



## IRRATIONALITY IN THE PLAYS OF EDWARD BOND

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### Abstract

*It is common to have problems in a society. But it is more important to nip any problem in the bud or else it becomes serious and will have disastrous consequences over the period of time. It requires serious concern to search for the root cause of the problem instead of brooding over the problem itself. One can hardly expect a problem without reason. In this sense, Irrationality is definitely a strong reason behind many problems. If someone is found rational of his life he can solve most of the problems with his sense of rationality. Irrationality of an individual destructs his life along with the life of many innocent people. Hence, one can apparently find the element of irrationality in the plays of Bond especially in *Saved* (1965), *Lear* (1972).*

**Keywords:** Apparently, Consequences, Irrationality, Problem, Reasons, Serious, Society.



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**INTRODUCTION:** Rationality is the attitude of an individual based on the reason, facts or logic. It leads us to analyze a problem or an issue and to take appropriate decisions whereby we can be safe and comfortable. However, most of the people are seen irrational at sometime or the other. This irrationality itself is the reason for many personal as well as social problems. It lets someone lose sensibility by which he becomes towards his decisions. It makes someone ignorant enough towards the circumstances and their consequences. The men of irrationality become reckless and indifferent towards not their lives alone but also the lives of others. They lose their emotional control. The problem of irrationality destroys the lives of many innocent people for nothing.

The sense of Irrationality which is the root cause of many problems is considered a universal problem. The major characters Pam and Lear in the plays of Bond *Saved* (1965), *Lear* (1972) respectively exhibit the element of Irrationality effectively.

For instance, Pam, a female character in the Bond's play, *Saved* (1965), is quite reckless of her own life. She doesn't respect even her parents. She cares none and nothing. She is thirsty of her sexual pleasure at the beginning of the play. She cannot understand the real consequences of her irrational and indifferent attitude. The same attitude let her struggle throughout her life. She was adamant towards the polite warnings of her well wisher and first sexual mate Len. This irrational attitude itself is the reason for the horrible and unbearable act

of infanticide in this play. Fred, a character in this play, is another example for the act of irrationality. Though he was the father of the baby, he doesn't stop his friends from pelting the stones over the infant. The most horrible incident is that Fred, being a father, also took part in the brutal killing of his own baby. This scene shows the intensity of threat to the peace and prosperity of society by the irrational attitude.

The element of Irrationality is also evident in Bond's play *Lear* (1972). The character Lear, the protagonist of this play kills a worker at the beginning itself. He assumes that the worker was responsible for the delay of the wall under construction. He gets emotionally imbalanced and kills the worker for nothing, without any reason or enquiry. He wants to control the enemies by constructing a wall around his ruling kingdom. His stupidity is clearly reflected in his words:

"I started this wall when I was young. I stopped my enemies in the field, but there were always more of them. How could we ever be free? So I built this wall to keep our enemies out. My people will live behind this wall when I'm dead. You may be governed by fools but you'll always live in peace. My wall will make you free" (1978: 92)

He didn't regret for his act of stupidity. First of all, he is blind enough to recognize that the stone walls do not make peace and secure. The life of Lear reflects irrationality. The character Gravedigger's boy remained a scapegoat losing his life for being innocent towards Lear. Gravedigger's boy voluntarily provides food and shelter to Lear even though Lear was unknown and stranger to him. His courtesy let him lose his life.

However, Lear is found realized at the end of the play and throws the wall away. It indicates his transformation from irrationality to rationality. This rational attitude (i.e. self awareness) Bond emphasizes for, in every individual. Unless/otherwise the decisions and the acts may not be right and fruitful so that the life becomes miserable.

One perception that the problems are the stepping stones of success may be right because the problems, for some extent, are the sources of contemplation that lead to the realization of oneself. This self awareness makes someone rational. This rationality inculcates social awareness which is quite necessary for social reformation. Individual reformation leads to the social reformation because social reformation starts with the individual reformation itself.

Bond could foresee such disastrous problems prevailing from the contemporary society. He feels the main objective of writing should be making the people aware of such

social as well as personal problems. The Re-Presentation of the play *King Lear* by Shakespeare through modern writer like Bond took a different shape by fulfilling the gaps as the writer desired. These gaps may be fulfilled by writing *Lear* in a different outlook. Daniel. R. Jones quotes Bond saying:

“Shakespeare took this character and I wanted to correct it so that it would become a viable model for me and . . . for society. Shakespeare does arrive at an answer to the problems of his particular society, and that was the idea of total resignation, accepting what comes, and discovering that a human being can accept an enormous lot and survive it. He can come through the storm. What I want to say is that this model is inadequate now; that it just does not work. Acceptance is not enough. Anybody can accept. You can go quietly into your gas chamber at Auschwitz, you can sit quietly at home and have an H-bomb dropped on you. Shakespeare had time. He must have thought that in time certain changes would be made. But time has speeded up enormously, and for us, time is running out.”(1991:132)

He wants to make the people know the root cause of the problem of violence. It is nothing but Irrationality. The seriousness of the problem of violence is shown to the extreme extent in the act of infanticide in his play *Saved*. But it is to understand that the violence shown in his plays is a symbolic representation of the intensity of the violence occurred during the situation.

Bond is also a visionary. He could understand the seriousness of the problem of violence and project it successfully during 1960's itself which has become true and clearly evident in this present society after 60 years of the play. Bond's idea was to nip the problem of violence in the bud by creating awareness among the audiences and the readers. His plays inculcate such rational thinking into their minds. A problem must be rectified at the beginning or else it becomes severe that can never be rectified. Bond had shown such serious concern towards the problem of violence from his debut. He tries to present the real problems of society. Karl-Heinz, Stoll quotes Edward Bond:

“Art is the close scrutiny of reality and therefore I put on the stage only those things that I know happen in our society. I'm not interested in an imaginary world. I'm interested in the real world. And in fact, of course, all things that I put on the stage are understatements.”(1987:32)

Rationality makes a man logical and emotionally balanced by which many issues can be resolved. It transforms the man. Individual transformation automatically transforms the society. This is what Edward Bond seeks from the individuals of society.

Everyone is a part and parcel of society. No one is expected to live without the company of others. So, one cannot be indifferent towards the problems of others. Hence, one is not expected to be indifferent towards the problems of others. For example: If someone in a locality throws garbage on the street it is inconvenient not that particular person alone but to all the people of the locality. He is not the person alone affected by the foul smell but also many people from the locality. In the same everyone should remember that the problem of irrationality and the violence do not affect and spoil the life of the people concerned but the life of many innocent people. We have to remember that the process of social reformation starts with the individual reformation.

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