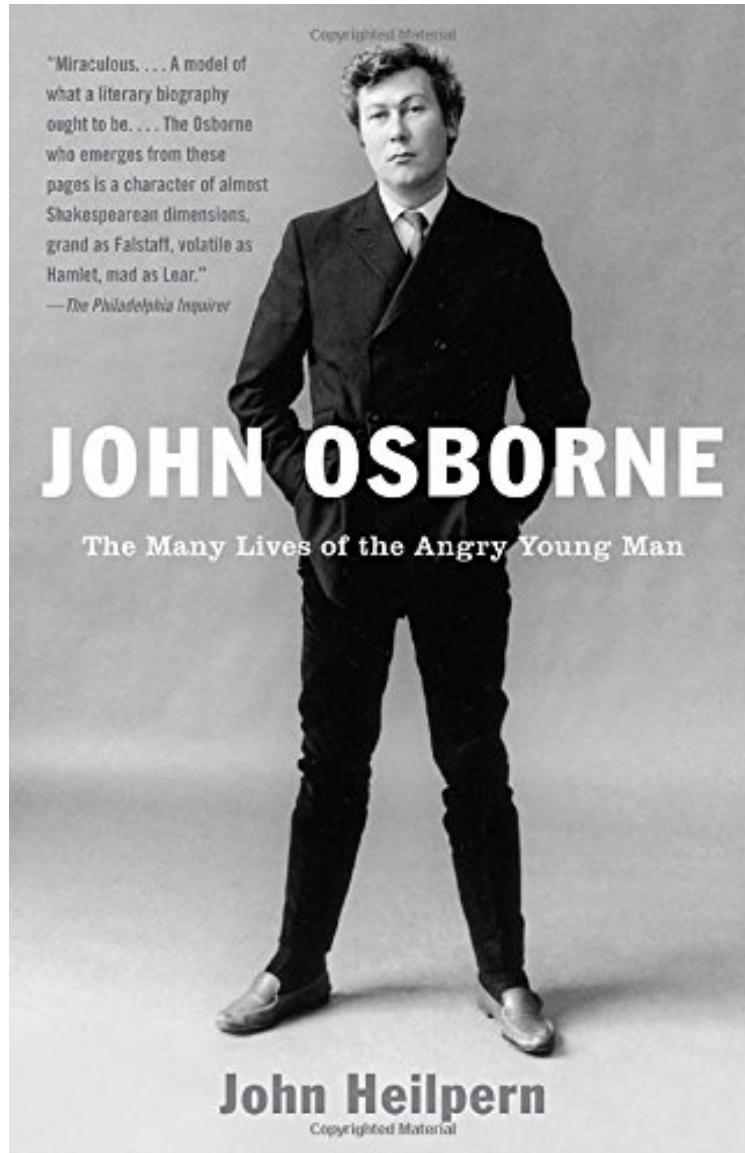


[FREE] John Osborne: The Many Lives of the Angry Young Man

John Osborne: The Many Lives of the Angry Young Man

John Heilpern

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John Heilpern : John Osborne: The Many Lives of the Angry Young Man before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised John Osborne: The Many Lives of the Angry Young Man:

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy concrete girlWonderful book. Perfect transaction.4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A 5-star biographyBy Armchair InterviewsThe most striking characteristic of British playwright, John Osbourne, is his fickle emotional well-being. At least, that's the way biographer John

Heilpern described him in a roundabout way. The famous actor-turned-playwright, Oscar winner, and prime pivotal subject in British theater, led a life more colorful than any play ever written. As a child, Osborne was already causing trouble as he was expelled from school at age 15 for hitting the headmaster—five years after his father had died of tuberculosis. Osborne was known to throw fits of anger and depression, and never healed from his father's devastating death. He was left with a mother who put food on the table by working as a barmaid. In his earliest years, Osborne had become attracted to theater (where he could camouflage his lower-class roots) and toured for a short time as an actor. During this time he wrote four full-length plays and married the first of five wives. His first divorce gave him the material for his best-known script, *Look Back in Anger*, which held an intense undertone of class hatred. British theater critics were stunned to learn Osborne was British, as they had assumed by his scripts that he was American. The biography continues with the story of Osborne's estranged daughter, his other four wives, and his downfall with drugs and alcohol, which ended his life on Christmas Eve, 1994, where he confessed his last written words, "I have sinned." Heilpern, a New York Observer drama critic, writes a fascinating and sympathetic biography, one where Osborne was portrayed as a charming, sweet man that collected teddy bears, but also the emotionally tormented man who threw his teenage daughter out and never spoke to her again. This is a biography that reads like a novel, taking on different narrators, though Heilpern is the moderating narrator overall, sharing Osborne's secret journal entries (Heilpern was given full access to Osborne's journals), interviews he conducted with people Osborne associated with, tying it all neatly together into a colorfully entertaining biography. *Armchair Interviews* says: If you like to read about successful people who rose above their dysfunctions, this is an outstanding read. 9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. One of the Best By Barbara Cleaver I was trying to think of appropriate superlatives to describe my involvement with this biography. I guess that is why I read so many biographies-- to get into someone else's life for a while. Back to superlatives (like excellent and outstanding)-- I have thoroughly enjoyed living JO's life with him. No, it is not in strict chronological order and no, it is not your average biography, it is a terrific read. The secret is the style, which I find unique. It is conversational and in the order it needs to be to make a point or explain a time period. I really feel as if I can describe JO's personality and the way he would react to a situation-- not that I would necessarily like him, but I KNOW him. Most biographies do not give you that depth. This one gave me true insight into what it was like to be the "bad boy" of the London theater and then to live the rest of your life never getting near where you were in your 20's. He was very complex, but aren't we all if studied sufficiently? The gift of this book is that you understand his complexity because it is so well described and documented. This ranks up there with the best biographies I read-- like "Team of Rivals" and "Alexander Hamilton". You should read it. You will only gain from the experience.

John Osborne, the original Angry Young Man, shocked and transformed British theater in the 1950s with his play *Look Back in Anger*. This startling biography—the first to draw on the secret notebooks in which he recorded his anguish and depression—reveals the notorious rebel in all his heartrending complexity. Through a working-class childhood and five marriages, Osborne led a tumultuous life. An impossible father, he threw his teenage daughter out of the house and never spoke to her again. His last written words were "I have sinned." Theater critic John Heilpern's detailed portrait, including interviews with Osborne's daughter, scores of friends and enemies, and his alleged male lover, shows us a contradictory genius: an ogre with charm, a radical who hated change, and above all, a defiant individualist.

From Publishers Weekly: Employing a nonchronological, prismatic approach to the life and career of acclaimed British playwright Osborne, Heilpern (theater critic at the New York Observer) steps behind the curtain to find an abyss, a soul in anguish: "I feel such despair... desolation, hopelessness," Osborne wrote in his journal. Stunned by the death of his father when he was a child, the 15-year-old Osborne was expelled from school in 1943 after hitting the headmaster. In London, he was soon attracted to the theater, where he could "camouflage his own lower-class roots." While touring as an actor, he wrote four full-length plays before the collapse of his first marriage gave him the material for the autobiographical *Look Back in Anger* (1956), expressing such "immensity of feeling and class hatred" that it altered the course of English theater. He followed with *The Entertainer* in 1957 and other successes, including his 1963 Oscar-winning screenplay for *Tom Jones*. As Heilpern probes Osborne's caustic creativity and his volatile relationships with his wives, he layers in myriad intimate details, paralleling the playwright's life with his dramas: "Osborne dreaded loss; a legacy of his father's death and loss seeps through his plays." Writing with verve and sensitivity, he skillfully interweaves a wealth of excerpts from Osborne's letters and private journals. (Jan.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From *Booklist*: *Starred* Osborne and "angry young man" are inseparable. From the moment his monumental play *Look Back in Anger* entered public consciousness in the mid-1950s, irreversibly changing British and post-World War II theater, his life was never the same. New York Observer drama critic Heilpern's sympathetic, fascinating biography covers the playwright's poverty-stricken childhood, hate-filled mother-son relationship, abortive acting career, many marriages (unhappy except for the last one), troubles with an estranged daughter, and sad final years, plagued by debt and poor health. When *Look Back in*

Anger emerged in 1956, many critics couldn't believe an Englishman wrote it. With its "un-English" raw emotions amply displayed, it must be an American's work, they thought. A watershed in theatrical history, it became a national phenomenon that captured the restless mood of Osborne's volatile generation. Other plays followed, including, most significantly, *Luther* and *Inadmissible Evidence*, but none surpassed *Look Back in Anger* in impact. Thanks to full access to Osborne's private notebooks, Heilpern presents an often disturbing portrait of a complex, emotionally beleaguered man, tormented by self-doubt and self-loathing, who suffered from bouts of depression that left him, at times, spent and disillusioned, and who, though legendarily bellicose, could also be charming, sweet, and sensitive. A must for theatrical and literary collections alike. June Sawyers Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved Miraculous. . . . A model of what a literary biography ought to be. . . . The Osborne who emerges from these pages is a character of almost Shakespearean dimensions, grand as Falstaff, volatile as Hamlet, mad as Lear. The Philadelphia Inquirer "A terrific story. . . . An appealing, rollicking portrait. . . . The best literary biography I have read in a long time." Harold Evans, The Wall Street Journal "I cannot recall a biography that was so amusing and intense. . . . If there is going to be a better-written, more entertaining, or more sharply observed performance this year, I'll be mighty surprised." Carl Rollyson, The New York Sun