
The Portrait of the Artist as a Disintegrated Man: A Comparative Study of John Osborne's *The Entertainer* and David Hare's *Teeth 'n' Smiles*

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Abstract:

*Using James Joyce's *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* as a framework, the present paper aims at discussing the position of the artist and his role in two post-war British plays; namely, Osborne's *The Entertainer*, and Hare's *Teeth 'n' Smile*. Unlike Joyce's novel which deals with the creative evolution of Stephan Dedalus into an artist, the plays under study deal with the gradual disintegration of the main characters/artists that stand for the disintegration of society and culture at large.*

The paper is divided into two main sections and a conclusion. The plays will be dealt with chronologically in sections one and two while the main findings will be stated in the Conclusion.

Key words: disintegration, artist, Osborne, the *Entertainer*, Hare, *Teeth 'n' Smiles*, society, and culture.

1- *The Entertainer* Who No Longer Entertains:

Undoubtedly, John Osborne (1929-1994) is one of the most celebrated playwrights in post-war British drama. With the novelists Kingsley Amis and John Wain, he helps to establish what is world-widely known as the 'Young Angry Men' tradition which is mainly concerned with criticizing "political and social

institutions"(as cited in Havířová , 2009, p.15). Between the end of World War II (1945) and the writing of *The Entertainer* (1957), life in Britain was largely "dominated by the consequences of the war, both negative and positive," as Arthur Marwick puts it in his *British Society Since 1945* (as cited in Ibid., p.7). Commenting on the general climate in these years, Allsop (1964, p.25) describes the British public as living in a 'run-down condition' after being "Battered by the war and ten years of filthy food, worn-out clothes and austerity, with grime and drabness that rubbed into the pores." The same period was one of a wholesale "re-building going everywhere in the world," as Marwick has stated (as cited in Havířová, 2009, p.8) which resulted in the creation of more jobs, "wealth, individual moneymaking and no public commitment nor enthusiasm for political or social reasons" (Goethals, 2011, p.17). This caused anxiety and disillusionment, especially among the working classes to which Osborne belongs (Ibid).

Indeed, in post-war Britain, there was much to be angry about as Joseph (1972, p.6) states. On the political level there was the violent suppression of revolt in Hungary by Russia, the Suez Canal fiasco which showed that Britain was no longer the imperial power it once was and the protests in Britain over nuclear disarmament. (Taylor, 1968, p.14) In the same vein, Richard Hoggart attributes the dominant mood of dissatisfaction and disillusionment to a number of sociological and psychological factors such as "nostalgia, classlessness, and maladjustment due to an inadequate educational system"(as cited in Joseph, 1972, p.20).

As a result, Osborne feels, like most of his characters, that he is a "displaced person" who is dissatisfied with everything and finds difficulty in living in a world where everything runs to his own personal expectations(as cited in Goethals, 2011, p.18). This impels Osborne to commit himself to "voice the ills of his society, to tell the truth 'at all costs'"(Joseph, 1972, p.8). According to him, the artist's job is to

"give people lessons in feelings," to make them "feel" what was wrong in their society (Worth, in Taylor, 1968, p.111). As his plays demonstrate, the lack of concern of the people enrages Osborne and he sincerely laments his inability to effect change in the moribund England of the mid 1950s. This may explain why Osborne has been so vituperative and persistent in using shock tactics which, he hopes, might lead society into an "awareness of its malaise" (Joseph, 1972, p.9). It is against this political and social background that we have to read *The Entertainer*.

The Entertainer projects a vision of contemporary tragic frustration and decline in Britain. Its hero is a failing comedian and Osborne uses the decline of the music hall tradition as a metaphor for the decline of a nation's vitality. The action of the play concerns the fate of a "showbiz" family. Driven by waning talent and the widespread decay of the music hall into unfashionable towns and sleazier attractions, Archie Rice is mainly trying to retrieve his fortunes by running a nude show. But even this fails and he has more creditors than audiences. As a matter of fact, the dramatic changes in Archie's life are a reflection of the changes in the field he is working in. Having reached the height of its popularity in the late Victorian and Edwardian period, the music hall was "in decline and by the beginning of Second World War it was virtually extinct" (James J. Nott, 2002, p.117). This was due, in part, to the introduction of new types of media such as "radio, cinema, and gramophone [which] absorbed much of the creative talent from British music hall, in addition to taking most of its audience"(Ibid.).

The description of the house and town in the opening scene is significant. What is evident in the description, Joseph (1972, p.53) asserts, is "The ugly aspect of neglect. There is nothing prettified about Osborne's setting. He brings to the audience, with shocking recognition, those aspects of society they will prefer to leave uninvestigated". It is against the background noises of the trolley buses and of vulgar brawling

from the other apartments that we first meet Archie's father, Billy who is described as spruce, with an old-fashioned dignity of speech and manner. He stands for "that house and town with its recollection of grander days and his very appearance is a rebuke to the vulgarity both of his neighbors and of the times" (Weiland, 1979,p.95). So here as throughout the play he is a nostalgic figure; a man who lives in the past and whose role is fixed as a kind of chorus that comments on the action and provides the necessary information about what is going on in England at that time. His opening conversation with Jean, Archie's daughter sheds light on the social and psychological problems modern man is suffering from. He begs Jean to stay with him so as to alleviate the feelings of loneliness and isolation that keep hold of him. He feels sorry for the young generation like Jean because according to him most of them haven't lived a real life. He says "I feel sorry for you people ...you've never known what it was like, you're all miserable. You don't know what life can be like" (Osborne, 1961, p.23). As a result, he clings desperately to a bygone time when people acted with grace and charm. As a music hall entertainer, Billy is part of that glorious past that was full of purpose and meaning. Now Billy is fully aware of the sour fact that "... it's dead already. Has been for years. It was all over, finished, dead when I got out of it. I saw it coming, and I got out. They don't want real people anymore"(p.18).

Billy, as these lines adumbrate, foresees the gloomy present long before it was to come. He knew that the fruitful life of music-hall was coming to an end. Therefore, he decides to retire. Unlike Billy, Archie refuses to recognize this fact because it signifies for him the death of his private and public spheres. As a result; he "clings tenaciously to the raggedy pieces of the music hall, hoping to recreate a utopia out of this dead past; and while he is in the process of doing so, he becomes a *hollow man*"(Joseph, 1972, p.57 emphasis mine). This *hollowness* which Archie often fails to properly deal with

incenses him and makes him in desperate and incessant search of a way out of it. On account of this, Archie spends his life in "an evasive attempt to stitch up his own little corner of a disintegrating social fabric. It is, of course, doomed to fail. His parent finds comfort in resignation, his daughter in active rebellion: he alone is of a lost generation, caught at the turn of history's tide" (Trussler, 1969, p.67).

Osborne, here, is not concerned with showing the impact of the collapse of the music-hall tradition on the Rice family per se. Rather, he presents the music hall as a reflection of the state of debasement and disintegration, which the whole English society is suffering from. It is the tragedy of a nation rather than specific persons that interests Osborne most. In his prefatory note to the play, Osborne remarks

The music hall is dying, and with it a significant part of England. Some of the heart of England has gone; something that once belonged to everyone, for this was truly a folk art. (no pag.)

The sense of failure implied in these lines is reflected in the career of Archie who simply replaced the genuine art of the music hall by "just a meat-market" (p.18), as Billy calls it because of his admission into theater of "third-class sluts.... in the nude" who are "killing the business"(Ibid.). He is a corny, fading comedian who is presently engaged in a holiday show called "Rock'n Roll New'd Look " at a large sea side town. The events of the play gradually reveal him as a hollow man who can make contacts neither with his family nor with his audience. The inability to communicate with others is presented as a general phenomenon in the British society. It results in domestic as well as social crises. Furthermore, it is important to note that "No one really listens" in the play, as Joseph explains (1972, p.66). This includes not only the family members, but extends to the audience as well. There is no serious attempt on the part of the characters to listen. Frank,

Archie's son, for example, calls for silence (p.55) while his daughter, Jean, discovers that "Nobody listens to anyone"(p.78) in England. This unwillingness or may be inability to listen and communicate helps to accentuate the sense of isolation and loneliness the characters are suffering from.

The trouble with Archie is that he is a failure as an entertainer. He wants to be as successful as his father was in his vocation, and he can not, as a result he wears a comic persona which has complete control over him. Archie's wife, Phoebe, says that Archie's is a case of "professional jealousy" (p.50). The purpose of using this comic persona, according to Taylor (1968) is to "ward off any one who may want to look [Archie] straight in the face"(p.47). In the same vein, Carter (1969) is of the opinion that Archie's "professional mask" is meant to hide "his bitterness"(p.64). In this sense, comedy does not help to lessen the sense of isolation and dissatisfaction which Archie experiences. Rather, it makes his tragedy more heartrending.

Archie's performance is a standard comedian routine. His jokes are tired and he depends heavily on the obscene innuendo to raise an easy laugh. These jokes stand for the decline in the artistic tradition of the music hall. The stage setting of Archie's shows itself is an index of the extent to which his life and career has sunk into bitterness and frustration. It consists of "ordinary, tatty backcloth and draw-tabs. The light is the kind you expect to see in the local Empire—everything bang-on, bright and hard, or a simple follow-spot" (p.12). As for the music, it is, the stage direction tells "the latest, the loudest, the worst" (p.12).

In relation to this, Joseph (1972, p.56) affirms that the final effect of both the setting and the music is "one of showy decadence". Archie's songs, however, deserve attention for the kind of satiric comment they present on current social affairs. They are meant to express the "very mixed feeling of most English men's distrust of jingoism, distrust of the more

hysterically self -righteous sort of liberality, a feeling that carpet had been whipped from under one's feet"(Fraser,1964,p.232). As in Osborne's other works, Archie is angry, and this anger is the keynote of his creator's comment on the moribund state of post-war England. Archie's feeling of anger and desperation is evident in the staging of his song 'Thanks God I'm Normal' which makes the audience question not only his claim, but their own assumption of normalcy:

I am just like the rest of you chaps
Decent and full of good sense
I am not one of these extremist saps,
For I'm sure you'll agree,
That a fellow like me
Is the salt of our dear old country. (p.60)

This song is intended to be a pungent and ironic attack on the putrid state of affairs in the mid-twentieth century England and on the complacency of the people who seem indifferent to what is wrong in their society. However, Archie is never precise about the real causes of his anger which takes the form of "ironic detachment, a comedian's technique that absolves him from seeming committed to anyone or anything" (Worth in Taylor, 1968, p.108). Archie realized that there is no hope of getting out of the ruts since his life is a continual process of degeneration and frustration. Even 'Rock'n Roll's' cannot relieve his tragedy. In fact, Archie's tragedy is not his utter failure as an entertainer, but his constant awareness of his failure. In this sense, being an entertainer in the true sense of the word is a state he still wishes to achieve. He doesn't have the 'folk' quality of the music hall, which his father had in a large measure. As a result, he cannot maintain relation with his audience whom he detests. It seems only natural then, that Archie's humor is "that of insult, sneer, and innuendo -the dirty joke, the sly smile, the complete prostitution of both personal

and professional for the sake of some response from the audience"(Banham, 1969, p.32).

Archie sees in the decline of the music hall a manifestation of the degeneration of English society, and the music -hall audience -the theatrical audience in fact -an image of the English people. The metaphor is extended to himself. He perceives his role of being a second rate comedian as symbolic of this decay. He has to accept that role but he is never reconciled to it. He is haunted by the memories of what the music hall had once been; they crystallize in the living figure of his father whose past life was governed by a sense of order, firm values and purposefulness. Everything of value is over in his life now. In reality, the events of the play imply that Archie's seasoned anger operated on two basic levels: the micro-social where he hates himself and his audience, and the macro-social where he projects his anger against society at large, since he believed that it is ultimately society that has failed him in the most important venture of his life (Joseph, pp.57-8). In relation to the first level, Archie explains to his daughter:

You see this face....this face can spilt open with warmth and humanity. It can sing and tell the worst, unfunniest stories in the world to a great mob of dead, drab jokes and it doesn't matter... It doesn't matter because look at my eyes. I'm dead behind these eyes. I am dead, just like the whole inert, shoddy lot out there. It doesn't matter because I don't feel a thing and neither do they, we're just as dead as each other. (p.62)

It is evident that the death-in-life state dominates not only Archie but also the English people in general. They are in the same boat of misery and suffering. Although he incriminates the apathy of the audience for his failure, the bankruptcy of his music -hall is to a large extent due to his own professional ineptitude, which he recognizes as an insurmountable obstacle in the path of his success. However, as Worth (1968, p111) suggests, Archie's bitterness about his relationship with his

audience is a proof of how much he still feels. As a matter of fact, he is, like Osborne's other characters, obsessed with 'caring'. Osborne himself admits that the purpose behind his characters' fierce attacks on almost everything around them is "to give people lessons in feeling." Archie has discovered that the ills of the world are rooted in the prevailing cynical and detached indifference on the part of people. This again reminds us of the "shrug of shoulders" attitude which Archie adopts as a result of his society's failure to give him proper acknowledgement as an artist. He tells Jean that he has stopped feeling, "I don't give a damn about anything, not even women or draught bass"(p.71), and warns her that in the end "no body really gives a damn about anything except some little animal something and for me that little animal...is draught bass "(p.76). His claim of caring about draught bass alone, according to Joseph (1972, p.60), is "an indication that he is only willing to swill himself into forgetfulness of his present troubles". Significantly, one of the recurrent songs in his repertoire is entitled

Why should I care?
Why should I let it touch me!
Why shouldn't I, sit down and try
To let it pass over me.
.....
What the use of despair,
If they call you a square?
You're a long time dead (p.24)

Although this song offers apathy as a self-protective attitude, Archie's disillusionment and cynicism are not complete. He still has faith in it as a meaningful human activity. The squalor and miseries of his life lie in the shadow of a revelation he experienced years before in an American bar, when he heard a negress signing a blues. He has never forgotten this aesthetic experience which, he believes, is an "intimation of what the

human spirit was capable of expressing in art” (Worth, p.108). He describes it to Jean:

If ever I saw any hope or strength in the human race, it was in the face of that old fat negress getting up to sing about Jesus or something like that. She was poor and lonely ... like nobody you've ever know...I never even liked that kind of music, but to see that old black whore singing her heart out to the whole world... (p.60-61).

The suffering, here, is clearly shown to be the necessary stuff of the artist's achievement. It is significant that Archie grasps at this vision only when he learns that his young soldier son, Mick, has been murdered by his captors in Egypt. It is a moment of greatest suffering. He says nothing at all, but slowly sings a blues forcing his feeling to express itself in art. Otherwise, the badness of his jokes and the vulgarity of his comic turns on stage are obvious. What is interesting is that Archie's bitterness over his failure to communicate artistically is echoed by his failure in his domestic life (Worth, p.109). Commenting on this, Banham (1969) remarks

Archie's relationship with his family tends to be an extension of that with his audience- treating them to a string of unfunny and inconsequential remarks, talking all the time to avoid the pain of silence, and smiling to cover the despair. He recognizes the emptiness of his own life and the manner in which all feeling has deserted him and been replaced by a numb acceptance of a sordid, daily existence in which he performs mechanically like a puppet in his own theater.(p.32)

As a result of his inability to be himself, Archie lives in the 'theater' all the time. He drowns his sorrowfulness and increasing insecurity in drink and "perennial affairs with other women, real or fictitious"(p.34) as his father, Billy tells. His relationships with his family members, therefore, are as jaded and worn-out as his songs and artistic shows. While his estrangement from his daughter, Jean, results from the

different viewpoints they hold about the world, his relationship with his wife comes to a standstill. Their marriage has long since gone dead. All attempts at communications between them have ceased. Like everything else about Archie, his failure as an entertainer mirrors his failure as a husband and father. He admits: "All my children think I'm a bum. I never bothered to hide it"(p.84). As for his relationship to Jean, Joseph holds the view that it is one of the most complex relationships in the play and that its complexity centers on "the question of the expression of genuine feeling"(p.64). On this relationship, Worth (1968, pp.112-3) points out that although Jean and her father are in sympathy, "they part on their ideas of how feeling should be expressed," for while she is interested in "reason and good work, the betterment of social conditions," Archie is 'skeptical'. To him, Jean's "assumptions are arrogant".

This makes Archie in a continuous need to enact someone else's role so as to have an identity. As such, his enactment of the entertainer's part can be considered a mask that signals out the inherent contradiction in his life. He is often aware of his inability to succeed neither in the music – hall field nor in his private life. He explains his dilemma in these words:

You know when you're up there you think you love all these people around you out there, but you don't. You don't love them; you're not going to stand up and make a beautiful fuss... you can smile, and look the friendliest jolliest thing in the world, but you'll be just as dead and smug and used up, and sitting on your hands just like everybody else. (p.72)

Archie's obsessive preoccupation in his role as entertainer makes him unable to differentiate between illusion and reality. In fact, the particular nature of Archie's failure, Evans (1977, p.110) remarks, is superbly embodied in his very employment as a professional fool. He compares him to Touchstone, Feste and Lear's Fool and points out that like them "he expresses himself in a language which is really in a state of flux between

commenting upon reality and creating a fiction” (Ibid.). Like them, he sometimes bursts into a song and prefaces or follows it with tart comment. Sometimes, he wraps up meaning in an anecdote, which doesn't always easily make its point. Like the Fools, he is berated for flippancy or coarseness and often appears to talk in the wild hope of getting applause (Ibid.).

At the end of the play, the decay of the music hall is equated with the sagging figure of Britannia – a nude woman wearing helmet- in order to create associatively the image of national decline. The image is also reinforced by Archie's show entitled "Rock'n Roll New'd Look" which points to the facile mercantilism of today's music hall as a pose to the prewar one when entertainers knew what their roles were. Archie's in the final scene is left completely isolated and when he leaves the stage, the audience is left with the image of the lonely individual whose frustrated and anarchic rage is so genuine that it forces their sympathy. The only person who waits for him in the stage to hand him his hat and coat is his wife Phoebe who suffers a lot because of his infidelity and negligence.

2-Teeth 'n' Smiles: The Acid Dreams Are Over

David Hare (b.1947-) is one of the most critically acclaimed, contemporary British dramatists. He began his dramatic career in the late sixties. Along with such dramatists as Howard Brenton and Trevor Griffiths, he writes in the aftermath of the "Angry Young Men" tradition of John Osborne. It is a well-known fact that the element of anger continued in the drama of the 1960s and became even more radicalized after the social, cultural and political unrests of 1968 by the dramatists of the "second wave" to whom Hare belongs (Taylor, 1978, p.14). Setting his plays in a variety of microcosmic societies, Hare exposes the inadequacies of capitalism and imperialism and the decay of civilization in England. The societies he portrays, ranging from an isolated girls' school in *Slag* (1971) to a

Chinese village in *Fanshen* (1976), parallel the problems of his country and demonstrate the impact of recent English history on individual lives. In this respect, Hayman (2007) remarks that Hare's plays invariably chronicle the state of British society and "depicted England in state of moral collapse"(p.6).

This comes in conformity with Hare's unshakeable conviction that it is the writer's duty to interpret the society where he lives and to diagnose its ills dramatically (Billington, 2002, p.5). The writer should be, in Hare's view, a "mole burrowing into the fabric of official culture and exposing its working"(Boon, 2007, p.4). Moreover, as a leftist dramatist, Hare believes that the theatre is most appropriate place to "tackle the major social and political issues of contemporary society"(Ibid, p.3). Collectively, Hare's plays provide an authentic and remarkably well-sustained picture of the convulsions that have taken place in British life over the past half century (Billington, 2002, p.5).

Teeth 'n' Smiles (1975) (hereafter *Teeth*) is one of Hare's early dramatic pieces. In 1975, when Hare wrote it, he was, like Arthur, the song writer of the band, twenty eight years old. This may account for the sympathetic attitude and intense interest in the presentation of the mood of dissatisfaction and aimlessness prevailing among the under-thirty generation. Moreover, in June 1969-the time of the action- Hare was, like Maggie and the band, on the road with the Portable Theatre, "equally exhausted and equally substituting neurotic intensity for public meaning and audiences"(Homden, 1995, p.10). Like Arthur, Hare was a "product of the general system he would condemn, educated to a degree level and then dropping out."(Ibid) This makes *Teeth*, Homden points out, a truly "autobiographical [play], an examination of Hare's own youth"(Ibid). More important, from the sociological point of view, is the fact that all the characters- and by inference, Hare himself- except Saraffian, Snead, and Randolph, belong to what is termed the 'baby boom' generation, born in the mid-to late

1940s, came of age in the sixties. According to Donnelly (2005, p.144), many of these baby boomers, unlike earlier generations whose lives forged during the hard times of war or the depression years of the 1920s and 1930s, grew up in what the sociologist, Eric Hobsbawm has called the 'golden years' of post-war economic growth among the industrialized nations. As the action of the play will adumbrate

In outlook, values and expectations the baby boomers were to show themselves to be less like their parents than any other previous generation in modern times. In place of the ethic of 'scarcity' that their forbears had so often endured, the sixties children were more likely to have unrestrained appetites. (Ibid)

Those 'unrestrained appetites', exemplified by the "celebration of drug and the demand for sexual liberation" as Diana West asserts, are inseparable from the culture of Rock 'n' Roll, one of the most popular forms at that time. In fact, the three go together and constitute the counterculture's "primary instruments of ecstasy, its chief weapons against the obligations of traditional culture" (in Kimball, 2000, p.34). This may explain the reason behind Hare's choosing this particular form to comment on the some of the social and cultural problems of his generation.

Sociologically speaking, 'Rock 'n' Roll' is closely associated with young generation. It was played by young artists for young audience and addressed young people's interests such as quick sex and puppy love (What is Rock?1994-2000, p.4). It is at once, the mainstream of commercial music and a romantic art form; and in Wollen's (1986, p.176) words, a voice "from below" or from the social margins, whose radical claim to advocate anti-establishment values was sustained by "adolescent irresponsibility, a commitment to the immediate thrills of sex 'n' drugs 'n' outrage and never mind the consequences"(What is Rock? 1994-2000, p.5).

Teeth perfectly captures this situation as it sheds light on the problems that usually accompany the adherence to these new anti-establishment values. In startlingly shocking verbal and physical images, *Teeth* documents the various moods of frustration, bitterness, and loss of direction the members of a musical band experience in the materialistically affluent and spiritually empty post-war England. In fact, the characters' engagement in a desperate search for meaning and happiness even at the cost of risking their health, profession and future betokens the seriousness of the problem and the necessity of properly dealing with it. In fact, in stressing the idea that the characters are borne out of their turbulent times, Hare proposes a cultural diagnosis of British society as he perceives it in the critical decade of the 1960s.

Both the place and time of the play are significant. The setting is the dramatist's alma mater, Jesus College, Cambridge, and Hare dates the action of his play very precisely during the night of 9 June, 1969 at the College's annual May Ball which is held to keep up with the times. The action centers on the shambolic efforts of a rock group booked for the gig to actually perform its sets. Commenting on the significance of time, Brown (1982) states that Hare's aim is to "catch an exact moment in the history of pop music and to give an exact 'feel' of living in England"(p.69). It is believed that the play is intended to commemorate two emblematic moments in the history of pop music: The Monterey Pop Festival in 1967 which was the apex of the 'Summer of Love' in San Francisco and The Woodstock Festival, and four months later, the Altamont Free Concert in 1969 (1960s, 2007, p.3). Those four events, taken together, especially the Woodstock Festival, epitomize the general mood at the time. Commenting on the importance of this festival, Midge Decter says, it "really did epitomize the longings.... of a generation. There were the drugs and music and clothes, of course- the LSD, rock, and denim....the blasé, pre-AIDS promiscuity"(qtd. in Kimball, 2000, p.175). In other words, the

festival calls for a "life unencumbered by the impediments of everyday obligations and responsibilities"(Ibid, p.173). As for the place, Boon (2007, p.35) believes that Hare's experience in Cambridge can be considered a "metaphor- or, accurately, a metonym-of all that was wrong with the British establishment (detached, from reality, self absorbed, endlessly self-perpetuating)".

Hare has chosen his characters so that the play is an image of a wider world. Maggie, the heroine, is a psychologically disturbed and a failing singer and Hare uses the failure of the band to present an appropriate and successful party as a metaphor for the decline of a nation's vitality. The action of the play concerns the fate of a 'Rock 'n' Roll' band which, when the play opens, is in the throes of "dissolution like the kind of alternative [or counter] culture it stands for," as Lambert points out (In Hayman,2007, p.11). In relation to this culture, *Teeth* makes it clear that as Arthur says, quoting from *The daily Express*, "the acid dream is over"(Hare, 1976, p.51). Also important are the things that are of primary interest for the members of the band: "money and girls." Both reflect the new changing climate in England which was characterized by the dominance of materialistic values and loose morality.

In sociology, counterculture is a term used to describe the values and norms of cultural groups or subcultures that run counter to those of the social mainstream of the day. A counterculture, thus, expresses the ethos, aspirations and dreams of a specific population during a certain period of time- a social manifestation of the *Zeitgeist* (Counterculture, 2007, p.1). As a term, counterculture received wider public awareness in the early 1960s through the work of the sociologist J. Milton Yinger. It gained in further importance and became canonized when it figured in the title of Theodore Roszak's best-selling book *The Making of a Counter-culture* (1969) in which he equates it with the 1960s version of cultural radicalism (in Braunstein and Doyle, 2002, p.7).

During the 1960s, which is often labeled the 'Swinging' or 'turbulent' sixties because of the libertine attitudes that emerged during it (Rabey, 2004, p.2), tension developed along generational lines regarding experimentation with drugs, race relations, sexual freedom and women's rights. New cultural norm emerged. The Hippies became the largest countercultural movement fighting for more openness within mainstream culture in civil rights especially in the field of using hallucinogens drugs such as LSD and the escalating involvement and conflict in Vietnam. The Hippies mostly expressed their views through the psychedelic rock genre of music (Counterculture, 2007, p.2). Moreover, they developed their own versions of family, sexual relationships, a variety of communal lifestyles, patterns of work and economic exchange (Cavallo, 1999, p.186). In this context, 'Youth Generation', 'Love Generation' and 'Vietnam Generation' seem very appropriate descriptive terms for the young generation of the sixties (Jason,1995, p. 702). Accordingly, Hare's description of the 1960s as a time during which he "went through an intense period of bitterness and self-pity," (Emerling, 1994, p.4) is noteworthy here.

The sixties Britain in which Hare was living, Donnelly (2005, p.134) explains, was a "composite part of the wider international phenomenon of 'the sixties'". As such, it was subject to many of the same forces that produced cultural liberation, social change, and political upheaval at various points and times across the globe during that period (Ibid.). In as far as Hare's dramatic career is concerned; Billington (1987) gives an accurate account of the sixties as a period of considerable social, cultural, and political chaos:

[Hare] was writing in the [late]-sixties at a time of considerable political disturbance and social change: the Americans had begun bombing North Vietnam; racial riots in the Watt's sections of Los Angeles; the Vatican Council had called for the modernization of the Catholic Church...while

the Beatles has erupted all over British life. There was no reason why any of this should not find its way into [Hare's] work. (p.26)

The opening scene is significant in the sense that it is intended to be an index of the extent to which the characters of the play have sunk in inertia and irresponsibility. Taking into consideration the financial problems the band faces, a more responsible behavior is expected from them. Instead, the members of the band "is all too obviously going nowhere as it lounges playing feeble word games, injecting itself, mocking the mobs," and ruminating the shiny dreams of fame and success" (Lambert, in Hayman, 2007, p.11). Thus, the action of the play can be considered a journey of gradual disintegration which takes many forms and extends to every corner of the characters', and by implication, of English people's lives such as language, moral responsibility, social relationships, and in relation to *Teeth*, the values that dominate art industry and naturally the artist-audience relationship.

The band is to produce three sets in the Ball but they fail to properly present the first two sets while the third is cancelled by the popular demands of the audience and the riots that take place in the marquee afterwards. The action of the first scene gives us the sense that the event is going to be a disaster. It starts ninety minutes late because a plug is not connected and "some bastard has put sugar in the petrol tank"(p.11). In the first set, the band starts an aggressive rock number whose title "Close to Me" is meant to be an ironic comment on the collapse of romantic ideals in modern age. The song talks of the feelings of abandonment and loneliness that keep hold of Maggie as she "feels a touch of winter/ In the summer of [her] life"(p.27).

The second set was a failure too. Instead of singing as the band expected, Maggie holds the microphone, picks up a bottle of wine, insults the audience with scurrilous language,

and expresses her low opinion of them. She describes them as "kids, schlebs and secret assholes"(p.53), and firmly declares that she will not sing to "dead yids"(Ibid.). However, this failure to establish a proper relationship with the audience- the audience of the play, indeed- is used as a frame for a wider comment on British society. It is a reflection of a deep and inner suffering and instability. Painfully, Maggie yells out at the audience: "I am what? What is that word? I have not heard it before...(She holds up the whisky bottle.) This is depressant, I take it to get depressed"(p.53). This event culminates in her attempt to climb on top of Wilson, the keyboardist, to rip his jeans off in front of the audience who begins to hoot loudly as an expression of disapproval and indignation. The next number begins shatteringly loud with Maggie's emphatic repetition of 'Yeah', after which the music fades and falters.

Henceforward, the deterioration in the conditions of the band is beyond repair. Saraffain, the manager of the band, fires Maggie and declares the breaking up of the band. He feels that there is something missing not only in the music industry, but also in the realm of social relationships. Both lack the warmth, intimacy, and social cohesion people once enjoyed in the past which was full of purpose and meaning. He nostalgically talks about "the golden days of the British rock,"(p.52) and "the beauty of this profession" when he was young (p.47). In the past, this profession seemed to possess personality and promised a brighter future of ease and affluence. The problem with Saraffain is that he finds himself stranger in a world he can no longer understand and surrounded by people with whom he can not communicate. This makes *Teeth* "simultaneously a metaphor for British society and an elegy for the vanished visions of the late sixties"(Lambert, in Hayman, 2007, p.11).

Despite these obvious signs of disintegration and collapse, Saraffain insists on playing the third set for it is their only way to get the cash. He does not care if nobody listens for the most important thing for him is to get "one's hand on the cash. That

is the only skill. Really. The only skill in music" (p.74). In so thinking, he turns the whole musical show into a materialistic enterprise to be judged, like any other business, by materialistic standards alone. This comes in conformity with Arthur's realization later in the play, to his dismay, that Rock 'n' Roll is just a commodity

produced and distributed by a profit-making industry, and therefore subject to co-optation by the dominant culture....it is also a big business, and therefore subject to the dictates of the white mass market, as interpreted by recording and broadcasting professionals. In pursuit of profit, they... exploited... performers, bleached the music, and promoted white rock 'n' rollers. (Altschuler, 2003, p.34)

Surprisingly enough and in an act that reflects Saraffain's utter unscrupulousness and selfishness, Saraffain decides to compensate for his financial loss by stealing a silver candlestick and encouraging others to emulate him. Almost all the members of the band have a hand in the general looting of the place. Maggie becomes the only possible suspect since the police have found some of the stolen silver and drug in her bag. The police's suspicions intensify as a result of Maggie's disappearance at that time. Besides committing this act of vandalism, the members of the band betray Maggie by deliberately stashing some of the stolen stuff in her bag; a most shocking act that shows the abyss of degeneration to which they have sunk.

However, Maggie is not bothered by the possibility that she might go to prison. To the contrary, she is pleased because this might be the solution to her inner troubles. In her desperate search for happiness and meaning in her life, she goes so far as to be ready for going to the prison hoping that the novelty of the experience might give her a chance to find herself. Therefore, she refuses to have a lawyer to defend her.

Maggie's here is an act of desperation that corroborates the enormity of the problems the British youth is suffering from. In accepting the role of a scapegoat, she hopes to confer some meaning on her presumably meaningless life. Coates (1989) believes that although Maggie's looks like a masochistic behavior, there is a sense in which it is a positive act, as Hare implies in this passage:

In *Teeth 'n' Smiles* a girl chooses to go to prison because it will give her an experience of suffering which is bound in her eyes to be more worthwhile than the life she could lead outside: not one English critic could bring himself to mention this central event in the play, its plausibility, its implications. It was beyond their scope to engage with such an idea. And yet, how many people here have close friends who have taken control of their own lives, only to destroy them? (qtd in Coates, p. 75)

It is noteworthy that one of the central images in the play is of a bomb explosion that takes place in the Café de Paris in London in 1941, full, at the time of the rich and young officers, studiously declaring their immunity from the war. Saraffain was a witness to this terrible incident. What is interesting, according to him, is that the downstairs of the café is a perfect reproduction of the ballroom on the 'Titanic'. Unfortunately, this ominous accident passed unnoticed by Saraffain. As the clients of the café lay dead and wounded, two anonymous figures move along them, stealing and looting their money and jewels. Saraffain found this act totally repugnant and regarded it as a sign of unforgivable meanness and lowness. However, about three decades later, the scene is in essence repeated in Jesus College, as it is stated above. The incident indicates a sever shortcoming in the moral fabric of English society since it takes place in an educational institution whose aims are to spread the values of responsibility and honesty. In a thoughtful commentary on the significance of this repetition, Bigsby (1981, p.44) remarks that "the apocalypse is no longer deferred, it has arrived. But everyone is 'on' something-drugs, alcohol, pursuit

of career, money; they all ignore the evidence of disintegration and decay. And their ability to ignore it is adduced as a further proof of its reality".

At the end of the play, during a blackout, short messages are flashed on a screen in big letters: it is 1973, and while Peyote is dead- he inhales his own vomit-the rest are alive and well, living in England. However, everyone, Arthur tells us, seems to be frightened and insecure. Then comes one more song: it is Maggie's "Last Orders on the Titanic."

The significance of the song lies in the fact that it equates the destiny of England with that of 'Titanic' whose supposed immunity from sea dangers did not save it from sinking tragically in its first voyage. In this sense, Hare succeeds in associatively creating an image of a national decline. On board of the Titanic Maggie is talking about, there is no place for sympathy, responsibility or self-sacrifice. What is more painful and shocking is the fact that while Titanic is sinking, life goes oblivious of the catastrophe. The same situation is repeated in England for while the British youth are sinking because of drugs, free sex, and violence, the rest of society goes on complacently believing that every thing is all right.

Therefore, "Expect nothing and you will not be disappointed,"(p.22) is Arthur's message to the audience. Moreover, Anson's declaration that "The whole system's totally corrupt an's gotta be totally replaced by a totally new system,"(p.58) is pointless since neither the dramatist nor the characters present any alternatives to the existing one. This makes Hare's England, Bigsby (1981) remarks,

a country whose energy is spasmodic, nervous, and artificial. It is a country in which private despair is the constant. There are no models of an alternative system, no calls for working class solidarity, only a clear-eyed analysis of moral entropy, the failure of the public myths and private values.(p.43)

This indicates Hare's belief in the impossibility of change in his society. As he says "If you have a period like [the late sixties], when you believe in a revolution and then afterwards, the objective criteria for a revolution are missing, indeed definitely absent as they were in this country, you're soured with the impossibility of change"(qtd. in Homden, 1995, p.11). This comes in conformity with Arthur's prophetic vision about the future of his generation. Insightfully, he says: "I can see us all. Rolling down the highway into middle age. Complacency. Prurience. Sadism. Despair." (p.88) a prophecy which clearly applies to the end of the play.

In *Teeth*, Hare uses the story of the disintegration of a musical band to illustrate the history of post-war Britain in a series of visually arresting incidents involving youth life styles, cheap living, poverty, art, sex, drugs, a huge range of interest for a single play, as Brown(1982, p.22) asserts.

3- Conclusion:

Like all comparative studies, this paper is concerned with pointing out the points of convergence between two post war British dramatists; namely, Osborne and Hare. In fact, after the first night of *Teeth*, there seemed to be one name on everyone's lips- John Osborne. Both plays, Bryden remarks, "plugged deep into the rusty, defective socket of contemporary England, popping and sparkling with anger at the connection"(In Hayman, 2007, p.7).

Like Osborne, Hare is not concerned with showing the impact of the disintegration of the band on its members per se. Rather; he presents it as a manifestation of the state of degeneration and debasement to which the English society has sunk.

It is noteworthy that the characters in both plays are obsessed with "caring." Osborne himself admits that the purpose behind his characters' fierce attacks on everything is

"to give people lessons in feeling". In this sense, both dramatists discerned that the ills of modern societies are rooted in the prevailing cynical and detached indifference of people.

Moreover, characters in both plays, especially the members of the older generation like Billy Rice in *The Entertainer* and Saraffain in *Teeth*, look nostalgically to the past which often stands, in their opinion, for order and harmony.

Finally, both dramatists use popular forms, 'music hall' in *The Entertainer* and 'Rock 'n' Roll' in *Teeth*, to shed light on the dilemmas of man in modern age.

It is not surprising, then, Bryden points out, to call "David Hare the Osborne of the 1970s"(In Hayman & et al. 2007, p.7).

In fact, although both dramatists insist that they are not social doctors prescribing remedies for the social ills of their society, both are dedicated social commentators. In general, both plays offer a richly comprehensive portrait of contemporary England and its institutions. Although Hare's range may be wider than that of Osborne, he seems, like his mentor, "to view his native land with a mixture of critical exasperation and baffled affection: he is one of those writers who feels constantly obliged to take Britain's moral temperature through the chosen medium of drama"(Billington, 2002, p.3).

Both plays are redolent of Osborne and Hare's concern with human isolation and the dark wastes of non or partial communication (Evans, 1977, p.199). Like most of contemporary drama, they are strongly concerned with the seamier sides of life. The reasons for the prevalence of these unattractive and sordid aspects of life are various. They can be located, Evans, and I think Osborne and Hare, observes in "the general permissiveness of contemporary life, a disregard for discipline, a dismissal of authority, and a gross slackening of personal and general moral standards (Ibid,p.205). In this

sense, both plays assert their writers' belief that "the main reform needed is moral"(Hayman, 2007, p.4).

This makes both Osborne and Hare "poet[s] of disintegration,"(Bigsby, 1981, p.43) as the action of the plays indicate only a continuing decay. The dominant fact is entropy. Language falls apart, as does the characters. Social cohesion collapses along the sustaining myths of the past. More important than this, the plays offer no way of breaking out of this process (Ibid).

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