



# The Theme of Technocracy in Two Plays by Edward Bond: Lear and the Bundle

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

**Key words:** *Technology, historical, imagery, metaphorically*

## Introduction

Technocracy is defined, according to Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, as a "government by technicians: specify Management of Society by technical experts. (Dulton 1986) Technological advances in this machine age tend at times to unseat man from any position of dignity in the world. He is made to serve the machine, instead of having the machine serve him. Man is degraded; he is subordinated to technocratic advances, where he can be replaced by a mere efficient machine. The human condition, according to Edward Bond, has become much worse than before, especially in the second half of the twentieth century, due to technological success.

Although *Lear* and *The Bundle* are set in remote historical and mythical settings, they reflect a crucial aspect of human misery in the present. Bond, as a Brechtian dramatist, writes about the past in order to find out the causes of present problems, because, as Colin Ludlow states, through dealing with the old times "Bond seeks to illuminate contemporary social and political issues in a way he clearly feels unable to do by writing about those issues directly. It is a Brechtian method. (Ludlow, 1982). Shakespeare's *King Lear* is viewed as an image of high,



academic culture to parallel the present culture. The social moral of Shakespeare's King Lear will endure until, in time, the world will be made right, which, for Bond, is a dangerous moral for the present time, when one has less time than Shakespeare. Time is running out for this technological culture. This culture, with all of its grandeur on a scientific level, has led to large-scale destruction being an ever-present threat. Bond comments on the ulterior motives which backed his choice of Lear, a play that reflects him as a dramatist, and who risked writing about a Lear who would trigger a comparison with Shakespeare's tragedy, saying "I can only say that Lear was standing in my path and I had to get him out of my way.

Bond also claims: "Shakespeare took this character and I wished to correct it so that it would become a viable model for me and, I would like to think, for our society (Hay & P. Roberts, 1978). In an interview, Bond asserts his desire to re-write the play, because society uses the Shakespearean text "in a wrong way. (Cohn, 1976) Lear is a suitable medium through which Bond can address contemporary society. Theatrically speaking, Shakespeare's play is not chosen because it says something similar: a King-Father is violently opposed by two power-hungry daughters. But, there is no loving third daughter to rescue him in Bond's play, because Bond's Cordelia is not Lear's daughter. In a radical departure from Shakespeare, Cordelia becomes the wife of the only man who befriends a defeated Lear, but this is due to the "structure in which new truth can be put. (Stuart, 1994) The Gravedigger's Boy, about whom Bond writes: "That, incidentally, was the image from which the play grew.

### **The Theme of Technocracy in Two Plays**

Bond's summary of the action is dialectical: "Act One shows a world dominated by myth. Act Two shows the clash between myth and reality, between superstitious men and the autonomous world. Act Three shows a resolution of this, in the world we prove real by dying in it. (Bond, 1978) Theatrically, the myth is symbolized by a wall, which Bond's Lear uses his kingdom's manpower to build. The wall can be interpreted on many levels, but the approach in this paper intends to look at the wall as a symbol of technology. In this way, the wall stands for every negative aspect that technology creates. Bond does not set up a man-against-nature conflict, but man as part of nature against man as a slave of social devices, i.e. technological ones. Technology is a dominant symbol of oppression through the symbol of the wall.

The opening scene is close to Shakespeare's, whose King Lear character shuns responsibility by dividing his kingdom. Bond's Lear, in contrast, assumes responsibility by building a wall to prevent the division of his kingdom. In both scenes, the King is misled by the political speeches of his daughters, and both scenes end with the plotting of the two disloyal daughters. Bond's Warrington, like Shakespeare's Kent, tries to advise the obstinate monarch. The absence of a third honest daughter means that Bond's Lear has to work out his own destiny. The wall was suggested by the great earth works near Bond's home called Flem Dyke and



Devil's Dyke, which were re-erected hastily by "the East Anglians after the departure of the Romans to protect themselves from marauders. (Coult, 1977).

As the play opens, a wall worker has died in an accident. Lear suspects sabotage behind accidents, and sabotage implies a saboteur, who has to be publicly executed. A scapegoat is chosen, and King Lear orders his execution, firing the gun himself. Lear's mythology persuades him that the wall can protect his homeland from his enemies, but he does not see that he is buying security for his country at the expense of his people. This misunderstanding of Lear's own situation reflects his blindness: "so I built this wall to keep our enemies out. My people will live behind this wall when I'm dead." (Bond, 1978).

Animal and human needs are closely related as far as Bond is concerned; thus, Lear as a man is in a constant process of consciousness, a consciousness manifest in the animal imagery which the play has in abundance. Bond sees that animals in a technological society tend to be simple pets or factory products, and increasing numbers of people have no sense of animals being a normal part of the environment. In his "Preface to Lear," Bond writes: "Our human emotions and intellect are not things that stand apart from the development of evolution: it is as animals we make our highest demands and in responding to them as men we create our deepest human experience. (Bond, 1978)

Bond exhibits a model of people who implicate themselves in revolutionary violence and the building by force of a new regime, people who "are infected by the same capacity for the brutally repressive political rule which characterized their enemies. (Le Blond, 1981). But, here one has to stress the difference between Lear and his daughters. Ruby Cohn sees that "Lear's cruelty springs from self-imposed necessity, but that of his daughters is wantonly sadistic". (Cohn, 1977).

Lear's daughters are, in fact, attempting to possess the wall, the new social order, and not trying to overthrow their father's regime. This social order saps them of emotion. Lear, it is important to point out, goes through a series of transformations, the main one being his change from an evil and ruthless tyrant into a good and caring citizen, from blindness to insight, from child to grown-up, and from victimizer to victim. These changes are reflected by the animal imagery used. Lear creates sympathy on the part of the audience and reader alike.

This process continues in the unnatural enjoyment with which both women go about the torture of Warrington. Fontanelle displays ecstatic, physical longing, reveling in the production of tears and blood, instructing that his hands and feet should be killed by being stamped and jumped on. Finally, she demands his lungs be crushed. Bond once said, "When personal freedom is frustrated by external authority it takes a very ugly course". (Hobson et al. 1970). This abnormality is due to the dull mechanistic rule of their father, which is represented by the



wall, imposing itself from the first moment as a dark shadow over the action, as the central symbol.

Michael Scott comments on the play by “In *Lear* Bond creates a world where frustration is found within the ruling class itself.” (Scott, 1989). The violence produced by this social order is real at present, and it is in fact “a much cleaned up version of the obscene events that took place in the Nazi concentration camps” (Worth, 1972). Being defeated, Lear is given shelter by the Gravedigger’s Boy, who survived the malady of the “Wall death” (p. 39),

Lear is his daughters’ prisoner by Act Two and is mad. In a false trial, his daughters try to set a trap for him to make him fall into self-accusation, but, like the Lear in Shakespeare’s play, he proves to be wise in madness. Then, as Lear begins his slow ascent back to sanity, his vision begins to change.

In this trial scene, Bodice gives her father a mirror to push him still further into madness, and, although he sees his own reflection, he characterizes it as “a little cage of bars with an animal in it” (p. 49). Here, Lear undergoes a process of self-realization, shifting the focus of his pity from himself to an image which mingles him with some undefined tormented animals: “there’s a poor animal with blood on its head and tears running down its face. Is it a bird or a horse?” (p. 49). Bond maintains: “[a] technocracy which is not a culture, which has abilities that are not directed by adequate ideas is the worst of all barbarism.” Bond further adds that social institutions control the law, education, the civil service, scientific research, and so on. This control, to Bond, is deeper. It permeates the ordinary use of language, mores, customs, common assumptions and unquestioned ideas. These institutions and their reflections make up a tacitly accepted view of life in which Lear is his own victim.

In the next scene, Lear’s mind evokes the ghost of the Gravedigger’s Boy. Lear has gone mad, but he can now keep the animal-image at a distance, so that it begins to control the horror of his new experience: “There is an animal in a cage. I must let out or it will be destroyed” (p.51).

Here, at this moment, two incidents can be observed which reflect the abuse of a technocratic rule. The first is the autopsy incident, in which Bond takes the Shakespearean metaphor:

Then let them anatomize Regan;  
See what breeds her heart?” (III vi 72-73)

and projects it into a fantastic incident. Lear’s hands fumble, looking for the essence of her evil, from which they emerge covered with blood and viscera. The truth of such evil is not within the “womb” (p. 73), but evil is rather found within a social structure and a mood of thought which causes men to be perpetrators. As William Gaskill puts it, this scene is “a big



gesture” and yet “a risky one,” (Scott, 1989) but it works in its shocking effect for one of the play’s most crucial objectives, which is to shift the illusion where the audience are in well-constructed play lives. Lear’s animal imagery is now quite objective, and the animals themselves have changed: “She sleeps inside like a lion and a lamb and a child” (p. 73).

The second incident is the blinding of Lear. Lear is blinded in a clinical manner, his eyes being removed by “a soothing solution of formal dehydrate crystals” (p. 77). This incident reflects the abuse of technology by totalitarian regimes. Lear cries out in the extremity of his pain: “Aahhh! The sun! It hurts my eyes!” (p. 77). Lear’s statement manifests the clinical obscenity of power structures which force man to create such a machine. The blindness of Lear has an archetypal significance in the blinding of Tiresias and Oedipus, the blind seers of classical myth. In shifting blindness from Gloucester to Lear, this allows Bond “to push the Shakespearean action to the Sophoclean end”.

By the end of Act Two, Cordelia has fallen prey to the myth of security through power, and she has ordered the resumption of work on the wall. Blind Lear hopes to reach her with his new insight about the futility of power. “I must stop her before I die” (p. 81). Bond writes in his “Preface to Lear” that Lear did not have to destroy his daughters’ innocence, he does so only because he doesn’t understand his situation. When he does understand he leaves Thomas and Susan unharmed.” (Stuart, 1994) Thomas and Susan are a couple who welcome Lear and live near the Gravedigger’s Boy’s house.

Lear’s world has turned out to be a technosphere and not, as formerly, a biosphere. Living in such a world is incompatible with basic human needs. The people of this world feel that they are misfits, which triggers their biological defenses such as aggression. Their environment is in such a state of sustained and rapid alteration that it is impossible to wait for biological solutions to develop. Danger lies in the swiftness with which a technological world expresses aggression, because the results could be lethal and more massive.

After the final horror of the blinding in Act Two, Lear once again dives into a search for meaning and begins to use nature as a yardstick against which to test his own experience:

“All life seeks safety ... A wolf, a fox, a horse” (p. 80).

Until the end of the play, Lear turns into a kind of “guru, moralizing in parables Worth, (1973).

In Act Three, Lear now begins to come to terms with the experience and suffering within his own mind, because he knows what suffering is and how much he has caused it. He uses a parable about a bird to teach others what he has learned. The story tells of a bird trapped in a cage, later crippled by having its wings broken. The significance of this parable is that it



conveys what previously occurred to Lear. The impetus of the story derives from King Lear's comfort to Cordelia in Shakespeare.

Come, let's away to prison.  
We two alone will sing like birds I'th' cage;  
When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down.  
And ask of thee forgiveness (Viii. 8-11)

After the agony of the first two Acts of Bond's Lear, Act Three shows a deceptive harmony, although offstage Cordelia rules the kingdom, and her government drafts labour to build the wall. When Cordelia and Lear confront one another at the end of the play, he at last understands where he went wrong. There is irony in his cry to the woman who is about to repeat his mistakes. "How can I make you see?" (p. 98). Blindness, as Bond himself points out, "is a dramatic metaphor for insight." (Worth, 1972) Disillusioned, Lear continues his preaching against the misfortunes brought about by the evil social order which his daughter insists on erecting. But, in a power-oriented world, Lear's oasis cannot be tolerated. Cordelia arrives to inform Lear that he must be silent if he wishes to live.

When Cordelia leaves, the Ghost of the Gravedigger's Boy goes off stage, where he is attacked by his own pigs and dies a second time. It is only Lear who sees him and, in a way, he represents something in Lear which has to die before he can find his true strength. At this moment, Lear and the Ghost are parallel to Arthur and George in *Early Morning*, where Arthur's road to freedom is impeded by George's presence.

The final scene shows Lear at the wall, as in the opening scene, but acting differently. Instead of sacrificing a life to build the wall, he now sacrifices a life to unbuild it. He sees the great wall, which he dedicated his career to building, as the symbol of a social order based on the denial of basic human needs. Bond's image is clear: destroy the barrier of darkness in society and true freedom will prevail, and with it true justice, which Bond defines in his "Preface to Lear" as "allowing people to live in the way for which they evolved. As Lear goes out to destroy the wall, he will perhaps "help bequeath them [his people] a juster society. But "changing himself does not change his society (Worthen, 1975).

Bond once commented: "I do believe in the triumph of the human spirit, a statement that draws a line between him and the Absurdist. The end of Lear could have been absurd and pessimistic had there not been signs of hope. Although Lear is shot at the wall after shoveling down loads of dirt, he transcends not metaphorically but socially all barriers. The play's optimism lies in Lear's statement about his followers: "I cannot be forgotten. I am in their minds. To kill me you must kill them all" (p. 98).



Another optimistic statement which Bond incorporates into this text is that through persistence, the truth can be perceived. Before being killed, Lear asserts this sanguine spirit. His shovel of earth will not be the last to be thrown from the wall. Lear will not be the last rebel.

Shakespeare's and Bond's attitudes are "dependent finally upon divergent views of human nature. Bond feels that Shakespeare's King Lear offers us an anatomy of human values which teach us how to live in a contaminated world and show us how to act responsibly in order to change it.

### **The Bundle: Living Rationally in a Technocratic World**

For Sigmund Freud, the problems of technology are clearly subordinate to the more fundamental issue of the social neuroses endemic to civilized life. Although he recognizes the dejection brought on by man's power to destroy himself, and the failure of human beings to find happiness, at no point is he prone to blaming technology for the present human condition. On the contrary, Freud is at times prone to be lyrical about the benefits of technology, which makes important contributions to the need for "beauty and order. (Freud, 1958).

In his short masterpiece "Civilization and Its Discontents," Freud predicts that someone will eventually undertake research into the "pathology of civilized communities. Bond happens to be this researcher. For Bond, for the evaluation of contemporary technology, two social realities have a prominent place. One is the pressure for survival at the historical roots of the development of technology, but no less powerful now in its strength than in earlier generations. The success of technology has, for Bond, by no means reduced a preoccupation with survival in many respects, particularly psychological. This preoccupation has become an obsession. The second social reality is that of individualism, which has urged the development of technology and exacerbated, almost beyond correction, the tendency of people to seek in technology a miraculous cure for their private miseries.

The Bundle's choice to represent evil in a technological society is based on well-founded evidence. As a playwright with Brechtian tendencies, Bond tends to robe his "contemporary social and political issues in historically remote attire. In an interview with Howard Davies, director of *The Bundle*, Peter Hulton poses the question why Bond, in his later plays, chooses images which are at a certain historical remove from us. Part of the answer is that "[a]n audience going to see *The Bundle* will not say that if it is an interesting insight into seventeenth-century Japan you immediately acknowledge that it is a totally modern play. Then Davies proceeds in his answer, commenting that Bond displaces language and the image (that of the river). So he's not actually working off populist images. What he allows you to do thereby is actually to look at the play objectively and not feel that this is a part of my everyday life which is dispensable.



The writer himself admits the existence of this Brechtian trend in his work. Choosing this Asian setting enables him “to abstract certain social forces and show their effect in a direct and simple way. For him, it is also “another way of exporting [one’s] ... conscience. One could substitute “all industrialism, or rather technology, for the image of the river. Bond provides a very clear-cut decision on the way one should view the play:

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

Bond implies that precisely as the river inflicts physical poverty, which is that of hunger, technology leads to a usurpation of humanity through a lack of moral values – a “cultural poverty – as Bond puts it, as is clearly stated through Basho’s attitude towards the child. To conclude this list of evidence, Bond discusses the role of technology and how it works on human life in his “Note” to the play.

As in the first part of this chapter, this part sees the river like the wall in the first part, as symbolizing or standing for technocracy. People in The Bundle live adjacent to a river and earn their living from it, either directly or indirectly. This river floods frequently and affects the lives of the people living nearby in negatively. Bond, through the Brechtian technique of distancing, wants to give a picture of what life is like in the West. Bond believes that in Art, distance sometimes lends clarity, and in dealing with the past, one can shed a lot of light on the present, because “[t]he past is also an institution owned by society. (Bond, 1978).

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

Basho: For those who suffer there is grace

Ferryman: Grace! Without food won’t help me row my boat (p. 1)



Even the human condition is interpreted in terms of the river, as when Basho says:

All creation seeks enlightenment just as the river flows to the sea. Does the river ask:  
What is the way? Men are like a dark river. We receive and spend, fret and eddy, twist  
into whirlpools till the water seems to devour itself in its frenzy. (p.1)

Bond wrote this parable to shed light on modern times and how technology, i.e. the tools of science and intellect, have been made subservient to the most primitive and irrational parts of human nature. The result is wholesale damage to the environment including human beings and their resources. This scene also reflects Bond as a socialist writer who seems to echo some socialist views regarding technology: “Change originates Bond succeeds in depicting the parable of The Bundle when the diagnosis “the historically relative and dialectical nature of morality itself. Spencer, (1981). The scene ends with Wang shouting “Buy me” (p. 21) in order to save his parents, thus becoming Basho’s servant for nine years.

For Bond, “human consciousness is class consciousness, and Wang is one of Bond’s characters who is class-conscious in Bond’s sense of the term. Wang is able to understand his situation in a way that allows him to act and escape being a victim of history and circumstance. He is not endowed with an enlightened perspective, but attains it through the learning process offered by the play’s concrete experiences and social relationships. It is practical knowledge, not purely conceptual, which provides a model for action.

Part One, Scene Four commences with the author’s direction: “Another part of the river and the bank. An abandoned child” (p. 22). Basho encounters the same test as before. He indulges in writing his verse, which is totally divorced from actual life.

Bamboos flutter by the moorhen’s nest  
Army banners!  
She does not ask  
Where the river goes  
Nor where the arrow flies. (p. 22)

Bond does not hesitate to portray Basho in a sardonic light in front of us. Bond’s interpretation contains a certain degree of contempt, indicating he is “deeply hostile to literature as an attitude or as a mere craft. (Peter, 1975).

The Bundle, as a play, is influenced by a traditional Japanese dramatic form called the Noh play: Narrow Road to the Deep North reflects this traditional form more than The Bundle. The definition of the Noh play may further enhance the range of comparison between plays or shows where these two plays, i.e. the Noh play and The Bundle, meet: Noh plays are short,



serious, musical plays, generally in two scenes; their plots are derived from Japanese history, myth, or folklore. They contain dialogue and descriptive passages, the latter usually a poetic song about travel ... typical action consists, first, of an appearance by a Buddhist priest describing the pilgrimage he is making. Then a ghost appears in human form, who tells the priest about his adventures as a moral (this portion constitutes the main plot). Or, it can be defined as “a composite art based on the three elements of song, dance and drama.

Basho’s attitude reveals “the relation between words, acts and consequences in Buddhist culture. In his “Note” to *The Bundle*, Bond suggests that “members of the exploiting class deny their moral function, in practice, while claiming it institutionally. Twice Basho refuses to rescue the baby; as in *Narrow Road to the Deep North*, Basho and the other characters are evaluated through their attitudes toward babies in the play. Through *The Bundle*, Bond attains the right amount of abstraction from everyday reality for his play to work as a parable without raising objections in his audience’s mind. It is also far enough removed in time and space to enable Bond to communicate his complex message with more ease and conviction.

Scene One in *The Bundle* parallels the “Prologue” to *Narrow Road to the Deep North*. In the “Prologue” to the latter play, Basho introduces himself to us and witnesses the abandonment of a baby by its parents on a river bank; he does nothing. When the play proper begins, it is thirty years later, whereas in *The Bundle* it is fourteen years later.

*The Bundle* examines in greater detail how those in power legitimize the evils of an exploitative social system, i.e. technocracy, and even goes on to consider the possibility of revolutionary change. According to Hinchliffe, “The Orientation is only a Brechtian device to show us familiar problems in a different light, it does not imply an understanding of Oriental thought process. (Hinchliffe, 1974). In a comment on Basho’s attitude toward the baby, Bond says: “In an ideal society he would have picked that baby up, gone off the stage and there would have been no necessity for a play, whereas Hinchliffe has a different point of view, commenting that Bond seems to ignore the idea that, as a pious Buddhist, Basho would not pick up the child as that would be “interfering with Karma or fate in the Buddhist tradition. Bond’s objection is to Basho’s background as a whole and not only to his inhuman attitude toward the baby.

Technology devours people and usurps their humanity like this river, which floods and ravages people. In an interview with Bond, he maintains that “In our society we are flooded with the debris of an affluent society which keeps us in a form of cultural poverty. (1978). Interview with Edward Bond.

Toward the end of Scene Four, Wang contemplates an abandoned child and seems to address himself when speaking these words: “You don’t know! Nothing changes here. I get up – I do the same things and pretend they’re different. You don’t even have to walk. You’ve been lying



there for hundreds of years” (p. 28). For Wang, it is the suppression of his personality. That is why he throws the baby into the river. Twenty-four years ago, someone, the Ferryman, rescued a child from that river. He, Wang, is now in the same position, whereby he is actually looking at himself.

Part One, Scene Five, presents Wang, who meets a group of bandits whom he heads later. He describes them as having “the bravery of a child and scavenging on trifles.” On his description of his experience with his old master, whom he calls “a great thief” (p. 38), the gang is appalled. In depicting this image of the thief and his servant, Bond creates a parallel between this poor Japanese situation and the situation in the West, which is even poorer. Bond provides a picture of the landowner aided by his servant the river, which stands for the new social order, which is technology:

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

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

In his “Introduction: The Rational Theatre” to his second volume of plays entitled “Plays: Two,” Bond suggests that the ruling class has the upper-hand over what the artist writes. This class controls even “the normative values of society by their legal and economic control of the mechanical functioning of society. (Bond, 1978). This is why Basho, being an artist, is portrayed as the “tongue” (p. 40) of the emperor. For Bond, an artist should be a strong barrier standing up against the surf of technocracy and any other phenomena that might menace people’s lives.

Scene Six, the first scene in Part Two, reveals a would-be revolution by Wang, who, like other Bondian heroes, learns through his “suffering” to act responsibly. (Cohn, 1977). *Edward Bond*. Like Lear in the previously discussed part of this chapter, Wang infers that a technocratic form of government tends to create ignorance. Then he reasons about his condition:

“Why should the landowner build banks? He’s rich. Why? Because we’re poor. Why are we poor? Because the bank breaks and takes away all we have” (p. 46).



In Part Two, Scene Seven, thirst caused by technocracy is manifest through one of the paupers in the play, as he is awakened by his woman's shouts: "water ... water ... water" (p. 48). This woman wants water, but he knows that it would be ineffectual, that it would simply not alter the conditions that put her in that situation. Bond shows Wang's control over his passion by the dramatic gesture of biting the side of his tongue, causing the blood to flow. Wang diagnoses the malady and finds a cure all: ridding his village of the owner's hands. Talking to Tiger, Wang reaches a solution that would break the yoke of tyranny. Since "breaking a window" is futile because "it has iron bars" (p. 50), one should seek a safer means. People, Wang notices, act out of fear, and this is the morality by which the landowner governs them. To conquer this landowner, people should rid themselves of their fear. Bond talks about this relationship between technology and economics, where he says: "At the moment, of course, technology is being run for commercial reasons and I think that's a destructive thing."

The play seems to present "an irreconcilable conflict between the needs of the individual and the requirements of civilization. It ends on a tragic note, with the accidental death of a worker. Consequently, Wang philosophizes and contemplates the situation in which he lives and the stale morality that still governs people. Bond comments on the present social scene through this parable: Wang:

Wang's speech has a strong resonance of Nietzsche's Thus Spake Zarathustra, which echoes a godless world. Bond suggests that the old morality is incompatible with modern life. This last scene is "a post-revolutionary scene, not Utopian, but charged with a sense of the opportunities now available. Roberts, (1979).

## **Conclusion**

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

Bond seems to fall into a state of contradiction in his appreciation of technology, which is to some critics "uncritical," as is manifest in the "Note" to *The Bundle*. His evaluation here is radically challenged elsewhere and particularly in the "Introduction" to *The Fool*. "Without technology," Bond argues, "there could be no abundance, no welfare, no hope, no destruction of false myths" (Bond, 1978). Technology causes a feeling of aggression, because it makes human beings feel like misfits and, accordingly, this motivates their biological defences as manifested through aggression.



Lear, in this play, is Man, not restricted to a definite period of time, with no free will, because he succumbs to the calls of technology, and crashes into the stones of the real. Lear has fallen prey to his own fantasies, which lack real grounds.

Technocracy, being a problem to Bond, finds an embodiment and an answer in *The Bundle*. As an embodiment, it is seen as a river flooding people with dirt and mud, and taken advantage of by the landlord, who is viewed from the perspective of this thesis as an agent of capitalism. As an answer, one wishes to refer to the fact that *The Bundle* is the first play in a series of plays that Bond calls “answer plays.” In this regard, Bond states that he has “stated the problems as clearly as [he] can – now let’s try and look at what answers are applicable” (Bond, 1978).

In *The Bundle*, the final scene shows a whole community living in a post-revolutionary world. Here, social change is not initiated by individual actions, but is dramatized as a tangible reality. But the social system Bond shows is not utopian: Wang, the revolutionary leader, reminds the audience before the final curtain that: “We live in a time of great change. It is easy to find monsters – and as easy to find heroes” (Bond, 1979).



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