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ON VIOLENCE AND JUSTICE IN MODERN CULTURE

Summary

The purpose of this paper is to show the similarity of views between the English playwright Edward Bond and artists such as Harold Pinter and Peter Sellars, who in their works also address the problem of social injustice and violence in the modern world. The aim of this paper is to present Bond's vision of the problem, elaborated in his essays and a war play called *Summer*, as well as to highlight the emphasis he puts on the importance of personal struggle for humaneness in an inhuman and unjust world. Bond offers many valuable insights into how destructive ideologies can be transcended by imagination, which he believes still has the potential to revive humanity and restore the lost dignity of man.

Key words: ideology, injustice, violence, war, imagination

THREE JUST MEN

„An injustice is like a pebble dropped in the centre of the ocean
 When the ripples reach the shores
 They have turned into tidal waves that drown cities.”

(Bond 2000, 2)

Edward Bond

In an interview with John Tusa on the BBC Radio 3, Edward Bond (2001) used the opportunity to define the age we live in not as *postmod-*

ern but as *posthumous* since, in his opinion „we have ceased to create humaneness.” Bond finds relevant reasons for this in the racing mechanism of capitalist society which grinds people down and destroys their souls. *Material affluence* brings with it *spiritual poverty*, claims Bond.

If one takes a closer look behind the glittering covers of our consumer culture, it becomes obvious that in the world where there is an intricate relationship between people, authority and technology what really matters is what means the government will use to keep its citizens under control and how many citizens can actually afford to enjoy the benefits of technological development.

What the western civilization imposes as priority is the creation of a strong market where the emphasis is on frantic and rapid consumption. In that kind of society, oriented primarily towards monetary gain, the guiding question becomes whether there will be *more jam tomorrow*. As a matter of fact, the pursuit of more money becomes an obsession and the sole purpose of existence. It turns into a disease which threatens to destroy everything in us that makes us human. „If economy turns freedom, democracy and justice into dross”, as Bond (2000, 16) comments, then we are sentenced to become a lost generation, unconscious of the corrupting power of money and for that reason unable to defend or save ourselves.

Modern man is put under pressure to take part in the competition of how to become more successful and earn more. However, in that game not every competitor has the same chance to succeed since *economic power* is not equally distributed. Turning us into money making machines this ideology of competition (not cooperation) actually deprives us of our human qualities and virtues. Values such as honesty, sympathy, generosity and kindness are coming under threat of extinction. Lack of imagination, which is a feature peculiar to human beings living under competitive stress, leads to estrangement, inability to feel compassion, and misunderstanding within the human community.

In the Tusa interview Bond criticizes this state of modern Western societies because the lifestyle they promote is so contrary to the natural, biological expectations every human being is born with. He believes that children are born with only one main interest and that is that the world should be their home. They want to be at home in the world. The child wants to create a good world that it can be at home in. When people grow older that need grows into a more complex concept of justice: that the world should be a home for *everybody*. For Edward Bond that is what justice is. Instead of which our existential need for justice becomes corrupt. We are seduced by wants (kill for a right pair of shoes) and cease to pursue humaneness even though it is an existential need. Without justice we are unable to create our humanity and the paraphernalia of modern consumerism become wreathes we bring to our own funeral. The human mind, Bond thinks, must be born with a desire for justice, a need for jus-

tice that seems to him to be the *one creative law in the universe*. The sort of society that we have corrupts and destroys it. Our economic set-up requires injustice, requires inequality. Our economy will not work without injustice. It requires it. We create inequality. Within such as set up, Bond writes, it constantly shocks him what we allow to happen, what we permit, what we indeed do.

In his essay *The Rough Notes on Justice*, Bond provides an additional formulation of the meaning of the word justice. This notion, in his opinion, can be analyzed as interplay of three separate entities. First, there is *legal justice* which has to ensure that all people are equal before the law. Second, there is *social order* which is divided into *community* (that is our social habitat), and *society* (which is the set of economic and organizational principles that shape the world we live in). This social order reflects the social justice that exists in one society. Third, there is *power*, which is expressed by the amount of money one possesses. According to Bond, the quantity of power directly influences the amount of justice one can be served, and the kind of legal protection one can get.

It is precisely this unequal distribution of power that Bond perceives to be the stumbling block in any attempt to create a just society. If social network is based, in all its functions, on entrenched relationship of superiority and inferiority, repression and submission, dominance and impotence, the gap between social structures is wide and class differences are prominent. This can be nothing else but outcome of non-democratic and unjust principles.

Bond understands well the difficult position of the lower classes. In society in which there is strict hierarchy, those who are at the bottom of the social ladder have little chances to cope with the demands of the modern age. The poor and the working class seem to be left out of the competition, which provokes in them a feeling of rejection and despair. Their position is made worse by the fact that they are constantly being reminded that they are not fit to be part of the global economic scene. „You don't count if you can't consume", says the American writer, August Wilson (2001, 296).

Moreover, those who have least financial influence are usually the ones who are blamed for most of the ills of society. If an outcast commits a crime, he certainly gets the *deserved* legal punishment, but who tries to investigate what causes his problems and what his dissatisfaction with life is? Bond (2000, 37) is concerned since for those who benefit from having power „the connections between economic power and social malise are not clear." The fact that the people who belong to the poor, the unemployed, the working classes are driven to the verge of madness is not perceived. Their mixed emotions, frustrations and impotence eventually lead to aggressive behaviour which is sanctioned and disapproved by the uncaring and unperceptive public. They are looked upon as villains and

criminals, despite being, first and foremost, victims of social injustice. Put away in prison cells and execution chambers, which is the usual way they are dealt with, they have to pay for their sins.

Bond urges that this could change if what is relevant becomes not only how to punish transgression but how to stop crime and violence, how to prevent it and avoid it. It is important to react before crime happens, not after it takes place. As far as Bond is concerned, the best deterrent for crime is justice. The criminality of the social system that generates crime must be discussed.

Bond accuses the government of not showing enough interest in reintegrating the underprivileged back into society, since social programs which should bring reforms are not seriously taken into consideration. The same thing worries Peter Sellars, American theatre director, author and activist. „We make policies for homeless people thinking we understand them well”, he says. „Actually, we know nothing about them except our prejudice.” (Sellars 1999).

Sellars believes that it is necessary to experience our real environment, because to be able to alter it we have to feel it directly, not through a membrane. If we look closely, injustice, he thinks, can be seen everywhere. It is in the streets, in schools, in the parks, in the courtrooms. In his speech, *Cultural Activism in the New Century*, Sellars (1999) gives an account of the off-stage shows of the LAPD (Los Angeles Poverty Department). He witnessed acts of injustice against homeless people in the poor districts of LA, who were maltreated by police officers and stopped in their attempt to make themselves at home on the street corner, occupying a little piece of land. Sellars feels deeply that it is absolutely wrong to deal with homeless people by charging them fees for staying in one place more than five minutes or hosing their sleeping boxes. The problem of homelessness cannot be washed away, or cleaned off the streets, it has to be confronted, understood and solved properly and permanently by giving homeless people a new chance for a better life.

The main question then is how to cope with what appears to be quite different from us, or opposed to us (like the poor and the homeless). Sellars suggests that we should not turn our backs to the other, fear it and demonize it. We should, rather, be open to it and accept it as part of our reality that has to be accounted for.

„Those who govern do not know what a person is
And the governed do not know what a government should be
Instead the evil do evil and because there is no justice the good must
do evil
How else can they govern the prison they live in?“ (Bond 2000, 2)

Edward Bond and Harold Pinter

In a society where the official discourse of politicians is full of lies, and where the authorities are able to cover their criminal activities by finding loopholes in the legal system, it is very hard to fight injustice and violence. Those who are mistreated by wrong policy often resort to violence themselves being unable to cope differently with the situation they are placed in. They are engulfed by a social climate in which „the need for justice becomes the desire for revenge” and „the need to create becomes the necessity to destroy” (Bond 2003, 25). However, revenge can bring us neither justice nor a peaceful mind. Perpetuating violence cannot be good.

Bond is against any kind of violence but he feels sympathy for people crippled by wrong political moves because they are indeed the victims of the system. If the government had more understanding for them, they would not be outraged and desperate. If a person is constantly dehumanized, he or she will lose some parts of their humaneness, eventually. The same thing inevitably happens to those who are dehumanizing them, under various traditionally legitimate and socially acceptable excuses.

Bond goes even further to bring the proclaimed Western democracy to trial. „Western democracy has become a secret Culture of Death” (Bond 2000, 45), he declares. Democracy in which violence, injustice and intolerance flourish certainly deadens our humanity. Moreover, incessant military activities of the Western countries in solving different political issues, certainly provide additional arguments for accusing modern culture of being deadly.

From Harold Pinter’s point of view, too, the word democracy has begun to stink. About the misleading language the government uses he says:

„Most political systems talk in such a vague language, and it is our responsibility and our duty as citizens of our various countries to exercise acts of critical scrutiny upon that use of language (Pinter 2005).”

Bond detects the main problem in the fact that imaginative capacity of human beings has decreased. His *Notes on Imagination* explain the relevance of language as a means of communication and exchange of ideas. In the past people had a *story* to believe in, a *Utopia* to hope for and anticipate; a story which gave meaning to life and which carried a set of moral codes, values and customs. This cult of storytelling is dying out and our culture based on generating stories is crumbling down. Instead of relying on the power of imagination we rely on the power of ciphers, where zeros actually reflect the emptiness of our souls. This happens because instead of satisfying our basic *needs* (essential drives) we have become victims of *wants* – things which consumer society invites us to be obsessed with. However, true satisfaction and purpose of life cannot be found there: „the more we have of what we want, the less we have of

what we need", Bond (2003, 30) points out. When we were guided only by our true needs, our imagination was alive and we were more human. Now, it is not sufficient to have enough to sustain ourselves. The *imperative* is always to have more.

Bond criticizes Americans for the lack of spiritual values by firmly stating that it is not possible to *live by bread alone*. There has to be something else to keep us alive. There must be some food for thought, to replace indifference and ignorance, and food for the soul, to prevent the spreading of misunderstanding and insensitivity in the mankind.

If we forget our *story*, we will forget how to use language to communicate as human beings; Bond claims that it is precisely on our use of language (that is, on our ability to speak and listen) that justice depends. For a better society to exist it is necessary to rebuild and reconstruct collective responsibility and collective awareness: it is not enough to be guided just by personal interests and desires.

The task should then be to *teach the dead to listen*, which implies that the time of the awakening has come. If we remain silent and deaf to injustice it means that we tolerate it, which would be almost as if we approved of it.

Bond believes that what prevents people from using their imagination, and a more understandable language is actually ideology. Similar to Blake's theory about transition from the state of innocence to the state of experience, Bond has a theory of how we become infected by ideology. It says that only in childhood we are able to rely on our imaginative self, because then we are not (yet) corrupted. Then our mind is free to ask questions and explore the world around us. As adults, we gradually lose that capacity and start taking things for granted, in the form they are served to us by institutions, authorities, and the government. A child believes to be the creator of the world and tries to put all the pieces of the puzzle together to form a meaningful and satisfying mental map. It is a creative process in which a child asks questions which are his own, not the authority's. This is called autonomy, the freedom of thought. However, no society allows autonomy to survive from childhood to adulthood. Whereas a child has a broadened mind, and a much more meaningful and profound understanding of the world, adults become narrow minded, strictly guided by their ideologies. In Bond's terms ideology is *nothingness* while imagination is *someness* because it attaches meaning to life. Nothingness is presented by the authority as „the site of eternity and infinity: which is a way of shutting the door on questioning skeptics (Bond 2003, 33).” It rewrites our childhood maps and brings new values and meanings. This kind of authority is usually repressive and aggressive. In addition, this means that, allegedly for a better society to exist, authorities often use force and violence to impose their rules. Their ideology actually justifies their injustice.

Bond feels that it is necessary to interrogate authority for its flaws and imperfections. In his essay *Notes on Postmodernism*, he recollects that even the old Greek playwrights presented Gods as imperfect in their plays, without fear of their rage and vengeance. Modern man does not have to be a good citizen if it means being inhuman, intolerant and unjust. There is no point in being obedient to that kind of system if it insists on qualities one cannot reconcile oneself with, which are contrary to one's moral principles. Activity of the government should also be subjected to discussion, analysis and criticism.

For Bond, a potential freedom from ideology is imagination, which is the source of our humaneness, which needs to be recreated time and again, especially now when we have started losing it. It is our imagination that will teach us how to act, how to make a valid estimation and how to stay moral.

Having similar views on the issue of social injustice and the institutional abuse of power like Bond, Harold Pinter is worth mentioning because of his hostility towards the dictatorial regime of the American government. He asks the same questions as Bond:

„What has happened to our moral sensibility? Did we ever have any? What do these words mean? Do they refer to a term very rarely employed these days – conscience? A conscience to do not only with our own acts but to do with our shared responsibility in the acts of others? Is all this dead (Pinter 2005).“

In his Nobel Lecture called *Art, Truth and Politics*, Pinter (2005) fiercely criticizes the involvement of the American authorities in *solving* conflicts around the world through their *low intensity* missions, which is just a subtle name for gradual but steady destruction of freedom, human rights, dignity and eventually the lives of the people involved.

„The crimes of the United States have been systematic, constant, vicious, remorseless, but very few people have actually talked about them“, says Pinter (2005). In his view (as well as Bond's) it is of crucial importance not to be silent and to speak out the truth.

He proceeds by asking the crucial question:

„How many people do you have to kill before you qualify to be described as a mass murderer and a war criminal? One hundred thousand? (Pinter 2005).“

Hypocrisy evident in the actions of the government is for Harold Pinter shameful and unprecedented. That is why his criticism is directed towards disclosure of lies and subversion of the intentions of the government to maintain power by hiding the truth and keeping the people ignorant about what is really going on. His intention, as author, is to enlighten people who are blinded by a *thick tapestry of lies*.

„When we look into a mirror, we think the image that confronts us is accurate. But move a millimeter and the image changes. We are actually looking at a never-ending range of reflections. But sometimes a writer has to smash the mirror – for it is on the other side of that mirror that the truth stares at us (Pinter 2005).“

Edward Bond and Peter Sellars

Being world famous for fighting social injustice with his criticism of society Peter Sellars can stand in line with both Bond and Pinter. In his speech entitled *The State of Cinema* given at the 50th San Francisco Film Festival, persistently comparing America to Nazi Germany, he condemns the political climate in America where citizens are still divided into *people* and *non-people*. For people who live this injustice and inequality, the experience is very painful. People stigmatized as *illegal aliens* are not granted full rights as citizens of America, they do not get paid for the work they do, and they do not get the same opportunities for education or proper health care. Eventually, many of them are deported or put into prisons, even especially designed supermax isolation cells, the unseen instruments of torture. The American government sees these measures also as the best way to deal with African-Americans, not searching for the real causes of the problem they allegedly represent. As Sellars observes, American society keeps distancing itself from these issues. „There is no distance. It’s the closest thing to your life“, Sellars (2007) says. The strawberries that Americans eat, for instance, or the underwear that they wear, are all the products of hard physical labor of people who sweat and suffer with no hope for a better tomorrow. Do Americans ever ask themselves who stands behind that work, and what human sacrifice it takes? It turns out that human life is regarded not as valuable but as disposable in American culture. America seems to be a good soil for a new kind of slavery where modern slaves are instantly exploited, drained to the last atom of their strength, and then thrown away like used tissues. That is why it is high time America started *tasting the history of injustice*. That is why it is necessary to observe carefully the present situation, and start asking questions, in order to fully understand the human condition. Many bad examples were given in history and it is important to avoid repeating them. It is important to have a very alert historical sense, in Sellars’ view.

Sellars believes that a precondition for a democratic society is that room is made for cultural diversity. This means that different people of different religious, racial and social identity should be welcome and should feel at home in a country that claims to be democratic. Democracy „ is not about one voice, it’s about many voices“ (Sellars 2007). If the only valid form of thinking is the one the government imposes, then democracy is replaced by autocracy. What must count are the voices of citizens who should be able to freely express their thoughts related to their human needs.

Sellars traces the roots of social injustice back to ancient Greece. In society which encouraged slavery, instead of abolishing it, democracy was debatable. The fact that one could not vote being a woman, a child, a slave or a foreigner was an obvious sign of inequality, discrimination and injustice. This pattern of social mistreatment has been recreated and updated throughout history many a time, receiving new contexts and new modes of application. In modern society, for example, it is applied to the Afro-American community, or to millions of civilian casualties in conflicts in Iraq and Afganistan. Sellars comments:

„The issues of multiculturalism, the issues of reconciliation, the issues of the cultural faces whereby we don't kill each other are not ideological, they are human. And we are talking about the function of the humanities in building a society where there might actually be safety, where security is based on an understanding among peoples, not who has the biggest army for the moment. When security is based on the ability to talk, to share and to be honest across very painful, hugely controversial, ugly questions (Sellars 2007).”

SUMMER: A WAR PLAY

In the play *Summer*, Bond explores the subject of injustice and violence in detail. The focus is on war's aftermath, the memories of WWII and the mass destruction it had caused. The question is whether the human mind has evolved enough to learn anything from the terrible mistakes made in the past. Even though the plot concerns a summer vacation that brings several characters to the Adriatic coast, the play, in fact, explores class conflict and historical injustices which lead to open violence and wars.

Bond brings together an upper class woman Xenia, her former servant, Marthe, and their offspring, Ann and David. Before the war started Xenia lived in abundance with her well to do family who could, among other things, afford to have servants. War brought her pain, exile and loss. Her father was imprisoned, their property confiscated, and she was banished from the island in the Mediterranean where they used to live. Years later she returns to the island to encounter Marthe and her son David in her old family house, and to meet an ex-German soldier guilty of committing war crimes in the region, which provokes very unpleasant memories about the war.

In this play, Bond insists on the tension between the two women. He shows that Martha's scorn towards Xenia has not lessened in intensity even after so many years. A scene when Marthe spits Xenia in the face is the best example of her accumulated hatred. It is the proof that the scars on the soul of Martha, and the *owned* like her, can never be healed. The way society treated them was degrading and inhuman. They were forced to accept their inferiority as something natural, as something they were

predestined to be. To Marthe, kindness shown by Xenia and her family was meaningless since the conditions in society reduced her quality of life to mere survival and servitude. „What decides our lives is not what the owners are like. You can live without kindness, you can't live without justice – or fighting to get it”(Bond 1987, 67) explains Marthe. For this reason, Marthe could not feel gratitude to her landlords for saving her life from German soldiers, since her life was barely worth living in the unjust society they benefited from. Without hope for prosperity, for making a more decent living, kept in submission without a possibility of escape, she was left with a huge feeling of dissatisfaction and contempt.

Bond is convinced that kindness and false sympathy is not enough to change the destiny of the lower classes. A more radical change in the structure of society and the minds of the ruling people is needed to restore human dignity. It is necessary to re-examine the fundamental nature of human relations. Only that would make the world a better place.

In one of her speeches Marthe makes this point clearly. When Xenia insists that Marthe should feel guilt for giving evidence against her father and accuses her of ingratitude, Marthe gives the following answer:

„What guilt? Let us talk about ourselves. People in my generation had to depend on your family in order to live. But why should that have been? Your kindness made us beggars. It made some of us grateful, which was worse. There can never be enough kindness to make the world human. If you spent your life being kind people would still die of ignorance and neglect. Much more is needed... The foundations of your world were crooked so everything in it was crooked. Your kindness, consideration, consistency were meaningless. And the good you did was meaningless. In your world the good did evil. What could be worse? (Bond 1987, 42).“

The point that Bond is trying to make throughout the play is that children should not continue the history of misunderstanding, hatred and conflict. „It would be a terrible wrong to a child to force it to fight its parent's battles” (Bond 1987, 64), says Xenia.

Bond suggests that this new generation should bring a new vision of more peaceful and balanced society which will rest on tolerance, justice, democracy and mutual respect. Of course, experience from the past is valuable in order to learn how to lead the present life more intelligently.

From the theme of social issues Bond shifts to the theme of war, highlighting a strong tie between these two subjects.

The German, who is not addressed by his name till the very end of the play, comes to the island as a tourist, with his son and daughter in law. What defines his character is not his name but his deeds. The fact that he was a German soldier implies his involvement in crimes against humanity, genocide and terror. He shows up at the crime scene after many years without any sense of guilt.

What his unit did was terrible. It slowly turned the island into the island of death. People were tortured, kept like hostages in small huts. Frantic and petrified in the crowded rooms, they waited for their terrible destiny. The island became too small for all the dead people to bury so the victims were eventually thrown into the sea. It was too time and money consuming to bury the victims on the mainland, so the Germans found it much easier to throw them away, like human waste.

The German, completely misled by war propaganda glorification of the Arian race, truly believed that what the Nazi soldiers did was for the good of mankind. Unfortunately, it seems that even after so many years after the war, his mind has not changed, and his conscience has not felt any burden. He is still convinced that the mission of German soldiers was to eliminate everything that was defective in society for the benefit of a more civilized planet. He claims that their task was not to destroy but to defend Europe and its culture from the *scum*.

The German even justified his military engagement by saying that he was just a small link in the mechanism for destruction, believing that this can give him an excuse for merciless murders. It is not important that he was not the one who issued orders, what matters is that he was the one who performed them without questioning. What he is unable to see and realize is that his action, and the action of any other individual soldier, however insignificant his role in the military hierarchy was, gradually built up the graveyards of the war victims.

He transfers all the responsibility on war ideology and the army officials who were in charge.

„That’s an army for you. Take the clothes off your back and put you in uniform. Take your name and give you a number. Take your head and stuff it with orders (Bond 1987, 34).”

It is the process of stealing one’s identity and replacing it with the war ideology for the purpose of achieving the unscrupulous and corrupted goals of certain individuals with perverted minds and positions of power and authority.

He sends a letter to Xenia in which he states that he feels himself to be innocent. The wrong governmental policy should, of course, be blamed for initiating the war, but washing hands after participating in it is not that easy.

Xenia is shocked by his monstrosity. It is unbelievable to her that someone who committed such crimes can be so calm, insensitive and cruel. „You invade us, bomb us, rob us, for our good!” (Bond 1987, 36), she utters in rage. It is hypocrisy to harm someone, to hurt him, curb his freedom, and to say you do that from clemency.

What she is; however, unable to see is that there is a parallel between what the Nazi soldiers did in war, and what her class of people did to the lower classes in peace. The difference is just in the scale of vio-

lence, one being open and tangible and the other less visible, but more durable and mean.

Unknowingly, she was the inspiration for the German soldiers; she gave them the strength to fight. They saw her as one of their own, because she belonged to the higher class. This revelation distresses her deeply because she finds it difficult to grasp what kind of political convictions rest behind her social status. Although she may be an anti-war person who does not approve of violence, her ignorance of class violence makes her a moral cripple.

IMAGINATION AGAINST IGNORANCE

In order to save the world, Bond thinks we first need to save ourselves from further material corruption, which is possible to achieve through spiritual rebirth. It means that it is necessary to restore the imagination which will help us regain qualities we have lost as humans. Moreover, what Bond considers to be extremely important is to increase the level of moral awareness and develop the ability to detect injustice.

The search for justice is an archetypal quest, it is a universal and ever-present need. Every society should be just towards its citizens. If society cannot satisfy the appetite for justice, then it is urgent to question it and defy it.

This is exactly where the hidden potential of art in general, or literature in particular, lies - to release subversive power and undermine the system which propagates and practices violence and corruption. For Bond, too, literature and theatre have power to make changes.

„You have to learn the language of Hamlet”, says Bond in the interview with John Tusa (BBC radio 3, 2001). It is the language of independent critical thinking, precise moral judgment, ethical purity and non-conformist views. It is the language of a person who states his opinion openly and has the courage to oppose authority. Unlike the servants Rosencrantz and Guildenstern who are loyal subjects to the throne, and who cannot see the truth with their own eyes, Hamlet is a careful observer whose sight is clear and sharp, and cannot be deceived by lies. Preserving his identity and integrity, he cannot be manipulated like the servants who resemble sponges, which *soak* every command, and fulfill it even if it is morally repugnant.

„Do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe?

Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, you cannot play upon me (Shakespeare 1997, 134).“

It is possible to trace the existence of characters like Hamlet even before Shakespeare, in ancient Greek plays. There are examples of brave women like Antigone who challenges authorities because she believes that there are certain unwritten laws and principles that a moral person sticks to and fights for.

For Bond, such a brave woman becomes Antigone's sister Ismene, the way he presents her in his play *The Woman*. She is the one who has the courage to step out in front of the entire Greek army, driven by imperialist thirst for conquest, plunder and destruction of Troy. Their aim is to get the statue of the Goddess of Good Fortune. Only Ismene's mind is capable of identifying with the hardship and sorrow of the Trojans.

„In Troy I saw the people suffer. Young men crippled or killed, their parents in despair and dying of disease. I told them as they were dying—they couldn't hear but I told them because I'm Greek!—I shall do all I can to stop this. No more suffering caused by men! I said that—if the sight of them hadn't made my mouth dry I would have sung it! (Bond 1977, 11).“

Even though they are her countrymen, she confronts the ideology represented by the Greek military forces since she fully realizes the nonsense of war. Her conscience warns her against their misdeeds. Her moral innocence urges her to prevent the triumph of merciless and destructive intentions.

As Sean Carney sees her in his interpretation of Bond's play, she personifies Bond's interrogative, doubting mind, radically questioning reality and expressing itself through imagination.

She is ready to declare the truth no matter what price she has to pay for it and that is what makes her opposition to the authoritarian thinking unique.

According to Peter Sellars, Greek theatre was the only place where the voice of the socially oppressed could be heard. It put on stage plays which spoke about the life of a woman, a child, a foreigner, or a slave, all the people who were deprived of the voting rights and represented the politically silenced majority. Through these plays it was possible to express ideas which could not be uttered in the Senate.

Theatre thus provided a free space for free minds, a possibility to point out to and speak against social injustice. It became a moral sanctuary, a shelter from the aggressive politics of institutionalized violence. More than two thousand years after the Greeks, Peter Sellars is sure that (in the spirit of Sophocles or Shakespeare) theatre and art should have the same role: be socially engaged and concerned with justice. He feels that theatre is there to make the impossible possible, to alter the world in a positive sense by exposing us to valuable moral lessons. It is there to drive us from the state of *social paralysis into a mode of activism*.

What Bond insists on is that the subject at the root (or foundation) of all drama should be justice. That is why, in his opinion, the role of the theatre can be very important if it engages in the recreation of situations and moral dilemmas from which the audience can re-view available choices of action and become empowered to pursue the good. The purpose of theatre is to enable us to identify, imagine and understand prob-

lems which we encounter in every day life. It gives us the great opportunity to stop being ignorant about ourselves and the world that surrounds us. It is there to hold up a mirror to us and to make us see our shortcomings as society, and individuals, so that we can improve ourselves, both personally and collectively. If that happens we can all say, like Bond in his poem:

„I am a citizen of Auschwitz and a citizen of Hiroshima
Of the place where the evil did evil and the place where the good did evil
Till there is justice there are no other places on earth: there are only
these two places
But I am also a citizen of a just world still to be made (Bond 2000, 3).“

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О НАСИЉУ И ПРАВДИ У МОДЕРНОЈ КУЛТУРИ

Резиме

У раду се разматрају ставови књижевника Едварда Бонда који га чине сличним Харолду Пинтеру и Питер Селарсу, ауторима који се у својим уметничким делима такође баве усроцима неправде и наасиља у савременом свету. Циљ овога рада је да се обухвате Бондова најбитнија културолошка становишта исказана у есејима и илустрована у ратној драми Лето и истакне нагласак који он ставља на преиспитивање моралне одговорности појединца у нехуманом, корумпираном и насилном друштву. Рад, такође, разматра Бондова размишљања о томе како се негативни утицај идеолошког мишљења може превазићи уз помоћ имагинације, која по његовој процени, има потенцијал да оживи хуманост и врати савременом човеку изгубљено људско достојанство.

Кључне речи: идеологија, неправда, насиље, рат, имагинација