

Depiction of the Post-Wars Anger in Youths in John Osborne's Play 'A Bond Honoured'

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Abstract

The European continent is supposed to be the most rich and dominant; politically and economically, but 'A Bond Honoured' by John Osborne has exposed its hidden lacunas that are evidence that this so-called rich and civilized continent has numerous drawbacks; mostly related culture and civilization. In addition to this play, 'The Rape of the Lock', a mock heroic epic poetry, and T.S.Eliot's 'The Waste Land' have also exposed the absurdity and hollowness of England. In the same line, John Osborne has focused on the cultural downfall of England in 'A Bond Honoured'. In his most famous play 'Look Back in Anger', Osborne has portrayed the unemployment problem of England, and in this play he has presented the picture of cultural and social absurdity.

Keywords: Depiction of the Post-Wars Anger, John Osborne's.

Introduction

John James Osborne was born on 12th December 1929 in London, England. As a dramatist, he has contributed fourteen plays in which 'Look Back in Anger' is his most famous play of him through which he has exposed the problem of unemployment prevailed in contemporary England. Kenneth Tynan the most influential critic of the age praised Osborne's 'Look Back in Anger' as: "I could not love anyone who did not see Look Back in Anger; it is the best young play of its decade."¹

'A Bond Honoured' is one of his less popular plays through which he has exposed many social, political and religious problems of his time. It was published in 1966. The main focus is on sex and sexual crimes. Leonido is the main focus who is absent-minded; he recalls that he had stabbed his mother in his senseless condition of mind. Upon this heinous crime he committed suicide. There are many other incidents that are related to crimes. The story of Leonido and Marcela is very tragic. They are brother and sister but their relationship has been shown as the lover and beloved so this relationship spoils their social reputation. The adaptation retains the sense of cruelty of the original, expositing the innermost feelings of Leonido, a man of exceptional violence and sadism.

We see this in his relationship with his sister, Marcela, with whom Leonido commits incest, and with his father, Gerardo, whom he despises when he comes to discuss with him the issue of Marcela's marriage. He brutally maltreated his sleepy servant, Tizon. Here, John Osborne has given a sharp account of Leonido's character. The playwright has focused on many problems that are related to social damnation.

'A Bond Honoured' (1966) is a play written by John James Osborne. In this play, Osborne has presented the scene of sex-crime. Like the other plays of Osborne, this play also picks up social issues. Anger, tense, frustration, sorrows, suffering, unemployment, theft, sex and love are the major themes in his plays, so this play too comprises all these themes. In comparison to the other plays of Osborne, this (Bond Honoured) is different. In general, Osborne's protagonists are not criminals. They do not commit very serious crimes and worst deeds but in 'A Bond Honoured' its protagonist commits so many worst deeds and does not like to come back. He is overpowered by sex-crime and never likes to be back.

This depiction of the post-wars social situation is an indication that the future of youths in England will not be favourable. The bitter situations were being created by the authority, whether it is of the Church or government. One side, Church was dominantly imposing rules and regulations on the people and other side, the men like, Leonido were opposing those so-called rules because those rules and regulations were against the progress of youths.

Already, England has witnessed its social and cultural damnation in the two world-wars which caused social, political and economic unrest across the European continent. The young generation has seen its ruin so, the people, particularly young fellows, stood up against all the authorities.

'A Bond Honoured' is a true and surviving portrayal of the contemporary social situations, which occurred in England after the World-War -I and the



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World-War-II. Its protagonist Leonido has been shown fallen into the ditch of sex-crime. Hence, this play is the study of a man who is inclined in the wrong ways of life. His habits of sex-crime make him Satan and his satanic deeds do not let him rise into right direction. Under the shadow of Leonido and his sex-crime, John Osborne has touched the most burning issue of the time. It is sex and sex-crime. It was a holistic problem in Osborne's time. Kenneth Tynan, a literary figure, had suggested to Osborne to write on such a holistic issue. John Osborne followed his suggestion and proved himself to be a true follower of Tynan. 'A Bond Honoured' play written by John Osborne is based on Lope de Vega's 'La Fianza Satisfecha'.

This play does not only show the sex, sex-crime of Leonido, but also it focuses on the man's interest in sex. Osborne has revealed a picture how a good man changes in to bad one and falls into bad habit of sex-crime. It tells the story of Leonido and Marcela which is highly tragic. The playwright shows how their relationship spoils their social reputation. The adaptation retains the sense of cruelty of the original, exposing the innermost feelings of Leonido, a man of exceptional violence and sadism.

Osborne has revealed his relationship with his own sister, Marcela with whom he commits incest and with his father, Gerardo, whom he despises. Even his sleepy servant, Tizon, is brutally maltreated in a long opening scene, where Osborne begins his exposition of Leonido's character.

Osborne exposes this heinous crime very slowly. He discusses a social ritual in which the players are grouped in a circle, and as they become concerned in the action, they emerge from the shadows to take their place alongside Leonido., and having done so, fade back into the ring. There is a pent-up imprisoned animalist about the proceeding as the depths of individual will and obsession are plumped.

In this way, climax rises in the play. An alarming situation stands up before our eyes. We feel wonder to see how satanic the character, Leonido, might be. It seems that his aim is to break up the bond of relations and society. As the title of the play, 'A Bond Honoured' suggests us to think about it. In the human-society, everywhere, some relations are supposed to be pious and honoured. Brother-Sister relation is also one of them. Maybe it is India or England, whether it is Hindu or Christian, and whether it is white or black, the relation of brother and sister is always safe, secured and pious.

The inhuman and harsh activities of Leonido created numerous social and mental problems for his father. There is an incident; when Leonido's father comes to suggest to him about his well-being and discusses the marriage-plan of Marcela, he becomes arrogant and furious in resistance. He irritates and a hot-talk takes place between both:

"Leonido: I say that clapper tongue of yours has deafened you inside that hollow bell."¹

Likewise he has no respect for, or fear of Dionisio, his would-be brother-in-law, whom he despises as being as lawful as an endless sermon. Outside in the garden, Leonido meets his servant Tizon, who asks:

"Tizon: Have you no feeling? Even for the reckoning?"

Leonido: I have God's credit for the moment. Let him settle up for me, and send in his account when he wants to."²

This is the bond to be honoured. Leonido is found asleep on the beach by some raiding Moors, but defeats them in a short battle. The Moor-King Berkeley, explains that he was seeking to capture so Christian hostage to give to the woman he loves but cannot please. This bizarre situation appeals to Leonido, and he accepts the offer to go with the Moor to Tunis. He puts on Moorish robes instructing Tizon to go to his father, Gerardo. Let us see:

"Leonido: I renounce his blood. Also his God, his law, the baptism and the sacrament oh, yes, and the passion of Death. I think I shall follow Mahomet."³

In the same play, we find another love affair; between Leonido and Lidora. Lidora is a woman whom the Moor-King loves. She falls in love with Leonido, but her feelings are not with Leonido. In looking, she is not a beautiful lady. Later, when other Christians are captured they turn out to be Gerardo, Marcela, and Tizon, who are welcomed by Lidora; "Leonido resents their intrusion, scornful of their servility to the Moors and sinking even deeper into his own viciousness, he stabs his father's eyes, when frustrated from killing Gerardo, he rushes out threatening to burn Tunis. The bond tightens and Leonido begins to realize his isolation and admits to a mysterious voice which beckons him. Leonido: "My imprint will have died out of all hearts inside a month. Discard."⁴

The voice is replaced by the symbolic shepherding telling Leonido of the debt he owns. The account is about to be settled. Leonido, weary and resigned, acknowledges that he is overspent, and tells the shepherds that he shall have his life to settle the debt. In Osborne's play he was in Lope de Vega's. The others find him; he fights but soon throws down his sword, and begs forgiveness of his father and sister.

Leonido, being an absent-minded man, recalls that he stabbed his mother –at this he is dragged out and hanged. King Berkeley then reads letter written by his deceased father who explains how the old king, whilst hunting in Sicily some years before, had rescued a Christian baby girl, Lidora, from a bear and brought her home. Thus Lidora is Marcela's long lost sister. The king decides to set them all free, and they take Leonido's body to Sicily.

Here, the play seems to be false towards the end that the 'Pantomime' ending is almost appropriate, indeed a turn to end with:

"Tizon: Well, king he played a good tune on vituperation, it may not be a bond honoured, but it's a tune of sorts to end with."⁵

Again, we find ourselves asking what Osborne meant by this play. Can it be regarded as anything more than an experience? Could the Lope de Vega play have any meaning for a contemporary audience? Osborne states that he was fascinated by the dialectic with the principal character of the Lope de Vega original, and by the Christian frame-work of the play. One of the most memorable passages of Osborne's reconstruction is that in which to explain the essence Tizon tries Christianity to Lidora. She is surprised at the fact that man can be mortal and immortal at the same time.

The Vehemence of the Life-Portrayed might conceivably have made a 'A Bond Honoured', a public voice play, but the second half of the play is too elaborately devised and the story becomes infeasible, diluting the exploration of violence which preceded it. The Two phases in Osborne-play suggest that some contemporary relevance might have been intended. One is "our shrinking possibilities' the other 'our overprotected island."⁶

Hence, through this play, 'A Bond Honoured', John Osborne has presented a live picture of his contemporary society in which he had seen plenty of vices; the Church-rules, religious rites and rituals. He literally came in contact with the Church and found numerous discrepancies. Ultimately, he came forward to resist upon that prevailed vicissitude.

In addition to the depiction of sex-crime, John Osborne has boldly focused on the prevailed exploitation in the name of God and Church. He came forward to resist all the boundaries made between man and his happiness. He did not like to prefer the so-called rules and regulations of the Church imposed upon him and did not like to support any such religious Church. Osborne has made his best to break up the boundaries of God and religion. In his age, the Catholic rules of life were dominant. Leonido's activities revolt against all types of religious and mental boundaries.

Leonido renounces his father, his blood, his Church, and other things that could make him religious. He had lost his faith in religious sermons and was always reluctant. This resistance of Osborne's Leonido, actually, is the resistance of John Osborne himself against the several agencies run by the Hippocrates only to meet with their own motives; earning of money and so on. Osborne seems to be against all kinds of exploitations. The impact of the prior two world-wars was quite visible in British society that was keenly observed by John Osborne and using his own power and capability, he has presented everything in his plays.

Objective of the Study

The aim of this paper-writing is to focus on the theme of revelation sex in John Osborne's play 'A Bond Honoured'. Generally, John Osborne seems to reveal the social problems of his time; the problems of unemployment, problems of husband and wife, problems of money and problems occurred in politics and religion but in this play he seems to be quite different.

Review of Literature

'A Bond Honoured' is the play of John Osborne which is concerned with the less popular of him. Like the other plays of John Osborne it also consists of multidimensional themes. As far as the review of literature is concerned, very little work is found on it. Alan Carter is the sole writer who has written about this play.

Conclusion

John Osborne himself writes, "In my plays, I like to establish a kind of remoteness between the actors and the audience, which is only to break at certain times and I can do that in the picture frame stage. I don't visualize a picture frame stage when I'm writing. If I think of anything, I think of theatre that doesn't exist, and that combines the intimacy of the Court with the grandeur of a circus I'd love to write something for a circus, something enormous and immense, so that you might get a really big enlargement of life and people."⁸

If we talk of overall conclusion of the play 'A Bond Honoured', it can be said that Osborne's 'A Bond Honoured' is replete with the burning issue of contemporary England; the inclination in sex and sexual crimes. The playwright has exposed the downfall of morality which was the pivot of a Christian country. The slight attack on the church is apparently visible in the play. The tone of language is quite satirical. The aim of the playwright is not only to expose the sex and sexual crime but also giving a warning that the future of England would be in great danger. The morality and teachings of the churches would be a failure if it goes in that undesirable direction.

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8. *Alan Carter: John Osborne, P-49*