

3rd Re-draft

My essay is about 'Jobs for the Boys' and 'Yosser Story', two plays from the series of five in Alan Bleasdale's 'Boys From The Blackstuff' Series. They are about the effects of unemployment in Liverpool in the early 1980s. Alan Bleasdale wrote these to show how bad unemployment could be. In some areas in Liverpool up to 50% of people were unemployed and Bleasdale wanted to express his concerns about this.

I am now going to examine the effects of unemployment on Chrissie from 'Jobs for the Boys'. One of the effects of unemployment on Chrissie is that he has had to express his feelings through sarcasm. If he did not laugh he would cry. One example of this is early on when Chrissie goes to get his dole check. The clerk is asking him questions about whether he has been working and where was he on certain days. She then tells him they'll be paying him another visit soon and he replies 'I'll bake a cake'. This is Chrissie's first sarcastic comment and in the early stages of the play we can see that he uses these sarcastic comments as a shield from the reality of unemployment. If he did not use this humour, then he would find it more difficult to deal with being unemployed.

Chrissie does not want to be unemployed and hates the weekly chore of having to go to the D.O.E office to receive what he sees as a form of charity which leads to a loss of pride. Also we see his loss of pride when he begs Malloy for a job. We see what Chrissie wants. He says 'I wanna be a working man again. I wanna come home at night with dirt on me hands and not have to hide it from anyone'. This shows us that Chrissie wants to be proud of who he is and what he does for a living.

Another effect of unemployment on Chrissie is that it has led him to betray his political beliefs. Like all the boys in 'Jobs for the Boys' he has allowed himself to be exploited by Malloy. In the play he does express his political beliefs to Snowy and why he has had to go against them. He says "...when you're scared, unless you're special you think about yourself –and yours. You think about feedin the kids and paying the rent and the effects its having on your tart-and even what's Christmas is gonna be like this year. I am a married man with two kids, and your beliefs go right out the window when the debtors knock at your door'. This is the first time Chrissie expresses his political beliefs. He doesn't have to just think about himself, he has his children and wife to consider whereas Snowy only has himself to consider. These are the reasons why he is allowing Malloy to exploit him, as cheap labour. This speech is the central image of the play because all the men employed by Malloy have allowed themselves to be exploited, but this does not mean they don't have beliefs. They do, but have to put their beliefs aside because you cannot survive on beliefs alone.

Chrissie in the early part of the play comes across as being a soft and gentle person except unemployment has made him toughen up and become stronger mentally. He says to Malloy 'I used to be soft you know, noted for it. But, not anymore. I've had it up to here. He says this to show Malloy that he can't be pushed around anymore.

While Chrissie was running alongside Malloy's car he was asking Malloy if he could have a word, but Malloy tells him to come and see him later. Chrissie shows his frustration by kicking a bag of cement. It has not been his choice to toughen up, but unemployment has forced him to.

I am now going to examine the effects of unemployment on Yosser in 'Yosser's Story'. One of the effects of unemployment on Yosser is him losing his mind. Evidence of this is his obsessive use of his own name, saying 'I'm Yosser Hughes'. He always says his own name because he realises it is the only thing he has got left. Everything else he has ever had, had been taken from him and the only thing that he could not have

taken from him was his identity. But during the play his life becomes less desirable and by the end he decides it's time he took something for himself and that something he tries to take is his life because he doesn't want it any more and it's the only thing he has left that he can take.

Another sign of Yosser losing his mind is seen when he attempts to cook a meal for his children in scene twelve. He is seen murdering a pan of fish fingers and he says to the children although he may as well be talking to himself "You wanna a dinner-you can a have dinner. I can cook, course I can, sod the chippy, leave to me" In the next scene we see Yosser walking glumly out of a chip shop holding a bag of large chips meaning he must of failed in his cooking attempt as he always does in life. Also, he always says he can do other peoples jobs. In scene 5 and 6 involving Malloy (that may have been a dream sequence and is not seen in the television production of 'Yosser Story') he uses the line 'I could have done that...' meaning he could of done what Malloy just did, commit suicide, but at the end of the play we see he can't even do that. This shows that he has lost his mind and that now he does not even know what he is saying

During the play he has been forced by unemployment to face his failures in life. He does this by using the sandcastle metaphor because like everything ever in his life the sandcastles did not last long. He says to the Wino 'I built sandcastles and...I sometimes think that's all I've ever done. This is the central image in the play concerning Yossers failures and him facing up to them rather than running away from them. In Maureen's interview she talks about how much of a failure Yosser was. She says 'And really he was nothing' which sums up Yossers life and really explains why he is such a failure. In the dream scene with George in the wheelbarrow Yosser tells George 'When I was little, I was king of the castle, but now I wet meself all the time...' Yosser feels he is speaking out to someone crying for help, but he can only do so in his dream. Dreams and reality have now become the same to Yosser. At the end Yosser has become such a failure that he cannot even take his own life and has become de-humanized and he almost looks like a fish, flopping around. This was a visual metaphor used by Alan Bleasdale to show that Yosser now seems not to be human and has had his life sucked away by unemployment.

Due to unemployment Yosser's life has now become his own living nightmare that he now has to wake up to everyday and can't wake up from. The opening symbolic nightmare scene when Yosser loses his children and where he is crying out for help, but is being ignored by everyone, has now become his life. He has lost his children and in the final scene we realise his life has now become a living nightmare. The lake in which he attempts suicide is the same lake in which his nightmare took place in the opening dream scene. This shows that the dream has now become reality and his life is his own living nightmare due to unemployment.

I am now going to examine the use of humour in both 'Jobs for the Boys' and 'Yossers story'

Humour is used in both plays to show the madness of unemployment and also to contrast with and therefore emphasise the tragedy. The reason for the humour being used to show the madness of unemployment was because Alan Bleasdale thought it was mad to pay people who are unemployed for doing nothing. Also spending money on building D.O.E offices and getting a workforce from people who have jobs because they are paying people with skills to do nothing and they could do these jobs. An example of this is in 'Jobs for the Boys' where Chrissie, Snowy and Loggo are collecting their dole money and at the same time building a D.O.E office. The

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government could have given this job to them and cut out their illegal workforce and stop them from breaking the law.

The tragedy of unemployment is what it has led people to and what it has done to them. Yossers is an example of this because due to unemployment he has lost everything, but humour is still used. An example of this is when religion cannot even save him. The priest tells Yossers to call him Dan and Yossers ends the scene by saying 'I'm desperate Dan' which is a pun. This makes us laugh, but then feel guilty because we just laughed at Yossers failure. This emphasises the tragedy so through humour Alan Bleasdale has made us realise the tragedy of unemployment.

I am now going to examine the T.V production in 'Jobs for the Boys' and 'Yossers Story' and why it was filmed the way it was

Both 'Jobs for the Boys' and 'Yossers Story' were filmed as if they were documentaries. Also the sound effects are louder increasing the documentary style. A clear example of this is in the opening scene of 'Job for the Boys'. We hear typewriters, groups of people talking and children crying. This increases the realism helping Alan Bleasdale make his points about unemployment and helping us to realise that it is real.

There is not a lot of music is used in 'Jobs for the Boys' and 'Yossers story'. When the music is used it is done so by creating a dramatic tension. An example of this is in 'Jobs for the Boys' when Chrissie, Loggo and Snowy are being followed by Lawton and Moss. The music builds up the tension for what is going to happen later in the play. Music is also used to show what's happening in Yossers head in 'Yossers Story'. Discordant and sad music shows what is happening inside Yossers head, it shows us his confusion, frustration and tells us that he is panicking. This is used in the opening dream sequence as he searches for his children.

In conclusion I feel that Alan Bleasdale succeeded in his attempt to show the effects of unemployment and has succeeded in getting his views across. My views on unemployment have changed because now I feel I have seen what it can do to people.