



MODERN PROBLEMS IN EDUCATION AND THEIR SCIENTIFIC  
SOLUTIONS

**THE ANGRY YOUNG MEN MOVEMENT AND ITS  
CONTRIBUTION TO THE IDEOLOGICAL AND AESTHETIC RENEWAL OF  
ENGLISH LITERATURE**

**Maksadkhon Khakimova**

*PhD Senior Lecturer*

*Department of English Language Teaching Methodology  
and Educational Technologies*

*Uzbekistan State World Languages University  
Tashkent, Uzbekistan*

**Abstract.** *This study examines the emergence, major representatives, and literary significance of the Angry Young Men movement in post-war British literature. Particular attention is given to the works of John Osborne, Kingsley Amis, Alan Sillitoe, and John Braine. The research analyzes how these writers reflected social inequality, class divisions, and moral crisis through new types of protagonists and realistic narrative techniques. The study also evaluates the movement's contribution to the ideological and aesthetic renewal of modern English literature.*

**Keywords:** *Angry Young Men, post-war Britain, English literature, social criticism, realism, class conflict, literary renewal, social inequality.*

### **Introduction**

The Angry Young Men movement entered the English literary scene in the mid-twentieth century as an artistic reflection of the profound political, cultural, and social transformations that characterized post-war society. The economic hardships that followed the Second World War, the persistence of class divisions, and the crisis of traditional values brought about a significant shift in the worldview of the younger generation. As a result, a new spirit emerged in literature, marked by protest, rebellion, and a desire to speak the truth openly.

The term Angry Young Men came into widespread use during the 1950s and refers to a group of writers who boldly depicted social inequality, class stratification, spiritual emptiness, and the inner dissatisfaction of the younger generation. Among the most prominent representatives of this movement were John Osborne, Kingsley Amis, Alan Sillitoe, and John Braine. In their works, the previously dominant aristocratic characters and romantic ideal heroes were replaced by ordinary people – often individuals from middle- or lower-class backgrounds who faced injustice and social constraints. These characters were not portrayed as flawless heroes; rather, they were depicted as complex individuals burdened with inner conflicts, unable to reconcile themselves with society, and eager to express their views openly.





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It was precisely this feature that distinguished the movement sharply from earlier literary traditions and elevated it to a new stage of development. The protagonists of this period emerged as figures who transformed simplicity into a distinct aesthetic value. At the same time, the movement introduced innovations not only in themes and character systems but also in language and style. Rejecting overly complex and artificial literary expression, writers adopted a simple, natural style closely resembling everyday speech. This approach enhanced the realism of their works and brought them closer to a broader readership.

Thus, the Angry Young Men movement initiated a new phase of realism in English literature and contributed to the open and truthful representation of pressing social issues. The movement acquired significance not only as a literary phenomenon but also as an important cultural manifestation of the social consciousness of its era. The primary objective of this study is to analyze the factors that contributed to the emergence of the Angry Young Men movement, examine the works of its leading representatives, and evaluate their contribution to the ideological and aesthetic renewal of English literature.

### Methodology

The study employed comparative literary analysis, the historical-contextual approach, and biographical and textual analysis methods.

The primary sources included John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* (1956), Kingsley Amis's *Lucky Jim* (1954), Alan Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1958), and John Braine's *Room at the Top* (1957). In addition, the critical perspectives of prominent literary scholars such as John Russell Taylor, Richard Hoggart, and Kenneth Tynan were examined.

### Results

The analysis revealed several significant findings.

First, the representatives of the movement placed class inequality, social constraints, and the moral crisis of post-war Britain at the center of their works.

Second, aristocratic and idealized characters were replaced by complex and internally conflicted protagonists such as Jimmy Porter (open rebellion), Jim Dixon (satirical dissent), Arthur Seaton (working-class resistance), and Joe Lampton (a strategy of social advancement). These characters embodied different responses to the social realities of their time.

Third, the use of simple language closely resembling everyday speech, instead of elaborate literary expression, strengthened the realistic quality of these works and enhanced their accessibility to a wider readership.

Fourth, each writer expressed dissatisfaction and protest in distinctive ways. John Osborne emphasized dramatic intensity, Kingsley Amis relied on satire, Alan Sillitoe adopted a strongly realistic approach, and John Braine focused on themes of social adaptation and upward mobility.

### Discussion





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The emergence of the Angry Young Men movement was largely shaped by the profound social changes that took place in British society after the Second World War. Post-war economic difficulties, the persistence of the traditional class system, and, above all, the younger generation's uncertainty about the future gave rise to an entirely new literary sensibility. Instead of romantic ideals or lofty aspirations, writers focused on the harsh realities of everyday life, social inequality, and spiritual emptiness. These concerns became the core principles of the Angry Young Men movement.

This new spirit found its clearest expression in John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* (1956). Through the protagonist, Jimmy Porter, Osborne sharply criticized social hypocrisy, class divisions, and the artificiality of human relationships. Jimmy is not merely an angry young man; rather, he embodies the inner contradictions of his age. His famous statement, "There aren't any good, brave causes left," [8: 84] vividly reflects the post-war generation's sense of disillusionment and loss of moral direction. Literary critics have paid particular attention to this aspect of Osborne's work. For instance, John Russell Taylor argued that Osborne gave a voice to an entire generation that felt excluded from the existing social order [10: 23], while Kenneth Tynan described Jimmy Porter as "not simply a character, but a social phenomenon [11: 45]. These observations demonstrate that Osborne's characters transcend individual psychology and become representative portraits of an entire era. From this perspective, the writers associated with the movement sought to express not only personal frustration but also broader issues such as collective social anxiety, generational alienation, and the crisis of values.

It is important to note that many scholars consider it misleading to interpret the movement solely through the notion of anger. The "anger" expressed in these works is better understood as a refusal to remain indifferent to social injustice, a commitment to speaking the truth openly, and a desire to foster a new social consciousness. In this regard, Richard Hoggart's observation that their anger was not mere rebellion but an expression of moral concern [5: 201] aptly illustrates why critics regard the movement as not only a literary phenomenon but also a significant social force.

Another prominent representative of the movement, Kingsley Amis, expressed the characteristic spirit of dissatisfaction not through intense dramatic conflict but through irony, satire, and humor. Unlike Osborne, Amis conveyed social criticism through comic means, although both writers shared a fundamentally critical attitude toward the existing social order. In *Lucky Jim* (1954), Amis portrays the social and cultural problems of the English academic environment through the character of Jim Dixon, a young lecturer from an ordinary background.

Dixon's primary concern is not scholarly achievement but social survival. His "good fortune" lies not in professional success but in partially escaping an artificial system. Within the academic environment dominated by Professor Welch, he feels alienated and out of place. Through Dixon's internal monologues and ironic perspective, Amis reveals the rebellion hidden beneath outward politeness. The protagonist resents academic





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formalism, pseudo-intellectualism, and hypocrisy. For Dixon, the university is not merely a center of learning but a world governed by social masks, artificial prestige, and unnecessary complexity. As Amis suggests that Dixon felt that everything around him was absurd and that he alone recognized its absurdity [2: 52]. This reflects not only the protagonist's psychological condition but also a broader generational experience of alienation.

Dixon neither wishes to conform to society nor possesses the means to challenge it openly. Consequently, his dissatisfaction manifests itself through irony, inner resistance, and sarcastic observation. Critics have emphasized that in Amis's works the concept of "anger" becomes more nuanced and multifaceted. John Russell Taylor noted that Amis used comedy as a weapon against artificiality and hypocrisy in academic life [10: 78] while Bruce King argued that *Lucky Jim* represents rebellion not only through anger but also through ridicule and the rejection of false values [6: 112]. These views demonstrate that Amis enriched the Angry Young Men tradition by expanding its artistic possibilities through satire and humor. Moreover, unlike many of his contemporaries who focused on the frustrations of the working or lower-middle classes, Amis brought these tensions into the intellectual and academic sphere, showing that social mobility itself does not necessarily guarantee personal freedom. In this sense, Jim Dixon emerges as an antihero who confronts the absurdities of modern society.

Whereas Osborne exposed social contradictions through dramatic conflict and Amis through satire, Alan Sillitoe portrayed them through direct realism. One of Sillitoe's greatest contributions to the movement was his focus on the lives of the lower classes and his ability to bring their voices into literature. His novel *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1958) presents the everyday experiences, emotional struggles, and frustrations of the working class with remarkable realism.

The protagonist, Arthur Seaton, refuses to submit to the norms and restrictions imposed by society. His life is defined by the tension between exhausting factory work and his desire for freedom during his leisure time. Through Arthur, Sillitoe reveals the economic, moral, and psychological problems of the working class. His statement, "Whatever people say I am, that's what I'm not" [9:94], expresses his resistance to the stereotypes imposed upon him by society. Arthur refuses to fit into the conventional image of the obedient worker and constantly strives for independence and personal freedom. His dissatisfaction appears sometimes as open rebellion and sometimes as indifference or a determination to enjoy life despite its limitations.

Critical assessments such as Sillitoe brought the authentic voice of the working class into English literature [5: 245] and his characters are distinguished by their resistance to social conformity and their pursuit of personal freedom [7: 67] highlight the importance of realism and individual struggle in his work. In Sillitoe's fiction, anger signifies not only social protest but also the individual's determination to preserve personal identity.





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Consequently, his contribution broadened the social scope of the movement and enriched it with deeper human significance.

Within this literary environment, John Braine developed a distinctive ideological and aesthetic approach. While Osborne, Amis, and Sillitoe generally portrayed open dissatisfaction and rebellion, Braine interpreted social tensions through the individual's attempt to find a place within society. His works therefore represent not passive acceptance but a strategy aimed at conquering the system from within. In this way, Braine introduced a new semantic dimension to the overall concept of the Angry Young Men movement.

His novel *Room at the Top* (1957) provides the most complete expression of this tendency. Through the protagonist Joe Lampton, Braine explores social mobility and the moral dilemmas associated with the pursuit of success. Coming from a lower-middle-class background and constrained by economic limitations, Joe aspires to a wealthier and higher social position. Unlike Jimmy Porter, Jim Dixon, or Arthur Seaton, however, Joe does not rebel openly. Instead, he seeks advancement within the existing system rather than rejecting it.

Joe recognizes that professional stability is essential for expanding his social opportunities. His move from Dufton to Warley and his employment in local government bring him closer to a more privileged environment. His relationship with Susan Brown, the daughter of a wealthy industrialist, is motivated as much by social ambition as by personal affection. Love itself becomes part of his strategy for upward mobility.

Moreover, Joe frequently compromises his moral principles in pursuit of success. Braine's important achievement lies in presenting social advancement not as an ideal state but as a source of inner conflict. Joe's realization is expressed in the statement: "I knew I was being false, but I couldn't afford honesty" [3: 132] Here, the inability to remain honest symbolizes the dominance of social pressures over individual integrity. Similarly, his declaration, "I was determined to get to the top, whatever it cost," [3: 45] reveals the ambition that drives his decisions.

Braine demonstrates that upward mobility in post-war Britain often demanded not only hard work but also emotional sacrifice and moral compromise. Consequently, Joe Lampton becomes not merely a symbol of success but a representation of the conflict between social ambition and ethical loss. Unlike the protagonists of Osborne, Amis, and Sillitoe, who express dissatisfaction by rejecting the system, Braine's hero attempts to master the system from within. Therefore, his protest manifests itself through social adaptation rather than open rebellion, which constitutes the central ideological principle of Braine's fiction.

### Conclusion

By the mid-twentieth century, literature had ceased to function merely as a source of aesthetic pleasure and had become a platform for openly discussing and critically examining social problems. The significance of the Angry Young Men movement as an important cultural phenomenon of its time can be observed in several respects. First, the movement introduced a new type of literary protagonist into English literature. Instead of





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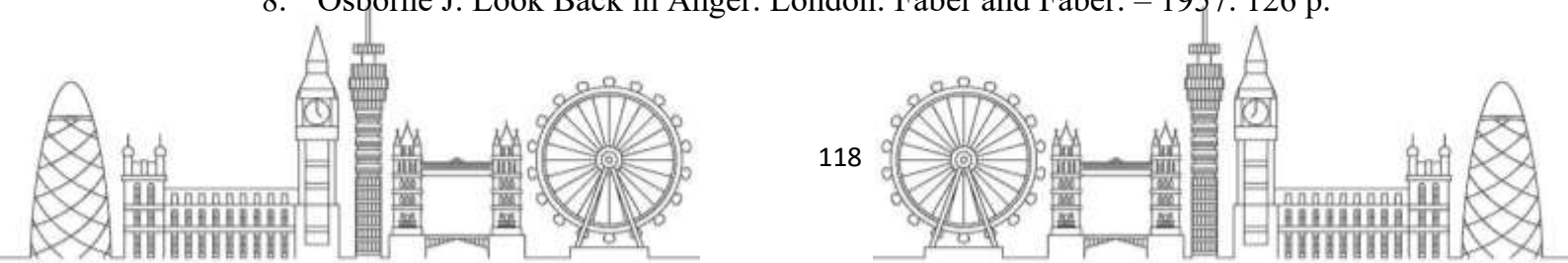
aristocratic figures or characters devoted to romantic ideals, writers focused on ordinary individuals struggling with everyday problems – people who were often socially disadvantaged but capable of expressing their views openly. These protagonists were far from perfect; rather, they were portrayed as complex and contradictory personalities – sometimes vulnerable, sometimes rebellious, but always sincere and closely connected to real life. Second, the representatives of the Angry Young Men movement brought about a fundamental transformation in literary language and style. Rejecting the elaborate, ornamental, and sometimes artificial forms of expression that had previously dominated literature, they adopted a simple, natural style closely resembling everyday speech. This increased the realism of their works and made them more accessible to readers. In particular, the vividness of dialogue, the extensive use of colloquial language, and the incorporation of the speech patterns of ordinary people became defining characteristics of the period. Third, the movement exerted a considerable influence on the development of modern English literature by strengthening the tradition of openly and boldly addressing social issues. As a result, writers increasingly sought to depict problems such as social inequality, class divisions, and moral crisis directly and critically rather than concealing them. Consequently, literature became a powerful instrument for shaping social consciousness and bringing important issues to public attention.

The traditions of realism, sincerity, and authenticity established by these writers continued to develop in later English literature and provided a solid foundation for new artistic explorations. Therefore, the Angry Young Men movement should be regarded not only as a product of its own historical period but also as an important stage that exerted a lasting influence on subsequent literary developments. For this reason, the study of the Angry Young Men movement is essential not only for achieving a deeper understanding of the history of English literature but also for gaining insight into the socio-cultural processes of the twentieth century and the complex relationship between society and the individual.



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