

In the Dark Forest: An Althusserian Reading of Edward Bond's Poems

Karanlık Ormanda: Edward Bond Şiirlerinin Althusserci Okuması

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Abstract

As an activist, a playwright and a poet, Edward Bond (1934-) avails himself of literature's power for practical purposes in order to raise awareness of a chain structure which entraps and subjugates the individuals by transforming them into mere subjects. Bond's close look into the dynamics of society in his poems offers a specific ground for demonstrating the subjection process of the poetic personae. Accordingly, *In the Dark Forest*, can be regarded as an epitome of Bond's ideas consistently verbalized through various mediums of expression on the interpellation of individuals in Althusserian sense. This study tries to evaluate the selected poems of Bond by means of Althusser's argument of ideology and the apparatuses through which ideology sustains its ascendancy over the subjects. The study also concentrates on the duality of (in)visibility of the state apparatuses in the poems by means of multilayered imagery and metaphorical language employed by Bond. Since the poems merge the private realm into the public sphere, their political stance also denotes a personal yearning for unity and peace. Thus, the poems vacillate between optimism and pessimism, but in the end, a dark atmosphere prevails since the subjection process is inevitable and the subject can achieve his Althusserian bad citizenship only through a consciousness which keeps him in the system but with the knowledge of how it operates.

Keywords: Edward Bond, Althusser, Ideology, subject, power relations, state apparatuses.

Öz

Aktivist, oyun yazarı ve şair olarak Edward Bond (1934-), bireyi tebaaya dönüştürüp baskı altına alan bir silsile konusunda bilinç uyandırmak için edebiyatın pratik gücünden yararlanır. Şiirlerinde toplum ve bu toplumun belli güç yapıları tarafından düzenlenişine odaklanması her gün maruz kaldığı sosyal mekanizmaların güncel durumunu yansıtır. Bu bakımdan *Karanlık Ormanda*, tabiiyet süreci veya Althusser'in ifadesiyle 'bireylerin çağırılması' üzerine Bond'un çeşitli vesilelerle dillendirdiği fikirlerinin en güzel örneğidir. Çalışma, Althusser'in ideoloji tartışması ve ideolojinin çeşitli aygıtlar vasıtasıyla nasıl tabiiyet kurduğunu seçilen şiirler aracılığıyla değerlendirmeye çalışmaktadır. Çalışma ayrıca, Bond tarafından kullanılan mecazi bir dil ve çok katmanlı imgelem aracılığıyla bu devlet aygıtlarının görünürlük/ görünmezlik ikiliği üzerine yoğunlaşmaktadır. Şiirler kişisel olanla kamusal olanı birleştirdiğinden politik duruşları da bütünlük ve huzur'a bir kişisel özlemi göstermektedir. Böylece şiirler iyimserlik ve kötümserlik arasında gidip gelmektedir, fakat sonunda tabiiyet süreci kaçınılmaz olduğundan karamsar bir hava hâkimdir. Tebaa ise karşı duruşunu veya Althusserci 'kötü vatandaş'lığını onu sistemin içinde tutan ancak nasıl çalıştığı bilgisini de ona sunan bir bilinçle başarmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Edward Bond, Althusser, ideoloji, tebaa, güç ilişkileri, devlet aygıtları

“When we have language,
then ideology becomes not only possible but inevitable”
Edward Bond, A letter to Geoff Gillham, January 1991

Introduction

Edward Bond is one of the most controversial playwrights¹ of British drama. Besides writing plays in a poetic style, he can also be regarded as a prolific poet. His focus on society

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¹ As David Tuallion argues, although Bond is accepted as a successful playwright, his works do not appear with the same so-called popularity (but scandalous news always circulates on media about his words), which is contradictory in itself. Bond also solidifies such a contradiction by talking about the gist of his plays or the operating incentives leading him to write certain plays rather than giving specific play names in most interviews with him (2015, p. 3-6). As Tuallion further maintains, “Edward Bond as writer is today more acknowledged,

and its arrangement by certain power structures reflects his aim to reject the current state of the social mechanisms that he is exposed to on an everyday basis.²

Bond collected his poems into two volumes. In addition to Bond's structural partition, the poems can be separated into two realms as the private and the public from the respect of their poetic forcefulness. His poems can also be categorized as lyrical and political poems. But such divisions stand as artificial demarcations for Bond since he does not see any difference between the inner (lyrical) and outer (political) spaces of the subject. In an interview, Bond states that "even as a private individual one is a member of the community. If one tells the truth about oneself, one is obviously performing an act that has relevance to society, not just to oneself" (1976, p. 415). Bond's words can be explained with 'the mirror structure of ideology'³ suggested by Althusser. Being a "member of the community" (Bond, 1976, p. 415), the individual reconstructs his intersubjective relation to the other. Then, the individual turns into a subject by both trying to keep his subjectivity and being subjected to the ideological apparatuses. Furthermore, as Strathausen points out in the light of Lacan, "the individual is 'subjectivized' in a double sense: it is interpellated as a subject, but at the same time subjected to the Absolute Subject and thus active in history only in order to reproduce the existing relations of production" (1994, p. 62).

In the Dark Forest (1978-1985) is a collection of poems where Bond poeticizes the violence⁴ and manipulations of the state or the absolute power over the individuals who are transformed into automatons or robotic entities. Moreover, his evaluation of violence as a concept in his poems bears a striking similarity with the violence expressed in Bond's plays as a source of tension. In other words, most of his poems follow a similar structure: violence is depicted in the opening lines and its outcomes on individual-subjects are narrated in the remaining lines. Thus, Bond's argument of violence in his plays also functions in the same way in his poems,

quoted, appreciated or criticized as an implacable preacher with clear-cut and provocative assertions, and the intimidating shadow cast by this figure contributes further to the concealment of his actual, proper dramatic work" (2015, p. 7). This study cannot resist the clear descriptions of the poet-playwright too, but it also tries to shed light on the "intimidating shadow" (7) of Bond's poems from an Althusserian analysis.

² In Bond's words "we find the guide to poetry and drama by reference to the street . . . there is no mysterious world of higher truth that is unapparent in the supermarket or the car wash or the law court" in a letter to John Clemo in March 9, 1990 (1994, p. 57).

³ According to Althusser the mirror structure realizes itself by creating

- 1) the interpellation of individuals as subjects;
- 2) the mutual recognition between subjects and Subject and among the subjects themselves, as well as the recognition of the subject by himself and
- 3) the absolute guarantee that everything really is so: God really is God, Peter really is Peter, and, if the subjection of the subjects to the Subject is well respected, everything will go well for the subjects: they will 'receive their reward.' (2014, p. 206)

The study constructs its argument on the above listed results of mirror structure that is going to be analysed in detail through the selected poems of Bond.

⁴ In a report prepared by Debuyst for the Conference of Directors of Criminological Research Institutes in 1972, the concept of violence redefined in terms of the social realities of the seventies. He criticizes the limited definitions offered by Lalande ("[as] an illegitimate, or at least illegal, use of force") and Lafon ("use of force contrary to the rules, against the law"). Debuyst maintains that ". . . there are forms of violence which are legally permitted: we have only to think of war, certain forms of police repression, legitimate self-defence etc." by deducing that "in some cases authority regards violence as legitimate" (1974, p. 180). Accordingly, Bond argues how this legalized form of violence is abused in order to transform individuals into subject positions in his poems.

There are moments of violence. They very often occur quite early in a play and the play then takes consideration of what has happened or what the consequences of that are. I always try to relate the problem of violence to society. (1976, p. 416)

An Althusserian reading of the poems can be a useful means of appreciation for demonstrating the destructive nature of the state apparatuses in Bond's poems. It also presents the tension between the dichotomy of real freedom and false recognition of such a freedom. Thus, this study tries to analyze selected poems of Bond within the defining role of ideology and Althusser's formulation of the state apparatuses. The study also concentrates on three major arguments in *In the Dark Forest* which are the individual-subject conflict, the state force, the problem of authority and questionable history as a paradigm to create false relations or receptions.

Althusser and Bond: Differences and Similarities

Althusser suggests two paradigms for the structure of the state by explaining the capitalist structure with the assaults of a Marxist stance. The first mechanism sets the ground for the development of the following one, ideology. The system also works in an inverse way, that is, ideology determines the functions of state apparatuses. State apparatuses (SAs) are divided into two sub-categories as repressive state apparatuses and ideological state apparatuses (ISAs). The former one "functions by violence" no matter it is physical repression or not and contains such groups as the government, administration, army, police, courts and prisons (Althusser, 1996, p. 53). The second group, ideological state apparatuses embody themselves in the social institutions such as religion, education system, family, law, political system, communication, trade union, and cultural ISAs (p. 54). For instance, in the plays such as *Red, Black and Ignorant*, Bond portrays a similar structure to demonstrate how the SAs and ISAs transform the individuals into either into monsters or living dead.

Bond and Althusser contradict in their perception of 'literature' although they share similar ideas on the violent politics of state and ideological relations determinant on the individual. In this regard, Althusser places literature into the category of cultural ISAs, literature is not different from a manipulating and encoding communication device, thus it serves for the aims of repressive ideology. On contrary, Bond regards literature as a way or action to cope with the depressing power structures in epic style by asserting that

People are violent because they are subjected to certain pressures. Now, if you do everything you can rationally to remove those pressures, then you are in a position to be moralistic about violence and to say: 'Violence is wrong'. But if you don't do that, then you have no right to morally condemn violence in those circumstances. And also it will be ineffective. (1976, p. 418)

In the Dark Forest is an attempt to justify that Bond is taking the position of not a moralist but an activist who fights against violence through the power and "economy" of the poem (1976, p. 414). According to Bond 'rational' art does not work for the ideology but functions against the mainstream reception of the institutions. When Bond supports the changing power of literature, paradoxically, he comes to terms with Althusser at the same point of their contradiction.

Repressive SAs belong to the public domain, whereas ISAs are dominant in the private realm. But for Althusser, this distinction is only valid in a bourgeois system which

applies its 'authority' (1996, p. 54). So both state apparatuses can function in a public and private domain. Repressive SAs have only one element, violence. On the other hand, ISAs perform through the power of ideology. The line between repression and ideology is an interchangeable one and it enables SAs and ISAs use violence and ideology as primary and secondary forces. For instance, Edward Bond recounts how the police can impose violence upon individuals by employing ideology as a complementing part both to formulate certain values to its members and to create psychological violence besides the empirical one in certain poems.

According to Althusser, ideology leads individuals to false relations and notions. Thus, he presents two theses for expressing "the imaginary form" and "materiality" of ideology (1996, p. 55). His first formulation is that "ideology is a 'representation' of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" (p. 55). Thus, the imaginary is represented as the real in its corporeality. Ideology is an "illusion" and "allusion" at the same time⁵. It needs to be analyzed and reinterpreted to reveal the underlying reality or the hidden real one (Althusser, 1996, p. 55). The second thesis is about the material entity of the ideology. Althusser states that "ideology always exists in an apparatus, and its practice or practices" (p. 56). Hence ideology and SAs are interdependent to function both on the levels of idea and corporeality.

Bond presents in his poems the process of transforming the individual into the subject under the law of authority. The same process is also a matter of struggle between keeping the human side of man and changing into a cannibal that destroys its own kind. Althusser names this process with another thesis related to the ideology, that is, "ideology interpellates individuals as subjects" (1996, p. 57). He suggests that ideology cannot exist without subjects. For this reason, ideology realizes its aim through "concrete subjects" and "by the category of subject (the soul in Plato or God)" (p. 57). Furthermore, Althusser maintains that "you and I are always already subjects and as such constantly practice the rituals of ideological recognition guarantee for us that we are indeed concrete, individual, distinguishable and (naturally) irreplaceable" (p. 58). Accordingly, what Bond achieves in his poems is to create a space for recognizing that he exists in ideology so as to "stop [himself] going mad" (1976, p. 414).

Thus, Bond is a poet who vacillates between the borderline of optimism and pessimism. Most of his plays end with some sort of destruction, assassination or suicide but at the same time with the traces or implication of a hopeful resolution. Bond accepts Althusser's idea that "man is an ideological animal by nature," (1996, p. 56) but by writing a poem on ideology he also demonstrates that "it is necessary to be outside of ideology to be able to [say] I am in ideology (a quite exceptional case) or (the general case) I was in ideology" (Althusser

⁵ As Žižek argues "ideology is not simply a 'false consciousness,' an illusory representation of reality, it is rather this reality itself which is already to be conceived as 'ideological,' 'ideological' is a social reality whose very existence implies the non-knowledge of its participants as to its essence," (2008, p. 15-16) which calls to mind the 'good' citizen described by Althusser.

1996, p. 59). Thus, the poet is already marginalized and through dark forest image, poeticizes a hostile world⁶ with determinant power apparatuses.

(In)visibility of the Subject in the Darkness of the Forest

“In the Dark Forest,” a poem from which the collection takes its name reflects the political and social situation of the modern world from a symbolic perspective. Bond defines poetry as “it’s what is left when the superfluous is taken away” and his plurality in meaning is expressed with “I often deliberately use words that have layers of meanings” (1976, p. 414). subject? “In the Dark Forest” exemplifies the poet’s attempt to revitalize what is rational, which is forgotten by the current society because of endless wars, authority, violence and inhumanity by means of the irrational and the surreal images.

Two corporeal groups are depicted, the wolves and the rest in “In the Dark Forest.” The dichotomy of the suppressor and the suppressed or SAs and the subjects are denoted with the existence of authority through triplets and couplets. The forest image aid and abets the violent leaders of the darkness for outstretching the physical repression in Althusser’s terms, which has a historical basis since during the seventies and early eighties, Bond and Althusser experienced the totalitarian administrations, the pressure of securocracy and ‘police state’ of the late Cold War period. Within the same historical background, the poem not only visualizes a physical lack of light but also reveals the predominance of the evil,

In the dark forest
The wolves silently circle in front of their lair
Like a mob of riderless horses
In the dark forest
Trees stand as thick as cages filled with bars
The wolves glide between them as easily as shadows with
eyes (Bond, 1987, p. 75)

Bond intentionally creates metaphorical realms for the development of the argument. In the concretization process, Bond leads his reader to the negative reception of the authority with definite words such as wolf teeth, wolf jaws with dripping blood, hand torches and the lines as “In the dark forest/ The wolves howl their slogans at night// In the dark forest/ Frightened birds crash in the treetops and flutter on the ground” (p. 75). Moreover, the abundance in the visual, auditory and tactile imagery reflects Bond’s concern for composing a ‘tangible’ poem without excluding an assumed meaning in it as he clarifies with the words,

Poetry must be solid, material, hard. The reaction to it should be mental and physical. Poetry should not only have the physicality of water but the reaction to it should be like that of the skin when water is dashed onto it. (2013, p. 24)

Accordingly, it seems that Althusser’s ‘repressive state apparatus’ is conveyed through a universal concern when the metaphorical circle of wolves is reinterpreted within the context of a midnight protest march of a group of students and the police trying to disperse the crowd that has gathered.

⁶ In the poem named “In the Dark Forest,” for instance, the negative image of ‘wolves’ with their threatening bloody teeth in the opening lines can be considered to set the ground for the reader to visualize the submission for the power of ideology.

As the couplet “In the dark forest/ the wolves move closer to the house” implies, the private realm of the individual is under the threat of destruction as it happens in the fairy tale of Little Red Riding Hood. When the same lines are evaluated within the context of the interrogation and investigation of certain state organizations, the situation of the individual is not so bright since “the canopy is thick and dawn cannot come at dawn/ no day no night” (Bond, 1987, p. 76).

In the dark forest
 The beginning is as far away as the end
 The future is as lost as the past
 Prisoners are always in mid-sentence
 In the dark forest
 The wolves come on time (Bond, 1987, p. 76)

The last lines of “In the Dark Forest” above present the relation of ideology to temporality. The ending reminds the opening lines of *Divine Comedy, Inferno, Canto I*⁷ by Dante as follows, “Midway life’s journey I was made aware / That I had strayed into a dark forest,/ And the right path appeared not anywhere” (Dante, 1976, p. 3). That is, what the personas of *Inferno* and “In the Dark Forest” share are not only a sense of being lost in a horrifying forest but also the extreme feeling of fear due to an unnameable force which confines the allegorical journeys of the personae. While the individual’s fear takes the shape of the three beasts in Dante, in Bond’s case, the fear is reflected through corporeal forms of state apparatuses. To put it differently, in Bond’s poems there are no wild animals hampering “the pilgrim’s progress up to the hill of salvation” (Alpakın Martinez-Caro, 2001, p. 572). Instead, ideology as concept replaces Dante’s beasts. Thus, Bond’s poetic persona itinerates without any sense of “progress” and preaches the loss of any possible “salvation” (p. 572).

As the second line, “The beginning is as far away as the end” (Bond, 1987, p. 75) of “In the Dark Forest” suggests, the linear sense of time is subverted through the persona’s metaphorical journey which can be named as subjection process. Accordingly, the Althusserian definition of ideology is beyond the boundaries of history or in other words, it is not time-bounded. Moreover, the category of the subject does function, in the same way, no matter what historical time or conditions differ. As the above lines denote, the hegemony of one colour (which is also symbolic in the sense ideology suppresses the plurality of different ideas by means of plural apparatuses) completes the pessimistic and apocalyptic perception of time. The wolves circling in the beginning lines symbolically draw a circle for delineating the borders of ideology over the subjects or prisoners in mid-sentence.

Repressive SAs: Depiction of a Dystopian World

⁷ Translated by Laurence Binyon as below,
 Midway life’s journey I was made aware
 That I had strayed into a dark forest,
 And the right path appeared not anywhere.
 Ah, tongue cannot describe how it oppressed,
 This wood, so harsh, dismal and wild, that fear
 At thought of it strikes now into my breast.
 So bitter it is, death is scarce bitterer (Dante, 1976, p. 3)

Bond's poems oscillate between the description of humanity and inhumane feelings with both romantic and anti-romantic backdrops. Because most of the poems visualize a destroyed world, nature's disconnection from the subject also contributes to such derelict landscape. Nature's borders, to put it differently, create another coercion besides the artificial borders of ideology. Then, violence is imposed upon the subject by either the elements of nature or man's own kind.

In "Music of Spheres," Bond expresses a world which is destroyed by the ill-nature of administrators. Althusser points out that state apparatuses work primarily with violence and secondarily through ideology (1996, p. 54). SA functions in the public domain but also enters into the private space in certain cases and "Music of Spheres" demonstrates what is lost in the private realm through the outer defining powers as it is reflected by Bond as below,

After the disaster when we lay in ruins
 It would be good if people from another world
 Who had read on their instruments
 The signs of our madness
 And had imagined our misery and despair (Bond, 1987, p. 78)

Althusser argues that to realize self-knowledge of ideology or recognizing how ideology functions through questionable visibility is possible only by means of a certain distance from the influencing circle of ideology. In this respect, the persona of "Music of Spheres" constructs a fantasy about aliens or the extraterrestrial "people" looking into the world from a higher altitude with their special "instruments" and scrutinizing the state of mankind after a total destruction, say a post-nuclear war. The following lines,

Broadcast -since they could never visit a place so contaminated-
 Music through space
 So that we knew there were still people who lived in peace
 and were not led to death by their rabble of leaders (Bond, 1978, p. 78)

combine both the yearning for regaining the man's human side and the improbability of such a desire due to the existence of an uncontrollable group of administrators through state apparatuses controlling over the public domain. In this respect, the title "music of spheres" gains an allusive function⁸ by referring to the loss of harmony in 'Musica Universalis' (or The Music of the Spheres) which is a popular subject in the Renaissance period with the focus on balance and harmony in art, science and governing bodies. Accordingly, the corporeality of man's corrupted state is stressed with the word contamination, which depicts the world as a poisonous or quarantined place. The violence predominant and threatening is also conveyed on the psychological ground with an emphasis on 'our madness.'

Moreover, a similar co-existence of anti-romantic space and a desire to return to that romantic sphere is conveyed in "Pleasant Landscape." On contrary to the serene description of a pastoral setting as the title suggests, the poem delineates the artificiality and hostility of authority by subverting the wilderness of nature as follows,

Far fens- sun on the fields and tree tops

⁸ Although Musica Universalis a general term about the order of planets and an unheard music produced during their movement in harmonic way, it also symbolizes the Pythagorean system of "geometric proportion" in which "the 'golden section' signif[ies] beauty and harmony, the 'geometric,' justice" (Scott, 1978, p. 105).

Everywhere things grow- the sign of the human hand
 The silos are not seen till you're close
 Along the road on the wire fences lick'n-spit neat warning
 with skulls and red letters
 The rags and bones on the wire at Auschwitz (Bond, 1987, p. 78)

The poem employs the basic conflict of man and nature to describe the physically repressed situation of the individual through the authoritative means such as prisons and concentration camps. In the first three lines, the persona depicts nature with a fragmented impression. That the all-comprising power of nature hides the ugliness created by the hand of man refers to the romanticizing of nature and indicates a false recognition since the productions of man are already there as a threatening force. In this respect, the multilayered "silo" image constructs both a positive image as a tower for storing food and grain and a threatening one as an underground place for storing and firing missiles. Thus the image conveys both life (as food storage which is critical in wartime) and death (artillery crucial during warfare) through the phallic structure "silo," by referring to the gaze ("the silos are not seen till you're close") and the Panopticon-like construction in order to solidify the subjection.

Furthermore, the freedom the persona feels with the vastness of nature is subverted with the "wire fences" delimiting the sphere of the subject by the Subject. "Lick'n-spit neat warning with skulls and red letters" demonstrates the function of language for coding individuals as subjects on the level of signification. "The rags and bones" at Auschwitz materialize the repression by calling to mind Althusser's argument "an ideology always exists in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices" (1996, p. 56).

"Wire fences" reconstructs the artificial circle of the authority to enslave the individual by transforming him or her into the subject position. The poem takes a historical event, a mass murder as a basis to visualize how the repressive state apparatus functions to sustain its own existence. This solidness of authority is expressed in another poem "This House is Made of Stone" as follows,

This house is made of stone
 Wind blows and the trees bend
 wind blows and the grass bends
 wind blows and the flowers shake
 But the stone is not moved (Bond, 1987, p. 95)

The poem makes a comparison between wind and stone as two forces in the fight. Bond takes the side of wind by uttering "wind shears dust from the side of the stone/ it stands/ Blow harder wind!" (p. 95). When the wind is evaluated within the way Romantics such as Shelley use it with the implication of the soul, the persona verbalizes his yearning for a return to the self. But even as the exclamation mark denotes (in most poems Bond omits punctuation), this return is impossible since there is no existence of self but subject functioning in the system of the State.

The close nature of a predetermined organization subverts the image of freedom into an ephemeral entity, in other words, the comparison of volatile and solid materials demonstrates the unchangeable structure of authority functioning without any significant

threat to its existence. In "Beautiful People" the persona suggests a transformation from the artificial borders constructed by the government and ideology by asking "On the walls of your houses grow beautiful leaves/ How will you escape?" (Bond, 1987, p. 77). Then he mentions the difficulty of cracking a gap from the circle consolidated by the repressive apparatuses of the state,

The government pastes pronouncements on walls
Sentries wait out their watch on walls
Prisoners are shot on walls
But leaves can make even prison walls beautiful
In autumn your leaves turn fiery red- can you take a hint?
And tear down the wallpaper in your lounge
Its even got roses! (Bond, 1987, p. 77)

Althusser defines ideology as "being nothing but its functioning in the material forms of existence of that functioning" (1996, p. 57), and the above lines demonstrate how the subject is manipulated by "the category of the subject" (p.57). Repressive state apparatuses such as "government", "sentries" and "prisons" nurture the existence of the Subject by functioning through "obviousness" (Althusser, 1996, p. 57). But this visibility of the ideology creates a bubble hindering a real recognition, so the persona's question "can you take a hint?" cannot subvert the process of formation from the individual to the subject. "tear down the wallpapers in your lounge" visualizes the desire to learn the underlying principle which covers the reality with false visual elements (Bond, 1987, p. 77). As Althusser puts it, the obviousness does not provide 'the real' that is, "they constitute an illusion, we admit that they do not make allusion to reality, that they need only be interpreted to discover the reality of the world behind their imaginary representation of that world" (1996, p. 55).

Repressive SAs are summarized in the long poems "Grand Hotel" and "The Iron People" which opens with an explicit reference to Margaret Thatcher as "I have been asked to write a poem/ To be sent with other poems in support of disarmament/ To a woman who boasts she is an iron lady" (Bond, 1987, p. 87). Although Althusser places literature within the category of cultural ISAs, Bond revisits his belief in shattering the power of ideology by regarding 'poem' as a counter-attack or an antidote to a parasite.

When the scientists at Los Alamos were told their bomb had
destroyed Hiroshima they cheered
That night you had to tip the head waiter if you wanted a
table in the best local restaurants
Genghis Khan dined on a stage raised over a mound of his
dead and dying foes
And the commandant of Auschwitz delighted in counting
Heads (Bond, 1987, p. 87)

The combination of history and contemporary time or the surreal and the real underlines the difference between the "bad subjects who on occasion provoke the intervention of one of the detachments of the repressive state apparatus" and the good ones who "work alright 'all by themselves'" (Althusser, 1996, p. 60). The scientist, the headwaiter, the historical figure, and the army member embody the power of ideology by realizing their actions coded beforehand. The persona or the outsider balances his isolation with the lines

“Perhaps there is a chance that the mind of a woman who/ boasts she is made of the same metal as bombs/ Might be changed by a poem-if it was good enough?” (Bond, 1987, p. 87). In other words, the persona resorts to the therapeutic power of the art, but the modal “might” used in the above lines signifies the difficulty of changing iron-clad governmental structures.

“Grand Hotel” describes a bombed hotel. Although the poem does not focus on the agents, it implies that a radical activist or terrorist group is responsible for the event to fracture the authority of the leaders. The persona explicates how the violence of state apparatuses is subverted with a similar physical counter attack. The ministers looking down on the strikers as expressed in “In the days before we had seen them stabbing the air with / their fingers as they threatened strikers” are repositioned into the same circle with the opponents by being bombed (Bond, 1987, p. 88),

Yet suddenly they are human: they have problems
Today their eyes stare like those of a woman who thinks of
her unpaid rent
Their faces are as blank as unemployed’s leaving the job
center
Their shoulders as tense as the mother’s whose son is on
active service in the wars of little islands (Bond, 1987, p. 89)

An act of violence or repression, bombing, in this case, reminds the ministers or the apparatuses of the government with their inhumane attitudes. The above lines also exemplify the operating mechanism of the SAs through several items such as economy and army with the implications of harsh conditions in a capitalistic and imperial system. With the pressure they apply upon the subjects, the ministers strengthen the status quo that is cracking with more repressive apparatuses as seen in the following lines,

Tomorrow their tongues cut from jackboots will rasp as they
vote money to arm police now they have another
reason
And to close hospitals and schools and build prisons and
military airstrips (Bond, 1987, p. 89)

The image of “tongues cut from jackboots” can denote the fascistic controlling and manipulation with a reference to Nazis’ long military boots. The strategy towards an act of violence does not eliminate the violence but it legalizes the existence of oppression. So when the monopoly of the state repression is balanced with a similar kind of violence done by the other, the state develops more repressive apparatuses such as police, military bases and prisons as a defense mechanism. What Bond tries to demonstrate in the whole poem is formulised in last line “These ministers who can appear human only after they have been bombed” (1987, p. 89), which delineates two aspects: the fracture in the system makes the means of SAs reposition their subjectivity or in other words, it gives an opportunity to select between being good or bad subject with the glimpses of the real rather than the illusory and the impossibility of such an act due to the intense internalization of the repressive power.

History and Temporal Boundaries of the Subjection

The imaginary nature of ideology makes ideology ahistorical without any origin since it does not exist but function through several means (Althusser, 1996, p. 57). “The Past”

reveals that what we call as 'history' is also a construct for the sake of ideology. The poem opens with writers attempting to announce the truth and ends with dictators proving their arguments with corpses as follows,

There are writers certain
 That what they write is true enough to be underlined
 And dictators who underline their small talk with corpses
 I take the opportunity this gives me to say
 The past is a parasite we should fear (Bond, 1987, p. 72)

The last line of "The Past" clarifies how history is vulnerable to the manipulation of the authority thus how it serves for the suppression since the history is rewritten by the oppressors. The "parasite" image conveys the functionality of ideology, that is, its dependence upon the apparatuses to prove that it is functioning.

In another poem, "Original Sin" history equals mythology. The persona subverts the traditional account of the original sin by rereading it in terms of capitalist economy. The lines "God said Eve plucked from the tree an apple to tempt Adam/ Any god who said was naïve in the ways of the world" (Bond, 1987, p. 72) demythologize that what is called as "God" does not fill in the place of the category of the subject which includes all ideology in itself and functions as a totalizing principle because of its being discordant with the modern world. "His scribe who worked for wages could have told him/ short-supply goods create their own prices" (p. 72) ironically suggests the conventional understanding of god in the first line is faulty by offering a capitalist reading of that certain situation. "Adam tempted more sorely than Eve tempted Adam" (Bond, 1987, p. 72) is a counter reading of the Judaeo-Christian tradition and exemplifies the relativity or "imaginary distortion" of ideology (Althusser, 1996, p. 55).

The Assumption of the Subject's Sovereignty

The mechanism of ideology is realized by the hand of the subject who regards falsely that he is the performer of a definite action. Althusser alleges that "individual is interpellated as a free subject in order that he shall submit freely to the commandments of the Subject, i.e. in order that he shall freely accept his subjection" (1996, p. 60).

"On Answering Cries," "Deciding," "Bread with Pictures on it" and "Do not Be Dismayed" deal with the conflict of the individual against subjection. "On Answering Cries" revisits the interpellation as Althusser defines it. Bond visualizes a drowning scene and indicates that "you" and "he" are already subjected by marginalizing the "hailing ritual" in everyday life,

You who jump into the river to rescue someone
 Who cries help
 May find he struggles so hard to live
 He strikes at you like an enemy
 So that you both drown (Bond, 1987 p. 71)

The lines above also convey the immediate inclusion of the individual into the system of ideology. The last lines "When you answer the cry for help/ Remember your own weakness/

Remember it in all you do” (p. 71) undermine a humanistic reaction by focusing on “the cry for help” (p. 71), which traps and initiates the subjection project.

Another poem “Deciding” clarifies how the passive nature of the subject is presented with the misconception of that he gets actively involved in ‘deciding’ or with ‘free will’, which actually does not exist;

Difficult to decide? To know what you want?
 How can the puppet tell what the master’s hands will do
 next?
 Some decisions are considered painstakingly- then you do
 what’s best?
 The others? Do it!- then you learn who you are
 These are the decisions by which you live (Bond, 1987, p. 71)

“Deciding” opens with two rhetorical questions in which the persona sympathizes with the subject. The third question signifies the fallacy of free will with “puppet-master” dichotomy. “Some decisions are considered painstakingly” repositions the puppet into master’s place only to indicate the vain effort to control one’s own life. “The others? -Do it!” formulates the functioning of the category of the subject and a second voice appears in these lines besides that of the persona. The oppressor’s imperative voice makes the persona understand “who you are”. The distancing effect of ‘you’ paradoxically becomes an outlet for expressing the inner conflicts for the persona. “These are the decisions by which you live” (Bond, 1987, p. 71) conveys the predetermined structure by referring to the subject passively and unconsciously realizing the demands of the ideology.

“Bread with Pictures on it,” tells the story of a worker who accepts painted bread offered by a mysterious person. Then he recounts his obsession with the face of that bread master. He sees the bread painter’s face in the teacher of his kids, the doctor examining his mother, in the priest’s house and his children’s toys. But the last lines demonstrate both the glimpses of enlightenment about grasping the real behind the surface and impossibility of a whole real recognition as follows;

I don’t know my own face in the mirror
 Or why my hands are heavier when they’re empty
 I don’t think the bread with pictures does me any good!
 The starving should learn to vomit (Bond, 1987, p. 83)

A certain experience, eating the painted bread, in this case, fragmentizes the circle created by the ideology and this distancing from the all-encompassing area momentarily leads to a misrecognition as visualized with a mirror image. The consciousness of being a monotypic subject is complemented with the harassment as described in “my hands are heavier when they’re empty”. But in the last lines, the persona returns to the safer ground by means of the joking tone denying the experience of fracture from the realm of ideology.

“Do not Be Dismayed” contradicts with the argument of “Bread with Pictures on it” from the respect of hope and despair. Just like “Audience,” another poem by Bond describes too, “Do not be Dismayed” verbalizes the mission of the poet Bond who is totally in reaction to the subjection process. The poem firstly positions the current state of the world and then repositions it by offering an alternative, resistance to repression or protecting the individual

from the authority. Ideology and its repressive apparatus are given in opening lines "World is in chain/ Everywhere is the tyrant's uniform is paraded" (Bond, 1987, p. 96).

The lines "the struggle for freedom may cost you your life but it is/ certain that slavery would cost you your life" and "those who don't die fighting the tyrant will die fighting for him" (Bond, 1987, p. 96) seem to reflect Althusser's argument that "concrete subjects only exist insofar as they are supported by a concrete individual" (1996, p. 58). Bond's poem attempts to break this link of subjection or ideology's "recruiting" subjects among individuals through the awareness raising process (Althusser, 1996, p. 58). But in the persona's idealistic stance expressed with "Do not Dismayed," Bond is not willing to acknowledge Althusser's idea that we are already subjects.

Althusser categorizes the functioning of ideology into a quadruple system in which individuals are "interpellated" as subjects, they guarantee their subjection to the Subject, the subjects reciprocally recognize each other and absolutely believe that everything is occurring under their own control (1996, p. 59). Media as a communication ideological state apparatus operate in the way to promote the chain relation of subjection. So according to Bond, media become vulnerable to manipulation by the authority. "Interview" exemplifies the degree of manipulation by merging a personal experience to a generalized assumption,

At the end I said to the TV interviewer
 One day as we walk in the street
 We will see the state of the world and how we live
 And burst into tears
 And change it
 When it was screened they cut out
 And change it
 And ended with tears
 Next time I will cut out the tears (Bond, 1987, p. 90)

The "street" image in Bond's poetry signifies a confrontation with the real life instead of the one created by the ideology, probably due to student events and the protests on the streets. The persona interviewed verbalizes the opinions or hopes that would impede the subjection process since it suggests a kind of enlightenment and a return to be an individual rather than a subject to the Subject. "Bursting into tears" visualizes a regained power of humanness and "change it" or action is a direct result of the break with ideology. Since the unity and invisibility of the ideology are shattered, another defending instrument of ideology, manipulation and censure perform their function by reducing what is said into pure sentimentalism.

In "Guesthouse" two realms combining each other are created with a group of salesmen organizing a conference on selling a plastic device in a TV lobby and a woman shouting or "stabbing the air" with her fingers similar to the ministers of "Grand Hotel" (Bond, 1987, p. 88). The poem conveys the interdependence of the state apparatuses by bringing the economy, media and politics together. The woman on TV is probably a reference to Margaret Thatcher, which is not uncommon in the poetry of Edward Bond,

On the screen a woman
 Her hair is stiffly coiffeured but unkept-the wig of a doll

that spends one night in bed and another upside down in a
 shoe-box
 Her lips tighten across her teeth in a smile
 Her skin is a white as a dust sheet
 Her eyes do not cry-others have cried into them
 As carefully as someone who mends a radio with a
 thumbnail she speaks of atrocities forty years old (Bond, 1987, p. 80)

The last lines give a typical example of codifying citizens in accordance with certain historical events by persistent use of media as in this case visual media. The woman on the screen is the embodiment of a repressive power without any trace of humanity, which is expressed in the line “Her eyes do not cry-others have cried into them” (Bond, 1987, p. 80) and she deliberately nurtures from the conflicts and hatred in general sense. Another poem “Reform” recounts in an ironic way how the notion of freedom is reduced to certain physical gains. In the poem “the minister of prisons decrees privileges” such as increasing the number of books from two to three for each prisoner, and that coloured socks can be worn, musical instruments can be learned, caged birds are allowed in the cells (Bond, 1987, p. 84). As a result,

The prisoners are grateful- each day the sun will shine on
 the bars five minutes longer
 But the minister for prisons have not given the prisoners a key
 to the bulldozer
 Or the privilege of painting the walls with slogans
 That turn them into the Books of the Law (Bond, 1987, p. 84)

The advantages offered by the authority only guarantees “their subjection to the subject” (Althusser, 1996, p. 59). The system remains as it is demanded by the ideology. “Bulldozer” image describes the yearning for the elimination of the repressive state apparatuses but through SA and ISAs obedient subjects do not question their current situation. Prison image symbolically reflects the present condition of the individual “interpellated as a free subject in order that he shall submit freely to the commandment of the Subject” (Althusser, 1996, p. 60).

Conclusion

Consequently, selected poems from *In the Dark Forest* illustrate the effort to demarcate the existing system produced by the overwhelming institutions of the ideology with an emphasis on the dichotomies of the real and the imaginary, the subject and individual. Bond distills the defining state politics over the subject into the poems written between 1978 and 1985. The analysis of the poems according to Althusser’s program on ideology clarifies both Bond’s reaction to the hierarchizing mechanisms of ideology and his yearning for a new world based on Marxist humanism.

Through repressive SAs, ideology establishes domination over the subject by trapping the personae into circular borders repeating themselves in a harassing manner in the poems selected. Nature in such a circumstance cannot grant a consoling space for the subject’s recovery from the destructing instruments of ideology. On the contrary, the subject in the poems feels nature’s irrelevance, which doubles his loneliness and entrapped position. In the

end, the poetic personae or the narrators acknowledge that their subjection process is inevitable despite their efforts to subvert unsettle the oppressive power of ideology.

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