

SHIFTS OF DISTANCE IN FIVE PLAYS BY EDWARD BOND

By

PENELOPE LEE CONNELL

B.A., The University of British Columbia, 1968  
M.A., The University of British Columbia, 1970

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Department of Theatre

The University of British Columbia  
Vancouver, Canada

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## Abstract

### Shifts of Distance in Five Plays by Edward Bond

Notorious for their "aggro" effects, Bond's plays have shocked and mystified critics and audiences throughout his career. Bond's politics contributes to the sensationalism of his work, in that his insistence on moral education seems at odds with conventional moral codes. But study of his plays suggests that style shifts, fragmentation of dramatic structure and an unusual attitude to character create real difficulties for the spectator. How to accept the "reality" of the action, how to "read" ambiguous action – such considerations force continual shifts in distance between audience and play. I explore how Bond works for these shifts, to what extent he succeeds in achieving them, and what his success means for his theatre and politics.

The concept of distance is itself problematical. Chaim describes it as having three aspects: it is willed by the spectator; being fiction, it permits an emotional response; and it allows for a suspension of judgement by the standards of reality. Bond aims to "dramatize analysis" rather than plot or character. Insofar as he explores the relationship between stage and audience, Bond's work contributes to that of other modern artists and theoreticians, including Brecht and Sartre.

Bond refines epic form, believing that social and political change do not grow from individual action but can best be understood when processes – of revolution, of awareness – are arrested and evaluated. Standard notions of character are not useful to him. He employs a variety of distancing devices (such as ekphrasis, direct address of the audience, songs and extreme violence) to evoke emotional responses, suspends or truncates the action, bringing the audience's intellect to bear on what it feels. Increasingly, the distancing effects create a "frame" inhabited principally by politically aware characters who analyse the action.

In later plays, the theatre itself becomes a paradigm for the restrictiveness of social conventions, with Bond showing that the perceived need to follow (dramatic) conventions destroys human integrity, even life. The continual violation of theatrical conventions disrupts stage-audience distance, but asserts the theatre's power to effect social change, revitalizing the theatre itself.



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"There is no excellent beauty that hath not  
some strangeness in the proportion."

Francis Bacon

In form, content and technique, the plays of Edward Bond have shocked and mystified audiences and critics. While a strong body of work on his content has now been developed, it is still difficult to find a thorough analysis devoted to how he achieves his effects.

Lear was the first of his plays which I read, several years ago. Even in the reading, I found myself very disturbed by it. Violent emotional shocks prevented me from making clear connections with Shakespeare's powerful drama, at just the moments when Bond referred to King Lear most directly. I felt that moments of tragedy were not deepened but contradicted by distasteful but highly comic dialogue and action. A sense of arbitrariness and accident in the plot finally stopped me from trying to decide what was "happening" in the play; I was left at the mercy of unexpected emotional shifts and with the impression that although nothing in my experience might have prepared me for this play, somehow it was important to me and very intriguing.

When I took a second look at Lear, I was able to identify at least a few potential causes of my reactions. In Act I, Scene Three, for instance, I was unable to tell whether one character was meant to be overhearing the asides of another. Also, the realism of some scenes relative to others seemed problematical. Parts of the play seemed allegorical, others like farce. The dimensionality of the characters seemed inconsistent. For me, the notion of the play as a discrete whole was violated; there seemed to be no constant – of plot, of character – in it, and its coherence broke down increasingly as the play went on. In its place,

however, I sensed an electric heightening of dramatic tension and a highly charged awareness of the theatrical. I saw the play as an artifact, a construction of elements.

At the same time, the clustering and presentation of vivid images was apparent, even in the reading. They made a strong emotional appeal, particularly in arousing the sensation of *déjà vu*, but they seemed to divert me from the rest of the *Water Sel*. I considered the possibility that they contained Bond's "meaning." Certainly they appeared to bear directly upon theme, particularly upon the statement made by Lear's having to suffer among his own people the cruelty he had himself imposed upon them as king. The tension among what seemed various styles, images and theme made me wonder how the play could be performed, but also lent it immediacy and seemed, paradoxically, to establish a new kind of internal cohesiveness.

My curiosity about Bond's aims and methods led me to read other plays, *The Sea*, *Saved* and *Restoration* among them. Again, they seemed to consist of abutted fragments at various levels of illusion among which the audience must move. While they strengthened my first impressions of Bond's work, they did not elucidate his technique, but rather provided me with more examples of an awkward treatment of a wide variety of theatrical elements; indeed, the awkwardness itself seemed the only consistent factor. Therefore I had a growing conviction that Bond carefully crafts his plays, that the seeming strangeness is neither accidental nor the result of poor workmanship, but that there is something particular which he wishes to achieve. I was also struck by the astonishing stylistic variety of his work, and by the compelling quality of his language. Between 1964 and 1971, he wrote six major plays in different styles. It seems possible to assume that the range of approaches relates to his casting about for an effective means of communicating what he wants to say. I guessed that identification of a pattern of elements which make me respond to his work as I do might provide a key to that communication.

I next turned to Bond's own statements about his work. Here I was rather surprised to find that the questions about technique which seemed so obviously troubling to me were not directly addressed. Bond himself is a voluminous speaker and writer concerning his own dramaturgy. But his interest is so grounded in his political reasons for writing that it is difficult to find an interview, foreword or introduction to his work which he does not bend towards discussion of the artist's political and social responsibility to the public. The clearest and most germane of his discussions is contained in the Preface to The Bundle (1978), which he calls "A Note on Dramatic Method." In it, he speaks of how human consciousness is influenced by social institutions and about the necessity for self-consciousness to create a moral universe; the same sort of discussion precedes Lear and The Fool. It also concerns the role of theatre in creating self-consciousness. Bond gives his view that the artist is responsible both to make a record of society and to analyse that record, and claims "dramatization of the analysis" to be the task he has set himself.

Briefly, he explains "dramatization of the analysis" vis-à-vis Brecht's similar method.

For instance, in discussing the ordering of scenes, he writes,

Practicality can only be shown by the ordering of scenes, not by incidents in scenes. The epic's structure must have meaning – it is not a collection of scenes showing that meaning is logically possible. The epic must have a unity [which] ... comes from the analysis, [and] which demonstrates, embodies cause and effect in a coherent way. (xx)

Altogether, the discussion speaks to the impressions I pick up in my reading. However, it is rather theoretical, based on a set of assumptions which do not relate directly to the drama but which must be accepted before the discussion of technique is clear. Bond has realized that he is searching for what he calls a "new poetics" of the theatre ("Edward Bond in Conversation" 39). In a 1980 interview with David Roper, he explains that the modern theatre is in need of new techniques with which to accomplish old dramatic tasks:

... the Greeks had messengers, but they couldn't make them the main characters of their plays. But in a curious way, in order to tell the truth, we're forced to give messages to our audience. We cannot combine the subjective

and the objective in theatrical devices in a way that the Jacobean could, or the Greeks could, in their own periods. We will find a way – that, in fact, is what we have to do. And I imagine that the new form of theatre will be an epic form. ("Edward Bond in Conversation" 38)

The epic he envisions is neither a "propaganda" nor an "incident" form of epic, but a third, "which would try to make apparent on the stage the actual movement of history" (40). An important facet of this form is the new view of character it requires:

... most problems have a social aspect, and most have a social cause. ... Problems of personality really don't exist in isolation. I find more and more that the concept of character in a play is useless to explain the truth of anything. ... What I'm much more interested in is "texture": that is where the character is always forced onto the surface ... you never have a secret subjectivity in the character, which he can suddenly produce to solve things. His subjectivity is all the time made objective – it's the texture. So that immediately things are clear. (41)

Again, this interview is helpful in suggesting aspects of Bond's theatre upon which to focus in an investigation of technique. However, it is still theoretical, and after raising the issue of character Bond again shifts to an explication of the effects of technology on modern life. In all of his own material, Bond does give us some idea of why he is writing in a new way. But despite isolated remarks which pertain directly to the question of technique in his work, his statements have not been especially helpful to me in clarifying my reading experience of the plays.

Therefore, as a next step, I turned to the critics. Here, with the exception of a few, I found a clamour of diverse and contradictory opinions, rarely pertinent to the questions I had in mind. Gregory Dark, Assistant Director of the first production of Lear, has suggested that it was difficult to find "intelligent remarks" about that production, "that the critics were scared of giving an outright condemnation – they had been caught out that way with Saved – but obviously did not like the play" (31). They simply seemed to him not to have understood it but to be "reluctant to admit it" (Scharine 183-184). Richard Scharine notes, "critical opinions being so diverse and so contradictory, it may well be too soon to rate Lear. None of

Bond's longer plays have been well accepted [sic] in their first production and all have received a much more intelligent press in revival" (185-186).

The Plays of Edward Bond, Scharine's important study, is one of those which does treat Bond's techniques in some depth. Although he writes mainly about the content of the plays up to The Sea, including expositions of plot, he makes relevant and interesting statements about Bond's technique throughout. For instance, he states that "one of his strengths has always been the evocation of atmosphere and many of his best effects have been the result of contrasting the tones of consecutive scenes" (252). His notion of plot in Bond's work is also very useful:

Bond confused his early critics by spending so much time developing the environment of his characters and so little time telling what happens to them. What the critics failed to realise was that the background is the plot. Bond writes about a society, the structure of which causes things to happen. (281)

Scharine makes reference to the anachronisms which appear in Narrow Road to the Deep North, and discusses them in terms of Bond's Brechtian intentions (154). In the last chapter, "A Summary of Themes and Techniques," which is largely devoted to matters of content, he recapitulates the several devices he has identified earlier – the structural consistency from one play to the next (280), the use of short units containing a single incident, the anachronisms, the switches to fantasy, and so-forth. None of these is analysed in depth, however, here or earlier.

Another study which treats Bond's technique is David Hirst's recent Edward Bond (1985). Hirst establishes Bond's basic methodology and the history of his productions in the first two chapters, and analyzes eleven of his plays in three central chapters, "Diabolonian Ethics: Techniques of Subversion," "Tragedy and Comedy," and "Epic Theatre: Dramatizing the Analysis." These divisions are quite illuminating, as are the passages in which he deals with specific scenes. His general purpose is, however, to relate Bond's



theory to his playwriting (a desirable elucidation). At the beginning of Chapter Five, Hirst summarizes his accomplishment:

We have examined in previous chapters how Bond's experiments with dramatic form have resulted in an undermining of conventional responses to the theatrical medium and in a rejection of tragedy and its implications. In the first instance essentially classical and bourgeois theatre forms have been made to yield a powerful subversive potential; in the second a variation of tragicomedy has been effected which looks beyond the social, ethical and political inequities of the present to a more optimistic future. These two contrasted styles are complementary in that they both challenge the status quo and demand new patterns of thought, more rational methods of organising society. There is a third area of Bond's work which is more radical: it presents an even more savage picture of abuse and irrationality and in turn suggest more precise answers to the problems dramatised. (123-124)

While Chapters Three and Four are useful, then, it is Chapter Five which is most relevant to my study. In it, Hirst compares Bond with Shaw and Brecht, and analyzes several moments in Lear, The Bundle, and The Worlds, to show how Bond uses his celebrated "aggro-effect."

Besides these studies of Scharine's and Hirst's, the work of various other critics has, to varying degrees, contributed to an understanding of Bond's dramatic technique. Nevertheless, their studies often raise certain problems. No problems exist in the area of content, where the consistency of theme and of treatment of character, and the repeated employment of a small pool of related images and metaphors, has helped critics to focus in a useful and insightful way. But analyses of formal matters are harder to come by. And often, critics seem to discuss content in a way which suggests they have stylistic concerns. In a recent review of The War Plays Trilogy, for example, Keith Colquhoun makes negative remarks about the content of Bond's plays. But he also writes of this latest of Bond's major works that it is "particularly unremitting in tone," and claims that Bond has been "led into discourse on his topic" ("Fundamentalist Forums"). His parting shot is that "the direction, by Nick Hamm, is as coherent as the text allows." Such comments have caused me to wonder if the critics might be addressing a stylistic matter, the "inappropriateness" of the play's tone to other elements, which would bear my considering.

Critics of early work found that Bond intruded himself in an uncomfortable way, again a judgement which might be connected to a matter of style. Irving Wardle, for instance, comments in "A Discussion with Edward Bond" that the shock of the violence in Saved, which he attributes to Bond's "relish" for violence, "is surely why ... I misunderstood Saved from the very beginning" (21); he is revising his earlier opinion that the baby-stoning scene, as a theatrical effect, was so obtrusive as to destroy the coherence of the Water Sel. Other critics have made similar remarks. Early in his career, Bond's critics do, in fact, often claim that there are stylistic faults in his work. In 1972, Arthur Arnold finds that "the difficulty with Saved is too much realism, too well done," while Early Morning has "too much surrealism, not well enough done" (17). Such quips, dismissive of the question of style, are frustrating because they require an explication which their author does not provide. Beverly Matherne questions the use of multiple staging in We Come to the River (1976): "I was wondering ... about its cacophonous effect. I mean, you are at a risk when you've got three separate areas of the stage going all at once" ("An Interview" 70). Robert Cushman, writing about Bond's 1979 The Worlds, says, "Every now and then Mr. Bond slides in explicit lectures which ... neither support or are supported by the action of the play" (qtd in Contemporary Literary Criticism 23:72). Finally, as Scharine notes, although "in Lear, Bond has achieved his best blend of fantasy and realism meshed well with their context" (219).

Without focussing on technique, these critical views raise questions about obtrusive elements in the plays. The "anachronisms," the "explicit lectures," "cacophonous effect" and arguably gratuitous violence seem to me to point to the same sort of impression as I had of Lear. The assumption of these critics seems to be that certain parts of the plays are out of context with the rest in a variety of ways, that in some sense the various elements do not add up to a meaningful collage. Hence there is a sense of structural faultiness and a threatened collapse of coherence.

Upon reflection, then, it seems that Bond has a strong statement to make in his drama, albeit one which is difficult for his audiences to accept. It seems, also, reasonable to assume that in his shifting about among various theatrical techniques, he is trying to deal with the difficulty of communication which he has experienced. His own agent, Margaret Ramsay, has commented recently, "Bond is marvellous, but he's inaccessible. ... Bond still writes, but he can't get his plays on. He doesn't want them on. He's going to die with a lot of plays unperformed" (Gussow 58). Bond does not hide himself from such opinions. He has said, in a verbal joust with Harold Hobson, then theatre critic of The Sunday Times, "I'm writing for people who are not going to understand what I want to say, so this gives me a very difficult problem ..." ("A Discussion" 32). This statement, like Ramsay's, may seem pessimistic in the extreme. But Bond is not altogether pessimistic. In the Author's Note to Saved, he says,

Like most people I am a pessimist by experience, but an optimist by nature, and I have no doubt that I shall go on being true to my nature. Experience is depressing, and it would be a mistake to be willing to learn from it. (7)

The quality of strain in his plays which makes his audiences so uncomfortable may be perceived in this statement. For Bond's attitude is not best explained by the words "optimist" and "pessimist"; it is one of "never say die." He explains in a letter to Scharine:

I've never experienced hopelessness. If I did, I'd stop writing, of course. Beckett is a pessimist, but even he hopes he will be printed – otherwise why write? I go so far as to hope I will have readers – and that they will be actors not on the stage but the street. So don't ascribe hopelessness to me. On the other hand, I have no courage. It's just I'm constantly enticed by how often experience can be defined in ideas and so made rational, and by the strength and resilience of human beings. (qtd in Scharine 288)

The ambiguity of attitude stems from the full recognition that people's socio-historical experience must be counteracted strongly, in such a way as to shock them out of attitudes taught by the aggressively destructive values of the social system. The complacency of the masses Bond identifies as moral bankruptcy; therefore, "if we are to improve people's behaviour we must first increase their moral understanding" (Saved 7). But this is not enough:

To believe that men should be free and to do nothing to aid them is to support their jailers. To give men hope, as Lear does, and to allow their position to remain hopeless, is to become a social institution. (Scharine 211-212)

Bond is in need, then, of a theatrical technique which is revolutionary – both in its theatricality and in its ability to convey new meaning. It must be directed towards the breakdown of habitual thought-patterns. From historical accounts, and from my own experience of seeing and reading Bond's plays, I think Bond aims for both rational and non-rational reactions, that he employs visual and physical theatrical devices which break continuity of plot and character, and that he wishes to externalise reactions to social injustice which for most people are internalised. He is dealing with ways of shifting – jerking – his audience's awareness – involving the spectator at a certain level, then breaking that involvement, then encouraging the spectator to realign him- or herself to the stage action and thwarting that alignment again: he is dealing, in other words, with adjustments in the distance between spectator and stage. For some of the same reasons that Brecht had for creating his Verfremdungseffekt, Bond creates moments of emotional – and intellectual – discontinuity, moments when the audience is forced back upon itself to evaluate not just what is happening on stage but also how it is responding to that action. By manipulating their distance from the stage action, Bond seems to encourage a special kind of self-awareness, the awareness of the socio-political, rather than the psychological, self in each of his spectators.

Bond does not discuss his work in terms of distance per se, and though he refers to Brecht's epic theatre and in a few places compares his "alienation devices" with Brecht's, he does not often employ the term "alienation" either. He was very much struck by the visit of the Berliner Ensemble to London in 1956, and when he came to work at the Royal Court Theatre with George Devine, "acknowledged as the leading British director of Brecht" (Holland 26), he "came to the Court as a Brechtian" (35). Whatever the influence of Brecht on Bond's work might be, Bond states clearly that "... I have worked consciously – starting

with Brecht but not ending there" (35) throughout his career. In 1978, around the time of Holland's article on Brecht, Bond, and Gaskill, Bond discusses in his Preface to The Bundle his attitude to some of the techniques Brecht uses in his theatre – the use of placards to comment on a scene, his acting theory, his presentation of story, and the relationship of scenes to each other. For each of these he explains the purpose of the device and why he has modified or rejected Brecht's way of employing it. In his "Reply" to Holland's article, Bond refers specifically to the "V-effect." While the two pages of this "Reply" do not strike me as enough to justify Hirst's calling it an "extensive" discussion, certainly it is informative. "About the V-effect," Bond says,

I suspect this was partly an attack on the operatic style of German theatre. ... Alienation is vulnerable to the audience's decision about it. Sometimes it is necessary to emotionally commit the audience – which is why I have aggro-effects. Without this the V-effect can deteriorate into an aesthetic style. ... Of course, the psychology of the audience is very complex, and the immediate response to a play is less important than the decision about it six months later. But there is a sense in which one often has to work for a "bad" response, given the society we live in. The immediate approval of an audience is often no more important than the immediate approval of the critics. ("Reply" 34)

Bond takes issue with Brecht in that he does not believe alienation to be enough to accomplish the task at hand, which is to "show the irrelevance of the traditional, character-rooted concepts of good and evil. We need a sort of positive V-effect, something less abstract," to prevent the V-effect's becoming "merely the removing of emotional tension so that the object or situation being examined ... floats loose. Scepticism is the preamble to truth but it is not itself knowledge" (35). In a few paragraphs, he focusses on those areas in which he employs alienation devices – in structure and presentation of character.

Various critics compare Bond's with Brecht's theatre, mainly showing how Bond "inevitably goes further than Brecht in disturbing and challenging his audience" (Hirst 127). Coult's statement is that Bond makes a "fundamental break with the Brechtian tradition of epic theatre" by involving rather than "seeking to distance the audience ..." (Coult, Plays of

Edward Bond 280). Again, then, it seems appropriate to discuss Bond's manipulation of distance, not simply as a key to understanding his technique, but also to indicate differences from Brecht in how his devices work.

Before we can discuss Bond's use of distance, however, it is necessary to define the term. This task is not easy. Aesthetic distance "has been accepted or rejected in citations or in footnotes" by twentieth century critics, says Daphna Ben Chaim, "with little attempt to make sustained arguments" (Chaim 81). Her Distance in the Theatre: The Aesthetics of Audience Response is a full-length study of distance, "the deliberate manipulation of [which] is, to a great extent, the underlying factor that determines theatrical style in this century" (79). Previous to this century, distance has been discussed by artists and theoreticians from Aristotle onward, and a mass of difficult and often contradictory material is available on the subject. Focussing specifically on theatrical distance, Chaim synthesizes and discusses some significant material which has developed in the twentieth century. In the first of her six chapters, she outlines the contributions to the subject of distance made by such eighteenth and nineteenth century thinkers as Shaftesbury, Addison, Kant, Coleridge and Nietzsche, and discusses Bullough's concept of "Psychical Distance." The next four chapters give the contributions to the subject by Sartre, Brecht, Artaud and Grotowski, and Bazin and Metz. In the final chapter, she comes to her conclusion, that "an awareness of fiction is the most basic principle of distance" and that there are three interrelated components to this awareness.

First is a "tacit knowing" that the art work is fictional. This provides the spectator with "psychological protection" from what is happening on stage. "Tacit knowing" is a component accepted by all the theorists she studies. It is permission for the spectator to experience the emotions that would be associated with the drama if that drama were taking

place in real life, and just as if it were taking place in real life. But the "as if" is always a conscious awareness that the work is a fiction.

Second is "volition," which involves the complicity of the spectator in treating the art work seriously – Sartre's specific contribution, though this element "is clearly implicit in both Bullough's and Brecht's concepts of distance" (74). The spectator is free to, and will, "initiate and sustain the imaginative act of consciousness" (74). It seems that the difference between distance and the willing suspension of disbelief, then, is that the "willing suspension" refers specifically to the initiation of distance as an act of will; that is, it is one of the three components of Chaim's definition, rather than the whole definition.

Third, "perception" of the art work "as unreal" frees the consciousness from imposing the criteria of reality on the art work: "we do not judge the literal truth of the events because our imaginative experience is divorced from belief" (75). This third component is largely the contribution of Sartre and Bullough, and is also explained by the theories, Chaim says, of Samuel Johnson, Coleridge, and Roger Scruton.

In summary, then, the three aspects of distance are (first) that it is initiated as an act of will on the spectator's part, but that the spectator, never forgetting s/he is viewing a fiction, permits him- or herself to respond emotionally to that fiction (second), while (third) suspending judgment of the fiction by the standards of reality.

It will be seen that Chaim wishes to arrive at a general theory of theatrical distance, and therefore is not concerned with analyzing specific moments in any drama where distance is problematical. Her assumption is that a degree of distance is always present between a play and its audience, and she explores the conditions under which that distance arises and exists. Though my concern in Bond's work is precisely with "problematical moments," it

seems reasonable to review the steps by which she reaches her basic definition – one which, I think, provides a useful starting point for discussion of the visible seams in Bond's work.

By the time of Coleridge, it had become necessary to reconcile two seemingly contradictory attitudes to art on the spectator's part, "the 'disinterestedness' of aesthetic experience, on the one hand, [and] the desire for pleasure which art fulfils on the other" (Chaim 2). This discussion was entered in 1912 by Edward Bullough, in a famous essay, "'Psychical Distance' as a Factor in Art and an Aesthetic Principle," which, Chaim says, "initiated a new way of thinking" on the subject (3). Distance, which by definition is always aesthetic distance for Bullough, requires an objectivity with two basic and necessary conditions: first, the involvement of the spectator emotionally and intellectually; and second, the capacity of the spectator to view the scene as if s/he were not involved. For Bullough, distance is "a relation between the [art] work and its public" (Langer 319) and it gives to art its aesthetic nature.

Bullough offers the following analogy to explain what he calls "Psychical Distance."

Imagine being caught in a fog at sea, a terrifying experience for most people:

Abstract from the experience of the sea fog ... its danger and practical unpleasantness ...; direct the attention to the features "objectively" constituting the phenomenon – [the opaque air which distorts objects grotesquely, the creamy smooth water, seemingly without danger, and so-on] – and the experience may acquire, in its uncanny mingling of repose and terror, a flavour of such concentrated poignancy and delight as to contrast sharply with the blind and distempered anxiety of its other aspects. This contrast, often emerging with startling suddenness, is like a momentary switching on of some new current, ... illuminating the outlook upon perhaps the most ordinary and familiar objects ... and we watch the consummation of some impending catastrophe with the marvelling unconcern of a mere spectator.

It is a difference of outlook, due ... to the insertion of Distance. (88-89)

Bullough describes a situation in which the spectator is in real danger, but partakes of the aesthetic experience of beauty by temporarily, mysteriously abstracting the danger from



the situation. The sea fog and the spectator are, however, in a real relationship to each other, and the danger can only momentarily be put aside. An art work, like the sea fog, contains a truth which is enclosed for the spectator in the experience of aesthetic beauty as a gift is enclosed in wrapping paper. In fact, says Bullough, the concordance between spectator and art work – the closeness of the spectator's experience to what s/he sees in the art work – is essential, with one qualification, that it not be so close as to render the two identical.

Thus does Bullough reconcile the "disinterestedness" of aesthetic experience with the desire for pleasure which art fulfils. Distance is "a personal relation, often highly emotionally coloured, but of a peculiar character," "cleared of the practical, concrete nature of its appeal" (92); it is not, as often assumed, Bullough says, the consequence but the cause of fictionality, not just in art but also in life: "that is to say, the converse of the reason usually stated [is] true: viz, that Distance, by changing our relation to the characters, renders them seemingly fictitious, not that the fictitiousness of the characters alters our feelings towards them." The proof of this seeming paradox, Bullough says, occurs at those moments when "we are overcome by the feeling that 'all the world's a stage'" (92). This notion is a problematical one for Chaim. Because he rejects the idea that awareness of fictionality causes distance, Bullough "cannot explain how distance actually affects or determines the viewer's involvement with the art work" (5), nor what causes distance to insert itself between the viewer and the work.

Relating the spectator and the art work as he does, Bullough finds certain generally-held opinions about distance to be false, especially that one which assumes a lack of emotion on the spectator's part (91). In this he anticipates a common misunderstanding of Brecht's theatre, that it proscribes empathy. He objects to use of the terms "objectivity" and "detachment," on the grounds that "neither of them implies a personal relation – indeed both actually preclude it" (94). Indeed, the spectator can "enter the play the more keenly, the

greater the resemblance with his own experience – provided that he succeeds in keeping the distance between the action of the play and his personal feelings" (93). The tension involved in sustaining this dual condition he calls the "antinomy" of distance, and from it he infers the ideal distance between spectator and art work: "the utmost decrease of Distance without its disappearance (94).

Bullough also posits the "variability of Distance." Distance is affected, he says, not just by the spectator but also by the art work; neither occupies a fixed point on the line of distance, but "in their interplay" they are responsible for the great number of "varieties of aesthetic experience." When distance is lost, the art work loses its aesthetic appeal – ceases to be art – in Bullough's view. The loss can occur in two ways, by "'Under-distancing' [which] is the commonest failing of the subject" – that is, of the spectator – or by over-distancing, "an excess of Distance [which] is a frequent failing of Art ..." (94). Bullough claims that art tends to compensate for the inclination of the spectator to relate what s/he sees directly to his or her own life:

... it appears that over-distanced Art is especially designed for a class of appreciation which has difficulty to rise spontaneously to any degree of Distance. The consequence of a loss of Distance through one or another cause is familiar: the verdict in the case of under-distancing is that the work is "crudely naturalistic," "harrowing," "repulsive in its realism." An excess of Distance produces the impression of improbability, artificiality, emptiness or absurdity. (94)

Discussing the variability of distance, Bullough makes interesting suggestions. He differentiates between the average individual and the artist in terms of their capacities to stretch the limit of under-distancing, claiming that the average person has far less aesthetic tolerance for certain types of content than the artist does. For instance, "explicit references to ... the material existence of the body, especially to sexual matters, lie normally below the Distance-limit" for the average person. Similarly,

Allusions to social institutions of any degree of personal importance – in particular, allusions implying any doubt as to their validity – the questioning

of some generally recognised ethical sanctions, references to topical subjects occupying public attention at the moment, and such like, are all dangerously near the average limit and may at any time fall below it, arousing, instead of aesthetic appreciation, concrete hostility or mere amusement. (95)

This statement would seem appropriate to the baby-stoning scene in Saved, for instance, the treatment of Victoria in Early Morning, or in a relation between Lear and that monument of the English theatre, King Lear. It has implications for reasons why audiences are disturbed by certain scenes, and more importantly, for the way in which Bond brings about the "aggro-effect."

Bullough also notes that "Art springing from abstract conceptions, expressing allegorical meanings, or illustrating general truths" (96) – that is, "idealistic art" – can be excessively distanced in the form of its appeal (that is, in being made abstract). But once it is made personally appealing ("my Patriotism, my Friendship"), it tends "all the more easily" towards under-distancing (96-97). He develops at several pages' length the influence in "idealistic Art" of form, content and technical finish (framing, for example) upon each other.

A significant point arising from this discussion is that, for Bullough,

Distance appears as a fundamental principle to which such antitheses as idealism and realism are reducible. The difference between "idealistic" and "realistic" art is not a clear-cut dividing line between [them], but is a difference in degree in the Distance-limit which they presuppose on the part both of the artist and of the public. (106-107)

Bullough concludes his essay with a long discussion on the application of his theory of distance as an aesthetic principle – "as a criterion," for example, "between the agreeable and the beautiful." Here he makes the point that "the case of comedy is particularly involved," that though the different types of comedy "presuppose different degrees of Distance[,] [t]heir tendency is to have none at all. Both to laugh and to weep are direct expressions of a thoroughly practical nature ... [and] both can be distanced, but only with

great difficulty ...." He stresses that "certainly the tendency to underdistance is more felt in comedy even than in tragedy ..." (111).

Bullough explicates the importance of distance in artistic creation with a contrast between the audience of serious drama and comedy and that of a melodrama (112-113), stating the position later held by Sartre, that the spectator's attitude must "bear the twofold character of the aesthetic state in which we know a thing not to exist, but accept its existence" (113). The audience of melodrama is not undergoing an aesthetic experience, whereas the audience of comedy or serious drama is. Distancing, Bullough asserts in connection with artistic creation, "is the formal aspect of creation in Art." He disposes not just of the notion that art copies nature, but further of the Romantic idea that the artist expresses him- or herself in the art work. Distancing, he says, is the primary function of the creative act (113). In conclusion, Bullough remarks that "it is Distance which makes the aesthetic object an end in itself" (117), supplying "one of the special criteria of aesthetic values as distinct from practical (utilitarian), scientific, or social (ethical) values" (118).

This thought-provoking, "seminal" essay has generated theories even in its contradictions, Chaim says; it has been described, in her view, but seldom closely analyzed (4). Besides that problem already discussed (that Bullough sees fictionality as a result, rather than a cause, of distance), Chaim finds three other issues to be problematical in Bullough's work. One is that he does not explain for her when the spectator is "too personally involved to permit distance"; Bullough states explicitly (95) that it is impossible to know exactly where the under-distancing border is crossed. This is the difficulty which most besets the person who wishes to understand distance, as it involves studying the audience, a desirable but practically impossible undertaking. It appears to me that Chaim simply refuses to accept the limitation Bullough recognises for his ideas, and demands that he go further than he claims possible. Similarly, without accepting his statement that the points at which distance

breaks down vary under a wide range of circumstances which pertain both to the art work and its spectator, she judges that he does not adequately define "what produces under-distancing and what produces over-distancing" (8). Again, I take Bullough to be making a slightly different point in his investigation: not that certain things necessarily cause a loss of distance, but that certain sets of conditions, which are too complex to be predictable, cause this loss. The complex of factors, all inter-related, is also variable according to such conditions as temporal remoteness, according to Bullough. Though her desire for something more definitive may be praise-worthy, it seems that here too Chaim is demanding something of Bullough which he has no intention of providing.

In the third of the three matters in which Chaim criticises Bullough, however, she makes what I consider a valuable point. The "incompleteness" of his explanations aside, Bullough does not define and use the term "distance" consistently throughout the essay. Chaim sees this as a drawback, and it appears, indeed, that Bullough is not aware of any shift of meaning, although one does seem to exist. In my view the "drawback" is a fortuitous one. "In one sense," Chaim says,

Bullough means by distance an emotional dissociation by the spectator from his emotion, the attribution of his own feelings to something outside himself. In another sense he seems to mean some level of awareness by the spectator that his engagement is with a virtual object. The difference is vast, as can be seen by the kinds of theatrical practice that these understandings would seem to encourage: on the one hand, an intensification of emotional involvement, empathy, with the characters (as in realistic plays); on the other, an intensification of awareness of fictionality of the whole, alienation (as in Brecht's Epic Theatre).

This contradiction is left unresolved by Bullough; ... he stressed one direction of his thinking in the first part and the other in the latter part of the essay. And, as will be seen, it is precisely the first which Sartre develops and the second which Brecht emphasises. (7)

The further "problems" which this "contradiction" causes, such as whether distance is a characteristic of the spectator's experience or of the art object (7), do not arise for me, as I said above, because Bullough seems to me to maintain specifically that both are the case

(Bullough 94). However, the far more significant inconsistent use of the term which Chaim identifies in the two halves of Bullough's essay has provided two (at least) ways of using the concept of distance. Although they are so different from each other, both of them apply to a study of Bond's plays. For the separation of one's emotion from oneself, so that it can be observed as if emanating from another source, permits the judgment of the appropriateness of that emotion in the circumstances: exactly the aim for his play that Bond states in the Preface to The Bundle. The quality of empathy, after all, is often present in the theatre, but seldom observed there; it is most often a reaction of the spectator's, not an action of the play's. At the same time, the Brechtian alienation, "intensification of awareness of the fictionality of the whole," is also important to Bond, who shares with Brecht many devices to trigger that awareness, and adds his own variations to Brecht's list.

Bullough also makes two important contributions to the subject of distance, in Chaim's view. He emphasizes "the artificiality of the theatrical conventions and their importance in relation to distance," which is a "crucial principle" shared by the otherwise opposed Brecht and Artaud (9). And his scope is broad, "not directly related to any particular artistic medium nor even to a particular work of art" (10); therefore, an exploration of distance which is directly related can be tested against, and placed in the context of, his general concept.

Chaim makes the transition into the central chapters with one question Bullough leaves unanswered by his failure to explain how distance occurs: "If distance cannot be attributed to any external stimuli, then why is the phenomenon so commonly associated with art objects?" (Chaim 11).

In the second chapter, Chaim discusses the contribution by Sartre of important perceptions on the question of distance. Sartre agrees fundamentally with Bullough on the

subject. In fact, he "suggests a far more satisfactory and complete theory than Bullough does to explain Bullough's idea" that when aesthetic distance is operating, it permits the investment of the spectator's emotions (22). Sartre believes that increased distance "means increased imaginative involvement" (16); this is quite a different idea from Bullough's, that distance requires the awareness of fictionality. Nevertheless, that distance is an act of will on the spectator's part, an idea which "is implicit in both Bullough's and Brecht's concepts" of distance, is, to Chaim's mind, Sartre's most significant contribution to the subject; he insists "on the freedom of the imagination" (23). Whether one chooses to enter a state of consciousness or unconsciousness, one still chooses, for Sartre and all the theorists whose work she analyses. This is beside the point for my discussion of Bond's plays, but it bears saying in connection with Bond because it is of central importance to his own theory about his work.

What Sartre calls "the crisis of the imaginary" is also significant to the operation of distance in Bond's plays. It involves what Sartre sees as the confusion for the spectator between the real and the imaginary event; it "[jolts] the viewer back and forth between increased distance and a near destruction of distance by vacillating between the near creation of illusion and the shattering of it with the intrusion of the real (the performance of actors) and the intrusion of reality (current issues within the world)" (Chaim 19). For Sartre, this is the specific problem of the "happening" or "documentary play" which relies on reality to such an extent. Bond wants to write for an audience which is "superior to the actor's" in being "on the real stage," demanding that the spectators "be not passive victims or witnesses, but interpreters of experience" (The Bundle xx) – that they be, in other words, consciously complicit in Sartre's sense. Perhaps the "crisis of the imaginary" can shed light on this desire of his, indicating in some sense how Bond prods the audience into making a practical interpretation of an aesthetic experience.

In the next two chapters, Chaim treats the theories on distance of Brecht, Artaud and Grotowski. Bullough claims that the ideal distance between the art work and the spectator is "the utmost decrease of Distance without its disappearance" (Bullough 94). Chaim identifies Artaud as completely in agreement with him on that point. Grotowski, who Chaim says has "eliminated the element of unreality in his work" and therefore rejected distance altogether (49), obviously crosses the boundary of distance at the under-distancing border, "concerned with approaching reality head on – by presenting it" (49), and now engages in work which is akin to religious ritual or some sort of secular, social healing. Interestingly, Chaim says, he shares with Brecht the desire to have the spectator identify with the actor, not the character (45).

At the other extreme, Brecht's idea of the ideal distance is the very opposite of Sartre's. For Brecht, "increased distance is an increased awareness of the fictionality of the work and an intellectual understanding of its structure and meaning" (32), and this he sees as highly desirable. "By forcing the audience to take a more critical attitude, Brecht hopes to actually make theatre more 'geared into reality' [Brecht's words], that is, make theatre have real-world implications" (30). His distancing devices "are primarily devices to exaggerate what is inherent in art [that is, style] in order that art will be effective propaganda," Chaim claims – an inference which could better, perhaps, be drawn from Bond's work.

A problem for Bond as for Brecht is that workable theatrical techniques to increase awareness of distance quickly become conventional, ceasing to have the desired effect of jolting or startling an audience out of its complacent acceptance into thoughtfulness. "If I went on stoning babies in every play then nobody would notice it anymore," Bond has remarked (Innes, "Edward Bond: From Rationalism to Rhapsody" 112). The shock effect works the first time only; "I had to find ways of making people notice ...." Oscar Büdel, in



"Contemporary Theatre and Aesthetic Distance" (1961), objects to Brecht's emphasis on theatrical devices, claiming that

all Brecht achieves with this rigorous demand is a loss of distance through over-distancing. What we get, then, is a theatre ... which is demonstrating situations of a mere factual nature and relationship. ... Here theatre is turned into an institution for the presentation of painless, spoon-fed, and "guided" historical, at times possibly also ideological, information .... (Büdel 76)

There are two implications of this sort of criticism. One is that to some, such as Büdel and various critics of Bond (Colquhoun, Wardle), any self-referential manipulation of distance – that is, any manipulation which makes itself apparent to an audience – is actually destructive of the art-character of the play, while to others (Brecht), it has no particular bearing on the question of art-character, which is a kind of absolute, indestructible by the manipulation of distance. The other implication of Büdel's statement reiterates the tendency to conventionality of unconventional theatrical devices; as Susan Sontag says, "'the theory of art as assault on the audience ... can become as much a convention as anything else; and end, like all theatrical conventions, by reinforcing the deadness of the audience'" ("Theatre and Film," qtd in Chaim 33). Regarding this latter implication, I have referred to Bond's awareness of the frustrating tendency to conventionality of theatrical "shock" techniques, a tendency which keeps his shoulder to Sisyphus' rock. Regarding the former implication, however, more must be said.

One's own values, the accepted aesthetic standards of a society and other factors might all be brought to an argument over whether a play is "good art" or not, but that argument seems irrelevant to me, as I do not hold Büdel's view that apparent manipulation of distance destroys the integrity of an art work. Neither Bullough nor Brecht, though they disagree on where the ideal degree of distance exists, believe that manipulation which makes itself apparent is destructive; nor, I think, does Bond.

But how Bond uses distancing devices is a question: does he use them as Bullough suggests they be used, to create an impression of the wholeness of the art work? or as Brecht suggests their use should be, to step outside that wholeness, that frame, interrupting it so as to examine it and compare it with the real world? Chaim states that "Brecht employs alienation techniques as a means for exceeding aesthetic distance ... to decrease the effects of empathy and, especially, to force the spectator to confront his world with the principles he has been observing in the play" (36).

In Bond's work, the distancing devices seem to work at more than one level. Like Brecht's, they are probes such as a biologist might use to examine an ant hill. They are also formal, shaping the work as a crustacean's shell shapes the creature and differentiates it from the world. At the same time, magnifying certain aspects of the work for investigation, they are part of the content, the subject of research.

According to Chaim the great advantage of Brecht's work for purposes of a systematic study of distance is that his narrow focus on the theatre, the continual testing of theory in a practical environment over a long career, and his willingness to adapt his view provide what Bullough's general exploration cannot: a sharp, clear focus on the subject. At the same time, she sees various difficulties with his theory, for instance that the actor presents his own response to the action as well as his character's reaction. "Who is 'moved,'" Chaim wonders, character, actor, or audience? And in what way is Brechtian alienation any different from, for example, the situation established by Shakespeare when Richard III role-plays for Ann (34)? Chaim finds Brecht incorrect in saying that

technique alone ... creates alienation: the technique merely surprises the spectator into recognising the social criticism if it is there.

The question is whether Brecht's techniques, conventions, and stylistic devices demand critical thinking at all .... Rather than merely techniques it becomes a matter of the fusion of techniques and content .... (35)

Chaim has derived the third component of her view of distance – that it must be "perceived as unreal" – largely from reference to the film theories of André Bazin and Christian Metz. A fundamental difference between theatre and film is that in film it is very easy to create the sensation of a single point of view; indeed, this can hardly be avoided. Metz argues that because of this, "only low-level mental activity seems necessary to the film experience (though obviously some specific films greatly challenge mental activity)," and Chaim reasons, further, that much of what tension does exist for the audience must arise from the "friction between 'identification' with the ... camera's point of view and identification with the characters in film." This friction, she continues,

"is perhaps the counterpart of the friction created by theatre's heightened awareness of the bodily presence of actors. Indeed, it could be argued that it is precisely that friction in all forms of art and the mental effort required to overcome it, that constitutes an aspect of distance." (65)

Chaim also finds particularly useful in Metz's theory the "notion of aesthetic 'projection' ... 'the low degree of existence' of the characters (e.g., our awareness that Hamlet exists as a fictional character)" (66), which is conducive to identification by the spectator. But she points out the weakness in this aspect of the theory, that if greater awareness of fictionality permits greater identification with a character, then Punch and Judy "have the capacity to become 'Super-Hamlets' – but that seems quite unlikely!" In fact, "the 'low level of existence' ... translates into a high level of distance." Here, then, as I see it, there is a paradox, in that at the point of greatest identification, it seems that something as yet unidentified by theorists, but perhaps simply the presence of the actor's body on stage, triggers a reversion to the opposite extreme, over-distancing. That is, at the point where the spectator would involve him- or herself in issues raised by what the fictional character is experiencing, the awareness of fictionality asserts itself and mental balance, in effect, is maintained. Without it, indeed, the spectator could be considered mad. There is an affinity between Metz's theory and those of Bullough, Sartre and Artaud.

When a play is judged to be "appropriately" aesthetically distanced, one assumes it permits a balance of emotional and intellectual involvement, the emotional component contributing one sort of judgment of its "truth" and the intellectual another. The emotional truth is verified through the faculty of empathy, while the intellectual truth is a verification of the harmonious interrelationship of all the parts of the play to each other.

In her conclusion, Chaim says

The plays of Harold Pinter or Edward Bond defy description in traditional genre or style terms; they must be understood, I believe, in terms of style shifts at the service of the manipulation of distance.

The deliberate manipulation of distance is, to a great extent, the underlying factor that determines theatrical style in this century: degrees of stylization may alter from one work to another according to the specific strategies of the works; and degrees of distance alter from one moment to the next within any individual *Water Sel* (79)

Chaim's study of distance is not, she says, "adequate for a full understanding of the aesthetic phenomenon" of distance (81), in particular in that it does not explain how the mind perceives the image and the real it images at the same time; perhaps that question cannot be dealt with in aesthetics. And Chaim does not exactly define distance, but words her conclusion thus: "An awareness of fiction is the most basic principle of distance ..." (73). If there are other principles, she does not suggest what they might be. However, her study is useful, with her assertions that "the deliberate manipulation of distance is one of the distinctive features of twentieth century theatre" (78) and that distance is a more useful measure of modern theatre than are the concepts of genre and style. Though possibly incomplete, her description of distance is workable in having the three components she identifies: that the spectator can be emotionally involved because of his or her "tacit knowing" that the work is fiction; that s/he bears responsibility for that knowing, in willing and sustaining the imaginative act; and that, because the work is a fiction, s/he suspends judgement of it by the standards of reality.

Bullough's essay, with its concepts of under- and over-distancing, also provides useful tools for my study of distance in Bond's work. Under-distancing involves, Bullough says, first, reference to the material existence of the body; second, reference to topical subjects in the public eye; third, reference to doubts about social institutions; and finally, to the questioning of ethical sanctions. In other words, under-distancing is triggered, it would seem, by subjects which have a strong emotional impact on the audience. These subjects, one infers from Bullough, are explosive and touch societal taboos. When a moment in a play is under-distanced, the spectator's emotional involvement is intensified to a point at which aesthetic distance is lost altogether. The intellect and the emotions cease to work in harmony, so that aesthetic appreciation of the beauty of the piece is washed away in an uncomfortably strong gut response to a particular issue. The more real the issue becomes to the spectator, the closer s/he moves to the point at which a spontaneous, emotional "No!" signals a rejection of the play on the aesthetic level. In fact, Bullough remarks, the censor may wait at the door of the theatre in which under-distancing is a threat (97).

Another prime cause of under-distancing is a very close identification of spectator with character. The theatre runs a greater risk than do other art forms (dance excepted) of under-distancing because of the presence on stage of the living body of the actor. Both Bullough and Büdel seem to imply that under-distancing occurs not just because of the actor's physical presence but also because the playwright has unusually encouraged identification with a character. Both theorists cite unusual treatments of character as a possible cause not just of under-distancing, but of over-distancing as well.

Certainly, one earmark of a Bond play is his unusual treatment of character. But Bond associates his treatment with Brechtian (over-) distancing devices in his Preface to The Bundle; furthermore, his devices, such as mingling actors and dummies, or presenting quasi-allegorical and "realistic" characters in the same scene, smack of over-, not under-distancing.

The matter of character as it is used to shift distance thus bears some study. It is rendered the more difficult by the lack of any real exploration or analysis by Bullough, Chaim, or any of the theorists Chaim discusses in her book.

In sum, then, under-distancing is the result of incorporating certain kinds of content into a play, and has something to do also with treatment of character; these are Bullough's conclusions. The causes of under-distancing at a certain moment in a play trigger an emotional reaction of such strength as to blur or blot out an intellectual response; unable to suspend judgement of the performance by the standards of reality (Chaim's third component), the spectator registers the play as under-distanced. A major difference between under-distancing and the successful maintenance of aesthetic distance is under-distancing's intensification of emotion to the point where it eclipses thought. This is not a fusion of the spectator's reality with the play's. Rather, a real issue in the play takes precedence for the spectator over simple enjoyment of the *Water Sel*. The emotional intensification causes the spectator not to will and sustain imaginative involvement; that is, Chaim's second component breaks down too, as does the protection derived from the "tacit knowing" that the work is fiction (the first component), because the "tacit knowing" is for the moment forgotten.

While the tokens of under-distancing appear to be matters of content for Bullough, those of over-distancing (emotional aloofness as opposed to involvement) seem to combine certain types of content – that developed from abstract conceptions, in allegory, and so-forth – with excessively mannered presentation. The focus here is on form and technique, both of which are made apparent to the audience while they are being employed. Whether the play at hand happens to be comic or otherwise is not, Bullough says in the discussion of distance as an aesthetic principle, an issue (111); that is, the same distancing devices will work in any

kind of drama. In fact, the result of loss of distance by either means is the same: the primary (and possibly uncomfortable) perception of the play as fiction.

Over-distancing, then, involves the winnowing out of the emotional component and a wholly intellectual reaction to a *Water Sel*. It places the spectator at a remove (often spatial and temporal) from the art work, and thus varies with time and locale of presentation. Bullough remarks that art works which have a didactic component at the time of their creation often benefit from time's passing, in that the temporal distance which accrues to them "corrects" a tendency to under-distancing (96). Although formal matters are wholly within the control of the playwright, then, there are tendencies to over-distancing over which no control can be exercised. By the same token, with under-distancing, the sudden prominence in the media of a "hot" issue can affect the aesthetic appreciation of an audience for an otherwise "appropriately distanced" *Water Sel*.

Büdel, who employs Bullough's terms ("under-" and "over-distancing" and "antinomy") in a general discussion of twentieth century theatre, comes to conclusions about distance that are similar to Bullough's. For instance, he states that

contemporary dramatic practice has striven more and more to decrease aesthetic distance to the point of almost eliminating it; ... On the other hand, we observe ... a tendency to over-distance, as in Brecht's theatre; but this in the end achieves the same results as does its counterpart: loss, destruction of aesthetic distance." (61)

Büdel points out the irony that the early twentieth century tendency was to decrease distance in art as a way of compensating for what seemed like its artificiality – to prove, as Peter Brook says, that there was "no trickery," continually compensates, through variation of distance, for the tendency to fall in one or the other direction.

Büdel discusses three ways in which distance is manipulated in modern theatre. The first is structural, and is divided into two categories: the shift from "the piece built upon

acts ... into the tableau-type drama" or Stationendrama (61); and the construction of "plays which are built upon an inversion of the time concept and its aspect of cause and effect" (64). Neither of these need be destructive of distance, in his view, although they often appear in company with devices which are destructive of distance.

The second type of manipulation he explores involves elements within the play which affect distance. He divides these into under- and over-distancing effects. For under-distancing, he identifies six commonly used devices. These are the play within the play, the placement of spectator-actors in the real audience, the deliberate address (as opposed to an aside) of the real audience by an actor, comment by the actors on the performance, and "the conscious evocation of an atmosphere of suspension between appearance and essence, between the world of the stage and real life" (74). His illustration here is Mommina's falling "dead" at the end of Tonight We Improvise.

It is important to note that Büdel and Bullough differ, then, in their attribution of devices to the categories of under- and over-distancing. Bullough would call these over-distancing devices, since they arise from – are the "failing" of, he would say – the art work. For Büdel, the play exists on the same plane with the spectator when it alludes to itself through these five devices. That he has grappled with the difficulty of definition involved here, however, is made apparent by his assignment of the sixth device he mentions, the use of the narrator, to both categories. His judgement that this device can work either way adds weight, as I have mentioned, to Bullough's idea that the depiction of character in a play may be handled in such a way as to abolish distance at either end of the scale.

Büdel does not discuss over-distancing devices in any detail, except to suggest that they are the devices of Brechtian epic theatre. Alienation effects such as the use of placards to convey information about setting or the employment of uniform lighting regardless of time



of day are good examples of technique, then, while Brecht's plot structuring is a formal over-distancing method. Bond, as we shall see, varies upon these. Büdel criticises Brecht's desire that the actor "demonstrate" the character: "to determine from the outset [the degree of rapprochement between actor and character] means to abolish the tension from which he derives his desire to play" and to turn the theatre "into an institution for the presentation of painless, spoon-fed, and 'guided' historical, at times possibly also ideological, information ..." (76).

The third of the ways in which Büdel claims distance is manipulated in modern theatre is spatially; "by this we refer to modern attempts to abolish the proscenium arch" (79). Spatial manipulations are the arena theatre, the theatre with tripartite stage, Gropius' Totaltheater, and variations. All of these result in under-distancing for Büdel: "distance is something which precisely is avoided in such theatres with the express purpose of making any psychologically differentiated situation impossible" (81-82). In these theatres, he says, audience and actors become one.

Büdel's list of under-distancing devices differs from Bullough's, in that while Bullough's are matters of content, Büdel's include matters of technique. But both agree that under- and over-distancing are faults to be avoided by the playwright, and not legitimate artistic devices which can in any way enhance aesthetic appreciation. Of the areas in which distance is shifted in modern theatre, however, it can be seen that only the second two, elements within the play and spatial elements, stand, in Büdel's opinion, to destroy distance altogether by either under- or over-distancing.

Büdel comes to an interesting conclusion, namely that the twentieth century artist may be employing distance to align him- or herself with the audience by posing a fundamental question: can the theatre, as an art form, still represent the world in a

meaningful way; is it still a viable medium for the conveyance of truth, or has it become a "swindle"? The "unrealness" of the theatre must be counteracted, in Büdel's view, by the playwright, who acknowledges it "by analytically dissecting it, by playing with it, or making fun of it," an approach which the playwright must hope will "reaffirm the truth of art to life" (84, 85). The manipulation of distance, to Büdel, then, is a tool, albeit a dangerous one, for that reaffirmation. He avoids counting as failures the plays of all revolutionary twentieth century theatrical movements by introducing the paradox that modern theatre (the generalisation is Büdel's), by threatening to destroy itself through loss of distance, reasserts its own value and continuing life.

It is perhaps a natural step to treat the loss of aesthetic distance not as a loss of the art-character of a play, but as an expansion of it at each end of the distance scale, increasing the number of conditions under which the play can continue to be an art work. If Bond's manipulation of distance results in its loss, this does not imply loss of aesthetic appreciation or confusion of the real with the theatrical for him any more than it does for Brecht. Quite the opposite: the loss of distance, no matter how it is contrived, seems to enunciate the difference between art and life. "Loss of distance," then, is not a perjorative term. It is simply a means by which audience and play can be brought into a dynamic relationship with each other, and a lively, two-way "communication" can be effected.

The task I have set myself is to identify those places in five of Bond's full-length plays where shifts of distance occur; that is, I am seeking inconsistencies in distance on any level. Where Bond manipulates distance, he must be doing so for some reason, to make something clear which he thinks will be lost on his audience otherwise. That he fears lack of clarity has already been pointed out; and any reader of his prefaces and interviews will deduce that the desired clarity is of socio-political issues. Presumably, close textual analysis can inform these socio-political issues, if such they turn out to be.

What is lost, and what gained, by the manipulation of distance? In their conversation, Bond agrees with Roper that "the literary theatre is moving towards a point where it becomes more and more self-consciously artistic" and that that artist must "strip away all that and get back to primary theatre again" ("Edward Bond in Conversation" 41). This seems to imply that although he may work at the boundaries of aesthetic distance, he does so to reveal or to create a balance between pleasure and understanding, a balance which, like other joys in life, a spectator might not appreciate until s/he stands to lose it.

The cues to a shift in distance, as Bullough says, vary according to context. It is reasonable to assume that they supply contextually inappropriate information, and manifest themselves in doing so. They would differ from foreshadowing, or from the "clues" which contribute to a subsequent understanding of plot or characters, in never clarifying those aspects of the *Water Sel*. This would make them as disturbing in retrospect as they are at the moments of their occurrence. They contribute to the creation of an open, as opposed to a closed, structure, as Volker Klotz uses those terms.

As Brecht avoids the extensive use of under-distancing on principle, one may look elsewhere for examples of it – perhaps, as Büdel suggests, to the work of such modern playwrights as Pirandello and Wilder. Bond's "aggro-effect," his counterpart to Brechtian alienation, suggests loss of distance in both ways. I have quoted his statement that aggro-effects are based, for instance, on the emotional commitment of the audience (Holland 34). And his saying that without the audience's emotional commitment, "the V-effect can deteriorate into an aesthetic style" is an indication that distancing is not, for Bond, purely an aesthetic matter.

Integral to the conception of Bond's drama and the fundamental aesthetic distance established in that conception is a vast array of anomalies, disjunctions and exaggerations

which, besides his claim that they contribute to audience understanding, also afford the aficionado aesthetic pleasure. Intellectual and emotional clarity, I will argue, result from the combination of diverse over- and under-distancing techniques.

Distancing has, indeed, at least two functions for Bond: to expose the fictionality of the play (the aesthetic function); and to expose the false values by which society conducts itself and with which, he believes, it is destroying itself. As distance has traditionally been considered a question of aesthetics, I have approached it from that direction. But the social function dominates for Bond the theoretician.

It took Bond approximately two years to write Early Morning. During this time, his previous play, Saved, was embroiled in controversy. Early Morning is so stylistically unlike Saved (or any of his subsequent plays, for that matter) that it is tempting to think of it as a response to the negative criticism he was receiving at the time. However, when it appeared, Early Morning proved to be even more outrageous to his audiences than the previous work. Bond was rather discouraged. "I wrote this very carefully," he has said in an interview with the editors of Gambit.

It was not an unimpassioned play, but it was a very calculated play, because I thought I had a right to be taken seriously and then all this dreary business came up with the critics, and nobody listened and nobody understood, nobody, I don't know, I just can't understand it. I knew that it was a much better play than Saved. ... ("A Discussion" 31-32)

Early Morning is well worth discussing in a study of distancing devices because, as Ruby Cohn says in "The Fabulous Theatre of Edward Bond," it is "one of the few shocking plays [of its time] to retain its shock power ..." (190). As an "early" play, it has some temporal distance from the present, a useful attribute here in that Bond's work is, broadly speaking, current. Jenny Spencer calls the play "a comic nightmare aimed at disturbing our comfort with Victorian history" and sees the historically-named characters as "attempts to displace the history-book idealizations of such real personages" ("Edward Bond's Dramatic Strategies" 126).

Negative criticism is interesting in suggesting how difficult it is to understand the play: "It is notable for being bizarre and repulsive, rather than for conveying any clear message or for having any great entertainment value. The behaviour of its characters has so

little basis in reality that the result is often boring" (Kerensky 20). Even William Gaskill, Bond's champion, says of Early Morning, "... I don't think the supernatural elements are always quite consistent in the way that they should be in a fairy story. ... it rather exposes its commentary on its own symbols" (43). In his monograph, Edward Bond, Simon Trussler also considers production difficulties:

The problem the play poses in production is, of course, one of persuading us that its allegorized "reality" is theatrically valid. Allegory is an honourable form, but it depends upon our ability to interpret it from a relatively fixed moral viewpoint: here, it is being used to challenge a moral viewpoint which, whilst it is certainly no longer fixed, is nevertheless still widely held. I don't think Bond has entirely solved the formal problem this poses. (16)

Each of these critics sees the play differently, as dream, fairy story, allegory. Gaskill recollects, "Jack Shepherd once said about Early Morning that it was pure Magritte ... and it's absolutely true – strange things, like somebody holding a leg or an arm; and the thing is very cold like Magritte. It isn't sensual, it's rather a clinical quality" (Gaskill 41).

Differing in their explanations of the play, these critics are furthermore far off the mark of Bond's own opinion. He tells Christopher Innes,

I don't think in categories – this play is naturalistic, that play is a fantasy – and fantasy is a word I never use. It's totally inappropriate to what I try to do, which is strictly analytical. If it is fantastic then it seems to be so because reality is fantastic, and I'm merely recording the absurd or the fantasy. ... I call Early Morning social realism.

Innes: How can you call a highly symbolic play that?  
 Bond: I would say Early Morning was analytic, not symbolic.  
 ("Edward Bond: From Rationalism to Rhapsody" 109)

As Innes remarks elsewhere, "This seems a fairly arbitrary use of critical labels; but [it] underlines that the play is intended to be a realistic demonstration of the psychology that perpetuates and justifies political power structures, an objective record of subjective illusions" ("The Political Spectrum of Edward Bond" 193). Bond clearly anathemizes not just the historical significance to the late twentieth century of the Victorian era, but the

attitude which the present takes to that past. That attitude has replaced interest in the facts of the historical period with an insidious mythology which seems impervious to those facts.

Interestingly, most critics appear to accept Bond's prefatory statement that "the events of this play are true." "There is little doubt that they are," says Arthur Arnold, adding, however, that "there are clearly many barriers to audience appreciation" and that possibly "no audience will ever get it right" (18). Like Innes, Katherine Worth takes a reasonable approach to the play's difficulty. In her chapter on Bond in Revolutions in Modern English Drama, she says,

The danger, here, one might suppose, would be of our refusing to take the action in real terms at all or possibly of our trying to turn it into a rather rigid allegory. In fact for some of the first audiences ... it came over in astonishingly real terms as a tremendous libel on eminent Victorians. This seems a great testimony to Bond's skill in clothing his fantasies with flesh. His ability to keep so many lines open, juggle with so many different sorts of reality is what makes Early Morning such a startling achievement, coming after one-level plays like The Pope's Wedding and Saved. (173)

Indeed, Early Morning is unlike anything in Bond's published work, although Hay and Roberts say it approaches "the scale, style and themes of The Roller Coaster and Klaxon in Atreus' Place," two very early works (Hay and Roberts 77). It is an important play to Bond, "'my freedom play'" ("A Discussion" 14) and "'easily the most optimistic of my plays'" (qtd in Worth, Revolutions in Modern Drama 171), but difficult in more than one way. The plot is complex and not easy to grasp. For most, the violence is obtrusive; "the violence isn't counterpointed by any sense of normality, of continuity, but almost becomes the continuum in which the action works ("Drama and Dialectics of Violence" 10). The setting is nominally the court of Queen Victoria, but both time and place are in question because of the pervasive use of anachronisms that superimpose modern-day London on Victorian England. The characters are named Victoria, Florence Nightingale, Disraeli; but Victoria is gay, Florence ministers sexual favours to the troops, Albert and Disraeli plot the overthrow of the government and the Queen's assassination.

Clearly, then, one can consider the shifts in the audience's distance from the play in terms of the plot alone, regardless of factors like language and characterisation. Let us begin discussion of specific moments by summarizing it.

The plot proper involves an attempted coup which succeeds and terminates about two-thirds of the way through the script. The last six scenes are in some way "tacked on." The sub-plot, if the romance between George and Florence Nightingale is one, is conventional in subject-matter but suffers very unconventional treatment: George is a Siamese twin; Victoria seduces the bride-to-be and dresses her in John Brown clothes with accent to match; Florence's ministrations to the troops, and the court, are sexual; and finally, out of love with her fiancé, she pines for his twin, who hangs above her draped in indifferently-clean clothes. This "sub-plot" is, if anything, more episodic than the main one, which it does not parallel.

And it is subverted by digressions which might themselves constitute the "sub-plot." These involve Len. They do not make up a unified story, and were they not farcical, one would likely consider that Bond meant them to round out either characters or action, or both. Other scenes, of Victoria knitting or the soldiers waiting for Florence, vary and repeat statements already made in more detail, and less exaggeratedly. Macbeth's Porter has substance, and he conveys a strong sense of what life is like at Inverness, fleshing out both plot and character. Unlike him, Len, Mennings, Ned and Griss confirm the impression that there is no depth here; even the underbelly of things is treated "on the surface."

The stage is almost devoid of scenery, Bond suggests, throughout the Water Sel In Scene One, Albert and Disraeli plot to kill Victoria and win the support of Arthur, her second son, to give "the appearance of legality" to their coup. In Scene Two, Albert approaches Arthur, who is asleep in bed with his brother George, the heir apparent. But Arthur,



apolitical, refuses to join the conspirators. Upon George's waking from a bad dream, Albert withdraws, asking Arthur to say he's "solved the riddle" if he decides to come to his father's side.

Scene Three opens in the Throne Room, with Lord Chamberlain and Lord Mennings gossiping about a trial they expect to be "a real jazz." Arthur and George enter; "it is seen that they are siamese twims" (143). Previous dialogue has already made clear that the brothers are not each other's intimates. Their physical condition calls this information into question and is the first real "shock" of the *Water Sel*. They are joined at least by the shoulder, though they do not share organs – that is, not from Arthur's point of view. As he tells Florence, he has a heart which George uses, rather than shares; Arthur also seems to consider George impotent (16). The shock is the mere fact of their deformity; but its significance is this juxtaposition of physical bondage with intellectual-emotional separation. The bondage image becomes a dominant metaphor for the play and takes on broad socio-political dimensions, conveying the fundamental impossibility of retaining individuality along with membership in society. As Brecht notes, "the smallest social unit is not the single person but two people. In life we develop one another" (Brecht on Theatre 197). So intimately twinned, Arthur is by this definition a "social unit" before he is a person!

So far as the audience is concerned, then, the protagonist of this play is a character – but also a metaphor. Possibilities for irony and paradox, and for a blatantly Freudian view of character, are built into his presentation. The Arthur/George pair can be conceived as one person with certain of his personality traits obtruding from his body in the form of George. It is easy, from a popular "Freudian" point of view, to recognise why Arthur would feel trapped in the bond to such a brother (142). Bond's presentation of Arthur as a double invites the audience to "read" on two theatrical levels at the same time; the character is a double *entendre* of a sort, the double participant in an action. This split creates two distances at

which the audience must keep the play by making interpretation a conscious and necessary function.

To safeguard the stability of her kingdom, Queen Victoria announces the engagement of George to Florence Nightingale. Arthur complains that he wasn't warned of this complication to his life. The twins offer to show Florence the palace. In Scene Four, two prisoners, Len (aged eighteen) and his girlfriend, Joyce (aged fifty), are brought to trial for murder, dismemberment and consumption of a man who butted into a movie queue. Though their guilt is taken for granted, even by them, they are unconcerned with their predicament. In fact, there is no emotional reaction on anyone's part to their crimes, except that they use the occasion to register complaints about the lack of chairs in line-ups and the poor quality of movie-house junk food. Len, who has been chosen by Albert as the potential assassin of Victoria, wins Disraeli's approval. Upon their conviction, Len and Joyce burst into song – not one of protest, exactly. A scuffle ensues, and Arthur demands, "Why did you kill him?" Len's eventual answer, "E pushed in the queue," never satisfies Arthur, who repeats the question on several occasions. It angers Len here and he kicks the trial exhibits – his victim's clothes – at Arthur. In the confusion, Victoria hustles Florence offstage to rape her and most of the other characters disappear down the on-stage trap. Arthur tells his father he's "solved the riddle," and Albert tries to warn him off the upcoming picnic.

At the picnic (Scene Five), Lord Mennings grovels before the distraught Florence, begging to drink from her shoe. Victoria comes on swatting flies and coos over Florence's innocence while soldiers (including Len, who whistles the same song he and Joyce sang at their trial), dressed as rustics, mingle. George badgers Florence with suspicious questions while she poisons the wine in her shoe at Victoria's request and hands it to Albert. He offers the loyal toast, but Mennings grabs the shoe in his lust to drink from it, an action which Len uses as cover for whipping out his pistol to shoot Victoria. They argue, Victoria swatting

flies the while, until Albert begins to feel the effects of the poison. Albert falls. Victoria strangles him while the soldiers try to make contact with "base" – that is, Disraeli, who comes on stage – by speaking into the picnic-hamper-cum-radio transmitter. Victoria points Albert's rifle at Disraeli, who goes off for reinforcements. She fires on Len, but the safety catch is on. In a prolonged scuffle, George is shot. Mennings dies, murmuring "Shoe. Shooe. Shoooe." The scene is apparently a parody of the last scene of Hamlet. Echoes of that play mingled with the farcical tone of the scene further reduce certainty about the context of the play in terms of distance: upon what "norm" the play varies cannot be ascertained.

In Scene Six, the Doctor announces his intention to cut the dying George from his brother's shoulder. Outside, the revolution has begun; a mob is attacking the palace. Arthur refuses the amputation of George and escapes with him down the trap. By a grove in the forest he stops to rest, as Scene Seven opens, and is feeding cakes to George when Albert rises from the grave, draped in chains, and the terrified George tries to flee as Albert lunges at him with his sword. Again, there seems to be a parody of Hamlet, this time of the Gravedigger Scene. Finally George simulates cock-crow (we are in Act I of Hamlet by now) and Albert returns to his grave, though Arthur wants to talk to him. George dies.

Scene Eight is set in Windsor Great Park, where Len is on trial for failing to kill Victoria. The lynching mob, including Joyce, votes for castration and death by kicking, which it carries out under the direction of Gladstone, Len's father, a perfectionist in the fine art of brutality. Arthur comes on in time to save Len, who promises not to forget the favour Arthur has done him, but as he leaves he is already plotting to sell the information of Arthur/George's whereabouts to Victoria.

Accordingly, he appears (Scene Nine) at Windsor Castle, where Victoria is knitting. Civil war now rages. Florence stands by, dressed as John Brown. Len tells Victoria that George is dead, and she declares the court in mourning.

Scene Ten, "near Bagshot," is the occasion of Arthur's summary execution at the hands of Disraeli, who is still attempting to overthrow the government. Victoria comes on seeking George's body and brings him back to life. She orders Arthur shot, but George interrupts, reproaching her with restoring him to his miserable existence. Realizing that Florence loves George, Victoria decides both sons must die. When she gives the order to fire, however, the firing squad turns on her at Disraeli's direction. She repeats the order, so as still to command even her own death, but is again disobeyed. The farce continues as Disraeli shouts "Fire!" and his soldiers shoot him instead of Victoria; Gladstone enters, clearly responsible for a double-cross. He pays Len off and again the preparation to shoot Victoria is made. This time, however, Gladstone drops dead of a heart attack as he is about to say "Fire!". George shoots himself, and Florence rushes off sobbing, pursued by the queen.

Scene Eleven contrasts in tone with Scene Ten. Arthur talks to his fraternal appendage, the corpse-skeleton George. He is in flight and guilty because he has given George's foot to a starving dog. A pile of rags downstage turns out to be the body of Len, to which Arthur recounts a symbolic dream. The Doctor, also in flight, is unable to comfort Arthur, who discloses to the audience that he has a plan, "a real step in human progress" – the extermination of both sides in the civil war.

Scene Twelve finds Victoria and Florence waiting for Arthur. In the background there are six corpses, all people killed for having been named Albert. Arthur proposes a tug of war in which Victoria's men will win and the mob will be destroyed. Victoria accepts,

with delight that he has gone mad. In Scene Thirteen, several injured men await Florence's sexual "ministrations," the prize in a "fixed" lottery. Ned, the youngest, wins; however, he drops dead.

On Beachy Head, the tug of war begins. When Victoria shouts "Peace!", and her men let go of the rope, Arthur's men fall to their deaths. Victoria's men run up to see the carnage, the cliff gives way, and all but Arthur are destroyed. In Scene Fifteen he surveys the bodies – mingled actors and dummies – and is preparing to shoot himself when a line of ghosts advances on him, "joined together like a row of paper cut-out men." He groans in horror as his brother advances to fasten himself again to Arthur's shoulder.

After an intermission, the locale shifts to heaven for the remaining six scenes of the *Water Sel*. Arthur is amazed to find himself there, surrounded by everyone he knows, and again on trial. Trial by ordeal is administered by Albert, who sticks his sword into Arthur (a smell of burning flesh emanates); he is pronounced "guilty and admitted to Heaven" (199). The crowd comes forward, among it Len, who offers Arthur a human leg to eat; "in Heaven we eat each other." The horrified Arthur whispers, "with great difficulty," "I'm not dead. O God, let me die" (201).

Between Scenes Sixteen and Seventeen, he comes up with another plan. This time he refuses to eat his fellows, even though the devoured members all grow back and no one is any the worse for the dismemberment. The result is that George suffers terrible pangs of hunger. For the next few scenes, a mad chase takes place. Arthur hides from Victoria and the court, becomes the leader of the mob again, and pursues Victoria and her cohorts in turn. In Scene Nineteen Arthur tries to persuade Florence to join him. He is captured and lugged off to be consumed, Florence trying to plead his case. But in Scene Twenty, George is still starving, and it transpires that part of Arthur has escaped. Sure enough, Florence has

concealed his head under her skirt. Florence uncovers it and Arthur declares his love for her (214). The others return, George in agony. The head is discovered and George falls on it greedily. As he wrenches at the meat with his teeth, Arthur laughs. Finally the bare skull is placed in a tin where all of Arthur's bones have been placed for safe-keeping, so that he can be continually consumed and prevented from regenerating himself.

In the final scene, the whole Arthur lies sleeping beside the sleeping Joyce. Obviously, the mob has won at least a battle. Victoria, Albert, George and Florence come on, they "settle it," and bid Joyce call the mob. Victoria announces to the assembly that when Arthur enjoined his followers not to eat each other, "he knew he was asking something quite unnatural and impossible ... And because he loved you ... he wouldn't ask you to eat yourself, as he did. ... So he died, to let you eat each other in peace" (221). The mob is convinced. As they pass around the "nosh," Arthur hangs in mid-air above the weeping, oblivious Florence, his only convert.

Rather as with the recounting of a dream, not much is told once this strange plot has been outlined. Shifts of distance occur in a shifting background. One observes not just the fabric of the play, but all its knots and surrealist patches. The aura of shock which results from unnatural combinations – flesh with fabric, the minute magnified far out of scale – is the more haunting for its detail. Much seems gratuitous or even redundant – the detail, the violence of certain scenes, the shock of visual images. There seems to be little or no sub-text, though so much is going on, all of it on the surface, as it were. But the language of the play is exceedingly rich in jokes, metaphors and allusions. In fact, the meticulous realism with which Bond renders speech patterns obliges one to take seriously the convoluted plot and problematical characterizations.

Character is just as complicated. A notable feature of Early Morning seems to be a difference in treatment of various characters – not that any of them can be easily categorized. Arthur, at one extreme, is emotionally and psychologically many-faceted, while other characters – Joyce, Albert, Ned – are handled rather as stock comic characters, even functioning as stand-up comedians, and some – Lord Mennings, Gladstone – seem to belong to farce. The Albert of Scene I, for instance, is a comic figure; his ineffectuality and mental rigidity are established immediately by the dialogue. His plot against Victoria's life is patently the stuff of Scribean court intrigue. But the Albert of the last several scenes, limping because his cannibalized legs have not wholly regenerated themselves, is busied with setting out the contents of a picnic hamper containing the flesh and bones of his fellow inhabitants in "heaven." His manner of speech and his reactions don't change; hence, they are not always appropriate to different incidents in the play; as a result, what makes him in the first scene simply a particular composite of human foibles makes him monstrous by the play's end. The disintegration of psychological plausibility in Albert's reaction to his environment recalls Galy Gay's equanimitous acceptance of the unacceptable in Brecht's Man is Man, or the dislocated reaction of Mother Courage when the war ends – "Peace has broken out!".

To discover the unusual ways by which Bond produces meaning in Early Morning, let us choose a specific scene and identify those moments where unexpected shifts, as I describe them in my introduction, seem to have been placed by Bond. Scene Four, which includes all the central characters, establishes Len as the agent for the attempt on Victoria's life, and sparks Arthur's interest in the subject of death with his decision to join the conspirators. It seems rather like a long digression, with its protracted and gratuitous trial of Len and Joyce. Though its contribution to the "plot" may be minimal, however, it is thematically central. The violence of society, the cannibalism inherent metaphorically in social values, the pornographic sexuality, the near impossibility of individual social action –

all of these ideas recur throughout the play, as does the trial motif. There are various linking devices, also, between Victorian and modern England.

Scene Four is complex and the longest but one in the *Water Sel*. For purposes of discussion, I have designated "beats," demarcating each where there seems to be a digression from immediately preceding dialogue. But I do not mean to imply by such divisions that the action can be seen from the point of view of one or another character; indeed, anything which seems like a Stanislavskian treatment of Bond's work is inappropriate.

The first beat is a preamble to the rest of the scene, occurring before the participants in the trial assemble. The scene is set, like the preceding one, in the Throne Room of Windsor Castle. However, true to Bond's injunction that "very little scenery should be used" (138), there is nothing to indicate the locale to the audience: "The stage is bare except for some chairs, or a bench, upstage, and downstage two chairs or a smaller bench, by an open trap" (146). There is no attempt to disguise the physical, theatrical reality of exit and entrance.

In the first few scenes, the only scenic elements (the bed, chairs) suggest a modified realism. But a trap can be "realistic" only when the setting is a stage; in the Throne Room at Windsor Castle, it is a jarring element which calls attention to the whole. The setting has minimal distance, then; for Büdel it would border on being under-distanced in being exactly what it seems to be. Bullough, on the other hand, would point to the meta-theatricality of the trap. Whether the audience considers itself to be looking at a stage or a castle governs whether it is under- or over-distanced. It seems that if one considers the context of a play to be a performance space, one sees such distancing devices as the trap to be under-distancing; if one considers a play's setting to be its context, such devices are over-distancing. It is perhaps useful to speculate that a third category of distance exists, in which the two



seemingly "opposed" tendencies merge, and that the opening of this scene might be an example of this merger. In any case, there is no need for the throne-room designation ever to be specified. The imposition of a stage reality upon the space creates an ambiguity of setting, under-distancing it, I would argue. Audience and actors are in collusion to create a setting which the fact of the trap would seem to contradict.

Disraeli and Albert are alone as in the first scene; hence an inference is that they are plotting as they were before. This makes them seem to "act" in their own "plot"; they are actors, even as characters. Disraeli's opening lines convey plot information. The difference in language between these two is not vast, but it prefigures remarkable differences among speech patterns; it is a hint that the characters are not all created in accordance with the same set of conventions, and will prove to be an over-distancing element. What seems to be Albert's psychological realism ("He's peculiar about his mother") is contrasted with Disraeli's seemingly absurd dialogue. In Albert's first speech, his analysis of his son's psyche contrasts sharply in tone with the anachronistic detail of the planned coup: "We close the ports and airfields, take over the power stations, broadcast light classics and declare martial law" (147). In staging, characterisation, manner and content of speech, this preamble cannot be pinpointed in terms of distance. The impressions it conveys do not cohere. The contrast in speech patterns here is not a contrast in dialect, class, or education, but a contrast in dramatic style. Bond is preparing for a focus on style without choosing to have one style predominate over others.

The first few minutes of this scene, then, appear to take the plot forward while the setting is unclear and the characters are differentiated by speech patterns from each other. Of the four speeches in this beat, the first relates to Scene Five, the second interprets Arthur from Albert's point of view, and plots the coup, the third introduces detail of the assassination of Victoria, and the fourth introduces Len, with an allusion to his capacity for

murder and the suggestion that Victoria is even more blood-thirsty than he. It also misinforms the audience of the content of the rest of the scene. Such a "prelude" is a variation on Brecht's idea of stating the action at the outset, the major variation being that it is misleading: none of the speeches relates to the action of this scene.

The Lord Chamberlain brings in a pile of old clothes – those of Len's victim. Again, the audience can only take this pile at face value, but it is an image which embodies a complex of themes in the play: that only their clothes differentiate people from each other; that the clothes "make (are) the man"; that people are rags and to be treated so (Len kicks this pile, is later kicked himself, and is finally replaced by a pile of rags); that, indeed, there is no difference between a person and a dummy stand-in. George, for instance, is sometimes an actor, sometimes a dummy at various stages of "decay"; and the heap of dead at the bottom of the cliff in Scene Fifteen is comprised of actors and dummies mingled. At this point, of course, that theme-complex has not made itself apparent. Here the audience sees no more than a property – clothes. It is only in retrospect that the ambiguity of distance inherent in the property will reveal itself.

The first beat of this scene, then, contains at least two elements which will contribute to later surprises, in the apparently funny dialogue which will later convey a darker impression and in the seemingly unimportant clothing. It also contains two characters who speak somewhat differently from one another – an indication to the audience that the characters are not all created in accordance with the same set of conventions; this fact will shortly be exaggerated greatly in the depiction of other characters. And finally, it contains a decor which actually specifies only one setting, that of the stage itself. One might say that, as with much of the dialogue, there is nothing subtextual here; the "setting" never tries to be anything other than what it is – a stage.

The statement which all of this makes to me, upon reflection, is that the court intrigue is not so much the "action" of the play as its theatrical atmosphere, in which the action will take place. It seems over-distanced, that is, untempered by the need for my emotional participation. Albert and Disraeli may be plotting the central action of the play, but the impression made by their dialogue and their placement "before" the action of the scene is that it will proceed without them, as it were, as soon as the next beat begins. This is the case. And further, once the trial of Len and Joyce is developed at such length and in such detail, the importance of the coup recedes even further into the background of the Water Sel. This is odd, because in fact the play is largely concerned with the retention or deprivation of Victoria's power: the play consists of stages in the revolution. The coup is not secondary in any sense, but seems so at this point, one reason being its filtration through Arthur's eyes.

The dialogue of the second beat of the action begins perfunctorily, with the Chamberlain's "Bring up the prisoner." Two prisoners, Len and Joyce, appear, not one, their entrance coinciding exactly with the Chamberlain's command in that they are brought up through the trap from below the stage. The Chamberlain then commands "Rise!", which action is not carried out, the court figures entering from the wings and going to the upstage chairs, where they sit, Victoria in the centre.

The trial begins without ado:

VICTORIA.	... Read the charge. Place?
CHAMBERLAIN.	Outside the State Cinema, Kilburn High Street.
VICTORIA.	Day?
CHAMBERLAIN.	A week last Wednesday.
VICTORIA.	Time?
CHAMBERLAIN.	Evening.
VICTORIA.	What happened?
CHAMBERLAIN.	The accused killed Joseph Hobson, and then ate him.

(147-148)

The dialogue between the Chamberlain and Victoria establishes the routine nature of the trial. Victoria is not officiating at a trial for the first time, but for the nth time; her questions

are perfunctory, uttered for form's sake, rather than being honest enquiries. Not even the Chamberlain's startling report of what happened moves her; she hushes an interruption and proceeds directly to sentence. The Chamberlain too is perfunctory in the performance of his duty. He does not seem to anticipate that anything he says will occasion undue response. Both he and Victoria are "acting," like Albert and Disraeli before them, rather than engaging themselves in the trial proceedings.

VICTORIA.	What happened?
CHAMBERLAIN.	The accused killed Joseph Hobson, and then ate him.
JOYCE.	'E pushed in the queue.
LEN.	I –
VICTORIA.	Silence.
JOYCE.	( <u>to</u> LEN). What did I tell yer? I tol' yer wait, ain I? Yer can't take 'im nowhere.
VICTORIA.	If he'd listened to you he wouldn't be here.
JOYCE.	Thanks, lady. I'll shut 'im up for yer. ( <u>To</u> LEN) Shut it. – Me best bet's ask for a separate trial.
LEN.	I –
VICTORIA.	Silence.
JOYCE.	You tell 'im, dearie. ( <u>To</u> LEN) An' keep it shut.
VICTORIA.	I shall proceed to sentence.

The dialogue of this third beat is fast-moving and packed with information. It hardly affords the audience a chance to react. In fact, if the audience does react, it will miss part of the dialogue; and since every line seems loaded one assumes the audience will suppress laughter to hear it: it is encouraged to respond to the dialogue just as the actors do, without remark.

The fact that Len and Joyce are on trial together leads one to assume they are in league; but Joyce is already planning to plead separately, since Len doesn't behave himself. She is completely disrespectful of him. The thirty-year discrepancy in their ages makes it difficult to know what their relationship is; they prove to be not mother and son, but lovers. A choice of possibilities cannot be easily decided, furthermore, by how the characters are responding, because they seem to have things to hide, and would speak differently in different company. This deprives the audience of a standard dramatic touchstone.

However, the desirability for accurate perceptions which is heightened by earlier concealments is here increased by the nature of the offense Len and Joyce have committed. Murder and cannibalism, as punishments for the rudeness of pushing in a queue, are savage responses, extravagantly egocentric, even primordial, rather than social and cultural. The audience is watching characters engage unemotionally in a representation of a court proceeding, but it is hearing about behaviours which instinctually are avoided. Between the culture-surface and the instinct-depth, the characters themselves are virtually "invisible," in that Bond is providing none of the usual sorts of information regarding their feelings and thoughts which ordinarily reveal characters. The audience is watching not people, but aberrant behaviours. Psycho-social truths, neither covered by nor translated into language, are staged in this *Water Sel*. This renders the author almost visible, lessening the distance gap.

Clearly there is an ethical sanction involved in the material Bond is presenting. According to Bullough, the questioning of ethics leads to under-distancing and the consequent breakdown of the integrity of the drama. However, the under-distanced subject matter is forcefully balanced by the very artificial characters on stage, with their unlikely behaviour and speech. Furthermore, as a plot eventuality, which it is, of course, cannibalism is unlikely, and contributes to the sense of artificiality and strain which the audience trying to suspend disbelief must feel.

Len's and Joyce's matter-of-fact attitude to what they have done seems quite inappropriate; however, it is not unlike Victoria's. But might her coldness not be quite a proper response to her subjects' savagery? The context for judgment remains ambiguous. This has an impact on the third of Chaim's factors for distance, the suspension of the audience's judgement of the play in terms of reality. The audience may be tempted to judge by such terms because the fictional terms do not provide any clear standard or guide. Bond

inhibits a clear intellectual and emotional response; something else is being required of his spectators. There is nothing in this third beat of Scene Four or earlier in the play by which the audience can judge the propriety and appropriateness of the court action. Without knowing what the play is suggesting, it cannot react comfortably. Not even a simple reference back to his or her own standards of conduct is particularly useful, as the average play-goer's eating habits are far from cannibalistic – except, obviously, symbolically. The likely response to such a fast-moving scene is acceptance of the subject matter and the action at face value; it is a joke, and should trigger laughter.

The dialogue of Len and Joyce also seems "acted." Their speech is naturalistically rendered, unlike most of the dialogue to this point, and all the more remarkable in that it is discrepant from the court-dialect of the other characters. It is not only lower in class, but also twentieth-century. They "perform" as a comic duo in delivering their evidence, and this keeps them at an additional remove from the audience. Though in many ways they are the characters one meets on the street every day, they are thus rendered as unrealistically as their cardboard cut-out Victorian fellows!

Joyce's line, "'E pushed in the queue," is a non sequitur, and doubly unexpected, because her dialogue is in such contrast to court speech and she interrupts the quasi-formal proceedings with this interjection. The trial, after all, is Len's: Joyce has not been so much as referred to. Her line is also humourous, not least because it responds to a sensational line disproportionately. She considers queue-jumping a serious enough offense to warrant cannibalism, a gigantic disjunction between crime and punishment as well as between precept and action. Bond's satire on the propensity of the English to respect queues is presented in his exaggeration of the consequences of queue-jumping.

Also, Joyce is very much at home in this "throne room." She feels quite free to address Victoria (whom perhaps she does not recognise) as "dearie"; not at all offended, the Queen warms to her immediately.

In the fourth beat, presumably because Victoria recognises a kindred spirit in Joyce, Len and Joyce are allowed to testify.

LEN.	)	
	)	We was stood in the queue for the State –
JOYCE.	)	
LEN.	)	T' see "Buried Alive on 'Ampstead 'Eath" –
JOYCE.	)	No, "Policeman in Black Nylons." "Buried Alive" was the coming attraction.
LEN.	)	Fair enough. We was stood in the queue for –
LEN.	)	
	)	"Policeman in Black Nylons" –
JOYCE.	)	
JOYCE.	)	– an I'd like t' know why chair accomodation ain' provided. They don't wan'a know yer in this country. Thass 'ow yer get yer trouble. ... Well, next thing this fella's pushed up in front. 'E weren't there when we looked before, was 'e?
LEN.	)	Never looked.
JOYCE.	)	Don' I always tell yer count the queue in front? That could 'ang yer. (148-149)

With the mention of the State Cinema, the play moves out of the Victorian fantasy-land into the modern day. By removing the distance in time, Bond zooms in on the violence of the action which, seen up close, is much uglier than it seems as Victorian intrigue. But it is the same violence. What the juxtaposition of court and commoners, Victorian and modern eras, reveals about their interests and values is a sameness. The characters are all at home. The detail may be anachronistic – the State Cinema and "Policeman in Black Nylons" – but the difference is apparent, not real.

Detail of all sorts is tremendously important in the Water Sel. Not only are speeches often drawn-out and loaded with information, but the characters' careful attention to detail is stressed. Here, Joyce grumbles, "Don't I always tell yer count the queue in front? That

could 'ang yer" (149). Just because they find it important does not mean that the characters always agree on detail, unfortunately. Len and Joyce argue over which movie they were going to see, Arthur speaks in riddles, Griss, in the next scene, refers to Victoria as dead when she is striding around the stage, and, here, the particular edition of the paper Joseph Hobson was reading when he was killed is in dispute – a clearly irrelevant dispute, since the newspaper can be identified by the blood spattered over it.

Since Len's and Joyce's cockney makes such a startling contrast with the court language in the scene, it is important to notice that there is no real difference between periods in the language, either, save in the addition of "h" to the appropriate words and the concomitantly fuller expression of complete thoughts by the court characters. The most elevated language in the scene is the Parson's "Eureka!" when Victoria pronounces that the lady novelist royal will be given the souls of the executed Len and Joyce. In such matters as the construction of their dialogue, they are all alike, full of interruptions, digressions, and half-formed thought.

Bond is doing something rather odd with language here. His characters consistently use irrelevant or secondary information to clarify important matters, when obvious primary evidence is available. This makes the detail, however seriously the characters might report it, seem inconsequential to the world it describes. It does not seem to be important in conveying truth, but as a weapon for attack or defense. Joyce hopes, if she can convince the court that her set of "facts" is the correct one, to spare herself Len's punishment. In dealing with the trivial and the secondary, and eschewing what seem central, the language of the play trivialises itself and reveals a distrust of appearances which such revelations as the handcuffs endorse; it suspends belief in itself. It neither accurately reflects the world of Early Morning nor succeeds as persuasion; Joyce, for instance, simply does not listen to the arguments she wishes to reject (150).



What, for instance, can explain Len's "fair enough" when Joyce first corrects him about the movie they were waiting to see? It is colloquial, implying, perhaps, his agreement to deliver his lines smoothly. "Fair enough" appears to pertain not to the content but to the polished delivery of their defense. A smooth performance on both their parts is the likeliest way to win their case. Later, Len switches back to insisting they were waiting for "Buried Alive," but this is clearly part of his continual bickering with Joyce and his desire to have her in the wrong, not part of his desire to get the facts right. The "fair enough," coupled with the simultaneous delivery of the next line by both defendants, places more emphasis on the delivery than on the plot-related information they might contain. What is the effect on aesthetic distance of this focus on the arrangement of language? No suspension of disbelief is necessary when the audience is watching the working of a machine or tool, which is essentially what the treatment of language is here; that is, there is no need to consider whether the content is fiction or not, and little need for "emotional protection" from that content unless the focus on delivery is a trick, a distraction from an inherent danger. The audience need exercise no particular choice to accept the language as performance. Nor need it suspend its judgment of the literal truth of what it hears; it is being encouraged not to believe, but to observe the operation of a mechanism. The audience is engaged, at best, in an analysis of one aspect of the communication process: how to deliver a convincing narrative.

Yet it cannot be ignored that the content of the narrative and the manner of Len's and Joyce's dealing with their material are highly emotionally coloured. A blood-stained newspaper can be identified, so far as they are concerned, not in being blood-stained but in having a picture of Manchester United on either page six or seven – the page is another point of contention. The details are inverted in importance, with the blood treated as a secondary corroboration, almost a non sequitur.

VICTORIA.  
JOYCE.

Does he recognise the blood?  
(sniffs). 'Is. (149)

Throughout the scene, it may be noted, all remarks concerning the murder are addressed to Len or refer to him, none to Joyce. But she is often the one who answers. Again a disconnection between language and action is effected. Here, her manner of responding, by sniffing the blood, is one of the details which create an opposition between the gory evidence and the coolness of her response to it. Moreover, that response is neither intellectual nor emotional, but physical.

In the sixth beat, Len begins again to recount what happened, and again he and Joyce bicker, this time over which of them was hungry. Finally the frustrated Len asserts himself:

LEN. Look, we're stood outside the State for "Buried Alive on 'Ampstead 'Eath" – right? – me gut rumbles and there's this sly bleeder stood up front with 'is 'ead in 'is paper – right? – 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 'andbag, and down 'e goes like a sack with a 'ole both ends – right? – and she starts stabbin' 'im with 'er stilletoes, in twist out, like they show yer in the army, though she ain been in but with 'er it comes natural, an 'e says, "'Ere, thass my place", an then 'e don't say no more, juss bubbles like a nipper, and I take this 'andy man-'ole cover out the gutter an drops it on 'is 'ead – right? – an the queue moves up one. (150)

Len has been interrupted so often in the previous attempts to deliver this information, and the consequent tension has therefore built so much for him, that the audience, whose anticipation is being heightened by the delay, can hardly doubt the factuality of it. The impact of detailing is powerfully heightened at this point in the dialogue. Len's whole manner is that of one who just wants to state the unembroidered facts; this is conveyed in his repetition of "right?". He has been interrupted too often to care about how he will present the incident. He will brook no further interruption of his story. That means that he won't pause to censor it out of consideration for what it contains or what it means to his fate. He is neither proud nor repentant, but matter-of-fact and unemotional, so far as his anger at having been previously silenced permits. He includes the detail because it is part of the account, and

again there is no sub-text; the story could be anyone's; it happens to be his; he affects to perform no manipulation of it in the telling.

In fact, he draws it out greatly, even including a digression which attests to Joyce's brutality. Paradoxically, the fullness of detail slows the delivery, so that tension is maintained to the end of the speech. Len's account is actually redundant, for the relevant information and corroboration of guilt have been obtained. However, no-one questions its veracity, a fact which even of itself would contribute to the sense of its truth, in that so much else is disputed. No-one in court objects to it on any grounds – ethics, morals, or even convention. It seems that in the Early Morning world there is no code or value system by which to measure such behaviours as Len's, and that even the legal system is no more than the rehearsal of a set of statements and responses, like an antiphon from unbelievers.

In this scene the audience is thrown back upon word-play and imagery as the main sources of coherence. An intricate and closely-bound set of images and metaphors relating to language (accents, diction, riddles) and to man's animal nature extends over the play, tying the scenes together. Much of the language consists of repartee which, though it contributes to related themes (see Scene Nine, for instance), stops the action, often rather to the same purpose as a sub-plot, increasing the tension of the scenes and delaying the outcome (Brooks 292). It does not, however, contribute to the impression of naturalness, as the sub-plot conventionally would, or as, say, the Porter scene in Macbeth does, allowing time to pass while important events take place. The dialogue reveals themes and images, but obscures the plot.

The imagery embedded in the language and rhetorical devices of these speeches suggests that individuals are utterly worthless, at their most useful beef cattle, at their least just "a sack with a 'ole both ends." Isolated or in groups, they are bereft of humanity, even

though they comply with rules of human conduct. The means by which Bond supports this imagery are the reversal of the audience's expectations (sarcasm; irony of situation; the juxtaposition of conventional speech patterns with unconventional but not original thought; understatement) by equal attention being paid to details of unequal value, and by the mingling of various levels of humour.

The speech pattern of Len and Joyce is in striking contrast with what has preceded it. Before they enter, the language has been much less direct. The planned coup has been discussed in such euphemistic terms as "stop her before she causes the wrong revolution" (140) and "He's not going to join us till we've seized power" (147). Phrases like "Victoria will tear him to pieces" are seemingly metaphorically employed. Thus it also concerns the particular use of language that emphasises formal matters – how meaning is constructed, how it can be used to elicit certain responses, and encourages the audience to look outside the play for explanations. Len and Joyce are as whimsical in their graphic descriptions as they are savage in their actions. Their images are specific, not generalized; "she starts stabbin' 'im with 'er stilletoes, in twist out, like they show yer in the army" (150); Hobson "bubbles like a nipper" when he's stabbed, and Len says that when they ate him, Joyce "'ad the wishbone." The detail is striking, gratuitous and illogical; all this, coupled with its savagery, contributes to the audience's emotional tension. However, it also confirms, for the audience, Arthur's opinion that Len would kill his own mother "for the experience" (147). Hence it validates Arthur's judgment independently of being presented from his point of view, as much of the play is. About the values and assumptions inherent in Len's account, and the extreme violence about which he is so blasé, more remains to be said, and we will return to it shortly.

Victoria's response to Len's "confession," "who cut him up?", suggests a nursery rhyme ("Who killed Cock Robin?"). The potential for allusion aside, there are other reasons

why Bond might have introduced the aura of the nursery rhyme at various points. For one, it deepens the flavour of the Victorian era, when such rhymes are known to have been popular. Also, it places Victoria herself more in alignment with the fantasy-queen of Carroll than with her historical counterpart. The impotence of the child-vision of the world, the manic, the irrational – all lend the aura of suspense and fear to the scene. In nursery rhymes, terrible stories are told absent-mindedly and unconcernedly.

Len is like the irrational, omnipotent villain of the fairy tale. He no longer recalls "who cut him up" – violence is not second nature to him; it is nature itself. Not that he resorts so quickly to violence as a solution to any problem, without reference to any ethical standard; rather, he seems unaware of what violence is, what the term implies. He lacks the capacity to feel for others and any awareness that such a thing as empathy exists. Without a scale of values, he cannot judge the appropriateness of a given action: any wrong merits any punishment, from his point of view; no punishment is a deterrent to wrong. The mix of his savagery and Joyce's "propriety" leads to such dialogue as what follows in the eighth beat:

VICTORIA.	Who cut him up?
LEN.	Don't remember. (To JOYCE). You remember? It was my knife. She 'ad the wishbone.
JOYCE.	I know I stripped him. I kep' 'is knickers on. I don't 'old with this rudery yer get. Speak ill a the dead, but 'e weren't worth the bother. Still, it makes a change. Yer don't know what t' get for a bit of variety. I suppose you don't 'ave 'ouse-keepin problems. 'E 'as t' 'and 'im round, a course.
LEN.	Yer can't nosh an not offer round, can yer? Some a the fellas off the queue give us a 'and, an' I 'ad a loan a this 'atchet from some ol' girl waiting' t' cross the street. Yer 'ad t' offer 'im.
JOYCE.	... Anyway, I played it crafty. I drops a few bits in me 'andbag an' we 'as a little nosh when the lights went down. I don't 'old with that stuff they bring round on sticks. Give yerself a nasty mouthful a splinters in the dark.
CHAMBERLAIN.	That's our case. (150-151)

Joyce adheres to the niceties and proprieties of social relationships, extending them especially to the corpse: it's rude to expose Hobson's genitals. But she reserves no gentility

whatever for Len, and addresses the queen as "dearie." She is a creature of double standards. Her official complaint is that movie-house junk food lacks quality; however, she is willing to sacrifice quality for variety in her own preparation of food. Her housewives' cant is the language of butchery, applicable to the preparation of slaughter animals and the selection of meat for the dinner table. How you do the thing – whether it be planning your menu or murdering an intruder – is what matters to her above all else. The insistence upon a "decent" and "respectable" bearing towards absolutely every aspect of life is grotesque and wholly inappropriate; it tests patterns of behaviour by substituting unacceptable for acceptable conduct. Joyce and Len are the morality-play figures, Mindless Propriety and Ruthless Barbarity. The delivery of their defense has been played by Len and Joyce as a stand-up comedy routine, with their attention directed to presenting their case well. In this section, the same sort of attention is seen to have been paid to the murder itself, and can be further generalised to the rest of their lives. Why and how have been cleft from each other, Bond seems to suggest, causing a social schizophrenia which Arthur's upcoming "why" could mend.

As we know, Bullough suggests that

in art practice, explicit references to organic affections, to the material existence of the body, especially to sexual matters, lie normally below the Distance-limit, and can be touched upon by Art only with special precautions. Allusion to social institutions of any degree of personal importance – in particular, allusions implying any doubt as to their validity – the questioning of some generally recognised ethical sanctions, references to topical subjects occupying public attention at the moment, and such like, are all dangerously near the average limit and may at any time fall below it, arousing, instead of aesthetic appreciation, concrete hostility or mere amusement. (95)

If this be the case, then some of the strain of this passage may relate to the tension – antinomy – of distance here. For the content of Len's and Joyce's defense is clearly under-distanced in these ways, while its form over-distances it.

The comic structure draws the spectator's attention continually to matters of form, inducing laughter through exaggeration, the violation of expectation, and the generalisation (to murder) of particular behaviours (household routine, neighbourliness). In the ninth beat, Arthur takes the role of defense and examines the Doctor (a "reversal" of the sort which has the queen's court double as a court of law):

ARTHUR.	Has a doctor seen [Len and Joyce]? The DOCTOR is nudged. His stethoscope is in his ears. Pause.
ARTHUR.	Have you seen these two? (Someone removes his stethoscope.) Have you seen these two?
DOCTOR.	I have examined the accused. Loosely speaking, one was male and the other was – I made a note of it at the time ... (He finds his note. He stares at it. He realises that he is reading it upside down. He turns it up the right way.) I see, it's a diagram ... female.
VICTORIA.	That explains most crimes. ( <u>Appreciative laughter.</u> )
MENNINGS.	There are others. ( <u>A frozen silence.</u> )
ARTHUR.	But did you find anything that would help us?
DOCTOR.	Most definitely. Both the accused have stomachs. (151-152)

After the Doctor's evidence, Arthur asks the question which initiates his involvement in the plot: "Why did you kill him?" What brings him to this question is not easily discernible, unless it be the sheer triviality of the interrogation which, on the surface of it, is "what is happening" in the scene. However, the seeming digression, the trial, takes over the main action rather than simply supplementing it when he questions Len. Though Scene Four has seemed to begin as a digression, it does not end so. Like a dream from which one cannot awake, it simply flows into the play, adding its self-conscious theatricality to the already strained presentation. Though the play has, up to Scene Four, purported to be "about" intrigue in Victoria's court, Arthur's interest in the trial of Len and Joyce takes it in a new direction.

A scuffle ensues which Len and Joyce accompany by singing "Lord George." The music-hall ditty highly distances the scene, making the sentencing seem less distanced, therefore harsher, by contrast. Victoria pronounces the ominous counterpart to the

Chamberlain's opening "bring them up": "Put them down." This is the language one uses of animals to be destroyed, and therefore is in keeping with the rest of the scene.

The scene is drawing to a close, but it still holds a big surprise for the audience: not until this point does it become clear that Len and Joyce are handcuffed together.

As with the similar revelation about Arthur and George, Bond has deliberately suppressed a piece of information in the light of which the whole scene must be reconsidered. The discovery that Arthur and George are Siamese twins is a shock, but it need not destroy verisimilitude. Rather than making any adjustment in distance, the spectators might judge that an adjustment in their perception is necessary, that they have made an error in assessing the Water Sel. However, when the device is employed again here, the audience is encouraged to "interpret" a variation of the previous effect, and verisimilitude is eroded. The encouragement to interpret the play, rather than simply to experience it, becomes obligation as the play progresses and George begins to wax and wane on Arthur's shoulder like a moon.

What changes when Len and Joyce are seen to be bound? The stage picture is a physicalisation of several themes. The primary one is that the relationship between the two characters is not an alliance but a bondage. Secondly, the bondage grew out of their behaviour – their murder of Hobson; so it exists in the context of society, of the law, if not of ethics. Yet they gripe at each other and at the state as if they were free individuals present in court of their own volition. Since they are not the first two to be represented as joined (nor are they the last), the possibility exists that in this play, all inter-personal relationship is bondage. This particular bondage is the result of complicity; Arthur's with George is expressly non-complicit. The handcuffs bring to mind the Arthur/George bondage, raising related thematic questions to do with freedom, responsibility, and the state.



The bondage of Len and Joyce is a significant image, influencing the distance between spectator and stage. It makes a point of the information that Len and Joyce are prisoners by withholding it, and it reveals again the concern with process – how a thing is done, and how known.

In terms of staging the scene, an important point is that Len and Joyce are in the spotlight throughout. Though they argue, address other characters, indulge in separate complaints, even (in Joyce's case) an aside, they must be virtually stationary, as actors, to conceal the handcuffs. If the director requires a great deal of movement from the other characters, Len and Joyce are the still centre of the action. Yet from them comes a grotesquely violent, action-packed story. Even if nothing else in the scene were to do so, this fact alone would underscore the disjunction between language and action in the *Water Sel*. What the characters say, as we have seen, seems to preempt what is happening in the scene. But what the audience sees may be no more true than what it hears. Without any magician being present, Bond has accomplished something like a magician's trick, directly connected to the audience's awareness of the actors' bodies. For just as Len and Joyce have both stood in a movie queue but cannot agree on which queue, the audience has watched these two through the whole scene, without knowing that they are bound!

Bullough and Büdel see some confusion concerning distance in the theatre simply because real people are on stage. "The physical presence of living human beings as vehicles of art is a difficulty which no art has to face in the same way," Bullough says (97). No conceivable distance can be maintained, presumably, while the audience is realizing that the actor has been concealing a significant physical fact about his or her character. Büdel doubts whether it is practical, fair, or even possible to expect an audience to learn anything from such a device as the actor's differentiating her- or himself from the character (76-78 passim). Yet once the image of the bound couple has been presented with Arthur/George, and

repeated with Len and Joyce, it is difficult to suppress speculations which relate "natural" bondage to "social" bondage, and which seem to draw conclusions for people as socio-political animals. Len's and Joyce's typicality is stressed by their physical bond.

Is Bond's "trick" to be described as under- or over-distancing? As it points to the presence of the actor, it is an under-distancing device. And insofar as it gives evidence of "manual dexterity" (Bullough 106), it makes a practical appeal which also diminishes distance – not an aesthetic consideration particularly, Bullough remarks, but useful in any case for balancing the tendency to over-distancing where that is aesthetically undesirable.

It is an over-distancing device, however, to the extent that it suggests an aspect of the "general theatrical milieu" (Bullough 104): the lack of setting indicators but the presence of the trap; the incongruous music-hall ditty Len and Joyce have just sung; and the various odd contradictions we have discussed – the language, the characterisation. Its placement near the scene's conclusion, and the fact of its concealment hitherto, gives it the status of a climactic moment, yet it is theme-, not plot-related, and not the climax, as it turns out.

The twelfth beat contains the direct confrontation of Len and Arthur, who asks, for the first of several times, "Why did you kill him?" The question threatens Len, whose body language worries Florence on George's account. When Arthur asks thrice, Len finally explodes:

ARTHUR.                   Why did you kill him –  
LEN.                        I said it ain' I? 'Is shirt! 'Is shoes! 'Is vest! (He kicks the exhibits at ARTHUR.) I done it! Thass that! Get, mate, get! They're 'is! 'Is! I got a right a be guilty same as you! An you next, matey! You ain' out a reach!

Some of the exhibits fall on ARTHUR. He's draped in them. (153)

This clash creates a comic confrontation, in that it takes place between "doubled" men. One member of each pair may be an unwilling participant, so in a sense the audience

sees three conflicts, that of Len and Arthur, of Joyce with Len and of George with Arthur. On stage, also, Florence may be trying to help George while Victoria pulls her away and the soldiers try to bundle Len and Joyce down the trap.

Arthur seems too preoccupied by his question to realize that Len is angry. His blindness contributes to the comedy while his sincerity adds to the tension of the moment. Even draped in the clothes of Len's victim, he repeats his question again, as if without concern for his own (and George's) physical safety. Since it focusses on the two couples, the image brings the audience back again to the theme of bondage, showing by the spread of violence from the central two – Len and Arthur – out through the other characters on stage how violence encompasses everyone.

For his part, Len is no more intimidated by being in the court than Joyce is. The ambiguity of Len's "I got a right a be guilty same as you," which implies that Arthur is also guilty of something, may be missed at first, but it is reinforced when, draped in Hobson's clothes, Arthur is linked with two innocent-guilty parties, Len and Hobson; murderer and victim, living and dead. This is a rich image prefiguring the scenes to come, in which Arthur will be linked to the dead (George), will himself be tried and condemned, and will be betrayed by the heap of clothes which is Len. Since so much is made of the representation of victims by piles of their clothes in later scenes, one assumes Bond means it to stand out at this point. Arthur's lack of response to Len's "You ain' out a reach!" suggests a pause in their action, and a shift in audience attention with Arthur perhaps motionless, and the effect that of a tableau.

These speeches narrate a very violent action and prepare for the staging of a violent scene – Len's beating; they typify that violence to which Bond's audiences have objected. One cannot dispute either their thematic relevance to the play, or the appropriateness of their

comment on the ceaseless modern search for novelty and pleasure. Because of the baroque elaboration of the detail they seem unrestrained, as if their author were carried away with them. The account of the murder lacks in every way the grandeur of similar classical descriptions (such as that of the death of Hippolytus), retaining only the grue. It is, basically, a streetcorner accident, recounted with neither pity for Hobson nor relish for the activity of dismemberment – but with relish for the recounting. Len and Joyce devote their energies to the ordering and correctness of detail, to interpretation, to motivation and the appropriateness of the action in the context. They create the account, with a shape of its own, and an outcome appropriate to it, irrelevant of consequences to themselves. The court acts in the same manner in adhering to the correct form of trial; even Arthur's question about the defense, which Albert agrees "would look better," may be seen as a purely formal request.

In the final beat, Arthur "solves the riddle" and the surprised Albert advises him, "Don't go to the picnic." Offstage, Florence is about to be raped by Victoria. The scene ends with a reprise of theme-words – the riddle, the picnic, eating. The overall juxtaposition is of comic form with serious content.

There are several general points about Bond's manipulation of distance to be drawn from consideration of this scene, especially concerning its structure and themes. Bond speaks in the Preface to The Bundle of revealing "the mask under the face not the mask on it" (xvii), and here he reveals society's hidden mask, developing the theme that social interaction is hollow form, and thus essentially alienated behaviour. The lip service they pay to propriety and correctness shows the extent to which the characters are caricatures, rather than three-dimensional.

The scene gradually tends away from wit towards broad humour, even slapstick and coarse effects. Lame humour is presented along with various modes of wit, including

Joyce's incongruous "'E pushed in the queue" and Joseph Hobson's understated "'Ere, thass my place." At the end of the scene, Arthur's uncomfortable sensation is that he has "eaten too much" (154). Beyond the foreshadowing, which can only be seen in retrospect, this is, again, a poor joke. The audience might feel as Arthur does, for swallowing unpalatable subject matter in incongruous joke form. The dialogue – indeed the whole play – concerns itself with such under-distancing material as Bullough suggests. An elaborate network of cultural taboos, spreading like bureaucratic red tape, has overrun matters which need to be extricated and addressed, Bond seems to suggest. The joke form at least returns them to discourse. It is also one of the "special precautions" which he uses to protect the dialogue from under-distancing. The rigidity of mind with which Bond endows his characters, and which is typical of stock comic figures, dissociates them entirely from the world they inhabit, since it renders them incapable of making appropriate responses.

Bond often seems to place violent (under-distanced) material in some framework which emphasises how the material is presented. Thus the tension between under- and over-distancing is sustained through the scene. Bullough notes that "the form of presentation ... frequently acts as a considerable support" to the maintenance of distance, which can be threatened, however, by "incongruities" in levels of realism among the various elements of the mise-en-scène; "... the bodily vehicle of drama," he says, is an effective "counterbalance" preventing under-distancing (104). In this play, it seems to me that the violent material itself and the contrivance of it throw each other into sharp relief.

A similarly handled scene is the kicking to death of Len in Scene Seven. The whole of the soldiers' attention is focussed on how the kicking is to be conducted for maximum efficiency, style, and orderliness. Examples in other Bond plays abound. In Lear, the torture of Warrington is presented in a framework of caricature and the death of the Boy in a series of stop-action tableaux. In The Bundle, the Woman sits with a stone cangue around her neck

and is discussed in terms of her political significance. In Great Peace, the "murder" of Woman's baby is the ripping in two of a rag, a purely symbolic and theatrical act. Ritual, pageant, and also the copying of other art works are common vehicles for presenting violence in Bond's work. The form and content highlight rather than efface each other; they gain attention in part by competing for it – because they are competing.

In the tension between "harrowingly real" detail and "artificial" presentation, the spectator can also see without suffering a violence which, Bond implies, tends to be dulled by convention: "Because if the viewer happens not to have seen such a thing before, the reproduction will not produce the pleasure qua reproduction but through its workmanship or colour or something else of that sort" (Aristotle 20-21). The function of stylisation in art is, after all, not to impose but to remove the distance between subject matter and spectator. It achieves this best where it is least visible. So a focus on the stylised frame for violence might distract a spectator temporarily before it brings him or her into fresh contact with the material inside the frame – a contact audiences lose if they are used to the conventions of stylisation. In Len's and Joyce's speeches, the sensational material competes with the manner in which they present it.

Other means of fragmenting action, such as the use of the frames, also make for shifts of distance. The structure of Scene Four, its placement in the play, its length and its allusion to Hamlet are some of these. Digressions and sub-plots, as Brooks notes in his analysis, are also means of speeding up or slowing down the action of a Water Sel

The structural ambiguity of Scene Four impinges on the main plot also. As Brooks says in his analysis of literary structure, "the sub-plot stands as one means of warding off the danger of short-circuit, assuring that the main plot will continue through to the right end" (292) by allowing enough time to pass so that the main action can unfold. When the sub-plot

is distorted, as here where it flows into the main action instead of remaining a discrete thread on its own, the unfolding of the main plot is also laid open to question. What sorts of actions will affect main characters in future scenes? Arthur takes what happens in this scene seriously, but no other character seems to do so. Indeed, whether anyone takes what happens seriously seems to be beside the point; the plot rolls along almost of its own volition. If someone dies inappropriately, he or she is simply brought back to life; absent people are treated as present and vice versa, those who make an unacceptable remark are treated as if they have said what was expected of them. Both characters and events are arbitrary and illogical, which somehow brings attention to bear on how things happen as much as it does on what happens.

This would obviously serve the generally political aim which Bond later formulates in the Preface to The Bundle:

The "dramatization of the analysis instead of the story," in both the choice and ordering of the scenes and in the incidents dramatically emphasized in the scenes, is a way of reinstating meaning in literature. ... The analysis can give us the beauty and vitality that once belonged to myth, without its compromises and intellectual reallocation of meaning. (xx)

Bond is restoring to history the quality of choice, of chance, the feeling which history eradicates that anything could have happened. Arbitrariness paradoxically reenters history in Victoria's peremptory decrees and injunctions. The demythologizing of Victoria's reign involves an analysis of the myth, which grew out of such happenstances as the fact that the Boer War occurred while several outstanding people were alive. Meaningful connections among people and events do not materialize in Bond's reconstruction of history.

However, Bond's bringing Len and Joyce into the main plot seems to suggest, as does his later statement about not treating scenes as entirely separable from each other (The Bundle xix), that there is no such thing as a plot digression. In several important ways, the plays grows more out of this scene than out of the previous three. What begins as a

"diversion" for the audience – that is, both court characters and real audience – precipitates the action for Arthur, persuading him to join the conspiracy. Hence the scene is by no means a true digression, but more like a shift of focus, a reconsideration, perhaps, of Arthur's role: he reconsiders the part he should play in the politics of his mother's court, while the audience reconsiders the level of truth at which he is being developed by Bond. What Klotz would call the "open" form of the play tends to under-distance it by making it more like life in lacking a three-part, "literary" structure (beginning, middle, end), and in removing the audience's sense of knowing what would be expected to happen within a "closed" structure. The scene is character-related, rather than plot-related, perhaps, but without developing character: the scene persuades Arthur to action. It usurps the centrality of the "main" plot established in the first three scenes by setting up a whole new point of view of the action. And oddly, it is repeated variously – in the trials of Len and Arthur, in the gratuitously violent reportage of unrelated incidents, and in inverted emotional attitudes to guilt and betrayal.

The scene's placement in the play is another structure-related anomaly. A trial scene might be expected to come much later, either precipitating the crisis or initiating a denouement. However, trial scenes punctuate this play with some regularity, finally contributing a sense of déjà vu rather than one of either anticipation or climax. They always create tension, but the tension is dissipated in digressions and the ineffectuality of the sentencings.

The length of Scene Four, another structural matter, is also disproportionate to its plot function – to introduce the intended assassin of Victoria to Disraeli. In a Shakespearean play, Len would be designated "First Murderer" and given eight or ten lines at best. Here he is filled out as a parallel, or contrast, to Arthur. His opinion of Len, reported by a third party



at the beginning of the scene, could easily be placed elsewhere with a few lines revealing Arthur's intended complicity.

Another means of foregrounding action per se, introduced here in Scene Four and developed in Scenes Five and Eight, is Bond's allusion to Hamlet. Scene Four is reminiscent of the last act of Hamlet; Scene Five would seem to refer to a slightly earlier passage in Shakespeare's play, while by Scene Eight we are in Hamlet, Act I: Early Morning is a version of Hamlet – backwards. If one places the cast lists of the two plays side by side, it is tempting to imagine Bond developing a parallel to the Laertes-Hamlet matter in the relationship between Arthur and Len – Len the son of a "court" figure, Gladstone, and the action-oriented opposition to the much more intellect-oriented Arthur. This might, indeed, be one of the major contributions of Scene Four. No less than the allusion, such structural matters tend to fragment rather than to integrate Bond's Water Sel

Besides structural matters, other elements, such as the presentation of complicated details seemingly without pointing, also seem distancing. Trivial and important cannot be easily distinguished from each other. What, for instance, is the relative significance of Victoria's swatting flies in Scene Five to the background of corpses in Scene Twelve? Can they be related? Are her subjects as flies to Victoria? Is she as a god to them? Bond's way of giving information seems calculated to keep the audience at arm's length, to prevent its plunging into the machinations of the court as it would into a good thriller. One continually senses that some seemingly trivial detail may turn out to be of importance later on.

The seeming disorderliness of detail throws one back upon the characters for a sense of what is happening in the Water Sel. It would be interesting to compare, say, Stoppard's Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead, in which the title characters come to recognise the predestined play over their lives of forces they cannot control, with Early Morning, where the

characters cannot rely on any sort of pre-established pattern to define, shape, or give meaning to their lives. Neither a political pattern, nor one attuned to the natural world, nor a dramatic (crafted or artficed) pattern sustains them: they are wholly at their own disposal, and incapable of sustaining the burden. Like the dramatic structure, they are over-distanced, being fragmented and incomplete. They are well-differentiated, but conceived as it were in different media – in plaster, in papier-maché, in wood – and displayed according to different conventions, some in perspective, some flat, some in trompe-l'oeille.

The major distancing devices Bond employs in Early Morning are all well represented in Scene Four. Even though he is also present, however, Arthur, who is the best example of Bond's treatment of character in terms of distancing in the play, hardly speaks until most of the action is over. Therefore, I have chosen to discuss his character separately from that scene. Arthur, who eventually emerges as protagonist, is physically malformed and politically unformed. Although a complicated figure, he is the vehicle for Bond's major statements in what he has called "'my freedom play'" (Hay and Roberts 14).

Arthur, like Alice in Wonderland, is very different from other characters in the Water Sel. He seems "real" by contrast with the rest. Juxtaposing two types of characterisation over-distances one by contrast with the other. Arthur emerges as a "real" character largely because Bond uses a different set of conventions – one closer to post-Freudian dramatic conventions – to establish his personality than he uses for the others. It might be possible to say, in fact, that the sense of his dimensionality is increased by contrast with the others, and an essential "flatness" is reasserted at the end when he suddenly ascends from his grave. Indeed, the whole question of his relative dimensionality becomes beside the point, because it is created by a theatrical trick – the twinning with George – for the sake of theme and image, rather than for his verisimilitude: his "character" is developed for the sake of certain themes.

How does one read the actions of this bizarre character? He shows qualities which Bullough finds in the tragic figure – "a consistency of direction, a fervour of ideality, a persistence and driving-force which is far above the capacities of average men" (103) – but he is no tragic hero; he is "merely cranky, eccentric, pathological." Nevertheless, he is exceptional in being what he is, a Siamese-twin prince, and that initially distances him. His fate is to "end in drama, in comedy, even in farce, for lack of steadfastness, for fear of conventions, for the dread of 'scenes'" – but all these lacks are not so much his as those of his unfortunate brother.

Indeed, every aspect of Arthur's being seems to depend upon the view one takes of George. By most views, George's material existence over-distances Arthur. They are first presented as separate characters, and they are not alike. George is a person of creature comforts, of appetite. Arthur's concerns, by contrast, are metaphysical – the whys of life: "Why did you kill him?" and, of George's experience of death, "what was it like?" His heart is Arthur's problem. His limitation, in other words, is his humanity:

I can't face another hungry child, a man with one leg, a running woman, an empty house. I don't go near rivers when the bridges are burned. ... I don't like maimed cows, dead horses, and wounded sheep. I'm limited. (185)

Bond uses the metaphor of the heart to advantage in depicting Arthur. The fusion of the physical with the metaphorical organ is apparent in Scene Ten in the midst of the insurrection, when Victoria promises Florence that although Arthur must be shot, she will restore him to life:

FLORENCE.	But he's got no heart!
VICTORIA.	He's got yours.
FLORENCE.	Yes. I'll always love you – but I still love him. (180)

An image-cluster related to body parts and linked with play on the theme of life and death extends through the play, especially in the disembodiment of Arthur's head in the final scenes and in such word-play as Griss's "Dead Queen to base" and that contained in

Gladstone's murder-scene apostrophe to life. Arthur's "Live is evil spelt backwards [and] an anagram of vile" and the continual refutations of both conditions in the "dead again – I can't die" jokes, epiphanies and plot turn-about are generated out of the physical fact of Arthur/George, a metaphor presented as a character. Indeed, Arthur's "character" is not a conjunction of traits but a riddle – the riddle of the personality.

The continual veering into language affects Arthur as it does the other characters, causing a seeming fragmentation, in physical, psychological, and emotional terms, and a strong compensatory emphasis on wit. Like the rest of the society in Early Morning, Arthur is not perceived in depth, but as a variety of surfaces. He poses his riddles wherever he goes. The various court intrigues are a mystery to him, and remain ambiguous. He tries, however, to make moral sense of the random conjunction of word and deed, and of a pervasive confusion which continues throughout, because his concern, like the audience's, is with motivation. Understanding someone's motivations, one can grasp the sense of even contradictory actions, the discrepancy between words and action, and ambiguous language. In drama, without revealed coherent foundations for action, the personality remains a collection of fragments. Bond's opinion, in line with the Marxist theory of alienation, would appear to be that when one's world is fragmented, one's acts, and hence one's self, appear to disintegrate (Hauser 95-96). The dramatic crisis here may be related to the theme of concealment. Arthur is literally ripped apart by his society, which catches up with him although he hides himself in various ways, even from George, his other self.

Different interpretations of Arthur each affect differently his distance from the audience. He can be read from a psychological point of view, as one person attached to expressionistically rendered character traits (George), or as a split personality. Third, he can be taken to be a parody, perhaps of Hamlet, perhaps of variety-show entertainment. Finally, he can be read allegorically.

Hauser, in a discussion of the modern psychological representation of character, notes that the measure of the modern hero's believability for an audience does not lie in his consistency of action or attitude, but in his inconsistency (121). Bond illustrates this point, I think, in *Arthur*. In the bond between George and Arthur, we see how difficult it is to be a whole person. They are psychologically incomplete individuals, inevitably so, in being "virtual," not real – virtual not only in Langer's (aesthetic) sense, but also in being unable to become themselves while they are joined to each other. Nor does Bond make any effort to conceal the cracks and joins in their personalities. He dissects Arthur by making him inconsistent at the level of physical existence. Because George "thrashed his way out in front" at birth (168) and is therefore heir apparent, Arthur is generally regarded as an unnecessary addendum to his brother's life. But the audience, unlike the characters, sees George as the appendage. For the audience, identification with Arthur is like identification with Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern*; the spectator recognises him to be "peripheral" to some related, "more central" action. Arthur's struggle for wholeness, integrity, is played as a struggle to be physically at one with George. After the muddled coup, he refuses to let the Doctor "cut my brother off" or even give him an injection for the pain of his bullet-wound, which of course Arthur feels almost as strongly as George (165), in case he is drugged into unconsciousness by it and George is cut off while they both sleep. But he yearns to be just himself. His progress through the play is from existence as a fragment to utter destruction, and finally ascension as a complete person (without George) into a space beyond heaven. Arthur's awareness of George stimulates the audience's, whose awareness of two-in-one serves to over-distance Arthur/George.

On the other hand, they can be seen as one split personality. George is Arthur's brother and (ever-quarrelsome) companion, but by the same token, the motif of the doppelganger is clear; these two are closer than brothers, in the sort of way that the naked, milk-white swimmer of Conrad's "*The Secret Sharer*" partakes of the captain-narrator's

existence. Like that captain, Arthur is "somewhat of a stranger to myself" (Conrad 369). Fundamentally, Arthur is George, the unreconciled antithesis, by this second interpretation. Bond's presentation of them as two characters may be taken to indicate the initial unresolvability of their opposition to each other.

Scene Eleven opens with a "conversation" between them that illustrates the notion that George, "now a skeleton" is merely a projection of conflicts Arthur has with himself. By this interpretation, the two would have access to each other's thoughts.

It is difficult to know whether it is a pretense that George and Arthur cannot read each other's minds, or whether this is not a convention they have adopted. The assumption upon which the action is based is that they cannot. But arbitrarily and spontaneously, Arthur seems to have an access to George's mind which could be more than intuitive. Since their mental capacities in relationship to each other are somewhat ambiguous, some inconsistency in character development is implied.

Brecht addresses the issue of consistency of presentation in relation to the theatres of the Greeks and Elizabethans, noting that "incorrectness, or considerable improbability even, was hardly or not at all disturbing, so long as the incorrectness had a certain consistency or the improbability remained of a constant kind" (Brecht on Theatre 182). Here, the possible inconsistency is character-related, but also pertains to the theme that while bound to each other, people are essentially disconnected.

An elaborate and pleasing interpretation of the scene in Freudian terms can be made, of course, but a difficulty with such an interpretation is that it seems at best unnecessary in terms of the rest of the play, and at worst, misleading. The pleasure of interpreting, rather than learning information, is what the spectator might expect to gain from this approach.

A third way of interpreting Arthur settles the question of distance, perhaps by oversimplifying it: he may be considered a parody of Hamlet. As with the other interpretations, to choose this one is to change one's notion of what is happening in the *Water Sel*. Like Hamlet, Arthur is guilt-ridden (perhaps his primary motivation is guilt), and tormented, possibly mad. It is Hamlet's sort of madness. Unlike Hamlet, he does not at first see himself to be in a position of responsibility. In any case, his self-revelatory utterances do not lead to an understanding of his personality if the play is seen to parody the classic, because Hamlet, not Arthur, is being interpreted by this reading.

In Scene Eleven, where Bond makes the first substitution of a dummy for the actor who plays George, a major shift in distance occurs. The stage direction for the conversation between them reads thus: "ARTHUR comes in. GEORGE is still attached to him, but he is now a skeleton. ARTHUR and GEORGE sit on a box, or can, and talk" (184). The stage picture which this direction gives me is of a ventriloquist and his dummy. Another possibility for interpretation of Arthur's character, then, is that it is of a piece with Len's and Joyce's in Scene Four. Another type of variety show entertainment is given here. However, Arthur's "conversation" is personal, even intimate in tone. He seems closer to George than he has in previous scenes. There is an emotionalism in his words which is belied by the picture they present of an actor and his prop.

This "prop," however, may or may not stimulate an intellectual response from the audience, depending, among other things, upon how the skeleton is fabricated and the degree to which it seems a caricature. Arthur treats his brother with much sympathy, chiding him for not eating and throwing his own coat over George's shoulders. This would tend, one assumes, to lessen, rather than to increase, the distance of the image, if the image were still fleshed. Since it is not, that sort of tension between under- and over-distancing which is Bond's hallmark is again created.

The pairing of Death (George) with Life (Arthur) might, finally, suggest medieval woodcuts, or the Dance of Death, fostering the impression of allegorical statement rather than comedy routine. Arthur sees that George is "staring" at the pile of clothes. When he discovers that it is Len, he immediately checks to see whether Joyce has castrated the corpse. Bond's direction is:

(ARTHUR has accidentally uncovered LEN's face. His features are blurred. His hair is plastered. His eyes are shut. ARTHUR turns and starts to walk back to his box. He stops. LEN has spoken to him.) I'm sorry. (He goes to LEN and fastens his flies.) I thought you wouldn't mind. – I know it's a liberty. Is that better? – Could we sit with you? Thank you. (He sits. Pause.)  
(184)

In this interesting sequence, we can see what is the effect on distance of the skeleton on Arthur's shoulder. The life-and-death figure approaches a dead body, Len's. If Arthur were alone, and examined the genitals of a corpse whose blurred features suggested decomposition, the effect might well be repellant, disgusting. The skeleton greatly lessens the likelihood of this emotional response, it would seem to me, and greatly increases the impression that the stage action "means" something. It provokes an intellectual response, a desire to interpret.

The subsequent dialogue is, again, that of a man speaking to a friend in a moment of honesty and intimacy. Arthur gives Len a somewhat different version of the story he has just told George, however, a story which had seemed honest and intimate, and is now being contradicted. Furthermore, Arthur is now treating his brother as if he can't hear, whereas just moments before he was engaging him in conversation: a moment ago, Arthur made George "present" by addressing him; now he makes him "absent" by "speaking behind his back." From this point of view, in other words, by which the characters seem to be rather more allegorical than farcical, that confusion about how much they know of each other's thoughts and deeds exists. One might call Arthur mad, falling back upon the Freudian interpretation – but to do so doesn't explain what is happening in the scene. There is unquestionably a



distance between the character and the spectator here – probably a very great distance – but it is not and cannot be pinpointed.

Arnold Hauser, who sees the type of character Bond creates in Arthur as non-existent before the age of mannerism, speaks of a "rift between the self and the world, and the conflicting impulses of the self," of which Arthur's behaviour seems typical (121). The conflict is not, one must note, a split between good and bad – George the "good" person and Arthur the immoral/unethical, or vice versa. It is a conflict, rather, between the social and the individual; and it is important that both continue to be represented, that neither be resolved into the other, in order for the dilemma they represent to remain clear. They are a dilemma, if you will, rather than a pair of characters. When George does not exist – namely, when he is "dead" – Arthur creates him. "It is characteristic," as Hauser maintains,

not only that thoughts, feelings, actions [of the mannerist hero] are never completely unambiguous, but also that the implicit psychological conflict often appears in the form of two independent characters [who manifest] a secret tendency, a suppressed characteristic, a repressed drive of the hero [which] is objectified, made autonomous, worked out more clearly, and contrasted with another side of the character, with the result that the associated pair of characters are essentially one single figure taken apart and represented by two. (128)

It is a feature of this type of hero that questionable or negative moral stances and values appear as much in the dominant as in the subsidiary of the two characters, and he is tested in the situations in which he finds himself. When he is represented by an actor, George, the subordinate figure to Arthur, neither extols the qualities of his stronger brother – one function of the foil – nor contrasts some "goodness" of his own with Arthur's deficiencies. Rather, he embodies traits which, differing from Arthur's, oblige him to respond differently to nearly identical circumstances and problems. The convincing representation of this type of character often involves, according to Hauser, an incompletely represented behaviour rich in surprises, and a complexity which

lies in the often extraordinarily involved and elaborate technique by which they maintain their identity. ... The inner conflict of their nature lies in the fact that, while they have completely withdrawn their love and sympathy from the world of men, they still need them as partners, public, or victims. (121-122)

Arthur is in no position, physically or philosophically, to make a complete withdrawal. He cannot either integrate himself with the rest or establish his individuality, except in a paradoxical way. He is involved, despite his initial intention to stay out of the planned coup. But within the court framework he is always played, somehow, "in opposition." His question, "Where's the defense?" in Len and Joyce's trial prompts Victoria to place him in that role himself. It is the role most appropriate to his nature. Thereafter, he acts contra-Victoria in everything. He saves Len's life in Scene Eight, protects his brother thereafter, and ultimately becomes the popular leader of a mob for which he is the messiah.

Ironically, each of these increasingly integrative acts is the result of his growing sense of – and desire for – alienation from others. A difference between Arthur and the tragic hero, as Hauser defines that figure, is that, unable to reconcile the ambivalences metaphorically presented in his being twinned, Arthur must abide with "inner contradictions, divided loyalties, a life of humiliating compromise" (93). He can neither internalise conflicts as, say, Hamlet does, nor resolve them; he cannot be "alienated" in existential terms (96). He is rather in the position of Berenger at the end of Rhinoceros, though he feels perhaps differently about that position.

Arthur is a creature of unresolvable dualities, in both character and action. He seems to place human values over social ones, but is ultimately more interested in abstract ideas than in individual distress. He is guilty of George's death, and also of keeping him alive; he is a mass murderer, forcing others to starve, but in the name of ethics. And he is most complete when he has been most resoundingly fragmented, when he is no more than a

disembodied head. Divided in himself, estranged from a family he cannot escape, and involved in a plot against his mother, with whom he shams joining forces, Arthur can best be understood from a shifting point of view. No one distance from this "personality" makes sense of him.

The ambiguity of his nature is carried in the manner of his visual representation on stage. Arthur is played almost entirely, like the court figures in Caucasian Chalk Circle, attached to his living brother George, or to a dummy which varies from full skeleton to "ragged epaulette" of bones. So he starts in half, or double, and ends in pieces. His doubling, without really informing the audience about his personality, obliges it to see him always in conjunction, often with the artifice/image of a dummy substituted for an actor, or of death. The theatrical fact of actor-plus-character is thus continually stated. Hence the artificiality of the Early Morning world is reinforced by Arthur, who is "demonstrated" on stage, in a quite unBrechtian variation on a Brechtian clarifying device, rather than given his own life. He makes a "catch-22" contribution to verisimilitude in seeming to struggle to understand the psychological motivations for acts of murder, an understanding which he can only attain, it seems, if he succumbs to being mad and a murderer himself, for irrational reasons and by irrational means. The struggle in which Arthur is engaged in the play makes him three-dimensional, but its resolution reduces him to two-dimensionality.

As I have suggested, a major difficulty for the audience in knowing how to respond to Arthur regards the progress of Arthur's relationship with George through the Water Sel. It moves from confrontation over Florence and the impending marriage to Arthur's pity for him. By the end of Scene Ten, he can let him die. In other words, the audience watches Arthur grow, come to terms with a fact about himself, and integrate it into himself. He finds this integration difficult, and rationalises it ambiguously. The problem of George for the audience is that because he takes different forms, the audience has to redefine the set of

reactions appropriate to his appearing, and by extension redefine its attitude to Arthur each time George changes also. An emotional response may be generated by the skull and bones on Arthur's shoulder, while an intellectual response is stimulated by the actor of George.

Like this effect of "conjured twinning," the various reversals in this play are often cumulative in their impact. No one moment might be enough to break verisimilitude, but eventually subsequent repetitions of an initial surprise take over from the plot – a necessary take-over, in that the plot is not so tightly knit as to sustain itself and lead the action along. A set of images, instead of a plot line, provides the play's backbone. An audience "reading" instead of simply perceiving images, is not responding emotionally but intellectually, over-distancing the *Water Sel*

It seems, then, that distance is shifted by many means and at every level through the *Water Sel*. The structure, the dialogue, and the imagery of Scene Four tend to over-distance it, while the setting of the whole under-distances, perhaps, in not really establishing a fictional world in which the characters can dwell; concerning characterisation, also, both under- and over-distancing devices are employed. Let us summarize these devices.

First, the setting is as much a (real) stage as it is a (fictional) court. If the audience chooses to see it as a stage, it is not permitting the existence of a fictional domain, and is therefore not exercising the second condition of Chaim's three aspects of distance, the will to "initiate and sustain the imaginative act of consciousness" (74). The result of refusing to place the characters in any sort of world other than the one the audience shares would be, one supposes, to refuse them any distance whatsoever – to keep them under-distanced, on the same plane as the audience is.

Second, the dialogue in this scene, I have said, is generally over-distancing. It contradicts the effect of the setting in varying stylistically from one character to the next (without that variation elucidating character), in not relating directly to the action of the scene, and in being sporadically anachronistic and referential to another play (Hamlet). Suspense is created in the dialogue by its being constantly interrupted, but that suspense is not resolved within the dialogue itself, by the final saying of something that has been withheld, because no information is withheld; rather, the thread of information is greatly elaborated upon, the elaboration of detail burying information under the pretense of revealing it. The dialogue is also, often, extremely violent. The detail itself, in fact, has a high emotional content in those few places where it is allowed to run away with itself – for example, in Len's account of the murder. Where it is controlled, as it is by Victoria's courtroom procedure, its stylisation overtakes its content. The result of the clash in distance is that the language withholds dimensionality from the characters.

Third, the imagery contained in the language of Scene Four – primarily to do with the cold-blooded disposal of the human body, and extended by implication to the similar disposal of the body politic ("We close the ports and airfields, take over the power stations, broadcast light classics and declare martial law") – is under-distancing, in manifesting doubts about the validity of social institutions, as Bullough suggests, and in graphic references to the material existence of the human body. But that imagery which is part of the stage picture – the handcuffs, the draping of Arthur in Hobson's clothes – is (or will be, once the clothing image is repeated) over-distancing in seeming to require interpretation. This clash results, among other things, in the audience's responding quite differently to the action of the scene than the characters do.

Likewise, the central characters, particularly Arthur, are both over- and under-distanced, with the difference that their distance is more obviously relative than is that

of other elements, and each character or turn of plot (or stage image, or fragment of dialogue) causes a further adjustment to the audience's view of any one character as the scene progresses. From my reading I have gained the impression that a major difficulty with Early Morning is to make clear to the audience that Arthur is the protagonist. To tell the "story" of the play, Bond creates a moment in almost every scene in which Arthur is focussed upon, for example, when he and George are seen to be Siamese twins, when Len kicks Hobson's clothing onto Arthur, and when the "paper cut-out ghosts" advance upon Arthur at the end of Scene Fifteen. Coult calls this play "a confusion of political and aesthetic issues" (The Plays of Edward Bond 15), and this confusion is obvious in the way Bond depicts, and uses, Arthur. Bond says,

The tendency was always to ask: what does that mean? and then: what does it mean exactly? – and so the play falls apart. You have to get on with the play and make the meanings clear so that the audience can then provide the meaning. ... the play works not by falling under a weight of symbolism and psychology, but by telling the theatrical story of the play in terms of theatre – and then the audience will learn from it, and even tell you what the symbols are." (qtd in Hay and Roberts, Bond: A Study of his Plays 84)

Arthur is not so much characterised by Bond as he is imaged. Bond's way of "getting on with" this play is to arrest its action at certain points and to fix the audience's attention upon Arthur. Thus a social or political point becomes clear, but an aesthetic matter – what Arthur is, exactly – is confused: he is a theatrical device for the conveyance of information, but depending upon how one identifies which device he is, his nature – and his distance from the audience – shifts, relative to the requirements of each particular scene.

Other manifestations of that relativity of distance can be seen in other characters. The costuming of Victoria is influential, in that if she is made to resemble the historical Victoria (with whose image most spectators are likely to be familiar), that depiction alone would tend to under-distance the whole play in sharpening Bond's attack on the Victorian world. For Hirst, "the most shocking, most offensive scene in the play" is Scene Thirteen, in which the image of the Lady With the Lamp so dear to the hearts of the English is parodied

(111). He describes Florence Nightingale as "a truly Protean figure, changing to convey different shifts of meaning" (106). Characterisations are changed in this play rather as sets are changed in others.

Finally, how does the structure of the play trigger and accommodate shifts in distance? The structure of Scenes One to Fifteen of Early Morning is in a sense conventional. Divergence from convention occurs in these ways: the information which moves the plot forward is inconsistently presented, sometimes as the main movement of a scene, sometimes as incidental, with displaced introduction and/or ambiguous development. The Len-Joyce sub-plot impinges on the main one, introducing and carrying central imagery, while the parallel love-interest it contributes is inverted and eclipsed. Digressions, such as Florence's tending the troops, are redundant amplifications of theme which contribute minimally to any plot. The setting and time of the play are inconsistently presented, varying from modern London to Victorian Windsor Castle, from stand-up comedy to Hamlet parody. And finally, the plot, which at times grows from the characters' actions, at other times seems incidental to them. All of this suggests that an audience cannot trust its notion of plot to provide any basis upon which to make sense of this Water Sel. Preconceptions about structure block the audience's understanding, rather than providing clarity. Altogether, there is an unorthodox relationship among theme, structure and character in Early Morning.

The second part of the play – Scenes Fifteen to Twenty-one – arises from Arthur's dilemma concerning how to act as a responsible leader. Although integral to the play, it is essentially a reprise, in a different key, and seems "tacked on" after the plot has been developed and concluded. It features the cast of the first part, but its "plot" is discrete, although parallel to the first; there is a trial, an attempted government overthrow which parallels the coup, a love-interest in which Florence, sent to betray Arthur, falls in love with and hides him – that is, hides his head – until George sniffs him out. Bond uses this double

structuring for various reasons in several plays – Lear, The Woman and The Worlds among them.

The major difference between the "heaven" sequence and the preceding scenes is that in its presentation of characters it is altogether more grotesque. The ongoing activity of these scenes is eating: the many characters on stage are mainly occupied with dividing and ingesting each other's flesh. This is the context, then, for Len and Joyce's "crime": the world of Bosch. There is perhaps some hope in the capacity of these characters for regeneration, but over-all the image is unsavory, the result of Bond's presenting as action the metaphors of the first part of the Water Sel

Much of the effect seems to be achieved by exaggeration. This is true particularly in that what has seemed to be exaggerated in the first sixteen scenes, the eating of Hobson, for instance, or what has seemed to be metaphorical there, is here realized. At the same time various riddles and contradictions continue. "I could have sworn I smelt burning," Victoria says, sniffing around after Albert sticks his sword into Arthur. Arthur tells Florence, "the dead are always hungry," and she replies, "I don't understand" (215). Florence is waiting to be told, but words cannot enlighten her. The language remains riddles; it does not cohere in a single, clear vision any more than the characters do. What we have noted about Scene Four also appears to be true of the play as a whole; there is something of a shift from wit to grotesque visual imagery. That which is contained by language in the first part bursts its bonds and becomes action in the second, and conventional hypocrisies such as "greater good" and "just cause" are exorcised.

The tendency to over-distancing may be a response on Bond's part to the political significance he assigns his subject matter. He is at pains to put his emotionally upsetting critique of a venerated mythology into an intellectual framework.



Historically it looks almost as if Art had attempted to meet the deficiency of Distance on the part of the subject and had overshot the mark in this endeavour. ... over-distanced Art is specifically designed for a class of appreciation which has difficulty to rise spontaneously to any degree of Distance. (Bullough 94)

The style of Early Morning reveals several substantial issues. Although he is dealing with court figures, Bond seems to have no interest in reinforcing those concerns which the fate of royalty has often represented – the purge of destructive elements in the society and the re-establishment of strong moral leadership. It is not his opinion that society can be purged of its ills in the manner represented by such dramatic structuring. The dramatic conflict in his play arises in the theme of revolution, but cannot be represented (contained, resolved) by that structure. Concerning Lear, Bond has said, "Now you can't get back to normal." Whatever he means by "normal," it seems clear that if the cycle of revolution with its movement through the stages of stability, unrest and revolution back to stability again is the "normal" pattern (as represented by the dramatic structuring which Bond upsets), Bond does not take such movement to be inevitable, like the ebb and flow of the tide, but rather to be a process over which societies can and should exercise control. Revolution (the dramatic crisis) is a part of the cycle, not a correction of it, and therefore cannot effect change. The cycle must be taken apart and examined so that "normal" patterns can be destroyed, while the damaging effects of the process of mythologizing are reversed so that historical analysis can occur, cleared of the romantic aura of the period. Arthur begins such an examination, but is himself taken apart, while Victoria triumphantly reassembles the court machinery. Bond's "examination" is somewhat more successful, in that he removes the whole society of the play into the fantasy-heaven, a mythical place in which the inhabitants suffer a variation on Tithonus' form of life everlasting – not immortality without youth, but immortality conferred through the happy expedient of regeneration.

A central issue for Bond appears to be that no retelling of history which takes the past as a model can be truthful or useful. Nor have the social problems so clearly demarcated by

Victorian ideology been "handed down" as a package, to be analysed and solved that way. Problems reside in process. As one stops a machine at various stages of its operation, to check it and repair it, so the process depicted in this play is arrested by shifts in distance at certain moments where malfunctions are most clear. These arrests, which distance the audience to prevent its immersion in process, fragment the play, but clarify its themes. They also trigger emotional reactions in the moments where those reactions can be applied to corrective perceptions. No mythology, however heavily encrusted upon history, can withstand the scrutiny.

In the welter of surprises and confusions there emerges a coherent philosophical view of the world, one which Bond develops through his career. This view disputes the notion that life is fated, and thus it has its most radical effect in his drama on Bond's depiction of character. It is not possible, it seems, to see character and action (the flow of history) as two immutable forces which inevitably collide, to the destruction of character. History cannot either destroy individuals or build character; and a character does not "grow" through hardship, adversity, etc. The personal growth of a character seems irrelevant, except insofar as the wisdom gained contributes to the betterment of the society. Its impact on the individual him- or herself is not something in which Bond shows much interest. In his interview with Roper, he explains:

You can't actually divorce personal problems from political problems. Obviously ... certain problems ... are innately personal, like suffering from a disease – that's your personal disease. There might be a social background to the disease, however. ... most problems have a social aspect and most have a social cause ...

... I find more and more that the concept of character is useless to explain the truth of anything. It's too much like the conjuror's white rabbit ... – you solve the whole thing by a sudden act of will on the part of one of your characters, or a sudden decision ... which he drags out of his abstract personality. What I'm much more interested in is "texture" ... his subjectivity is all the time made objective – it's the texture. ... The texture has to do with what you do, when you do it, and above all, I suppose, how you do it; and finally, it's what you judge a thing by. (40-41)

The audience is again distanced by the final tableau, in which Arthur hangs over the assembled company as it shares around the nosh. Whether he is to be seen as transcendent, crucified, or simply defying the laws of gravity cannot be definitively ascertained, nor may it even be relevant. Bond, asked whether the theme of redemption is a "poetic means of resolving in art what can't be resolved in real life" ("Edward Bond in Conversation" 67), replied, "No, I don't understand redemption. I would say it's a question of understanding the situation. ..."

If ever there were a play which should occasion an audience the "difficulty to rise spontaneously to any degree of Distance" (Bullough 94), that play would surely be Bond's Lear. The moments of shock are in several cases moments of brutality, drawn out and embellished through clusters of distancing effects. Also, the allusion to King Lear is inescapable and pervasive. It must be difficult to approach Shakespeare's work from a remove of almost four hundred years, not merely on account of King Lear's temporal distance, but also because of its language, its abiding cultural relevance, its philosophic statement, the many forms of discussion it has engendered, and on account, above all, of its reputation.

Bond seems from the programme note to have taken his story from the same sources as Shakespeare uses. One sees from a plot summary, however, that Lear and King Lear take quite different directions. Lear is written in three acts, which Bond describes thus in his Preface: "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" (12).

As Act One opens, a wall is being built around Lear's kingdom. Lear is inspecting a work site. He summarily executes a worker who let an axe drop on the head of a fellow worker. Among the uneasy spectators, his two daughters dissociate themselves from their father, announcing their engagements to Lear's enemies, North and Cornwall, and insisting that the wall around Lear's kingdom be pulled down. Lear denounces them and leaves them on stage to arrange a Council of War. Saluting his regiments in the next scene, he receives a

letter from each daughter, each denouncing the other. At the Daughters' War Council in Scene Three, Bodice and Fontanelle inform the audience in separate asides of their schemes to undermine each other's attack.

Their armies having routed Lear's troops, the sisters torture the captured Warrington (Scene Four) while Bodice knits and Fontanelle jumps up and down delightedly. The deafened and mutilated man is helped offstage by his torturer, who tells him, "Don't blame me, I've got a job t' do. If we was fightin' again tomorra I could end up envying you anytime" (30). By this point in the play, the atmosphere of distrust, capriciousness and betrayal is established as the characters' natural condition.

Scene Five finds Lear and his Old Councillor in flight, and stalked by the crippled Warrington. A Gravedigger's Boy feeds Lear and takes him to his house (Scene Six), where the Boy's pregnant Wife receives him very grudgingly. Warrington hides down a well and appears as Lear sleeps, startling him into thinking he's seen a ghost. The next day, a Carpenter (who loves the Boy's Wife) comes to the house with a cradle, and Lear hears about his wall and the civil war for the first time from the point of view of his own people. Though the Wife asks him to go, Lear refuses, arrogantly demanding instead that she go, and claiming in his distraught condition that the Wife has been sent by his daughters to destroy the farm. Soldiers enter in search of the king, kill the Boy and Warrington, slaughter the Boy's stock, and rape the Wife, whose name, Cordelia, the Boy shouts as he is shot. The Carpenter appears as the soldiers are about to remove Lear, and kills them.

The scene shifts, as Act Two opens, to a courtroom where the captured Lear is brought to trial by his daughters. Ranting, Lear is shown his own image in a mirror – the image, he says, of a maimed and caged animal. The sisters have heard that their people are

rallying under the command of Cordelia to fight their leaders, and go off together, though still plotting against each other, to mount a defense.

In his cell, in Scene Two, the mad Lear is attended by the Ghost of the Gravedigger's Boy. The Ghost whistles up the ghosts of Lear's youthful daughters to share his imprisonment, but they leave him while soldiers search his cell. An Old Orderly gossips about his long sojourn in the prison to the unconscious king, who revives to grieve that he ever looked into the mirror and saw "that animal." The Ghost asks the fearful Lear for pity and is finally embraced; Lear echoes Shakespeare's Lear with "Cry while I sleep, and I'll cry and watch you while you sleep."

In the rebel camp, Cordelia and the Carpenter receive information from a captured soldier, and tend one of their own wounded as he dies pathetically, counting the stars.

In their headquarters, the bickering daughters are doing their office work – signing, for example, their father's death warrant. They have arrested their husbands. Bodice soliloquizes at her desk on the subject of power, for which she has become a slave.

In Scene Five, Lear and four other soldiers are being taken to prison when the Carpenter and his men capture the lot and add Fontanelle to the chain of prisoners. Lear treats her kindly without recognising her; they are led to another prison where the Ghost of the Boy appears again. Fontanelle pleads with her father to intercede for her life, but he is unconscious of her. She is shot. Her body is sliced open and Lear gazes at her entrails, amazed at their beauty, which he created. In growing awareness of his social and political responsibility for their fate, he says, "Her blood is on my hands. ... And now ... I must become a child, hungry and stripped and shivering in blood, I must open my eyes and see!" (74).

Bodice has been brought in. She tries to negotiate with the Carpenter, but he refuses to commute her death sentence and she is bayoneted. Though the Commandant wants to kill Lear too, the Carpenter spares Lear on the grounds that Cordelia knew Lear and won't allow it. However, he doesn't object to Lear's being incapacitated, and the scene ends with the blinding of Lear by a man testing his "scientific" blinding machine. The Ghost frees Lear from the machine and leads him out. In the last scene of Act Two, Lear and the Ghost encounter a Farmer and his family, all off to begin the rebuilding of the wall at Cordelia's command. Lear insists that he must find Cordelia and make her understand what she is doing.

The last act opens at the Gravedigger's house, where Lear now lives with its new inhabitants, Susan and Thomas and their friend John. A "Small Man," a deserter and possibly a spy, comes begging food; he has asked for Lear in the nearby village, and soldiers seeking him follow him onstage. The others hide him against their wishes, Lear insisting that everyone be given refuge.

Months pass, during which time Lear has become a sort of legend in the district for his speeches. But although Cordelia has tolerated his preaching, finally Lear has gained such a reputation that she has decided to put a stop to it, and sends soldiers to arrest the deserters he is harbouring. The Small Man is led away and Lear pushes the rest away too, since being in his company has become dangerous. He is completely discouraged. The insidious Ghost returns again, and offers to poison the well so that no-one will stay.

In Scene Three, Lear is grubbing in the woods. With the completely emaciated Ghost he discusses death, of which the Ghost has become afraid. Cordelia comes to ask Lear personally to stop speaking against her regime, and Lear begs her to pull down the wall before it destroys her. She refuses. Lear tells Susan he is leaving. There is a sound of

squealing; pigs have attacked the Ghost and wounded him; as the scene ends, he drops dead at Lear's feet.

In the closing scene of the play, Susan has brought Lear to the wall, where he is seen by the son of the Farmer he met at the end of Act Two. As Lear begins to shovel earth away from the wall, bringing it down, the Farmer's Son kills him. The other workers are told to leave his body and march off: but "one of them looks back."

Lear contains many instances of a focus on the creation of the theatrical illusion and the contrivances which effect that creation. Fitzpatrick, Oppel, Leslie Smith, and Ruby Cohn are among critics who dissect Bond's use of exaggerated violence, the abrupt changes in tone and character, the variety of ghosts and the disturbing melodrama. In his chapter on the play, Scharine discusses various reviewers' condemnations of Bond for his failure to provide objective correlatives, the inaccuracy of psychology, and even his social irrelevance, among other points (184-185), and draws the positive conclusion that Lear is the sort of play "that gets failure a good name" (Marowitz, qtd in Scharine 185). Nightingale says, "I must admit that the more the seats around me emptied, the more the play impressed me, albeit against many of my instincts and much of my judgement" (Scharine 185). Few critics, including Scharine writing in 1975, are moved to make a definitive judgment of the play, "critical opinions being so diverse and so contradictory" (185). One gets the impression that the play works on the page, or in theory; not, however, on stage. Dark quotes the catcalls of retreating patrons: to Lear's having suffered, "Yes, so have we!" and to the blinding machine, "Use it on the author, mate" (31).

Bond's audiences have historically responded, or felt they ought to respond, to what they see more fully than by occasional laughter, gasps and clapping. Bond himself has not worked to achieve this; he has explained that he does not write with his audience in mind ("A



Discussion" 5). Especially early in his career, it is clear from various statements that he was surprised by his spectators' responses. His plays – and Lear is a good example – do not allow for more than conventional audience response (applause, silence, laughter, and so forth), at least not while the spectators are in the auditorium. His aim being in a broad sense political, Bond desires that the spectator's most significant responses occur once the play is over.

Confronting a play which evokes reaction but allows little immediate room for it, the audience must feel frustrated and impatient – emotions which might spur later action, especially if the intensity of feeling generated by those who leave the crowd in the auditorium is great enough. For the crowd and the individual are two very different, though closely related, beasts, as Elias Canetti has proposed in his monumental study, Crowds and Power. And the types of political action generated by each are also very different, as are the actions and circumstances which initiate that action. Canetti terms the theatre crowd a stagnant crowd, whose typical features are its patience, its passivity, and "an agreeable but not too pressing feeling of density" (40). He notes the proscription, even stronger in concert crowds, against disturbing the group as a whole – by arriving late, clapping at an inappropriate time, and so on. Though the theatre crowd is still comprised of individual members, each with his/her own seat, its movement is physically and emotionally limited:

... one should not underestimate the extent of their real and shared expectation, nor forget that it persists during the whole of the performance. People rarely leave the theatre before the end of the play; even when disappointed they sit through it, which means that, for that period anyway, they stay together. (41)

An implication for Lear of these remarks is that the spectator who expresses him or herself by leaving during the performance is not necessarily expressing disappointment in the play qua play; s/he may be reacting against the frustration of observing, where, in an extra-

theatrical situation, action would usually relieve emotional tension. Being constrained to watch terrible truths is, after all, a common form of torture, especially in this century.

The blinding of Lear is one of the actions that illustrates both Bond's method and the audience's difficulty. It is a cruelty presented in the name of science, and the horror derives not just from the act, but from its being subsumed under a "higher good." The effect of it cannot be lost in the audience's laughter, as Cohn remarks, because the tone of the scene is mixed, as in other of Bond's torture scenes. This saves the violence from Grand Guignol (Modern Shakespeare Offshoots 260).

Compare Lear's blinding with, in Summer, David's analysis of Marthe's condition, another variation of the same device. The jargon of the medical profession is chilling there: it is the opposite of palliative or comforting (David's whole point in using it), and, like the blinding machines, it is a scientific instrument which doubly victimizes, first in that it refers itself to a victim, and second in that it sacrifices that victim to an abstract body of knowledge, "for her own good." David's language is a form of "truth therapy" for her; the blinding machine, if "truth therapy," is so only for the audience. This device of Bond's is similar to one employed in the late Renaissance, in anatomical treatises which purported to illustrate, scientifically, the musculature and so-forth of the human body. Such illustrations were often figures animated "expressively," as Bousquet says, "their hanging strips of flesh [having] gratuitously oval shapes," so that, observing them, one feels them to be "rife with a typically Mannerist ambiguity of intention" (251). Seeing them, one feels an unsettling clash of pathos, curiosity and disgust. The significance of this ambiguity for the mannerists, Sypher says, lies in the "dissociated view of reality" suggested by the anatomical distortions. This is a key to Bond: not that his view of reality is distorted, but that he wishes the spectator to recognise the ambiguity of his or her own (the spectator's) view, and further to give that ambiguity moral and ethical overtones. The violence is spectator-directed, rather

than plot-directed. The ambiguity is not, in Lear and Summer, over whether Bond seriously proposes a scientific view – he does not – but over the savagery of his intentions. The power of the emotional statement is so out of proportion with the context that it draws attention to itself; it is unseemly, rather Swiftian, and mediates between the author and his disturbed audience.

At those moments of disruptive action in the audience, the play teeters on the line between actual and "virtual" experience. What is the difference between watching a terrible thing and watching the sign or representation of a terrible thing? For Aristotle, the virtual act is cathartic as well as instructive. Bond requires that catharsis be restrained, to be discharged in the rectification of the actual horror, before instruction can be said to have been successfully rendered. In the speech from Summer, the horror is cancer; but cancer is a metaphor for the infections of the past – the War, Marthe's xenophobia – which debilitate the present.

One would assume the emotional risk for a spectator of walking out of a performance to be quite high. She or he reconstitutes the audience, for one thing. As the Malvolio removes him/herself from the comfort and anonymity of the crowd, which is subordinate to the group of actors in being the passive recipient of their show, s/he places him- or herself in apposition to the actors. Traditionally, only the actor creates and fills this intermediate space between stage and audience, with an aside or some similar device; but now the spectator has turned actor. While this creates elation, at the same time, a deep feeling of embarrassment and hostility often greets the one who leaves, the same feeling, perhaps, as is evoked by the actor who fails in his role, forgetting lines or mistaking a cue.

What becomes of the audience divided from itself? Like the one who walks out, the spectator who remains may or may not be responding appropriately. If s/he stays for

catharsis at ten o'clock, Bond would say, the performance has failed for that person. The only other good reason for staying, in his view, is to observe in its entirety a "dry run" for action, and/or an explication of a possible scenario. The performance is not just the reflection or simulation of a reality, then, but also of a potential; or rather, it is projection and reflection. Hence the person who walks out has perhaps thwarted the possibility for constructive action (The Bundle xiii- xiv).

Lear would seem to be both reflection and projection. Like Early Morning, it is an image or reflection (Bond calls it "social realism" [Innes, "Edward Bond: From Rationalism to Rhapsody" 109]), an "as if" that can be said to comment on the present by distorting the present reality. In its indeterminate time-frame, and even by anachronisms, it suggests directions in which one might take the present; it illustrates a variety of possible futures. One might say that Lear, Bodice and Fontanelle, and Cordelia represent different possibilities, each with its heavy load of cruelty and its legacy of pain. Their possible worlds are presented in contradistinction to each other, though none is much different from the others.

As with Early Morning, it seems difficult to pose a reading of the play without acknowledging that other mutually exclusive but equally apparent readings exist. A disruptive audience further poses the likelihood that there are thinking spectators with alternative proposals, or with good reasons for negatively criticising the ones they see. Even for a "stagnant" audience, Bond still creates various "realities" which de facto reduce the spectator's reading to just one among several. The following description of Howard Brenton's Weapons of Happiness (1976) is substantially applicable to Bond's earlier play, both plays being similar in utilizing the shock techniques of avant-garde theatre and the desire to educate of agit-prop (Bull 105):

In Weapons, there is no single voice on which the audience can rely. ... The separate viewpoints are shown to have arisen from the very different social

experiences of the various protagonists. This multiplicity of viewpoint is central and is reinforced at narrative level by the constant disruption of the "story", and by the historical jumps. Each scene, in classic Brechtian manner, is in effect a separate discourse with the audience; and the audience is being asked to consider a series of virtual contradictions, which in turn form a larger discourse. No single "reading" of the play is possible. (Bull 106)

A unifying factor in Lear is that Lear himself, in changing, illustrates the various viewpoints which exist around him in the other characters; he has the dubious advantage of watching his own attitudes and behaviours erupt in those among whom he dwells. And, although the play shows much of Brecht's influence, the scenes are by no means disconnected from each other, but tightly linked in ways I will discuss.

In large part, the creation of several "realities" on stage is accomplished by the vehicle of Bond's Lear character. Fundamentally, Lear is a play about Shakespeare's play, as Bond explains to Stoll in their 1976 interview. Bond had King Lear clearly before him when he wrote. He felt that Shakespeare leaves his audience with some false impressions. "One of the very important things in the play was to redefine the relationship between Cordelia and Lear ... Cordelia in Shakespeare's play is an absolute menace," Bond says, implying that Cordelia is a threat because she wishes to establish, or reestablish, Lear's kingdom, reinstating or replacing him in the position of absolute ruler ("Drama and the Dialectics of Violence" 8). The castigation of Goneril and Regan is a lie, so far as Bond is concerned, because in their selfishness and egotism they are truly their father's daughters, and Lear denies that in rejecting them. "I wanted Lear ... to recognise that [Goneril and Regan] were his daughters, I wanted to explain that Lear was responsible" for their attitudes and for his own downfall (8-9). Shakespeare's Lear's responsibility is not just in having made a misjudgement of character, and then in allowing his pride to blind him to Cordelia's worth, but in having ruled as he has and been a model for the behaviour of his two elder daughters. Lear's flaw is in his social conduct, Bond judges, pushing the matter of personality into the background.

Initially Bond's Lear commands the audience's attention and interest. He has personal authority through his status as title character, the other characters being diminished in various ways from the audience – through caricature, through their not being uniformly named, through their presentation in a hierarchical way, with Lear foremost among them. As Cohn says, "though Bond achieves an impressive Lear, his very stature dwarfs the other characters. The Gravedigger's Boy remains an image rather than a character." Cordelia "is all too schematic. ... Bond's daughters ... are caricatures" (Modern Shakespeare Offshoots 262, 263). And Lear himself, as I hope to demonstrate, alternates between realistic and allegorical character throughout the play.

It is clear that there are substantial differences between Lear and King Lear other than those in the characterisation of the title character. On the surface of it, Lear appears to be a modern copy. In the Theatre Quarterly interview quoted above, Bond states, however, "In fact my version goes back more faithfully [than Shakespeare's] to the original source ..." (8). And much initial interest may be assumed to lie in the difference between Shakespeare's character and Bond's. Bond exploits this interest, treating "King Lear as a large quarry which he may plunder at will" (Oppel 5). Beneath the surface, Lear is a challenge to King Lear, a revision and a refutation of the idea that the "good state" can be "sustained," as Albany wishes at the end of King Lear: "... all societies," Bond says, "must resign themselves to the loss of their golden ages ..." ("Drama and the Dialectics of Violence" 8).

Bond is also still reacting to his previous work. "'The trouble with Early Morning is that it isn't real,'" Hay and Roberts report him to say, "'and I had to make up for this by making it politically/royally offensive'" (109). But for Lear, he says, he gets his "image from the world that isn't on the stage.'" He explains this to Karl-Heinz Stoll:

There are always complex reasons for writing a play, there were many reasons why I wrote a play about King Lear. One is that in the English theatre King Lear is a sort of archetypal culture-figure who lays down certain standards for civilized perception – the way civilized people ought to think and feel – and I

thought that should be criticized. He is part of the dead hand of the past which I thought should be removed. That's one reason. Another reason is that Lear, although he belongs to the past, he belongs to it in terms of solutions, but in terms of problems he is in many ways a contemporary figure: He deals with the difficulties that human beings have in their society. He articulates important problems very passionately, often very clearly .... ("Interview with Edward Bond and Arnold Wesker" 412)

To create his "'image from the world that isn't on the stage,'" Bond requires, if my impression of Lear is correct, more flexibility of theatrical conventions than any one set can provide, so as to depict a world of multiple realities. The difficulty, despite Brecht's work, in seeing sets of theatrical styles and conventions as flexible – to accept, for instance, that one character can be read as a type while another is read as a metaphor – leads to the impression I have reported of my first encounter with Lear, that the play is unable to sustain its probability. This impression is based on the fallacy that one sees all of life as a seamless fabric, and always from the same point of view, and that in art one should do likewise. Bond does not take this view. It seems to me likely that people react to Lear as Bullough suggests they do in the storm at sea – by simultaneously suspending one reality and adopting another. The "one reality" may be variously that of their own lives or that of Shakespeare's King Lear, or, progressively, through Lear, the several levels of reality it contains.

As with Early Morning, the spectator will sense continually the inappropriateness of conventional theatrical assumptions. In Lear, the "truth" resides in a clash of probabilities. It is worth keeping in mind Bullough's perception that "probability" is not a matter of judging truth by any standard external to the play, but rather of judging a set of circumstances to be appropriate to each other (Bullough 102). The form of drama, insofar as it is separable from any particular example, is a set of conventions by which the author tacitly conveys certain details to the audience without having to reeducate it completely with each work. The impact of Early Morning is deepened by Bond's playing with form. And, rather like Don Quixote (see Hauser 114), Lear is always mysterious, because to adopt one view of him is to

disallow the possibility of understanding those actions of his which exist in a different frame of reference. If Cordelia did not seem to replace him as protagonist after Act I, the play might be called expressionistic in the monstrous exaggerations that seem to emanate from Lear's view of things. He is the context for the first act, but is placed in context by the other two.

Compare this treatment with Brecht's handling of Grusha and Azdak in Caucasian Chalk Circle. In that play, both protagonists are placed within the frame of the dispute between the Galinsk and Rosa Luxemburg kolchoses. This establishes their equality, rather than the primacy of the former over the latter. Although Cordelia's actions constitute a repetition of Lear's, the same is not true in Lear. Bond's king is in every way the primary character, and Cordelia's actions constitute usurpation. Grusha and Azdak both act out of their sense of justice, which is opposed to the aristocracy's law. Cordelia's sense of justice accords with Lear's law, in that she goes about imposing it in the same way he has ruled, and his symbol of it, the wall, is taken over by her. She is another Lear, and he is introduced into the second and third acts to suffer at her hands what before he legislated. Grusha does not reappear until the last scene of the Azdak story, so that she is never subordinated to him; even when he judges her, she refuses to toady to his judge-role. And he has been clearly shown to be a mere pawn in that role: they are both victims of it. There is no role-reversal between them as there is between Lear and Cordelia. On the other hand, Grusha does not grow or change, as a character, in Azdak's part of the play; she is not there, but in the mountains, becoming even more fully the self we know.

Lear, however, makes a transition from creator of the wall to destroyer of it. Cordelia stands for Lear, while Lear tries out a variation on his former way of life. Perhaps Bond is varying upon the relationship of the Duke and Angelo in Measure for Measure. Lear's level of awareness of what Cordelia is doing is very high, because he has the personal experience



of it, and he talks about it spontaneously: "Cordelia doesn't know what she is doing! I must tell her – write to her!" (8). This allows the audience also to be aware of the action of the second part of the play as a repetition, although it has never seen Lear as ruler, except in the very first scene. Even though the verisimilitude of the character is, as we will see, continually breaking down, then, he is still the eyes through which the audience interprets the action; he constitutes a sustained distancing device in himself.

Structure notwithstanding, the tendency to draw parallels between such two dissimilar Lear plays is variously encouraged by Bond. Hence King Lear is a kind of ghost accompanying this play, so that those two separate worlds are simultaneously being created or evoked and maintained. There is a tendency to see Lear not just as a character but as the embodiment of a set of values, a moral stance, an attitude to an abstract issue. There is also a mitigation of the audience's possibly hostile reaction to Lear's shooting the workman – for, knowing how keenly King Lear's rejection of Cordelia comes to hurt him, the spectator can anticipate that this opening cruelty to a nameless "Third Worker" may well be trivialised by the magnitude of the punishment to redound upon Lear's head. From this point of view, the shooting is not so much a murder as a conventional gesture by which Bond initiates dramatic action parallel with Shakespeare's. He establishes the characters as relative ones – relative to Shakespeare's. This point has profound implications for the establishment of distance in the play, for as we see, it constitutes a judgement of Lear by some standard of probability external to the play itself – the standard of King Lear. The probability of Lear being initially founded on its conformity to the other play, it is destroyed quickly once something improbable to King Lear is intruded. I will discuss this at more length in terms of the relationship between the two kings, though it must be stated here as it colours the audience's view of the whole play.

Along with relating Lear to King Lear, Bond employs several other devices which prevent the audience from settling upon a fixed stage-spectator distance. One of the most trying, for actors and directors at least, occurs in Act I:3, where Bodice and Fontanelle let the audience in on their private thoughts. Language, namely the use of asides, is the device by which Bond shifts distance here. Let us place it in the context of the characters themselves.

Both women have been established at the outset of the play as realistic characters. Lear calls them "blind children" (20) for their naiveté, their self-assertiveness, their desire to manipulate him, their repugnance at his killing the Third Worker, and so-forth. Lear sees in all this that they are "too good for this world," that they're "right to be kind and merciful, and when [he's] dead they can be ..." (18). Because Lear seems to understand why Bodice and Fontanelle are fighting him, the audience has the impression of well-rounded characters developed by the conventions of realistic theatre. It listens to and watches them in the situation, for example, and hears them commented on by family, supporters and antagonists.

When Lear realizes fully what they intend, however, his condemnation of them as ambitious and lustful perverts seem overstated, like raving, especially since his words follow his own act of summary execution just moments before, and their intentions are completely in keeping with what he has taught them.

Hence, by their sudden conformity to the condemnation Lear has hurled at them, the daughters seem to lose dimension, in part because his picture seemed unrealistic. The "real" daughters are, by the conventions established in Scene One, specifically not the perverts described by Lear. Their conformity to his "mad" opinion effects the sacrifice of their three-dimensionality. This effect is strengthened in that the immediately preceding and following scenes enforce the conventions whereby three-dimensionality is established for them. In I:2, Warrington seems to act rationally, giving advice and offering alternatives, and in Scene 4,

the common soldiers, speaking in their dialect, with matter-of-fact attitudes, convey an air of the everyday. This puts Bodice and Fontanelle "out of synch" with the other characters. As with Victoria in Early Morning, much of the horror derives from the fulfilment of Bodice and Fontanelle's wishes when other, saner realities inhabit scenes close by, unable to assert themselves against the insanity of two-dimensional thought. There would be far less horror if all the others were like Bodice and Fontanelle. With their machinations and their allies, they become the surrealistic context when other characters suffer.

As with the upcoming torture of Warrington and the later blinding of Lear, Bond's exaggeration of the daughters contributes in large part to the audience's reaction to them. It results in what Brecht would call an "exercise in complex seeing" (Brecht on Theatre 44). Both daughters are straight-forward; their language is simple and direct; but they are simple-minded in the extreme. Their plans read like the plotting of Cinderella's step-sisters, and their unquestioning assumption that all will go exactly as they wish deprives them of credibility. Insofar as things do go as they intend, the plot seems as contrived and fantastic as they. There is a domino effect at work here, whereby a suddenly "flattened" character strips the next of verisimilitude, the next "flattens" the dialogue, exposing its artificiality, the dialogue punctures the plot, and so-forth. This effect depends on the continual collision of two- and three-dimensionality, where elements randomly but invariably undercut each other.

Various critics, actors, and directors have mentioned the difficulty of performing these roles, which demand abrupt style shifts rather than consistency and motivation, especially in the first part of the play (see Fitzpatrick 128 and Oppel 15, for example). Shifts in style, for actors as well as for audiences, are uncomfortable in that they involve the continual re-establishment of believability, creating an effect of cut-and-paste which could be theatrical anathema. Nonetheless, they also celebrate the elasticity of theatrical illusion, that can be destroyed and recreated so magically. If Bond is reconsidering the need for this

illusion, a possibility which has grown on me, we must consider with what he replaces it. The magic of the theatre occurs at that point where the truth and the illusion are the same and indissoluble, Artaud's truth/lie. Bond works to split the atom.

Not only do character portrayals shift in convention but characters also address asides directly to the audience. Bond's "dramatic characters state their intentions clearly and register their feelings reliably without concerning themselves about the presence of their adversaries," as Oppel says of Lear's daughters (15); in doing so, they renege on their earlier-established psychological plausibility. This is especially true of the daughters because of their long asides in II:3, which are played directly to the audience (Dark 27). The scene is difficult because the aside is an artifice which assumes solitariness, but which cannot, like the film close-up, make the other characters disappear. North, Cornwall, and whichever sister is not speaking might freeze, as in tableau, or might conduct their own improvised and inaudible conversation. The stage might be darkened to render them "invisible": in any case, they must not distract the audience, and they must not "know" there is someone talking. In the Gaskill production, three characters study the map while the fourth speaks.

The usual aside is a short interpolation of thought, a line or phrase which occurs in the mind of the actor-observer and is "thought aloud," with the actor-observer's head turned away from the others on stage. It is often in the nature of marginalia. Büdel mentions that those speeches which under-distance characters are "not [those] meant as a mere aside" (73). In this play, the aside-speaker steps closer than usual to the spectator, in that the asides are not self-directed or random but audience-directed. They automatically place the actor-observer in an intermediate space between audience and characters, a space whose emptiness ordinarily conceals its existence. Filling it "creates" it; in a way, it creates the picture as a proscenium arch does. Bond's actor moves into that space.

The stage directions make Bond's intention clear in the opening of III:2. At other points, however, a director might wonder how to handle the various asides in the play. The solution in the original Royal Court production, according to Dark's notes, was to

choreograph a simple stylization. Bill [Gaskill] explained to the girls [playing Bodice and Fontanelle] that in an aside you have to explain your emotion and communicate directly with the audience. You can hide nothing, keep nothing back. (27)

When one sets this direction beside Bond's general comment to the actors, that each of the characters lives in his own world, and that "if you relate [to each other] too much you'll break up the scene [II:2]" (Dark 27), one has the impression that the line between stage and audience is broken down in this play, that the characters are in the presence of the audience in the same way that, in another play, they would be in the presence of other characters. It seems clear that this direction calls theatrical distance into question: "Just find your own identity. Now that's a very odd note to give an actor – you're usually told the opposite. But it is true that in this play you should live in your own world" (Dark 27). Dark reiterates the point several times, emphasizing that it applies to "Lear especially."

How would this sort of note to the actor translate into the stage picture? Presumably, the audience would be made to see that each character in the play – Lear especially – lives in isolation from the others. Despite the semblance of a human community, the projection is of individuals differentiated from each other in interests, motivations, and values, and linked only by physical and temporal proximity. No shared interests, common goals or mutual alliances bind Lear to his fellows, whose connection is the purely formal one of leader. But this isolation has an even more fundamental basis: it depends on each character seeing the others as fictions vis-à-vis their own realities, and on some characters seeing the audience as "real," as physically present in the same world they inhabit.

Ordinarily, the contents of an aside in no way violate the mode in which a scene is presented. If the speaker is a realistic character, as is the case with Bodice and Fontanelle before they begin their asides, the aside and the manner of its presentation might be expected to vary from the already-established scene in a conventional way. However, when Bodice begins to speak she violates this expectation. First, she reveals simplistic thought which might, in a warring princess, be more appropriate as text than as sub-text (and the aside, as a convention, expresses sub-textual material). Second, she speaks at such length that she draws attention to the artificiality of the speech in itself, and she imposes an artificial pause in the dramatic action upon the other actors. Having moved in the direction of under-distancing by entering the audience's world when she initiates the aside, she moves paradoxically and concurrently away from the audience as well.

Her initial subject-matter is the stuff of quite candid, private conversation: "when he gets on top of me I'm so angry I have to count to ten. That's long enough. Then I wait till he's asleep and work myself off" (24). This is juxtaposed with the unadorned plot information she states, her "game plan" reduced to a few short words, still hardly political. There is no change in tone; the whole aside is of a piece. There is no shaping of the information on her part so as to take the audience and its potential reactions into account, even though she is addressing it directly. (Of course, Bond is highly aware of the audience.) Fontanelle's complete indifference to the nice feelings of her hearers gives them a first-hand experience of what otherwise they can only watch her do to others. The delivery of the information, without pause for consideration or effect, might be expected to "hurry the audience's reactions along"; there is hardly time to feel like a close confidante (or a gratified voyeur) when there is plot information to attend to. One must hope to mull over the intimate details later. In the mean time, the surprise of the character-change, from "round" to "flat," takes as much attention as the contents of her speech do. The audience members are hard at

work and unlikely to come out with a single unified impression or response at the end of this aside.

Almost immediately Bodice's aside begins. Oppel has remarked that the scenes in Lear are developed by parallels and contrasts, rather than sequentially in time (14). This is inescapably the impression given by the second aside, which compounds the effects of the first one. Ordinarily, the two would be considered to be "thought" simultaneously; they could even be performed simultaneously – Bond has used that operatic technique elsewhere. But the audience cannot fail to notice that Bodice's speech directly parallels her sister's.

Given her words, it is a natural first assumption that she hears Fontanelle, just as the audience does: her speech suggests she is offering her experience as an alternative to Fontanelle's. One wonders why one cannot assume that North and Cornwall hear her too. As with Arthur and George, whose thoughts are never either definitively shared with or discrete from each other, it is impossible to tell what is known by any of the characters about the action. The extreme inference is that any character can know its outcome. These four may be well aware of each other's intentions, but proceed even to their own deaths with perfect disregard for what they "know." The problem is one familiar to students of melodrama.

A second possible assumption accounts for this odd lack of connection between dialogue and action, but it poses a different sort of problem. This assumption is that Bodice does not hear Fontanelle at all, but that Bond contrives the parallel in speeches for certain purposes – for instance, to illustrate that the sisters think alike. This assumption proposes that the audience should pay attention to the composition of the speeches. It greatly weakens any sense of verisimilitude which might have been established for any character, because it opens the possibility of considering the whole play in terms of its being a composition, an

artifact. By this assumption, the artist is manifested; the play becomes a sort of puppet play in which every once in a while the puppeteer pauses, his toys drop to the stage floor, and he organises the next scene, or comments on the political weather, or refers to his dog-eared King Lear before he takes up his strings again.

The two sustained asides end. North and Cornwall express their desire for their wives' bodies before they "risk death" and "go to the field," euphemisms which contrast with the directness of Bodice's and Fontanelle's words. The women each indulge in a second informative aside, the themes of which are the confusions – sexual, maturational, and political – of their husbands. A high level of awareness of the difference between "role-playing" and "playing for keeps" can be inferred from this dialogue.

Lear too is made to indulge himself in direct address of the audience, thereby calling the level of his own reality into question. The opening speech in III:2 is a case in point. As Thomas leads him downstage, Lear greets a few on-stage "strangers"; then, "facing the audience," begins the last of his parables, presumably an example of the oratory that has made him so famous throughout the countryside, and such a threat to Cordelia. Direct delivery to the audience of a self-contained segment of a scene is a familiar convention in the opera. In recent times it has fallen into disfavour because it disrupts the action, thereby breaking the illusion and drawing attention to the virtuosity of the performer. Also, it shatters the psychological validity not just of that particular performer, but of all those present on stage – by extension, of all the characters. Sypher locates the use of this device in yet another art form, in mannerist painting. He labels the figure the "Sprecher," which he describes as

a sharply accented foreground figure who faces outward toward the spectator, yet twirls inward, gesturing or glancing toward the action behind him. The Sprecher is a mannerist mode of direct address corresponding to the intimate soliloquy in Jacobean drama, a form of brusque communication between actor and audience that tends to violate dramatic distance. ... the Sprecher puts the picture and the spectator in immediate but equivocal relation, as do the



intensely personal soliloquies in Hamlet; both venture to pass from one context to another, from the theatric situation on the stage to the non-theatric world outside. The Sprecher solicits us – at times assaults us – in our own world, frontally, melodramatically, illegitimately, and involves us in introspective space, which is different from aesthetic space. We yield to his solicitation, but soon find that the problem of adjusting the two worlds, art and life, is not really met but left in heightened ambiguity. The Sprecher is a daring psychological exploit of mannerist art, a case of unsustained but very energetic theatrical logic, a logic operating under the stress of crisis. The Sprecher is a kind of opportunist. (143-144)

Fitzpatrick's discussion of Lear in Page to Stage is apropos. He notes that Lear seems in Act III to be "more in harmony with the world of simple decencies than hitherto" (141), but that the continual and unsettling shifts in conventions which have been employed throughout the play lead to an inability to identify with Lear by this point: "The character has spent too long in the worlds of comic opera and sur-real nightmare" to allow belief in him as a psychologically developed character who gives evidence of moral growth by the end of the play (142). That is, the audience just cannot believe Lear, or believe in him, especially since the modes by which he chooses to express what he has learned – parable and allegory – constitute, yet again, breaks from the conventional dialogue of the rest of the act. Fitzpatrick makes the critical point that "while readers can rest in ambivalences, productions must find an emphasis ... The script, however, seems to require that such choices leave room for the contrary possibility ..." (143-44).

If consistency of character, or at least rationally and psycho-logically valid explanations for inconsistency, be part of what the audience demands to see staged, then Lear might indeed prove better in the reading, that is, truer to Bond's vision, as Fitzpatrick implies. If one should forego that demand, and the demand for consistency of convention in other aspects of the play as well, it is perhaps possible to "leave room for the contrary" in a staged production. The stylistic, linguistic, and other anomalies which occasion the shifts of distance are, in other words, formal requirements for meaning.

The whole problem is, of course, mightily compounded by the play's relationship to King Lear. This is a main factor in over-distancing Lear. That he is not alluding to Shakespeare's Lear just to dispose of it and get on with his own story is made clear by Bond's continued, direct reference to King Lear throughout his own play. The first scene in particular illustrates traits the two Lears have in common – their temper when they are challenged, the injustice of their actions. They are basically alike in being at (or beyond) the height of their powers, still in control, but perhaps only nominally, of themselves and others. They are each attended by councillors and daughters, at moments when they are acting significantly for what they see as the good of their people and for their own future security. The stunning introduction of Cordelia's name in the last scene of Act I, Lear's saying to the Gravedigger's Boy's Ghost, "Cry while I sleep, and I'll cry and watch you while you sleep" (II:2), the animal imagery, and the echo of "nothing" (for example, in "I know nothing, I can do nothing, I am nothing" in III:2) are a few examples of his sustained allusion, on various levels. The connection between the two plays has received much critical attention. The spectator is not permitted to settle into the illusion of Bond's play, or to accept Bond's Lear as a being entire unto himself. Shakespeare's Lear is always present.

This belies the realism with which Bond renders Lear. He is a man with memory (it hurts him to see Bodice's ghost put on her dead mother's dress), the full range of passions, dreams both literal and metaphorical, physical needs and sensitivities, a sense of his social being, and mortality. Yet at every critical point, he is not a man, but a rewriting of a great theatrical character, a mouthpiece for a revised world view, and finally a symbol of (blind) action. John Hall goes further, stating that "Lear himself is only an archetype; the character is inspired equally by figures like Tolstoy, Leonardo da Vinci, and Bertrand Russell [who] live out the problems of the species" ("Edward Bond"). The inability to embrace Lear as a tragic hero derives from a double attitude towards "great men" which Bond confronts, as do others of his generation. Howard Brenton, explaining the destruction for him of "any

remaining affection for official culture," a term which aptly describes Bond's attitude to Shakespeare, remarks that "all of them, the dead greats, are corpses on our backs – Goethe, Beethoven ..." (Bull 14). Bond's *Lear* carries the corpse of Shakespeare's. This is a specifically cultural, literary burden, and the statement the play makes pertains most directly to the role of culture vis-à-vis society.

Invoking the ghost of King Lear (which Lear is the ghost?), Bond presents this resultant problem to his audience, that it must suspend its judgement of Lear's actions, insofar as these are seen to depend on a larger context than is apparent at any given moment. This context is never quite clear, but always about to become so. When he kills the Third Worker, for example, how is the audience to respond to him? Consequently, Lear can be observed, but not judged, embraced or dismissed. Each time the spectator is reminded of King Lear, I would argue, Lear suffers the breakdown, through over-distancing, of his believability. He becomes an archetype and that statement transfers to Shakespeare's king. The "clash between myth and reality" which Bond says is the content of Act II is a battering at Shakespeare's Lear, whose "dead hand" Bond's Lear struggles to throw off. This basic alternation of believability with two-dimensionality is presented in various other ways in the character of Lear as well.

One is in his mode of speaking. Lear makes two kinds of utterance – a pragmatic, concrete type that relates to his physical condition and the concrete activity going on around him; and a metaphorical, allegorical commentary which is the distillation of physical experience, but not necessarily the result of his own experience in the play. Lear is, in Sir Thomas Browne's words, "that great and true amphibium, whose nature is disposed to live, not only like other creatures in diverse elements, but in divided and distinguished worlds ...". (qtd in Sypher 176). Examples of the concrete, immediate speech are, when he notices details of wall-building in the opening scene, "Who left that wood in the mud?" (16), and his

last words, as he begins to dig at the wall, "I'm not as fit as I was. I can still make my mark" (102). They are scattered throughout the play. Examples of the metaphorical type are equally pervasive. Lear's short soliloquy in Act I:5 is typical:

My daughters have taken the bread from my stomach. They grind it with my tears and the cries of famished children – and eat. The night is a black cloth on their table and the stars are crumbs, and I am a famished dog that sits on the earth and howls. I open my mouth and they place an old coin on my tongue. They lock the door of my coffin and tell me to die. My blood seeps out and they write in it with a finger. I'm old and too weak to climb out of this grave again. (31)

Lear frequently alternates between these two kinds of speech. Indeed, one of the surprises about him is that even where he is realistically drawn, he does not necessarily act or speak in an appropriate way in any given situation. His speech is at odds with other character elements. Nevertheless, his pragmatic dialogue generally fills out or furthers the plot, while the other commentates. One type of speech might be said to tend to over-distance him, while the other tends to under-distance. To whom he is speaking with the first type of speech is always clear: it is the other characters. With the second kind, it is not so clear. In terms of dramatic verisimilitude, those about him cannot always be expected to understand his metaphors; sometimes, for that matter, it is not immediately apparent, because of his speech, in which of the two Lear-worlds he is speaking, and there is a hiatus in the audience's ready understanding while a shift is made.

An example follows that passage just quoted. The scene is the woods. Lear is outcast following the successful insurrection of his daughters. He sees the Gravedigger's Boy coming on with bread and water:

LEAR.	Who are you?
BOY.	I live near here.
LEAR.	Is that bread?
BOY.	Yes.
LEAR.	Is it poisoned?
BOY.	No.
LEAR.	Then my daughters didn't send him. ... (31)

In plot terms, the Boy cannot understand what Lear means by these questions; he doesn't know who he is or any of his background – he is not the true "audience" for Lear's questions. In any case, Lear might be said to be exaggerating; that is, if one accepts the convention of realism of the first scene of the play, there is no reason to believe of Bodice and Fontanelle that Lear need literally to fear poisoning. On the other hand, the immediately preceding scene has presented two daughters who are fairy-story caricatures, jumping up and down in glee over a nauseating and horrible torture, and alternating "purl and plain" with "doo-de-doo" in a man's ears. At this moment with Lear, we do not seem to be in that world, which was petty, violent, and comic without relief. In what world does Lear say "Is it poisoned?" It is as if Shakespeare's Lear speaks. The madman (and Bond's Lear is mad, one could argue, in at least the first two acts of the play) always has an illusory audience. Not only the Boy is excluded from it; a madman's reality cannot be said to be inhabited by anyone at any level. But it still exists, side by side with other realities, unassimilated. Thanks to Lear's mode of speech, he exists as both realistic – three-dimensional – and two-dimensional, at one and the same time.

Another way in which the spectator is shown this combination of believability with over-distancing abstraction is in Lear's being companioned, not just by Shakespeare's Lear, but also, like Arthur, by ghosts. In the "Job" scene (II:2), the ghosts of his daughters appear, not as their adult selves, but as the children they used to be. Neither daughter being dead, the audience is encouraged to respond to their presence intellectually as well as emotionally. Bodice and Fontanelle are ghosts in a particular sense only; they are apparitions which emanate from Lear's mind at the bidding of Lear's significant companion, the Ghost of the Gravedigger's Boy. The mingling of realities carries over from the physical into the spiritual world in the encouragement to differentiate among types of ghost. Bodice and Fontanelle are rather Dickensian, like the ghosts of Scrooge's nightmares, while the Gravedigger's Boy's Ghost is created in accordance with some orthodox religion, perhaps Catholicism, as the

returned spirit of a murdered man. But they are, all three, truly the inhabitants of Lear's mind, and have no effect on or reality for anyone but him. Therefore they reinforce the perception that he exists in a different world from all the other characters. Insofar as the audience is given this "window" onto how Lear sees the world, it is enabled to step momentarily "through the looking glass," seeing what he sees as he sees it. The addition of this level of illusion does not break down the verisimilitude of the play, but it prepares a context of shifting illusions.

The idea of different worlds inhabiting the same stage is perhaps a comfortable one in Lear, since it dismisses the necessity of relating elements to each other and fitting together all the incongruities of the play. Lear cannot be integrated into the play at the same level as the other characters, in spite of the marked realism of various portions of the play. Furthermore, there is no clear differentiation of the Lear-character from the others such as would exist if he or they were treated consistently. Sometimes his, or their, language, actions and reactions conform to a shared (realistic) model, and sometimes they don't.

Another way of seeing Lear's association with the ghost-characters is to say that he steps, in those scenes with them, into a variation of the play-within-a-play, in the same way that Arthur "steps into" Hamlet in Scene Eight of Early Morning, when their murdered father appears to Arthur and the failing George. The Early Morning scene, a witty send-up of the Hamlet parallel, includes such highly comic effects as the lunges of the chained Albert at George, whose terrified "Cock-a-cock-aroo!" defeats him. Act II:2 of Lear, which also has its comic potential, is a much more elaborate creation of the same sort. The scene shifts in tone several times. It opens with the earthy remarks, in their dialect, of two soldiers. The Boy's Ghost appears and Lear addresses him in the elevated prophetic language which is one of the marks of his stature. The daughters' ghosts are summoned and their little-girl presence humanises both them and Lear. In the "Lear Casebook," Dark notes that in the première

production, this portion of the scene was played in slow motion to distinguish it from the rest (Dark 25). Obviously this provides a sort of frame for the sequence that would contribute to the sense of its theatricality. Ben intrudes with Lear's food and this clashing language: "Don't 'and it out, grandad. They'll be round for the empties in a minute. Don't blame me if it ain't 'ow yer like it. I ain't the chef, I'm only the 'ead waiter" (53). This clearly intensifies the distance between the slow-motion memory-sequence and the rest of the scene.

Lear and his ghost daughters remain silent during a second intrusion. Against the tableau of the old king with his daughters at his knees, three "methodical and quiet" soldiers search the room, one instructing another, and contrast searching Lear's cell, "this 'ole," with fighting the enemy. The agitated daughters go into a different realm, to serve tea at their mother's funeral. The desperate and deranged Lear, crying out "But my mind! My mind!," falls unconscious on his sack as an old orderly comes in.

Again an intruder breaks the continuity of the action: of this man, the Porter in Macbeth is the type. Like the Porter, ("Wake heaven with your knocking"), the Orderly introduces the idea of the world beyond death, although he is an allegorical creature. His vigorous language reminds the audience, perhaps, that in the other play it would laugh at him. But he is macabre; although he speaks commonly, as it were to establish his healthy, earthy attitude to life, he is hundreds of years old, has "'eard every crime in the book confessed t'me," and inhabits a Purgatory he will never leave because he can't even remember the crime which brought him there long ago. The tone of this scene differs from that in Macbeth, as does its tension. Lear's body, in full view, is unthreatened, but his mind is under siege: he is in the reverse position to Duncan. When Lear wakes, overcome with guilt and grief, the now very threatening Boy's Ghost approaches with the account of his own awakening in death, a rotting body. He has mastered the horror of himself. But his insidious question, "Are you afraid to touch me?" expands the audience's understanding of

his uneasy relationship with Lear; the Boy's Ghost turns his recollected self-loathing into a trap for Lear, who responds as if he had walked from the stage of Macbeth onto a King Lear set: "Cry while I sleep, and I'll cry and watch while you sleep" (56).

Among the notable features of this scene one might include its being a pastiche or collage of times, tones, and realities, moving around in Shakespeare's plays, prison cells, the relative discomforts of modern army wartime assignments, dream, Shakespearean background. The technique is cinematic, focussing in and out on Lear and the ever-present, ever-changing alternative action that Bond provides. Dark mentions this scene especially when he points out that "Many images in the play are reminiscent of Blake's painting" (28). Lear himself is always present, but he alternates between being in the background and the foreground of the scene, which is fragmented by this alternation, and which thus mirrors the fragmentation of his own mind.

The device is à propos because it comes at the point in the play where Lear has just looked into the mirror and seen the animal there, that is, where he has recognised the suffering creature in himself: this is the turning-point for him, as various critics note. While in Early Morning the distancing devices often seemed to pick up and knit together the significant moments concerning Arthur, in Lear they often reveal the characters interpreting themselves.

Bond makes strong statements by the use of allusive visual images which direct the audience's attention outside the play. Lear is by no means the first play in which he collects images and presents them through various media; vide the "sequences of slides showing random advertisements, newspaper cuttings and comic-strips to cover scene changes" (Coult 16) in the Gaskill revival of Saved. As mentioned above, Dark notes that "many images in the play are reminiscent of Blake's paintings – Lear with his daughters in the cell is like 'Job



and His Daughters' for instance" (28). Smith compares Bond's work with that of "The paintings of Francis Bacon, or the Goya engravings of the Disasters of War ..." (80), and Opiel sees the death of the Boy as

a single "tableau" which reminds one of Goya's unrelenting strokes, [in which] the torments are united to which the victims will be subjected. ... The scene acquires a grotesque quality which of course does not veil the deadly seriousness of the dramatic events; on the contrary, it actualises them to the point of intolerability." (17)

To have suddenly presented before it a Goya engraving, circa 1810-13, or a Blake watercolour, circa 1826, is to be confronted with a full-scale and unabashed anachronism, of course. Lear abounds in anachronisms; one might almost say that it moves among time frames rather than that it digresses from one. In response to a query from Gaskill, Bond responds that the anachronisms "are rather important and part of my style ... [they] are for the horrible moments in a dream when you know it's a dream but can't help being afraid." He claims they "must increase and not lessen the seriousness," that they "aren't careless or frivolous touches," and that "'mixed periods' is wrong. The anachronisms just occur" (Dark 22). The "copies" of art works in Lear help, so far as Bond is concerned, to remove the time frame from the play altogether: "The play isn't ... a period piece. Any creation of any age on the stage is arbitrary." At the same time, they suggest that Lear is one of many voices, crying out for the redress of the social problems which manifest themselves in persecutions and wars.

Hence these tableaux make an interesting statement concerning the nature of the art work, as well as wresting from the audience its idea that the action of the play is confined to a particular age. They allude to the war theme and provide a twist on the biblical reference: Lear is not like Job, at the end of his spiritual journey, by any means; and insofar as he is reconciled with his (three) daughters, that reconciliation is negative. Movement back and forth along the time continuum, as well as from one form of artistic expression to another,

jars the audience out of its illusion that the play is a self-contained experience, just as the allusion to King Lear does. In the same way, a tableau distorts by exaggerating one moment so greatly out of proportion to the shapeliness of the rest. The lens has gone "too close," and disproportionately magnified one moment.

It is a sustained, high level of awareness which is responsible, in my view, for one of the most stunning of the distance-shifts in the play, the death of the Boy, which is presented in a cluster of visual and aural effects. It occurs near the end of Act I, in a scene which introduces two central characters, the Gravedigger's Boy's Wife – designated "Wife" in the script and nameless till the last moments of dialogue – and the Carpenter, who loves her. This Wife is pregnant, reluctant to care for Lear, and engaged in household chores, preparing supper and hanging out the wash. The Carpenter, a cradle- and coffin-maker in the village, has brought a wooden box, a cradle, for her baby. The Boy, who has exchanged his gravedigging for the professions of pigherd and farmer, goes down the on-stage well to get fresh water for his wife, and finds the body of Warrington. He carries it up on stage, "dripping wet," and notices bubbles on the lips: Warrington is still alive and a pool of water spreads around his body.

At this point there is a pause. "The BOY looks at LEAR. Stops. Suddenly he panics and shouts. Cordelia!" twice (43). The sergeant and the soldiers appear:

SOLDIER E shoots him. He staggers upstage towards the sheets. His head is down. He clutches a sheet and pulls it from the line. CORDELIA stands behind it. Her head is down and she covers her face with her hands. SOLDIER D is preparing to rape her. The BOY turns slowly away and as he does so the sheet folds round him. For a second he stands in silence with the white sheet draped round him. Only his head is seen. It is pushed back in shock and his eyes and mouth are open. He stands rigid. Suddenly a huge stain spreads on the sheet. (43-44)

The soldiers go off to kill the pigs and to rape Cordelia, the bodies of Warrington and the Boy are dropped down the well to the accompaniment of pig-squeals, and Lear is taken off,

declaiming, "O burn the house!" The pig-killer, blood on his "face, neck, hands, clothes and boots," follows the sergeant towards the house. But the Carpenter has stalked him and kills him with a cold chisel before he gets inside. The Carpenter then enters the house with the soldier's rifle and the audience hears three shots. The act ends.

Clearly this several minutes of action is a great change from the earlier part of the scene, in which there is a predominance of dialogue over action and the plot moves forward only slightly. The purpose there is to establish a particular picture of the Wife, a nurturer asserting her authority in the household and reinforcing her traditional position in the family. Pregnant, she seems vulnerable. The movement of the scene up to the point where the Boy puts Warrington's body down is steady, not rushed. Thereafter, the action moves in spurts, a fast sequence punctuated by pauses like snapshots which set images in the spectator's mind. It is choreographed so as to establish a sequence of tableaux: the first when the Boy stands with Warrington in the pool of water at his feet and Lear on the bench; the second when he pulls the sheet from the line to reveal Cordelia standing, head in hands, and the soldier undoing his pants; and so-on. The dialogue reinforces the looking: "Chriss look at this! ... Look at this blowin' bubbles! ... 'Ere's another one." And Lear recapitulates the sequence in his cry:

	O burn the house! You've murdered the husband, slaughtered the cattle, poisoned the well, raped the mother, killed the child – you must burn the house! You're soldiers – ... O burn the house! Burn the house! Burn the house!
SOLDIER F.	Shut it an' move. (45)

On top of the visual effects there is a sequence of auditory ones: the Boy's shout, "Cordelia"; the squealing of the pigs, which continues for several lines of dialogue; Lear's outcry which begins when the pigs stop and strongly contrasts with the rest of the scene in its style and tone; Cordelia's "short, high gasp"; and finally the three shots.

Bond has written elsewhere about the inadvisability of ending a scene on a moment of high drama, as the emotional response triggered in the audience may override the intellectual one (Hay and Roberts 275). But the problem for the director of this scene is rather that the welter of "climactic moments" must be carefully orchestrated so as not to blur or cancel each other out. They are prepared by the life-with-death images in the first part of the scene – the well, dug as a grave and transformed by the spring of water, the descent into this well by the Boy and his return with the not-dead Warrington, the presence of a carpenter of coffins and cradles. Several of the tableaux are unified in the same image: Warrington lying in the pool of water; the bucket of blood just brought from the well; the stain spreading over the Boy's body; and the pig's blood smeared all over Soldier E, who intends to pass it further to Cordelia – "An' I'll 'ave 'er reekin' a pig blood. Somethin t' write 'ome t' tell mother." These comprise an idea which is physicalised and then shown in various aspects, so that the audience can see it from all sides, as it were. It is an idea fragmented and shown as it affects different members of a group. The technique is filmic. It sustains the tension at a high level for several moments, on a plateau, rather than bringing it sharply to a peak and then letting it drop away.

As the introduction to this sequence, the cry "Cordelia!" must arrest the audience. The other characters, so far, have borne varying resemblance to their Shakespearian counterparts, but in their being reconstituted and renamed lies the tacit assumption that they are not giants, not sacred, whereas Lear keeps in the retention of his name something solid, unchangeable, something to be measured against; he is a fixed star. With the cry "Cordelia!" there appears another such. She is in apposition, equal to an artifact from Shakespeare's play, a character who is not a variation on the other Cordelia but defined negatively: she is not Cordelia. The audience knows her, but does not know, until this point, when she is almost murdered, who she is. And when it knows her, it learns who she is not. She becomes a dark horse at this moment.

The change is like that by which Bullough describes the transformation of the fog, from life-threatening to the spectator, to aesthetic vista – not that the spectator's life has been threatened, though certainly s/he has been emotionally involved. Structurally, something must happen at this point. Bond builds the tension in a two-pronged way – through the plot, where the excitement discharges with the Boy's death, and through the image-patterns, where the excitement discharges through the tableaux. He then further fragments the discharge of tension by reminding the audience that it is witnessing a "virtual," and furthermore an historical, moment of a sort.

The cry, "Cordelia," reinforces this double awareness. It is a cry which calls for a complex of responses, and perhaps for this reason alone, it is distancing. One might describe it as having the effect of shrapnel, or better (Bond might not appreciate the image) of a dud-dum: the spectator expects to be struck by an understanding; but at the moment of impact, the understanding multiplies itself at several levels.

What can be the advantage of exciting this sort of multi-reaction, rather than a cathartic discharge or even a single shock of the types one might find in the Theatre of Cruelty or the Epic Theatre? We must hazard the possibility that Bond sees it as coming closer to conveying truth; "I always write plays in order to demonstrate some truth about our lives" (Stoll 422). Also, although it is true that, as Hay and Roberts say, "there are no conventionally 'good' characters" in Lear, as there are in King Lear (Bond: A Study 116), that fact is not apparent at this juncture: the Boy seems humane and compassionate, and his Wife's fears justifiable. So their being murdered and raped is quite likely to excite pity, and Lear's being saved by their avenger compounds the likelihood of cathartic discharge. But the additional shocks forestall that. Let us pose the question negatively: what is the disadvantage of the single shock?

Consider an unlikely comparison, the case of the chained men in Plato's cave. Say they are freed; they rush from the cave, rejecting those shadows and even the comforting fire. The shadows are fake, and the real awaits their expanded vision. The single shock of knowing that their former experience was partial involves rejection of the old perception in favour of the new truth, and it oversimplifies both. Now suppose, having been freed, these men are again denied their freedom, and forced to endure the additional knowledge of imprisonment. They might fall into a deep cynicism at being in bondage, or come to enjoy the shadows in and for themselves, as giving relief and diversion from their condition. They might make a deeper commitment than ever to the truth of the shadows, contrasting it with the untruth of freedom. Perhaps they will turn scientist, furthermore, and discover the role the fire plays in the creation of the shadow-world. Perhaps, knowing that another world exists, they will decide that specific meaning has been intended for themselves in what selection of it they see. But eventually the less fearful among them might make a fuller recognition, that the shadows are not fake, but merely, rather, one aspect of truth. Arguing among themselves, they might finally allow a diversity of possibilities.

Now suppose these men are freed a second time. How quickly will they rush to the entrance of the cave, with their minds sharpened to the mode of argument and the gradations of definition available to "reality?" What motive might guide them to the entrance: can they benefit from a simple shift in point of view; and have they the right or responsibility to assert their view upon another? They have been exposed to a situation much like that created by Bond at the end of Act I: restrained by invisible chains, Bond's audience witnesses a few moments of familiar action, drawn out in an unfamiliar way, fabricated by obvious techniques, arguable in meaning and content, and contrasted with other worlds. Hesitating at the mouth of the cave, it is in an excellent position to use what it has learned. Plato says that of the "three arts which are concerned with all things: one which uses, one which makes, [and] a third which imitates them ... the user of them must have the greatest experience of

them, and he must indicate to the maker the good or bad qualities which develop themselves in use ..." (qtd in Dukore 25).

This is the audience which Bond is creating. However, at the moment when Cordelia suddenly "appears" in the Boy's cry, Bond is by no means ready to release his spectators, but only to allow them, in the coming intermission, the opportunity to ruminate. He has provided them with potentially contradictory material, as if to stimulate discussion. Cordelia has not, after all, been presented sympathetically as yet, but at best non-committally. As the act closes, though, her life is jeopardized by brutes, and fear for her might be expected to be very great:

LEAR.	She's pregnant.
SOLDIER D.	It can play with the end.

Furthermore, she is the namesake of a very sympathetic Shakespearean character; his Cordelia is among the sweetest, noblest women in his canon. The audience has seen Lear transformed in this play, but not to the revolutionary extent that Cordelia will be. Hindsight and a knowledge of Bond's canon tempt one to a further perception, also, that the Boy's Wife is pregnant metaphorically speaking, and with various potential offspring. She is pregnant with her own future and delivered of it both by her being named "Cordelia" as the political acts of violence are perpetrated, and by the rape and subsequent abortion: a future of blood. She is pregnant with murdered hope, and with a destiny which, while she mothers it, is a re-enactment of the past rather than a move into the future. The act of naming her at this crisis point is a kind of red herring, insofar as it temporarily diverts the audience from some such ambiguous interpretation. A Christian parallel to the secular story (Cordelia as a type of Mary) might be to Bond's point, but if so, it is rendered sub-textually. In later contemplation, a spectator might use it as a tool to bring into greater relief the ambiguity of the Cordelia-image. Given only a moment, however, the audience will make a biased (and incorrect) reassessment of her, not in terms of the play before it, but in terms of Shakespeare; so the shouting of her name at this point is like the stripping off of a tattered cloak to reveal

royal velvet. The expansion to include Lear's faithful daughter initially weakens the integrity of the scene. Once the spectator begins to interpret what s/he sees, however, Lear, like King Lear, moves onto the cosmic level.

The audience's immediate reaction fuses to one elicited by the almost simultaneous death of the Boy, with the emblematic blood spreading on his body. "This is not simply a shock effect," as Leslie Smith says,

Although it does, undeniably, shock. It is a strange, fantastic image of a living man turning into a ghost before our eyes, preparing the way for the continuing presence of the boy ... and in the strange paradox it also suggests ... a bleeding ghost, it evokes a kind of death-in-life, a feeling of something sinister and unhealthy ...." (76)

As it will come to know, the audience is seeing in an image of the Boy what it will see in action regarding Cordelia as well, the transformation from seemingly positive to negative character.

The tableau, which Bond employs for the Boy's death, the blinding of Lear and the display of Fontanelle's entrails makes a very different use of the actor than does the shift among styles, which is a comment on how one judges individuals differently, depending upon the context in which one meets them. Here the actor's body becomes an object, like a screen upon which images and even emotions are projected. At the start of the sequence, the frightened Lear sits upstage "and watches." The Boy is looking at Lear when "suddenly he panics and shouts." A moment later, the emblematic blood on the sheet designates an abstraction: murder. The theatricality of this is important, but not the point. The separation of an essential crie de coeur humaine from the human body is achieved by it. This essential humanity has nothing to do with individual perceptions or their expression by individuals. It cannot be contained in or expressed by any individual, nor can it be distorted. The actor who acts as the vehicle for it is a scenic element, and not simply one among others, but the most powerful vehicle possible. Bond's use of it is analogous to Appia's use of light and Jones'



use of the three great masks in his design for the banquet scene in Macbeth. Bond says, "Instead of scenery I use objects as elements in a society. ... You can think of things on stage as a sort of net or some sort of fog pushing people around to their various positions" (Innes, "Edward Bond" 112). The Boy-image "pushes Lear around." The symbolist set provides a close parallel to Bond's set, in that the actor there is often confronted by the symbol. The expressionist set is in a way opposite to Bond's, in that it is a projection from the actor's inner self onto the space around him. In Lear, the symbolic environment is imposed upon the body of the actor. This is unusual. Which actor is used to display the symbol, while not irrelevant, is a subsidiary concern.

In the interview cited above, Bond tells Innes, "The things on the stage are an interpretation of what used to be called 'character' in the theatre." One can see, then, that in a particular sense, the actor still reflects "character" – but only to the same degree and in the same way that anything else on the stage does. A primary effect of this manner of displaying the symbol is that while it tends to erase the individuality of the character for the moment, making him or her the object or background or vehicle, to reflect it off a human body humanises the abstract quality of the symbol itself. The flash of spreading blood on the white sheet is something "done to a human" whose individuality is eclipsed by the image, while his humanity is intensified. This gives it emotional power. Simultaneously, the Boy's face reflects dehumanisation in becoming just the three O's of eyes and open mouth – the fleshed skull. This is the look of Munch's "The Cry." With that painting, the landscape begins to take on the curvature of the man's face; here, the Boy begins to take on the abstraction of the setting. Visual over-distancing here functions as euphemism does in language. The horrible hidden truth is unveiled when the mask to cover it appears. The (over-distanced) abstraction is balanced with the (under-distanced) actor's body.

Bond has remarked that the characters in the play all comprise one character, society. But it can also be said that everything in the play is an aspect of Lear himself. Even the play's structure, especially and obviously in the fragmentation of scenes like this, reflects a truth about the man. Lear is his society – because he is its king and its protagonist, because he creates it and lives at every level in it, and because his personal traits, deficiencies and weaknesses are extended into it. This sort of relationship between title role and surrounding play-society does not exist between Hedda Gabler, say, or with Hamlet, Faust, Saint Joan, or Antigone, because however representative these figures are of their societies, they are also clearly differentiated from them. Such is not the case in Lear. The world Lear leaves is peopled with Lears, and ruled by Lears. The critical clamour over Bond's so-called optimism points this up: a glance backwards, a spadeful of earth – these gestures are the paradigm of the human race on the planet, struggling stout-heartedly on, an infinitesimal speck in the vast black. The pessimist among the critics must share his place with the optimist, for Bond, I believe, creates a Janus of their two views.

It is difficult to settle the question of distance with Lear for all the reasons I have discussed. He cannot be "characterised" any more than Arthur can be in Early Morning; this is the root of the difficulty. One is obliged to discuss him as the embodiment of certain social tendencies or abstract ideas, or as a function serving certain purposes in the play. Who he is is never quite as important as where he is – in background or foreground, at the crux of a problem, in the position of leader, victim, or worker, or in his own mad dream. The reader's key to his position is largely contained in the dialogue, or in the sketchy stage directions. Hence one is obliged to discuss his language, which, if he speaks of himself, is formal, often allegorical in content, and to discuss his relationship to others. Both of these deflect attention from the man himself onto the results of a king's being made a commoner. An important ramification of constructing this play in such a way that Lear is central but not

cohesive as a character is that particular interpretations of the play, if they are not to contradict themselves, may seem too narrow to account for the play as a whole.

Bond has achieved an unusual creation in *Lear*. In fact, from Scopey of The Pope's Wedding to Lord Are of Restoration, he has refused to create a "heroic" figure, while in *Lear*, he creates a figure who becomes even less and less, as the play proceeds, the protagonist. For many reasons, not the least being the association with his namesake, he is the commanding center of attention when the play opens. Near the end, he lives in the company of people who do not know him; his kingly functions have all been usurped long since and exercised by others for much of the play, so that those others, notably Cordelia, can almost claim the position of "protagonist" in the play; and his death is noticed by one lowly soldier among a group, who happens to glance at him. This same treatment of the protagonist occurs in The Bundle.

In fact, this gradual change in treatment of the protagonist probably represents one of the major features of Bond's development as a playwright. Initially, most of his protagonists are "innocent murderers." In Black Mass (1970), Christ himself slips from the Cross to poison the communion wine. In Bond's own view each protagonist evolves from the actions of the preceding one, especially in the first several of his plays ("A Discussion" 13-14). One can see in these early characters an initial inability to understand a world of corruption; a cautious meddling with people and events, mixed with and overcome by the tendency to observe without acting; a desire not to accept responsibility for their acts; and slowly, with *Lear*, a dawning recognition that "innocent murders" by would-be saviours do not make appropriate improvements upon man's lot. They are especially inappropriate if they create, of the murderer, a hero – that very fellow whom much of Bond's work describes.

By the time of Lear, Bond has dispensed with the label "hero." And by the end of The Bundle, when Wang says "It is easy to find monsters – and as easy to find heroes" (78), one infers that heroism and humanity have little to do with each other. Lear is special not because he is a greater man than others, or a man placed in unusual circumstances, but because he has arrived at a certain understanding of the socio-political climate of his time, which as king he helped create, and he is willing to labour towards creating a better world. Furthermore, he is more likely to be successful in his role as worker than he could ever be as king. He tries to work quickly, to "make his mark," in spite of his blindness and age. He notices that no-one cares for the shovel, but he does not think of himself as a neglected implement; all self-expression is complete by the end of the previous scene:

I see my life, a black tree by a pool. The branches are covered with tears.  
The trees are shining with light. The wind blows the tears in the sky. And my  
tears fall down on me. (100)

This last of his parables seems to suggest that he has come to weep for himself quite unself-consciously. There is a most impersonal tone, conveyed by the short, flat statements, to words which in any case smack more of the allegorical than of the flesh-and-blood. The individual in him is obliterated even before his death, which has the same relative significance as that of the Third Worker he murders in the first scene. He has replaced this man, and likewise will be replaced.

By the time of Lear, it is becoming clear that even having a protagonist in his plays works against Bond's intentions, insofar as the protagonist, even in modern drama, is most often seen to be that character out of whose personality the action of the play develops. Bond sees character as contingent upon events, not vice versa. This is why his Lear is new-born, even at the end of his life: he has had few experiences, and has understood little of those few, until he sees his mirror image as an animal in a cage, or he gazes at the entrails of Fontanelle, or he recognises that the Ghost must die. He has always seemed to be in charge, but things have been done to Lear, who is really a passive recipient moulded by external

events. He spends almost the whole length of the play in other people's care. And when he dies, he is best replaced, Bond implies, not by an individual possessed of masterly and unusual traits, but by the anonymous worker, one among many. An implication is that the acts of the faceless individual can contribute to the well-being of all, whereas those of the celebrated individual cannot. There may be regret at his passing, but one must avoid the temptation to emulate the protagonistic individual, if this emulation masquerades as the commitment to make a contribution towards a better world; for, it seems, before one can emulate a person, one must create the circumstances which call that person into existence. The circumstances which create the hero are those of oppression, unjust action, degradation of the many, the denial of humanity. Bond shares his view, obviously, with Brecht.

The moments I have discussed in which distance is shifted have this in common: a focus on individuals whose individuality is being stripped from them, to reveal their fundamental humanity or the encroachment upon that humanity by role-playing. Although the play is generally over-distanced, then, by the various methods I have discussed, the moments of shock themselves invite the audience's empathy. They are moments of reaffirmation of the audience's commitment to the issues of the play, a reaffirmation of the fundamental human values, which societal structures – cultural, legal, political – tend to crush. But they are equally moments in which Bond illustrates that humanity is crushed by those structures.

The Bundle is a radical revision of Narrow Road to the Deep North, (1968), and is doubly subtitled "New Narrow Road" and "Scenes of Right and Evil." Bond's major device for the presentation of ideas is doubling. Characters are paired, often dialectically – the Ferryman and Bash, Wang and Tiger, the two Water Sellers; images are doubled, and scenes are repeated with variations so that fine distinctions can be made and different possibilities explored.

Paramount in Bond's mind is the idea that "Art does not consist in the recording or reproduction of a thing (that is merely one sort of skill) but in analysing what is recorded or reproduced" (The Bundle xv). To him, theatre's special advantage is that "the audience may look at things it would normally run from in fear, turn from in embarrassment, prevent in anger, or pass by because they are hidden, either purposefully or innocently" (xiii). In other words, the stage-audience relationship is analagous to the spectator's relationship with Bullough's dangerous fog. The danger is not removed in either case. But the special condition which permits the audience to enjoy the beauty of the fog also permits it to observe and learn socio-political lessons. In this play, the lesson to be learned is that the political system itself, when it fosters the unequal distribution of wealth, oppresses everyone. The only true enlightenment for the characters is to understand "who is the thief" – that thief being an unjust economic system administrated in the name of good by its servant-officers.

The special advantage the theatre has is, of course, the theatrical framework, which Bond brings to his audience's mind by many of the same means that the Jacobean playwrights also employ:

Their plays (Every Man Out of His Humor, The Knight of the Burning Pestle) make the audience exactly aware of two worlds, theatre and life, stage and audience. They draw upon theatricality to a high degree, but in doing so they only render the audience more conscious of the antinomy of the whole, without a thought of its elimination .... The Elizabethans ... by playing on the complexities of the stage-audience relationship (and far from blurring and effacing it) made the audience more critically aware of its existence. (Büdel 72)

Bond's doublings occur on either side of the theatre frame. His proscenium is not drawn around the whole performance, however, but around the inset pieces (Wang's playlet when he meets his gang, his discussion of the Wife in Scene Seven, and others). The frame widens and narrows like a spotlight to pick out various segments of action, or splits into simultaneous "spots," as in Scene Eight. It is a moveable part of the set, which governs levels of distance and which is manipulated in full view. It has the sort of position assigned to it in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in tableaux vivantes and later in the Renaissance (Kernodle 188), and in its moveability, continually redefines the relationship among actors, audience, and setting (178). Bousquet takes note of the considerable elaboration of the painted frame during the sixteenth century (129). Bond's "frame" is also very elaborate, in that it is the analysis of the central image; it is the place where the true "action" occurs on his stage.

The Bundle, indeed, is almost as much "frame" as it is "picture." But the question is not, as with Pirandello, which is which (Büdel 70); Bond always keeps the two clear, though the relationship between them shifts. The inset material is that circumstance which transpires for lack of education; the frame is inhabited by those who are coming to terms with or correctly comprehend their situation. In the first part of the play, where the characters cannot "move," the frame circumscribes the whole stage. As Wang frees himself of his various shackles, he enters the frame and begins the work of liberating his fellows from the stage "picture" and bringing them into the frame with him.

The play is divided into two equal parts, with Scenes One to Five comprising the youth of Wang and Six to Ten his political maturity. In Scene One, as the poet, Basho, comes across the river at the start of his journey to enlightenment, he sees an abandoned baby and refuses to adopt it. The Ferryman, however, adopts it, against his better judgment. Fourteen years later, as he is explaining the economic relationship between themselves and the Landowner to his son, Wang, Basho returns under the false impression that he is still journeying towards the deep north. Realising he has travelled in a circle, he faints and is revived by river water: "Enlightenment. The water on my face ..." (8). He has forgotten having abandoned the baby. Two keepers try to arrest him for poaching, but he dissuades them with the news that the Landowner has appointed him Judge. The establishment owns its poets.

In Scene Three, the floods have come and the villagers have fled to the high ground of the village graveyard. The Keepers appear again to "rescue" them, for profit. Since they have already appropriated his boat, the Ferryman has nothing with which to buy his life except Wang. After a long hesitation, Wang sells himself into the Landowner's service for nine years.

That time passes between Scenes Three and Four. The Landowner has passed Wang over to Basho, who has educated him in the political checks and balances by which the overlords subjugate the peasantry. Scene Four has three parts (not formally designated, whereas the parallel Scene Eight has three designated sections). In the first, Wang refuses to stay in Basho's service, now that his time is up. The two bargain with each other, using an abandoned baby as a pawn. In the second part, the baby's mother comes to give it water and leaves happily in the understanding that Wang will adopt her child. In the third part of the scene, however, Wang throws the child into the river after a long deliberation, addressing it as "you little killer." He realizes that their humanity is the cardinal means by which the



people maintain themselves in a state of poverty, and that fundamental values must be reconsidered before their lives can be redeemed.

Scene Five occurs in a swamp, where Wang comes upon a gang of illiterate thieves. He persuades them not to harm him by relating a parable which shows the thieves that their real enemy is the Landowner, who subjugates others by manipulating them through his great servant, the river. The thieves, including their leader, Tiger, who has lost his property and his hand to a rich man, agree to follow Wang.

Thus Wang's political apprenticeship ends. As the house lights come up for the intermission at the centre of the play, Wang reads one of Basho's poems:

The great thief  
Like little thieves  
Works in darkness

The poor are ignorant  
They live in darkness  
What is enlightenment?  
Understanding who is the thief  
And what is the great light (39)

As a young man, one infers, Wang has reached the destination towards which the old man Basho was journeying at the start of the play. But spiritual enlightenment leads nowhere: it is political awareness Wang has found.

Part Two (Scene Six) opens at the Ferryman's house, at night, with the intrusion of Basho and his soldiers. They are seeking Wang, who is preparing to overthrow the government. Upon receiving assurances that the Ferryman and his ailing Wife will pass information to him, Basho leaves; Wang and Tiger enter immediately. They want the Ferryman to carry rifles in his boat, to help them arm the villages, because, as "the saint who lives by the river," he is not likely to be caught. Wang finally persuades his stepfather by

forcing him to recognise what his reputation for goodness is based upon: the life-long debilitation of his Wife, who is now near death.

Scene Seven is a deliberate digression, in which a woman paying for the crime of stealing bread for her starving husband is freed by Wang and Tiger. Bond has written and placed it so that "it interrupts the story," specifically to foster the audience's analysis of cause and effect which occurs through epic structuring (xx). The scene opens with the conversation between two competing Water Sellers and two soldier guards of the Woman and her husband. Wang and Tiger, dressed as priests, come upon this scene. Tiger wants to free the suffering and thirsty Woman immediately. Though he recognises that she is the mother of the infant he murdered, Wang insists they wait: "No. The ox bears the yoke. Break the yoke. Another yoke is put on its neck" (54). When the merchant, Kung-Tu enters, Wang instructs Tiger to "watch and learn" what goodness consists of. Sure enough, the merchant buys the Woman some water, but does not try to free her neck from the cangue; that is, he performs the act which, while purporting to be one of kindness, really just prolongs misery and supports only his fellow entrepreneurs, the Water- and Rice Cracker-sellers. But when it transpires that the Landowner is leaving, a first sign of the success of Wang's insurrection, the soldiers depart and Wang quickly breaks the stone on the Woman's neck. He instructs the Water Sellers to note "who is the stone – on the people's neck! And who is the stone breaker" (58). Unable to decide which of their masters – the Establishment or the revolutionaries – is the more dangerous, the Water Sellers watch themselves succour their suffering fellows. Now kindness is placed in a politically correct – useful – context.

The three-part Scene Eight is a night scene in the Ferryman's house. In the first part, Basho confronts the Ferryman over rifle-running and brings in the mutilated Tiger to substantiate his information. The Wife is bound and gagged, the Ferryman taken out. The second part takes place downstage while "The SECOND SOLDIER and the WIFE remain

motionless ..." (64): on the far bank of the river Wang and his gang await the Ferryman. They hear the Ferryman's pole drop into the water, a sure sign to Wang that something is amiss. He and his gang flee. Hearing from a soldier, in the third part, that the Ferryman dropped his pole, Basho understands immediately, as Wang has, that this was no accident. He has the Ferryman taken out and killed, a brutal murder which both audience and Wife hear.

In Scene Nine, the merchant rushes to beg Basho's protection. He and Basho hear from the First Soldier that he has orders to retreat immediately to the capital; "then," Basho understands, "the government's hollow within" (71). Neither he nor Kung-Tu have prepared themselves for this eventuality, and are unable to take their goods – money or, in Basho's case, poetry – when they flee. The poetry that serves the master is equated with money, the currency of oppression.

By the river-bank at mid-day, in the last scene, the gang is eating while one of their number repairs a shovel – an activity which alludes to the endings of both Saved and Lear. Their conversation is utterly mundane and trivial, although it is difficult to miss a recurring question: "Are you afraid of the river?" Then the drowned body of a gang member is brought in. Basho also enters, decrepit, clutching "a few charred manuscripts." He still seeks (even of the corpse, which he kicks in his blindness and impatience) the way to the deep north. While Basho wanders into the audience, Wang tells "a worse story" than any about disturbing the dead: the parable of a man who wasted his life, carrying a dead king on his back. Alone on the stage as the lights come up, he speaks the last lines of the play: "We live in a time of great change. It is easy to find monsters – and as easy to find heroes. To judge rightly what is good – to choose between good and evil – that is all that it is to be human" (78). For correct judgement, one needs the objectivity that a socio-historical context

supplies; for choosing, one needs a socially-directed, rather than a self-aggrandizing morality.

The Bundle re-examines the image of the abandoned baby encountered by Bond in "Records of a Weather-Exposed Skeleton," a travel sketch by the seventeenth-century poet, Basho. It is carefully structured to give "an image of ourselves," and more than that, to give a tool for the analysis of that image.

The action of The Bundle is spread over a much longer span of time than is that of Early Morning or Lear. It is uncluttered by detail – witty interpolations by minor characters, the welter of incidents in the other two plays. That makes the tone of the play altogether different from that of the others; here is a thematic clarity and simplicity, the sense of a broad historical sweep, achieved through distance.

The sense of simplicity and of scope may have something to do, indeed, with the presentation of the lowly servant, Wang, and his political, not psychological, growth. He is a swaddled baby in Scene One, abandoned and anonymous, and again receding into anonymity when the play ends and he is a young man. Young manhood is the stage of life, if not the age, which the Ferryman has reached in Scene One when the play opens and he adopts his infant child, while Basho, already an old man, compares himself with the baby: "Child we are both by the river at the start of our journey. Yours may end at this river. I shall cross many rivers" (2). In a way, then, the play opens with a representation of three stages in the life of man, all of them seen as beginnings. There is hardly a scene, in fact, which may not be described as a "beginning."

The philosophical and historical sweep of the play has something to do, furthermore, with the fact that Wang, the Ferryman and Basho are all philosophers of their types: they

tend to see the essence, rather than the surface of things, and to think in terms of all humankind, rather than in terms of individuals. They abstract the principle from its specific manifestation or practice and they place individual actions in a historical context. This is distancing in that it encourages the audience to see the dramatic action as typical, not unique, and the characters as types whose personalities and individual fates are of secondary importance.

Finally, an exaggerated sense of distance is given the play by the way Bond proportions the kinds of dramatic action he employs in it. There are three. One is action in the usual sense of events which carry the plot forward. Wang's murder of the infant and the soldiers' arrest of the Ferryman are two examples. A second is the discussion which invariably precedes these events. Nothing happens in the play without prolonged deliberation first. For example, in Scene Seven, the swift and tense act of breaking the cangue from the Woman's neck follows two long conversations. One is between the Water Sellers and the others in which the Woman's suffering is used by them without their attempting to commiserate with her or relieve it. The other is between Wang and Tiger, who discuss the Woman's situation, Wang forestalling, throughout, Tiger's impulse to help.

Besides these two types of action, a third resides in the images which Bond creates as stage pictures. The audience observes a static situation which contains evidence of violent and significant action: a baby has just been abandoned; a whole village has been inundated and the villagers have fled to high ground; travellers on a lonely road have been murdered by thieves "all day today. Heeeeeee." All of these are "story-pictures," effects which have been preceded by complex but clear causes. Sometimes the staged "image" is a tableau, held by the actors for a moment and punctuating movement and dialogue; sometimes it is maintained for an extended period, while other dramatic action carries on around or in front of it. In the closing moments of Scene Eight, the Wife stops on her way to the window and stands while

the Ferryman is clubbed to death offstage. "The weak, persistent sound of her cry, on one note" substitutes for an act of resistance, reinforcing the idea that the couple has never engaged in effective resistance.

What affects the distance of the play is that Bond devotes roughly equal amounts of emphasis to these three types of action. The third does not simply support or illustrate the other two; it may generate or modify them as well as sum them up. It is closely related to the first type, plot-movement, less so to the second, the discussion, which generally commentates on the other two. Its relationship is this: that the first type of action is the particular occurrence of events to individuals, while the third type seems to be the expression of those particulars in abstract form.

Sometimes the first and third type of action are fused with each other. Thus, in Scene One, we have a baby, the Ferryman, and Basho the poet at a moment of crisis in their lives; also, we have infant, young man and old man at crises which occur in all lives.

Conversely, the first and third type of action might be presented separately. In Scene Three, for instance, there is a moment when Wang trembles with the tension of not selling himself to the Landowner, but shouts out "Buy me!" The relationship Bond makes among plot, dialogue and mise-en-scène allows for and necessitates a depth of interpretation which would be obviated by the presentation of a story line mainly through dialogue. The theatre, to Bond, is a place where the playwright and director experiment with the organisation and maintenance of society. The audience too participates in this analysis, through observing framed pieces shown them for specific reasons: for "moral discovery"; moral teaching; and "as a demonstration of how the words 'good' and 'bad,' and moral concepts in general, work in society and how they ought to work if men are to live rationally with their technology, with nature and with one another" (The Bundle xviii). In Lear, the analyst of personal and

social experience is still the central character. In The Bundle, seven years later, the analyst is the spectator. Bond's attitude to this examination is summarized in his Preface:

The "dramatization of the analysis instead of the story," in both the choice and ordering of the scenes and in the incidents dramatically emphasized in the scenes, is a way of reinstating meaning in literature. It may seem cold and abstract but it is not. The analysis can give us the beauty and vitality that once belonged to myth, without its compromises and intellectual reallocation of meaning. It can be the most exciting part of the play, dramatized through powerful images and dramatic confrontations between appearance and reality. But these dramatizations must not exist in their own right as dramatic effects. They demonstrate those crises in a story when the audience are asked not to be passive victims or witnesses, but interpreters of experience, agents of the future, restoring meaning to action by recreating self-consciousness. At these moments the audience are superior to the actors: they are on the real stage. (xx)

It can indeed be said that the audience does the work that characters would do in, say, an Ibsen play. For example: social forces are at work. Nora suffers them to a point, and then acts, or reacts. Action is all the more difficult for her because those social forces are embodied in people she knows and loves – her husband, her children – as well as in those she fears and hates. She must say yes to everything, or no to everything. Helmer sums up the attitudes and the material structure of society in himself; he can be seen as a collection of establishment values. In this, he is like Basho or the Ferryman; but the audience's role in The Bundle is played by Nora in A Doll House. This, at least, might describe Bond's ideal. The principle is precisely Brecht's, to "[take] the human social incidents to be portrayed and [label] them as something striking, ... to allow the spectator to criticize constructively from a social point of view" (Brecht on Theatre 125). The audience recognises the problem, if not the war banner and the cangue, from experience close at hand; the subject is specifically the familiar (192).

Brecht's techniques for the encouragement of analysis, which Bond lists and discusses briefly in his Preface, include a new method of acting, showing a character as a class function, not as an individual. In The Bundle, characterisation is the aspect of drama

most radically revised. A successful Wang may not journey along the pathways of his fathers; he must strike a new narrow road. Wang, it might be said, samples first the ethic of one of his fathers and then of the other. Both fail and he is driven underground. The audience contrasts his journeys along two different paths. Wang becomes the consequence of the failure of both fathers.

In this, he is different from Lear, who suffers consequences, but does not embody them:

I wanted to explain that Lear was responsible, but that it was very important that he could not get out of his problems simply by suffering the consequences, or by endurance and resignation. He had to live through the consequences and struggle with them. ("Drama and the Dialectics of Violence" 9)

Wang is the only one of Bond's many babies, besides, possibly, Kiro and Shogo in Narrow Road to the Deep North, to survive infancy. He pays for his life by service to the Ferryman and by selling himself into slavery to the Landlord, who gives him, ironically, to Basho, the very man who left him to perish sixteen years before. This background has led Wang to think a great deal about the tyranny of the virtuous, while continual exposure to the plight of abandoned babies has led him to think about the tyranny of the oppressed. He has two enemies, the good weak and the bad strong, and from his position on the fence between the two, murders both. In other words, risen through the ranks of the oppressed, Wang assumes power to mete out justice as he sees it against a newly identified oppressor: the oppressed. In the course of the action, he goes from baby to student to revolutionary, and finally assumes a position of no importance in the gang of liberator-thieves he has adopted and educated along the road. In none of these phases, except in that of guerilla leader, is he easily to be categorised as hero, even though his wit, courage, politics and discernment might seem to commend him to the role. Nor can he be called protagonist, unless that term means just that he is always present (although often he is more than merely present).



Bond's treatment tends to under- rather than to over-distance Wang. At first, unlike Lear, Wang seems psychologically believable, rather than being simply the mouthpiece for a philosophy or a value system. This is paradoxical, in that he is not even a character in Scene One – he is "baby" – and at best a stock character in Scene Two. He is psychologically believable only because there is nothing in him to ring false, at the time he comes to act: he is composed almost wholly of the audience's generalized preconceptions and emotions. Hence Wang's acts can never be predicted by reference to a conventional genre pattern. Each of the situations in which he finds himself causes him to choose between opposed value systems, a continual choosing which might be termed the text of the play, and through choosing, to reveal the strictures which direct his choices. What seems subtextual at first – Wang's attitude to himself – is gradually revealed to be a major statement about character: he has no interest in or awareness of self, but thinks of himself and his situation as typical and generalised. He does not have a "personality" of his own. He is a "man on the street" placed in several historically recurrent crisis situations, and his varying responses must be evaluated in terms of the social and economic pressures brought to bear on him.

Upon recognizing this, the audience comes to corroborate Wang's self-estimate. He is not a character who inspires empathy, because his experiences are too various to be contained in a personal history, except in a most remarkable one. The experiences themselves, on the other hand, though remarkable as a collection, are not, taken singly, unheard of. Anyone in an audience might know an adopted child; everyone must allow this to be an age of guerrilla warfare and popular uprising; police torture is commonplace, though in the West, at least, seldom visible, and so-forth. The several technical means by which Bond achieves distance have their ramifications in the structure and visual effects of the play, but they require a fundamentally new definition of characterisation, and they have their greatest power where the actor of Wang most clearly presents Bond's revision of character.

Consider Scene Three. Impoverished flood victims are trapped on the high ground of the village graveyard, an image which informs the parable Wang recounts at the end of the play. As in the two previous scenes, the Ferryman goes about his business of saving some lives – in this case, those of Old Man and Old Woman – at the expense of his usual victim, his Wife. He is working under cover, because "Wang would be angry if he knew I'm feeding you. His mother's weak, she needs the rice ..." (11). This scene establishes the Ferryman's mode of giving succour to one's fellow, to nurture a few at the expense of the few; he is "the saint who lives by the river!" (47), as Wang says in the rifle scene. Wang's mode, born here and developed later, is to nurture all at the expense of all, so that the powerful many may fight its oppressors: he cannot be assessed, then, by the standards of the individual, but only by those of the collective. For Wang, the rule is more important than the exception. In theatre where that view is expressed, often there is not a single protagonist. His own individuality is a problem to Wang; to Bond it might embody The Problem. How is it dramatized?

Hay and Roberts comment on the "tension between the words and the actions" at the end of Scene Three, noting Wang's physical stiffness as he yells "Buy me!" (*Bond: A Study* 274). This stiffness indicates his unwillingness to continue his enslavement to the Landowner when at this moment he might dive into the water (which seems to signify his freedom, whether through life or death) and rid himself of all enthrallment. Wang cannot move because neither of his options seems to him to represent real movement, just as, later, he cannot "free" the Woman from her cangue until the context of the situation is conducive to real freedom. Then movement is possible. The rigid, arbitrary circumspection of movement reduces it to stasis, so that even the smallest seeming movement (physical and metaphorical) appears exaggerated. (Compare the Wife's removing her gag at the end of Scene Eight.) This is a variety of dialectical presentation, a thing presented as its opposite – movement, in this case, presented as stasis. Wang's standing there does not only indicate his

response to the Keepers, which is that he would rather be free and die, but also his interpretation of the whole confrontation, which is that every decision he can make results in his death. The words, "Buy me!" are not information but interpretation, as Bond points out in the Preface. This certainly makes them distancing for the audience, though one might ask, as Büdel does of Brecht's requirement that actors demonstrate characters, whether the distance results in the audience's thoughtfulness if it simply tells the audience what to think. The shouts of "buy me" alternated with "Saved! Our son!" also suggest the question, what price salvation? and further imply a Christian analogy, with Wang a most unwilling Christ. Throughout the play there is strong negative commentary on the Christian attitude to nurturing one's fellow. Wherever it surfaces strongly, as it might here from some spectators, it is likely to reduce an otherwise over-distanced crisis somewhat.

Bond employs the word "buy," as he says in the Preface, specifically to "dramatize the analysis," to trigger the audience's understanding of the issue at stake, not of the specific situation. Hay and Roberts say of this scene that it

is designed to show the operation of harsh economic and social forces, [so] each action sums up in a dramatic image the effects of these pressures. Bond himself is keenly aware of the danger that their emotional impact on the audience might be counterproductive and has described how carefully he has tried to use and contain them: "I tend to avoid ending a scene on a high dramatic point, because there is something melodramatic about it. But when a scene is clearly based on an intellectual analysis, like Scene Three of The Bundle, then I think one is justified in ending the scene in that way." (Bond: A Study 274-275)

In other words, Bond hopes, in these critics' view, to make two points here. First, by presenting a particular one, he analyzes a general condition. Second, he presents a theatrical image "which summarise[s] a character's reactions to an extreme situation" (274). The moment, then, does not resolve itself in terms of the personal crisis, so far as Hay and Roberts are concerned; it generalises Wang, on the one hand, and theatricalises him, on the other. Thus Bond over-distances Wang somewhat while, to the extent that one does see him

as a type of Christ, negatively presented, there is a concomitant tendency to under-distancing here too. This clash does propel the spectator to think.

Whatever Bond's view of these two points, however – and Hay and Roberts' interpretation of them is, I think, quite right – he seems to me to be concerned with a slightly different issue than the ones they define. That issue is this: how does one present a character at a highly dramatic moment without the audience's emotional response dulling its intellectual one? Here, it seems to me, Bond is beginning consciously to explore the device he has been using in previous work, of juxtaposing over- and under-distancing effects at the same moment. Later with Tiger, and here with Wang, Bond works out this theatre problem.

From the Preface one infers that Bond wishes to err, if he must, on the side of under-distancing, not over-distancing, and to treat his analysis of economic and social pressures rather as if the example of Wang in the graveyard were an occurrence reported yesterday in the newspaper. He is toying with distance at the point nearest under-distancing where art realizes itself. Where Brecht mulled the problem over concerning Mother Courage, he seems never to have settled it to his own satisfaction. In creating a less complicated character than Courage, Bond avoids some of those variables that make her problematical. Unlike Wang, she is no thinker, and embedded in her very name is her nurturing role. She never perceives herself to be in a position of authority, even over herself.

Wang has authority, making choices in everything he does. The battle he wages is between passion and intellect – a time-honoured clash. As with Lear, whose alternating between simple, commonplace utterance and allegorical rhetoric never results in their fusion, so the passion and intellect in Wang are not reconciled. Rather, the intellect wins out and the passion is reined in.

Although most of the plot elements are presented in a conventional way, Bond makes it necessary for the audience to consider whether Wang should sell himself in Scene Three thus: by withholding information about Wang's personality and opinions, and arguing both sides of the case through the mouths of minor characters. The audience sees the choice clearly, and sees which solution would be better for Wang ethically and economically. But it cannot tell which decision would make Wang "happier," or "more guilty" or a more or less sociable person, and so-forth. Nor can it anticipate which decision the boy will make, because since the two previous scenes have shown him as a swaddled babe and as a teenager receiving instruction, the focus has never been on Wang either as a personality or as a type.

Furthermore, all of the dialogue makes clear the general view that Wang is "garbage" (19), and should he capitulate, he also will be accepting the equation of himself with currency, with beasts or worse; note that the peasants are likened to "a herd of cattle outside a slaughterhouse shoving to see who got in first" (20) – a view of the masses which Bond uses again in Restoration. His "Buy me!," while it is a repayment of the generous act of saving his life in the first place, underscores the basically distorted view of human worth that permeates the whole society. "We invested so much in him, " the Ferryman explains, indicating Wang's "value." The humanity of his life-giving act is thus both limited and limiting. It is an advance on security rather than a grand gesture. Furthermore, the view that he should sell himself is placed in the mouth of the unattractive Kung-Tu, to demonstrate, as it were, how unpalatable wisdom can be, and how difficult to accept. From this perspective, "Buy me!" arouses the audience's intellect to temper its emotional involvement. As with plot crises elsewhere, Bond frustrates the audience's potential identification with Wang, bringing total attention to bear on the economics of the situation.

Economic concerns dominate also for the Keepers and the Ferryman. The Keepers make it plain that they have come for the peasants not because they believe their lives to be

in danger but because the flood "always goes down after six days" (11), which number of days has now passed, and they want to make a profit while they can still trade on the peasants' fear.

FERRYMAN. It's over. We stay. The water will go down soon.  
 SECOND KEEPER. Why d'you think we're here? (19)

Hence the audience is propelled by the build-up of tension in the scene into participating emotionally, only to learn that there's really nothing to get excited about: the whole dispute is likely unnecessary. The characters fear for their lives because, like silly sheep, they haven't thought out their situation or the Keepers' motivations. This is a powerful incentive to the audience to sit back and consider the action, maintaining a rational and evaluative calm, instead of empathising with the thoughtless panic of the peasants.

The Ferryman recognises that if Wang is to serve ten years, there will be no possibility of his being able to work the ferry for his father; "We'd never see him again," being too old. For Wang as well, going into service is tantamount to dying. As the Wife says, "It's wrong to take a young life," but she is still willing to trade off Wang's life for her own; "I don't want to die ..." (19).

The moment is a dramatic one for Wang, but its placement in the context of the Keepers' entrepreneurialism trivialises it. In the one sense in which it remains really important, in that the boat must wait for his decision instead of rescuing other nameless and off-stage members of suffering humanity, it might even be said to spotlight a certain self-indulgence which is reprehensible when voices from the near-by hill cry

Help. Help. The woman has given birth! I'm up to my neck in mud. Bodies are being washed out of the ground. The dead are floating around us. The landscape is moving. (19)

The terror, the psychic damage being done while Wang refuses to sell himself is too great to excuse hesitation. His personal maturation, for better and for worse, is driven by economic

considerations, which accounts for negative ramifications. Arthur is in a similar situation in the last scenes of Early Morning when he causes George such pain by refusing to eat. But his refusal has evolved through the action, whereas Wang's seems blunt because the situation is thrust upon him and the audience so early in the play. Wang does his thinking-through on the spot, whereas Arthur comes to his decision between scenes, where the audience cannot see him. Tension is created here in The Bundle by the ironic reversal of natural law (Birnam Wood come to Dunsinane): the living are immobilized, but the dead move freely in this society controlled by impersonal economic forces (the river).

Also, although the drama of the scene is focussed on Wang, he is comparatively silent, his occasional "No" punctuating a babble of panicky dialogue. The implied chaos of action and rising floodwaters, and the aural effects, compelling and unusual, underscore Wang's position too. Theatrical devices, combined with content, tend to close the distance gap. In this context it is actually difficult to think of Wang as an individual; he is one among many. His isolated and problematical act of self-sacrifice is thus greatly reduced in stature. In spite of his "Buy me!" at the end of Scene Three, which is "incorrect," Wang has learned what is the "correct" response to such a situation, and the audience has learned how the socially prescribed response to a situation can subjugate an individual. The impression conveyed by the action is of an intellect struggling in an emotional sea.

This struggle is presented, however, by stylization of action and by a focus on staging. The devices of contrast and image reversal have part of their technical expression in the suspension of all physical movement which concerns the plot. The stage movement the audience sees is that by which the actors, not the characters, proceed: the business to get the boat on and off stage, the Ferryman assuming his "victory" pose, and so on, as Bond discusses it in the Preface. The scene ends with a very strong emphasis on the motif of the individual as commodity, with the Ferryman, his Wife, and Wang repeating their keynote

words, "buy" and "save", like the soloists singing together in an opera trio. The clash of joy and desperation is by no means the least of the contributing factors to the distancing of the audience. Bond develops Wang's character by the classic device of contrast with other characters in the play, though he withholds the usual treatment of putting him in the "commendable" light.

Hay and Roberts argue that Scene Four makes a contrast with Scene One, the dramatic debate in which the Ferryman decides to take the infant Wang home with him. In my view, this scene makes as direct a contrast with Scene Three, for in it, Wang is presented again with the predicament of saving a life at the expense of his own freedom, with the infant substituted this time for the Ferryman and his Wife. This time, Wang chooses even more radically than Basho has, rather than as the Ferryman has: he hurls the infant into the river. His act forces a thinking audience to reassess its opinion of Basho in the first scene, but also to test the understanding it has just acquired. Since Wang acts here in accordance with an argument clearly presented, although emotionally trying, there is a sense of correctness about the climactic moment. This sense, I think, can best satisfy an audience which recognises in Wang not a person but a set of ideas at work.

Bond encourages the focus on ideas in various ways. For one thing, there is almost nothing on the stage when the scene opens. This is the stage setting Bond prefers, where the few objects represent the "character" of the situation, in flux and reduced to its essence. The stage direction reads, "Another part of the river and the bank. An abandoned child," equating the child with set elements by itemizing it.

Furthermore, the scene contains little action. It is predominantly talk reinforced by blocking, rather than action expressed in blocking. The swaddled child is objectified because it is being ignored by both Wang and Basho until they "need" it, as a weapon to wield against



each other in their argument; as the object of a discussion of economics between Wang and the Woman, who cannot "leave her child" but can "sell him" (28); as a de-individualised representative of all children; and further, by Wang's view of it, as a potential subjugator who would reduce him again to servitude. It is not a baby; it is a sort of synecdoche standing for Wang's society, especially the peasant segment, economically destitute. It is not a baby: it is a metaphor for Wang himself, a symbol of his state.

Nevertheless, it is a baby, that creature to whom the words "helpless" and "innocent" are often attached. However astute Bond's sense of the theatre, however logical and penetrating his analysis of the socio-political situation he depicts here, this moment, above all others in Bond's canon, is difficult for me to accept. The "aggro" here seems to be overindulged, to stop thought, as it provokes feeling, rather than to encourage thought by "waking" the emotionally somnolent spectator. The underscoring of the baby's facelessness provokes, Bond hopes, a recognition of its power and, therefore, its culpability. As Hay and Roberts say, "The hurling of the baby into the river challenges our ability to follow through the implications of Wang's statement. It is like a slap in the face ..." (Bond: *A Study* 279).

Bond is encouraging the audience to make an emotional response and then to examine it, in Hay and Roberts' view; Brecht might have inhibited the audience's involvement by breaking the action earlier (280). This, I think, is so, and the basic assumption on which it depends is that the audience involves itself by feeling a strong antipathy to Wang, his intellectual process, and his act. If this were not the case, it would have no reason to "Examine [its] response"; it could simply accept what happens and wait for the next scene. Brecht might not follow through so far on the action before the break. His audience would, perhaps, be left to ponder the choice, whereas Bond's audience sees the action completed and is left with its own response to examine. The critical difference between Bond's and Brecht's technique seems to me to be that while Brecht's "alienation"

device is meant to be an incentive to thought – thought being what Brecht considers his audience to eschew – Bond's "aggro" is an infusion of emotion into an audience whose reactions he seems to consider merely reflexive, driven by neither thought nor feeling. Bond still aims for "rational theatre," but the rationality is not weakened, for him, if his audience feels while it thinks. As he says in his "Reply" to Holland (34), "one often has to work for a 'bad' response," so that the V-effect will not "deteriorate into an aesthetic style."

As Wang hurls the child to its death, he moves from inside the stage picture into the picture frame. Hereafter, his actions, even the transportation of arms in Scene Eight (see 65), are instructional. The moment is a turning-point for him. But this does not mean that he has developed as a character. He has developed, rather, as a political animal.

A central thesis clarified by this treatment of Wang is, I think, that certain kinds of epiphany are useless. The "character development," the "growth" of a personality which leads to such views as that we are as flies to wanton boys, or that love is the answer – these are insignificant visions nowadays. For this reason: Bond seems to agree with Brecht that the individual is not worth discussing in the twentieth century: "what use is the art of carving tombstones in the century of the mass grave?" (Matherne and Maiorana 71). In response to a question of Maiorana's, Bond replies,

The profundities of nonsocialist art are in fact trivialities – Beckett's fixation with death, for example. We all die – ... but do we have to die in indignity and squalor, do we have to blow ourselves up? ... Art is concerned with change, with cause and effect, it is rational. Socialism gives my writing its structure, it stops it being arbitrary or naturalistic and instead makes it realistic. (71)

Bond explains one of the things that makes art arbitrary for him in a conversation contemporary with that just cited:

I find more and more that the concept of character is useless to explain the truth of anything. It's too much like a conjuror's white rabbit pulled out of the hat – you solve the whole thing by a sudden act of will on the part of one of your characters, or a sudden decision he makes, which he drags out of his

abstract personality. And that seems to me to be very dangerous and artificial and not honest. (Roper, "Edward Bond in Conversation" 41)

His concept of character, quite clearly illustrated in Wang, presents no difficulty if one sees that for Bond, character is arbitrary and unpredictable, while those actions which are motivated by social and economic forces have fixed and identifiable causes, and predictable consequences. This view is less common than the Freudian concept pervasive in this century.

One must note that, as in The Bundle, the child is commonly separated from the parent in Bond's work, in being a foster-child. Babies are interchangeable to their parents, and vice versa. Len is not the father of Pam's baby, whom he fathers; Cordelia's father is not Lear, but a priest; Hecuba mothers Ismene in The Woman; and Woman's baby is anyone's child in Great Peace. An alternative reconstituting of parent-child bonds permits Bond to make his point, that people are related to each other by their social circumstances, not their blood. Hence he implies, for example, that Cordelia is Lear's child, in a very important way: she acts as he does in his position as leader, and when he is in her position, receiving refugees at the cottage door, a sign of his growth is that, unlike her, he keeps that door open.

It makes no difference, from Bond's point of view, who a person is or what their function; he has the same attitude towards victims as he does towards heroes. Consider this statement, from the Author's Note to *Saved*:

Clearly the stoning to death of a baby in a London park is a typical English understatement. Compared to the "strategic" bombing of German towns it is a negligible atrocity, compared to the cultural and emotional deprivation of most of our children its consequences are insignificant. (6)

Bond does not see his position on this question as peculiar to himself or in any way unusual; that is clear. Instead, he would maintain, he is only showing what results from the attitudes of the majority. What makes the murder of an individual atrocious is that the act reveals a

general condition, not that the individual is of particular or greater worth than any other. To subscribe to Bond's view of character, it is necessary to see individuals from this point of view, to place one's reading of the play in the socialist context. His spectator is to be relieved of Freudian preconceptions and invested with socialist ones. How?

It can be seen that Bond fulfills Bullough's description of distancing, namely that "Distance does not imply an impersonal, purely intellectual interested relation. ... On the contrary, it describes a personal relation, but of a peculiar character" (91), and furthermore, that "... Distance, by changing our relation to the characters, renders them seemingly fictitious ..." (92). Wang is a good illustration of how the intrusion of distance occurs. He is, or seems to be, a three-dimensional character at first (ironically, since the baby's "character" is wholly established by convention and is completely impersonal, and the boy acts as straight-man to his father), but the change in emotional perspective which Bond makes on him results in his two-dimensionality. Wang is not a hero, redeemer, liberator, or even an example to be followed by the audience in solving its own political problems. With distance, he can be seen as an "answer" to the abstract problem of oppression by the rich and powerful, and more than that, as an example of how the problem perpetuates itself. His personal history goes some way towards explaining his actions throughout the play, but cannot explain his character, which is motivated, as Hay and Roberts say, not by "individual and psychological factors" but by "social and political" ones (Bond: A Study 271). Brecht's Galileo says, "Unhappy the land where heroes are needed." Wang might say, "Unhappy the man who takes on the role of hero when his land is already so weak." For he typifies the personal danger: "You can go for a walk and come back another man" (25).

In Scene Five, Wang settles himself in the role he will play for the rest of the play. He confronts the sly Tiger immediately with "Let someone else get blood on their hands – so you can be simple and honest and good! You deserve what you got! Knocks TIGER out with

a stick. Learn – and next time know! Or you'll go on paying !" (33). When he comes with Tiger in Scene Six to persuade the Ferryman to carry rifles across the river, he voices the same philosophy: "You saints 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! You are the scourge of the – " (47), but checks himself with the thought, "No, no, I must understand."

Again Bond points up the substitution of thinking for feeling, emphasised by the use of the sentence fragment. The Christian ethic is difficult to understand even from the obverse Tiger-stance, while a new opposition to the Landlord comes naturally to Wang, though he still expresses himself in the Biblical language he has been taught. Perhaps Wang has reflected on Basho's explanation: "The priests take too many infants. The old suffer. The pediment is crumbling. When the temple is neglected, its image no longer works with the people. Then no infants are taken in!" (25). Where does the benefit in this ethic lie – in the acts of mercy to individuals, or in the aura of security which reconciles the many to their lot? Basho invites Wang to think in collective terms, not in terms of himself.

That he speaks his mind in the face of the Ferryman's "kindness" in Scene Six dramatically reiterates the point that Wang is not to be considered a hero by the audience because of his gun-running. The acts of revolution may be courageous and enlightened, but Bond still casts them in an unfavourable light insofar as they make a hero: he opposes Wang to his father, whom Wang has placed in extreme jeopardy. The Ferryman's silence shows that he understands Wang, and that he is indeed killing his wife. The argument is reflected in the continual ironic, inverted references to goodness through the play. The Ferryman might "be patient at the wrong time." Morality is "dirty." "Holy hands" drown children. Tiger has dissembled by "whimper[ing] like christian"; he affirms his trustworthiness by linking the wise saying, "Give hand in friendship" to the fact of his stump. The unremitting attack on

the conventional moral view distances it and throws the whole action into relief, under-distancing the play.

Wang does not empathise with the suffering of others. Those who sacrifice themselves are not heroes to him, but the enemy, labelled both "saint" and "killer." Wang seems to feel for the individual peasant much as one ant or bee might feel, coming upon the corpse of another: only the "greater good" matters to him. In his confrontation with the Ferryman, he accuses him, fundamentally, of hypocrisy: how can one love a person one keeps in a condition of starvation? Wang sees impersonally, as a camera sees; a minimum of emotion accrues. When he and the others bring on Tuan's body in the final scene, there is little mourning; rather, there is respect. The audience's gut reaction is deflected to the business with Basho, whose symbolic hero-attribute, blindness, allows him to kick the corpse and stray into the audience, addressing it directly. This movement in the closing moments of the play would collapse distance altogether (Büdel 68), but again, as throughout the play, Bond contradicts it with Wang's very stylized recital of a parable.

In the last speech, however, distance is collapsed: alone on stage as the lights come up, Wang addresses the audience, including himself in it by the use of the first person plural – "We live in a time of great change." Wang uses this occasion just as he does others. Wang's is a new reaction to a standard situation, but consistent with his reactions throughout the play. He does not so much initiate the actions which comprise the plot, as understand a situation and respond to it, thereby moving the play forward. The plot is external to, rather than springing from, his own character or history.

Bond handles other characters in the play in quite the same way. A particularly notable instance is with Tiger, the physical counterpart to the intellectual Wang. When Wang crosses his path in the swamp, Tiger, a "thin young man," is all reaction. His dialogue

consists of lines like "Huh!" and "Ha! Err! Hoo! Aaaghghghghghgh!" (31ff). His way of handling any difficult situation, and his chief entertainment, is to kill: "Kill all day today. Heeeeee." The initial impression is that he cannot speak in sentences, but the fact is different; when he tells his "Story. How Tiger lost hand," it becomes clear that he has lived a civilized life until heaven forgot him, dried up the fields and caused him to lose his house. Part of the story he tells in simple sentences, part in fragments which consist of lists and images. He has murdered and paid the price of his hand for that; his stump is, however, evidence for the brutalisation and mutilation of his mind and his life. He is, in other words, the perfect student to Wang, who teaches him to think politically about social power structures.

Scene Four is an essentially discussion-oriented scene, where analysis of the situation is the cause of action. Scene Five, in which Tiger first appears, contrasts with this. Scene Four ends with the murder of the infant; Scene Five begins with the division of the spoils of murder among gang members, none of whom can appreciate their value except as disconnected and isolated objects, although it is clear that taken together, these objects comprise a life. Like the young Wang, Tiger is a problem for the spectator. The several aspects of his personality which shift distance on the spectator's part are very skillfully handled by Bond. Tiger is reluctantly won over to Wang through the device of the play-within-the-play which Wang uses to illustrate the oppression of the people, and which Bond uses to illustrate the process of analysis. As Wang designates roles and situations, Tiger is brought step by step through a history of the people's subjugation, in terms he can understand. The business with the bell illustrates the levels of intelligence of Tiger, Kaka, and others in the gang. Throughout the scene, it indicates, in not ringing and in ringing false, the weakness in cognition which keeps the gang oppressed. Each time Tiger tries to ring the bell and fails, his argument loses to Wang's. Tiger is the counterpart to Wang, but, without Wang's opportunity to learn while he suffers, without the relative distance from life which

working as ferryman or court servant has given Wang, Tiger is failing to effect change. His forays against the establishment do not attack the structure of the system. Like Robin Hood, he invites its perpetuation. Wang pours out a bowlful of water, to represent the river's role:

<p>TOR-QUO. WANG.</p>	<p>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. ... And the people stand in their ruined fields like ghosts. They might as well be buried in them.</p>
<p>TIGER. WANG.</p>	<p>But the thief you worked for – Lives on a hill. (To SHEOUL.) You are the poor woman. I am the thief my master. Tiger is the river. The river rises. Ha! Hoooooo! I sit and smile on my hill. Where d'you run for protection?</p>
	<p><u>SHEOUL runs away from TIGER to WANG. She brings the bundle of loot.</u></p>
	<p>I smile at the poor and weep at the flood.</p>
	<p><u>SHEOUL sits by WANG. He steals the bundle.</u></p>
<p>TIGER. WANG.</p>	<p>As I weep the waters go down. (sits) Ha. (to SHEOUL). Go home. Praise heaven. SHEOUL goes. <u>She misses the bundle ... (38-39)</u></p>

Tiger learns by seeing Sheoul robbed and by being bested himself; learning, he becomes thoughtful: "Ha ...". Although he never completely regains the capacity to communicate his experience in complex sentences, he goes a long way towards revising the bestialization perpetrated upon him and regaining his powers of reflection, and the huh! hooh! disappears from his speech. He is becoming not Tiger the animal, but Tiger the abstract character trait.

The next time we see him, he has become the student completely. Dressed as a priest, he sits beside Wang, offering the emotional response, as Wang offers the intellectual one, to the sight of the Woman with the cangue around her neck. A morality play atmosphere emanates from Wang and Tiger, clashing with the comic tone of the sellers which is already



such a jarring mis-reaction to the Woman's physical pain. Bond multiplies levels of meaning by having the religiosity of priestly robes also inappropriate – a lie, in fact.

For both Wang and Tiger, this scene is a difficult and important one: for Wang, because the Woman is that same mother whose child he threw into the river; for Tiger, because it is the first test of his newly-acquired learning, and his nature is to erupt immediately, with violence. Hence the Woman is not the only one who operates here as an example of a larger social issue; the same is true of Wang and Tiger, for their different reasons. Can their newly-acquired political understanding save them from their Old (Tiger) and New (Wang) Testament impulses?

Here Bond sets up a situation which is manifestly didactic, learning "on the job." Tiger suggests actions that seem appropriate for two reasons – because they seem humane and because they follow the traditional pattern of dramatic action. Wang resists them. The action could be resolved as Tiger suggests, to the satisfaction of the individuals involved, but then they would only be freed (and in danger of future bondage), or heroic (attracting the oppressor to further inhumanity without disarming it), or accomplices (because they remove the need for future resistance in remedying the visible wrong). Wang's resolution de-centres the stage action, makes it an example of a larger evil; the action is made unresolvable except in a minor and partial way, unless or until the larger context changes.

In this scene, the instruction of Tiger more for its own sake than for Tiger's is featured. The lesson is what counts; the audience never sees what use Tiger could make of it, but gathers a general sense of that use. In Drama, Stage and Audience, Styan speaks of two kinds of "energy" in theatre communication, "that created by [i] a fusion of impressions and [ii] an opposition of impressions, a fission which precedes the final fusion" (59). Bond tempers the first kind, "liable to the kind of excess associated with such limited genres as

heroic tragedy, melodrama, sentimental comedy, the theatre of cruelty, and others" (60), by the employment of the second.

Without the fissions, however, one can see how difficult he might find it to indicate, among other things, the difference between his idea of character and the idea of the stock character, or how many problems might be posed him by the situations he chooses to dramatize – murdered babies, husbands imprisoned and wives made desperate thereby, the agonies of war and isolation exacerbated by madness. His situations are not the ordinary, but sensationalized versions of the ordinary. That he should choose to work with such stuff, and by distancing it should mitigate its sensational quality or show the naiveté of an emotional reaction, leads one to interesting speculations upon Bond's attitude to the theatre. He is taking material that is in a sense distanced already for a modern audience by its manifest "trickery," (a flung baby, a cangue), and restoring its truth to it, by under-distancing the context in which it appears: Basho and Wang stake their own lives on the baby's; Tiger and Wang risk their revolution on the manner of help the Wife should receive. The spectator can then see a connection between the individual pain and the larger political problem: that immediate political action, whether "correct" or not, will undermine the long-term goal and inevitably harm the individual, whereas correct, political action, coming at the appropriate moment, will serve to benefit all.

Büdel claims that Brecht's over-distancing destroys aesthetic distance (61). By shifting distance in both directions simultaneously, Bond avoids the problem Büdel sees with the post-Expressionist tendencies toward a destruction of aesthetic distance with reference to the spectator, so that the art-character of a work disappears. Bond's over-distancing techniques are perhaps counter-acted by didactic material which, because it does not affect the characters in his plays whether they come to understand it or not, therefore has real

meaning only in an extra-theatrical context. The over-distanced and the under-distanced balance each other without either overwhelming the other and without their ever fusing.

As a whole, the scene illustrates Bond's comment on Brecht, that scenes should be closely tied to each other even when they are separable units; it is interpolated into the plot in such a way as to break the flow of action. Although he seems to present a collection of fragments, his "fragments," however heterogeneous, do make a whole (Hauser 24). But its main impact comes with the images through which distance is triggered, especially that of the stone, which is established here, and the bowl of water. Bond does not simply employ images; he identifies and interprets them each time he introduces them: "Men are a dark river" (1); "the cradle clothes are a shroud" (3); the people are "like cattle who live in the mud" (46); and so-forth. Often, as here, the image is physicalised in a prop which both represents itself and stands for a set of related objects. By this means, Bond merges language, set pieces and character, which come to substitute more and more freely for each other.

The fact that one image-cluster is variously and repeatedly interpreted ensures that the audience recognise its own interpretive role, as well as continually making visible objects, therefore themes, which otherwise would gradually become background. This tends to force an adjustment towards over-distancing. The bundle, for instance, is sometimes a baby wrapped in rags, sometimes booty, rice, or rifles, and finally ("the sound of a wet bundle being hit") the Ferryman being clubbed to death in the river (69). The audience is sensitized to the image to the point that, when a bundle appears, it questions its use to the characters and its importance in the scene. The audience continually extracts and intellectualises about property-images. The story line recedes into the background, its usefulness being mainly to provide a context for interpretation. Thus the relationship of these two facets of the drama is reversed.

The bundle and the stone are closely related in the play. Each is that burden which, as in Stone, people must rid themselves of; in Stone, in fact, the protagonist's need to pinpoint the significance of his burden is a variation on the device Bond employs here. In Scene Seven, the stone stands for serfdom and oppression. When the scene begins, it symbolises the Woman's crimes:

FIRST WATER SELLER. No one will buy anything! If you'd done one good deed – someone would come! The judge was right! You're an evil woman! The WOMAN groans to quieten the WATER SELLER.  
I've sat here an hour! Not one cup! (50)

But the stone serves a double purpose, even here at the outset, since the Water Seller's using the Woman to attract customers is so callous. Dialogue quickly reveals that the Woman stole food for her starving husband – the very man who has, more times than she can remember, forced her to abandon their babies. The cangue therefore represents not just her crime, but his also; he is also responsible. (As he puts it, the responsibility is for not turning his starved-looking face away from her. This couple is opposite to the Ferryman and his Wife, he who has saved, not abandoned, the child, and she who has kept her hunger to herself.) A few such considerations fine-tune one's interpretation of the cangue; it betokens punishment for crime, but whether the crime is perpetrated or suffered by the Woman cannot be specified without narrowing and thus falsifying the interpretation of the cangue. The audience's recognition of this is reinforced with later dialogue: "TIGER. People who did this – they made your parents leave you by the river. Ha! Show them change coming! Tonight their feather pillows like stones. ..." It is wrong to attribute to character what pertains to abstract social forces. This is an example of Bond's manipulation of distance, placing the image between the audience and the character so that the activity of both is to interpret the image. The audience contrasts its interpretation with (in this case) Wang's and Tiger's; they are discussing the implications of their different points of view and (in Tiger's case) being persuaded to a specific interpretation.

As this speech and Wang's response make it clear that the Woman both does and does not deserve punishment, which she accepts though it is manifestly and painfully unjust, it seems that Bond is separating the reason for punishment from the fact of it; cause and effect are prised apart. The use of the stone cangue is unconscionable, even as punishment for murder, and certainly as punishment for hunger. This interpretation is verified also, shortly, in the dialogue, when Kung-Tu refuses to accept Wang's injunction to wait before helping the Woman: "Fathers, my heart is full of a natural pity. It brims! Shall I give in? Or be stern for the good of the community? ... I've never studied theology. So I'll have to give in. A man without feelings is a stone" (56). By this point, the stone has become not the agent of oppression, but the oppressor himself, and it is the oppressor who breaks when Wang and Tiger "attack" the Woman to break the stone cangue: she and her husband beg to be spared rescue, but Wang persists: "WANG muffles the stone with the towels and begins to hit it again. ... Now see – who is the stone – and who is the stone breaker" (58). Kung-Tu makes opposites of having and not having feelings. Wang's truer opposition is between acting at the instigation of feeling or at that of thought. Bond maintains the tendency towards over-distancing Wang by having him speak, as usual, of the lesson to be learned. He is completely unsolicitous of the Woman, who has fled anyway in fear of being associated with that gravely dangerous person, the true revolutionary.

The stone in this scene works in tandem with the image of the bowl of water, its opposite in representing acts of kindness, and its parallel in representing the continuance instead of the relief of oppression. Let us go back to the opening of the scene, to see how this image is evolved. The setting is a road between two villages. Two water sellers confront a couple guarded by two soldiers; two priests enter – the disguised Wang and Tiger. The stone (punishment) and the bowl (relief) make one pair of several doubled elements. Wang and Tiger sit apart, to discuss the scene. Like Scene Four of Early Morning, this one is essentially a digression at the outset, and purposefully: Bond has "chosen and ordered" it to

"[interrupt] the story" but to give "unity" to "the analysis, which demonstrates, embodies cause and effect in a coherent way" (The Bundle xx). The discussion of the relative quality of the Water Sellers' water is contrasted with a discussion of the relative guilt or innocence of the Woman. Then the picture is analyzed. Tiger and Wang evaluate it, and the possibility of intruding upon it.

In other words, they create that same intermediate space between audience and actors which is created by the speaker of an aside, and which is also created by the presentation of "a play within a play," as in the scene where Wang meets the gang in the swamp. Their whole dialogue is "aside," with Tiger in the position that the audience is in elsewhere; they locate themselves in the frame, an under-distancing device, rather than "in" the play. On the other hand, their dialogue – analysis – is the "action" of the scene, since the situation, established theatrically and pictorially, constitutes a play-within-a-play. What is foreground and what background is ambiguous. Where one locates the action governs the relationship of Scene Seven to the rest of the play, and Bond would have it placed, clearly, in the foreground frame. Jacobean theatre likely contains more examples of this sort of presentation than any other, though in none I know of is the proportion of "frame" to play as heavily weighted towards the "frame."

Wang's and Tiger's views are, of course, opposed. Tiger is all for action: "Ha! Show them change coming! ... (Gestures with his stump.) When this hand itches: means good deed!" (53). Wang opts to wait, an intellectual decision specifically opposed to his own feeling:

WANG.	I know the woman. I'd help her before all others. I sit here calmly. I bite the inside of my lip to keep from shouting out. Look, there is blood inside my mouth –
TIGER.	And my hand itches!
WANG.	Too soon.
TIGER.	Then buy her water!
WANG.	Worse!
TIGER.	Hard!

WANG. (there is a sudden fall of blood from Wang's mouth. As he talks it runs down his chin.) No. The ox bears the yoke. Break the yoke. Another yoke is put on its neck. The farmer has fifty yokes in his store. Stop being an ox. What is the use of breaking a window when it has iron bars? ... Learn it: the government makes not only laws, but a morality, a way of life, what people are in their very nature. ... I say it with blood in my mouth. ... (54)

Here is a complicated interlinking of picture with commentary. The Woman is an illustration of Wang's point, and the fall of blood from his mouth is a testimonial to the truth of his words. The dry mouth is coupled to the mouthful of blood which water would wash away. After Tiger's capture and torture, the cup of water and the bowl of blood again make one of the pairs of dialectical images. Also, the fall of blood is an illustration of how evil spreads from one victim to the next. Wang continues:

When the landowner is no longer feared then our kindness will move mountains. That is our morality, Tiger. Today we should look on kindness with suspicion. Here only the evil can afford to do good.

Immediately upon these words, Kung-Tu, the rapacious merchant, enters – the illustration of the "evil" man who can literally afford to do good if he chooses. His entrance is completely artificial and unprepared-for, as in melodrama. The following inset scene illustrates Wang's words. The Water Sellers work to sell water and succeed with the Rice Cracker Man's help. But the food and drink do not alleviate the Woman's pain, of course; they simply enable her to endure it longer. Hence good is not done; though he seems good, Kung-Tu is evil (he gives water instead of blood), and the seemingly evil priests who won't slake her thirst become, after all, the doers of good.

This complex idea is conveyed by the use of a simple technique on Bond's part: when the audience can see and evaluate while it feels the pull of Wang's argument, the idea is easily clarified. In that the irony about the priesthood is included, the paradoxical situation is enriched even further (Christ's blood as useful as Kung-Tu's water). And, in that Wang's

guilt or pity is aroused, his mind and his heart are seen to be disconnected as the spectator's have been.

The Third Soldier brings the news of the Landowner's flight. Now the "priests" can get to work. One produces a gun, the other an iron cosh, and the stone is cracked open. Now a second parallel is drawn with Kung-Tu's gift of water. The Water Sellers watch themselves act in a new way:

SECOND WATER SELLER (observing himself in amazement, watching the running water as if it were the first time he had seen it, handling the water can as if it had just dropped from space). ... I pour the water ...

FIRST WATER SELLER (staring at his own hand as it moves; almost whispering). I take the cup and ...  
The FIRST WATER SELLER hands the cup to the WOMAN. He stares at his hand holding the cup of water.

RICE CRACKER MAN. Drink.  
They watch in silence as the WOMAN drinks half the water and gives the rest to her HUSBAND. She watches the Water Sellers as her HUSBAND drinks.

FIRST WATER SELLER (quietly, unsure, amazed, puzzled, calm, without boasting). We gave her the water to drink. (60)

On top of the distance of audience from action which is afforded by the repetition – the wrong way to give water, the right way to give water – the characters themselves are estranged from the action. Water is a simple, necessary, everyday affair, but goodness is neither simple nor everyday; it partakes of strangeness and wonder. Still, it is not to be shouted from the housetops, but quietly affirmed. When the Water Sellers have finished distributing the water (of human kindness), they pick up pieces of the cangue so they can "show the stones in the villages" – they are spreading the word made water and stone.

The steps in the procedure are thus: first, the audience is given two incidents and directed to choose the more correct scenario; second, it is directed to react in a certain way – "quietly, amazed, calm, without boasting." The characters are not to be identified with. But the objectivity, the distance itself, is to be identified with by the audience.



The distance is paradoxical. It is only when characters are distanced (able to view their own actions objectively in a broad context) that there is any hope of their behaving correctly; this we have seen in Lear, and it is likely generally a point Bond makes. Only when the audience is distanced can it judge correctly; only when it is not distanced can it comprehend the results of its judgment. A vacillation between alienation and involvement results from the presentation of two views, both for audience and characters. This is unsettling, and contributes to the desired effect. The character who vacillates most in Scene Seven, whose development is least steady and whose objectivity concerning his "lesson" is therefore unstable, is Tiger. He is also the character who vacillates most in distance from the audience.

Tiger has obviously made much progress during his association with Wang. He has become capable of scheming and waiting, as well as of speaking clearly and succinctly. His story of how he escaped jail during a riot is filled with conscious irony:

<p>FERRYMAN. TIGER.</p>	<p>Jailer takes me to jail. Iron chain on wall. Ring. Bolt. I whimper like christian. Clasp hands under shawl – hold out to pray – so! Jailer knows nothing. Heaven smiles. Jailer puts ring round right arm. Click. Goes out. Wait. Soldiers drunk. Doors open. Night. Slip arm through ring: hup! Walk home. Home? (giggles). Ha! They say: "Tiger has one hand but fights with ten." (49)</p>
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This story in itself, but other aspects of his behaviour also, make it clear that Tiger improves in capacity to assess a situation and act accordingly (if he can keep his ego in check). However, on this particular occasion, which is that of Wang's coming to ask the Ferryman to help in transporting rifles, Bond shows that he does not assess the situation: his joking dialogue with the Ferryman is "inappropriate," juxtaposed with the conversation between Wang and his dying mother, who holds her son in an emblematic madonna-and-child posture. The visual clash is paralleled by Tiger's boastful story, counterpointing the

memory the Wife has just repeated. This is the technique Bond uses in the trial of Len and Joyce, in Scene Four of Early Morning.

It is interesting to perceive that the area in which Bond makes the most use of Tiger is that of language. The distancing technique he uses is a combination of contrast, by which two speech patterns draw attention to themselves, revealing social relationships or strata rather than personalities, and inappropriateness, by which speech is separated from other elements of the drama.

As well as being contrasted with Wang, Tiger is contrasted with the Wife in the attitudes each takes to his or her own history. Each has come to terms with that history in a different way, one retelling his as an anecdote while the other relates, then interprets an account. Both speak of themselves in the first person, but fit themselves into their stories as if they were external to them, narrating in the third person. Otherwise, their essentially different stories contrast the Wife with Tiger. The Wife says,

Yes, I will die. But you mustn't speak to your father like that. The night he brought you home I shut the door. He sat with you in the boat. I said: "Good, let him be cold." He put up the little canvas awning. It flapped in the wind. You started to cry so he cried too. Sat in the boat and cried with you. You were a greedy child. Always after more. We gave it – when we could. You are right – that's why I've lived like a cripple and can't fight this sickness. And now – strange – you come over the river – hiding for your life – and ask for more – not with a gun – but something stronger – even stronger – as you've shown. Father, do what he wants. (48)

This speech, unlike Tiger's, is quite contemplative. Tiger's present-tense speech has immediacy, even though the events it narrates are in the past. The Wife's speech is a memory piece at first, and moves slowly; but it shifts into a different mode of thought, in the present tense, moving the more slowly as the Wife begins to construct for herself the implications of Wang's return.

Both speeches are composed of short utterances, the Wife's being fragments of images and Tiger's fragments of sentences: "He put up the little canvas awning. It flapped in the wind"; "Iron chain on wall. Ring. Bolt." The effect of fragmentation is created in Tiger's speech as much by the elision of articles as by the dropping of nouns and verbs; in other words, it is as much apparent as real.

Both speeches appear to break down structurally as they near their conclusions. In the Wife's case, this "break-down" really consists of the interpolation of pauses, and indicates the replacement of memory with new thought. Word repetition is the device which binds it together. Much of the Wife's thought is uncommunicated. By contrast, Tiger verbalises everything in his mind, without repetition; his speech is outward-directed, showy and rapid, staccato and vivacious.

Part of Bond's reason for the "character" contrast through language patterns is related to the contents of the two speeches. They constitute two uses of the past, a time which is problematical for Bond. To Bond, the past is a burden which must be dropped if people's lives are to be improved. But "'Reaction likes to keep its hand on the past because it throws too much light on the present'" (Roberts, Bond on File 43). So Bond cannot shuck it himself in writing the play. He must illustrate its deadening effect – as in the content and the sentence patterns of the Wife's speech. And he must use it to clarify the present, as in the content of Tiger's speech: the audience needs to know Tiger's past to understand what Wang is accomplishing in teaching this animal-man. Neither of these aims can so easily be met as by the expedient of having each contrast with the other, so that the attitude of the speaker appears as clearly as the form and content of the speech.

Also, it is essential for the audience to recognise that the past is not gone, it does not recede into a before-the-present; the whole problem is, indeed, that the past is with us in the

sense of existing as the present: the past is in disguise as present time, and must be excised before any sort of progress can be made. But it cannot be annihilated; it must become history so that the present can be generated wisely. The past, like Osiris, must be dismembered and scattered, but must not be allowed either to die or to cohere into the present again. One can see the device at work in Early Morning, as an event in the plot, where Victoria dismembers Arthur but preserves his bones – "reaction," as Roberts says, "[keeping] its hands on the past."

The past of the Wife is still alive in two senses: she still burdens Wang; and her account of his rescue tells of an action still commonly perpetuated. The past of Tiger is also still alive in that he still suffers, even embodies, it. It is as alive in his imagination as is anything happening to him presently. And in fact it continues to repeat itself, each time in a worse form. His first brush with the law cost him his hand; the second threatened his life, though he escaped; the third takes his tongue and his humanity, and thereafter his murder is hardly worth mentioning. That his tongue should be ripped out stands to reason, since it is his understanding of his plight that Wang teaches him, and the expression of that understanding is his most dangerous subversive act. The coincidence of silencing with dehumanisation also seems fitting. Tiger is a vessel anyone can fill: as Wang can use him to illustrate an argument, so can the establishment make an example of him. It is appropriate, then, that he tell his past in the present tense; he could as well express it in the future, for without real change, it exists there as well.

No less appropriate is it that the Wife, having told of Wang's infancy, "holds WANG against her, strokes him and makes soothing noises as if he were a child" (49). The action mirrors the speech and reincarnates his child-victim past. Her nursing and rocking him occur while Tiger tells the Ferryman about his incarceration – so that two types of imprisonment are presented to the audience at once, the Christian/familial, and the political/juridical, one in

visual image, the other in words. The technique is operatic, with the audience's reading a collage of the two stories and appreciating the aesthetic beauty of the collage per se. So even here, though the emotional effect is powerful, it is held in abeyance while the audience savours the moment: the pause tends towards over-distancing: it is a pause for reflection and recognition, not for pity.

Having fragmented the argument in physicalised, paired images, and the plot into a series of occasions for discussion, and having located characters in types of commentary rather than in psychologically coherent constructs, Bond fuses the various fragments in new combinations as possible outcomes begin to present themselves. The fusions are as startling as the fragmentations. For example, let us examine the first segment of Scene Eight, where argument evolves into action. Bond creates three simultaneous stage spaces. First there is the Ferryman's house, where Basho confronts the Ferryman and his Wife, and the soldiers bring in the further-mutilated Tiger. Second, on the far riverbank, downstage, Wang waits for the Ferryman to come for the rifles. On the intermediate river, the action is audible but invisible. Bond uses Tiger again as the locus of imaged analysis. He is brought on as evidence that the Ferryman is lying to Basho about having seen Wang: "... he can walk unaided. His hair and face are covered with several patchy layers of dry, faded blood. The upper part of his body is knotted in a sheet" (61).

In the Bond canon, this figure is a familiar one. He is unmistakably a variation on the living ghost of which Bond makes frequent use, his notable predecessor being the Ghost of the Gravedigger's Boy. He is rapidly approaching a death which claims him from the head down, hence the winding-sheet about his chest; at this point his mind and heart are already gone; he has betrayed Wang and sunk on the animal scale: "Do pig." He is elemental, closely associated with the land, retaining animality (as is common with Bond; see Early Morning, Scenes Seven and Eight; Lear, III:2, II:6; Restoration passim). His humiliation is

presented in the manner in which he is commanded. He has a standard response – "a residual noise in the back of his throat" – to the verbal commands to do animal imitations, but a special one, kneeling on all fours, when "The THIRD SOLDIER lifts his foot from the ground and lowers it" (62).

As head animal trainer, the First Soldier speaks calmly and reasonably, like a man who has mastered present danger. He explains his emotions, as he has when speaking of the peasants in Scene Six ("You people are doormats ..." [43]), without allowing emotion to accompany or permeate his words. The former speech is impersonal: "They don't know your names. You don't know theirs. The unknown soldiers fighting for the unknown citizens. How I rejoice when a bullet goes astray through your necks" (43). This speech, in tone highly reminiscent of Azdak's in Caucasian Chalk Circle, is another example of that depersonalised view:

Tiger told a great story – how he lost his hand. A lie, of course. Lost it for pick-pocketing. No more stories. Pity. (Imitation) "Tiger has true story to tell now. How Tiger lost other hand." (Points to the THIRD SOLDIER.) He collects mementos of the departed. It was like chopping branches off a tree. I thought he'd get to the roots.

THIRD SOLDIER (laughs flatly at the bad joke.) (62)

His simile reveals that the soldiers do not think of Tiger as human to begin with, although he is afforded the dignity of the tree image (the peasants are "doormats," a far lowlier opinion). The flat laughter underlines the mannered presentation of Tiger; the whole business, the soldiers seem to imply in their attitudes, is for show; what is said is unimportant by contrast with the reason for speaking, and the Third Soldier laughs only because he has been handed a laugh line. By this flatness Bond is employing a classic Brechtian device for distancing the audience from Tiger's plight. The aura of contrivance which surrounds the soldiers, and which generally informs their presence in the play, has its counterpart in Tiger's "performance." The whole thing is display to frighten the Ferryman, a formal dance, "sabre-rattling" in a small way. There is no attempt to approximate truth in any of this, not even by

Tiger, whose sounds for chicken, sheep and pig are identical, and this makes the comment about Tiger's "story" being a lie ironical.

However, there is a lie in the scene which is made into the truth: transferred from zoo to farmyard, Tiger does not simply act, but becomes, pig when he is offered water – a repetition of the equivocally humane gesture of Kung-Tu to the Woman in the previous scene. He "drinks messily and greedily" in dire need, though the First Soldier has pronounced it "too late" to bother with giving him water. He has still the capacity, but no longer the opportunity, for life. The scene moves from a level of illusion at which actions and words are conducted entirely for form's sake and the spectator has registered the intrusion of distance, to a level of illusion at which the audience will suspend its disbelief. At this point, Bond arouses the audience's emotion and distances the moment violently:

The THIRD SOLDIER takes the bowl from TIGER'S mouth. [SOLDIERS and TIGER exit.] The FERRYMAN still holds the bowl. (63)

Hay and Roberts remark of this moment that "The difficulty Tiger has in drinking is a great shock. ... but there is another shock when [the Ferryman] sees that the bowl is full of blood" (Bond: A Study 283). Of these two, the first is more likely not a shock to the audience, but a confirmation of what it has been told of Tiger's mutilation and an invitation to empathize, whereas the second is likely as much a shock to it as to the Ferryman. There are several related reasons for this. One is the movement through the scene from theatricalisation to realisation – from the studied speech of the soldiers to the desperate slopping-up of water. Another is the extension of the already-established lesson of the offered water. The Water Sellers have learnt the correct way to give water, and the manner of giving has validated all their claims for its purity and restorative powers. Tiger has also learned, which adds to the irony of this scene. The Ferryman has not learned. (Furthermore, there is an underlying implication that he has proferred blood.) He still practices what Hay

and Roberts call "unprincipled goodness" (285), which is "self-serving and destructive" rather than charitable.

Water, especially a cup of water, is of course a powerful symbol in its own right, and brings with it a suggestion of ritual which "christianises" the whole scene (if not the play itself). Indeed, one could make the claim that The Bundle, and perhaps much of Bond's work, explores the limitations of Christ's way in the modern world. There is not so much a radical reinterpretation of Christianity here as a radical approach to its application. The symbolic statement is deepened by the symbolic dramatic context, and by the statement that the water is no longer of real use to Tiger. The gift is an end in itself, and reinterpreted by its being given back reddened with blood.

But the most important reason for the shock to the audience is that the Ferryman turns directly to the audience, with his bowl held "close to his chest," to state his lesson:

Why are our lives wasted? We have minds to see how we suffer. Why don't we use them to change the world? A god would wipe us off the board with a cloud: a mistake. But as there is only ourselves shouldn't we change our lives so that we don't suffer? Or at least suffer only in changing them? (Noiselessly, carefully he puts down the bowl.)

The ferry bell in the distance: one stroke. (64)

This speaking directly to the audience takes the whole scene out of the dramatic context and moves it in the direction of the theatrical. The Ferryman's words are ironic in that they move in the opposite direction, taking for granted as they do the failure of ritual to relieve suffering. Rather than the bowl of blood infusing people with life, people's lives are reduced to bowls of blood. Hay and Roberts quote Bob Peck, who first played the Ferryman, analysing his action:

I have learned that the Ferryman's first question has to be pushed out directly to the audience. Doing that integrates it with the bowl image. If the audience isn't included directly in that first question, the effect is lost when I put the bowl down at the end of the speech. If I have included them, when the bowl



finally goes down it's as if it is offering it to them and saying: "Look – this is what we are doing." The image is integrated into the speech. (Bond: A Study 284)

Seeing this bowl from several points of view conveys some sense of its power. It is a naturalistic prop, completely in keeping with the setting of the Ferryman's house and appropriate to the situation of easing a wounded man's pain. It can also be seen as an expression of the Ferryman's desire to be of service, and, moving farther in that direction, as the surrealist embodiment of his servitude, whether that is a positive or negative value. The final placement of the bowl, if it is set down between actor and audience, is a second offering, this time of blood, rendered ambiguous because this blood is Tiger's, and Tiger is suffering in changing people's lives as the Ferryman has just learned that people should. The shock effect of the blood serves Bond's purpose just as the fall of blood from Wang's mouth has, by being an alternative to the action which is suppressed. Offering the bowl of blood becomes the act which substitutes for the correct act; the audience which is willing to "accept" the offering, to see that bowl as offered to itself, participates in the Ferryman's "innocently guilty" ritual act.

The ring of the ferry bell in the distance is a reference to that bell of Tiger's which rang false, or not at all, without its tongue. Here the one ring renders false the Ferryman's statement that he does not expect Wang. As punctuation for the lesson, also, it frames didactic monologue, marking the shift from one type of speech to another. To interpret the bowl correctly, one need only go back to its appearance in Wang's playlet in Scene Five, where Wang describes its contents as the great servant of a great thief, and empties it on the ground (38). In the last moment of this segment of Scene Eight, the Wife is prevented from making a similar expression of emotion to Wang's fall of blood by being gagged. The gag is a brilliant theatrical device in that it stops words, blood and water, binding all three into the same image by preventing them all.

The poem, "De Que Sirve una Taze?" among "The Bundle Poems" makes Bond's point:

You knock out the teeth  
 Twist the neck till the skin is taut  
 As wrinkles on ice  
 Scorch the hair as you do on a pig  
 Tie the hands  
 And break them with a hammer  
 Dress the body in rags  
 As if it were a wound  
 Empty the skull  
 And stuff it with sheets  
 Torn from your book  
 Shoot out the eyes  
 So the face looks like cracked glass  
 And now you offer a cup

What use is a cup? (90)

This poem shows that Bond's purpose in using the cup image is quite similar to that in Restoration, where the willing assumption of chains is the essential problem of bondage. The chains which Bob can remove and replace, the prison in which he lives exactly as he does in freedom, are not the obstacle to be overcome; they are symbols of mental bondage. Likewise, the cup, offered to alleviate suffering, is not a sign of humanity, but more ambiguous, like an offering of vinegar. It makes the point that suffering is occurring and parodies an act of kindness in pretending to relieve it. Tiger has been made into a creature needy of kindness by "You saints who crucify the world so that you can be good!" The juxtaposition of the cup image with the figure of unrelievable pain occurs in such a way as to show that the real connection between the two (love) is missing; it is a grotesque non sequitur to offer water to a tortured man.

Bond sees and shows what custom has rendered invisible – that reactions to commonplace acts and situations in society have lost their appropriateness, rather as old expressions do. Whether these reactions – to handcuff a man's stump, to break the stone on a woman's neck – are palliative or punitive, they cannot correct the problems they address.

The shifts of distance in Bond's theatre are often moments when the expected result does not occur but where, instead, the audience is made to review what has just been said and done. In language, this involves the use of repetition, malapropisms, irony, redundancy of formulaic phrases, and so on. In actions, it often involves grotesque exaggerations and repetitions; and in character and imagery, unusual couplings which signal the importance of a passage through a seeming redundancy or over-emphasis.

Bond adopts the epic device of dividing the stage space. After the confrontation, Basho takes the Ferryman out to answer the ferry bell, Wang's signal. The Second Soldier is left in the house with the Wife, and the two "remain motionless" while the scene with Wang is played out. Again a single sound punctuates the action. There is a "Splash. The sound of the ferry pole falling in the water" – the Ferryman's warning – and Wang vanishes before the soldiers get there.

Now Basho enters the Ferryman's house and the Ferryman is kept off stage. This creates a physical and visual gulf between the two, although Basho addresses the Ferryman directly: "you've ferried your boat long enough to know about haiku" (68). The action ceases while Basho analyses the previous audible but invisible dropping of the pole. He even composes a haiku to illustrate his point, haiku being appropriate, in that the "surprise" of the last line of this type of poem makes it the poetic form closest to what Bond is achieving in theatrical terms. It is also, as a poetic form, among the most formal in any language. The gulf between the brutal murder and Basho's reaction to it is immense. But his poem correctly interprets both the cruelty of the act and its philosophic application:

The ferry pole fell  
Deep in the dark water – poked  
In the eye of god (68)

A very complex statement is made by this haiku. The plot is at a dead stop. Basho's speech heightens the severance of relationship among the characters; they are "in fact, all isolated,

seeking their own ends" (Hay and Roberts, Bond: A Study 285). The interpretation often placed upon such actions as those of this scene (the brutality of overlords in quelling revolutionary violence, for example) is that invocations are useless, falling upon the ears of "deaf heaven." Bond's modification of the image makes god blind, and the good man responsible for that blindness. Basho's growing blindness and the misplaced morality of the Ferryman are both implicated here. Both of these "good" men act with cruelty, even, and necessarily, in fighting each other to protect their own definitions of what goodness is.

No haiku is a riddle, but the haiku form requires that its hearer complete the idea of the poem: Bond's use of it at this juncture, and with this subject matter, over-distances the moment by dictating that the appropriate audience response is thoughtfulness. The audience must know what happens in the scene, but more significantly, why.

In the "Note on Dramatic Method" (xviii ff), Bond explains his concept of dramatizing analysis rather than action. Basho's being on stage and the Ferryman off stage is, like the interpolation of the haiku, entirely appropriate to this concept. Basho's interpretation takes the place of the plot, which unfolds concurrently in the wings and is secondary to analysis.

The use of the haiku here is somewhat different from that at the end of Scene Five, where Wang picks up Basho's poem and reads it out to the audience as the house lights come up for the first intermission. There, the poem completes the scene and summarizes the lesson of Wang's instructive playlet. Here, the poem is separate from and parallel to the action, rather than a segment of it. Basho translates his experience into another form. Ordinarily Wang integrates his experiences with each other, so that they form a continuum; here he adopts Basho's mode. The difference in treatment of experience is appropriate thematically in that it underscores the difference in treatment that Bond is giving the elements of the play.

He also is working rather as Basho does, creating another "angle" from which the action can be viewed. The poem thus has a comment to make on content and structure as well.

Basho's poeticized interpretation is next translated into the death of the Ferryman. The murder is clearly audible, but what comprises the action near the end of this scene is the struggle of the Wife to remove her gag. The Wife's struggle is, again, a commentary on the unseen action. The plot is oddly segmented here, with the by-stander Wife, an ancillary victim, focussed on, and the pivotal murder conveyed by sound effects. Here is the death of a central character rendered in sounds and nothing more; not only are the various segments of plot fragmented, but also the elements composing each segment – that is, the visual image and sound effects – are disassembled. There is an overpowering sense of helplessness generated by this device; it is a fragmentation which echos the hacking away of Tiger's body parts ("like chopping branches off a tree") and the fragmentation of the personality.

The Wife also is reduced to a "weak, persistent" cry, "on one note," but the audience, in seeing her, sees that that is all there is remaining of her resistance. She is immobilized, worn down by long years of her husband's sacrificing her, by her treatment at the hands of the soldiers, and by her struggle to go to the Ferryman's aid. The dissection of the poor people in the play is conducted for "scientific" purposes, like the blinding of Lear or David's analysis of his mother's cancer in Summer. Bond's purpose is not, of course, to modify the behaviour of the victims, but to show them to the audience. An upsetting mixture of pathos and repugnance is one result. Acknowledgment of responsibility by all parties who opt to live within the social construct is another.

Compare this treatment with the end of Scene Three of Mother Courage, where the body of Swiss Cheese is placed before Courage for identification, and she denies knowing him with two shakes of her head. There are strong parallels between the two moments (as

between this scene and the death of Kattrin). In both, the murders are not staged but are made immediate – in Courage, by the continual running back and forth of Yvette, conveying the bargaining. Mother Courage herself is in control of the action: all she must do is agree to pay the two hundred for her son's life. She refuses for various excellent reasons – because her whole life's work is being reduced to an ignoble and immoral blackmail, because Kattrin is "twenty-five and still no husband," because her political sense tells her the war is about to end so that the King and the Pope can ally themselves against the Emperor. Courage is, indeed, much of the same mind as Wang, when he pitches the baby into the river, the significant difference between them being that Courage does not allow her recognition of what is at stake – Swiss Cheese's life – to stop her haggling, while Wang acts because of, not in spite of, realising. When the consequence of her haggling transpires, all Courage can do is confess her fatal weakness, too late.

It is also too late for the Wife to act when her husband is being clubbed to death, but too late by many years, not by minutes. She has colluded with him in bringing about her own debilitation; she can hardly walk across the floor, much less render a significant protest or an effective counteraction. Courage could act, but tries to avoid it, until the corpse is placed right before her eyes, Brecht implies; the murder of Swiss Cheese therefore takes place at a complete remove from the scene, and the intermediary, Yvette, conveying its potentiality, signifies the remove from herself at which Courage keeps her children. The Wife would act: Bond presents her incapacity. It is worth remembering that she did act years ago, when the Ferryman first brought the infant Wang home. But, weak then as now, she finally capitulated to, and was sacrificed to, his goodness. Since she has no power to save him, it is not necessary for the murder of the Ferryman to happen at a great remove; Bond distances it visually, but presents it audibly.

The off-stage dialogue has a double function. It conveys unseen action, but also refers to the actions of the Wife:

FERRYMAN (off). Uh-uh-  
 SECOND SOLDIER (off). His hands!  
The WIFE removes her gag. Immediately, as if tuned in on a radio, the weak, persistent sound of her cry, on one note.  
 THIRD SOLDIER (off). Kick!  
 FIRST SOLDIER (off). Why do they struggle at that age?

At the reference to hands, the Wife removes her gag. Her cry accompanies the struggle, and ends with the few splashes of his dying; it parallels her husband's struggle. Through this mode of presentation, Bond can show that the violence which is done to one is done to all.

It can be said, too, that the action is doubled; as a mime it is a reflection of an act, rather than simply an act. At the same time, it is the action of the scene and the Wife is the victim who must live with the fact of the murder. Her reactions to the death of the Ferryman intensify it. The audience's pain is increased with the increase in number of victims, and Bond concretizes his point that the act of injustice is magnified by its ramifications.

Bond often places brutality on a plane with, or in the background of, trivial conversations, so that the audience witnesses both at once. This has the disquieting effect of somehow equating the two in importance, and suggesting that the trivial and the brutal act are part of the same mind-set. This connection is unusual, in that dramatic dialogue more commonly alternates with dramatic action in a cause-effect relationship; also commonly, dialogue substitutes for action. In Greek tragedy, such acts as the blinding of Oedipus, the savaging of Pentheus and the murder of Medea's children are conducted off-stage. One might hazard the notion that these acts cannot be countenanced: before the eyes of an audience with a strong sense of ethics, they could not take place without destroying some sense of their (the actions') truth – without, that is, the play's collapse through over-distancing. Since they must be suffered, they must be hidden. In Shakespearean

tragedy, those murders which are staged – those of Desdemona, of Julius Caesar, of Coriolanus have the sense of honour, however mistaken, about them. The purely loathsome acts, like the murders of the Princes in the Tower, or of Duncan, happen off-stage.

In Bond's plays, actions, brutal or otherwise, often serve no greater cause than their own. The Wang of Scene Four is a sort of Canute at bay before a vast tide of babies. Bond has said that the ends can never justify the means. In The Bundle, Lear and Saved, ends seem virtually unattainable. For example, the wall in Lear is forever being built and torn down, practically, one senses, in the same action. There are no grand actions, only limited, ephemeral, and fragmentary ones.

Where the action in Bond is brutal, the effect is sinister in the extreme. This is partly due to its being predictable neither in the course of the plot nor in the structure of the play. It is of no account in terms of plot to either perpetrators or by-standers. Even Wang's murder of the infant is to him an illustration of a condition – not a murder. Brutality makes more of a difference in structure, however, and closes the distance between spectator and stage somewhat. If off-stage, then it makes the action seem somehow peripheral rather than central. Scene Three, the flood, is an example. If up-stage, it is a judgment on the downstage action. Whatever is foregrounded is trivialised by contrast, but paradoxically, the trivial action – as the Wife's struggle with her gag in Scene Eight – is invested with some of the grandeur of the more terrible one. The Wife's struggle is as grand as her whole life, and the Ferryman's struggle is measured against it. And: "Why do they struggle at that age?" Unarmed resistance is pointless at any age, in this play.

There is no way of assigning value to the acts of violence in this and other Bond plays, and no unified or positive response to them possible either, because of this structural placement: there is no one place for violence, because it has spread everywhere. In the



unpredictability of its eruption lies its greatest danger. The victim might be a great person or a small (as I discussed concerning the death of the Gravedigger's Boy), the occasion might be an evening meal or a royal picnic, and the scene might be the riverside or the manor house. Though it may be prepared for in a theatrical way, no context justifies violence either. So the preparation for it, where it shows, seems mean and small-hearted no matter to what end it is directed. This view short-circuits the possibility of personal or social tragedy, and The Bundle often vacillates in tone, as does much of Bond's work, between comic and grotesque. Because philosophically violence is never appropriate, it can never be the summit or outcome of any action; on the other hand, because it is sporadic and continual, it can truncate action, and every context foreshadows it.

In his attitude and this vision of the world, Wang is much like the Lear of the final scene of Lear. He is not at all interested in heroes: "It is easy to find monsters – and as easy to find heroes" (78). But he is completely dedicated to change, and the particular change he desires relates to people's attitude to tradition. Desecration of the dead doesn't worry him. But "to carry the dead on your back" is to waste your life (78). The creation of heroes involves the creation of dead for them to avenge, agents of death by which and from which to save the potential victims, and a system (such as a cycle of revolution) by which heroes can be continually reconfirmed. Heroes are antagonists, in being mere agents of those they defend – the poor, slaves, children; and these, insofar as they require heroes, are equally murderers with them in requiring their heroes to fight. So long as the audience maintains its habit of seeing Wang or Lear as heroic, the point about repudiation of heroes is lost. Therefore Bond illustrates the process by which they step down from the pedestal, just as Christ steps from his cross in Black Mass to poison the communion wine. This important step marks the hero's transformation from mere tool of the people to collective protagonist.

At the end of The Bundle, Bond goes one step further than at the end of Lear in that there is no visual emphasis on Wang, and the action has veered away from him entirely. Unlike Azdak in Caucasian Chalk Circle, Wang is not made to disappear; that might smack of abdication of responsibility, which is not Bond's point. Bond insists on the potential for change, whereas Brecht, arguably, has less hope. Wang sits with his bread, one among others, neither saved nor, as Tuan's not-prevented death underscores, a saviour. Off to one side, as a visual counterpoint to the group and a reinforcement of Wang's integration into the group, Pu-Toi mends a shovel, a symbolic act which recalls the endings of both *Saved* and *Lear* strongly. Not care of the individual, but care of the tool: this is the act of true greatness. It can be performed by anyone.

In Restoration, as elsewhere in Bond's plays, theatrical convention seems more like an arbitrary constraint placed upon both character and action than like a code which permits their free development. Bond's task is to explain the dangers inherent in a particular mode of thought to an audience which must use that mode to understand the criticism. The placement of the whole play at a greater distance than the audience might expect is useful, then, thought about thinking being what he hopes to stimulate.

Several distancing devices achieve the removal of the work from the audience's emotional involvement. At just those points where convention would dictate the outcome of a particular scene, Bond draws attention to convention itself and to how it is operating. He varies, for instance, upon the commonplace use of both asides and songs. He extends plot and character parallels (two classes, two marriages, double murders and victims), through the repetition of conventional language – "Dead? – Dead! – Dead? – Dead!: O the tedium of tragedy: everything is said twice and then thrice" – and significant action, namely the murder of Ann. At the last moment, he introduces a Messenger who is commissioned to deliver Bob's pardon, pointing up the artificiality of the device by Lord Are's handling of this "deus ex machina." Compare Brecht's *Threepenny Opera*: as here, the audience is teased by the wholly arbitrary appearance of a nuntius equitatus at the appropriate moment. And compare Gay's *Beggar's Opera*, where the Player expostulates with the Beggar, "But, honest friend, I hope you don't intend that Macheath shall be really executed" (154), and the charming rascal is reprieved, "for you must allow that in this kind of drama, tis no matter how absurdly things are brought about." Nor does Bond leave it up to the audience to recognise what he is doing, but states it in the characters' dialogue, so that both Bond's

method and also the characters' awareness of it are plain. In these ways, among others, Bond makes the constrictiveness of conventional mentality a subject matter in Restoration.

Heightened distance is not, of itself, enough to achieve Bond's purpose of goading the audience into thinking about the patterns and processes of action – both mental and physical – which the play illustrates. "In contrast to Brecht," Bond has said, "I think it's necessary to disturb them emotionally, to involve them emotionally in my plays, so I've had to find ways of making [my] 'aggro-effect' more complete, ... to surprise them ... (Innes, "Edward Bond: From Rationalism to Rhapsody" 113). That is, he must draw the audience in with an emotional appeal that relates directly to its own life. Perhaps for that reason he creates the character of Rose, a slave's daughter, as the antagonist of Lord Are, the foppish landowner. Introduced to Rose, one expects that the problem of racism in Britain will provide some of the tension of the play: "Heard the London servants was getting black," says Mrs. Hedges when she meets Rose. But Bond is not really concerned with that political problem. Nor is the feminist issue, also a volatile one and certainly raised in the play, what he is mainly concerned with – in spite of, for instance, the continual reference to women as cows. Rather, Bond uses the emotions that accrue to the male chauvinism and upper-class elitism of various of the characters by applying them to a broader issue for which those two are only metaphors or paradigms: the issue of inequality among people who have been taught to see themselves as all alike, and who therefore cannot see that they are dehumanised and subjugated to others. The injustices perpetrated in the play are so outrageous and so unnecessary that they can be counted on either to provoke disengagement or to stimulate rage. But the rage mingles with confusion when the victims work actively for, and claim responsibility for, their own condition. The confusion is generated by marked shifts in distance, and resolved by the analyses presented in several over-distancing vehicles, especially the characters' songs and their explanations of their own behaviour.

One of Bond's techniques for focussing on convention is the creation of a set of characters who cohere in social terms (that is, they comprise a set – Lord and Lady, maidservant, outdoor servant, housekeeper, parson, and so forth), but not in other ways; the coherence of the group stops at this level of convention. Individually, they spring from disparate sources; the Lady's background is in trade, the maid is a black immigrant worker. Rose's initiative and pertness are Restoration traits, but her espousal of social action does not occur with her Restoration counterparts; though social commentary is pervasive in Restoration plays, it usually reflects the author's, not a particular character's, perceptions there.

For instance, in The Country Wife, the critical eye Wycherley trains on the subject of marriage does not witness his equivocally moral hero's reformation at the end, nor is the more upright Harcourt condemnatory of his friend Horner. The characters differ in the degree of this adherence to a moral code, but not in their social background or in superficial acceptance of social mores. Indeed, the code is universally understood. Not so in Bond's play, where the code itself, not the characters' adherence to it, is the subject. The coherence of the group is about to dissolve in Bond's play, because a socio-historical perspective has penetrated the characters' awareness, and the title, "Restoration," is ironic. None of Bond's servants merely approximates the advantages of their masters in their own lives, as can happen in Restoration comedy – for instance, in The Way of the World, where Mincing affects to speak as her mistress, Millamant, does. As a class, they wish, rather, to wrest those advantages of education, money, freedom of movement from their masters in a whole range of ways, from theft to the enforcement of basic rights and liberties as guaranteed them by law.

Bond not only particularizes social commentary by his treatment of Rose, Bob, and the other servants, but develops a theme that pervades his work: revolution is not enough, if

it does not revise the basic principles upon which the inequalities of society are founded. Bond takes a very negative view of "Restoration" servants who do not know this "truth," as his depiction of Bob illustrates, and outlines the distance those servants must travel towards emancipation in the character of Rose, a "modern" counterpart to Bob.

The overlay of one historical period upon another is very telling. Rose may enjoy a twentieth-century emancipation from the slave-past of her mother, but she is still married to Bob, who lives in a world constructed in the Restoration. So she is still in dire need of freedom from now invisible chains. For his part, Bob may have been thrown forward into the twentieth century, but this accident of fortune alone is not enough to free him from a repressive social structure which still obtains. Still in the grip of that structure, he has been barred from the education which would permit him to emulate Rose's partially successful struggle. Having fought her own battle, she prepares at the end to continue his.

To emphasize that the responsibility for the outcome of the play is shared by both masters and servants, Bond has the servants perform on themselves the acts by which their masters contrive to subjugate them. The Hedges lock Frank into the chest, Bob fastens onto himself his own chains, and Mrs. Hedges burns her son's pardon at the eleventh hour. The significance of these actions lies partly in the nature of the characters' awareness of them: Bob knows that it is his place to wear chains, and at the very moment when he could escape, his habit of obedience short-circuits the plot. It also lies partly in the reasons for the characters' lack of awareness: Mrs. Hedges is responsible for Bob's death because she cannot read: ignorance is tantamount to murder. The plot is not "complicated" directly by the blocking characters (Are, Hardache), but by those whom they would block. The blocking characters simply profit from the advantages of a social system which is the real villain; hence they need not "block." Like The Bundle's Kung-Tu, they can afford to be kind.

Much of the tension in Restoration comes from the audience's not knowing whether or not Restoration theatrical conventions govern the action of the play. In fact, these conventions seem randomly violated, and the suspense for the audience comes not from watching a variation on a Restoration play as it unfolds, but from watching the interruptions which delay and deflect that unfolding in some areas, while the action moves inexorably onwards in others.

The main theatrical convention at issue here is that by which the servants serve their masters, protecting them from their rivals, plotting and inventing excuses and explanations for their behaviour. Ceasing to function as accessories to the action, the servants can only be antagonists to its progress. Another convention, that of the aside, is also varied upon by Bond; while the asides in The Country Wife, for instance, often contain the speaker's attitude or emotional reaction to the dialogue, those in Restoration mainly elucidate the plot or comment on the dialogue.

The play opens with Lord Are, in his country colours of russet and green, posing in conformity to a sketch he has commissioned so that he can copy it. He states at the outset that he means his pose to be attractive to Ann, the unsophisticated but potentially wealthy daughter of coal-merchant Hardache. They have married by the second scene, the advantage to Ann being presumably Are's pedigree, and are retiring to the country, a place they both hate. The connection to gentry does not turn out to be the real reason for marriage; for it transpires that the strong-willed Ann is the pawn of her father, who wants access to the coal which Are doesn't know his land contains. So eager to get to London is Ann that she disguises herself as a ghost in Scene Four and "haunts" Are with the news that his wife is pregnant and must go directly to town. Are is at breakfast, however, and finds the ghost "pesky"; to dispel it he picks up his rapier and runs Ann through. In comes the indoor servant, Bob. Are contrives to place the rapier into Bob's hand and, by fooling him into

thinking he's being attacked by a ghost, manipulates the murder a second time through Bob. Bob believes himself guilty and turns himself in.

In the meantime, Bob has married, like his master. Rose, his new wife, is the maid of the new Lady Are. They arrive as part of the entourage when Are comes to his country seat, and Bob introduces his wife to his mother, Mrs. Hedges, the housekeeper. Frank, the outdoor servant, steals some silver plate and is caught by the other servants. While they go off in search of rope, Rose takes pity on Frank and releases him from his temporary prison, a large chest.

The second half of the play is set mainly in the jail where both Bob and Frank await execution. The fact that both have received the death sentence makes clear that the crime of offending the rich by stealing silver, even though Frank considers the silver as payment due his under-rated work, rates equally with murder in this highly materialistic society.

Rose comes to receive from her husband his account of the murder. Thus the audience knows that only a short time has elapsed between the two parts of the play – not enough time for a trial of either servant. She quickly realizes that Bob is not guilty of the crime, and makes him see that Are has set him up to save his own skin. But she cannot get him to attempt either self-defense or escape: Are "is the law – so I must obey him" is Bob's position. Frank, shouting from an off-stage cell, has a much different attitude. He managed to flee almost to London, "swillin' and screwin'" as he went, "the last wild beast in England" (58). He addresses Are as "Lord Arse" and rails at the Parson sent to confess him.

Rose makes various attempts to get her husband freed. She tries to stir his parents to protest by explaining that the establishment is sacrificing Bob so that neither Are nor Ann's father, the coal merchant Hardache, will lose the profit of their legal connection: "It's



between two bosses," she explains. Finally she appeals to Are's old mother for clemency, having heard that Lady Are has influence with the prince. But Lady Are is as ornery and cynical as her son, and refuses out of hatred for Are and because not only would an appeal be tantamount to "[leading] a riot or [opening] a revolution," but also, "if Society protest every time the law is an ass no one will respect it" (82). Nothing must be allowed to shake the order of things, not even the upholding of a principle upon which that order is founded.

Though Lady Are does finally relent and obtain the pardon, for the pleasure of incriminating her son, Are manages to intimidate the messenger sent to deliver it and both servants go to the gallows. In the final scene, the widowed Rose stands on London Bridge, preparing to take her cause into the streets. She sings the last of the seventeen songs interspersed through the play, its lesson: "Man is What He Knows." These words are, significantly, the words Bob has been learning to read in prison from the Parson who also teaches him to read Rose's name.

Some of the idea of the ambiguity of the play can be gained from the opening note, which places the play in "England, eighteenth century – or another place at another time." Bond's suggestion seems to be that the time and place are interchangeable with the present (Western) world, and that to pin them down is to tell the lie that they are not universal. The subject matter of the play emerges clearly in the dialogue and through the songs. It is that all these people, masters and servants alike, are the victims of a powerful materialism which sacrifices everything – social structure, legal and religious values, individuals – to the secure, profitable maintenance of itself.

All of these issues are raised directly at the outset. By its first glimpse of him, the audience might suppose Are to have a clear notion of humanitarian values: to him, these might be considered to reside in cultivation, in culture in every sense – in art, in love, in

matters of taste and of worthy companions. Not that Are exercises humanity in any of these senses. A caricature of Restoration fops, without depth of his own, he unmasks himself immediately. He is witty about his revulsion at having to come into contact with a servant, a pasture, a tree. He is poor, he says, and he is clearly bored, and he is having to stoop to conquer.

Initially, nothing he does or says seems greatly to exceed its "objective correlative." But Are does not maintain a set of values against which to measure his actions; he allows his behaviour to be determined by the moment; and his motives and actions are not consistent with any governing morality in the play. Nor is Ann so out of keeping with Are that her presence jars the audience into revising its perspective of him; indeed, her exaggerated and single-faceted materialism, being ascribed by Bond to the would-be bride rather than to some older and more jaded relative or companion, is a direct rebuke of the marriage of convenience.

Are is triumphantly indifferent to facts. He lives by art, in more than one sense. He models himself on it, as in his posing in conformity to a sketch, and he protects himself with "artful" manipulations. He restructures the world in conformity with artistic principles; for example, he recognises in Ann's death the matter of tragedy:

ARE.	Her ladyship is dead.
MOTHER.	Dead?
ARE.	( <i>aside</i> ). O the tedium of tragedy: everything is said twice and then thrice.
MOTHER.	( <i>flatly</i> ). Dead?
ARE.	( <i>aside</i> ). Twice.
MOTHER.	( <i>flatly</i> ). Dead?
ARE.	( <i>aside</i> ). I have survived the morning tolerably well, now I shall spoil it with a headache.
MOTHER.	( <i>suddenly realising</i> ). Her ladyship is dead!
ARE.	( <i>aside</i> ). If she is not she is a consummate actress.
MOTHER.	Is her ladyship dead?
ARE.	( <i>aside</i> ). O god is it to be put to the question? We shall have pamphlets issued on it. ...
BOB.	Alas!

ARE. (aside). And now the convulsions they learn at country dancing. (47-48)

Throughout, Are acts as commentator on the action and as participant. He makes liberal use of asides, which place him in the position of Master of Ceremonies. He sees the action in terms of the spectator, as if he were in the audience. One of the most disquieting things about him, in other words, is that despite the artificiality of his speech, dress and conduct, he sees himself as close to the audience, as being less distanced from it than the servants are. Part of his repulsiveness is created by Bond's placing him at the very elbow of the spectator to share his undesirable confidences with him or her. Nevertheless, when Rose tells the Parson that Ann was bleeding before Bob stabbed her, Are says, "Bleeding? (aside) I repeat myself like the rest" (54), which indicates, I think, how immediate is his awareness of the theatricality of his own response. It is his natural mode of thought; he is evaluating the action in terms of its conformity to dramatic practice. How the thing is said (as with Len and Joyce in Early Morning) matters far more to him than what is said.

Are employs typical theatrical devices – repartee, the aside, the soliloquy – in a Restoration comic frame. He thinks of the murder action as "a scene from a farce" (56), and his own involvement as an embarrassment. All of this implies his awareness. He assumes he is in the company of like-minded people – the audience, whom he addresses – who understand his attitudes and experience, and who recognise the conventional theatrical references he makes. He refuses to be associated with anyone on stage. Addressing it, Are assumes the audience to be appreciative of his view. In this he resembles Wycherley's Mr. Horner, a realistic character insofar as qualities and shortcomings are mingled in him, and he acts with the ease of one whose behaviour typifies his society's. Like Are, Horner knows himself. Through the device of the compliant doctor, Quack, Horner informs his audience at the outset, "let vain rogues be contented only to be thought abler men than they are, generally 'tis all the pleasure they have; but mine lies another way" (Wycherley, qtd in Lawrence 85-86). Like Horner, Are poses without fear of censure. He expects the audience to see its own

theatrical role in the performance. He takes the events of life, courtship, marriage – the comic events of life only, because that is the mode of theatre he prefers to live in, tragedy being tedious and farce making him look silly – to be vehicles for self-expression and occasions for extemporising. Action, in other words, is the raw material for Are's dialogue.

To pronounce on an event, one must see it as if in its entirety, and divide oneself from it. This annuls the possibility of being shaped or changed while analysis is in progress. Once the analysis is completed and the judgement made, one must will to enter again into the situation, be shaped by it to the degree upon which one has decided, and to shape it according to the judgement made. This will to enter the situation again is not a matter of emotion, but of intellect; in that he does not exercise it, Are shows evidence of a failure of intellect. To the degree that it identifies with any of the elements of his personality, the audience might be moved to wonder why Are does not exercise his will to "reenter" his own life at any point.

The matter can be addressed rather as I have addressed the appearance of structural duplication in the asides of Bodice and Fontanelle, by noting the intrusion of the author into the activities of his nasty protagonist: perhaps Bond wishes to indicate how socially devastating it is to remain estranged from others, as Are is. A psychological interpretation, though there seems to be little justification for one, would suggest that Are experiences hatred, revulsion or fear. Certainly, like Bullough's hypothetical person in a storm, Are may be in danger of his life. But that seems truly irrelevant to him, no more than pepper on the bland daily fare. Taken to an extreme, and exercised in isolation, his "objectivity" could be considered a form of madness. But Are can protect himself by joining a majority, or a powerful minority. Imagining himself to entice the audience into sharing his type and level of consciousness, Are links himself to a majority.

An audience to which Are is joined is vital to his impunity. Without the audience, Are stands to be affected, because alone, by his actions – his marriage to Ann, his murder of her, his indictment of Bob and insistence upon pressing charges against Frank. The audience is necessary to him not in its role as auditor/viewer, but simply as complicit with him. In Bond's play, the audience does not literally move onto the stage (though it moved onto the Restoration stage; see Elam 34); instead, he joins it, by commenting on action in which the others engage without distance from what they do. More than joining it, he dominates it by telling it how to feel about the stage action. Are acts as if he were very closely linked with the audience – so closely that he thinks for it and it does his feeling.

However, Are misjudges it somewhat. For he treats it rather as he treats the Messenger, flaunting his wares – clothes, and more important, wit – to charm it. Yet Are is witty only to a degree. Certainly the expression of his thought is unusual and surprising; certainly it is lively; but except in a very particular sense, it is not always apt or, besides in a contrived way, amusing. That is, the sort of repartee which is very amusing in the context of wooing is embarrassing or worse in the context of others' misfortune; in the context of murder it is misplaced and repellent. His audience cannot join him, on pain of sharing his immorality, and of being in very bad taste.

Therefore, Bond's evocation of laughter through Are has a complex significance. Were Lester present, the lords' rapier wit might well be hilarious, since they are similar creatures, likely with equal powers. But Are's jousting with Bob is not funny when it becomes clear that Bob has no ability to parry or even recognise the attacks – no native wit, no luck, no friends who can move into Are's world and joust on his behalf. Bob is a defenseless animal whom Are simply finishes off without any cause beyond self-interest. (Almost all the characters in the play are referred to as animals; Bond uses the imagery pervasively in a way referential to Othello.) One might say that Are thinks of laughter as the

audience's expression of appreciation of himself while Bond uses it as a mark of condemnation, both of laughed-at and laughter. Laughter prepares the audience for violence. Also, it binds Are and the audience (see Rademacher). Since his wit becomes synonymous with his crimes, the laughing audience becomes complicit in those crimes.

Are's thoughtless relish for laughter is shared by Lady Are. Both mother and son contrive reality with such gusto that it almost kills them – Lady Are when she fabricates the death of Ann and almost laughs herself into a heart attack (83), and Are when he impresses himself so much by getting the pardon away from the Messenger that he prepares to ride up to the hanging and deliver it himself:

Hedges! Lay out my blue coat and yellow hat. Nay, my pink with the purple plumes. Let us not add to Bob's woes: he shall see a good hat at his hanging. Faith 'tis so spectacular 'twill take his mind off the rope. I shall doff it to the hangman – but Bob may take it as a courtesy to himself. ... Yet I grow fond! Think, I cannot ride up with the pardon! I must forego the hanging! ... (88)

The disjunction between the world they contrive and the one they live in is almost complete, and even when their own lives are at stake, they hardly trouble to connect the two. Life is, altogether, art to both. Are's concern when he murders Ann is with how his act will look to Lord Lester.

In fact, throughout the play, the audience is invited to look not at the events themselves, but at the characters' attitudes to them. One can extrapolate a political point from this, that an emphasis on the formal institutional matters – the law, social codes and etiquettes, power structures – is morally debilitating. The audience too is being requested to examine its attitudes. Sypher maintains of Hamlet that the audience cares more about Hamlet's reactions to what happens than about the events themselves (145). But Shakespeare is focussing the audience's attention so as to clarify Hamlet's coming to terms with his situation, whereas there is no question of any of Bond's characters, except Rose, coming to terms with themselves or anything else. At best, Bond's characters embody venial

sins – jealousy, avarice, vainglory. Their motivations are self-aggrandizement and revenge, on the gentry's part, and on the servants', self-effacement through proper – that is, conventional – conduct. Lady Are's response to the fact that her son is a murderer (she doesn't doubt it for a minute) is "Pox on the rogue!" because Are "hounded her from the house" when his father died (81). Since all of these behaviours and motivations simplify – falsify – the complex relationships and events of the play, all are inappropriate. Oppel remarks that in Lear the falsification of the truth is explicitly stated and agreed upon by all (11): by the end of this play also, it is clear that almost every character, including all those affected, knows that Are is the murderer. They comply with the lie that he is not, however. The truth is a trivial detail. The "facts" inspire no confidence whatever; "facts" are themselves ambiguous, as Hauser points out concerning mannerist art (29).

Bob's fate provides a shining example of this. He trusts Are's words over his own knowledge, and remains in fetters quite needlessly. He and Are both exhibit what Hauser calls "an attitude of indifference to mere facts, [and] also ... resentment ... a reluctance to [follow] them and [reconcile themselves] with them" (29). Hence both are guilty of murder – Bob, of murdering himself.

Like the Jacobean playwright, Bond seems to depersonalize Are by manipulating the action for the sake of the intrigue – as when Are obtains Bob's pardon – allowing only the character's self-interest to govern his response to circumstances (Sypher 149-150). Are is a provocatively ambiguous figure. By his highly-contrived style of speech, of Restoration vintage, he establishes his foppishness. His intentions and his manner of speech to his servant, Frank, reveal him to be coldly materialistic and elitist, the obsession with dress indicating his thoroughgoing superficiality. Are thinks of himself first as an object of attraction, a decoy or lure, second as an object of admiration, an "art work," and third as a powerful man, differentiated by title and heritage from others:

ARE. ... When I pass the boundaries of the town I lower the blinds in mourning and never go out on my estate for fear of the beasts.

FRANK. Cows aren't beasts sir.

ARE. The peasants sirrah. ... (8)

The ambiguity results in large part from the degree of self-awareness which the audience is to impute to him. Whether he is attitudinizing or sincere in such statements, he clearly contrives, rather than revealing, himself when he studies "how a gentleman drapes himself across his fields." It also seems that he is intelligent, in that he speaks epigrammatically, as a wit speaks. He pretends to education: his allusions are to "the proper use for art" and "the secret of literary style." His dismissal of Frank ("About your business. I must pine"), suggestive of *Twelfth Night*, perhaps, or *Hamlet*, indicates this also. Since his sincerity cannot be judged, the audience is in the quandry of whether or not to feel empathy for Are. His wit would encourage this, although its content is rather brutal. But his behaviour over-distances him.

In her study of the impact of narrative sequence in the works of Beckett and Pinter, Morrison explains an analogous effect:

The two poles of that tension are these: that the audience "wants" to identify the characters on stage with the characters in the narrative because of [their] similarities and yet no conclusive evidence for such an identification exists. A "yes" and "no" war with each other ... in that complex absorption which is part of an effective theatrical experience. And this tension pulling the audience between "yes" and "no" is analogous to the tension the characters in the play experience. (120-121)

Are exists in a condition parallel to that of the Beckett character who tells a story which might be about his or her own past, in that at this point he seems to parallel the Restoration protagonist who, however foolish at first, is brought to toe the line by the end of the play. Are feels a tension between what he is and what he pretends to be; the audience, likewise, feels a tension between eventualities: he may prove sympathetic, he may not.



Further evidence of his self-contrivance lies in the contrast between Are and Frank, who does not speak like his master, but matter-of-factly and without flourish:

ARE.	Lean me against that great thing.
FRANK.	The oak sir? ...
ARE.	How do I look?
FRANK.	Well sir ... how would yer like to look? (7)

This contrast in speech is drawn even more clearly with the entrance of the thick-minded Bob:

ARE.	... Good fellow, take the run of my grounds. Go and play.
BOB.( <u>aside</u> ).	This is a test Bob. Don't git caught out. ( <u>Idea</u> .) Drat what a fool I am! That owd rag round your neck hev hitched yoo up in the bramble! ... (9)

By contrasting him with these plain-speaking and literal-minded fellows, Bond indicates that plain speaking is a mode of communication the characters can employ, and shows the audience that Are has not chosen it. Indeed, Are almost never speaks simply, the two brief exceptions being the moments when he realizes that he has killed Ann, and when Hardache tells him there is coal on his land. When Rose makes it clear that she knows Bob did not murder Ann, Are comments on his own reaction in the same breath as he reacts.

ROSE.	(to PARSON). Her ladyship was sitting in the chair bleeding.
ARE.	Bleeding? ( <u>Aside</u> .) I repeat myself like the rest. (54)

And when Hardache reveals his scheme to dupe Are of his land, Are's response is "Why didn't my steward tell me I had coal?" (75). Both of these remarks seem disproportionately flat by contrast with the significance to him of what he learns – that he will be found to be a murderer, and that he will lose a great deal of money.

Are's language and reactions are generally inappropriate to the situations in which he finds himself. Even those "spontaneous" remarks just alluded to seem out of place. Occasions when he might be expected to react strongly, including the appearance of Ann as a ghost, his own discovery that he has murdered her, and the confrontation with Hardache over

the murder, leave him completely unperturbed. In attributing this detachment to Are, Bond works rather as Orton does in such plays as Loot, in which the repartee, the non-emotionalism and artificiality of the characters, together with a rapid pace, "keep feeling in its place" (Worth, "Form and Style in the Plays of Joe Orton" 78). Are is able to maintain himself at a distance from the other characters – a distance, moreover, of which he is well aware, since his own play with language would often be impossible without that awareness. Indeed he mocks others for their manner of speaking, most strikingly in his admonishment to Mrs. Hedges, whose grief-stricken sobs he finds distasteful:

... Mrs. Hedges the chimney tops will rattle down scattering fire and ash as if Hilgay were the sister city to Gomorrah. Your wailing will start the dogs, the dogs will start the cows, the cows will start the farm and so the next farm and the news of my wife's death will reach London by neighing and mooing. I would have it arrive by a more conventional conveyance. (49).

Are's affected preference for conventional communication is as sadistic as his giving the pardon to Hedges to burn. But the reprimand has this in its favour: emotional self-indulgence at this moment permits the tragedy to fulfil itself because it prevents thought and hence action. The self-indulgence is the plot's "complication." It is least appropriate in Bob's mother, who should be taking up arms against Are, not dissolving in mindless lament. Bond implies that to defend her tears as "natural" is as silly and destructive as to say that since cancer is "natural," no attempt should be made to cure it.

The distance from himself at which Are keeps his servants ensures, Kayser might argue, that he can laugh at that comic element in their behaviour and personalities intrinsic to the conventions by which Bond has created them. But by continually bringing the audience itself into the servants' company, Bond makes it difficult for the audience to laugh at them as Are does. In reference to the Romantic artist, Busch, Kayser notes the alienation effect achieved by the "merger of mutually incompatible elements," which "may either be effected in the tangible objects themselves or ... from a character's – or the narrator's – reaction to a given situation" (116). Bond uses this device in connection with objects elsewhere in his

work; with Are, the spectator sees it in action also. Kayser claims that the effect is grotesque when the combination of situation and reaction is impossible, inhuman. Though it is perhaps possible to imagine that a raving maniac might respond as Are does when he murders his wife, and that another raving maniac might act as Bob does, the likelihood is so remote that an "impossible" situation transpires here. So with Mrs. Hedges' attitude to Are, once Bob is bound to hang. Later, in Great Peace, Bond approaches a realistic presentation more nearly by providing a possible context of madness for his characters; in Restoration, however, he does not do so; their relative sanity is not at issue.

Although they address each other and are affected by each other's words, the characters in this play are not really speaking to, nor do they really hear, each other. They are concerned only to express themselves, and are isolated from each other by that concern, as are, say, Arkadina and Treplev in The Sea Gull or (to use Volker Klotz's example), Wendla and Melchior in Spring's Awakening. Whereas the incapacity to reach each other is partly a function of personality for those four characters, however, personality is no more at issue in Bond's play than sanity. If the Restoration characters, separated from each other into different worlds by class and by a difference in history which springs from the class system, are subsumed under any one point of view, terrible injustice results. No single point of view accommodates all social positions, nor can an artist's resolution of a social problem by the imposition of one on the others be enlightening. The artist must inhibit the formation of one coherent whole, and facilitate a juxtaposition of views. As Bond shows here and in various plays, there is no such thing as "the world" in which to be comfortable any more. There are "worlds," preying upon each other. Are's is ugly and dangerous. Defending himself within it with the sharp weapon of his tongue, he keeps his traditional enemies – his mother and Lord Lester – at bay. His world – London – is a sort of Valhalla where the gentry do not dress their mortal wounds, but prefer to dress for dinner. It is maintained by the balance of power among themselves, and Are can thrust and parry there with abandon.

When, however, he unsheaths his rapier in the world of trade, the whole social construct totters, just as it totters when Rose lobbies Gabriel, the Parson, and Lady Are for Bob's release. No method of crossing class boundaries, whether through language or violent action, seems to be successful in this play. (Perhaps that is why Rose's march on London at the end of the play seems unpromising to such critics as David Rabey [116].)

Bond has stated that theatre should not try to change the world, that this is not the dramatist's job; but rather it should draw attention to certain aspects of social reality (Innes, "Edward Bond" 113). To this end the footlights are turned, as it were, sideways; it is easier for Rose to leave the stage singing "What have I learned? If nothing, then I was hanged" (99) than to cross into Are's world, of which she is ostensibly a part, as it is easier for Are to be in company with the audience than with Bob.

Indeed, it is imperative for Are that he avoid stepping into the world of Bob and Rose, lest he be charged with murder, and the facility with which he replaces his "masks" – language and clothing – on the few occasions when he is surprised into using plain speech shows us how repugnant and dangerous to him is their "ordinary" status. On their level, he is a villain, a schemer and a cold-blooded murderer, and stands to be punished for his crimes.

This might explain his large wardrobe, which keeps the man veiled as much as his wit does, and his hat collection: a hat is a great signifier of roles, and he loves to play roles. What Bond accomplishes with language he reinforces with the metaphor of clothing: clothing makes the man. His costume is as important to Are as his flesh; it is his flesh, in the sense that without it he is dead. Lord Are is the companion to the Parson in The Fool. When this Parson is stripped naked of his vestments in Scene Three, the point is made that even his body is clothing which he has stolen from the poor:

DARKIE.

Where you stole that flesh boy? Your flesh is stolen goods. You're covered in stolen goods when you strip!

How you climb your altar steps like that? What God say when you raise Chriss flesh in service? – more flesh they stolen doo he say? You call us thief when we took silver. You took us flesh! (The Fool 24)

The effect of this motif of stripping and dressing, which pervades Bond's work, is to increase the insignificance and worthlessness of the human body. It makes of Are's body an onion – many layers, nothing at the core. Nakedness is a metaphor for emptiness – Leonardo's perfectly proportioned man at the centre of a meaningless universe. How can one combat the dissolution which follows this vision? Description, the insistence through language that an object is present, even just as a shell, is one way. By his speech, his clothing, and his establishing particular boundaries for himself, Are can exist – as an object, however. He is cliché taken to the ultimate, and juxtaposed to more realistically drawn characters who are still, however, totally circumscribed by convention, even to the extent of dying in accordance with conventional motives (Sypher 152).

One result for the audience is that it is not possible to evaluate either characters or action in terms of one frame of reference or one set of information or values. There can be no black and white judgements, "no easy answers," since no credence can be given by the audience to just one character's set of values, as each appears artificial by the standard of any other. If one recalls other works of art in which one world or set of values intrudes upon another – Twain's "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court," for instance – it can be seen that a more conventional way to handle this clash is to give one world clear dominance over the other. A frequently employed method of developing a commentary by one world on an intruded other is that of Carroll's Alice in Wonderland or Dante's Divine Comedy, the creation of a mythic reality into which a stranger ventures. Because the mythic world is distanced from the spectator, s/he identifies with the "stranger" protagonist the more quickly, and comes to recognise elements of the familiar world in the distanced one. Early Morning is in a sense this type of creation, in that Arthur is essentially an alien in his own court. That

play can be seen as a step towards the Restoration model of two fully-developed worlds, at odds, and finally at war, with each other. In Restoration, the audience is shunted back and forth between protagonists, in and out of their respective realities, and continually draws connections with its own world. And this is where the powerful theater-life conceit which Bond is employing crystallises. By the same token that the self-styled "impoverished" Are can eat a hearty breakfast and choose among hats, the ghost of Restoration sheds blood when stabbed. This is a post-Pirandello world. It requires the footlights, without which the theatre/reality dichotomy cannot exist. But it does not stipulate that all of the theatre has to remain on one side of those lights, and all of the "reality" on the other.

I have been speaking as if the basic dichotomy in point of view is between the two camps, masters and servants. But if Bond were to put the matter so simply, Restoration would be uninteresting. All the characters inhabit both worlds, and all recognise the power of the others' views. But they are not looking at the same things when they cross into each others' situations. Rose sees the political advantage to Are of maintaining himself. Frank sees the advantage to Are in terms of monetary wealth and the leisure it purchases. For his part, Are sees the security upon which the Hedges wish to maintain a firm grip. Mrs. Hedges sees (both in her "character" and in the songs she sings) that the whole social construct depends on Bob's guilt. Each group can rely on the system to maintain itself, because it recognises that the other group, also benefitting, must be unwilling to rock the boat.

Though this is much of the point of such scenes as Part Two, Scene Nine, nowhere in the play is there a more clear example of the desire to maintain the system at the expense of natural emotion and personal integrity than in Part One, Scene Five, in which Ann is murdered. The action is highly contrived to begin with. Ann has put on a ghost costume to threaten Are into taking her to London, but her appeal fails. Furthermore, Are is at breakfast, and considers that an inappropriate time to discuss business, especially with a ghost. For

another thing, Are takes the opportunity to disparage his wife, and Ann so loses her temper that she begins to insult him in turn. This he cannot bear. He goes for his rapier, crying, "Out vapour! ... I shall stir you up and blow you off in a mist!" (43). She backs off, but he runs her through. The sword-play is, from Are's point of view, a theatrical gesture, nothing more. "Theatricality" is absolutely inappropriate in – in fact, destructive of – "life," a paradox established no matter in which category Are and Ann are placed.

The more carefully one studies this scene, the less possible it becomes to maintain the theatrical illusion (163). Are's dismissal and murder of Ann might strain credulity (Are himself remarks, "Who'd have thought I'd unloose such a show of bravado?"), but it is also difficult to accept that he conducts himself appropriately to his established character and for the reasons he gives. He props Ann at the table to mitigate appearances, and calls Bob to replace the now-cold toast. Murder, not being part of the scheme of his life, is of little consequence to Are. It is "invisible," because it is out of the order of things, even, indeed, to Bob, Are's creature, who enters and removes the offending toast without noticing Ann's condition:

ARE. O thou great Boob. Thou art my deliverer. Thou mayest be relied on. I do not see it yet, but thou art a loon and shall serve. (Adjusts ANN.) To arrange thee better. Faith thy silence is wonderful! Hadst thou behaved so when thou livst though mightst have lived longer. Thy costume becomes thee. At last thy tailor hath done thee justice. Thy face had always a lowering look. You played death to the life. A performance to retire on.

ARE goes. ... (44-45)

The assumptions here are that Are is so unremorseful at this point as to contrive conceits, though he is highly sensitive to others when he wants to be, that he is not afraid of being found out by Bob, and that he has no pity whatever for Ann. The combination is of intellectual vigour and massive moral stupidity. It deflects the audience's attention from the plot to Are himself, making the plot a "mere formality," a convention which can be invoked

to ensure that the label of villain be correctly applied, but which need not be rendered at all convincingly.

Furthermore, the violence of the act of murder, in itself, is completely out of keeping with the rest of the action to this point. What has been a sort of comedy of manners suddenly breaks into Grand Guignol, quite out of context. In being repeated, it is doubly destructive of verisimilitude. Bond is manipulating the elements of theatre as Are manipulates Bob, to show that no matter what happens, the outcome is inevitably Bob's downfall. He uses the same idea in The Woman when he has Hecuba engineer the Dark Man's victory in the foot race which, as Innes says, "demands a deliberate mystification of the audience," and like the unmotivated departure of the Greeks, manipulates the dramatic action, "[stretching] the logic of his symbols" (Innes, "The Political Spectrum of Edward Bond" 203).

At a loss to act further, Are is witty, as usual. Nor could he ever be described as a perpetrator of events; he enacts, rather than acts. Working the double entendre in "A performance to retire on," he leaves the room.

	<u>BOB comes in with toast in a silver rack, goes to the table and steals a cup of coffee. He sees ANN. He drops the toast.</u>
BOB.	<u>Eek! Lawd defend us! The dead are risen! ARE comes back.</u>
ARE.	What man?
BOB.	<u>(points).</u> Th-th-the-
ARE.	Ye have burned the toast? Twice in one morning!
BOB.	No' - th' - no' - th' - ...
ARE.	<u>(goes to the chair and looks at ANN).</u> There is a ghost. O Robert thou art possessed! What have ye done? (45)

From this point Are allows Bob to "write the script," which he can then direct as he chooses. The audience watches not only what happens, but also how it comes about. The ghost, propelled by Are, advances on Bob.

	<u>Terror! ARE makes ghost sounds and lifts ANN towards BOB. BOB points the rapier. ARE leans ANN on the rapier's point.</u>
ARE.	O Robert. Open your eyes.



BOB. (eyes covered). Hev it gone? (Uncovers eyes.)  
 ARE. See! the ghost – the rapier – you: joined. Bob what  
 have you done? (He pushes ANN with a finger: she  
 topples.) Murdered your mistress.  
 BOB. My mistress? ... But I – took it for a ghost! (46)

The second murder is parallel to the first, but identical assumptions have produced divergent results; the reactions of Are and Bob to being advanced upon by what each thinks is a ghost are quite different. Are's dispassionate, peremptory reaction would be more appropriate if it were not so exaggerated in its coldness, and redundant if Are did not believe in ghosts. He seems unbelievably devoid of human feeling, such a cardboard character that his power over Bob also challenges belief. Bond is preparing the audience for the political argument Rose mounts when she experiences the same amazement that such an obvious contrivance of action can go unchallenged. The exaggerated theatrical manipulation here is placed in its political context in Part Two.

The exaggerated naiveté of Bob, however, conforms with his intelligence, and does not draw attention to inconsistencies of character. Bob has just allowed Frank to escape, a far greater crime than coffee-theft. He does not even see Ann at first. But considering the previous scene, the theft of the coffee is extremely compromising, and his guilt is appropriately projected in the ghost's materialisation. His believing Ann to be a ghost (he might as likely consider her to be asleep at the table, after all) thus has psychological justification, while Are is further distanced in that his "belief" is altogether conventional to melodrama. Bob's reaction conforms to other relevant circumstances in his world, while Are's does not. Yet his extreme dullness is as exaggerated as Are's moral turpitude.

Paradoxically, then, the second "murder" contains an element of believability which the first does not have. This is extraordinary, in that it is a duplicate action, and could hardly be more patently contrived by the villain – or the author. Also, the physical execution of the second murder is as problematical as the step-by-step formulation of it by Are. Are must lug

the heavy body of the actress playing dead into a chair, heave her up to meet the rapier point, and "impale" her upon it; she must suspend herself in that awkward position until Are "topples" her with his finger. All this suggests the ungraceful execution of difficult movements, and under-distances the characters by giving the audience an uncomfortable awareness of the actors' bodies. It is almost grotesque, in the odd conjunction of real and acted awkwardness of movement. Further, it is the physicalisation of an ordinarily purely intellectual process – scheming. There are few actions like it in drama (although several others in Bond's plays), though the repetition somewhat resembles the collective stabbing of Julius Caesar, without the quasi-ceremonial tenor of that collective act.

By contrast with Bob's, Are's murder of Ann seems unbelievable. I attribute this to the presence of an objective correlative (the corpse) minus its attendant emotional response, and also to the relative involvement of Are and Bob in the action of the play. Bob is wholeheartedly involved as a character. He accepts a complete set of conventions – those which constitute his life as "real" – without question, and acts according to it. Are's stance is to treat the ghost as he treats all the other characters in the play, as nuisances. The condition of their existence is never a question for him; the only "significant other" for Are seems to be the (non-existent) Lord Lester. Are is sensitive to the ghost; he can use it, like anyone else, as "straight man" or whipping-boy. But his exchange with it has seemingly no psychological motivation, and is unaccompanied by dread, fear, or even curiosity. Unless Lord Lester is the agent, Are is almost completely unaffected, except by boredom and irritation, which he turns to account in wit.

In this double murder of Ann, Bond has created material which no single view-point can make coherent. Rather like some mannerist works of art, this scene is only partially founded upon some degree of verisimilitude. It is analogous to Pontormo's *Joseph in Egypt*, in which architectural units exist in isolation, impossible to integrate with each other, and

human figures are represented in some cases three-dimensionally, as flesh and blood, and in other cases as statues, doubly "artificial" in being presented equally with their three-dimensional counterparts. Bond's presentation of Are, Bob, and "the ghost" of Ann together on the stage, with their different kinds of unrealistic action and reaction, creates the same impression of internal disunity.

This sort of lack of relation between situation and reaction can be variously interpreted, depending upon the viewer: people can ignore soldiers at the door, a maddened drummer, natural and man-made disasters of the magnitude of nuclear bombs, corpses in the street; such matter as this is contained in Restoration's songs. They can ignore the connection (often financial) between themselves and those facts and refuse responsibility for them; instead and thereby they can get on with their lives. They might be called mad or sane, moral or monstrous. Like Bob, Are constitutes his reality in a particular way which is obviously out of context when the viewer does not share it. Here, either Are's or Bob's reality will jar on the spectator.

Rather than seeing his reality destroyed, and instead of adjusting his own view, Are has both the social power and the verbal skill to persuade others to act by the rules of his world. The other characters are not in his position. Bob and Rose and Parson and Mrs. Hedges may see that his world is not theirs, but they defer to it. Lord Lester, even were he present, could not be a threat; he is part of Are's world. And Hardache's world provides the economic base for Are's, so it is the more "convincing." Are's world is completely artificial, being both man-made and isolated from the natural. It is completely ritualised, and human in a very narrow sense; not even peasants, whom Are sees as beasts, are included. His preoccupation with this world is narcissistic and might well be termed mannerist also in its "preoccupation with ritual and with established manners, a certain negation of reality because of its inherent coarseness, a certain effort to construct artificially a strictly human world"

(Bousquet 62). Lord Are, and all the other characters, too, know that in this world, what one says dictates one's fate, and further that Are's speech dominates all. This implies that his power is artificial, resting as it does on language, an artificial construct.<sup>1</sup>

I do not think, here or elsewhere in his work, that Bond sees language as a force which, out of the control of its creators, is subjugating people to its own power, nor that he believes that "it is language itself which, closely scrutinized, alienates the world" (Kayser 166). None of his characters become trapped in language. Rather, they seem all to hold Rose's view that it is a tool; its power comes more, perhaps, from its conventionality than from its inherent being. Mrs. Hedges tells Bob not to "talk daft" about killing himself after the murder because "Parson'll speak up for yoo if his lordship doo" (49), and Rose says of the gentry, "They have accidents, we make mistakes" (53).

The irreconcilability of actions, then, has its counterpart in the dialogue. Are has harnessed language, just as the Landowner in The Bundle harnesses the river. The characters act in accordance with what Are says, even though they know him to be lying. Bob and Rose, for example, do not argue with Are over his definition of the truth: "Truth is what the lawyers say it is" (55), and there can be no argument over who is the guilty party; Are freely acknowledges guilt. Rather, they debate with each other the extent to which they owe him obedience:

BOB.	Wait, we can't afford to make an enemy of him.
ROSE.	He is our enemy. He's guilty and you're innocent.
BOB.	Yes, but that ont seem to matter. We accuse him we'll starve gal. Never git another job's long's we live. We jist hev to go along for the sake of appearance – like he say.
ROSE.	Yer said yer always obey the law.
ROB.	But he is the law – so I must obey him.
ROSE.	But he's guilty and you're –
BOB.	( <u>head in hands</u> ). Ont know what I ought t'do! Less think woman! (57)

As in Early Morning where Griss at the picnic shouts "Dead Queen to base," the language of the play is established as at variance with the action. What happens and what is said have mutually contradictory integrity. Usually in a play, the foundations of truth reside in what happens. But in this play, the plot unfolds in accordance with dialogue that contradicts what happens, from the moment of the murder. Bond points this out in having Rose try repeatedly to bring words to reflect acts, "to live," as Havel terms it, "within the truth," and to appeal for validation to the very law which hypocritically asserts that truth (39ff). What has happened – that Are has murdered Ann – is continually reasserted and reaffirmed. But it has no power over establishment hypocrisy. The language here stands for truth, but does not embody it.

This theme is developed throughout the play. Wilson defines herself to be generous. The Parson calls himself successful in bringing Bob to Christ. And Lady Are refuses to procure a pardon for Bob, on the grounds that if the lie of his guilt were corrected, the whole social order would collapse. This is the use to which Bond puts the distance he establishes between acts and words, inviting his audience to bisect the reality ordinarily constructed by their conjunction, not hypocritically, but so as more precisely to define the kinds of truth that emanate from each. He also invites a significant question: is the doltish Bob worth destroying the social order for? To be sure, no good is seen to come of that order. Indeed, he is the fitting sacrificial lamb, especially since his mentality is as repressive as Are's. Both the manipulator of and the subscriber to what is said are brutes, and apply language brutally. The audience is placed at one distance from the characters, and at another from what the characters say, so that it can evaluate each in isolation from the other.

Are himself has a modified, and more cynical, view of language, that its meaning is legislated.

What you or I say is no matter. Truth is what the lawyers say it is. You have none, whilst I ... (Gesture.) If Bob confesses, the killing is an accident. If he accuses me – well, have ye ever listened dumbfounded while ye contradicted

yourself ten times a minute? My lawyers will torment him till he runs to the scaffold ... (55-56)

And it is obvious also that he listens to himself while he speaks, since he refers to that activity as if it were commonplace: "have ye ever listened dumbfounded?" In Bob's case, the answer is no; hence his predicament. Just because Are listens to himself, however, does not necessarily imply that he knows himself. He is like the Water Sellers in The Bundle who watch themselves commit a socially responsible act, though Are's self-observations are narcissistic. But it does imply that he knows language; he plays with it continually, trying various "effects." At the critical moment, when the Messenger "happens" to arrive with Bob's pardon, he softens him up with witticisms, and wins him over with thirty pieces of gold. However, even though everyone sees through Are, all are defeated by him, even this Messenger who, like Are's speech, is a theatrical convention.

The Messenger's appearance is obviously contrived. Unlike, say, Chekhov with The Three Sisters, where the seemingly naturalistic action and dialogue must be observed closely before the author's contrivance of them becomes apparent, Bond makes every effort to reveal contrivance in this play, so that the almost invisible "series of alienations" (Hauser 89) which occur in Chekhov are more than visible here.

One might draw the same general inference that act and speech are divided from each other from other scenes in Restoration as well – Part Two, Scene Eight, for instance, where Bob learns to read, Mrs. Wilson entertains Mrs. Hedges, and Hardache blackmails Lord Are for the coal in his land. Rose has made almost all her attempts to get Bob freed, and failed. Bob refuses to denounce Are, whom he now sees as a clown but whom he must still trust, partly because he believes in the law: "I am an Englishman, a freeborn Englishman. I hev a right to speak – to shout for all to hear! Thass in our law." He assures Rose that "When I ont git a pardon, then I'll speak out" (78).

Bond prefaces this conversation with a song, "Hurrah!", of which the third verse goes,

They drove him into the factory like a slave  
 Or chained him like a beast  
 To crawl in darkness to his grave  
 His torments never cease  
 Till butchered in the wars of kings  
 His mutilated body sings  
 Hurrah! for every Englishman is free  
 Old England is the home of liberty (76)

One takes this song to illustrate the enslaving power of the propaganda that the English are, by definition, free – propaganda which enslaves them. The singers of this song are Rose and Bob, Hardache, Mrs. Wilson and probably Mrs. Hedges, oppressors and oppressed.

The subject matter, anachronistic in some details, is picked up in Rose's and Bob's immediately following conversation: "You're a slave but don't know it. ... How can yer fight for freedom when yer think you've got it?" (78). But it is given a special sting in the physical image by which Bond dramatizes Bob's mental condition: Bob says old Lady Are has the pardon in the bag:

ROSE.	Then why ain't you got it?
BOB.	Can't jist hand em out. Hev to do things proper way.
ROSE.	I've got money. We could get that chain off –
BOB.	(removes leg from fetter). Thass only for show.
ROSE.	God! Then we can go! ...
BOB.	Thass madness! I git caught I git hang!
ROSE.	You are caught! (77)

The removal of the fetter is one of those shocks with which Bond enables his audience to see the magnitude of the problem he is analyzing. Its effect is the same as for those moments in Early Morning when Arthur and George, and then Len and Joyce, prove to be bound to each other. The audience has to suspend its attention at this point to review what it knows of Bob already. Though its knowledge of the bound couples in Early Morning is extended, here what it knows is confirmed and deepened: Bob can never be free. The audience is not given information, but rather is told to take what it knows seriously. The distance established is

between material and political reality, a distance which is often taken for granted not to exist. If all fetters were material, half the freedom-fighters' battle would be won. Perhaps there is a lesson in this image for Rose, whose wrists do not bear marks of iron. Bob's physical imprisonment is for appearances only; it is a metaphor for his mental state. The mind makes, indeed, a heaven of hell.

Nor is it a thoughtless bondage, an unwitting deference to Are's reality, as the following dialogue shows. Rose wants to go to Liberia:

BOB.	What I do in the jungle?
ROSE.	What I do here!
BOB.	'S different for men. Liberia! That where food grow on trees? Break a stone an' milk come out?
ROSE.	Bob the door is open. ... (77)

Bob's intelligence is not a constant but varies according to the use to which Bond wishes to put him in any given situation. Shedding for the moment his stupidity in exchange for sage critical understanding, he expresses the fact that he has chosen fetters he understands, and that all his future possibilities, like his past, include chains. Because Rose sees him remove the chain at the same moment the audience does, the audience feels the emotional impact as it hears the argument which ensues – an argument which clarifies the difference between Rose's former slavery and Bob's present one.

Until this point, Rose has not understood what she is fighting. She has been offering him a life which may be potential for her, but would be a fantasy for him. By his very nature Bob is fettered; it is not a matter of leg-chain or border-crossing; freedom for him can only lie in choosing the prison. Rose's goal for him, which has seemed to be that which he himself desires, turns out, when he removes the leg-chain, to be antithetical to his wish. Having married him, Rose has married a slavery she mistook for freedom, and thus has taken onto her own shoulders the enslavement of the servant class. The physicalisation of the



enslavement metaphor precedes a restatement of his problem for the audience's consideration:

All my life I struggled. Bob the joker. Bob the sport. Walk down the road, the sun shines, eat, work – struggle to keep body and soul together. You got yoor strength Bob, you can doo anythin'. Where did I goo wrong? I know well enough. I know what yoo tell me now. Long ago I should hev put my boot in their teeth every time the bastards smiled at me. But I've left it late. Now it's dark. Black. Black. Black. I must goo steady, or make a terrible blunder. I must trust the clown an' hope for my reward. (78-79)

This is a clear statement of his condition, made, perhaps, directly to the audience ("I know what you tell me now"); Rose has left the stage. She re-enters and the two sing "Song of the Conjuror."

The intrusion of the song, a distancing device, reinforces the image of the fetters. The theme of this song may be that one is free so long as one thinks one is, and fettered as soon as one ceases to believe in one's freedom; or possibly it suggests that by accepting non-existent fetters, a person brings them into existence, whether the fetters are visible or not being irrelevant. "Song of the Conjuror," on the same theme as Bob's soliloquy, is a sort of reprise of "Hurrah!" Bond's distancing technique is to outline his theme in the first song, illustrate it in a passage of dialogue, recapitulate it in Rose's speech, "you're a slave but don't know it" and Bob's soliloquy, "All my life I struggled," and repeat it in the second song. By this time the points about varying definitions of reality, and that one ought to hesitate before accepting another's definition for oneself, are made.

The shunting back and forth between dialogue and song is also clearly a distancing device. As it watches Bob's fate inexorably approach him, Bond implies, and prepares itself to feel bad when he hangs, the audience takes on responsibility for his death and is morally reprehensible. Two analogies to Bob's chains present themselves for the audience. One is the conventional theatrical milieu, which seems to prohibit its participation except as voyeur. The other is that it wears the same set of mental chains as Bob does, which makes its

mounting an effective restructuring of social classes literally unthinkable. The scene ends with a verse which the audience could understand to be pointed at it, since it shifts the lens to focus on the conjuror's audience:

They gasped as he fell – the splash  
 Turned the water white  
 They screamed as they watched him struggle and thrash  
 With horror they saw him sinking down  
 And stood on the bank to watch him drown. (79)

This particular little allegory has strong resonances in modern thought, for example, in Camus' The Fall. Bond's short play, "The Swing," deals directly with the audience's responsibility for what occurs on stage – by extension, with the society's responsibility for the dilemmas and evils portrayed in its art works. One implication, there and here, is that the audience can do nothing to rectify social ills or, in this case, perceive the real danger in which the illusionist has placed himself by forgetting his reality, unless it is continually aware of what is theatrical and what is not. To be completely literal-minded like Bob, who can put no distance between himself and the world ("That owd rag round your neck hev hitched yoo up in the bramble!") and to utterly theatricalise one's life as Are does ("My wife. Stretched out on the floor. How is a man to put a good face on that?"), totally over-distancing all his experience and severing the emotional and intellectual connections which bring the individual into moral equilibrium: these are the deadly Charybdis and Scylla between which the audience must steer. Otherwise, it is equally to be counted murderer, or victim, with the stage characters.

What I have been describing is fundamentally a dialectical presentation of material, a commonplace technique in Bond's plays. It involves the handling of story elements in uncommon ways. For instance, Restoration is distanced in time – or may be. It may be seen as Are's story, in Restoration times, or as his story in a modern context. Then again, it may be Bob's or Rose's story, set in either of those historical periods. Perhaps the setting is

England. Considerable complexity of interpretation is made possible by Bond's temporal distancing. The audience combines the elements in various ways, and the implications of the play vary accordingly. In my view, the distancing in time is more a euphemism than an analogy for twentieth-century England, however, for the anachronisms so strongly weight the time of the play in the direction of the present that no fully developed Restoration parallel is really presented.

The dialectical presentation of material is not just a matter of telling sequential "stories," as in The Woman, or parallel stories, as Brecht does in Caucasian Chalk Circle. Derek, The Worlds and Restoration each involves the transfer of a character out of his/her "natural habitat" and shows how dangerous that transfer is to both worlds. Restoration shows that transfer to be not just dangerous, but inevitable. Lady Are is trying to stem the tide:

A pardon? – nothing would be easier. ... But I shall not ask. ... Child, who would be safe? Charles my footman would strangle me at table for the sake of a titbit on my plate, Dorothea would crack me over the head with my bottle and drink it, and Trevor my valet would kick me downstairs. Pardon? Ye might as well ask me to lead a riot or open a revolution. (82)

Lady Are's comparison of the pardon with revolution is a telling one: the breaking of the artistic convention parallels real-life social effects.

Dialectical thought is apparent in the structuring of the play. Bond uses two conventions which are shared by both Restoration and epic theatre, the aside and the song, to encourage transfers between worlds. The asides are Are's; with one exception, none is spoken by anyone in the play outside of conversation with Are. Two-thirds occur in the first part of the play. They establish Are as a character totally aware of himself as an actor (both poseur and, if he is not good at his game, pawn). Are adopts one tone for the other characters in the play, which is always impatience ("About your business. I must pine"), and another for the audience ("So here I am set, imitating the wild man of the woods. An extravagant gesture ... Faith boys what would one do ..." 8-9). Because of the asides, Are functions

much as do the repoussoire figures of mannerist painting, allowing the audience to make direct "eye contact" through which it can enter the picture. As Hauser puts it,

... anything in a work of art that takes account of a spectator, including the use of repoussoire figures and such expedients, destroys the completeness of the illusion, and recalls its fictitiousness, in other words, reminds the spectator of the self-deception necessary to the artistic experience, thus robbing it of its spontaneity and self-evident quality. (279)

No character outside of Are's company makes use of the appeal that the aside allows ("Faith boys what would one do"). Yet there is hardly another character who is not in dire need of appeal. This indicates, perhaps, that to the other characters, Are's expedient is wholly artificial.

The rest, in the meantime, employ another convention – that of the song. There are sixteen of these abrupt shifts in the audience's distance in twelve scenes. Lord Are does not participate in any of them, and there are none in the lengthy Scene Five, in which Are kills Ann. Roughly speaking, the gentry are not singers; Rose, Frank, Bob and Mrs. Hedges sing most of the songs; as I have remarked, the asides belong to the gentry, the songs to the servants. Are and Ann are never even present for any of them (again, with one possible exception, "The Gentleman"), Are leaving the stage on occasion when a song begins.

The songs are too numerous to be dismissed as "stop-action," nor do they mainly function thus. They constitute, rather, a substantial, separate reality, as proportionately central as either Are's world or the servants' – a third level. They are the major structural device by which the audience is distanced in this play. Because they are performed by the servants, they weight the point of view in the play in their direction. As the asides appear predominantly in the first part of the play, so are the songs placed mainly in the second part, fully two-thirds of them integrated with the action there. Unlike most of the songs in the first part, furthermore, those of the second part require the actors' stepping completely out of character to sing them. Furthermore, the content of the songs of the second part seems, at

first glance, disconnected from the plot; in the first part, they function more like the songs in a melodrama, where the lover woos and the maid laments to music.

Although the asides invariably reflect the contents of their speakers' minds, the songs do not do so, with the seeming exception of the first, "Roses," a love song with which Bob courts his darling. All of the others are broadly political, modern "protest songs" – that is, emphatically not Restoration. Very few, if any, can be considered to be sung in character, although sometimes the song is pertinent to the situation of the singer. Frank's "Song of Learning," for instance, expresses his predicament and his attitude to it. The style of delivery of this song, if it conforms to the taped performance (Bondsongs), is vigorous, aggressive, partly-sung, partly-spoken. It is tough, virile music also, with a sense of threat. But the frame of reference is broader than Frank: it is all humanity:

For fifty thousand years I fought in their wars  
I died so often I learned how to survive  
For fifty thousand years I fought battles to save their wealth  
That's how I learned to know the enemy myself (20)

Bob sings of his own situation in "Song of the Calf," and in "Drum Song" of Rose's predicament: "A drummer beat upon a drum / ... And no sound came / From the beaten hide / He did not stop till he was dead" (97). It cannot be assumed that, in character, Bob recognises Rose's predicament so clearly. His mother sings "Wood Song": "For everyman [sic] the die is cast / All you who would resist your fate / Strike now it is already late." If she were listening, in character, to her own words, they would transform her. Here, the song states the predicament of the character who, when she has finished singing, makes the same point in prose, but without the understanding the song shows: "My family polished this silver so long the pattern's rub off" (28). The song and the speech are antithetical in the point of view on Mrs. Hedges' life, although they agree on the level of content. And the order in which they are presented, awareness first and mental bondage after, creates a strong sense of frustration which is distancing. That she delivers both is ironical. In that the same

matter is picked up by Bob in Scene Eight, where he recognises his situation, it approaches the tragic: "long ago I should hev put my boot in their teeth every time the bastards smiled at me. But I've left it late. Now it's dark" (78).

In Scene Six, Are makes a proposal to Bob and Rose: that Bob allow himself to "Stand trial. Be acquitted. I'll buy the jury." Then he adds, "I withdraw while ye consider your reply" (56). The line is one of those many in which a second layer of meaning relates to awareness of form rather than being ironical in the usual sense of "meaning" two things. On the surface, Are is a character allowing two others their privacy. But also, he is introducing a performance. Bob's and Rose's reflection takes the form of a song, "The Gentleman," which considers not what they should do but Are's technique in manipulating them: "Who would raise their voice when soft words will do my friend?" The shift from aside to song accompanies the shift from Are to Rose, who might be considered the protagonist of the second part of the play, and underscores strongly the artificiality of Are's character. The aside, by which convention he connects himself to the audience, seems all the more artificial by contrast with the appeal inherent in the actor's stepping to the front of the stage and treating the audience to modern protest songs on topics such as butchery in warfare, the desecration of the tree of liberty, or the artist maddened by his own silence. What sort of verisimilitude can a character like Are maintain in the face of that content, and that directness? He is never so much as present on stage for any song, although for one of them Hardache and the Parson are present; otherwise the songs belong completely to Bob's world. Possibly, had Bond decided Are should be present, Are's character would have been utterly broken down, which might have given the impression that he is less of a danger than he is.

"The Fair Tree of Liberty" is clearly metaphorical. The tree has eyes which watch passers-by, striking down those that threaten its life. It grows strong and tall, wreathed with honeysuckle, vine, and wild rose, an allusion which clarifies Rose's function and develops

her character. The songs too are like opened eyes; the action of the play is blind. Clearly for Are to perform any of these songs would be redundant and cynical in the extreme, whereas their performance by the servants creates a deep tension, which partly results from the didactic tenor of the songs' content, as in this case. It is difficult to interpret "The Fair Tree" in terms of the play, yet as a metaphor for democracy, it would seem to have extra-dramatic relevance of some sort. An ironic reading is indeed possible, in that it directly follows Lady Are's little plot to "distract" her son by playing *deus ex machina* and sending the pardon Rose so dearly wants. Her penultimate line before the song reads, "As in the old romances, [Bob] shall be reprieved at the tree" (83). The tree of liberty, then, is not a meeting-place of patriots who gather to celebrate their political privileges, nor a metaphor for the state which defends its own against all intruders, but the gallows tree on which the "freeborn Englishman" will hang. The song links to "Hurrah!": England's "prisons were houses for the dead / And on her gallows tree / The people hanged for stealing bread / Why steal when you are free?" (76).

By including his songs, Bond generalises material which is also, and more directly, presented in the story-content of the play, where some characters (Frank, Rose) lay siege to the world of others (Are, Hedges, the Parson). The creation of any reality involves a certain necessary self-deception. At the point where realities clash, as they do with the shifts to and from song, either an adjustment must be made to include the intrusive material, or the intrusive will destroy the illusory. Bond has it both ways. Far from interrupting or truncating the scenes, the songs quite often bridge them, and are introduced and followed by related dialogue. For instance, at the end of Scene Four, Rose and Mrs. Hedges sing "Man Groans," in which the chorus ends, "To you who go in darkness we say / It's not easy to know the light" (40). Scene Five opens immediately with Are at the breakfast table, saying, "When I go to the city of light Hedges stays here in outer darkness." Thus the idea of light and darkness is picked up and varied upon, and the "you" by which Rose and Mrs. Hedges

address the audience is turned back upon themselves by Are's words. In this way Bond makes the reversal of point of view clear, and connects the song to Are's monologue.

This use of the song as bridging device is quite unlike Brecht's use, say, or Shakespeare's. For both of those playwrights, the song often (by no means always) creates a structural interlude, enriching theme. For Bond, the song constitutes something more like the shift into higher gear. Even the change of form affords no pause. The addition of another perspective, coupled with the predominantly narrative character of almost all the songs and their very often brutal subject matter, creates heightened tension. Consider "Drum Song," sung by Bob near the end of Part Two, Scene Eleven, after he has realized that he will hang, and while he and Frank wait to be taken. A suspension here occurs in the plot, but the song is action-packed.

WILSON.

FRANK snatches the prayer-books and throws them away. The GAOLER moves in. The PARSON motions him back. He closes his eyes and goes on reciting the prayers aloud by heart. BOB notices nothing of this but comes down from the table.  
(pouring beer). Four. I keep count so no one's over-charged. (To ROSE.) They're allowed one in the cart. I'd offer, but now there's the door to pay ... (Pours drinks for everyone.) (95-96)

Bob's song, by contrast with the waiting, the drone of the Parson and the penny-pinching small-talk of Wilson, conveys a scene of wild frenzy, especially through such words as "thrashed and lashed," "rattled," "struck," "Hammered on / Again! Again!". These might be a true representation of what Bob feels, although what he shows of himself is maudlin and spiritless. Bob has been dissected, and his emotion estranged from him.

Where this differs from the similar construct in a melodrama is that what Bob sings is not of himself; it is further estranged, in being made metaphorical (his own or Rose's predicament through a drummer) and in representing not what he feels or does, but what he



should feel or do. In this, of course, it is Brechtian. The appropriate response is trapped inside the song as Bob is trapped in the chains. He should free it, but he leaves it there.

Although of course the director plays a very great role in contriving the effect, it does not appear, then, that Bond means the songs simply to interrupt the action of the play. They are integrated with the action thematically, and virtually introduced and commented upon by the characters; they are taken for granted by all, and are in no way incidental. Nevertheless they are distancing, both in form and in that they provide analyses of character and action in lieu of presentation of those. In that they are anachronistic and narrative, they serve as the aural equivalent to "staging" a painting, as we have seen happen in Lear, and as happens at the start of this play when Are poses in conformity to a sketch. They create a larger context for the play, which becomes a comment on two fragments of history as much as it is a complete artistic entity. Of course they change the mood of the scenes also, but not for the lighter: overall, they are grim social comments, and in light of them, all the characters look egocentric and blinkered of vision. Even effects like the rattle of Bob's chain, which accompanies his man-to-man, "free" talk with Are, are raised in stature by the songs from the level of sound effect to equal the dignity and centrality often accorded language.

Bond has written much on the importance of music to the political cause, mostly in the form of lyrics, and it is clear that he eschews the "culinary" in songs, as Brecht does (Brecht on Theatre 89). "Music cannot ask questions / It can startle – / That is as good as a question", he says in Theatre Poems and Songs (78). In fact, as persuasive tools, the songs hold more chance of success than does logical analysis, Bond seems to imply, since the servants' arguments fail and they turn constantly to song. The songs destroy the separation between actors and characters, making it difficult to speak of coherent characters at all by effectively under-distancing them. But they achieve the coalescence of emotional and intellectual understanding which will, Bond hopes, move the audience towards a

restructuring of society. His "On Leaving the Theatre" from Lear is as clear a directive as any other statement:

Do not leave the theatre satisfied  
Do not be reconciled  
Have you been entertained?  
The theatre that's not also an idea is cruel  
Have you been touched?  
Sympathy that's not also an action corrodes

To make the play the writer used God's scissors  
Whose was the pattern?  
The actors rehearsed with care  
Have they moulded you into their shape?  
Has the lighting man lighted you  
And the designer dressed your ego?

You cannot live on our wax fruit  
Leave the theatre hungry for change  
You cannot live on our wax fruit  
Leave the theatre hungry for change

(transcribed from Bondsongs)

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Václav Havel, in "Power of the Powerless," discusses the power of language in terms of the post-totalitarian state, where the artificial construct – language – embodies convention rather than truth, and speaking the truth, insofar as it is possible, constitutes an act of aggression against the state.

Great Peace is a massive play, the third part of a trilogy that runs at least eight hours in performance. Thematically it might suit the term "cosmic" better than "epic", except that, depicting an unrelievedly godless universe, it scales no height between heaven and earth. Rather it spreads, flat like a plain, through time in the future. It is episodic, and more than many other Bond plays could be served by the subheading, "Scenes of ..." It is a modern pageant, roughly analagous to part of a medieval mystery cycle.

The War Plays Trilogy is set in two future times separated from each other by seventeen years, and the last part of Great Peace itself spans several years. Essentially the three plays cover the same time-span twice. Red Black and Ignorant covers approximately the first eight scenes of Great Peace, and The Tin Can People spans the intermediate time in Great Peace between Scenes Eight and Nine. The remaining eleven scenes of Great Peace complete the history. However arranged, the whole would give the impression of meandering or wandering.

The Trilogy is to be performed as a piece. Attention is divided between incidents and participants. The scenes are written in what Volker Klotz calls "open form." The structure of the play being episodic, one does not expect threads of plot to be picked up in later scenes and woven into a single fabric, although in an unusual way this happens.

A nuclear war has taken place. The earlier of the two time-spans in Great Peace depicts a time shortly after it, when the remnants of civilization continue life in devastated cities, clinging to such behaviours as politeness (an organising principle), babysitting,

maintenance of the army, and returning to or leaving home, beneath the surface of which they scabble viciously for food. The later time depicts life in the wilderness, after the breakdown of conventional behaviours and the gradual dying-off of most of the population from radiation and related sicknesses.

Tension is very high from the opening scene, in which a squad of soldiers is instructed à la Herod to return each to his own home and kill a child under the age of five, because "the nuclear exchange has destroyed / our community's economic foundation" (5). Hence the "if" for which the audience is to suspend its disbelief is specifically political. The Son returns home to his mother, who in Scene Two goes to a neighbour to pick up the infant she left there while she went to work, and is informed that daily care of the infant will cost her more in future. It is clear from the argument between the two women that they are desperately poor, often reduced to "arrangements" with corrupt locals who have access to tinned food. The Son tells her why he is home, after a long hesitation and a goading by his mate, Pemberton. Woman is aghast, but she quickly rationalizes, thereby incriminating herself, that her neighbour's infant should be the one that Son presents to his captain. When she tries to get it away from its mother, however, the neighbour, having heard of the soldiers' assignment, won't let her near. Son, desperate for a body, kills his own sibling.

Having committed what all of them clearly see as murder, the soldiers deal with their pain and guilt by adopting an attitude of bravado and filling their small talk with grotesquely violent language. The Corporal orders Son to pick up a cigarette package, but Son cannot; he has obeyed one too many orders. His fellows are ordered to shoot him in the name of military discipline. As they go off with his body, the Captain comments that his disobedience was "a useful / demonstration for the others / And it got rid of a weak element ... No place for mavericks in the army" (24).

Seventeen years pass. Woman, wandering in the wilderness with a bundle she calls her baby, meets the pregnant Woman 1, who has never seen a baby. Being close to term, Woman 1 needs help. She dies in childbirth, and Woman abandons the newborn, stealing its clothes, because "the world can't cope with another mouth" (29). The abandoned baby "raises a hand and gives one short cry that is lower than would be expected."

Two years later, Woman comes across Pemberton and his squad of four. He has convinced his soldiers that they are all dead, an idea which Woman assures them is wrong, basing her conviction on the "fact" of her living baby. The soldiers are confused and begin to believe her. But Pemberton orders them to hold the "baby" up as if it were a sheet on a clothesline, and rip it, which they do. "Yer see!" Pemberton jeers. "The rag's not a kid: she was wrong! / She says we're not dead: she's wrong!" (39). Woman is devastated by the violation of her child. Pemberton tries to shoot her, to prove her already dead, but the gun won't fire. In a frenzy, the soldiers demand to be shot also. They arrange themselves in the postures of the peasants in Goya's "The Third of May 1808." Pemberton kills them all in one burst of automatic fire. This climax places the scene in the realm of historical criticism.

Two days later the oblivious and exhausted Woman pauses for a rest. Suddenly her baby begins to cry, a shock increased because placed in an interlude between confrontations. It expresses its fear of the soldiers, of being so thin, and of being deserted: "I could've spoken a long time ago," it tells Woman, "But then if I died you'd miss my voice ... I could've grown big / I was afraid you'd leave me" (42). It makes Woman promise to carry it forever. This demand is a sinister reminder of the Ghost of the Gravedigger's Boy, whose desire to remain with Lear so clearly binds the king to his past and compromises his sanity. The bond between Woman and Bundle is power-based, not one of love; they are connected by maintaining the fiction that the infant needs care.

Again years pass and Woman meets two more wanderers – the aged Mother 2 and her grown daughter. Leaving the two old women together, Daughter goes off in search of help. After a conversation in which Woman wonders if Mother 2 and Mother 1 are the same – that is, if she is confronted with the victim of her son's and her own crime – Woman spreads her bundle to help her new friend – and the bundle complains at having to bear the burden of an old head.

In Scene Fifteen, Daughter has encountered a group of people who are beginning to reconstruct society. She leads them back to the two women, but Woman refuses to accompany the others to the settlement, where she could live. In that settlement, the members of the community explain to Daughter how they expect to construct a better society than the one which destroyed itself in the nuclear holocaust. Various points are made in their conversation, for example, that "Yer dont save the world by being good or / destroy it by being evil," that "trainin t' eat shit is what they [previous generations] called / culture," and that the lesson to be learned from the past is "dont follow in people's / footsteps" (56, 57).

In winter, the Man whom Woman has mistaken for her dead Son returns to bring her food, and to try once more to persuade her to join the rest. But she refuses. In the final brief scene, the following year, the Man finds the Woman's bones, "not as a skeleton but lying roughly in the human shape" in the blue nylon coat he has given her, with an array of tins in her stomach, "some open and empty." The elements of culture – nylon and tin – embody, survive and transcend the human element.

Given the setting, or rather the time of the setting – post-holocaustal – it is not surprising that the mise-en-scène has something in common with those of Beckett or Pinter, a few chairs and a table where rooms exist, rock and stone where they do not, which is almost everywhere. The play contains stunning and rich visual imagery, however, again as Beckett's

and Pinter's plays do, in its language. Even in contrast with Restoration, where the language is remarkable, one cannot help but be impressed by Bond's virtuosity in this regard. It is so striking in the reading, to me, that I find it easy to imagine an audience being distracted by it. In the Methuen New Theatrescript publication, the dialogue is presented in double columns and almost wholly throughout as poetry, with little end punctuation. It consists in places of conventional dialogue, in places of "solo recitation," chorus, or story for (expressed by) several voices. Like the time-frame, the dialogue "wanders," developing the action at some points, intruding upon it with commentary or digression at others, and weaving various themes, like harmonies, with each other. A substantial degree of over-distancing is achieved by this style, which lends a meditative quality to the whole.

The people of Great Peace are not characters, but little story-lines in themselves. As in other plays, Bond makes empathy with the characters very difficult, mainly because they are not presented in depth. They are consistent in being types, not individuals. Indeed, they are barely types; thanks to the operatic quality of the play's style and structure, they could as well be described as "voices." The characters jostle against each other when they chance to meet, each of them at a different point in the "human drama" of birth, adolescence, maturation, and death. They are typical of characters in open drama, who never truly meet each other or seem to converse on the same plane (V. Klotz 224-225). The first and last of these four stages – birth and death – receive most of Bond's attention, the very notions of adolescence and maturity being quite foreign to the play until the last few scenes; for the rest, death follows birth as if November followed immediately upon March, and the richness and purpose of life are simply non-existent.

Bond employs a small company of actors who share among themselves the many parts in the Trilogy, actors, he suggests, being doubled or trebled within and between plays. The effect seems rather like that in Megan Terry's Viet Rock. Although Bond's plays occur



after rather than during war-time per se, the sudden and seemingly random deaths of various major and minor characters, and characters' assuming others' roles in later scenes (for example, Woman's Son dies, but another Man later offers to take his place) also discourages identification with any one character for the most part.

The Trilogy is not, then, a linear history so much as a collection of somewhat chronologically arranged photographs. In this sense it is a mannerist work, an analysis of segments of reality, "not so much a picture as a collection of contributions to such a picture" (Hauser 25). These are not random, however. They focus on a few fundamental issues, such as what it is to be human, what freedom is, the burden of the past. They dwell upon birth and death in an artificially hostile universe. The births are rare, and of dying things; the deaths are early and shocking in their suddenness and nearness to characters still (temporarily) alive. That is, the inception and termination of life are "unnatural" in this play.

The impression of the dying-out of the human race is heightened in the first scene of Red Black and Ignorant, which is a sort of prelude much in tone like a Sophoclean chorus or the Anglo-Saxon "Seafarer":

Alone of creatures we know that we pass  
 between birth and death  
 And wish to teach each new mind to be as  
 profound as a crystal ocean through  
 which we may see the ocean bed and  
 from shore to shore (5)

In due course the speaker, Monster, explains that he is a "fabrication" who died in his mother's womb in what one takes to have been a nuclear attack. So he is at a sort of double remove from the audience – the ghost of a never-born character. This first actor to appear in the Trilogy is dressed thus:

The Monster's skin, hair and clothes are charred and singed a uniform black so that he appears as if he might have been carved from a piece of coal. His

hair sticks up in stiff spikes as straight as nails. (Alternatively, the Monster may be a uniform red.) (4)

His poetic language and his appearance are thus in direct conflict with each other, one lyrical and elegiac, the other stylized, perhaps expressionistic, possibly allegorical. The clash of styles is over-distancing even here, but later it is exaggerated further. Near the end of the play Monster is murdered in a confrontation with his soldier Son (the "real" monster), and then stands to address the audience on the subject of what it is to be human, picking up the last lines of The Bundle:

We know ourselves and say: I cannot give  
                                   up the right to the name of human  
 All that is needed is to define rightly what  
                                   it is to be human  
 If we define it wrongly we die  
 If we define it and teach it rightly we shall  
                                   live (18)

The play ends with three short speeches, by Monster, Wife and Son, prefaced in "epic" fashion by Wife's and Son's announcing "Funeral." These speeches are addressed to the audience – "You who live in barbarous times" – and concern the savagery of defining freedom as personal rather than collective. In its staging, its presentation of character, its stylized language and its themes, this short play (about one-tenth of the whole) functions as an overture for the Trilogy.

Having indicated in Red Black and Ignorant that the audience should not identify with the characters but should perceive illustrations of individual means of coping with universal problems, Bond writes The Tin Can People as a play in which collective life is preferable to, and vulnerable to, living "singly." He then settles in Great Peace on a mother whose circumstances are those of the wandering alien. This shifts the point of view from the collective (Tin Can People) to a single focus (Great Peace). Woman is not, however, the focus of every scene. Rather she functions as a linking device, so that cause-effect

relationships can be illustrated and a measure can be taken of the late stages of the disintegration of human history. Although this woman is dead at the end of the play, and the lights go down on the wasteland setting in the dead of winter, a new movement has begun in previous scenes towards rebuilding, regrouping, the dawn of a new age.

The structure of the play is extremely loose. The time gaps between scenes seem arbitrary. Why seventeen years between Scene Eight, where Son is executed, and Scene Nine in the wilderness, where Woman encounters the squad? Why two days before the Bundle speaks? Why "some years" until Woman comes upon the second Mother and Daughter? Bond obviously wants passages of time that are substantial in a human life, but no reason in terms of character or incident justifies any particular span. The sense of arbitrariness increases the sense of artificiality about the plot.

On the other hand, the spans of time have more significance in their relationship to the nuclear war which has occurred than in relation to each other. How long after the war before a woman can bear a normal child? Before food from some other source than tins is edible? Before people can begin to reestablish themselves in groups, able to trust each other, able to build? This is the sort of question engendered by the time span, and it has nothing to do, strictly speaking, with the play, but relates to extra-theatrical material. In this play, the distance is such that the audience's attention is brought to bear on the subject matter of the play, but in its real-life application. Great Peace transcends macro-politics, but is as rigorously political as any of Bond's previous works in attending directly to micro-politics, to the citizens who see their lives as only obscurely and remotely affected by political realities – and then only when those realities take the form of gargantuan disasters, capable of causing pervasive individual and social deformities which thrust ordinary life into memory, transforming it into the mythic past.

Woman's death is anticlimactic, in the sense that it occurs after the fact of the new society has been established and to some extent developed. However, when it transpires that the new society exists, and Woman's relationship to it becomes clear, the structural effect on the play is of overlapping: while the audience is watching one character, a new and more critical cycle of action has begun, into which her story temporarily obtrudes. That is, the play extends past her death, which is more incidental to its development than, say, Hamlet's is to the wellbeing of Denmark, in that her life is no way a block to the new society. It is just a superfluous burden which must be eased in one or another way.

However, her death is no more anticlimactic than any other episode to the image of the universal death which has preceded the Trilogy. Evocation of that destruction is presented so grandly by Bond as to diminish in significance almost everything that follows. Also, Woman's character is tempered, perhaps, by what she experiences in the play, but it undergoes no other growth or change. The revelation at the end (of the nature of the bundle) is no news to her. Because she is unable to connect the incidents in her life in such a way as to make a relationship among them, none exists in the usual sense; the connections she makes contradict what the audience knows to be possible, so the sense of a whole story, if she had the distance from it to see it, would still be hers alone, and not the audience's. Even the new world near the play's end does not provide the "sense of an ending." It is, the dialogue makes clear, a beginning.

This "beginning" is notable for its smallness. It is presented in its mundane details: a chair (a triumph!), electricity (without which "yer abolish the 'uman mind" [55]). And even though "The first person 'oo sharpened a flint began t' make H bombs," the same evil is being potentially initiated, but with "corrected vision": machines replace goods (55). In this, the play aligns itself with the Marxist philosophy of such fringe groups as CAST and Red Ladder, which "showed that the primary focus of capitalist oppression is at the point of

production" (Craig 33). Such details greatly undercut the sense of triumph or glory with which the Trilogy might end. Triumph is also suppressed by the fact that Woman rejects the brave new world, preferring to die apart.

The Trilogy does not end, then, with the fulfilment of character, or with the coming-to-terms of a central character with the world. It is helpful to see the characters rather as melodies or operatic motifs, each establishing itself in a particular scene, clashing and combining with others, dying out and returning as ghostly echoes. But it is not helpful to see the fulfilment of individual destinies as the fulfilment of themes or plot. The sort of identification Bond permits the audience is, as a result, the sort a modern audience might feel for Euripides' Jason when, at the end of Medea, he curses the witch-mother of his children, whose corpses float with her above him in her dragon. The emotion generated at the end of Great Peace is real, powerful and true, though the occasion for its expression is a perhaps unlikely fiction. The truth of the play is founded upon the audience's tacit acceptance of what Bond sees as a real possible future. The suspension of disbelief (in the characters) is complicated by the necessity for a suspension of disbelief regarding the possibility of nuclear war.

Neither the time scheme, then, nor the characters provides a sense of internal coherence for the play. Handled as they are, they invite a vacillation of distance from the audience. This is reinforced by the way Bond names the characters. The cast list for Great Peace specifies only Pemberton, a soldier, and Mrs. Symmons, a working woman whose name is used just once early in the dialogue, and never in the script, where she is designated "Mother 1." These "names" are not even specific enough to admit of type-casting on the audience's part; more of types is suggested by Good Deeds and Fellowship, Snake and Backbite, or Biff and Happy. Except for rank-designations (Soldier, Corporal, Officer/Captain for the army personnel), no other character is even designated by function.

The few who are not "Young Man," "Woman," "Man," etc., are identified by their position in the family unit – Mother, Daughter, Son. All humanity, then, is hardly concretised farther than into gender groups, with further definition confined to two alternatives, the family or the army. It seems reasonable to assume that the over-distancing of basic elements – time, setting, structure, characters – creates a context in which the sudden intrusion of under-distancing devices would have all the more impact by contrast. The character from whose life scenes are taken is Woman, genetrix of both. She provides a specific example of how Bond the mature writer manipulates distance through character.

Woman, with her grown Son in the army and a baby still in swaddling, lives a marginal existence in a devastated neighbourhood, supported mainly by Mother 1, for whom she babysits, and by Son, who brings her tin cans he has garnered in ways she won't ask about (7). These tins are significant, remaining at the end, when her flesh is gone. Her attitudes reflect the difficulties and conditioning of war time, blind to those corruptions which suit her, and critical of resistance to authority. When she tells Son about some squatters whom "they" took away, he fleshes out her attitude in his own response: "We 'ave t' get rid of the 'uman rubbish ..." (7).

Woman is developed in these first, short scenes, then, partly by extension to her Son, who can be seen as the facet of her personality engaged in public life: she the private citizen, suffering the privation of socio-economic and political circumstances which he polices in his public capacity. Woman accepts responsibility for the murder in advance, by abetting Son in it.

Woman is also developed by contrast with Mother 1, who is dealing with the same hardships and responsibilities as she. Mother 1 illustrates a second type, trusting, grateful for help and accommodating whenever possible; whereas Woman is the estranged individual,

Mother 1 is the social animal. This difference between them may be seen as a philosophical one permitted by the economic-political climate.

Woman is further contrasted with Son in Scene Three. Once the reason for his presence is revealed, he cannot help but seem brutal, of course; the audience cannot immediately know to what extent he is hiding his feelings from his mother, and to what extent those feelings are inappropriate to the situation he is in. His language ("What's left after some of the terrorist skylarks'd turn a corpse's stomach" [8]) and attitudes ("We 'ave t' get rid of the 'uman rubbish first" [7]) are learned, from the army and from Woman herself, as is illustrated in various ways. His experience changes him psychologically while her participation in it, and the transformation of her common-place language into heightened poetic style and diction, seem to render Woman two-dimensional by contrast. Her alignment of herself with Pemberton (16) is soon seen to be appropriate.

The characters respond in different ways to the slaughter of infants. However, the mutability of Woman's opinions, a protective device which can be seen in her submission to authority, implies acceptance. Son is outwardly obedient, but inwardly can make no adjustment, and goes mad. Mother 1 retreats behind her closed and locked door, which for her amounts perhaps to her death, while the four soldiers find a temporary outlet for the pain incurred by their experience and the brutal regimentation of their thoughts and lives in their language: "Nowhere t' 'ave leave / All corpsin soldiers and corpsin civvies on / corpsin bomb sites" (20). The word repetition seems mechanical. All these coping devices are dehumanising and distancing; by extension of this fact, the only ones who can cope are deprived of their humanity as a result; they are part animal, part machine. This happens to Woman. Pemberton, the named one, also appears to be able to function without dissociating himself from his world. But in Scene Twelve where he machine-guns his soldiers, who have grouped themselves in a rendition of Goya's "The Third of May 1808," the audience

discovers the nature of his "functioning." That he is not in touch with his world is made explicit there, but is set up early.

None of the actions in the first part of the play, except perhaps Pemberton's speaking up for Son, which seems to be motivated by their friendship, appears to stem from individual personality traits. In the main they are generalised responses to situations. As such, they cannot reveal character so much as, perhaps, capacity for character; they indicate mental alertness and physical condition. "Character" implies adherence to one set of values, a personal history which can be continued into the future, and faith that those around you live in the same "world" and by the same standards that you do – or at least that they will not impose alien worlds and standards upon you. That Bond's whole outlook is issue- rather than character-based seems to suggest a rejection of the concept of the individual generated through the whole history of Western philosophy; his outlook calls the Renaissance concept of man into question.

Character seems, in Bond's view, to be that thing which humans cannot have, since they live in a state of war:

We're living in the aftermath of a nuclear  
bombardment  
I don't know what will happen next or  
what we'll be ordered to do ...  
We're in a war to defend the standards of  
our society and I refuse to betray them ... (24)

This contains a contradiction: if the society has standards, then one whose job it is to uphold them must be able to foresee what he will be ordered to do. But thoughtless obedience is required of all in this play, as the Corporal insinuates in Scene One. Life in war time accords with a reversal of values; "live and let live" becomes "die and let die" or even "kill and let kill." By their being soldiers, people affirm the desire to die: "Corpse us! Corpse us!" (40) and are recognisable in that form: "I know you're people because you're / corpse-shaped"



(36). The object of enquiry is not a character, nor even an event, so much as it is an attitude, which can best be analyzed when the other two objects are distanced – that is, removed from consideration. Distancing is not just a process by which Bond gives the spectator an objective look at something. A great distance renders individually-held views insignificant, or at least just relatively significant. Because it is held in common, the attitude here springs into view. It makes its impact through being generalized, while differentiating personality traits of the characters are not rendered.

The types with whom Bond peoples this play do not have personal histories. This does not imply that they lack a psychological make-up, or that their actions are not psychologically motivated. But anyone watching a young child stalk a cat, or a cat stalk a bird, recognises the nature of that psychology. It relates itself not to growth of human potential but to growth in the strictly physical sense. Even sophisticated actions such as the strategizing of bidders at an auction, which require or evidence great understanding of human nature, do not represent dispassionate wisdom, and do not impart depth of understanding. That is, their experiences do not develop them differently from other people in a qualitative way, but only in degree.

One possible reason for this view of character is that Bond does not seem to think it possible in post-war conditions to have any kind of leisure, to be homo ludens. The basic necessities of life are too scarce; foraging and defence claim one's attention. One is reminded also of Brecht's remark that in the modern world, it is impossible to speak of people in any number less than two hundred. The experiences which necessarily focus attention on nourishment and self-defense make a person more like others than different from them. Alone, the hungry person hoards food and organises its consumption. It is, Bond seems to imply, the rare hungry person who can build a philosophy or a code of ethics, when the necessary basis – the law – is rudimentary at best, and directed at management of the

population. That the post-nuclear age of this trilogy is simply a metaphor for present life might be argued on the basis of the fact that in The Pope's Wedding, the hermit, Alen, sequesters himself with tinned food just as the Tin Can People do in that much later play; the same governing image is employed there in the time-frame of the present.

In the first part of Great Peace (Scenes One to Eight), then, Bond posits not a narrow range of characters, in designating a few mothers and children, a few soldiers and officers, but rather humanity reduced to its common denominators by history. He is simplistic in dealing with first causes, preferring to assign responsibility without arguing it, and go from there:

The WOMAN goes back to her baby.  
 This is my only chance an I'm wastin it!  
 (Tears the shawl.) 'Er kid should be dead!  
     Its father!  
 They start the wars! They're why we 'ave  
     bombs! Kill kids!  
 'E's safe under 'is concrete in prison an 'is  
     kid's tucked up in its cot!  
 I'll tear it like this!

Tears the shawl.

Yes, tear it (Tears the shawl.) and stop  
     (Abruptly stops in mid-tear and holds  
     the two sides apart.) like this  
 Stupid cow! – tears a shawl! – weak weak  
     weak!  
 Yer might as well do nothin! (17)

One notices that this speech, which is quite typical of the play, refers to material which predates the play. In this, it resembles, say, Oedipus Rex, where such material is summoned up in the person of a shepherd who can supply the "missing link" in the plot. It also resembles Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead, where the title characters see themselves as engaged in a totally peripheral way in action which they cannot shape. It gives a sense of reach beyond the play's boundaries as I have said. But it is unlike Oedipus, in that the extra-referential material is not ever brought on stage, nor does it relate specifically to Woman,

who therefore cannot react to it in a personal, meaningful way. And it is unlike Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, in that it presents Woman as a paradigm for the generalised condition she condemns, rather than as a victim – her own view. She and her society are infanticides.

The artfulness Bond employs here is directed at creating a person not as a rounded human being, but as a complex of attitudes and reactions. She fights social conditions on their own terms. She is not thoughtful, though she schemes, and she does not so much learn as illustrate that her act is ineffectual. Where she functions as a character, as in the conversations of Scenes Two and Three, she evidences conventional reactions to extraordinary situations without showing any growth. As Una Ellis-Fermor says of Henry V, "the character has been converted whole to the use of [his] function, the individual utterly eliminated ... There is no Henry, only a king" (46). Woman is a composite of conditioned responses. The relationship the play bears to the world of the late twentieth century is metaphorical, and Woman is a metaphor of a person, rather than an example of one.

The lack of "character" leaves the audience exposed to the impact of shifts in language which illuminate themes rather than character. Bond has carefully prepared the audience for Woman's discovery that her baby is dead. But the emotional discharge is truncated at the end of Scene Seven by Woman's sudden adoption of a more stylised sort of poetry than has been used in the play hitherto. This speech exhibits all the characteristics common of speech in open drama, as Klotz defines it, except that it employs manifestly heightened poetic language, which he finds characteristic of closed drama. The heightened language is thus very much at odds with the surrounding dialogue, its sense of the inexorability of fate greatly opposed to the feeling of aimlessness of the rest, and its fatalism somehow inexplicable in light of that aimlessness. It is parataxic, lacking subordination in its construction, and increasingly fragmented and interruptive of itself (using anacoluthon) as it goes on. Its detail does not cohere into a single image, but "remains an agglomeration of

independent illusions" (V. Klotz 175). At the point of crisis, the language of this segment of the play literally falls apart, an effect varied upon in Scene Twelve later. The shift to poetry divorces the speech from the speaker, distancing the audience so that it can observe how long it takes Woman to face the truth, something it needs to know for later judgement of what the truth is.

The disintegrative form of the speech approaches very nearly its content. Paradoxically, its formalising into heightened poeticism is emotionally distancing, because poetry seems inappropriate to Woman, suggesting the extreme state of shock in which she speaks, and intellectually disturbing, because poetry is the most artificial of language constructs. The fragmentation also defers to the idea that emotion such as this cannot be served by language at the same level as other emotion is served. Poetry is not traditionally held to be that form of language least capable of conveying emotion, however; on the contrary. Bond makes good use here of the paradox that poetic language may negate emotion, but is more likely to refine it, presenting it purely.

In his discussion of the Pastoral form in mannerist theatre, Shearman notes that "the verse tends to be most stylised in moments of supposed crisis" (95), a fact which likely has its basis in the demonstration of the finer points of art which Vasari and the artists of his time so admired. The stylization deflects attention from the crisis to the language, thus removing the crisis from the possibility of a direct response. Distance, that is, allows matters to be understood intellectually but does not necessarily make room for catharsis. The intellectual awareness may be gained at the cost of emotional resolution. Thus, a felt confusion, which has no intellectual justification, may be the result of virtuosity. Shearman quotes Pino's dictum, that the artist "'should introduce at least one figure that is all distorted, ambiguous and difficult, so that [he] should thereby be noticed as outstanding by those who understand the finer points of art'" (86).

Virtuosity, prized for its own sake by the mannerists, has another function; it presupposes "intense self-awareness [which must exist] during the creation of the work" and which "is so self-conscious at the moment of creation," Shearman asserts, "largely because of the anticipated criticism of a sophisticated audience" (93). For Bond, the virtuosity manifested in the effective switch from one mode of speech to another is an over-distancing effect which draws attention to itself. It is unexpected, offsetting the certainty of the murder and ensuring the maintenance of tension. It is the quality one expects in the attitude of the highly skilled doctor performing delicate surgery. Because of it, Woman's emotion is not only heightened but distanced from the audience also, in that as she speaks, she switches referents from second to third person – "your eyes," "your nose" become "its [sic] dead." The process by which Woman is distanced from her own child and her own crime is the more clearly to be observed by the audience because it is alerted by the marked shift in diction. It observes a dehumanizing process, both of Woman and of her infant, objectified in the third person; this process bears on the later behaviour of Woman with other children. The switch is from what happens to how. Why is not dwelled upon, but covered by past "official" rationalisations and clichés. The pronoun "it" functions as the swivel from second to third person:

If Im calm I'll find a way  
 Wake up sleeper the smell of milk'll open  
     your eyes  
 You're only small but yer make me be  
     very good an very bad  
 Take your tit  
 Now I've got blood on me finger –  
     smeared up the side  
 Did I cut meself on the floorboards?  
 Its out of your nose – one of your nose  
     bleeds  
 Wake up darlin  
 The blood's not comin – only when I lift  
     your 'ead

Dabs at the child.

Its on me 'and – me wrist – don't mess  
     mummy's –  
 Its –

She holds the baby up as if she was  
hanging a picture

Its running from its nose  
No no darlin dont do that  
It won't stop runnin – it's goin down my  
arm –  
Its bleedin – like a thing –  
Its dead  
No darlin breathe quickly for mummy  
Its dead its dead!  
Breathe!  
I'll 'elp you! Look – shake you!

She shakes the child.

Take it t' the kitchen an 'old it under the  
tap  
(Calls to the door.) Come back an 'elp me!  
Its dead!

She cries. (20)

One observes that when Woman first uses "it," the pronoun refers to blood: "Its out of your nose." When she holds the baby up, Woman pauses on that word: "Its on me 'and – me wrist – dont mess / mummy's – / Its – " and then proceeds quickly to "It won't stop runnin – its goin down my / arm – / Its bleedin – like a thing – ". Thus this speech traces the process of dehumanisation which is the condition for the characters for the rest of the play, until very near the end. Humanity is dissolved in blood, and the dialogue changes to monologue.

The next scene (Eight) hammers home the concept of humanity as dead, a theme in the play to which the audience is now alerted. The soldiers, back from their mission, show in their use of the word "corpse" the effect of becoming infanticides. Instances far too numerous to detail employ "corpse" as noun, adjective, verb and adverb, filling the whole structure of language with expletives. The resulting images are powerful: "corpsin live-meat in a concrete sandwich," "a fly up a corpse's arse'ole," "corpse-crap." They are funny, possible only to minds that dwell on word-play and see language not just as powerful but as the incarnation of power, and their grand guignol humour comes from their being the play-

things of the powerless. The soldiers extend them in references to skeletons and shit: "Screechin like a skeleton / in a spin-dryer," "'E'd make a skeleton's flesh / creep." It is not comfortable to laugh at desecrations, however, or at victims, especially since the laughter is caught from people who cannot cope with their experience of these things in any way except through the use of violent, denigrating words. If the soldiers found themselves funny, the audience might not. But they use the word "corpse" desperately, as if to beat off an enemy they cannot distance in any other way. Finally, in its very effusiveness the imagery is inadequate and frustrating, so the humour is mirthless. "Shittin-corpses we get / enough corpse-crap droppin bodies all / day without this" (Scene Eight passim). Here is exceptionally dynamic language which still cannot prove adequate to the experience of its speakers. It is used by all the soldiers, so it serves to break down their individuality, fusing them into one. The exception is Soldier 3, whose capitulation to it is all the more overwhelming when he finally uses "corpse" in Scene Twelve, seventeen years later, right before his death.

In this first part of Great Peace, the setting and characters are established as metaphors and the language is gradually given a higher and higher profile, until at the height of the tension, when the Son refuses to pick up the cigarette package, the Captain enters to command him. The image-laden language ceases abruptly and is replaced by quasi-rational analysis. Again, this increases the audience's tendency to analyze. Although the Captain is less sympathetic than Wang and Tiger when they discuss the removal of the cangue, the structure of this scene resembles that one. The Captain comments on the image of the rigid Son and the offending apposed package. He reviews the political, social, and emotional context for the tableau, a character discussing a staged dilemma. Against the tendency to over-distancing is opposed the emotion generated by the pathos of the situation, "increased," as Frye would say, "by the inarticulateness of the victim" (38-39). The emotion is further

heightened by the Captain's cold-bloodedness. The insistence on human degradation by this point has reversed the value of cigarette package and soldier:

Its a small thing – but its an army issue  
 packet and those civilians who can read  
 would know it'd been dropped by a  
 soldier and that would encourage  
 further acts of obstruction and violence  
 There's enough lawlessness and general  
 mayhem without that  
 You realise that anyone who infringes  
 military discipline puts their comrades  
 at risk?  
 I cant overlook it. (23)

Again, then, the metaphorical import replaces the intrinsic value of the object. Announcing that "War makes that little packet very big," the Captain orders the Son shot, and justifies the murder on the grounds that he has gone mad after killing "his brother or sister was it? ... No place for mavericks in the army" (24). His justification resembles that he gives for the mass murder of infants in Scene One, having a cumulative emotional effect on the audience.

In the first part of the play, especially in the discovery of the baby's death and in the murder of the Son, Bond appears to encourage a divorce between object and significance which renders it difficult for the audience to define or assign significance to what it sees. There is a cigarette package, trivial in itself, since "the 'ole city's a shit' eap shit"; and who could deny the Captain's definition of him as a "weak element"? The baby is replaced by a shawl, the Son is murdered for his service before he is praised ("He was a soldier and he did good work"). Its pity aroused, the audience is encouraged to withhold judgement, just to watch, because interpretation, though it seems to be required, is not made easy; this is especially true because the characters themselves are all making black-and-white interpretations which approximate justice imperfectly at best, and because those interpretations are fuelled by an emotionalism which is skewing the characters' rational



powers. In this scene, instead of using language to support character, or visual image to clarify language, Bond disjoins these devices, giving a block of language-imagery, then a visual image, then an analysis of the visual image. Each, alternately foregrounded, is a piece of the whole; the whole is a collage: "That very caprice or fragmentation is," as Langer says of literature, "a total effect, which requires a perception of the whole history as a fabric of contributive events" (262). Bond is putting the play together as real-historical events occur.

The characters might in certain cases be said to be foils for each other in a fairly conventional way – Woman and her Son, for instance – except that they do not round out character by presenting different aspects, but rather intensify one impression by repeating it. The Son, for instance, is an exaggeration of his mother, and acts more fully what she acts; she tears a shawl, he kills a child. In Scene Eight, of course, he is no longer choosing to kill, but to be killed. This heightens the tension. One can also see that whereas in Scene Seven Son kills a child, in Scene Eight he is the killed child; as the tables turn, the audience sees the killer in the victim role. In one sense, then, the plot progresses. In another sense, it only seems to do so. At first this play develops a situation to a certain point, but then it renders variations on the theme. The audience sees it in all its aspects. To identify with one or another would be arbitrarily, without justification, to choose sides. For these soldiers are shown in Scene One to be fully capable of understanding their situations and coming to the appropriate political conclusions: however, the multiplication of points of view and skewing of significances drowns their capacity for political astuteness.

The gap of seventeen years which separates the two parts of the play, representing the passage of time, also throws the established themes into greater relief. Scenes Nine to Twenty are patterned like the first eight. Again, Woman meets a mother and thereafter the army in the persons of Pemberton and his squad; again her character is "developed" by contrasts in a fairly narrow range; again she rules on the life of an infant, preferring her own

child; and so-on. The difference – the intensification – comes from repetition and from the relative simplification of the action. For the characters this is partly a matter of less food and clothing, a more barren environment, but more important, it is a matter of less human contact – fewer people, and less variety of experience in them. For the audience, the scenes are stripped of distractions, and the spectators watch characters repeat mistakes they have not been able to learn from, because those mistakes drove them mad.

As before, each character has his or her own interpretation of the world, these being presented rather "awkwardly" in separate chunks of narrative or through different kinds of image. But their interpretations are even more fragmented than before, in that, while before they were different interpretations of the same situations, now the characters, individually and in groups, exist in quite separate worlds – realities – and only rarely, by chance, share experiences, or test their perceptions against each other's. When they meet, each asserts the fundamental reality on which his or her own world rests, so that they can "synchronise watches," as it were. Each pretends to wish for co-ordination with the other, although in fact it is imperative to each that s/he impose her/his own definition. Every meeting is a jarring clash, with a shift of distance occurring because the reasonable view is not chosen. This shakes the spectator's confidence in what the parameters of a "reasonable view" might be.

The first time this happens is with Woman 1, who has stalked Woman for days to be sure of her: "Help me to have the child – / then I'll manage on my own" (25). Bond uses the opportunity created by the fact that Woman 1 has "never seen a baby" to describe Woman's, but part of the point is that these people know nothing unless they know it communally:

Woman:	... (She points to the bundle:) There's one
Woman 1:	I thought you were feeding it ...!
	... It looks like a bundle
Woman:	Wrapped up t' keep the cold out
Woman 1:	Its like ... a piece of cloth
Woman:	That's what they look like wrapped up
Woman 1:	That came out of you ...? (26)

In Scene Twelve this attempt to "align" themselves is recapitulated when both Woman and Pemberton, knowing what is at stake (their lives), each struggles ferociously to impose a reality on the other.

This dialogue corroborates the audience's awareness that the so-called "child" is a prop. But in an odd way. First, Woman 1 does not share the audience's assumptions, that just because Woman seems to be feeding something, she is; that it is a baby; and that she is its mother. Woman 1 makes none of these assumptions, which would be theatrically conventional. Second, when she is invited to look at the baby, she does not make the assumption that, just because she perceives it to be a rag, the bundle is a rag. She is willing to accept Woman's definition of it, though she does not abandon her own perception outright. She allows herself to be gradually convinced by Woman's matter-of-fact and natural speech and actions. Woman 1's caution, her fears, conforming as they do with her perceived situation, provide the basis upon which the audience can accord with her definition of reality: she seems integrated with her world, and her stance towards the baby reveals Woman as one who fantasizes her experience as a survival technique (though as a technique, fantasy contrives, rather than affirms, value in her life). Woman 1 accepts the baby, and with it the corollary of Woman's sanity, at the same time and by the very process that for the audience renders the "child" a rag and Woman mad.

One could speak of this bundle in various ways, as a physicalised ambiguity, as the connecting point between realities which swivel, as it were, on it, or as a test of related or relative verisimilitudes. But however various it is for the characters, it is a fixed point for the audience: it is a theatrical device which, depending on their reaction to it, will reveal character. For Woman, it is a comforter, like a baby's blanket, named and animated by her imagination. For Woman 1, because Woman believes in it so strongly, it quickly becomes an object of occult fear, and she is reluctant to hold it. Thus it begins to be animated, to take on

"personality" as a talisman. Paradoxically, it begins to "live" powerfully as soon as it is definitively a prop, animated like Pinnocchio by its creator's faith.

As one might expect, the baby image is both contradicted and deepened when in Scene Ten the week-old baby of Woman 1 is in Woman's arms. The fact of a "real" baby should vindicate and justify all Woman's callousness and narrow-minded pragmatism, and permit her reintegration into her world by providing sufficient cause – an objective correlative, a child – for her aggressive opportunism. However, a much heightened tension in the scene results from this baby's presence: Woman asserts her continuing madness by draping the unravelled cloth, which she still calls her baby, around her shoulders and arms, instead of discarding it for the real thing. She has once before been in the position of caring for two infants, and when she saw herself obliged to choose between them, quite "naturally" favoured her own child. Should she be forced into the same position again, the same choice would be the murder of one of the last hopes of mankind in lieu of tossing aside an old sheet – a particularly pitiable and devastating murder. This situation quickly transpires. With unperturbable logic, Woman reasons that "The world can't cope with another mouth / There are 'ole cities with one blade of / grass / my kid needs more than one blade of / grass ..." (29). She robs the infant of its shawl and hat and leaves it on the ground with this "pay":

She draws with her stick on the ground.

There a 'ouse – with two doors – an' a  
pond – a tree – these dots are the apples –  
a sun with a cloud – a car – an a boat on  
the lake – all ready for when you're big –  
an' a matchstick lady in an apron t'feed  
you an teach yer lessons (29)

The horror of what she has done is compounded when "the baby raises a hand and gives one short cry that is lower than would be expected." This is the shock which alerts the audience to the perception that no baby engendered by the past is a good baby. Wasteland people bring forth monsters. The baby's low cry is sinister; the same interpretation must be

made of the Bundle's speaking when that shock occurs. These babies are dangerous; they must not be pitied before they are clearly identified. Woman's naive ramblings about what a woman could have in her womb ("a monster") and what sort of existence might be better than human ("an animal") have clearly been suggested to her by the fact of this baby, whose mutancy she does not accept consciously. Her action – to abandon it – may, ironically, be "best in the long run." But conscious and unconscious thought, motive and act are all disconnected in Woman, who is a bundle of disparate affects.

It is very often true that Bond achieves his shock effect by doubling – a visual image with a sound effect, a plot reversal with a shattered impression about character, and so forth. These often juxtapose one sort of convention with another, so that contradictory sets of assumptions manifest themselves, and ideas present themselves in unusual combinations. For the audience, the baby's cry is a double shock. Considering the trouble to which Bond has gone to establish the idea of baby-as-prop, this cry is manifestly a sound effect added to a prop, two elements which ordinarily combine to suggest an illusion, but here remain disparate elements because the audience has been strongly persuaded to see babies as props. On the other hand, it is a reproof to the audience: "why do you not suspend your disbelief? Here is a baby." The other part of the double shock is, of course, that the cry is not a natural baby cry; this is not a baby: It would be romantic nonsense to believe that a woman, alone for seventeen years in a post-nuclear wasteland, could have one. The babies in this play are metaphorical in the sense that they pose fundamental political questions. One can insist on seeing them as new beginnings. But given such a "new beginning" in a world like this, how would that new life grow out of the old? Would it be truly a new life, or just an echo, distorted by distance, soon to die out? The device is a split, more than a shift, of distance.

In a way, Woman is like the outsider First Man in The Tin Can People. Death follows wherever she goes. Whereas all the characters in the first part of the play were

"alive," all those in the second part are, or see themselves as, dead. The baby is a rag; Woman 1, the only surviving stray from Tin Can People, dies in childbirth between scenes while her baby is abandoned; and when Woman comes across Pemberton's squad in Scene Twelve, the soldiers define themselves as dead:

PEMBERTON:       ... We're dead  
                          You're safe with us

WOMAN:            Dead? 'E thinks 'e's dead - uh! ...

PEMBERTON:        Poor woman thinks she's  
                          alive  
                          (to WOMAN:) You're dead

WOMAN:            Dead?

SOLDIER 1:         That's why yer dont feel  
                          'ungry

WOMAN:            When did I die? ...

                          Im not dead ... When? ... I  
                          dont remember dyin (31)

Again the question of life and death comes to hinge on the bundle. Whereas for Woman 1 it was important to believe it a child, for Pemberton it must be rags. Otherwise, he cannot maintain order among his men, who accept the definition of themselves as dead for the security and comfort it gives them. "Surely the dead can 'elp each other?" he says, showing that he has reversed the values of life and death, the reversal being Bond's counterpart to such comic use of it as Wilde's, for example, where marriage is "the consequence of a misunderstanding," or to the more sinister use to which Orwell puts it: Freedom is Slavery; Ignorance is Strength. Pemberton's language is Orwellian. The men's only hope depends on a metaphorical perception of their existence as non-existence. If they think themselves alive, that is, if they must endure life in this wasteland, they will despair. Again, the power of Woman's faith in her child's life is so strong that she begins to make converts. Ironic commentary on Christ's birth is implicit.

As I have mentioned, the Trilogy opens with the Monster, a medieval sort of personage who might have lived but for the war. Woman's baby is a parallel character. It was born at the time of the holocaust and murdered within weeks or months. Woman has carried it all these years, until it has long since disintegrated and its own rags have replaced it. Woman is fully aware that she has carried it "a long time – out the war" but she insists that Woman 1 treat it as a living baby. She treats it with affectionate devotion herself, and is full of homely advice about caring for babies. But her mothering is disturbing by contrast with Woman 1's fear, which is so much more in keeping with her surroundings, her history, and her prospects.

This child is not exactly a character. Its theatrical nature is something between that of character, theatrical device, and symbol. Its major dramatic use is as touchstone. It also validates Woman's life, provides the proxy by which Woman 1 learns about that thing in her womb, and (paradoxically) affirms the existence of Pemberton and his soldiers. Each of these separate functions seems valid in isolation, but since none stands up to comparison with another, they prevent the audience from settling upon one view and thus force a continual disturbance of distance. The characters' meetings, indeed, are contrived, theatrically unjustified, purely coincidental, and the measure of them – the baby – clearly a theatrical device. This theatricality is much heightened when at this point Bond inserts a digression, which is the soldiers' evidence for their being dead in the form of a memory sequence. This digression is itself distancing in contributing to the collage effect. The sequence begins with a description of a grotesque dance performed by living and dead, articles of furniture, soldiers and civilians, "like a painted ceilin" (32), whirled into the air by a mighty wind. It is a variation on the grotesque ball described by Kayser which, "with its total alienation and chaotic dissolution, offers a frequently recurring theme in the history of the grotesque and is closely related to that of the city in the process of alienation and dissolution" (116). Bond's

devices are unusual, but as we see, they have their precedents in the artistic movements of other epochs.

When Woman meets the soldiers, there is the ritual exchange of histories by which every stranger is greeted in the play. She is desperately hungry; they are scavenging, a fact which Bond reinforces with a visual picture: when he sees her, Soldier 4 stares, the large sack on his back breaks open and a heap of bones falls out at his feet. This visual image precedes and prepares for the imminent and far greater shock to the audience of the memory sequence, rather as splashing water over one's arms prepares one to plunge into the cold sea. The subject will be bones; bones are cast upon the stage to anchor the soldiers' account in a physical manifestation. Then there is a shift to spoken image. Pemberton speaks of the "end of the world" in a depiction which recalls Arthur's dream (Early Morning 67-68):

We was corpsin civvies in a quarry – ...

All the bodies – livin an dead, army an  
 civvie – shot up in the sky  
 It was full of bodies whirlin round in  
 circles like a painted ceilin  
 The wind blew em up there  
 Whirlin round over our 'eads – looked  
 like a dance (32)

The other soldiers contribute lines of detail in such a way as to give the effect of recitation. The "painted ceiling" alludes generally to art works in which division of the picture plane into layers, rather than perspective, conveys distance. As the scene continues, there is less and less pretense of exchange of information; Woman becomes the audience. The soldiers occupy themselves completely with sorting bones, a significant symbolic act, gradually becoming hysterical as they sink more deeply into the memory. Little by little, the dialogue becomes stychomythic and the experience is separated from the individuals who speak it. It coheres in the collective consciousness of all, who express it as members of a chorus. The form of this passage is over-distancing, in tension with its content. The



disjunction between the two conveys the sense of the soldiers' madness, so that the structured manner of presentation supports the horror of what is being conveyed. At first each often speaks a complete sentence:

SOLDIER 1: They lynched the postmen for carryin government mail  
 PEMBERTON: After a few months there were no more survivors ...  
 (33)

Gradually the sentences break down more often, so that one person finishes a thought that another has begun:

SOLDIER 2: There was the tower block  
 PEMBERTON: One of them glass jobs  
 SOLDIER 2: One wall left  
 PEMBERTON: All the rest – walls an floors – ripped away  
 SOLDIER 2: One sheet of glass twenty stories 'igh  
 SOLDIER 3: Straight up in the air  
 SOLDIER 2: An all the people 'oo was in the offices squashed flat on  
 the glass  
 SOLDIER 4: 'Uman blobs  
 SOLDIER 2: Squashed flat  
 SOLDIER 1: Like specimens  
 SOLDIER 4: Flat blobs  
 SOLDIER 1: On the glass  
 SOLDIER 2: Like specimens on a microscope slide. (33)

In this passage, though the words are disconnected, particular memories are assigned to particular soldiers, as one can see by the assignment of the word "blob" to Soldier 4 and "squashed" to Soldier 2. Soldier 1's "specimens" is elaborated by Soldier 2 as this pattern begins to change. Gradually, the repetitions of such words are not used conjunctively, to take the memory forward, but reiteratively, to intensify, lessening the distance of the whole:

SOLDIER 4: An the old man  
 SOLDIERS 1,2,3: The old man  
 SOLDIER 3: Tryin t' kill 'is son  
 SOLDIER 2: The son was in pain  
 SOLDIER 3: The old man  
 SOLDIERS 1,2,4: The old man  
 SOLDIER 2: Tryin t' kill 'im with 'is crutch  
 SOLDIERS 2,4: T' 'elp 'im  
 SOLDIER 1: Jabbed the end of 'is crutch in 'is mouth  
 SOLDIER 4: Only the mouth was left

The repetitions illustrate terrible difficulty in speaking; the soldiers are uttering a memory they can hardly bear, that of the mercy killing of a son by his father. When they finish, there is a pause and a very marked change in tone and style of speech:

SOLDIER 1:           She tried t' get into the crack  
 SOLDIERS 2,3:       In the crack  
 SOLDIER 4:           'Er dress caught under 'er  
                           knee

Silence

PEMBERTON:         When yer realise you're  
                           dead its like droppin a 'od-load of  
                           bricks off yer back  
                           Or losin a sack of clay  
                           Yer grow tall with relief (34)

This statement explains the soldiers' belief that they're dead, and it also informs the image of Soldier 4 dropping the load of bones at his feet when he sees Woman: the sight of her is equated with the notion of believing oneself dead. Pemberton's words link back to that picture, completing the digression. The memory itself is contained, as it were, in a part of the Soldiers' collective mind, and they "drop" it when startled. It is akin to the Ancient Mariner's story. But these men have been unable to come to a moment of spontaneous blessing, so they have a triple burden: the horror of the memory, the lack of control over when they will be forced to relive it (for the telling is not at their command) and (the greatest horror) the fact that the telling does not confess them, assuaging their guilt and pain.

The complexity of the interplay between under- and over-distancing is the more clear if one compares this digression with, say, the extended similes of Homer's Iliad and Odyssey. From the battle scene in Book IV of the Iliad, for instance, here is one:

... straight through his shoulder passed the spear of bronze, and he fell to the ground in the dust like a poplar-tree, that hath grown up smooth in the lowland of a great marsh, and its branches grow upon the top thereof; this hath a wainwright felled with gleaming steel, to bend him a fellow for a goodly chariot, and so it lies drying by a river's banks. In such fashion did heaven-sprung Aias slay Simoeisios son of Anthemion ... (70).

It is immediately clear that Bond's digression enables the hearer to visualise the experiences being recounted, as Homer's simile does. This brings each account very much nearer the audience. But Bond's visualisation dehumanises, rather than humanises, each vignette. There is no naming of victims. He furthermore denatures each occurrence in the very process of studying each – "Squashed flat / Like specimens ..."; "Tryin t' kill 'im ... t' 'elp 'im ..." (33). It is not the act which dehumanises: it is the study of the act; not the doing, but the watching. This makes a broadly political and a more specifically art-related point: not the artist of the terrible, but the audience of the terrible is indicted by virtue of bearing witness. So the emotionally involved spectator is trapped by Bond, strangely, and some anger with him must be expected to accrue to the experience. In the particular simile of Homer's which I quote, as in the Soldiers' memory sequence, there is the suggestion of use: "to bend him a felloe for a goodly chariot" makes a suggestion of immediate recasting of the "tree" into something of value and even beauty. "Like specimens on a / microscope slide," by contrast, conveys a quite ambiguous sense of usefulness – not the moulding of something vital into something else which is dynamic, but rather the flattening of something which has been vital so that it may be observed in a lifeless, shapeless and inert condition. Bond's spectator is drawn into the action by the dialogue, but most unwillingly. The action is reporting, a passive act, and it embellishes in draining away beauty. In every way, then, the spectator is made to feel (to be under-distanced) but to desire distance, not just for the understanding distance can bestow, but more for the refuge that distance affords, from disgust, pity, dismay.

Woman re-enters the picture, and begins to argue that they're all alive, basing her belief on the child's existence: "You make the soldiers eat / their words!" (35). Her faith amounts to religious conviction. The soldiers believe her. She has managed to turn her story to seemingly positive account; this is seductive. But the situation Bond images on stage is that these men are being offered a choice between two evils – two bundles of dead. The

jarring shift of distance which results from the contents and placement of the Soldiers' memory allows the audience to perceive this.

Scene Twelve becomes a night scene, with the soldiers on duty discussing the child:

SOLDIER 1:           There!  
 SOLDIER 3:           'Ead – arm – clutchin it – uh!  
 SOLDIER 1:           What?  
 SOLDIER 3:           Moved ...

SOLDIER 3 (to SOLDIER4): Quiet – it ain  
 a bundle its alive – we seen it  
 SOLDIER 1:           What'll we do?  
 SOLDIER 4:           I knew it was alive \_\_\_\_

The SOLDIERS stand in a group

SOLDIER 3:           She showed 'im the rag – the  
 real kid was in the cart – took it out in \_\_\_\_\_  
 the dark – (36)

In the morning, desperate to discredit her, Pemberton orders his men to "Undo it!", "Spread it!" (the command which precedes violation); the mood is one of terror, with Soldier 4 claiming he can't hold it because it's moving, and Pemberton tacitly accepting the opinion that it lives with his "'Old it still!" Finally Soldiers 2 and 4 hold it up "as if it were on a clothesline" and Pemberton makes Woman face it:

PEMBERTON:       Is it a conjurin trick? – a \_\_\_\_  
 kid on the other side?

PEMBERTON goes to the sheet and  
 slides his hand behind it like a conjuror. \_\_\_\_  
 He shows his empty hand.

No rabbit?

WOMAN:           It won't last – think of 'ow I 'old \_\_\_\_  
 you –

PEMBERTON:       Now rip it!

WOMAN:           No no!

SOLDIERS 2 and 4 tear the sheet into two pieces.

It screamed!

PEMBERTON: A sheet bein torn! \_\_\_\_  
 There's nothin emptier than that sheet! – \_\_\_\_  
 its got a 'ole in it! ...

SOLDIER 3 picks up the two pieces of  
 sheet and takes them to the WOMAN. He  
 tries to knot them together.

SOLDIER 3: 'Ere's your kid – take it back  
 We didn't 'arm it – ...

WOMAN (nursing the sheet): My child I  
 couldn't 'ide you from the –  
 I took care of you so long  
 Forgiveness  
 It was a violation

She tries to join the pieces together.

I sit 'ere – they bring my kid back – I look  
 for the wounds

She half-drops the sheet and gathers it up.

Mothers sittin – 'oldin torn pieces –  
 Its finished – I promised you – the soldiers  
 won't touch you (38-39)

Something about this sequence – the rending of the cloth, perhaps, the presence of the soldiers or the final pièta – recalls so strongly the Crucifixion of Christ that it is tempting to attribute the emotional power of the scene to that allusion, resonating externally to the play. In that it repeats her own tearing of the shawl in Scene Six, it also enriches that scene. There, the gesture by which Woman held up the two torn pieces, commenting on her own action, seems theatrical, although not out of keeping with the moment; it is also a visual foreshadowing.

This animation of the bundle is an important factor, because when Pemberton decides to "defrock" it, he makes the specific point that it is not a "rabbit out of a hat," a cheap magician's trick. And its mysterious being is heightened rather than debunked as he wishes. However, something very different is the case for the audience. It has had the "magician's trick" explained for it on the critical issue of the baby's reality, an altogether unnecessary and

superfluous explanation. It knows that Pemberton is right, narrowly speaking, and that Woman's hope for the future, her child, is unjustified. Pemberton pits his Fact against Woman's Faith.

In the broader context of history in the play, however, Pemberton is wrong, for a whole community, complete with children, is established at the end of the play. Neither can be believed. The problem lies with the baby. "To carry the dead on your back," Wang says at the end of The Bundle, "that is the worse story." None of the babies in Great Peace have anything to offer the future. The baby – as a symbol of hope, innocence, a clean slate, a fresh start – is a lie. The continual focussing and refocussing on the baby image must finally propel the audience to reject its standard interpretations, rejecting belief in either Pemberton or Woman, so as to accommodate a new perception: that innocence and naive hope are destructive, while mature vision and an ability to construct a new world wisely are the qualities necessary for a true "fresh start." The old symbols, the old interpretations will betray the society which clings to them, Bond seems to argue, and the audience must be shown why this is so.

The passage bears, furthermore, a strong resemblance to that sequence at the end of Lear, Act I, the death of the Gravediggers' Boy, which derives much of its power from two factors. One is the swiftness with which a succession of surprises follow each other, and the other is the parallel presentation of visual with aural effects, so that although the actions follow one another closely, the choppiness of stop-action, with abrupt cessation and initiation of sound effects, interrupts the audience repeatedly at the same time as the action itself arouses it.

Here the shock is simpler, cleaner in its presentation. It is comparable generally with Scene Eight of The Bundle, except that here, the sound effects (the commands and protests

of the characters) are all on-stage. The action is the single one of the sheet's being displayed, then ripped; it is at the focal point and the audience's attention is not suddenly drawn elsewhere. However, the emotional impact is heightened by the drawn-out dialogue, which only describes what the audience sees, repeating, as it were, without interpreting. The moment is handled, in other words, in just the same way as is the fatal rebellion of the Son in Scene Eight over the cigarette package. And the end of Scene Eight is also the direct internal resonance of this moment: again we have a child of Woman denied its humanity and "murdered" by soldiers who have just committed (in recollection) the most terrible crimes of their lives, and seen the most terrible visions. This act of obedience, this murder, is a repetition.

Rather than using a complex of images to achieve the emotional impact, Bond allows structural similarities with earlier scenes to "complicate" later critical moments. This allows the audience time to think about what it sees as the rending of the sheet occurs (because it is also hearing what it sees, in dialogue which makes its appeal to the rational faculty) and to feel much of the emotional impact as delayed reaction. Its own immediate memories of preceding scenes thus extend the emotional kicks administered by this moment; they are after-shocks. As sometimes with a burn, the pain spreads and deepens under a seemingly little-affected surface.

Pemberton refers to the creation of a baby out of whole cloth as a "conjuring trick." Bond has used the same theatrical device of having a character allude to the fact of theatre in Restoration, where Are comments on the play "as though it were a play," and where Bob illustrates that the physical fact of his chains is for him a pretense. There the theatre reference develops the theme of cultural bondage. Here it explores the nature of faith. The characters in this scene exist in a quasi-Beckettian universe. Pemberton chooses to reduce the matter of faith to the level of conjuring, and destroy it at that level. Expression of faith is

a direct threat to life as he defines it. When "SOLDIER 2 suddenly throws his arms up like the pope" and the others protect and support each other, his reaction is "Yer vengeful bastards! / Dont you threaten me!", and he guns them down. The continual destruction of what is holy, and the repeated reconstitution of the holy, is one of the lines of development of the play. Woman's reaction to the Bundle's first cry is like Vladimir's when he thinks Godot is coming; "now / it'll be all right, now I'll live" (41). Pemberton's response to expressions of faith, both verbal and visual, resemble Estragon's terror-struck "I'm damned!" A Godot of sorts leads the audience, if not Woman, out of this absurdist universe; he is the new Son, a carpenter, a human and material Christ. As this passage through to the end of the scene culminates in one marked shift in distance and prepares for an even more significant one, let us analyse it more closely.

The maddened Pemberton's ranting about the rag (39) seems redundant, coming on top of the action of ripping it. He feels none of the awe which the soldiers did at the sight of Christ's dead body, and is not sombre in conformity with the tone of the scene. Thus the audience's reaction contrasts with his. It has swung from sharing his perspective at the beginning of the scene to being distanced from it, and this distance constitutes its judgement of him. To prove Woman dead, he begins to load the rifle, but is too out of practice to be efficient. While he fiddles, Woman comforts her torn baby; when he finally pulls the trigger, the gun misfires and Woman walks off without even noticing. Without the "evidence" of her remaining upright after being fired at (which of course Pemberton has, ironically, supplied, though not to his own mind conclusively), the soldiers remain unconvinced of their "metaphysical" state. Soldier 3 demands to be killed, and Soldiers 1 and 2 want to join him:

SOLDIERS 1, 2:      I wanna be corpsed!  
                              Me mates is waiting!  
                              I want t'dance again! ... (40)

Soldier 4 being afraid to die, the others arrange themselves so as to support each other and protect him, in the "Third of May 1808" arrangement: "PEMBERTON fires an automatic



burst. The soldiers fall" (41). Pemberton ends this long scene with a short, elegaic monologue. For the audience, the religious iconography has been placed in the more modern historical context of the French invasion of Spain. It is clearly a political statement, and the first suggestion it makes to me is that aggressors are victims. The tableau staging points up the political, as well as the art, statements.

Perhaps Bond has recalled his interview with the editors of Gambit, conducted fifteen years previous to the writing of this play:

- WARDLE. ... I don't know if you would agree with me, but it seems to me that artists who have done most to represent, you know, the inhumanity of man to man, like Goya for instance, are those who themselves have got some kind of relish for it and can get under the skin of the people whom they're exposing.
- BOND. Has Goya a relish?
- WARDLE. I would have thought so, yes. I would have thought it would have been impossible to produce that work, unless he would have been able to imagine that he has participated in the actions he presents. ...
- BOND. I would have thought his work showed extreme disgust.
- WARDLE. Yes. But especially as a dramatist, you are better able to get under the skins of people who are, who perform those actions.
- HOBSON. This was what disturbed many people, wasn't it, when they saw Saved for the first time?
- WARDLE. But this is surely why, for instance, I misunderstood Saved from the very beginning, because of the degree to which you could participate in what they were doing.
- BOND. Yes, but the funny thing about that scene is that everybody's reaction is different. ... So it's their reaction, I mean they must ask themselves, not ask me what I think about it.
- HOBSON. This is not altogether the case after the first performance. The reactions are more complicated now. Simply because you know that you are one of the foremost dramatists of the age. ... ("A Discussion" 21)

If the transformation of reality into art does not help people cope with terrible events, wherever the responsibility for that failure lies, it would appear that the art-product becomes an agent or medium through which the terrible may be effected and endorsed. Like Goya, Bond focuses on people and human behaviour, largely excluding landscape. His vision is, at mildest, satiric, at most bitter, a savage indictment. His satire is not simply of individuals,

but more generally of the systems which create them. The pity of which both artists give evidence is in no way sentimental. And Bond's tableau at the end of this scene differs from the Goya painting in another highly significant way. Goya depicts the massacre of peasants. Bond replaces those peasants with soldiers. The statement that aggressors are victims works both ways: these victims are cold-blooded murderers, the cold-bloodedness a result of the failure of their moral intelligence to impose limitations on their actions. The chain of army command has been allowed to substitute itself for that intelligence: where there was morality, there is now obedience. Again he is making the statement which Wang makes when he tosses the infant into the river: why pity the killer killed, just because the killer is manifested as an infant? "If there was a gun in your hand you'd pull it! You would kill! And you smile! Like a god playing games! As if men were your toys!" The infant is used, in both Great Peace and The Bundle, to represent a false set of values. It is an icon, Bond suggests, which no longer represents those values of innocence and faith in the future which are commonly associated with it, but that has become the excuse for quite a different set, much as the statue of the Goddess of Fortune in The Woman becomes an excuse for an economically-motivated invasion.

It is an interesting observation, perhaps, that Wardle identifies himself with the aggressors and not the victims, and assumes that others do so also, but irrelevant to Bond, as his interpretation of Goya's painting shows. Bond is not the final judge of the audience; he simply initiates its virtual experience. His notion of his position vis-à-vis both play and audience conforms, in a way, to those which Barthes and Derrida reject, "that a text can serve as a norm governing interpretations of it and that there is such a thing as an author," and that meaning resides with the reader (Dauenhauer 138). While Bond, like Dauenhauer, would likely not make such an extreme statement regarding the author, he clearly believes in the responsibility of the spectator for what s/he sees.

This scene is structured like two peaks of tension with a valley between, the valley being the night sequence of the haunted soldiers, the peaks being first their description of the end of the world, and second the "crucifixion" sequence. While it is not pitched high, the night sequence doesn't really provide relief either, but forms part of a very long passage of tension which increases the strain of the scene. The double resolution into the Goya, and then into Pemberton's elegy, interprets the scene in two ways, completely out of relation to each other. The first, "ekphrasis, which is understood in general terms as the description of a work of art in literature" (Barkan 649), moves the horror into another key. The reference to the Goya painting evokes utter wretchedness and misery, but it humanises these soldiers, even though they are performing something so stylised as a self-conscious arrangement of themselves into a pre-conceived and extra-referential image. It also historicizes them; they become the victims of political oppression and war waged for (at best) economic reasons, instead of just the victims of Pemberton's madness.

Indeed, the Goya image is an interesting distancing device. How many works of art must be created, it asks, before people really see what is being shown them? Although the two are otherwise little alike, Bond's fervour resembles that of Jerzy Grotowski who also fears that art cannot reach across to its audience. When Acropolis, Grotowski says, "ceased to be an encounter with others and became merely an aesthetic fact," he stopped performing it (132). Bond has another approach to "aesthetic facts." When they cease to be effective, he would reframe them, extend and update their significance, show that they have not ceased to be significant. The re-presentation of the Goya not only gives it a new life, revitalising its art-character, but places it also in a historical context so that it must be interpreted politically as well as aesthetically. Undermining the myth of progress, Bond makes clear that historically our society continues in the grip of a mentality which can rejoice when one country invades and persecutes another. Though a powerful emotional image, the Goya is thought-provoking in part because, familiar with age and seemingly remote from modern

times, it has lost some of its emotional power. Bond both uses that emotional weakness and counteracts it.

The second and final resolution of the scene shows conventionality at its worst. Underneath his tough veneer, Pemberton has clearly felt sentimental and paternalistic towards his squad. Brook points out that Chaplin's main device for the alienation of his audience is the contrasting of sentimentality with calamity (82). Here Bond employs it:

In the evenin – found just the right time t'  
                   call 'alt  
 Dont push 'em too far  
 Watched 'em from the back in a wood  
 'Eads down in case they tripped – eyes on  
                   their feet  
 Posted the sentry  
 Wake up in the mornings: what's the sky  
                   doin?  
 Liked all that (41)

Fatherliness in Pemberton is a threat, because while he has noticed their vulnerability, he has never trusted his soldiers. The Goya image has distorted the scene, exposing Pemberton. It is impossible, after it, to "believe" him. The Goya subtracts humanity from him, leaving him hollow. He becomes a sort of allegorical character, Political Paternalism.

In the last scene of this phase of the play, Bundle speaks. This seems to me to trigger the major shift of distance in the play. It resembles the moment in The Winter's Tale when the statue of Hermione comes to life, or the moment when the Orator in The Chairs proves dumb and the invisible crowd of spectators begins to murmur. Bundle's speaking embodies the fundamental mystery of the theatre experience, which derives its whole power from the audience's capacity to accept transformation. Brook says of the coming to life of the statue in The Winter's Tale that "the way to understand this scene is not to discuss it but to play it" (101). Barkan sheds some light on the process in his study, "'Living Sculptures': Ovid, Michelangelo and The Winter's Tale." He refers to the rhetorical device, ekphrasis, which

Bond uses in the previous scene in the presentation of the Goya piece. According to Barkan, this term signifies the "'speaking out' or putting a voice into the mouth of a sculpted or painted figure" (649). Obviously, in this sense, Bond is employing it here too. Bundle comes to life. This is no more illogical, in consideration of the fact that on a stage anything can happen, than that the other characters should believe Bundle might speak, but it does involve Bond, as it involves Shakespeare, in "some very high levels of improbability," and augments the risk Bond takes with dramatic verisimilitude (Barkan 641-642). It is a serious shock which contradicts everything the audience has been tacitly assured is true of the child.

It is not so high a risk as it first appears, however. There have been several tremors before this earthquake. The nature of Bundle has never been settled – only posed. It is evident that while the first part of the play involves the dying-off of humanity, this part reverses the trend, the baby being the first of a set of characters which come back to life, followed by Mother 1, her child, and Woman's Son; the regeneration of the human race has begun. Besides, the whole question of dramatic verisimilitude is very complex at this point. If the audience accepts that Monster can talk to it after he has been murdered before its eyes, that the characters speak different kinds of language, depending on their situations and not on their characters; that an abandoned-baby prop emits a low cry, and so-forth, then the speaking of the Bundle is merely the repetition and exaggeration of the same devices.

Part of the scene's peculiar vacillation in distance comes from the functioning of characters and props in identical ways. Bond has created an animistic world. Not that the rocks and bushes speak – the rocks are dust and the bushes ash – but some sort of spirit which is not generated by religious faith endows with speech everything that can be taken for human. We are in the intense, turbulent worlds of Artaud and Genet, though the turbulence is muted, where characters interact with icons on the same plane.

If Scene Thirteen contains the major shift of distance in the play, then, there are more questions to be raised about its placement than about the plain fact of it. It follows a scene which is emotionally charged and which crests in the sort of "moment when the illogical breaks through our everyday understanding to make us open our eyes more widely" to the nature of war (Brook 101). But it is hardly anti-climactic. It has equal power with the foregoing scene. This is remarkable since the visual effect is often considered stronger than the aural. The emphasis placed on the artificiality of Scene Twelve (the "conjurer's trick," the staged painting) lends this scene a powerful sense of truth, by contrast. *Great Peace* has a kind of double plot; the Soldiers' story intertwines with Woman's. As Scene Twelve brings the former to a resolution, so Scene Thirteen can be seen as the crisis at least of the Woman-story. What makes the placement of scenes unusual is that we are still virtually in mid-play. This placement skews the significance of these scenes; it makes the statements about faith, the allegorical interpretations, and so-forth, part of the process of the play, rather than part of its conclusion. It places emphasis not upon the role faith plays in the characters' lives, but rather upon the use to which they put faith. The uses assigned it by both Woman and Pemberton kill them. It seems, indeed, that the play is structured rather upon the Brechtian principle that the ordering of scenes in "dramatic" theatre is artificial, and that it misleads the audience to place climax and denouement at the end of the sequence. The shift of distance which makes this point in the play climactic prepares the audience for the most important material from Bond's point of view: the consideration of the (socio-political) consequences of certain attitudes of life.

In the third phase of action "some years later," in Scene Fourteen, Woman meets Mother 2 and Daughter in the Wilderness. By this time she is completely territorial and thoroughly distrustful of any human being. She drives her hard – and familiar – bargain, a person for a shawl (45), and conducts herself entirely as before. Inevitably her involvement comes around to the usual question – whether or not to kill. By this point, however, another

facet has been added to Woman's character by her query concerning Mother 2's life. When she asks, "Did we meet before the war?" it transpires that she wonders whether Mother 1 and Mother 2 are the same woman. While this is impossible within the plot, its thematic likelihood is given some credibility by Mother 2's reaction, which is to try to avoid Woman, to insist she feels ill, and to begin to hallucinate, as if Woman were suggesting to her what is already in her own mind. The very convention by which characters return to confront each other as a play nears its close, in combination with the other putative miracles in the play, strengthens the possibility of this previous relationship and weakens the audience's hold on what is "true" and what "false" about the interaction among characters. Bond is not aiming to say that all men are brothers: it is the parent-child bond, rather, which conveys cause-and-effect relationship, society's responsibility for both past and future.

By pitting the artificiality of the conventions by which plot evolves against the given information about the characters, Bond illustrates the falsity inherent in dramatic structure. The structure demands a certain outcome, even when the characters are no longer alive to contrive it; he elucidates the same idea in Restoration. This convention of the climactic confrontation is lent some strength from being often employed in plays where the characters need to express some emotion (love, remorse), where they are guilty of knowing or committing some hidden crime, or where they suffer without knowing the cause. Any of these possibilities might be true of Woman from what the audience knows, but there has been so little exploration of her individuality that it would be difficult to choose one "cause" or another. Any would constitute an "explanation" which moved towards "closing" the "open" form of the play. Not that it would change the shape of the drama, but in one area at least there would be something resembling a completely expressed story: for example, a woman accepts responsibility for a crime; she suffers for it for many years; and she expiates her guilt by helping one of her former victims. The complete story, however, is a fiction rarely imitated by life. Bond avoids it on the principle that it conveys comfort: unease is his aim.

That Mother 1 and Mother 2 can be the same is never, therefore, established. In any case, a recurrent theme in the Trilogy, and especially in this part of the play, is the ease with which people replace each other. Daughter can act as daughter to both Mother 2 and Woman (46), Woman can take Daughter's place (47), and any woman can substitute for another: "'Er or another woman - what's the / difference? - one 'ead, two arms, legs - / they're all the same". Furthermore, Woman decides that Man, who appears in Scene Fifteen, is her son, though the audience knows this to be impossible in any world where the dead stay dead. As Bullough says, probability is a matter of consistency of distance, not of truth to nature (102), and the appearance of Man seems to shed some light on the truth of the relationship between Woman and Mother 2 and Daughter. However, because Bond chooses the end of Scene Fourteen as the place in which to have Bundle speak for the second time, literally when it is being loosened into a pillow for Mother 2's head (47) it seems that inconsistency of distance is virtually a motif by this point. Nothing can be known of these characters, who constitute the tattered remnants of suffering humanity, as individuals. The most timid suggestion of discrete personality would be irrelevant, even preposterous. They are individuals: so what? They have human shape: that is enough.

The last few scenes, which function as a denouement or reprise and imprint a final image, underscore this idea. Even the dead can speak or be silent; they are no different from the living. Man begs to be substituted for Bundle, which Woman finally turns into a rag by opening it and declaring it to be so. Even Bundle's identity, which unlike its nature has never been in question, is suddenly taken from it: "The bundle wasnt my kid / It was the other kid" (62). Which other kid? Great Peace itself allows two possibilities – Mother 1's and Woman 1's; the symbolic imagery allows for more. Whatever it has been, the bundle grates on the ground when Woman drags it (63), and she drops dead when she lets it go – strong indications that it has been neither rag nor child to her, but something even more profoundly integral to her being.



The last scene is composed almost entirely of a final vision of Woman:

A year later.

The coat has been turned over. In it are the WOMAN's bones, not as a skeleton but lying roughly in the human shape. In the stomach: tins, some open and empty. ... (63)

An odd coincidence of elements creates this strongly distancing image. The coat, "long and made of light blue, padded nylon" (62) is central on an otherwise almost empty stage, and speaks to modernity; it is an anachronistic object specific to the late Twentieth Century, though it contains universal and timeless bones. Bond seems to be concerned not to invoke, in the representation of the skeleton, the death-image so dear to the Middle Ages and Renaissance which has re-entered art in modern symbolist work. Woman's skeleton is softened, one assumes, by the disconnection of the rigid bones from each other and their placement so as to suggest the plasticity of her body when she fell. This is not Death Triumphant, then, but death as part of the natural cycle – death as sleep.

Nevertheless, it cannot be overlooked that the arrangement of bones is by no means natural; it is contrived, an artistic statement, its seeming naturalness offset further by the tins, which ensure a symbolic interpretation of the figure. Like shawl and bones, the tins are a dominant metaphor in the Trilogy. They are that for which wars are fought, around which settlements grow up; they are the past which subjugates the present. Once the tins are gone, "we can only own what we make and wear and use ourselves" (Tin Can People 51). It seems that Woman has died half-way through the process of coming to own herself; some of the tins are empty, but they are all in her stomach, as they have been in bomb shelters and storehouses and even tanks. There is the uneasy sense of their endurance.

Nothing in this composite image suggests either the summation or the reduction of a personality. The bones are not essentially Woman, nor have the tins become her flesh, nor has she even seen the coat until the very end of her life. The audience is not so much given

disintegration, as in "dust to dust," as it is given the fragmentation of enduring societal elements, none of which, juxtaposed, signal "humanity" or even "beast" or "machine." Perhaps they signify "culture."

The impression of Woman's total absence is strengthened, once again, by the contrast of her remains with Man, who returns with provisions and stands over the coat to create the final tableau. This summary image is the last in a chain of tableaux into which the action continually resolves throughout the play. The Trilogy presents less an action extended through time than a set of summations of action in images. The weight falls here on effects, not causes. This explains the static quality of the play. Man is Woman's inheritor, but she has given nothing; he has taken nothing, and it would be dangerous for him to do so. His two visits to her amount to respects paid by the future to the past. Man "carries a bundle of provisions. He stops and stares at the coat. He lowers the bundle to the ground with a slight thud. End." In depositing his bundle, he indicates the fulfillment of his responsibility for what is past. His action defines Woman negatively, by what she could not do, as his continuing life relegates her, in death, finally to history.

The shifts of distance in the play, then, are a shift of attention from action and characters to the consequences of action. They seem to work where a strong emotion-arousing point is followed quickly by a switch in mode of speech, a violation of internal verisimilitude, or a resolution into a clearly contrived stage picture. Bond makes the following point in his 1980 conversation with David Roper:

Roper: In The Woman there is a political message and socio-political impact, but in some ways this was wrapped-up in something which was just as interesting for the audience to get involved in, namely the story and the people.

Bond: If you think that, then that is because you don't know how to see, feel, hear, or taste. ... the point I'm trying to get across is that we're in this situation where we have to develop new ways of contacting an

audience. ... Our subjective experience is mediated through our social experience. The way we see the world depends on our political situation and our class situation. ... ("Edward Bond in Conversation" 42)

The distancing devices Bond employs seem in The War Plays Trilogy to explode the notion of character. "New ways of contacting an audience" are only possible, it would seem, where the spectator is first discouraged from expecting the old ways. For the old ways do not function. The intrusion of distancing devices arrests the audience's modes of perception and then provides a "new way of contact" – a model for interpreting the author's meaning. Without the heightened poetry of Woman's reaction to the death of her child, for instance, the audience would not be so easily able to recognise how Woman herself is implicated in the murder by her mentality; what this murder means for Woman herself is largely irrelevant. Without the ripping apart of Woman's Bundle, it would not be so obvious that the baby's primary function in the play is metaphorical: the baby means, rather than is. Without Bundle's speaking, the point that passivity is necessarily related to innocence would not be so deftly refuted. None of the moments of epiphany in the play illuminate character in any way; in fact, almost all of them confound the few scraps of psychological insight which an astute spectator might have put together. "The story and the people" are the vehicles, not the reason, for the play. So that they cannot be mistaken for the reason, the distancing devices break them down continually.

The handling of the baby-metaphor in this play is of particular importance for Bond. The baby is the most sensational of his metaphors, but even though it has been, in Bond's view, repeatedly misunderstood by his audience and critics, he continues to employ it, making its function as metaphor more and more explicit. In Saved (1964), the baby represents "the reduction of personality" (Penelope Gilliatt, qtd in Roberts, Bond on File 15) which is a dominant theme of the play, the death of innocence, the victimization of its social class – any of these themes and motifs; but those who see it as a baby cannot interpret the play as Bond would wish. In Narrow Road to the Deep North, the centre-stage substitution of

dolls for young children, and dialogue which makes the point of their lack of individuality, still has not always succeeded in helping the audience to see through the slaughter to the social problems it signifies. In The Bundle (1978), Bond makes yet another attempt to explicate his baby-image in terms of socio-economic and political concerns, with Wang spelling out in his monologue at the end of Scene Four exactly the nature and function of the "baby" in society, and the reason for its employment as a theatrical image. This monologue makes abundantly clear that Wang is not centrally in conflict with himself over an infant child, but in conflict with his culture over power and freedom. The display of the sheet, behind which Pemberton "slides his hand ... like a conjuror" performing a trick, is the most explicit elucidation of the non-character, non-infant nature of the baby; one wonders how Bond could make his intentions more clear than he does here. At all times through his career, ever more explicitly, Bond has clarified and theatricalised his character presentation, especially through the handling of the baby-prop.

His paradoxical intention must be, however, to fail initially in clearing the baby-image of emotionalism, since the arousal of emotion is necessary to his technique. He uses a baby so often, one must conclude, because human beings respond instinctively to the baby; they cannot help but feel, however clear their minds, when they see a baby in distress. The subsequent, intellectual interpretation is corrective of emotionalism. Right here is a fundamental difference between Brecht and Bond: in a broad sense, Bond's theatre teaches the spectator a way to deal with his or her emotions, while Brecht's uses the emotion it stirs in part to fill out character interpretation. Bond does not ground his audience's emotions in his characters. Instead, he arouses them, and then manipulates distancing devices so that the audience's mental powers are brought to bear on their feelings. Thought modifies feeling, rather than feeling colouring thought. This relationship between the two faculties could bestow the peace promised by the title of the play. Distancing works by interrupting a

learned social response system which is so ingrained that it passes for "natural," and to replace that system with responses which are the result of conscious, rational analysis.

Although none of the devices Bond uses is in itself revolutionary, their conjunction often results in several levels of awareness for his audience. Asking himself what role theatre plays in modern society, Bond has deemed necessary a new attitude to structure and a new definition of dramatic character – in fact, a re-estimation of what the theatre is nowadays. As he reshapes it, the astonishing transformative power of theatre manifests itself. For Bond, this magical quality is never, as Hauser puts it, "something that can be completely expressed in material form. Instead it [is] so irreducible to material form that it can only be hinted at ... by the distortion of form and the disruption of boundaries" (Hauser 10). The distortions and shocking dialectical presentations may be rooted in analysis of real-life political power-structures, then, but their outcome is the strong affirmation of the theatrical experience.

The epic structure of his plays itself serves Bond's thesis that "all art is political" as he discusses in his interview of 1980 with David Roper ("Edward Bond in Conversation"). Bond sees the epic form as in the process of creation, and as having two branches – the propaganda and the "incident" form (39-40). In this latter form, a problem is solved by a particular action, and when the problem is, say, a factory crisis and the solution the raising of social consciousness, the two types of epic merge. However, he desires a third type of epic, a "play of epic poetics, which would try to make apparent on stage the actual movement of history ..." No chance, such as a sudden death or inheritance or the place of one's birth, can shape this movement, nor can even the passage of time dictate it: "Other animals evolve in time, we evolve in history. Our situation is entirely different" (44).

This explains why Bond handles chronology in the way he does, as an element of his plays, but not a structurally significant one. "The progress of human history," he says, is "a constant building up. It's a constant adding process. You see, what goes wrong is this: technology demands that we organize ourselves in a certain way" (43). But organizations, once established, change much more slowly than technologies, which develop rapidly, leaving both the culture and the art forms it has engendered far behind. "Our danger is that technology is still controlled by old forms of society, by old forms of consciousness" (45). Bond implies by this statement that established art forms cannot present any truth about the present, because the distance between any established art form and the structure of modern life is so great. He raises the matter of form by his conspicuous manipulation of it, to render visible the "invisible" structures of drama.

The plots of various of his plays give such clear evidence of the structural malformation as to tend to over-distance plot (by contrast with content, which seems to tend towards under-distancing). Early Morning falls into two unequal pieces at Scene Sixteen, which opens in heaven, the relationship between the two chunks being mainly thematic. There is not a plot connection in the usual sense of the term because the resolution in Scene Fifteen so thoroughly completes the plot of the first part of the play. In The Woman, by way of comparison, where the same structure is employed, there is a completion in Part Two of actions initiated in Part One to a much greater degree. The last six scenes of Early Morning are, perhaps, an extended envoi.

The structure of Lear follows Shakespeare's play loosely, deviating in "enlarging" certain sections to allow for the greater involvement in the plot of characters who would be termed minor in Shakespeare – the Gravedigger's Boy, Cordelia, sundry soldiers and workers who have what amounts to cameo roles in Bond – and balancing Lear's involvement with each of theirs. Lear is not a study of the title character, except in the sense that Bond

speaks of him, as a microcosm in whom every facet of the population is represented equally with the others. Where scenes break and acts end, the focus is not on what is happening to Lear himself; the crises are those of his victims and opponents. The structure disconnects the plot from Lear.

Like these two plays, The Bundle is Brechtian, in having scenes presented as discrete units. Bond makes a point of the difference between his theory and Brecht's, remarking that the interrelationship among scenes is central to his purpose. This makes structural breaks all the more clear when they happen; Scene Seven, for instance, is "inserted" at a point where it ruptures the action. If the scenes were so loosely connected as Brecht theoretically desires, there would not be the impression of a break or disruption here.

Bond does not desire the scene breaks in his plays to occur at moments of crisis or tension, since such breaks, he claims, leave the spectator emotionally compromised, distracting her/him from the shape of the historical action. Plot is too narrow to convey history. The function of plot is to convey personal history only. This is why Bond cannot allow plot to be the backbone of his plays. He wishes his audiences not to wonder what will happen to individuals, but to consider its own responses to a broad movement of forces. He singles out the end of Scene Three, where Wang tosses the baby into the river, as one place where the emotional tension of the moment is dissipated by the whole discussion which has preceded it – a discussion which, Bond believes, permits the audience to analyse both the situation Wang is in and its own attitudes to that situation. Whether Bond achieves his aim in practice as in theory, of course, is problematical. The audience cannot but help feel the mounting tension of the scene as it is played out, and there is no real reason to believe that its fear for the baby can, or need, be held in check by analysis of its negative impact on a society.



The use of the same basic dichotomy in other places shows that Bond considers language and action to work parallel with each other. For instance, the woman suffers the cangue around her neck later in the play while Wang and Tiger discuss her plight in an abstract and generalised way.

An even closer parallel is one in Scene Fourteen of The Woman, the play which immediately follows The Bundle. This scene is the last in the first part of the play; it is at the centre point. In it, Ismene sits, maddened and dying, cemented into a wall at stage left. Her last words in the immediately preceding scene are "I shall sit in the dark and listen to the last wail [of the victims of Troy's defeat]. Not to tell tales when I go to heaven, but so that the truth is recorded on earth" (55). At the start of Scene Fourteen, a soldier taps on the wall, and through the scene Ismene cries out the horrors she can hear taking place. On stage, Greek victors lord it over their royal Trojan victims, and common soldiers glory in their booty. Being sealed, Ismene's fate cannot be as emotionally stirring as are those of the visible victims for whom she has fought. On the other hand, her slow death is occurring, not simply imminent, and she is consciously undergoing it. At scene's end, the two remaining Greek soldiers tap once more; there is no answer. When it seems to be a fact, a drop in tension (relief that her suffering is over) coincides with the raising of the house lights. At that point at least, a shift of focus to what she has said, and to the action of the just completed scene, might well occupy the audience. Their relief has not been altogether cathartic, since Ismene has proposed herself as a spokesperson for innocent war victims rather than as a victim in her own right.

Another example, protracted through much of the length of Summer, is the fatal illness of Marthe. She too embodies in her disease the condition of her whole generation. For the most part, she has come to terms with it, and her contentment, combined with the fact that her illness is not to be perpetuated in her son, illustrates that the cultural problem can be

understood and overcome. The loss of her person is trivial; in any case, her "garden," the best of her, (not to mention David), will be growing. So it is with Wang's baby-victim, which can only be silent in lieu of defending itself; it cannot defend itself, but can represent itself. This makes a difference which is structural to the extent that it diffuses the climax, spreading it through the play. The problem Bond addresses still persists, and neither victims nor aggressors have effected any change. The scene and act breaks occur with the statement about culture. This is also clearly true of the scene breaks in Great Peace, which afford yet another example of the same basic situation in placing the various babies in the position of Wang's baby. The placement of tension-points seems to me to depend to a great extent on Bond's handling of character.

The structure of Restoration is unusual in a different way. It follows ostentatiously the pattern of tragedy, from exposition (Are's announcement of his intention to marry) through complication (the drain of Are's money) and crisis (the murder of Ann). But at this point, description of the plot pattern cannot ignore the shift from one protagonist, Are, to another, Bob, a shift which pivots on the crisis. At this point the two exchange roles. Are's participation in the plot becomes that of the antagonist, while it is Bob's fate which is traced through the falling action to the catastrophe, his death.

A second difference between this plot and the pattern (Freytag's "pyramid") is that here the falling action takes up a great deal of the play, while the complicating action is relatively brief – a reversal. Third, the pattern is consciously maintained in spite of the protests of Bob and Rose, and in willful ignorance of Are's being his wife's murderer, which information, were it acted upon, would change the shape of the play. It is a fair objection that Bond has rarely, if ever, written a play in closed dramatic form, as Volker Klotz would describe it, and Restoration too is laid out in open form, in two rambling "parts" of roughly equal length and twelve scenes. Nevertheless, the action of the play per se reflects Bond's

awareness of Restoration dramatic form, which is invariably five-act, and which subscribes with slight modifications to the so-called Aristotelian unities. The structure of Restoration could almost be described as "dual," the tension between rigid formalism and loose episodic construct reflecting a central thematic concern, the oppressive and alienating impact of convention upon ordinary people.

Likewise, the structure of Great Peace supports the content of that play: while not directionless, it is wholly episodic. Successive scenes are linked more because the same few characters reappear in them than because of any action which arises either from intellectual or emotional motivations, or because any circumstance or situation necessitates them. Dramatic tension in this play arises from the sense of inexorable death, which no character can predict or escape, and which is not the result of any individually-generated cause. All action, and no action, in this play is escape and defense. The movement of the play is not towards knowledge of oneself or of others, but rather of social patterns. Hence it is a repetition of patterns which can be broken only when they are identified. The patterning itself is the object of study, and from this comes the over-distancing of structure. Bond explicates his purpose in the dialogue of Scene Sixteen: "Societies can change – they dont 'ave t' / blow themselves up / We're lucky" (55). The creation of the forms, both machines and structures, Man explains, is what keeps humanity in darkness. New use of those forms leads to enlightened life.

In its piecemeal presentation, its being interwoven with loosely-constructed and unconventional sub-plot fragments, and its truncation, the plot of a Bond play forfeits pride of place. It does not convey the subject-matter of the play and is often largely irrelevant to the characters who participate in it, and who have other things to concern and affect them than what happens. With a few exceptions, indeed, the plot of a Bond play could be summarized in a sentence. It is treated manifestly as another of those conventions to be

varied upon, with impunity for the integrity of the theatre experience itself. This allows the "dramatization of the analysis" of the action. The ordering of incidents, the information conveyed by dialogue, and the allusion to other play structures often permit the audience to believe that it knows what will happen, referring it from the outset not to what will happen, but to how the plot will come about.

This does not make the plays static. In fact, however simple it is, the plot often acts almost as a blocking character in a neo-classical comedy does: it imposes a set of conventions from which the characters fight to free themselves. Thus, the plot-structure becomes a metaphor for entrapping social structures. In Restoration, for instance, the appearance of Are and the question of his marriage, which are immediately established, make it clear that Bond means to write, if not a Restoration play, at least a commentary upon one. But the few characters who are truly comfortable upon that stage exist beside others who spring from a different set of conventions. The tension of the play is derived from the struggle of those imprisoned by the class conventions of the Restoration against those who use them to imprison. The audience tests its knowledge of how the Restoration form works out, against what it sees happening on this stage. Although it is not a feature of the Restoration play, the sub-plot Bond incorporates here also encourages the audience's perception of formal elements.

There is a shift of focus from characters initially established as protagonists (Lear, Are) to others who replace them (Cordelia, Bob or Rose). This shift happens sometimes mid-play (as with Lear and Are) and sometimes near the end (as with Wang and, in a sense, Woman). Hence the structure of Bond's plays is often unusual in another way, in that the clear differentiation between foreground and background is never strongly maintained. Not just the displacement of central figures into the sidelines or background but also the placement of seemingly mundane foreground action against arresting background tableaux

achieves this effect. Striking examples include the boxing match scene in The Fool, the hanged men behind Victoria and Florence in Scene Twelve of Early Morning, the abandoned baby apposed to Wang and Basho in Scene Three of The Bundle, the crucified pig of "Passion" and the Christ of "Black Mass"; there are several more. This device is neither "play-within-a-play" or simultaneous staging, but a close relative of both, and like those two, which Bond also employs, it invites analysis rather than identification on the audience's part. For one thing, it segments the stage space, splitting the picture plane and suggesting either parallel actions, commentary on or interpretation of one action by the (metaphorical) other, or cause-effect relationships. For another, it ensures that the audience watch itself insisting on the illusion of verisimilitude, such as it is.

Furthermore, in suggesting another "action," the tableau approximates "life" when it introduces the element of time and the idea of multiple occurrences and occasions. The presence of the baby by the river, for instance, suggests the act of abandoning it. The hanged men are evidence of an otherwise undisclosed fact about Victoria's reign. Bond achieves the same effect by the means of parading the "tableau" past the audience, in, for example, the procession with Shogo's body in Narrow Road, or even in dialogue, as for instance when the soldiers describe the skyward immolation of all people in Great Peace or the German describes the bodies cast out to sea in Summer. These images, whether staged or recounted, imply vivid action which negates their potentially static quality.

The dramatization of analysis is also undertaken in another way which is in effect structural, in Bond's handling of space. Centre stage is a focal location employed by Bond no more often than peripheral focuses; and at moments of analysis, there is characteristically more than one focus in his stage picture. The analysis in a Bond play, indeed, often relies on there being visually realized contrast. Thus Wang's final conversation with his mother is in apposition to Tiger's boasting to the Ferryman, Victoria and Florence chat against a

background of corpses, and Hardache blackmails Are into signing over his coal while Bob says in the background, "Expect a pardon look like that" (75). Often, when the characters themselves are at a loss, they are isolated on the stage. Bob and Rose, for instance, worry alone over their dilemma in Part Two, Scene Eight, and even Rose leaves the stage specifically while Bob delivers a short soliloquy on being left in the dark (78-79), returning immediately thereafter to join him in the theme-related "Song of the Conjuror." Her departure and return have no justification whatever, except to create a stage picture which conforms to the content of Bob's song. Where the character is not isolated so obviously, as in Lear II:6 where Lear presents to the audience the trailing entrails of his daughter Fontanelle, there is still apposition; in this case the scientific description of the human body by the doctor is contrasted with the compassionate recognition of that human form by Lear.

The stage space is so often peopled but empty of set in Bond's plays, and settings, where presented, are often metaphors for social facts (as are the walls in Lear, The Woman, and Summer, for instance). There is often the impression of isolated figures in the empty universe, and of the movement of those figures through a considerable space. Wang and Tiger sit at a remove from the suffering Woman and her Husband, Woman in Great Peace travels from one house to another to see Mother 1, and the Man travels to her, in the final scenes, through time (three months) and space. Bond handles space in a mannerist way, his treatment, like that one, illustrating a shift from closed to the "'open,' 'loose,' and deviating motions" typical of a centreless vision (Sypher 134). Space is a presence on Bond's stage and between audience and actors too: songs, direct address, Basho's wandering through the audience all realize this space. Bousquet speaks of its occasional abolition in some mannerist works, and of the ascendancy which images achieve over space "in all cultures where the sense of reality has become dulled" (142); but in the sense I mean, it is not abolished; it is either so crowded or so empty that one notices it. "Marowitz suggested," Scharine reports, "that perhaps the diminutive size of the Royal Court lessened [Lear's] effectiveness" (185),

but one can imagine the tension created by the jamming of many, and of monumental, characters in a small space, and also the visual support which that crowding lent the theme of the masses of directionless, or destruction-bent, people. The crowds in Bond's work, interestingly, whether present or reported, are often crowds of dead.

Bousquet points out that though the mannerists enjoyed creating nocturnal settings (as one would expect from observing their taste for ghosts and skeletons, monsters and lurid fires), they were not interested in creating the atmosphere of night; "rather," he says, "these flat black backgrounds are a kind of screen of nothingness, an abstraction against which the startling reality of form detaches itself. Mannerist painting had a strong taste for artificial backgrounds in general" (128). One can notice the same attitude in Bond's work. Scene Seven of Early Morning, for example (George and Arthur's grave-yard interview with the ghost of Albert), makes no reference to time of day, either in stage direction or dialogue, except for George's simulation of cock-crow, which may be taken to simulate dawn as well, and which is all the funnier if performed in the light. The night in Scene Seven of Great Peace is a thematic, not a naturalistic, night, there to create the atmosphere of fear and mystery in which the soldiers discuss the potential for the life of the bundle. It is interesting to note Brecht's use of the same device at the end of Scene Three in Mother Courage, where the lights dim on the unmoving Courage, who has lost her younger son to haggling, and come up again, as if suggesting a night has passed. This "night" is not a sinking and rising of the sun, but a dying of part of Courage herself, and a reassertion of her personality. Many of Bond's plays do not move through the changes of light which signify evening, night, morning, and so forth. (The Woman and Summer, which allude so strongly to Greek tragedy, are exceptions perhaps for that reason.) Rather, the lighting seems to refer specifically to the particular scenes, rather than providing a framework or context which ties them to each other. Furthermore, like Brecht, Bond prefers well-lighted sets to darkened ones. Also, like Brecht, who states in "Theatre for Pleasure or Theatre for Instruction" that

the use of projections, film, choruses, and so forth has the effect of moving "the 'background' ... to the front of the stage" (Brecht on Theatre 72), Bond creates no background, in effect.

This changes utterly the nature of social relationships in the play. For one thing, since his "settings" are often human beings – the abandoned baby in The Bundle, the boxers in The Fool, the Young Woman gibbeted à la Rembrandt in Bingo, the dead armies in Early Morning – they substitute for and alternate with other characters, whose histories are no more significant than theirs. This raises the matter of mutual responsibility, as well as the matter of the responsibility which art bears for its culture, since the background images are often tableaux and in various places are presentations of art works. Equally, the insignificance (the egotism) of the individual is commented upon by this presentation, as is the impossibility of maintaining a single vision which can correctly interpret the world. In Bond, then, one sees a relativism which Hauser claims first appears in Raphael's Fire in the Borgo, "a relativism that abolishes the earlier relationship between the more important and the less, as well as the logical distribution of emphasis between substance and symptom" (157). Hauser describes the subsidiary figures in Raphael's painting as "inappropriate to the theme," "unusual and partly unnatural," "impressive but practically pointless," suggestive of stage scenery. The effect, there as in Bond, is an emphasis on the artfulness of the creation and a display of technical virtuosity. Structure is not abandoned, but ceases to dictate proportion. Thematically, whatever Raphael's statement, Bond's appears to concern a bondage of people to each other in the wrong way, and for the wrong reasons, an uncaring relationship deceptively resembling a caring one. His characters are "artificially set in motion from without" and evidence "inner inertia ... a fundamental mannerist characteristic" (158). This explains why they can be massed and manipulated like scenery, and cannot generate action out of personality.



The matter of form is also continually reasserted in a whole variety of framing devices, the chief of these being the "Sprecher." This character-commentator chooses to stand back from the action at various points and discuss it with the audience as it unfolds or as ramifications become apparent and the choice of subsequent actions becomes an issue. This commentator takes several forms. *Bodice*, *Fontanelle*, and *Are* involve the audience directly by the collusion of their asides. Either by engaging themselves in analysis of staged tableaux or by direct address, *Lear* and *Wang* exhort the audience to analyse for itself what it sees. *Woman* continually analyses her experience aloud. Her narrow, ignorant and prescriptive interpretations are so seldom normative that what happens in the play seems to dissolve and disappear under the weight of various interpretations of it. The commentative role is also filled by choruses – the singers in *Early Morning* and *Restoration*, the recitative and poetry in *The Bundle* and *Great Peace*. The fact that the language of Bond's plays shifts into metaphor and between rhetoric and common speech, as well as among dialects, also creates the sense of the play-within-a-play, and often it becomes eventually difficult to decide which is the framework and which the inserted content; content and context are ambiguously presented and the line between them indefinable.

The play-within-the-play is, of course, one of the major formal devices by which Bond brings background and foreground onto the same plane. In *The Sea*, the Orpheus myth is played in rehearsal: this is an example of Bond's employing the device in a standard way. More often he varies upon it. The allusions to *Hamlet* in *Early Morning* I have discussed. These spoofs are digressive and distracting, serving mainly thematic ends. The digression from which the plot never returns, as with *Len* and *Joyce's* trial, is another variation more representative of Bond's use of the device, in that it supports the idea that the structure of "dramatic theatre," in Brecht's sense, is a false one which cannot properly convey meaning.

Restoration is perhaps the play in which Bond develops the play-within-the-play idea most fully in this direction; for the whole can be seen as a play within a type of play, the Restoration "frame" being continually alluded to by Are's words and actions, while by introducing such elements as the Messenger, Bond foregrounds its theatricalism per se. He has strayed into a modern context, and his stepping back out of that context, through his continual collusion with the audience, in one sense places the audience in the Restoration world, in the frame. Handke "insults" his audience; Beckett calls it "a bog"; but Bond exhorts it paradoxically through Are to dissociate itself from Are's easy cynicism and murderous elitism, to turn the "frame" inside out, to contain that historical period so as to discontinue its social and political attitudes.

In other plays Bond is more clearly didactic in his use of the inset play. Wang instructs his gang, when he meets it, on the proper identification of the enemy, by having it perform wittingly what it already lives unwittingly. More subtly, Tiger is made to "act out" his nature, chicken, dog, and pig, before the Ferryman and his Wife, and the Captain in Great Peace directs the Son to stand over the cigarette package for the instruction of the other soldiers. The first part of The War Plays Trilogy, Red Black and Ignorant, is an induction scene to the whole, which is left open-ended with Woman's death: it is left to the audience to close this frame. If it does so, it will place the potential reality of the play in the past, removing it from the future.

Finally, although it stretches the definition of "play-within-a-play" too far to associate with it the use of such devices as the bell which rings false for Tiger when he tries to argue against Wang, one can still notice the suggestion of the inset play in such devices. The bell, for instance, is the signal for the Ferryman to pick up a passenger in its first use, and each time the audience hears or doesn't hear it, as in Scene Five when Tiger tries to ring it (31, 32) but cannot make it sound, the previous context is alluded to. When it rings finally, it rings

"falsely," in that it sets the scene for the miscarriage of Wang's plans and the murder of his father, for which he is indirectly responsible. Thus its ringing is a signal to the audience to consider a certain selection of scenes from the whole, juxtaposing them with each other. Because of the bell, the audience rearranges scenes in its memory to arrive at interpretation, taking them out of their original context to do so. The tin cans in The War Plays Trilogy perform the same function.

Another framing device Bond uses is the unabashed intrusion of staging practicalities upon the theatrical illusion – the pushing on stage of the Ferryman's boat, the trap in Early Morning, the "costume" in which Wang and Tiger masquerade as priests. These are not only "contradicted" (by the technical maintenance and heightening of illusion in Arthur's "ascension," Woman's baby's "cry," the mechanical eye-remover) but also incorporated into the play in the same way as the plot is "incorporated" through being manifestly manipulated. The fall of blood from Wang's mouth, various and sundry tortures and mutilations, the prop-skeleton of George, the doll-babies – these metaphors are equivocally realistic. Though they and similar devices are used in such a manner as to make them self-referentially theatrical, they are the vehicles for Bond's truths.

The director of a Bond play has great scope here. It would not be out of keeping with the style of The Bundle, for instance, for the actor of Wang to hold up the baby in Scene Three in such a way as to show the audience that it is a doll, and not an actor at the same level of verisimilitude as Wang is. His throwing a doll into the river would not undercut the impact of his action because he is not telling or participating in a story, but acting out the results of an analysis, and the doll-baby, like the other characters, is a metaphor. Indeed, some of the "shock" of the moment comes from the audience's not being allowed to interpolate conventional characters between themselves and the truth. The situation Bond presents is not a fiction in the common sense of that word; it is not a story à la Tom Jones, or

even Tristram Shandy, but a proposition, as Havel's greengrocer is a proposition. And a proposition, as Azdak knows only too well, is a dangerous thing. A real person, albeit one Bond has never met, stands behind each of his characters, who resemble that real person not in psychological makeup, personal history, or present personal circumstances, but in being a paradigm of a modern citizen in historically generated socio-political circumstances. The conventional modes of establishing verisimilitude for such a character are unnecessary and irrelevant to Bond's point. In fact they impede the spectator's capacity to see his point, to the extent that the spectator insists on a conventional fiction. Stereotypes also lie, and Bond revolts against them as the mannerists did against classical form, for "the over-simplification it imposed on the variety of phenomena" (Hauser 25).

The characters in a Bond play are a formal element of a much different order than the usual in being created according to different sets of criteria. They often play off known characters, like Cordelia, Ismene, Basho, and Victoria, or off stereotypes, such as those of the soldier, the country servant, or the church soprano. They are often dialectically paired, like George and Arthur or the two Lears, or torn in opposing directions, as Wang is. Bond also creates characters who respond to a situation, suffer the consequences, and then find themselves in the same situation again, as the Woman does with her bundle in Great Peace. There is little or no attempt to integrate dialectically opposed views; Bond's idea of character seems to be that it is comprised of elements which rarely cohere to establish solid foundations for action or understanding.

However, the most important of Bond's criteria for character seems to me to be point of view; and this, again, Bond sees as a structural matter:

Seeing the world from a socialist point of view, seeing a table from a socialist point of view, you actually see it differently from the way a Christian would see it. Literally differently. And you'd write about tables differently, and you'd arrange your experience of the world differently. ... There's been a lot of experimenting in the theatre; a lot of it really has been iconoclastic, like painting moustaches on the Mona Lisa in order to destroy academic forms of

art and the conservative political consciousness that those forms express. But within an epic form you would have to really look at everything again in a new light.

Although I'm not a Brecht expert, I would certainly think that my use of the word epic would contain elements of what he intended. ("Edward Bond in Conversation" 39)

Bond develops this thesis by the example of a painting:

Consider – Auschwitz. Am I to understand, that if a guard ... and an inmate painted a picture of Auschwitz, ... that they would see it exactly the same? Not at all. They would see it totally differently. What they would represent would be totally different. ... Our subjective experience is mediated through our social experience. (42)

Of this thesis, Restoration is a telling illustration. Let us consider, for example, Bob. He is unevenly intelligent. He cannot learn from observing what happens to Frank; it takes Rose, the outsider, to interpret for him. What he learns about his own fate is, in the same breath, "Long ago I should hev put my boot in their teeth every time the bastards smiled at me" and "I must goo steady, or make a terrible blunder. I must trust the clown ..." (78, 79). He knows his own personal truth – that he is innocent; he knows the socio-political truth – that the system oppresses and will hang him. But the next time he appears on stage, he is sitting at Wilson's table still, and "without fetters!" Frank also might be said to be enmeshed in the plot, in that unlike Bob he expresses no overview which would call the inevitability of it into question, except in his songs. Bob, with Rose's help, moves "in" and "out" of awareness as Are does.

Bob is also unevenly emotional. His affections are expressed in contrived ways – the love song to Rose, for instance. Lacking knowledge, he cannot fear for himself; gaining knowledge, he succumbs to his fears and the knowledge is lost. His true love is of an abstraction, Order, and his faith lies in not having betrayed that love. That is why he sees the murder he commits as obedience to Are, and is incapable of interpreting it otherwise. He would die in peace without the Parson to terrorize him and Rose to force beer down his

throat. He would see his own death as a glorious one, the freeborn Englishman dying in accordance with English values. Len and Joyce in Early Morning are very like him.

Finally, his character "falls apart" for the audience because of the tremendous inconsistencies among the songs he sings. Some, "Roses," for instance, are consistent with his non-singer character. But the difference in level of awareness and thus point of view between "Roses" and "Suddenly," for instance, is so extreme as to render their integration in one man impossible. While the collection of things which Bob does and says forestalls his coherence as an individual, there is no clear division either between the actor-role and the character-role, because there is no uniformity of representation for either. Bond, and Bob, switch back and forth almost relentlessly between points of view, so that the audience must continually re-think Bob's fate and the causes of it. Thus his "character" is destroyed, a formal destruction which appropriately parallels his destruction within the plot, and also makes Bond's political point. Point of view acts thus upon character throughout Bond's plays, with the partial exceptions of The Pope's Wedding and Saved. Those few characters who have integrity are secondary to theme, serving mainly the plot; they are two-dimensional and are often those which can be doubled or trebled – played by one actor shifting roles – which fact, again, could undercut even their integrity.

One can see in Bond's work, then, some ramifications for his spectator's life, in that a political bridge joins stage to auditorium. Both in structure and in the view they take of character, the plays do seem to be paradigms for modern social conditions, addressing twentieth-century concerns and placing them in a historical context. But what of the crossing in the other direction? Does the insistence upon destroying certain theatrical conventions, and upon reminding the audience that it is sitting in a theatre, destroy the art-character of his work too? Raymond Williams, who places the structure of tragedy "in the pattern of our own culture: war, famine, work, traffic, politics" (49), would not think so; he would say, rather,

that Bond had simply taken his patterns from a different source than the drama, just as other modern playwrights have eschewed dramatic form in favour of musical forms, or film. What Williams calls "the major points of the theory" of modern tragedy, namely "order and accident; the destruction of the hero; the irreparable action and its connections with death; and the emphasis of [sic] evil" (46) seem very much also to be Bond's concerns (though I do not mean to imply that Bond writes tragedies). A change of subject matter and the rejection of old forms should not be enough, then, to cast doubt upon the art-character of any piece.

Nevertheless, Bond's work does indicate "this crisis of the artist's conscience," through the concern with the destruction of illusion upon which, Büdel reminds us, Thomas Mann pronounced that art may no longer have the capacity to render truth (84). Büdel says:

The sometimes painfully felt emphasis upon theatricality, often in such an obvious way that one at times has the feeling the emancipation of the means is being done for the sake of the means themselves, might this also be taken as a defense of the playwright who by no means wants to be suspected of believing his own make-believe ... . The phenomenon of destruction of aesthetic distance may accordingly be the expression of an awareness on the existential level of the questionability of a specific art form as handed down to us by times with an outlook and relation to the world very different from ours.

The playwright himself assumes his audience will no longer accept theatre as theatre .... (84)

Although Büdel's perceptions inform a study of aesthetic distance in Bond's plays, I see no evidence that Bond has lost faith in theatre, or that he thinks his audience has lost faith. Indeed, I believe his use of distancing devices to be a statement of a faith so strong that it can hardly be shaken. The continual re-use and manipulation of the same several objects and images in his plays – the stone, the bundle, the baby, the wall – suggest to me a certain wonder that these tools (for they are, all of them, the tools by which Bond constructs his audience's understanding) do not disappear wholly into the meanings he assigns them, but reassert themselves in magical ways. They grow and shrink, they speak, they die, are dismembered and recreate themselves. This immanent vitality and power has little to do with the uses he assigns them, whether those be conventional or not. An object becomes

both less and more than itself when it is theatrically distanced; it becomes just one element among others, "artificial, precious, bombastic" (Chaim 8) perhaps, especially where it lacks verisimilitude; but paradoxically, "the artistic aspects of the work of art" are confirmed through being distanced (4).

Hauser considers the rediscovery of mannerism in our day to indicate the same rejection of established aesthetic doctrine by modern mannerists as their sixteenth-century counterparts undertook. This does not imply that the two groups reject the same doctrines. Indeed, no modern dramatist need reject "the principles of order, proportion, balance, of economy of means" (3) that characterize the classical ideal but have never dominated art since the mannerist revolution. As soon, however, as art is codified according to any set of rules, it loses the flexibility which enables it to render reality, whether naturalistically, surrealistically, or in any other way. The codification itself entombs art.

Both in the theatre and in society, Bond opposes murder by codification, a principle which is as destructive of life as it is of art. Waging the battle on two fronts, he does not misconceive their relative importance: the play is always the paradigm for him, and society the object of his concern; his theoretical writings and discussions always make this clear. But this does not mean to say that he is indifferent to his craft, or an inferior artist. Detractors might imagine the reshaping of society an impossible task for one man to shoulder, and generalize their opinion of his chances for success to his plays as well. But he gives them no ground for this. His plays suggest, whether one takes them to be positive in outlook or not, that he does not see the burden as shouldered by himself alone. His great gift, in my view, is his manipulation of forms so as to stimulate his spectator's intellectual involvement, and his doing so in such a way that the audience does not confuse "realities" and wonder which to endorse. Rather, I think, Bond poses his audience the question: "in



what reality do I want to live with my fellows?" His range of possibilities assures it of choice.

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