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Desire and Ambition: The Catalyst of failure in O’Neill’s *Beyond the Horizon*

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*Suppose I was to tell that it’s just beauty that’s calling me. The beauty of the far off and unknown, the mystery and spell which lures me, the need of freedom of great wide spaces the joy of wandering on and on... In quest of the secret which is hidden over there... **Beyond the Horizon.** Eugene O’Neill*

Abstract

The present paper tries to consider Eugene O’Neill’s *Beyond the Horizon* and find answers to the questions about men’s desires towards their life. Man and woman have deferent types of desire in their whole life. O’Neill poses the story about the desire of life and love affairs and the interactions between two brothers in one hand and a girl on the other hand. This play tries to reflect a realistic view of different desire of men and women. He uses the character Robert and Ruth to show that man’s urgent need for sexual pleasure causes him to use romantic and emotional pleasure causes her not to see the fire under the clash. O’Neill, throughout the play, emphasizes the importance of having desire in one’s life as something real that can be found in any human being.

Keywords- Desire, Emotion, Love, Security

Introduction

Eugene O’Neill one of the most admired American playwrights of the 20th Century, wrote his famed play named beyond the Horizon in 1920. His bitter experiences of life challenges

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caused him to write this poignant and piercing drama. All of his characters have a historical and universal significance with general passions and principles. This drama deals with the frustration is temporary which originates from weak and wavering mind. About it Arthur and Barbara Gelb remark, “O’Neill expressed for the first time on a large scale his ‘hopeless hope’ philosophy, painting with sweep and grandeur the tragic theme that was soon to distinguish him from all American playwrights who had come before” (i) It deals with his sense of special relationship between man and his environment. The play depicts the tragic story of Robert Mayo, the true tragic protagonist who lost his harmony with the environment. On the tragedy of Robert’s life Doris V. Falk rightly remarks, “Robert’s death is an escape, not a victory. It is a sorry compensation for a barren life, wasted in a futile search of identity. (2) Human beings suffer from this problem through the whole history. O’Neill tries to pierce the depth of his universal characters to unravel the true driving force of men women and their desires. He believes that human beings are dynamic and they can change their destinies through their decisions. Human being desire cause them to be tempted for fulfilling their sense of wellbeing if people don’t pay attention to their real self, inner conscience and rational mind, they invite trouble for themselves.

Statement of the Problems

Since the first date of world up to the present time, one of the big problems of people is their weakness in making decision. Though a psychoanalytical look on this issue, one can finds that human being are in danger of temporary desire by instinct. In *Beyond the Horizon* we become familiar with the outcomes of wavering mind. We wonder how a man has an aberrant behavior. Human binges always tend to know that how they can avoid the dangers of temporary desire. The characters of this play unwillingly do something and then regret. Robert and Ruth got married in spite of their contradictory ambitions. Their misfits lead this incompatible couple to tragedy and burned emotionally. Love is eternal, an essential, in every human being, but Ruth’s conception of love is entirely based on her self interest. The real intention behind her approach to Andrew is nothing but only security. Living a hopeless live with Robert, She becomes helpless and insecure at least economically. Therefore, in order to get security, she insists Andrew to stay in the farm. She say, ----- Oh, Andy, you can’t go! Why we’ve all thought- we’ve all been hoping and praying you was coming home to stay, to

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settle down on the farm and see the things. You mustn't go ----- and how the farm' ll be ruined if you leave it to Rob to look after. You can see that (P.120.21)

Ruth's need for emotional support caused her to be trapped by Robert's need for sexual pleasure. Both Robert and Ruth's desires destroyed the peace of their families. In fact they made a hell for themselves and their relatives. Their opposite dreams were destroyed by their different ambitions. Everybody on the earth has their own talent of something. If Robert and Ruth decided based on their life and others. This article tries to consider moment any enjoyment and last misery of temporary ambition and desires. In fact it is the tragic flaw of one who may be trapped in it.

Summary of *Beyond the Horizon*

The play mainly deals with the tragic story of two brothers, Robert and Andrew, who are in love with the same girl, Ruth. Robert is a young far born dreamer, whose romantic mind and frail body yearn for the open sea, the swarming ports of the mysterious East, and the beckoning world beyond the line of hills which enclose his native town. But Andrew has no interest in all sorts of romantic imagination. He is a 'real Mayo' a true son of the soil, born to do nothing but work in the field. He decided to voyage with his uncle captain Dick Scott. There was a girl named Ruth Atkins who lived with her windowed mother, Sarah Atkins in their neighborhood. Their neighborhood caused them to be with each other most of the time. Ruth and Andrew's similar interests farming and living on the farm caused them to love each other. Once upon a time Robert found Ruth alone. He was tempted to talk to her emotionally. His romantic words about love attracted Ruth towards himself. The spell of his romantic and emotionally words seduced Ruth and caused her to forget her love affair with Andrew. Under the spell of Robert's romantic and emotional words Ruth said to him that she already loved him. Robert says, I could find all the things I was seeking for here, at home on the farm. The mystery and the wonder our love should bring them home too, I think love must have been the secret that called to me from over the world's rim – the secret beyond every horizon; and when I did not come, it came to me. . . . Oh, Ruth, you are right; our love is sweeter than any distant dream. (P.31)

Therefore, Robert remains behind in marrying Ruth, feeling that love is perhaps what he hoped to find in his search.

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But when Andrew comes to know all this he suddenly decides to take the place of his brother and this is another matter of surprise for everyone. He does so because he himself had loved Ruth and he was expecting to marry her. He is anguished. From this point, he wants to be alienated, to be away from the rest of the world. His father James Mayo warns him against the wrong decision. Your place is right here on this farm the place you was born to by nature- and you can't tell me no different. I've watched you grow up, and I know your ways, and they're my ways. You're going to be a mighty sorry for it if you do (P.58)

He could not stand to see his brother with his own beloved girl. In spite of his interest, he left his family, farm, and village to go farther in a foreign country. His father and mother's insistence could prevent him he left without any attention to anybody. He stayed in foreign countries for five years. During these years he sent telegram to his sister-in-law Ruth. He couldn't put out the flame of his inner love to Ruth. On the other hand Robert couldn't run the farm. He always dealt with his interest reading literature. Ruth didn't love started to hate him because of his reading, lack of skill in farming and his interest in journey. They just bear each other while they had a little girl. After two years of birth, their little marry died. Her death and Ruth's hate caused him to be sick mentally and physically. Ruth consoled herself with the return of Andrew while she lived with his sick husband and paralyzed mother. Andrew came back to his village after five years. Ruth dreamed to see his husband die and to marry Andrew. Robert died. But Andrew didn't marry Ruth because of her sin in destroying Mayo's family. He believes it was Ruth that killed Robert.

In *Beyond the Horizon* Robert, Andy and Ruth become conscious of conflicting forces. Robert wants to know the details of the world—ehat lies beyond the fields? What is time process? What is there beyond the stars and sky? How do people live in other continents? Unfortunately he takes the wrong decision and invites troubles for the whole family. The situation becomes severe and unbearable for husband and wife. After the departure of Andy, he has no choice left. Had he worked hard on the fields, he would have survived as a farmer. Again he fails to enjoy work. Unfortunately he fails to reconcile avocation and vocation and the result is catastrophe. Here the artist attaches importance to psychosomatic disorders as Ruth fails to adjust with Robert. Joseph Says:

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Beyond the Horizon is even more clearly in the tradition of realism, for it not only deals grimly with the life of the farmer but ends on that note of complete and unrelieved frustration, so characteristic of the earlier classic of the modern drama, but so unlike the not of high tragedy to be found in O'Neill's latest work, *Anna Christie*, a first version of which was the next of his important plays to be written, is also predominantly realistic and even the highly imaginative and poetic 'The Emperor Jones. Like the later 'All God's Chillan God Wings', could be and was taken as O'Neill's Contribution to the study of 'The Negro Problem; (xv).

Conclusion

O'Neill shows in *Beyond the Horizon* that the human beings suffer from then uncontrolled desire and ambitions. We see that how the desire destroy the life of all Characters. In choosing to stay behind and marry Ruth, Robert feels that love is perhaps what he has hoped to find in his search for happiness. But it was his allusion only. All characters are scattered. Thus, in the end we see that Robert was not cut out to be a farmer and that Andrew, in his turn, was not meant to be a sea adventurer.

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