

Unit-IV

John Osborne: Look Back in Anger

John Osborne: His Life and Times

Osborne's autobiography titled 'A Better Class of Person: An Autobiography: 1929 – 1956', provides a valid record of Osborne's childhood and youth. John Osborne was born on 12th December 1929 of parents of very different backgrounds. Nellie Beatrice Grove, Osborne's mother was from a working class family, the daughter of Adelina Rowena Grove whom Osborne describes with a sense of regard, which he admittedly had for the Proletarian. Almost every working day of her life, she has got up at five o'clock to go out to work, to walk down what has almost seemed to me to be the most hideous and coldest streets in London. Osborne's approbation and idolisation of the woman who has the inborn dignity comes out in his words "She'd put her head down, hold on to her hat and push. And she did so with grit". His maternal grandfather, William Crawford Grove, was smart in more than one way he had, always, other women in his life which was not a secret from Mrs. Grove.

On the paternal side Osborne's grandmother was snobbish and unpleasant, she ill-treated her husband as well as her son. Old Osborne is described by John as "a shambling shy figure who said little" and was "ill-treated contemptuously as a servant". She is compared to the Redferns by Osborne in that her behaviour and words were always utterly studied, she lacked naturalness and spontaneity to such an extent that young John never for once heard his grandma raise her voice. Adept at concealing her emotions, she could ill-treat people without betraying the least bit of anger or disgust.

The two older women, in 'Look back in Anger' are born out of Osborne's own experience. Alison's mother Mrs. Redfern is a copy of his paternal grandmother. His friend Hugh's mother is his maternal grandmother. Osborne lived for sometime, when his parents were not living together at Fulham Palace Road quite near the Groves home. That his childhood was not a happy one is established by his memories of his having blooming fainting fits when his parents came to live together in 1936. Osborne's father was contemptuous of many things including the clergy, and John was to inherit this contempt for the church from him.

John's memories of both the families were one of unpleasant quarrels, which, he recounts with a tinge of remorse in his autobiography. The Osbornes moved house from Stoneleigh to Ewell by-pass in 1938. John was at this time nine, he joined the Ewell's Boys school where unlike the other boys, he made few friends and remained rather lonesome. He had only one friend, Micky Wall, the boy who read a lot and with whom he formed the Viper Gang Club. His greatest love at the time was cinema, which was to him, his church and academy.

John Osborne fell in love with Joan Buffen, three years his senior (she was twelve, he only nine) who tried to draw his attention to sex. John was treated affectionately by both Joan as well as her mother: the affair came to an end abruptly when she was sent to the boarding school.

Two things seem to have afflicted Osborne the most in his childhood. He suffered, for years, as he himself records the humiliation of being a fairly regular bed-wetter. The other, one, of a deeper consequence was the death of his father. John experienced the death of his father, who, they were told had only six weeks to live. More than his death, it was the callous attitude of "Black Look" John's unpleasant and irritable mother that saddened and angered him. Even the senior Mrs. Osborne never mourned her son's death. The humiliation and anger at the apathy, he saw were to leave a scar on Osborne's mind for life.

John flung himself with girls, his love for Isabell Seller who was ten years older to him was the innocent love of an adolescent who wanted to escape a mother he hated. Later in St. Michael's Boarding school, he fell in love with Jenny, the niece of the Principal. The letters that Jenny wrote, unfortunately fell in the hands of Eric her uncle, the Principal and the affair came to an end. John's term, at the boarding school, ended equally abruptly, when unexpectedly, slapped by Eric, John retaliated by slapping him and was expelled.

John had a short stint with journalism. Working for 'Gas World' and 'The Miller'. He had, at this time another of his affairs. A woman of great physical attraction, she had no brains to match it. John Osborne's interest in her was limited to the erotic, he knew that he would not like to marry her. Finally, he succeeded in breaking the affair by drifting into the world of theatre. He first acted in 'No Room at the Inn', a music hall drama and worked as an Assistant Stage Manager.

He wrote a play on the persuasion of Stella Linden, his mistress for sometime who was married to Patrick Desmond. The play was first named 'Resting Deep' which was later changed to the 'Devil Inside Him.' He also had a brief and inconsequential affair with Sheila, a juvenile actress. He took on small jobs in Restaurants till his second assignment as an Assistant Stage Manager at the Theatre Royal. His first play was produced here in 1950. From this year onwards, Osborne started his career as a playwright, writing some plays in the beginning in collaboration, later all of them on his own. His output is varied, apart from his well known plays he wrote adaptations of earlier literary work and plays for T.V.

John Osborne was a growing boy during the second World war. The era of Imperialism seemed to be closing during the period after war. During this period the process of dismantling started with the Labour government coming to power in 1945 and when the Conservative government came to power in 1951, the process continued unabated. On the international level, the western nuclear monopoly was challenged by the Soviet Union. They had manufactured the atomic and the hydrogen bomb triggering the arms race. With the destructive power of these scientific innovations the fear of annihilation at the slightest provocation raised doubts and fears in the hearts of mankind. CND, the campaign for nuclear disarmament was the new slogan of the people who wanted the human race and nations to survive. There was, understandably resentment against the Church of England when it extended support to the nuclear programme. The resentment mounted into antagonism and there was considerable withdrawal of faith in the Bishops.

Another change was in the industrial side. After the recovery of industry in the post war era, people migrated in response to job positions and though it led to better prospects of income, people who had migrated felt cut off from their moorings. The work they under-took to do on the machines was also so repetitive that their work-life became stereotyped. Automation in industry crept into human life rendering them unable to live with individual passion and pride.

Osborne responded sensitively to the Major issues of this period. Though other writers of this period had also reacted sharply to some of the issues, Osborne's reaction was much more aggressive. Jimmy Porters tirades against the conservative party, his inactivity against the Bishops for supporting the nuclear programme are all an expression of the author's own impatience with these establishments. Jimmy Porter and the other characters in his plays only expressed the anger and dismay of their author, none of them offers a practical solution, since their creator offered none. Osborne just raise the issues which demanded people's attention, he wanted the people to feel, the way his protagonists did about the prevailing situation, he did not expect them either to know or offer any solutions.

With a more socialistic pattern emerging in society, with the class distinctions becoming less distinct, with the economic security offered by the governments in the shape of housing, unemployment and old-age pensions, the old and the young felt more relaxed. They became complacent with no social or political injustice to fight against. Even the taboos related to sex became less rigid, the middle-class morality and Victorian prudery was replaced by more freedom in the behaviour amongst opposite sexes. The charm of struggle, chivalry, romance in love was becoming a thing of the past, disillusionment was bound to follow.

Lineage and place in Modern Drama

John Osborne did not find any dramatist in the contemporary drama who could be his model. English drama had become during Osborne's earlier phase hermetically sealed. The drama of T.S. Eliot and Fry were too far removed from reality those of Coward and Rattigan, through commercially successful lacked in the spirit that could inspire. The theatre of the Absurd, the most popular on the French stage had not taken root in Britain. Becket had himself translated the play from French into English and it was being talked of like the verse plays of T.S. Eliot, 'Murder in the Cathedral', 'The Cocktail Party' and 'The Confidential Clerk' etc and Fry's 'A Phoenix Too Frequent' and the Lady's Not For Burning', 'Venus Observed' and 'The Dark Is Light Enough'. The only prose dramatist of significance, in England, at that time was John Whiting, but John Osborne looked up to earlier writers in England for inspiration.

Amongst the foreign writers who influenced him, Ibsen stands in the forefront. Ibsen dealt with the social problems of the day, presenting the every day life with a verisimilitude: his plays come close to reality in characterization, themes and the stage setting. Osborne was to adapt, 'Hedda Gabler' of Ibsen's plays later when he was working on scripts for T.V. and film productions. The violence and death that recurs in Ibsen's plays, the suicides in the 'Wild Duck', 'Rosmer Sholm' and 'Hedda Gabler'; the deaths in 'Little Eyolt' and 'The Master Builder' reverberate in the violence and deaths of Osborne's plays.

If Osborne is closer to Ibsen in creating sensational ends, he is closer to Chekov in his characterization. Unable to communicate fully with one another, they feel isolated. His plays like Osborne's long monologues and even while talking to each other his characters are always at cross purposes. They are, like Jimmy, drifters who have lost their moorings.

Chekov does allude to death and violence in some of his plays, 'The Sea Gull' includes a suicide and like 'The Three Sisters' death in duel, but these take place off-stage and the ending of 'The Cherry Orchard' is quiet. Mostly his characters only sit, talk, eat and drink evoking a certain mood in the audience.

Another playwright who comes to mind while reading Osborne is August Strindberg. He set a precedent by portraying brutal pictures of the man-woman relationship in plays like 'The Father', 'Miss Julie' and 'The Bond'. The man-woman and class conflict of 'Miss Julie' was to occupy Osborne in 'Look back in Anger', with Jimmy, Alison and Helena replacing Jean, the valet, Miss Julie and the working maid in the house.

George Bernard Shaw was too optimistic with the substance of life held firmly in his hand to be confirmed with the Nihilism so visible in Osborne. Some of Shaw's plays do present a grim picture of England as well as decry its values and systems but Shaw never completely renounces hope and none of his protagonists is ever a drifter.

It is only the 'Heart-break House' of Shaw, which comes nearest to Osborne's perception of the futility of human relations and social customs.

Oscar Wilde was another writer whose novel 'The Dorian Gray' Osborne dramatized. In Oscar Wilde, Osborne found a playwright who, in his well-made plays, looked at man-woman relationships, erotic attachments and social conventions from a satiric perspective, turning the prevalent norms upside down and suggesting a diametrically opposite sense of values. Osborne refers to Helena as Lady Bracknell of Wilde though it would have been more appropriate to compare her with the still more repulsive and dominating Mrs. Redfern.

Osborne himself admitted his debt to D.H. Lawrence in his colliery plays like 'The Widening of Mrs. Holroyd', 'A Colliers Friday Night', 'The Daughter in Law' and other prose-plays where he recreated the atmosphere of the world of he knew through the dialogue of the mining district and a general evocation of working class life. He had in his plays recorded the mental tensions arising out of the differences in the class backgrounds. Osborne was to later deal with the same kind of marital tensions arising out of the inability to adjust. The tough, coarse but vigorous working class man was portrayed by both Lawrence and Osborne married to the sensitive, snobbish upper class girl— ill-matched and angry for the class distinctions.

Jean Anouilh was another acknowledged model. Osborne's similarity with Anouilh lies in creating strong central characters who defiantly challenge the existing institutions of power and control. Antigone and Joan are given long, powerful speeches like Jimmy and Archie to make their views known. They, at the same time, defy the opinions of the other characters and the society at large.

Osborne, was influenced by another playwright, Tennessee Williams. Tennessee Williams, like Osborne chose for his characters, social outcasts, who find the crass society they live in intolerable and refuse to conform to its values. They also, like Jimmy and company, play roles and identify with names in literature in order to escape from or cope with the problems that confront them. Williams' realism is however, notably different from the usual sense in which it is used. He calls his theatre The 'Plastic Theatre' since reality is not literally copied but moulded, transformed for presentation on the stage.

In some other plays, like Van Moody's, 'The Great Divide', the woman, like Alison, in 'Look Back in Anger' comes back to her man affirming her new loyalty across the divide of class.

It should be noted, that many playwrights had prefigured in their plays elements of 'Look Back in Anger': an alienated rebellious character who defies the World, surrounded by certain character types; intense marital tensions and a central love triangle; class conflict, vitriolic satire on social, political and religious institutions; the structure of the well-made play; rhetorical speeches and role – playing and the creation of atmosphere through speech variations, set and music, but without the frame-work of realism.

Osborne had, in the area of drama, many kindred spirits who if not his mentors, were men Osborne could identify with. In spite of similarities John Osborne stands on his own ground as a dramatist.

John Osborne Works

The Devil inside Him (1950)

The Devil inside him, Osborne's first play was written in collaboration with Mrs. Stella Linden. It is the melodramatic story of a Welsh youth who is considered to be a sex-maniac by his relatives because he writes poetry. A visiting medical student to the village where he lives recognized the talent of the youth, though he has so far only been taken for an idiot. The tragedy of his killing a girl who tries to misappropriate him by passing him off as the father of her child is melodramatic in nature.

Personal Enemy (1955)

Written again in collaboration, this time with Anthony Creighton, his theatrical partner. The story of a soldier who refuses to be repatriated from Captivity in Korea, the play suffered on account of the large-scale deletions demanded by the Lord Chamberlain, a stand of homosexuality in the play was also ordered to be deleted.

Look Back in Anger (1956)

John Osborne started working on 'Look Back in Anger' on 4th May, 1955 and finished of on 3rd June. Osborne was just twenty-six and the play that was to make him world-famous had been completed within a month. The play was sent, quite simply by Osborne to the recently established English stage company, a group with the mission of introducing new theatrical writing. Though the reviews were of mixed nature, Osborne was recognized as the 'Juvenile prodigy', who had brought new drama on the stage in the sweep.

The Entertainer (1957)

The Entertainer is the story of a Archie Rice Music Hall performer who improvises his artistic integrity by bringing nude-woman on the stage in a vain bid boost his business. A photograph of his father Billy, who was an authentic artist remind Archie of his fall from the standards set in The Edwardian period. Nostalgia for this period is evident in the play. His personal life also suffers, tired of his aged wife Phoebe, he becomes a

philanderer who seduces every other woman. The decline of the Music Hall becomes in a larger sense symbolic of the declining fortunes of the British Empire. A note of protest against the policies of the government is registered by Jean, Archie's daughter from his first wife. Her one half-brother in action and the other, Frank is sent to jail for his conscientious spirit and faith objections are raised against the British invasion of the Suez Canal. The play was presented in the framework of fantasy music-hall numbers, letting it away from realism. Archie Rice's journal emotional failure signifies the loss of nerve and purpose on a wider plane. The play closes with Archie being forced to leave for Canada by old A Billy's brother who pays off his loans. Old Billy dies. A highlight of the first production was Sir Lawrence Olivier playing the lead role.

Epitaph for George Dillon (1957 – in collaboration with Anthony Creighton)

The play focuses on, the life of an artist, who compromises with his art and in the process loses his integrity. George Dillon starts living with the Elliots and gets involved with their frivolous daughter Josie. George is treated variously by the different characters. Mrs. Elliot welcomes him to the house. Her husband opposes his stay and Ruth the divorced sister-in-law puts George in position by telling him that he is a failure. But George continues to stay in the house impregnating Josie. There is also in the play, a purely, commercial producer. Barney Evans who fires George to cut-off the high-know staff and replace it with a list of dirty stuff to make the play commercially viable. Barney Evans', character, it seems was drawn in contempt of Patrick Desmond, Stella Linden's husband, who was associated with Osborne in the beginning of his career. It is, a sort of caricature of the commercial producers in England who are savagely satirized by Osborne. George's play becomes a big commercial success, but only inspires him to talk of his own epitaph.

The World of Paul Slickey (1959)

The world of Paul Slickey, an ambitious musical, with all the ware of songs, dances and musical pieces was a failure Jack Oakham, alias Paul Slickey, a journalist has been asked to investigate the affairs of Mort Lake Hall, who happens to be his father-in-law. The whole family, including Paul, himself is promiscuous; besides being greedy, hypocritical and unfeeling. Paul Slickey has an affair not only with his secretary Jo, but also Deirdre, his sister-in-law. Osborne attacked through his character, not only the aristocracy, the Clergy and the British Empire but also exposed journalism. The play was innovative in its use of stage devices with the newspaper office evoked as a huge cloth representing a sheet of newsprint and a chorus punctuating and qualifying the action on the stage

A subject of scandal and concern (1960)

The play is based on an incident that happened in 1842. George Holyoake, was tried for blasphemy of atheism. The police, the jury and the judge, Erskine are shown to be incredibly unfair to him, and sentence him to six months imprisonment. The play ends tragically with the news of the death of George's former Comrade South Well and the death of his daughter. Though, there were no more trials in England of this nature after George Holyoake, a narrator steps onto the stage and announces that he is to defend some one charged with a similar crime, suggesting that persecution of this nature is still prevalent.

Luther (1961)

Luther is an adaptation of a sort. Osborne, dramatized the career of Martin Luther on the basis of Erik .H. Erikson's sketch of him in his 'psychobiography'. 'Young man Luther'. Luther's inadequate faith in his earthly father, Hans Luther lends to his less faith in God. He rebels against the Divine father as well as the concept of the Holy Father, the Pope. The psychosexual predicament of Luther forms the core of the play is presented impressively combining the impressionistic as well as epic devices. The agony and suffering of Luther is presented visually by the round cone of light and the torso of a naked man hanging across a knife. A knight formally announces the time and place of every scene creating a sense of distance, which leads to an objective viewing of the play rather becoming a part of it. The person of Luther is psychology

determined and the peculiarities of the treatment of Luther disallow any moral judgement on him as a public figure.

Under Plain Cover (1962)

The techniques used in this play are also not-realistic like his earlier play. The play repeats the theme : it parodies the world of journalists the protagonists Tim and Jenny live their life playing different roles each time they encounter a new person. Their life is however shattered when they come to know that they are brother and sister. Jenny breaks away from Tim to marry a post office clerk but returns soon after Tim. They come together but live secluded from each other. New devices are used. A reporter in the play talks directly to the audience, and cinematic techniques help the fading away of characters and quick change of scenes.

The Blood of the Bambergs

This is a companion play : drawing into the area of attack not only the journalists but also the Royalty. The assault is on the royal wedding of Princess Margaret to a photographer, it showed how, when on the day of the Royal wedding Prince Wilhelm dies in an accident, he is replaced by a double, Alan Russel, a photographer from Australia to marry Princess Melanie. There is direct address to the audience, this time by Wimple, who functions as a kind of narrator.

Inadmissible Evidence (1964)

Inadmissible Evidence, as the title suggests is an attack on the judicial system. The play is about the efficacy of the judicial system, its methods of questioning and, trial. The main character Bill Martland who passes through anxiety and a sense of guilt in his dream trial cannot shake off the impression it has cast even after the dream is over.

The play records not only the professional life of Bill but also his personal relationship with women; he makes overtures not only to his mistress and wife but also to his clients and his employees. Bill suffers a kind of disorientation in spite of the affirmation of love from his mistress Liz and writes a five-page long monologue to his only daughter revealing his disintegrated state of mind and failure to communicate with people.

A Patriot for Me (1965)

The play covered a significant phase of history in its dramatization of the military career of Alfred Redi. Enlisted in the Austro-Hungarian Army. Alfred Redi was blackmailed by the Russian intelligence for his homosexuality. The play records a series of Redi's sexual encounters, first with woman and then with young men. Spectacle is provided by the big names like Archduke Ferdinand and countess Dalyanoff, who is shown to be involved with Redi. The grandeur of some scenes stands in contrast to the scenes of complete darkness. The tragic end of Redi and the final Victory of Oplensky who continues his espionage activities leaves the reader in a very peculiar state of mind.

Time Present (1968)

Pamela, The female protagonists of the play has striking similarities with Jimmy Porter of 'Look Back in Anger'. Her bitterness after the demise of her father and her sardonic invective against the politicians, woman writers, homosexuals reminds the reader of Jimmy's Virulence. An actress by profession, she dominates all the characters in the play, her mother Edith, her stepsister Pauline and her ex-lover, Edward.

The Hotel in Amsterdam (1968)

The play is set in a suite in a large first class hotel in Amsterdam. Three English couples are spending a weekend here. They occupy themselves most of the times talking about their mother or mothers-in-law and discuss topics like homosexuality, Airlines, Pills and marriages. Some flutter is created by confessions of love between the character who come later, but the climax of the ply with the death of K.L. K.L, a film personality is shown to be some what mysterious in his life as well as death, in his unexpected suicide. The play has an air

of emptiness which adds to the suffocation of stillness and lack of action.

West of Suez (1971)

Wyatt Gilman, a writer is on a holiday with his four daughters to a sub-tropical ex-colonial island. They are accompanied by three men, husbands of two daughters and the lover of the third. During the excursion, they are interviewed by a local newspaper reporter Mrs. James. They also meet a popular writer named Lamb, the conversation with these two brings out the emptiness of their lives. Wyatt's recollections of the Colonial Past suggest a feeling of nostalgia about the Imperial glory of England's past. The play becomes sensational after the arrival of Jed who warns them of their impending death. His presumption comes true when several armed islanders come and shoot Wyatt.

A sense of Detachment (1972)

This play, most reflex in one sense is also in another sense more group oriented. Posing questions about the artistic and dramatic illusions, which the author had experienced it, has direct references to Osborne's autobiography. The audience become participants in the drama by virtue of the direct address to them and also by the invitation by The Box Man they receive to join in the songs or interrupt if there is a genuine need for it. Stills from political, social and military life are shown in the background. There are references to the contemporary playwrights like Harold Pinter, Arnold Wesker and Samuel Beckett to name a few. The autobiographical references include the death of his father because of T.B. and his sexual life with Stella Linden.

Watch it Come Down (Published 1975)

Marital discord and the resultant violent fights is the theme of 'Watch It Come Down'. Ben, the renowned people director and his wife Sally, fight their sordid battles in the presence of their guests. Glen the young artist doomed to die, his devotee Jo and Raymond a homosexual, all witness their ugly scene.

Ben is shown to be lustful, he desires Shirley as well as Jo. The play ends on a violent note with the death of the Couple's dog, and their physical skirmishes. Ben is shot dead by The Yobbos, and Jo commits suicide after Glen's death. The play has been compared to G.B. Shaw's 'Heart-break House' for its violence and promiscuous lovemaking.

The End of Me Old Cigar (1975)

Lady Regina Frimley an arch-feminist lays a trap for the dignitaries whom she has invited to her country-house. She has fixed women for them for the night and would have them expose while they are making love to them. It is discovered however that one of the couples, Leonard Grim Thorpe and Isobel really fall in love. Lady Regina's plans are also foiled since, her lover betrays her for promised life of luxury in Spain.

T.V. Plays & Adaptations:

The Right Prospectus (1970)

Very Like a Whale (Published 1971)

Jill & Jack (Published in 1975)

You're not Watching me Mummy (1978)

Try a Little Tenderness (1978)

These plays repeat some of Osborne's typical characters and themes. The characters are aliens, actors, artists, discordant couples, the theme that of maladjustment, compromise with one's integrity in art and family discord.

Adaptations

A Bond Honoured (1966) a reworking of Lope de Vega's La Fianza Satisfecha – The play is a class, apart for its physical violence. Whereas Leonido rapes his sister before her wedding, in the original, in Osborne's

adaptation he rapes his mother too. Sadist to the utmost degree, he takes out his father's eyes and tortures everyone.

Hedda Gabler (1972)

Osborne, except for a few changes in names and places stuck to the original by Henrik Ibsen. Osborne was able to retain the verisimilitude of Ibsen.

The Picture Of Dorian Gray

Osborne is like Oscar Wilde, adept at the art of portraying intense characters and sensitively portraying their agonies and conflicts. Osborne reduced the number of characters and condensed the story to suit his medium of drama.

Place calling itself Rome

Adaptation of Shakespeare's 'Coriolanus', Tom James by Firdling Osborne adapted the novel for the screen.

Osborne's Introduction (collected plays Vol. I. Faber & Faber)

Reception as a playwright – 'Look Back in Anger'

With a writer like Osborne, who has little pretention about either his intellect or intentions, it is comparatively safer to take him for his face value for an authentic answer to some of the major questions about his life and work.

This is how Osborne recounts the first production of 'Look Back in Anger':

May 8th, 1956, is one of the few dates usually quoted in accounts of modern theatrical history, and generally regarded as the commencement for good or ill, of a tangible change in the climate and direction of The English Theatre. It was the first, performance of 'Look Back in Anger' at the Royal Court Theatre, an occasion I partially remember, but certainly with more a accuracy than 'those who subsequently claimed to have been present and, if they are to be believed, would have filled the theatre several times over.'

Osborne refutes the claim of the literary historians contradicting the attendance at the first performance as well as the impact that the play had. He says, 'The compilers of these histories have deduced all sorts of theatres about the consequences of that sparsely attended first night and its social, political and then revolutionary implications.'

Osborne finds the appraisal of the play speculative and disordered and the motives of Osborne fanciful inventions of the critic and the general reader. He regrets that "all this has served to draw attention to the piece as an historical phenomenon, while the play itself is passed over under the weight of perpetuated misinterpretation."

The most offending question to an author according to Osborne is one of his motive in creating a piece of work. Exasperated by the question, "Why did you written Look Back in Anger", Osborne says 'that writing comes to a writer as naturally as breathing, laughing or falling in love, without any explainable reason, without any motive.'

The main ingredients of the play, which have contributed to its survival, are vitality and honesty, says Osborne. Unlike, some writers who in order to seek intellectual respect and approbation 'flatter, indulge and offer false and easy comfort'; Osborne claims, 'to write in a language in which it is possible only to tell the truth.'

Osborne discusses the use of language in drama at length. In Literature, he observes, drama has been, unfortunately considered as a supernumerary branch and the most successful playwrights assigned a place below that of the poets and novelists. Even in drama, which has sometimes been very successful, the language is according to Osborne far from living and true. Speaking of Somerset Maugham's plays, which he knew closely since he had acted in a few of these, he says: Somerset Maugham, on the other hand, appeared to have the trick of it and entertained middle-class audience for a quarter of a century. As a young actor I did a lot of

Maugham — and one of the things I discovered was that they were extremely difficult to learn — Maugham’s language was dead, elusively inert, wobbly like some synthetic rubber substance — you could approximate with little difference in meaning or nuance.’

The nuances of language are important to Osborne and the notations are meant to be meticulously followed. They are constructed for reasons : even ‘ands’ and ‘buts’ contributing to the syntax and truth, to convey the full meaning. A play is according to Osborne, an intricate mechanism, and the whole mesh of its engineering logic can be shattered by a misplaced word or emphasis.

Osborne is sore about the mistake of the critics who claim that the language of ‘Look Back in Anger’ was naturalistic. It negates the two basic properties of a play that according to Osborne lend credibility to it. “The Pursuit of vibrant language and patent honesty” are the hall-mark of drama were denied to him by attacking the epithet of naturalistic to his language. The naturalistic language, is according to him inadequate. The language of ‘everyday life’ is almost incommunicable for the very good reason that it is restricted, inarticulate, dull and boring, and never more so than today when verbal fluency is regarded as suspect if not downright ‘elitist’.

The other point that people have missed, to the dismay of Osborne is that ‘Look Back in Anger’ is a comedy. He recollects the objections of the directors, George Devine and Tony Richardson at the public dress rehearsal of the play on 7th May, 1956, when some audience, mostly young, laughed where expected. The following nights, there were fewer laughs, which was more re-assuring to the directors, more discomfiting to the author. Vehemently stressing that play is a comedy Osborne makes his point. A performance of ‘Look Back’ without persistent laughter is like an opera without arias. Indeed, Jimmy Porters in a accurately named ‘tirades’ should be approached as ‘arias’ and require the most adroit handling, delicacy of delivery, invention and timing.’

Osborne, in this introduction, written after thirty years of the play’s first performance admits that some of the misunderstandings about the play have been cleared over the years. His impression that the play was a monologue by Jimmy, ‘a vacuum’, as the other characters in the play hardly had the substance either to support or contradict him. Alison’s obdurate withdrawal had also been misjudged.” This part of the introduction, where he discusses the nature of the play and the characters therein will be taken up later while dealing with the issues, where it is relevant.

It would suffice, here to say, that the one thing Osborne resented the most was that the theatre-managers as well as directors “followed in their productions the playgoer’s directions instead of the play-wrights, he resented, as a matter of fact the constraints which involved conciliating the audience by confirming their prejudices and not mocking their expectations.

‘Look Back in Anger’, Osborne declares, is a much misunderstood play because the time it came up was not yet ripe for it. ‘In my profession’ says he, “the surest road to penury is to be ahead of your time’.

John Osborne narrates the particulars of the how the play was received by the viewers, readers and the critics on the publication and presentation of the play. In the Introduction to the first volume of his collected plays, by Faber & Faber. This is what he has to say.

“In spite of the attention to the play at the time, amounting to something like crazed tumult, it did not transfer to the West End. The misgivings and private distaste of the presiding managements were unpersuaded. Timidity prevailed over agonized avarice. The one producer prepared to compromise his reputation insisted that all references to bears and squirrels he excised. This, I was told, embarrassed the customers; it made them squirm. Even the play’s most quoted supporter, Kenneth Tynan, had described them as ‘painful whimsy’. A few years on, whole pages of respectable national news papers would be devoted to ‘Valentine’s Day’ messages from ‘Snuggly Bouffel Bears’ to ‘Squiggly Whiffly Squirrels’, far more nauseous than my own prescient invention.”

This is what Osborne recalls of the difficulties that arose when the play was first brought public in 1956. Since he wrote the introduction to this collection after more than three decades had passed between its first reception,

he had much to say: the play's durability is now unquestioned; its popularity, and success unchallenged. He is no longer interested in refuting his critics.

He says: Some where in the world the play is performed every night. People are bemused, dismayed or, I hope, exhilarated by it and driven to laughter. There have been homosexual and black versions. The lesbian angel must surely be to come. Misogyny is attached to it for ever and the American – Freudian view of Jimmy and Cliff as lovers is still irresistible to academics and feminists alike. It is an old war-horse that has paid my rent for a lifetime and seems able to bear the burden of whatever caparism is placed upon its laden back.

The responses to the play, it seems were dictated by the dons of literature. People are guided in art and literature by the rules set for them by who, they consider have superior talent, intellect or scholarship. Bewildered by novelty stage they fail to comprehend their responses in absence of a standard gauge. Osborne read the same bewilderment in the First Night audience. "The First Night audience, if they were conscious, seemed transfixed by a tone of voice that was quite alien to them. They were ill at ease; they had no rules of conduct as to respond".

Mention must be made of the incident Osborne relates about the first-night production of his play 'The World of Paul Slickey'. He became, he says, "the only living playwright to have been pursued down the London Streets by an angry mob – Anyone reading the play now may well wonder what the fuss was all about. I can only refer them to my own account of the strange events and climate of the time, which led up to bizarre, rowdy and ugly event."

The incident, at once evokes the memory of the playboy riots after J.M. Synge's, 'The Playboy of the Western World' was played in Dublin more than half a century before 'Look Back in Anger'. The tone of the two writers is equally stubborn in their refutation of the public as well as critics.

Osborne was in spite of slight discomfort which the audience felt in the unexpected turn from the usual and expected, hailed as a sensational discovery. Gareth Lloyd Evans records in the Chief Chronicle of the fifties and sixties, John Russell Taylor was empyrean in his enthusiasm – for him Osborne "Started everything off". Only slightly less ecstatic is his view that the play was the first "type-image of The new-drama' (Modern British Dramatists 'Twentieth Century view – New Perspectives edited by John Russel Brown. Prentice Hall inc. 1984.

Summary and Critical Appreciation

Act I

The action of the play takes place in a one room flat in a large mid-land town. It is a fairly large attic room on the top of a large Victorian house. The room serves as the living room, bedroom and kitchen, household chores like ironing are done in the same room.

The room is occupied by Jimmy Porter, his wife Alison and a friend Cliff Lewis. They are all in the same age-group say about twenty-five. That they are not affluent is apparent from the ordinariness of the room, the furniture is simple and old, there are only three dining chairs instead of a set of four or six and the chairs are shabby.

It is springtime, the play opens on a Sunday in April, the time is early evening.

Jimmy and Cliff are buried in a heap of newspapers and weeklies, both of them are intently absorbed in them. Alison is busy ironing the clothes. An ironing board is in front of her a pile of clothes beside her. It is chilly. There is an atmosphere of stillness in the room, which is full of smoke.

It should be noted that Jimmy starts the very first dialogue in the play on a note of discontent. He creates fuss about the quality of book reviews and blames himself for wasting his Sundays on them. He comments on the quality of the book reviews, half of them are in French; more over much of what has been written is a repetition of what had been said earlier about a totally different novel. To his question whether Cliff feels ignorant after

reading them and receiving a positive 'no' as reply, he asks Alison, the same question. She does not pay much attention to Jimmy's question evading him by saying that she had not read the paper so far. Jimmy's sarcastic remarks about Cliff and Alison set the tone of the play. Jimmy is throughout disparaging, Cliff amiable and reconciliatory, Alison preferring to ignore and avoid argument.

Jimmy complains that Alison starts to sleep when he is talking. Cliff suggests that Jimmy not disturb Alison since she cannot think when he is talking, Jimmy replies that Alison hasn't had a thought in her head for years. Jimmy's question, 'does the white women's burden make it impossible to think?' is a dig at the British women at large and at Alison in particular.

The manner of speech and the behaviour of Jimmy and Cliff suggest their lower-class upbringing. There is sincerity and fondness in their attitude. Cliff does not mind Jimmy's calling him ignorant, a peasant, uneducated and a Welsh ruffian. Jimmy similarly does not mind being called the big horrible man. The familiarity with which they treat each other establishes Jimmy's affection and trust in Cliff, a very rare feeling from Jimmy. Though critical of Cliff he does not tear him to pieces the way he does Alison and many others including Alison's family.

Cliff's remarks about Jimmy are also more cutting than caustic and spoken in a light vein. He calls Jimmy a pig. He says to him 'you're like a sexual maniac—only with you it's food that you lust for. When Jimmy replies 'yes, yes, yes, I like to eat, I'd like to live to eat, his immediate response is most natural, 'Don't see any use in your eating at all. You never get any fatter.' Jimmy's reply is, 'people like me don't get fat—we just burn everything up'.

Jimmy continues to rail, he denounces the posh papers, the Bishop of Branley and the younger generation of girls all in one stroke. The girl who wants to know if her boyfriend will lose all respect for her if she gives him what he asks for is disgusting, she is to him a stupid bitch. Against the clergy, he has more than one grievance, the first that they are supporting the Christian world in the manufacture of the H- Bomb, the second against their hypocrisy. The Bishop wants to clarify his position in regard to the rich and the poor. He denies that he makes any distinction in classes and blames working classes for persistently and wickedly fostering this idea.

That neither Cliff nor Alison give much attention to these vitriolic speeches by Jimmy is obvious from their reaction. Cliff remains mostly unmoved by Jimmy's most scathing remarks, his only concern is to make Alison get the least effected. His gestures of friendliness show not only his fondness for Alison but also his anxiety to put a sort of safety valve on her growing impatience. Jimmy finds Cliff's acts of caressing sickening. He finds love sickening paradoxically he finds the lack of it devastating.

He wants Cliff and Alison to share in his utter frustration in things he declaims as debunk. He refers to the news about a lady having been badly wounded during a mass meeting of a certain American evangelist at Earl's Court. People's confession of love in theory is marked sharply against their practice of indifference and apathy. The example of the woman who went to the mass to declare herself for love and broke four ribs and got kicked in the head, is cited by Jimmy in order to get support for discrediting the Church where in their enthusiasm for the 'onward Christian soldier march, they became oblivious of the woman who kept yelling her head in agony.

Jimmy also suggests that probably all the stuff about the Bishop of Brombey, has been written by Alison's father under the assumed name of the Bishop. Cliff urges Alison not to take any notice of what Jimmy had said because Jimmy was deliberately trying to be offensive. Jimmy's aim is to evoke some response from his wife and Cliff, but they both remain indifferent, with the result that Jimmy gets frustrated. Ironically he says that there must be something wrong with him. His failure to elicit a response from both of them deepens his sense of isolation.

Jimmy's first piece of rhetoric comes soon afterwards. He finds the dull routine of Sundays so monotonous, the same papers, the same cups of tea, the same ironing of clothes. He gets impatient not only with his boredom but also the complacency with which Cliff and Alison accept it. He is impatient with the people around, he avoids going to the pictures on Sunday night fearing that his enjoyment will be ruined by the yobs in the front

row.

He wants Cliff and Alison to share his concern for what is happening around in the world or at least about what is happening in England. He misses in them his own ardor and avidity. He bursts into a tirade against lethargy of mind and lack of enthusiasm. None of the two have read Priestley's piece in the weekly that he gets. He resents their indifference, their dubious sloth. Nobody except him seems to be bothered.

It must be particularly noted that Jimmy feels as muffled under the weight of their passivity as they do under the weight of his supercilious and overbearing vigour. They are imperturbable, he susceptible to the slightest provocation.

He longs to feel really alive. He even suggests that they play a little game to revive the life force in them. He exclaims in utter helplessness the loss of feeling really alive and looks to Cliff and Alison for help. 'Let's pretend we are human— oh brother, its such a long time since I was with anyone who get enthusiastic about anything.'

Cliff now asks Jimmy what Mr. Priestley has said in the paper Jimmy, who is always looking for an excuse to target Alison's family immediately compares him to Alison's father. Priestley, like Colonel Redfern always keeps looking back to the Edwardian times the glory is lost but the Colonel persists to live in it. Please mark the use of the word 'comfortable' to describe Colonel's attitude.

The scene reveals another side of Jimmy. He is humane and tender when it comes to the people he loves. He notices the condition of Cliff's new trousers and snubs him for ruining the pair of new trousers he had spent so much money on. His question to Cliff, 'What do you think you are going to do when I'm not around to look after you?' is almost patronizing.

Cliff does not need any reassurance about Jimmy's feelings for him and turns to Alison who is emotionally a part of the trio.

Cliff's distaste for the smell of the pipe that Jimmy is going to smoke and Jimmy's denial of a cigarette to him evoke a mood of easy understanding rather than disapproval. Jimmy is only concerned about the ulcers Cliff is suffering from. He wishes to be treated with concern; he wishes to treat people the same way. His self-pity makes him a bore "I am sick of doing things for people and all for what?"

His personal grouse takes a much larger dimension. Again, suddenly and uncalled for, Jimmy thinks of listening to a musical programme by Vaughan Williams which Jimmy welcomes since it is truly English unlike the English cooking, which somebody said came from Paris, their politics from Moscow. They copied their morals from the Port-land, it was said. Jimmy does not forget to attack Cliff and Alison, forgetting the name of the person who said it, he taunts them by saying that there was no point asking them as they would have no clue to things like these. A long speech on the shrinking of the empire after the British departure from India shows Jimmy's regret at the glory that is now lost. The old Edwardian brigade of whom Colonel Redfern was a part is justified in missing the high summer, crisp linen, volumes of verse etc in India. The picture is glorious and tempting. What with the home made cakes and croquet, bright ideas and bright uniforms, an idyllic picture of life lived grandly, romantically. Jimmy understands that a part of the story was phony, yet the picture is so tempting that he who had never been a part of it becomes a compulsive mourner for the passing away of it.

He finds the American age 'pretty dreary', as he calls it and his fear is that the children in England will be Americans soon. The glorious past of imperial Britain is regretfully compared with the Americanized Britain of future times.

Jimmy talks incessantly. A compulsive talker, his thoughts run from one topic to another without a second's break. Feeling let down by Cliff's disinterest in his last 'thought', as Jimmy calls it, he kicks Cliff and asks him to make some tea for him.

His thoughts now wonder to Webster, a friend of Alison, who though he does not like Jimmy, is more acceptable to him. Webster has the 'bite, the edge, the drive' and gives to Jimmy what the others fails to give.

Alison makes a reference to Madeline, who she reminds Jimmy had the bite and the drive. When Cliff asks who Madeline was, Alison says with a kind of mockery that Madeline has been talked of so many times that Cliff should have remembered who she was. Cliff remarks that there were quite a few. Alison also asks Jimmy again, ironically whether he had an affair with her when he was thirteen or fourteen. Jimmy unabashedly says that he was eighteen and that Madeline was ten years older to him. Alison does not forget to add that Madeline was his mistress and that according to Jimmy he owed almost everything to her. Cliff calls him Marchbanks, reference to the names in literature as well as authors are scattered all over the play. Here, Cliff compares Jimmy with Marchbanks the young poet of Shaw's 'Candila' who is in love with her. Candila is married and older to Marchbanks.

Jimmy goes back to look for the time of the concert, he had been wanting to hear on the radio. Cliff's distaste for the kind of work they are doing particularly the sweet stall is obvious. Jimmy talks of the routine of going to the factory for the fresh stock and setting up the stall in the morning.

To the reader it should be obvious that Alison is not as unaffected and non-participating as the critics would have us believe. Though not as excited and exuberant as Jimmy, her words are measured, suggestive and meaningful.

Jimmy continues to talk of the sweet stall waiting for the concert, which is to start in five minutes time. Cliff rouses himself from lethargy to make some tea. But Alison has not forgotten Madeline, she resumes the topic inciting Jimmy to go on with Madeline's staggering curiosity about things and people. He reverts to the reverie of the time spent with Madeline. Every small thing became an adventure with her. Even sitting on the top of a bus with her was like 'sitting out with Ulysses'. Osborne, here uses Ulysses as a metaphor. Madeline was like Ulysses, the Greek hero of Homer's classic adventurous, living life to the full.

Cliff's absent-minded remarks stand in sharp contrast to the willful disinterest of Alison. They also provide relief from the tedium of Jimmy's talk. Cliff rebuffs Jimmy, comforts Alison and goes back to himself, only partially conscious of what Jimmy is talking about. Jimmy compares Webster to Emily Bronte, the well-known English novelist and teases Alison that it was surprising that she could get along with a man like Webster, who was worth something, suggesting that she was not worth much. Webster's merit and value lay in his guts and his sensibility, a rare combination.

Alison's appeal to Jimmy to give a break suggests that his persistent assiduous chatter is wearisome to her. Her earnestness and quickness do not suggest the submissiveness generally associated with her, her attitude is one of simple exasperation.

Jimmy's continued assault on Alison is irritating to the reader. He tries to provoke her and having failed exclaims that, she would not be provoked even if he dropped dead. But why does he want to provoke her. What reaction does he expect from her? He does not himself seem to know.

Jimmy now, diverts his attack to Alison's family. They were militant, arrogant and full of malice. Her brother Nigel was straight backed, chinless wonder from Sandhurst. Jimmy continues to rail at them, coining phrases and making the most odious comparisons. Jimmy calls Nigel a commonplace object from outer space. His acrimonious attack becomes almost cankerous towards the end. His rancour and resentment against the entire privileged class becomes evident in the passage. 'Nigel is sure to make it to the cabinet one day. The politicians have been plundering and looting everybody for generations'. That Nigel was difficult to define since he was so vague and that there was a very thin line between being vague and being invisible, that the invisible politicians are of no use even to their supporters. 'Nigel is most vague in his knowledge of life and human beings and deserves to be awarded some kind of decoration for it'. Jimmy's subtlety and felicity with words, which he uses with such negative force, is amazing. He says, Nigel is vague about everything his motives and ideas are vague, he is immune to the notion of right and wrong and not even the greatest injustice will move him, nothing will strike or pierce his conscience.

Jimmy continues to bombard the Englishman, who is too stupid and satisfied to think of change. During his long

speeches, Jimmy moves up and down lending rhythm to his speech and movement. He is angry at everything. He is angry with the socially upper class, he is angry with politicians, he is angry with the Englishman and he is angry at the system of education. The very fact that Nigel had received an education which had made him unfit for thought will help him secure a position better than anyone else.

Osborne describes Jimmy as a man who is not only angry but also bent upon drawing blood. Seeing that Alison is determined to maintain her brazen calm, he composes himself and carrying on his blabber unabated he hammers Alison and her family. Talking of Alison in the third person and ironically alluding to her parents as Mummy and daddy. 'Their manners are royal but they are under the skin as schemy as would not hesitate biting you under the groin the moment you turn your face.' For Alison and Nigel, Jimmy uses words like sycophantic, flattering parasites, phlegmatic, which stands for sluggish and pusillanimous which means lacking in firmness of mind.

Cliff has by now completely lost his cheerfulness and looks troubled. He asks Jimmy to turn the radio on since it is already the time for the concert.

Jimmy continues his non-sensical talk about pusillanimous, saying that Alison typifies the qualities of the word. He goes into one of his far-fetched comparisons again. The word pusillanimous, he says, sounds like a Roman word and pictures Alison going to watch games in Rome along with her husband Sextus. The nuisance caused by Jimmy becomes unbearable for Alison as well as Cliff.

Jimmy continues the simile of the games, with himself playing Sextus and Alison Pusillanimous. He transgresses into the world of Hollywood. If a film were to be made on him, the beefcake Christians would take off with his wife in the stereophonic sound before the picture is over. In one stroke he demolishes the Christians, the British actors and the Roman Empire. Sextus is unimpressive, the British actor suitable only to play unimpressive role like that, the Christians making away with pusillanimous and Pusey herself willing to go for an easier, brighter and more promising future. He calls Alison Pusey and suggests that both of them go into the Arena and feed themselves to the lions.

It is for the first time in the play that Alison feels the loss of her nerves and exclaims that unless Jimmy stopped she'll go out of her mind.

Jimmy remains unruffled. In his hunt for Alison he takes out the dictionary and reads out, emphasizing each word, the meaning of pusillanimous. As if not satisfied with this he refers to the origin of the word. A Latin word, he says, 'Pusillus' means 'very little', 'animus' mind. He again points at Alison calling her lady Pusillanimous, watching and waiting for her to break down. It seems as if Jimmy would succeed but Alison retains her composure.

Jimmy gives himself a short break to listen to the concert and the conversation between Cliff and Alison serves as a pleasant interlude. Cliff's trousers have been ironed, he wears them and Alison and he smoke cigarettes.

Jimmy's fuss about the noise Cliff is making by turning the pages of the newspaper and his reminder that he has spent his nine pence on it restores the atmosphere in which the play had started.

Jimmy's objection to Alison's ironing the clothes and his subsequently switching off the radio shows, as Alison rightly says, his childishness.

Jimmy does not like to be patronized, he hates sensitivity, he hates sentimentality. He hates indifference he hates attention. The speech that follows shows Jimmy's hidden hatred for women. Apart from Madeline and his friend's mother, of whom we shall learn later, he hates to live with them. Jimmy sounds like a misogynist, he finds women clumsy in their movements and wonders what would happen if the world had more women surgeons. He finds Alison clumsy the way she jumps on the bed, the way she draws the curtains back, even her dressing up when she for example is applying her make up or doing her hair. There are two simile's comparing a woman to the old Arab and another one comparing her to a surgeon operating on a patient. Jimmy's picture of a woman surgeon operating on a patient with his guts taken out and put back in the body just

like a puff in a powder-box suggest mockery and impatience of the woman's ways. Jimmy recounts one of his past experience to prove his point. He had a flat once, he says, just beneath the one occupied by two girls, the girls movements and actions were a kind of assault on his sensibilities. Even a simple visit to the lavatory sounded like a medieval siege. Jimmy suffers not only from class hatred and opposite sex hatred but also bears against them a strong ill will. He does not spare the use of, he himself admits, the most ingenious obscenities for the bastard girls as he calls them. The marriage is for him, in itself agonizing to the man. The two girls, he imagines, must be married by then, driving their husbands out of their minds. The slamming of doors, the stamping of high heels and banging of irons and saucepans add to the assault on the sensibilities of man.

Jimmy wants the world to tune itself to his fancies and whims. He had earlier expressed his unhappiness at the clouds appearing on the sky, now it is the ringing of the Church bells that disturbs him. He rushing to the window and asking for the bells to stop suggests the frenzy that is taking hold of him. His denial of everything leads to paroxysm of despair and disgruntlement.

Alison stops him from shouting but recovers herself in a moment. Jimmy's attitude towards Mrs. Drudery, who is mentioned by Alison for the first time is the same as for everybody else. She is their landlady, a robber according to Jimmy. She is a Church-goer too, which is not a recommendation as far as Jimmy is concerned.

Cliff's understanding of Alison and Jimmy is most near perfect. He closes the window and acts as if they are on the dance floor. Their jokes are lightly vulgar, Cliff asks him if he comes there, (imagining that they are at the dance floor) to which Jimmy naughtily replies, only in the mating season'. His warning that all Cliff's teeth will come out if he does not stop his tomfoolery is also in lighter vein.

There is a light irony in the question whether the bosoms will be in or out this year, it is a passing remark on the changing fashions of the times.

Jimmy's and Cliff's fights and physical assaults throw light on their relationship, which is one of deep affection and understanding. The tussle between Jimmy and Cliff is an everyday affair says Alison, it is distasteful to her, disgusting and vulgar may be, but she uses restraint describing the place as a zoo. Jimmy and Cliff after grappling with each other fall on the ground, bringing down the ironing board with them. Alison burns her arm with the hot iron. Alison, who has been controlling herself so far, can constraint herself no longer. Both the men apologize to her but she is difficult to appease. She asks both of them to get out. It is Jimmy only, however, who leaves and Cliff remains to tend her.

The relationship between Cliff and Alison is tender and effortless. That they have a deeper understanding between them than Jimmy and Alison enjoy becomes clear from the uncertainty of Jimmy after Alison is hurt. It is Cliff who nod, asking Jimmy to go. Cliff brings the soap and assures Alison that he will wash it gently without giving her pain.

Alison is on the breaking point, her gestures when Cliff goes to get the soap show her failing spirit. She can fight no longer, she seems to be telling herself. The front that she has been putting up ultimately seems to be collapsing. Feeling utterly defeated she tells Cliff, 'I don't feel very brave—I don't think I can take much more—I think I feel rather sick'.

The scene where Cliff and Alison are left alone is important to understand the feelings of both Cliff and Alison, towards each other and for Jimmy.

Cliff, a sensitive man lives on the assumption that he is a coarse and ordinary man, he would have others believe it too. His concern for Alison and Jimmy, his effort at disregarding Jimmy's behaviour and trying to bring things back to normal show a man whose emotions and suffering are much deeper than they seem to be. He embarks on the reason for his staying with Jimmy and Alison, 'one gets fond of people', he says, 'which unfortunately makes one dependent on them'. Alison is too tired of hearing about love. Her speech suggests two things, one, that both Jimmy and Alison have lost the spontaneity and verve of youth and two that they

have lost the naturalness so essential to sustain a relationship. Even an apology, a consolation, a word of love are difficult, nothing comes on impulse.

Cliff's sadness of the relationship between Jimmy and Alison is also expressed by him, his doubt as to how long he will be able to bear the recurring ugly scenes between the two confirms his feeling of uneasiness in living with them. What renders him helpless is his love for Jimmy and Alison.

Alison discloses to Cliff that she is pregnant. She expresses her own unhappiness about it. She does not want a child in their present condition and is also apprehensive about Jimmy's reaction. It is clear that they do not want a child, since they succeeded in avoiding it for three years after their marriage, says Alison.

Cliff asks her whether the pregnancy is in an advanced stage, she says, she guesses so. It is suggested that Alison would have got it aborted if it were possible but will have to bear it now.

Alison's fear of how Jimmy would react to the news make her cautious of her moves. He is suspicious of Alison's designs on him, he is vulnerable to the smallest thing that means commitment. One can perceive in Jimmy a kind of revulsion for confirmation and continuity. Stagnation to him means binding by laws that don't come to you naturally—feelings of compassion, ecstasy of music, good art, even physical energy are the things worth the salt. Their sexual life seems also inhibited by the fact that after making love with Alison, Jimmy feels hoaxed, cheated as if Alison was trying to ensnare him, kill him, make him her slave, her prey.

Jimmy's vary of a morality that lays restrictions on natural love, love on impulse. Alison tells Cliff that Jimmy and she never slept together before getting married. It was simply because they did not have much opportunity. Later when Jimmy realized that she was a virgin he taunted her. Jimmy's morality instead of being conventional is evolutionary in an idiosyncratic way. He felt, having been defiled, by an untouched woman. The compulsion with which he is out to bulldoze everything that comes from the upper classes, authority, morality, politics, Church, even marriage is indicative of the grievances and hatred he has against them, in his heart.

Cliff tells Alison that both he and Jimmy have common views about so many things since they both come from the working classes. Jimmy's hatred for the posh is evident from the fact that he hates some of his relatives who are better off. He likes Cliff and gets along with him because he's common.

Cliff and Alison have no guilt about their affection. They have therefore, no shame of it. Even after Jimmy enters the room, Cliff and Alison continue to have their arms around one another. Cliff has already asked her to disclose her pregnancy to Jimmy, assuring her that all will be well.

Jimmy is some-where unsure of himself. When Cliff says, that Alison is beautiful, he says that Cliff seems to think so. He also asks whether Cliff feels that Alison was more suited to him. Alison answers Cliff's remark that he was not her type, in very meaningful words, 'I'm not sure what my type is'.

Jimmy's aversion for excessive physical fondling and sexuality is brought out in his words, 'they look pretty silly slobbering over each other: their freedom with each other would be enough to scandalize Alison's parents. Every time Jimmy creates a scene, he tries to normalize things, to restore and reestablish himself.

Jimmy comments on Cliff becoming shorter and smaller everyday and calls him a mouse. Cliff readily welcomes this. Cliff dance happily like a mouse around the table. The old friendly atmosphere of their world is reestablished; Jimmy is the horrible 'old bear', Cliff the mouse, dancing the Mourris dance. Jimmy and Cliff resume their tomfoolery, Alison her affectionate way. Cliff is sent to get some cigarettes since Alison has run out of them and Jimmy and Alison are left together standing close to each other. We see a glimpse of Jimmy's other self, the loving Jimmy, which gives the reader a respite from the ongoing madness. He apologizes to Alison and breaks into a speech, which brings out his feelings for Alison, much deeper than one has perceived so far. He would not have her busy herself with the drab routine of ironing clothes and other household chores.

Jimmy is lonely and furious. He hates staleness and yet he fears losing people he is used to. 'The trouble is', he says, 'you get used to people'. 'Even the trivialities of people, you get used to, become indispensable to you'. He now wants to make love to Alison but will have to wait, since Cliff will come back any time. He wants to

know what Alison has been wanting to tell him but Alison is unable to do so. He talks of his school friends, recalling their names and mentions Hugh's mother, who to him, is special. She is let Jimmy buy her sweet stall and pay in his own time. She had as a matter of fact bought the shop for them only. It hurts Jimmy that Alison maintains her distance with Hugh's mom in spite of the old woman's fondness for her.

Alison feels alarmed at Jimmy's sudden change of mood. After his avowal of watching and wanting her every moment, his reversal to Hugh, Hugh's mother and Madeline is foreboding. Jimmy senses the growing anxiety of her mind and re-assures her by calling her a grey-eyed squirrel. He continues to call her by endearing names like, 'hoarding nut munching squirrel', she responds by calling him a 'jolly', 'super and marvelous bear'. The bestial sensuality has replaced the intellectual and emotional rancour.

Alison takes no time to get into the animal exhilaration of love. She starts jumping and taking out sounds like a squirrel. It is in this happy mood that Alison wants to tell Jimmy what she had been intending to say. But as in a drama, the dramatic turns must be contrived so as to keep the audience's interest intact. Cliff suddenly appears saying that he had not been able to go for the cigarettes at all. He was all this while with Mrs. Drudery, who hadn't gone to the Church. He tells Alison that there is a phone call for her and the news of Alison's pregnancy is postponed for another time. Jimmy is upset to hear the name of the caller since Helena Charles, a friend of Alison is his enemy, he says. He fears that Helena Charles' visit will disturb the atmosphere of the house further.

After Alison leaves to hear the phone call he falls into another unpleasant speech. He had had enough of women and sensual pleasure. He then goes on to speak of Andre Gide and then of Webster, adding that if a revolution ever comes, he would be the first to be shot with all the poor old liberals.

He alludes to the fact that Webster does not like him and sarcastically comments that Webster is not an exception since nobody seems to like him. Webster keeps thrusting his strawberry mark as if he was the only one with it. Jimmy has his own strawberry mark, he says, only it different from Webster's. The leftists would mistake Jimmy for a liberal if ever the revolution came and he would be killed along with the other liberals.

While talking he opens Alison's bags and sees her mothers letters in it. He resents the fact that his name is never mentioned in the letters. Jimmy admits that he has become mean but explains that that was the only way of knowing Alison's secrets. Cliff objects to his opening of Alison's bag. Jimmy replies unabashedly that to know whether or not Alison is betraying him, he not only opens her bag but also then searches the drawers, the bookcase, the trunks and what have you.

He takes out a letter from the bag, a letter from Alison's mother wherein he has not been mentioned at all. He bitterly says that his name is never mentioned in their letters by either Alison's mother or her because it is a 'dirty word' to both of them.

The return to the rancorous mood is complete. Helena is coming to stay but Alison would arrange for her the spare room that is vacant with Mrs. Drudery.

Jimmy's phrases like he will kick her in the face and that Helena should bring armour as she would need one, reveal the extreme hatred he has for her.

The last part of Act 1 is important in that it is here that we see Jimmy not only as a man who resents the treatment meted out to him, but as a man who has no control over his nerves. He tells Alison that she is living in a dream world and that she needs a tragedy of a great magnitude to happen to her to shake her out of her sleep. A tragedy like she having a child and then losing it, the tragedy will bring some expression on her expressionless face.

He describes how passionately Alison can make love and says that at such times, he is devoured by her as if he were a rabbit. The most offensive of Jimmy's speeches this establishes him as not only an 'angry man', an epithet usually used for him, but as a maniac, a sadist, whose perversity in inflicting pain becomes sacrilegious.

ACT II Scene (1)

The same room. Two weeks have passed since Helena arrived and she has already made herself at home. We see Helena for the first time though we had heard of her in Act 1. It is a hot evening and Alison and Helena are preparing the evening meal. Helena is almost the same age as Alison, carefully and expensively dressed. She has a personality, which draws attention and commands respect. She is seen helping Alison prepare the salad. Both the women are busy talking side by side.

Alison asks whether Helena has been able to adjust to which Helena replies that she feels comfortable working and reminds Alison that it is she who had done most of the cooking the previous week. She says that the only problem is fetching water from the bathroom on the lower floor since she is not used to a thing like that.

The fact that the system is rather primitive is agreed upon by the two. The conversation between Alison and Helena is of a casual manner. Alison tells Helena that Cliff manages most of his own jobs and even helps Alison with her household chores. Helena says that she has already knocked at Cliffs' door to call him for the meal. Jimmy is heard playing loudly at his trumpet, which as usual is upsetting Alison.

This scene brings out the relationship between Helena and Alison, the scene is also important to hear from Alison what her feelings about Cliff, Jimmy and her marriage are.

The sound of Jimmy's trumpet is disturbing to both the women. Alison says that one of these days, Mrs. Drury, the landlady is going to ask them to vacate because of this noise. She imagines the irritation it must be causing to the people and fears that they will soon start banging at their door, asking them to stop this menace.

Helena starts to analyse Jimmy's behaviour. Her first question, as expected, is whether Jimmy drank, to which Alison replies that he was not an addict if that is what Helena meant. Helena observes that 'Jimmy's hatred could be seen in his very eyes and that the magnitude of his hatred was bewildering and horrifying. He hated all, but Helena in particular', she says. It must be noted that Helena finds his anger horrifying but at the same time 'oddly exciting'. She had never seen 'such hatred in some one's eyes before' is what she tells Alison.

Alison offers, what to her seems to be the most apparent reason for Jimmy's frustration, the sweet stall that he runs. Jimmy had, while he was still a student, his own jazz band. Jimmy would, she says, like to start another jazz band and give up the sweet stall altogether.

Helena finds the relationship between Cliff and Alison slightly suspect; their behaviour is what would seem strange to most people. It does not confirm to the accepted standards. It is not normal and Helena seeks clarification from Alison about it.

Alison asks whether it is the hugging and embracing which she finds strange. Helena feels that there is something strange about them and has noticed Cliff restraining himself in her presence. To Helena's question whether it is something beyond affection, Alison replies that it is not a consuming passion, it is like the comfort that you get in a warm bed which is so relaxing and satisfying that you don't look for anything more exciting.

Jimmy's comfort and lack of anxiety about this relationship is difficult for Helena to understand. Alison tries to explain Jimmy's attitude towards their relationship as a part of his larger psyche. For Jimmy it is a question of allegiances, loyalty and devotion. Jimmy expects Alison to fully share not only his present and future but his past as well. Jimmy expects Alison not only to share his present but also to share the memories of his past, to then cherish the relationships he cherished. He is unhappy if Alison does not share his love and admiration of people. He expects Alison to identify herself with his suffering of the past, of his father's death and even share the memories of the women he loved in his early years.

Helena fails to comprehend the meaning and justification of what Jimmy demands of Alison. Alison has herself not been able to figure it out completely. Alison has failed to feel about things the way Jimmy does.

Cliff seems to have come by chance as a stroke of luck in their life. He is kind and lovable and Alison is genuinely fond of him, she says. He is so very unlike Hugh, a former friend of Jimmy in whose house they lived for some time after their marriage.

Jimmy had no money at that time, he had recently left the university and had no place to go. Alison also mentions that Jimmy went to a University, which was most ordinary, it looked most unimposing with an ordinary campus and rooms with white tiles. Everything that Alison describes proves that Jimmy came from a poor background, so did his friends. Hugh Tanner lived with his mother in a warehouse in Poplar and that is where Alison found herself on her wedding night. Alison's loss of hope and a sense of frustration are evident from her narration of those days. Hugh and Alison had taken a dislike for each other on the first sight. Jimmy wanted Alison to have a most wonderful relationship with his friends. Alison's discomfort with the class of people she had come to live with comes out in words like 'three of us tried to get tight in some cheap port they'd brought in'. There is even a kind of remorse in her at having burnt her boats and having being cut off from the people she'd always known, her family and her friends. Alison felt trapped unable to return to her parents whom she had bitterly opposed. She had nowhere to go. Her brother, Nigel was busy for the coming elections since he was contesting for membership to the Parliament, he didn't have time to think of anyone at that time. Though, if approached he would surely have been kind to her, she never went to him.

There are things in the play, which don't seem too plausible. Alison did not inform her brother of the trouble she was in, she did not go to Helena since she was away on tour for a play, look less than probable reasons for either Helena or Nigel not having been approached.

Alison describes the days at Poplar as a nightmare. She recalls that those days were full of horror, Jimmy and Hugh were so ruthless: Hugh subtly insulting and sarcastic, Jimmy steadily depressed; they were a savage team. She was made to feel stupid, she was snobbish and squeamish, she was told. She felt as if she had been dropped in a jungle. Hugh's character can be guessed from what Alison says of him, 'he takes the first prize for ruthlessness- from all corners. They both seemed to regard Alison as a hostage from those sections of the society they had declared war on. They were together frightening to Alison; they started another campaign to avenge themselves on Alison's family. . They would invite themselves to Alison's family, friends, the people her parents knew and their relatives. They went everywhere uninvited to the Arksdens, to the Tarnatts, for cocktails, parties and entertainment. Living in Poplars, SW, SW 3 and other posh localities were for them the enemy territory. Jimmy and Hugh felt happy at plundering them of their drinks, food and cigars. The people they visited did not disallow them, they were in the first place too decent for it, and secondly afraid they would hurt Alison if they objected.

Hugh was the worst of the two. He even black mailed a friend of Redfern's by giving him the story that they were being turned out of the flat they were occupying for non-payment of rent. They were such men that people would have given anything to get rid of them.

Alison had no money to sustain them since her mother had got all the shares transferred in her name before Alison got married. For want of money and for revenge, the guerrilla-warfare, which Jimmy and Hugh had waged against Alison's class, continued unabated.

Helena is surprised that Alison had not tried to put a stop to it, neither opposed them nor voiced her anger. As a matter of fact, she asks, why did Alison marry Jimmy in the first place? Alison has no precise reason for it. She describes the circumstances in which she met Jimmy. Her parents, she says, had come back from India. Col. Redfern had become uncertain and irritable; Mrs. Redfern had little understanding to confide in. Alison was only twenty-one. She met Jimmy at a party. He was the odd man out, with a bicycle, looking different from all the others in the party. He had oil all over his dinner jacket. He looked a creature from a different world; the men looked at him with distrust, the women with contempt. Alison's narration of the past in this scene is the vantage point from which Alison's feelings and attitude towards Jimmy can be studied fully. Alison continues to describe how she was charmed by Jimmy It was a lovely day and Jimmy had been in the sun. What

attracted Alison towards Jimmy was the fire in him. Everything about him seemed to burn his face; the edges of his hair glistened and seemed to spring from his head, and his eyes were so blue and full of the sun. He looked so young and frail in spite of the tired line of his mouth.

Alison knew her limitations but she had no choice. She was in love and whether he was in love or not he was determined to marry Alison simply because her people were outraged at Alison's choice. Jimmy wanted to prove his victory in the teeth of opposition.

Everything seemed so romantic to Alison, Jimmy was to her like a chivalrous knight rescuing the damsel in distress. Alison continues to recount incidents that occurred in the past. Nigel's meetings were sometimes disturbed by Hugh and his companions. Alison then describes the circumstances under which Hugh left England. Hugh had been writing a novel. He suddenly made up his mind to go and try some other country. England was no longer a place to stay, he said. Alison's reference to China or some other God-forsaken place suggests her hidden contempt for these countries of the East, which she considered 'God-forsaken'. Hugh felt that the conditions in England had been rendered hopeless by people like Alison's family. He sarcastically called Alison's family, 'Dame Alison's mole'. Jimmy disapproved of Hugh's idea of leaving his country as well as leaving his mother alone. Jimmy considered it shirking from responsibility. The friends fought bitterly over the issue till ultimately Hugh left. Alison's remarks like 'I almost wished they'd both go and leave me behind', are enough to indicate the extent of her frustration.

Alison continues to narrate the past to Helena. Alison and Jimmy came to their present flat after Hugh left. Hugh's mother seemed to be blaming Alison for Hugh's departure. Alison tells Helena that she has nothing against Mrs. Hugh. She is a kind lady, sweet and ignorant to Alison, adorable to Jimmy. Jimmy's admiration for Hugh's mother is partly because she has always been poor. Poverty to Jimmy is something, which deserves attention and admiration. Poverty to him it seems is a quality, a virtue, not a state.

Helena advises Alison to make up her mind finally about Jimmy. She says she that since she is pregnant she has to worry not only about her life but about the life of her future child.

Alison again makes remarks, which show how closed, uncommunicative and stifling her relationship with Jimmy has become. 'I'm so tired. I dread him coming into the room'. The pity is that she loves Jimmy in spite of everything and has never wanted any other man in her life. Alison tells Helena and assures her that the child she is carrying is Jimmy's only. Helena says that things should be set in order. Either Jimmy should learn to take responsibility or Alison should quit, what to Helena is a 'madhouse', a menagerie, a wild place inhabited by animals like Jimmy.

Alison now shows Helena a bear and a squirrel, the bear, she says, is Jimmy, the squirrel she and then they both play a game, 'bears and squirrels, squirrels and bears'.

Helena looks bewildered and remarks that Jimmy may be mad for doing such things. Alison tells her, how after Hugh's departure, Jimmy and Alison had resorted to this game. Bitterly lonely and having little rapport, they retreated into the animal world; they played like animals with one another, made love like animals: 'they became furry creatures with little brains'. This was something that gave them a short lease of life, she recoils from the thought of living like mere animals but adds that bereft of that animal spirit, they have nothing to live on. Helena again urges Alison to make up her mind as if she lived with Jimmy, she would go mad.

The conversation between Alison and Helena is interrupted by the entrance of Cliff. In his usual light mood, he asks Helena if the tea is ready. He calls out to Jimmy asking him to stop his bloody noise. Cliff asks Helena and Alison if they were going to the pictures, he is surprised to hear that they were going to the church instead. To Helena's question whether he would like to accompany them, he replies, that he would like to read the papers since he had not been able to do so in the morning.

Jimmy's remarks about the newspapers and his love for music expose his hatred for Alison and Helena. Jimmy lets out his hatred, by his insolent and brutal attack on the two women, he spares Cliff, ensuring at the same time that Cliff remained his ally, not theirs. Jimmy makes uncalled for remarks to instigate Helena and Alison,

'Cliff likes music, all right, only the women don't and those who don't like jazz, have no feeling for music or people', he concludes. Helena snubs him calling his remark rubbish.

With no controversial topic to pick on, Jimmy again reverts to the lack of care in handling newspapers in the house. His focus now shifts to Cliff. He comments on the lack of intellect and curiosity in him, denounces him as 'Welsh trash' and asks him 'what are you?' 'what are you?', here does not signify doubt in Jimmy's mind about Cliff's worth, it is simply his way of dealing with him. If Cliff is nothing then he should be the Prime Minister, Jimmy's target shifts; it is not Cliff but the Prime Minister he seems to denounce now.

Jimmy's tirade against Alison and her class continue while they are having their meal. They, the people where Alison belongs are all very spiritual, so refined in taste that they discuss matters of sex as if it were the 'Art of Fugue'. Picking up and keeping the continuity of the argument in musical tones, he passes adverse comments like the following on Alison without any provocation. 'She is sweet and sticky outside while messy and disgusting if you see deeper.

Cliff is like Alison, Jimmy says, he is always keen to please and to appease. Jimmy warns him that he will end up being like Alison and others of her class, black-hearted, evil minded and vicious if he continued to live like them. Alison does not react even once against the mad ravings of Jimmy, she seems to have insulated herself against them.

Jimmy says that he had composed a new song. Talking to the ladies by turn he asks Helena if she would help him give a religious angle to the song since that is bound to make the song more popular. Jimmy recites the lyric, which deals with booze and whoring. Sick of sex and being constricted by women, he would prefer booze, which is at least pure, celibate.

Jimmy repeats his weariness with sex, revealing in him a kind of revulsion for the physical. Jimmy is tiresome in his repetition but he must make his point. After sex, it is religion that becomes his target. For his denunciation of religion he chooses Helena as his special listener. He tells her that the other poem he had written has the religious strain of Dante and Eliot; the religious element, he adds sarcastically should particularly appeal to Helena.

The title of the poem is the Cess Pool and Jimmy is the stone trapped in the pool of filthy water. Cliff's derogatory remarks about Jimmy bear no ill will against him, nor do Jimmy's remarks bear any malice for Cliff.

Helena asks Jimmy why he tries to be so unpleasant, to which Jimmy replies that he is happy to incite Helena, to instigate her into entering into an argument. Helena's remark that Jimmy is very offensive makes him still happier and he roars with laughter at having won the battle.

Jimmy's curiosity about where Alison was going with Helena, betrays his sense of insecurity. Though domineering in his treatment of others, the fear that his authority would be challenged is always lurking in his mind.

He tries to instil a fear in Helena as he had done earlier in the case of Alison. The pride, which he tries to flaunt, and the arrogance that he displays is only skin-deep. He is desperate to know where Alison is going with Helena. He tries to hide his fear of Helena usurping his authority over Alison by calling Helena's company an affliction. It is Helena, more of a match to Jimmy who makes a confident reply, telling him that they were going to the Church. Jimmy is for once beaten at his own game.

He accuses Helena of trying to win Alison over and accuses Alison of being so feeble. He reverts to the old story of what all he had endured to marry Alison. Alison's outburst that yes Jimmy had rescued her from the clutches of her family shows her contempt for Jimmy's claim. To her taunt that he was like a knight who had carried her off on his white charger, he replies in a voice that is calculated and calm. He lends to the entire episode a touch of parody, a mock-heroic by describing her mother as the off white charger, their house as a castle and her family's war against Jimmy as a holy crusade. Mummy, Jimmy says bitterly was prepared to use any weapon to shield her daughter, she could resort to cheating, bullying, lying and blackmailing.

Jimmy makes another odious comparison between Alison's mother and a female rhinoceros in labour. Alison's mother would be so dreadful and disgusting to the male rhinoceros that they would pledge themselves to celibacy.

In Jimmy's long speech, Alison's mother is the object of hatred and attack. Alison's mother, he says, looked over fed and flabby on the outside, inside she was all armour plated, ever ready to strike. She was rough as a night in a Bombay brothel and tough as a paired animal's arse. His hatred amounts to the wish that he kill her, annihilate her. He sits on the cistern saying that Alison's mother may be hiding in it and listening to them and beats it with bango drums.

Jimmy's hatred for Alison's mother is a reaction to her contempt for him. She hated his long hair, she considered him a ruffian, she found him unfit for her daughter and would do anything to save her from him. She would not mind resorting to any measure, intrigue, even conspiracy to ruin Jimmy's reputation, puncture his guts and get him going. She wanted to ruin Jimmy's reputation so that discredited and despoiled he would flee the field, leaving Alison free.

Cliff is throughout trying to control Jimmy good-humouredly. Jimmy continues to pour profanation not only on Alison's family but against Helena as well. Helena is the sin-jobbler who would take Alison to the Church to supplicate herself to worship and to pray for forgiveness. Helena tries to stop Jimmy but he continues in an even more menacing tone. Alison's mother was a bitch and should be dead. He challenges Alison to rise in her mothers' defence. Cliff, alarmed by Jimmy's tone and apprehending the worst, tries to stop him but is savagely pushed back. Jimmy continues to spit venom against Mrs. Redfern. After she is dead, the worms who eat her body will suffer from stomach ache. Her body is so poisonous that even the worms will need laxatives to cure themselves of the mal-nutrition. 'From purgatives to purgatory', the phrase used by Osborne is effective for its alliteration as well as its meaning. From cleansing of the body to the cleansing of the soul is purgatory.

He incites Alison to react but Alison, to his dismay, will not. He insults her, he mocks her by statements at once witty and surprising by their paradox. She would, he says, react if someone insulted him, by springing into one of the moods of lethargy and saying nothing. To Jimmy, Alison can rise to an occasion by merely not rising to it. She can neither be lifted nor pushed down from her level. It is her static position that exasperates him. She remains unruffled even by the most deadly provocation.

Helena is the only one who does not withhold her contempt and loathing for Jimmy, but Jimmy goes on undeterred. He shall he says, write a book one-day. The book that he will write with his blood will be all 'fire and blood'. His book will have no thoughts of comfort and tranquility; he shall not go picking daffodils with Annie Wordsworth. He will write about the flames a mile high, the most unwordsworthian of all poems.

Helena tries to be reason out with Jimmy, for a change. It is Alison who remarks that she better not take Jimmy's suffering away from him, he'd be lost without it. The remark is very meaningful since Jimmy according to her is sustaining himself only on his bitterness against the world, he thrives on the grievances he nurtures in his heart, his anger and hatred are his blood, he breathes them, he feeds on them, he lives on them.

Jimmy is for a moment surprised by this subtle attack by Alison but decides to continue his war. Jimmy feels more and more threatened by Helena's presence and asks her why she had not left even a week after her play was over. He accuses her of hatching a plot against him, to which Helena smartly replies that there was enough of villainy already (meaning in him) for them to think of furthering it by conspiracy. He then asks Alison why she is letting herself be influenced by Helena. Alison shows her displeasure for being questioned for everything small but Jimmy does not give up.

Jimmy says, and this speech is mostly for Alison's consumption, that they had in the past never gone to Church. The last time they had gone to a Church was when they got married. He remembers his marriage with a kind of scorn, scorn for the lust of marriage, which involves physical abandonment and indulgence. Jimmy and Alison had decided for a wedding in the Church, since the Registrar was a close friend of Col Redfern. They wanted to keep it a secret for fear of Alison's parents. When Jimmy and Alison went to the Church, they found

to their surprise that Alison's parents were already there. Jimmy's words like 'execution' and 'lusting for marriage' again reveal his disgust for the carnal, his anguish at having surrendered to the lust of the body, continuing his metaphor of the female rhino he describes how Alison's mother sat in the Church. Alison's father was upright and unafraid; he was still living in the hey-days of British glory, imagining himself still in India. Jimmy recalls that there were only four of them in the Church, he, Alison and her parents.

Jimmy continues to incite Helena. He calls her a cow, a sacred cow, a saint in Dior's clothing, alluding to what she was and what she would have people to believe.

Cliff reprimands Jimmy for going too far but Helena pays no heed. Jimmy accuses Cliff of going over to Helena's side, the side of Christianity, to the Church, which are as commercial in their dealings as any other business house: they promise you reward in heaven for your good deeds on earth, penalty for the sins you have committed. They are the share brokers who make promises of gain in heaven for your investments in spiritual matters here on earth.

Jimmy continues to impugn the Church for merchandising and trafficking in souls. He says, the Directors of religion with their new skills in management always ensure that the dividends are good; they also have the knack of approaching the right people, those who are vulnerable and can easily be taken in. The method adopted by these religious propagandists is simple, go back to the old times, paradoxically their only way to progress is by a return to the past. They romanticize their spirits, they close themselves in the small hermitage of their hearts and become oblivious to the problems around them. Helena is such a person. Like many others, the only place where she can see light, is the Dark Ages. She is ecstatic in her solitude, confessing and absolving herself of all guilt privately. She is not interested in what is being explored and created, she likes to cut herself off from the modern conveniences that man has discovered and invented. She does not like to meddle with the problems that the world faces either.

Helena maintains her calm throughout the speech. She puts Jimmy in place by saying that had he been within her reach she would have slapped him. When Jimmy moves towards her, she repeats that if gets any closer she will slap him. Jimmy retorts by saying that he can slap Helena back without a moment's thought. He had neither the public school education nor the scruples of a gentleman to stop him, he would not hesitate striking her and lay her down.

Helena's simple reply that she does not fancy any such notions about Jimmy since she knows his class as well as his manners, serves to rebuff as well as insult him.

Jimmy explains that he does not wish to be threatened by any women, for he would not take from her without giving back to her. Retaliation will come naturally to him but he prefers to avoid violence, since he hates it.

Jimmy asks Helena again whether she had ever watched anybody die. He recounts the death of his own father who came back from the war in Spain and died after suffering for a year. His reference to the God-fearing men who had rendered him unfit to live for long is a painful reflection on the violence and pain inflicted by man on man on the pretext of patriotism and principles. Jimmy was at that time only ten years old and his father's suffering and alienation bereaved him. Jimmy's mother hardly cared for him, she saw him as a man who allied himself with the wrong side. She was all for minorities provided they were a smart and fashionable minority. The family did not fail in its duty by way of money or provision but the care that one longs for was missing. Only Jimmy cared, the others it seemed, waited for him to die. The father did not want to create any vulgar fuss but he shared with Jimmy, things, which he could hardly understand, at that age. The sad outpourings of his father's heart made Jimmy sad and brought tears to his eyes. Jimmy recalled the bitterness and despair of the dying man and his sweet sickly smell.

Jimmy knew what it was to be angry and helpless at the age of ten, he had become a veteran in suffering. Whereas Helena was still a virgin as far as death and suffering were concerned, she had experienced neither.

Jimmy's speech does not leave much impression on Helena whose immediate remark that it was time they went, is very matter of fact in tone.

Jimmy cannot bear to be defeated at anyone's hands. Losing his bravado in the face of defeat at Helena hands, he appeals to Alison to save him. His words to Alison that it does not matter to her what people do to him again reveal the weaker side of Jimmy's personality. He would expect Alison to stand by him, to refute and fight Helena for the sake of his prestige. He abuses Alison for letting Helena do this to him.

Alison is not moved by either Jimmy's appeal or anger. She changes into a new dress and is ready to go. However, she is so upset that she feels giddy and leans against a wall for support. All she wants is a little peace, she says. But Jimmy's complaints are perpetual refusing to offer even a minute of respite to Alison. He complains that people do not understand him, they either pity him or denounce him, his grudge is that Alison's treatment of him is the most painful, to him she is indifferent to his suffering. When his heart is full or he is sick with rage, she simply keeps herself clear of him, unconcerned and undisturbed she even goes off to sleep.

Jimmy's self-searching speech makes him slightly pitiable indeed. Who is to blame, who is mean and stupid, who is the tyrant, he or Alison, he asks himself. He resorts to self-pity to relieve himself of the utter rage and desolation that have overtaken him. Alison's rejection of him in the act of wearing her shoes and going to the Church signify to Jimmy a loss of power, the loss of his power as a man. He compares himself in the futility of his words to a hysterical girl.

His helplessness at Alison's treatment of him infuriates him even further. He now falls to the level of cursing Alison. He wishes that Alison may one day suffer and that he may be able to gloat in her suffering. He would, then stand in her tears and rejoice in them, dance in them, splash in them. Defeated and beaten Jimmy feels out bargained by Alison and Helena. He wants Alison to suffer, fall and be subdued, that is what can satisfy him, he wants nothing more.

It is in this mood that Jimmy goes to hear the phone call for him. Helena's hatred for Jimmy comes out in her words, 'I want to claw his hair out by the roots' etc. She is more concerned about Alison's pregnancy and the child and blames Jimmy for upsetting Alison in her present state.

Cliff's long speech, the first out of the two or three that he has in the entire play, makes us familiar with the situation between Jimmy and Alison from his point of view. He calls their house a battlefield, a narrow strip of plain hell and tells Helena that he has played a role in keeping Jimmy and Alison together. Alison and Jimmy would have broken of long back but for Cliff, who has served, he says, as a no man's land between the two. He makes a statement of his love for both Jimmy and Alison, about the atmosphere in the house, he says, brawling and excitement are a part of life and he doesn't mind being in the thick of it. Cliff adds sadly that he pities himself and others in the house for the situation they are in. Helena discloses that she has sent a telegram to Alison's father to come and take her home. Alison's simple yes to Helena's disclosure that she had sent a telegram and that Alison should go back to her parents shows that she has no power to resist or oppose anyone, she agrees to go with her father without even asking one question to Helena. She does not even mind Helena having called her father without consulting her. Jimmy comes back after taking the phone call. It was from a hospital, where Hugh's mother had been admitted after a stroke. She was dying he says. By the manner of his speech, it is obvious that he expects Alison to go with him. He falls into one of his sentimental speeches reminiscing their days with the Tanner's.

Mrs. Hugh had seen Alison's photograph after their marriage. She was charmed by Alison's beauty. Jimmy remembers the genuineness with which she had exclaimed, 'Alison was pure gold, she was priceless.' Jimmy again expresses his sense of loneliness while asking Alison if she could come with him and looks baffled when she walks away. In utter disbelief he picks up the bear and throws it down stage. The groaning and rattling of the bear are symbolic of Jimmy's own feelings at that time.

ACT II (Scene II)

Scene 2 is important for two reasons. The first that we meet Colonel Redfern, who arrives in response to Helena's telegram and second because Alison walks out on Jimmy. Unexpectedly Helena stays back.

The Colonel is described as a large handsome man, his basic goodness is proved by the fact that he is sad for Alison, disturbed by the turn of events rather than being happy as his wife would be, perhaps in case she were present.

In the course of his conversation with Alison the Colonel says that he has failed to understand the situation, he says that Jim speaks a language different from any one of them. Alison tells him that Jimmy was away to meet Mrs. Tanner the mother of Hugh Tanner, a friend of Jimmy. She had suddenly taken ill and Jimmy had left for London immediately. Since the Colonel has only a vague idea about Hugh and his mother, Alison tells him that she was the same person who had helped Jimmy set up the sweet stall. To her father's question whether she was in any way like her son, Alison says that she was nothing like her son. The question is indicative of the impression that the Redferns had of Hugh, it also confirms that Hugh was obnoxious to their family. Alison describes Hugh's mother as very ordinary. She was a charwoman who had married an actor. She had worked hard throughout her life to support her husband and son. Her ordinariness was what Jimmy admired, since ordinariness to him was the tag of the working class.

She tells her father that Cliff is managing the stall in Jimmy's absence. The Colonel expresses surprise at the fact that an educated man like Jimmy who was clever in his own way has found nothing better to do.

It is also disclosed during the conversation that Alison had not shared with her parents the conditions in which she had been living.

She tells her father that Jimmy thought that it was a great treason on the part of Alison to be writing to her parents. The question of what she wrote was of no consequence, when to Jimmy corresponding with them was betrayal in itself.

Colonel Redfern admits that they were to some extent responsible for igniting the fire of revenge and hatred in Jimmy's heart. He remembers with regret how hostile Alison's mother had become towards Jimmy. He hadn't been able to stop it but the inquiries about Jimmy, the detectives they had hired, the accusations, the insults they had hurled at Jimmy were horrifying. He re-affirms his disapproval of Jimmy as a match for Alison but the way things were handled was undignified.

Colonel Redfern's views which strike Jimmy as more balanced than most other characters in the play are revealed in his speech was honest in his dealings per se, Alison's mother was justified in her anxiety to protect her daughter. But the method adopted was undesirable. Redfern blames Alison and himself for letting the situation take an ugly turn. They never put their foot down, never fought them back refusing to disturb their position which was by comparison more comfortable. They, Alison and her father were alike in the sense that they avoided anything that disturbed their peace and were in that sense responsible for what happened. He then suggests that Alison should not have written letters to them when she knew that it infuriated Jimmy and hurt his sense of pride. Both the father and daughter find the situation awkward, Alison continues to tell Colonel Redfern what Jimmy said about Mrs. Redfern. She reproduces the very words used by Jimmy without reservation. She says that Jimmy's feelings about Colonel Redfern are not so hard. He just talks of him more humorously, portraying him as a 'plant left over from the Edwardian wilderness', that can't understand why the sun isn't shining anymore. The phrase suggests the ludicrousness and absurdity of the man, but not the hatred, which every word that Jimmy says about Alison's mother, conveys.

To her father's desperate question as to why did she have to meet Jimmy at all, she appeals that the question was meaningless as she had paid for it by suffering for four years. She is scared of any argument and logic since nothing can reverse what has already happened. Alison renders different reasons for Jimmy's determination to marry Alison. It may have been revenge, revenge with the class he hated. The reader would remember that Alison had in the earlier scene said the same thing to Helena. Jimmy and his friends felt that

Alison was the hostage they had taken to settle their score with her class. Alison feels that Jimmy takes himself to be P. B. Shelley, the poet and wonders why Alison is not Mary, the woman Shelley loved and why was Colonel Redfern not the villain Godwin. Jimmy weighs himself as well as others in his own scale, he measures himself to be a genius for love and friendship, the others lacking in both. Jimmy has his own set of values and would not accommodate any other idea. She calls Jimmy, 'a spiritual barbarian, meaning, the man who has his own scruples and conscience but guards them unscrupulously, without any restraint or without any civilized code of conduct. He throws the challenge at Alison's face, challenging the righteousness of her class. Her situation is so complex that it is difficult to understand it.

Colonel Redfern acknowledges Jimmy's mastery over words and turn of phrase. He tells Alison that she had learnt a good deal from Jimmy whether she realized it or not. The Colonel is unable to understand the mind of the younger people. He says that he always believed that people marry because they are in love but love seems, no longer to be a sufficiently a valid reason for people to marry. He does not understand what a man woman relationship has to do with challenges and revenge. The Colonel wonders why his own daughter of all the people should have got trapped in a marriage where revenge and anger had taken the place of love, when she herself had admitted that not all marriages even of the younger generation were as hard as hers.

Colonel's long speech explains why he feels like an 'old plant left over from the Edwardian Wilderness'. He says that Jimmy is justified in calling him that. The Colonel's reminiscences of his days in India, when the sun was shining on the British Empire are full of nostalgia. He recollects the long years he spent in India from 1914 to 1947. He as the Commander-in-chief of a Maharaja in India had enjoyed a position and prestige, which was difficult to forget. He remembers the long cool evenings in the hills, all purple and golden, the faith of the British people in their Empirical power was so strong that they never thought that it could come to an end. When he had to leave India in 1947 he knew that all was over for them. When the train left the dirty and suffocating station, he knew that the end of a golden period in his own life not only but also the Golden era of the British Empire had come to an end.

He had loved his life in India, which now seems like a dream that had ended. The Colonel had lost the world that he loved and the England he came back to was a disappointment too. The England of 1914 when he had left for India was hardly recognizable. The country had totally changed. He felt sorry but tried to live in the England of the past.

Alison tells her father that it is difficult to comprehend and define the situation; it was strange that the Colonel thought that things had changed so drastically whereas Jimmy is sad that nothing had changed or was changing.

Alison has by this time packed her things, she picks up the bear and is about to put it in the suitcase when she suddenly decides to leave it behind. Alison lingers for a moment, trying to make up her mind. Suddenly she leans against her father and begins to weep softly. The Colonel asks Alison to give a second thought to her decision of leaving Jimmy and going back to her family.

Just at this point, Helena enters the room, she asks Alison if she needed any help and whether she had packed everything. Alison replies that she had managed to pack most of the things but if anything was left behind, Cliff could send it later. Her remark that Cliff should have returned by now shows that she is unconsciously waiting for him. It is after the Colonel is ready to take the suitcases down to the car that Helena tells him that she would not be leaving with them. This comes as a surprise to Alison, it also comes as a surprise to the reader. The reason that she gives about her appointment for a role is not entirely convincing. Helena's staying back in Alison's house after she has left, with a man whom she abhors, is difficult to understand.

Cliff who has by now come back also finds Helena's staying back aberrant, unaccountable. He is polite and gentle to the Colonel as the Colonel is to both him and Helena. The Colonel bids them good-bye and asks Alison not to delay the departure since her mother would worry if they don't reach in time.

Helena taking the responsibility about telling Jimmy that Alison has left also shows her presumptuousness, she seems to believe that she has the right to decide things for others as also act on their behalf. It is with amazing ease that she takes over the household chores of Alison.

Cliff wants Alison to consider her decision again. He also feels that it would be more fitting if Alison told Jimmy before her leaving. When Alison hands over her letter to him he simply says that it was a conventional way of doing things to which Alison replies that she was a conventional girl. Alison's concern for Jimmy and her confidence in Cliff come out in her words, 'Look after him'.

Cliff feels that Helena is responsible for the break between Alison and Jimmy. He doesn't like Helena staying back and refuses the cup of tea she offers to make for him. His irritation with Helena is an indication of his doubt about her honesty. When Helena tries to cajole him into talking about Jimmy's involvement with his old woman friends, his replies are rude. When Helena asks him if there were any chances of Jimmy going back to Madeline, he loses his cool and says that it was not probable since Madeline was old enough to be Jimmy's mother. Cliff's exasperation is visible in his reply 'why the hell should I know'. We see Cliff unhappy and angry for the first time in the play. But Helena's excessive firmness verging on stubbornness is unwelcome to Cliff, even the reader feels disturbed by her obstinacy and stubbornness.

Cliff is ready to leave the room, he finds not only Helena's company unsavoury but also the task of giving Alison's letter to Jimmy painful. His exit, leaving the letter with Helena shows that he has doubts about Helena's honesty. He would not like to see Jimmy hurt. His sorrow about the situation is so deep that his attempts to hide it in humour fail miserably. He tells Helena that he would like to have a good meal and few drinks before witnessing Jimmy suffer. His words, 'he's all yours', reveal how deeply he felt for both Jimmy and Alison, Cliff can already see that Helena is going to take Alison's place. Cliff's hatred of Helena comes out in words, which sound vulgar when spoken by Cliff. He wishes that Jimmy should ram the letter up her nostrils.

Jimmy walks into the room to find Helena sitting on the bed, with her head back on the pillow, holding the toy bear. She looks at him. Jimmy is almost giddy with anger and has to steady himself on the chair. He has just seen Colonel Redfern drive away with his daughter. 'The old bastard nearly ran me down in his car,' says Jimmy. Unable to fully grasp the situation he wonders why Cliff had avoided him in the street, he had pretended as if he had not seen him. Jimmy's disbelief on reading Alison's letter shows how he had disregarded even to himself any doubts about her. He had believed foolishly that Alison could never desert him. Her words that she always would have a deep love for him further infuriate him. Alison's words of love and concern don't ring true to him, he expected her to express her true feelings of hatred for him and curse him rather than cover her hatred by the humbug of civilized words. He finds the whole thing phoney and disgusting, then realizing that he has been letting himself over to Helena, he checks himself. He asks Helena to clear out from there. But Helena knows how to handle Jimmy, she knows where and when to strike. She immediately tells Jimmy that Alison was pregnant and asks him cunningly if that meant anything to him.

Jimmy is surprised, but he holds his ground for the next round with her. He assures her that the news had not filled him with remorse as she had expected. He says that he didn't care if Alison was going to have a baby, he didn't care even if the child had two heads. He then starts telling about the death of Hugh's mother, in the vein very similar to the one he had used to describe his father's death. He accuses Alison of being callous and unfeeling towards Mrs. Tanner. Alison was like the people of her class indifferent to the suffering of the people who were ordinary and poor. To her class they were insignificant.

Jimmy asks Helena to leave since her performance was over. He calls her 'evil-minded little virgin'. The scene closes with Helena slapping Jimmy and kissing him passionately and drawing him beside her.

Act III

Several months have passed since Alison left. The scene takes place in the same room on a Sunday evening. Helena is seen ironing the clothes on the ironing board; Jimmy and Cliff are busy reading the papers. The furniture is the same. Jimmy and Cliff are stretched in their respective armchairs; only Alison's things have been replaced by Helena's on the dressing table. Jimmy hasn't changed he is still smoking the pipe which he was smoking in the first scene, he is reading the papers and commenting on the content and categories of the

newspapers, the dirty ones and the posh ones. Cliff tells him that his pipe stinks, but Jimmy continues to smoke saying that Cliff himself stank. Jimmy then asks Helena whether the pipe bothered her, she replies that it didn't and adds instead that she liked it.

Jimmy then makes some critical remarks about the news of the grotesque and evil practices going on in the midlands. As Cliff has not read this, Jimmy tells him that some people there have been indulging in midnight invocations of the Coptic Goddess of fertility. A debutante during an evil orgy in the Market Harborough killed a cock and drank it's blood. The revelry of the devotees was maddening. Jimmy says, ironically that the people in poultry business must be doing roaring business since the demand for cocks would have risen suddenly. He then goes on to say that perhaps their landlady, Mrs. Drudery also performed the same ritual on Sunday evenings and may be doing the same at that moment. He turns his attention to Helena every time he talks of something. He asks her if she had ever been a part of such a ritual. Helena laughs at the question and jokingly remarks that she had not tried it, at least lately. Jimmy suggests that things involving blood are suited to Helena's and that such an exercise would at least keep her busy. He says that it takes different kind of people to make this world. He suddenly shifts the topic; he says that somebody has been sticking pins into his wax image meaning that somebody has been busy stabbing away at it. He immediately concludes that it can be no one else but Alison's mother who must be getting wax from Harrods every week to wound his image. Jimmy is suggesting that Alison's mother would find Jimmy's sacrifice the most befitting.

(1. Coptic refers to Egyptian Christians)

Helena says that he could also make a sacrifice to which Jimmy replies that the first sacrifice they make could be of Cliff. They could roast him over the gas stove but so much of gas would be consumed to roast Cliff that they wouldn't have money to pay for it. He says that such an occupation will keep them busy on those autumn evenings. He ridicules the people who feel that they are making a sacrifice when they give up something, their career, sex or belief. In reality they befool themselves as well as others because they only renounce and give up what they didn't care for in the first place. Such people should be pitied instead of being admired.

Jimmy keeps talking for the sake of doing so. Jimmy blabbers most of the time to give vent to his pent up feelings. He again turns to Cliff and says that Cliff is the most suited for a sacrificial offering. He, however, modifies his statement by saying that Cliff's blood will not make as good a sacrifice as Helena's since his blood was common whereas hers was pale Cambridge blue. He compares Cliff's blood to the red-dye consisting of dried bodies of the female cochineal insects. He continues to impugn on the posh newspapers and the articles they publish. Cliff says that they being men should not sacrifice to the Coptic Goddess since they didn't want to be blessed with fertility. He addresses Helena and tells her that there was an article in the paper on artificial insemination. The article criticizing artificial insemination had been written by a lady and would be of more interest to Helena since it was she who could use it.

Jimmy ridicules the journalists and the contributors to the papers for the weird topics they write about. One of the topics discussed in a long correspondence was whether Milton wore braces or not. Most of the papers were full of news about murders, rapes or riots, since these sensational news made the papers popular. Jimmy wants to know who got shot down that week. Cliff referring to another correspondence going on in another paper, says that that particular correspondence was now closed because a fellow of a Church called ' All Souls' had died because the Athenaem was destroyed in fire.

Jimmy makes fun of the academicians who flourish and gain by coming out with the most absurd things. Lately an American professor had come out with the theory that Shakespeare had changed his sex while he was writing 'The Tempest'. He was obliged, consequently to go back to Stratford since none of his actors took him seriously after that. The professor, the paper said, was coming to England to substantiate what he had said. It

further said that Shakespeare, later married a Warwickshire farmer but only after he had three children from him. Jimmy's opinion of the Professor needs no further elaboration.

Helena laughs and says that she was beginning to understand Jimmy. She tells Cliff that earlier she was never sure as to when Jimmy was serious and when he was not. Cliff says that Jimmy himself was half the times not sure.

Jimmy then asks what they were going to do that evening, there was a no concert worth listening to. He asks Helena if she was going to the Church, the question surprises her as she was never expecting it. She says that she did not intend going to the Church unless he wanted to go.

Jimmy remarks that he had observed a growing shine in her eyes, which was satanic and evil. He then asks Helena if she had the guilt of living in sin with him. Jimmy says that he was only curious about her feelings and that he did not intend to make fun of her. Helena herself does not like to believe that Jimmy was trying to ridicule her. Helena is shaken by the coolness in Jimmy's eyes; his remark has upset her a bit. The normalcy in Jimmy's tone, immediately restores her confidence.

Jimmy asks her if she had met the parson, a friend of Mrs. Drudery the previous day. Helena replies in the affirmative in an uneasy tone. Jimmy tells her that she need not be defensive. Jimmy realizes that Helena is hesitating since she knew of Jimmy's dislike for the Church and the clergy. He says that there was no harm in calling the parson to tea in their house. He asks Helena if it would be worth his while to try building up his moral and spiritual strength. He makes an analogy between building up of spiritual strength and physical muscle. He was earlier a liberal skinny weakling, he was afraid of seeing naked truth about himself, but the anomaly was that the abstinence from conventional religion had made him so strong that people now envy him for the strength he has acquired.

Jimmy has by denouncing all accepted norms and conventions given himself a facelift which beats the uplift of a starlet hollow, he claims.

Helena and Cliff tell Jimmy to give them respite from his talk about religion and politics. Cliff tells him to change his record, since it was becoming too much for them.

Jimmy then says that he has thought of a title for his new song. The title is 'My mothers' in the mad-house - that's why I am in love with you'. The lyrics of the song that he has written are catchy, he suggests that they work the lyric into an act.

Helena agrees and Jimmy suggests minor changes in the names of the characters they could give themselves new names instead of Jock and Day. There is a sort of play within a play, with Jimmy taking the lead.

Cliff falls in with the familiar line, he utters three words Mirth, Mellerdy (Malady) and Madness, the core of what they are enacting, the primal elements of man's mind and heart, the sources of his joys, sorrows and madness. Both the lovers are not only guilty but they are insane as well.

The lines seem to touch the cords of Jimmy's heart, he stands up and rattles off the next lines in an almost unintelligible speed. Jimmy here tries to entertain in the style of a traditional fool, the quiz master of the game. 'Ladies and Gentlemen', he says, as if addressing the audience in a theatre, as he was coming to the theatre, a man walked up to him on the stage door and asked him whether he had seen nobody. He was answered that he hadn't seen nobody and that he didn't want to waste his time in further conversation. Jimmy recites the title of a poem, which runs like this, She said, and she could be any woman for Jimmy, that she was called Little Giddling but she was in reality more like a sharp knife, capable of cutting, of castrating. Jimmy's remarks an ironical comment on the nature of women, innocent to look at, killers at heart.

The other man is still looking around for nobody, he is desperately looking for nobody since he has a case to deliver to him and repeatedly asks Jimmy if he had by any chance seen nobody. The actor, played by Jimmy is irritated at being interrupted in entertaining the ladies and the gentlemen present.

Cliff plays the stranger who is looking for nobody, Jimmy the entertainer. The tomfoolery continues for some time till Helena joins as nobody and mocks at the play.

Helena says that Jimmy's play stinks but her attitude of ridicule is only a sham. The play ends with Helena saying that she was nobody and Jimmy telling her that since the case was for nobody she shall take it. He hurls a cushion at her as if it were the case being talked of. The cushion hits the ironing board.

The two men enact another comic act. The song that Jimmy and Cliff sing is about a young man who wants to marry a girl with blue blood in her veins. She is better than him but he shall persist and marry her, he shall approach the sweet hearts father since her mother had already turned him down.

The lover says that he is waiting for a more favourable time to marry her; he will then build a little home for the two of them.

The middle-class may spurn the lower classes but the people with real blue blood still care.

The angels above know that your love is true, they shall therefore bless you,

Their little household will be quiet and happy, they will send their children to public school

The song encourages the lover not to be afraid because his sweet heart was better than him. He should not fear making love and sleeping with her.

The song over, Jimmy and Cliff resume their normal tone. Jimmy has had enough of the gag and wants Cliff to make some tea. They kick and chide each other, again more out of familiarity than contempt. Cliff manages to push Jimmy down, kneels on him and pretends that he is going to read the paper in that pose.

The childish game between the friends continues till Jimmy succeeds in taking the better of Cliff.

The important thing to be noted is that there is continuity of life in the house. Cliff and Jimmy continue to have the same relationship as they did in the beginning of the play, their games and amusement are the same, the absence of Alison has not affected them, their mutual trust and affection is intact. Helena has taken Alison's place. She is now going to wash Cliff's shirt as Alison had, in the first Act ironed his trousers. But one can perceive the difference. In the short time that Helena is away washing Cliff's shirt, Jimmy asks him if he is fond of Helena. Cliff says that it is not the same as with Alison, to which Jimmy replies that one woman is never the same as the other. Since, however, relationships are not permanent it is better not to give much thought to these things. The thoughts that hurt you must be avoided. Cliff's hurt is as deep as Jimmy's, he for the first time lets out his feelings. He tells Jimmy that he won't like to stay in that house much longer. Cliff also says that he would like to try his hand at something else and quit the tea stall, he reasons it out saying he felt that looking after the two of them is quite a job for Helena. Jimmy's casual attitude and his assumed indifference to Cliff is skin deep. He doesn't take Cliff seriously at the face of it betting him that he will not be able to last even five minutes without him. He needed Jimmy even to understand the score. He tells Cliff that Helena would find a suitable girl for him, one of her friends with lots of money and no brains. Cliff has an inherent modesty and a natural amiability, which has insulated him against any sense of hurt and false pride. His replies to Jimmy's questions about his plans of marriage and occupation reveal an imperturbable calmness; Cliff refuses to be instigated as well as to instigate Jimmy, calls Cliff 'scruffy little beast' who would end up as clean as a pin after he marries a rich girl from Pinner or Guildford. Jimmy's feelings for Cliff are clear-cut. He, for the first time expresses the value Cliff's friendship has for him. Cliff has been to him, a generous and loyal friend and yet he is prepared for the coming separation. Jimmy deplores the frailty of human nature, the fact that man hopes to get things which he knows are impossible to get. He now is hoping to get from Helena what he knows; she is incapable of giving to him. He knows the futility of his search for the relationship he is looking for. He feels sorry to say goodbye to Cliff as this would be another of the painful partings he has had.

Jimmy deliberates on the man woman relationship that is so mysterious and strange to him. He knows that Cliff is worth half a dozen Helena's and yet there is something strange that impels him to be drawn and destroyed by women. The men have no good causes left to die for. All good causes came to an end in the thirties and

forties when Jimmy and his friends were just kids. There is no scope for a dedicated life, no chance of death for a noble cause, there is nothing left for men but to be bled by women.

The era when man's life and even death had a purpose is over. People are now likely to die in the devastation of war, a death that is as inglorious and accidental as dying under the wheels of a bus. Jimmy says that men are now bleeding for women, even the appeal for the donation of blood by the post office is merely an appeal on behalf of all the women of the world for the blood of men; nothing less than that would satisfy them. Jimmy's words sum up the absurdity and purposelessness of the 'Brave new nothing- very- much- thank you present times with the yesterdays world of a grand design and purpose lay bare the cause of his frustration.

Helena has in the meantime washed Cliff's shirt, and is back with it. Cliff's words of thanks, 'that's decent of you', throw light on the difference between Cliff's feelings for Alison and Helena. With Alison it was genuine emotion, with Helena a courteous decency. Cliff goes to dry his shirt and Jimmy asks him in the same tone to make him a cup of tea; he announces they shall go for a drink. He looks at Helena and asks her to make herself a bit glamorous, he feels depressed to see her busy at the ironing table all the time. He would like her to have a little pucker and not wear a dull and dead look. He flirts with her, he says that he wants that her heart should flutter every time she sees him. Helena says that her heart does stir whenever she sees Jimmy.

Jimmy tells Helena that Cliff will be leaving them, he is told by Helena that Cliff had already told her about his decision the previous night. Jimmy complains that he is always the last to get information. Helena is unhappy over Cliff's decision to leave and so is Jimmy. Jimmy again expresses his feelings for Cliff, he is a man, says Jimmy who can be forgiven his untidiness and sentimentality simply for one of the rarest things he possesses, he has a big heart. He knows not only how to take but also how to hand over, to give.

Jimmy appreciates not only Cliff but also Helena. Talking of her he says that he admires Helena for almost the same reason. She could step forward and give without expecting the other person to make the first move. She had no inhibitions in love, from the first day itself it was Helena who had put out her hand first. She had not expected anything in return of her love. She was a formidable enemy when it came to fighting but that is what made her a worthy opponent.

Jimmy appreciates Helena's spontaneity in love; she had no hesitation in caressing and fondling him. Jimmy then analyses what love means to Helena. To her, love means giving comfort to the general, in this case Jimmy who is tired, hungry and dry after a campaign. Jimmy and Helena share a feeling of tenderness, Jimmy kisses her fingers and she fully reciprocates by pressing his hand against her.

Jimmy is grateful to Helena for having taken the initiative to express her love for him and to seek his in turn. He entreats her to ensure that nothing goes wrong between them. They will make a good pair, a good double of T. S. Eliot and Pam. If Helena helps him, he says, he will start afresh and build a new life, close the tea stall and go somewhere. Helena shares his promise of a new future for both of them, where they will love each other tenderly, he will love her so passionately that she will forget everything else in the world.

Helena and Jimmy are now ready to leave. Helena wants to change from Jimmy's old shirt to go out. Jimmy moves towards the door to call Cliff. But before Jimmy reaches the door, Alison enters. She is wearing a raincoat, her hair is untidy and she is looking ill. Jimmy is stunned to see her. He regains his composure after a minute and walks out of the room. He refuses to greet Alison as his wife and asks Helen to attend to her.

The meeting between Alison and Helena in the last scene of the play is not noisy or obtrusive, as would normally be expected. Nothing much happens in the scene, though the return of Alison is very significant for its dramatic effect. Helena is seen pouring out a cup of tea, while Alison sits on the armchair. The sound of Jimmy playing on the trumpet in Cliff's room can be heard. Alison tries to revive her memories of her life in that room. She picks up a little pile of ash from the floor and drops it in the ashtray.

Alison asks Helena if Jimmy still smokes the pipe. She tells Helena that though she hated the smell of it initially, she had later on got quite used to it. She narrates an incident to tell Helena that she has become so habitual of the smell that she had almost started liking it. Only the previous week, she says, he had gone to the pictures, an

old man was smoking a pipe a few rows away, she got so drawn by the smell of the pipe that she went and sat beside him.

Alison apologizes to Helena for coming there so abruptly. Helena asks why she should feel guilty about coming there. Helena is polite throughout and asks Alison if she was better. Alison recounts how she had fought the urge to come back to that house many times. She narrates how on that day itself when she had bought a ticket from St. Pancras, she doubted whether she would really board it. It was all like a riddle, was the place she was returning to hers by any claim, she felt that she was intruding. Everything seemed to have receded into oblivion. She seemed to be unsure if there was ever a house like this one where she had lived. But now that she was there, she tells Helena everything had become suddenly real. Absent-mindedly Alison foot plays with the newspapers on the floor. She recollects how in the months that she was away, the picture of the days spent in that place flashed on her mind. There was no sequence in her thoughts and memories, just solitary pictures suspended in isolation.

Alison tells Helena that a sense of timing was one of the things she had learnt from Jimmy, this refers to her returning at precisely the moment when Jimmy and Helena had committed themselves to each other. When Helena wants to tell Alison what she had learnt from Jimmy, Alison says that she realizes the blunder she had made in returning. Alison's remark that all of them must be wishing that she was a thousand miles away shows that she is aware of the fact that Jimmy and Helena have grown very close.

The conversation between Alison and Helena is a dialogue on the institution of marriage. Helena holds the view that Alison's place in the house was the rightful one and that she had usurped her place. But Alison has stopped believing in the divine rights of marriage, there were no prescribed rules about relationships; it was only a matter of consent she believes now. When the divine rights of the Kings could be substituted by Constitutional Monarchy, where was the surprise if the pattern of marriages also changed?

Alison assures Helena that she had not come to disturb Jimmy and her. She had no intention of blackmailing them. She was herself at a loss as to why she had come there, it could be just hysteria, impulse, madness or the macabre curiosity to see Jimmy and Helena living together. She was sure of one thing in any case; she did not wish to make a breach between Jimmy and Helena. Helena has full faith in what Alison is saying, but her distrust of herself makes her feel guilty. Helena feels all the more outraged at what she has done because Alison does not reproach or blame her.

Alison tells Helena that she need not feel that she had cheated on her for Jimmy. Helena is surprised at Alison's new outlook on the modalities of life. She recognizes Jimmy speaking through Alison. Helena is shocked that Alison does not expect any confirmation to any values by either her or Jimmy. She blames herself for living in sin with Jimmy and says that though she had flouted the rules she believed in, she had never for once doubted their validity.

Alison's reference to Helena's letters to her about Jimmy tell us that Alison was posted with whatever was happening from time to time between Jimmy and Helena.

Helena had professed her love for Jimmy in these letters; she had also condemned him whole-heartedly. Alison finds it difficult to understand Helena's stance, Helena herself finds it difficult to explain it. Alison tries to explain Jimmy's position, he was born out of times, she says. Jimmy finds the mundane everyday life of his times too ordinary, with no purpose, nothing to dedicate yourself to, nothing to live for and nothing worthwhile to die for, life is too unexciting and ordinary. Jimmy still lives in the times of the French revolution, when people fought and rebelled for a cause, he should have belonged to those times. In the present times Jimmy has no direction with no motive of any significance, Jimmy would live an insignificant life. Alison says that Jimmy was an eminent Victorian and slightly comic as all Victorians were. Helena then declares her intention of leaving Jimmy. The moment Alison returned Helena realized that she had made a grievous mistake, she says. Helena had never believed in the principles that Jimmy believed in and would never be able to believe in them. Jimmy and Helena were diametrically opposite in their views, Jimmy's amorality was not compatible with Helena's

strong views on right and wrong. Helena says that she does not feel that she needs to apologize for her opinions and convictions, which are quite modern and not outdated, as Jimmy would call them. She says that even making love to Jimmy and sleeping with him can never bridge the gap between them. Helena tells Alison that she is convinced that what she had done was wrong.

Alison tries to dissuade Helena from leaving, since then Jimmy would be left alone. Helena however, takes a firm stand and even advises Alison not to make the blunder of coming back.

The scene not only throws light on the difference in Helena's and Alison's character but also proves Alison's strong feeling for Jimmy. Helena has no fear of Jimmy being lonely; she feels that soon after both the women walk out, he will find somebody else. He may even hold a court in the fashion of the Renaissance papers in that room. It was all over between Jimmy and herself asserts Helena and tells Alison that though it was strictly her business, she would be a fool if she came back to Jimmy. A change had come about in Helena's feelings by the way Alison looked, tired, hurt and ill. The suffering and loss of Alison's child was, according to Helena, a punishment, a divine judgement on them.

Alison does not seem to agree with Helena's view. She simply feels that it was something that had happened and it must be taken as such. No body can be blamed for it, nor can it be attributed to any judgement. In this sense it must be noted that Alison's views are closer to those of Jimmy than Helena's.

Alison tries to explain the logic of it but Helena feels that there can no logic in your sense of right and wrong. Alison, once again tells Helena not to leave Jimmy, since he needed her but adds that none of them were suited to Jimmy anyway.

While the two women are talking Jimmy continues to blow his trumpet, its volume growing louder and louder. Helena gets impatient of the sound and asks Jimmy to stop it. The rest of the scene with Jimmy's attempts to spurn Alison, looking for dark plots in whatever the two women do, helps the characters move towards the denouncement in the play. Helena decides to tell Jimmy about her decision. Jimmy has noticed Alison's condition which he describes as ghastly, in the meantime when Helena tries to describe her condition to him, his impassioned tone in 'I can see what's happened to her', reveals Jimmy's deeper feelings for Alison. He is somewhere still concerned about her.

Jimmy being averse to any sentimental talk, dismisses his concern for Alison as simply an aversion for pain and suffering in general. The loss of the child was one of the many he had suffered in his life. It was in the case of Alison, a big loss and the first one she had suffered.

Jimmy hates sentiment and sympathy more so because of the reserved solemnity that they are usually accorded. He asks Helena why was Alison there and what made her look so serious. Alison tries to say something but is choked with emotion. Helena checks Jimmy from swaying into one of his moods. She tells him that Alison had nothing to do with her decision to leave. Helena re-affirms her faith in the concept of right and wrong. She proclaims that one can never be happy if what one was doing hurt someone else. She tells Jimmy that things between them would never have worked out, she had however loved Jimmy and would never be able to love the way she loved him.

Helena takes command of her emotion and is ready to pack. She tells Alison, that the arrangement for her stay for the night could be made in a hotel.

Jimmy's long speech addressed to Helena is about love One needs guts and defiance, the freedom of mind and soul to be in love. People who are scared of suffering and defying the norms of society and religion are incapable of loving. Religion and the sense of right and wrong incapacitate human beings from loving without fear, without inhibitions. He hands over Helen's things to her with the final words, 'If one wants to live, one has to live as a human being, if one wishes to be a Saint, one has to reject life, renounce life. You cannot be human and saintly at the same time'.

Jimmy is shaken and avoids looking at Alison. He is disturbed by the Church bells ringing in the distance. The call of religion is to him the call for the denial of the natural life.

Jimmy's outburst about what Alison had done is to give vent to the hurt feelings he has been nursing in his heart. He rambles into a long speech, reviving each and every hurt that Alison had inflicted upon him. She had not even cared to send flowers to Mrs. Tanner's funeral. In doing so she had denied flowers not to the dead lady but to Jimmy himself, since he cared for her. He continues to deplore the fact that there was no justice in the world, since wrong people went hungry, wrong people died and wrong people were loved.

Jimmy's final speech, gains in strength by virtue of being tragic without being vindictive. Was he wrong to believe that there is a burning virility of mind, a potent force of spirit, could find a spirit akin to itself in an ever loving energy- looking ever for more and more. The strongest men in the world are lonely like the old bear following his own breath in the dark forest. The ordinary ones walk in herds, the stronger ones alone, the weaker ones have many allies, the strong ones no one to understand, no one to match. The strong are the ones who are utterly lonely. Jimmy tells Alison what he had marked in Alison, which demarcated her from others. On the first night that he saw her, he observed in her a wonderful relaxation of spirit. Jimmy mistook this relaxation for a balance of spirit, struck after much struggle and fight, later on, however, he discovered that Alison had no real strength. She had never seen struggle in her life, she had never fought, she had never opposed. He may be a lost cause, says Jimmy, but if Alison really loved him, it shouldn't have mattered. He reminds Alison that her desertion of him meant that she never loved him truly.

Alison's affirmation of faith in a life of futility and corruption rather than attitude of passivity and neutrality is at once, her avowal of comradeship with Jimmy and her emergence as an individual rather than a dummy of her class.

It is the loss of the child, which has taught her how helpless one could be. She had lost the child she felt was hers; it was so safe and secure in her body. All she wanted after the loss of the child was to die. She wanted Jimmy to see her, in such an abject condition, so stupid, so helpless. This is what Jimmy had always wanted, he wanted to see her defeated. He wanted to splash in her tears, to revel in her suffering. All that had come about, Jimmy could see that Alison had suffered, though he had, himself, lost his child in the process. Alison tells Jimmy that he should be happy since she was now in utter sorrow, groveling in the mud. Alison's emotions are fully worked up; unable to hold herself she falls at his feet. For a moment, Jimmy stands rigid, then he bends and takes her trembling body into his embrace. He tells her that he cannot bear to see her in that condition. He then reminds her of the bears and squirrels game that they used to play. He says that they will continue to live like a bear and a squirrel, eating honey and nuts. Lying in the sun they will sing songs about trees lying in the sun. Alison will keep her eyes on his fur and keep his claws clean since he was a careless sort of a bear. He would see that his squirrel keeps her tail bushy and shining forever. They shall be careful of the steel traps lying about everywhere to catch the timid, little animals. He calls Alison rather mad and slightly satanic but a beautiful squirrel, warning her of the traps thrown in for people like her. Alison reciprocates affectionately calling him 'Poor Pears'. The bears- the men, are like squirrels- the women very, very poor creatures indeed.

John Osborne-as an Innovator

John Osborne was hailed as an innovator in drama in the mid twentieth century. His protagonist, Jimmy Porter was regarded as the first non-hero, his language considered revolutionary.

In the heat of enthusiasm for the angry man who was not a hero and his use of language, which was far from the language conventionally used in drama, Osborne was credited with more innovation than he deserved or even himself claimed. Gareth Lloyd Evans elaborates on this in his essay on John Osborne and naturalism. He says, that to regard Osborne as the first to bring this concept on stage would be to belie the truth. There were people who had presented the non-hero protagonist before Osborne. Stanley Kowalski, was by the time 'Look back in Anger' was written was well known and had spawned, in films, a number of progeny of his own type. Evans contends that Osborne's scything newness, which seemed to his admirers a break-away from the well made play is also in reality not so. The author also contends the opinion held by many that Jimmy represented a post-war generation. Many of Jimmy's generation would not recognize them in him and that Jimmy is only a

mouthpiece for one man's disillusionment with the society he lived in. Jimmy's anger, petulance, dissatisfaction, infirmity of purpose, railing and complaining is more an expression of his own frustration than that of the younger generation of that period as a whole. Even the label of raw naturalism is to the critic a bit exaggerated. Osborne's language might have seemed permissive by contemporary standards but it was far from being either raw or natural.

Evans quotes Osborne, who, himself delivered the greatest blow to these claims. Osborne described the play as formal and old fashioned which Evans elaborates. Evans says, 'A summary examination of the play reveals some interesting facts. It is a Three-Acter, it has a thoroughly conventional set; that is in the old fashioned sense, a box set, the play has a very precise conventional pattern- statement, development, crisis and resolution- in dramatic and theatrical terms, even if thematically it is opaque and lacks direction, no special effects are required, the situation is naturalistic in that it could well be equated with real life events. Indeed, a cursory examination alone amply confirms that Osborne's view of his play is indeed forthright'.

What Evans misses out is that the last part of his statement where he says that the play is opaque and that it lacks direction negotiates a novelty in approach, Osborne is taking us to an experience that is unfamiliar, introducing us to characters who are not only complex in the typical humours they personify but in the inconsistency of their professed beliefs and behaviour. A conventional pattern is not enough to designate the play as conventional. Apart from Jimmy, the other characters are also, all through, in a dilemma. Jimmy's is constantly wavering between agnosticism and belief; he faces helplessness in his attachments and attractions, the purposelessness of life and the wantonness of death and suffering. These are the maladies of the modern times. The consciousness of the malady by the one who suffers from it is even more modern.

Nature of Language in 'Look Back in Anger'

Two claims have been made for 'Look Back in Anger', one that it is vehement in its approach and second that the language of the play is markedly distinct from the language of drama written before it. The first and most striking feature of the pattern of language which he observes while reading the play is the rhythm that is set up between monologue and dialogue. The dialogues seem sparse and thin comparison to the long monologues.

The characters speak in a fashion that can be called neutral. Little can be made out of their lass or character from the dialogues. Except for a few words from Cliff, like 'girlie' and 'not arf', there is no individualization in the dialogue. The words in 'Look back in Anger' just pass information; they do not help us identify the characters. The conversation between Helena and Alison or the dialogue between Alison and her father reveals rather a lack of dimension than a measure of their scope. The dialogue between Redfern and Helena is an instance.

Colonel: 'Well I'd better put this in the car then. We may as well get along. Your mother will be worried, I know. I promised her I'd ring her when I get here. She's not very well'.

Helena: "I hope my telegram didn't upset her too much. Perhaps I shouldn't have. —"

Colonel: 'Not at all. We are very, very grateful that you did. It was very kind of you indeed——'

The use of everyday speech, by way of words fails to lend authenticity to Osborne's characters. The truth of character created by Shakespeare or Shaw is missing in Osborne. Whatever pleasure we get from Jimmy's speeches is not because of the character they reveal but his oratory and the use of rhetorical devices such as hyperbole, metaphor, literary illusions and blatant abuse.

The language of the other characters in the play apart from Jimmy, is lacking in personality. Even in the case of Cliff and Alison, who share a feeling of affection and trust, the words spoken to each other only express a sense of sympathy and understanding but do not help to throw light on either Cliff or Alison as a person.

Evans further says, 'the dialogue as such, which, of course, involves Jimmy too, is on the whole a neutral speech. Little attempt is made by Osborne to characterize thorough it, or to indicate class or accent— there is no identification, no individualization in this dialogue.'

He cites the example of the following speech of Alison, which, he says, is not much different from Jimmy's self-indulgent speeches. 'I am 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'.

The language in the play fails to fulfil the very first requirement of dramatic language—the embodiment of individual character.

Evans discusses the language of Jimmy, which, to him is nearer the naturalistic, in the sense that it has a degree of truth. Jimmy's speech, is however, not naturalistic in the sense of the language of the other contemporary dramatists like Edward Bond. He does not speak of the lowest common speech.

He is eloquent. It is not so much raw as vehement in a very lucid way. It is the language of the University graduate. He has delved deeply in the arts, it is a language that he has acquired by a self-willed awareness. A conceit born out of Jimmy's consciousness of his intelligence is evident in his words. Jimmy's is the language of a youth determined to chalk up a victory in the intellectual stakes, convinced of his role as a rebel, determined to put things right. Jimmy's naturalism is special in the sense that it is elitist as compared to the language of the drama of the 1970s.

Jimmy uses speech for most part of the play, to pour out his invective, his invective, which is so wide-ranging that nothing escapes it. Exaggeration, hyperbole, is used by Jimmy to show his anger towards most of what he targets. Jimmy's constant use of hyperbole makes his the most vehement of all the speeches in the play, highlighting the element of exaggeration in his character. Jimmy, exaggerates through repetition and his speeches tend to be rhetorical in the vein of a public speech rather than spontaneity of a personal grief or emotion. Consider the following speech for example:

"Reason and progress, the old firm, is selling out! Everyone gets out while the going is good. Those forgotten shares you had in the old traditions, the old beliefs are going up- going up. A lack of spontaneity lends Jimmy's speeches a colour of eloquence sans depth. Jimmy's outbursts lack consistency of logic, though it can often suddenly eliminate an idea or a feeling or an intuition. "If you have 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 are American of course."

Jimmy loves to parody; writers, drama, newspapers, pamphlets, and journalists all fall into the ambit of his attack. The parody is sometimes more conscious and deliberate. Jimmy's attempt to be witty is mostly successful, he being intrinsically an exhibitionist, prefers to be loud to then being quiet. His metaphorical use of his wax image is a proof of Jimmy's ability to make the most far-fetched comparisons, profitably to use.

'All I know is that somebody's been sticking pins into my wax image for years (suddenly) of course Alison's mother? Every friday the wax arrives from Harrods, and all the through the weekend she is stabbing away at it with a hatpin! Ruined her bridge game, I dare say.'

Jimmy does abate into a more commonplace language at times. It is then, that a kind of youthful pathos can be glimpsed behind the cataract of his words:

"The heaviest, strongest creatures in this world seem to be the loneliest like the old bear, following his own breath in the dark forest. There is no warm pack, no herd to comfort him. The voice that cries out doesn't have to be a weaklings, does it?"

The use of the simile, the comparison of the loneliness of Jimmy with the old beard does bring out how lonesome and isolated Jimmy is. Jimmy's speeches are innately melodramatic. They are meant to appeal to the emotions. G. L. Evans considers the use of language at length, Jimmy's emotions, sentimentality as it proceeds and emerges from the language he uses. Sentimentality, says Evans, emerges less as an inevitable facet of the character than as a function of language. Rhetoric is often the mother of sentimental expression, with its recourse to repetition, its self regarding rhythms, its tendency to seem impersonal while pushing unerringly towards the emotionally subjective.

The entire impact of Jimmy's personality lies in his waywardness and versatility of his capability to talk himself into one posture or another. It is the sentimentality of the language, which sometimes proceeds to turn from the object of Jimmy's speech to himself.

The sum total of Jimmy Porter is the language he uses, the language in a way becomes, the protagonist, it is the words that hold are attention and it is the words we behold for comprehension.

Alison makes use of the language, as a tool, not merely of expression, but to hold attention once or twice, like in her speech "I want to be a lost cause". Helena and Cliff use language unconsciously, deriving not much from it not dominating by their use of it. Colonel Redfern, though not rhetorical by any standard, is eloquent in his speech of the now lost long summers of India. Though not much of a talker, he is not inarticulate; he is able to express himself fully as a left over plant from the Edwardian period. He is also able to convey fully, his regret at the way Jimmy had been treated by his wife. More restrained by nature and training, he establishes himself favourably by his dignity of manner and speech.

Imagery and Symbolism in the Play

Jimmy and Alison are happy when they are playing Bear and Squirrel. They impersonate them when they are in love; the love turns into hostility when they resume their human form, with individual minds and thoughts. Alison tells Helena the game Jimmy and she played, describing it with a childish love for rhythm, 'Bears and Squirrels, Squirrels and Bears. In the beginning, when they were left to each other after Hugh's departure, the game was a symbol of their uncomplicated affection for each other. They lived in their world of make believe as two dumb furry creatures. They were then, all love and no brains. Becoming human is painful but to reclaim the animalism, the sensuality of that time difficult too. The poor little creatures are now dead, as humans Jimmy and Alison cannot live the life of abandonment, the cosy life they had led in the zoo. It should be noted that though Helena finds their game quite mad, to Alison it is absolutely natural and agreeable. The animal symbol works in two ways. It offers a refuge from the married couples daily life, secondly it provides the only way for them to communicate, love between Jimmy and Alison is based only on physical attraction which functions below the level of rational thought.

The bear is the symbol of masculine power and virility. After, Alison's departure, when Helena is opening the drawers in the chest, she picks up the toy bear and sits on the bed, looking at it. She lays her head back on the pillow, still holding the bear. Jimmy himself throws the bear down showing what to him seems a fall from grace after Alison has walked out on him.

The reappearance of the animal symbols and the resumption of the game of bear and squirrel with all the vows of love, promises happier times for Jimmy and Alison. The apprehension that the game that had failed them earlier, may fail them again lingers in our minds.

Another recurring image, though not symbolic in the strict sense is that of the newspapers. Jimmy and Cliff are shown reading the papers in the opening scenes of all the Acts and all Jimmy's discussions on politics and religion start from these. It brings the outside world into the small world of Jimmy, Alison and Cliff more than that it, like an invader upsets the familial setting of their home.

The images in the play, mainly verbal are sometimes pleasant and romantic, at other times disgusting. Colonel Redfern's description of Edwardian England evokes a pleasant image of the 'brief little world' that he nostalgically speaks of. Alison's image of 'I'm in fire and I'm burning' describes her anguish metaphorically. Some of the images, however, are employed only to shock or disgust, the image of 'a mass of India rubber and wrinkles' used for a newborn baby is an example.

The only image of an animal, who is human in his solitude and grandeur unlike the timid little animals referred to in the play, is that of the old bear following his own breath in the forest.

The bear and the squirrel were images of animal sensuality; the lonely bear one of dignified solitude who has no pack since he has no equal.

Jimmy Porter: An Appraisal

Jimmy Porter has been seen by many as a self-portrait of Osborne. A substantial body of critical appraisal of Jimmy is based on the critics. Subscribing to the view that Jimmy shares not only his anger with his creator, but they have many more things in common. Not only is the episode of Jimmy's fathers' death almost autobiographical but the class, economically and otherwise which they belonged to is almost the same. Gareth Llyod Evans' statement that Jimmy is the mouthpiece of one man's disillusion about the society he lived in can be further qualified by saying that this man is not Jimmy but Osborne himself.

Osborne's impatience with the contemporary British society and Empire, his denunciation of the Church, of the upper and middle classes are at once discernible in Jimmy's character. Jimmy embodies Osborne's derision of the Conservative Government, the Royalty. Jimmy hates the stiff upper lip of the privileged classes in England; he sees them as a personification of apathy and detachment.

Jimmy's contempt of the British is explained by what he calls their lack of enthusiasm. He mourns the loss of vitality, vigour and the will to fight in the generation of the day. He attributes this not only to a degeneracy of character but also to the times, which have nothing to offer to infuse enthusiasm. 'Nobody thinks, Nobody cares'. No beliefs, no convictions and no enthusiasm", laments Jimmy. He attributes it to the fact that there are no brave causes left to fight for.

Though a spokesman of Osborne's views, his emotion and empathy, Jimmy is a much more complex character. To base him only on a comparison with his creator would be limiting the scope of his character and the study.

Jimmy Porter's character has a huge sentimental element. This sentimentality, should however, not be confused with the characteristics it is generally associated with. Jimmy is a romantic; his sentimentality segregates and isolates him from people. Though Jimmy talks sentimentally about his father's death and angry about his treatment by the Redfern's, it is difficult to relate fully his resentment to his experiences. We can only conclude from his long speeches and rhetoric that it is not so much his prejudice against any principle or people that urges him to make these long vitriolic attacks, it is the indulgence of listening to himself. Gareth Llyod Evans finds a sure proof of Jimmy's love of indulging himself in self-pity: 'There is no surer evidence of this than in the famous speech about his dying father, hailed by many as an example of an underlying sensitivity and vulnerability in the angry, deprived, perturbed spirit of Jimmy Porter. In truth, what is remarkable about the speech is not any revelation of the deeper soul of Porter, but the utter shallowness of his responses. The language as it grows more rhetorical, 'turns in the sentimentality and as this proceeds, the object of the speech turns away from the dying father to Jimmy himself. He has talked himself into being victim. His father was the stalking-horse for Jimmy's self-indulgent eloquence'.

The childhood experience, says Jimmy has hardened him, embittered him towards the world, resulting in mistrust and a feeling of hatred. According to Mary McCarthy, Jimmy's profoundest, quickest, most natural instinct is mistrust.

In classical Freudian terms, Jimmy can be seen as a paranoid personality, suffering from the fear of losing his dear ones. He makes a property of the people he loves, he cherishes them as invaluable possessions, he feeds his sense of tragedy on his separations from them. People as well as fate play his adversaries, the entire world is against him, horrifying Cliff, Hugh and his mother, everyone is included in his list of persecutors, even Alison is not spared.

The inferiority complex from which Jimmy suffer, is, according to one school of thought proved by constant attention-seeking. Jimmy waivers between moods of cruelty and kindness, which is attributed to schizophrenia in his personality.

Jimmy is insecure. M.D Faber relates his insecurity to neurosis. According to him Jimmy has problem the origin of which lies in the stresses of the 'oral stage'. The characters suffering from the 'oral stage' are prone to passivity, fear of retaliation and a sense of alienation; these tendencies in turn can lead to sadism. In the case of Jimmy persistent fear of being abandoned, of being separated from the mother surrogate is evident from the

many references he makes to his separations in the past and his fear of the ones that may come in the future. The distinctive features that mark him out as a psychoneurotic prevent him from emerging as hero, he remains the protagonist but fails to emerge as a man to be remembered.

Jimmy's suffering entails by its violent outburst a suffering of others. He is clearly a sadist and a masochist. His brutal behaviour towards Alison indicates that he enjoys all the pain that he inflicts on her. He abuses and rails at her brother, her parents and friends and mounts his attack more and more forcefully on seeing her unarmed. He looks for the strongest words of disapprobation for Alison and her people. He calls her Pusillanimous and describes its meaning from the dictionary word by word to make his attack more vehement. Bamber Gascoigne's view that the real reason for Jimmy's cruelty to his wife is the excess of energy, which he cannot use in the Sweet-stall. This may explain his atrocious behaviour, as being the outcome of his pent up animal energy, but not the joy he derives from hurting Alison. Nor does it account for the way he bullies Cliff and does not miss any chance at physically hitting him. His pleasure in giving pain is obvious. Instances like, when he twists Cliff's ears and he cries in pain, Jimmy only grins back at him.

Jimmy's defence of suffering as an essential part of the process of personal involvement lead him to his glorification of himself as well as condemnation of those who had not suffered. He asks Helena if she had ever seen someone die. He also wishes that Alison should suffer by losing a child to become a better human being. Jimmy lives happily with Helena but misses no opportunity to wound her either. Jimmy's misogyny as well as his sado-masochism are evident in his behaviour towards all the three characters, he lives with. Jimmy's cries of social justice and psuedo-philosophical dogmas are only the expression of his desperation for recognition. That Osborne is insufficiently critical of the flaws in Jimmy's character is confirmed by John Mander, who aptly remarks, 'Jimmy is a phony: but we are left with the impression that his creator cannot admit the fact.'

The Feminist Viewpoint

Alison and Helena

It is possible to see all the characters in the play as the sites where the vexed realities of class and gender play themselves out.

There are two women characters in the play. Both belong to the same class and both love Jimmy. They both accept their positions. Helena's assertion differentiates her from Alison very marginally, willingly, even happily. Alison and Helena are shown busy with household chores, ironing the clothes on the ironing table and wearing Jimmy's old shirts.

Both of them hate Jimmy's way of talking, his pipe and his trumpet and yet both of them get accustomed to these. Their complaints of Jimmy are rendered null and void by their tone of him. It is Helena who manipulates to stay back when Alison is leaving and it Alison again who comes back without being approached by Jimmy, even once.

Alison has a long list of grievances against Jimmy which she share with Helena but is absolutely quiet when Jimmy is present. Helena's defiance also slowly gives way to a kind of servility.

The women who are discussed in the play are either Jimmy's favourites or the ones he hates. Mrs. Redfern apart, he hates his landlady, he hated the girls who lived in the same house as he at one time, he hates all the women for their noise and lack of poise in movements.

Jimmy adores the women who are poor and helpless. Two women fall in this category. His own grandmother and Hugh's mother. Both had worked to support their families, both were ordinary to look at. Jimmy's love for the under-dog surfaces even in his relationship with women.

Glossary

Naturalism: Historians and critics of drama have held divergent views on the interpretation of the term 'Naturalism in Theatre'. The term was first used for the French Literature, which stemmed from the writings

of Zola and his followers. Though an extension of realism in literature, naturalism differs from it in deliberate emphasis on the ugly, the shabby, the vicious. The author offers no moral or ethical judgement; the stance is amoral and no judgements are passed on characters who are invariably seen as biographically and socially determined.

The Well-made Play : The term is applied to a neatly constructed play with all the conventional requirements of plot and structure

Dramatic Personae: The characters in a play

Hyperbole: Is a figure of speech that means using exaggeration for emphasis. It is used, usually, to convey a sense of emotional disturbance, in exaggerated praise or invective, to give vent to one's feelings of love or hatred.

Parody: A burlesque imitation of a literary or musical work or style. Ludicrous in nature, it is used to mock at a person in high position or a reputed work of art/ literature. The person who parodies refutes their claim to fame and recognition.

Imagery: A figure of speech forming mental images, imaginative description of a picture or pictures, images in general or collectively.

Symbolism: To represent by symbols, use of symbols in literature and art.

Contemporary: OF the same time or period. Used for writers etc..

Ambiguity: when views are not clearly defined. Having a dubious meaning.

Bildungaroman : A piece of literature that educates. It is educative in the sense that while tracing the protagonist's growth to maturity, it educates the reader through the development of his character.

Subjectivity: Belonging to the inner self, having an individual perspective of things by looking at them not objectively and rationally but relating them to personal experience and vision.

Misogyny: Dislike or hatred for women

Articulation: Ability to express one's self in words

Evangelist: Person who preaches the gospel that is the life and message of Jesus Christ.

Colloquial: Every day informal speech

Vanderville: Form of light variety entertainment with skits, songs and dances

Masochism: Abnormal pleasure obtained from pain or suffering inflicted by a member of the opposite sex.

Questions

1. The other characters in 'Look Back in Anger' are not more than stage furniture with the result that the content of the play is reduced to Jimmy's views. Do you agree?
2. Does the author deliberately keep our attention focused on Jimmy? If so, what are his intentions in doing so? Substantiate your answer with examples from the text.
3. The conflict between Jimmy and Alison is a part of the larger class-war. Jimmy's vitriolic attack on Alison and her family is part of his frustration at being on the lower side of the dividing line. Do you agree?
4. Class and gender are two grounds for conflict and strife in 'Look Back in Anger'. Both of them, the class-war as well as the battle of sexes are conflated in the play. Discuss in view of the marriage between Jimmy and Alison.
5. Discuss how the romantic and modernist concepts of the delineation of character are combined in the portrayal of Jimmy's character. Do you sympathize and identify yourself with him?

6. As an 'Angry Young Man', Jimmy is not only the protagonist, but also a delegate of the younger generation? How far do you think, does Jimmy represent the men of his age in those times?
7. The action is reduced to a minimal in 'Look Back in Anger'. The only action is the interaction between the characters, Discuss.
8. The re-appearance of the animal symbols may appear to give the play a conventional, sentimental happy ending but that is only a contrivance that offers no real solution. Do you agree? Do you believe that Jimmy and Alison will have a happier life in future?
9. Do you agree with Dyson's observation that Jimmy's trumpet can mock the universe but not sound a call to battle? Discuss in view of Osborne's own statement about Jimmy where he says, "To be as vehement as he is, is be almost non-committal."
10. Attempt appraisal of the relationship between Jimmy and Alison? Would you describe it as a love-hate relationship?

Short Questions

1. Jimmy's invective in 'Look Back in Anger' is meant to convey the mood of his generation. Does it perform this function effectively?
2. Pretence in Play- acting in 'Look Back in Anger' comes out in its rhetoric and imagery of animals. What is the role-playing in the lines of the characters in the play?
3. What do you understand by the term hyperbole? How is it used and what purpose does it serve in 'Look back in Anger'?
4. What issues in 'Look Back in Anger' can be highlighted from the feminist perspective? What impression do you form of the situation of women in England at that time from the play?
5. Locate Osborne's main concerns in the play.
6. Briefly discuss how Helena engineers the departure of Alison. Is she justified in this as well as in leaving Jimmy at the end of the play?
7. What does the term morality mean in the context of the play? What is Jimmy's morality and how does it differ from that of others whom he denounces?
8. Do the social and economic realities of Britain find expression in the play? How do the characters react to them?
9. Cliff stands in sharp contrast to Jimmy. What is the bond between the two friends, which lasts longer than Jimmy's love for the two women discussed?
10. Helena's character and role is the least convincing of all in the play. Do you agree?

Important Passages for Reference to Context

Act One

JIMMY: Well, she can talk, can't she? You can talk, can't you? You can express an opinion. Or does the White Woman's Burden make it impossible to think?

JIMMY: 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! I've an idea. Why don't we have a little game? Let's pretend that we're human beings, and that we're actually alive. Just for a while. What do you say? Let's pretend we are human. Oh, brother, it's such a long time since I was with anyone who got enthusiastic about anything.

JIMMY: The old Edwardian brigade do make their brief little world look pretty tempting. All homemade cakes and croquet, bright ideas, bright uniform. Always the same picture: high summer, the long days in the sun, slim volumes of verse, crisp linen, the smell of starch. What a romantic picture. Phoney too, of course.

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 an American of course. Perhaps all our children will be Americans.

JIMMY: The Platitude from Outer Space - that's brother Nigel. He'll end up in the Cabinet one day, make no mistake. But somewhere at the back of that mind is the vague knowledge that he and his pals have been plundering and fooling everybody for generations.

JIMMY: And nothing is more vague about Nigel than his knowledge. His knowledge of life and ordinary human beings is so hazy, he really deserves some sort of decoration for it - a medal inscribed 'For Vaguery in the Field'. But it wouldn't do for him to be troubled by any stabs of conscience, however vague.

JIMMY: All this time, I have been married to this woman, this monument to non-attachment, and suddenly I discover that there is actually a word that sums her up. Not just an adjective in the English language to describe her with - it's her name! Pusillanimous! It sounds like some fleshy Roman matron, doesn't it?

JIMMY: Have you ever noticed how noisy women are? Have you? The way they kick the floor about, simply walking over it? Or have you watched them sitting at their dressing tables, dropping their weapons and banging down their bits of boxes and brushes and lipsticks? I've watched her doing it night after night. When you see a woman in front of her bedroom mirror, you realize what a refined sort of butcher she is. Did you ever see some dirty old Arab, sticking his fingers into some mess of lamb fat and gristle? Well, she's just like that. Thank God they don't have many women surgeons! Those primitive hands would have your guts out in no time.

ALISON: I keep looking back, as far as I 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 savaged, 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.' It's those easy things that seem to be so impossible with us.

ALISON: 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 was trying to kill him in the worst way of all.

ALISON: And, afterwards, he actually taunted me with my virginity. He was quite angry about it, as if I had deceived him in some strange way. He seemed to think an untouched woman would defile him.

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 can't stop my sweat breaking out when I see you doing - something as ordinary as leaning over an ironing board.

JIMMY: I've got my own strawberry mark - only it's in a different place. No, as far as the Michelangelo Brigade's concerned, I must be a sort of right - wing deviationist. If the Revolution ever comes, I'll be the first to be put up against the wall, with all the other poor old liberals.

JIMMY: Oh, my dear wife, you've got so much to learn. I only hope you learn it one day. 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 recognizable human face emerge from that little mass of indiarubber and wrinkles.

She just devours me whole every time, as if I were some over-large rabbit. That's me. 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.

Act Two

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 and oddly exciting.

ALISON: It isn't easy to explain. It's what he would call a question of allegiances, and he expects you to be pretty literal about them. 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.

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. Together, they were frightening. They both came to regard me as a sort of hostage from those sections of society they had declared war on.

ALISON: Hugh fairly revelled in the role of the barbarian invader. Sometimes I thought he might even dress the part – you know, furs, spiked helmet, sword. He even got a fiver out of old Man Wain once. Blackmail, of course.

ALISON: Everything about him seemed to burn, his face, the edges of his hair glistened and seemed to spring of his head, and his eyes were so blue and full of the sun. He looked so young and frail, in spite of the tired line of his mouth. I knew I was taking on more than I was ever likely to be capable of bearing, but there never seemed to be any choice.

ALISON: She's been poor almost all her life, and she's frankly ignorant. I'm quite aware how snobbish that sounds, but it happens to be the truth.

ALISON: It was the only way of escaping from everything – a sort of unholy priest-hole of being animals to one another. We could become little furry creatures with little brains.

Full of dumb, uncomplicated affection for each other. Playful, careless creatures in their own cozy zoo for two. A silly symphony for people who couldn't bear the pain of being human beings any longer. And now, even they are dead, poor little silly animals. They were all love, and no brains.

ALISON: Oh yes, we all know what you did for me! You rescued me from the wicked clutches of my family, and all my friends! I'd still be rotting away at home, if you hadn't ridden up on your charger, and carried me off!

JIMMY: The funny thing is, you know, I really did have to ride up on a white charger – off white, really. Mummy locked her up in their eight-bedroomed castle, didn't she? There is no limit to what the middle-aged mummy will do in the holy crusade against ruffians like me.

She wouldn't hesitate to cheat, lie, bully and blackmail. Threatened with me, a young man without money, background or even looks, she'd bellow like a rhinoceros in labour – enough to make every male rhino for miles turn white, and pledge himself to celibacy.

JIMMY: My God, those worms will need a good dose of salts the day they get through her! Oh what a bellyache you've got coming to you, my little wormy ones! Alison's mother is on the way! She will pass away, my friends, leaving a trail of worms gasping for laxatives behind her – from purgatives to purgatory.

JIMMY: One day, when I'm no longer spending my days running a sweet-stall, I may write a book about us all. It's all here. Written in flames a mile high. And it won't be recollected in tranquility either, picking daffodils with Auntie Wordsworth. It'll be recollected in fire, and blood. My blood.

JIMMY: Progress, the old firm, is selling out! Everyone get out while the going's good. Those forgotten shares you had in the old traditions, the old beliefs are going up – up and up and up.

She's moved long ago into a lovely cottage of the soul, cut right off from the ugly problems of the twentieth

century altogether. She prefers to be cut off from all the conveniences we've fought to get for centuries. She'd rather go down to the ecstatic little shed at the bottom of the garden to relieve her sense of guilt. Our Helena is full of ecstatic wind – aren't you?

JIMMY: At the end of twelve month, I was a veteran. All that that feverish failure of a man had to listen to him was a small, frightened boy, I spent hour upon hour in that tiny bedroom. 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. 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.

JIMMY: But that girl there can twist your arm off with her silence. I've sat in this chair in the dark for hours. And, although she knows I'm feeling as I feel now, she's turned over, and gone to sleep.

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.

CLIFF: I've been a – a no man's land between them. Sometimes, it's been still and peaceful, no incidents, and we've all been reasonably happy. But most of the time, it's simply a very narrow strip of plain hell. But where I come from, we're used to brawling and excitement. Perhaps I even enjoy in the thick of it. I love these two people very much. And I pity all of us.

JIMMY: She looked at it, and the tears just welled up in her eyes, and she said: "But she's so beautiful!" She kept repeating it is if she couldn't believe it. Sounds a bit simple and sentimental when you repeat it. But it was pure gold and the way she said it.

Scene Two

COLONEL: I don't know. We were all to blame, in our different ways. No doubt Jimmy acted in good faith. He's honest enough, whatever else he may be. And your mother – in her heavy-handed way, as you put it – acted in good faith as well. Perhaps you and I were the ones most to blame.

ALISON: 'Poor old Daddy – just one of those sturdy old plants left over from the Edwardian Wilderness that can't understand why the sun isn't shining any more.'

COLONEL: I 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 challengers and revenge. I just can't believe that love between men and women is really like that.

COLONEL: Those long, cool evenings up in the hills, everything purple and golden. Your mother and I were so happy then. It seemed as though we had everything we could ever want. I think the last day the sun shone was when the dirty little train steamed out of that crowded, suffocating Indian station, and the battalion band playing for all it was worth. I knew in my heart it was all over then. Everything.

HELENA: You're his friend, aren't you? Anyway. He's not what you'd call reticent about himself, is he? I've never seen so many souls stripped to the waist since I've been here.

JIMMY: Alison'. Oh, how could she be so bloody wet! Deep loving need! That makes me puke! She couldn't say 'You rotten bastard! I hate your guts, I'm clearing out, and I hope you rot!' No, she has to make a polite, emotional mess out of it!

Act Three

JIMMY: After all, it wouldn't do if we was all alike, would it? It'd be a funny world if we was all the same, that's what I always say! All I know is that somebody's been sticking pins into *my* wax image for years. Of course: Alison's mother! Every Friday, the wax arrives from Harrod's and all through the weekend, she's stabbing away at it with a hatpin! Ruined her bridge game, I dare say.

JIMMY: Do you feel sin crawling out of your ears, like stored up wax or something? Are you wondering whether I'm joking or not? Perhaps I ought to wear a red nose and funny hat. I'm just curious, that's all.

JIMMY: I was a liberal skinny weakling. I too was afraid to strip down to my soul, but now everyone looks at my superb physique in envy. I can perform any kind of press there is without betraying the least sign of passion or kindness.

JIMMY: No, of course it's not the same, you idiot! It never is! Today's meal is always different from yesterday's and the last woman isn't the same as the one before. If you can't accept that, you're going to be pretty unhappy, my boy.

JIMMY: Why, why, why, why do we let these women bleed us to death? Have you ever had a letter, and on it is franked 'Pleased Give Your Blood Generously? Well, the Postmaster-General does that, on behalf of all the women of the world. I suppose people of our generation aren't able to die for good causes any longer.

JIMMY: Right from that 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.

JIMMY: 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.

JIMMY: We'll get pleasantly, joyfully tiddly, we'll gaze at each other tenderly and lecherously in 'The Builder's Arms', and then we'll come back here, and I'll make such love to you, you'll not care about anything else at all.

Scene Two

ALISON: Because it was unfair and cruel of me to come back, I'm afraid a sense of timing is one of the things I seem to have learnt from Jimmy. But it's something that can be in very bad taste. I felt like a criminal. I told myself I'd turn round at the other end, and come straight back. I couldn't even believe that this place existed any more. But once I got here, there was nothing I could do. I had to convince myself that everything I remembered about this place had really happened to me once.

ALISON: 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.

HELENA: When I saw you standing there tonight, I knew that it was all utterly wrong. That I didn't believe in any of this, and not jimmy or anyone could make me believe otherwise. How could I have ever thought I could get away with it! He wants one world and I want another, and lying in that bed won't ever change it!

HELENA: When you came in at that door, ill and tired and hurt, it was all over for me. You see – I didn't know about the baby. It was such a shock. It's like a judgement on us.

JIMMY: It's no good trying to fool yourself about love. You can't fall into it like a soft job, without dirtying up your hands. It takes muscle and guts. And if you can't bear the thought of messing up your nice, clean soul, you'd better give up on the whole idea of life, and become a saint.

JIMMY: The injustice of it is almost perfect! The wrong people going hungry, the wrong people being loved, the wrong people dying!

The heaviest, strongest creatures in this world seem to be the loneliest. Like the old bear, following his own breath in the dark forest. There's no warm pack, no herd to comfort him. Do you remember that first night I saw you at that grisly party? You didn't really notice me, but I was watching you all the evening. You seemed to have a wonderful relaxation of spirit. I knew that was what I wanted. You've got to be really brawny to have that kind of strength – the strength to relax.

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. 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!

JIMMY: We'll be together in our bear's cave, and our squirrel's drey, and we'll live on honey, and nuts – lots and lots of nuts. And we'll sing songs about ourselves – about warm trees and snug caves, and lying in the sun. And you'll keep those big eyes on my fur, and help me keep my claws in order, because I'm a bit of a sippy, scruffy sort of a bear. And I'll see that you keep that sleek, bushy tail glistening as it should, because you're a very beautiful squirrel, but you're none too bright either, so we've got to be careful. There are cruel steel traps lying about everywhere, just waiting for rather mad, slightly satanic, and very timid little animal. Right?

Notes

1. *Midland.*: the central part of England.
2. *attic*: a room at the top of a house directly under the roof.
3. *landing*: the level part of a staircase between flights of steps.
4. *skylight*: a window in a roof or ceiling.
5. *tweed*: woollen cloth with a rough surface.
6. *flannels*: trousers made of loosely woven woollen cloth or similar material.
7. *disconcerting*: surprising and upsetting.
8. *freebooting*: random and almost uncontrolled.
9. *importunate*: annoyingly persistent.
10. *blistering*: fiery, strong enough to disturb.
11. *loudmouth*: one who boasts in an unpleasant manner.
12. *vehement*: very assertive, passionate.
13. *To be as vehement as he is* : The author implies that a person who always talks aggressively may not be committed to any idea or viewpoint.
14. *exact it*: obtain it by pressure.
15. *counterpoint* : total contrast.
16. *polyphony*: uneasy combination of different elements. The term is used in music to describe a composition combining a variety of sounds, apparently not in harmony.
17. *She is turned in a different key.* : Alison is very different from Jimmy and Cliff, suffering from ‘well-bred malaise’, i.e. the sickness or weakness resulting from being well brought-up. She cannot cope with Jimmy’s aggressive behaviour. Her personality is in contrast to the ‘robust orchestration’, that is, harmonious vitality of the other two.
18. *grubby*: somewhat unclean.
19. *equivocation*: avoiding frank and honest statements or behaviour.
20. *not arf*: not really or not at all, suggesting contempt.
21. *While Woman’s Burden* : This is an ironic variation of White Man’s Burden which means, in the history of Colonialism, the responsibility to ruling the colonised. Jimmy is angry because Alison, like so many of her class, seems uninterested in serious ideas.
22. *Old Porter talks* : Jimmy complains that people don’t take an interest in his talk but respond even to a yawn by Alison! He implies that it is so because she belongs to a higher class than he does.
23. *Welsh Ruffian*: a violent, brutal person from Wales, which is on the mid-west coast of England.
24. *You’ll end up in the “News of the World, .. boyo,* : There will be some scandal about you and it will be reported in the kind of newspaper that gives prominence to scandals.
25. *boyo*: affectionately critical term for boy.
26. *bound over*: colloquial for imprisoned.

27. *Builder's Arm.* : name of a pub, a place where alcoholic drinks are served.
28. *black-outs* : a condition in which a person appears to lose consciousness.
29. *guzzled*: swallowed food or drink greedily.
30. *Girl here wants to know...* : reference to a letter in a Personal Advice Column of a newspaper, asking for an expert opinion on a sexual situation.
31. *Bishop of Bromley* : a church correspondent in the newspaper. Bromley is a Greater London diocese.
32. *dullin* : slang for darling.
33. *nom de plume*: pen name.
34. *evangelist*: a person who preaches Christianity, especially at large public meetings.
35. *Earl's Court*: a district of S.W. London
36. *yobs*: rough, dirty, bad-mannered persons.
37. *Hallelujah*: song of praise to God; used ironically here.
38. *Edwardian twilight*: end of King Edward VII's reign (1901-1911); a period characterised by complacency of the socially privileged.
39. *disenfranchised wilderness*: a place in which one is deprived of the right to vote; metaphorically, without any influence. one whose voice is no longer heard.
40. *slinks the place out*: fills the place with a dirty smell.
41. *ulcers*: sores that do not heal easily, on the skin or inside the body.
42. *Vaughan Williams*: (1872-1958) eminent British composer.
43. *Port Said*: a port and fuelling station at the Mediterranean end of Egypt. An implication of sleaziness.
44. *The old Edwardian brigade. . . pretty tempting*: The conservative upper class made their former narrow environment seem attractive.
45. *croquet*: a game in which wooden balls are driven by long-handled wooden hammers through a series of hoops fixed in the ground. The game was once popular among the English upper classes.
46. *phoney*: not genuine, false, full of pretence.
47. *he's got bite, edge, drive*: he is capable of thinking sharply and effectively; has the determination to get things done.
48. *Proper little Marchbanks*: the comparison is with a character in Shaw's play *Candida* who fell in love with a woman (Candida) much older than himself.
49. *naive nosiness*. - childlike curiosity.
50. *Ulysses*: the hero in the Greek epic *The Odyssey* attributed to Homer. An ironic reference to a long epic journey.
51. *A sort of female Emily Bronte*': the *author of Wuthering Heights*, a novel of tempestuous passion, written under a male pseudonym. 'A female Emily Bronte' is an ironic tautology.
52. *there's a shower for you*: Jimmy considers Alison's friends 'wet', that is uninteresting, dull.
53. *That blooming droning*: that damned noise (the concert on the radio).
54. *sadist*: one who gets pleasure in being cruel to others.
55. *Sandhurst*: The popular name for the Royal Military Academy (1802) of Great Britain. formerly at Sandhurst. Berkshire. but since 1947 at Camberley, Surrey.

56. *Well-bred commonplaces* : polite and superficially cultured but rather ordinary statements.
57. *bowler hat* : a type of hard, round felt hat.
58. *The Platitude: from Outer Space*: a platitude is a statement of something ‘obvious and trivial, said many times before but made as if it were new and important. The reference to outer space suggests a thin, insubstantial creature, hardly real.
59. *he’ll make it*: he will be a success.
60. *shakily triumphant*: successful without confidence.
61. *draw blood somehow*: succeed in creating the effect he has in mind, which is to shock and upset.
62. *Marquess of Queensberry*: the Marquess of Queensberry (1844-1900) established the code of rules governing modern boxing. The implication here is that despite the civilised outward manner the individual will observe no rules of civilised conduct.
63. *sycophantic*: flattering behaviour with the intention of gaining some advantage for oneself.
64. *phlegmatic*: not easily moved or excited.
65. *pusillanimous*: cowardly, weak, incapable of action.
66. *the Games*: public entertainments organised by the Ancient Romans.
67. *beefcake Christians*: muscular Christians, i.e., solid. Fundamental, unwavering Christians.
68. *stereophonic*: of recorded Or broadcast sound giving the effect of coming from different directions.
69. *feed ourselves to a couple of lions* : referring to the Ancient Roman pastime of feeding the Early Christians to lions in their amphitheatres.
70. *The iron mingles with the music*: the electricity on which the irons interferes with the music from the radio.
71. *patronise*: a way of behaving towards another which is kind and friendly but indicates that one is superior.
72. *grimacing*: twisting the face.
73. *ingenious*: inventive.
74. *Miss Drury*: the landlady.
75. *takes in*: convinces, though not honestly.
76. *swinging on those bloody bells*: being emotionally aroused; enjoying something.
77. *Do you come here often?*: Cliff pretends comically that Jimmy is a single woman at a public dance.
78. *Only in the mating season*: Jimmy replies ironically as if he is a single woman, though such a woman wouldn’t confess she is in search of a husband.
79. *Do you think bosoms will be in or out, this year?*: Will it be in or out of fashion for women to reveal or to conceal their bosoms? Alternatively, whether the size of bosoms will determine the male response to women.
80. *Your teeth will be out....*: Stop harassing me with your questions or I’ll break your teeth.
81. *getting close to breaking point....*: about to collapse or to become violent under pressure.
82. *infallible* : incapable of making a mistake, always right.
83. *vulnerable* : in this context, easily hurt, sensitive.
84. *trying to kill him in the worst way of all*: making him accept their relationship because of the pregnancy; making him conform to the expectations of society; destroying his real personality and convictions.
85. *loose*: freewheeling, morally unscrupulous, promiscuous.

86. *common*: low, vulgar.
87. *Puritan* : one who is excessively strict, precise in religion or morals.
88. *slobbering* : literally, to let saliva dribble from the mouth; metaphorically, to seem overflowing with sentiment.
89. *randy* : full of uncontrollable sexual desire.
90. *mourris dance*: Cliff distorts the word *Morris*, which is the name of a dance that originated in Medieval times and now is performed at festivals, to *mourris* so as to suggest mouse - a Morris dance done by a mouse, so to speak, as he explains later.
91. *whimsy*: odd or fanciful.
92. *halfwit*: half-mad.
93. *half a crown*: a coin worth 2s 6d before the UK went metric; hence a coin of low value.
94. *That's my boy*: That's the kind of person I like.
95. *a lot of old-stock*: The conventional way of his parents and ancestors asserting itself in Jimmy which, he adds immediately, "Nobody wants".
96. *I know what I want now*: i.e. sex.
97. *You'll have to wait till the proper time*: i.e. at night, when we go to bed.
98. *There's no such thing*: There is no fixed time for sex.
99. *mimes*: using movement to perform the functions of speech.
100. *"expense of spirit" lark*: Quoted from a sonnet by Shakespeare
- 'The expense of spirit in a waste of shame
Is lust in action.'
Jimmy calls it a lark, i.e., a piece of fun or mischief.
101. *a scoutmaster*: one who is likely to be conventionally' moral and to preach morals.
102. *Gide*: Andre Gide (1860-1951), French author, who wrote frankly about his homosexuality.
103. *Greek Chorus; boys*: they are believed to have been homosexual.
104. *he's like a man with a strawberry mark*- He's like a man with a strawberry-coloured birthmark of discolouration on the face; who is self-conscious about it.
105. *Michelangelo Brigade*: men who are alike the Renaissance artists who were supposed to be homosexuals.
106. *right-wing deviatianist*: a conservative who disagrees with the conservative establishment.
107. *the Revolution* : a sexual revolution in which opponents of homosexuality win be shot.
108. *predatory*: living by attacking and feeding on others.
109. *Hippodrome*: name of a theatre.
110. *digs*: (colloquial) inexpensive accommodation.
111. *She just devours me whole every time*: Every time we have sex she seems to eat me up, i.e. reduces me to something impersonal. She does not change as a result of the experience. She returns to her conventional way of thinking, feeling and behaviour.
112. *tripes*: parts of the stomach of a cow or sheep, used as food; the reference here is to Alison's intestines, which Jimmy describes as "distended, overfed".
113. *slip*: a kind of undergarment.
114. *intermittent*: stopping for a while and starting again.

115. *matriarchal*: like a mother who dominates a family.
116. *rabble-rousing instincts*: urge to use words and phrases which will excite listeners.
117. *catcalls*: shrill whistles indicating disagreement or disapproval.
118. *salad colander*: a bowl with small holes in it for draining water from salad, vegetables, etc.
119. inhibiting: repressive, causing inability to relax and to express one's feelings in an open and natural way.
120. *allegiances* : loyalties, Jimmy is loyal to Cliff and will not be suspicious of his relationship with Alison.
121. *literal*: following the exact meaning with no exaggeration and nothing added by the imagination.
122. *fluke*: something that happens by chance.
123. "comes down" : a phrase denoting that a student has left a university; used only in relation to students of the best English Universities such as Oxford and Cambridge.
124. *red brick*: universities founded in England from the late nineteenth century onwards and so without a long tradition or learning and cultural values. The term comes from the building material or the time.
125. *white tile* : not even as good as the red-brick universities; virtually without intellectual standards.
126. *warehouse* : a building in which goods are stored.
127. *tight* : slightly drunk.
128. *port* : a kind of strong, dark-red, sweet wine.
129. *burnt my boats* : destroyed any means of retreating.
130. *brawling* : quarrelling.
131. *squeamish* : easily shocked.
132. *snobbish*: inclined to admire people of high rank or social class and to look down upon those of a lower class.
133. *hostage* : a person who is held prisoner as a guarantee that certain demands, conditions of any agreement etc. are carried out.
134. *W. I. S. W. I. etc.* : Postal codes for some of the more affluent London districts.
135. *gate crash* : go to a party, meeting etc., without being invited or without paying.
136. *the silver* : anything made of or looking like silver, specially knives, forks, spoons, etc.
137. *guerrilla warfare* : wars conducted by small groups, generally outside the regular army, who make sudden attacks on the enemy.
138. *that did it* : I made my final decision to marry Jimny because the family objected to it so strongly. (If it had left me alone, I might have changed my mind!)
139. 'the *knight in shining armour* : the fighter for a cause, with high ideals.
140. *cronies* : friends, close companions.
141. *Dame Alison's Mob*: a sarcastic reference to Alison's high society upbringing contrasting with her working-class marriage.
142. *The New Millennium* : a millennium is a period of thousand years. The reference here is to a New Age or Utopia likely to last for a long time.
143. *menagerie* : a place with a collection of wild animals.
144. *fey* : with homosexual tendencies.
145. *boyo* : affectionate substitute for the word boy.
146. *blinkin* : slang term for damned.

147. *washes over you* : has no effect on you.
148. *trash* : something worthless.
149. *Blimey* : a vulgar interjection of surprise or contempt.
150. *fugue* : a piece of music in which a tune is repeated by different parts of an orchestra or by voices.
151. *spinster* : an unmarried woman, specially one who is past the usual age for marrying.
152. *You know your trouble. son? Too anxious to please* : Jimmy is imitating Cliff's father giving advice to his son.
153. *meringues* : very sweet cakes made of sugar and egg-white.
154. *tom-toms* : small drums.
155. *top of the bill* : above all.
156. *religious angle* : some religious ideas, words and phrases.
157. *a big hit* : a great success.
158. *necking* : kissing and embracing.
159. *pecking* : a quick kiss.
160. *blues* : low spirits, depression.
161. *booze* : liquor.
162. *hetero* : heterosexual.
163. *metero* : the word metro, which means underground railway in London, is extended to rhyme with hetero.
164. *perpetual* : constant.
165. *whoring* : going after prostitutes.
166. *python coil* : deadly embrace.
167. *celibate* : doing without sex.
168. *theology* : study of or system of religion.
169. *slosh of* : tone and influence of.
170. *the theology of Dante with a good slosh of Eliot*: Dante Alighieri (1265-1321), the great Italian renaissance author of *The Divine Comedy*. and T.S. Eliot (1886-1965), the distinguished twentieth century Anglo-American poet; both representatives of high culture; thus models for emulation.
171. *Cess Pool* : for collecting waste or sewage.
172. *rise to the bait* : like a fish (be tempted to criticise him, which is what he wants).
173. *Lady Bracknell...* : a large and formidable prospective mother-in-law in Oscar Wilde's play *The Importance of Being Ernest* who interviews her son-in-law to be over tea and cucumber sandwiches.
174. *charger* : a war horse.
175. *off white* : a colour near white.
176. *crusade* : a continued effort to help a good cause, derived from the military expeditions of Christians to win back the Holy Land from the Turks.
177. *chivalry* : kindness towards women, a higher standard of politeness towards them than towards men, derived from the medieval knightly social code.
178. *guzzler* : one who swallows food or drink greedily.
179. *He clutches wildly* : he tries desperately to think of something.

180. *matelot's arm* : French for a sailor's arm.
181. *cistern* : a tank for storing water.
182. *get me into the News of the World* : find a scandal about me which can be reported in the newspaper of that name, which focuses heavily on scandals.
183. *tricked out* : pretentiously equipped.
184. *caparisoned* : colourfully dressed in some old historical style.
185. *mare* : a female horse; a reference to a Nursery Rhyme "The Old Grey Mare, she ain't what she used to be".
186. *brawl* : to quarrel noisily.
187. *genuflecting* : bowing in an exaggerated way, showing excessive respect for someone's opinions and wishes.
188. *sin jobber* : one who helps another with various kinds of jobs for payment, in this case to the extent of committing sins.
189. *he brakes for a fresh spurt later* : he pauses before bursting out again.
190. *He's saving his strength for the knock-out* : He controls himself so that he will be able to hit hard to the point of defeating his opponent in argument.
191. *those worms will need.....* : even the worms in Alison's body will not get the salt they need to survive, because she has no salt in her (metaphorically, i.e. nothing strong).
192. *declamatory* : oratorical, as in a speech intended to sound dramatic, forceful.
193. *purgatory* : a place or state after death in which a soul is purified before it goes to heaven; any state of suffering or unpleasantness.
194. *She hasn't broken* : Alison is not wholly upset by Jimmy's remarks about her and her mother; her endurance has not collapsed.
195. *on the end of his line* : metaphorically, his fishing-line or rope at the end of which is the bait.
196. Written in flames a mile high: remembrances which are extraordinarily fiery.
197. Recollected in tranquility: Wordsworth's definition of how poetry is written.
198. picking daffodils with Auntie Wordsworth: Recent research indicates that Wordsworth's sister Dorothy made entries in her diary about their walks together in the Lake District, which inspired Wordsworth's poem "The Daffodils".
199. *expediency*: a practical necessity but not down with belief or conviction.
200. *the local registrar*: registrar of marriages (i.e. outside the church).
201. *spill the beans* : to tell what is expected to be secret.
202. *like a shot*: immediately.
203. *vicar*: priest.
204. *my best man* : a friend of the bridegroom who accompanies him to the church altar for the wedding services.
205. *to watch the execution carried out*: Jimmy maliciously describes the wedding as an execution.
206. *buzzed* : dizzy, exhausted, irritated.
207. *pew*: a seat or bench in a church.
208. *vestry* : a room in or near a church used by the clergy as a dressing room and for small meetings.

209. *He can smell blood again*: one more opportunity to be provocative.
210. *Saint in Dior's clothing*: Christian Dior, one of the popular fashion designers of our time. A saint would not wear fashionable clothes and would arouse suspicion if he or she did so.
211. *Sacred cow*: a person, idea or institution considered beyond criticism, derived from the Hindu veneration of the cow.
212. *dry up*: stop talking.
213. *pay off*: make it worthwhile.
214. *the Economics of the Supernatural*: a way of thinking about the world in which everything is explained in terms of the supernatural.
215. *apocalyptic*: relating to the end of the world.
216. *share pushers*: share sellers or promoters who hide the weaknesses of their case.
217. *a transfer of power*: from the system of ideas under the category of Reason and Progress to "The old traditions, the old beliefs" in the Supernatural.
218. *There's going to be a change over*: Jimmy describes (ironically) a possible change in the spiritual and religious ethos in terms of shares and dividends. etc.
219. *The Big crash*: The collapse of the beliefs considered modern (Reason and Progress. etc) The term is usually applied to the stock exchange, the prices of shares, the rates of interest, and so on.
220. *gilt-edged*: absolutely reliable.
221. *capital gain*: a term in economics which means an increase in the main sum of money and not only in the rate of interest.
222. *The Dark Ages*: the period (5th - 8th centuries) of European history for a bad or chaotic period, here ironically.
223. *ecstatic*: intensely joyful.
224. *wind*: air of gas in the stomach.
225. *smouldering*: burning slowly.
226. *public school*: A British boarding-school, in this context, established as rule a long time ago and noted for its intellectual standards, devotion to traditional morals, manners, etc.
227. *scruples*: a feeling to hesitation or doubt about doing something because one thinks or knows that it might be wrong, or unkind to do it.
228. *cash in on*: take advantage of.
229. *just plain Irish*: the Irish are said to be more outspoken than the English.
230. *a pretty bad case of virginity*: metaphorically, a case of ignorance, lack of experience, etc.
231. *the war in Spain*: the Spanish Civil War (1936-39)
232. *a veteran*: one who is old and experienced (Jimmy uses the word ironically).
233. *bravado*: a show of daring but not real bravery.
234. *Judas*: Judas Iscariot. one of the 12 Apostles, who is said to have betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver.
235. *phlegm*: thick, slimy liquid brought up from the throat by coughing.
236. *He's drawn blood at last*: he has been successful in his attempt to provoke.
237. *twist your arm off*: do something very cruel.
238. *hysterical*: uncontrolled in speech and behaviour, often without adequate reasons.

239. *grovel* : to make oneself excessively humble because one wants something.
240. *I want the front seat*: I want to have a clear view of it.
241. *see your face rubbed in the mud*: see you humiliated.
242. *raving* : talking and behaving as if mad.
243. *got a kick out of*: a pleasant thrill.
244. *hardly audible*: not clearly heard.
245. *speaks a different language*: has a different attitude, view-point, way of behaving.
246. *charwoman*: a woman employed in house-cleaning.
247. *heavy-handed*: clumsy, not very intelligent.
248. *take after me*: resemble me.
249. *sit on the fence*: avoid taking sides.
250. *trails off*: concludes rather weakly.
251. *blow-out*: a feast.
252. *Edwardian* : of or in relation to the reign of king Edward VII (1909-1911).
253. *sturdy old plants...sun isn't shining any more*: a survivor of the cosy reactionary background of the Edwardian era who can't understand why the former age of cosy comfort for the socially privileged has vanished.
254. *quite a turn of phrase*: a special way of using language which brings it alive, makes it more effective.
255. *the famous American question-you know the sixty-four dollar one*: a question that can't be answered at all or is very difficult to answer.
256. *uncomprehendingly*: without understanding.
257. *another Shelley...Shelley had a romantic marriage with Mary, daughter of the philosopher William Godwin, who did not approve of it.*
258. *barbarian*: rough, wild or uncultured person.
259. *throws down the gauntlet at me*: challenges me.
260. *mystified*: puzzled, confused.
261. *why the sun isn't shining any more*: why life is not enjoyable.
262. *the Blimps*: people who resemble Colonel Blimp, a die-hard reactionary named after a cartoon character representing a pompous, obese old man.
263. *the stall*: the sweet-stall, which Cliff and Jimmy manage jointly to earn a living.
264. *cock-eyed*: in the state of confusion.
265. *nut-house*: mad-house.
266. *reticent*: reserved, withdrawn.
267. *souls stripped to the waist*: half-naked souls, persons who reveal what they think and feel without any respect for social conventions.
268. *tart*: a prostitute or a Woman who behaves like one.
269. *old mother Drury*: a mocking reference to the elderly landlady Mrs. Drury.
270. *rams*: pushes it hard.
271. *snorts*: forces air noisily through the nostrils.

272. *bloody wet*: disgustingly insensitive.
273. *puke*: vomit.
274. *soggy*: wet and soft.
275. *sordid*: dirty, unpleasant .
276. *aria*: a song for one voice in an opera. Jimmy means that he is not going to make a fuss, not dramatise...
277. *the dirty ones...the posh ones*: the poor and the rich.
278. *wet round the mouth*: cowardly in speech.
279. *grotesque* : very odd, almost ugly.
280. *the old place* : the Midlands,, familiar place.
281. *invocations*: appeals, to summon a spirit into the mind.
282. *the Coptic Goddess of fertility*: the Goddess of a primitive culture, supposed to be responsible for the conception and birth of children.
283. *depraved*: evil, corrupt.
284. *rather us*: somewhat like us.
285. *snarling*: becoming confused.
286. *debutante*: a girl making her first formal appearance at a gathering in upper-class society.
287. *orgy*: a wild party or celebration.
288. *cockerel*: a young cock.
289. *Fortnums*: a well-known department store in London.
290. *a roaring line*: successful sales.
291. *a stint*: a short appearance.
292. *Y.W.*:YWCA Young Women's Christian Association.
293. *a workout*: some practice.
294. *dabbled in* : attempted in an experimental sort of way.
295. *Your cup of tea*: the kind of thing you would enjoy.
296. *accent*: a special way of pronouncing words in a particular area or way of life.
297. *Sticking pins into my wax image*: reference to the superstition that if you stick pins in a wax image of someone, he or she will experience bad luck, suffer financially or in health.
298. *Harrods*: a famous department store in London, with many branches.
299. *Kidding*: deceiving.
300. *brooding*: thinking anxiously or with great seriousness.
301. *excursion*: a trip, an outing (used metaphorically to describe Jimmy's long speech about why people make sacrifices).
302. *Dry up*: Stop talking.
303. *cochineal*: a scarlet dye used in colouring food.
304. *a long letter....*: in the newspaper Jimmy has been reading.
305. *artificial insemination*: making a woman pregnant by non-natural means.
306. *whether Milton wore braces or not*: a sarcastic reference to the english preoccupation with literary correspondence in the major newspapers, largely concerned with inconsequential, or downright farcical matters.

307. *who gets shot down*: whose argument is destroyed by a counter-argument.
308. *A Fellow of All Souls*: a Fellow is a distinguished instructor in a college; All souls is in Oxford.
309. *bitten the dust*: been humiliated in argument.
310. *the Athenaeum* : probably a reference to a London club founder in 1824 for men of distinction in literature, art and learning.
311. *acquiring yourself a curiosity*: learning to be curious in matters of knowledge.
312. *Yale*: an eminent and well-known American university.
313. *When Shakespeare was writing the Tempest he changed his sex*: referring sarcastically to the far-fetched and sensational research thesis of American literary scholars.
314. *second best bed*: other than the one shared with one's marital partner.
315. *Old W.S. ended up .. three children by him*: a continuation of the whimsy mentioned above. Actually, Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway, and had three children. He left Anne his second-best bed in his will.
316. *quizzically*: as if asking a question.
317. *mark it down*: consider it.
318. *satanic glint*: a devilish gleam or sparkle.
319. *living in sin*: a sexual relationship without being married.
320. *Reverend*: a Christian priest.
321. *Parson*: a Christian priest in charge of a parish (organised neighbourhood).
322. *Spiritual beefcake*: moral and spiritual ideas which are not reliable or convincing but have a good "teste".
323. *moral weight-lifting*: exercises with moral ideas which have been traditionally accepted.
324. *a liberal skinny weakling*: one who believes in democracy, tolerance, progress, reason and so on, but without much conviction.
325. *physique*: the structure of the body, here intended to mean the structure of the soul.
326. *any kind of press*: perform any action.
327. *uplift*: a high moral and spiritual condition.
328. *tumbling over*: discussing.
329. *change the record*: don't repeat yourself.
330. *pipe down*: stop talking or talk less.
331. *catchy*: attractive, likely to be popular.
332. *scrub*: cancel, drop.
333. *Jock and Day*: the names of the two main characters in the musical Jimmy is composing.
334. *"And jocund day..."* a quotation from Wordsworth.
335. *that peculiar man's plays... have finished with him*: the thorough literary analysis of Jimmy Porter's plays by academic intellectuals.
336. *snappy*: smart, short and crisp.
337. *T.S. Eliot and Pam*: T.S. Eliot, the distinguished modern Anglo-American intellectual and poet, and Pam Ayres, the pop poet. An incongruous pair.
338. *falling in* : accepting and co-operating with.

339. *mellerdy*: melody, deliberately mispronounced for the sake of making it sound funny.
340. *rattles his lines off*: sings them very fast; unintelligible: not clear.
341. *a little Gidding*: ironic reference to one of T.S. Eliot's Four Quartets entitled "little Gidding" which is the name of an English village.
342. *gelding iron*: instrument used for gelding, i.e. castrating animals.
343. *perlease*: please, deliberately mispronounced for comic effect.
344. *stinks*: is worthless.
345. *a Flanagan and Allen*: a pair of music-hall comedians.
346. *Roedean*: a distinguished English public school for girls.
347. *ménage*: household.
348. *marge*: short form of margarine, a butter-like substance made mainly from vegetable fats.
349. *true blue*: who has real merit.
350. *gag*: joke
351. *wrench my guts*: sprain my ribs.
352. *oaf*: fool.
353. *Marlon Brando*: a Hollywood actor admired for his tough, manly appearance and style.
354. *to explain the score to you*: help you to assess the situation.
355. *scruffy*: dirty and untidy.
356. *Pinner or Guildford*: small English towns, known for their conventional morals and manners.
357. *gobbles you up*: swallows you, i.e. makes you resemble her in respectability.
358. *make out*: make a career.
359. *bleed us to death*: destroy our individuality.
360. *franked*: marked with a rubber-stamp.
361. *the big bang*: the atomic explosion.
362. *the old-fashioned, grand design*: the traditional social and moral ideal.
363. *Brave New*: reference to Aldous Huxley's novel (*Brave New World*) about an ideal society.
364. *butchered*: slaughtered, killed.
365. *glammed up*: dressed up glamorously.
366. *hit the town*: go into town to have an entertaining time.
367. *shroud over Mummy*: a cloth over the photograph of Alison's mother.
368. *Union Jack*: the British National flag.
369. *sloppy* : untidy.
370. *how to take it*: how to endure or accept harsh things said or done to him.
371. *how to hand it out*: how to hit back, in words and action.
372. *a good double*: a good pair.
373. *tiddly*; mildly drunk.
374. *lecherously*: with strong sexual desire.

375. *"The Builder's Arms"*: name of pub.
376. *St. Pancras*: one of the three major railway terminuses in London.
377. *charade*: a piece of ridiculous pretence which is so obvious that it does not deceive anyone.
378. *Suspended and rather remote*: not involved in whatever happens, with a sense of its unreality.
379. *don't bring out the book of rules*: don't refer to conventional notions of right and wrong.
380. *strong-arm stuff*: in this case, trying to assert your rights in a marriage.
381. *blackmailer*: one who seeks money or a favour by threatening to reveal something the victim wishes to keep secret.
382. *macabre*: horrible.
383. *breach*: gap, disturbance, conflict.
384. *He was born out of his time*: he is completely out of tune with the present age, belong to a different historic period.
385. *never amount to anything*: he will never be a success in any way.
386. *An Eminent Victorian*: the reference is to a famous book of biographical essays by Lytton Strachey entitled *Eminent Victorians*. Alison is obviously very confused about Jimmy who has nothing of the Victorian in him; no faith in reason, Progress, a society with high moral standards, etc.
387. *get away with it*: succeed in reconciling Jimmy's way of life and ideas with mine.
388. *hold court*: assemble people and pass judgement on those he dislikes as if they are "the accused" in a law case.
389. *like one of the Renaissance popes*: in Helena's statement they represent the all powerful. There is irony in Jimmy, with his anti-religion slant, being compared to the popes.
390. *a kind of cross between*: an odd combination of.
391. *courtesan*: a prostitute.
392. *henchwoman*: a faithful supporter or follower who will engage in dishonest practices: a principal attendant.
393. *Cleopatra*: Cleopatra VII (9-30 BC), queen of Egypt, mistress of Julius Caesar and later Mark Antony, representing a powerful, attractive, dominating personality.
394. *Boswell*: James Boswell (1740-95) biographer of Dr. Johnson; a respectful, admiring person devoted to another's life and work.
395. *wrenching*: pulling with a violent movement.
396. *Jimmy (off)*: his voice is heard but the audience can't see him.
397. *dark plots*: plans for doing something evil.
398. *draw a diagram*: explain the simple and obvious.
399. *They all want to escape*.. This is one of Jimmy's central convictions. That one must face life's sufferings and cope with them.
400. *hot-house feeling* : artificial feelings, not genuine, apparently strong but not really sincere.
401. *like of soft job*: a situation in which there are no serious problems.
402. *muscle and guts*: strength of mind and courage.
403. *the injustice*....the wrong people dying. Life is full of underserved suffering.
404. *as powerful as itself*: equal vitality in people, relationships, work experience, etc.
405. *The heaviest...the loneliest*: an independent mind is alone, since few mind are genuinely independent.

406. *warm pack, herd...*: company.
407. *The voice that cries out...*: that expresses its sufferings.
408. *grisly*: horrible, unpleasant.
409. *brawny*: muscular as applied metaphorically to the mind.
410. *sweat your guts out*: work hard, think intensely till you arrive at your basic convictions.
411. *a hair out of place, or....*: you've never been really disturbed in your mind.
412. *I may be a lost cause*: isolated, unsuccessful, with ideas shared by very few people, etc.
413. *I don't want to be a saint...*: Alison asserts Jimmy's values.
414. *splash about in*: experience all the time, remain familiar with, not avoid for the sake of mental comfort and security.
415. *this is what he wanted from me!*: he wanted me to know suffering as it really is.
416. *I'm groveling*: begging for something with excessive humility, respect and fear.
417. *bear's cave and ...*: Jimmy sees himself as a bear living happily with Alison as squirrel, each acknowledging the nature of the other.
418. *drey*: a squirrel's nest.
419. *snug*: warm and comfortable.
420. *soppy*: foolishly sentimental.
421. *Scruffy*: dirty and untidy.
422. *none too bright*: not very intelligent.
423. *satanic*: evil.
424. *Poor squirrels!... Poor bears!* Jimmy and Alison, each recognises and feels a kind of a affectionate pity about the essential nature of the other.

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