

# Resentment in John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*<sup>1</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

Resentment is a personal and social phenomenon illustrated widely in John Osborne's masterpiece, *Look Back in Anger*. The central idea of Osborne's illustration of this phenomenon is to present the dissatisfaction of the English individual with the political, economic and the religious situation of the time. The study deals with the term, resentment and how it is presented through the major characters so as to concentrate on the main issues discussed in the play.

The study consists of three sections and a conclusion. The first section introduces the term, resentment. It investigates its origin and definition with the intention of presenting a vivid picture of the term in particular and the events of the play in general.

The second section is mainly concerned with John Osborne as a member of The Young Angry Men and his life which have a great impact on his literary career. Young Angry Men is a group of British playwrights who appeared during the 1950s and 1960s. This section also presents the playwrights' ideas of the current circumstances of the period that are presented in their dramatic works.

The third section discusses resentment as a personal and social phenomenon in Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*. It shows how resentment is employed through the major characters of the play, especially Jimmy Porter over the society and the formal institutions in the play after being left wrecked and desolate in the period following the World War II. Finally, the conclusion sums up the results inferred from the investigation of resentment in the study.

**Keywords:** John Osborne, Resentment, Angry Young Men. Class.

## ORIGIN AND DEFINITION OF THE TERM OF RESENTMENT

Resentment is one of the human feelings. It is a harmful reaction because it begets damage on an individual or a surrounding. A person experiencing resentment suffers internally which is reflected on the external behavior. This study presents a clear explanation of the term, resentment, with the aim of discussing the origin, definition and the main reasons behind it.

The origin of the term resentment goes back to the French origin. Resentment is a noun which is derived from the French term *resentir* (Crabb; 1839, 40). *Resentir* can be divided linguistically into two parts; the prefix "re" and the root "sentir". The root *sentir* literary means "to feel", so, *resentir* means to "feel again" (Cooper; 2013, 109). Therefore, resentment means to have a feeling toward something. This feeling is an undesirable one in the sense that it has a negative effect on a specific subject or an issue. The

one who goes through a state of resentment will have a mixture of negative feelings which have a negative impact on his life in general and on his behavior in particular.

There is more than one way to define the term resentment. One of the short and succinct definition is presented by Merriam Webster Dictionary which defines it as "a feeling of indignant displeasure at something regarded as a wrong, insult or injury" (LeClaire; 2017, 111). This definition clarifies the term, resentment, which correlates it with displeasure in the sense that an individual going through a state of resentment is not satisfied with their own situation due to the act of injustice. Furthermore, resentment describes an attitude which arises often unconsciously from aggressive feelings frustrated by the sense of inferiority of one's situation (Santagelo; 329, 2003). It is clear that resentment is generated spontaneously when an individual feels being treated inferiorly or to be unprivileged in a specific situation.

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Resentment is also defined as "a feeling that shows annoyance. It is a combination of emotions, actions and thought patterns resulting from unresolved anger at an injustice" (Larsen; 1999, 43). This definition provides an appropriate connotation to the subject matter of resentment since it relates it to one of humans' feelings which causes irritation within the individual. In addition to this, it leads the individual to find themselves in a state of prejudice and inequality as a result of the unfair justice imposed by a person, a society or the form of government. Thus, an individual may experience resentment as a result of an action caused by another one; a citizen feels themselves undergoing injustice by an official at the top of the state. Another individual may have his own resentment as a result of a society. A whole society imposes specific restrictions which generate a gap between its classes. Thus, dividing it into two classes; the high class and the low class. The high class is the privileged while the low class is the deprived. For instance: the low class or the proletariat endure resentment as a result of injustice caused by the privileges that are available to the high class only. In this case, resentment is considered as a negative phenomenon of an individuals or a society as a whole.

Resentment is an undesirable trait of an individual. When someone passes through a state of resentment, he or she feels like an outcast who is rejected by a group or by a society. Another negative trait resulted from resentment is that it leads to isolation in the sense that a person finds himself alone and physically separated from other. Additionally, resentment leads to a state of frustration, a person who undergoes a state of resentment feels that no one identifies with him or no one understands his suffering. He is tired and exhausted and the whole burden is put on his shoulders. Consequently, resentment occurs when someone feels that he has been deprived from his own right.

A more comprehensive definition of resentment is introduced by Wilson and Davis. They define it as "an explicit feeling on animosity or antipathy toward a person or a group of people who are perceived to be unfair or unjust recipients of some outcome" (Mitchell and Covin; 2016, 20). This definition presents a clear picture of resentment. It signifies a strong negative feeling of dislike by an individual towards a group of individuals recognized as being unjust. As a result, a form hostility or enmity emerges between the oppressor and the oppressed. In literature in general and in drama in particular, the form of hostility or enmity between the oppressor and the oppressed is clearly portrayed and presented since it leads to the rising conflict between the two opposing forces in the literary work.

Resentment is totally based on the psychology of a person and his way of thinking. Thus, in drama,

characterization plays a crucial role in determining the success of the dramatic work. What is meant by characterization is that it is a literary device used in literature to highlight and explain the details about a character in a story (Deswal and Khanna; 2022, 69). A playwright should characterizes a character who is going to perform the role of being resentful as having the qualities of the negative emotions such as anger, annoyance, bitterness, hatred ...etc. Since the whole study is based on resentment in John Osborne's play, *Look Back in Anger*, a distinction should be made between the two terms; resentment and anger.

Both resentment and anger are negative emotions resulted from exposing to an unpleasant experience but the key difference between them is that resentment has a greater degree of longevity and force (Johnson; 2007, 58). It means that resentment lasts and takes duration more than anger. In other words, anger is an immediate emotional response to an upsetting situation on an objectionable event while resentment is not an urgent emotional response to a situation. It is based on a series of events. Another distinction between resentment and anger is that resentment does not cease quickly since it depends on a pile of previous experiences which leads to a form of culmination. Thus resentment has a greater impact on the individual than anger. Eventually, the term resentment will be applied to and explained in the next parts of the present study.

### JOHN OSBORN AS A YOUNG ANGRY MAN PLAYWRIGHT

The twentieth century period is considered as a period of turbulence in the sense that many changes, arguments and acts of violence take place especially after the period of the Second World War. The aftermath of war brings disastrous results such as destruction, death and unemployment which affect the life of people. People's life becomes arduous that they start to suffer physically and mentally.

Literary figures start to present the negative sides of life that affect people's livelihood and their ways of thinking. Since drama is mainly concerned with the representation of life on stage, playwrights succeed to convey the troubles of people's daily life vividly. In the 1950s and the 1960s, the British drama is flourished by a new tendency of realism. Playwrights are more concerned with the current situation of people by portraying their daily life. This new tendency is represented by a new generation of playwrights and writers known as angry young men.

The term, angry young men, refers to a group of literary movement including playwrights and novelists who become prominent in the period following the Second World War. The term is introduced by Leslie Allen Paul in his autobiography, *Angry Young Man*

(1951) "in which he describes his personal struggles with Marxism, class war, and religion" (Kastan; 2006, 44). So, Paul's personal struggles denote to the dissatisfaction and resentment of the angry young men. The term "angry young men" consists of two words: angry and young. The former refers to a group of revolutionary English writers who want to build their future in a society that imposes restrictions that prevent them to achieve their goals. This leads them react and attack the prevailing system of their country. The latter differentiates them as aspiring young people seeking social, economic and political in order to enhance the circumstances of their country.

The angry young men start to produce revolutionary plays which expose real events of the British life to the audience. They are intellectuals and their intellectuality attacks the social, economic and political customs caused by war. The angry young men's contribution to the English drama lays in their ability to depict the resentment of the English people who are tired of the policies of the government. These misleading policies treat people unfairly. Thus, a gap emerges between the low class and high class people. Since unemployment, poverty and psychological disorders are the normal consequences of war, the angry young men have received a wide acclaim by the English audience.

The two terms, angry young men and kitchen sink drama, are overlapped (Stephen; 2013,325) which means that they describe each other. There are many characteristics which distinguish the works of angry young men or the kitchen sink drama from the previous drama. Jeremy Black says that the kitchen sink drama "sought to be socially gritty: to deal with people in difficulties, and in commonplace milieu (2017, 105). Black means that all the angry young men writers spring from low or working class people. During their life, they have witnessed poverty which has an impetus to write about the difficulties of the low class people. They show resentment and dissatisfaction against with the contemporary institutions of the state in the sense that they express disrespect with British class system. Most of their plays deal with the themes of resentment, anger and frustration toward the bad results caused by war. The major characters in the plays of the angry young men attack the society and direct their attack to the authority. In addition to this, what characterizes the setting of the angry young men drama is the simple place such as an apartment or a shop which indicates the simplicity of the low class characters.

Throughout the twentieth century especially the period preceding the Second World War, playwrights usually concentrate on isolation of the individual in examining the psychology of a character in a dramatic work. Isolation is produced as a result of a tough experience that a character goes through. A character

in a dramatic work becomes isolated from others and usually encounters a state of apathy in which they have no desire in other people and the surrounding. Thus, the character keeps their worries and problems inside themselves. This is why the theme of silence is associated with the plays that deal with social, economic and political problems in the period preceding the Second World War. On the other hand, the angry young men writers deal with the psychology of the character differently. In the plays of the angry young men, a character who faces a social, economic or social discrimination does not conceal their problems inside. In this case, the theme of silence and isolation has no role in the angry young men drama. Characters go through a state of resentment as a result of a bad issue. Then, they reveal their resentment by attacking the authority. The themes shift from inwardly to outwardly of a character. This is why some find more pleasure in the plays of the angry young men movement than the previous ones.

Another noticeable characteristic in the plays of the angry young men is the clash between the past and the present in the psychology of the character. The characters have a nostalgic spirit to the past. The past is presented in the plays of the angry young men as fascinating. They resort to the past since it has a great impact on their existence. Most of the angry young men are educated people who hold university degrees. Hence, they did hard in the past to find suitable positions in the society so as to enhance their situations. Unfortunately, they did not succeed due to the political, economic and social system which hindered their progress. Moreover, this clash imposes a mixture of feelings inside psychology of the character. The character becomes resentful of the current situations and shows his resentment throughout the events of the dramatic work.

The major figures of the angry young men playwrights are John Osborne, Shelagh Delaney, Arnold Wesker and others. These playwrights share common features in their dramatic work since the premise of their plays is based on dissatisfaction and resentment of their current miserable situations. Nearly all of them have been raised in poor families. They are able to portray the image of resentment in their plays and succeed to depict the life of the working class people.

John Osborne (1929-1994) is one of prominent playwrights who are able to depict the character of the modern man skillfully. Through his intellectual depiction, he is able to give a clear picture of the English society in the post –World War II British drama. John Osborne is considered as the leader of angry young men movement. With his well-known plays, he is able to succeed in activating and motivating people's outlook towards social, economic and political change in the aftermath of the war.

Osborne was born in Fullham, London. His family sprang from a mediocre family; his father was "an advertising copywriter" (Heilpern; 2006, 26) who spent most of his life in a bad health condition that he was unable to manage his life properly. Osborne's mother was a barmaid, an occupation that Osborne himself did not desire. This leads to a mixture of feelings inside Osborne which will be reflected later on his life.

Matthew Carr says that Osborne is the one who "had a bleak childhood" (1998;58). His father died when he was twelve years old. The death of his father had a profound impact on his life which could be described as a turning point in his life. This is why he had witnessed resentment and indifference from the early age due to his loss of the patronage of his father. He was obliged to face the struggles of life alone since his time was a harsh one due to the difficult circumstances caused by the consequences of war such as devastation, unemployment and poverty. From that point, he started to build himself in order to secure the future. Then, he moved to spend his life with his mother.

Osborne was sent to public school to study. He got a scholarship at St. Michael's college, a private school in Devon. He himself had become a bad-tempered person when he hit his teacher's face. As a result of this, he was dismissed from school. After spending a period of time at home, Osborne started to work as industry trade journalist. Later, he exposed his interest in theatre as an assistant manager and an actor.

Throughout his career in theatre, Osborne shows his dissatisfaction and anger to the current situation in the life of the English Individual in the period following the Second World War. He starts to seek a way in which he can detect the defects and the shortcomings of the social, economic and especially the political regimes of his time that had influenced the life of people in general and the young in particular. Since drama is a way of presenting the life on stage, Osborne is able to present the events of his plays skillfully by manipulating social issues taken from the daily life. As mentioned earlier, people face difficulties in managing the necessities of their life due to the aftermath of war especially the middle class people who do not have good opportunities in their own society. This is why middle class people want to build their future by working hard so as to reach the social ladder but the end, all their efforts are in vain. As a result of this, a kind of discontent arises among middle class people with their own situation; this leads to resentment in the psyche of the low class people to the English formal institutions. These issues pave the way towards a new form of the English drama in the post-World War II. Osborne finds the theatre a fertile place to present his ideas in front of the audience.

Monhit. K. Ray describes Osborne as "the harbinger of a revolution in English drama" (2007, 411). The assumed description is closely related to the subject matter in the history of the English drama in the period followed the Second World War. The negative sides of war are obvious on the life of the English people. Therefore, Osborne searches for a new form of drama in which he could find meaning in life and make the English audience more interested in the new dramatic works presented on stage. This is why Osborne's dramatic works especially his masterpiece, *Look Back in Anger*, received a public recognition since the English audience are resentful from their own situation which leads them to be sympathized with the protagonist, Jimmy Porter, who worked hard to build himself but he could not due to some restrictions imposed upon him.

Osborne's success of being a revolutionary in the English drama is due to his manipulation of realism in his plays and specifically social realism. Like many of his contemporary writers, he employs realist issues in which most of public audience experience through their daily routines. He is able to stir the attention of the audience to discover their own problems. In addition to this, he uses a setting of the middle class people to set the events of his plays. This makes audience eager for knowing more about their problems which are presented on stage. Being emerged from middle class people who have witnessed the effects of war as a firsthand person, he is well aware of using the dramatic techniques that are in accordance with the prevailing tendency of the English audience.

Osborne is able to present the resentment and the dissatisfaction of the English people over their formal institutions through the employment of the dramatic techniques. Dramatic techniques are basically the skills that are used in the dramatic works to stimulate the audience's understanding of an idea presented in the story of a play. Dramatic techniques are important in the development of the plot, characters and ideas. They develop are also essential to make the audience understand the gist presented in the play. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the dramatic techniques in order to analyze the main issues raised in a play. Thus, Osborne employs the dramatic techniques in order to attract the attention the English audience in his producing revolutionary plays that deals with the problems of the middle class people who are resentful from their own situation. Penny MacFarlane says that dramatic techniques are used to provide emotional support in drama (2012; 35). Therefore, Osborne uses the technique of identification in his plays in order to make his audience in a complete involvement with the dramatic events presented on stage. The English audience get pleasure in the plays of Osborne since he has abandoned Brechtian's technique of alienation effect which cuts the line between the audience and the dramatic events on the stage. As a result of this, the

audience find the plays of Osborne more interesting. They identify and sympathize with the characters because they share the same experience of resentment with the characters of Osbornian plays.

### RESENTMENT IN JOHN OSBORNE'S *LOOK BACK IN ANGER*

As a pioneer of the angry young men movement, John Osborne is able to present the resentful image of the middle class people in his *Look Back in Anger* by using setting, characters and situations which are closely related to the life of the middle-class people. The play is set in 1957, a period followed the Second World War which has a great impact on the life of the English people in general and the middle class in particular. The action of the play mainly takes place in the Porters' one room

Jimmy Porter is an education and ambitious man, descended from a low class family marries Alison who belongs to high class society. They live together in a small flat with their friend, Cliff, who resides in a separate room beside. The play opens with Jimmy's reading of a newspaper while Alison is ironing clothes. Jimmy and Cliff work in working in a sweet stall, a job which is unsuitable for Jimmy's status. It is noted that Jimmy is unsatisfied with his own situation. He has graduated from college but his university degree does not allow him to get a suitable job and to be a member of high class people. He hates Alison's high status because he thinks that the high class people have deprived him from his own right. This is why he attacks his wife verbally and physically because she comes from the same class in which he hates.

Jimmy is lost in a society which does not grant him with what he deserves. As a result of this, he could not build his himself and achieve his dreams in the future. He finds himself in a difficult situation which leads him to be resentful like most of the young English generation during the 1950s. Jimmy's resentment affects his psychology and his way of behavior. He yearns to time of the past when Britain was once holding the world's leadership in which the English people were enjoying the wealth and the welfare of the country, but that time has passed and would never be repeated. This arouses Jimmy's resentment which is reflected on the action of the play.

From the very beginning of the play, Osborne uses the characterization of his protagonist, Jimmy Porter, and the setting to set the scene of the play and to present a deep insight of Jimmy to the audience when he says:

"Jimmy is tall, thin young man about twenty five, wearing a very worn tweed jacket and flannels. Clouds of smoke fill the room from the pipe he is smoking. He is a disconcerting

mixture of sincerity and cheerful malice"(Osborne: 1957, 9).

Osborne describes Jimmy Porter as "young man about twenty five" in which the protagonist is at the peak of his age and full of energy. He is ambitious person with old clothes. Hence, the playwright presents the thesis and the antithesis of the play which will shape the conflict of the story. A struggle between the thesis and antithesis inside the protagonist will lead to the synthesis. The thesis in Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* is Jimmy's ambition while the antithesis is his poverty. The synthesis of the play is resentment which is resulted from the main struggle between Jimmy's ambition and his poverty. This is why resentment is a crucial phenomenon which has a negative impact on the English individual in the aftermath of war.

The provided setting in *Look Back in Anger* symbolizes the life of the middle class English people. The furniture of the room is old which implies the mediocrity of its inhabitants. Middle class people are living under difficult situation in the sense that they are unable to make any good change in life though they have great zeal and ambition to advance their conditions. They do hard but the social, economic and political circumstances of the country impose restrictions which hinder their aspirations. These circumstances lead them to be resentful from their own situations. It is important to note that the English people are resentful from their situation in the period following the Second World War.

Symbols are extensively used in *Look Back in Anger*. Osborne describes the atmosphere of the Porters' room as filled with clouds of smoke caused by Jimmy's pipe. The clouds of smoke symbolize Jimmy's resentment which will shape the action of the play. Jimmy is resentful young man because he is unable to get a decent job which qualifies him to be a member of the high class people. His low class status does not allow him to get success in life. Jimmy is the representative of the young English generation who has witnessed the bad effects of the war in the middle of the twentieth century period. Jimmy's pipe is another important symbol used in the play. It symbolizes Jimmy's attempt to climb the social ladder in order to be a member of the high class people. The act of smoking escalates Jimmy's resentment toward himself and those around him.

Like the aspiring young English generation of his time, Jimmy is an energetic young man aspiring for a better future but unfortunately, he could not get success due to the restrictions of the social class. It is clear to note that a touch of resentment prevails among the generation of Jimmy's class. He tells Cliff "People like me don't get fat. I've tried to tell you before. We just burn everything up"(Osborne: 1957, 9). In the previous speech, Osborne presents Jimmy as the

typical example of the resentful English young generation who is incapable of achieving something good in their life. They could not move ahead in a society which does not provide them with the suitable conditions to advance in life. In spite of their hard works and arduous efforts, they still the same: no more success and no more prosperity. They are overwhelmed by resentment since they stay consumers not producers in their own country.

Osborne presents a clear image of the English young generation through the character of Jimmy Porter. Jimmy is resentful and his resentment is directed on those around him especially his wife, Alison. He always attacks her physically and verbally since she belongs to the high class, a class in which he hates. Jimmy is a revolutionist who is against the political system of the country. The political system is governed by high class people who do not allow the low class or the working families to climb the social ladder. In this case, Jimmy finds the high class people as unqualified to run the political system of the country. In the 1950s, the English people were affected by the disastrous consequences of the war, they lost their jobs and unemployment prevailed among the working class people in the country especially the young people who wanted to improve their social status like Jimmy Porter. Although he is a graduate and holding a university certificate, he does not find a job which is suitable for his academic achievements. He runs a stall which makes him outraged against those around him. At that time, only high class people were able to get decent jobs in order to get their livelihood.

A conflict arises when Jimmy finds his enmity and injustice in the image of his wife. Whenever he sees Alison, he remembers the high class people whom Jimmy thinks as the ones who deprive him from his own rights. Jimmy does not tolerate his situation since he has married a woman from a higher social class. In his analysis of *Osborne's Look Back in Anger*, Alex Sierz says that "Jimmy resents the higher status of his wife" (19, 2008). Therefore, Jimmy's resentment is clearly shown through his behavior toward Alison. He starts to express his resentment by attacking her. He shouts and insults her so as to provoke her emotions. In Act One, Jimmy uses different negative adjectives in order to insult Alison when he tells Cliff "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?" (Osborne: 1957, 21). In *Look Back in Anger*, Osborne uses the character of Alison as the representative of the high class people. This is why in the previous speech; Jimmy uses the word pusillanimous to define Alison's character. He describes her as coward and impassive character who does not make any good change in life. Whenever Jimmy attacks her, she stays calm and

silent. This ignites Jimmy's emotions which makes him more antagonistic.

Alison's calmness and silence are considered as a way to keep her from Jimmy's attack. Conversely, Jimmy's resentment deteriorates as he believes that Alison's silence stands for the complacency of the upper class people over the current situations in the country. So, he insults Alison by using more negative adjective as he describes her as "Wanting of firmness of mind, of a small courage, having a little mind, mean spirited, cowardly, timid of mind" (Osborne: 1957, 22). He uses such adjectives in order to provoke her but he does not succeed since Alison is able to maintain her calmness. She sympathizes with him because she is well aware of the reasons which have led him to be frantic. She tells Cliff "Jimmy said the same thing to me the other day. I pretended not to be listening-because I knew that would hurt him, I suppose. And-of course- he got savage, like tonight. But I knew just what he meant" (Osborne: 1957, 28). In the previous speech, Alison tells Cliff about her relationship with Jimmy as a husband and a wife. Jimmy is used to insult her verbally but she neglects him in order not to provoke him because she understands his psychology. Alison is depicted as the ideal wife who wanted to keep her relationship with her husband united but Jimmy does not realize this. He always tries to expose his resentment by attacking Alison who belongs to the high class people, a class who governs and holds the high social positions in the society. As an ambitious young man representing a whole generation, Jimmy is looking for change in order to evoke the emotions of the whole English people and wake them from their own slumber and pusillanimity.

Jimmy considers the members of the high class people as the ones who seize the state resources without giving opportunities to those out of their class like Jimmy. So, Jimmy is a revolutionist who finds himself as a defender of his own class. Whenever Jimmy sees a member of the high class people, his resentment increases and tries to express it verbally or physically. In *Look Back in Anger*, at the end of act one, there is a scene in which Cliff tells Alison that a someone called Helena is on phone for her, Jimmy becomes more frantic and starts to insult Helena by calling her a bitch. When Cliff asks Jimmy about Helena, Jimmy says "One of her old friends. And one of my natural enemies" (Osborne: 1957, 35). Jimmy is a radical who supports his own cause against the prevalent systems which do not allow the aspiring middle class people to ascend through the ranks all the way to the highest positions in the society but unfortunately he could not due to the restrictions imposed own him. This leads him to be resentful and his resentment is prolonged. Consequently, he wants to have revenge upon the members of the high class people. He always attacks harshly. Not only this, he

attacks any member who belongs to the high class people like Alison's friend, Helena. Jimmy's resentment leads him to be away from the people of his own society. This is how he described Helena to Cliff as one of his enemies.

Jimmy endeavors to get rid of his resentment and to acquire the rights of his people proclaiming the injustice imposed upon them by the social, economic and political system of the country. He fights bravely so as to get a suitable position in the society. He is heading for a better future but he is unable since he fights alone. This is how Alison describes Jimmy to Helena when she says " Jimmy went into the battle with his own axe swinging round his head-frail and so full of fire" (Osborne: 1957, 45). Alison describes Jimmy as energetic and full of desire who fights alone defending his own cause but he lacks the means which qualify him to get his ultimate goal. Yet, he does not surrender, he is heading for change and hoping that he will get what he wants someday and improve his situation. This is clearly shown when Jimmy tells Helena and Alison that "One day, When I'm not longer spending my days running a sweet-stall, I may write a book about us all. It's all here" (Osborne: 1957, 53-54). It is important to note that Jimmy believes in his own capacity and desire to achieve his ambition in spite of the difficult circumstances that he is going through like running a sweet stall in order to get a meager amount of money which is insufficient for a decent livelihood. Although he is resentful, he does not stay static but his resentment gives him an impetus to move forward, to proceed and not to yield.

Jimmy's resentment of his own situation makes conflicting ideas in Jimmy's mind which take him back to the glorious time of England in the past when England was the prosperous in the period before the Second World War. Then, he goes back to the present in which he faces the problems of his daily life. These conflicting ideas make him furious and he starts to insult Alison's family. He calls Alison's mother a bitch and her father as a useless old colonel who is left from the Edwardian's times since he is a retired officer who served in the Edwardian army in England. (Osborne: 1957, 66). In addition to this, Jimmy's resentment makes him in a conflict with the religious institution of the church. Due to his belief that he has been deprived from his own right, Jimmy accuses the church to be a crucial participant in the current unsatisfactory situations of the country.

Whenever the church bells chime, Jimmy goes furious and starts to shout by saying "Oh hell! Now the bloody bells have started! Stop ringing that bells! There's somebody going crazy in here! I don't want to hear them!" (Osborne: 1957, 25). Jimmy's resentment over the religious institution of the church stems from his belief that the church is not concerned with the issues of the poor people and their livelihood. It

provides people with salvation but does not care about their situations. The church itself cares only about the welfare of the high class people. This is why Jimmy is against any form of the upper class people. He opposes every form which is against the working class seeking to find better opportunities and trying to put an end to their miserable situations. Jimmy also points his attack towards the church and its rituals since the church takes part in the strangling of the working class. This is shown when he says:

" God, how I hate Sundays! It's always so depressing, always the same. We never seem to get any further, do we? Always the same ritual. Reading the papers, drinking tea, ironing. A few more hours, and another week gone. Our youth is slipping away. Do you know that? " (Osborne: 1957, 25).

Jimmy's resentment is against the civic and the religious laws of his surroundings. He is going through a fight against any form which hinders the development of the working class. He resents the class difference he feels from his wife's upper-class family (Tibbetts and Welsh: 1999, 60) and he resents the religious rituals of the church. He shows his antagonistic view against the monotonous repetition of Sundays. According to Jimmy, the church does not provide any form of development to the working class. It is always the same and it is a matter of passing time. In this way, the working class people are just spending their time in misery while the high class people are spending the luxurious life without paying attention to the conditions of the poor people.

Resentment brings disastrous consequences in Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*. Jimmy treats Alison badly for the sake of having revenge upon her class. Alison leaves Jimmy because she could not stand him any longer. After her leaving, Helena tells him that Alison is pregnant but Jimmy says "I don't care if she is going to have a baby" (Osborne: 1957, 73). Jimmy is apathetic towards her. He is busy with his own cause, the cause of defending the working class and demanding their rights.

His bad treatment leads Alison to lose her unborn child. Thus, Jimmy's resentment is the main reason for losing the child and escalating the marital problems between him and his wife.

At the end of the play, Osborne wants to convey to the audience that Jimmy's efforts for change go in vain. He could not make any change due to the social, economic and political values imposed upon him. Finally, Jimmy relents and realizes that he could not do anything useful to the problems of the working class. These problems are inherited over generations. He settles and reunites with Alison in a simple game of what is called "bear and squirrel". This game is

symbolically used which summarizes the whole relationship between Jimmy Porter and his wife, who represents the high class people. Jimmy's resentment leads to nothing. He reconciles with his wife. The game of bear and squirrel symbolizes an escape from the tiring world to their own world, a world of tranquility which is away from the discrepancy in their marital status. The social values are more powerful than a person's efforts looking for a revolution and heading for change.

## CONCLUSION

The study has presented the implicit use of resentment in John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* through the main character, Jimmy Porter, who is resentful of the social, economic and political values imposed upon the English working class. In the period following the Second World War, the working class people suffer greatly due to the lack of opportunities in which they are unable to find suitable jobs in which they could manage their life. Playwrights start to present the sufferings of the working class on stage hoping to reveal the injustice that they suffer in a great country like England so as to improve their situation.

Osborne shows how the nouveau educated English young generation suffers due to the social values which prevent them from achieving their ambition to build the future. Osborne finds the working class people as being tricked by the formal institutions of the country in which they are deprived from their own rights. This is why he depicts Jimmy Porter as an archetype of the working class who struggles to live in a country that gives him no real opportunity which is suitable for his university certificate. Jimmy suffers greatly which leads him to be resentful and his resentment affects him emotionally and psychologically.

Osborne suggests the idea that resentment does not lead to a solution. Instead, it harms the individual and leads to undesirable consequences. Jimmy Porter spends his time fighting against the norms of the high class people by attacking the formal institutions of the state but he could not do something useful for himself and for his working class. Finally, he loses his unborn child as a result of the bad relationship with his wife. The study summarizes that change cannot be achieved due to the social, economic and political values imposed on the working class.

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