INTRODUCTION

:: Meaning of Violence ::
Bond's Concept of Violence
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The Webster Dictionary defines the word "violence" thus:

1. Physical force so as to injure or damage,
2. Intense powerful force, as of a hurricane etc.,
3. Unjust or callous use of force or power, as in violating another's rights, privacy etc.

If we take these three meanings together we find that the word 'violence' has a wider connotation and it includes both mental and physical injuries or damages. For example if someone forcibly enters my house, his act is a violent act and similarly if a husband throws away the tea prepared by his wife in her presence it is also an act of violence as he by doing so hurts her feelings. The forms of violence such as fightings in the street, fightings for grabbing lands, looting houses, capturing booths and gaining political power by means of terrorism and war are more manifest.

In recent years violence has become fairly common all over the world and is one of the burning problems of the human society. But this does not mean that violence was not there in the past. It has a history extending over centuries, though the causes and instruments used for violence have varied from time to time. In our age it has assumed
a menacing form mainly for the reason that science and technology have made weapons more lethal.

In our time, the question is: What causes man to be violent? Psychologists are of the opinion that a child, who is not given due care and love, becomes violent. The examples are those of the notorious criminals who did not receive their parents' love. The famous psychologist Adler, propounder of the concept of inferiority and superiority complex, is of the opinion that a person suffering from some kind of inferiority, physical, intellectual, economic, political and cultural, is aggressive to the people who in his eyes are superior to him and he tries to show his superiority by his aggressiveness. Those who have studied animal behaviour are of the view that an animal instinctively defines its territory and does not want any kind of intrusion and, if someone enters that territory, it becomes violent.

But this is all at the level of the individual. Violence takes a menacing form when groups are involved and, annihilating, when wars are waged. What is the reason for group conflict resulting in violence? Why is a woman gang raped? Why an entire village is massacred? Why are there terrorists operating in certain areas? The reasons for these can be best given by sociologists.

Marriage between two families is a sign of good will. A married woman gains respect in her in-law's family. The gang rape of a woman is an insult to the family she belongs to and in India to the entire caste or community. The reasons for group conflict are usually
economic or political. When a group feels that it is being oppressed by the other group, it revolts sooner and later and takes to arms. The Nexalite movement is an example of this form of violence. Terrorism too springs from the same cause. This is why terrorists receive sympathy from all the people of their group or region. They set high ideals and create a paradise for them. Wars are fought because a country feels that the other country is exploiting it.

Violence is violence whether it is for some noble end, such as the American war of Independence in 1776 and the French Revolution of 1789, the October Revolution of 1917, or for some mean end as the attack of France under the leadership of Napoleon on the European countries and Hitler’s declaration of the Second World War. The recent Gulf War ensued because of the greed of President Saddam. It was he who attacked Kuwait to gain control over the rich petroleum wells. The result of his violence was death of a large number of the Kuwaiti people and later on of his own people.

In the same way the competition of modern countries for Nuclear Stock is none else but the preparation for the destruction of the whole world. Violence is the keystone behind it. It can be said that the preparation of nuclear weapons has no boundaries of time and space. The aggression and agresssee, both stand sure of annihilation.

Violence is bad for humanity. Man by nature is peace-loving. It has been found that violent people are feared by people and although they are given respect in their presence they are hated by everybody
at heart. This is only terrorism faded slowly in Punjab, Kashmir and Assam and people actively took part in recent elections. Similarly, the Naxalite movement could not expand beyond a few areas and later on faded slowly.

Yet violence cannot be neglected. If animals are violent sometimes, their violence is localised and temporary. They do not have memory. But human beings have memory. They do not forget the violence inflicted upon them. Besides, in our age, weapons are highly advanced and have immeasurable destructive power. Because of this global menace caused by violence, intellectuals are analysing and tracing the causes of violence and suggesting ways to mitigate it.

Bond considers violence as biological mechanism. According to him the element of violence is found in animals also. They are violent, but their violence generates under certain conditions. We must see what those conditions are. This is certain that every animal has a capacity for violence and when anything endangers or threatens it, it becomes violent; but this is only a response to a danger or threat or attack.

Bond distinguishes hunting from violence. Although all the facts of violence are present in hunting as speed, intensity and energy, but the use of all these in hunting is the use for existence, that is, search for food. Every man or animal has a right to get food and if it is not easily available then there is certainly the need of force or power for getting food. This is also natural that the power or force is used on the weaker ones.
He says:

"Hunting is violence only when the prey becomes a threat. Nor, I should add, do cannibals hunt and eat each other because they are hungry; they wage war on each other for social reasons. So we must distinguish violence from hunting."\(^1\)

Violence in human beings is almost the same as in animals. Sometimes to maintain social order for political needs violence is used. Bond considers 'violence' as 'Political Invention'. In his 'Note on Violence', in the preface of Saved he writes:

"If men are necessarily violent they will always endanger one another, so there must be a strong authority that will use violence to control violence. This authority is the ruling class."\(^2\)

This ruling class controls the society to maintain law and order in an arbitrary manner which becomes a kind of violence, but it says that it does for the common good. It says that it does so not out of hate, enmity or jealousy. In Bond's opinion it does so because it considers itself the best and most intelligent of human beings. Thus monopoly or absolute authority initiates violence.

According to Bond we have faith in churches and obey bishops only for fear of God's punishment or to escape from eternal pain after death. He writes -

"The church could not explain everyone was born to eternal pain

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1. Author's 'Note on Violence' in the preface to Saved. p. 7.
2. Preface to Saved. p. 11.
after death unless the church saved them. It carefully monopolised all the sacraments which were the only means to salvation."

People are accustomed to a kind of living. When they are interrupted by some adverse conditions, their response is either aggressive or submissive. But when they find that there is no way out, they at first are aggressive in their behaviour and later on, if the condition remains unchanged. They become explosive and violent. Bond gives a new interpretation of 'law' and 'order'. He says that it is one of the steps taken to maintain injustice. If once the social structure exists, it needs to perpetuate and for this the ruling political group and the leaders do their utmost. When their inheritors come they try to justify the system, although its position is unjust for the majority in the name of administration of justice. At first opposition to it will not be revolutionary or even political, it will be 'meaningless' and involve personal discontents and frustrations:

"When personal problems become private problems, as they must for the people involved in them, they are distorted, and then people seem to be acting in arbitrary, self-regarding ways. This can always be shown to be socially disruptive, of course. In this way an unjust society causes and defines crime and an aggressive social structure which is unjust and must create aggressive social disruption, receives the moral sanction of being 'law' and 'order'."

The people who benefit by unjust social order have emotional interest in social morality for the only reason that it allows them to

1. Author's 'Note on Violence' in the preface to Saved. p. 10.
maintain that order for the fear of an opposition that would take everything they have, even their lives also. In this way social morality is monopolised and those who have monopoly become aggressive and ruthlessly maintain law and order. Naturally social morality becomes a safe form of obedience for many of the victims of the unjust organization. Bond believes that the foundation of this kind of obedience is fear. In his 'Note on Violence' the author considers it a characteristic:

"It is a sort of character easily developed in childhood, when power relations are at their starkest. Then it is dangerous to have aggressive ideas against those in power because they can easily punish you. They are stronger and cleverer, and if you destroyed them how could you live? (In adults this becomes: We can't have a revolution because the buses wouldn't run and I'd be late for work. Or: Hitler made the trains run on time.) Our society has the structure of a pyramid of aggression and as the child is the weakest member it is at the bottom."

The social structure in like a pyramid and in the same way the family, where the weakest member, the child is at the bottom. Discipline in family becomes a kind of force to subjugate the child especially when it begins to receive education. It is forced to live by the clock and to live in uniforms just to appear in exam, at a fixed date, like prisoners in a jail. It is a kind of injustice to coerce them to the discipline as defined by parents. Any noise from them is not

1. Author's 'Note on Violence' in the preface to Lear, p. vii.
tolerated. If a child cries parents fail to understand the reason for the protest. Therefore, Bond says,

"The child's first word isn't 'Mummy' or 'Daddy', it is 'Me'. It has been learning to say it through millions of years of evolution, and it has a biological right to its egocentricity because that is the only way species can continue."\(^1\)

Before birth every child has some biological expectations. Food is important, no doubt, but what is more important is reassurance. The weight of aggression in our society is so heavy that the unthinkable happens. The small vulnerable child panics at any thing strange and coercive. Because it does not get emotional reassurance it needs and so in its fear, it identifies discipline with the people who impose upon it. As a result, it accepts their 'morality' naturally. Bond therefore argues that the morality which is social morality, now, has all the force of fear and panic that created it. Morality stops being something people want and becomes what they fear. He says -

"Social morality is a form of corrupted innocence and it is against the panic wishes of those who have been moralized in this way. It is a threat, a weapon, used against their most fundamental desire for justice, without which they are not able to be happy or allow others to be happy."\(^2\)

Social morality denies their need for justice, but that need is so basic, it can only be escaped by dying or going mad, otherwise it must be struggled against obsessively. In this struggle pleasure, becomes guilt, and the moralizing, censorious, inhuman puritans are

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1. Author's preface to Lear. p. viii.  
2. Author's preface to Lear. p. l.x.
formed. Sometimes their aggression is hidden under strenuous gleefulness but it is surprising how little glee is reflected in their opinions and beliefs and how intolerant destructive and angry these guardians of morality can be. In the words of Bond:

"Social morality is a form of suicide. Socially moralized people must act contemptuously and angrily to all liberalism, contentment and sexual freedom because these are things they are fighting in themselves."¹

He gives the example of an animal and proves how the pains of one become the pleasure of the other. The people enjoy to see the caged animal while the animal wants to be free from slavery and to come out of it. In Bonds' words,

"If an animal was locked in a cage and then fed with the key, it shakes the bar but can never get out. So other people's happiness becomes their pain, and other people's freedom reminds them of their slavery. It is as if they had created in themselves, a desolate inhospitable landscape in which they had to live out their emotional and spiritual lives."²

This landscape reflects, of course, the inhospitable, unjust world in which they first suffered; and it exacerbates and reinforces their aggression and seems to give it added depths of bitterness. By calling the unjust world good they recreate it in themselves and are condemned to live in it.

¹ Author's preface to Lear, p. ix.
² Ibid.
you do not make it go away by shutting your eyes. These people are the angry, gleeful ghosts of my play, *Early Morning*."¹

Due to this disorderly social system, some children become cynical and indifferent and others become criminal and openly destructive. Most of their act is ugly, deceitful and violent.

The ruling class treats adults almost in the similar way. Just as children are subjugated to an artificial kind of discipline, adults are bound to do the works to which they have no inclination nor are they biologically fit for them. The coercion, in a covert way, is imposed by commercial propaganda. It makes the people's lives unnatural. For biological reasons, they become tense, nervous and aggressive and these characteristics are fed back into the younger generation. In the modern age, as a result of this, man is tense and troubled.

So the first thing is that the present system is basically unjust. Secondly, it makes people live unnatural lives. Both these factors create a natural biological aggressive response in men. Generally, the ruling class's formal answer to this is to socialize morality. But this is only another form of violence and so it must itself provoke more aggression. Any organization which aspires for biological justice, therefore becomes aggressive, even though it claims to be moral. This is true of most religious reformations that protested against the tyranny of the religious authorities. It is also true of many movements for political reform.

¹ Author's preface to *Lear*, p. 1.
The aggression of social institutions is moralized in the sense that it is mixed with some kindness and decency. According to historical records our institutions have been aggressive. By this aggression, aggressive people get some power and authority. And this is the reason why leaders whether revolutionary or reactionary have been guided by animal instincts. The reign of terror that followed the French Revolution is perhaps a perfect example of the fact.

So human aggression is nothing else but the aggression of animals in the mask of humanity. The difference is that it is more destructive than that of the animal. It consists both the aggression of inner as well as outer side. Children are more vulnerable in this sense because of the presence of the violent conditions. So violence is a man’s reaction to the threat in a natural and biological way, but a step forward, it is mental, moral and emotional and not merely physical. In this respect man is more violent than animals. Man is not marked being violent because he has given many forms and shapes to violence. They are chiefly his military giantism, moral hysteria, industrial servitude and all the ugly aggressiveness of a commercial culture.

Modern technological developments are also responsible for aggression. Bond uses two terms 'biosphere' and 'technosphere'. The human body involves 'biosphere' but it has to adjust it self with the new development, 'technosphere'. The rapid change in the environment, created by nature and modern technology, force him to make adjustments with the help of science and technology, for entering into
controlling the world of science and technology (i.e. technosphere) there is a fierce competition and the more powerful win and gain and the weak lose and perish.

From this it follows that men have to fit in the society and live in this aggressive world and must have a combination of technology and socialized morality. But this is not the solution. The ruling authority whether old or new will always enforce socialized morality by the use of technology. Therefore we must search for a better alternative for the solution of the problem of aggression and violence.

The problem for human being is, how to live justly. But in the present set up justice is not free from violence because it forces people to live in an unnatural way. People submit to the authority physically but suffer at heart. They have to fit themselves in the present unjust society or struggle against it throughout their whole life, consciously or unconsciously. The present socio-political system its morality and technology all compel human beings to be either violent or surrender meekly to it and let it destroy us our individual freedom.

Bond comments :-

"In fact our society and its morality, which deny this, and its technology which more and more prevents it all the time whisper into people's ear 'you have no right to live'. That is what lies under the splendour of the modern world. Equality, freedom and fraternity must be reinterpreted in the light of this otherwise any revolutionary change is impossible."  

1. Author's preface to Lear. p. xii.
What is basic in human life is the satisfaction of the aesthetic and intellectual needs. Every man and woman needs love protection and peace besides the fulfillment of the people want to adjust with the social system in which they live. Tragedy occurs, Bond says, "When hysterical old maids become sergeant majors, the disguised peeping Toms become moralists the immature misfits become judges" and people have to tolerate them, willingly or unwillingly.

Society pays lip-service to the basic needs and we are not capable of doing something revolutionary because of the competition of commercial culture in our society. So we blindly follow these things, create and add more and more to it 'Blake' said that 'When we try to become more than men we become less than beasts' and that is what we have done. Our human emotions and intellects are not things that stand apart from the long 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.

Thus Bond explains what is familiar but often unnoticed by us. We find it very difficult to put every thing right because of our own inherent weaknesses. In his opinion to subordinate justice with power is easy, but when it is done. Power takes on dynamics and dialectics of aggression and then nothing is really changed and oppression continues. Marx did not know about this problem and Lenin discovered it when it was too late.

Bond's emphasis on contemporary society is significant, specially

1. Author's preface to Lear, p. xii-xiii.
in view of the fact that his framework, for his investigation of our society and our problems, is based on classical plays. Furthermore, it seems to us that the feeling of suffering is an important factor in his dramas.

Bond says in "Preface" to Lear that in a violent society aggression is the binding cord. Men are not aggressive but the society is. It creates aggression in two ways: first it is basically unjust and secondly it makes people live unnatural lives. Both the two create a natural biological aggressive response in the members of society. Society's formal answer to this is socialized morality but this as he has explained is only another form of violence and so it must itself provoke more aggression. There is no way out for this sort of society because an unjust society is sure to be violent. Any organization which denies the basic needs of biological justice must become aggressive even though it claims to be moral. This is true of most religions which say that justice can only be obtained in another world, and not in this. This is also true of many movements, for political reform.

The recurring phenomenon in the plays of Bond is the reinterpretation of classical plays, legends and myths in terms of contemporary society. Bond usually explores the themes of the plays of the past to interpret the contemporary society. Macbeth reminds of Hitler and The White Devil Nixon's abuse of power. The play Lear very much based on king Lear is an attempt at understanding the roots of violence. He has aimed at drawing our attention to the fact that
violence steps from men's aspiration for absolute power; power and violence are inseparable. Bond's aim is to show that power and violence which are political in nature will plague mankind till men in power are able to realise their own misdoings and weaknesses as Lear does at the end of the play.

According to Bond all the societies are condemned to live out the myths they create to maintain their injustice. The myth is that we are essentially violent. There are scientific and technological means of controlling our violence but we live out the myth by creating the weapons of death. In this way the First World War can be seen as the myth of the nineteenth century.

Bond believes that an old fascist is always bitter and cynical not because his conscience troubles him but because he lives in conflict with his fundamental sense of human values. Men can only be content when they live in peace and share respect with other men. It seems odd to say these things in a century of fascism and brutality. The world is unhappy and violent not because we're cursed with original sin or original aggression, but because the present social setup is unjust. The world is not absurd. It is a place for men to be sane and rational. The absurd situation has been created by the system and absurdity can be removed by rationalizing people.

Human beings have become increasingly barbaric and aggressive. This is partly because they have emotional attitudes to what they think and partly because the organisation of their lives has physiological
consequences. In conditions of tension people prove to be aggressive and violent.

Usually we assume that people become destructive when they are motivated by unconscious emotional attitudes which make them behave atavistically. But Bond thinks that they behave like this because of the conditions society imposed on them and because of the tensions of holding an absurd society together. Society creates self-consciousness, based on imagination, organization and attitudes from the past which causes emotional crises in members that result in violence and aggression. They either struggle to resist, as any prisoner might, or become dangerously apathetic so that they do not protest at the inhumanities of their reactionary regime, or even become its brutal accomplices. That is the sum total of the forces of human darkness, the original sin or natural aggression, which the ruling class seizes on so avidly and teaches so assiduously.

Bond takes the theme of violence seriously and considers it to be first importance in art and theatre:

"Art is one way of creating the wholeness of understanding and theatre is one of the arts best suited to do this. Theatre can validate human standards, ways of living, ethical decisions, understanding by demonstrating the relation of cause and effect in practical human life and not merely in concept or theory ... An audience can see what human beings are and what are the
standards, practices and concepts by which they should live, in this way human consciousness is changed."

According to him plays should deal, either comically or seriously, with situations, accounts and characters, which concern the audience in their daily life. But a dramatist need not always deal with the present events. The past is also an institution owned by society. Our understanding of the past will change with our developing self-consciousness.

The dramatist has understood violence as the reality of society and he has proved his plays useful for human beings by pointing out this reality.

"All art is a record of reality and an interpretation of it. If the interpretation is valid it changes naturalism into realism and so into art. Art does not consist in the recording or reproduction of a thing (that is merely one sort of skill) but in analysing what is recorded or reproduced."  

In "Preface" to Lear he explains why violence is one of the most important themes nowadays:

"I write about violence as naturally as Jane Austen wrote about manners. Violence shapes and obsesses our society, and if we do not stop being violent we have no future. People who do not want writers to write about violence, want to stop them writing about us and our time. It would be immoral not to write about violence."

All the dramas written by him account for the different forms of violence. His major dramas from 1962 up to 1980 are to be illustrated here as to point out the various forms of violence in them. Violence has been the oldest and the most oppressive part of rulers. For a long time it has occupied the place of humanity. All possible forms, which torture a man in the society, have different conditions, shapes, circumstances and surroundings. Man is a social animal and society is usually based on injustice. Most of the societies are led by those who profit from injustice.

A society which tries to create a half consciousness based on imagery, organization and attitudes from the past, will cause emotional crises in its members that must result in violence and aggression. The violence of prisons, work houses, whipping, starvation, mutilation, pulpit-hysteria and all the rest of it, is found in his various dramas.

If the social environment is one that frustrates our aspirations, then our emotions tend to deteriorate into fear, tension, racial and religious paranoia, which lead to aggression vandalism, child-battering and other forms of violence.

Bond has represented the different kinds of violence as the result of different conditions - social, domestic and political. These conditions give birth to violence, sometimes in 'thought' sometimes in 'action' sometimes in 'family' and sometimes in 'society'. All these forms are based on reality because art is always the same. It always insists on
the truth and tries to explain the justice and order - that are necessary to sanity. The chapters that follow deal in detail with the various forms of violence imaginatively portrayed and analysed in Bond's plays.