LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

S . S . 1

Characters In Look Back In Anger

(***1) Jimmy porter:*** Jimmy porter is a loud, obnoxious man, rude and verbally abusive. He is born working class but highly educated, like his friend and roommate cliff, but has an ambivalent relationship with educated status, seeing himself mostly as a working class man and yet frustrated that his education can do nothing to affect his class status . He is disconcerting mixture of sincerity and cheerful malice , of tenderness and freebooting cruelty. He is usually found spouting tirades against the complacency of the British upper classes and especially against his wife Alison and then his lover Helena. Jimmy is married to a pretty girl , Alison whom he feels he almost had to steal away from her family , the kind of family whom strength and graces were grounded on England s 1914 Empire. Jimmy not only resents his wife s family and all the institutions that bred them because they led to nothing but the dust and ashes of 1945, he also berates her for having lost the stamina presumed to her background , without having it replaced with any new values of her own , even romantically negative ones like his. Jimmy porter is an aggressive man. He is angry at almost every British institutions such as the church, the Monarchy, the government and he rants against posh Sunday papers although he buys them every weekend. But most of all he is against any form of upper class manners. However he married a girl from the class he hates. As a result of his class hatred jimmy attacks Alison both verbally and physically throughout the play since his wife reminds him of everything he despises in terms of class distinctions. He berates Alison for being too reserved and unfeeling. Jimmy expresses physical aggression towards Alison by pushing Cliff on the ironing board and cliff falls against Alison and she burns her arm on the iron. At first, Jimmy tells Alison that he did not mean to hurt her but then he apologies for doing it deliberately. I’m sorry ... I mean it, i did it on purpose . Jimmy is frail and dependent on Alison. Although jimmy has graduated from a university, albeit one with no prestige , he works with Cliff as owner , proprietor of a candy stall in an outdoor market. In spite of his tendency to sometimes cruelly insult Cliff , jimmy genuienely likes him . Cliff lives with jimmy and Alison and hes close friend with both.

***(2) Alison Porter*** : She is a tall, slim dark girl whose personality is not immediately apparent to us, the audience Alison porter is jimmy’s wife. They have been married to each other for three years. She comes from the solid upper- middle - class Establishment. She is pregnant with jimmy s child. Her father was a colonel in the colonel service and the family lived very comfortably in India until 1947. Her brother Nigel attended Sandhurst, the British equivalent of west point, and is a member parliament. She married jimmy party as a rebellion against the proper, predictable, stultifying precepts of her class. However, she has been molded by her upbringing and it is her fence sitting. Her lack of total emotional commitment that provokes jimmy s attacks. Jimmy assaults Alison often and other members of her family and her friends. He calls her parents militant, arrogant and full of malice. He labels her friends sycophantic, phlegmatic and of course, top of the bill pusillanimous. Alison knows that jimmy wants her to understand what he means when he shouts at her and most of the time she comprehends what jimmy tries to say but as she tells cliff she knowingly chooses to remain silent. Alison is warm and open with cliff without ever harboring a sexual attraction to him. When Helena takes charge and arranges for Alisonto to leave Jimmy, Alison does not protest and does indeed return to her parents, their values and the security they offer. Jimmy’s destructive anger causes her great strain and she eventually leaves him, but returns to him later in the play after she loses their child to a miscarriage to show him that she has undergone great suffering.

***(3) Cliff lewis:*** Cliff is a friend to both Jimmy and Alison. Cliff lives with them in their attic apartment although he has his own bedroom across the hall. He is a working class Welsh man and jimmy makes sure to often point out that he is common and uneducated. He is quite fond of Alison and they have a strange physically affectionate relationship throughout the play. He is also Jimmy’s partner in the candy stall business. Nevertheless, ultimately he decides to go out on his own.