Disruptive, Anarchic and Asocial: Class and the Post-War British Regional Novel

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Abstract

In their study, *Working Class Community* (1969), Brian Jackson and Dennis Marsden declared that: "besides what the sociologists have given us since 1958, we might also consider another kind of experience: that of the creative artist". Responding to this statement, this dissertation considers the ways in which the novelist (the creative artist) presents a nation and its people in flux. It also responds to an essay collection edited by Mackay and Stonebridge which set out to investigate the canon of post-war writing with a focus on working-class representation. The introduction concedes that after modernism, and after the Second World War, the post-war novel documented an "increasingly grim reality" and required the novelist to act as a political documentarian. Expanding on this, I have viewed the novels as both works of fiction and of political rhetoric which present the feelings of disenchantment towards a post-war British society.

Divided into three chapters, there develops an argument on whether these are suitable adjectives to describe the working-class people in post-war Britain. There are three novels which are central to this study, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1951), *Hurry on Down* (1953) and *Room at the Top* (1957), each of which are formed around an archetypal working-class individual. Interlinking the ambition to rise in the social hierarchy, or lack thereof, this study positions the novel (a typically middle-class form) as a sociological text, capable of describing the condition of the nation, and the condition of the collective individuals. Explicitly regional, each novel has a distinct voice which is directly tailored to the working-class man in his respective region. The regions of West Yorkshire, Nottingham and Stoke-On-Trent, in wartime Britain, were starkly industrial; this fact helps to inform my study of said archetypes, with the backdrop of the grim industrial landscape.

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for a degree or other qualification at this University or elsewhere. All sources are acknowledged as references.

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Introduction

> Yet besides what the sociologists have given us since 1958, we might also consider another kind of experience: that of the creative artist. Sociology is concerned with groups, and it is very hard within the present terms of the discipline even to remember the existence of those insights into individual life which cannot be trapped in fundamental assertions about old orders or new orders of living. But the artist is able to embody perceptions of the individual life which can be disruptive, anarchic, asocial.
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> — Brian Jackson and Dennis Marsden, *Working Class Community* (1969)

The opening chapter of *Working Class Community* (1969) begins with three adjectives which can be applied to working-class life: "disruptive, anarchic, asocial".[1] In this chapter, Jackson and Dennis acknowledge the power of working-class literature and its ability to present insights into "individual life which cannot be trapped in fundamental assertions about old orders or new orders of living", recognising that literature can present life in its truest form.[2] In 'Bad Teeth: British Social Realism in Fiction', Rod Mengham writes that the social realist novels of the 1950s are capable of "document[ing] new forms of alienation as a result of growing income equality […] of mass culture on class, regional and gender identities".[2] Wildly accurate, Mengham's statement applies to the three key titles on which I focus: John Wain's *Hurry on Down* (1953), John Braine's *Room at the Top* (1957) and Alan Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1951). The three authors belonged to the Angry Young Men pseudo-movement, a group which "fulminate[d] against a society in which they [found] themselves, criticising its politics, morality, jobs, women, and the widespread complacency they perceive[d]".[3] Under this quotation, I aim to establish how these works vary in the nature of regionality, working-class aspirations and social movement in a period of post-war austerity. This thesis investigates how the novel, a form rooted in, and shaped by bourgeois origins, can present working-class culture and identity.

Given the gap in contemporary scholarship on these novels, a re-evaluation must be given to draw an account of post-war British austerity and national reform. The novel underwent a great change after Modernism and post-war, turned to a mode of realism intent on presenting the world without fanciful metaphors. Richard Sheppard notes that "the concept of Modernism does not denote a coherent movement but a […] label designating an experience of cultural crisis", voicing the individuality of the Modernist author.[5] In contrast, the Angry Young Men designated their work to an experience of

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[1] Brian Jackson and Dennis Marsden, *Working Class Community*, 1st edn, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), 14
[2] Ibid., 14
[2] Rod Mengham, 'Bad Teeth: British Social Realism in Fiction', in *British Social Realism in the Arts since 1940*, ed. by David Tucker, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 81
[3] Peter J. Kalliney, 'Cities of Affluence: Masculinity, Class, and The Angry Young Men', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 22: 1 (2001), 2
[5] Richard Shepperd, 'Modernism, Language, and Experimental Poetry: On Leaping over Bannisters and Learning How to Fly', *The Modern Language Review*, 92:1 (1997), 98

cultural crisis, in a coherent pseudo-movement of working-class deprivation and agony. In the introduction to *British Fiction After Modernism* (2007), Braine, Sillitoe and Wain are only mentioned in passing by their "axis", or by their standing in 1950s social realism.[6] MacKay and Stonebridge cite Rubin Rabinovitz's *The Reaction Against Experiment in the English Novel, 1950-1960* (1967) as being grossly overrated in its popularity due to the primary exploration of Braine, Sillitoe and Wain and not their preferred choices of C. P. Snow, David Storey, Stan Barstow and Colin MacInnes. They observe that after Modernism, though it "exhausted the novel", "a new ethnography turned inwards to observe an evermore precarious-looking Britain […] to document an increasingly grim reality".[7] With the Angry Young Men, this statement confirms the literary success of *Hurry on Down*, *Room at the Top* and *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* in forming realist imitations of post-war life. In these three novels, there is a different sense of aestheticism, not as *l'art pour l'art*, but as a mirror to a post-war reality. David Roberts, in his lecture on Alan Sillitoe, notes that what makes *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* great is its "ability to encapsulate the point of view of society at a moment in time" – it represents a period with greater accuracy than an aesthetic Modernist text could muster.[8] Affirming Roberts' point, Kenneth Tynan asserts that "a political belief is the most enriching thing that can happen to a writer"; this is well evidenced by the literature produced by members of the Movement and emphasises the animated expression of politics and class exposure.[9]

The Angry Young Men label was given "whether they liked it or not" in recognition of the starkness of their prose, poetry and dramaturgy following the first production of John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* (1956).[10] Critics such as D. J. Taylor have noted that Braine, Sillitoe and Wain were "hailed retrospectively as social documentarians, prescient of a new and virulently divisive era of urban capitalism" and their novels consolidated and defined working-class struggles in the post-war period.[11] These novels are attuned to the factors referenced in Mengham's definition of the social realist novel, each displaying the "effects of mass culture on class" with fluctuating obliqueness.[12] Mengham's suggestion that social realist novels "document new forms of alienation" privileges the novel form as a means of representing these new orders, in ways that cannot be captured by the sociological.[13] If written today, they would be categorised as historical but fictional accounts of the

[6] *British Fiction After Modernism*, ed. by Marina Mackay and Lyndsey Stonebridge, 1st edn, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 5
[7] Ibid., 5-6
[8] David Roberts, 'The Sillitoe Lecture', *Centre Piece 3*, NOT 5.J2.2 (University of Nottingham Special Collections, 1975)
[9] Kenneth Tynan, 'Theatre and Living' in *Declaration* ed. by Tom Maschler, (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1957), 113
[10] D.J. Taylor, 'When the North Invaded Hampstead', *Guardian*, 30 Nov, 2002, 26
[11] Ibid., 26
[12] Rod Mengham, 'Bad Teeth: British Social Realism in Fiction', in *British Social Realism in the Arts since 1940*, ed. by David Tucker, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 81
[13] Ibid., 81

period. These novels offer important insights into the individual through the first-person narrative mode through which they operate.

Austerity Britain

Following the Second World War, Britain was a failing economy. The Labour government, under Clement Attlee, became a point to which these three writers were responding with a working-class perspective. In a speech just a month before his election, Attlee brought to light an "economic and social organisation" which "may satisfy the deep […] of good will in all classes for social justice and economic democracy".[14] The Labour Party was intent on the values of all "men and women", or the everyman, however, this government was not sustainable. The everyman was a figure of deprivation and missed opportunity under the post-war Conservative government and was required to reside in his own 'local' community. These communities, or regions, were illustrated by a collection of proletarian writers who highlighted the struggles and injustice felt amongst them, "embody[ing] perceptions of the individual life which can be disruptive, anarchic, asocial".[15] Where sociologists fail to amplify individual voices, post-war literature gave the working class a means of self-representation or a voice. Alongside the notion that "preventing or relieving poverty seemed so integral to post-war society as to be almost irreversible", things were on a continual decline for the working classes, but with hope as new ideologies pushed to the surface.[16]

Post-war Britain was also marked by a variety of social revolutions. For the working classes, there was new hope on the horizon in the New Left. The New Left, a culmination of evolved but outdated values, is removed from Marxist tradition and instilled with a new sense of vitality. It operated for empowerment among the working classes with anarchic action and looked at upward mobility for those on lower ground. In 1956, Anthony Crosland urged that "'as the pre-war reasons for a largely economic orientation are […] steadily losing their relevance'", socialists could "'divert […] energies into more fruitful and idealistic channels and to fulfilling earlier and more fundamental socialist aspirations'".[17] But *what* were these "fundamental socialist aspirations"? They are the aspirations which are so different to the capitalist aspirations at the time and the prevalence of "economic […] over human values".[18] But then I should ask, what are *human values*? Aneurin Bevan lists them as "loving, laughing, worshipping, eating, the deep serenity of a happy home, the warmth of friends".[19]

[14] Clement Attlee, *Attlee's Election Speech*. AP Archive, (British Movietone, 1945)
[15] Brian Jackson and Dennis Marsden, *Working Class Community*, 1st edn, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), 14
[16] Ramesh Mishra, *Welfare State in Crisis: Social Thought and Social Change*, 1st edn, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1984).
[17] Anthony Crosland, Qtd. in in Black, Lawrence. *The Political Culture of the Left in Affluent Britain 1951-1964*, 1st edn, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 133
[18] Ibid., 133
[19] Aneurin Bevan, *In Place of Fear*, 1st edn, (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1952), 45

Are these *socialist* values? The answer, again according to Bevan is absolute: socialism meant "moral considerations would take precedence over economic motives".[20]

A group of New Left academics contributed a new school of thought, to portray the imposing ideological state apparatus and is best represented by Richard Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy* (1957). The work addressed the working-class family in post-war Britain and the wider society which put them in this social category. Nick Bentley positions Hoggart as "[a man who] was interested in the way that the 1950s economic boom was changing established frameworks of social class in both cultural and political terms".[21] This point of view marks a significant starting point for this dissertation, which bridges the gap in scholarship on the post-war British regional novel. As young writers in the post-war period, Braine, Sillitoe and Wain were especially well-placed to reflect upon the trends Bentley describes and announced a cultural change in their respective novels.

In the middle of the twentieth century, the British working-class novel was a mark of record and experience, determined to present the "disruptive, anarchic, asocial" qualities of those who had written them. In crafting an image of mid-twentieth century working-class people, it is important to make a distinction between the several layers in class. There were three primary class distinctions in post-war Britain: the upper class; the middle class; the working class. The social historian might refer to specific class distinctions *within* these primary categories, but these are the three generic foundations. There were various keystones to critical thinking and liberation for working-class people, as David Brinks states, "the need to protect local political minorities from being systematically disadvantaged by local political majorities" was crucial in a time of governmental control and censorship.[22] In post-war Britain, the working class were generally living in poverty amidst a health and housing crisis – family and the arts were few comforts to survive on and the economy needed a financial re-evaluation to fix these issues. Jean Stean, writing in *The Guardian* realised that "[t]he children of 1965 are in some ways more deprived than the poor of the 1940s when there was a communal poverty", acknowledging the children of the generation continued to suffer on the streets.[23]

The working classes in post-war Britain were excluded from wealth of all kinds, starved of representation, and with little chance to access or afford literature of their own. This was eased by Allen Lane's effort to introduce accessible literature with the Penguin paperback and Pelican Books,

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[20] Lawrence Black, *The Political Culture of the Left in Affluent Britain, 1951-64*, 1st edn., (Basingstoke Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 133
[21] Nick Bentley, "'New Elizabethans': The Representation of Youth Subcultures in 1950s British Fiction", *Literature & History*, 19:1, (2010), 19
[22] David Brink, 'Mill's Moral and Political Philosophy', *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* (Autumn 2022 Edition), https://plato.stanford.edu/cgi-bin/encyclopedia/archinfo.cgi?entry=mill-moral-political (Accessed 22 February 2023)
[23] Jean Stean, Qtd. Brian Jackson and Dennis Marsden, *Working Class Community*, 1st edn (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), 8

which would supply material at affordable prices. Penguin and Pelican Books became an "intellectual force".[24] The first of the Pelican Books in 1937 was, notably, George Bernard Shaw's *The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism, Capitalism, Sovietism & Fascism* (1928) which became a tour de force in socialist circulation and information. In the introduction, there are "Seven Ways Proposed" to "let every person have that part of wealth of the country".[25] It acts as a handbook to empower the working-class individual, and though addressed to the female, "the feminine pronoun here includes the masculine".[26] Braine, Sillitoe and Wain's novels are deploying ideas about class that are circulating in this period, themselves published in paperback form in the late 1950s. In a fictional setting, the novels offer, as David James notes, "a version of the physical world that […] serves to dramatize through action, perception, and personified setting".[27] The works offer balance to a world of imbalance. Literary fiction was responding to the shift in dynamism and political turmoil, as mirrored in the protest novels and kitchen sink realism. This mode of realism presented every day, often working-class life in its truest form with subjectivism and was disruptive to pre-existing artistic trends. It emanated from literature, theatre, and art in the 1950s, with the mission to *present*, rather than conceal the reality of working-class living. The strength of the post-war novel lies in its very label: post-war. Inferring hindsight, though seldom looking back, *Hurry on Down, Room at the Top* and *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* present the age of austerity with a sense of being young amidst the ruins.

Regional Difference in the 'Age of Scarcity'

While these authors were critical of the institutions thrust upon them in post-war Britain, notably marriage and taxation, their viewpoints varied depending on *which* institution they protested. This Britain was one marked by what Tom Maschler has called "[a] combined mood of rather damp and grey moderation and rather complicatedly motivated aggressive hysteria".[28] Maschler identifies that each of the Angry Young Men held a variety of values and this is a result of the various regions in which they lived, wrote, and set their work. Their aggression lies in the refusal to "sentimentalise England's provinces, countering the compulsion to idealise rural integrity" and "evok[e] the historical density of such localised settings".[29] This brought a new shift in 'regional' fiction disparate from its origin. This tension between post-war recovery and economic growth lies in being "accustomed to a

[24] Alan Bell, 'Allen Lane and Modern Trade Publishing', *The Sewanee Review*, 114:2, (2006), 336
[25] George Bernard Shaw, *The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism,* 1st edn, (London: Constable & Co., 1928), 19
[26] Ibid., 19
[27] David James, 'Relocating Mimesis: New Horizons for the British Regional Novel', *Journal of Narrative Theory*, 36:3, (2006), 424
[28] Tom Maschler, *Declaration*, 1st edn, (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1957), 7
[29] David James, 'Relocating Mimesis: New Horizons for the British Regional Novel', *Journal of Narrative Theory*, 36:3, (2006), 428

level of production which has been below capacity".[30] Britain was in an "Age of Scarcity" with little to support those who simply could not afford basic commodities. Urban growth was high, as part of urban recovery from the Blitz in late 1940 and early 1941. Marshall Aid, part of the United States' financial aid for Western Europe contributed to "rebuild the productive capacity of the West European economies" – a large amount went to the industrial cities which had large productive capacity.[31] In light of this political context, an 'Age of Scarcity' would surely influence the literary output of writers, particularly when they are young, angry, and disenchanted with society. In *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning,* Seaton protests middle-class life with his various internal monologues and Braine's Joe Lampton in *Room at the Top*, keeps in mind that "*There's always room at the top*" in the white-collar world.[32] In identifying the shift in social status, a contradiction in class reveals itself, one which led Braine to leave "Yorkshire for the South in 1966 because of the change in [his] political values".[33] Without justifying *why*, Braine's relocation to the South of England indicates a change in financial status just nine years after his working-class novel was published. His critique of "politics, morality, jobs [and] women" was flimsy, his class loyalty short-lived and like his protagonist, he has shown that the working-class life was not for him. They both flee from economic and social tension and although Lampton fails to succeed at this, Braine's life continues to ride on his reputation for his depiction of working-class living.

Referring again to *Working Class Community*, the first chapter focuses on the dialect of the people: "When you hear them, those voices are Yorkshire, deliberate, authoritative".[34] The key scene in *Room at the Top* is Joe's return to Dufton in West Yorkshire, a fictional place represented by "the Bad Morning, the Death Morning" when his parents were killed in the Blitz.[35] It is a grim place "where the snow seemed to turn black before it almost hit the floor" because of the industrial smog in the air.[36] The local pub was called 'The Siege Gun', the name representing both Lampton's internal conflict and the war of recent memory; the Dufton "style of living" does not suit him and therefore he must strive for *more*.[37] I hope to define "the qualities, good or bad, of working-class life", those qualities which are represented as bleak and unsavoury.[38] However, this bleakness is representative of the individual protagonist's psyche and dealings with working-class living as Seaton is psychologically

[30] John Maynard Keynes, *How to Pay for the War*, 1st edn, (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1940), 4
[31] Jim Tomlinson, "Marshall Aid and the 'Shortage Economy' in Britain in the 1940s." *Contemporary European History*, 9:1, (2000), 147
[32] John Braine, *Room at the Top*, 3rd edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), 212
[33] Braine, John, 'Share My Life', MS20c Braine C, (University of Leeds Special Collections, May 3 1986)
[34] Brian Jackson and Dennis Marsden, *Working Class Community*, 1st edn, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), 4
[35] John Braine, *Room at the Top*, 3rd edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), 90
[36] Ibid., 85
[37] Ibid., 85
[38] Brian Jackson and Dennis Marsden, *Working Class Community*, 1st edn, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), 4

certain, however Lampton is financially obsessive. Braine presented the North of England as a place of opportunity with dustings of Southern culture, class, and confidence. In his fictional Yorkshire setting (Dufton and Warley), his characters speak those "deliberate, authoritative" voices in the Yorkshire dialect. Within 'Disruptive', northern deliberation and authority are considered within the various cultural and political shifts of the post-war period. In this chapter, I will also consider the accuracy and validity of the literary representation in the three novels.

The post-war British regional novel explores the "qualities, good or bad, of working-class life", through its authoritative presentation of working-class *living*. The post-war regional novel is one written and based on a specific region in Britain that consequently explores locally specific concerns in the context of post-war recovery. Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, Wain's *Hurry on Down* and Braine's *Room at the Top* each present a character through a first-person narrative and one whose experience of the working-class life oscillates between ambition and acceptance. Lampton strives for social mobility through working-class graft, Seaton passively protests against established ideas and Lumley flits to and from the middle-classes. Each character voices the working class, for they *are* working class and each give an authoritative account of the regional cities of their origin. The Angry Young Men present their operative regions with the use of mimesis, capturing "a version of the physical world that [the novel] serves to dramatize" and in an essay, David Pryce-Jones also acknowledges this mimesis, stating that as of 1951 "literature tried to come to terms with social and political change, to assess what sort of feeling was abroad among the unobservant".[39, 40] He notes two features of British literature in the period: the first is a heightened sense of observation in the face of austerity and the other, the extent of political discord in this time of "social and political change", a provocative catalyst for post-war writing and response.

Regional Fiction

The literature from regional working-class cities contributed to a national chorus of working-class struggle with disruptive and assertive notes. These novels gave a voice to marginalised regions and the frustration which emanated from post-war austerity; they would later permeate into popular culture through theatre and the surge of British New Wave film. These works appear as: "Real enactments of the intensest kind", a line I have adapted from Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* (1894).[41] The line was crafted for the sake of realism and describes an urban crowd, one which was enveloped in "tragedy,

[39] David James, 'Relocating Mimesis: New Horizons for the British Regional Novel', *Journal of Narrative Theory*, 36:3, (2006), 425
[40] David Pryce-Jones, 'Towards the Cocktail Party', in *Age of Austerity 1945-51*, ed. by Philip French and Michael Sissons, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964), 218
[41] Thomas Hardy, *Jude the Obscure*, ed. by C. H. Sisson, 1st edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1998), 168

comedy, farce".[42] Tony Davies presents the idea "that fictional representation, like acting, is no simple matter of transcription or mechanical mimicry but a complex and mediated process of transformation".[43] Although Davies acknowledges realism in theatre, this is widely applicable to the 'enactments' present in post-war fiction and their function of translating life into art. Hardy's crowd is realist, like those represented in post-war regional novels who "speak realistically for the condition of the provincial man", whether it be with tragedy, comedy or farce.[44] Alan Sillitoe's character Arthur Seaton speaks for "the condition of the provincial man" by amplifying the unspoken anarchic ideas of the masses (ideas which are *not* shared by the author). The essence of these works lie in the humanity, be it in Faustian flaws or failed courtship, and present anarchic ideas and values as atypical for a young working-class man in the post-war period. He is anarchic in mind, but his body is institutionally bound by the need to survive and provide. This thesis will identify themes of protest in the second chapter, 'Anarchic', to consolidate an image of resistance in the regions of Britain and the resonance of social enquiry foreclosed by London-centricity.

These works which emanated from war-torn Britain gave a voice to those living in marginalised, industrial and working-class regions. They often grew poorer as the rich grew richer in a *faux naïf* attempt to re-evaluate working conditions for the working man under various governmental conceits. This reform was a façade, instead promoting investment in the bourgeoise and with little consideration for those living in "the complex and claustrophobic" social situations.[45] In the introduction to *Age of Austerity 1945-1951*, Michael Sissons and Philip French state that in post-war Britain, it was "difficult to recall a time when so much idealism was in the air".[46] They are alluding to the social and recreational elements of society, those which orbit the two primary sub-categories of social order: the working-class, and the middle classes. Hoggart would divide the post-war people with two simple labels: "'Them' and 'Us'", – 'Them' being the middle-classes and 'Us', the familiar working-classes.[47] Hoggart identifies here, perhaps inadvertently, the presence of both author and protagonist in the post-war novel with 'Us', indicating a sense of unity between protagonist, author, and his reader. This divide also indicates the two primary parts of post-war society, instantaneously separating the protagonist of each novel as 'Us' and the institutional bodies as 'Them'.

The war had a broad impact on Britain, though as I have tried to make clear, the working-class regions took the financial brunt. Keynes makes it imperative that "everyone can be protected by

[42] Ibid., 168
[43] Tony Davies, 'Unfinished Business: Realism and Working-Class Writing', in *The British Working-Class Novel in the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Jeremy Hawthorn, (London: Edward Arnold, 1984), 132
[44] Leslie Paul, 'The Angry Young Men Revisited', *The Kenyon Review*, 27: 2, (1965), 351
[45] Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy*. 4th edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992), 16
[46] Philip French and Michael Sissons, *Age of Austerity, 1945-1951*. 2nd edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964), 9
[47] Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy*, 4th edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992), 72

making a certain rule of behaviour universal", but this 'behaviour' enabled a certain level of greed amongst those who could *afford* to be greedy, and directed the repercussions on those who could *not*.[48] He cites inflation amongst essential and commodious goods, labelling it the "mighty tax-gatherer", and its means of generating voluntary savings to, as the title of his economic monograph suggests, *pay for the war*. Published in 1940, this account is pre-emptive of the wartime budget and attempts to consolidate the cost of conflict whilst sustaining a functional economy. His sympathy towards the working classes and his marking of the necessity of voluntary saving (to spend on taxed goods) indicates the strain the war took on Britain and the unrequited necessity to chip in for a collective effort. I shall return to this in the second chapter, but it is worth unpacking to clarify the extent of turmoil not post-war, but as it was ongoing.

'Disruptive', 'Anarchic' and 'Asocial'

In light of these social and literary contexts, I aim to divide this essay into three chapters: 'Disruptive', 'Anarchic', and 'Asocial'. Each will aim to distinguish the disruptive, anarchic, and asocial qualities of the novels, supporting insights into the titular qualities of the period. These titles are borrowed from Jackson's *Working Class Community* and are representative of the state of flux amongst the post-war working class. The first chapter is titled 'Disruptive'. This initial chapter will engage with the socio-political events which motivated the writer to engage with polemics and 'enact' an image of *socialist* realism. In illuminating the distinction between the kind of appearances these writers were trying to sustain against the actual implications of their work, I also aim to locate a vein of disruption within the authors themselves. This initial chapter aims to dissect the motivations and struggles of the post-war novelist, whilst considering the class disparities of Britain in the period. Disruptive in the public domain and within their pages, the three novels protest various divides in culture and class-centric debates, often utilising place, and space as a close alternative to self and other. The strength of my argument will lie in a close analysis of the texts and the characterisations within them, to present the disruption caused by the Second World War and the characters who confront this with disruptive monologue and action. Additionally, my argument will look at the material conditions which are referred to in these novels, disrupted by the war and responded to in a disruptive repentance to society, using the pre-war Modernists as a contrast.

The second chapter is entitled 'Anarchic'. Similar in definition to that of the third chapter title, 'Asocial', I would like to introduce a distinction between them, doing so by referring to the micro and the macro. The micro refers to the secondary character, whereas the macro-analysis refers to people in the broader society. My later discussion will clarify this statement, but in brief terms, I will argue the

[48] John Maynard Keynes, *How to Pay for the War*, 1st edn, (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1940), 70

case of the asocial *individual* within the working class. This chapter aims to identify the characterisations of Lumley, Seaton and Lampton under the lens of contemporary socio-political concerns, be it the rise of youth culture or the paradoxically commercial anti-capitalist movement. An analysis of the political landscape in Britain, focussed on the New Left regime, will frame the authorial intent and final literary product of these characters, asking what stance *these characters have* and what they contribute to a wider reading of the period. These are key questions to ask, with the hope of defining a sense of the anarchic responses contained in the novels themselves, which contribute an agenda of both authorial and public incentives to rebel against the system. The historical and social elements will be key in identifying these political shifts, whilst also allowing for a social commentary on working-class culture in this period. In referring primarily to *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, *Hurry on Down* and *Room at the Top*, the novels will themselves become a lens through which post-war Britain can be seen as the subject of austerity and the anarchic response to this. This stance will prioritise the voices of the working-class, rather than relying on what is primarily middle-class observation in social politics to attain a true perspective from those who were suffering first hand. I will further illuminate this suffering in the body of the chapter. As 'Disruptive' analyses the product, or the novel's origin and impact, 'Anarchic' analyses the composition and means to its production.

Following this individual focus on the protagonists, the third chapter 'Asocial' will analyse the underrepresented, secondary voices in the novels. It will also focus on working-class reservedness, considering Lampton's aim for social mobility, Lumley's fleeting class aspirations and Seaton's working-class security. This chapter aims to prioritise the wider working-class voice, noting not the factors which enabled this, but those middle and upper classes which stunted social growth and caused the sickness of mid-twentieth century society. The voices at the peak of social hierarchy ceased to *be* a vice, but rather an object of working-class reaction, a motivation: this is evidenced in working-class growth. 'Asocial', though a study of the secondary character in these novels, will re-evaluate the asociality of the working-class way of living and their accuracy as fictional manifestations. Defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary*, this word applies to an individual being "antagonistic to society or social order", evoking elements of protest.[49] This differs from Mann and Blunden's definition of anarchy, though the definitions are close. The asocial is not a "political system", but can be applied to an individual or social group – it does not allow individuals "complete freedom to govern themselves", nor does it aim to; to be asocial is to prefer individuality, be it socially or in spirit.[50] In light of this, the natural place to shift would be to the protagonist, as the word

[49] *Oxford English Dictionary*: https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/11555?rskey=BjryTG&Result=1#edit (Accessed January 3, 2023)
[50] Trischa Mann and Audrey Blunden, *Australian Law Dictionary*, 1st edn, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010)

derives from the Greek prōtos, or first in importance. The etymology signals a protagonist as the 'first', noting the individual, however, I would like to observe the secondary characters in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning, Hurry on Down* and *Room at the Top*. Deeper still, the male secondary characters shall be my focus as those *within* working-class society as they are generically noted in social history as the 'breadwinners', or the *working*. The following analyses of the secondary characters will accompany an analysis of society's infrastructure, from the surrounding streets to the bounds of society's institutions – *these* are the factors which define him.

MacKay and Stonebridge's observation of the post-war novel and their focus on authors other than Braine, Sillitoe and Wain stifles contemporary scholarship on these three works. Although papers, notably Minogue and Palmer's "Helter-Skelter, Topsy-Turvy and 'Loonycolour': Carnivalesque Realism in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*" and Kalliney's "Cities of Affluence: Masculinity, Class, and The Angry Young Men" pay significant attention to individual novels, there is an absence of recent attention to all three. This paper aims to fill this absence, taking an original shift from MacKay and Stonebridge's recent scholarship of the post-war novel and paying special attention not to Modernism, but to working-class society and authorship. Overall, under the three chapters, this thesis aims primarily to "redefine and consolidate the past in the present" with special consideration for the 'Disruptive', 'Anarchic' and 'Asocial' qualities within these three disenchanted post-war texts.

Disruptive

"superhuman patience about to snap at last"

— John Wain, *Hurry on Down* (1953)

The presence of disruption, post-war, was most prominent and was adequately represented in the content of the post-war novel. However, in the years before the war, the Modernist novel was a tour de force of literary convention but it was *far* from conventional and rather experimental. Where the post-war realist, like the Romantic, "expressed their inner vision rather than obey[ed] formal conventions", the "Modernist writers characteristically reversed this objective".[51] This too was a class debate between the writer and the reader. As the Victorian tradition of readership continued until the Second World War, reading was a primarily bourgeois activity and as a *l'art pour l'art* movement, writers believed that if they "acknowledged rhetorical aims, they would reduce their art to entertainment".[52] Unlike the post-war working-class novelist, whose art functioned as a mimetic device, society was presented as enchanted and mythological. As a political device, however, Modernism operated on the basis of interpretation, lending "a matrix through which to interpret events that otherwise appeared to lack any internal logic".[53] There is a distinction in substance and style here between the three novels on which I focus and the Modernist: the Modernist would 'say it how you *think* it should be said', whereas the post-war kitchen sink realist would say it 'how it is'. Pericles Lewis stated that "Modernism gave life to a generation of narrator-heroes who forged social realities" and "sought to demonstrate the power of national myths to shape even apparently 'objective' perceptions of reality", positioning this statement against the realist.[54] As this chapter outlines, it is the social realist whose characters forged a document of reality, as it was being written immediately after the Second World War.

The presence of politics in Saturday Night and Sunday Morning, Hurry on Down and Room at the Top is frequent, though it tends to exist as the subject of narrative and monologue to present the encompassing presence of social injustice. As this chapter aims to illustrate, these three novels were published in conjunction with great artistic and social change: be it the kitchen sink movement, or the New Left in Britain. This chapter aims to illustrate the transition from pre to post-war society and the social changes which would influence the publication of the three novels. The genesis of disruption can be traced to the Second World War and the six years of conflict which ensued, however, the

[51] Joyce Wexler, 'Modernist Writers and Publishers', *Studies in the Novel*, 17:3, (1985), 286
[52] Ibid., 286
[53] Pericles Lewis, *Modernism, Nationalism and the Novel*, 1st edn, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 4
[54] Ibid., 11

socio-economic disturbance which followed and the disruptive response from the working classes shall be the primary focus here. The protagonists in these novels were disruptive to their associated institutions, to the social order, and the preceding literary protagonists of pre-war Britain. Harry Hopkins noted that in the mid-1950s, "a movement of the novel back into the mainstream" was underway, with a focus on "ordinary people who might actually live in the provinces".[55] The novels of Braine, Sillitoe, and Wain claimed the baton left by the pre-war writers, reflecting instead on the after-effects of war and the disruption inflicted upon the new society. The war shaped the early experiences of Braine, Sillitoe and Wain and as a result, their work focuses not on the war as an event, but as a catalyst for social reform. These three novelists interpreted war and post-war Britain with a disparate tone, subject, and perspective to the pre-war novelist on society; the pre-war novel, represented in archetype by Anthony Powell's *The Afternoon Men* (1931), presented a gentrified society of inter-connected social spheres, artistic endeavour but was set amidst an economic decline following the Great Depression of 1929. The first episode in *The Afternoon Men* opens with a gentrified criticism of a bar ("the quality of the brandy had been poor") and monetary matters of debt ("half a crown, a shilling and three pennies").[56] Both signify an acquired taste in a time of economic difficulty. Powell's novel set him within the intellectual group, The Bright Young People, a collective of "the well-off under-thirties" but they might have been called the 'wealthy young men', acting as a healthy antithesis to the Angry Young Men and their difficult economic background.[57] Social constructionist ideas of social, political and cultural association would state that the age and location of the author will influence his or her social response and would thus influence their literary output; Alvin B. Kernan notes that literature, as a social construction, is "a product of a particular time and place".[58] The vicinity of Braine, Sillitoe and Wain compared to the social distance of Powell and his contemporaries, outlines a shift in values and perspective which stimulated Jeremy Hawthorn's comment: "'working-class novel' is a contradiction in terms. […] [Writing a novel] is an act that produces a result that it is not in itself compatible with working-class aspirations".[59] Until the post-war period, the novel was a predominantly middle-class form. In an age of deprivation, poetry would not suffice, thus bringing the working-class novel into prominence.

The Angry Young Men, labelled so for their disenchantment with post-war society, were merely youths during the Second World War and, as predominantly working-class individuals, were accustom to the widespread deprivation during this period. In contrast, it is significant to note

[55] Harry Hopkins, *The New Look, A Social History of the Forties and Fifties*, 1st edn, (London: Reader's Union, 1964), 356
[56] Anthony Powell, *The Afternoon Men*, 4th edn, (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1974), 1
[57] Marius Hentea, "The End of the Party: The Bright Young People in 'Vile Bodies, Afternoon Men', and 'Party Going'", *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 56:1, (2014), 90
[58] Alvin B, Kernan, 'The Social Construction of Literature', *The Kenyon Review*, 7:4, (1985), 31
[59] *The British Working-Class Novel in the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Jeremy Hawthorn, 1st edn, (London: Edward Arnold, 1984), vii

Powell's perspective of pre-war Britain and the gentry. Powell's novel written during the second generation of Modernism, presented an idealised and gentrified society which represented the niche corners of society – this became the norm in pre-war literature until the Second World War ended and the working-class author came to the fore. Where Pryce-Jones said "literature tried to come to terms with social and political change, to assess what sort of feeling was […] the unobservant", he acknowledges the strength of these realists, putting a spotlight on an emerging generation of authors who present life as it is to "the unobservant" members of the middle-class.[60]

Post-War

Following the ceasefire in Western Europe, a new wave of authors emerged in Britain. Different to the Modernist, Braine, Sillitoe and Wain presented an age of bleak working-class living, far removed from the prose produced before the break of war. They wrote from the vantage point of youth, with an encompassing sense of missed opportunity and class imbalance. These feelings formed a genre which would become known as kitchen sink realism, titled so for the common setting of the grim working-class regions and insightful detail towards the "individual life".[61] Kitchen sink realism is rooted in the visual arts, with the work of John Bratby R. A. (1928-1992) illustrating the reality of working-class living. His paintings depict the modern kitchen and other facilities, with an abstract form accentuating the idiosyncrasies of the home. There are some distinct differences between Powell's early novel and Bratby's artwork. Like my three key authors, Bratby's pieces illustrate an often bleak, socially accurate image of a working-class home, whereas Powell writes about upper-middle-class life and the ease of things – a stark contrast from the novels central to this study. The novel, in this instance, is also about shared feelings in others, "embody[ing] perceptions of the individual life" in its setting, themes and sense of injustice. William Van O'Connor, quoting J. B. Priestley, recalls that he "says that the *Zeitgeist* is producing the new fiction. […] Their novels represent a rejection of Society".[62] The writers present three protagonists who often resent the middle classes, but do not necessarily resent themselves in a "rejection of [general] Society".[63] This occurs most notably in *Hurry on Down*, with Lumley being from a middle-class background but attempting to live a working-class life. The novel's climax lies in Lumley's rejection of "his own kind", when he covers his partner's middle-class family in the "scummy grey flood" from the sink and washing-up bowl:

> Hell! They could have it if they wanted. With a sudden twist he broke free, lunged across to the sink and snatched the washing-up bowl. Edith had just finished washing up when he

[60] David Pryce-Jones, 'Towards the Cocktail Party', in *Age of Austerity 1945-51*, ed. by Philip French and Michael Sissons, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964), 218
[61] Brian Jackson and Dennis Marsden, *Working Class Community*, 1st edn, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), 14
[62] William Van O'Connor, "Two Types of 'Heroes' in Post-War British Fiction" *PMLA*, 77:1, (1962), 171
[63] Ibid., 171

> arrived, and for some reason she had not thrown the water away. Half of the scummy grey flood poured over Charles himself as he dragged the bowl wildly out of the sink, but the other half cascaded gloriously as, with a tremendous sense of release, he swung it round. Almost simultaneously three sounds filled the kitchen – the water's gulping splash, Edith's loud squealing, and the clatter of the empty bowl landing in a corner.[64, 65]

This is a significant milestone in the emergence of kitchen sink realism, both in the literal sense and for the transgressive statement it makes. It is Wain's adverb "wildly" that illustrates this transition into the working classes for he is dehumanized, even animalised. Lumley confronts the change in popular culture by washing over the middle classes and thus begins his working-class journey: a baptism by murky water, a disruption to his social standing – these actions embody his own anti-ablution. In Christianity, the ablution acts as a cleanse unto God before entering a church, or place of worship. Lumley, however, dulls his in-laws and damns their dwelling before fleeing to seek a pure, absolutist working-class world. This scene goes down as the most visual and sensual episode, particularly in the three verbs "twist", "lunged" and "snatched".[66] In explosive action, Wain presents a character with a "rejection of [his own] Society" who is disruptive to his own personal enhancement, to his own life and to the prospect of marriage.

Alan Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* also begins with a disruptive burst of energy which asserts the carefree operative forces of the text. The first part of the novel, 'Saturday Night', opens with an archetypal working-class setting: "Benefit Night for the White Horse Club".[67] As Aytül Özüm states, it is a place where the working classes "can leave their responsibilities aside for awhile", where Arthur drunkenly walks amongst the tables and relishes "the share of [Brenda's] absent husband" (he is not a member of the club).[68, 69, 70] Belonging to a working-class family himself, Arthur has little intention to alter his own class background, noting his comfort in his wages, whilst also stating "[t]hey rob our wage packets every week with insurance and income tax and try to tell us it's all for our own good".[71] A contradictory character, he flits from comfort to spoken protest, though he never realises his disruptive actions. As David Storey notes of Sillitoe's work, "there is an ambiguity which is never resolved: the feeling that the revolution he would set up in society is in fact a revolution inside himself".[72] Storey acknowledges that in Sillitoe's prose, his vehicle is protest, but also concedes that this protest is purely psychological or self-fulfilling. However, the monologues

[64] John Wain, *Hurry on Down*, 2nd edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), 25
[65] Ibid., 19-20
[66] Ibid., 19-20
[67] Alan Sillitoe, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, 2nd edn, (London: PAN, 1959), 5
[68] Aytül Özüm, 'The Representation of the Working Class and Masculinity and Alan Sillitoe's Saturday Night and Sunday Morning', *Hacettpe University Journal of English Language and Literature*, 3:1, (1995), 43
[69] Alan Sillitoe, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, 2nd edn, (London: PAN, 1959), 1
[70] Ibid., 5
[71] Ibid., 28
[72] David Storey, Qtd in Jeremy Hawthorn, *The British Working-Class Novel in the Twentieth Century*, 1st edn, (London: Edward Arnold, 1984), 97

were made public when the novel was published and gained great popularity for this simply by the way in which Seaton confronts contemporary issues. Sillitoe's crafts Seaton as a pawn for disruptive protest, uprooting the pre-war literary traditions and bringing exposure to working-class conditions.

As a novel which may be categorised as 'protest fiction', it is important to consider exactly what that term refers to. Eric Leuschner defines protest *literature* as something that "attempts to confront the simplification and commodification of protest action".[73] But to what extent does Seaton simplify or commodify protest *action*? Seaton's monologues are a means of identifying his position in the class hierarchy and his inability to contribute to society, being stuck in a menial position at the factory and living a life of weekend liberty. Leuschner continues, echoing Scott Saul's question: "How do we distinguish between works directly involved in social conflict and those that, retrospectively, shape our memory of that conflict?".[74] In light of Seaton and given the strength of hindsight, the answer reveals itself: Seaton's conflict is retrospectively rigid in his working-class life and reveals that to most working-class characters, social mobility is not possible due to their having a dampened voice. As he is marginalised by the post-war government and taxation rates, he is perceived as an inferior, working-class man within capitalist class relations and with an appetite for married women. Early in the novel, amidst Seaton's affair with Brenda, he and her husband Jack indulge in conversation about politics and marriage. Though the former episode is significant, it is the latter one which holds primary footing here. The seed is sown when Jack unwraps a pack of sandwiches made by his wife and Arthur wishes to indulge in one "cut and spread by Brenda's own hands", unwrapping his concealed desires.[75] On the following leaves, Arthur confesses to voting for the Communist Party using his father's ballot, asserting that "these looney laws are […] to be broken by blokes like me".[76] Though he is directly referring to Jack's warnings on the ballot, it anticipates his later rejection of due process and social institutions, notably marriage. Arthur holds a dramatic irony over his co-worker, knowing in the face of the un-knowing and when confronted by the question of marriage, he states that he is "not that daft".[77] This is not a class-based debate, but rather a disruption toward an institution. Referring back to Leuschner's point, we are reminded that protest fiction "attempts to confront the simplification […] of protest action".[78] The protest here is against society, fuelled by a youthful urge to disrupt social order. These pages codify his values, enabling the later verbal, institutional disruptions to be demonstrated with greater purpose.

[73] Eric Leuschner, 'The Literature of Protest and the Consumption of Activism', *The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association*, 52:2, (2019), 73
[74] Scott Saul, 'Protest Lit 101', *American Literary History*, 21:2, (Summer 2009), 404
[75] Alan Sillitoe, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, 2nd edn, (London: PAN, 1959), 27
[76] Ibid., 29
[77] Ibid., 29
[78] Eric Leuschner, 'The Literature of Protest and the Consumption of Activism', *The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association*, 52:2, (2019), 73.

The protest present in these novels is prominent and the subject of their protest differs depending on the protagonist. For instance, where Morton Kroll states that *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* presents an "amalgam of liberalism and democratic socialism", it must be said that *Hurry on Down* rejects these political beliefs, but with similar elements of disruption.[79] Democratic socialism refers to a left-wing philosophy of supporting democracy and *some* forms of socially owned economy; Wain's protagonist rejects these institutions in particular. Like Seaton, Lumley rejects marriage in the opening chapter, revisiting his partner Sheila's home where she and her parents lived and where he made his anti-ablution. He flees and concludes "It was over. No more Sheila" after a confrontation with her sister.[80] His character is as confused and convoluted as the post-war society and is influenced from various angles by various institutions. Wain provides a justification, whilst outlining the economic focus instilled in Lumley, in *Declaration*:

> We spend a good deal of money, both publicly and as individuals, on having the young taught to appreciate the masterpieces of literature and art. […] So naturally I wrote a novel about a man who had been given the educational treatment and then pitch forked out into the world; adding for good measure, and for realism's sake, another cluster of problems which concerned the disappearance of the old-style bourgeoisie, among whom the hero was supposed to have been brought up.[81]

In his own words, Wain criticises a variety of institutions in society. Beginning with a critical viewpoint on the education sector, he notes the focus on subjects which are inherently *academic* and lacking in practicality for the wider world. His response was to write *Hurry on Down* about a "man who had been given the educational treatment", but who entirely rejects his middle-class upbringing and relies on his practical skills to earn an honest living. In the first chapter, Lumley meets the parents of George Hutchins, an undergraduate contemporary ("a man who had been given the educational treatment").[82] Lumley's acknowledges that "Hutchins has been so abjectly and obviously ashamed of his parents' working-class appearance and manner that he had tried to avoid introducing them".[83] Though, unlike Lumley's parents who fail to appear in the novel, Hutchins' mother and father engage in conversation, remarking their son's "success" in academia.[84] However subtle a detail, the presence of Hutchins' parents and the absence of Lumley's mirrors the variation in class between the two. Lumley, though middle-class but with working-class ambitions, shows no engagement or interest in his parents, but lingers with Hutchins' to "show them their son was an ungainly snob".[85] The tables have turned and Wain illustrates a character who rejects his working-class background for middle-

[79] Morton Kroll, 'The Politics of Britain's Angry Young Men', *The Western Political Quarterly*, 12:2, (1959), 159
[80] John Wain, *Hurry on Down*, 2nd edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), 20
[81] John Wain, 'Along the Tightrope', in *Declaration*, ed. by Tom Maschler, (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1957), 91
[82] Ibid., 91
[83] John Wain, *Hurry on Down*, 2nd edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), 13
[84] Ibid., 13
[85] Ibid., 13

class academia, and the protagonist who rejects his middle-class background to sympathise with the working-classes. This section illustrates him taking on the role of *disruptor* as he wholeheartedly rejects his past life for his present ambition.

In an attempt to categorise the protagonist of post-war fiction, Van O'Connor identifies that:

> English fiction in the new years since World War II has produced a new kind of protagonist. He is a rather seedy young man and suspicious of all pretensions. He spends a lot of time in pubs, has any number of half-hearted love affairs. He gets into trouble with his landlady, his boss, and his family.[86]

O'Connor's statement imagines a generalised and disruptive protagonist, though his article fails to acknowledge the *humanity* present in these individual characters. If one must analyse a character's hedonism, then one must analyse his humanity for the sake of spherical and unbiased criticism. The novels, rather than the critics, do this by creating a character who allegorises working-class struggle and who also offers disruptive challenges to the sources of these difficulties. If applied to Seaton, O'Connor's claim is approximate, with Seaton often "suspicious of all pretensions", spending a "lot of time in pubs" and with his many "half-hearted love affairs", in the initial stages of the novel. Seaton's three enemies are not "his landlady", "his boss" , or his family and most accurate is his "suspicio[n] of all pretensions". He has respect for his boss, as he had "a genuine respect for hard work", though labels him as the "enemy's scout" due to his association with those at the top.[87] As a product of the Welfare State, Seaton is aware of the class differences in industrial city and of his position in the social hierarchy. This aside, he remains compliant when at his lathe, noting internally "I'm worth as much as any man in the world".[88] He recognises his position at the bottom, acknowledging the "good using [his vote]" will do to him.[89] Van O'Connor capitulates that though "there is no single mood" in this period, "common to most of these novels is an air of being hemmed-in, restricted".[90] This is true for Seaton, though referring to his monologues, one sees an attempt at social mobility (in the literal sense) in amplifying his struggles and disrupting his inferiority complex.

However, Van O'Connor's statement is more accurate when observing Lumley and Lampton. In the first chapter of *Hurry on Down*, Lumley interacts with his "landlady […] and his family" and in later chapters with various employers, past and present. His landlady Mrs Smythe speaks the opening lines, asking "'Can't you tell me, Mr Lumley, just what it is that you don't like about the rooms?'" with

[86] William Van O'Connor, "Two Types of 'Heroes' in Post-War British Fiction", *PMLA*, 77:1, (1962), 168
[87] Alan Sillitoe, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, 1st edn, (London: PAN, 1959), 51
[88] Ibid., 32
[89] Ibid., 32
[90] William Van O'Connor, "Two Types of 'Heroes' in Post-War British Fiction", *PMLA*, 77:1, (1962), 173

"superhuman patience about to snap at last".[91] The second clause notes Lumley's difficult character and her difficulty in dealing with him as a tenant. Though, following this, Lumley notes that he "'need[s] something a little nearer'" to work.[92] Mrs Smythe queries his place of work and the need to relocate, though he has no answer at present. The later pages note his rejection of his family, the third of Van O'Connor's institutions, as he "had indeed made use of the obvious and only method of keeping his parents surging into his life" – not passing on his new address.[93] Van O'Connor is making a generalised point on the post-war protagonist, though each of his significant statements can be applied, with fluctuating accuracy, to the novels.

"Two Types of 'Heroes' in Post-War British Fiction" was published approximately ten years after the publication of the *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*. His familiarity with the period and his own experience in post-war Britain lends him an authority, despite his points appearing generalised. He appears to lack a capacity for detecting what is *human* about the characters but is astute on their hedonistic qualities. The protagonist whose behaviour is most applicable to Van O'Connor's paper is Lampton. Lampton is a perceptive, working-class young man from Dufton, a fictional industrial town in Yorkshire. His perception of class difference and his hunger for female companionship make him the archetypal post-war protagonist. Unlike Seaton and Lumley, Lampton wishes to rise up the social hierarchy. His romantic relationships are far from "half-hearted love affairs"; instead, they are passionate, lustful, and disruptive.[94] The novel begins with Lampton alone, heading to his new destination and with a self-assertion: "I came to Warley on a wet September morning with the sky the grey of Guiseley sandstone. […] I remember saying to myself: 'No more zombies, Joe, no more zombies"'.[95] Self-assertive, the zombies are the middle-classes, whose exteriors are animate and their interiors hollow. The clichéd image of the working-classes, incidentally, are zombies (drones) to capitalist agendas as expressed in Chris Doran's 1990 essay "The Working Class as Zombie: Simulation and Resistance in the Late Twentieth Century".[96] Lampton's self-assertive maxim is short-lived as his initial working-class mindset comes to reject bourgeois values, but with the presence of irony. It becomes apparent that these bourgeois values are his Faustian flaw, be it in hubris, vainglory, or avarice. The following paragraph notes Joe's eye for material culture, as he is wearing his "most expensive" shoes.[97] Other items of clothing are not up to this new-found meticulous standard:

[91] John Wain, *Hurry on Down,* 2nd edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), 7
[92] Ibid., 7
[93] William Van O'Connor, "Two Types of 'Heroes' in Post-War British Fiction", *PMLA*, 77:1, (1962), 174
[94] Ibid., 174
[95] John Braine, *Room at the Top*, 3rd edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), 7
[96] Chris Doran, 'The Working Class as Zombie: Simulation and Resistance in the Late Twentieth Century', *America's Baudrillard: The Politics of Simulation*, 14:1-3, (1990)
[97] John Braine, *Room at the Top*, 3rd edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), 7

> My trench-coat and my hat, though, weren't up to the same standard; the coat, after only three months, was badly wrinkled and smelled of rubber, and the hat was faintly discoloured with hair-oil.[98]

He notes his face, "not innocent exactly" but "unused by sex, by money"; he is hardly touched by "any of the muck one's forced to wade through to get what one wants".[99] Later in the novel, his "hands and face were bleeding" and also that "his suit had big splotches of dirt and blood on the jacket".[100] In the novel, he wades through the muck, though does not realise his own failings in his new social sphere. From his lusty affair with the deceased Alice Aisgill to his pregnant bourgeois fiancé Susan, it is clear that this life is *not* for him – he is safer as a zombie himself.

His affair with Warley is just as unsuccessful as his romantic relationships, and encodes the irony in the novel's title – the narrator states "[y]ou can only love a town if it loves you, and Warley would never love a co-respondent".[101] Being the co-respondent in his relationship with Alice, outlines that a middle-class place like Warley cannot stand for infidelities. Continuing, the narration notes that "I had to force the town into granting me the ultimate intimacy, the power and privilege and luxury which emanated from T'Top".[102] His appetite for power remains, but his need to escape the social implications of "T'Top" is clear.[103] Van O'Connor states that "there is no single mood" in post-war Britain, and that the novels contain a set of characters "trying to find their way in new social and cultural situations", and Lampton's attempt to find a way is denoted by his working-class background in a middle-class situation.[104] When returning to Dufton, the place where "no dreams were possible" for Christmas, Lampton reveals his relationship with Susan, daughter of Mr. Brown and thus mechanises his attempt to fit the mould of Warley society.[105] He reveals his class fixation when asked, by his Aunt Emily, "'Who is she?'" to which he responds "'Her father owns a factory near Leddersford. He's on the Warley Council'".[106] Later, Emily sadly replies "'I wonder how fond you really are of her'", identifying in Joe a love for the wealth she brings; he is set on her *assets*, rather than her affections.[107] Later in the novel, Lampton is summoned to the Conservative Club, the "place where the money grew".[108] Mr. Brown opens with a proposition to set Joe up in business, with the condition that he "'never see Susan again'", to which Joe responds: "'No. Definitely no. If you were a younger man, I'd knock you down'".[109] Following this proposition, masked by financial incentive,

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[98] Ibid., 7
[99] Ibid., 7
[100] Ibid., 233
[101] Ibid., 197
[102] Ibid., 197
[103] Ibid., 197
[104] William Van O'Connor, "Two Types of 'Heroes' in Post-War British Fiction", *PMLA*, 77:1, (1962), 6
[105] John Braine, *Room at the Top*, 3rd edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), 85
[106] Ibid., 90
[107] Ibid., 90
[108] Ibid., 202
[109] Ibid., 207

Brown imperatively states "'you're marrying her'", due to an unplanned pregnancy.[110] Peppered with irony throughout, this transaction came from a man who states: "'I don't give my daughter away to seal a bargain'".[111] In failing to bow to his commands, Lampton has braved his superior and proven himself in a test of resilience. By means of courtship and physicality, Lampton has jumped ship from "'Us'" to "'Them'", abandoning his working-class identity and taking on a new upper-middle sensibility. Yet, whilst he conforms to the institution of marriage in 'passing the test', he later succumbs to sinning with the death of Alice: "O merciful God, I thought, she's committed suicide and left a note blaming me".[112] However, the guilt is short-lived and turns to conceit: "That's finished it. That's finished me in every possible way".[113] This marks Lampton's disruptive contribution to romantic relationships in the novel. The motive for Alice's death is unexplained, however there are several indicators to suggest that Lampton is the cause ("'I did love you, but I can't now'").[114] Disruptive to social order and now disruptive to local population, Lampton begins to show symptoms of tyranny, undoing his earlier moments of conformity to the institution of marriage.

Braine presents an Icarus, one whose wings withstand the heat of social pressure and enable him to flee to social mobility. However, the heat gets all too much in the sequel, *Life at the Top* (1962), with the final lines being: "It could not last, it was already evaporating as I began to be grateful for it; but I knew it would come again".[115] At the hand of infidelity, in the presence of unfamiliar wealth and riches, Lampton realises his demise: "it was already evaporating".[116] Despite this, he knew it would come again and his pursuit of the middle-class would continue. Lampton's rhetoric here is preceded by "I was happy, happier than I had been since childhood", marking that in this new life, he has uncovered a new sensitivity.[117] It is worth unpicking just *why* he is happy in the moment, after having admitted to his infidelities with Norah and once again tumbled into a conventional domestic marriage – something which he had resisted in *Room at the Top*. The simple answer may be acceptance of his failings and the end to his gradual decline into marital security, which itself evokes the sense of calmer living. His being "happier [than] since childhood" comes as a response to his making tea for Susan and his rhetoric *is* convincing. His character arc, failing to thrive in middle-class society disrupts the narrative of social mobility and his efforts to improve his own social standing have been disruptive to Warley, but also to himself and his progression.

[110] Ibid., 207
[111] Ibid., 210
[112] Ibid., 217
[113] Ibid., 217
[114] Ibid., 213
[115] John Braine, *Life at the Top*, 2nd edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), 255
[116] Ibid., 255
[117] Ibid., 255

In noting that Lampton's social climbing is disruptive, John D. Hurrell writes that Sillitoe has conceived "a study of the effects of industrial society on a feeling human being", referring to Seaton's plausibility as a working-class character.[118] Lampton, though an equal study "of the effects of industrial society", has different ambitions to Sillitoe's character. Hurrell fails to realise that when at work, Seaton's lathe becomes an extension of body and that his mind becomes an independent entity, giving him "the only time you have to think".[119] His body becomes a machine of production and his mind a passage to elsewhere: "And so it was possible to forget the factory, whether inside it sweating and straining your muscles by a machine".[120] To Lumley, elsewhere is a mere escape from his familial and marital foundations as he darts from place-to-place in pursuit of work, leaving his next location to fate and "s[ticking] a pin into [a] list" of place names at random.[121] He exhibits what F. R. Leavis would call a "reverent openness to experience", or bohemianism and by leaving his next destination to pure chance, shows no concern for his future.[122] In these novels, (with the exception of Sillitoe's) change in location drives the narrative as Lampton and Lumley relocate for work. However, they do so with the utmost turbulence and disruption, and as a result of the various social standings they encounter along the way, become the disruptors *and* the disrupted. However in *Hurry on Down*, there is an element of irony in Lumley's conclusion. The novel concludes with his financial success, joining bohème novelist Froulish as "'The Seventh Man'" at a joke-writing gig in London.[123] He celebrates the news with Mr. Blearney, a bourgeoise businessman with whom he has been acquainted along his travels, pouring out "four glasses of whisky" and smoking cheroots.[124] Lumley's story concludes with his re-entry to middle-class living and in the company of wealth and with employment.

The final pages conclude that he also gets the girl, Veronica Roderick, though he evaluates this in pros and cons. The pros note her beauty, "knowing every contour and texture of her body under its demure clothing" and the con is his view of entrapment, in an "air conditioned, clean" cage of his own making.[125, 126] Though he acknowledges the sense of entrapment with his life dominated by capitalist agendas, a bright prophetic light shines, emphasizing "the shape of their predicament".[127] Here, Wain outlines a visionary ending, one which asks what becomes of Lumley. This prophetic gleam carries similar images, like the cage, noting an irony in the 'cleanliness' of the middle-class, which ultimately results in his entrapment. The premise of *Hurry on Down*, as Wain stated, was to outline the condition of he who "had been given the educational treatment and then pitch forked out into the world", and

[118] John D. Hurrell, 'Alan Sillitoe and the Serious Novel', *Critique 4*, (1961), 9
[119] Alan Sillitoe, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, 2nd edn, (London: PAN, 1959), 32
[120] Ibid., 37
[121] John Wain, *Hurry on Down*, 2nd edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), 10
[122] F. R. Leavis, Qtd. in Tom Maschler, *Declaration*, 1st edn, (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1957), 104
[123] John Wain, *Hurry on Down*, 2nd edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), 243
[124] Ibid., 249
[125] Ibid., 253
[126] Ibid., 251
[127] John Wain, *Hurry on Down*, 2nd edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), 252

also to experience class fluidity.[128] Yet on return to his middle-class background, Wain illustrates that Lumley is encaged and removed of his former freedom to roam. In *Hurry on Down,* the politics of place is not reliant on physical place, or Lumley's living in working-class towns and cities, but on the intangible bounds of class. Both *Hurry on Down* and *Room at the Top* trace the psychological well-being of their protagonist set against his surroundings and although Lumley concedes to his middle-class customs, his satisfaction is not concluded. Unlike Lumley, Lampton's wellbeing is apparent. His attempts to flee the upper-class heterodoxy and into the arms of Alice resulted in *his* own entrapment, becoming encaged and psychologically beaten by his new lifestyle. His final words in the novel are those peppered with terror: "'I did kill her. I wasn't there, but I did kill her'".[129] Alice stood as an allegory for escape from the middle classes, an escape from Warley and a retreat into security. Lampton mourns this death, not just for his own conscience, or the loss of his love, but for his impending death as he joins the middle class: "'No more zombies, Joe'".[130] Although Braine stated that *Room at the Top* was written about Lampton's "affair with a little Yorkshire town", the lightness of 'affair' is passive.[131] In fact it isn't an 'affair' at all, but a damning and turbulent experience as he pursues wealth and states, thus committing himself to an engagement in a world that is not his, resulting in his ruin and heartbreak. Ultimately, Lumley and Lampton become entrapped by the middle-classes and their new-found financial success, but there is an underlying irony in that upon realising their own financial success, Braine and Wain became rooted in the middle classes. The disruptive protagonists are written by eventual conformists, themselves caught in the "air conditioned, clean" cage of literary fame.[132]

The locus of the protagonist's journey, in these instances, is the *disruptive* path to eventual conformity. Seaton is the standalone protagonist of these novels whose path concludes with non-conformity, Lampton becomes his earlier antithesis at "T'top" and Lumley, despite rejecting his parentage rests in the "fine new cage" of the upper-class: "No one stays young or angry forever".[133, 134, 135] Was the protest a product of youth, or an "irrational capacity to become inflamed by intents and causes"? Max Weber stated that "man is dominated by the making of money, by acquisition as the ultimate purpose of his life".[136] "Acquisition as the ultimate purpose of life" becomes a psychological boundary as one's psychology becomes dependent on material objects and financial status, binding

[128] John Wain, 'Along the Tightrope', in *Declaration*, ed. by Tom Maschler, (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1957), 91
[129] John Braine, *Room at the Top*, 3rd edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), 235
[130] Ibid., 7
[131] John Braine, 'Share My Life', Oct 1986, MS20c Braine C, University of Leeds Special Collections.
[132] John Wain, *Hurry on Down,* 2nd edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), 251
[133] John Braine, *Room at the Top*, 3rd edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), 197
[134] John Wain, *Hurry on Down,* 2nd edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), 251
[135] Leslie Paul, 'The Angry Young Men Revisited', *The Kenyon Review,* 27:2, (1965), 344
[136] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. by Talcott Parsons, 1st edn, (London: Routledge, 2001),18

the individual, like Lumley, to a capitalist cage. Lampton and Seaton both yearn for social mobility in the hope of a better existence, whereas Lumley yearns for ulterior class ambition in the hope of freedom. Yet, each fail to realise these ambitions and end content in their initial positions, highlighting the impossibility of social mobility for those born into the working-classes. Seaton's contentment rests not in becoming "Doreen's young man", but in the rural borders of Nottingham.[137] The closing chapter illustrates his solitude, "sat by the canal fishing on a Sunday morning in spring".[138] He is fishing, unbothered by urbanity, yet retorts in one final monologue:

> Whenever you caught a fish, the fish caught you, in a way of speaking, and it was the same with anything else you caught, like measles or a woman. Everyone in the world was caught, somehow, one way or another, and those that weren't were always on the way to it. As soon as you were born you were captured by fresh air that you screamed the minute you came out. Then you were roped in by a factory, had a machine slung around your neck, and then you were hooked up the arse with a wife. […] If you went through life refusing all the bait dangled before you, that would be no life at all. No changes would be made and you would have nothing to fight against. Life would be as dull as ditchwater.[139]

This section represents Seaton's philosophy on life and exhibits the thoughts and feelings of many young men in the period. He is most existentialist and receptive when in solitude, with these monologues carrying resistance and acceptance of his destiny to be "hooked up the arse with a wife".[140] Fishing, like the lathe, is also a place where Seaton has "time […] to think".[141] Following this, the monologue continues with militant rhetoric, stating "[t]here's bound to be trouble in store for me every day of my life, because trouble it's always been and will be. Born drunk and married blind, misbegotten into a strange and crazy world".[142] Just after, he is once again passive: "it's a good life and a good world, all said and done".[143] It appears conclusive, with Seaton realising that "it's a good life and a good world" after committing to Doreen, but there are undertones of nadir where he states "[a]nd trouble for me it'll be, fighting every day until I die".[144, 145] The novel concludes with Seaton having "a grin on his face", beginning "to wind in the reel".[146] One may observe this as Seaton and his youthful cheek, though in the context, one cannot ignore the analogy of fishing. With agency, ownership and acceptance, Seaton reels in his own victim, lured in by his bait, as he is lured by an external society. Yet, "[w]henever you caught a fish, the fish caught you" – he has lured himself.[147] This description recalls the cage which encloses Lumley – the very act of reeling in his fish marks his

[137] Alan Sillitoe, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, 2nd edn, (London: PAN, 1959), 177
[138] Ibid., 188
[139] Ibid., 189
[140] Ibid., 189
[141] Ibid., 32
[142] Ibid., 191
[143] Ibid., 191
[144] Ibid., 191
[145] Ibid., 191
[146] Ibid., 192
[147] Ibid., 189

realisation that to survive, one *must* yield to the institutions of marriage and hard labour. This itself is a disruption to his protests, which themselves are an attempt at disrupting society. The disruptions falters depending on the geographical location of the protagonist. On the streets of Nottingham, he is disruptive to society, at the canal or lathe, he is disruptive to his own disruption. The canal, as with Leddersford in *Room at the Top* and the urban apartment in *Hurry on Down*, is a liminal space, free from the loaded political power of the urban world. Though the canal is in the social sphere, Seaton crafts his own personal and internal private sphere when at its bank, transporting his thoughts to elsewhere. At the lathe he is also transported from reality, becoming autonomous at work with thoughts of the wider world coming to the fore. Both the lathe and the canal have an evocative effect, which enables Arthur to ruminate on his disruptive thoughts, yet the lathe holds him in the present, whereas the canal propels his mind to his future endeavours as a married man. Even as he attempts to leave his new partner Doreen, he is held back, leaving later than his own agency allowed him: "'There'll still be time for fishin', I expect'".[148] His commitment to this institution hinders his freedom of private self-expression. It is in these private (but public) spaces that Seaton's hubris is internalised and his passive thoughts rise to contest the impassive. The politics of place, to Seaton, is unconventional; his private sphere is not the home, but the mind, and when situated in the private, often resorts to his own rambling monologues. The politics of place present in these novels lies in its ability to conjure a sense of pathos at conforming to societal norms and being "hooked up the arse with a wife".[149] The conclusive note to each, with Seaton "wind[ing] the reel", Lampton blaming himself for Alice's death and Lumley in his "air conditioned, clean" cage resemble the working-class man's experience with social climbing, labelling it a Faustian bargain to be had with perilous consequences.[150, 151]

This sense of consequence remained for decades after the war. The novels of Braine, Sillitoe, Wain claimed the baton left by the pre-war writers, reflecting instead on the after-effects of war and the disruption inflicted upon the new society. In expressing the condition of the working-class society, an artistic representation of the people was given, rather than of a particular *zeitgeist*. In this society, new genres of art and literature, such as kitchen sink realism opened a new means for presenting the socio-political state of the nation. The incentive was to present insights into the "individual life" of the working man and to present the frustration of the general population and the social injustice afoot. The concurrence was that where the public felt a "detestation of the class system", the post-war novelist presented a familiar protagonist expressing familiar thoughts and feelings of disruption.[152] The post-war society is a *postlapsarian* one, branded by fluctuating values and a yearning for

[148] Ibid., 179
[149] Ibid., 189
[150] Ibid., 192
[151] John Wain, *Hurry on Down*, 2nd edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), 253
[152] Colin Wilson, *The Angry Years*, 1st edn, (London: Robson Books, 2007), xv

repentance. Though, in light of the above, the class war continued for decades, resulting in an anarchic uprising at the hands of the working-class population who, in the coming years, would mine the coal to reignite the fires of British economy.

Anarchic

> A new sort of working-class was coming into being. How it would go forward, what values it would develop, only the future could tell. The one thing certain was that it could not go back. For the old qualities, the old attitudes had denied their strength and consistency from the way in which they had corresponded to the needs of the old situation – first among which was the need to survive.
>
> – Harry Hopkins, *The New Look: A Social History of the Forties and Fifties*, (1964)

The word 'anarchism' derives from the Greek *arché*, which refers to ruling power or to a foundation of society. In the latest edition of the *Australian Law Dictionary* published in 2010, Trischa Mann and Audrey Blunden define it as: "a political system characterised by absence of central governance, in which individuals have complete freedom to govern themselves".[153] Under this definition, I observe various similarities and dissimilarities to the novels, applying the lens of cultural materialism to "contrast between political optimism and political pessimism".[154] Peter Barry, in *Beginning Theory* (2017), defines it as a theory in which "men and women make their own history".[155] Alternatively, Barry cites Graham Holderness as viewing cultural materialism as "'a politicised form of historiography'", or "the study of historical material (which includes literary texts) within a political framework, this framework including the present which those literary texts have in some way helped to shape".[156] Aside from his procedural actions, Lampton's vision is to gain his *own* financial capital and autonomy – what ensues is chaos. This sense of anarchy pervaded not only fiction but became a system of empowerment to the British working-classes. There was a constant "central governance" though the youthful working-class began to grasp for their own equal opportunities, resulting in a social revolution, one that empowered the communities of the Northern regions charged with "the need to survive".[157] This chapter will present the ways in which the novels, and their protagonists, reject established authorities with anarchic motivation. The various social and cultural changes codified these actions and moulded a new social hierarchy, one which I identify in the body of this chapter, particularly through the lens of youth culture and New Left political agenda.

The British people, now living in an age of reform and 'collective' labour, had drawn conclusions about their own nation and their ways of living, asking what it *meant* to be British and 'where do we go from here?'. As Harry Hopkins notes above, they "could not go back" to "the old attitudes" which

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[153] Trischa Man and Audrey Blunden, *Australian Law Dictionary*, 1st edn., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010)
[154] Peter Barry, *Beginning Theory*, 4th edn., (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), 178
[155] Ibid., 178
[156] Ibid., 184-5
[157] Harry Hopkins, *The New Look, A Social History of the Forties and Fifties*, 1st edn, (London: Reader's Union, 1964), 339

had denied their strength and consistency".[158] The nation's economy was failing and as Keynes had illustrated in his 1940 pamphlet *How to Pay for the War*, the facts and figures conveyed that it was weak even in the early stages of conflict. He stated that the primary way of recovering was to "raise our output to the highest figure which our resources and organisation permit".[159] He also predicted that "[i]f the war continues for two years or longer, the National Debt will reach an unmanageable figure, which will hamper national finance for years to come".[160] Britain's socioeconomic structure and the state of affairs would become unmanageable, though as Hopkins identifies in the above epigraph, a "new sort of working-class was coming into being".[161] This was the general consensus for those belonging to the group, inspiring a change for a more collective social ambition.

The wartime working-class family felt "the pressure of the greater organization of urban life" and were "glad that [their chances in life] had improved".[162] These families no longer corresponded to this situation and had warrant to "become conscious of this conflict and fight it out" in the pursuit of their survival.[163] Inspired by two key factors, consumerism and cultural Marxism, a social revolution peppered with anarchic action and class subversion would emerge. It is worth noting that when referring to cultural Marxism, I refer to the theory that "the oppression of the working-class is effected through social and cultural means" and not the to the fascist, antisemitic ideology.[164] Sophie Scott-Brown states that scholarship in the latter part of the twentieth century only "anticipated the cultural Marxism which emerged in later years", also noting how recent scholarship has "stressed the relative uniqueness of the late fifties as a period of political and intellectual metamorphosis, [inviting] closer attention to the distinctive practice-based 'activist politics'".[165] In this chapter, I would like to invite closer attention to these contemporary modes of interpreting cultural Marxism and the implications it had on the Northern regions in the three novels. I will also aim to illustrate the people, who under a period of economic disparity, became "conscious of this conflict and f[ought] it out".[166] This battle was portrayed as social revolution in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, *Hurry on Down* and *Room at the Top*, though each novel bears a different perspective on the class-war. There was the question of youth, battling for a future against the institutionalised and ageing Victorian

[158] Ibid., 339
[159] John Maynard Keynes, *How to Pay for the War*, 1st edn, (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1940), 2
[160] Ibid., 47-8
[161] Harry Hopkins, *The New Look, A Social History of the Forties and Fifties*, 1st edn, (London: Reader's Union, 1964), 339
[162] Richard Hoggart, *The Uses Of Literacy*, 4th edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992), 16.
[163] Karl Marx and Maurice Dobb, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, 1st edn, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977), 21
[164] *Oxford English Dictionary*: https://www.oed.com/dictionary/cultural-marxism_n?tab=meaning_and_use#1334020460 (Accessed: September 30, 2023)
[165] Sophie Scott-Brown, 'Rethinking the Socialist Intellectual in the British First New Left', *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 70:5, (2022), 592
[166] Karl Marx and Maurice Dobb, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, 1st edn, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977), 21

population and with this, the social revolution became an anarchic uprising and a new battle between the working and upper classes. Though not as linear as I make it seem, this revolution was turbulent and enveloped in New Left politics versus old-fashioned British conservatism.

Materialism and Youth

Consumerism is closely tied with materialism – with materialism comes consumerism and with consumerism comes materialism. Materialism, the infatuation with material goods became, as Hoggart noted, "a social philosophy" which, post-war, became unavoidable as "material improvements [were] used so as to incline the body of working-class people to accept a mean form" of it.[167] Material goods such as cigarettes were felt to be "part of life", however, domestic goods such as the television and spin-dryer and were still felt as commodities, a rather backward view in the modern day.[168] Arthur Marwick states that the emerging 'New Left' "turned away from economic determinism towards the concept of alienation inherent in contemporary industrial society", a statement which I aim to prove false.[169] If, for instance, the working-classes felt that cigarettes were "part of life" and the acquisition of domestic goods and apparel became an indistinct "part of life", then economic determinism was an unconscious idea throughout. The acquisition of goods floated the national economy from the immediately post-war "Age of Scarcity" to an eventual age of plenty.[170] The fashion industry (one of commodity), boosted by Christian Dior's 'New Look', "a postwar fashion that celebrated abundance", had revolutionised the way in which Britain dressed.[171] This, like various other forms of realistic trends and leisurely qualities is best represented in the first part of *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*. Arthur "emitted a belching roar over a middle-aged man sitting with a woman on one of the green leather seats", covering his "best suit" which had cost "fifteen bob" with vomit.[172] The need for the vomit victim to state the suit's value questions whether he could *truly* afford it, or if it was purchased on credit ("As if money grows on trees. And suits as well").[173] The cost of fashion is amplified here by his monetary fixation, having spent "fifteen bob" and is faced with his hedonism and excessive drinking. Two significant forces of working-class, post-war Britain converge in this episode. The man's wife capitulates: "'Look at him,' she jeered into his face. 'He's senseless. He can't say a word. He can't even apologise. Why don't yer apologise, eh? *Can't* yer apologise? Dragged-up, I should think, getting drunk like this'".[174] In dialect, the matter shifts from

[167] Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy*, 4th edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992), 322
[168] Ibid., 56
[169] Arthur Marwick, *British Society Since 1945*, 2nd edn, Penguin, 1990, 121
[170] Ibid., 17
[171] Lourdes Font, 'Dior Before Dior', *West 86th: A Journal of Decorative Arts, Design History, and Material Culture*, 18:1, (2011), 26
[172] Alan Sillitoe, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, 2nd edn, (London: PAN, 1959), 10
[173] Ibid., 10
[174] Ibid., 12

the material to the mannerly, using social status and parentage to question Arthur's actions. He has no shame, despite their criticism. Class, to Arthur, is not a concern: "I'm me and nobody else; and whatever people think I am or say I am, that's what I'm not, because they don't know a bloody thing about me".[175]

Following this, the "beast inside Arthur's stomach gripped him again, and suddenly, mercilessly, before he could stop it or move out of the way, or warn anybody that it was coming, it leapt out of his mouth with an appalling growl".[176] There is a stark similarity to Lumley's 'kitchen sink scene' here. Arthur's stomach, growling with alcohol, asserts his carelessness with hypermasculine action, but instead of defiling the middle-classes as Lumley did, he 'spewifies' the older generation and asserts his youth. Both act with exertion, rather than vocalising their radical episodes. Seaton's vomiting, or 'spewifying', is a stand in for speech and an anarchic refusal to play by the conventions of ordinary dialogue. In the face of his social superior (age being the defining factor), Seaton remains true to the old maxim of being 'seen not heard', though ironically if his apology was voiced, the situation may have been resolved. He becomes hyper-visible here, ensuring the club's attention falls on this anarchic action and preserves his own luxurious attire, soiling that of his superior, presenting the anarchic and youthful values which define his character. There is a useful comparison, again with Lumley being confined to an "air conditioned, clean" cage and being animalised in his middle-class, institutional confirmation.[177] The wife of Seaton's vomit victim becomes "a tigress" with "teeth between open lips, narrowed eyes, claws raised", herself animalised and trapped by her obsession with the material.[178] He flees, "gather[ing] all his strength" and "push[ing] through the crowd, impelled by a strong sense of survival towards the street-door".[179] His own agency has given him a sense of empowerment and freedom, towards the open air and into the street. Though this scene is not class related, but related to youthful freedom and recklessness, Seaton's ability to flee the scene without repercussion notes his freedom as a working-class youth. Sally Minogue and Andrew Palmer state that this scene announces the arrival of "working class energy [...] into the post-war English novel" in an explosive assertion of metaphor, bursting at the confines of the Club and onto the streets of Nottingham.[180] In the face of explosive irresponsibility, Seaton repeats: "Couldn't care less, couldn't care less, couldn't care less'".[181] His irresponsible actions can be acted only by a man of his age with a lack of care for the institution, be it the archetypal working-class pub or the working man and his wife. Yet, the later chapters entail Seaton finding a sense of care after his encounter with the swaddies.

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[175] Ibid., 120
[176] Ibid., 12
[177] John Wain, *Hurry on Down*, 2nd edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), 251
[178] Alan Sillitoe, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, 2nd edn, (London: PAN, 1959), 12
[179] Ibid., 12
[180] Sally Minogue and A. Palmer, 'Helter-Skelter, Topsy-Turvy and "Loonycolour": Carnivalesque Realism in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*', *English*, 51:200, (2002), 127
[181]Alan Sillitoe, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, 2nd edn, (London: PAN, 1959), 12

In the teddy-boy culture with which Seaton is tied ("'Looks like one of them Teddy boys, allus making trouble'") there was a fixation of looking one's best, which Sillitoe presents throughout *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* with his eye for clothing ever present. In the fourth chapter, Arthur:

> [F]lung his greasy overalls aside and selected a suit from a line of hangers. Brown paper protected them from dust, and he stood for some minutes in the cold, digging his hands into pockets and turning back lapels, sampling the good hundred pounds' worth of property hanging from an iron bar. These were his riches, and he told himself that money paid-out on clothes was a sensible investment because it made him feel good as well as look good.[182, 183]

Sillitoe exhibits the significance of clothing to Seaton and the commitment he makes to his physical appearance. In "his riches", he transforms into something greater, though slips them over "his soiled underwear".[184] His exterior may appear rich, though his garments are soiled under this façade. His confidence and social image is lifted, as was the gentleman's in The White Horse Club when wearing his best suit. Fashion, to the post-war people, became a purely *social* image, or rather an 'enactment'. Seaton's image is a tragedy, due to his underlying "soiled underwear" and offers a rare glimpse into his poverty. Hiding behind this façade, Seaton's cleanliness lacks, similar to how on surface, he presents himself as an anarchic character, but internally lacking in the guts to act upon his political inclinations. His 'soiled' and anarchic insecurities often remain within, behind the exterior of a fine workman and innocent youth.

Post-war British youth culture came alongside Marxist values and ironically, consumerist ones too. Exhibited in Lampton, Lumley and Seaton, the three strands of youth, Marxism and consumerism are closely linked. As Marwick notes, "[t]echnological developments […] give youth a particular hegemony over the aspect of popular culture".[185] The kitchen sink realist novel, with its anarchic messages and countercultural precedents came to be widely (and cheaply) circulated under the paperback revolution, and so did music. The television and radio set came into common circulation and a cultural war of its own came to life between the Mods and Rockers. Though I will investigate this further, through the lens of cultural anarchy and pervasive culture, I will note the band which, to me, best symbolises the working-class spirit of post-war Britain – The Kinks. Since their debut album *Kinks* (1964), their lyrics have grown to represent a Britain free of care, living a hedonistic life in metropolitan London and beyond. Yet hedonism is not the extent of their message, encompassing elements of working-class deprivation in 'Dead End Street' (1966). The song interrogates class

[182] Ibid., 12
[183] Ibid., 56
[184] Ibid., 56
[185] Arthur Marwick, *British Society Since 1945*, 2nd edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990), 123

imbalance, declaring "We are strictly second class/ We don't understand/ Why we should be on dead end street" and "What are we living for?".[186] These questions mirror the class enquiries made by Seaton, whose name also appears in a later track 'Where Are They Now?' (1973) as they look back to the post-war period with nostalgic eyes. William Richey and Daniel Robinson note that the "literariness [of Ray Davies, the songwriter for The Kinks] is typified in his songs by an impeccable ability to describe character and psychology, merging the often mundane details of the likes of his characters with an irony and self-consciousness that suits the ways we tend to talk about literature today".[187] Richey and Robinson have identified the crux of the band's cultural relevance, one which I identify in relation to the post-war regional novel. The strength of both the literary and musical protagonist lies in their self-consciousness of contemporary ongoings, contributing a palpable line of argument when considering the topics being discussed, such as the "grim economic realities of post-war Britain" in 'Sunny Afternoon' and 'Dead End Street'.[188] Though not inherently 'anarchic', their songs are mimetic of the struggling working-class, illuminating the sense of youth which pervaded both the band and its fanbase.

As I have discussed in 'Disruptive', the working-classes were being freshly represented through kitchen sink realism and its representation of the working-class protagonist. This new mode of representation gave a voice to the marginalised and the regional by expressing authorial opinions through the monologue of a conjured character. A small ripple in a large and turbulent pond, post-war regional fiction represented Hopkins' "new sort of working-class" and their anarchic values with assertion and authority.[189] Lampton and Lumley's social mobility is indicative of these social changes, both oscillating between working and middle-class values, representing a class instability. In this first section, 'Anarchic' aims to illustrate the anarchic or pseudo-anarchic qualities of the three protagonists amidst a post-war British society. Relying on classical allusion, youth culture and New Left philosophy to illustrate post-war frustration and anarchic response, this section amplifies the discord between the working classes and wider society, beginning with the pre-war and concluding with the post-war novel.

The New Left was introduced under the guise of Bolshevism, a form of Communism set on the overthrow of a capitalist agenda. As discussed, consumerism was a large part of this New Left Britain which reveals a contradiction in values, given that consumerism is starkly capitalist and in a society

[186] The Kinks, "Dead End Street", *Face to Face*, Pye Records (NPL 18149, 1966)
[187] William Richey and Daniel Robinson, "'Everybody's a Star': Rock Stardom, The Kinks, and Ray Davies' Songs of Self-Consciousness", *CEA Critic*, 66:2/3, (2004), 22
[188] Ibid., 24
[189] Harry Hopkins, *The New Look, A Social History of the Forties and Fifties*, 1st edn, (London: Reader's Union, 1964), 339

set on economic reform, *true* Bolshevism was impossible for the people to follow. Britain, as Dworkin notes, "distanced itself from the mainstream Marxist tradition" of pure anti-capitalist views, stressing the "autonomy of culture and ideology in social life" instead.[190] But Marxism was not just heralded in pre-war Britain. In the years after the war, The Communist Party of Great Britain was at the height of its influence and issued a pamphlet entitled *The British Road to Socialism* (1957) which outlined a gentle transition into Western socialism. It declared that: "The people of Britain can look forward to a better future only if they take their country into their own hands".[191] "The people" here are the British working-class, whom Harry Pollitt's foreword states as needing to "take a stand against the influence of capitalist ideals in the Movement".[192] It would be foolish to state that the British working classes *did* stand "against the influence of capitalist ideals" after my statements on consumerism. However, the consumerism which they seized was their own product, having seized their *own* means to production.

The then working-class John Braine presented a character transfixed by class distinctions, who takes the "stand against the influence of capitalist ideals" by exploiting the upper-class. I have dissected his failure in joining the aristocratic circle of Mr. Brown and his daughter, however here I offer an alternate argument. Previously, I noted how Lampton's Icarus-like ascent resulted in 'his acceptance of his new albeit turbulent social standing' and labelled his position in the aristocratic circle as being victimised by the disruption which comes with it. However, he is not Icarus like under the lens of his new and turbulent social standings, in fact Lampton has many similarities with the Greek myth of Sisyphus. He is damned from his first anarchic moments, born into a disadvantaged social standing and with every intent to roll his disadvantageous beginnings to "T'Top".[193] He cheated death during the Blitz, acknowledging upon his return "the Bad Morning, the Death Morning" on which his parents were killed and later is punished by a Godly force in Mr. Brown, who lands him in the middle-classes with an imperative deal: "you're marrying her".[194, 195] In writing a Sisyphean character, Braine presents the impossibility of social climbing for a working-class figure, and that social mobility is an impossible summit to reach. His anarchic attempts to subvert social order grow impossible, and he himself is continually subverted.

Sisyphus makes what Albert Camus calls a 'Philosophical suicide' in his theoretical work *The Myth of Sisyphus*. Where Sisyphus is stuck in his eternal routine and moves between suicidal wishes and

[190] Dennis Dworkin, *Cultural Marxism in Postwar Britain*, 1st edn, (Durnah, North Carolina: Duke University Press, (1997), 4
[191] Harry Hopkins, *The British Road to Socialism*, 1st edn, (London: The Communist Party, 1951), 3
[192] Ibid., 3
[193] John Braine, *Room at the Top*, 3rd edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), 197
[194] Ibid., 90
[195] Ibid., 207

absurdities, Lampton encounters his own 'Philosophical suicide' in his love for Alice. Her accidental, but self-imposed death is a result of his own negligent actions, combined with Alice's unattainability and his own entrapment in middle-class life. Camus states that: "There exists an obvious fact that seems utterly moral: namely, that a man is always a prey to his truths. Once he has admitted them, he cannot free himself from them. One has to pay something."[196] Alice's death is the price he has to pay. In losing his love, but retaining his presence in Warley, Lampton begins his Sisyphean life, engulfed in the task of moulding to his new beginnings in a place that is not his own, and with an overbearing sense of sin. His love for Alice is short-lived and it is this realisation which cements his life with Susan. He is in chains and the anarchic trap of capitalist social order begins, with his philosophical suicide submitting him to a vicious circle in a vicious world of hierarchy. The 1st-century BC philosopher Lucretius views Sisyphus as a personification of politicians and those in the quest for power: "to solicit power, an empty thing, which is never granted, and herein always to endure hard toil, this is to push laboriously up a steep hill the rock that still rolls down again from the very top".[197] Lampton's struggle to stay at the "very top" and to "solicit power" amplifies his pseudo-anarchic ambition to pursue something which is out of his entitlement. Political and social power (for the self) is also "an empty thing" in the eyes of Marxism. Lucretius' account of Sisyphus aligns with the contemporary values of social mobility, in its emptiness and the need to acquire power for the *people*, rather than the self. Viewing the social connotations of Lampton's hypergamy, he commits his own "philosophical suicide" whilst adhering to the Lucretian teachings about the myth. Like Sisyphus himself, his anarchic values have resulted in a very pseudo-anarchic product of servitude.

However, it is possible to view Lampton's anarchy as pseudo-anarchic. He does not, as with The Kinks, seize his own social mobility and means to production by producing, but rather via marriage. In Lampton one can observe that as Bertrand Russell notes, "hatred is far more visible than love".[198] His social mobility is fuelled not by his love for Susan, but rather a hatred for her ways of being, leading to the maxim 'if you can't beat them, join them'. The novel becomes a cautionary tale of sorts, showing the faults in capitalism, but equally presenting, as Russell states:

> [T]he man whose attention is fastened upon the relations of a group with those whom it hates or fears will judge quite differently. In these relations, a surprising ferocity is apt to be developed, and a very ugly side of human nature comes to the fore.[199]

[196] Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus and other essays*, ed. by Justin O'Brien, 1st edn, (London: Vintage Books, 1955), 25
[197] Lucretius, *De Rerun Natura*, ed. by W. H. D. Rouse, *De Rerum Natura*, 3rd edn, (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1966), 239
[198] Bertrand Russell, *Roads to Freedom*, 1st edn, (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1921), 14
[199] Ibid., 17

There is an acute paradox in Lampton's dealing with his hatred of the upper classes in that it is not anarchic, but pseudo-anarchic and conformist to society. That being said, his means of joining Brown's ranks are unorthodox as he cannot match the status of his natural antithesis, Jack Wales, and this rivalry brings out a furious hatred in his character.

The first notable example of Lampton acting in a distasteful or hubristic manner is when he is juxtaposed with Wales, who is in pursuit of Susan and is introduced with caution: "'But watch out for Jack Wales. Bags of money, about seven foot tall and a beautiful R.A.F. moustache'".[200] Lampton responds to this warning, with hubris: "I laughed. 'I eat those types for breakfast'".[201] He follows this with "'[b]esides, my admiration [of Susan] is purely artistic'".[202] Braine's presents us with a character who expresses his class anxiety with dialogue, and not action (as similar with Arthur Seaton). It is when faced with this antithesis, that he is reminded of his own class position, feeling like the "poor man at the gate".[203] Recalling Lampton's scathing metaphor of middle-class zombies, when first introduced to Susan he notes her hand being "childishly warm and soft", likening this softness to "Zombie habits".[204] Lampton's attack on the middle/upper classes presents a further irony as the common image of a zombie would not have a warm softness, but rather a rotting exterior. He remains scathing and notes how he particularly liked Susan's role in a play he had just watched at the Warley Thespians. Why would Lampton particularly take a liking to Susan's performance in the play whilst portraying a scathing aside, other than her class position, financial background, and her involvement with his archetypal rival? Outlined in a manuscript, now held in a private collection, Braine states that "in the end it isn't Susan who wins it's Warley", also noting that "Joe rejects Alice not because he doesn't love her, but because he can't have her and Warley too".[205] His relationship with Alice was *true* love, his relationship with Susan is to acquire power in Warley and to fuel an anarchic pursuit of the means to production. It is unsustainable to alter his own social status, particularly through marital relations, though as Richard Centers famously declared, "class is no more nor less than what people collectively say it is, 'an entirely subjective kind of membership' based on a 'psycho-social grouping,' 'an individual's ego', his or her sense of 'belongingness'".[206] What Lampton exhibits is an upper-class ego, advanced social grouping, and willingness to achieve a sense of belonging. The cracks in his image are visible throughout the novel, though it is arguable that he attains his upper-class membership by association. He aims for social mobility, materialist goods and Braine mingles his

[200] John Braine, *Room at the Top*, 3rd edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), 39
[201] Ibid., 39
[202] Ibid., 39
[203] Ibid., 39
[204] Ibid., 39
[205] John Braine, *The Making of Room at the Top*, (Bonhams Auctions, 2011)
[206] Richard Centers, Qtd. in Nick Hayes, "'Calculating Class': Housing, Lifestyle and Status in the Provincial English City, 1900-1950", (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 113

successes with his failures to depict whether it is *worth* rejecting social order, or beneficial to submit to it.

If this behaviour is pseudo-anarchic, then it must be said that Lumley's behaviour is profoundly anarchic. The novels title, *Hurry on Down*, displays an opposite vertical trajectory to that of *Room at the Top*'s and presents a sense of fleeing the middle-class, whereas *Room at the Top* presents a sense of moving towards it. The first Penguin edition, illustrated by Len Deighton, shows a figure in an athletic jog, fleeing with silhouettes of industry behind him. Despite this sense of energetic fleeing, Wain presents Lumley with a sense of shame at his failings in middle-class life:

> Why was this? Had he failed? he asked himself as he dragged the heavy suitcase down the main street towards the station. The answer, like everything else, was fragmentary: partly the University had, by its' three years random and shapeless cramming, unfitted his mind for serious thinking; partly because of the continued nagging of his circumstances ('Go out this morning or she'll know you haven't a job – come to a decision today before you waste any more time – look at the papers to see what sort of jobs are offered'), and partly for the blunt, simple reason that his problems did not really admit a solution.[207]

The significant part in this episode is undoubtedly the narrator's choice of "fragmentary". His life, prior to his new working-class life was far from fragmentary. His new life is to become as fragmentary as can be with an absence of family, an absence of firm employment and an absence of lodgings. In this passage, from which I take the above quotation, his belongings from his previous life weigh him down, ("as he dragged the heavy suitcase down the main street") and prevent his *hurrying* on down.[208] He travels to a new region, "scurr[ying] across country to his dingy huddle of streets and factories", readily aware of its grim and industrial backdrop.[209] To survive, Lumley must himself take up menial, industrial employment. The second chapter begins with his position as a self-employed window cleaner, and the first detail provided is that of pleasure: "The wash-leather made a pleasant noise, half slosh and half squelch".[210] For the first time in his life, Lumley "had worked, he had earned his living for a whole week!" and his heart "gave a great leap of joy" at this knowledge.[211] The working life and that of self-governance bring him satisfaction, yet he continues to yearn for a contract to clean windows for his former university college, tying him into a capitalist commitment.

There is a metaphorical strand throughout each novel concerning altitudinal and hierarchical structures, which are often places where the sense of anarchy pervades. A strong example is Lumley's initial effort to abandon his middle-class upbringing and for his first working pursuit to be a traditional working-class job as a window cleaner, climbing altitudinal heights in a very literal sense.

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[207] John Wain, *Hurry on Down*, 2nd edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), 11
[208] Ibid., 11
[209] Ibid., 11
[210] Ibid., 30
[211] Ibid., 30

The positioning of the Brown residence in *Room at the Top* aligns with their being the top of the social hierarchy, something which Lampton *always* strives for. Finally, Seaton's most significant act of social commentary, his discussion of kingship at the Goose Fair, represents the climax of his absurdity and sets up the second section of the novel: 'Sunday Morning'. Contemporary social hierarchies often contain three structurally key categories: the upper-class; the middle-class; the working-class. In the three novels, there are two fundamentally working-class figures, one of which raises his social status by marriage and the other cements it through the same institution. The third discusses a fundamentally *middle-class* figure who aims for a liberal way of living in the working-classes. Each novel gives glimpsing insights into the dichotomy of altitude and class, raising a question of height (in a literal sense) and power. The regions in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning, Hurry on Down and Room at the Top* are archetypal, with their disparities in class and status represented. As stated, Sillitoe spent his youth in Nottingham, Braine in Bradford, and Wain in Stoke-on-Trent; each of these cities are linked with working-class industry. This politics of place which incentivises Braine to write *Room at the Top:* "[It is] not really about Joe Lampton's affairs with Alice and Susan, [but] it's about his affair with a little Yorkshire town".[212] The product of Lampton's "affair with a little Yorkshire town" is his ruin, though wealth and social elasticity are achieved through anarchic action.

Lumley's social situation is described as disparate from that in the first chapter of *Hurry on Down*, where he rejects his middle-class birth but flirts with a return to his university town, "trying to get a contract from his college", reflecting "that he also could never, now he came to think of it, remember having seen a professional window-cleaner work in a college".[213] Two middle-class values already come to the fore here. The first, he is using a middle-class set of advantages in exploiting his contacts in an attempt to gain financial capital, exploiting what Jürgen Habermas states as "the private sphere" which "comprised civil society in the narrower sense, that is to say, the realm of commodity exchange and of social labour".[214] The second is Lumley's own use, of "professional window-cleaner".[215] From what is a very un-professional attempt at the profession, he resorts to calling himself a "*professional* window-cleaner [my italics]", an anarchic refusal to observe professional hierarchies, particularly with his middle-class, educated background.[216] On the same leaf, he twice exclaims "A contract!" – the concept of contract implies one giving service to a superior body to the worker, an inherently capitalist affair.[217] His acquisition of a contract, be it at his former university college or the YMCA is

[212] John Braine, 'Share My Life', MS20c Braine C, (University of Leeds Special Collections, May 3, 1986)
[213] Ibid., 33
[214] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, 1st edn, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1991), 30
[215] John Wain, *Hurry on Down*, 2nd ed., (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), 33
[216] Ibid., 33
[217] Ibid., 33

a prospect of income, one to form his *own* path in the capitalist society. He is one step closer, or so it seems, to fulfilling his vow of "independence of money and social position".[218] Zachary Leader states that "Lumley is drawn to what he sees as the authenticity of working-class culture" but notes that he "knows its days are numbered", alluding that to Lumley, this working-class way of living is a holiday from the social formalities of the middle-class.[219] Why does he know his "days are numbered"?[220] It is as Hayes states: "we cannot simply select our own class" and capitalism's class relations will bring him back to his social standing.[221] His excitement to clean the windows of his college in particular draw once more on the question of altitude and social hierarchy. As illustrated in the first UK edition of *Hurry on Down*, illustrated by Stein, one can see the facial expressions of each figure. The first, atop the stairs, burning what is a degree certificate, the second is Lumley in his window-cleaner attire with a broad grin and the ladder extending to the top edge. The ladder, even on his first step down the illustrated social ladder, lends him a height over his past equals in an altitudinal sense, but certainly *not* a social sense. His previous headmaster, Scrodd, exclaims:

> 'I can only conclude, Lumley, that you felt some kind of grudge against me that impelled you to come back and waste my time with this foolish joke. Window cleaning! I suppose the implication is that your education had unfitted you for anything worth doing, and you seek to drive the point home by coming here with this foolish talk about having turned artisan. You need not speak in parable.'[222]

He identifies with the necessity of window cleaning and alludes to the futility of the humanities, by implication of Lumley's own views, but he scoffs at the prospect. When rejected, Lumley exits the room with one final spoken line: "'Why not in parable? I spent eight years here being taught to think metaphorically".[223] The metaphor to which he alludes is the futility of university degrees, which he has consciously decided *not* to utilise, but rather to work in manual industry. Instead, he intends to start afresh and climb a social *ladder* of his own making as a window cleaner, from the bottom step to the utmost top, drawing similarities with the first section of *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*. Lumley's decision is not wholly anarchic, but capitalistic.

In the opening chapter of *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, Seaton falls from the topmost stair to the bottom, laughing "as he rolled down the stairs, at the dull bumping going on behind his head and along his spine" – the cause was the "seven gins and eleven pints" in his stomach, fuelling a climactic

[218] Ibid., 79
[219] Zachary Leader, 'Movement Fiction and Englishness', *The Cambridge Quarterly*, 42:3, (2013), 260
[220] John Wain, *Hurry on Down.* 2nd edn, Penguin, 1960, 260
[221] Nick Hayes, "'Calculating Class': Housing, lifestyle and status in the provincial English city, 1900-1950", *Urban History*, 36:1, (2009), 114
[222] John Wain, *Hurry on Down*, 2nd edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), 36
[223] Ibid., 37

moment in the text.[224, 225] The carelessness with which Seaton acts, in what could be a fatal accident (note the "bumping going on behind his head and along his spine"), presents his falling to new lows with an explosive assertion of working-class status. It is this alcoholic "high-octane fuel" which brings him to what are *social* and *altitudinal* lows.[226] Minogue and Palmer state that "Arthur's fall takes place amid a scene of 'riot', in which metaphors of freedom and frustration […] coalesce […] and the effect of a week's monotonous graft in the factory was swilled out of your system in a burst of goodwill".[227] This act codifies Seaton's reckless actions with, as Minogue and Palmer state, an explosion of dichotomised "freedom and frustration".[228] From this point onwards, Sillitoe exhibits Seaton's infidelities and his life as a working man, upending all behaviours in his drunkenness. The following morning, he wakes with a married woman and the following chapter gives the initial inside into his life at the factory, as machines "with their own small motors started with a jerk and a whine under the shadows of their operators".[229] In this description, the personification of the operative machine is a direct metaphor for social hierarchy. The worker (or the machine) works under the command of a faceless shadow, as Seaton does in the great chain of work. Though Arthur neglects society, he is committed in his place of work and remains at the bottom in his social status.

Later in the first section, 'Saturday Night', Arthur climbs to the metaphorical peak of his surroundings at the Great Goose Fair. He climbs the helter-skelter, "a tall wooden tower with an outside flyway" and marvels at the height.[230] He awaits his descent to the ground, but takes time to contemplate, "look[ing] over the lights and tent tops and people bellowing out a rough voice to the sky, at the three-day-ritual bout of forty thousand voices".[231] He notes the population below him and their "rough voice" juxtaposed with his own majesty, feeling "like a king up there with so much power spreading on all sides below him".[232] This façade is short-lived as he is pushed to the bottom, back at his rightful position in the social hierarchy. He is not a king; he is a working-class factory worker. This glimpse into Arthur at "T'Top" conjures a man with the perspective of the ruling classes – Minogue and Palmer label it as being "the potentially ebullient, rebellious energy of the [working] class".[233, 234] They lean on Stallybrass' and White's term of "a privileged locus of inversion" in that three senses this scene conjures the carnivalesque (the de-stabilization or reversal of power structures):

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[224] Alan Sillitoe, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, 2nd edn, (London: PAN, 1959), 7
[225] Ibid., 6
[226] Ibid., 6
[227] Ibid., 127
[228] Sally Minogue, and A. Palmer, "Helter-Skelter, Topsy-Turvy and 'Loonycolour': Carnivalesque Realism in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*", *English*, 51:200, (2002), 127
[229] Ibid., 23
[230] Alan Sillitoe, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, 2nd edn, (London: PAN, 1959), 143
[231] Ibid., 143
[232] Ibid., 143
[233] John Braine, *Room at the Top*, 3rd edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), 197
[234] Sally Minogue and A. Palmer, "Helter-Skelter, Topsy-Turvy and 'Loonycolour': Carnivalesque Realism in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*", *English*, 51:200, (2002), 135

geographic, temporal and narrative.[235, 236] The geographic applies to the fair, being "located on a large open tract of field near the city centre", but also to the very man-made geographical peak on which Arthur feels in power.[237] His descent lacks the explosive energy of the first chapter, but rather contains a sense of bathos as he is again thrown to the ground. Though there are explosive energies released, they fail to give him a sense of progression in the social order. Forced to the bottom by the hands which "stabbed him into his back and pushed him into oblivion", foreboding what awaited him at the bottom – the "columns of soldiers".[238] As a result of his anarchic and anti-marital actions, he has met his fate. The subsequent scene depicts the storm before the calm. Although he has been warned by Jack, Arthur is still dumbfounded: "'That swaddie had it in for me. I don't know what for, mind you, but you saw how he went for me. […] If you see that swaddie again tell him from me that he wants to watch his step'".[239] His militant rhetoric does not cease in the face of *real* military personnel. Jack the conformist advises: "'Why don't you get wise, Arthur? Why don't you meet a nice girl and settle down? It'll do you the world of good'", foreshadowing his relationship with Doreen.[240] Wandering through the estate and stumbling from the pub, "the war was on at last".[241] In an explosive episode, Seaton is beaten and "dragged […] down" to his rightful place.[242] The cold, hard ground is a place which corresponds to his status in society and in acknowledging that he "had deserved to lose this fight", is conscience is cleared.[243] The first part concludes with Arthur in security, the final spoken line being from Doreen after "he slipped down in a dead faint, feeling the world pressing its enormous booted foot on to his head" amongst "the dark comfort of grime, spit and sawdust on the floor".[244]

Where Lumley and Seaton are exalted in altitude, Lampton exhibits moments of inferiority, dependent on class and geographical positioning. Arriving at Warley station, the area "with all the industries of the town", Joe is central to his familiar industrial location.[245] He later "discovered that this segregation was a Council policy" as "if anyone wanted to set up a mill or factory in Warley, it was the east or nowhere".[246] This is the first taste of middle-class snobbery the novel has to offer. On

[235] P. Stallybrass and A. White, Qtd in Sally Minogue and A. Palmer, "Helter-Skelter, Topsy-Turvy and 'Loonycolour': Carnivalesque Realism in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*", *English*, 51:200, (2002), 135
[236] Oxford English Dictionary https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/oi/authority.2011080309555081 (Accessed: 21 September, 2023)
[237] Alan Sillitoe, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, 2nd edn, (London: PAN, 1959), 143
[238] Ibid., 143
[239] Ibid., 146
[240] Ibid., 146
[241] Ibid., 150
[242] Ibid., 153
[243] Ibid., 153
[244] Ibid., 154
[245] John Braine, *Room at the Top*, 3rd edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), 8
[246] Ibid., 8

the following leaf, his landlady, asserts "'We live at the top. It's always T'Top in Warley, though, with a capital T'".[247] Upon entering, Lampton goes straight from the industrial quarter to "'T'top'" and expresses his excitement at this prospect:

> I was going to the Top, into a world that even from my first brief glimpses filled me with excitement: big houses with drives and orchards and manicured hedges, a preparatory school to which the boys would soon return from adventures in Brittany and Brazil and India or at the very least an old castle in Cornwall, expensive cars – Bentleys, Lagondas, Daimlers, Jaguars – parked everywhere in a kind of ostentatious litter as if the district had dropped them at random as evidences of its wealth.[248]

There is an infantile quality in this monologue. The length at which he notes the material and the effect of his listing give this quote a pace, mimicking the speech of a child. He later identifies with his *own* infantility, having a "childish longing for the ugly rooms and streets where to be hungry or lost wasn't possible".[249] This material wealth is alien to Lampton and leads him to believe that all his life he had "been eating sawdust and thinking it was bread. Amidst this wealth, he feels a pawn for the firm, like "a sort of sandwich-board man" upkeeping its social image at his own expense. Later in the novel, an oedipal figure emerges.[250] Where I have likened Lampton's character to Sisyphus, the classical similarities have no end and there are some elements in Joe that signpost traits not of Sisyphus, but of a tyrant. Sophocles' play, originally entitled *Oedipus*, was later renamed *Oedipus Tyrannus* and the antiquated term, 'tyrannus' is naturally linked to 'tyrant', or a ruler with no legitimate claim to rule. Lampton, the hypergamous working-class lad has no position amongst the ruling class at the top, and so is a tyrant by definition. Like Sophocles' Oedipus, he usurps his designated superior's courtship with Susan and takes her hand in marriage, causing a stir in the town. The progressive titles of the Lampton trilogy illustrate his upwards climb, with *Room at the Top, Life at the Top* and television series *Man at the Top* (1970) noting the shifts from possibility (Room), experience (Life) and existence (Man). I allude to Oedipus as there are similarities with which Lampton defeats his rivals to climb the social hierarchy, through tyranny and mingling with people who are not (at least by social class) his own.

In reference to the loaded thoughts of Seaton feeling "like a king up there" on the helter-skelter, Lampton continues this notion of royalty.[251] He enters a wealthy Yorkshire town and usurps his superior rival, becoming a significant cog in the Brown machine. When meeting in the Conservative Club, Brown asserts "'I'm not a sort of king, I don't give my daughter away to seal a bargain'".[252] Yet, in Warley, he *is* a sort of king. He controls the means to production and is located in the great

[247] Ibid., 9
[248] Ibid., 9-10
[249] Ibid., 15
[250] Ibid., 13
[251] Ibid., 143
[252] Ibid., 210

chain of being just a notch below God himself, as deified by the characters in the novel. A further place of altitudinal height which Lampton occupies is Sparrow Hill. Accompanied by Alice, Lampton drives through "narrow, twisting, steep" to the hill, a place with "'No people, no dirty people'".[253] Sparrow Hill is, like Seaton's canal, a place free from societal expectations and a place of confession. Joe admits "'It's never been like this before'", after which Alice pleads: "'Please don't fall in love with me, Joe. We will be friends, won't we? Loving friends?'" in a contract of affection.[254] Lampton feels elated, engaging in intimacy for the first time since eighteen. This scene, set in both heights of elation and geographical heights sets Lampton's conscience in motion, ending the chapter with: "I was the devil of a fellow, I was the lover of a married woman, I was taking out the daughter of one of the richest men in Warley, there wasn't a damn thing I couldn't do".[255] This hubris fades into the next chapter, in Dufton for Christmas where he states "I was too much of T'Top now, and hating myself for it".[256] In just nine chapters, Braine has presented a character drunk with hubris, of satisfaction and with a new-found upper-class identity. However, his hubris occurs when not at altitudinal heights, but rather in archetypal working-class settings by means of contrast. As an individual, Lampton's hubris and ruling ambitions draw on an anarchic need for "freedom to govern" himself. The power to self-govern will come from an ascent to "T'Top" to the height of social hierarchy in Warley.[257] As Susan does not have a sibling, at least it is not indicated in the novel, and as the hypergamous entrant to the family, the empire will be Lampton's to inherit and he will take Warley sovereignty, an anarchic response to his working-class background.

There is a comprehensive argument that the people of Britain were, in the archetypal instances of Seaton, Lumley and Lampton, able to "take their country into their own hands".[258] Between narrative technique and anarchic representation, these novelists were able to present a variety of regions which illustrate a social position by means of physical levelling. The three protagonists offer glimpses into "complete freedom to govern themselves", but each ultimately submit to a governing institutional body.[259] My argument has outlined Seaton submitting to the institution of marriage and Lampton paradoxically submitting to his working-class *and* upper-class values. This leaves Lumley in an orbit between his past middle-class and working-class ways of living. However, his final place of employment is peppered with artifice and rather different to the narrator's initial questions: "Could he not, just as easily, cast up and be rid of his class, his *milieu*, his insufferable load of presuppositions

[253] Ibid., 81
[254] Ibid., 84
[255] Ibid., 84
[256] Ibid., 85
[257] Ibid., 85
[258] Harry Pollitt, *The British Road to Socialism*, 1st edn, (London: The Communist Party, 1951), 3
[259] Trischa Mann and Audrey Blunden, *Australian Law Dictionary*, 1st edn, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010)

and reflexes?".[260] In the novel, his final job title final is "'The Seventh Man'" at a joke-writing gig.[261] The significance of his being the *seventh* lies in further Christian connotations in *Hurry on Down*. In Genesis 2:2 and by the seventh day of creation, "God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work". Throughout the novel, Lumley too created his *own* world from labour, not birth-right and as the "Seventh Man" he has overtones of being a creationist.[262] Lumley's picaresque journey also has elements of a *bildungsroman,* illustrated in a geographical and social journey to self-identification. Reverting to the novel's climax and my previous discussion of the 'kitchen-sink scene', there was a significant detail missing: "Half of the scummy grey flood poured over Charles himself as he dragged the bowl wildly out of the sink".[263] The ablution to which I alluded in 'Disruptive' has also cleansed Lumley, muddying his middle-class identity along with Robert and Edith. This is the first day of creation, appearing at the start of the novel and "darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the spirit of God moved over the waters". Where God creates life, Lumley creates a *working, living* reality and the possibility to choose one's own class. It is not just the geographical height which the author implements, but a heavenly height with the ability to control social class without implication.

Along the way, Lumley discovers love, laughter, worship of social progression but often lacks "a happy home [and] the warmth of friends".[264] But as he nears his middle-class status, he gains a home, plentiful fortune, and the warmth of upper-class friends. If one applies Bevan's socialist priorities here, it seems that Wain has illustrated the possibility of the working-class attributes in a middle-class sphere. His "'moral considerations'" are those of class, and his "'economic motives'" are those of unconventional aspirations.[265] Under this criterion, Lumley stands as a character with socialist inclinations, one which fails to realise his initial anarchic motivations, resulting in a pseudo-anarchic submission to homely middle-class results. Again under Bevan's notion of socialist aspirations, Seaton is also presented with an inclination for working-class living, feeling suited amongst "the dark comfort of grime" of industrial Nottingham.[266] He has "economic motives" but ones which keep him in his position, whether they are in clothing or alcohol. He seldom realises any sense of "'moral consideration'", particularly in *Saturday Night*. It is at the beginning of part two, Sunday Morning, that Seaton begins to develop a moral compass. It begins: "He lay in an apathetic state and, sitting up to move his pillow, stared without recognition at the pink wall of the bedroom. Then he fell back, to sleep his troubles away".[267] Until Doreen's entrance to the bedroom some five days later, he "didn't

[260] John Wain, *Hurry on Down*, 2nd edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), 30
[261] Ibid., 243
[262] Ibid., 243
[263] Ibid., 19-20
[264] Ibid., 45
[265] Ibid., 45
[266] Alan Sillitoe, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, 2nd edn, (London: PAN, 1959), 255
[267] Ibid., 155

much care whether he lived or died".[268] But before this, he also rejects a sense of security, internalising "I'll have a good life: plenty of work and plenty of booze and a piece of skirt every month till I'm ninety".[269] He confesses "'But I'm glad you came to see me,' […] cheerfully. 'I think I'd'ave stayed down in the dumps for good if you hadn't'".[270] In this remedial exchange, he returns to work in the following chapter. However, admitting his joy at Doreen's visit is arguably the height of his positivism. Here, 'moral considerations' do not take precedence over his "'economic motives'", but both remain in the linear plateau of his immovable character. Like Lumley, he is also a character who has socialist inclinations, but he ultimately fails to realise any sense of anarchy, submitting to the institution which he so strongly rejected: marriage. But Lampton submits to each and every institution which stands between working and upper-class living. Be it marriage, employment, the economic or the familial, Lampton takes *economic* motives over moral considerations, disparate in ways from the other two protagonists. If socialism meant "'moral considerations would take 'precedence over economic motives'", then Lampton's actions are as disparate as can be.[271] He is a pseudo-anarchist, a conformist character, one who acts as a tyrant to the social group he wishes to join.

In light of what would be an *anarchic* presentation, Lumley and Seaton present a strand of similarities, in that upward social mobility is *not* for them, at least until Lumley regains his middle-class status. The anomaly in this instance is Lampton. He is an archetypal figure of post-war austerity Britain: determined and driven. Under this archetype, his character enters into a discourse of revolution, defined by age and appetite, not to mention the tyrannical ambition which accompanied it. This archetype resembles a shift from the customs of an ageing Victorian population with a stark, explosive contrast of social innovation. As art imitates life, particularly in this new genre of kitchen sink realism, the novels are part of a capitalistic discourse and the drive to remain, reduce or rocket their social status. Mingling left-wing, anarchic values with working-class social realism seems a straightforward trajectory to present working-class suffering and uprising. From youth-culture and its commercial buzz to the dole, the post-war working-class seized the means of production, creating an inherently working culture. The operative maxim of this anarchy is spoken by Seaton who affirms, "it's a hard life if you don't weaken".[272] This stands for each individual protagonist: Lumley conforms to middle-class living *via* his working-class transition, Lampton conforms to the upper classes, weakening to hypergamy (and not graft) and Seaton weakens, becoming "Doreen's young man".[273] Post-war anarchy presented an amalgam of passive and impassive action and some instances, as seen in Lumley, Seaton and Lampton's conformism are what I have phrased as 'pseudo-anarchic', though a

[268] Ibid., 155
[269] Ibid., 159
[270] Ibid., 162
[271] Lawrence Black, *The Political Culture of the Left in Affluent Britain, 1951-64*, 1st edn, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) 133
[272] Alan Sillitoe, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, 2nd edn, (London: PAN, 1959), 17
[273] Ibid., 177

constant flirtation with rejection and individual government is present, until it dissolves. Working-class ownership stands as the primary anarchic 'thing' throughout. Be it selecting one's own class, rising up the social hierarchy, or actively protesting society's institutions, they transgress the inner workings of society, stretching the bounds of class division and class agency. It is as Dana Williams notes, that anarchists "are principally and generally motivated by the presence of social inequality and domination to take action".[274] Whether it is for a wider, or individual benefit, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning, Hurry on Down* and *Room at the Top* present the possibility of anarchy through the possibility of social mobility, be it upward or downward in direction. However, this anarchic action is not malicious. It an action taken by the working-class individual to rise in social standing, or to feel a sense of agency under tight government restrictions. This is best evidenced in Lumley, Seaton and Lampton, as their transgressive actions present the best of working-class spirit: ownership and identity.

[274] Dana Williams, 'From Top to Bottom, a Thoroughly Stratified World: An Anarchist View of Inequality and Domination', *Race, Gender & Class*, 19:3/4, (2012), 10

Asocial

This chapter aims to prioritise the wider working-class voice, rather than the middle-class or governing voices which I addressed earlier. The voices at the peak of social hierarchy ceased to be a vice of revolution and became an object of working-class reaction: this is evidenced in working-class growth and asocial individuality. 'Asocial' aims to re-evaluate the cultural memory of the two decades following the war and to gauge the cultural implications of the working-class regional novel amidst a middle-class society. 'Asocial' will give an observation of the culture of the minor characters in these novels, who in cultural memory have been overshadowed by the likes of Lumley, Seaton and Lampton to create a collective voice of working-class injustice and urgency. In this final chapter, I aim to consolidate my findings about working-class culture and clarify Trevor Noble's notion that post-war there was "an incipient decline in the centrality of specifically class or status group relations in the [...] distribution of power" through the means of the secondary character.[275]

In an exchange of the "distribution of power", the protagonist in each novel takes claim of this power, as Lumley rests in a middle-class position, Lampton in an upper-class position and Seaton affirms his unrelenting agency until the very end of the novel. However, the secondary characters play a significant role in the acquisition of power. There is at least one significant secondary character in each novel, each of whom advise or influence the protagonist's journey and final destination; Alex Woloch, writing on minor characters in the work of Charles Dickens echoes my statement, in that the minor character is a "thematic conflict that structures the novel as a whole".[276] Though this critical note is directed towards the work of another author, it holds its similarities to all secondary characters in *Room at the Top*. There are three characters in *Room at the Top* who have a significant secondary influence: Jack Wales, Alice Aisgill and Mr. Brown. The initial interaction with Wales is a significant influence here and where Lampton is at the peak of hubris: "'But watch out for Jack Wales. Bags of money, about seven foot tall and a beautiful R. A. F. moustache.' […] I laughed. 'I eat those types for breakfast'".[277] From similar wartime experiences in the air force, they are immediately paired together as "'intrepid birdmen'", a similarity which comes to be a class-based battle of achievement.[278] By Wales's association with Susan and her "'rich and adoring papa'", Lampton's narrative proceeds to be written, with a "thematic conflict that structures the novel as a whole" – the acquisition of hypergamous power, and the victory over a rival.[279] The thorny problem is that of material goods and material status, or things that Lampton lacks until usurping his rival in a *tyrannical* exploit. The

[275] Trevor Noble, 'Social Mobility and Class Relations in Britain', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 23:4, (1972), 434
[276] Alex Woloch, 'Making More of Minor Characters', in *The One vs. the Many: Minor Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Novel*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 126
[277] John Braine, *Room at the Top*, 3rd edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), 39
[278] Ibid., 41
[279] Ibid., 38

acquisition of goods hides behind the façade of *the woman*, who is commodified and objectified in this battle of Lampton and Wales: “All right, I muttered to myself childishly, I’ll pinch your woman, Wales, and all your money won’t stop me…”.[280] An action follows, with Lampton inviting Susan to a middle-class event – the ballet. He is successful in this invitation, but instantly turns to his love affair in Alice Aisgill.

Alice plays a significant part in Lampton’s narrative and character profile. She, like Wales, is an obstruction to social mobility and the acquisition of power, contributing to a strong “thematic conflict” within the novel’s structure. She is unhappily married and flocks to low-hanging, young fruit (“‘Don't introduce him to Alice' […] 'She's hunting for fresh meat’”).[281] She becomes the subject of his affections, despite their promise of being “‘[l]oving friends’” and meets a demise symbolic of Lampton’s freedom.[282] Her drunkenness, in love and alcohol, results in a final mark of punctuation and death. Lampton’s narrative contemplates Alice’s death, attributing a thingness to her demise, rolled up in crumbled machinery: "But Alice has been killed, and what I saw was the components of a huge machine that now only functioned out of bravado: it has been designed and manufactured for one purpose, to kill Alice".[283] Alice is mechanised, a “thematic conflict” and fulfils her function as a catalyst to Lampton’s narrative as a distraction from the ambition he has set before him. Her function also tunes with the asocial, in that her presence is “antagonistic to society or social order”, but also narrative order.[284] This is how Braine, and many other authors structure their work, placing the protagonist at the focus, and the secondary characters around his centre to inspire, transpire or retire his fierceness. In the novel Wales inspires Lampton’s fury, Alice allows it to transpire into a climax of fatal passion, and Mr. Brown, with his omnipotence and influence over Lampton’s life, entombs him in upper-class living. While Wales gives Lampton fire and motivation and Alice gives him an unrequited chance at freedom, Mr. Brown is the most significant secondary character in the novel. His daughter acts as a vehicle to the end goal of financial security, which by Brown’s imperative, he can achieve. But his instruction differs from Lampton’s end goal. His goal is to be the ‘man at the top’, but is still under instruction to marry her “[r]ight quick”.[285] In a battle for assertion, Lampton presents a front of concern for Susan and his unborn child:

> ‘I’ll take her away with me tonight, I swear I will.’ ‘You don’t know what I can do,’ he said. ‘I can get my story in first, and I can handle her better than you can.’ ‘You try it. You try it.

[280] Ibid., 56
[281] Ibid., 32
[282] Ibid., 84
[283] Ibid., 220
[284] *Oxford English Dictionary*: https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/11555?rskey=BjryTG&result=1#eid (Accessed: January 3, 2023)
[285] John Braine, *Room at the Top*, 3rd edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), 207

> I'll take the matter to the police before I let you do it.' 'I believe you would.' He seemed pleased about it. 'I really believe you would. You're an awkward customer, aren't you?'[286]

With great pace, Brown frames this marriage as a financial exchange, labelling Lampton a customer who receives his daughter for the fee of commitment. In the following pages, the immediate matter of salary arises: "'I've a wife and family to support,' I said. 'How much salary?'" after the proposition of employment.[287] Joe then follows these observations: "There was a handshake, there was talk of a contract, there was tolerance – *I've been young and daft myself* – there was praise – *You're the sort of young man we want. There's always room at the top*".[288] Lampton's mission to go "to the Top" from the initial stages of the novel is realised in a transaction.[289] Lampton's fury, now in the face of Mr. Brown, is challenged and pacified. It is the "economic vocabulary" which draws Lampton and his impatience at "having to assert a claim over what should fall to him" that validates his decisive criteria.[290] Lampton is not led by the secondary characters but led by what they can *offer* him. A novel like *Room at the Top* can function as a cautionary tale to the working-classes as it presents serious but farcical consequences of upper-class living, the likes of which can be seen in William Hogarth's *The Marriage Contract* (1732).[291] In Hogarth's image, the rich aristocracy sit in the centre, the fine objects at each angle, the gossiping crowds in the background are all reminiscent of the Civic Ball. Like the Ball, Hogarth's work enables one to "visualise the matter [of] the nature of human self-determination, social and political, cultural and sexual".[292] Lampton's remarks start here with discomfort, feeling the suit he had hired "didn't fit very well".[293] Despite this, when exposed to the "[l]ight and music", he "couldn't help feeling happy".[294] His eye for material detail again points to his "economic vocabulary", but also replicates the scene from Hogarth: "Jack was with her in a tailored evening-suit – white tie and tails, no less".[295] In admitting Wales's superiority, Lampton accepts a rare defeat. The Ball occurs before Lampton impregnates Susan, leaving his *true* victory to come. The chapter concludes with Brown giving some cautionary advice: "'Don't worry about the way the world's run, lad. Enjoy yourself when you're young'".[296] Yet, he continues to worry, leaving all to unfold and fail.

My analysis of the secondary characters in *Room at the Top* appears to contradict my intention to prioritise the working-class voices. However, one must consider that the observations I cite are from

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[286] Ibid., 209
[287] Ibid., 211
[288] Ibid., 212
[289] Ibid., 10
[290] Rod Mengham, 'Bad Teeth: British Social Realism in Fiction', in *British Social Realism in the Arts since 1940*, ed. by David Tucker, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 86
[291] Lawrence Gowing, *Hogarth*, 1st edn, (London: The Tate Gallery, 1971), 32
[292] Ibid., 28
[293] John Braine, *Room at the Top*, 3rd edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), 159
[294] Ibid., 159
[295] Ibid., 160-1
[296] Ibid., 164

the perspective of Lampton in dialogue and narrative. He remains a working-class figure, despite his upper-class entry, as Lumley remains middle-class despite his working-class pursuit. Those remaining voices prominent in *Hurry on Down* and *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* are the archetypal working-class. Braine's presentation differs from the two additional texts, in that his protagonist rejects the working-class life. As I have identified, these texts present ideas of left-wing politics, be it in anarchy or the New Left. Though Lampton's excursion to Dufton gives insight into his former working-class life it is, altogether, a novel peppered with working-class anxiety, but upper-class customs of material goods and economics. *Hurry on Down* and *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* attune to the "ways in which ordinary people think and feel and eat and earn and work" as kitchen sink realism intended, with rawness and the lives of "'the mass of ordinary working people'".[297, 298] They offer an account of lodgings unlike Lampton's "ready-made suit" of a tenancy, they present *real* working people and, protagonists aside, explore the *lives* of these people, be it the scholarship boy or the bicycle manufacturer.[299]

The secondary characters in *Hurry on Down* are a complete contrast to those in *Room at the Top,* and the variation of social class is greater in Wain's novel than in Braine's, too. This reflects on what sort of focus the author intended to put on his protagonist. Braine, for instance, successfully outlines Lampton's social class by stark contrast to the surrounding figures in the novel, such as Jack Wales and Mr. Brown. Wain presents a broader palette of class through his secondary characters, which both usurp and intensify Lumley's changing social status throughout the novel. His working-class journey begins in what Rousseau would call the nascent society of the "'golden age'".[300] In this 'golden age', man learns the laws of liberty and progresses to a state of embellishment. Lumley's 'golden age' is his class reset; he learns the laws of his *own* liberty by means of meritocracy and working-class progression, again rising to his middle-class status. Mingled with the Bohemian, the criminal and the high-society, Lumley's path to success is crafted by no hands other than his own. From impoverishment, paying out "his last pound note" to finally being sent "'a contract to sign'", there is something to be said about the influence of the characters around him.[301 302]

Throughout the novel, those with the greatest influence on Lumley appear at the bottom of the social hierarchy. Their word stands as gospel, and his desire to 'join them' brings him a sense of economic chameleonism. There are three secondary characters to note. The first is Edwin Froulish, who appears

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[297] Kenneth Tynan, 'Theatre and Living' in *Declaration,* ed. by Tom Maschler, (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1957), 112
[298] Tony Davies, 'Unfinished Business: Realism and Working-Class Writing', in *The British Working-Class Novel in the Twentieth Century,* ed. by Jeremy Hawthorn, (London: Edward Arnold, 1984), 126
[299] John Braine, *Room at the Top,* 3rd edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), 12
[300] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Qtd. Richard Noble, 'Freedom and Sentiment in Rousseau's Philosophical Anthropology', *History of Political Thought,* 9:2, (1988), 263
[301] John Wain, *Hurry on Down,* 2nd edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), 11
[302] Ibid., 249

with prophetic exclamation: "'Lumley, I dreamt about you last night!'".[303] The narrator explains their connection, both knowing each other "particularly well during their undergraduate years".[304] Froulish is the bohemian character of the novel: free-spirited but shoddy. As Bohemianism explains, Froulish is "a person who is interested in artistic and unusual things […] and lives in an informal way that ignores the usually accepted ways of behaving".[305] He thinks himself a novelist, a "man of letters" and resides in a barn where his typewriter takes centre stage as a "shrine".[306, 307] When slumming it with Froulish and his partner Betty, the narrator amplifies his discovery as a working-class case study: "Nothing showed so clearly the wisdom of his new policy of taking life as it came, as this miraculous stumbling upon a ready-made *ménage*. It answered perfectly to his simple needs; while neither comfortable nor clean".[308] Aside from lodging at the YMCA, this is Lumley's first insight into real working-class living, but social pressure continues to be inflicted upon him. His career as a window-cleaner dwindles, with his "constant feeling of being an outlaw, on the run from an unseen but powerful organisation that sought to crush him".[309] His acquaintance with Froulish breaks with public embarrassment by association and a stumbling reading at a local literary society. There, his next episode begins.

Lumley has employed a partner, Ern, in his window cleaning affairs. Their first interaction is along the lines of business: "'Wud that be yoor cart outside?'", and following this, Lumley and the uneducated Ern become partners. [310] The following scene has an explosive energy likened only to Seaton and the swaddies and details Lumley's first interaction with the local crime scene, with a "violent shove" carrying him almost off his feet. The attacker then asks "'That's your cart, ain't it?'", then admitting "'Yes, it's mine'".[311, 312] In this violent scene, the attacker then asserts "'[j]ust keep on takin' the bread out of other folk's mouths. The first time I catch up with yer, yer'll get this. The second time, yer'll get yer bloody neck broke'".[313] His knight in tainted armour appears, smashing his fist "into his face".[314] This exchange is prompted by Lumley's failed working-class image, being associated as a figure not on the base of social hierarchy, but one who steals from the poor and gives to the rich. The reader will be aware that this is not his present intention. Wain's novel gives a rare perspective of the secondary working-class character and his judgements of middle-class figures,

[303] Ibid., 39
[304] Ibid., 39
[305] *Cambridge English Dictionary*: https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/bohemian. (Accessed: August 8, 2023)
[306] John Wain, *Hurry on Down,* 2nd edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), 46
[307] Ibid., 47
[308] Ibid., 49
[309] Ibid., 51
[310] Ibid., 58
[311] Ibid., 61
[312] Ibid., 62
[313] Ibid., 62
[314] Ibid., 63

reflecting an asocial presence of working-class people, inflicting their judgement on a man aspiring to live a working-class life. The attacker views Lumley and his small-scale profession as a local, financial threat, "'takin' the bread out of other folk's mouths'" and identifies him as being "antagonistic to [working] society".[315] This unnamed figure stands as a character of protest, who himself is actively antagonistic by attempting to stop a simple man's income. In the introduction for this section, I argue that I would like to clarify the idea that there was "an incipient decline in the centrality of specifically class or status group relations in the [...] distribution of power".[316] Characters such as the unnamed assailant, Ern and Froulish meet this statement. Though on surface they appear Bohemian, criminal, and regional, each have firm qualities of the middle-class man: Froulish is a man of letters, the attacker an anti-worker and Ern a motivated man of business. This is not to say that the working-class cannot be scholars, men of business or politically motivated, however the generic discourse of these attributes *are* inherently middle-class. Mike Savage presents a distinct difference between the working and middle classes, inspired by the accounts of the people: "the idea that the middle classes worked with their brains, and were hence more intellectual, cultivated and superior to the working class runs very deep".[317] One account to which Savage responds distinguishes that: "Although definitely not class conscious, I usually refer to any form of manual worker or uneducated person to a class apart from myself, from which I generally term the working class".[318] The paradox, in response to the statement, is with Lumley. Educated, but working manually, he resides in a liminal class between the working and the middle. There is an asocial reason for this, with a focus on the individual as Lumley exercises an "antagonistic [mindset] to society or social order", affecting his *own* society, or self.[319] Throughout the novel, in various instances, these characters influence Lumley's working-class aspirations. These aspirations falter when he encounters businessman Mr. Blearney on his journey to Stotwell. From their first exchange, there is a visible distinction between Blearney and Ern: "'Have a heart, partner! I'm refrigerated to the marrow as it is!'".[320] The narrator notes him chuckling 'richly' and later his high tastes, lodging at "'The Grand'".[321] Mr. Blearney becomes one of Lumley's employers at the "'Golden Peach Club'", a gentleman's club in London.[322] Here, he reignites his relationship with Froulish. Again with the first line, he exclaims "'Oh, God, it's you, Lumley'".[323] It is here that he mentions Terence Frush, Lumley's final employer of the novel. It

[315] *Oxford English Dictionary*: https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/11555?rskey=BjryTG&result=1#eid (Accessed: January 3, 2023)
[316] Trevor Noble, 'Social Mobility and Class Relations in Britain', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 23:4, 1972, 434
[317] Mike Savage, 'Changing Social Class Identities in Post-War Britain: Perspectives from Mass-Observation', *Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung*, 33:3, (2008), 58-9
[318] Ibid., 58
[319] *Oxford English Dictionary:* https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/11555?rskey=BjryTG&result=1#eid (Accessed: January 3, 2023)
[320] John Wain, *Hurry on Down*, 2nd edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), 97
[321] Ibid., 100
[322] Ibid., 232
[323] Ibid., 240

is with Frush that Lumley makes a re-entry to this middle-class way of living, back into his rightful position and leaving questions around his asociality.

His final job is at a joke writing firm, furnishing the scripts for comedy shows. He begins, "[r]eady for anything" and is introduced to Frush himself.[324] Straight into business, Froulish announces "'I've got him, Mr. Frush. The Seventh Man'", to which he responds "'Good,' […] 'And you've got the current jokes as well, I hope'".[325] The office appears clinical and cold, with Frush looking "like the head of a steel combine".[326] Lumley has entered the capitalist machine, not working for himself, but for an employer who harvests the crops of his employee's labour. From the biblical reference of The Seventh Man to the outright severity of Mr. Frush, the semantics allude to something comical in itself. The positioning of a character who, from the very first chapter, wishes to reject his middle-class upbringing and resting his character in an inherently capitalist joke-writing firm concludes the novel on biting satire. Wain, in *Declaration*, notes that Lumley encounters "the disappearance of the old-style bourgeoisie", suggesting that he now encounters the new-style bourgeoisie in Mr. Frush who is a caricature of his class.[327] There are two notices which define Frush's attitude to his business: "One read 'The Customer is Always Trite'; the other, 'What he'll Say Next is Nobody's Business – and 'Remember, You're Nobody'".[328] In Froulish and Lumley, not accounting for the fellow employees as they are not accounted *for*, he is prone to employing the working-class pawn, aside from the "'culture man'" from Eton and Trinity. His influence on Lumley is simple and allows him to re-enter the middle-classes on a generous salary, after which Blearney analyses Lumley's, gesturing: "'Here you are, only just in the game, and you start talking like all the rest of them'".[329] By influence of a markedly bohemian working-class character, introducing him to a middle-class realm, Lumley has re-entered his initial middle-class social status. The penultimate page of text begins with a short narrative monologue:

> Neutrality; he had found it at last. The running fight between himself and society had ended in a draw; he was no nearer, fundamentally, to any *rapprochement* or understanding with it than when he had been a window-cleaner, a crook, or a servant; it had merely decided that he should be paid, and paid handsomely, to capitalize his anomalous position. To his companions in Mr Frush's team, this job was like any other. They did it instead of working in industry or commerce. But to him it was an armistice, obviously leading to a permanent armed truce. There could be no forgiveness, but neither party would, in the foreseeable future, launch an offensive.[330]

[324] Ibid., 243
[325] Ibid., 243
[326] Ibid., 243
[327] John Wain, 'Along the Tightrope', in *Declaration*, ed. by Tom Maschler, (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1957), 84
[328] John Wain, *Hurry on Down*, 2nd edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), 244
[329] Ibid., 247
[330] Ibid., 250

This section is conclusive because of its position in the text, but also by the narrator's account of Lumley's tug-of-class-war which ends with a truce. There is a dissimilarity between this job, in that the employees do it "instead of working in industry or commerce".[331] It is white-collar employment, distinct in practice to Seaton's position at his lathe. In his famed monologue at the start of the final chapter, he concedes that: "Factories sweat you to death, labour exchanges talk you to death, insurance and income tax offices milk money from your wage packets and rob you to death".[332] Unlike Lumley whose cage is a "fine new one, air conditioned, clean, commanding a good view", Seaton's is "a hard life if you don't weaken".[333, 334] He grasps his reader, confessing "listen, this lathe is my everlasting pal because it gets me thinking, and that's their big mistake because I know I'm not the only one", suggesting that his lathe is a place of security, a place of self-identification and a place to asocial ideas.[335]

The lathe acts as a sustained metaphor throughout the novel – the driving force of a capitalist state. In sweltering conditions at his lathe, he "worked at the same fast pace as in winter to keep the graph-line of his earnings level".[336] Not mentioned is the *firm's* earnings, or those of "the rate-checker, the foreman, and the tool-setters".[337] But still, Seaton continued to work "quite happily for a cool fourteen nicker".[338] He does not act on being asocial, or antagonistic, but rather keeps his thoughts to himself. That aside, he *does* reject the institution of marriage. Seaton is familiar with Brenda, his respondent by association with her husband, with whom he works at the factory. Jack is first introduced without reference to his name and with a set of stage directions as Seaton escapes his and Brenda's affair ("'He's coming,' she said. 'I heard the gate open'").[339] He is a hard-working character, present in the novel for a moral viewpoint, but also as a catalyst to the narrative arc. Without him, there would be no protest against the marriage or reference to further infidelity (not counting Brenda's sister, Winnie, whom Seaton knows by association). However, Jack is the archetypal capitalist and serves a function here. He acts to contrast Seaton, as a 'family man' and a man driven by institutional servitude. He is "timid in many ways, a self-contained man who did not give much of himself away".[340] At the beginning of the seventh chapter, Jack confronts Seaton in the factory, alerting him that "'I've come to give you fair warning'".[341] Providing advice with an unsuspecting loyalty, he continues: "'I shouldn't be telling you this, but being as we're supposed to be friends, I will'"; what follows is a warning that

[331] Ibid., 250
[332] Alan Sillitoe, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, 2nd edn, (London: PAN, 1959), 176
[333] John Wain, *Hurry on Down*, 2nd edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), 251
[334] Alan Sillitoe, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, 2nd edn, (London: PAN, 1959), 176
[335] Ibid., 176
[336] Alan Sillitoe, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, 2nd edn, (London: PAN, 1959), 110-111
[337] Ibid., 25
[338] Ibid., 25
[339] Ibid., 17
[340] Ibid., 35
[341] Ibid., 85

several men are out to get him, particularly if he "'do[es] carry on with Brenda'".[342] The following scene is a preamble to this assault, in which Arthur and his brother Fred engage in a barfight, caused by "a flying dart" "sticking into the soft meaty part of his exposed ankle".[343] Respectfully, the dart player asks "'Can I have my dart back'", to which Arthur asserts "'Say you're sorry, then, because your dart stuck in my leg'".[344] Sedate and sober at this stage, until all explodes in a scene of violence: "lash[ing] out left, right and centre".[345] He has his victory, but the scene foreshadows later events. The dart itself, metaphorically marks Arthur with blood, leaving an open wound to be scented by his final opponents – the swaddies.

His brother's influence, for a single evening, sparks four confrontations. The first with Mrs Bull, the local gossip who exclaims: "'You cheeky sod. I've seen you carryin' on wi' married women'".[346] The second is the dart, but the third is with a "woman, younger and wearing an Army uniform – the colour of which immediately prejudiced him".[347] The prejudice afoot here is her association with the institution. Her military uniform triggers an inferiority, increased by warnings of "'[t]he police'" and triggers an asocial response to reject her dress and authority. This episode begins when Arthur and Fred spot a man throwing a "beer mug with great force at [the funeral director's] window".[348] The sound of breaking glass synthesises "all the anarchism within him" and is described as a sharp climax, "musical and carefree".[349] The sound of the street and the sound of urban destruction is a stimulant to the anarchic, asocial character in Arthur. First appearing as a strange attack on a strange shop, the missile-launcher confesses in the face of authority, or "Old Rat Face", that he "'[w]anted that there'", pointing to a "black flower vase covered by a metal grid, and […] a grey, partly inscribed headstone" to give his mother a burial.[350, 351] The absence of a gravestone for a deceased woman, a mother, is a crucial detail in the novel's position as a post-war working-class novel. Working-class living is represented as impoverished and futile, to the point where the people cannot put a loved one to rest. This was a long occurring problem, as Julie-Marie Strange draws on a death in the *fin de siècle*: "The loss of a close relation was so bound up with material problems of life that at worst it seemed no more than an intensification of the misery of existence".[352] Post-war and in the face of further conflict (on shore and abroad), British fatalities were at an all-time high ("War deepened the realization that

[342] Ibid., 85
[343] Ibid., 91
[344] Ibid., 91
[345] Ibid., 91
[346] Ibid., 89
[347] Ibid., 96
[348] Ibid., 93
[349] Ibid., 93
[350] Ibid., 94
[351] Ibid., 95
[352] Julie-Marie Strange, "'She Cried a Very Little': Death, Grief and Mourning in Working-Class Culture, c. 1880-1914", *Social History*, 27:2, (2002), 143

human life is social capital: birth, nurturing, employment, even death became subject to closer regulation").[353] This short episode outlines the state of austerity in crisis, cemented in kitchen-sink realism with grim subject matter. Arthur identifies with the poverty and hardship this individual has faced, advising him to leave the scene: "'Why don't you run, mate?'".[354] The police arrive at the scene, the Seatons flee and the man is arrested. Asociality is present in this episode, from the rejection of a broken system (the breaking of the window) to Arthur coming to his aid and the image of the police. Where the secondary characters in *Room at the Top* and *Hurry on Down* present the upper and middle classes with a sharp distaste, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* follows suit. The individual frequently represents the ideological state apparatus or, in this instance, an archetype in uniform: "Rat Face" and the swaddies represent the armed forces, the policeman is self-evident, Jack represents the capitalist and Arthur's lathe the unrelenting task of work. There are various metaphors at play, attributing the weight of an institution upon an individual.

In the instances of *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, *Hurry on Down* and *Room at the Top*, the secondary characters provide the backing to a protagonist, smoothening or transgressing his journey to find contentment in a social position. Regarding the "distribution of power", in the introduction I noted that those at the top of the social hierarchy ceased to be a vice to the working-class and became a target of working-class reaction. Evidenced in the convincing representation in these three novels, each protagonist finds motivation and liberation in joining and associating with these figures. Brown and Wales act as the opposition to Lampton, whereas Alice is his anchor to working-class life. Blearney and Frush are equal catalysts to Lumley's middle-class return, but Froulish and Ern are *his* working-class anchors who, like Alice to Lampton, break away. Seaton encounters the institution, like the two other protagonists, but has no ambition to 'join them' and accepts that he *will* be beaten. Under my chosen definition of asocial, my argument makes a claim for each individual protagonist. Lampton and Lumley are antagonistic to *their own* standing in social order, shifting to and from working and middle classes with irregular success. Seaton is an exception who remains asocial throughout and although he submits to the possibility of marriage, the novel's final scene alludes to a future of revelry and disobedience ("a grin on his face", beginning "to wind in the reel").[355] This set of protagonists mingle with various institutions but do not achieve a true submissive state. Quoted in *In Anger: Culture in the Cold War 1945-60* (1981), Wain recognises that "[i]n England there is a time-honoured method of dealing with opposition. First of all, you try to squash it; then, if it refuses to be squashed, you institutionalize it".[356] Though a definitive stance, Wain speaks only partially for the

[353] Geoffrey Field, 'Perspectives on the Working-Class Family in Wartime Britain, 1939-1945', *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 38, (1990), 6
[354] Ibid., 96
[355] Ibid., 192
[356] John Wain, Qtd in Robert Hewison, *In Anger: Culture in the Cold War 1945-60*, 1st edn, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 174

three protagonists. The opposition in each novel has been identified as *himself* (Seaton, Lampton and Lumley), whose asociality ensues a number of barriers in the path to social security. He suggests that 'They' squash the opposition, however in each instance there is a psychosomatic desire to squash himself. Lampton marries Susan, Lumley takes a "air conditioned, clean" cage and Seaton becomes "Doreen's young man".[357, 358] Seaton's operative maxim "it's a hard life if you don't weaken" stands true for the working-class figure in each novel, in that each must weaken under the pressure of the ideology that functions at the top.[359] The institutions have influence, but the working-class continue to repent for the sake of their autonomy, echoing a presence of asociality in the three novels and the desire for "complete freedom to govern themselves".[360]

[357] John Wain, *Hurry on Down*, 2nd edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), 251
[358] Alan Sillitoe, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, 2nd edn, (London: PAN, 1959), 177
[359] Ibid., 17
[360] Trischa Mann and Audrey Blunden, *Australian Law Dictionary*, 1st edn, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010)

Conclusion

In the introduction, I stated the desire to uncover how the novel, a form rooted in, and shaped by bourgeois origins, represented working-class culture and identity in post-war Britain. This led to the question of *how* "the artist [is] able to embody perceptions of the individual life which can be disruptive, anarchic, asocial".[361] Dividing into the chapters under three distinct behavioural adjectives. I have drawn on a wide array of critical and scholarly responses to support my argument. Each of these have influenced my point of argument that the post-war novel voiced a polyperspectivity under the influence of regionality. In the introduction, I draw on Mengham's statement that these novels, amidst the field of social realist works, "document new forms of alienation as a result of growing income equality and the effects of mass culture on class, regional and gender as identities".[362] Identifying several factors of alienation amidst the working-class, Mengham's statement clarifies a class dispute relating to greater issues than income: regional and gender identities. In positioning the 'regional' as an archetype (as in this instance, the socioeconomics of each location are similar), I have been able to analyse how the presentation of each protagonist, situated in an industrial region, presents working-class culture and identity. From capitalist youth culture and fashion crazes to mass observation, the breadline and New Left reactions, this was a period of great social and cultural change; where social history fails to record an individual perspective ("Sociology is concerned with groups"), there is a significance in representing an individual emerging in the novel form.[363] He is given a voice amidst a movement of documentarians and politicians, voicing the struggles of the working-class man in an authentic, working-class region. Where sociology conjures an outline, the novelist fills in the gaps and presents the real experiences of an individual in a historical society – he is the sociologist of the individual, able to make great claim through the accuracy of representation.

There is a disparate attitude to class in each of the three novels. Braine's protagonist, Lampton, aims to escape the working classes with hypergamy. On his journey to Warley, he utters "[n]o more zombies, Joe, no more zombies", but soon falls to temptation when realising the difference in quality of life between his own class and those at "T'Top".[364, 365] This initial fall is a *felix culpa* as, early in the novel, Lampton seems content in his new surroundings. His satisfaction arises from a new and improved quality of life, seemingly innocently. The rhetoric becomes childlike, as he notes his new surroundings with pace: "big houses with drives and orchards and manicured hedges, a preparatory

[361] Brian Jackson and Dennis Marsden, *Working Class Community*, 1st edn, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), 14
[362] Mengham, Rod, 'Bad Teeth: British Social Realism in Fiction', in *British Social Realism in the Arts since 1940*, ed. by David Tucker, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 81
[363] Brian Jackson and Dennis Marsden, *Working Class Community*, 1st edn, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), 14
[364] John Braine, *Room at the Top*, 3rd edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), 7
[365] Ibid., 197

school to which the boys would soon return from adventures in Brittany and Brazil and India or at the very least an old castle in Cornwall, expensive cars".[366] However, as I have discussed, his happiness is short-lived. After he and Alice swear to be "'[l]oving friends'", he returns to his hometown of Dufton, the place where "[n]o dreams were possible".[367, 368] The novel takes a volta as his voice tells the reader that (when returning to Dufton) "[i]t was hard to leave Warley" because of the contrast in quality of life.[369] Braine presents working-class culture as stark and inferior to middle-class living through this shift in surroundings as after the visit to Dufton, his experience in Warley begins to decline. Unlike in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* and *Hurry on Down*, there are no accounts of blue collar employment as the only workers are dressed in white. The majority of the working-class characters who appear in *Room at the Top* are rough or sexually promiscuous. The middle and upper class characters, however, are presented as clean, intelligent, and scheming for social connections. The strength of Braine's novel lies in its ability to present working-class living in contrast with the middle-class ways, positioning Lampton as behind enemy lines. The variation in characters and their socioeconomic backgrounds, from Lampton's aunt in the "faint sadness of the front room" to his own initial description in his "Sunday best", Braine's novel functions by means of contrast.[370, 371] There is a sadness of his background and life in Dufton, with the memories of familial deaths during the Blitz so prominent. However, he is victorious in his pursuit of a new life, at least in *Room at the Top*. He gets the girl, the security, and the money, but pays a price and is zombified into appeasing the customs of his new class position. He marries, he works in white-collar industry and submits to the local patriarch Mr. Brown. In a time of turbulent politics and class elasticity, Lampton is unidirectional in his ambition. Referring again to his likeness with the myth of Sisyphus, unlike his Grecian predecessor, he is victorious in reaching the summit and shows us that, to modify Hayes' observation, Lampton is proof that we *can* select our own class.[372] In the greater image, Braine's novel highlights that in working-class Britain, class was a turbulent affair and the possibility of social mobility was often unsuccessful. It is by a façade of finery and attitude that Lampton succeeds. Contrary to his performance at the Warley Thespians, his acting in the real world gives a fair and convincing representation of a middle-class man with a middle-class sensibility.

I have noted Lampton's success in *Room at the Top*, despite his turbulent journey to the top. However, there is one protagonist who is unsuccessful in his journey – Lumley. From his ambition to live a working-class life, he is successful until he is re-acquainted with Froulish, who introduces him

[366] Ibid., 9-10
[367] Ibid., 84
[368] Ibid., 85
[369] Ibid., 85
[370] Ibid., 89
[371] Ibid., 7
[372] Nick Hayes, "'Calculating Class': Housing, lifestyle and status in the provincial English city, 1900-1950", *Urban History*, 36:1, (2009), 114

to Frush. Lumley becomes the seventh man on a good salary, with his contract of three-years. Like Lampton, he also gets the girl, the security, and the money. However, his success is limited as he fails to stay true to his initial journey of working-class living. By this measure, his narrative can be described as a failure.

Tobias Wingen et al ask 'why does social class affect quality of life?', to which they respond with two factors:

> a high social class is associated with increased control over resources (i.e., power) or because a high social class is associated with higher respect and esteem in the eyes of others (i.e., status).[373]

My observations of Lumley re-entering his middle-class status respond to Wingen et al's second factor. Lumley's reason for his descent to the working-class was hardly identified by the author, but the sense of freedom and fleeing his parentage is a credible alibi. During his working-class journey, he is unable to hold a job and moves between locations. With the lens of self-esteem in focus, his lack of financial income or success in a place of work does not align with his middle-class customs and ways of being. As a man of "high social class" and therefore having an association with "higher respect and esteem in the eyes of others", Lumley's acknowledgement in the working classes goes amiss.[374] It is in the final chapters when he is revitalised and reintroduced to Blearney that he regains a middle-class sensibility with its "Neutrality".[375] The novel has a straightforward impact on post-war society, the primary one being that it offers an insight into the suffering of the post-war man. Following his job as Braceweight's chauffeur, whose car stood "crumpled beyond any hope of repair", he was willing to take "any blame going" for the incident, writing a letter of apology.[376] Several pages later, he receives a response and a significant case of class prejudice unfolds: "I found your letter waiting for me, but I do not know why it contained no mention of the fact that, before leaving, you stole a valuable jade figurine from my wife's writing table".[377] The evidence "points unmistakably to […] Hutchins", who is lodging with the Braceweight's as a tutor for their son.[378] Until this point, Braceweight has been a kind and forgiving host, but here he turns to prejudice, not considering Hutchins in his capacity as 'the academic', but the fleeing chauffeur in Lumley. This sleight act of prejudice and misunderstanding draws me to how working-class culture is represented. Representing an inherently middle-class man as a working-class character, who is subject to

[373] Tobias Wingen et al, 'Exploring the Relationship between Social Class and Quality of Life: the Mediating Role of Power and Status', *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, 16, (2021), 1983
[374] Ibid., 1983
[375] John Wain, *Hurry on Down*, 2nd edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), 250
[376] Ibid., 222
[377] Ibid., 238
[378] Ibid., 238

prejudice, criminal activity, and an eventual submission to his original birth right, Wain suggests the inescapability of the middle-class and the implausibility of working-class living. The eventual factor which settles Lumley is financial, the primary factor which he flees in the first chapter. He regains his security and therefore "higher respect and esteem in the eyes of others".[379]

The character with the greatest "esteem in the eyes of others" is Blearney, who dims the social tension with an analysis of Lumley:

> 'It's the type who wants neutrality who comes into our racket. Doesn't want to take sides in all the silly pettiness that goes on. Doesn't want to spend his time scratching and being scratched. Wants to live his own life.' Charles was humbled. The man understood him perfectly. His very choice of a word was absolutely right. So far, he had set himself target after target that had proved out of reach: economically, the quest for self-sufficient poverty; socially, for unmolested obscurity; emotionally, first for a grand passion and then for a limited and defined contentment. And now he valued his niche simply because it gave him the means, through his new wealth, to put himself beyond the struggle, and the leisure to meditate sufficiently to keep him on his guard against his new folly.[380]

In this short analysis, Blearney identifies a Lumley who is working-class but entering a fresh status. He notes the "silly pettiness" of the working-class journey and the lack of appeal to being unsettled, "scratching and being scratched". Throughout this journey, Lumley is a passenger to those around him and unable to live his life without dependents (Ern, Froulish, Blearney, Braceweight). The narrator acknowledges that working-class living remains an ambition for the protagonist, but does so with a bleak rhetoric ("self-sufficient poverty", "unmolested obscurity", "limited and defined contentment"). This section, by rhetoric alone, describes working-class life as a disruptive, anarchic, and asocial affair. It is disruptive in the sense that he disrupts his own social order, anarchic in that there is an absence of central government and asocial that his escapades are antagonistic to social order. In the final stages of the novel, he seeks the antithesis of my claims for his working-class life – seeking to "put himself beyond the struggle, and the leisure to meditate sufficiently to keep him on his guard against his new folly".[381] In presenting a character with reversed class ambitions, Wain presents post-war Britain as a state of backward progression. When in a working-class situation, Lumley finds security in the bohemian, impoverished state of Froulish: "It was curious to reflect that, but for his meeting with these down-and-outs, he would never have been able to continue his new life".[382]

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[379] Tobias Wingen et al, 'Exploring the Relationship between Social Class and Quality of Life: the Mediating Role of Power and Status', *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, 16, (2021), 1983
[380] John Wain, *Hurry on Down*, 2nd edn, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), 248-9
[381] Ibid., 249
[382] Ibid., 52

Ironically, however, without this down-and-out, he would never have been able to begin his return to a middle-class life either, as it is Froulish who introduces him to Frush. Wain's characters are confused in the face of social rearticulation. This complicated class system which emerged post-war, brought questions about who, in a post-classist society, 'Us' and 'Them' actually are. This confusion mirrors the national identity of Britain, once a gloating global powerhouse but, post-war, a nation of debt, depravity, and disruption; like Britain, Lumley was having a class-conscious identity crisis.

Seaton is the single protagonist in each novel who remains in his original social strata, and throughout, has no intention to rise in this hierarchy: "I'm me and nobody else; and whatever people think I am or say I am, that's what I'm not".[383] Although he remains loyal to his class throughout, he actively protests against various institutions. His primary target is the institution of marriage, sleeping with other people's wives ("when you were with a man whose wife you were doing you couldn't stop taking about her").[384] This aside, his wider acts of protest in society are passive in that there is rarely an action to follow his thoughts. During his encounter with "Rat Face", he remains an outsider, with the swaddies he remains a victim and with Jack, he becomes a third party, within but without the marriage.[385] This leads to the question of how effective his rhetoric is at representing working-class culture and identity in post-war Britain. Roberto del Valle Alcalá denotes Sillitoe's writing as "offer[ing] a fresh perspective on the persistence of class antagonistic dynamics", in that as I have asserted, his protagonist differs from those conjured by his contemporaries; it is not "mutation or refraction but structural opposition and real confrontation".[386, 387]

The novel triumphs in its ability to delineate the working-class perspective in an "Age of Scarcity", giving accurate representations of suffering from the perspective of a working-class author. The minor details of modernity in his home are necessary to identify his condition, be it the "bright fire in the modernised grate" for which the "family had clubbed-up thirty quid" or the TV which is the subject of his father's attention "'six to eleven every night'".[388, 389] These details, should he have been middle class, would not have been mentioned purely by expectation of their presence. Lampton notes the material wealth around him, from his perspective of a working-class character as objects of his desire, the narrator in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* notes them to present his family achievements and collective community in the family home – what they have they feel grateful for. Their situation is accepted, though their condition is one which would be described as typically working-class and

[383] Ibid., 120
[384] Alan Sillitoe, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, 2nd edn, (London: PAN, 1959), 47
[385] Ibid., 94
[386] Roberto Del Valle Alcalá, 'Sketches of Autonomy: Capitalist subsumption and working-class resistance in Alan Sillitoe's early fiction', *Genre*, 48:3, (2015), 437
[387] Ibid., 438
[388] Alan Sillitoe, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, 2nd edn, (London: PAN, 1959), 18
[389] Ibid., 19

urban industrial. In the novel, the word 'street', or a synonym of it, appears ninety-six times, marking a common place to represent a common man. The street is the central stage in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, alongside the pub. In the street, Seaton is free from institutional control and presented as a character free in body but trapped in mind. It is only when at the canal that his mind can be free from the industrial smog of Nottingham and muse on his social situation.

What, then, do these novels achieve as a collective post-war output? The initial point is the means by which they transform the novel form and take ownership of a bourgeoise tradition: "[it] is an act that produces a result that it is not in itself compatible with working-class aspirations."[390] There is a sense of truth in this statement, but it is dependent on the commercial success of one's novel. Upon publication, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, *Hurry on Down* and *Room at the Top* thrust their authors into financial freedom, however this is not applicable to each and every working-class novelist (D. H. Lawrence, for instance). The primary achievement is the cultural and historical resonance that these novels achieved. As we approach the second quarter of the twenty-first century, they remain prominent in popular culture as working-class declarations and as revolutionary works of literature. In an abstract fashion, these texts become texts *of* the Second World War by association with the following period of national rebirth. In this sense, though fictional representations, they can be marked as objects of historical document, composed of notes and memories of a very real occurrence. Margaret Drabble, on narrative, tells us:

> the post-war novelist [...] employing many of the techniques of both the realist and modernist novel, he or she increasingly, over these last two decades, interrupts his own narrative to remind us that he is a factor in the narrative, that his presence must be taken into account, that he or she may fail, out of blindness of bias, or out of sheer embarrassment, to tell us all, to represent the whole.[391]

She concedes that in this form, there are elements of life-writing, or narratives drawn from lived experience, but that there are also reservations in full representation. This absence of the *full* truth is what distinguishes it as fiction, rather than memoir. They mingle fact and fiction, in a desire for an protagonist whose character is driven by a hatred of the establishment. In relying on real historical material, however, there becomes an element of fact and a *genuine* reason for this fictional representation – the disenchantment of the post-war youth. With their youth suffocated by the actions

[390] Jeremy Hawthorn, *The British Working-Class Novel in the Twentieth Century*, 1st edn, (London: Edward Arnold, 1984), vii
[391] Margaret Drabble, 'Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in the Post-War British Novel', *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature*, 20:1, (1987, 13)

of others in the war, these novels present three distinct reactions to a situation encountered by those born in decades around 1945.

In these closing words, I should like to conclude by stating that within these novels, there is a sense of topsyturvydom which cannot be identified as a definitive response to post-war society. The novel illustrates that in a turbulent society with an uncertain future for the working-class, the greatest way to portray a character of low society is to mirror his own turbulence against that of society itself. The manner in which Braine, Sillitoe and Wain craft a character who either remains, escapes, or rises in social hierarchy is with formulaic accuracy, as a soprano to an alto, or an alto to a tenor. Working-class culture has been presented as true, rather than fanciful or falsified: in Lampton we see an escape to higher places; in Seaton we see dissatisfaction and antagonistic revelry; in Lumley, there is an escape to, and then from the working-class. However, in this analysis of the individual characters, positioning them together creates a distinct group of the working-class and thus crafts an image of post-war society. Now a society, this analysis falls into the hand of the social historian, who "is concerned with groups".[392]

[392] Brian Jackson and Dennis Marsden, *Working Class Community*, 1st edn, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), 14

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