

**RETHINKING AESTHETICS IN THE POLITICS OF
THEATRE: A ROAD TO EDWARD BOND – THE ETHICAL.**

Volume II

Appendix

Encountering Edward Bond

(When knowledge perceives us)

Julio César Villa Díez

Interview transcribed and edited following a visit to the dramatist on the
30th October 2004.

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of Ph.D.

The University of Leeds

School of Performances and Cultural Industries

Bretton Hall Campus

September 2006

The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has
been given where reference has been made to the works of others.

This copy has been supplied on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no
quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgment.

Introduction to Appendix

Encountering Edward Bond: “When knowledge perceives us.”

Full of anticipation, I met Edward Bond on a Saturday – 30th October, 2004. Prior to my encounter with the dramatist, a rich correspondence had already paved the way between us. Although this is a true privilege in personal terms – and now I truly look to him with the affection of a friend – thankfully it does not place me in any way in a *position* of privilege: for Bond I am firstly a person, and secondly a student interested in drama. What filled me with joy was not only the fact that he opened his house to me and that they both – he and his wife Elisabeth – treated me with an overwhelming care and friendship that made feel as if I was with old friends; it was also the fact that this clearly was the kind of generosity they would have extended to anyone else in the world. There is total absence of egotism in the person of Edward Bond. Being, as he is, one of the greatest dramatists of the late 20th / early 21st century, is quite a remarkable thing to experience at first hand his palpable lack of sense of importance. This is patent not only when one meets the man face-to-face, but in the letters I have from him and in the five volumes of published letters selected and edited by Ian Stuart.¹ He has *something important* to say and is pleased to tell anyone willing to listen. This is in my view a significant quality that shapes Bond’s output as a whole: it has a character of universality.

Following the advice of my supervisor, Professor Richard Boon, my main concern was to record whatever Bond wanted to tell me instead of interrupting him with a pre-scheduled list of questions. Indeed, listening to the dramatist I soon realized that my long list of questions were rather unnecessary. Often enough Bond’s answers contain implicit questions themselves. But, as I hope to reflect in the following editing of this encounter, Bond is not trying to impress or persuade with rhetoric answers; he is a thinking man whose thoughts are in continuous evolution – or more accurately, transformation. Bond ‘enacts’ his perception of the world, not with the intention of persuasion or seeking to influence, but like a chronicler. As he puts it “drama is not

¹ Routledge: Vol. 1 1994, Vol. 2 1996, Vol. 3 1997, Vol. 4 1998 and Vol. 5 2001.

about teaching (p. 40). And throughout our encounter he was very keen to make it clear that this is his only purpose. Edward Bond's thought is the reaction to whatever the current situation is; therefore the Edward Bond of yesterday is not the same Edward Bond of today.

To call this transcription "a conversation with Edward Bond", would have been slightly preposterous. The following pages make it clear that, on the whole, the dramatist is speaking and I am listening to him. Thus, the following editing is not exactly a 'conversation', as I had formerly intended to entitle it. This was not the result of Bond monopolizing the conversation at all; neither because he made me feel intimidated by the presence of the great dramatist or by the stories recounted by some theatre practitioners, describing Bond as a "hard bone to chew."² In fact, being as it was a first personal encounter, I have never felt so at ease and relaxed in my entire life as when I was with Edward Bond. Our roles were so mutually appreciated that, with true enthusiasm, Bond spent eight continuous hours of his time with me. I was the listener and he was the speaker and this arrangement suited us both.

Now it would be helpful to explain the structure of the editing chosen in this transcription. As I said above this is not a conversation in its exact meaning, but neither is it a monologue. In my view, what was of the utmost value was that Bond went through the act of reflecting his ideas *for me* there and then. Consequently, I decided that the best approach was to reproduce in writing what I think is of most value. This meant indicating the moments of silence, reconsiderations and turnarounds full of meaning, which created a peculiar and valuable live rhythm of the continuous development of Bond's mind. It also gives away details of the dramatist's personality which as far as I know from the many evaluations I have done on his work, it is a very rare thing to find. But neither have I structured this transcription with the intention of feeding any fetishistic devotion for the dramatist – I am sure that Edward Bond himself would not appreciate that. Actually, when I first became interested in the dramatist's

² To name few examples: in *Peter Hall's Diaries* (1993) or Brian Logan's article "Still bolshie after all these years," in which the journalist begins with such foreboding diatribes:

One approaches a visit to Edward Bond in his own home rather as one might steel oneself for a trip to Bluebeard's castle. One doesn't expect to leave intact. The playwright's "difficult" reputation, as much as the increasing difficulty of his plays, has precipitated exile from the British theatre which his lacerating dramas of moral responsibility - *Saved*, *Lear*, *Early Morning* - once animated. (*The Guardian*, Wednesday, April 5, 2000.)

works, what struck me most was the almost total absence of any reference to his private life, or private feelings. We cannot discern whether he smokes, drinks or does yoga. This is because, like the ancient Greeks, his works are about the situation of the world *out there*, and not about his kitchen or any amorous adventures he might have had. In contrast with many other artists, the ethical principles of Edward Bond exude from his work and make it very difficult to feed any fetishism towards him as a personality.

Thus, the thoughts explained by Bond hereafter orbit around few concepts which, to some extent, become like a mathematical constant. These are – and not necessarily in this order – the sense of the tragic, the comic and the moral sense which Bond refers to as the basic ingredients of drama; the “Invisible Object;” the “lie-truth” (as opposite to the “lie-lie” and the “truth-truth” which, as Bond argues, can be attainable in drama); the perception of what it is to be a “neonate” (that is, as an illustration of what does it mean to be in a state of radical innocence); and finally (and as the source of everything else), why it is so important to assess the meaning of what is it to be a human being. As he says below “It is not “I will get the children out of the burning house” but why is it that I HAVE TO” (p.26). Now, instead of dividing and rearranging ideas from the whole transcription trying to fit them in a framework of titles taken from the above, I have left this work to the nature of the transcription itself. Without breaking Bond’s most interesting reflective progression, I have divided the transcription into a sequence of parts, like a chain of ideas passing through each other or joined together, trying not to interrupt the dramatist’s discourse and the successive development of arguments. Of course, I have had to make a choice of what was relevant to my thesis, but in order to make it useful for other readers, an index of subjects and names is also added.

The reader will observe that throughout the transcription there are some expressions that have been capitalized. With this capitalization I reflect the especial emphasis that Bond puts into certain words while he is speaking. My writing intends to be an imitation of the dramatist’s ‘viva voce’ without demanding too much from the reader. Therefore, I have excluded from the editing a number of silences and colloquial expressions like “yeah?” “you know” or “c’mon” except for those occasions where in my opinion, it suited the argument.

Finally, I would like to thank Edward Bond for being there, not only for me but for everyone that is truly interested in his work. He does not only see the urgency of our

times with the insight of the artist; he makes people like me realize that urgency too. Some academics and experts in drama say that Bond provokes in order to incite thought but, is logic a provocation? If several people are smoking in a room in which all the windows and doors are closed and a child comes in and shouts “I cannot breathe! Open the window!” would the adults call the child a provocateur? Some would but certainly the child is not.

Sections of transcription:

- I. On acting: Yvonne Bryceland** p. 1
- [II.] Drama is the creation of reality.** p. 2
- [III.] That's what makes you human. You have the sense of the tragic, the comic and the moral sense.** p. 3
- [IV.] They think that drama can be a lesson but it is not.** p. 8
- [V.] In a way I think the most important thing society could do is to produce a viable form of tragedy.** p. 11
- [VI.] *Knowledge perceives us?*** p. 16
- [VII.] We are not players in the world, we are the STAGE of the world.** p. 17
- [VIII.] When you have a thought, the world changes.** p. 19
- [IX.] There are ideological structures in ME, which are lies and truths.** p. 21
- [X.] Somebody said to me "when one is watching one of your plays, if it's properly acted or properly staged and all the rest of it, you are absolutely alone."** p.22
- [XI.] The tragic always, ALWAYS touches on the comic.** p. 25
- [XII.] "But what is the Invisible Object."** p. 26
- [XIII.] The postmodern is the conspiracy of style.** p. 28
- [XIV.] Talking about the neonate or something like that,**

- I'm really trying to get to one of the sources of
why socialism was the logic of humanness.** p. 32
- [XV.] Each new generation goes back to the very basic problems.** p. 34
- [XVI.] I think that the danger is now
this continuous propaganda of terror:
every time you listen to the news,
everything is always a disaster.** p. 35
- [XVII.] Without imagination,
nothing would be as irrational as reason.** p. 36
- [XVIII.] It is not saying "how do I get the children
out of the burning house," it's saying "Why do you do it?"** p. 40
- [XIX.] And therefore I have to say,
in the end you are frustrated,
not because you haven't got a fast car,
but because nobody actually says "you are a human being."** p. 43
- [XX.] It would do no good to your lorry driver
because he sees a Harold Pinter's play!** p. 46
- [XXI.] In fact, it will be wrong
if they were to think of the play
as I had to think of it when I wrote it!** p. 47
- [XXII.] The way we think is "we've got a problem, solve it."
And the answer is "no; we've a problem, make it creative."** p. 49
- [XXIII.] And now we need to make a distinction
between theatre and drama.** p. 51
- [XXIV.] I do not want to teach anybody anything.
I do not want to persuade anybody of anything.** p. 52

Notes to Appendix

p. 57

Index of names

p. 62

Index of subjects

p. 63

Encountering Edward Bond – *When knowledge perceives us*

(Saturday, 30th October, 2004)

I. On acting: Yvonne Bryceland

Cesar: As far as I know the first and the only time in which you said something positive about an actor or an actress was in your Obituary to Yvonne Bryceland - actually you said that you loved her acting.¹

Edward Bond: I wrote about the way she could perform. She came from South Africa and her father had worked in the railways. She was white but she was from the South African poor white community. She knew the realities of working class life. I think that in many ways she related to the realities of my own family background, because my grandparents were farm-labours and unconsciously, you know, we just understood the world in the same terms and that makes a difference. There is a universal alphabet for human experience when somebody wants to know what is it that you do when you're rehearsing (as Yvonne used to say it is different with different actors and different plays). I don't know, we just did it. She was in *The Woman* and in *Summer*. I remember saying to Yvonne Bryceland at one time in *Summer* that "this is the scene in which she dies, that perhaps she is feeling cold, and perhaps she will pick up her shawl on the chair" and she said "oh, yes! I like that. That makes sense." And she picked up the shawl, she put it on and she did it perfectly. Without any rehearsal; without any 'how should I do it' or whatever. She just did it absolutely perfectly and it occurred to me: those are differences between somebody who has a servant to move objects and somebody who *is* a servant. There is a huge difference, because the servant would say "I must not break this object; I'll lose my job" and putting on the shawl the other person will say "how I can make this object look beautiful". But Yvonne Bryceland handled this shawl as if she was a servant of death; or life or something. She was putting it on simply because she was cold and it was a perfect action. And I wouldn't have to explain anything to her; she just would do it, you see.

I am not terribly aware of these things, but if you are working-class, you become a clown, or a comedian or something or other, that's what they expect you to do. And then, if you are middle-class or upper-class, you'll go to university. There you will learn something very different, I think. There you'll learn something called art. For

somebody 'art' comes into existence in the middle of the industrial revolution. Now, the great artists like Mantegna or El Greco never practiced 'art'; they didn't do anything called art! They did something which was saying what the meaning of life is and what is it living. So, an artist is a later commentary; is a later invention. And I find it sick. I find most of the 'art' sick. You see [*E. Bond points to the pictures hanging from his walls*] that picture, and that picture, and that picture: all are drawn by children, and it seems to me that they have an immediacy, which most adults can't have. I am not a romantic about that because then I think of great artists like Manet [*Edouard*] or El Greco or Picasso - I think Picasso is a great artist. I think they *had* it; they could keep *that*. For instance,

[II.] drama is the creation of reality.

It's not the image; it's not the copying of reality; it creates a new 'reality'. But that reality is like a centipede with its hundred legs and one day it wakes up and it has a hundred and one: it can't walk. It has a problem. It can't walk because the other hundred legs don't know how to organise themselves [*laughs*]. Human beings always find themselves in the position of that centipede; they are always finding themselves in a new situation. And the situation is IN them.² They are not OUTSIDE the situation. The situation engulfs them. And that's why you have to have something like drama. And it is creating something that has never existed in the universe at that moment in which it is created. That is what human beings are about: they create a new universe each day, constantly. And if they don't create a new universe then they will die in the old one. That's what politics is about. So, drama is in a way universal but is also that cup [*pointing to my own cup of tea*] when the two things come together, the cup is on the border, on the horizon of the universe; but it's also on my table at the moment. Drama is mediating that process. This goes back to the mind of the young child. Would you like me to talk about that?

C: *Yes please.*

EB: I think this is very important, because almost always people think "well, the child is an animal. It has to be trained to become human. It can't even excrete in a polite, social way". But nor can young animals, of course. It has to be trained. But then you see, even an animal has to be trained to be an animal. So, if you are dealing

with a human being, you are NOT dealing with an animal. You are not dealing with an animal AT ALL. This is the point I try to make. And so I look at it and I say: to understand drama, to understand human beings, you have to see the world from the point of view of the neonate, the infant, the new born child. Now, that child doesn't know it's in the world. He can't probably focus his eyes, he can't move... and he doesn't know that he is in the world we are in. So it's like God. He's like God. It has a total relationship to an existent thing around it - which it doesn't really know - therefore it is responsible for that. IT thinks it is the world. That's God. If I say to myself "what is it that the child first becomes aware of": it is pleasure and pain. And if he didn't feel pleasure, then he didn't feel pain and then he never could become human. Then he can't ever have a working relationship with the world. But then if he feels pleasure and pain – and this is, I think, the ABSOLUTE decisive point – it doesn't just *feel* them; it knows them. It has concepts. And so the first concepts in the human mind are the concepts of pleasure and pain. What are those? Comedy and tragedy. So at the very beginnings of human existence, even before the child can speak, it has the concepts of the tragic and the comic. And it also has something else: it has a moral sense, because if it is God, it is responsible for its world. And that doesn't mean what later we understand as morality. It is something that artists like Giotto or Duccio would understand by morality. They would understand that it is a statement about our relationship to the world. Not my relationship "am I good? Have I broken the law?" It is about my relationship to the world.

[III.] That's what makes you human. You have the sense of the tragic, the comic and the moral sense.

And those are the basic ingredients of drama. Therefore, the mind is a dramatising structure. But then some people would say "no, no, no, you see, we've got these genes, and we are acting out our genetic inheritance". And I say that that is total rubbish. It's total rubbish. It's like saying "I've got legs; therefore I must walk in a certain way". Or go in a certain direction. My genes can't tell me what to be. Any more than my legs can tell me which way I've to walk. What tells me how I am going to walk, and what I am going to think are those three things: the tragic, the comic and the moral sense. That is why you are always involved in the question of choice. What the child wants – and it's very, very, very simple, you know – is the world. It wants the world to be good. Or also what the child wants is the world to be its home. That's all, you know. It wants the

world to be its home. As it thinks it is the world, then it has to come to some sort of relationship with the tragic and the comic. If you want to know what all of that is about look at Greek drama. Because they were the first human beings who said: “concepts matter”. We think. We are not just told by God what to do. We think. In fact, we ask ourselves “what is the universe?” Not what is the purpose of the universe, but what is it made of; how does it function? And of course, these are the questions that the child would ask as he starts to move out into the world. We-are-all-born-Greek. All of us. Because the human mind is Greek in that way. We are all born Greek and then we are required by society to forget it. And we are required by society to forget that we are Greek just as the Greeks - very soon – forgot they were Greeks. Greek theatre only lasted a couple of generations and then was finished. You know, it is like “the light is too bright to stare at”; the demands it makes on us are too extreme. Why? Because you cannot arrange the world politically in order to meet those three requirements [*the tragic, the comic and the imperative to be human*]. The world is too complicated. You have to organise societies and the choice of organisation is immensely important to human beings. A bird doesn’t say “well, should I choose to swim or fly?” The human societies are virtually sort of asking these questions if you live in a polar region, or if you live in the tropics or any where else - or if there are few or many people. All these things require organisation. And it is organisation in a world you don’t know about. Primitive people didn’t know anything about the atomic nature of material reality. So they thought “well, God is doing all this”. It’s like the mirror of their childhood. This seems a sensible explanation. Then unfortunately what happens is that societies become unjust, for the purposes of organisation. For instance, if there is a flood you would have to have somebody organizing something. Yes? There is no magic unity among human beings. Imagine that there is a fire in a crowded place and then somebody can actually say “look, use THAT door; don’t use THIS door” or something like that. Or there is chaos! And that is built into our situation. Now, that’s not saying something about being human beings; it’s saying something about the situation. And if you are in a dangerous world, then not only do you require organisation, but organisation itself becomes violent, because it makes demands. And then it becomes unjust: it creates privileges and so on. And so, instead of a child moving to the world of justice, it moves into the world of the lie-truth. I think this is very important, because history could not have existed without its lies. Not because of being human. We keep saying we are in search of the truth. When the Greeks produced the profound insights of Greek drama they had to tell themselves lies. That is why we think there is something called ‘truth’

as opposed to lies and it is not like this; no, no, they come together. We cannot have the truth without lies.

C: *This is very interesting because once you said “we have to lie to our own children in order to protect them”. Do you remember it?*³

EB: Mm.

C: *I think that you were talking in the domestic sense...*

EB: No. I was talking about the whole of society. You know, the midwife of humanity is lies. It is like the Greek temples that were built to non-existing things; the Gothic temples or whatever...the earliest hospitals were founded in monasteries. We need lies in order to produce our own humanity. But in the end the lies become destructive. The lies become destructive because society constantly re-organises itself, and therefore the old lies instead of being protective of truth, they become destructive of truth. Now, it seems... do you follow me so far?

C: *Yes, I am following you because I have been following your work or in other words, I have a good background of your work... do you see what I mean? You were talking about the neonate...*

EB: No. What I am talking about now is adult society. The strange thing is that lies are productive of truth. We need lies! They are not the enemies of truth; they are productive of it. It's something like what Hegel says “history needed its great criminals”. And history needed its enormous lies, in order for us to become humans. Then, what is it about human beings that will not accept those situations? Why is it that there is always an imperative for change? We need concepts like the human imperative, because the child (the neonate) wants the world to be its home. I think that is very simple for the neonate: it means articulating comedy and tragedy; articulating their relationship in a certain way.

Now, we think that we want to escape the tragic but there is no reason for the neonate wanting to do that. It's much closer to what the Greek theatre is about, which goes towards the tragic; it doesn't go away from it. But when it gets into a more complex

society, it (the neonate) isn't the whole world. Then it's involved in something that you would have to call justice or law or something like that. Now, the law is not static, it changes. But what is the law? What is the sense of our law for somebody living in New York or London now? It wouldn't be a sensible law for somebody living in Mesopotamia five thousands years ago. It wouldn't make any sense. But both were embodying justice in some way. And what is justice about – it's not an abstract thing, you know. If somebody gets drunk and drives his car on the wrong side of the road, you would not say "you have made a mistake;" you would say "you've committed a crime". And that is something different because then you would say "well, you're not a good person" or something similar. Not that your action is wrong, but that YOU are wrong. A child does not sit here and has a relationship to the world; the world starts to have a relationship to a child. And that is...it's as if a child is born like that and then it ends up like that [*Bond shows it upturning his own hands*]. It has been completely reversed. The situation of a human being is: we are born into a world that we are going to find very soon is a totally different world from the one actually we are living in. One can't say to the child "this is right or wrong" when asking some very complex questions. I mean, parents actually do say to their children sometimes "you are wicked". But that's a terrible thing to say to a child! It's not saying you have done something... which is not suitable; it's saying "you've done something which shows to me that you are wicked". How can you ever be at home in this world? Because you are permanently exiled into wickedness. You are put into hell at quite a young age in that sense. The only way you can sort these complex situations is dramatising the situation. You can't say "well, be reasonable". Yet, a society might say "let's be reasonable; let's be rational..." well, the rational thing to do is kill off all the people who break the law. Yes, that would be very rational; but apart from anything else such a society couldn't function. It could if we were machines or robots: if the machine doesn't work, scrap it. But we can't DO that with human beings. The only thing you can constantly do is re-dramatise that situation, and this means finding the logic of humanness at any age, at any time.

What is the logic of humanness now? It is not the same as it was five thousand years ago. The logic is different. But there is a constant: there is the imperative to be human. And if I look at a work of art created five thousand years ago, I know it's a work of art. I can see that whoever is making it, is trying to say something about their moral relationship to the world - or if you like it, their aesthetic relationship to the world. But

then, I would say that that actually does read-back to a moral relationship. It is absurd to imagine that you can go and look at the heaps of corpses in Auschwitz and say “mmm, rearrange them, they are not aesthetically nice at the moment”. It’s nonsense. But what you can do is you can go and create an image, a work of art. This is what Adorno talks absolute foolish nonsense when he says, you know, you can’t write poetry anymore after Auschwitz. The-home-of-poetry-IS-Auschwitz. That’s where poetry comes from.

C: *that is a very important subject and I sent you a letter about it. It shocked me as well when I read Adorno saying that “there is not poetry after Auschwitz”, but he rectifies himself later on in his work; he explained it further.*

EB: Yes, yes.

C: *Do you remember it? In reality what he is saying is that poetry CANNOT be the same after Auschwitz. I don’t know what do you think about it and I would like very much to know your opinion. Because ultimately you are saying more or less the same thing. We human beings cannot be the same AFTER Auschwitz. And what happens – as you very well say throughout your work – is that society went on as if nothing had happen.⁴*

EB: Human beings on the 10th of March 2003 cannot be the same as human beings on the 10th of March 2002... all right. There are sometimes certain events so extreme that they change society; change the human mind very dramatically. And obviously Auschwitz, Hiroshima - things like that - they belong to those extreme events. It is very difficult to see if the human mind begins as the human WORLD, as it were, in the neonate. Then even the neonate is capable of extreme experiences, which we don’t know and can’t understand and can’t recall. Dante seems to have needed a place called “Hell” - which is very much like Auschwitz - because he was exiled from Florence. Therefore one can say that there is something extreme going on in Dante’s mind. It is true that these huge historical crises are of great importance, but there is also a continuity of humanness: it never snaps; it never breaks; it can find the extreme problems in [*Bond has a moment of silence here*] what might appear to be quite ordinary situations.

But returning to the main line of my argument, why is it that one cannot simply say “well, kill off all these people; they are a nuisance” and then we will have a rational society. Why is it that we can’t actually do that; why wouldn’t that work for us? Why is it fascist, in fact, that you just destroy those people who don’t agree with you? Here I must go back then to what I refer as radical innocence, when we say “well, the child is a nuisance, or is disrupting whatever” and I say “no! THAT is a symptom of the child’s radical innocence”. That it insists on there being a good world; that it insists on the world being its home. What it has not yet learned is that it has to share and that justice is sharing. And that is a more complex thing because society does not agree on what is just, except in the emptiest sense. Now, no society is just; all systems of morality are corrupt. But I also say “when somebody is committing a crime, it is in fact committing an act of justice; they are searching for justice”. And then people would say, “c’mon, but you are walking down the street; you don’t want to be mugged and robbed” you know. And I say “no, I don’t; of course I don’t” and then they say “you see, you’re wrong” and I say “no, it’s just the lie-truth”. Of course, I need the lie-truth. But what I am not going to tell myself is the truth-truth. Therefore, where is it that I can talk about the truth-truth? I can’t do it in religion anymore because there is no God to make the decisions for me.

I have to make the decisions for myself, and the only place where I can talk about the truth-truth, insofar as it’s possible to do that, conceptually, is drama. That is what drama is about. It’s the creation of justice. It is not TEACHING you to be just. I think this is VERY important. And I think this is where Brecht as well as political theatre goes disastrously wrong. Because

[IV.] they think that drama can be a lesson but it is not.

You know, there is no lesson. Look... supposing Manet reinvents the way you use the paint-brush (he recreates the way he uses the paint-brush). That comes from a new way of seeing the world; a new way of understanding why the world puts itself TOGETHER. And there is nothing in Manet which is the knowledge of being Manet. He can’t say to somebody “I will teach you to be Manet”. But he can say “I can teach you to paint”. And he couldn’t say “I could teach you to be Manet” because it is not knowledge. The image that he paints is not knowledge. But we can recognise ourselves in it; we recognise our own human imperative in it. Yet, the techniques he might have...

that's something else. We would have to use them, not to be Manet, but to be 'I' - or me - something like that. So, there is nothing that is human unless I create it.

What I say then is that there is nothing out there that's human. I have to be human in the logic of my situation. That is why drama is different now to what it was six hundred years ago or two and a half thousand years ago. Because the logic of being human it is different, and yet there is always a logic. Our humanness is not an accidental thing: is the logic of our situation. If we get the logic wrong, we create Auschwitz. And it is very easy to do that because all the while you are dealing with concepts that are descriptions of the world you are in. But, if you see the world in that way then you could think "Franco thinks that his description of the world is the way the world actually is; or the way humans should be".⁵ We are always describing not the physical world, but our world; the human world.

And then I would have to add that if we get the logic wrong we will end up destroying each other more and more. In the past you could live with a certain amount of lies, because the truth was greater than the lie, but when you start to get germ warfare and Hydrogen Bombs then the lie becomes too powerful. You can't live with it. This is why I say that just as EVOLUTION did away with the dinosaurs, it might be that for evolution it makes SENSE to get rid of humanness. Perhaps it is impossible for humanness to survive in the universe. There is nothing that would guarantee it. You see, when we talk about being human, we are not exponentiating [*sic*] something in us; we are talking about our relationship to the world. And if we don't really understand that relationship, then it's like... imagine there is a boat, and on one side there is a set of rowers and on the other side there is another set of rowers, but unfortunately they are all rowing in the opposite direction. On that side they are rowing on one way and on that side they are rowing on another way. What happens to the boat? It's going nowhere, going round and round in circles. Because the rowers don't understand their situation, but the sea is not going to say "ah! You're rowing this way". And the world is not going to say "ah, ah! But it's human". WE carry humanness with us. The sea gives to the fish something. But the world doesn't give us our humanness - or a god for that matter. It is something we create: from ourselves, through our relationship with other people. That is, drama and ONLY drama can solve that situation.

The curious thing is that if I say there is no knowledge that can teach you to be Manet, what knowledge is there that can teach you to be human? As far as I know I can't teach anyone to be human; all I can do is to set up those situations where you have to say to yourself "what do I choose to do in this situation?" And what you choose is to find your humanness. But then I have to say something else: that there where it is always possible for drama to make contact is in the radical innocence of the young child. I am not suggesting going back to the stage of childhood – which would be nonsense – but to go back to that radical innocence to which is added the experience of being an adult, of growing up, the experience and knowledge of the world; cultivating a specific relationship to the world and to other people. The radical innocence could then still function - and in a real existing world, not the imaginary world of the neonate. This means that you have to talk about the logic in imagination. Humanness can only exist in the imagination. Now, everybody thinks that the imagination is the opposite of logic. My answer is that when reason is used in human affairs, the result can be deeply irrational. I put this very simply: "you have a pile of bricks; are you going to build a gas chamber or a hospital? Who decides what?" And the decision in some way has to deal with your imagination, because you're carrying there the earliest concepts that you have in your mind: the concepts which define you as a human being, which are the tragic, and the comic and the imperative to be human. Adolf Hitler doesn't say "I want you to be horrible and kill all the Jews". He says "I want you to be good and kill the Jews". Nevertheless, as Euripides says "you can't go along to a madman and teach the madman to be sane". It's impossible. The madman would simply say "you are insane or you're trying to trick me, I know this" or whatever.

C: That is a very prevailing thought in your writing to which you come back very often: "you can't teach the madmen".

*EB: You can't do it. But what you can do is to dramatise situations. It may be that if somebody is clinically mad, that they are unreachable; that their mind isn't functioning any more; that they have as it were, dropped out of the world. It may be, you know, that they are having incredible visionary experiences in there [*Bond points to his head*] but they've lost utility; they have no utility anymore. And adults have to have a relationship of USE to the world. That's why I am always talking about 'use'. 'Use' is as important as imagination. It is as if there is a whole battery of concepts that one needs in order to understand our position. Because at the moment we misuse all the*

words we use. For example, I've always been intrigued about why it is that Freud needs this theory of the death instinct. It is really interesting... Freud begins with the pleasure principle that what motivates the infant, the neonate and later people is the pursuit of pleasure. It's a stupid idea. Then you would have to say "what is pleasure?" I mean, some people find pleasure climbing up steep cliffs. I do not, you know [*Laughingly*]. I don't have to challenge myself in that place. It's a non-existent idea. It imagines that pleasure is somehow concrete, almost as if it is given to us by the world, rather than something we give to the world. Because the idea is so inadequate, Freud then goes to the other extreme because he is a medical person and thinks of pleasure in terms of physical pleasure. And yet I think Freud is a very, very important thinker, but like all important thinkers, they get things wrong. However, having got this biological form of pleasure, he then says "but there is something that is not pleasure and it's the opposite and so it must be a death instinct; what we must desire is death" - you know, "we all want to die" - only we don't consciously realise this concept. This is the theory of Thanatos.⁶ I parody this in *Early Morning* in which I put this guy saying, you know, "Adolf Hitler is a great man because he wants us to kill each other". And I realise that Freud invents this theory of the Thanatos, because he sees the problem as a medical thing; it's a disease that we have to repress medically or physically in some way or another. But the problem with Freud is that he doesn't have a theory of tragedy. If he had a theory of tragedy then he wouldn't need a biological theory of death.

[V.] In a way I think the most important thing society could do is to produce a viable form of tragedy;

..to interpret what we mean by the tragic. And we haven't got one. That's a very, very difficult question. Unfortunately, we don't really understand that by just imitating Greek drama. I think that the neonate actually needs the tragic to make its world viable; to make it concrete. So that it can live with the tragic and not be destroyed by the tragic. It is for this reason that the tragic is an idea, not a physical thing - not in the immediacy of a physical thing because you can have a physical thing and certainly not have any concept of the tragic. I don't know, about nineteen hundred, eighteen fifty or something, as a result of the Industrial Revolution and its new technologies, it was discovered that you could manipulate the world. And then some people began to think of human beings not necessarily as machines; not necessarily as animals, but as somehow manipulable. It is also true that it made us see our own potential of

rationality. But we weren't rational enough. It is as if the problem is then that there is an INSTRUMENTAL way of achieving rational human life. But as you well know, you have a child, when you look at that child, you love the child; sometimes you are cross with the child... what's rational about loving a child? It doesn't make any sense. One isn't talking about reason and yet that is a profound human experience.

I think this is a very important question that gets neglected still because on the one hand there is something called reason: "oh well, we'll tag criminals so, you know, we can follow them and we'll survey society". In order to get to work the average person in London is surveyed by 33 cameras - or something like that I think. And it's as if you can deal with human society as if human beings were machines. On one hand you have reason and on the other there is something called entertainment (pleasure) and 'art', and the two have nothing to do with each other. I think that if you divide the two, you dehumanise both. That's why I say that with imagination the search is for reason. This means that drama always has to create extreme situations, because is only in the extreme situation that you actually have to identify what are you going to do. You know, you have to make a choice. To consciously make a choice is the human dilemma. Because, look, if there is an animal and it has to make a choice, it only makes a choice about its environment, about the world; if I make a choice about the world, I would make a choice about the "who I am": I define myself. The animal doesn't; it would be a nonsensical question. But if I had had to make a choice, I would feel compelled to define myself. So whatever choices I make about the world, from those choices I choose to be 'this'.

Now, somebody like Kant seems to suggest (on the physical, not the moral level) that that's almost a sort of automatic thing; as if saying that you are not involved in the process of making choices: if I look at anything I must see it in terms of perspective, because my mind is constructed in that way. And that the human mind cannot see anything outside time; it can't do that. But it can imagine... You can't actually really imagine the time of this world, but you can tell yourself "you do". However, the mind is structured in such a way, that it must define the world in a particular manner. And I have no choice about that; that's what the mind is. But if I say "is humanness given in that way?" No, it isn't. I have to make a choice. Let's say then that I could look out all the laws of perspective: I can look at those trees that I am seeing there in such a way - yeah? - [*Bond is indicating to some trees in his garden*] that they're all turned upside

down. I can't do that because I wouldn't be able to exist in this world. But humanness isn't like that! It's why I say "humanness is in the gap". Because... I can choose. That's the most important of all choices which it's not determined for me. You see, it's given, determined, to an animal, but it's not to me. For instance, the neonate's mind makes concepts; therefore I have to make these choices. This is what in a certain sense defines me. Not just the world I am in. Because you cannot say for instance, you know "if I am going to fight for Franco then I am not making a choice about myself" - [*Laughingly*] I'm using Franco because you are Spanish. But you're making a choice about yourself. Franco would say "no, you're making a choice about Spain, or about what it means to be Spanish" or something like that; that's just ideology.

C: *The protection of God and the catholic church... yes.*

EB: Yes. But the important thing is that some people would say "yeah, I am human because I fulfil myself by being a good Francoist". But what I'm saying is that drama is the ONE process you have that can subvert that. You see, even starvation – because you could die for Franco – you can starve for Franco; you can kill for Franco. And the only way you could ever get back to an original innocence - if it is at all possible - must be in the forms of drama. Because in the forms of drama you don't have to face Franco, which is always never just a good idea, because Franco has his firing squads. You have to face yourself: that's what drama can do. I think it works when societies know that they need to answer these questions. And I think the Greeks and the Jacobians did know this. There are those epochs where people needed, as it were, to examine themselves in radically new ways.

This is why I'm always dealing with objects: take for instance a crown. If you go back four, five hundred years, the crown was a very sacred image; a sacred object; it was a living relic in a way. They said to Oliver Cromwell "well, you can't execute the king, because the king is divine". And without hesitation Cromwell said (it's a very clever thing, by which you can see how his mind was working) he said "I will cut off his head with the crown on it". That is like cutting off God's head with a halo on it! And that's what we need to do now; God is dead but we are still haunted by God. I mean, we have to be able to say "I will cut God's head with a halo on it: dare to be free". And only the innocent can be free in that way.

C: *Indeed, you said in the 1980s that “if God existed, we should have to kill him”.*

EB: Yes! That would be absolutely necessary. At one time it was necessary for God to kill his son. And that, you know, it is a lie... but it's a hugely truthful lie.

C: *But what you said about Kant... The problem with Kant is that his morality, his philosophy continues to be around us, and yet Kant saw everything from the perspective of a God-believing Christian.⁷*

EB: Do you mean Immanuel Kant?

C: *Yes... Did you mean any other Kant?*

EB: No. I just wanted to make sure. I cannot say what Kant thought about religion, because he is very much a victim of his time. I mean, he was a hugely important revolutionary thinker. Of course he comes with limitations but he was a hugely important thinker. Unfortunately, he went gaga at the end of his life - you know, notoriously. He just burnt his brain out by this huge concentration of thought. It is difficult to realise how revolutionary the *Critiques* were. He might have thought something else but we certainly need to go beyond that in any case. However, there are two things here: I am not very interested as a dramatist whether Kant sees the mind as a cognizing structure – you know, that it creates the world, whether or not that is true. As a dramatist [*Bond laughs*] it's not my point. But what I find fascinating is that you can say – and this is what is for me Kant's profound insight - that you have to see the world in a certain way from inside 'here' [*Bond points to his head*]; that the world is not seeing you, but that you are seeing the world. And from the point of view of medieval people (I mean “since God was always seeing you”) that's a very unreligious thing to say. But then imagine all the structures in your head as if they were ideological structures. How is it that you can see what the world is really like? Because if you're Hitler, you see Jews, they are the enemies of human kind. How can I explain it... look, various trees out there (this one at the bottom there) they are going to mean one thing to me. Yes? If I am a religious fanatic, every time I see a tree I think of the cross. If I am a sort of a late nineteenth century impressionist I would see the trees in a certain way. **That... mixes the aesthetic and the political in the mould; they all get joined together. And you can't really disentangle them.** That is the way in which I would

see the world. That's why Manet cannot teach you the knowledge of being Manet. He can't do that. But without sort of wanting to make utopian statements about the world, human beings are not in the world in the way that the tree is. It's different. So that, when you talk about seeing the world you are not doing the same thing as when you are seeing other people, other races or other classes or something like that. That's a very different way of talking about the world. In the end for us it is the most important thing; other people are more important to us than trees, eventually, you know. [*We laugh together*]

C: "eventually" ...

EB: [*jokingly*] well trees are very important... Yet, the relationship we have with the world is very difficult. Nevertheless, I think you always have to think of this in historical terms. For example, if I talk about the logic of humanness, THIS is also the logic of drama, because drama is seeking the logic of humanness; that's what the logic of drama is about: the constant imperative of what does it mean to be human, and that means to try and make the world a home. For very primitive people that might mean killing your enemies, but to the world it would mean nothing but a fact; it has nothing to do with moral imperatives. A simple factual thing is that if you're going around killing people nowadays with so many weapons around, then as a matter of fact terrorists will simply say, "What? Fine, we'll go and get a plane... we won't make a bomb; we get a passenger plane and blow-up the two towers". Our relationship with the world becomes factual. There are two things: there is this constant imperative of what it means to make the world a HOME, Yeah? But the meaning of that changes. Unfortunately the meaning of justice is not written on stone tablets to be read; it changes; the logic changes. What you needed to be human five hundred years ago, or what you could DO to be human five hundred years ago is not what you need and can do now. But there is a certain sense in which you can say that – and this is the difficult thing to say, but I think it is true. This is why, among other things, I am against Brecht, [*with a manifest disgust in his voice, a gesture*] because I think Brecht perverts information in order to achieve specific ends. There is a sense, not in which we understand knowledge or learn knowledge, but a sense in which knowledge perceives us.

C: [VI.] *Knowledge perceives us?*

EB: Perceives us... if it's dark, and I stumble in the dark and I hit that tree, in a certain sense though I haven't seen the tree, the tree has seen me. Yeah? Do you see what I mean? That tree is there and I've run into it; I haven't seen it. So the tree says "no, I'm here; you can't pretend I'm not". You can't fabricate that reality. Well, if you think about that in a slightly more complex way, not just as a tree; if you think about knowledge in a more complex way, you can also say "it is not that I understand THIS but that THIS perceives me. And then I will be at home in the world". I will be at home in the world because the world would not become an instrument by which I can corrupt my humanness. Let's pretend I say "let's go and dig for gold" and therefore "let's us have mines but instead of working at it ourselves, we'll have slaves to go and work in the mines for us". By this example, the world is in a sense corrupting my humanity: because I'm using the world in a way that destroys other people. If you read Aristotle's *Politics* - 'Book V' I think it is - which is about slaves... it's extraordinary! It is like, you know, both the slave and the master should agree that slavery was good for them. And one thinks [*laughs*] "Oh, c'mon, you know! How can this very intelligent person think these things?" Because it was logical then; because at that moment in history he couldn't imagine a world beyond that. Now, I think it would be possible for us to be so certain of the world that we could then say "knowledge perceives us; that there would not be a barrier; we would not use the world to corrupt". At the moment, of course, we use the world constantly to corrupt ourselves. The world becomes a WITNESS on our behalf to our corruption. And one doesn't have to say "yeah, well, I need a theory of Thanatos or human beings are animals" or something like that. You DON'T NEED any of this. You can think in terms of concepts. Does that make sense?

C: *I think so, yes.*

EB: So, in some way it is as if... for example, Shakespeare says "all the world is a stage and all its men and women merely players", or something like that. But I think that drama is much closer to us than that: in drama every mind is a stage. Human beings are not just players as Shakespeare says, for the reason that he sees the world still in a medieval way, and the human beings are players in it. And I say NO! Actually the child sees himself as THE WORLD! And so,

[VII.] we are not players in the world, we are the STAGE of the world.

That is bringing drama into a new stage of logic; a new form of logic. And I think that neither of the huge great big forms of beliefs in the world seem capable of doing just that: to understand that we are the stage of the world. Capitalism can't do it; terrorism can't do it. They still see human beings as players, rather than as the stage. And this is behind what I am talking about when I say "well, you have to see the mind as a GAP, into which you build the stage". Then, of course Freud will say "no, no, no but that's not right" or any scientist nowadays would say "no, no, no... there's no gap; all you have is the end, the limits of genes and instincts and you have to cope with those". Then Bin Laden will say "no, no, no there is no gap, there is only Allah" and I say "no, we are the gap", you know? So that means that there has to be a radical new understanding of drama, and that's why I sent you this paper on Sara Kane. Because then what I wanted to say is that Kane actually does get in love with death; she gets in love with the void; she gets in love with nihilism. And [*Bond sighs in despair*] You know, sometimes it's like those religious groups that go off and commit mass-suicides.

C: the case of Sara Kane is quite a particular one because, at the beginning of her studies at university, apparently she said that she wasn't interested in theatre from the perspective of a dramatist. It seems that she became a dramatist because of you.⁸

EB: Because of me?

C: yes

EB: well, yes.

C: And it was a peculiar thing that attracted my attention because something similar happened to me when I read Human Cannon - though in a totally different manner to Kane's nihilism. I see your work as an opportunity, a door from where to go beyond. It gives me confidence and hopefulness; in other words, surprisingly optimistic.

EB: Well... I'm optimistic about the problem, but I'm not that optimistic about the solution.

C: *No, I had no intention of mentioning the 'solution'.*

EB: I wanted to make the distinction...yes. In rehearsals I use the idea of "the problem" and I always say "never solve the problem". It's the only thing YOU'VE GOT [Bond laughs] Of course, I do need a solution to the problem, but it has to be further than the sort of linear solutions that are normally applied; you have to pursue the questioning much, much further. You see, so much depends on the opportunity; so much depends on the SITUATION always. We can never escape from the reality of our situation, that's why I dislike all these cult-religions, you know, "just be happy and bla, bla bla" [sic].

C: *I think that when there are people like you around that put forward the 'problem' there is hope. The important thing is that it's said and then of course how it is said. Once 'it' is said, the action can be put forwards, because otherwise I think we wouldn't have anything.*

EB: But it has to be a practical optimism, or practical hope. It's not "oh, one day I am going to win the lottery..."

C: *No, it's not about that either, but then I have children. And I wasn't even thinking about my own children.*

EB: Yes...

C: *I was thinking about my children's children... precisely about what you are handling here. In my thesis, what I am most interested in is that morality is at the core of our problems, of human society, why socialism is yet not attainable. I have been re-reading Nietzsche – as a consequence of many of the things you have written. In the past I thought of Nietzsche's work as very complex, and now I don't think so. For Nietzsche human beings have a fundamental problem, which is being in continuous struggle with what they think on the one hand, and what they do on the other; in other words, in being honest with themselves. But not the 'honesty' of everyday life of little*

lies and little truths; the kind of honesty Nietzsche is talking about would be too painful to bear: a true recognition that the way in which we run our lives is wrong would be so explosive. Marx said that the day human beings are able to overcome this state of things, we then will be leaving pre-history and beginning true history. That is why your work seems to me a DOOR. That is why I see hope, because I see that door. I think Nietzsche is shouting loudly "the solution is to be honest".

EB: Yes, I agree with that... but you see Franco thinks he is being honest.

C: Yes! And I say that Bush thinks that he is a very good person. That's why Nietzsche says "the problem with people is that when you say that "you are bad" you are bad, but when you say that "you are good," you are bad too" – perhaps even more so..

EB: Yes [laughs]

C: that's, in the words of Nietzsche, Ressentiment...! if you remember when I sent you my thesis, the second part was about that, which has put me in a journey of no-return. That's why I wanted to be here with you.

EB: you see... the way to approach that problem; the way to get a grip of it... it does fall into two parts. And I'm sorry but I do have to return to the neonate because I think this is so important. If I could make a claim to have said something radical, I think it would be that. Try to imagine the state of the infant; try to imagine what happens in the neonate's mind, because what you would do is you always read back into 'it' your present experience. And the neonate is very different but it is a HUMAN BEING; is not an animal. A thought is a thought, and you can't have a bit of a thought.

[VIII.] When you have a thought, the world changes.

It's like... if one moment you become self-conscious, the world will completely change. And so, once you have a thought, everything changes. And the child obviously has thoughts. And then you have to say "well, it doesn't know what a room is; it doesn't know what a parent is; he doesn't know what time is it or anything". You know, it doesn't know anything. He can't really focus - not to begin with. And then people

would say “what are you talking about? Are you talking about the first year?” I say “No! I don’t know! I may be talking about the very first nano-seconds!” I don’t know. And it’s not for me to say, but a thought is a thought. And once you have THAT something is entirely different, because it’s a thought of something. And no animal has that. And the moment you have a thought OF something, then you have a view of something; you have an attitude towards something. Supposing you look up there and supposing that sky should suddenly turn red and then an eternity later or a half a second later, it was to turn blue. You’d be in a different world! You’ll think you are in a completely different world. Or supposing, when a child has a pain, what does it mean to have a pain? Supposing Vesuvius suddenly explodes in that garden. It’s an entirely different world. And the child thinks IT-IS-IT. You know, it cannot make that distinction between it and the world. So, what does it do when it has a concept, when it starts at concepts? It doesn’t even have a self to begin to have a concept; when it has a concept it then also HAS the concept of the self. As Kant says “there is no self”. There are only these processes, which one is almost aware of – well he says more than this, but that is another thing - he says “to create the world you’re in”. But he is not talking about the neonate; he is talking about the adult mind. If you think from the point of view of the child, then the child is absolutely responsible for everything; it is responsible for the world; if it is conscious then it is responsible for the world. Now, that I think is the foundation of the human mind and buildings should not abandon their foundations. Therefore that means that the child is absolutely responsible for making the world its home - in very complex ways, because it cannot move. If the skies suddenly turned red, I’d open the window to have a better look! A child can’t; all it can do is to think, and it’s the philosopher *per excellence*. It creates the world and it creates itself by thinking and experiencing very basic things like pleasure and pain. So, equipped with those imperatives (that is, to have concepts of feelings and experiences), a child can get into the real world, and then have another set of descriptions. And it is bringing those two things together: the child cannot loose its imperative to be itself because then it would cease to be self-conscious – perhaps it can have schizophrenia or something like that – but self-consciousness has the implication that I-must-be-at-home-in-the-world. If I can’t be at home in the world, I become autistic - you know, the world isn’t there; I cannot relate to the world in a materially creative way. The problem then becomes understandable. But you then have to say that next, instead of the child being radically innocent, radically committed to truth, it becomes the victim of ideology. And then we get to the problem Nietzsche is dealing with: what is truth? How could I live

with the truth? Well, you live with the truth by creating it. It's not "Oh, I'm going to see the truth". If I'm going to see the truth, I have to change myself. So I change my understanding - and in important things. It's not that I change my understanding about 'that'; I change myself in order to be able to understand, because that tells me how I will see the world. So,

[IX.] there are ideological structures in ME, which are lies and truths,

and that is what I'm interested in. They have to be partly lies in order for me to be able to live in history. At one time, I might have to believe in the Gods, in order to make sense of my world. I just might have to: to make sense of the ontological world; and to make sense of the feudal village I'm living in. You know, I might need to recreate God, like the Protestants do; they recreate God; they have a different God (they call him the same God, but it is different). To do that, you would have to say "well, I'll cut off the king's head with the crown on it" or "I'll cut off God's head with a halo on it". It is a relationship to the material world as well as to myself. This is what Hegel calls dialectics: that there is one truth and another truth or whatever, and they meet and they produce... and they don't! They only meet on the battlefield: in here [*points to his head*] or out there. They don't nicely meet; it's like tectonic plates and when they meet there is an earthquake. So, there is no adjustment of fact because some of it, is value; it isn't fact. It's a meeting of a fact and a value sometimes. I believe it's about that. So, the relationship between those two things can only be dramatised. And therefore I have been not talking about dialectics, but about drama, because I think dialectics is sort of pseudo-scientific. And it is this which enables Marx to say "well, it's not immoral that the working-class is exploited by the capitalist classes". Do we then have to say then "well, it's not immoral that the Jews, that the Gypsies, that the homosexuals are killed in Auschwitz?" But if you are going to say that, then I say "you are going to have a very, very bad future". Because you don't know what morality is; you don't understand the struggle of morality in history; you don't understand the lie-truth. And that's what drama has to do: you can only break that bond, that bind, that situation by changing yourself in some way. And you don't change yourself by being a born-again Christian. You change yourself by letting the world perceive you; letting the world talk for itself. By being put in that situation where you have to make a choice - which is another way of describing it. Now, I think you can push that situation.

For instance, I don't think you are put in that situation in cinema, because the dimensions are changed: the cinema makes you a child, because you see huge faces; so you are like a little child with huge faces against you. Actually, it puts you in the relationship of the child - which is very interesting for an audience; they quite like that, because they can become children: they have all the panics and fears, like the dark and creepy-crawlies... it's a very child-like experience - very different from theatre. But it can teach you in a curious way... what the film teaches you is etiquette: how you behave in society. It sort of teaches you things like "this is what etiquette is..." even the etiquette of "don't go in the dark wood at night because there is a creepy-crawly there". Well, Dante says "I passed through the wood". And that's what you have to do. And curiously enough, cinema's huge intimacy excludes you. You know, it makes you a voyeur and not a participant. Now, theatre is very different and specially the Greek theatre which was mostly in daylight and they were very aware of being a community. But it's still there, you know. When you go into the theatre, the rows of seats or spaces or whatever, and you are reminded that you are performing a social activity; that you are not just talking about yourself, but about other people... or seeing with other people.

[X.] Somebody said to me "when one is watching one of your plays, if it's properly acted or properly staged and all the rest of it, you are absolutely alone".

And you think "Hey, that's a shocking thing to say" but actually it's not. It's a very profound and a very truthful thing to say. You are alone because you are responsible for yourself and therefore for your society. What's another social thing? You are in a rank of soldiers. Are you alone? No, because the commanding officer will tell you what to do. So, you know, you are not alone; you are like a living centipede as it were. But you are alone in tragedy because you have to accept responsibility for it; only you in the whole of the UNIVERSE of that moment. And the universe then becomes a theatre, in which only you can make the choice. Only you can be perceptive or not see what's happening 'there'. It's said that Napoleon could glance along a rank of soldiers and say "that man's button is undone". Because he had this peculiar form of perception, he just went like that and saw it. I say Napoleon, but I think drama can do something like that to EVERYBODY. And in that sense drama will perceive YOU, it would say "this is the situation" and then you are absolutely, entirely alone. In other words, you have accepted responsibility for the nature of that decision. If you were in a house on fire,

and your children were in there, you got to make a decision... YOU got to make a decision, which will involve the children, but you will have to make the decision, you know? And yet, as actual fact, drama goes further than that. It goes further than that because it is nothing to do with the fire in a house, it's a fiction. And so, really what it is asking you to say is not 'what do I do' in this particular situation. Why should I be interested in *Lear*, why should I be interested in Hamlet? You know, they are not my problem. What drama is not asking you is "what I'm going to do to get the kids out safe from this burning house?" Instead it's saying "I'm asking you to define what does it mean to be human". Because a human person will want to get the children out. Drama goes one stage further because if you say "I must get the children out" I can say "why? Why don't you drive off and leave them?" No, no... why is that inhuman? Did you read my paper "an incident in Hedda Gabler?"⁹

C: *I think I did...*

EB: Because it is like the kids playing outside the gas chamber and the commandant says "I had to tell an NCO to take them in and it was very hard and bla, bla, bla... and self-deception is extraordinary..." and that's a moment where the man defines himself. But drama gets those paradigm-situations, which then make you say to yourself why is it that, if I were in a burning house, I would say to myself "I must get the children out". Or am I even tempted by the idea "no, I get myself out first? Perhaps I would do that". It's like the story of the cap... do you know that story? The man who stole this cap in the concentration camp and it was punishable offence. Now, if you read the rest of the man's story - he wrote his own biography - why did he write his biography? WHY HE DIDN'T SHUT UP? Why did he feel it necessary? Because he had to ACCUSE himself; because if you read about the rest of his life, you realise he was destroyed by the action he took. It is... as if somebody who is corrupt, has to say "I am corrupt, aren't I?" I think that Drama can do that.

The Greeks deal with the gods in drama because the gods are defining: reality, the nature, the world... not so much that they have created the world - I don't think they had that Christian attitude to it. But they could live in it. [*Laughingly*] Survive in it! And they didn't have to die; that was the important thing: they were immortal. So they can survive in it; they can come to terms with their world and be happy or to cheat each other and all the rest of it. They can do that. And yet, there are no gods in Shakespeare,

which is very, very strange. You know, if he didn't write about God, he wrote about priests, and Jupiter appears in one of his plays. Jupiter! And when you get to the extreme dramas like *Lear*, when you think that he would talk about God, he talks about Jove. [*Laughing*] It's vanished! Shakespeare is not interested in that; he's interested in politics and in Kings. Why? Because he's dealing with the politics of revolution and stability in Europe.

One of the extraordinary things about the Greek system - if you take all the Greek cities - is that they tried everything: there were about three hundred constitutions and all of them were different. But Europe, which has this set thing, hasn't done that yet. Well, we are not interested in gods; we are not interested in kings; we are interested in what human beings are. And that means a need for a new logic in drama, which has to contain the tragic.

I think that you cannot define humanness until you put it in the extreme situation. That's it. It's got to be the extreme situation. All I think about *Hamlet* is that he keeps avoiding the extreme situation. And in the end he never actually faces it! Until it's too late - he's already dying! He never has to make the decision. It's like the tree in the dark... he runs into the tree in the dark. Shakespeare can't go beyond that. You have to put always the extreme situation and this is why I would say in the end that Brecht is incredibly sentimental: because he avoids the extreme situation. The Germans LOVE *Mother Courage*. They love her, because with her it would be an economic miracle. They would lose the war but it would be an economic miracle. And *Mother Courage* would take part in it. That is absolutely their conviction; they LOVE [*with emphasis*] her. You know, she is such a good German: she fights on... whatever happens; she would go on to the end. Well... the last thing in *Mother Courage*: *Mother Courage* has to pay somebody to bury her daughter. For some reason or other when she loses her daughter, *Mother Courage* gets all sentimental; she doesn't speak; she discovers she's got a heart. Or she is capable of mourning or something like that. I am sorry to laugh about it but, you know, it's just SO sentimental it's not true. It's like the death of little Nell, in Dickens. She is upset by the loss of her daughter. Now, what *Mother Courage* would really say is "Oh, I must get another person; I must get another servant to help and I'll have to pay until I have another daughter" or something like that. She wouldn't mourn about her daughter! That's rubbish! Well, it should be according to Brecht. If we are entirely made by the objective situation, what is this soul he [*Brecht*] suddenly

produces? Eh? And she then has to pay somebody to bury her daughter; she has to hand over the money.

[In the following paragraph Bond describes his own version of *Mother Courage*]

So she pays somebody to bury her daughter, and then she puts the cart handles on and starts to move off and the wheel comes off. Now, *Mother Courage* cannot change the wheel - she is not physically strong. Consequently she has to go to the man and says "would you repair my cart". He says "I'm burying your daughter". She says "no, no, no... I want you to repair my cart, because I have to get to the market" and the man would say - wouldn't he? - "well, you know, to bury your daughter costs 10 Marks; to repair you wheel costs 50 Marks". Obviously! And so *Mother Courage* would say "well, if I have to spend 50 Marks, I have to spend 50 Marks, but I cannot spend 60 Marks". So *Mother Courage* goes and buries her daughter herself. Now, that I would regard as an extreme situation.

But Brecht wouldn't do it. Partly also because it is dangerously comic. But

[XI.] the tragic always, ALWAYS touches on the comic;

and it is so because the neonate puts the two together. And that is what I would do. I would show her digging the grave, and pushing her kid in. An economic miracle is not going to solve THAT in the audiences: it's too near Belsen; it's too near Auschwitz. But Brecht wouldn't do that. And that's why he's sentimental. He avoids the tragic because he knows... Brecht must know somewhere that the tragic would define a truth, which he cannot theorise adequately for himself. If it is not immoral for the owners to exploit slaves, then it's not immoral what *Mother Courage* does. And if she can do it for as long as she can do it, then, fine! What are the grounds for criticising her? You have to have a different frame of reference; you need the tragic. And without a sense of the tragic, without a theory of the tragic, you can't be human. What Kate Katafiasz says in her article is of course that he is trying to put the tragic in surreptitiously, and not admitting he's doing it.¹⁰ Instead, Brecht is relying on it. And of course, if he didn't rely on it, he would be inhuman, which he actually isn't. BUT, his theatre is inhuman. And I think that that's what makes drama of crucial importance in human consciousness. There are huge problems at the moment because there is a mass of

drama on television, in film, in the Olympics and all the rest of it. But it's all because of commercial and technological imperatives; it's all reduced to stereotypes. You don't really have to question yourself: the audiences just sit there and it's like a treadmill going round and round in the head. Have you had an experience? Have you been on a journey? No, it's a treadmill. You are never put in 'the' situation... you are put in the situation of feeling something; you even cry! But you're never put in the situation where you have to make a choice. And that's the whole difference.

In the logic of the modern form of theatre, one of the things that you absolutely must do is to put the audience in a situation where they must make a choice. Shakespeare doesn't do that, you see. He always has a closure at the end; he always settles the problem. And yet, it's not this postmodern thing in which there is no closure. There is a closure if you make a choice. That's why it's correct to say that when somebody is watching my plays they are alone. They should be alone. Because only THEY can make the choice. But then I think that it is a very social choice, because if I cannot find humanity in myself, it won't be in myself for myself. Humanity cannot be just yourself. You know, hu-ma-ni-ty is a group. It's not a personal thing. I define my humanness when I am defining myself. It's a Lutheran thing: the audience has to be put in the position of "here I stand and I can do no other". And that is: I will cut off the king's head; I will cut off God's head with a halo on it if necessary, if that's what I have to do. It is not "I will get my children out of the burning house" but why is it that I HAVE TO. If you look at my little play called *The Children* [Methuen, 2000] - which curiously enough children understand more than adults - it's like the man which never hesitates about going to get the child out of the burning house; he can't save the child, but he tries to. He doesn't hesitate. They all say, "you can't go, it's too dangerous" but he goes in. And at the end of that play there is the opposite of the burning house, where he is very still, very quiet with these other children, and says "it could have been otherwise" and then you have to find a way of playing that.

You see, all these things come together, because then I say

[XII.] "but what is the Invisible Object".

Supposing I am in Rouen, where they burned St Joan,¹¹ and there's the cathedral and there is St. Joan being burned in front of the cathedral... Where is the evidence of

humanness there? Is it in the act of burning St Joan? Or is it in this huge Gothic cathedral? The two can't exist apart from each other! It's the lie-truth; you cannot disentangle them at-that-time. So, where do I look? Do I look at St Joan face? Do I look at the face of the executioner? Do I look at the crowd; do I look at the cathedral? If it's a drama, you have to be conscious of everything. Everything becomes evidence. EVERYTHING becomes evidence. That is what it means playing the **Invisible Object**, because the Invisible Object doesn't EXIST until you act it. And then it becomes evidence. So, this is why I'm not interested in Brecht – you know, find the gestures, find the abstract thing... **I'm not interested in that any more. I'm more DESPERATE than that; I need something that will take me further. I need to be able to look at the stage and see... the INVISIBLE OBJECT presenting ME!... with the necessity of making a choice.**¹² And only the human face or the human body can do that, you know? That is what theatre comes down to in the end; it comes down to the acting of the play - the director and all of that; that can set that situation up - but it has to come down in the end to the actor. And I think this is true again of the inauguration of humanness in the neonate; that the child learns that there is a world out there, not from its cot, or its blanket, or its clothes... but from a **face**. You know, [*laughing amused*] he would recognise itself in that face. That... that would be the moment of learning. That it is with other human beings. **It's why totalitarianism always wants to disguise the human face.**¹³ It wants to turn it into a piece of ideology or into a mask. So, I need a whole new technique of acting to be able to stage my plays. But actors are trained now to produce style and I am not interested in style, because style then becomes ideological.

*C: That is interesting because as far as I remember you were interested in style before. At some point, style was very important for you.*¹⁴

EB: Yes...

C: in the 1980s...

EB: Well...style is important, but things cannot be reduced to style. I have had to define what I mean by style. I mean, you would use style in order to go beyond style; style would take you SOME-WHERE. And style in acting doesn't do that; it becomes the etiquette of being, because it's an image of what contingently reality is, rather than

breaking into reality. I feel very much that in acting drama academies now they teach people style - you know, they teach them how to survive. And directors want people that can produce style - and certain *frisson* as well. When I'm holding workshops inevitably happens that after two days the actors say "I'm going mad" or "I don't know what I'm doing anymore". Unless, you say "lose yourself..." I don't know how to write plays, you know. I'm always saying this, and it's true. **If I knew how to write plays, I'd be a very bad dramatist!** Because then I'd write to formula. It's the same with acting.

C: Now, when it comes from the playwright Edward Bond, that is quite a thing to say, and it is quite an interesting observation. When I read your works, I always think that you are in a kind of continuous evolution, never satisfied.

EB: It's absolutely true. You know, you have to learn how to write each time - and fail - and do your best. Because NOT being able to write is much more interesting than being able to write. You learn much more by not being able to write. I did a very interesting workshop in Marseilles - it was only a short thing of two weeks. In this one of the actors said towards the end... "I don't know whether I can act any more". And another of the actors who had been watching him during the workshops said to him "you are acting better now than you have ever done before". And it was true. And yet he wasn't aware of it. It seems to me that actors now are being the victims of a conspiracy of style. I would say that

[XIII.] the postmodern is the conspiracy of style;

everything has style, but without content or meaning. The **Invisible Object** has no style; it doesn't have any style; you recognise it; you see it. You sometimes see it in real life. I'll show you this picture... I haven't showed you this before, no? Well, look, that's a real photograph, yeah? And it's from Dresden, you know... after the bombing. *[Bond takes the picture down from the wall]*

C: is it from a newspaper? [It has this kind of quality of an enlarged newspaper photograph]

EB: It was from the *Radio Times* which is a newspaper, but I have enlarged it – it was very little when I’ve got it. And it’s after the bombing raid.

[In the photograph appear four people: on the left side, a tall and thin man in civilian cloths is holding in his arms a child of about five years old; on the right side, there is a young woman wearing a German military uniform. She is helping an older woman who is situated in the middle. All are getting out of a wrecked building which apparently has just being bombed. In the following Edward Bond makes an interesting description on the details of his photograph]

Now, everybody has changed their role there, *[in the photograph]*. The woman wears a uniform and she is looking where they are going, so nobody trips - she’s in charge, you know? And she is holding this woman’s hand. She’s leading her; she’s in charge; she’s got a uniform on; it’s all buttoned up; no buttons are undone; everything is in order; she is wearing a man’s uniform. This is the man. The man is almost dancing; he doesn’t know where to put his legs - he’s sort of stumbling... and he is holding the child, yes? And the child is... is quite difficult to see who the child is looking at. But the child is not looking at anything other than a person. None of the other people are looking at people. This child is. In the middle you have this person... *[Sort of laughing or amused]* straight out of tragedy. She doesn’t know where she is going; she’s been carried like the child and she LOOKS at you. And she’s the one who’s saying “what? Why?” Her clothes are undone and she’s obviously been dragged out of this bombed building. And that’s the whole of my plays; **all my plays are in that image**. I think it just sums that up completely. It’s certainly one image, but in drama it would not be static in that way. And that’s the **Invisible Object**. This ‘is’ the Invisible Object, you know? Just presenting itself and saying “this is what happens” and “why? Why? Why are we doing this?” Yesterday, she might have been saying “Heil Hitler!” but she’s not saying it today. And it’s as if SHE becomes the meaning of all this. *[Sighs]* **You need to lie in order to survive**. The child is looking at the face. That’s really extraordinary. It’s a very good picture! It’s a very good, very, very good picture... she doesn’t have any expression; he *[the child]* does...

[Bond makes a short break. He explains to me various paintings and photographs that hang from the walls of his studio. I notice that those paintings who clearly have been made by children, have a position of importance in his studio]

EB: Good.

C: *You are being very generous to me...*

EB: No, no, no... your letters and your questions and the things you told, they are really very, very interesting... and it's nice to be able to respond to them. But I want to know what you are going to do in later life; what do you hope to do with your life.

C: *I hope to write plays as well... but more than anything, I would like to be able to direct after my own plays too.*

EB: would you go back to Spain...?

C: *[I tell Edward Bond about me. The content of what I say is not relevant for the purposes of this thesis. Nevertheless, I don't miss the chance of telling him about the play I have had in mind for some time now. I explain the content of it to EB].*

EB: yes, yes... I think so...you know it's all about Hegel and Napoleon and the world spirit on horseback. The thing is that I suspect... there were lots of things coming together, and they finally came together... I think there were a lot of things coming together and they came together in that man [Hitler]. I mean, the Germans... he wasn't the only person who thought that Germans had been stabbed in the back by...

C: *in the First World War*

EB: yes... they were in a quandary; they wanted somebody to blame. And they couldn't blame their officers, you know, because that would be betraying the German General Staff; they needed a scapegoat to blame. Anti-Semitism came from Vienna originally - well, not really 'originally', but any way in its modern form, it begun in Vienna. And I think anti-Semitism would have played a significant part in the Second World War. But whether or not Anti-Semitism would have produce Auschwitz... [Bond sighs] you have this feeling that it needs a particularly [long silence] fanatic, bizarre person, to create Auschwitz, doesn't it? That's not an anti historical-materialism [sic] argument, because it's perfectly possible to say that all those things

could come together in one particular individual. I think it's possible for lots of tendencies in a society to come together in one person. And it's not really that person who is producing those things, because again, Hitler didn't invent anti-Semitism. So I think that individuals can be very prominent in history by giving to society their particular characteristics, their particular dimensions. But the real cause lies in the social relationships not in the individual. I think that's true. And I'm sure you are absolutely right - you know, that the War would have taken place if Hitler had never been born. I'm sure that's right. I think it was inevitable in that situation. But **certain things like Auschwitz might have been avoided**. But you wouldn't have avoid... I was going to say "it might have even been worse" but I can't think of anything worse actually than Auschwitz. Not simply for its physical destruction but for its symbolic destruction. But it might very well be that if there had not been a Hitler, Heisenberg and others like him would have provided the German army with Atom Bombs.¹⁵ And then God only knows what would've happen. It leaves **the uncanny thought that perhaps the world was saved by Hitler** [*We both laugh amused at the thought*].

C: your work seems to be a project in continuous development. As far as I know, at first you were very aware of socialism: you were standing for a socialist art and a socialist society. It was a fundamental element of all your letters and ideas. Lately, the use of the word 'socialism' in your writings has been progressively supplanted by 'justice' – which, as I presume, for you is like saying the same thing.

EB: yes, yes...

C: now you are talking about and explaining the 'neonate'... you have come from socialism to the neonate, and everything seems contained in the same 'receptacle' if you want.

EB: you see... the problem about socialism is that... there're two things: there is the long term pattern from Marxist to Hegelian theory. And then there's a rational structure of history that must classify everything and therefore that Marxism is a science – and that socialism is a science because it's inevitable. And I don't believe that at all. What I see is that you have to talk about the logic. Now that's very, very different. Because 'this' is logical. I disagree with the idea that history doesn't know what it is doing until it has done it. You know, it's like you don't have to know it, you just do it, and then

history as it were tells you the meaning of it. I think this is not true. I think people do have to understand what they're doing. For Hegel history as it were is blind as far as the people are involved; that they don't know what they're doing and that inevitably 'this' is what history will bring about. And I think that is not true; I think it's a question not of science, but of logic. And therefore human decisions and human will and all the rest of it will then become very, very important again. That history will not look after our humanity; we have to be responsible for it - and consciously responsible for it. In the end all stems from ourselves. You know, by then,

[XIV.] talking about the neonate or something like that, I'm really trying to get to one of the sources of why socialism was the logic of humanness.

And it's not good enough to talk about the adult mind, as Marx would do. I think this is...

C: *Perhaps too late...?*

EB: it is wishful thinking in a way... I mean, I have great criticisms of Lenin. Do you know *The State and Revolution*?¹⁶ He wrote it just before 1917; it's unfinished. In that book you can see Lenin persuading himself of certain things when actually he's supposed to be a realist. It is quite obvious, you know, there is not anything secret about it: he's trying to persuade himself of certain things that are just not true. He says things like "oh, we don't have to worry about bureaucracy and administration, because the working class will do this for themselves"; or that it's only a matter of "book-keeping" - you know, that organizing a society is only a matter of keeping the books or something - and that is wishful thinking.¹⁷ He said in 1914 "the working class will never fight for imperialism". And then I think "well you don't know much about the human mind..." six months later they were all killing themselves! Out of fear, out of patriotism; for all sorts of motives! On the contrary if people always acted sensibly or rationally or in their own best interests, there wouldn't be a problem, would there? So, you know, I think the analysis has to go deeper. I would put it this way: why is it that the greatest army of all time, which has the most justified of causes - that is, the working class - why is it that it constantly suffered defeat? In fact very often **the victories it achieves are not through socialist politics, but through the successes of capitalism.** I know I'm saying here terrible, heretical things, but you know, I want to

look at the problem. I remember a friend of mine saying “when Thatcher destroyed the Miners’ Union” - and she defeated them you know. Friends of mine that were saying “oh, but they’re not defeated”. And I thought “if that’s not defeat, what is it?” Then another friend of mine said “yes, but NEXT time, the miners are going to arm themselves”. Now, I knew that was sheer fantasy. I mean, the members of the miners’ union going out, because they got lot of rifles and will take on... he might have said “well, they all are going to arm themselves with swords!” It was just sheer fantasy! (And a terribly sad fantasy in a way). One of the things in my play, *The Fool*, it’s about the scene of the Littleport riots -¹⁸ which is a village just up the road there. And these poor people actually got on a hay wagon armed with pitchforks, and they were going to capture London. Well, you know, one can simply say that they don’t know the situation they are in. Saying “well, next time the miners are going to arm themselves with rifles” is just fantasy - the problem is deeper than that. And that’s why I want to try and look closer at what people are, and to find what it is that would make people NEED justice, and to know that they need justice in the sense that they need food. You know, people cannot live without food. And I think there is a certain sense in which in extreme situations the human mind would say “I need justice”. So, that’s why I talk about the need for a new drama. Drama is not going to solve the world’s problems.

C: *No.*

EB: Of course no. That’s all an organizational thing; it’s a question of political organization; of social administration and all those things. But what I want to do is to try to provide a better understanding of what the situation is, so that then one can know what you should fight for and what you should aim for. For instance, Lenin said “well, communism is the Soviets plus electricity” and sort of very striking slogans like that. Well, they had both and it wasn’t communism.

C: *in fact, one could think that the right thing to do is not to do any theatre or drama whatsoever...*

EB: No...!

C: *[I laugh] No... just for a while. You see, I’m going back to the question of whether or not drama gives any solution to the world’s problems. And as you say, it*

would not fix anything; nor teach anything. It seems to me that the very existence of drama and playwrights gives back to society a sense of being 'alive' within a productive and creative culture – all well encrusted in what in reality appears to be as a Culture Industry. Yet, the vast majority of people have never gone to a theatre; it continues to be 'something' of a kind of elite. And then taking the subject from Marx and Nietzsche up to now here with yourself, one common denominator is that we are living - and maintaining – corrupted societies as the result of our very long-established moral values: one could think that we are living in a permanent "Catch 22" ...

EB: I think the truth is that it is a Catch 21 and a half [*I laugh very much*] No, no... But there is this gap... [*Now it is Bond who laughs*] you see, it's not as sealed as it seems. We just behave as IF it is but I think it is not. And I do think this is very important:

[XV.] each new generation goes back to the very basic problems,

and therefore the very basic questions are never settled. There is this constant generational agitation. And I think that that is a very hopeful sign, because each generation can then ask these questions in a different context: the institutional situation has changed; there are new possibilities - people are not going to get on the back of a hay wagon with pitchforks. They are more clued up now. The particular danger that we have from contemporary culture is that, instead of letting the problems be alive and create their own solutions, technology becomes so powerful, that it can deal with the problem itself. But really what it is doing is dealing with the symptoms of the problem.

C: *like the psychologist and the patient...*

EB: in fact, there can be this increasing instrumental attitude. If I say "look, in seventy years time, it might be that, if you are a shop lifter, you just would be gassed." And people say "c'mon! But that's bizarre!" And I say "no, look, it depends of how that situation defines itself". Because, if I'd said in 1870 or something, "in seventy years time, if you are Jewish, you will be gassed", people would have said "this is fantasy!" They wouldn't believe it. And it's what I say in the *Hidden Plot*: the impossible becomes the inevitable - if you're not conscious of the process you are in. **That's the whole dialectic of the lie-truth.** People then use the lie to solve their

problem, because they would then say “but, you know, don’t we want to get rid of thieves” and so on; “yes of course, that is a truth; so that’s what we would do”. And in that society it would appear natural to gas shop-lifters. I remember when I was doing the proofs of the *Hidden Plot*, and at the end in one of the essays, it says, you know, “in this society it would be right to gas shop lifters” and I got this note back from the copy editor or proof reader saying “do you mean that it would appear to this society to be right to do so?” And I said “no, I don’t mean that; I mean, in this society it WILL-BE-RIGHT.” In Roman society it was right to have gladiatorial shows and nobody objected; Seneca says “we shouldn’t just kill criminals for fun” but he never said “we shouldn’t have gladiatorial combats”. It is absolutely a question of understanding that we create our social reality in that way.

[XVI.] I think that the danger is now this continuous propaganda of terror: every time you listen to the news, everything is always a disaster

or whatever, you know? But our experiences of every day life tell us differently: my mother, who is ninety two, is been treated in hospital at the moment – she broke her leg (fell over and broke her hip) - and you know, the amount of care, attention that she gets; she is well fed and well looked after... is extraordinary! You turn on the radio and the Health Service is breaking down; it’s rubbish! It is absolute rubbish! I’m not saying is perfect or anything like that but it’s much better than one would think. “No! you’ve got to have a new service; a 24 hours new service;” it’s always got to find something to complain about or dramatise or whatever in order to create a false drama. A false tragedy! At one time Nixon was saying, “perhaps we should screen all young people and find out if they are the recipients of this gene, and then, if they were, we’ll give them a special treatment” or something like that, you know. Well, is this very different from Hitler talking about racial purity? And the problem is that society is now so technologically powerful that it could actually – I’m going back to what I said earlier – it could actually start thwarting **the imperative to be human**. It is what I say in the chapter I call ‘the Faustian trap’: there is no guarantee – there is no evolutionary guarantee – that humanness will continue to make us more profound, more complete or whatever!¹⁹ **You know, a stage might come where, left to the mechanics of evolution, evolution just gets rid of humanness.** Ironically we’ve seen science and reason, as it were, bringing on that stage... that’s perfectly conceivable; and there is always an imperative on governments, you know, to solve the problems: to solve them

either penally or scientifically or in terms of therapy. But never in terms of creating something. Because creativity is just fun, isn't it? It never was in the past, you know, that human beings, when they first started to paint on walls, weren't doing it for fun; they were doing it out of sheer, sheer necessity for them. And therefore it would be possible to see that the Hegelian certainty that says that history will produce fun and reason is not true. Certainly not left to itself. If it's left to itself, what reason will produce will be the irrational; the humanly irrational. Because that's the easiest solution. And that finally is the solution of Auschwitz - and I'm not saying, "they will produce an Auschwitz". I'm sure it all would be done in much different institutions. All that which is left to reason itself becomes very irrational, very quickly. You know,

[XVII.] without imagination, nothing would be as irrational as reason,

because it will have a technological limitless solution; very, very quickly. And that is the danger: that a rational revolution leads to the Gulag. Now, Hitler proclaims his barbarism every time he opens his mouth, but Russian Communism was always talking about "the brotherhood of mankind, of human good" and things of that sort. The situation has to be dramatised in order to become rational; to become humanly logical. And you only get human reason when imagination and linear reason, abstract reason work together. There would be no other solution; **no other solution is possible**. You can say that ABSOLUTELY dogmatically. It's of no use praying to trees; it's of no use praying for the crops to grow. You know, because [*Bond sighs*] the world has no god, and if it has no god, I have no god; because I'm part of the world. So, you have to have those two things together [*imagination and reason*]. Or you can say "we will dehumanise ourselves". And we will dehumanise ourselves not by returning to some sort of primitive state, but by advancing into some sort of SUPER rationalistic world, where we will just treat ourselves as objects. And in the long run, the only thing that could stand against that will be the fact that the child, the neonate produces these three concepts [*The comic, the tragic and the imperative to be human*]. But they are destroyable! They are destroyable ideologically; but only as an act, only by the process of denying the imperative for justice in those three. The denial of justice doesn't produce a neutral state; it produces the NEED for revenge. Otherwise the society couldn't function. Because then you would have repressed... (denied – denied is a better word than repressed) you would have denied the individual imperative to be human. And curiously enough (I've argued this in great length, but it's true) all revenge

is really against yourself; and therefore revenge is insatiable; you can't ever have enough revenge.

I think you can never have a really JUST society, because there are too many incompatibles, but you have to have a way of reconciling those. So, I think that conceptually **justice** is never totally perfect; it can't ever be utopian; there'll always be a need for drama. But revenge is always incomplete for other reasons and that is that it cannot be physically carried out. I have this little anecdote about **the difference between justice and revenge**: I was in France in a meeting of writers and a French prominent dramatist (I forgot his name, but one who is really still stuck in the 1960s) was saying "well, don't you think just revenge is very good because it enables you to get rid of your anger" and all the rest of it. And of course, it doesn't do that. It's the one thing it doesn't do; if you commit an act of revenge you'll be always afraid that someone else is going to take revenge against you. So I told him this little story: "look, there was this man and he wants to carry out revenge against somebody, but this other man has a brother, so he has to carry out revenge against him otherwise he'll be preventing his..., so he has to kill him too, but that man has got a friend, so he has to kill him too... so he kills everybody in the world! And... there is one person left; there is a light on this room – so he knows there's a person there; he goes up the stairs and he knocks on the door, cause this is the last man and then he can carry out his revenge; and the door opens and there's a man there with a gun, and he said 'I was waiting for you' and he shoots him."

So revenge is never accomplishable. The Mafia's appetite for revenge will never be met. **Justice is different because it requires perfection and that cannot be completely reached, so you will always need some dramatising process to compensate for that.**

C: Revenge... revenge can become an entity as the result of resentment and resentment is a concept I'm very interested about in my thesis. But I think there is also a kind of revenge which might very well be the result not of resentment, but of an overwhelming instant anger. If we are interested in people's humanity, can this kind of revenge also be understood as one more aspect of what it means to be human? Let me

give you an extreme example: a very loved person, one that you love more than anything, is killed by a man who is drunk while driving a car, yes? You then manage to get that person and kill him; it would be an act of 'instant' revenge... I say that in the context of the particular that reflects the universal. Do you remember saying this yourself? That the representation of the particular reflects the universal? And that what we are interested about is in understanding the humanness of humanity?²⁰

EB: Mm, mm...

C: so one could say that that killing looks like a human reaction.

EB: Sorry, I don't follow that

C: that that will be a human reaction

EB: what?

C: A child is killed by a drunk driver. The father of that child gets the drunk driver and kills him.

EB: Mm, mm...

C: That's an act of revenge. But it's revenge as the product of the 'momentum'. It's not a revenge matured in the mind of the perpetrator, by the workings of resentment, do you see what mean? I am trying to bring up a dramatic situation and its questioning.

EB: Yes... but it isn't natural... let me see if I understand your argument. You're saying that a drunken driver drives over a child and kills the child; it would be natural or whatever for the father to kill the driver...

C: I didn't use the word 'natural', but the father killing the drunk driver, would it be an act of revenge?

EB: well... we are living in societies, aren't we? This couldn't occur unless there were cars, so it couldn't be... I know you didn't use this word [*natural*], but it couldn't be entirely natural because immediately you get a social situation, particularly an historical association put into it, and then one can say "if you got cars why is it possible to be drunk and then drive them?" But, would it be an act of justice to kill the driver? No, it wouldn't be an act of justice. You can call it an act of revenge, but it wouldn't be an act of justice because justice doesn't have two scales like that; it has millions of scales... [*Long silence*] when the man got drunk, did he do it in order to run over the child?

C: *No.*

EB: No. So, he hadn't set out deliberately to kill the child. You see, you have got to think in the terms of the conceptual mind, and not the biological mind. I know you weren't, but that's the danger because that's when the confusion comes in. If you think in terms of the biological mind you'll never get any where; you'll just go round and round in a circle. If you think in terms of the conceptual mind, you'll be thinking something entirely different: why did the man get drunk? Because is he a drunk? No. He might have got drunk. And this is the irony of drama. He might have got drunk because he was seeking justice, yes? That is why I would say "no, he's not committing a crime; he's seeking justice". The crime is an act of justice, and that's the difficult thing for people to understand, because then they say "yeah, but c'mon, that's bizarre..." and I say "yeah, but you really have to understand it". Somebody grows up into a society where that is completely turned round into forms of morality, but forms of morality are always unjust, because society is unjust. Look, somebody has a radically innocent need for justice, yes? And then he is been told "Don't rob somebody because you are stealing their property" but how did they get their property without stealing in the first place? Because society is unjust. My morality simply maintains that situation; I'm trapped! In order to be moral, I am immoral. And all those sort of religious gurus do actually say that! Christ says "well no, sell what you got; give it to the poor and follow me". At least that's honest because he thinks God is up there and because of it, he will finally be judged. But I say that there is not god up there; you must understand that a crime can be considered an act of justice – or a moral act – just as could be giving money to the poor. Because you live in a society which is meaningless - and in the society these people do get drunk. The proper question is: why does he get drunk?

And you see, the other problem is that the mind is not like a game of billiards, where ideas are just ricocheting off each other and so on. In the mind the billiard ball can hit and the other ball goes like that, and then suddenly instead of going like that, as it's supposed to do, it turns round! You know, because the mind is like that! Because... [*Sighs*] its psychology does not follow its reason; and probably never will, but at least it doesn't have to be - the gap between the two [*mind and reason*] - doesn't have to be as great as it is in our society. **And what you could do is to bridge that gap by the use of imagination and dramatise it.**

Drama is not a question of learning something; drama is not teaching; it ENACTS. You see, to go back to Manet, he cannot give you the knowledge to be Manet – that you then will paint like Manet. Why not? Because what he has isn't knowledge; it is a BEING. And that's much more complex than knowing something. For instance, I can know how to repair an engine, and that can be part of my being, but it's segmented, because to repair an engine can be the performance of a human service. For example, somebody has a problem with the car, I can stop and repair the car for them ([*laughingly*] if I happen to know how to repair cars; if I offer to repair your car, don't accept my offer [*we laugh*]) but one can do that. I'm not saying that to create drama is a higher activity than repairing the car - you might be repairing an ambulance and saving somebody's life. But when you're doing something like painting a picture or creating a drama then it requires a different act of definition from you.

[XVIII.] It is not saying “how do I get the children out of the burning house”, it's saying “Why do you do it?”

Because I think that the key word for drama is 'why?' And that's very important. I went to this rehearsal of this play of mine called *Eleven Vests*. It was a rehearsal in France and I was just going to spend a few hours with them – because they were going to read it through. And I said (because we didn't have much time) “I will not interrupt you until we come to something that is absolutely essential; something you must reconsider”. And they said “well, that's all right then”. So, the actress began. She said the very first word: “Pourquoi”? I said “Stop!” [*Bond laughs*] and she said “but it was the first word!” And I said “Yes, but that word occurs critically throughout the play”. You know, it's “why, why, why...” until in the end it changes into “what” “what did

you say". I am not saying that to understand everything is to forgive everything... I am prepared to forgive everything BEFORE I understand it. That doesn't mean that I have to just lie down and let everybody run over me, you know. I am not a pacifist. Sir Harold Pinter is a pacifist. He's given to great flights of socialist rhetoric and theory and insight such as "President Bush can kiss my arse". But the man is a charlatan - if he weren't so drunk, he would know it: he accepts a title. And yet he's saying the right things; he comes out with all the right slogans. But they don't mean anything! You've always got to put things in context. And so, in order to understand "is this an act of justice?" you don't have to say "I have to think conceptually". Where? Would it be an act of justice in this street or is it an act of justice in that street? On this date or that date? You always, always have to think conceptually. But then, I think, you know, one can say... "No! I don't know why this man is a mass murderer! But I won't let him mass murder!" I don't know why this man wants to get drunk and run over kids... but I won't let him get drunk and drive a car. But there is no point in killing him. And if some people are consistent criminals and they go round knocking people on the head and robbing... I'm not going to let them do that, it's absurd! Yes? But I do know that if I put them in prison what they want is not punishment; they want justice. [*Sighs*] Crimes are cries for justice. Shakespeare knew that; Euripides knew it – within the context of their society. *Lear* says, "the man who is punishing this person for doing X, he actually wants to do X himself". But then at the end of the play he has to say "but we have to have the crown prince coming back and restoring the status quo". Because that is a **lie-truth** which is ok at that time; one could live with it.

But now we have to be much more radical. We can't live with these lies. And unfortunately what happens is that the more society becomes affluent..., there are very few people living now who would have known the poverty of somebody living in Spain in 1920. People who are supposed to be poor now, are much better off in many ways – in all economic ways I would say – than my family was when I was born. But it doesn't make any difference, because what it is denied to them is their humanity. It's just not a question of their stomach; it's their need for justice. But then, as it were, you get the psychological flow back, because then people deny justice – in fact many take drugs and drink and other things. We are an autistic society; we create autism. You look at television; you listen to the news; you read the papers... look at the adverts: buy this; have this. **We create autism.** And the symptoms of autism are indifference and neglect or they are violence. And what is autism, what does it mean? It means that you

do not understand the world ENOUGH to be able to relate to it in a constructive way. And the funny thing is that someone else might say “it is absurd to say a crime can be an act of justice or the seeking of an act of justice”. Well! Suppose we have in front of us an autistic child: it’s very stupid; uncooperative; you can’t work with the child; you can’t live with the child. And yet, you give the child a pen or a pencil or whatever and it draws brilliantly. Or you say to an autistic person who is stupid and can’t live in the world “the seventh of January 1907, what day of the week was it?” [*Bond clicks his fingers*] “It was a Wednesday.” There is not anything innately wrong with their minds. It is pure dysfunctionality. And then some scientists say “well it’s something to do with its genes” or something like that. To which I would respond “well, I am not saying that that’s not possible”. But perhaps that autistic child at the very beginning might have said to itself “open the window” and the window did not open and the whole meaning of the world changed for it. So the whole situation is much more complex. A judge has to say “did you break the law?” I understand that but I do have to say the law has got nothing to do with justice. It’s an entirely different subject. That’s why you need drama. If you have drama and if you can begin to understand what I’m talking about, then, yes! You still have to say “we are not going to let criminals wandering around and just break into people’s homes”. But then on the other hand there is all this moral rhetoric...we are absolutely mad! I was listening to the Archbishop of Canterbury...

C: I listened to him too...

EB: Yes... and he gave this interview and said “well, Tony Blair has gone to war on false premises”. And not only that, he said HE KNEW they were false premises; that Tony Blair was lying. So the interviewer said to him “well, what would happen to him?” and the Archbishop answered “well, he will be judged on judgment day”. And the interviewer asked him “what does that mean?” and he said “well, he will stand before God’s judgment seat and be judged by God”. Now he said...

[At this moment, Bond and I both break out laughing and I would like to explain something here about our jolliness that could be of real interest: throughout my encounter with Edward Bond I recognised in him a cunning talent and true appreciation for comedy and comic situations. In fact, we laughed together on many occasions while I was listening to his swirling flow of ideas. I have pointed it so already in some occasions with “Bond laughs or I laugh” but, in my attempt to preserve the

particular rhythm of this transcription, I have not mention all of them – and there were many more. And yet, all the subjects touched by the dramatist have a real quality of seriousness and urgency – as he himself said above “he is more desperate than that.” This is not a contradiction; in fact, in my view, it is where Bond shows to be true to himself. This is why again and again, Bond repeats adamantly that the Tragic cannot exist without the Comic and vice versa. As I see it, the vision of an Archbishop wearing his usual gear while denouncing the Prime Minister as a liar and that, accordingly, is going to be judged by God, is both totally hilarious and totally tragic.]

EB: he said that Tony Blair went to war on a lie... I don't believe that; I think he believed entirely what he was told. I'm sure! He's not that mad to say “well, I'll go to war and lie and nobody will discover it”. Because they are bound to discover it; he's not that stupid! No. He just believed whoever is employed in an Intelligence Service saying “we just have to do this” - whether he was right or wrong, I'm not saying. But what is bizarre is that Blair is being criticised by this man who actually is allowed to go around with those discourses and CORRUPT little children and drive them mad. Now, that is obscene! If somebody were to go around and interfere with their bodies, they will say “this man is appalling; he's sexually assaulting these children”. Why is it not a greater crime to assault their minds? We live in a mad society. And very often there are some people you cannot reach. I mean, obviously Hitler should be locked up and obviously the Archbishop of Canterbury should be locked up. [*I am just laughing uncontrollably*] you know, they're equally dangerous, aren't they? [*Bond laughs too*] you know, or one is only evil and the other is very good, it doesn't make any difference. [*We are laughing very much*] they are both profoundly corrupt! I mean, I'm sure Hitler was as sincere as the Archbishop of Canterbury!

C: yes! [*Here I just cannot stop laughing*]

EB: During Thatcher there was a Minister of Education in this Country who said education was bad because we are no longer teaching kids about hell! [*We both made here a long silence*]. When you live in a mad society people do not have any active concept of justice.

[XIX.] And therefore I have to say, in the end you are frustrated, not because you haven't got a fast car, but because nobody actually says "you are a human being".

They say "you're a fag" they say "you're a working class idiot" or whatever. That means going down absolutely to the definition of what human beings are. And one doesn't have to say "oh, well, you know, we're animals and we have a theory of death". If we had a theory of death, we wouldn't have lived longer enough to discover that we have an instinct for death. We wouldn't have got this far.

C: another thing that worries me Edward is that... theatre, drama... your theatre's audience continues to be an 'elite'.

EB: an elite?

C: You see, I have been working myself in all kinds of jobs... from lorry driver to the assembly line in factories... you name it. All I could see is all those maddened eyes on people. Lorry drivers who don't do any thing else but driving; people who are exhausted doing their repetitive, vacuous job day after day. Their minds worsened when they include families in their lives. And yet they are the immense majority but they are not the audiences you find in the theatres.

*EB: No, they never go to the theatre, no. **My father never went to see one of my plays.***

C: Your father never went to see one of your plays?

EB: No, no... he would never go into a theatre.

C: My father never saw me acting...

EB: There you are, you see... these institutions aren't for them... this is absolutely right. It is one of the reasons why I concentrate a lot on theatre for young people. Because the difference there, is extraordinary. Young people understand what I write; it's the older ones that have the difficulties.

C: *Would you say that it is so because it is too late for the adults? Or because we don't know how to get 'nearer'?*

EB: You see, we are living in a very affluent society but it's a very recent one (it's very recent) and one doesn't know the long terms effects of it. If you had grown up in a world where... I wasn't born in a world of abject poverty, but it was a world of real necessity; there wasn't any luxury or anything; things were very limited. And I'm not talking about the War, but just the ordinary times. Then came the supermarkets and it was like entering utopia; it was so unbelievable! And that has had an effect – a momentary effect - but for how long is it going to last? No one knows that. How long would the effects of television last? One doesn't know. What I'm saying is that if young children can be exposed to drama during the crucial stage of their development... that can actually be quite influential. Because drama has structural effect: it's not just something that passes like 'that', it's something that goes like 'that' [*Bond points from his heart to his brain*] it goes in. Of course, the play has to be the right one – this is why I talk about ENACTING and not acting. I mean, you can go and look at a play and it's just fun, it's nice. But I'm talking about something that potentially can hurt - or fascinate. I get bored with saying this but it's true: a teacher says "well, the kids can't sit still for ten minutes". And I have seen young audiences - and I'm not talking about my plays - sitting there totally absorbed! They can sit for an hour or an hour and a half, dealing with quite difficult plays - with the tension, really focussing. And the teacher says "this is unbelievable; I just don't understand that; I've never seen anything like it." They can do THAT. So, I think that's very important. But the other thing is: **theatre does have an influence beyond its immediate audience.**

I think that's quite important. The people who tend to go to theatre, tend to be people who have a greater effect outside than the average person would have. Having said that, I still feel that we need to have big institutional changes. Because you're quite right, it [*theatre*] doesn't have a wide audience; you've got to change the institutions of theatre; make them more available. Theatre has to be able to find different audiences. Unfortunately what tends to happen in theatre is that you get art plays, elitist plays, that's going to do... [*Bond stops for a moment of reflection*] I'm sorry! I've to say this:

[XX.] it would do your lorry driver no good because he's seen a Harold Pinter play!

It wouldn't do him any good at all! It's something called art, it's something elite. He [*the lorry driver*] might learn about adultery or something like that but he would probably teach Harold Pinter a lot more about adultery than Harold Pinter would teach him! It's no USE having that sort of art theatre. As far as one can see, for Shakespeare and say, Euripides, it wasn't an elite audience but a mass audience. It came from different stratas [*sic*] of society. We are not more stupid than the people were then. On the contrary, I'm sure we're more intelligent. So, it's no use taking kids or asking older people to go to the theatre and see something that is called art. Or indeed, going to see something called Brecht! **You have to write those plays in such a way that will have an immediate impact on people's lives.** Otherwise, there is no point to it... but then I'm saying, there's got to be a new understanding of what drama is, and what it can do.

C: You made me recall here a very important point that I wanted to open to you today. I was introduced to Edward Bond at university, through your play Bingo. But in my view, when Bingo is used as the introduction to Bond the dramatist, it puts off students from reading Bond further. I have always argued that plays like Saved, Human Cannon or Eleven Vests – especially Human Cannon - would be more appropriate. I saw it happening to all my peers for whom Bingo was 'too paternalistic or too philosophical'.²¹ In other words, I would say that introducing Bond to students for the first time with Bingo would be a very wrong thing to do.

*EB: What can I do, except agree with you. If that could be as true now as it might have been a little while ago, a few years ago. You see, I have to educate myself as a writer; while writing, you educate yourself. It was important for me that I wrote about Shakespeare, at that time. But I wouldn't write it now. But curiously enough the country that now I know most is France, and they don't have any fixation about *Bingo*. I think that's probably truer in this country, because Shakespeare is the great English figure.*

The institutional theatre changes a lot and now I try to write plays that will engaged people much more immediately - I mean, one writes all sort of things. But if you look at a play like *Eleven Vests*, it is written initially for schools. So it begins in a school.

And it's written very much for the audience of a school. When adults look at it tend to say "oh, well, the two opening scenes are too long" – because I have these two long speeches by a head master and so on – but actually they work terribly well in schools. Because they are the situations in which the kids are all the time: they have to listen to the teachers. But the kids are not only listening to the teacher on stage, they're looking at the other person, the student on stage. When I have involved young people in that way, then one can go on involved in the rest of the story - what happens to the guy and the rest of the play. But again it's a complicated experience; they don't have to follow the structure of the play saying "Ah, ah, ah! I can see, that's why, that's what is working out and why he's doing that; and I can see why they are using a sack here" and so on, you know. They don't have to follow all that.

[XXI.] In fact, it will be wrong if they were to think of the play as I had to think of it when I wrote it!

Don't misunderstand me; they can do it, if they want, but they don't have to do that. That's a different experience. I think it's possible to write plays that would need an immediate situation, but also be of permanent value. I don't see any objection to that. If I go and watch a Euripides' play like *Electra* (I mean if you go and 'see' it, because normally it's impossible to watch since the director has dressed everything up and made it weird and strange. They always put excuses saying that it's Greek and so the audiences wouldn't understand it or whatever). But when *Electra* is actually played in a much rawer, much more direct way it's still very powerful for an audience. I think that you read that thing in there about the teacher that got very upset about *The Small Electra*, have you read that?²² The teacher left the room slamming the door. The play is powerful because theatre always has to deal with root-situations and of course, that's taken directly from Euripides. Now, I think that in fact you could use *Bingo* with the same effect. But it would depend on the way it was told, the way it was handled. After all, you know, you could use Shakespeare's *Lear*, which I think is an extraordinary play.

C: you did a phenomenal work with that play [I don't think Bond heard what I just said]

EB: But there is nothing I can do about *Bingo*. I can't go round...

C: *no, it's not you or Bingo! I am not judging the play. What I'm saying is that, as far as I have seen, Bingo puts off students from the rest of your work.*

EB: When you're going into a school, into an institution, it will be very often resistance to what you want. I saw a performance of *Eleven Vests* in Paris recently. In France you are not allowed to fire guns in schools (it's against the law) so, in order to reach them, the young people were invited to some 'maison d'art' in Paris, which is fine. They watched the play working very hard. Afterwards there was to be a discussion and then one of the kids said "oh, why did this happen?" and the director said "oh, this happened because bla, bla, bla, bla, bla..." and then another kid said "and why does that happened", "oh, this happened because bla, bla, bla, bla, bla, bla, bla, bla, bla".²³ While all this chattering was going on, I was sitting with a friend of mine who translates for me and he was saying "keep calm, keep calm; please, please, please, behave yourself". And I couldn't say anything and then I just stood up and said "Non!" And you know, big shock. Well, I said it because I was SEETHING with TEMPESTOUS ANGER! [*We laugh*]. I finally got annoyed because I am not interested in things like "what is it like to play a character you don't agree with?" as one of the kids said. I knew then that the next question was going to be "how much make-up do you put on" or something. What I want to know is "what do you think?" And of course they will ask "are we allowed to say?" But once they have sort of realised that they can say what they want to say, they were fascinating. I mean, they were really, really fascinating. There had been a girl sitting in front of me - she never had been in the theatre in her life - and throughout the whole performance she was sort of looking at her friends, and scratching, and doing her hair, and every time anything happened, she was looking at friends to see what they thought. And you would have thought that she paid no attention to the play. But her questions were the most deep and most searching. It was very interesting. And there were two guys of about fifteen over there and they came in together. And throughout the whole of the scene of the bayonet lesson one of them just stared like *that*, not an eyelid moved... he was just like that. Instead, the other guy was convulsed with laughter. But his laughter was totally silent, and I thought, "my God, if he shakes anymore, his arms are going to come off". He really was! And side by side, they were totally, totally different. And somebody asked me "what was the right reaction?" Both; of course, both. You know, each of them had found a reaction. So, after the play there was a very, very good discussion. Actually, when we went out,

most of these kids were standing outside in the street talking about it. We are in this wonderful French square in the middle of Paris with Cafés and all the rest of it, where they could have done all sort of things and instead they were talking about the play. And yet, a teacher came up to me and said “I was very disturbed when you suddenly said “Non!” Don’t you think this was teaching our children bad manners?” Really, I just shut up. And that was it, but perhaps I wasn’t teaching bad manners; perhaps I was teaching to protest when there is something wrong. And all I said was “non” but I hadn’t sworn or anything, you know. But it was a teacher, you see, who said “it was bad manners”; the kids don’t say that at all.

At the end of the play [*Eleven Vests*] there is this language I invent: it doesn’t mean anything; it’s a false language... I made it up. And of course the kids were asking “what did the guy say at the end?” and I said “I don’t know” and they say “oh, c’mon, you know, tell us, please, you must know”. And I said “I don’t know”. And they said “you must know; you wrote it” and I said “no, I don’t know; I’ve absolutely no idea what it means, and I DON’T!” Now, actors always say it must mean something and I said “well, I don’t know. I don’t speak the language!” And I say “you have to work out what he would say”. And that for the young French students was freedom. So, you could forget about teaching bad manners.

We have to understand theatre in a different way; we have got to understand the relevance and importance of theatre. People say “you are giving theatre too much importance”. and I say “drama is as important to the neonate as milk or breathing”; it cannot become human without that and we don’t understand that - I’m repeating myself but it’s worth doing it because it’s important.

[XXII.] The way we think is “we’ve got a problem, solve it”. And the answer is “no; we’ve a problem, make it creative”.

One of the reasons why I wrote *Bingo* was that there was a Tory Chancellor of the Exchequer – under Thatcher I think it was or might be before. And he said, “well of course, Shakespeare was a Tory” [*Bond laughs*]. I don’t believe that *Lear* was written by a Tory. So, I’m going to look at Shakespeare and at his problems: respective for his faults as much as for what he got right because he’s a man of his time. And one doesn’t have to take for granted all this business of saying that Shakespeare was not for an age

but for all time. Well, in one sense it's true, you know, the person who painted buffalos on the cave wall was an artist for all time, and one can get enormous power from whatever was painted on the wall... in these caves in Spain, do you know what I mean?

C: *I have a print of one on my wall!*

EB: not simply for what they are themselves, but also for the situation and time in which they were painted.

C: *in one of the last letters you sent me, you said that "the cave dwellers painted for me". You said 'for me' in italics.*

EB: yes. You see, one has to be very careful because if I talk about **the imperative to be human**, people think "oh, that's a form of idealism, and there's something which is like the soul which demands humanness" and, if you talk about imagination, you're not a materialist. And I am a strict materialist. I'm an ABSOLUTE strict materialist! And I'm not an idealist in ANY-WAY-AT-ALL! What I'm saying is, it is in the LOGIC of the neonate's situation that it creates for itself the imperative to be human. **It's a logical thing: It feels pleasure; it feels pain; it is in a situation and it wants to make that situation a home in which it can live with the pleasure and pain.** NOT merely seek the pleasure, as Freud originally said, because I think it also has a relationship with tragedy (Later Freud misunderstood this and his theory of Thanatos). If it's part of its world and it is god and IT is its world, it has to somehow use that. It can't reject that; it can't throw something out of its universe. Because then it would be throwing itself out of its universe. The question doesn't even arise for it. But we think "ah, it seeks pleasure and avoids the pain" and one has to say: no, if it's god, it has to form a relationship with those two things. So that's very different from the thought of saying "there is a cure for everything", and I've said that there is not cure for being human. **And once you think in terms of 'cure' then you produce totalitarianism or psychological devastation.**

C: *by imagining a just world...is it what we are looking at, above all in your last works?*

EB: yes... well, I think that to have a utopian vision is part of the way the mind works. And I think that's important. An animal can't have a vision of utopia; it's just nonsense. The mind obviously invents for itself an extreme situation where everything will go well because it has to make choices. It can use reason in that way because utopia tends to do with physical well being. You know, it is like the Rabelais' thing: roast turkeys or chickens growing on trees. There has to be dissatisfaction with the situation. So for that reason utopia is unobtainable; there will always be something just out of reach, and it has to be if we were to be continually human. And that's ok! That's not a terribly pessimistic thought. But I think that drama isn't just the imagination; the imagining of the ideal. I want to make this **distinction** between **theatre** and **drama**. And I think theatre can be fun; it can be moving; it can be diverting; it can make you sit on the edge of your chair, and you know, be excited in that way. And yet everything is as it is; everything is unchanged: you had a good time and there is not harm in doing that and that that would be ok. **Aside from the fact that I actually DO think that a lot of theatre is ideologically corrupted;** that it feeds your prejudices; that it feeds your longings in an affective way; that it's a form of escapism, not a form of reality. That's true of a lot of theatre. But **drama** is different. It is not theatre.

[XXIII.] And now we need to make a distinction between theatre and drama.

Drama is actively involved with the logic of humanness, and the logic of humanness always needs to redefine itself in its situation. It's like saying "in this street two and two are four; in this street two and two are five; in this street two and two are six". The logic always changes, and it changes because it has to do with the human self; it changes through an act of creativity. You cannot make two and two six, but you can change the human self. And so the drama has to do with the logic of the self; which is always to say the logic of drama; which is always the logic of humanness. And the three logics go together. Now that is not something in which you have acting, because in theatre you can have style. **You can't have style in drama.** It's not acting, it is ENACTING. And this makes it a form of reality. And it makes a form of reality as much as that is real [*Bond thumps the table*]. And yet it's in the imagination; and yet it is fiction. If I change myself, that is a real event. You know, as much as if I had my foot amputated; or one that has a breast enlarged or something. They are real events. So, curiously enough, **fiction can be in some ways the most profound form of reality,**

because it is the meaning; it can involve the meaning we give to life. When the Archbishop of Canterbury says “one day we will stand in front of God’s judgement seat”, he doesn’t have all that much effect; he’s not going to burn St. Joan. But there was a time when he could. It is a form of reality-fiction, on that level. IF you act on that level, it is not ACTING, it is ENACTING. And then ENACTING changes something. You know, it’s not... acting can just be copying. But in English to enact something has a double meaning: if you enact an act of parliament, it becomes the law and changes reality.

C: Yes, I was just thinking that myself. But I was thinking about persuasion as well...

EB: Well, it’s not persuasion... persuasion would be when I try to persuade you of something. That is what a lot of political theatre does; a lot of political theatre wants to persuade you of something. I put you in a situation and say “choose”. I don’t want to persuade you of anything (well, I do; but I’m not going to set out to do that). What I can do is to put you in a burning house and then you have to make the decision. And that’s why tragedy requires enactment and that’s what the Greeks did: they enacted; they didn’t act. And it’s awful when you see modern productions of Greek drama... they keep acting. And I keep saying “STOP THAT! Stop it!” [Laughingly] And “you’re being stupid; you’re turning it into art”. The Greeks had no word for art: art was something that you did when you mend shoes; when you made a wagon. It’s interesting... the great images of ‘art’ we have about the Greeks – figures and statues and dramas... Art is a stupid word to have, you know. They were involved in reality so that drama – this is why I say enactment – actually changes you, changes the world: because it changes you as an actor in the world – not as an actor on stage. That’s why I say that we need a new way of writing, that we need a new way of acting.

[XXIV.] I do not want to teach anybody anything. I do not want to persuade anybody of anything.

I want them to choose what they are. Interestingly enough, Nietzsche says “become what you are” - I can’t quite remember the phrase, but it’s roughly that. And he was

really fascinated by the problem of how to become authentic. Alas I think in the end he becomes mad, but because he's searching for meaning, such as someone that commits a crime is searching for justice. But I believe that when he says "become what you are", that he is actually leaving a question open: because you are nothing; you are a **gap**; you have to create what you are.²⁴ With his phrase there's still the suggestion that you could find something there that was you.

C: *Consciousness?*

EB: Well... no, not that, because you can be conscious and also be inauthentic. As when people say "to be self conscious", and **the trouble is that there is no self to be conscious of.**

C: *Reification...*

EB: Well... I think that what he says it's not radical enough; it's not complete enough... and he gets hung up in his own class problems and the rest of it.

C: *Whom? Nietzsche?*

EB: Nietzsche, yes. And then it leads into all this nonsense about the superman and Borgia and god knows what. To which I say: there is nothing there but what you can find out is your **imperative to be human**. THAT you can return to when being authentically yourself and that is your insistence; self-insistence on certain actions, certain behaviours – "will I take the children out of the burning room". Well, some people actually would not do it. The decision is not a judgment; what is it that "CREATES what you are?" And that means finding other people as well as yourself, which Nietzsche certainly never got round to. Indeed, when he's finally mad, he doesn't know whether he's talking about Dionysus or Christ. He also says "have I been understood?" and one has to say "in the end you don't understand yourself, and that's why you're going to go mad".

That is why I insist on enactment, because it is that very basic thing that defines your humanness. And of course, if you go to see *West Side Story* or watch some 'detective' on television, is not going to do that for you. You see Cesar, I'm not an interventionist.

What I'm saying is either totally true or everything I say is totally wrong. It holds together. Rudolf Rach (that's my French publisher) said "Edward, the problem is that you ask everybody else to believe the opposite of what they have always believed" [*laughs*], and I said "well, for a start..." You can begin with that. But yes, it is as if we've got the wrong tape measure, the wrong ruler, so we can never read the world properly. But the world - this human world - does not exist unless we create it. At the moment, you know, we solve a lot of technical problems but now we've reached the stage... in *The Children* [2000] a teacher wrote to me and said "why is there no sign of the world collapsing and dying and why is there not an explosion?" In other words, he's thinking of the H Bomb and all of that. And I said "no, is not that sort of idea... the world isn't dying in that way". Once I was watching a rehearsal with kids and this sort of problem arose again and the teacher said "well, how is the world going wrong; where is the sign of the world going wrong..." and the kids said "look out of the window". You see? The kids could see it. Furthermore, children are very much aware of living in a world which changes very radically. As you know, if you had been born in Spain one or two centuries ago, life would have seemed to be going on and on infinitely. And it's not! They're aware, young people now are very aware of changes, but also very aware that there is no direction. That picture there [*Piece de Guerre*] is an enlargement of a drawing made by somebody who was a child in Hiroshima when the Bomb dropped - at the time I think he was five or something like that. But he drew this about thirty years later: you see, there it's like regularity; things all in place and up here is fire; it's completely fire. I think that's a very dramatised vision, because he actually was there when the Bomb exploded. In some ways young people live in a world that is very like that; that the ground - the pavement - has got all this marking on it [*always addressing the picture*] and so on. But the rest of it doesn't have any structure; it just reflects a potential danger. And what is fascinating about it is that he's drawn himself just standing in it. Now, I'm hundred per cent certain that if the moment was depicted as an adult, he would absolutely show either the figure being dead or running away. But the kid is just standing; he's in the middle of it. And I think that that is to a large extent the world of young people now. Kids are just aware of these *other* things. And if you look at the picture behind you (that is *Le Douchamp - the nude descending the stairs*; is a reproduction of it) it is one of the very first classical modernist pictures. What he has done is to break the figure up, yes? Because he's experiencing it subjectively as an adult: motion and speed changes; the figure is partly mechanical and partly non mechanical and so on. The subject is breaking down. Instead that representation over

there is very different [*the kid in Hiroshima*], because there is the world which is breaking down. And that's what the neonate sees - as it were, you know. It wouldn't see itself breaking down, which will be meaningless to a neonate; it doesn't have subjectivity in that sense but it does have a world. And my plays are like that – like that poster and not like that [*indicating to the modernistic painting*] I'm not like that. You see that? I think that's a wonderful picture [*Bon is referring to the Duchamp, the one picture that does not reflect Edward Bond's plays*] I love it, I really do – I think it's a wonderful picture; it's a conscious piece of art.

C: *Duchamp, is it? [Marcel]*

EB: Yes... I think it's a wonderful picture and really teaches people something about the world.

C: *How are you? Are you tired?*

EB: No... do you have more questions or...? I think I probably have answered the lot of your questions... oh! [*Bond is printing out a paper for me*] it is only a paragraph but it's about the cultural industry. It's interesting because in this thing I make a remark about the National Theatre. Whenever I have said something that I think it's necessary to say or that it is important, people would say "you mustn't say that" or they are worry about saying it because it will offend people and be counter-productive - which is going to be always a problem [*Bond gives me the paper*].²⁵

C: *Thank you...*

EB: And you tell me "well, I have authority to say things" and so on... it's not always like that. People can be very nasty. I did an interview broadcast for the BBC (last year I think it was) and it was a long thing (three quarters of an hour). And he just started attacking me and I said "stop this recording. Look, I didn't come here to be attacked" or something similar. Then I said "I came because I wanted to explain certain things" and the man argued "oh, I wasn't really attacking you". "Well, you were anyway" and we continued. Then, about six months later, I got a letter saying "I'm going to put together some of these interviews in a book and I'm pleased to tell you that you'll be in the book" and so on. And I wrote back and said "I don't want to be in your

book because I feel the interviewer...'²⁶ and he got really very cross. "No," I said "I'm not going to be in your book; you were attacking me and I had to stop the recording" and then he said "you didn't stop the recording!" and I said "well, actually I did stop the recording". And then he answered "well, I've had a word with my producer, and my producer says that you didn't". Now, are they lying? Or are they like Archbishop of Canterbury, you know? I suppose the producer is saying "oh, I suppose the interviewer is right because actually it is my job". One is constantly surrounded by this world of stupidity – especially in theatre: lies and half truths and evasions and... people with incredible egomanias, and one has to learn to negotiate a way through it. I think that in the end it's what I say about drama: there are moments when you have to define yourself. And you say "well, I won't do this and I won't do that". But I always say to students "look, if you want to go to university and you want a degree, you are not actually committing a crime, you better do what they want! And then when you've got your degree, you can use it for your own purposes" (Because you can be sure that the meanings they teach in university today will be different from those they will teach years later). Otherwise, you're really being self-destructive. That's the situation and to that extent, you have to accept the situation. I'm not saying that it is easy; I'm not saying that it is right; I'm not saying that I'll ever do it myself! [*Bond laughs*] - I'm always giving good advice to people, but I don't think I always take it myself. You are absolutely right, you know, we live in a commodity-consumer society and that is the standard for everything, and it appears everywhere.

NOTES TO APPENDIX

¹ Edward Bond's Obituary to Yvonne Bryceland appears in *Edward Bond Letters III* (London: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1996. Also a telephone interview with Bryceland on this can be seen in Theodor Shank's *Contemporary British Theatre*, McMillan Press Ltd., (London) reprinted 1996.

² The capitalization intends to reflect Edward Bond's unreserved emphasis upon certain words like the prepositions above. Hence the use of it throughout the rest of the transcription.

³ In *The War Plays* Bond says : "Because parents wish to protect their children and nurture their emotions they lie to them in stories, gestures, behaviour and reports. If they wish to enter the child's world to be its guide, they must lie to it. **Yes, they lie to it out of love – but that is the reason Himmler gassed Jews.** Only those who hate or fear children tell them the truth – it would destroy a child if it could have any meaning for it" (Methuen, 1987, p. 264). When Bond says here "that is the reason Himmler gassed Jews" he is making a remarkable evaluation of 2,000 years of Judeo-Christian understanding of morality which is of extreme importance in this thesis; to evaluate it with its proper value, its main purpose. Previously in the same work, the dramatist explains: "Himmler said "We gas the Jews out of love". That is terrible, but is true. It is the most important remark of the twentieth century – it is the sermon of the mount. If we do not understand it we are left with cynicism, apathy or the illusion of religion – and what is theology but frozen despair?" (P. 255)

⁴ Seeing what Bond answers immediately here after, I realize that I have not been able to communicate properly to him this point, which is of extreme importance in my thesis. He says that "there are certain events so extreme that they change society". Yet, taking from Adorno's and Horkheimer's train of thought, my argument is that, on the contrary, people – society – have not "changed" after Auschwitz. That the very moral-values that drove people to Auschwitz are untouched and unchanged; that the same psychological and social mechanics that were encrusted in the European society of pre-Auschwitz continue to be a manifested reality. Although, I have evaluated this argument at length in the submitted first part of the thesis, scrutiny will continue to be needed. Nevertheless, later on Bond seems to say the very same thing, though in a different framework. (After reading this transcription Bond added: "Of course I agree with what you say. My argument about the extreme in drama is that it forces people to define themselves one way or the other – but I also think that by creating total situations it can force people to see through themselves; to see themselves in their situation." 4 July 2005).

⁵ Bond addresses Franco here specifically because I am from Spain but we can assume that he is referring to any other dictator.

⁶ Freud's theory of Thanatos was first elaborated in his paper "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" (1920). Edited by James Strachey, London: Hogart Press, 1961.

⁷ On this see Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (Kant, 2000), for example p. 263; also Kirk Pillow's "Sublime Understanding: Aesthetic Reflection in Kant and Hegel", MIT Press 2000; as well as Richard White's "The Sublime and the Other", *HeyJ XXXVIII* (1997), p. 126, and Christine Battersby's "Terror, Terrorism and the Sublime: Rethinking the Sublime after 1789 and 2001", in *Postcolonial Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2003, p. 77.

⁸ "The first draft of *Blasted* was dreadful," said Sara Kane, "full of huge dense monologues about the characters' backgrounds, every feeling stated, every thought spoken. A friend read it, and didn't say very much, but he gave me a copy of *Saved*. I'd read this years before, but I read

it again in 1993. And that really was where I learned to write dialogue". (*In-Yer-Face-Theatre*, Alezs Sierzs, Faber and Faber, 2000, p. 101) However, she explained also how during her academic years at university, her main interest were "exploring" and "doing new things;" to study other's works 'switched her off' (Ibid.:92)

⁹ Included in the *Journal for Drama in Education*, Vol 20, Issue 2, Summer 2004, pp. 24-32

¹⁰ Katafiasz, 2004:7-11.

¹¹ Bond is talking of St. Joan of Arc, who was burned in the Old Market Square of Rouen in the year 1431.

¹² I have specially marked this part because to me it reflects with clarity not only Edward Bond the persona and its qualities at his best but also his philosophy of drama today and hopefully it would do so to the reader. In other words, bearing in mind that for the dramatist "people experience the social as a private phenomenon".

¹³ This is quite an important point in our current social situation: think for example of the millions who today work in the service industry, which requires from them a perennial smile in order to maintain their jobs; it occurs to me as an extreme parallel, that during the selection of the slave-workers in the concentration camps the inmates knew that one way of being alive one more day was to work and march smiling when they were in front of the SS.

¹⁴ Here I owe Bond an apology because what I say above is not totally justified. Nevertheless, my comment was brought about with the best intentions, though. At the time I was not recalling in its fullest meaning what the dramatist says in Ian Stuart's *Selections from the Notebooks of Edward Bond, Vol. One, 1959-1980*: "But I must take up the position that my writing is NEW (...) And so I must manipulate my style very carefully; without the style the plot would have no meaning, or a false meaning. (...) The style must be the truth". (p. 48). This is quite different from saying that "style is very important".

¹⁵ Werner, Heisenberg (1901-1976). Heisenberg was in charge of the scientific research in connection with the Atomic Bomb project in Germany during WWII. Nevertheless, it might be also interesting to note that Heisenberg won a Nobel Prize in 1932 for his theory of the "uncertainty principle", which plays a key role in the understanding and development of quantum mechanics today. I remark this because Heisenberg's case stands as one more example of how the pursuit of scholastic excellence did not prevent people from endorsing murderous social systems.

¹⁶ *The State and Revolution* was a famous pamphlet which Lenin wrote in Finland in the summer of 1917: as one might say his most important contribution to Marxist political thinking. It was intended to be made with seven chapters, but Lenin did not write the seventh called "The Experience of the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917." *The State and Revolution* is widely available online in the Lenin Internet Archive (www.marxists.org), from *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 381-492, transcription by Zodiac and Brian Basgen, (1993, 1999), accessed: 25.09.03

¹⁷ Bond is actually very precise about it. For instance, Lenin says in *The State and Revolution*:

"... it is quite possible, after the overthrow of the capitalist and the bureaucrats, to proceed immediately, overnight, to replace them in the control over production and distribution, in the work of keeping account of labor and products, by the armed workers, by the whole of the armed population. (The question of control and accounting should not be confused with the question of the scientifically trained staff of engineers, agronomists, and so on. These gentlemen are working today in obedience to the wishes of the capitalists and will work even better tomorrow in obedience to the wishes of the armed workers).

Accounting and control – that is *mainly* [sic] what is needed for the “smooth working”, for the proper functioning, of the *first phase* [sic] of communist society.” (Chapter IV “The Economic Basis of the Withering Away of the State”, part 4 “The Higher Phase of Communist Society”).

¹⁸ The riots that occurred in Littleport – twenty miles north of the University of Cambridge - and Ely took place in the year 1816. At that time the population of Littleport was approximately 2000 and there were few families who were not affected by the riots. England had been at war with France for many years and had finally ended with Napoleon being beaten at Waterloo on the 18th June 1815. The battle weary men of England returned home to find the country in recession; jobs were scarce and low paid. In Littleport bad feelings ran high, one local farmer and magistrate had just sacked three of his labourers and yet he was known to spend more on buying one shirt than on the weekly wages of the three men combined. (For more information see www.btinternet.com/~strawson.online/littleport.htm).

¹⁹ Bond refers to his essay “Modern Drama and the Invisible Object” published in *The Journal for Drama in Education*, Vol. 20, Issue 2, Summer 2004, pp. 24-32, p.30: “Our danger is not Thanatos but the Faustian Trap, a matter not of instinct but of politics. The danger is real.” The dramatist then adds the following example from Rudolf Hoess’ *Commandant of Auschwitz: Autobiography* (Pan, 1975).

On one occasion two small children were so absorbed in a game that they quite refused to let their mother tear them away from it... The imploring look in the mother’s eyes, who certainly knew what was happening, is something I shall never forget. The people were already in the gas-chamber and becoming restless. I had to act. Everyone looked at me. I nodded at the junior NCO on duty. He picked up the screaming, struggling children and carried them in his arms into the gas-chamber; accompanied by their mother who was weeping in the most heart-rending fashion.

Bond adds then: “the social and the psychological cannot be separated. They have only meaning together”.

²⁰ Though it has been raining a lot since Bond said something similar - as a matter of fact in 1977: “the real problems of our species are social. A dramatist deals with individual characteristics. This poses a problem: how do you pose the general through the particular”. (*Selection From the Notebooks of Edward Bond*, p. 169)

²¹ I am not alone pointing out this problem. On her first encounter with *Bingo*, Jenny S Spencer herself acknowledges what her first encounter with Bond’s *Bingo* was like during her first year at university, “the [play] seemed at once presumptuous, unnecessarily violent, deliberately obscure, or maddeningly simplistic” and that his prefaces “were irritatingly didactic” (Spencer, 1992:xiii). This aversion towards anything perceived as pedagogical, patronizing or paternalistic, may be, for many students, a major problem with *Bingo*.

²² Bond refers to his later play *The Short Electra*, of which I have a copy and which will soon be published. The specific incident mentioned here by Bond appears in John Doona’s article “The Short Electra,” in the *Journal for Drama in Education*, Vol. 20, Issue 2, Summer 2004, pp. 42-53, p. 43, in which a teacher left the room where they were reading the play in tears. Doona says that he described Bond as a “mad old git asking kids to think about killing their mothers” (p. 43)

²³ I have decided to transcribe this literally as it was because in my view reflects the joyful exuberance of Edward Bond.

²⁴ I would not be able to pinpoint with exactitude where Nietzsche says those very words which Bond refers to. Yet, it could be easily argued that “to become what you are” is broadly the

entire philosophy of Nietzsche. I would even go further and suggest that ‘honesty’ is the single detail from where all of Nietzsche’s thoughts spring. On the relations that Bond does between humans, reality and ‘art’, it is interesting how Nietzsche evaluates this in a very similar fashion with the following passage from *Human All Too Human*:

(160) *Created People*:

When one says that the dramatist (and the artist in general) creates real characters, this is a beautiful illusion and exaggeration, in whose existence and dissemination art celebrates one of its unintentional, almost superfluous triumphs. In fact, we don’t understand much about real, living people, and generalize very superficially when we attribute to them this character or that; the poet is reflecting this, our very incomplete view of man, when he turns into people (in this sense ‘creates’) those sketches which are just as superficial as our knowledge of people. There is much deception in these characters created by artists; they are by no means examples of nature incarnate, but rather, like painted people, rather too thin; they cannot stand up to close examination. Moreover, it is quite false to say that whereas the character of the average living man often contradicts itself, that created by a dramatist is the original model which nature had in mind. A real man is something completely necessary (even in those so-called contradictions), but we do not always recognize this necessity. The invented man, the phantasm, claims to signify something necessary, but only for those who would also understand a real person only in terms of a rough, unnatural simplification, so that a few prominent, often recurring traits, with a great deal of light on them and a great deal of shadow and semidarkness about, completely satisfy their demands [...] That the painter and sculptor express at all the ‘idea’ of man is nothing but a vain fantasy and deception of the senses; one is being tyrannized by the eye when one says such a thing, since, of the human body itself, the eye sees only the surface, the skin; the inner body, however, is as much part of the idea. Plastic art wants to make characters visible on the skin; the spoken arts use the word for the same purpose, portraying character in sound. Art proceeds from man’s natural ignorance about his interior (in body and character). (Section IV, “From the Soul of Artists and Writers”)

²⁵ I transcribe here its content which, for the records, should be dated on the same day of this conversation:

“Why do I write for Big Brum? [*Big Brum* is a Theatre Company located in Birmingham that works mainly with youth groups and schools] Throughout history every age of big change has produced its own drama. We may be the exception. In the last two generations human life has changed more than in the last two millennia. There is an unprecedented flood of media drama: Film, TV, “events” and the substitute drama of spectator sport. But fierce commercial and technological pressures reduce all of it to stereotypes. It’s as [if] it put a tread mill in our heads. Because it can still occasionally give its audience a jolt it claims to be innovative. Yet drama’s role is not to create the novel but the new. We should understand the difference because our future hangs on it. It’s said all the world’s a stage. But we are closer to drama than that. Every mind – every person – is a stage in which the human future is decided.

Increasingly the entertainment industry trivialises the whole of drama: acting, directing, writing, staging – all are supervised and dominated by accountants and committees. (If only we didn’t speak American!) What would become of our children if we handcuffed them before we let them play with their toys? Would they remain sane for long? Yet that is – in essence – what we do to adults when they turn to drama to understand their lives and their world. We create a cultural autism – with violence or withdrawal [of] its inevitable symptoms.

I choose not to write for the London ‘establishment’ theatres – if I wrote for the RNT it would have to be on the side of a vomit bag. I do not even let those theatres stage my

work. I write for Big Brum – partly out of self respect, but also out of respect for the audience and for drama’s power to wrench the heart and the gut with pity, quicken the senses with joy and radiate the mind with understanding and the passion for freedom. That may also be why my Big Brum plays are staged so often abroad.”

²⁶ Bond is extremely relaxed about all these episodes, and there is no bitterness in his voice whatsoever. I would like to insist in this: if someone thinks that Edward Bond is of a ‘doctrinaire’ character, there could not be something so far from reality; such a comment would not do justice to the dramatist real spirit.

Index of names.

- Adorno, Theodor: 7, 57.
- Aristotle: 16.
- Archbishop of Canterbury, The: 42-3, 52-6.
- Bin Laden, Osama: 17.
- Bond's father: 44.
- Bond's mother: 35.
- Brecht: 8, 15, 24-5-7, 46.
- Bryceland, Yvone: 1, 57.
- Bush, W George: 19, 41.
- Cromwell, Oliver: 13.
- Dante (Alighieri): 7, 22.
- Duccio (di Buoninsegna): 3.
- Duchamp, Marcel: 55.
- Euripides: 10, 41, 46, 47.
- Franco, Francisco: 19, 57.
- Freud, Sigmund: 11, 17, 50-7.
- Giotto, (di Bondone): 3.
- Greco, El: 2.
- Hegel, (G W Friedrich): 5, 21, 30-1-2-6, 57.
- Heisenberg, Werner: 31, 58.
- Hitler: 10-1-4, 29, 30-1-5-6, 43.
- Joan D'Arce, St: 26-7, 52-8.
- Kane, Sara: 17, 57.
- Kant, Immanuel: 12-4, 20, 57.
- Katafiasz, Kate: 25.
- Lenin, Vladimir Ilyich: 32-3, 58.
- Manet, Edouard: 2, 8, 9, 10-5, 40.
- Mantegna, Andrea: 2.
- Marseilles (France): 28.
- Picasso, Pablo: 2.
- Pinter, Harold: 41-6.
- Seneca: 35.
- Shakespeare, William: 16, 23-4-6, 41-6-7-9.
- Thatcher, Margaret: 33, 43-9.
- South Africa: 1.
- Vienna: 30.

Index of subjects.

- Aesthetics and the politic, The: 14.
- Anti-semitism: 30.
- Art: 1, 2, 6, 7, 12, 31, 45-6-8, 52-5, 60.
- Audience: 22-6, 44-5-6-7, 60-1..
- Bingo*: 46-7-9, 59.
- Capitalism: 17, 32.
- Cinema: 22.
- Coal Miners Union: 33.
- Comedy and Tragedy: 3, 5.
- Conceptual mind, The: 39.
- Criminals: 5, 12, 35, 41-2.
- Cultural Industries, The: 58.
- Dialectics: 21.
- Early Morning*: 11.
- Electra*: 47, 59.
- Eleven Vests*: 40-6-8-9.
- Enacting: 45, 51-2.
- God: 3, 4, 8, 8, 13-4, 21-3-4-6, 31-6-9, 42-3-8, 50-2-3.
- Greek Drama: 4, 11, 52.
- Gulag, The: 36.
- Hamlet*: 23-4.
- Hidden Plot, The*: 34.
- Human Cannon*: 17, 46.
- Humanness: 6, 7, 9, 10-2-3-5-6, 24-6-7, 32-5-8, 50-1-3.
- Imagination: 10-2, 36, 40, 50-1.
- Imperative for justice, The: 36.
- Imperative to be human, The: 4, 6, 10, 35-6, 50-3.
- Invisible Object, The: 26-7-8, 59.
- Jacobean, The: 13.
- Jews, The: 11-4, 21, 57.
- Justice: 4, 6, 8, 15, 31-3-6-7-9.
- Lear*: 23-4, 41-7-9.

“Lie-Truth,” The: 4, 8, 21-7,34,41.

Morality: 3, 8, 14-8, 21, 39, 57.

Mother Courage: 24-5.

“Neonate,” The: 5, 6, 7, 10-1-3-9, 20-5-7,
31-2-6, 49, 50-5.

“Plays, My:” 26-7-9, 44-5, 55.

Pleasure and Pain: 3, 20, 50.

“Truth-Truth,” The: 8.

Political Theatre: 8, 52.

Politics, Aristotle’s: 16.

Politics: 2, 24, 32, 59.

Postmodern, The: 26-8.

Reason: 5, 10-1-2-6, 24, 35-6, 40.

Situation, On the: 6, 9, 10-8, 22-4.

Small Electra, The: 47.

Socialism: 18, 31-2.

Style: 27-8, 51, 58.

Summer: 1

Television: 26, 41-5, 53.

Terrorism: 17, 57.

Thanatos, Theory of: 11, 16, 50-7-9.

The Children: 26.

The State and Revolution, Lenin’s: 32,
58.

Theatre and Drama (distinction): 51.

Totalitarianism: 27, 50.

Tragedy: 5, 11, 22-9, 35, 50-2.

Woman, The: 1

Working class, The: 32, 44.