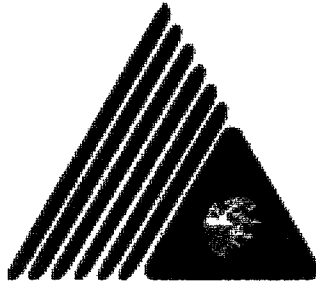


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YEDİTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

REPRESENTATIONS OF ANGER AND LOVE IN JOHN OSBORNE'S
LOOK BACK IN ANGER

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Submitted to the Graduate Institute of Social Sciences
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ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to investigate the role of emotions in our understanding and responses to literary works of art. This is done through an analysis of John Osborne's play *Look Back in Anger*. After providing background information on the history of the theories of emotion, the thesis goes on to analyze the emotions of love and anger as represented in the play. For this analysis, the Cognitive and Social Constructivist theories of emotions are employed. The thesis demonstrates that the sources of these two universal emotions that the characters in the play experience and express, i.e. love and anger, are their particular cognition of their world, and their values which are shaped by the society they live in. This thesis also involves a discussion of emotional responses to Osborne's play based on the theories of Plato and Aristotle. The role of emotion in art and life is examined and clarified in this connection.

ÖZET

Bu tezin amacı, duyguların edebi sanatları kavramamızda ve bu tür sanat eserlerine verdiğimiz tepkilerin oluşmasında oynadığı rolü incelemektir.. Bu inceleme John Osborne'nun oyunu *Look Back in Anger*'ın çözümlemesi ile gerçekleştirilmektedir. Duygu teorilerinin tarihi üzerine gerekli bilgi verildikten sonra tezde, sevgi ve öfke duygularının oyunda ne şekilde betimlendiği açıklanmaktadır. Bu çözümlemede Bilişsel ve Sosyal Oluşumcu yaklaşımlar kullanılmaktadır. Tez, oyundaki karakterlerin tecrübe ve ifade ettikleri iki evrensel duygunun, yani sevgi ve öfkenin, kaynağında kendi dünyalarını kendilerine özgü kavrayışlarının ve içinde yaşadıkları toplum tarafından şekillendirilen kendi değer yargılarının olduğunu göstermektedir. Bu tez ayrıca Plato ve Aristo'nun duygu teorilerine dayanarak, Osborne'nun oyununa verilen duygusal tepkilerin irdelemesini de içermektedir. Bu bağlamda duyguların sanattaki ve hayattaki yeri incelenip, ortaya konulmaktadır.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Throughout the ages it was believed that emotions make people irrational. However in the last decade or so, this belief has started to change and it has become clear that emotions serve very important functions in our lives.

Various philosophers, educators and psychologists have differing opinions about the place of emotions in our lives and human affairs. We can simply categorize these opinions in three groups: ones who disregard emotions and argue that our “reasons for being” are cognitive-intellectual; those who disregard reason, and claim that people are emotional-social beings; and finally, those who consider that reason and emotion are interdependent.

It is rather difficult to give an exact definition of an emotion since there are many of them with different properties. Over the last hundred years, a number of different definitions of emotions have been proposed by scientists. Kleinginna and Kleinginna identified ninety-two definitions found in textbooks, articles, dictionaries, and other sources. After evaluating these definitions they proposed the following consensual definition:

Emotion is a complex set of interactions among subjective and objective factors, mediated by neural/hormonal system, which can (a) give rise to affective experiences such as feelings of arousal, pleasure/displeasure; (b) generate cognitive processes such as perceptually relevant effects, appraisals, labeling processes; (c) activate widespread physiological adjustments to the arousing conditions; and (d) lead to behaviour that is often, but not always, expressive, goal-directed, and adaptive” (Kleinginna and Kleinginna, 1981:335)

The primary function of emotion is to provide information. Emotions as manifested in facial and vocal expressions give us information about the mental state of other people. Our own emotions provide us crucial data for our judgment and decision making process. We always turn to our feelings when we are making decisions or judgments about something. Moreover, how we feel in a moment determines our judgments. For instance, we can judge the same thing or event positively when we are happy, and negatively when we are sad. In that way an emotion organizes efficiently and very rapidly our response to changing environmental factors. Emotions also involve bodily changes in blood distribution, in muscle tension, etc. However, mental changes brought about by emotions are just as important as the behavioral changes, since they direct our lives.

We as human beings are greatly shaped by our emotions, and art is a way to present and represent our emotions. In every work of art we see an artist’s emotions; it is a way to express his or her

feelings. There is no doubt that, in the experience of art, emotion is a significant element. Art is a way to express emotions. If we consider three basic types, i.e. painting, music and literature, we see a strong relation between them and emotions. In painting, for example, all great artists reflect their emotions on the canvas; even colors of the painted objects or concepts result from the artist's emotions. Music has also been regarded as indispensable because of its effects on our emotions. When we see people listening to classical music we see them listen with their eyes closed, rapt in a performance, or we see people listening to heavy metal banging their heads. Both of these examples show the emotional effects of music. When we consider literature, we realize that one of its main aims is to express and analyze individual emotions. By doing this it also directs the reader's emotions. Writers, similar to psychologists, deal with the bodily and facial expressions of emotions, as well as their behavioral and psychological aspects when they develop their characters. Since we are dealing with literature in this thesis, I want to emphasize the deep connections between literature and the emotions. Imagined events and people are what literature is composed of. Kendall Walton in his 'On Being Moved by Fiction' explains that with the help of literature, we participate in an imagined world. He writes:

Participation involves imagining about ourselves as well as about the characters and situations of the fiction –but not just imagining that such and such is true of ourselves. We imagine doing things, experiencing things, feeling in certain ways. We bring much of our actual selves, our real life beliefs and attitudes and personalities, to our imaginative experiences, and we stand to learn about ourselves in the process. (Hjort and Laver, 1997:38)

But what connects us to this imagined world? To answer this question it is necessary to consider the nature of literature. Aristotle, in his great literary criticism, *The Poetics*(1982), explains fictional narrative as a written work based on 'mimesis'. In English, 'representation' or 'imitation' or 'copying' are the words we use for 'mimesis'.

According to the Greeks, there was no distinction between imitation, copying, impersonation and representation. Mimesis was the word which included all these concepts. The first critics of art, Plato and Aristotle, have different views about written works.

According to Plato, art is an imitation of an imitation, thus it is far from reality. Art is dangerous in that sense. We can mistake its products for reality. He says that poetry appeals to the lower part of the soul which is concerned with emotions, it makes us give in to grief, pity, laughter lust, anger and

so forth. Plato claims that we should not indulge our emotions, but rather control them. One of his criticisms of the arts centers around the concept of art as imitation, and art as away from reality. According to Plato, an artist can be defined as “an image-maker whose images are phantoms far removed from reality.” (Oates1972)

According to Plato, young people may imitate the immoral behaviour they see on the stage. He suggests that art should be controlled. It should not be practiced for its own sake but for those who receive its true benefits.

Aristotle, who was the first person to write a treatise about literary theory, had a more relaxed attitude towards poetry than his teacher Plato. Plato thought that art deceives us about reality, whereas Aristotle thought that art in fact teaches us reality. He believed that if we recognize that something is a representation, this involves an intellectual process since we recognize in it some features of the actual object. In his *Poetics*, Aristotle wrote:

..Tragedy is not an imitation of men but of actions and of life. (Quoted in Butcher, 1951:51)
Tragedy imitates persons who are better than the present generation. (Quoted in Butcher 1951:46)

As it is seen Aristotle had a less hostile attitude towards art than Plato. As a consequence, he was concerned with the relationship between emotions and the work of art. ‘Catharsis’ is the word which describes this relationship. Unlike Plato, he thought that although art arouses the emotions of the audience, this can be beneficial. This idea involves the concept of catharsis:

..Tragedy is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and possessing magnitude and effecting through pity and fear [what we call] catharsis of such emotion. (Quoted in Butcher 1951:50)

Catharsis is a medical term derived from Latin and it is adopted from the Greek word ‘katharsis’, which literally means a “cleansing and purging”. We use it when we talk about drama or the arts.

Aristotle was not afraid of art. He was not afraid of the emotions that art caused its viewers to feel. He felt that art was a suitable representation of emotions and that catharsis should be regarded as an emotional cure. Aristotle felt that useful art was both guided by nature and served as a supplement to nature.

Aristotle believed that a distinction had to be made in regards to the differences between fine and useful arts. It is to Aristotle that we owe the first clear conception of fine art as something outside the domain of religion, morals and politics. Fine art came to be seen as an independent activity of the mind, free from the constraints of having to teach moral values, or to teach anything at all.

Aristotle felt that art was a reproduction of its original, but that it reproduced it not as itself, but as it appeared to the human senses. According to Butcher, art in Aristotle's view;

can present no more than a semblance; for it impresses the artistic form upon a matter which is not proper to that form. Thus it severs itself from material reality and the corresponding wants. The real emotions, the positive needs of life, have always in them some element of disquiet...The pressure of everyday reality is removed and the aesthetic emotion is released as an independent activity. (Butcher, 1982:128)

Aristotle's theory of catharsis, which is still influential in drama theory, suggests a fundamental and significant place or need for the performing arts in a healthy society. He first used the term "catharsis" in his definition of tragedy to describe what happens when people eliminate negative emotions simply through aesthetic experience. This aesthetic experience could be watching a play or movie. Aristotle defines the function of the tragedy as the catharsis of the emotions, their purification. In his *Poetics* he defends the purgative power of tragedy. The best tragedy is the one which imitates pity and fear very well. Spectators must feel pity and fear very strongly as they are watching it.

In his *Politics*, he explains tragic catharsis. Pity and terror—although they seem painful emotions at first—they in fact depend on why people feel them.

He says that the tragic poet must aim to bring about the pleasure that comes from pity and terror by means of representation. If we experience them in real life they are painful emotions. However, if we feel them because of the tragic representation, they lead to pleasure. Aristotle thinks that we get pleasure from seeing the representations, even if they are painful representations. He writes that

We have evidence of this in actual experience, for the forms of those things that are distressful to see in reality—for example, the basest animals and corpses—we contemplate with pleasure where we find them represented with perfect realism in tragedy. (Quoted in Hutton, 1982:47)

Through watching tragedy, we feel pity and fear. Tragedy stimulates these emotions and helps to relieve them by giving them an outlet that is both moderated and harmless. It brings us nearer to the virtue in our character and as a result of this relief we feel pleasure.

It is very important to feel emotion correctly, according to Aristotle's moral theory, which means feeling emotion towards the right object, at the right time and with the right intensity. For him the key point is the plot (action). If there is a well-organized plot, the audience will have a correct emotional response. The badly organized plot, however, causes the wrong emotional responses: literally dirtiness, in other words, the opposite of catharsis. It is not difficult to develop correct emotion through art. So it is not wrong if we say that for Aristotle art has an educative and moral function in the formation of a character. In his *Poetics*, Aristotle makes the point that:

Tragedy succeeds in producing its proper effect even without any movement at all, just as epic poetry does, since when it is merely read the tragic force is clearly manifested. (Quoted in Hutton 1982:78)

When we come to modern times and think about the links between emotion and the arts, we are not far away from the ancient philosophers. A modern society's art forms also provide an emotional outlet. Films move us emotionally, through laughter, sorrow, or a myriad of other emotions. Modern plays also evoke our emotions, as do paintings and works of literature. Some modern writers regard fiction as a dream-making process. A person's need to make-believe begins with childhood and extends into the representational arts when they are adults. Participating in make-believe, as a viewer of a play or other representational art, helps people imagine themselves in roles in which they might find themselves later on in life. Keith Oatley and Mitra Gholamain, in their essay 'Connections Between Readers and Fiction' give Robert Louise Stevenson as an example for this:

...When he was a child, he was a dreamer. When he became a writer, his stories tended to come to him not from ordinary life, but as dreams in which characters and situations suggested themselves, and started to become actual in the theater of his brain.(Ekman & Davidson, 1994:264)

Stevenson says in his essay, 'A Chapter on Dreams' (1888):

The past is all of one texture-whether feigned or suffered-whether acted out in three dimensions or only witnessed in the small theatre of the brain which we keep brightly lighted all night long, after the jets are down, and darkness and sleep reign undisturbed in the

remainder of the body...which of them what we call true, and which a dream, there is not one hair to prove. (Quoted in Ekman & Davidson,1994:264)

Dreams, like art, provide an emotional outlet. One often dreams of the day's events, and many times dreams can reveal a person's fears, loves, anxiety for future events, etc. There is a long list of books that deal with dream interpretation, and how certain dreams reveal certain emotions for the dreamer.

Literature is important since it also reveals emotions. Literature is one form of art that provides us a safe place to reflect on our emotions. Moreover, it is something which is far away from our real world. In other words, we can say it is a way of escaping from reality. When we read a work of fiction or watch a play or movie, some fundamental processes take place in our minds. Susan L. Feagin in her essay 'Imagining Emotions and Appreciating Fiction' says that 'Identification' is the first of these, which means escaping from reality and becoming one with one of the characters to which we feel close. This process was already explained by Sigmund Freud who argued that

The spectator...is "a poor wretch to whom nothing of importance can happen," who has long been obliged to damp down, or rather displace, his ambition to stand at the hub of world affairs; he longs to feel and to act and to arrange things according to his own desires-in short, to be a hero. And the playwright and actor enable him to do this by allowing him to identify himself with the hero. (Freud, 1904:36)

As readers we find ourselves in a character's situation, and we share the character's intentions, desires, hatreds, loves, etc. We identify with the character in that sense.

'Sympathizing' is another important process that we go through when we read a work of fiction or watch a play or movie. We feel sympathy for the characters in a work of fiction or a play.

'Autobiographical Memory' can be regarded as a third process in which we are reminded of our past experiences by a work of fiction, a play or a movie.

These three processes are the major ones which generate our emotional responses to the work of art.

As another process, we should not forget 'Our Response to the Discourse Level' .We should not forget that the work of art includes more than one structure. In one structure we find chains of events which can be called the 'narrative level' and in another structure we find direct and indirect speeches which is the 'discourse level' that aims to affect the reader. So we can say that art is the

result of stimuli from the art itself and the response of the spectator. When the spectator is responsive, emotional involvement occurs.

Empathy, a form of emotional closeness, is another important element. We do not only make an identification but also empathize with many parts of work of art. Walton summarizes these ideas as follows in his book *On Being Moved by Fiction*:

It has been suggested, variously, that such activities furnish opportunities to try out unfamiliar roles, thereby helping us to understand and empathize with people who have those roles in real life and to develop skills needed to assume them ourselves; that they provide safe outlets for the expression of dangerous or socially unacceptable emotions, or purge us of undesirable ones, or help us to recognize and accept feeling that are repressed or just unarticulated, that they assist us in working out conflicts and in facing up to disturbing or unpleasant features of ourselves and our situations. That they give us practice in dealing with situations of kinds we might actually expect to face, and so on. Whatever exactly the benefits of other imaginative activities are, one would expect the appreciator using a novel or painting as a prop in a game of make-believe to enjoy similar one. (Walton, 1990:272)

Involvement of the emotions in drama is very intense. Drama is one of the most effective arts which reveals emotions directly to us. Like literature, it is an art form of emotion, self expression, and self discovery.

The effects of emotions are seen in every structure of our lives. Our emotional states determine our perception of the world. Our behavior is the result of our emotions. Emotional responses to the arts is very complex. They depend on many factors such as sex, culture, etc. However, they are generally connected with our own experiences and our way of thinking. When we watch a play we see characters taking us on a journey to experience a story's fulfillment. As Walton states,

The appreciator's perspective is a dual one. He observes fictional worlds as well as living in them; he discovers what is fictional as well as fictionally learning about and to responding to characters and their situations. (Walton, 1990:273-274)

The audience wants to believe in the possibility of what characters can achieve. We want to see ourselves in their shoes. We identify ourselves with a particular character. There is no doubt that in a play characters have emotions so it can be determined how they will react to a story's events. That means if we have a story about courage, characters can confront their feelings about lacking courage. Then characters are put into an environment that forces them to react. In that way, they reveal the play's purpose and give voice to their feelings. As characters try to solve the problems

about their inner conflicts, the audience is pleased to see their own similar feelings and issues on the stage.

In my thesis, I discuss the representations of anger and love in John Osborne's play *Look Back in Anger*. After evaluating anger and love through cognitive and social constructivist perspectives, I discuss the emotional responses of readers to the play through Plato's and Aristotle's views.

I do this by first providing a background on emotions by explaining selected theories by philosophers, educators and psychologists. I then discuss the way art is used to represent emotions, including how ancient philosophers like Plato and Aristotle view art and emotion. Then I give the background of the play, discuss its critical acceptance and John Osborne's background, as well as the period in which it was written. I then go into greater detail discussing the motivation and emotions of the characters in the play, especially those of the two protagonists, Jimmy and Alison.

Next, I evaluate the play and its characters with regards to cognitive and social constructivist perspectives. I will first provide a background on different psychological theories on emotions, both modern and historical. I then go into further detail evaluating the representations of love and anger in the play and evaluate characters' feelings and motivations about love, and the sources of their anger.

Finally, I discuss audience reaction to the play, including the audience's interaction and participation with the play, and their emotional responses. I conclude with a discussion about the role of emotion in art and life.

"It is intense, angry, feverish, undisciplined. It is even crazy. But it is young, young, young" John Barber, Daily Express (Russell Taylor 1969)

"Look Back in Anger" is a play about the young by a young man seething with rage at social line inequalities and life's injustices." (Campbell Dixon, Daily Telegraph, 27 May 1959)

"Look Back in Anger," which opened last night, takes place entirely in the living room of the shabby flat occupied by Jimmy, Alison and Jimmy's Welsh friend Cliff. Alison and Cliff are joyless bystanders to -- and occasionally victims of -- Jimmy's tirades about the futility of modern British life. He's a resentment-filled monster and an ideal distillation of the soul-crushing institution with which (John) Osborne's drama is obsessed, the British class system." (Peter Marks Oct 18, 1999 At Mid-Century, [Review] New York Times, Choking on the Class System)

CHAPTER TWO: LOOK BACK IN ANGER and JOHN OSBORNE

2.1 Historical and Social Background of the Play

The Second World War had a big influence on British society. The loss of an imperial role had sent the British into a period of painful identity crisis. People were anxious for change. Many returning soldiers and sailors who wanted a turn-around in their social statuses were resentful because of unemployment. They wished for an important role in the country's restructuring after the war. They had no hope that the Conservative government would find solutions to the social, economic, and political problems. As a consequence, in 1945, the Labor Party came out as the winner from the elections. The new government stated some of the greatest changes in Britain's long history. The Labor Government tried to improve standards of living and moved to a "mixed economy". However, after a financial crisis, in 1951 the Conservatives resumed control of the government. In his social critique of the period, Taylor writes that

The time, obviously, was ripe: 1956 was the year of Suez and Hungary, protest was in the air, and the mood of the country, especially that of young England, veered sharply from the preciosity and dilettantism which had been in vogue at the universities and elsewhere for the last few years to one of grim political consciousness (Taylor, 1969:35)

This vague atmosphere in the country affected not only the ordinary people but also the artists. Most English writers chose to focus on social problems. They tried to reveal their inner thoughts and dealt with the moral issues regarding the war. In the works of some novelists and playwrights of the 1950s, such as John Osborne, Colin Wilson, Kingsley Amis and John Braine, a great dissatisfaction with British society was apparent. These writers-among them Osborne- became known as “Angry Young Men”. They had no hope that social conditions would improve. They were angry because England still had problems with class-consciousness. They were angry about the ineffective Conservative government as well as the upper and middle-class values in post-war England. These writers identified with the lower classes, and viewed the upper classes and the established political institutions with disdain. According to some critics, they were the generation stuck in the mid-twenties and missed the security and innocence that is believed to have belonged to that period of England before the war of 1914.

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 (Taylor, 1969:50)

“Some of the heart of England” probably means India. Security during this time had gone for England, and modern life with its new values had started. The Angry Young Men hated the materialism and superficiality of their age. Hence Kaufmann wrote:

The Angries are not in revolt against poverty or exploitation; they are, in age of dying gods and living bombs, in revolt against hopelessness. (Kaufmann, 1966:180)

These angry writers also had another target for their objections. This target was women. They saw women as symbols of superficiality, materialism and snobbery, and they hated them for it. Females were used as a metaphor for the “affluent society”. New concepts and new values began to clash with the old ones. The most exciting work of the period came as a play by John Osborne. His play

Look Back in Anger was a symbol for this period in England. It was a play in three acts, first performed in 1956 and published in 1957. *Look Back in Anger* became the rallying cry of the under-30 generation in England. Taylor writes that

In *Look Back in Anger*, the under-forties, as well as many of the under-thirties, found a rallying-point, though as subsequent events demonstrated, this era, in the theatre at least, was to prove short-lived; when the next bunch of dramatists came forward they turned out not to be playwrights of protest at all, but meticulous.(Taylor, 1969:35)

Although the form of the play was not revolutionary, its content was unexpected. A play with so much hate and unexpected violence is as shocking to read today as it was fifty years ago. Perhaps then it was more so because it was less expected. The play was a great success with a great number of audiences. Osborne's effect on British theatre is incalculable as pointed out once again by Taylor:

Mr. Osborne communicates no sense to us that he has taken even three paces back from the work that has so hotly and tormentedly engaged him for all that his is a play of extraordinary importance. Certainly it seems to have given English Stage Company its first really excited sense of occasion. And its influence should go far beyond such an eccentric and contorted one-man turn as the controversial *Waiting for Godot* (Taylor, 1969:31)

With *Look Back in Anger*, Osborne brought the class problem before British audiences. According to Hill, he would also

bind together all the key issues of the period that followed: youth, class, affluence and the status of women.(Hill, 1986:21)

Who was this man? Was he a rebel against society?

2.2 About the Writer

John Osborne was born on December 12, 1929, in London. His father was an advertising copywriter. When his father died in 1941 he left John an insurance settlement which he used to finance a boarding school education at Belmont College in Devon. However, Osborne could not focus on his studies because of sorrow at his father's death and, after striking the headmaster, he left the school. He returned to London and lived with his barmaid mother. He took a job tutoring a touring company of young actors. He served as an actor-manager for a string of repertory companies and soon decided to write plays and changed the face of British theatre. One of his plays *Look Back in Anger* was very successful. It is regarded as a turning point in postwar British theatre by many critics. Jimmy Porter, Osborne's protagonist, was the symbol of the angry and rebellious nature of the postwar generation which was clearly unhappy with things as they were in the decades following World War II. Osborne's character Jimmy Porter represented an entire generation of "angry young men".

Osborne continued to examine the state of the country and included his observations when he wrote his next play, *The Entertainers*, in 1957. In this play, he wrote about three generations of a family of entertainers to symbolize the decline of England after the war. Laurence Olivier played Archie Rice, a struggling comedian, and the role resulted in one of his most famous performances. According to most critics, after the great success of *Look Back in Anger*, it was an appropriate follow-up. Osborne then produced a number of great plays such as *Luther* (1961), a play about the leader of the Reformation, and *Inadmissible Evidence* (1965), a play about a frustrated solicitor at a law firm. Although these plays were successful, he also produced a number of unimportant works, which is why his rage no longer affected his audiences and critics began to accuse him of not fulfilling his early potential.

In 1963, Osborne won an Academy Award for his screenplay *Tom Jones*. He died of diabetes, (on December 24, 1994), in Shropshire, England. Osborne left behind many works for the stage, in addition to several autobiographical works. Many of his plays including *Look Back in Anger* and *The Entertainer* were also adapted to film. "An angry young man" was a published description of John Osborne and it was applied to an entire generation of dissatisfied young British writers.

2.3 About the Play

Look Back in Anger is a three act play which takes place in Midlands, in a one-bedroom flat. Jimmy Porter, the hero of the play, is in the marginal position of bordering the middle class. As a person living in the mid-fifties, he represents and is a spokesman for a whole post-war generation. He is twenty-five years old and from a working class family; his father died when he was ten as a result of wounds from fighting against the fascists in the Spanish Civil War. Jimmy is a graduate of the university, he likes listening to jazz, reading good books, and 'posh' Sunday papers. He can be called a 'snob' in this sense since he does not have the hobbies of a person from a working class family. Although he enjoys many of the same forms of entertainment as people of the higher classes and looks for these qualities, and even married to someone from a higher social class, he lives in an attic room in Midland town and has a sweet stall in the market with his friend Cliff. Here we come face to face with a contradiction; we have a university graduate, an intellectual character, who runs a sweet stall and lives in a shabby attic apartment. Obviously, he is not happy with his life. His wife, Alison, is a great source of unhappiness for him. She is upper-middle class and the daughter of a retired colonel who served the British Empire in India. Her parents went to great lengths to prevent the marriage, because they felt Jimmy had neither the money nor the background to be even minimally adequate for their daughter. But their efforts were useless, Alison loved Jimmy so much :

Alison:...everything about him seemed to burn, his eyes were so blue and full of sun.
(Osborne, 1966:543)

In the play, Jimmy is angry. He is angry at the upper class, he is angry at the country he lives in and he feels hopeless. His unhappiness makes Alison a victim since she represents many of the things he is angry at. Because of his wife's background, Jimmy always blames her, is always angry with her, and constantly attacks her verbally in an attempt to try and elicit some sort of emotional response from her. Yet Alison is what she is because of her background. The culture of the upper-middle class defines her and how she is able or unable to express emotions. Jimmy may envy and try to

emulate her class' pastimes, but he is unable to tolerate their inability to show emotion and their emotional unavailability.

The play takes place in Jimmy and Alison's shabby apartment and immediately we see a contradiction: elegant Alison in shabby clothes, (she is elegant *despite* the shabby clothes) in a shabby apartment, working physically by ironing. Though it is not stated in the play explicitly, it is obvious that Alison has never had to do physical work before in her life. We see Jimmy, who allegedly hates the upper classes, reading a 'posh' newspaper and calling his friend Cliff uneducated. This is a contradiction in that if he supposedly hates the upper classes for looking down on him, why does he look down on Cliff and call him names when Cliff attempts to better himself by reading the 'posh' newspapers Jimmy brings? He somehow feels superior to Cliff, even though they work in the same sweet stall. In addition, Jimmy continuously reminds Cliff how much he has paid for the newspaper, as if to show off. Jimmy acts angry towards Cliff for not reading the newspaper fast enough, yet has absolutely no problem with Cliff sucking on his wife's fingers, or when he kisses her on the cheek. Is this the behavior of a normal man? What kind of a relationship do Jimmy and Alison have that would make Cliff's behavior towards Alison permissible?

In addition, Jimmy apparently had a problem with Alison being a virgin when they got married. It might have been more typical for a man in the 1950s to be surprised if his wife was not a virgin. Why he would look down upon her is beyond comprehension, unless he is trying to be modern and resents her for sticking to the traditional values of an era in England which he hates.

But what lies behind Jimmy's hatred? And why does he hate his wife? Jimmy is a complex character; when we analyze his motivations and the way in which he expresses his emotions, we see how much he was affected by his father's death. Perhaps, it was the one defining experience of his life. He sat and watched his father die over a period of twelve months, knowing he was dying and all the while feeling as if he was the only one who cared about him. One can only imagine the bitterness that his father poured into him during that time. The bitterness of a dying, unloved man who felt impotent at facing death alone, whom no one cared for and whose family was eager to see his end finally come about:

Jimmy: He would talk to me for hours, pouring out all that was left of his life to one, lonely, bewildered little boy, who could barely understand half of what he said. All he could feel was the despair and bitterness, the sweet, sickly smell of a dying man. You see, I learnt at an early age what it was to be angry—angry and helpless. And I can never forget it. I knew more about—love...betrayal...and death, when I was ten years old than you will probably ever know all your life. (Osborne, 1966:586)

It is his father who teaches Jimmy about love, betrayal and death. His father feels betrayed by his mother and that is apparent in Jimmy's description of her and of her interaction with his father in the year before his death. He criticizes his mother for only tending to his father's basic physical needs, and not to his emotional ones. He is able to concede that she might perhaps have had pity for a dying man:

Jimmy: The family sent him a cheque every month, and hoped he'd get on with it quietly, without too much vulgar fuss. My mother looked after him without complaining, and that was about all. Perhaps she pitied him. I suppose she was capable of that. (Osborne, 1966:586)

Jimmy makes no attempt to try and understand his mother's motivations. He does not take into consideration that she was running a house on her own, tending to her dying husband and trying to raise him. He condemns her as cold and unemotional. This condemnation carries over to his relationship with his wife, and he hates her for showing him the same coldness that his mother showed his father. Alison is shown while ironing, taking care of the house, but not taking care of Jimmy's emotions. It does not matter what spews out of Jimmy's mouth, what horrible, hateful thing: Alison does not react. She acts like she is not paying attention, or as if she simply did not hear him. She faces everything Jimmy does or says with a stiff upper lip. Even though Jimmy is supposed to represent the working class man and he is supposed to resent his wife for being upper class, it is in fact the lack of expression of her emotions which leads him to lash out at her, and not what she represents in terms of their class differences:

Jimmy: Don't think I could provoke her. Nothing I could do would provoke her. Not even if I were to drop dead. (Osborne, 1966:556)

But the class differences do come into play when we take into account the way in which each of them was raised. It is because of her culture as a lady in upper-middle class society that Alison reacts the way that she does to Jimmy. And it is the manner in which he was raised that teaches him how to express his emotions through anger. It is not that he envies her for being born into the upper classes—there are many aspects of upper class life which he has adopted—but the fact that she does not act like she cares about him or anything else he does or says; this is what bothers Jimmy.

The fact that Alison's parents completely opposed their marriage, and apparently did everything in their power to break them up does not help the situation. If Jimmy was already aware of their class differences, Alison's parents just highlighted the point and humiliated him with their actions. They even hired a detective to try to get information about Jimmy in order to break them up. With so much distrust in him simply based on their class differences, who would not be angry? We can only imagine how humiliating it must have been for Jimmy to know that his wife's family thought he was so low that he deserved to be investigated. As Alison suspects, perhaps he was partly motivated out of a sense of revenge to marry her because of their disdain for him, as an act of youthful rebellion:

Alison: Well, the howl of outrage and astonishment went up from the family, and that did it. Whether or no he was in love with me, that did it. He made up his mind to marry me. (Osborne, 1966:576)

Jimmy's anger and insults are not only reserved for Alison. Though Jimmy does actually seem to like the Colonel, Alison's father, he is not spared of his tirades. He taunts Alison with his insults against her family, but he reserves the bulk of his anger for her mother, who was the one who really opposed Jimmy. Her father just kind of sat quietly by and let her mother do everything. It appears that the only action Alison took was letting Jimmy marry her, since no mention is made in the play

of any action she might have taken to stop her mother or at least put her in her place. Even after everything they have done to Jimmy, she continues to write letters to her parents, sneaking around behind his back to pick up and mail the letters. She never actively defends Jimmy against her parents, and simply lets things happen. When her conservative father, representing the opposite personality of her husband, comes to take her back home, he tells her that they were wrong; that they should not have been against her marriage. Alison is shocked that her father thinks that Jimmy is right and honest. Even her father who used to be against their marriage, makes her question her attitudes towards her husband. Was she really honest? Did she really try to do something for her husband? Did she really do the right thing by staying calm or did she make the problems between them worse by doing so?

Colonel: Perhaps you and I were the ones most to blame.

Alison: You and I!

Colonel: I think you may take after me a little, my dear. You like to sit on the fence because it's comfortable and more peaceful (Osborne, 1966:592)

Alison is much like her father in that sense. Even her father recognizes it, and tells her that they both are to blame for the problems between Jimmy and Alison's family. Her father's criticism contributes to her suffering a miscarriage, she becomes less arrogant, and the play ends with her returning to Jimmy, with a much greater desire to try and understand him.

But it is this particular quality about Alison that drives Jimmy crazy. After three years of marriage, and probably minimal physical contact with his daughter, Alison's father has realized the error of his and his wife's ways for attempting to stop Alison from marrying Jimmy. He sees the damage that he and his wife have inflicted on their daughter's marriage and on her husband. He even seems to agree with the idea of marrying for love regardless of society and class, and it does not seem like it is a new idea for him. It is obvious then that Alison's mother is the one who had a real problem with Jimmy. This is another condemnation of women by Osborne. Alison's mother is the one who is consumed with class differences and money, regardless of how unhappy it might make her

daughter. She is the one who acts to stop their marriage; Alison's father just follows along. Alison's mother even goes so far as to make her sign over all of her property before she gets married, so that Jimmy would have access to none of it. Alison signs over her property, and does nothing to stop her mother. On the other hand, Alison's father seems to believe it is okay just to marry for love and he tells her:

Colonel: I've always believed that people married each other because they were in love. That always seemed a good enough reason to me. But apparently that's too simple for young people nowadays. They have to talk about challenges and revenge. I just can't believe that love between men and women is really like that. (Osborne, 1966:593)

Jimmy has a college education, but he has no future. He whiles his day away at a sweet stall, with no hope for anything better, knowing his potential and not being able to do anything about it. And although he never benefited from England's colonialism, and certainly will not benefit from its end, he laments its passing. Alison's father is as much a victim of the end of colonialism as Jimmy is, and Jimmy realizes that. When describing the world of Alison's parents, he says:

Jimmy: Phony too, of course. It must have rained sometimes. Still, even I regret it somehow, phony or not. If you've no world of your own, it's rather pleasant to regret the passing of someone else's. I must be getting sentimental. But I must say it's pretty dreary living in the American Age—unless you're American of course. (Osborne, 1966:554)

This line strikes the readers as a contradiction because it is known Jimmy is a huge fan of jazz and even plays the trumpet. He probably finds it modern and revolutionary. Yet he's criticizing the fact that now they are living in the American Age, and by extension, American influence on the world. And if he really had such a problem with the world that Alison's father grew up and lived in, why would he regret its passing?

The question of love and anger becomes quite convoluted over the course of the play. Jimmy and Alison's relationship is, of course, quite complex. And although he seems to hate her and is constantly saying hurtful things to her, he is actually trying to get her to show if she has feelings for him, or about anything:

Jimmy: (Shouting) All right, dear. Go back to sleep. It was only me talking. You know? Talking? Remember? I'm sorry. (Osborne, 1966:549)

Alison is the type of person that just lets things happen. She does not react. She does not let things get to her, or at least will not show if they do. She just lets her unhappiness build until it reaches a breaking point. When Jimmy speaks, it is as if she is really not even there, as if she cannot be bothered by paying attention to what her husband is saying. She is not interested in her husband's pastimes, constantly criticizes his trumpet playing, and never reads the newspapers. This drives Jimmy mad:

Jimmy: Nobody reads it except me. Nobody can be bothered. No one can raise themselves out of their delicious sloth. You two will drive me round the bend soon—I know it, as sure as I'm sitting here. I know you're going to drive me mad. Oh heavens how I long for a little ordinary enthusiasm. Just enthusiasm—that's all. I want to hear a warm, thrilling voice cry out Hallelujah! Hallelujah! I'm alive! I've an idea! (Osborne, 1966:552)

It is her upbringing that makes her take anything—any insult, no matter how hurtful and regardless of any violence—all in stride. She takes it all in without returning the insult, without yelling, without reproaching Jimmy for the life he is given her. The life full of economic and emotional poverty. She is aware that not listening to him hurts him, yet she continues to do it:

Alison: I keep looking back as far as I can remember and I can't think what it was to feel young, really young. Jimmy said the same thing to me the other day. I pretended not to be listening—because I knew that would hurt him, I suppose. And—of course—he got savage,

like tonight. But I knew just what he meant. I suppose it would have been so easy to say 'Yes, darling, I know just what you mean. I know what you're feeling. (shrugs) It's those easy things that seem to be so impossible with us. (Osborne, 1966:562)

Why would she continue to behave this way if she allegedly loves her husband? Why would she purposely want to hurt him. She does not know how else to behave, that is what she has been taught all her life. To be a lady she must have proper manners; to be a lady she must never show her true feelings. Even when Jimmy insults her mother and tells her she is a bitch and should drop dead, she still does not react. Jimmy responds by saying:

Jimmy: I said she's an old bitch, and should be dead! What's the matter with you? Why don't you leap to her defence! (Osborne, 1966:582)

She tells her friend Helena about the humiliations she suffered at the hands of Jimmy and his friend when they crashed the parties given by her family's acquaintances and acted horribly, just to embarrass her and her family. Yet she did nothing to stop him. You have to wonder whether Jimmy was trying to get a reaction from her then too. After all, he could not have gained access to those parties without her name, and if she did not refuse, she was basically giving her consent. It is the party hosts' upbringing, as well, that enabled them to continue, because no one would break their good manners to kick them out, even though they deserved it. These party hosts are in the same class as Alison; no matter how inappropriate their guests may have acted, they were never willing to break their manners to throw them out:

Alison: They started inviting themselves—through me—to people's houses. Just about everyone I know. In my name, we'd gatecrash everywhere...I used to hope that one day, somebody would have the guts to slam the door in our faces, but they didn't. They were too well-bred and probably sorry for me as well. Hugh and Jimmy despised them for it. (Osborne, 1966:574-575)

Readers have to wonder, too, whether this was not a way for Alison to get back at her family. It might have been her passive way at exacting revenge against her parents by continuously allowing her husband and his friend to embarrass her family with their antics. Again, if she had not allowed the party crashing to continue, it would not have happened more than once. By not saying no, and confronting Jimmy to get him to stop, she allowed it to continue. Some psychologists believe that emotions are socially constructed, that the society in which we are raised dictate how we feel about certain situations, and how we feel *in* social situations.

We can, after all, be ashamed of the faults of others. But I do not believe that this is true unless we accept the fault as our own; when our children or even our friends, commit antisocial acts in houses that we introduced them to. The connection between shame and responsibility is not, of course, ignored in the traditional theory of emotions. It appears as the doctrine that every emotion must have an appropriate object; that it is impossible (psychologically) to experience the feeling specific to shame unless you recognize that you are open to criticism. (Harre, 1986:21)

Instead of feeling ashamed and putting a stop to the situation, Alison is implicitly giving her consent for them to continue. But she is absolutely repulsed by Jimmy's childhood friend. Even if Hugh is helping them out by allowing them to stay in his home when they have nowhere else to go, Alison's life is miserable. They have just been married and Jimmy is unable to financially support the two of them, so they are forced to live with Hugh. In the words of Alison,

Alison: Those next few months at the flat in Poplar were a nightmare. I suppose I must be soft and squeamish, and snobbish, but I felt as though I'd been dropped in a jungle. I couldn't believe that two people, two educated people could be so savage, and so—so uncompromising. Mummy has always said that Jimmy is utterly ruthless, but she hasn't met Hugh...They both came to regard me as a sort of hostage from those sections of society they had declared war on. (Osborne, 1966:574)

Despite all this, Alison stays with Jimmy. And despite the fact that his friend hates her, Jimmy stays with Alison. And there is a time when they are happy together, when they invent the squirrel and bear love story. Hugh has left and they are living alone, able to love each other.

There are a few moments in the play where Alison's façade does crack a little. When Helena takes Alison to church despite Jimmy's opposition to it, Jimmy accuses her of betraying him:

Jimmy: Doesn't it matter to you—what people do to me? What are you trying to do to me? I've given you just everything. Doesn't it mean anything to you? You Judas! You phlegm! She's taking you with her, and you're so bloody feeble, you'll let her do it! (Osborne, 1966:586)

After Jimmy utters these words, readers get the strongest reaction from Alison in the play. She hurls a teacup on to the floor. However she immediately recovers, and goes about her business. Through the comments she makes to Cliff and her friend Helena, it is obvious how unhappy Alison is with the situation, but it is in her power to change everything, yet she does nothing. She is able to talk about her emotions openly with Cliff, yet is unable to do so with Jimmy. She tells Cliff she is pregnant before she tells it to Jimmy. She is able to open up to Cliff in a way that she cannot with Jimmy:

Alison: He'll suspect my motives at once. He never stops telling himself that I know how vulnerable he is. Tonight it might be all right—we'd make love. But later, we'd both lie awake, watching for the light to come through that little window, and dreading it. In the morning, he'd feel hoaxed, as if I were trying to kill him in the worst way of all. He'd watch me growing bigger every day, and I wouldn't dare to look at him. (Osborne, 1966:564)

With the arrival of Alison's actress friend Helena, everything becomes worse. She, 'the gracious representative of visiting royalty', attracts Jimmy and becomes yet another cause for his abuses toward Alison. Alison's passivity reaches epic proportions when she allows Helena to decide that it is time for her, Alison, to leave Jimmy. Alison does not make the decision to leave Jimmy, Helena makes the decision for her. She makes all of the arrangements for Alison's father to come and pick her up and basically commands Alison to leave, without giving her a choice:

Helena: I had to do something, dear. You didn't mind, did you?

Alison: No, I don't mind. Thank you.

Helena: And you will go when he comes for you?

Alison: Yes, I'll go.

(Osborne, 1966:588)

Helena is so used to taking charge in different situations, that she takes it upon herself not only to wire a message to Alison's father to come pick her up, but she also tells Jimmy about the baby that Alison is expecting. Alison does not question it, and does as she is told. She is like a zombie, or a robot, just following Helena's directions. She does not fight for Jimmy. Helena just steps in and gives herself the right to interfere in their relationship and split up their marriage:

Helena: Listen to me. You've got to fight him. Fight, or get out. Otherwise he will kill you.

(Osborne, 1966:577)

And passive Alison, once again, gives her permission by simply not objecting. It is no wonder that Jimmy just lets her go, and does not seem to miss her at all. He gives up on her. Helena simply moves in and takes Alison's place.

Helena is an interesting character in that she purports to be the most moral person in the group, yet she is the one that sends her supposedly good friend back to her parents and then ends up living with her husband. She, apparently, is not afraid of being murdered by Jimmy. In the end she does not even go to church anymore, even though she used to make Alison go with her when she was there, knowing full well that it infuriated Jimmy. You have to wonder whether she did not like Jimmy from the start, and did everything she did just to cause problems. A comment she makes when she first arrived makes her conduct suspicious:

Helena: It's almost as if he wanted to kill someone with it. And me in particular. I've never seen such hatred in someone's eyes before. It's slightly horrifying. Horrifying (Crossing to food cupboard for tomatoes, beetroot and cucumber) and oddly exciting. (Osborne, 1966:572)

She does not seem to have any problem with having stolen her friend's husband, until her friend returns. We see how much Helena has changed when, at the end of the play, after she has told Jimmy that she is in love with him, he asks her if she is going to church. He is calm, and it does not appear that he would be bothered if she were to say yes and go. Yet when he asks her if she is going to go, she looks surprised at the question and says no. It is obvious she has stopped going to church.

Jimmy's relationship with Helena is very different from his relationship with Alison. From the minute she arrives, they are at war. Helena reacts to everything Jimmy says to her, and even threatens to strike him:

Helena: If you come any nearer, I will slap your face.

Jimmy: I hope you won't make the mistake of thinking for one moment that I am a gentleman.

Helena: I'm not very likely to do that.

Jimmy: I've no public school scruples about hitting girls. If you slap my face—by God I'll lay you out!

Helena: You probably would. You're the type.
(Osborne, 1966:585)

Yet somehow, after Alison leaves, they manage to live together, and Helena ends up falling in love with him. Alison knew Jimmy for only a short period of time before they got married, and so must have been unaware of his anger; Helena is well aware of Jimmy's potential for brutality and falls in love with him still. Act III opens with Helena taking Alison's place at the ironing board, but the difference is that she reacts to everything Jimmy says positively. Jimmy seems happy enough, and there is never any indication that he actually misses Alison, or that he is experiencing any type of sorrow for not being near his wife and his unborn child. He never chases after her, never tries to win her back; he just takes up with her replacement. When Alison does come back, he reacts by leaving the room and going to play his trumpet across the hall.

When she returns, Alison still is not fighting for Jimmy. She just shows up and relies on Helena's sudden burst of moral consciousness to decide the matter. Helena finally feels bad for what she has done and leaves. Alison even goes so far as to say:

Alison: Don't make me feel like a blackmailer or something, please! I've done something foolish, and rather vulgar in coming here tonight. I regret it, and I detest myself for doing it. But I did not come here in order to gain anything. Whatever it was—hysteria or just macabre curiosity, I'd certainly no intention of making any kind of breach between you and Jimmy. You must believe that.

Helena: Oh, I believe it all right. That's why everything seems more wrong and terrible than ever. You didn't even reproach me. You should have been outraged, but you weren't. I feel so—*ashamed*.

Alison: You talk as though he were something you'd swindled me out of—“

Helena: (fiercely) And you talk as if he were a book or something you pass around to anyone who happens to want it for five minutes. What's the matter with you? You sound as though you were quoting him all the time.

(Osborne, 1966:610-611)

Returning may have been Alison's passive move to reclaim her husband. Why else would she have abandoned her parent's home, once again, just out of, as she calls it “macabre curiosity”? It is not a rational explanation.

Alison also demonstrates snobbery in the play. Although she does not necessarily put Jimmy down for having such a low job despite his having a university degree, it is obvious that he expects her to humiliate him in public:

Jimmy: But I haven't told you what it means yet, have I? I don't have to tell her—she knows. In fact, if my pronunciation is at fault, she'll probably wait for a suitably public moment to correct it. (Osborne, 1966:558)

She also looks down on the two people that Jimmy cares about. When Jimmy describes Mrs. Tanner's reaction to seeing a picture of Alison after they were married, it is obvious that Mrs. Tanner was impressed by her beauty and was happy for Jimmy. However when Alison expresses herself about Mrs. Tanner, she demonstrates no warm feelings toward her; she in fact looks down on her:

Alison: Oh—how can you describe her? Rather—ordinary. What Jimmy insists on calling ‘working class’. A charwoman who married an actor, worked hard all her life, and spent most of it struggling to support her husband and her son. Jimmy and she are very fond of each other. (Osborne, 1966:591)

Why Alison feels superior to her—considering she is now in the same situation as Mrs. Tanner, with a husband who does not have a good life, and struggling with money—is obviously because she was born into a higher class and she uses that to justify feeling superior over her. She also does not appreciate the fact that it was Mrs. Tanner who helped them get the sweet stall, which is how they support themselves. When Mrs. Tanner falls ill, all Alison can say is she is sorry. Even Cliff asks if there is anything he can do. As a good friend to Jimmy, and knowing how close he was to Mrs. Tanner, he wants to be supportive of him. But when Jimmy pleads with Alison, his wife and the woman he loves (and who is supposed to love him too) to be by his side, and go with him to see her, she simply walks out the door:

Jimmy: You're coming with me, aren't you? She hasn't got anyone else now. I need you..to come with me. (Osborne, 1966:590)

Of course Alison does not even reply. She goes to church with Helena, leaving her husband all alone. His words during a difficult time for him do not move her. The fact that he was looking intensely into her eyes did not move her. Jimmy's devastation is seen when he throws himself on the bed. He is going to attend to the last moments of a loved one's life, and again he has been abandoned by a woman. In the case of his father, it was his mother who left him alone, and in this case it is his wife. If he did not love her as much as he does, he would not be affected the way he is. Alison prefers to attend church with her friend, though it is doubtful that she was doing her Christian duty and praying for Mrs. Tanner, whom she deeply disliked.

Alison prefers to stay in a bad situation, which appears to deteriorate day by day, then admit that perhaps she might have been wrong and return to her parent's house. There are signs from the beginning that they probably are not going to mesh well. Their social lives and upbringings are so different:

Alison: Well, that was where I found myself on my wedding night. Hugh and I disliked each other on sight, and Jimmy knew it. He was so proud of us both, so pathetically anxious that we should take to each other...Hugh got more and more subtly insulting—he'd a rare talent for

that. Jimmy got steadily depressed, and I just sat there, listening to their talk, looking and feeling stupid. For the first time in my life, I was cut off from the kind of people I'd always known, my family, my friends, everybody. And I'd burnt my boats. After all those weeks of brawling with Mummy and Daddy about Jimmy, I knew I couldn't appeal to them without looking foolish and cheap. (Osborne, 1966:574)

One of the most shocking lines in the play is when Jimmy tells Alison:

Jimmy: Perhaps, one day, you want to come back. I shall wait for that day. I want to stand up in your tears, and splash about in them, and sing. I want to be there when you grovel. I want to be there, I want to watch it, I want the front seat. I want to see your face rubbed in the mud—That's all I can hope for. There's nothing else I want any longer. (Osborne, 1966:577)

This line marks the end for Jimmy. He has given up. Is this extreme hatred or is there something else hidden behind this attitude? In fact, what he tries to do is to shake her up and make her think. The only thing he wants is to be understood by his wife. He wants someone to discuss everything with, he wants someone who listens to him and pays attention to what he says. This proves to us how emotional Jimmy is. However, he is alone, nobody understands him, when he speaks he finds no one to argue with. Her lack of emotion is smothering him:

Jimmy: That bulge around her navel—if you're wondering what it is—it's me. Me, buried alive down there, and going mad, smothered in that peaceful looking coil. (Osborne, 1966:570)

It is an ironic statement because the bulge is in fact part of him, and she is worried about telling him that she is pregnant because she feels that he will blame her; that he will see her pregnancy as a death sentence for his dreams, although they are probably already dead. But we see in the end how much he does love her, because despite the fact that she left him, he is still willing to take her back. He would not have if he did not love her.

As the play is read, it is seen that the personal relationships between characters are still valid today. In addition, its content also survives since people still have disappointments about finding a place in

society. Although the characters change, obstacles that people face in everyday life are still the same. Of course, some of the imagery and language reflect only the preoccupations of the specific era. For instance, jazz seems very exotic for Jimmy as it did for most people then. His words about a gay man also reflect his times when homosexuality was still illegal in Britain:

Jimmy: He's like a man with a strawberry mark—he keeps thrusting it in your face because he can't believe it doesn't interest or horrify you particularly. As if I give a damn which way he likes his meat served up. (Osborne, 1966:569)

But the characters and dialogues in the play still have vitality. Some facts are universal and timeless. Because of these qualities, *Look Back in Anger* is regarded as an interesting piece of English social history.

When the play was first performed on May 8, 1956, the audience was surprised at the sight of an ironing board along with the words, such as when Jimmy, unaware of Alison's pregnancy, says to her:

Jimmy: If only something—something would happen to you, and wake you out of your beauty sleep! If you could have a child, and it would die. Let it grow, let a recognisable human face emerge from that little mass of India rubber and wrinkles. Please—if only I could watch you face that. I wonder if you might even become a recognisable human being yourself. But I doubt it. (Osborne, 1966:570)

It is a play about people, not ideas. In the play we recognize an uncensored feeling of human weakness and therefore of failure. What Osborne tried to do was to emphasize life's difficulties at the time. But the emphasis changed. It is not on the martyred expressions of the British ruling class anymore, as represented by Colonel Redfern, but on ordinary people. Alison says to her father:

Alison: You're hurt because everything is changed. Jimmy is hurt because everything is the same. And neither of you can face it. Something's gone wrong somewhere, hasn't it? (Osborne, 1966:594)

People were hopeless since they did not know where they were and what they were doing. When Helena criticizes Jimmy, we can understand this clearly:

Helena: There's no place for people like that any longer—in sex, or politics, or anything. That's why he's so futile.... He doesn't know where he is, or where he's going. He'll never do anything, and he'll never amount to anything. (Osborne, 1966:611)

This goes hand-in-hand with Jimmy's statement that:

Jimmy: ...people of our generation aren't able to die for good causes any longer.... There aren't any good, brave causes left. (Osborne, 1966:607)

All of these statements reveal the deep pessimism Jimmy feels.

CHAPTER THREE: TWO THEORIES OF EMOTIONS AND THEIR APPLICATION TO THE PLAY

3.1 Cognition and Emotion

Today it is very clear that the evaluation of ideas about emotions, both in philosophy and psychology, shows cognition and emotions to be inseparable concepts. It is impossible to ignore the fact that there is a link between the way we cognize the world and our emotional responses to this world.

Emotion-cognition debates were first seen in ancient Greece. Plato, as he outlined in his *Republic*, argued that feelings are the enemies of reason. True citizens would leave out their feelings from their daily “cognitive” decisions. Emotions cannot be controlled easily and they reflect the dangerous aspect of human psychology. Plato looked upon emotions with deep suspicion. He was the first who divided the soul (mind) into three different parts which are desire, reason and passion. According to Plato, these three functions guide our actions and the highest in value of these three functions is reason, which also balances destructive animal passions. This tripartite model of the human mind has affected psychology since then. Since there is always a battle between passion and reason according to Plato, he believed that music and drama were dangerous and corrupting because these arts can cause our reason to lose control and lead our emotions to be superior; therefore, balancing the three parts of the soul can be difficult. Thus Plato wrote that

...that other part which impels us to dwell upon our sufferings and can never have enough of grieving over them is unreasonable, craven and faint-hearted.” (Quoted in Mc Donald 1964:336)

For Aristotle, cognition and emotion should be considered together; cognition is an integral part of emotion and our emotions and actions both depend on reason. According to researchers in this context,

Emotions, or the affective life of humans, were explained by Aristotle as a combination of this higher cognitive and appetitive life of humans, together with their lower, purely sensual life. Many bodily feelings in humans, Aristotle was suggesting, were caused by the way humans view the world around about them. (Dalglish and Wiley, 1998:23)

Some bodily feelings, such as feeling pain as a result of falling, are not the ones that Aristotle mentions. He wants to emphasize the feelings which are the result of our beliefs and desires about the world.

The Stoics and Epicureans who were among the most original philosophers of the Hellenistic period, were interested in the genesis of our emotions. They also tried to explain how humans can control their emotions. Before Christianity, Roman scholars like Seneca expanded these views. Throughout the centuries, many different theories of emotions were proposed. For example; in the seventeenth century, Descartes believed in the separation of mind and body, and regarded emotions as something mental, without need for classification. In the eighteenth century, Hume described a particular emotion as a result of interactions with other emotions and ideas.

In the nineteenth century, there was Darwin, who, in his book *The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872), wrote that emotional behaviour began with our prehistoric ancestors as a way to communicate intentions, and so was originally used as an aid to survival. If someone acted a certain way, such as baring his or her teeth, it was a means of communicating anger, and perhaps signaled that person's intention to attack. The nineteenth century also brought the Associationists, Intellectual theories, etc.

In the twentieth century, *The James-Lange Theory* is the first theory of emotions which comes to our minds. According to this theory, when a situation occurs, the brain interprets it and a physiological change is seen. An emotion is a perception of this physiological change. In other words, emotion is our perception of the physiological changes as a result of our responses to the objects and events in our environment. These changes can include perspiration, a change in heart rate, and facial expressions as well as gestures. The James-Lange Theory states that not until the brain *cognitively* assesses the changes in physiology can these reflexive responses be labeled emotions. It also states that these responses occur before a person even becomes aware that they are experiencing an emotion. In other words, people feel emotions only if and when they are aware of their own internal physical reactions to different events.

The opposite of this theory is *The Cannon-Bard Theory*, which claims that we experience emotion at almost the same time as bodily changes occur. Walter B. Cannon and Philip Bard, authors of the theory, believed that the hypothalamus was the "seat" of human emotions. They believed that only when the hypothalamus, a part of the brain, was stimulated, would emotions arise. In this theory it is

said that we feel the emotion first, and then actions follow from cognitive appraisal. *The Schachter-Singer Theory* is another important theory of this century claiming that emotions arise from the cognitive labeling of physiological sensations, and shares the same argument with *The James-Lange Theory*. Schacter and Singer agreed also that in order for a person to be able to discern the differences between emotions, he or she needed to gain information from his or her environment and assess his or her immediate situation and thus label the emotion. The theory states that emotions result from people's *interpretations* of their situations after they have been physiologically stimulated.

The modern cognitive perspective, on the other hand, started to emerge in the mid-1960s. These were boom times for scientists working on the relationship between emotion and cognition. In 1980 and with the Zajonc book, *American Psychologist*, the modern argument about cognition and emotion came of age. Lazarus, Oatley, Johnson Laird and Roseman are some of the famous names whose approaches center on the relationship between emotion and cognition. Randolph Cornelius's (1999) definition summarizes the cognitive perspective of emotion:

The essence of the cognitive approach is the idea that in order to understand emotions, one must understand how people make judgments about events in their environment, for emotions are generated by judgments about the world. (Cornelius, 1996:115)

It is very clear that according to the cognitive perspective, emotions are *our responses to the meanings of events* and how they are related to our goals and motivations. Emotions and how we experience them are a result of a complex sequence of events. When something happens to people, or they think about something, they must first interpret the meaning of the situation or the thought, and then their interpretation of the information determines what they are likely to feel, what emotion will be the end result of their interpretation. The following is a good illustration of this view:

Four persons of much the same age and the temperament are travelling in the same vehicle. At a particular stopping-place it is intimated to them that a certain person has just died suddenly and unexpectedly. One of the company looks perfectly stolid. A second comprehends what has taken place, but is in no way affected. The third looks and evidently feels sad. The fourth is overwhelmed with grief, which finds expression in tears, sobs, and exclamations. Whence the difference of the four individuals before us? In one respect they are all alike: an announcement has been made to them. The first is a foreigner, and has not understood the communication. The second has never met with the deceased, and could have no special regard for him. The third had often met with him in social intercourse and business

transactions, and been led to cherish a great esteem for him. The fourth was the brother of the departed, was bounded to him by native affection and a thousand ties earlier and later” (Dalglish and Wiley, 1998:6)

So according to the cognitive theory of emotion, emotions are based on appraisals of events and depend on how we see the situation. Emotions are determined by and are kinds of cognitions.

3.2 Social Construction of Emotions

According to this approach emotions are socially constructed. What are considered appropriate or inappropriate expressions of emotions, and what emotions we are supposed to feel given different circumstances, situations or events, are all constructed by whatever society we live in.

Rom Harre, in his “Social Construction of Emotions” (1986), describes how Aristotle’s belief is in fact the basis for many of the arguments of social constructivism, the belief that society constructs an individuals emotions. Aristotle proposed a cognitive account of emotion in which factual beliefs and moral judgments have a central role in the causation and individualization of emotions.

It is obvious that moral judgments are determined by our society, and thus our value system is socially constructed. If our morals and values determine our emotions and how we define them, it then follows that our emotions are socially constructed. In this case, all cultures have independent social constructions of emotions, though they have different in some cases very similar expressions of emotions. These constructions will depend on the values, beliefs and history of a given culture; and just as many languages have their own vocabulary, syntactic forms and meanings, many cultures have their own independent patterns of emotion. People learn to express their emotions by emulating members of their society. Though some expressions of emotions may be hard wired into our biology—in fact research has shown that isolated people show certain emotions using similar facial expressions, such as a smile, frown, etc.—the way we express emotions and when we find it appropriate to express them are all culturally determined. If it is socially acceptable to cry during certain occasions, we will cry. If it is socially expected for us to smile during certain occasions, that is what we will do. It is not just our “natural” responses to certain situations that determine what we feel and how we express that emotion. In addition, the emotion words which we use to describe our emotions also affect our perception of them. According to Rom Harre,

The overlay of cultural and linguistic factors on biology is so great that the physiological aspect of some emotional states has had to be relegated to a secondary status. (Harre, 1986:4)

Because emotions are largely shaped by culture and society, we are able to analyze them on a social level, as a social construction. The fact that we are able to accomplish this level of analysis also allows us to make predictions about the behaviour of a culture's people during certain situations, since emotions are not simply random or spontaneous biological processes. In the words of Cornelius,

Emotions are not just remnants of our phylogenetic past, nor can they be explained in strictly physiological terms. Rather, they are social constructions, and they can be fully understood only on social level of analysis. (Cornelius, 1996:151)

It is not wrong to say emotions are products of culture according to this approach. All cognitive approaches to emotion emphasize that emotions depend on inferences, albeit inferences that are often unconscious and involuntary. The social constructivist approach goes one step further; it adds extra components to this perspective. It says that society helps determine our value systems and how we interpret certain behavior, and this affects our cognition of certain situations. Hence,

In cognitive terms, emotions may be conceived of as belief systems or schemas that guide the appraisal of situations, the organization of responses and the self-monitoring (interpretation) of behavior. (Averill, 1986:100)

In these extra components we find folk theories of emotion and the social purposes they accomplish. According to Armon-Jones, human emotions are social products which are based on beliefs. They are shaped by language and derived from culture:

According to constructivism, emotions are characterized by attitudes such as beliefs, judgments and desires, the contents of which are not natural, but are determined by the systems of cultural belief, value and moral value of particular communities. (Armon-Jones, 1986:33)

Social constructivism is a relatively young approach which came into its own in the 1980s. "The Social Construction of the Person"(1985) by Kenneth Gergen and Keith Davis and "The Social Construction of Emotions" (1986) by Rom Harre were the two important texts which gave way to

this approach. Anthropology, sociology and related disciplines are all parts of social constructivist perspective since it does not only examine emotions, but also sexuality, self, gender, mind, and even science. This approach is gaining credence as Harre states:

The overwhelming evidence of cultural diversity and cognitive differentiation in the emotions of mankind has become so obvious that a new consensus is developing around the idea of social constructivism. (Harre, 1986:3)

Another important aspect of the social construction of emotions, also shared by the cognitivist approach, is that emotions are intentional, they are always about something. We are angry at, joyful about, afraid of things/situations/people. For a rational person, there is always an object towards which an emotion is directed. People are not just angry, they are angry for a reason. And once we feel emotions, they compel us to act, or not act, in a certain way. So in addition, emotions are also causal.

...emotions naturally come to be thought of as inner forces that move us, in combination with, or in opposition to other forces, to act as we do. (Harre, 1986:6)

3.3 Anger

What is the source of anger? Why do we feel this emotion? Anger is a sophisticated term which has cognitive and social dimensions. Aristotle defines it as;

An impulse, accompanied by pain, to a conspicuous revenge for a conspicuous slight directed without justification towards what concerns oneself or towards what concerns one's friends (Dalglish and Wiley,1998:23)

So, if we perceive that someone behaves in a wrong manner towards us, we feel anger.

The term "anger" has a multiplicity of meaning in psychology, as an everyday language, and can refer to an experience or feeling, internal bodily reactions, an attitude toward others, an instigation to aggression, an overt assault on some target, and to various combinations of these different reactions. (Dalglish and Wiley, 1998:411)

According to Averill and other social constructivists, anger is a reaction to the things that we think are morally wrong. In Western cultures for example, if someone humiliates another person, he or she will react by crying, slapping or attacking verbally. However, in Japanese culture, he or she will simply smile at the person who angered him or her.

Research shows that when people are angry they experience bodily reactions such as a change in blood pressure, heightened bodily tension, muscle tension, general restlessness, an increase in heart rate and a flushed face. Most people also express their emotions using the same facial expressions. The same occurs in a drama, when the actor hopes to convey their emotions, they use universal facial expressions.

Jimmy feels wronged. He feels wronged by the British class system, by Alison's parents, and finally, by Alison herself, whom he feels has betrayed him. With his character Jimmy Porter, Osborne created a model of the "angry young man". He swears at the lack of passion of his age and wants Alison and Cliff to show some enthusiasm. Kenneth Tynan describes Jimmy as "the completest young pup in our literature since Hamlet". Why is John Osborne angry? Why is Jimmy Porter angry? According to the social constructivist view of emotion, Jimmy should be analyzed according to his society and the culture of his particular social class. In her book, "The Thesis of Constructionism", Claire Armon-Jones quotes Mead (1934):

the behaviour of an individual can be understood only in terms of the behaviour of the whole social group of which he is a member, since his individual acts are involved in larger, social acts which go beyond himself and which implicate the other members of that group. (Armon-Jones, 1986:32)

Jimmy, and John Osborne by extension, represent the generation of young men disillusioned by the prospect of a bleak future. They may be college educated, but are living in an England where class status still defines them, and defines what they can achieve in their lives. They are angry, and are described as angry.

Jimmy's anger can be seen immediately. He is angry at everything, at his close friend and his wife. He is constantly attacking the people around him verbally. Throughout the first act, Jimmy is the

person who does nearly all the talking, he has an interest in things and people that is deeply likable. When Jimmy reads the newspapers, he objects to phony, obscure writing in them, and, making an effort to get Alison's attention, he asks:

Jimmy: Why do I do this every Sunday? Even the book reviews seem to be the same as last week's. Different books-same reviews. Have you finished that one yet?
Cliff: Not yet.
Jimmy: I've just read three whole columns on the English Novel. Half of it's in French. Do the Sunday papers make you feel ignorant?
Cliff: Not 'arf.
Jimmy: Well, you are ignorant. You're just a peasant.(to Alison) You're not a peasant are you?
Alison: What's that?
Jimmy: I said do the papers make you feel you're not so brilliant after all?
Alison : Oh-I haven't read them yet.
Jimmy: I didn't ask you that. I said-
Cliff: Leave the poor girlie alone. She's busy.
(Osborne, 1966:548)

Even this opening scene of Act I gives some clues about his anger. He is an angry young man and this conversations ends with shouting. Jimmy continues his verbal attacks by shouting and anger fills the air. His anger quickly escalates and what seemed to be a regular conversation all of a sudden explodes into violence. It is shocking because it is so unexpected. As Cliff defends Alison, Jimmy gets mad and bangs Cliff's paper out of his hands. His anger becomes physical. Again from the very beginning of the play we see his verbal and physical attacks.

This is clearly not the first time this has happened, and Jimmy shows how much he is hurt that his wife can just tune him out, as if what he says does not matter:

Jimmy: Old Porter talks,and everyone turns over and goes to sleep. And Mrs. Porter gets em all going with the first yawn.
Cliff: Leave her alone."
Jimmy:[shouting]. All right, dear. Go back to sleep. It was only me talking. You know? Talking? [leaning toward her] Remember? I'm sorry.
(Osborne, 1966:548-549)

What makes him so angry? Why is he angry all the time?

In *Rhetoric* (1941)Aristotle says:

Anger may be defined as a belief that we, or our friends, have been unfairly slighted, which causes in us both painful feelings and a desire or impulse for revenge." This means that anger

is a cognitive causation, it is our thoughts which motivates aggressive actions. (Quoted in Dalglish and Wiley, 1998:23)

This follows the cognitivist belief that in order to feel anger, we must feel that it is the person with whom we are angry, that is at fault. We are mad at *them* for something they did to *us*.

Seneca also had the same ideas as Aristotle. He thought that when a person has a tendency towards violence, that means that person perceives injury, hurt or affront. In this respect, it shows us that even though we can control emotion with the help of reason, it should not be forgotten that reason is also a cause in the arousal of an emotion. For Seneca, reaction to an injury is the goal of anger. As a person feels hurt and vulnerable, he reacts with anger and violence. He also deals with preventing angry violence which can be seen as the basic of cognitive restructuring. These efforts can be to persuade people to hold themselves from an angry attack by using their reason. According to recent research,

Although we see it as potentially destructive, in its normal occurrence it functions between people to readjust the terms of a long-term relationship. So if in a relationship one person finds that the other has explicitly or implicitly agreed to do something but does not do it- in other words, if the other is not fulfilling expectations-then this is a cause for anger. (Lewis\ Haviland, 1999:351)

From this perspective, Jimmy Porter's anger and his violence are a result of his thoughts, or his cognition. When he feels that he is not listened to, he is not cared for by others, by his wife, he becomes angry. His father was not cared for by his mother either. Alison is sweet to Cliff, offering to iron his pants, yet she completely ignores Jimmy. This is the reaction that he reveals:

Jimmy: We never seem to get any further, do we? A few more hours, and another week gone. Our youth is slipping away. Do you know that? Oh, Heavens, how I long for a little ordinary human enthusiasm. Just enthusiasm -- that's all. I want to hear a warm, thrilling voice cry out hallelujah. Hallelujah! I'm alive! (Osborne, 1966:552)

Jimmy wants to like things, and he wants his wife to encourage that. He is asking for something Alison herself hopes for, but she feels stabbed, and tries to hurt him by speaking in a belittling way of his relation to a woman he cared for in the past:

Alison [to Cliff]. Madeline . . . she was his mistress. Remember? When he was fourteen, or was it thirteen?

Jimmy. Eighteen.

Alison. He owes just about everything to Madeline. (Osborne, 1966:555)

Madeline meant a lot to Jimmy, and he tells why a few minutes later:

Cliff: To be with her was an adventure. Even to sit on the top of a bus with her was like setting out with Ulysses. (Osborne, 1966:564)

Alison, in fact, belittles everything Jimmy does. She is not willing to compliment him to his face. In an exchange with Cliff, he points out that Jimmy would be happy to hear her at that moment, because she is actually speaking well of him:

Cliff: I've never heard you talking like this about him. He'd be quite pleased.

Alison: Yes, he would.

(Osborne, 1966:573)

It is the fact that all of us look for someone who care for us, who understands us, who can see what we feel because in all of us there is a notion of self that is complete, though what it is, we do not know. If we meet some person who cares for us, who understands us, who can see what we feel, then there is a chance for ourselves to be complete. Alison sometimes appears to understand what her husband wants, but she does not change her behavior towards him at all. She does not let her guard down and just love him.

But instead of trying to understand her husband, Alison Porter is hoping something will happen to finally prove that once and for all, her husband is a brute. Later, as she tries to describe to her friend Helena why she and Jimmy are having trouble, we see her cruel and irritated disdain -- his past, the people he cares for, his relation to the world, are interferences to her:

Alison :[to Helena]It isn't easy to explain. It's what you would call a question of allegiances Not only about himself and all the things he believes in, his present and his future, but his past as well. All the people he admires and loves, and has loved. The friends he used to know, people I've never even known -- and probably wouldn't have liked. His father, who died years ago. Even the other women he's loved. Do you understand?

Helena: Do you?"

Alison: I've tried to. But I still can't bring myself to feel the way he does about things."
(Osborne, 1966:573)

This line gives an indication that Alison understands more about Jimmy's wants and needs than she has let on, and she simply can not bring herself to think like him. One of the most moving scenes in the play shows how much Jimmy is yearning to be known by his wife and others. He speaks about what he felt years ago, as his father was slowly dying of the wounds he got in the Spanish Civil War, and he, then age 10, was the only person to stay with him every day for months:

Jimmy: He would talk to me for hours, pouring out all that was left of his life. (Osborne, 1966:61)

Jimmy can be understood more deeply; every person's past matters, is tremendously meaningful. But Alison has not been interested. Many psychologists think that anger exists when outside events are understood in a particular manner. As mentioned previously, Averill, for example, says that there must be an object for anger.

So Alison is an object for Jimmy's anger since she does not listen to him, and purposefully ignores him just to spite him. By creating the character of Alison, Osborne wants to point out that people are not listening to each other any more. As Taylor points out,

Osborne has at last discovered the profound truth that nobody really listens to anybody, and least of all do they listen to those who most imperatively require their attention, their imaginative participation- in life. (Taylor, 1967:61)

Of course Alison is not the only object of Jimmy's anger. According to Averill's social constructivist perspective, anger is a syndrome which has psychological, biological, as well as social components, including appraisals:

The anger experience apparently grows to a considerable extent out of our biological processes, but it is also shaped to some degree by cultural learning. (Dalglish and Wiley; 1998:425)

The country he is living in is another object for Jimmy's anger. As he is a symbol of the post-war generation, he is angry at political institutions and everything that represents these institutions. It is

not surprising that Jimmy would come to symbolize this generation, because they all have felt the effects of the social conditions in England at that time. Taylor argues that

...what matters is not that Jimmy is a mass of contradictions (most of us are), but that Osborne has managed to make them into a convincing dramatic representation of a complex human being, and one who offered a rallying-point for a number of people from the post-war generation who felt that the world of today was not treating them according to their deserts. (Taylor, 1969:45)

Nobody is happy, nothing is all right according to Jimmy. He graduated from the university but it is still not enough for upper class society, or for Alison's parents to accept him. You have to wonder whether part of the reason he mistreats Alison is partly out of revenge against her parents for not accepting him, and expecting him to treat her badly because he was not upper class like them. In spite of his university degree he runs a sweet stall which is a protest against society. In this case there is something wrong. In fact, as Taylor puts it, according to Jimmy,

..the world is all wrong, and it need to be just the weakling who cries against it; Jimmy is the saintlike witness to right values in a world gone wrong, the mouthpiece of protest for a dissatisfied generation. (Taylor, 1969:44)

And Jimmy expressed this dissatisfaction when he says:

Jimmy: ...people of our generation aren't able to die for good causes any longer.... There aren't any good, brave causes left. (Osborne, 1967:607)

According to social constructivists, when people are emotionally aroused their cultural learning determines what they feel. Scherer, Wallbott and Rime carried out an investigation, based on university students in Belgium, France, the UK, Israel, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, and West Germany:

The participants had to describe their sensations when experiencing various emotions. They typically reported themselves as unpleasantly aroused, feeling hot, having muscular symptoms and increased blood pressure when they were angry. There were some cultural differences in addition to these commonalities; when the investigators compared the descriptions given by the students residing in the northern countries with those made by their southern counterparts, more of the northerners indicated having muscular symptoms, whereas the southerners were more apt to report a rise in blood pressure." (Dalgleish and Wiley, 1999:412)

If Jimmy was a citizen of one of the undeveloped countries, he perhaps would have become a terrorist with a gun and he would reveal his anger to his country in that way. But in his country's conditions he reveals his anger by shouting, swearing at everything, including at his wife who symbolizes upper class values and morals. He is motivated by the insecurity he feels for his future and his social condition, as observed by Taylor:

... Alison says she thinks that in spite of everything Jimmy rather likes her father, though he is obviously in many ways the representative of everything Jimmy is against. And the reason for this is clear enough, on a moment's consideration: at least in their heyday Alison's father generation knew where they were, what standards their lives were ruled by, and where their duty lay (or so, at least, it now seems); they had causes to die for and even if they were wrong they had a certain dignity. Their security in an apparently secure world is eminently to be envied by someone, like Jimmy, who finds no certainty anywhere, outside himself or within. (Taylor, 1969:49)

3.4 Love

According to many scientists, we should distinguish between two forms of love which are "companionate love" and "passionate love". Passionate love, in other words, love sickness or being in love, is:

"A state of intense longing for union with another. Reciprocated love (union with the other) is associated with fulfillment with ecstasy. Unrequited love (separation) is associated with emptiness, anxiety, or despair." (Hatfield & Rapson, 1993:596)

Companionate love, on the other hand, which can be called true love is:

The affection and tenderness we feel for those with whom our lives are deeply entwined. Companionate love is a complex functional whole including appraisals or appreciations, subjective feelings, expressions, patterned physiological process, action tendencies, and instrumental behaviors. (Lewis and Haviland, 1999:596)

H. T. Fink was a music critic for the New York Evening Post who wrote a treatise on love. According to him:

Love is a complex of feelings, attitudes, and sentiments; these include an aesthetic appreciation of human form in the person of the loved one, together with impulses to sympathy, solicitude, and self-sacrifice. (Lewis and Haviland, 1999:345)

According to him again, love must be cultivated because not everyone has the talent, or ability, to love. We all know that romantic love is a new concept of the last two centuries, even in western cultures. Marriages were only contracts in social life before these times.

Love contains several components such as physical attraction. Shaver and Hazan (1988) argued that romantic love should be seen as a form of attachment and added that our childhood attachments affect our adult attachments. For example, if children are allowed to be independent and affectionate, they will be attached to their mothers. Moreover, they will be mature adults who are able to trust those they care for. If children are taught to be dependent, they can be anxious adults who fall in love very easily and have a fear of being abandoned.

It is obvious then that a person's ability to love has a lot to do with their childhood, and relationships with their parents.

Research shows that when women and men are loved, they feel secure, accepted and understood. On the contrary, when relationships fall apart, they feel lonely, poor and their self-esteem is usually shattered. In *Look Back in Anger*, it is obvious that Jimmy does not feel loved, and his self-esteem suffers from it.

In romantic love, several emotional states such as love, hatred, joy, loneliness, anger, jealousy, sadness and fear can be experienced because romantic love causes strong reactions.

According to cognitively oriented studies of emotion, what is needed for love is an appraisal of a particular person or object. Psychologists also state that love requires action tendencies along with cognitive appraisals. In romantic love we see these tendencies as touching, interacting with the other, sexual desires, etc. We should not ignore the element of culture, since the qualities of the person that attracts us are cultural and individual. Averill says:

Love refers to the principle(s) by which people organize their relationships with one another. (Cornelius, 1996:202)

This means that when we say to someone “I love you”, we want to say that we have some social expectations. In other words, romantic love is a social construction in addition to attachment and other biological systems. It is hard to imagine that Alison and Jimmy actually love each other since it does not appear that either one of them idealizes the other. There are, however, instances where their affection is apparent:

Jimmy: You’re very beautiful. A beautiful, great-eyed squirrel.... With highly polished, gleaming fur, and an ostrich feather of a tail.

Alison: Wheeeee!

Jimmy: How I envy you.

Alison: Well, you’re a jolly super bear, too. A really soooooooper, marvelous bear. (Osborne, 1966:567)

And when they are separated and then reunited again at the end of the play, it is obvious that they really do love each other, that they are not just together for the sake of spiting Alison’s family, and that they cannot live without each other:

Alison: All I wanted was to die. I never knew what it was like. I didn’t know it could be like that! I was in pain, and all I could think of was you, and what I’d lost. I thought: if only—if only he could see me now, so stupid, and ugly, and ridiculous. This is what he’s been longing for me to feel.

Jimmy: Don’t. Please, don’t....I can’t---You’re all right. You’re all right now....We’ll be together in our bear’s cave and our squirrel’s drey and we’ll live on honey and nuts.... (Osborne, 1966:616)

3.5 Representations of Anger and Love in The Play: A Social Constructivist and Cognitive Evaluation

Evaluating Jimmy Porter’s actions and emotions through a social constructivist perspective, it is obvious that Jimmy is a very emotional person, and his anger towards his life, his society and his marriage, dictate how he behaves towards everybody. He is angry at his wife because she is not fulfilling his emotional needs. In fact, Alison comes to represent his mother and how she neglected his father’s emotions as well, even though he is dying. In order to feel an emotion, a person must be aware, must have cognized the situation:

Emotions are dependent upon cognitions. In order to be 'envious' I must believe that the object of my envy e.g. an attribute, belongs to another, and I must also believe that it is an attribute which I do not possess." (Harre, 1986:41)

Jimmy is angry because he has observed and evaluated (cognized) his situation. He married a woman whose family did not accept him because he was working class. They did not take into consideration that he was educated, and that he loved their daughter. The discrimination he might have felt all his life due to being from the working class was highlighted in this situation, humiliating him and making him feel worthless. He lashes out at this social class by gate-crashing their parties and acting the way they expect him to act; despicably, and dragging Alison along as well.

Jimmy enjoys many of the upper-middle class' leisurely activities—he listens to concerts, reads 'posh' papers, but he is acutely aware that his wife looks down on people of his class. Alison may love him, but she has a real problem with his childhood friend Hugh and Hugh's mother, Mrs. Tanner. She refers to their environment as 'being in a jungle' and sees no value in either of them. Because of this, Jimmy probably feels that Alison looks down on him too. Even though during the course of the play we do not hear Alison reproaching Jimmy for their lack of money, and for living in a shabby flat, Jimmy probably feels emasculated for not being able to provide Alison with the type of life she was accustomed to.

But above all, Jimmy is angry at Alison's lack of understanding. The attention and emotional support that he needs from her is not there. He probably just needs Alison to say, 'it is okay, my parents were wrong, I love you above all else and I respect you', but Alison is less than forthcoming with her emotions. It is her culture that does not allow her to show her emotions. According to Armon-Jones:

Emotions are characterized by attitudes such as beliefs, judgments and desires, the contents of which are not natural, but are determined by the systems of cultural belief, value and moral value of particular communities. (Cornelius, 1996:155)

It is very difficult for Alison to learn to show her emotions. It takes the death of her child and the loss of her husband to finally get her to react; that is how deep her 'stiff upper lip' culture is engrained in her. As for Jimmy, his anger is engrained in him, too. His father's death affected him

like nothing else; not even the death of his own child seems to have affected him as much as the loss of his father. According to Cornelius,

The experience and expression of emotions is dependent on learned conventions or rules and to the extent that cultures differ in the way they talk about and conceptualize emotions, how they are experienced and expressed will differ in different cultures as well. (Cornelius, 1996:188)

Jimmy believes that Alison is capable of more; that is why he feels like he needed to rescue her from her family, so that she could become an emotional person and not be consumed with social class and turn out like her mother. The fact that she purposely seems to ignore him, justifies Jimmy's violence in his eyes. According to Averill,

In the adult, anger is typically based on complex judgments regarding intentionality and justification... (Harre,1986:112)

From this point of view, social constructivist studies are focused on the cross-cultural and historical differences in the way people experience and conceptualize emotions. What is thought to be good and bad, right and wrong, in short, social values, are important determinants of emotional appraisals. In this perspective, emotions are seen as social roles. Armon-Jones argues that:

Emotions such as guilt, compassion, resentment and anger in so far as they have a moral role, are said by constructivists to contribute to the preservation of the moral rules of a society." (Harre, 1986:57)

For example; the self is individualistic, autonomous in the West, whereas it is relational in many Eastern societies:

Americans may experience anger when they perceive a threat to their autonomy. For many Asians such threats may not occur, since they neither believe in nor depend on any such concept- but threats to relatedness may elicit emotions such as anxiety. (Lewis and Haviland, 1999:341)

Social constructivists believe that especially emotions like fear, anger and grief, in addition to their personal functions serve important social functions. Emotions are socially determined patterns of experience and expression which are acquired. They are learned as part of a person's socialization

and teach a person the beliefs, values and norms and expectations for the culture in which they are being raised in. Emotions then, are learned, and can be acquired through training. They govern our interpersonal relationships.

In the play there are moments when the characters are not able to control their emotions and they reach a boiling point, and their biological responses to the situation just manifest themselves without the characters willingly expressing those emotions. As Lazarus would agree, they react primordially to the situation, they are not able to *cognize* the situation enough to control their reactions. Though Alison does a good job of curbing her emotions, there are a few times when her mind is not able to control her physical reactions, she is not able to control the expressions on her face, and her emotions flood out from her unwillingly. There are, however, a few occasions when Jimmy and Alison actually utter words that belie their emotions:

Alison: Stop shouting! (Recovering immediately) You'll have Miss Drury up here. (Osborne, 1966:560)

It is not always necessary for them to even utter a word. There is one case where Jimmy tells Alison the physical effect she has on him, whether he is willing or not:

Jimmy: There's hardly a moment when I'm not—watching and wanting you. I've got to hit out somehow. Nearly four years of being in the same room with you, night and day, and I still cant stop my sweat breaking out when I see you doing—something as ordinary as leaning over an ironing board. (Osborne 1966:566-567)

Jimmy is acknowledging that he has no control over the emotions that overpower him when he sees Alison.

The majority of the instances where Jimmy and Alison lose control of their emotions are indicated in the stage directions that John Osborne includes for the actors. The characters do not have to show their emotions through dialogue, their physical movements constitute what are important in showing these uncensored emotions. When Jimmy makes the comment about wishing Alison could experience the pain of losing a child, Alison, already aware of her pregnancy, responds by:

(Alison's head goes back as if she were about to make some sound. But her mouth remains open and trembling, as Cliff looks on) (Osborne, 1966:570)

When Jimmy is verbally assaulting Alison for wanting to go to church, she remains calm and imperturbable. However when she finally reaches her breaking point, and, instead of hurling insults back at Jimmy, we know how she ultimately expresses her frustration, her intense emotion at his words, by reading the stage directions.

(Alison suddenly takes hold of her cup, and hurls it on the floor. He's drawn blood at last. She looks down at the pieces on the floor, and then at him. Then she crosses R., takes out a dress on a hanger, and slips it on. As she is zipping up the side, she feels giddy, and she has to lean against the wardrobe for support. She closes her eyes.) (Osborne, 1966:586)

Alison reacts, but once she completely cognizes the situation, she attempts to retreat back into her calm and collect self, but she is unable to because she has been so physically moved. She expresses her anger and frustration by throwing and shattering the cup. But this action pulls her back into reality and she tries to go on as if nothing has happened. Her emotions, however, have overwhelmed her and she is moved to giddiness. She can no longer control her physical reactions.

Helena, though better at expressing her hate and anger towards at Jimmy, is also driven to lose control. Even though she has just sent Alison away, allegedly to protect her from Jimmy because she is such a good friend, the intense emotions she feels towards Jimmy end up driving her into his arms at the end of Act II. She knows all that he has done and hates and despises him, yet there are also the emotions of attraction and love that she cannot control, and in a moment of intense emotion, she is unable to control them. This is known from the following stage direction:

(She slaps his face savagely. An expression of horror and disbelief floods his face. But it drains away, all that is left is pain. His hand goes up to his head, and a muffled cry of despair escapes him. Helena tears his hand away, and kisses him passionately, drawing him down beside her.) (Osborne, 1966:599)

According to the definition of emotions and the cognitive theory that states that there are eight basic emotions that we express in infancy, which usually include fear, anger, joy, sadness, disgust, surprise, shame and interest, that are biologically hardwired into our face, we can see that in this scene, where not a word is uttered, Jimmy experiences several of these emotions. According to the stage directions, Jimmy expresses horror, which can be a combination of surprise and disgust, and despair, which can be a combination of sadness and pain.

As mentioned above, emotion theories state that infants express six to ten basic emotions on their face. These emotions are hardwired to express a frown when an infant is unhappy, or a smile when they are happy. These are physiological and biological reactions to their emotions, and they have no control over them. However it is the social construction of emotions that we learn as children that teach us what emotions are appropriate to express, and in what situations it is appropriate to express them. We learn how to override those emotions we naturally feel, based on our society and our culture. But as we see in the case of the play, sometimes that is not always possible. Even Alison is unable to maintain her imperturbability in the face of mounting emotions.



CHAPTER FOUR: EMOTIONAL RESPONSES TO *LOOK BACK IN ANGER*

4.1 Role of Emotions in Drama According to Plato and Aristotle

What is the point of drama? What was the point of this play? As we know, Plato thought that drama, and all representational arts, brought out the base emotions of the audience. He would surely have disagreed with the subject matter of the play, as well as the characters being represented, the types of dialogue which John Osborne chose to include, and the emotions depicted on stage. Plato believed that an imitation of a mad person should never be allowed on stage, in case it could be mimicked by the audience at a later date. He also would have disagreed with allowing a character like Jimmy to rant and rave about the stage, since he felt that characters should only imitate good men:

They are not to do anything mean or dishonourable; no more should they be practiced in representing such behaviour, for fear of becoming infected with the reality. You must have noticed how the reproduction of another person's gestures or tones of voice or states of mind, if persisted in from youth up, grows into a habit which becomes second nature. (Quoted in Mc Donald 1964:83)

Plato would never have agreed with Jimmy's treatment of his wife. Nor would he have approved of Jimmy's irreverent behaviour towards organized religion. He would have found his actions to be sacrilegious. His yelling after the church bells chimed, his attempts to impede his wife from attending church, and his criticism of the Bishop in the newspaper, would all have been criticized by Plato, who believed that

A poet, whether he is writing epic, lyric or drama, surely ought always to represent the divine nature as it really is. (Quoted in Mc Donald 1964:71)

Plato might actually have agreed with Alison's insistence on suppressing her emotions, since he found that expressing your emotions was distasteful. Plato believed that watching a tragedy or comedy, instead of leading you to catharsis, would encourage you to uncheck those emotions which until then had been suppressed. Plato believed you should always suppress your emotions, particularly in public. Plato would have approved of the way that Alison was raised. He would have approved of her ability to keep her emotions in check throughout the play, no matter how spiteful

Jimmy acted. For Plato, it was better to keep those emotions in check, then to open the floodgates of emotion that might follow, and which you might not be able to close again. He wrote:

There is in you an impulse to play the clown, which you held in restraint from a reasonable fear of being set down as a buffoon. But now you have give it rein, and by encouraging impudence at the theatre you may be unconsciously carried away into playing the comedian in your private life. Similar effects are produced by poetic representations of love and anger and all those desires and feelings of pleasure or pain which accompany our every action. (Quoted in Mc Donald 1964:338)

There is a sense of dignity in Plato's thinking, and in Alison's behavior in a sense. It is the idea of never letting anyone see you broken or weak. That, of course, was a problem for John Osborne's Jimmy, who relates emotional closeness to expressing emotions.

Aristotle disagreed with Plato. He felt that drama was an acceptable way for people to achieve catharsis:

The world which poetry creates is not explicitly stated by Aristotle to be a likeness or mimesis of an original, but...the original which it reflects is human action and character in all their diverse modes of manifestation; no other art has equal range of subject matter, or can present so complete and satisfying an image of its original. (Quoted in Butcher, 1951:138)

Instead of having to experience these different and painful emotions, Aristotle thought that tragedy helped the audience to feel those emotions in somewhat of a controlled environment. Aristotle felt that pity and fear were among the most noble of emotions. He wrote:

Tragedy excites the emotions of pity and fear—kindred emotions that are in the breasts of all men—and by the act of excitation affords a pleasurable relief. (Quoted in Butcher, 1951:245)

He goes on to say:

The stage, in fact, provides a harmless and pleasurable outlet for instincts which demand satisfaction and which can be indulged here more fearlessly than in real life. (Quoted in Butcher, 1951:245)

By watching a tragedy, and thus experiencing pity and fear by watching the actors on stage, the audience could experience catharsis.

Aristotle was not afraid of emotions, he thought they were desirable. He thought that suppressing emotions was unnatural:

It is not desirable to kill or to starve the emotional part of the soul, and that the regulated indulgence of the feelings serves to maintain the balance of our nature. (Quoted in Butcher, 1951:246)

The way in which tragedy was used, then, was by imitating stories from the past, and enacting the struggles of not only epic heroes, but other tragic figures as well on stage. Plato disagreed with this approach. He felt that only noble men's deeds should be told, and that imitation was against nature because it was far removed from nature. This included all representational arts including painting, theatre and sculpture. Plato felt that the artist just represented one facet of the subject matter which he was undertaking, but that the artist really knew nothing at all about his subject matter. The idea of 'eikon' has its roots in the 5th century B.C:

The view that a work of art is an image or likeness (eikon) of some original, or holds a mirror up to nature, became prominent towards the end of the 5th century together with the realistic drama of Euripedes and the illusionistic painting of Zeuxis. Plato's attack adopts this theory. The art which claims to be 'realistic' is in his view, as far as possible from reality. (Oates, 1972:58)

Plato's view that an artist was untalented for only being able to depict one aspect of their subject is apparent when he says that:

...the poet, knowing nothing more than how to represent appearances, can paint in words his picture of any craftsman so as to impress an audience which is equally ignorant and judges only by the form of expression. (Quoted in Oates, 1972:331)

According to Plato, because works of art are representations of reality, they are far from reality:

The art of representation then, is a long way from reality; and apparently the reason why there is nothing it cannot reproduce is that it grasps only a small part of an object, and that only an image. (Quoted in Oates, 1972:328)

In the case of drama, and of *Look Back in Anger* in particular, we do only see one small part of the character's lives, whether they be fictional or not. A play only allows us to see just a slice of the characters lives, many times in only one setting. Especially in *Look Back In Anger*, which takes

place in Jimmy's and Alison's apartment. The other places they lived are only mentioned. The sweet stall, or any other significant locations in their lives are never seen.

Plato's criticism of the artist continues when he says:

...the artist knows nothing worth mentioning about the subject he represents, and that art is a form of play, not to be taken seriously. This description, moreover, applies above all to tragic poetry, whether in epic or dramatic form. (Quoted in Oates, 1972:333)

This criticism is not necessarily accurate for John Osborne, from what is known about his life. His life paralleled Jimmy Porter's in a few significant details, like losing his father, coming from the working class, and being filled with anger at their social situations. Osborne is writing about a subject that is both familiar to him, and near and dear to his heart: class differences and their effect on a new generation of British citizens.

Aristotle was less critical of artists, and believed that:

A work of art reproduces its original, not as it is in itself but as it appears to the senses. (Quoted in Butcher, 1951:127)

Look Back in Anger can be defined as a tragedy, using Aristotle's parameters for what constitutes a tragedy. Aristotle believed that the genus of tragedy was emotions, and *Look Back in Anger* is fraught with emotions: From the opening scene and Jimmy's unbridled anger, to the closing scene where Alison and Jimmy experience catharsis and put aside all the pain from their past to be together. The three most important elements of a tragedy for Aristotle consisted of recognition, reversal and suffering:

Recognition, as the word itself indicates, is a change from ignorance to knowledge...for a recognition joined thus with a reversal will be fraught with pity or with fear (the type of action tragedy is presumed to imitate) because misery and happiness alike will come to be realized in recognitions of this kind. (Quoted in Butcher, 1951:127)

Reversal in drama occurs when there is a change in the situation from one state to its opposite. In *Look Back in Anger*, we see several reversals. The two most significant reversals occur when Helena is transformed from Jimmy's rival, and object of hatred, to become his lover. Helena and

Jimmy go from completely hating each other, to living as a couple. Jimmy's first description of Helena is:

Jimmy: One of her old friends. And one of my natural enemies...What does she want? What would make her ring up? It can't be for anything pleasant. (Osborne, 1966:568)

Yet at the end of the play, he does not want her to go. He is happy with Helena because he finally found someone who acknowledges him. And she has managed to fall in love with him:

Jimmy: ...Right from the first night, you have always put out your hand to me first. As if you expected nothing, or worse than nothing, and didn't care. You made a good enemy, didn't you? What they call a worthy opponent. But then, when people put down their weapons, it doesn't mean they've necessarily stopped fighting.

Helena: I love you.

Jimmy: I think perhaps you do. Yes, I think perhaps you do. Perhaps it means something to lie with your victorious general in your arms. Especially, when he's heartily sick of the whole campaign, tired out, hungry, and dry. You stood up, and came out to meet me. Oh, Helena—Don't let anything go wrong!

Helena: Oh, my darling—

Jimmy: Either you're with me or against me.

Helena: I've always wanted you—always!
(Osborne, 1966:608)

Though he does not ever say that he loves her, he has grown to need her. He mentions that he is a 'tired general', and that is indicative that Jimmy gave up on Alison and finding happiness. He is recognizing that he was unable to change her. This is Jimmy's recognition in the play, the second aspect of Aristotle's requirements for a tragic plot. Jimmy has reached the knowledge that he failed with Alison, she is gone and there is nothing that he can do.

The second, and most significant case of reversal and recognition in the play occurs upon Alison's return, in the closing scene of the play. Jimmy admits his love for Alison, and his weakness at needing her love and approval. He says,

Jimmy: I may be a lost cause, but I thought if you loved me, it needn't matter.

Alison: It doesn't matter! I was wrong, 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! Don't you understand? It's gone! It's gone! That—helpless human being inside my body. I thought it was so safe, and secure in there. Nothing could take it from me. It was mine, my responsibility. But it's lost. All I wanted was to die. I never knew what it was like. I didn't know it could be like that!
(Osborne, 1966:615)

Alison's reversal occurs with the death of her unborn baby, and she comes to understand and recognize what Jimmy wanted from her, and how she had failed her husband. She realizes how much she loves him and needs him. That is why she makes the journey to see him.

Alison: ...I was in pain, and all I could think of was you, and what I'd lost I thought: if only—if only he could see me now, so stupid, so ugly, and ridiculous. This is what he's been longing for me to feel. This is what he wants to splash about in! I'm in the fire, and I'm burning, and all I want is to die! It's cost him his child, and any others I might have had! But what does it matter—this is what he wanted from me. Don't you see! I'm in the mud at last! I'm groveling! I'm crawling! Oh, god— (Osborne, 1966:616)

Throughout the play there are never as many exclamation points as when Alison is speaking in the above quoted passage. She is finally showing her emotions and they are unbridled. She is finally unleashing the emotions that she has kept pent up. She is experiencing her catharsis of emotions, and it is through this catharsis that she regains her husband.

The third element of a tragic plot, according to Aristotle, is suffering, and both Alison and Jimmy suffer. Jimmy suffers throughout the course of the play, while Alison suffers the pain of losing her child at the end of the play.

The one thing that Jimmy wished for has come true. Earlier in the play he had unknowingly prophesied the tragedy that was to occur, the death of their unborn child. He had said he hoped it would happen so that she would express human emotions:

Jimmy: If you could have a child, and it would die. Let it grow, let a recognizable human face emerge from that little mass of indiarubber and wrinkles. Please—if only I could watch you face that. I wonder if you might even become a recognizable human being yourself. But I doubt it. (Osborne, 1966:570)

But when it happens, Jimmy, instead of rubbing her face in her loss, and being happy about what happened to her, actually has pity on her and wants to help her with her pain. This is the greatest demonstration of love that Jimmy shows to Alison. Despite everything that she has done to him, not being there when he needed her, and then leaving him altogether, he still has the capacity to love her:

Jimmy: You're all right. You're all right now. Please, I—I...Not any more...(Osborne, 1966:616)

This is Jimmy's reversal. What he wanted to happen, happened, and it brought the result he had hoped for, but he is not gloating in Alison's pain. He immediately forgives her and they then revert to their loving role playing as bear and squirrel, and it is in this state of love that the play ends.

Aristotle believed that emotions were useful in a functioning society, and we see from the play that Osborne agreed. Osborne's criticism of Alison because of her lack of emotion, and his positioning of Jimmy, the most emotional character of the play, as the hero, leaves no doubt that Osborne felt that emotions were important.

Aristotle believed that by allowing a safe representation of difficult emotions, tragedy allowed the society to experience catharsis, without having to experience real loss or tragedy. In *Look Back in Anger*, Osborne is venting the emotions and frustration of an entire generation through Jimmy Porter. This is why the play was received with such resounding acceptance by the under-30 generation, becoming their "bible". The play, then, fits into the principles of tragedy as defined by Aristotle.

In addition to providing catharsis for difficult emotions in a society, art serves other useful purposes. If emotions are tied to morality, in the case of tragedies, then by watching tragedies, a moral lesson can be taught to the audience. Tragedies can become vehicles for society's moral lessons and can keep the society's morals at the forefront, without having to be too preachy. The society's moral standards can be upheld in the storyline of the play with moral characters being rewarded and immoral characters being punished and suffering for their actions.

One of the moral lessons in *Looking Back in Anger* is that the differences in classes in British society during the 1950's originated a generation of angry young men. Even though they were afforded a college education, in an England that had just lost its colonial might, they had no hope for a better future.

The play also explored the morals between a husband and wife in a marriage. Though Jimmy would outwardly appear to be the immoral character in the play, what with his explosive anger and his constant insults towards his wife—he is in fact the hero. His wife, though properly educated and

with her proper manners—is actually the subject of Osborne’s criticism because of her snobbery and her inability and even seemingly unwillingness to try and understand her husband.

It is not Alison’s virginity that makes her a more moral person than Jimmy in the play, nor the fact that she behaves properly and does not scream or curse. Not even attending church, no matter how briefly, makes her a moral person.

It is interesting that the characters who come from the lower classes in the play turn out to be the most moral. Alison’s parents, who probably purported to be good Christians among their friends, who would be (or should be) operating under the assumption that all men are children of God and thus equal, looked down on Jimmy and did all in their power to separate their daughter from him. They did nothing to help the young couple, and even tried to hurt them by hiring a detective to discredit Jimmy and taking away Alison’s only means of support by making her sign over her property. They did not care about the consequences in their daughter’s life. They were out to protect their own money and their social status. They probably justified it to themselves by thinking that they were saving her from a heathen.

Mrs. Tanner, whom Alison dislikes so much, was the figure in the play who did the most for the young couple. She was supportive of their marriage, and was happy for Jimmy that he had married someone like Alison. Not because of her money and social background, but because she was so beautiful and Mrs. Tanner wanted Jimmy to be happy. She was financially supportive of the couple in terms of helping them find a place to live and enabling Jimmy to make his livelihood from the sweet stall that she set him up with. She did more for them than either of their families, and Alison still does not like her or even seem to appreciate what she has done for them.

It is interesting that Jimmy chose Mrs. Tanner as the one moral woman in the play. Though Alison thinks that Jimmy admires her just by virtue of her having being poor most of her life, it is Alison’s snobbery that does not allow her to see the value that Jimmy sees in Mrs. Tanner. He says,

Jimmy: The injustice of it is almost perfect! The wrong people going hungry, the wrong people being loved, the wrong people dying! (Osborne, 1966:615)

Considering Alison’s description of Mrs. Tanner as a charwoman who married an actor and worked to support her husband and son, what she is not seeing is that Mrs. Tanner supported her husband in achieving his dreams. She did not stifle his dreams by making him work as something other than an

actor, simply because they were poor. She loved her husband and son, and sacrificed herself by working to support both of them. She probably went through similar sacrifices to help Jimmy and Alison out, since it appears that at the time of her death she continued to be poor, yet she had helped them out only recently. And Alison does not bother to see her when she is in the hospital, or when she passes away. That is how unappreciative Alison is towards Mrs. Tanner's sacrifices:

Jimmy: For eleven hours, I have been watching someone I love very much going through the sordid process of dying. She was alone, and I was the only one with her. And when I have to walk behind that coffin on Thursday, I'll be on my own again. Because that bitch won't even send her a bunch of flowers—I know! She made the great mistake of all her kind. She thought that because Hugh's mother was a deprived and ignorant old woman, who said all the wrong things in all the wrong places, she couldn't be taken seriously. (Osborne, 1966:599)

This line reveals how deeply Jimmy felt about Mrs. Tanner. We see how much her self-sacrifice has been valued by Jimmy. It is this type of support and self-sacrifice that Jimmy is looking for from Alison. Alison's lack of caring even at Mrs. Tanner's death really upsets Jimmy. It is Jimmy's experience with the death of his father that defines for him what it is to love, and so he equates sacrifice with love. Whether right or wrong, this is what shapes Jimmy's view of love. His mother sacrificed nothing for his father, thus she did not love him. Mrs. Tanner demonstrated her love for her family and even for Jimmy and Alison through sacrifice. For Jimmy and Alison she provided the sweet stall which they use to make a living.

Alison is similar to Jimmy's mother in this respect. In his description of his mother, Jimmy is just as critical as he is about Alison.

Jimmy: As for my mother, all she could think about was the fact that she had allied herself to a man who seemed to be on the wrong side in all things. My mother was all for being associated with minorities, provided they were the smart, fashionable ones. (Osborne, 1966:586)

This sounds uncannily like a description of Alison. Jimmy, too, seems to be on the wrong side of everything. He is educated but does not have a good job. He resents the 'American Age', yet appreciates jazz. Jimmy hates her father and all he stands for, but resents the fact that the British colonial era is over. And he shares many of the same pastimes of the upper classes, which he purports to hate. If there is anyone on the "wrong" side of society or anything else, it is Jimmy.

Alison might have married Jimmy in part out of youthful rebellion against her parents. However, when it was not fashionable to be married to a poor guy with no future and a major attitude and deep resentment for the upper classes, it was not fun any more and she is not happy. Jimmy draws a parallel between Alison and his mother and the way each treats their husbands. The fact that Jimmy's bitterness grows daily because she does not reach out to him emotionally is just a sign of Jimmy's unwillingness to allow himself to die like his father; abandoned and ignored by his wife.

It is not really clear what it is exactly that Jimmy wants to accomplish in his life, if given the opportunity to do so. But to him that is irrelevant. If Alison loves him, she should encourage and support him in everything. But all she does is complain about his trumpet playing—he played in a band, he could not have been that bad—and anything else he does. She is more tender and caring to Cliff, their friend, than to her husband, and Cliff comes from an even lower class than Jimmy, whose mother's side is allegedly 'posh'. Instead, Jimmy feels constantly humiliated because she does not give him any sort of respect. This lack of respect only highlights Jimmy's failures as a man. Failures for which he is only partly to blame, given the social conditions of England at the time.

All of these reveal that *Look Back in Anger* has a moral lesson for the audience to be learned.

4.2 Audience Reaction to The Play

The first time I read *Look Back in Anger*, I was shocked by the character Jimmy. By reading the play—and not seeing the play in person—I could not help but empathize with Alison, and at the horrible situation her youthful love had gotten her into Jimmy's anger and the vitriolic words he used to describe and talk to his wife were almost unbearable to me as a woman. I tried to put myself in her place, and could not imagine being able to put up with her situation. The language and the violence were shocking to me, particularly knowing that the play was written in the 1950's, considering this is a period of time that many times people in the West hark back to when it comes to being a model for morality and family unity. The images that come to mind when thinking about the 1950's in the West are images of wholesomeness, where men were financially responsible for their wives, and women were happy to be mothers and expected to be house wives.

It was inconceivable, thinking of the 50's in that light, that the characters (and the playwright) would openly discuss such taboo subjects as abortion, especially when the pregnancy was a product of love in a marriage, or when it came to domestic violence (Jimmy's not-so-accidental burning of Alison's hand and his threat to strike Helena). The image of the 1950's depicted on television and film have obviously been sugar coated, and if Jimmy was supposed to represent a whole generation of angry young men, he was not the only one full of rage, and he was not the only one striking out at his wife.

It is hard to imagine a country full of Alisons and Jimmys. But this play struck a chord with so many young people, that they must have existed.

Aristotle believed that art was created out of a spontaneous union of the intellect and sense. Aristotle felt that the expression of emotion did not need to be explained to anybody, that there were universal expressions of emotion that carried across cultures and languages:

Still facial expression, gestures, attitudes, are a dialect which nature herself has taught, and which needs no skilled interpreter to expound. (Quoted in Butcher 1951:134)

Paying more attention to the dialogue and the stage directions, Alison's coldness struck me, as did Jimmy's pleas for attention. He is like a child, begging for attention. And like a child that needs attention, he lashes out, because negative attention is better than no attention at all.

In order to understand the audience's reaction to and interaction with this play, or any play, it would do well for us to explore how the world of make-believe, or fiction, in the representational arts affects a regular person's emotional response to it.

In his book *Mimesis as Make-Believe*, Kendall Walton discusses the relation between the audience, or appreciators, of the representational arts, and the art work which they are viewing or experiencing. Walton suggests that our attraction to the world of make-believe that a tragic play is part of begins from childhood. As children, we learn to day dream, as well as role play when playing with dolls or other figurines. We learn to get "lost" in books, which transport us to different worlds, and we basically feel the need to do it. In order to understand why we are drawn to "lose" ourselves in the latest film or play, we must first understand that this need to experience a world of make-believe is inherent in our nature, and that it exists in all cultures. In Walton's words,

In order to understand paintings, plays, films and novels, we must look first at dolls, hobbyhorses, toy trucks and teddy bears. The activities in which representational works of art are embedded and which give them their point are best seen as continuous with children's games of make-believe. ..Children devote enormous quantities of time and effort to make-believe activities. And this preoccupation seems to be nearly universal, not peculiar to any particular cultures or social groups. The urge to engage in make-believe and the needs such activities address would seem to be very fundamental ones. If they are, one would not expect for children simply to outgrow them when they grow up; it would be surprising if make-believe disappeared without a trace at the onset of adulthood. (Walton, 1990:12)

That urge not only continues into our adulthood, but, it deepens. It is interesting to note that we not only lose ourselves in the stories that we view, but we also come to sympathize with the characters we watch. We share an intimacy with them despite the fact that they are fictional. We feel sorry for them, come to hate the evil characters depicted, and even fall in love with the good characters. We relate to the characters, and perhaps put ourselves into the stories, perhaps even look for friends or lovers with the same qualities as the fictional characters in the movies. We do so unconsciously and are drawn into the story in ways which we do not realize. Walton writes in this connection that

But in appreciators' games psychological participation tends to outrun and overshadow physical participation. This accounts for the apparent asymmetry in our relations with fictional characters, the fact that we seem psychologically intimate with them but physically cut off from the. There is not really any such intimacy. It is only fictional, not true, that we feel for Willy Loman or detest Iago...Isn't it strange that there should be pity or anger in appreciators' games without the possibility of acting on these emotions in normal ways. (Walton, 1990:241)

This was an aspect of the representational arts, in particular tragedy, which Plato had such a problem with. He found it wrong that people would lose touch with reality so much that they would let their guards down to the point where they came to share the emotions experienced by the characters. Plato, with his low opinion of emotion, no doubt felt that of all things that compelled a regular human being to show emotions, watching a tragedy was not what should let us put down our barriers and feel emotions. He saw the demonstration of emotion as a weakness, and thought it was an even greater weakness to demonstrate emotion for a fictional character.

Few I believe, are capable of reflecting that to enter into another's feelings must have an effect on our own; the emotions of pity our sympathy has strengthened will not be easy to restrain when we are suffering ourselves. (Quoted in Oates, 1972:338)

The audience of a tragedy participates in that tragedy by involving their emotions. They are able to participate to the extent that they are comfortable with by choosing not to attend a tragic play or film, or choosing to walk out. Watching a tragedy, as Aristotle argues, allows the viewer a catharsis of emotion, without actually experiencing the loss of a loved one, or experiencing the tragedy in their own personal life.

Dramatic representation seems to be injurious to minds which do not possess the antidote in a knowledge of its real nature. (Quoted in Oates, 1972:384)

By getting lost in a work of art, the regular citizen is manipulated emotionally, without knowing its real nature. Walton argues that:

Recognition of the psychological role appreciators play in their games will contribute significantly to our understanding of the nature of fiction and its importance in our lives. It lies at the heart of the experience of being 'caught up in the story', it will enable us to account for what has been misleadingly called the suspension of disbelief without supposing that appreciators lose touch with reality when they are immersed in a work about fiction. It will contribute to the resolution of the chief aesthetic question about fiction, the question of why we do not dismiss novels and stories and other such works as mere fiction and thus unworthy of serious attention. (Walton, 1990:241)

Plato felt that part of each person that art appealed to was the emotional part, and this is why he had such a problem with drama, because it represented an imitation of emotions, and elicited an imitation of emotions from the audience.

...the element in our nature which is accessible to art and responds to its advances is equally far from wisdom. (Oates, 1972:335)

Present-day philosophers would agree, and question why spectators would subject themselves to watching scenes of sorrow and pain, and be affected by drama, even if they know that what they are watching is not real and that even though they experience sympathetic emotions, they are not lasting and not real. Walton states that:

How is it that appreciators eagerly seek the painful experiences they know to expect from works of tragedy, and indeed enjoy them? We now know that tragedies do not induce actual sorrow and terror in spectators—not anyway, in most of the instances in which one might think they do. (Anxiety is a different matter) (Walton, 1990:256)

The sentiments, then, that are aroused when we watch a dramatic representation, or when we witness any other works of art, are said to be fictional:

It is fictional, when we appreciate novels, plays, films and paintings, that we feel compassion, exasperation, indignation and so on... (Walton, 1990:249-250)

But emotion is tied to art in the sense that emotion evokes art, and art evokes emotion. The two are completely intertwined.

4.3 The Role of Emotion in Art and Life

Aristotle made a distinction between functional art and fine art. He felt that even though epic poetry was said to be a higher form of art, he felt that tragedy was in fact the better form. In the Poetics, he argues the point that even though it is said that:

...epic poetry... is addressed to a superior audience who have no need of gestures and postures, tragedy, to the common crowd. Therefore, if tragedy is vulgar, obviously it will be inferior. (Quoted in Butcher, 1951:78)

But he strongly opposes this idea, and explains why:

Tragedy is in fact the better form because (1) it has everything that epic poetry has (for it can even employ the epic meter) and has in addition an element of no small importance in its music, which intensifies our pleasure in the highest degree then also (2) it has the advantage of vividness both when read and when acted (3) it excels because in tragedy the imitation fulfills its purpose in shorter compass—that which is more concentrated gives greater pleasure than that which is dispersed over a great length of time. (Quoted in Butcher 1951:78)

Our emotions affect everything in our lives. Whether we make conscious or unconscious evaluations of situations, our emotions shape our judgments and decisions in every aspect of our lives. According to recent researchers,

Emotive states are certainly influenced (and sometimes overridden) by higher order cognitive functions and social learning. However, substantial parts of our lives and consciousness is concerned with our 'feeling' state, we care whether we 'feel good'. (Quoted in Butcher, 1951:104)

Emotions have also played a large part in the achievements of humankind. The creation of art, and art's effect on each society's culture is without a doubt the single biggest influence on the change, growth and representation of each culture. We know and describe different cultures by their folkloric art—not by their scientific achievements or anything else. Each culture is represented in the consciousness of the rest of the world through their artistic representations. Whether it is through dance, paintings, works of literature, or theatrical works, when one calls to mind a certain culture, it is through their art.

Emotions also bind members of each culture and society to each other:

Emotions effectively guide and consolidate memory storage and retrieval. They effectively guide social bonding, an extremely important survival factor in many species. And emotions efficiently guide and modulate reproductive behavior. (Quoted Aristotle, Butcher, 1951:104)

Emotions and art, then, are invaluable and essential to the growth and continuance of our culture.

A piece of art can convey many things to the person that is viewing it, reading it or experiencing it. It can convey information about the life of the artist, his or her intentions in creating the work of art, as well as the context in which it was created. *Look Back in Anger* was written during a certain period of time in England, in a specific part of the playwright's life and created in a particular social and political context.

The experience of viewing a piece of art, or reading or experiencing a play or other dramatic representation, is greatly influenced by the state of mind in which the viewer finds him or herself. The emotional state of the viewer of course also greatly influences their reaction to a piece of art.

Art, especially dramatic representations, can also teach us moral lessons. By placing ourselves in the place of each character, and trying to imagine ourselves in the situation, we can make judgments about their situation. We can agree or disagree with the ultimate actions of each character, but there is a moment in which we become aware of the emotions that they are portraying, where we can imagine ourselves as them, and can empathize with their situation.

Our response to art cannot be separated from our emotions. It is not a weakness of the viewer to experience emotions when viewing art, nor is it a failure of the artist to express their emotions through art. It is clear that there is a duality in the human mind that makes emotions and reason inseparable. As an expression of emotions, art is essential to the modern society.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

In John Osborne's play *Look Back in Anger*, there are two emotions that account for the behaviour of the two main characters, Jimmy and Alison, and the plot of the play is woven around these emotions: anger and love. I have defended in this work the thesis that the manner in which the characters come to experience and give expression to these emotions throughout the play have strong *cognitive* and *social* determining factors.

For years the role that emotions play in human behavior was considered an unfavorable aspect of human behavioral processes, that part of an individual which was responsible for instances of "irrationality" and "primitive" behaviour. Emotions were initially viewed as negative; the perspective that "emotionality is the antithesis of rationality" remained strong and influenced the nature of the research conducted in numerous domains. This view started to change in the late 1970's. Modern investigators recognized that emotions can serve as a source of information to individuals about their environment and individuals are more or less skilled at processing this information. Starting slowly during the 1970's and 1980's, the 1990's have seen a resurgence of emotion theory and research, both within and outside of mainstream psychology.

The major theoretical approaches to emotion I discussed here are the *cognitive*, and the *social constructivist* perspectives. This choice is the most representative of current research practices. A physiological arousal initiates a search for causes which, when found, determines the label we put on the arousal, which then determines the emotion we experience.

Cognitive theories of emotion privilege cognition over physiological arousal. These theories hold that emotion experience includes various cognitive components including the *activating* appraisals, subsequent desires, and intentions. According to Oatly (1989), "emotions happen when certain events affect our goals", he says that emotions must be understood in relation to actions.

In *Look Back in Anger*, Jimmy, the hero, is a person who does not belong to the upper class but as a husband and son-in-law, has problems because of this contradiction. Decidedly, his thoughts, the way he cognizes his wife's attitudes becomes one of the aspects of his anger since his wife, Alison, as a representative of the upper class, does not try to understand him,

but rather ignores him. In this connection, when Jimmy cognizes her insensitivity, his anger becomes superior in their relationship. Alison's family is another important cause for his anger. Everything about Alison, her family, her friends seem to make him angry; however, my thesis demonstrates that before judging someone because of his or her behaviour towards others, the causes of his or her behaviour should be considered to form a fair judgment.

It is very clear that Jimmy *perceives* and *cognizes* an assault toward his personality and feels an insult from Alison and her family along with her class. He finds them distrustful because they are materialists and pay no attention to feelings, virtues, or personality traits. Alison could not change Jimmy's beliefs though she fights to change him. However, she becomes one more opportunity to prove how rightful he is. As a result of his perception, anger becomes Jimmy's special characteristic.

Cognitively oriented studies of emotions show that love requires an appraisal of a particular object or person. Throughout the play it is impossible to think that Jimmy loves his wife or this is a love marriage. As for Alison, love seems very far away from her again. Although a negative outlook is perceived at first, when the situation is considered from the cognitive perspective of emotions love does not seem impossible in their relationship. Their love for each other changes from the beginning to the end of the play. They come to *cognize* that they in fact love each other.

On one hand, there is Jimmy who thinks that as a husband he is not respected, listened to, cared for by his wife. On the other hand, there is Alison who marries Jimmy as a reaction to her class and family, is insulted by her husband all the time. Though Alison seems innocent at first, it is Alison who causes Jimmy's problems. If Alison were not insensitive for his husband's needs, Jimmy could be a different man. This is proved by Helena's case in the play. Even though Jimmy does not like Helena and sees her as a rival at first, he likes her and does not want her to go at the end of the play. This is because he finally has someone in his life reacting to his words and behavior.

Alison's attitude toward her husband is really inconsistent. Although she marries him as a reaction to her family, she wants her family's support when she leaves her husband. Her father makes her realize the mistakes she makes but the death of her unborn baby causes her to understand how she failed her husband. After this distressing experience, she realizes her love

for her husband. She realizes how much she needs him and decides to come back. Obstacles they have in their marriage make Alison try to understand him at the end of the play.

Jimmy, on the other hand, by accepting being a 'tired general' recognizes that he was guilty, he should not have tried to change Alison. Alison's return displays his weakness:

Jimmy: You're all right. You're all right now. Please, I—I...Not any more...(Osborne, 1966:616)

For the first time in the play, he admits his love for his wife. He feels sorrow because of the death of their unborn baby. Without a doubt, as their *cognition* of each other change their love toward each other change throughout the play. The final section of the play displays that both of the characters come to a conclusion based on understanding and accepting each other.

The social constructivist perspective, on the other hand, asserts that emotions are not merely individual, but culturally diverse and culturally derived. Harre (1986) asserts that, emotions are related to the language games, local moral orders, and social functions, which make sense of both emotion displays and emotion talk in a given culture or sub-culture, and can only be understood in the context of these.

When the conditions of England at that time are considered a deep identity crisis appears immediately. As a turning point of the country, The Second World War started to change everything. Not only the living conditions of the people but also their points of view on life started to change. Since people from the middle class began to be educated, the class differences were expected to disappear; however that did not come true. Classes were still clashing, people from the upper class were still looking down on the others. However, beside the classes, sexes also began to clash. Materialism and superficiality were becoming superior and for some, women were the symbol of the materialism.

When the play is considered from the social constructivist perspective, it is seen that social conditions of the country become one of the major reasons for Jimmy's anger. Although he has a university degree it has no value neither for his wife nor her family and friends. The country he is living in is the country where the aristocracy still occupies the higher points. He is a person who is running a sweet stall, living in a shabby attic and could not make his dreams come true. Playing a trumpet, listening to jazz, reading good books, and 'posh' Sunday papers,

to be married a woman from the upper class are not enough to be accepted by the people who do not belong to working class. Jimmy feels suppressed in this sense. His words, his attitudes reflect this feeling.

'Women' as representatives of superficiality are other objects for his anger. The memory of his mother affects his view about women. According to him, there are women like his mother, wife and mother-in-law who are selfish, materialist and their unemotional, insensitive attitudes make Jimmy see them as enemies and targets for his problems. On the other hand there are women like Mrs. Tanner, who is kind and compassionate toward his husband, loves his husband so much and lets his husband's dream come true. Alison's ignoring his friend Mrs. Tanner who also helped them financially, make Alison fall out of favor in his eyes one more time.

According to social constructivist perspective, love, like our other emotions, is socially constructed. At first, neither Jimmy nor Alison satisfy their social needs in their marriage. Jimmy does not have a wife who loves and supports him; he feels lonely though he is a married man. Mrs. Tanner's funeral clearly shows his conditions:

Jimmy:... And when I have to walk behind that coffin on Thursday, I'll be on my own again. Because that bitch won't even send her a bunch of flowers—I know! She made the great mistake of all her kind... (Osborne, 1966:599)

He thinks that he is married to a woman who looks down on him, tries to humiliate him.

Jimmy: But I haven't told you what it means yet, have I? I don't have to tell her—she knows. In fact, if my pronunciation is at fault, she'll probably wait for a suitably public moment to correct it. (Osborne, 1966:558)

Meanwhile, Alison does not have a husband who sees her virtue and understands that as a lady and wife she is taught to be silent against her husband's attacks. It is the way of her upbringing that she does not show her emotional side and that although she married to a man from the working class, she has the values of the upper class.

At the end of the play, all of these social factors that affect their marriage negatively are ignored by both of them. Both of the characters, Jimmy and Alison, believe in their love and stay together:

Jimmy: I may be a lost cause, but I thought if you loved me, it needn't matter.

Alison: It doesn't matter! I was wrong, 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! Don't you understand? It's gone! It's gone! That—helpless human being inside my body. I thought it was so safe, and secure in there. Nothing could take it from me. It was mine, my responsibility. But it's lost. All I wanted was to die. I never knew what it was like. I didn't know it could be like that!
(Osborne, 1966:615)

It is very clear that emotions are not only wellsprings of intuitive wisdom; they also provide individuals with potentially profitable information every minute of the day. The relationship of art and emotions are also interwoven. As emotions provide us information about others, a work of art can be a guide to people. This idea comes from ancient times. According to great philosophers Plato and Aristotle the relationship of art and emotions is profound. Since Plato thought emotions should not be indulged, as they are hard to control, he believed representations of some emotions such as anger, fear, grief, pity, in the work of art could be a wrong model for people. However, Aristotle claimed that every kind of emotion should be represented in a work of art. In that way people can come to know some emotions without experiencing them in the real world.

By reading John Osborne's play "Look Back in Anger" we experience two emotions "anger" and "love" from Jimmy's and Alison's perspectives and the application of cognitive and social constructivist theories of emotions to the play deepens our understanding of their condition.

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