



The Psychological Effects of Parental Guidance in Edward Bond's *The Children* (2000)[†]

Edward Bond'un *The Children* (2000) Adlı Oyununda Ebeveyn Rehberliğinin Psikolojik Etkileri

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Abstract

The world has witnessed various economic, social, and political problems throughout history. People could not overcome the psychological disorders that stemmed from war. Individuals growing up under these conditions surely need parental guidance to find the correct path in puberty. Correspondingly, Freud emphasises the importance of parental protection and supervision. Psychosexual developmental stages, which are part of "Psychoanalysis", have served as a guide for parents to raise well-behaved children. In this respect, Edward Bond cleverly deals with the social problems in his plays. He touches upon the theme of violence and victimised children by exposing social issues to present solutions to the existing order for the sake of constructing a mentally healthy generation. Bond additionally believes that literary figures should shed light on the violence that people are exposed to in their early ages. For this purpose, he evidently challenges the problems that the society preferred to keep their ears deaf and eyes blind in *The Children* (2000). In other words, the purpose of this study is to show how Edward Bond successfully reveals the psychological problems of the younger generation by focusing on their main underlying reasons under the light of Freud's "Psychosexual Development Theory" in *The Children*.

Keywords: Edward Bond, Sigmund Freud, Psychosexual Development, Violence, Children.

Öz

Toplum tarihinde meydana gelen pek çok ekonomik, sosyal ve politik olaylar vardır. Birinci Dünya Savaşı'nın yıkıcı etkileri geçmeden patlak veren İkinci Dünya Savaşı, insanlık tarihini derinden etkilemiştir. Şiddet dolu ortamların yarattığı yaraları sarmayan toplum bir kez daha psikolojik bir yıkıma uğramıştır. Bu toplumda yetişen bireyler de insanların, özellikle ebeveynlerin sorumluluğundadır. 1950'den sonra hayli önem kazanan birey yetiştirme ve yetiştirirken dikkat

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edilmesi gereken hususlar, Sigmund Freud tarafından aydınlatılmıştır. Psikanaliz teorisinin içerisinde yer almakta olan Psikoseksüel Gelişim evreleri bireyin gelişimi için ebeveynlere ve topluma bir kılavuz olmuştur. Bu doğrultuda topluma ayna tutmak isteyen bir diğer isim de Edward Bond olmuştur. Yazdığı sayısız tiyatro oyunları ile toplumun sorunlarını dile getirerek hem var olan düzene çözüm bulmak hem de gelecek nesillerin topluma yararlı bireyler olmaları için sahnelerinde şiddet ve çocukları çokça işlemiştir. Şiddet üzerine yazmaktan kaçınmanın ahlaksızlık olduğunu dile getiren Bond *The Children* (2000) adlı oyununda toplumun genç nesiller üzerindeki etkilerini açıkça belirtmiştir. Bu çalışmanın amacı Bond'un aynı isimli oyununda yer alan Joe ve 10-14 yaş aralığındaki genç karakterlerin gelişimlerine etki eden ebeveyn rehberliğinin Freud'un "Psikoseksüel Gelişim Teorisi" çerçevesinde incelenmesidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Edward Bond, Sigmund Freud, Psikoseksüel Gelişim, Şiddet, Çocuk.

Introduction

"Violence shapes and obsesses our society, and if we do not stop being violent, we have no future" (Bond, 2000: 23). Along with centuries, drama has tried to convey social messages to society through the audience. Playwrights such as John Osborne, Bernard Shaw, Henrik Ibsen, and indeed Edward Bond try to change society's social, economic, and political defects through that society's members. That is why society's members face the reality of the century – the 20th century witnessed two world wars. After the First World War, all the states' balances in Europe and Asia are disrupted. Many new political regimes have emerged. The defeated states are forced to sign very heavy treaties. These events pave the way for World War II. After the devastating effects of World War II, the optimistic way of thinking about the condition that happens under any plight is uprooted and replaced by a pessimistic perspective. European society could not recover for a long time after the pain and depression it caused. They may experience psychological problems due to these wars, which have settled in the consciousness of humanity. As a result, violence starts to dominate society in the second half of the 20th century. After the wars, Europe is exposed to both physical and psychological violence. Leaving their hometowns, establishing new lives in places where they do not belong, and psychological problems have badly exterminated their peaceful (!) lives. Under these conditions, parents cannot bring up mentally healthy children because of violence and their psychological problems (Eltanamly et al., 2019: 2).

The existence of violence is revealed chiefly on stage. British dramatists and playwrights write to seek a solution to this problem and enlighten their society. British theatre turned to comedies to relieve the people's suffering in this period. The playwrights of the twentieth century, who lived through two world wars and much suffering, used the stage as a medium to express their anxieties. The new period is a revolt against the alienation of the working class and the order of the 20th century. The reason for the revolution in theatre is that the anger that started with John Osborne influenced other playwrights and started a new era in the Angry Young Man Movement. In the 20th century, theatre focused on the lives of ordinary people, and realism became the most prominent feature of this period. At that time, many playwrights dealt with social problems. In their plays, such as *Look Back in Anger* by Osborne, they wrote about marriage problems, socio-economic issues, justice, and the condition of society. This play is significant in terms of contributing to reordering the culture and the political system (Luckhurst, 2006: 164). The aim of touching upon these problems is to try to solve the structural problems in society through theatre. Modern society will inevitably experience psychological and destructive effects. Artaud states in his book titled *Theatre and Its Double* "[i]f theatre wants to find itself needed once more; it must present everything in love, crime, war, and madness" (2014:

60). At this point, Antonin Artaud created "Theatre of Cruelty" which shows the audience the absolute truths, like a mirror of society. Under the influence of Artaud, Bond creates his style. However, there is a difference between them. The difference is that Artaud has a pessimistic style about the future, whereas Bond always has hope for the future. The characters that Edward Bond creates exist as pure good at their core. In *The Children*, Bond creates Joe as a victimized member of society. Joe becomes a murderer because of both his mother and the society he lives. Indeed, he is just a young boy who cannot maintain enough attention from his parents during his psychosexual development stages.

Edward Bond focuses on children and how they are affected by violent society. One of the main reasons for this corruption is the capitalist system and values. The effects of the system create pressure and fear among the people. Thus, man turns into an aggressive being. Children in Bond's plays are sometimes salvation for society and sometimes a way out. However, these children often lose their lives or are exposed to psychological violence by parental guidance. Children who grow up with fear and pressure become violent and hysterical during the late-life stages. Hundreds of children have lost their mental balance owing to bullying and oppression. Therefore, they suffer from suppressed fears in their adolescence. However, they could not overcome their suppressed fears for the rest of their lives, so they experienced neurasthenia one after another. Pamela Thurschwell suggests: "Freud's psychoanalytic theory suggested new ways of understanding – amongst other things – love, hate, childhood, family relations, civilization, religion, sexuality, fantasy, and the conflicting emotions that make up our daily lives" (2000: 1). The basis of Freud's theory is to show people that they have strong sexual and aggressive urges. It also proves that they have an unconscious over which they are fighting for supremacy. These immature individuals also have sexual disorders and tend to enjoy pleasure outside their sexual zones. Moreover, the disorders found in patients reveal that they are systemically a result of early childhood experiences, especially parental education. In *Three Essays on Sexuality*, Freud illustrates that during the maturation process, libido energy is felt in different parts of the body (2016: 137). As a result, different sources of sexual pleasure emerge. The pleasure principle that starts with the mouth continues with the anal region, and finally, the genital area becomes the primary source of sexual satisfaction (2016: 199). In this period, deviations may occur due to inherent tendencies or an intense early frustration or satisfaction rate. In such cases, the libido moves away from these areas, and the excess libido returns to the previous phase. As a result, regression and personality problems occur. Freud claims that the sequence of development is substantial (as cited in Strachey, 1953: 315). The process should be completed correctly in the children's psychosexual developmental stages.

This study aims to analyze Bond's significant play, *The Children*. The play is essential in terms of the characters. In *The Children*, almost all the characters are aged between 10 and 14, except for Joe's mother and the old man. The reason why Joe has mental problems is a result of receiving poor guidance from his parents. Trying to satisfy his mother, he became a murderer by setting the house on fire.

Moreover, his mother dehumanized him for no reason. The mother had some mental problems, too, such as being alone to raise a child and having a poor income. Eventually, she reflected her troubles to Joe negatively. He was receiving poor guidance in his psychosexual

development stages. On the other hand, the other young characters are killed by an old man because of Joe. At the end of the play, Joe is alone in his surround. The difference between the play and Bond's other plays is that it brings the world of children to the stage in the eyes of children. Adults are the most liable cause of the children's personalities in this play. It can be easily deduced that parents and society are the only factors shaping children's development and future character.

The Psychological Effects of Parental Guidance in Edward Bond's *The Children* (2000)

Personality is shaped by society and parental attitudes toward children (Freud, 2016: 119). Various factors, such as the society they live in and the family order, greatly affect their character (Freud, 2016: 121). The effect of life determines the character type that a person becomes in adulthood. Assuredly, people perform their actions within the framework of their own choices; however, the root of the factors caused by the choices is always the traces of childhood traumas (Thurschwell, 2001: 22) and the care he experienced. Every individual has the right to have a good childhood, and as Bond wants to take on the role of an advocate for the society that affects the lives of children, he wrote *The Children* to create a healthier, more peaceful, and loving world for the youth. The play discusses society through children's eyes and its ravage on them. Bond presents the traumatic events he does not want to happen to the next generation in the play. Therefore, he wants to be a light to society and reveals this desire. Bond's other plays, such as *Early Morning* and *Saved*, contain one or two young characters; however, *The Children* comprises only two mature ones. The aim of having many children as a character in the play is to awaken the society of the next generation. People can end violence and help children have better lives in the future. Bond replaces Joe to convey his message on behalf of all the children from all over the world.

Parents may face many challenges in their relationships; however, their difficulties should not reflect on their children. Thurschwell also suggests that if the child is aware of the nuisance between his parents, he can blame himself, and the blaming can lead to neuroses (2001: 109). Inevitably, the problems created by each period in the development process come to light. The person experiences the neuroses in his adulthood or in the development process (Freud, 2016: 44). In parallel to this, Joe has severe responsibilities during his childhood. The play contains his thoughts about the children and how society does not create an area for children where they can live peacefully. The main argument of the play is the chain of events Joe passes through after he burns a house that he does not know the owner of. A child died because of the fire, indicating that Joe caused the death reluctantly. After the fire, Joe and his friends try to escape from the town. The sick and elderly man they took with them is the deceased child's father. Later, the old man kills all the children until only Joe is left. The genocidal act of the sick man resembles the attitudes of parents toward their children in society. Joe: "Do not cry. Should not have brought you with me today. Brought you because you cried. Now you are crying even more. Are you afraid? You do not like the dark. You will be all right for one night. Are you hungry? I will bring you some sweets in the morning. What sweets shall I bring you?" (Bond, 2000: 5)

The conversation between Joe and his puppet is about an "abandoned lot by a railway line" (Bond, 2000: 2). Joe's parents are divorced, so his father does not have a good relationship with his mother, who is a hysterical woman. His mother's inappropriate behaviour towards Joe and

her unsuitable lifestyle harms her son's character development. Bond compares the dialogue, or rather the monologue, between Joe and the puppet to a conversation between an adult and a child. Parlak claims in his article that Bond gives Joe the role of an adult to show that parents create a makeshift situation in troubled waters (2018: 307). Joe reflects on his mother's actions towards him. The words he says to his puppet are almost the same as his mother's attitudes in the later parts of the play. Children do not want to remember the positive or negative events they went through in their childhood. Freud firstly classified this behaviour as suppression defence mechanism in 1892. It is a child's unconscious behaviour following an event they want to forget, in which they pretend it never happened. "*Wegner et al. showed that people can indeed be partly successful at suppressing such thoughts, but then later these thoughts increase in frequency*" (as cited Baumeister et al., 1998: 1085). Children can develop defense mechanism without being aware of it, like Joe's behaviour toward his puppet. Joe is afraid of the dark and considers himself in a dirty state. Indeed, he treats his puppet as if it was Joe and tries to comfort him (!) as his mother does. Children with suppression can invent an event that reminds them of bad experiences. He thinks his mother will punish him, so he imitates his mother by shouting at the puppet. To put it another way, it expands on the introjection.

A child needs to grow up in an environment where they are loved and respected. Otherwise, his sexual development is interrupted. Sexual development stays in the fixation process, and the child experiences pathological problems. Joe is a child who thinks he is unloved because of his mother's psychological problems. Joe states the following lines: "*I am too old for you! You are nothing! A puppet stuffed with packing*" (Bond, 2000: 5). Joe's mother has to live in difficult living conditions and care for her son away from the father. As a consequence of being a child, Joe has compassion and innocence. Besides the affection, there is also anger and aggression in him. Due to the difficult living conditions between his mother and son, Joe has not been successful in any of his developmental stages. It is supposed to be that Joe is in his latent or genital stages. These stages are essential for his puberty; during that time, his character develops, and his ego-superego continues to evolve. He is both experiencing self-development and the process of gaining moral values. Divorced parents have an impact on their children. This situation is devastating, especially if the mother is not involved and the parents' lives are more of a priority. Consequently, the child feels alone, and the audience understands his loneliness and desperation from the dialogue with the puppet. His mother's words against him and the life he left alone led Joe to loneliness. A child who feels lonely during development will be obsessed with the former stage. Every individual dread loneliness because when one is alone, he pulls himself down, and this causes neurotic problems. Indeed, the mother is lonely and, because of her fears about life, she behaves like a child when the issue comes to Joe. Freud indicates: "*Conversely, an adult who has become neurotic due to unsatisfied libido will behave in anxiety like a child: that person will become fearful as soon as he or she is alone, that is to say, without someone of whose love he or she had felt assured and will seek to assuage this anxiety by the most childish of measures*" (2016: 120).

Undoubtedly, the role of the mother in child development is crucial. The anal period is completed with the mother, breast milk nourishes the baby, and the libido reaches satisfaction orally. (Freud, 2016: 118-9) However, it is not right to only care about the child. For a mother to bring a child into the world with moral and material satisfaction, she must first be in good

condition (Liberska and Deja, 2021: 2). The mother has to work to fulfil their basic needs, such as hunger and caring for a child. She must lead a life both for Joe and for herself. The responsibilities she took on in society and not being with her husband angered the mother. She takes the pain of his problems and difficulties of Joe. She takes the pain of his problems and difficulties of Joe. Her anger causes severe trauma to the child: “[a]nything goes wrong in our house, Mum hits me. Do not know why. Am I supposed to change the world”? (Bond, 2000: 6) Due to his parents’ being separated, Joe is a child who is divided into two. He does not have a warm family, and the mother takes her anger out on her child because she has to work. It is pretty traumatic for a mother to beat her son; no doubt, a child who is beaten in the developmental stage experiences severe problems. Children cannot change the world, and Joe’s experiences have already caused him to be more mature than his age. At this point, Joe creates a sentence on behalf of all the children. The ones who can change the world are not Joe and his peers but his parents and society, who are responsible for raising him. It is highly traumatic for a mother to beat her son, and there is no doubt that a child the mother beats during the developmental stage suffers greatly. Children cannot change the world, and Joe’s experiences have already made him wiser than his years. It is not typical for a child aged 10 to 14 to wonder if they will change the world. Joe composes a sentence on behalf of all the children. Not only Joe and his peers but also his parents and the society responsible for raising him to have the power to change the world. When he cannot control his rage, Joe imitates his mother once more: “No lies. I brought you here to get rid of you. You have to learn to be on your own. You cannot. You will never be able to look after yourself. That is why you cannot let me go” (Bond, 2000: 6). He combs his hair and puts it back in his pocket as he mulls over his anger. His mother’s stance influences Joe’s behaviour. A child in the developmental stage absorbs everything he sees in his vicinity. These attitudes of Joe are based on the information obtained from his family or society. During the latency period, between the ages of 4-6, the boys’ attention is focused on their mothers. It is no coincidence that Joe looks up to his mother as a role model.

Furthermore, Joe believes the proper way to treat a child is to punish and hit them. Like his mother, he treats his puppet like nothing, forcing him to be alone. Freud claims: “[t]he parents are likely to be the first (phantasmatic) objects of the libido” (2016: 67). Children experience the first satisfaction of pleasure thanks to their parents. The libido's basic needs are from the mother, such as breastfeeding, dearness, and showing her baby, which is vital for satisfaction. Thus, the child reaches satisfaction and can successively complete the psychosexual developmental stages. Joe does not have a mentally healthy mother but rather a warm home. It is incorrect in terms of development for a child of that age to be in such an environment and not even be able to control their anger.

The use of violence by children in their environment is why the tendency to violence descends to the age of children. Children, at this point, understand and employ violence. When Joe cannot control his anger, he wants to kill his puppet by crushing his head with a brick by saying: “I will have to kill you” (Bond, 2000: 6). This scene is like Bond’s *Saved*, where the baby is stoned to death. Joe’s mother does not kill him physically but psychologically. However, if Joe is thought to be imitating his mother, the puppet can also be considered Joe. By killing his puppet, he refers to the attempt to kill his childhood. If a child has lived

comfortably and happily in the phallic stage and has successfully passed to the next stage, they will be happy, healthy, loving, and creative. However, beginning with the anal stage, a forbidden and punished first three years for education and social adaptation pushes its weight around the Oedipal stage (Freud, 2016: 1-2). Many complexes emerge and settle in the future due to the feeling of guilt and the fear of punishment that follows this feeling. Joe's unending tolerance for his mother stems from a phase he is going through. There is a fondness for his childlike love for his mother at the stage of the Oedipus complex. He accepts whatever her mother says. Otherwise, his mother punishes him. The underlying reason for this punishment is Joe's fear of becoming more like his father.

It is imposed that acting like a father is a negative situation. In the phallic stage, when he has the Oedipus complex, he fears his father as much as he loves his mother. This is due to his perception of his father as a rival and his instinct to protect his mother. On the other hand, his fear of his father is a manageable situation. According to Freud, phallic children believe they will be punished by their opposite-sex parents, including the fear of castration (Thurschwell, 2007: 57). According to Freud, in *The Sexual Researches of Childhood*, phallic children believe they will be punished by their opposite-sex parents, including the fear of castration (2016: 95). This situation can have both positive and negative consequences for puberty. There will be no fear of castration because Joe has to grow up estranged from his father. For this reason, he inevitably hugs his mother more tightly. However, in such a case, he will have difficulty abstaining from character formation, alienation from sexuality, or adapting to social environments. Joe is blamed for everything he has done, and he loses the fag money his mother gave him, which terrifies him. When he returns home, he encounters a much bigger reaction than he expected: "*Mother: Go and switch the micro on. Have your meal. You make me weary [...]* Joe: Turns to go. /*Mother: You go when I say, not before.* / Joe: You just told me to switch the... /*Mother: Do not answer me back! Save your lip for outside where it is appreciated. I am upset because I do not know which way to turn*" (Bond, 2000: 9).

According to his mother, Joe's resemblance to his father is at the root of such behavior. On the other hand, troubles and quarrels should not be reflected in a child during the psychosexual development phase. Thurschwell states, "*Freud postulated that one of the primary wishes of early childhood is to be the centre of attention and love from the parents*" (2001: 58). According to this viewpoint, a young boy aspires to be like his father because he sees him as the model mentioned. On the other hand, Joe constantly hears something about his father, such as he is not a good father or has no good character. These rumours about his father have an impact on Joe's mature personality. Joe will choose positive behaviour or vice versa to avoid resembling his father. A child of this age will be overwhelmed by pressure and fear due to their mother's violent reaction. The words from the mother reflect the parents' relationship problems with their innocent child. Bond claims that the problems in the family are not limited to men and women. Joe is directly affected by his mother and father's puzzles. He needs to hear encouraging words but is always met with threats and tense conversations.

Joe's mother has an interesting character. She scolds her son for his little mistakes and quickly changes her attitude. These quick changes demonstrate the psychological disorders that she has. She gets angry at Joe for losing money but soon changes her stance: "*O, you poor kid, you are hungry. I forget you are still a child. Put your arms around me. Give me a hug. I feel as if I*

have forced you. What I am asking is not for myself- it is for us" (Bond, 2000: 10). The mother's demeanour may appear erratic, but it is clear that she understands what her child desires. Her main goal is to manipulate the little child by showing her love to get him to do what she wants—manipulating the child as a mother result in a very negative neurosis in the child's development. Conforming to psychosexual theory, Joe will develop a dependent personality as an adult. Those with dependent personality disorder frequently feel powerless, submissive, or incapable of caring for themselves. This condition, caused by being dependent on the mother throughout the oral stage, also creates excessive anxiety and a fear of abandonment. Although there is no sign of these future problems in the play, a psychoanalytic analysis can draw this conclusion based on the mother's approach to Joe.

The tension, pressure, and dread instilled in a youngster by a mother's comments will have no good consequences in the child's life as an adult. She urges her child to burn down a house deliberately. While providing these directions, she does not forget emotional abuse because it is her most potent weapon: *"You know how to get your way with me. I have to admit it, you twist me round your little finger. You are all I have got in the world. I would not go on without you"* (Bond, 2000: 11). She takes advantage of her son's dependence on her for her gain. These behaviours against Joe turn into torture beyond oppression. Edward Bond intentionally featured so many dilemmas created by the mother in the play. He aims to demonstrate how damaging people with mental problems or unhealthy minds can be when it comes to parenting the next generation. A mother with dilemmas has changed her ideas about the blackmail to her son after he burns the house: *"Stop it! Stop it! Do not ever say that! I will wash your mouth out in disinfectant! Told you to burn a house? What mother would tell her children to do that. She would be a monster! No one would believe you"* (Bond, 2000: 22). Through the quotation, it is clear that the mother gaslights her son by repudiating her inner intention, which is to make Joe set the house on fire. Dr. Theresa J. Covert mentioned the theory of Gaslighting as a method of psychological manipulation and harassment in her book *Gaslighting* (2019: 4). It is a misdirection that forces the individual to question and examine their memory, perception, and mental health. As a form of manipulation, the gaslighted splits the truth through inconsistent statements and induces people to interrogate their memory and sanity. The mother wants to confuse her son's consciousness by pretending that nothing happened. Possibly, she thinks it is the ease of deceiving a small child. However, the effect of this deception on Joe will cause him to lose his mental balance.

A child dies in the fire caused by Joe's mother, so Joe becomes a murderer. Once again, by increasing the dose of tension and violent events in the play, Bond refers to how unexpected results can result from a seemingly simple event. Due to his guilt, Joe prefers to abscond with his friends. Thus, together with a group of children of their age, they embark on a journey for which they do not know where and how it will end. Through the escape, it is possible to deduce that not only Joe, but his other companions are unaware of their responsibilities, and they will sooner avoid difficulties than confront them. In addition to that, the children accompany the old and sick man. They are unaware that the old man is the father of the child who died in the fire. They must cope with a sick man while dealing with several other troubles.

On the other hand, no matter how many crimes they have committed, children's compassion invites attention. Every person has compassion that comes from their infancy,

regardless of the situation of the society they live in or the family structure. Some people do not display it or may not even know it exists. Children, unlike adults, do not hesitate to feel and express such pure feelings (Freud, 2016: 103). Bond claims that the ultimate limits of man are "*compassion, understanding, integrity*" (2001: 107). Based on this, it can be stated that compassion is always present in a person and will continue to exist.

Even if Joe has been abused by his mother and society to the point of murder, he does not have the heart to abandon an old man by saying: "*We cannot leave him now! There is no one else. He would die*" (Bond, 2000: 32). Joe does not demonstrate careless attitudes, one of the psychopathologies associated with toilet training during the anal stage when the anus is the pleasure point. No definite conclusions can be formed about toilet training based on Joe's background. However, based on his mother's actions toward Joe throughout the play, it is reasonable to assume that she would have given him the same punishing, uncaring, and rigorous instruction during the anal stage. Individuals with anal personality qualities may live in a bright and sophisticated world, usually alone. They are still determining how or what to share. They are unable to be happy or do not ascribe pleasure to themselves. The fear of losing control is vital; it exists only when the individuals around it follow their habits (Thurschwell, 2001: 92). Joe has a strong desire not to lose control. While Joe's companions prefer to leave the old man where they found him, Joe insists on taking him, and in the end, he gets what he wants.

After the children's journey with the old man begins, the play metamorphoses into reverse behaviour between adults and children, while adults behave like children and children behave like adults. To the old man, children perform the behaviours children should perform in their developmental stages. In the argument between Tasha and Adam, the old man sleeps and "*turns down his side and curls up like a baby*" (Bond, 2000: 36). It is ironic that during the fight in this scene, the old man sleeps like a baby, but he hears what happened. Children may also pretend to sleep during their parents' arguments, but they hear and feel everything. In addition, the violent sentences Adam said to Tasha are also sentences that should not come out of a child's mouth: "*You are mad! Say it once more- I will break your neck*" (Bond, 2000: 36). Violence is no longer just verbal; it has reached a physical dimension, and it has come down to the age of children. Freud illustrates: "*Quarrels between the parents themselves, or an unhappy marriage between them, form conditions for the most severe predisposition for disturbances of sexual development or neurotic illness among their children*" (2016: 122). A good marriage is necessary for good child-rearing. Children who grow up in happy households enrich their lives with the goodness they witness in their families. Joe has witnessed nothing good about the family structure and group of friends. He was living with a toxic mother, away from his father, in the environment where he lived before the fire. After Joe became a murderer, he remained in a group of friends who used violence against each other. Being in the middle of such intense violence signals Joe that he can also resort to violence in his adulthood.

Through the help of Freud's Psychosexual Development Theory, it is possible to hypothesize about adulthood. Nevertheless, it is quite pertinent to analyze the situation of Joe and his friends in the play. It is noteworthy that children, who look at the optimistic man like a baby, behave like adults; the children are trying to heal the man and attempt to walk him in the ninth scene. As Joe assists the old man is walking, the man struggles and suffers; however,

Joe's words are ripe for a child: *"You are afraid we will leave you when you can walk. You can stay as long as you like. It would be easier for us if you can walk"* (Bond, 2000: 41). It is suitable for Joe because he understands and empathizes with the old man's feelings and emotions. This is because, although no one can empathise with him, he is still not evil towards others. However, from another point of view, he may be attached to the man. He wants to keep the old man by his side because of his excessive optimism and dependence on people, which is one of the personality traits created by the oral period. Indeed, it is not surprising that Joe feels very close to the old man because he does not have a fatherly figure; furthermore, he does not know how to be loved by an older man. Already emotionally involved with his friends, Joe is afraid of the dark and loneliness, so he wants an adult to accompany them; hence, he feels safe in the dark.

As the weeks pass, the children's position gets increasingly bleak because it is difficult to find food and care for the old man. It is worth noting that none of the friends' families pursued or called their children. Children in such situations must express their rage against life in some way, and in the slightest instance, they display their anger by committing violence against one another. Due to the children's age, they are very close to the latency stage. For this reason, the development of logical thinking has begun. They have started to develop the attitudes required to participate in an adult-dominated society. Joe's taking care of the old man exemplifies this sense of responsibility. In addition, the ongoing conflicts in this period may have remained from previous periods. One of the children, aware of real life and difficulties, is Donna: *"I think the world is dying. There is no one anymore. No one looks for us. No one remembers us. I feel old. It must be like this. We have grown and do not understand it yet. Shall we split up?"* (Bond, 2000: 46) Donna and her friends are alone in the world and do not know what to do with a sick man for whom they are responsible. This is because children at that age still need parental care. Both their physical and mental development is not conducive to leading a solitary life. However, in this case, Donna thinks it is the end of the world because they must travel alone, and there is no one to accompany them. Another aspect to consider is the absence of adults who raise children and are accountable for their growth. A life without parents and care is defined as the end of the world in the world of children. There is a connection between Donna's thoughts and Bond's message, which is that humanity's future is in today's adults' hands. Raising lonely and uneducated children is a form of preparedness for the world's end. This preparation will take place because children raised in a violent society will eventually become violent individuals who inspire aggression in the people they encounter for the rest of their lives. *"Your mother was a whore. She worked for me. I kept the money. Bought the house. She wanted to move in with me. No! I moved in with my wife! Your mother wanted revenge! She burnt the house! They only knew- the ones I killed. You did it! You killed my son"* (Bond, 2000: 51).

Joe may find answers to all his unanswered questions in his mind, but none of them is appropriate for a child. It is heart-breaking to know how his mother supports him financially. Furthermore, Joe is negatively affected by being aware of the cause of the fire. Almost every character in the play blames Joe's mother for the fire. In contrast, the old man's words can be perplexing. Although the mother is the cause of the fire, it is ultimately Joe who ignited it.

People should not be judged as good or bad when they are born because this judgment requires life experience. The individual determines the person he will be after the

developmental stages. The personality that emerges is directly proportionate to the environment, society, and parents. Therefore, Joe's nature cannot be blamed for who he is. The responsible ones are society, his mother, who continually scolds him, and his father. Through the end of the play, Joe starts to have psychological disorders and daydream. This is a result of the psychology

The ghost he sees is the child who died in the fire. The sense of guilt causes to depression and neuroses as Freud suggests "the criminals from a sense of guilt" (Goldberg, 2003: 467). He adds that childhood depressions provide satisfaction with misbehaviour. In the scene through the end of the play, Joe seems to be talking to himself and his inner child: "*Stranger: I came to forgive you. / Joe: Forgive me? / Stranger: Yes, you did not mean to kill me. [...] and anyway, I was dead by then. Do not forget me. I wish we could be friends*" (Bond, 2000: 51). When a kid sustains even the slightest damage, he calls out for his mother and longs for an adult to be by his side in any negative situation. The rationale for this is to be able to relax and receive assistance while maintaining a mature demeanour in the face of danger. Children mature later in life as a result of observing adult attitudes. Joe is a child who has received no guidance in this regard. His demeanour in the face of adversity is juvenile. For example, he does not demonstrate a proper attitude by escaping after the fire and bringing numerous children with him, as well as their obligations. His psychology is damaged as a result of all of these behaviours and the guilt of the child who perished in the fire. Therefore, when there is no one around, Joe starts talking to himself and thinks that the imaginary stranger standing in front of him is the child who died. In a minor key, he wants someone to forgive him for what he has done. However, he has neither his mother nor a friend to call him. What he said in the closing scene of the play is proof that he had lost everyone around him: "*I have got everything. I am the last person in the world. I must find someone*" (Bond, 2000: 52).

Evidently, society is shaped by violence, and Joe has no guide to hold his hand in the society he lives in and show him the right path. After losing everyone, he is faced with the future. What Bond wants to emphasize is that Joe, who claims to have everything, has nothing. In fact, an uncertain, alone, and insecure future awaits him. As the characteristics of the play are considered as a whole, the reasons that prepared Joe for this end seem conspicuous; his mother's behaviour towards him, a broken family, and the murder he was forced into are his reasons. The main character of the play, Joe, confronts these issues as he is a member of a broken family; however, the issues that the mother endures are not her decisions but society's derogations. In other words, social structure complicates the mother's existence – it prevents her from properly raising her child during the developmental stages; thus, Joe has issues with the death of a child. All the considered causes are interconnected like a chain. The society that the individual lives in influences the mental state and impairs the psychology; therefore, the inner child of the individual cannot be better.

Consequently, an individual whose development is negatively influenced cannot be an adequate parent in the future, which culminates in the transmission through generations. In addition to the influence of external elements, such as parents and society, the internal element, that is, the individual's own choices, cannot be overlooked. The individual and character he wants to be, not the person he is forced to be, should be adopted. Throughout the play, Joe's mother appears to be culpable, yet the situation is not that superficial from a broader

perspective; as Joe commits arson on the house at his mother's inducement, he is the cause of it. Society influences the development of the individual and shapes the character of the person he will become, but at the end of the day, Joe's behaviour is his choice. *The Children* ends optimistically, and Joe begins to think of starting a new life for himself. In other words, he must overcome his inner conflict and rediscover his innocence in the face of the violence inflicted on him by society.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has scrutinised how the young individuals and child characters in Edward Bond's *The Children* goes through and undergoes developmental stages under the conditions of the period. People come into the world innocent. It is inappropriate to stereotype them as good or bad. Children form their characters with the influence of their society; that is, the social structure and the characters are directly proportional. The id, a part of consciousness, wants its desires to be satisfied, but aggression and violence are not hungering to be satisfied. Being aware of this situation and making children an essential subject of his plays, Bond gets to the root of the problems and brings social problems to the stage. These are issues that need clarification, even if they are uncomfortable to watch or read. Children with psychopathological problems of children like Joe do not achieve adequate satisfaction and endanger future generations. One of the striking features of *The Children* is the lack of self-confidence that the young characters experience on the one hand. Because of his mother's insults, Joe is an insecure child. He fears the dark, never wants to be alone, and takes his puppet wherever he goes. The reason for all these behaviours is that he does not trust himself enough to be alone. He lives in a separated family and cannot find a parent to lean on. His mother also does not act to reassure him and even uses words that will break his existing trust. In his early development process, he receives poor parental guidance from his parents.

Furthermore, he has not any good father figures. As a result, Joe's personality comes up with neuroses. Being a problem for the future, Joe causes the fire and leaves death behind him. Any adult cares about the young generation in the play. In such a society, it is normal for a generation that grew up with violence from infancy and assimilated it to exhibit the same behaviour towards their children. The interactions between Joe and his puppet in *The Children* best illustrate this. He applies every behaviour he takes as an example and internalises from his mother to his puppet. Joe's mother projects her anger toward life onto her son. Children need love and attention, as shown throughout the entire study. In this respect, if Joe could obtain parental guidance in the psychosexual stages, he would have a wholesome personality. Children could improve their personalities for a healthy generation with love and guidance.

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