

# STRONG TOWER ACADEMY, IKORODU, LAGOS

## WEEK FIVE

**CLASS:** SSS 2  
**SUBJECT:** Literature-in-English  
**TOPIC:** "LOOK BACK IN ANGER"  
**SUB-TOPICS:** (i) Summary of Act Three  
(ii) Themes

**ASPECT:** Non-African Drama

**ENABLE OBJECTIVES:** By the end of the lesson, students should be able to:

- (i) Read and summarise the selected act
- (ii) Identify the thematic preoccupation of the selected play.
- (iii) Critically analyze the major themes of the text.

### REFERENCES:

- (i) Obiene Ututu's "Scholars Literature-in-English" (New WAEC & NECO SYLLABUS (2021 -2025))
- (ii) Ehis O. Osajie's "Complete Guide to Literature-in-English for WAEC & NECO candidates (2021 -2025)"
- (iii) [www.enotes.com/topics/look-back-anger/themes](http://www.enotes.com/topics/look-back-anger/themes)

**CONTENT:** Introduction to Non-African Drama: "LOOK BACK IN ANGER" by John Osborne.

### SUMMARY OF ACT Act 3

Act 3 opens as a deliberate replay of Act 1, but this time with Helena at the ironing-board wearing Jimmy's Act 1 red shirt. Months have passed. Jimmy is notably more pleasant to Helena than he was to Alison in Act 1. She actually laughs at his jokes, and the three of them (Jimmy, Cliff, and Helena) get into a [music hall](#) comedy routine that obviously is not improvised. Cliff announces that he's decided to strike out on his own. As Jimmy leaves the room to get ready for a final night out for the three of them, he opens the door to find Alison, looking like death. He snaps over his shoulder "Friend of yours to see you" and abruptly leaves.

Alison explains to Helena that she lost the baby (one of Jimmy's cruellest speeches in Act 1 expressed the wish that Alison would conceive a child and lose it). The two women reconcile, but Helena realises that what she's done is immoral and she in turn decides to leave. She summons Jimmy to hear her decision and he lets her go with a sarcastic farewell.

The play ends with a sentimental reconciliation between Jimmy and Alison. They revive an old game they used to play, pretending to be bears and squirrels, and seem to be in a state of truce.

### THEMES OF "LOOK BACK IN ANGER" BY JOHN OSBORNE

**ALIENATION:** This is an important theme in John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*. Jimmy Porter, the main character of the play, typifies the overeducated, underemployed worker. He lives in an attic flat with his wife, Allison, and his business partner, Cliff Lewis, with

whom he runs a candy stall in an outdoor market. It is 1956, Britain has lost its soul (according to Jimmy), and they are living in an “American age” that has left men like Jimmy Porter behind. He feels alienated from the Establishment, the upper-crust of British society, which has shut him out of the most lucrative jobs because of his class. He graduated from a “white-tile” university, one of the newer and least prestigious universities in Great Britain, so his education, as good as it ended up being, does not mean much to the British Establishment. He also feels alienated from his wife, Alison whose father is a colonel and whose brother is now a member of Parliament. He regularly berates Alison, characterizing himself as the only thinking person in the household. He has even given her a nickname: Lady Pusillanimous. This nickname emphasizes both Jimmy’s intelligence (via his vocabulary) and Alison’s timid nature. It also suggests that part at least part of Jimmy’s alienation stems from his behaviour, not his socioeconomic status, and that he might have an easier time connecting with people if he treated them with respect.

**ANGER:** Jimmy Porter’s anger dominates the play. This theme is pervasive, affecting the plot, the characters, and the tone of the entire play. In the first act, Jimmy’s anger causes him to lash out his wife and his business partner, Cliff, calling them boring, stupid and unambitious, in large part because they don’t share his rage and frustration.

Jimmy likes conflict. He wants Alison to suffer, because then she will understand where he is coming from and why he is so angry. At the end of the play, after Alison has a miscarriage, Jimmy is satisfied that she has suffered enough, and the couple reconciles. The reader is left to wonder if Jimmy’s anger has dissipated or if it will continue to destroy his marriage.

### **CLASSWORK**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Answer the following questions:

1. State two significant points in Act Three of Look Back In Anger by John Osborne.
2. What genre of literature is Look Back In Anger?
3. What animal does Jimmy compare to Cliff ? (a) Squirrel (b) Bear (c) Mouse (d) Rat
4. For what reason does Cliff believe that Jimmy likes him? (a) He is common (b) He is rich (c) He is jolly (d) He is quiet.

**CLASS: SSS2**

**SUBJECT: LITERATURE**

### **ASSIGNMENT FOR WEEK FIVE**

- (1) Define the term, ‘Theme’
- (2) Mention three themes of the play, Look Back In Anger by John Osborne.
- (3) In not more than two pages, summarize Act Three of the text, “LOOK BACK IN ANGER” by John Osborne.

**Teacher: Mrs Oloyede Ethel O.**







