

‘A WORLD OF TERROR’: DYSTOPIA AND TRAUMA IN EDWARD BOND’S CHAIR

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Abstract

Dystopia is a cornerstone theme in Edward Bond’s plays. Set in 2077, Chair explores an apocalyptic military world through cryptic and silent characters. Simple elements like a chair may bring catastrophe to a repressive society in which all compassion is a crime and with no possibility to stay outside the prescribed norms. The totalitarian system depicted by Bond’s dystopia can be easily identified in the post 9/11 scenario. Symbolizing human’s alienation from the basis of a technological world which deemphasizes “humanity”, trauma appears as a powerful resource to distort reality for the less painful effect. While fictional characters such as Alice or Billy experience trauma on stage, Bond stops at the causes to reflect upon the systematic violence of our institutions. By figuring cathexis as a radical new form of emotional exploration, the playwright intends to elaborate a profound analysis about the decay of our states. In this futuristic scenario, Bond addresses drama as a contemporary forum for political debate to undertake the meaning of humanism.