

The Concept Of Love In John Osborne's “ Look Back In Anger ”

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Abstract

Despite the great dispute its first performance caused , *Osborne's Look Back in Anger* (1956) was hailed in due time as a real landmark on the British theatres which brought much fame to its writer as a spokesman of an angry young generation .

Literary speaking , the theme of love is an important theme in the play . As a matter of fact , the play was written in the bleak fifties when not much of heroic causes were left . Therefore , many critics , among whom is Samuel A. Weiss , consider the plea for love as the only good cause , if not the best , left for men in an otherwise a waste-land world .

The basic interest of this paper is to show Osborne's conception of love in the play concerned . It is through the experience of love Jimmy Porter , Osborne's spokesman , has come across that the playwright has shed light on much of his beliefs in relation to true love .

1. *The World of Osborne's " Look Back in Anger "*

To give a clear account of the literary world of the play , S.P. Sen Gupta (1989: 105) holds that the period of fifties was not fertile for the British drama . Even though T.S. Eliot was writing excellent poetic plays , these plays were not fully approved by the audience . In fact , young men who had the bitter experience of despair in the wake of the Second World War , demanded plays to be written not only to satisfy their tastes , but also to touch deeply their bleak reality . That's why , they could easily find their target in Osborne's play . The latter was really successful in presenting a naturalistic treatment of how the British youth of the fifties reacted against their irredeemable background which was ultimately realistic . Though a note of idealism crept in , the fact remains that the play is as much as realistic as the naturalistic plays (Ibid. , 107) .

It is generally agreed that "*Look Back in Anger*" has been a faithful record of the blaze that was going all around in Britain after the Second World War . To a large extent , the play has accounted for the post-war generation who felt the bitterness of being trapped , displaced in a world which was not treating them according to their deserts (Taylor , 1968 : 81) . It seems necessary then to consider the political and social background of the period Osborne and his hero were angry with .

Indeed , when the Second World War was over in 1945, the Labour Government was controlling the whole political situation in Britain but it was to be replaced by the Conservatives in the early fifties . Accordingly , young men at that time were whole-hearted believers in better political and social changes , which to their belief , would bring about a new world .At first , they thought their dreams would be

better visualized in terms of a socialist esteem but that was far to be realized . Much to their disappointment ,these young dreamers were equally disillusioned about the Conservatives than they were about the Labour Government . In other words , they were torn by doubts between two worlds-one was dead and the other was crippled to see the light (Gupta , 1989 : 102) . In addition , much of the national pride and glory came to dust as the British Empire consequently lost control on its colonies and so the economical situation was worse than before .

Socially , the period was marked with bitterness and frustration for the working people who were in constant clashes with the upper class . Even though , the working class youths were educated at the so-called ' Redbrick Universities' they were deprived of the real opportunities the upper class had . On the surface , such educational institutions had their own advantages to provide education with the same privileges of the Oxford graduates . But , these privileges were only superficial in the sense that the working class youths were practically deprived of the important positions the upper class used to occupy whether in the offices or the parliament . However , this is largely reflected through Jimmy Porter's situation . Like the majority of the working class youths , Jimmy is not given a chance to join a white-collar job even though he has been an ex-graduate of a Redbrick University.

2. Osborne's Jimmy : An Angry Young Man

No doubt , " *Look Back in Anger*" has established Osborne's reputation as the most prominent and perhaps widely acclaimed of the so-called " Angry Young Men" . The term comes from the title of Leslie Paul's *Autobiography* , *The Angry Young Man* (1951) and in turn is applied to a

group of British playwrights and novelists in the 1950s and 1960s . Those writers were mainly rebels against the political and social system at the time that they have never missed the chance to attack the prevailing debased values especially those resulting from aristocratic attitudes (Holman , 1985 : 24) . If Osborne is the leader of those agonized young men , then his hero, being a true portrait of the playwright himself , is a typical example of the angry young man .

As it has already been mentioned , Jimmy Porter , a young man of twenty five , is an educated working man but his high aspirations are bent to earth to run a sweet stall he shares with a friend of his , Cliff Lewis .

A further consideration of Jimmy's situation reveals that he is not altogether an easy person to deal with . Indeed , the key word to understand his whole situation is " angry" . He seems to be fed up with anger against everything and almost every person round him . In the simplest terms , Jimmy is totally bored with the routine and dullness of his present life . He , thus , used to burst into brutal outrages against his wife's ironing as part of the mechanical repeated things he detests at depth: "*always the same ritual. Reading papers , drinking tea ironing*" (Act 1. 15) .

Practically , Jimmy's anger is deeply rooted . In his childhood , Jimmy had the bitter experience of nursing his dying father , speechlessly watching the latter agonies , when his mother was completely unconcerned . It turns out then that Jimmy "*learnt at an early age , what it was to be angry-angry and helpless*" (Act 2 , Sc. 1 , 58) .

His anger could be also viewed differently . On the one hand , it could be the expression of his discontent with his callous society the head of which is the establishment and its obvious lack of " *enthusiasm*" (Act 1 , 15) .

In this concern , Jimmy is seen as a passionate person who is trapped more in a society in which " *nobody thinks , nobody cares . No beliefs , no conviction , and no enthusiasm*" (Ibid. , 16) . It is at their apparent lack of sympathy and passionate

intensity that Jimmy could be viewed by many as " *simply a loudmouth*" (Ibid. , 10) .

Jimmy's reactions then are " strategically situated between those of the cynics and those of the committed idealists"(Taylor in Gupta , 1989 : 146) . No doubt , in this sense , Jimmy has his own set of the ideals but he is socially a drift . He is , thus , mainly a rebel against the social and educational systems which have shaped his conducts and life as his society demands , not as he likes (Ibid.) .

This , in turn , causes other characters in the play to think of Jimmy as the one who was born out of his time . Probably he should have better lived in France during the French Revolution (Dyson in Brown , 1980 : 54) . If we accept Jimmy to be a frustrated idealist , then part of his idealism lies in his bitter realization that the present time is not worth living . Jimmy looks back in anger that the noble causes , which were vital in the past , are completely missing now : " *There aren't any good , brave causes left . No , there's nothing left for it*"(Act 3 , Sc. 1 , 84-85) . Much to his disillusionment , Jimmy thinks that there is nothing to fight for but men gratefully allow themselves to be " *butchered by women*" (Ibid.) . He is , in this sense , equally angry with women to fool men , to bleed them to death . He seems then to be a reminder of Shakespeare's Hamlet with the latter equally hostile attitude towards women . (McCarthy in Taylor , 1968 : 154) .

On the other hand , Jimmy's situation bears different explanations . A.E. Dyson (in Styan , 1968 : 258) observes that Jimmy is not only a frustrated idealist " raging against the evils of man " , but his behaviours show him the more to be a strange mixture of contradictions that made him " cruel and even morbid misfit in a group of reasonably normal and well-disposed people" (Ibid.) . However , the former remark could be especially true if we consider Osborne's own way of depicting his hero as a " *disconcerting mixture of sincerity and cheerful malice , of tenderness , and free-booting cruelty*" (Act 1 , 9) .

Whether Jimmy is angry in season or out of season , his anger finds different outlets . The first to mention , however , manifests itself in Jimmy's repeated wish to " *write a book written in flames a mile high . And it won't be recollected in tranquility either , It'll be recollected in fire , and blood , my blood*" (Act 2 , Sc.1 , 54) . Being bored with conventions , both religious and moral , and of the establishment at large , Jimmy expresses an inner wish to write a book in which he will attack all sorts of superficial conventions. Whereas Wordsworth's emotions were recollected in tranquility far from the mad crowded world , then tranquility is only an awkward word which has no place in the angry man's dictionary .

Thus , Jimmy's book will be totally different from that of Wordsworth . The former book has nothing to do with the Wordsworthian tranquility . Instead , it will be written in blood as an expression of anger and discontent .

Being married to a woman who belongs to the upper class , Jimmy has never been tired of taunting his wife as an expression of his anger and hatred against the establishment . Thus , by constantly humiliating his wife and her family members , Jimmy thinks that he is bringing indignation to her class as a whole .

Another means of expressing anger , is by repeatedly blowing trumpet . By doing so , Jimmy partly seeks a means of escape from the deadly silence and monotony of his daily life , and to cause recognition and disturbance to his family members (Gupta , 1989 : 147) . Soft music then does not make a sense for the angry young man nor does move a limb of his : " *Anyone who doesn't like real Jazz, hasn't any feeling for music or people*" (Act 2 , Sc. 1 , 48) . In this sense , the church bells parallel Jimmy's Jazz trumpet but with a difference . It is true that the church bells used to irritate Jimmy's domestic peace as the reminder of the authority of the church and in turn rises his contempt at clergymen and the establishment at large . Whereas , his trumpet is the

means by which he violates the seemingly peaceful atmosphere of his household .

If we accept Jimmy's anger as the culmination of different misfortunes , then his constantly taunting his wife , blowing Jazz and sarcasm are only cries from the heart to gain recognition and furthermore to join in suffering (Banham in Gupta , 1989 : 97).

3. *The Emergence of Love and Later Disillusionment*

As it has already been mentioned , Jimmy is married to a beautiful woman , Alison who belongs to the upper class but he is altogether dissatisfied with the sort of life he is leading . It turns out that despite their passionate love , mutual understanding is missing . The reasons , however , are not far to seek . When Jimmy first met Alison in a party , he was immediately fascinated by her " *relaxation of spirit*" (Act 3 , Sc. 2 , 94) . She seemed to be the embodiment of all desirable features Jimmy has been yearning for in his future wife . Alison , in turn , was no less attracted to Jimmy though the latter had nothing to do with the luxuries and grandeur of the upper class . His appearance suggested that he was a typical working class man who would come rather unblushingly to a party " *on a bicycle And there was oil all over his dinner Jacket*" (Act 2 , Sc.1 , 45) . But , that was not totally discouraging for Alison . Though Jimmy was equally detested by men and women alike in the party , it was evident that Alison pitied him and pity was the first clue which led her to love him . On more than one occasion , Alison used to recall with nostalgia how she was fascinated by Jimmy as a sort of a medieval hero who would rather risk his life to marry her (Ibid.) . But , the fact remains that both are equally disillusioned .

As a matter of fact , Jimmy longs for " *a little ordinary enthusiasm*" (Act 1 , 15) which he wished to have in Alison . But , he is soon irritated to find out that Alison , who is

a member of the establishment , used to lead an idle life which obviously lacks the sense of enthusiasm he demands . Alison , in this concern , deserves to be contrasted with Jimmy's ex-mistress , Madeline , ten years his senior . What makes Jimmy really attracted to Madeline is that both belong to the same social rank and naturally they used to have many things in common . It is not surprising then that Jimmy is quite nostalgic to recall his memories with Madeline : " *even to sit on the top of a bus with her [Madeline] was like setting out with Ulysses*" (Ibid. , 19) . Being fascinated by Madeline's sense of human enthusiasm, he compares her with Ulysses as the representative of man's tireless craving for adventures , knowledge and genuine thoughts . Alison , then , is Madeline's contrast . Unlike Madeline , who used to live her times fully , Alison has no enthusiasm for anything and thus is content to lead a quite relaxed life .

Besides , as it has already been suggested that Jimmy has been acquainted with suffering since his early teens that's why he is mainly concerned to find " a fellow-sufferer" (Gupta , 1989 : 98) . Jimmy is disillusioned the more to see that Alison , who used to lead a quite relaxed life , could not fully appreciate his pain . To Alison , Jimmy's suffering is only a " luxury of woe" (Ibid.) , that once it is taken from him , he would be totally lost .

Jimmy , thus , comes to a bitter realization that Alison's calmness and relaxation of spirit are only those of a sleeping beauty and that nothing can wake that sleeping beauty but anguish and suffering . He is seen , in this concern , trying hard to make his wife pass through a bitter experience of intense suffering only to humanize her in flesh and blood . However , this manifests itself in Jimmy's constant mentioning of his wish to see his wife having a baby and sadistically watching her breakdown at losing it: " *if you [Alison] could have a child , and it would die ... If only I could watch you face that*" (Act 1, 37).

Jimmy also conceives a sadistic pleasure in abusing his wife and permanently humiliating her upper class family . On the one hand , Jimmy thinks that by constantly humiliating Alison , he is degrading the whole aristocrats , and in turn avenging himself upon the establishment . On the other hand , Jimmy thinks that it is the only way out to humanize her soul . It is only through suffering that one comes to possess what Jimmy calls " *relaxation of spirit* " (Act 3 , Sc. 2 , 94) and it is only through suffering that one learns how to adjust himself to others.

It is worth mentioning here that Jimmy's attitude towards his wife is a strange mixture of tender love and irretrievable malice . This could be especially true if we consider Jimmy's character as being a strange mixture of contradictions that he could be at once " sincere and malicious , cruel and tender , sensitive and callous , artistically conscious and vulgar" (Gupta,1989:54) . Thus , one could see that for a while Jimmy is all loving and caring for Alison when all of a sudden , his attitude is changed into a complete indifference once her arm is burnt while ironing . Though love is not totally absent , the husband and wife have no " compatibility " (Worth in Taylor , 1968 : 105) . Their incompatibility is basically alluded to the fact that they do belong to different social ranks . It is no doubt that Alison does love Jimmy but , for him , her love is not expressive . The problem with Jimmy is that he is a whole-hearted believer in what Osborne calls " *allegiances*" (Act 1, 42) . He then does not only demand love from the people he loves , but also their unquestionable allegiances . Indeed , love alone does not fully satisfy him . Accordingly , he wants to feel that those whom he loves are not only attached to him in the name of love , but also are totally loyal to his own ideals . In other words , they must be equally loyal to his own beliefs and conventions . To adjust herself to Jimmy , Alison must break totally free from her past and gratefully accept his own beliefs , which is not altogether an easy thing to achieve . It is true that Alison offers him love generously but

constantly stimulates his anger at her silence : " *The girl can twist your arm off with her silence*" (Act 2 , Sc. 1 , 59) . Therefore , Jimmy keeps on taunting her in away to strike some sort of response , on her part , but she almost remains unconcerned . Jimmy , too , is equally conscious of Alison's aristocratic background with all its artificiality and lack of passionate intensity . Instantly , he storms at Alison for not reading the newspaper : " *well , she can talk , can't she ?! She hasn't had thought for years*" (Act 1 , 12) . As a member of the upper class , Alison , used to lead a quite undisturbed life which obviously demands no genuine thinking . It is not surprising that Jimmy has never been tired to tease his wife by calling her " *a monument to non-attachment*" , (Ibid , 21) and other times by referring to her as " *lady Pusillanimous*" (Ibid) . It is , in this concern , that Jimmy has gone further to find in the latter characteristics which are parts of Alison's personality , such as : " *having a little mind : mean spirited ; cowardly , limited of mind*" (Ibid , 22) . If this criticism means something , it mainly serves as a vivid indication of the gap , and incompatibility which could not be easily bridged between the married couple . Indeed , each one belongs to a world entirely different from the other and in turn their constant clashes are justified . Their situation , further , implies a sense of irony in that Jimmy is unwilling to forget Alison's aristocratic background whereas he is equally forgetful that Alison has sacrificed all for the sake of love .

It seems useful then to consider Jimmy's critical attitude and continuous attacks against Alison's family as an integral part of his fight against the establishment . Since Osborne and his hero are mainly rebels against the establishment , naturally there is no room of sympathy for people like Alison's family . On a large scale Jimmy disdains Alison's family background with its plentiful lack of wits as " *always the same picture : high summer , the long days in sun What a romantic picture , phoney , too !*" (Ibid , 17). At this declaration , Jimmy storms at the superficiality of the

upper class since they have little human substance behind their "romantic" (Ibid) exteriors , that the contrast will be immediately there between what they appear to be and what they really are . Nigel , Alison's brother , is a constant subject of Jimmy's attack . The former , who has hard efforts to have a seat in the parliament , is repeatedly mocked by Jimmy since " his [Nigel's] knowledge of life and human beings is hazy" (Ibid , 20) . Nigel , then , as the representative of the establishment does possess as much of the features that Jimmy detests , with his apparent pretension , and little consideration of any respect for human life .

Jimmy is equally critical of Alison's parents . Indeed , if Nigel is the embodiment of how the upper class are dishonest and little considering of human life , then Colonel Redfern is a living example of the British imperialism and past glories which have come to dust at the colonies' attempts to get independence . Jimmy's attitude towards his father-in-law deserves to be considered here . The retired Colonel seems to be sick with his sense of nostalgia for his years of power and wealth in India . But , the problem is that everything is changed utterly for him . Despite Jimmy's hostile attitude towards the Colonel as " one of those sturdy old plants left over from the Edwardian Wilderness " (Act 2 , Sc.2 , 67) , he is not totally disrespectful of him . Alison , in this sense , realizes a sort of similarity between her father's situation and Jimmy's : " You're [Colonel Redfern] hurt because everything is changed. Jimmy is hurt because everything is the same . And neither of you can face it" (Ibid , 68) . It seems that both are equally hurt though for different reasons . The former is deeply hurt that everything is changed against his will that England on his return is totally different from the one he left in 1914 . The latter is no less hurt that there is no recognizable change .

It is true that there is such no room of sympathy , for the retired Colonel , on Jimmy's part but the latter is no less considering that the Colonel had aims , and causes to fight

for in the past . Even though , the Colonel and his generation were sometimes wrong , they were secure and dignified that at least they knew well what they wanted (Taylor ,1963 : 47).

4. *Alison's Relationship with Cliff Lewis*

Unlike Jimmy who keeps on raging in despair , Cliff is calm and lovely . Indeed , " *if Jimmy alienates love , Cliff seems to exact it . He is a soothing natural counterpoint to Jimmy*" (Act 1 , 10) . Cliff is sincerely attached to Alison and Jimmy alike . It turns out that Cliff shares them their flat beside running a sweet stall with Jimmy . Obviously , there is a sense of familiarity and harmony between the two young men . This harmony , however , is alluded to the fact that both are of the same age , and both belong to the same social rank . Everything between them is as " relaxed and normal" (Hayman , 1968 : 19) . The only recognizable difference is that Jimmy is always angry whereas Cliff's reactions are almost calm and normal . Cliff's remark , in this concern , that both of them are " *common as dirt* " (Act 1 , 30) is suggestive of the idea that as working class youth , they are common and even vulgar that there is nothing artificial about them . As a matter of fact , Cliff has been fully acquainted with Jimmy's fits of anger and in turn has been no less familiar to soothe him that the latter gratefully admits : " *He [Cliff] is the only friend I seem to have left now*" (Ibid , 33) .

As far as the husband / wife relationship is concerned , Cliff has never been tired to bring a sense of comfort and peace into their otherwise " *mad house*" (Act 2 , Sc.2 , 89) . It becomes evident that if Cliff had not been with them , their situation would have been worse . One thing about Cliff is that he keeps a passionate love for Alison without offending Jimmy . It is in her misery that Alison appeals to Cliff for comfort and consolation but the latter has never exploited the situation to satisfy his own interest . Indeed , Cliff seems to be sincerely devoted to Alison when her arm is

burnt , while ironing , he is altogether concerned to nurse her pains . Beside being a reliever , Cliff is seen as a trustworthy person to whom Alison reveals the secret of her pregnancy . It is clear that Alison and Cliff are fond of each other but theirs is not " *a consuming passion , , it's just a relaxed cheerful sort of thing*" (Act 2 , Sc.1, 41) . Even though , they exchange occasional kisses and embraces , these are only " an expression of their affection , rather than passion , born of lust" (Gupta , 1989 : 159) . However , this attachment does not upset Jimmy who in turn thinks that physical fidelity is less important than the moral and spiritual fidelity . (Dyson in Brown,1980:50).

Cliff , then , loves Alison in his own way and is equally sympathetic to consider Jimmy's daily drudgery . It turns out that Cliff heartily feels for them and that's why Alison's final departing Jimmy does not appeal to him . It is on her departure that Alison left Jimmy a note with Cliff , but the latter is definitely and finally unwilling to deliver the note lest Jimmy would be offended

A further consideration of Cliff's situation reveals that he could safely serve as a vivid contrast to Jimmy's ex-friend , Hugh . Whereas Alison shares Cliff a sense of tenderness and affection , she detests Hugh from the very beginning . Indeed , Alison used to recall with bitterness her difficult experience when she had to share the same roof with Jimmy and Hugh : " *I couldn't believe that two people , two educated people , be so savage both come to regard me as a sort of hostage from those sections of society they had declared war on*" (Ibid , 43) . When they were newly-married , Jimmy and Alison shared Hugh his flat in Poplar . It seems that the married couple had no other alternative than to share the same roof with Hugh . Alison's life there was unquestionably miserable . Both Jimmy and Hugh belonged to the working class and thus were equally determined to declare war on the upper class they detested at depth . Alison , therefore , as a member of the upper class

was constantly attacked by both men . Though they were equally educated , they were savage like to declare war on Alison as a sort of hostage (Ibid) .

The experience with all attached bitterness serves to declare Alison's first disillusionment with Jimmy. Much to her misfortune , Alison comes to a bitter realization that Jimmy as a working class man , is unwilling to forget that Alison does belong to his enemy side .

Unlike Alison who has no soft corner in heart for Hugh , Jimmy has his tenderness towards Hugh and his mother , Mrs. Tanner . It becomes clear that Jimmy is fully sympathetic with Mrs. Tanner with whose help he keeps a sweet stall . Part of his sympathy lies in that Mrs. Tanner has led a quite miserable life . The latter horrible experience on her death bed brings into Jimmy's mind the bitter experience he has already had with his dying father , when he was at the age of ten .

If Jimmy is fully sympathetic with Mrs. Tanner who , in turn , shares him the same social rank , then Alison , though unaware , could not break totally free from her aristocratic background to consider Mrs. Tanner's ignorance : " *she's [Mrs. Tanner] very sweet , in fact , Jimmy seems to adore her principally because she's been poor almost all her life , and she's frankly ignorant*" (Ibid. , 46) . It is true , that Alison has committed a grave error when she refused to accompany Jimmy to visit the dying women . It was something Jimmy could not really forgive to see that his upper class wife is totally unmoved even to send flowers on Mrs. Tanner's funeral .

5. Jimmy's Relationship with Helena and His Final Reconciliation with Alison

The situation between Jimmy and Alison , however , is made worse with the arrival of the latter school-mate , Helena Charles . Helena is an actress who asks her friend to stay with her for sometime since she has theatrical

assignments in the town . Helena , also , belongs to the upper class that's why her arrival does not appeal to Jimmy . One thing about Helena is that she is an impressive woman and has an authoritative personality which " *makes most men who meet her , not only to please but impress*" (Act 2 , Sc.1 , 39) . Besides , she has been endowed with a sense of curiosity to lay bare all Alison's secrets especially those concerned with Jimmy and her attachment to Cliff .

There is no doubt , at the very beginning , that Helena is Alison's confidant to whom Alison uncovers all private details of her life . Helena , also , seems to be altogether concerned to instill her friend with strength to challenge Jimmy : " *fight him or get out , otherwise he will kill you*" (Ibid. , 47) . Both women then conspire against Jimmy in away that rises his nerves . Jimmy's anger is instantly stimulated to see his wife regularly accompanying her friend to visit the church . It is natural for Jimmy , who is in no sense bound to conventions , to detest these rituals as part of the establishment's relatedness to respectability . Jimmy's anger , in this concern , is moved to see that his upper class wife does not break totally free from her loyalty to conventions he completely rejects .

As far as Jimmy and Alison are concerned , Helena takes the opportunity to interfere with their marriage that she soon sends a telegram to Alison's father to take his pregnant daughter away from her " *mad house*" (Act 3 , Sc.2 , 89) . It is true that Helena interferes to spare Alison's misery especially that the latter is pregnant and her husband is totally unaware . But , Helena's situation soon brings into account certain doubts . As a matter of fact , Helena could have better accompanied Alison but the former unexpectedly claims her need to stay the night to go to Birmingham for professional reasons . At the beginning , Jimmy keeps a hostile attitude towards Helena who belongs to his enemy side , and thus conceives no reason for her to stay longer with them . Helena , in turn , is constantly aware

of Jimmy's blowing trumpet : " *as if he wanted to kill someone with it . And me [Helena] in particular*" (Act2 , Sc.1 , 41) . Soon , everything is reversed . On Jimmy's return from Mrs. Tanner's funeral , Helena delivers him the note Alison left and that upsets him all the more . It emerges that Jimmy and Helena exchange insults to the degree that Helena , though unaware , comes to slap him . But her slapping Jimmy is not so much of hatred than of love that soon they fall in love with each other .

Helena's situation , in this sense , bears different explanations . On the one hand , Helena could be simply moved by a suppressed demand for love which makes her gratefully accept to be Jimmy's mistress . On the other hand , one should not forget that Helena is an actress and obviously she knows well how to draw the line for her own benefit . Cliff's remark on Alison's departure that " *He [Jimmy] is all yours . And I hope he rams it up your nostrils*" (Act 2 , Sc.2 , 71) , serves to be a vivid indication of the former immediate suspicion of Helena's motives . Accordingly , Helena may arrange the whole plan to get Alison out in a way to have Jimmy for herself .

Whatever Helena's motives could be , Jimmy loves her in his own way without the romantic excessiveness . It becomes clear that they share their life under the same roof and in the same way a husband and wife do . Though Alison and Helena belong to the same social rank , one could see that Jimmy is more at ease with Helena than he was with Alison . Indeed , this could be especially true if we consider Jimmy's situation to be attached to Helena only in the physical sense and that there is further commitment (Taylor , 1963 : 40) . The fact remains that though Jimmy and Helena come to lead their life undisturbed , with no further troubles , physical passion alone could not fully satisfy the angry young man . Their minds , however , have no " affinity" (Gupta , 1989 : 84) .

After her abortion , Alison unexpectedly comes back home without knowing really why she comes back . It is

clear that Alison has passed through a purgatory of suffering but it is not without advantage . It is true that Alison has come to a better realization of her whole dilemma that though she failed to adjust herself to Jimmy at first , she has eventually learnt from her own experience . Alison's situation , does not demand further explanation on Jimmy's part . Indeed , the latter is soon aware that Alison has suffered intensely at losing her baby which is her first misfortune , but it is not the only misfortune Jimmy has had. It is only one among similar misfortunes Jimmy has already experienced . After all , Jimmy has learnt how to adjust himself but it is Alison's first experience and she has to learn how to adjust herself .

Alison is soon conscious of Helen's presence as Jimmy's mistress , the panic of which she has deeply felt as a woman . But , the former claims her unwillingness to have them separated if they really share their life happily . Helena , in turn , is not totally a woman without principles . She soon stands to reason that she is the one who must leave . After all , it is Alison's household and that she has all the rights to be there whereas Helena is reasonably displaced . It becomes clear that Helena is caught in a strong conflict between her passion and reason but fortunately the latter overcomes . Though Helena lives with Jimmy as a mistress , she is at last conscious of the right and the wrong . Her final decision to leave Jimmy is opened to different interpretations .

Mainly , it is her unquestionable belief in " *the book of rules*" (Act3 , Sc.2 , 88) which governs her behaviours at the end . Indeed Helena , though late , comes to an awareness that her act is terribly wrong and that's why she does not wish to continue :

" *At least , I still believe in the right and wrong Even though everything I have done is wrong , at least I have known it was wrong*" (Ibid. , 89) .

A part from ethical considerations , Helena is equally aware that Jimmy belongs to a world entirely different from hers . Her decision stems from a further consideration of Jimmy's

situation that if she and Alison are absent , Jimmy will seek another female companion elsewhere .

Alison's remark that neither of them is a fitting partner for Jimmy deserves to be considered here . Apt to Alison's words , the woman Jimmy longs for is " *a cross between a mother and a mistress , a kind of hench woman , a mixture of Cleopatra and Boswell*" (Ibid , 91) . Jimmy , who is mainly disrespectful of the conventional love , longs for a woman who is endowed with the qualities of a mother and a mistress . She should be altogether concerned to tender him like a mother and be equally beautiful and authoritative as Shakespeare's Cleopatra . Besides , she should never fail his concept of " allegiances" and thus keep a hero worshipping of him in the same way John Boswell keeps on placing his hero , Dr. Johnson on the pedestal (Gupta , 1989:177) .

On her final break with Jimmy , Helena could be moved by the pricks of a sinful conscience towards Alison . Thus , seeing the latter suffering intensely , Helena does not wish to add more agonies : " *When you [Alison] come in at that door , ill and tired and hurt , it was all over for me*" (Act3 , Sc.2, 91) . Whatever Helena's reasons are , it is her loyalty to conventions , other than people , which determines her conditions at the end (Dyson in Brown , 1980 : 54) . This emphasizes in turn that Helena and Jimmy are only opposite in that Helena is a whole-hearted believer in conventions whereas the latter is definitely and finally unbound to conventions .

Jimmy loves Helena in his own way but he does not seem to be deeply hurt at her departure . His reaction stems from a further consideration of Helena's situation that she is incapable of genuine love and is no less escapist from its panic : " *They [people] all want to escape from the pain of being alive . And most of all , from love*" (Act3 , Sc.2 , 93) . Jimmy is no less convinced that it is rather her inability to stand any harsh test which determines her decision because those who love need " *muscle and guts*" (Ibid.) .

It seems worthy then to consider Jimmy's own conception of love which is in turn Osborne's . Jimmy observes that to be in love is not altogether an easy job but one must dirty his hands or else he should better give up the whole idea of being alive and rather become a saint : " *You [Helena] can't fall into it [love] like a soft job , without dirtying up your hands And if you can't bear the thought of messing up your nice , clean soul , you'd better give up the whole idea of life and become a saint*" (Ibid.) .

Jimmy whose main concern is " to possess a woman's complete unquestioning love" (Wellworth in Gupta , 1989 : 134) eventually finds his target in Alison . After being humanized in blood and tears , Alison has become Jimmy's true partner in life . Indeed , wealth and comfort are no longer her target . Alison has learnt from her own ordeal that she is no more to lead the life of a saint : " *I was wrong I don't want to be neutral , I don't want to be a saint , I want to be a lost cause , I want to be corrupt and futile*" (Act3 , Sc.2 , 95) . Alison is reaccepted by Jimmy only after she has passed through the experience of being a recognizable human : " *I'm in the mud at last ! I'm groveling*" (Ibid.) . Thus , the angry young man is relaxed to see his wife as miserable as that to join him in suffering . Eventually , Jimmy is seen capable of sympathy and consolation for his wife that he comes to compare himself to a lonely bear , crying in the forest , longing for his mate : " *like the old bear , following his own breath in the dark forest . There's no warm pack , no herd to comfort him*" (Ibid., 94) .

It is at this point that the married couple start playing the bear / squirrel game . Jimmy , as an old bear , tries to dismiss his mate's fears , to sustain her with hope that once more they will be playing the roles of the bear and squirrel in their little cave :

" *We'll be together in our bear's cave , and our squirrel's drey , and we'll live in honey , and nuts-lots and sing songs about ourselves - about warm trees and caves*" (Ibid. , 96) . In this concern , it seems necessary to consider the dramatic

significance of this game the married couple used to play . The game was first introduced in (Act II , Sc.1) of the play when Alison was questioned by Helena about the nature of love Jimmy has towards her . Helena accuses Jimmy of not knowing really the meaning of love whereas Alison , with no further explanations , simply points to the toy-bear , representing Jimmy , and the squirrel-toy representing herself . On the one hand , they used to play this game as an expression of their urgent need to escape their bleak reality into a world of fantasy . This means that the game serves as a comic relief for the tired couple when there is little understanding and not much of relief . It is then at their playing the bear / squirrel game that they come to compensate for their lack of adjustment and harmony . On the other hand , they are equally escapist from the burdens of being humans , that's why they imagine themselves to be animals : "*It was the one way of escaping from everything A silly symphony for people who couldn't bear the pain of being human beings any longer*" (Ibid , 47) .

Besides , it has already been suggested that the game is revived at the couple's reunion to indicate their final reconciliation and a note of the triumph of their genuine love . In his sense, James Gindin (in Gupta , 1989:133) undertakes to show how the game has been changed from being a simple or even trivial evasion to ease the tension of their married life into : " a statement of the nature of human love- the willingness to immerse oneself in creatureness , to share the pain and the pleasure of the limited animal" .

6. Conclusions

It has become very obvious that *Look Back in Anger* reflects to a large extent Osborne's conception of true love . This is shown through the experience of love Jimmy , Osborne's spokesman , has come across throughout his life .

Jimmy's first experience is with Alison who belongs to a different social class . Their love appears to be unhealthy . Each one lives his own world separately ; though they share the same roof ; Jimmy with all his working class values , and Alison with all her upper class ones . So the differences between them seem , at this period of their relation , irredeemable . It needs deep suffering from both of them in order to come to a right decision .

The second experience Jimmy has is with Helena , Alison's school-mate . Though Helena also belongs to the upper class , she offers Jimmy the love he is longing for . In fact , Helena is more successful than Alison in giving Jimmy what he is looking for . She gives him a mistress love , i.e. , physical love . Later on , both of them come to realize that physical passion alone is not sufficient to satisfy the angry young man . Helena's existence in Jimmy's life , in fact , is of great significance to Alison . It helps her to get a better understanding of the relationship between a wife and her husband . So the way to their reconciliation is correctly paved .

Finally , it could be safely concluded that Osborne's conception of love is that love should be based on a kind of social adjustment , mutual understanding ; love which satisfies the needs of the soul (motherly love) and which also satisfies the needs of the body (mistress love) .

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