

Q - Examine 'Look Back in Anger' critically & discuss how the play displays the mood and temper of the post-war period.

Ans: - Each and every work of art needs some germinal impulses to make it vital and powerful. When the needed impulse was lacking in the realistic dramas of A.G.B. Shaw, the famous angry novel of 'Look Back in Anger' written by John Osborne came up at the Royal Court Theatre. It was a true picture of the mood and temper of post-war England. Jimmy Porter, the hero of the play became a kind of folk-hero for a young generation frustrated by the Hungarian revolution, unhappy about Britain's last fling at Suez and determined to protest against the hydrogen bomb and about all kinds of political and social questions. This play expressed the dramatist's feeling for the contemporary scene, and the temper of post-war youth, by his awareness of the contemporary idiom and his sharp comments on matters ranging from "post" Sunday newspapers, and "white tile" universities to bishops and the hydrogen bomb.

Like a Byronic hero, Hamlet and Dr. Faustus, Jimmy Porter, the working class member became the spokesman of the angry mood of the time. The pre-occupations of Osborne were assimilated to those of Kingsley Amis or John Wain or those of Arnold Wesker and Raymond Williams. All the characteristics of post-war youth are to be found in Jimmy Porter. These characteristics are: the drift towards anarchy, the instinctive "leftishness", the automatic rejection of the official attitude, the surrealist sense of humour, the casual promiscuity, the sense of lacking a noble cause worth fighting for.

But some critics are of the opinion that the speeches of Jimmy Porter are superficial and meaningless. He criticises the Bishops for supporting the rich against the poor and for apparently supporting the hydrogen bomb. Thus the blame is laid on the

The retired military commander, Redfern had a
of human psychology and sociology. He frankly says
that he and his wife should not interfere with Jimmy
Jimmy's marriage with Alison. He also states that
she had a tendency to bit on the fence like him
did. He also observed that he cannot understand the
motive of revenge as reason for anybody's revenge
and that people married because they were in love.

According to Jimmy Porter, suffering
is essential to bring about maturity in a human being
and to give him the proper perspective about life and
its problems. So he says to Alison that she must suffer.
She must have a child to die. His experience of
his dying father had taught him more of love,
betrayal, and death than Helena. He finds himself
alone "like the old bear following his own breath in
the dark forest." Alison, too, had a miscarriage and
suffered a lot. Both need each other. So their reconcili-
ation shows how suffering can humble human beings
and how every human being wants a companionship.
Thus this very end of the play bears a vital comment
on human psychology.

Thus we find that though the hydro-
gen bomb is mentioned in the play only twice, we feel
throughout its pervasive effect upon the moral imagination
of a generation. We also see that this play is conscious
of the psychological impact of the hydrogen bomb era
upon men like Jimmy as anything else in the twentieth
century English literature. Then there is the place
of the Establishment in the plays. The protest against
the corruption of the church is as usual. But the
protest of Jimmy is of the post-world war period. In
this play anticipates the nuclear disarmament movement
of the present century. The caring of Jimmy has
a ~~very~~ remarkable role in the play when he says
"nobody ~~cares~~ thinks, nobody cares, no beliefs, no conviction
and no enthusiasm."

In this way find that ~~the~~ Osborne
has honestly explored in the play the ambiguities and
weaknesses of anger and mood of the ~~time~~ post-war

English period. So this play increases our understanding of human nature and a particular human bit.

It offers permanent moral insights.