

Family in Crisis: Revisiting Domestic Violence in Edward Bond's *Saved* Majeed Hammadi Khalifa¹

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الأسرة في أزمة: مراجعة العنف الأسري في مسرحية أنقذ إدوارد بوند

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Abstract

History is littered with examples of society struggling with the problem of violence within the family. However, law and politics have largely ignored it as a social issue until recently. Significant shifts in the economy, society, and government have all contributed to shifts in the frequency and severity of such violent acts. This essay takes a multidisciplinary approach, drawing from fields such as literature, sociology, and psychology, to examine Edward Bond's methods for staging violence in his play and to explain the causes that fuel family violence. Additionally, Bond's views on violence are outlined, and the theme of domestic violence as it appears in *Saved* is discussed. Keywords: Domestic violence, Aggro-effects, Edward Bond, *Saved*, Aggression

الخلاصة:

التاريخ مليء بأمثلة عن المجتمعات التي تكافح مع مشكلة العنف داخل الأسرة. ومع ذلك، فقد تم تجاهله اجتماعيًا من قبل القانون والسياسة حتى السنوات الأخيرة. ساهمت التحولات الكبرى في الاقتصاد والمجتمع والحكومات في حدوث تحولات في وتيرة وشدة أعمال العنف هذه. يتبنى هذا المقال نهجًا متعدد التخصصات، وذلك باستخدام مجموعة متنوعة من التخصصات مثل الأدب وعلم الاجتماع وعلم النفس، لفحص الأساليب التي استخدمها إدوارد بوند لإضفاء الطابع الدرامي للعنف في مسرحيته في محاولة لشرح الأسباب التي تغذي العنف الأسري. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تم تحديد وجهات نظر بوند حول العنف، وتمت مناقشة موضوع العنف الأسري كما يظهر في المسرحية. الكلمات الدالة: العنف المنزلي، إدوارد بوند، أنقذ، مسرحية العنف.

Introduction

Family crisis has been defined in many different ways for the subject is both interesting and complex and researchers tend to emphasize one of its many aspects. Most definitions of family crisis include the idea that a crisis occur when a family is forced by a stressor to make a change in its established patterns. Pauline Boss asserts that family stress can be understood as "pressure put on a family," and during a family crisis, there exists "an imbalance between pressure and support" (qtd.in Lamanna et al. 348). One of the significant manifestations of such crises affecting many families is domestic violence. Various definitions of domestic violence have been derived from the scholarly investigation. Early reports define family violence as "the term that best encompasses the various forms of abuse that may take place between family members" (Gelles 50). Furthermore, many scholars recommend that "the definition must include information about the multiple forms of abuse, including physical, sexual and emotional abuse and property and pet destruction" (Hamberger and Phelan 241). Mary P. Brewster expands the scope and says that "physical assault, threats, emotional abuse, harassment, and humiliation" are all types of "intimate partner violence" (24). Going beyond these early definitions, Sherri L. Schomstein provides a more intricate perspective, characterizing family violence as "a systemic pattern of abusive behaviour, occurring over a period of time, that may become more frequent and severe and is done for the purpose of control, domination and/or coercion. Such behaviour may include verbal abuse and threats,

physical, psychological and sexual abuse, and the destruction of property and pets” (1). Family system theory, among other sociological theories, has attempted to explain family violence. Supporters of the family system model of intimate partner violence argue that “all members of the family play a role in the construction and maintenance of a system of violence and that violent behavior is transmitted from generation to generation” (O’Leary and Maiuro 24). Families that engage in family violence are trapped in a cycle of violence. In the context of discussing domestic violence, this study thoroughly investigates Edward Bond’s unique dramatic style and its significance in relation to the subject matter.

Edward Bond’s Dramatic Style

Since his 1962 debut at London’s Royal Court Theatre, Edward Bond has been one of the most distinctive and influential theatre writers in the United Kingdom. His drama reveals the injustices of capitalism and calls for a new perspective on human potential, which would lead to a new way of life. He believes that the problem of writing plays is “to make the concealed violence disclose itself” (Bond, Letters:1 31). Therefore, Bond uses violence in different ways throughout his work. At first he analyzes it in the prefaces of his works, next he treats it as an individual theme, and finally uses it as a theatre strategy in his new way to perform a “new sort of acting” (Hirst 3). However, Bond does not immediately introduce the overuse of violence into the scene. But instead, as a moralist, he questions the source of violence and its possible solution in society, stating: “We respond aggressively when we are constantly deprived of our physical and emotional needs, or when we are threatened with this, and if we are constantly deprived and threatened in this way, as human beings now are we live in a constant state of aggression” (Bond, Author’s Preface 5). For him, “aggression has become moralized, and morality has become a form of violence” (Ibid). To explain this, he states: Social morality is ... a safe form of obedience for many of the victims of unjust organizations. It gives them a form of innocence founded on fear – but it is never peaceful innocence. 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 destroy them how could you live? (Ibid 6). Bond also rightly expands upon the notion that people are not inherently violent but are, in fact, shaped by their culture : “Violence is not an instinct we must forever repress because it threatens civilized social relationships; we are violent because we have not made those relationships civilized” (Bond, Author’s Notes 12). To him, it’s clear that the root of all of our societal ills is the prevalence of violence. Bond also explains why it’s so important to write about violence. As he puts it: “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” (Bond, Author’s Preface 4). Since the abovementioned commentary on violence published in 1972, a number of critics seem to have noticed the dramatist’s serious approach to the issue and to his work. Malcolm Hay and Phillip Roberts, for instance, have observed that “throughout Bond’s plays, there is an analysis, sometimes implicit, of violence, its origins, and its consequences” (115). Critic Richard Scharine also champions Bond’s exploration of social violence in *Saved*, asserting that “it is an ailment that the author is observing, not creating” (22). Additionally, critic Hubert Zapf identifies the Aggro-Effect, a dramatic strategy, as the key distinguishing element that sets Bond apart from Brecht. Zapf contends that “the most prominent feature of Bond’s plays, sharply separating him from Brecht, is the deliberate and even excessive utilization of violence as a form of shock therapy for the audience” (354). Bond himself describes this conscious and excessive use of violence as being “designed to make the audience question what they normally accept...placing the violence in a context, which makes the violence a riddle... the important point is always the questions the violence leads to” (Bond, Letters:1 32). With this background information about Edward Bond and his theatrical aesthetics in mind, it becomes apparent that *Saved* should be approached as a manifestation of Bond’s theater as a social responsibility. By placing the play in England, Bond has worked to address the particular set of social and political problems that have emerged in his country since the late 1960s. *Saved* takes place in the London of 1970, at a time when many British artists and social critics were beginning to view England as a nation plagued by industrial pollution and the consumption of consumer goods. It presaged the urban violence of such youth riots as those that broke out in Brixton and in other British cities in the mid-1970s. Bond’s approach in *Saved* indeed appears to be less about evoking the British past and more about offering a unique perspective to critique and engage with the modern world. He doesn’t seem to aim for nostalgic portrayals of the past but rather uses the play as a lens through which to scrutinize contemporary society. It’s notable that Bond denied categorizing *Saved* as an example of socialist theatre. Instead, he viewed it as a means to critique

an already established socialist government in Britain. This distinction is crucial, as it underscores his intent to hold those in power accountable and question the effectiveness of existing systems, even those claiming socialist ideologies. Bond's work can be seen as a form of social commentary that transcends traditional political labels, focusing on broader societal issues and the human condition. In doing so, he prompts audiences to contemplate the complexities of the modern world and their role within it, making his work relevant and impactful beyond its initial context.

Domestic Violence in Saved

Among Bond's plays, Domestic violence is perhaps most ruthlessly embodied in *Saved*. With a disturbing scene involving the murder of an innocent infant, *Saved* quickly gained notoriety and became a cause célèbre. Sir Laurence Olivier marked the following in a letter to the Observer: “*Saved* is not a play for children, but it is for grown-ups, and the grown-ups of this country should have the courage to look at it” (*Saved* (Play) - Wikipedia). Bond called his play “*Oedipus Comedy*” and claimed it is “almost irresponsibly optimistic.”¹⁹ It takes place in London during the 1960s of the 20th century. Its central theme is concerned with the “dialectic of violence.” (Bond, *Drama* 6). As a society, human beings are destroying themselves through violence. The play also presents the audience, as David L. Hirst suggests, “with an accurate and minutely detailed picture of life which functions as a savage criticism of the social and political composition of contemporary Britain” (49). *Saved* is a drama about a working-class family in South London. Three generations of the same family live in the same house: Harry and Mary, their daughter Pam and her baby. The play takes place over a number of years, but the characters' constant behavior and dialogue show that they don't believe they can change. The First Scene opens the world of the play, and it evolves around the relationship of the two central figures, Len and Pam. The scene is built on “the young man's [Len] sexual insecurity - he either invents interruptions himself or is interrupted by the old man.” (Bond, *Author's Notes* 309). Pam brought Len home for a short courtship, but they struggled to find comfort. Harry, her father, disturbs the little privacy the two have. He comes in and goes out again. Pam does not even appear to be aware that the interruption is taking place, unlike Len, who seems slightly taken aback by it. She is adamant that they use the living room instead of the bedroom. Because, in her words, “Bed ain' made ... It's awful. 'Ere's nice” (Bond, *Saved* 21). The scene accurately depicts how the flatness of their conversations reflects the shallowness of their culture and the destitution of their social circumstances. For Bond, “culture is the way we live, and when it is nihilistic, cynical or despairing, then there are waste and violence at all the stages of our life and all our relationships” (Bond, *Letters*:4 50) Bond's *Saved* depicts a dysfunctional family whose members are brought down by their inability to communicate with one another. During her work with domestic violence victims, Vesna Stanojevic observed that “the lack of communication skills is an important contributing factor in cases where domestic violence occurs” (qtd in Nikolic-Ristanovic 83). This is fully demonstrated in Harry's first lines in the play, through which he denies any involvement or concern: “I ain' gettin' involved. Bound t' be wrong” (32). According to Bond, the emergence of violence is caused by a combination of factors, including a lack of mutual understanding and inappropriate social relationships. For him, “Aggressive behaviour is the inevitable result of a lack of communication” (qtd in Spencer 186). In the play's “*Author's Notes*,” Bond says that Len is “naturally good in spite of his upbringing environment” and claims that he “remains good in spite of the play's pressures” because “he lives with people at their worst and most hopeless... and does not turn away from them” (309) The play also sheds light on parenthood. Here Bond presents mothers as inadequate and fathers as physically or emotionally absent. There are two examples of mothers in the play: one is Pam, the mother of the baby, and the other is Mary, Pam's mother. Mary's mothering of Pam is inadequate, for Pam has internalized little good-enoughness herself. Mary as a woman lacks any appreciation. She lives with a husband with whom she never speaks, and she always complains of headaches and takes medicine to stop the pain. The dull pain of the characters' lives and their deprivation is symbolized by the baby, who cries throughout the scene and is ignored by everyone, even when it chokes. It is obvious that the baby is conceived without being wanted, so it is “treated as an object [that] can be destroyed” (Hirst 52). This shows how the care of children is associated with violence. Pam, the baby's mother, denies any responsibility for her baby. She is “too lazy to get up and fetch it” (49). Even though Len expresses some concern, he does not do anything because he thinks that “kids need proper 'omes” (50). Hay and Robert highlight the significance of this event because, for them, this would “demonstrate important ways of regarding Pam, Len, and the baby” (47). Albert Bandura suggests that children can learn to act aggressively by watching adults who act aggressively. For him, “it is by watching another person act aggressively and obtain desirable rewards or by learning through personal experience that such behaviour yields rewards, aggression

can be learned” (qtd in Neil). By emphasizing this attitude to Len, Pam follows in her parents' footsteps and displays the same pattern they set. William Goode holds that “one reason intimates commit violence against one is that they are in each other's presence a lot and few others can anger one so much as those who are close” (qtd in Flowers 177). This is embodied by the ongoing conflict between Pam and Len:

Len. straightens the bed.

Pam. Leave that.

Len. You're comin' undone.

Pam. Leave it.

Len. It's all-

Pam. I said leave it.

Len. (Continuing) someone's got a give yer a 'and.

Pam. I won't 'ave yer pullin' me about.

Len. (Walking away). Why don't yer sit in a chair for 'alf' 'our?

Pam. Mind yer own business. (53)

In her play analysis, Jenny Spencer notes Len's tendency to eavesdrop (33). He is the only listener in the play when all else fails to communicate. Len is the only one who argues, trying to persuade Pam to accept her baby. Len is the only one who refers to the infant as a "he," gives it an identity, and attempts to treat it like a human being. He also reveals his readiness to sacrifice himself and do what seems to be against his self-interest. Len says he has bought some tickets for the football match and has thus maneuvered Fred into coming around to see Pam. The scene stresses that Pam is still hopelessly attached to Fred. Scene Six is the climactic scene. The scene opens very calmly, Len is sitting on the bank, and Fred is fishing. Fred shows Len how to squash a worm and use it as "bait." Jeanette R. Malkin points out that “the connotation of the indifferent torturing of a worm is, of course, to point us toward the torture of the child, which will follow”(130). Bond uses images of animals getting ready to be killed to talk about people who have been hurt by social and political oppression. Likewise, Errol Durbach notes: What Bond asks to see in *Saved* is an image of the social structure as a hierarchy of aggressors and victims, the strong brutalizing the weak and the weak brutalizing the even weaker, until the existence of the whole is jeopardized by the murder of the child ... the weakest element of society but also its hope for the future (483). Pam then arrives at the park while pushing the stroller. Despite her apathy toward the baby, she seems to view it as the factor that keeps them together as a couple. Essentially, she tries to tempt Fred back to the house. Pam uses the child as "bait" to get Fred to come over. She talks to him as the child's father and tells him the baby will not bother them. It “Won't wake up till t'morra” (68) because she has drugged it with aspirin. As revenge, Pam abandons the child with Fred after he rejects her, saying, "an 'yer can take yer bloody bastard round yer tart's!" (70). The group walks into the park and immediately begins teasing each other. The stroller becomes the target of their hostility. When they get angry at each other, it's usually in a playful way at first. However, their crude sense of humor eventually manifests itself physically.

Fred. You wake it up an' yer can put it to sleep. (Colin and Pete laugh)

Barry. Put it t' sleep?

Colin. 'E'll put it t' sleep for good. Pete. With a brick. (72) At the moment of horrifying violence, the audience is forced to perceive the child's pain and fear visually and acoustically from the victim's standpoint. In such an elaborate way, the horror of human aggression builds up toward its climax, and thus, its impact on the audience becomes overwhelming. At this point, the spectators can no longer escape from the fearful site created on stage. Hay and Robert point out that Bond's strategy in *Saved* is one of gradual enlargement and focus. “The restraint of the scene is organised not only by the amount of time it takes to build up to the assault of the baby, but also has to do with the number of times various members of the gang express worry or concern for the child or alarm at what others are doing to it”(48). Bond considers these alarms “a series of possible stopping points. At each of these, the baby could be saved” (Bond, *Drama Devices* 89). For instance, when Mike asks Fred to leave the baby with Liz, Fred's new girl, he asks him "Can't yer arst your Liz t' look after it?" or at least “We should made Len stay with it” (70), Colin also asks Barry to “Go easy” with the baby. (71) Only Barry of all of them never deflects from the escalation and initiates the aggression with a cradlesong: Barry: Rock a bye baby on a tree top When the wind blues the cradle will rock When the bough breaks the cradle will fall And down will come baby and cradle and tree an' bash its little brain out an' dad'll scop 'em up and use 'em for bait. (73) From a victim's perspective, one may wonder how humans could be so cruel to the innocent for no apparent reason. Human history demonstrates that, sadly, worse events than those depicted in the play could occur on a

regular basis in the real world. When you look at it this way, scene six becomes the starting point for the audience's investigation into the problem of why and how people fight with each other. However, searching for the source of violence may be impossible for those who regard onstage atrocities as unbearable due to their proximity. It would be even more so if the scene were acted purely naturalistic. In other words, the theatrical effect of *Saved* upon its audience would vary according to the ways of staging the violent scene. In short, the impression of the play would be different if it were represented in a non-naturalistic way in favour of Expressionism or the Absurd. Regarding theatrical style, Bond insists on Realism, stating, "Naturalism combines with poetry/epic - this produces realism, which is my sort of theatre" (Letters:1 132). While Bond's definition of Realism remains elusive, it is safe to assume that those who have never read Bond's essays or seen his plays staged will react negatively to an inappropriate production. In his monograph on British drama, Christopher Innes provides a well-documented example of this: But members of the audience at the first production protested against the play [*Saved*] as 'obscene', while reviewers attacked it as 'not . . . the feeblest thing I have seen on any stage, but . . . certainly the nastiest', with 'characters who, almost without exception are foul-mouthed, dirty-minded, illiterate and barely to be judged on any recognizable human level at all (164). Michael Mangan, in his *Edward Bond*, also confirms this and further suggests that the audience's response is a crucial issue in understanding the effects of Bond's plays, arguing that: From the beginning, his drama has been concerned not merely with putting certain events, incidents, characters and ideas on stage, but with the effect that these would have on an audience . . . The greater part of Bond's theorizing about his own and other people's dramaturgy is predicated on this single question: what will the theatre do to those who watch it? (13-14). Consistently dealing with the problems of human violence, Bond himself is well aware that "audiences are happy to be entertained in a way that removes the problem rather than solves it because any solution makes a demand on them"(42), but still, he insists that "this is not a reason to encourage them [the audience] with lies"(Ibid 17). In Bond's remark mentioned above, the dramatist's constant commitment to social reform is made clear. Hence, for Bond and his audience, theatre is an opportunity to deal with social problems in practice. In this respect, Bond's *Saved*, like his other plays, has to rely almost entirely on an individual's sense of social responsibility for the success of his work. To put it differently, the dynamics of *Saved* lie in the interrelationship between the theatre and the audience. In his "Author's Notes," Bond clarifies his analysis of human violence, asserting that "the cause and solution of the problem of human violence lie not in our instincts but in our social relationships" (12). If, as Bond suggest, our social relationships are corrupting and causing human violence, it is necessary to turn to Scene Six to understand how the playwright sets violence within its social context. In this context, it's important to quote Innes's commentary on the same scene: Its murder is completely gratuitous: a game of "rock-a-bye baby" turns into a competitive test of manhood between its adolescent father and his street gang. By placing this climax of violence in the first half of the play, Bond intends the act itself to become subordinate to its social context. His focus is on its cause (164). It may be that Bond's intention here is to emphasize his notion of human violence: "violence is not a function of human nature but of human societies" (Author's Notes, On Violence 17). The shocking murder is not the climax of the play. The act of infanticide takes place only halfway through the narrative and provides no resolution to the unfolding events. Martin Esslin summarizes the matter and states: "So, the horrible, brutal physical act of the killing of the baby is the objectification, the concretization of a moral problem: the problem of an unloved child produced by people of subnormal intelligence who are unable to exercise self-control or responsibility" (qtd in Styan 161). So far as the spectators are concerned, such a sly way of distancing themselves from the vicious crime would be unacceptable, even granting that the characters are fully conscious of their brutal deeds. Part of the significant effect of the scene derives from the violence without reason. Hirst analyses the gang's "atavistic fury" and finds out that "there is no sadism in the attitude of the boys in this scene; their cruelty is cold, unfeeling. It is because it is inexplicable in terms of straightforward emotional psychology that we are forced to consider the deeper psychological motivation which relates their action to the social and economic situation" (50). Edward Bond strongly believes that capitalism affected institutionalized state violence while condemning individual acts and that the bombing of civilians is as reprehensible as the killing of a baby. In his "Author's Note" to the play, Bond himself affirms that the stoning to death was "a typical English understatement compared to the strategic bombing of German towns. It is a negligible atrocity compared to the cultural and emotional deprivation of most of our children. Its consequences are insignificant" (310). In an early interview entitled "Drama and the Dialectics of Violence," Bond reveals the source of the play's most disturbing episode. The scene of the baby being stoned to death in the park is derived from Bond's memories of an equally unnatural incident in which a

bomb or a missile explodes near him in Finsbury Park: There was suddenly this enormous sort of bang which one can't describe, you know, because it's so... a noise almost inside you. I went along to the park and saw all the trees stripped bare, and picked up this little bird with its head blown off. I would think, very much, that was one of the reasons why I wrote that scene in *Saved* (8). Tony Coult argues that this short description of war seems to prefigure the characteristic of Bond's later working methods and points out that: The ruined body of the bird, the stripped trees, both creatures of air, have a material connection with the thing that has come from out of the air to devastate them in the 1940s. The image of the dead bird in the park resurfaces in the 1960s, transformed into the saved baby in the park: the balloon attached to the pram, a flag signalling its vulnerability, and possibly distantly evoking memories of barrage balloons over London. The same insistent questions are demanded of reality – 'what killed the baby/the bird and why?' (14) *Saved* revolves around an intense desire to know and learn about deeply troubling events. The driving force behind the play is the potential for change and advancement, rooted in the act of witnessing, experiencing, and comprehending the darkest aspects of life. It's important to note that there are no conventional solutions embedded within the play; instead, the responsibility for finding solutions is assigned to the audience. In his reassessment of Bond's works, Coult presents the case for Bond and states In a sense, what Bond does is to turn his audience into watching children. As Len is, we are made into voyeurs. We are made complicit in child murder. Like Len, we have been voyeurs at an atrocity. In instinctively measuring ourselves against Len, as we must surely do, we have a choice to stare in shocked fascination, or to understand and perhaps absorb that understanding into action (15) In the carefully established social context, the eruption of violence in Scene Six should not be regarded as an anomaly but rather as a symptom of underlying issues, not a root cause but a consequential outcome. Bond states that the play up to this point follows "the tragic Oedipus pattern" (Selection 77). Consequently, the logical consequence is Len's act of killing his "father," Harry, and taking his wife to bed, mirroring the tragic trajectory of Oedipus who killed his father, Laius, and married his mother, Jocasta. The true challenge for the audience lies in navigating the complex dynamics of Len's character. Bond deliberately employs a technique of stoking the audience's expectations and then leaving them unfulfilled. Hay and Robert point out that "given Len's nature as demonstrated in the play up to Scene Nine, the Oedipus row and death is never in question" (53). Therefore, Bond consciously decides to avoid the Oedipus outcome to maintain the play's status as a comedy (Spencer 32). But instead of the traditional pattern of Oedipal tragedy, Bond inverts the action: Len not only avoids the Oedipal outcome, the "Oedipus row and death," but also offers help. "Yer'll 'ave t' wash that cut. It's got tealeaves in it (121). According to Simon Trussler, the bathos in this situation, which consists of Len's matter-of-fact advice and Harry's ineffectual response, relieves tension with laughter at a highly appropriate juncture (13) The last scene shows the family sitting together in the living room, doing their things as usual. The only action is Len mending a chair. The family is led to "a silent social stalemate" from fighting and resentment. Bond has described his play as "optimistic," but Len's life doesn't provide many options. Mangan points out that Len's mending of the chair, clearly, operates as a kind of metaphor. It shifts the play's discourse onto a more symbolic plane than that which it seems at first to inhabit, representing some continuing attempt to make the human relationships of the play work, despite all the odds against it (16). Bond challenges his audience to examine and interrogate the roots of the issues of violence and aggression and argues that people's socioeconomic status profoundly impacts the likelihood and nature of their violent behavior.

Conclusion

To sum up, *Saved* establishes a distinctive style of presenting raw experiences without analyzing them. It unfolds a series of situations without commenting on them explicitly, leaving spectators to wonder who is behind the scenes. This deliberate approach effectively establishes a gap between the theatrical performance and the audience, particularly when considering theatre as a complicated art form. To bridge this gap, the dramatist explicitly demands that the audience embraces a strong sense of social responsibility regarding the issue of human violence, which the play portrays. Bond achieves this through his theatrical device, the 'aggro-effect,' a carefully staged moment or image intended to unsettle or perplex the viewer. Bond's skill in employing the 'aggro-effect' becomes evident in the 'curious buzzing' created by a group of youths as they depart after stoning a baby in *Saved* (Scene 6). Bond utilizes this technique to underscore their inhuman behavior (Suliman 121). Within the sequence of brutal actions and verbal aggression depicted on stage, the dramatist forcefully shifts the audience's perspective to that of the victim. This compels the audience to confront the complex issues surrounding the causes and potential solutions to human violence. Based on the premise "the cause and solution of the problem of human violence lie not in our instincts but in our social relationships," Bond insists that the

brutal violence depicted in *Saved* must be addressed within its social context rather than in isolation (Author's Note 12). In practice, portraying onstage violence without its social context could create a bleak impression of the play, potentially leading the audience to mistakenly believe that human violence is inherent and irreparable. Therefore, the focus should always be on understanding the causes and consequences of violence, rather than the act of violence itself. Len's role in *Saved* plays an important part in bridging the gap between the audience and the play. At first, the protagonist falls short of the expectations of those who look to him as a positive role model. However, The audience is encouraged to side with Len when he tries to understand each family member's problems through communication. Because of his persistent attitude toward the problems confronting him in struggling to recover his relationship with the other members, the play appears, in the dramatist's words, "irresponsibly optimistic," indicating his reliance on his audience, who hold the key to the success of the play. This is the dynamics of *Saved* that lies in the interrelationship between the theatre and the audience.

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