Alienation and Hybridity. Patterns of Estrangement in the British Novels since the 1950s.

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Remus Racolţa
aus
Timişoara

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1. Introduction

What is alienation and how can one define it? There are numerous possible definitions of the term given by many thinkers over time, yet Jimmy Reid, the Clydeside trade union activist, managed perhaps to put it best during his inauguration speech as rector of Glasgow University in 1972:

> Alienation is the precise and correctly applied word for describing the major social problem in Britain today. People feel alienated by society. In some intellectual circles it is treated almost as a new phenomenon. It has, however, been with us for years. What I believe is true is that today it is more widespread, more pervasive than ever before. Let me right at the outset define what I mean by alienation. It is the cry of men who feel themselves the victims of blind economic forces beyond their control. It's the frustration of ordinary people excluded from the processes of decision-making. The feeling of despair and hopelessness that pervades people who feel with justification that they have no real say in shaping or determining their own destinies. Many may not have rationalised it. May not even understand, may not be able to articulate it. But they feel it. It therefore conditions and colours their social attitudes. Alienation expresses itself in different ways in different people. It is to be found in what our courts often describe as the criminal antisocial behaviour of a section of the community. It is expressed by those young people who want to opt out of society, by drop-outs, the so-called maladjusted, those who seek to escape permanently from the reality of society through intoxicants and narcotics. Of course, it would be wrong to say it was the sole reason for these things. But it is a much greater factor in all of them than is generally recognised. (*The Independent*, 2010).

The concept of alienation played a paramount role in the general political, social and philosophical discourse in the immediate aftermath of World War 2 in Western Europe, and the realm of fiction was no exception. Great Britain witnessed an unprecedented outpouring of alienation-related phenomena in the emerging working-class fiction of the 1950s, 60s and 70s, most prominent of all being the authors of the so-called "Angry Decade". Even though alienation continued to play an important role in working-class fiction, Marxism as a whole seemed to be on the wane during the following decades, the last important expression of working-class fiction being the works of Scottish authors such as James Kelman and Irvine Welsh during the first half of the 1990s. The official dissolution of the Soviet Union on December 26th 1991 sent shockwaves through the entire world and was seen by many in Western Europe and the US as an irrefutable victory

not only over the Soviet Union, but also over Marxism (or Marxism-Leninism) as the official Soviet ideology as a whole. After the initial shock, the "end of history" was heralded by Western theorists such as Francis Fukuyama, a view that became very popular during the day. As Terry Eagleton put it, the general misconception among theorists about the beginning of the 1990s seemed to have been the idea that world history would experience an unparalleled process of ossification: "The future would simply be the present infinitely repeated – or, as the postmodernist remarked, 'the present plus more options'" (Eagleton 2004: 7). Many cultural commentators did not consider at that time that it was not the end of human history unfolding, but a major socio-cultural disruption, which was set to redefine the realities of the new millennium and radically change and reshape the old antagonisms of the past.

In the world of fiction, things were no different. Marxism, which, as previously mentioned, dominated the cultural discourse for the last four decades in which it experienced a slow but steady decline, was faced with its own demise after the emergence and growing popularity of postcolonialism, an academic discipline focused on the cultural legacy and implications of colonialism and imperialism. The "New Literature in English", as it was called during the day, brought forward literary concepts which were different as well as English-speaking authors who were "exotic", either second-generation Brits or coming from South-East Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, and many other former British colonies. If one concentrates on quintessential concepts within both literary Marxism and postcolonialism, one can find striking similarities between the waning Marxist concept of alienation (which played a paramount role in British working-class fiction especially during the 1950s and 60s) and the concept of hybridity within postcolonial theory.

The hypothesis of my dissertation is that a shift has occurred in literary theory from the Marxist concept of *class* to postcolonial concept of *race/identity* during the end of the 1980s and the beginning of 1990s, a shift which has led to the reconceptualization of alienation under the guise of the postcolonial concept of hybridity. This hypothesis is at odds with standard accounts of most literary theorists. The common view held is that hybridity and alienation are completely unrelated to each other, both concepts belonging to two different literary currents, namely Marxism and postcolonialism. The generally

accepted view of contemporary literary theory is that hybridity succeeded and effectively displaced the previously significant Marxist concept of alienation, thus engendering the path within literary theory which eventually led to the disappearance of Marxism and the emergence of postcolonialism.

At first glance, the comparison between these two abovementioned concepts might seem paradoxical. However, writing as early as the 1970s about the renaissance of alienation theories in postwar Europe and the world (despite the fact that Marx's ideas had been formulated centuries before the 1970s), Adam Schaff postulated a captivating assumption on why certain concepts become 'fashionable' and the underlying conditions:

> In order to answer the question why the theory of alienation became 'fashionable' once more, why it proves useful in various fields of the social sciences, we must examine the foundation of the contemporary social transformations which condition this phenomenon. Otherwise it is difficult to explain a 'wandering of ideas' when certain concepts and theories forged in the past and considered outdated take on a new significance in a new social context. Ideas, in my opinion, become 'fashionable' when they offer a theoretical answer to some objective need; old and rejected ideas are taken up and reanimated when, properly adapted, they make possible a better understanding of contemporary life and a solution of its problems. Herein lies the secret of the renaissance of the theory of alienation" (Schaff 1980: 85).

Applying this idea to the postcolonial concept of hybridity and analyzing the transformation of the seemingly dated concept of alienation, we should be able to establish not only what the core characteristics of these two concepts are, but also whether there are overlapping characteristics or junctures between the two. The newly discovered insights could lead to a newer (and perhaps more precise) understanding of both of these important concepts within contemporary fiction and literary theory.

It remains to ascertain, then, if and in what way these two concepts are interrelated. Let us discuss the question of how concepts suffer certain alterations when they are 'adapted'. Discussing the parallels between the concept of alienation and that of hybridity, we find that one common feature linking these two concepts is their versatility and long 'travels', not only within the same discipline, but also from one discipline or scientific field to another. For instance, the concept of alienation 'travelled' from religion to philosophy

(e.g. the Social Contract Theorists), within philosophy from Rousseau to Hegel and from Hegel's Idealism to Marx's sociopolitical beliefs, from which it later travelled to the realm of working-class fiction. Similarly, hybridity started out as a purely biological term meaning the cross-breeding of two plants or animals of different breeds, varieties or species; later on, it entered the racially charged colonial discourse of the nineteenth-century, only to entered the fields of linguistics and fiction during the early 20th-century (cf. Bal 2002: 25). In fiction, postcolonial theorists such as Homi Bhabha used the concept of hybridity as a quintessential characteristic of multicultural diversity. As a result, we can logically conclude that both concepts have significantly changed along the way, having travelled from one discipline to the other and having suffered several 'mutations' between historical periods. Thus, each concept has not only been 'altered' and 'adapted' by each discipline or field, but both of them have also proven to be versatile, flexible concepts that allow for more than one rigid definition confined to one scientific field.

Restricting the span of both concepts to fiction (especially working-class fiction and fiction of migration) only, if one takes a closer look at the phenomena of alienation described in many of the working-class novels of the 1950s (including its Scottish offshoots as late as the 1990s) and novels of migration (which are mainly focusing on the concepts of hybridity, becoming *en vogue* during the end of the 1990s / beginning of the 2000s), one can recognize that the underlying phenomena manifest in both types of novels share remarkable similarities. Thus, in both genres, a feeling of social or psychological alienation, deep-seated disenchantment against an opposite 'Other', anger or frustration, feelings of unbelonging, powerlessness, a general sense of *ennui,* are dominant features. Furthermore, the main character is usually portrayed not as an active subject in control of his/her actions and in tune with his/her environment, but as a passive subject that is trying to cope with various negative situations imposed on him/her from the outside by a social reality or environment he/she cannot control or escape from. In both genres, we can ascertain that these phenomena of alienation are rooted in a contested space, constantly negotiated between two diverging constituents. It is the "third space of the impossible (cf. Acheraiou 2011: 79) in which a dysfunctional, unbalanced relationship between diametrically opposed constituents is constantly (re)negotiated that the main characters of both working-

class fiction and fictions of migration inhabit. With both concepts of alienation and hybridity being characterized by a flawed relationship between two opposing constituents, we may conclude that, somewhat paradoxically, the concept of hybridity could be perceived as the continuation of the concept of alienation under a new guise, due to the post-colonial turn which led to the waning of the concept of alienation in the eyes of the present-day literary canon.

However, my definition of alienation as a framework or model made up of two opposing binaries is not comprehensive enough without taking into account the possible constituents of the frameworks models. Thus, we must establish what the precise constituents of each binary framework are. I define alienation in working-class fiction as a hostile, incompatible, unbalanced relationship between the two constituents of 'us' vs. 'them', where 'us' is the world of the working-class hero, and the 'them' the middle- and upper-classes. We can easily detect that the common denominator connecting the two opposing constituents is that of *class*. This also explains the great attention these novels received in Great Britain during the time in which the Marxist concept of alienation was very popular (i.e. the 1950s) not only with cultural theorists and literary critics but also with the general British readership of the time. Within the binary framework made up of the constituents of working-class and the upper-class, there are what I would call *dominant* and *subordinate* elements, which are essential if we are to understand how the binaries 'mutated' during the last four decades and what role these specific elements played in the 'mutations' of the concept of alienation itself. In the case of the alienation binary framework of the 1950s, the dominant element between the opposing constituents of working- and upper-class is that of *class*, while the *geographic location* (invariably the North of England) is to be seen as the subordinate element.

This model seems to 'shift' if we take a closer look at the newer Scottish version of working-class fiction of the 1990s, the last offshoots of the original (Northern) English working-class of the 1950s. The alienation binary model of the 1990s is made up of different constituents, namely those of the Celtic North opposed to the Anglo-Saxon South, which are also characterized by a deeply flawed and hostile relationship between them. The novels of Scottish authors such as James Kelman and Irvine Welsh exhibit in my view a

strong Scottish (national) element as dominant element, thus, in the case of the so-called *Celtic Fringe* (Haywood 1997: 151) novels, it is the (*northern) location* that plays the dominant role, while the previously dominant aspect of *class* becomes subordinate. This, however, does not mean that class has been erased and plays no role whatsoever in these novels; instead, we may easily detect that the previously dominant element of *class* has become subordinated to Scottish *identity and geographic location*.

Interestingly, the same definition of alienation (i.e. a binary model made up of two opposing constituents) can also be applied to the postcolonial concept of hybridity, suggesting that hybridity could be seen as a reconceptualization of the Marxist concept of alienation under a postcolonial guise might be a valid point. In the binary framework of hybridity, the opposing constituents 'shift' again, from the Celtic North vs. the Anglo-Saxon South to the flawed relationship between the (traditionally Christian) British *centre* (i.e. Great Britain itself) and the (Muslim) Black colonial *periphery*. In my view, hybridity in the early postcolonial novels is to be seen not as the primarily positive feature described by Homi Bhabha, but as an uncomfortable "third space of the impossible", a space characterized by deep feelings of alienation and estrangement for the characters that inhabit it. Within this specific binary framework, we can easily identify the dominant aspect to be that of *cultural/racial identity* (i.e. British vs. British Indian/Pakistani/Jamaican, etc.), while the (previously) subordinate aspect of *class* seems to have completely disappeared it being replaced with the aspect of *geographic location* (Centre vs. Periphery). Even more interesting is the fact that the element of *geographic location* seems to connect the concept of hybridity with the concept of alienation in the working-class fiction of the 90s (i.e. the so-called Celtic Fringe), yet another aspect which connects not only the two concepts *per se*, but also the literary movements of Marxism and postcolonialism. The difference between these two literary movements consist in the fact that geographic location in the working-class fiction of the 90s is limited to Great Britain, while in postcolonialism Great Britain itself becomes the opposed element in relation to its former imperial colonies. As far as hybridity is concerned, the focus has moved on the post-racial, multicultural British society, globalization and on the idea of (postnational) identity during a time characterized by mass immigration from the former colonies of the British empire to the UK.

Taking into account the evolution of the previously discussed dominant and subordinate elements of both alienation and hybdridity, one can establish not only a certain continuity of alienation-related phenomena within the postcolonial concept of hybridity, but also a refashioning of the concept of alienation itself. After all, it seems that these two concepts have more in common than literary theory has been willing to acknowledge so far. The slow but steady decline of the concept of alienation and the sudden rise of the concept of hybridity during the beginning of the 1990s goes to show that, although the literary critics of today has virtually ceased to discuss alienation as a productive and relevant literary concept, the phenomena previously referred to in fiction, especially the working-class fiction of the 1950s and 1990s, still persist as subordinate elements in postcolonial fiction. Phenomena of alienation prevalent in British working-class fiction can be easily identified in what Roy Sommer calls the "transcultural or hybrid novel[1]" (Sommer 2001: 162) and many other novels dealing with the topic of hybridity, an aspect which should reinforce my claim that there is a significant rift between an already occurred change in literary theory and the endurance of underlying phenomena of a concept presumed dated and obsolete by the present-day literary criticism.

The second aim of my dissertation focuses on the question whether the shift from alienation to hybridity is directly or indirectly linked with the shift which occurred in literary periodization from Marxism-based literary theory to postcolonial literary theory. In other words, can the concepts of alienation and hybridity shed any light on the interdependence between Marxism and postcolonialism as literary trends?

In order to answer this question, we must discuss Marxism and its demise from literary theory during the late 1980s in relation to the postcolonial surge during the early 1990s. Since the topic is an extremely vast one, I will only focus on the different strands of Marxism and their different approaches, with special emphasis on British Marxism. Here

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[1] In the original: "transkulturell-hybrider Roman", a novel in which hybridity is based on Fludernik's definition as "internal difference based on a confluence of heterogenous cultures and traditions". According to Roy Sommer, all techniques which contribute to the blurring of boundaries between ethnicities and cultures, the fragmentation of the fictional world, pluralized identity concepts and anti-essentialist visions of alterity are narratologically staged and engender the hybridization of the novel (Sommer 2001: 162).

we need to differentiate between the so-called "Western Marxism"[2] and "Eastern Marxism", also called "Marxism-Leninism" or "Stalinism". Western Marxism is a vast and diverse body of Marxist theorists who were based in Western and Central Europe. In contrast to the Eastern strand of Marxism, the Western theorists[3] are mainly focused on the Hegelian and humanist aspects on Karl Marx's thought and opposed to the rigid Marxist ideology of Soviet-style Marxism-Leninism. Marxism-Leninism, on the other hand, is a political philosophy which also relies on Karl Marx's views, but was fused together with the views of V. I. Lenin and later on, J. V. Stalin. The official state ideology of the Soviet Union and its Eastern European allies of the Warsaw Pact, Marxism-Leninism unambiguously supported the view of a "dictatorship of the proletariat", i.e. the creation of a one party workers' state, state dominance and intervention over the (planned) economy and internationalism, i.e. opposition to colonialism, imperialism and capitalism.

Within Western Marxism, I will focus mainly on the typically British manifestations linked to Marxism, namely the British *Labour* movement and the later formation of the so-called *New Left*. While the Labour movement is clearly the oldest established leftist party in Britain (1900 A.D.), we need to acknowledge its focus primarily on the working-classes and not on Marxism as a political philosophy. The Labour Party, a left-of-centre political party, was initially formed as a means for the British Trade Unions movements (i.e. Chartism, a working-class movement for political reform) to establish political representation at Westminster. Thus, it becomes clear that the focus of Labour has traditionally been the British working-class and its opposition not directly aimed at capitalism, but rather the British Conservative Party and its upper-class representatives. The *New Left*[4], on the other hand, established in 1956 mainly by university students, commonly associated with the student movement of 1968, thought of itself as different from both Communism and Labour: "the New Left saw itself as an alternative to the economism of the

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[2] The phrase was coined by Maurice Merleau-Ponty in 1953 (Merleau-Ponty 1973: 30-59).

[3] Important early theorists of Western Marxism are György Lukács and Karl Korsch, followed by many others later on, such as Louis Althusser, Walter Benjamin, theorists of the Frankfurt School such as Theodor Adorno, Erich Fromm, Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse and many others. In Britain, the most important early Western Marxists are Stuart Hall and Raymond Williams, both leading theorists of the British New Left.

[4] Stuart Hall describes *The New Left* as "a new kind of socialist entity: not a party but a 'movement of ideas' (Hall 2010: 190).

Communist and Labour Left and the revisionism of the Labour leadership (Dworkin 1997: 61).

Similarly, Stuart Hall claims the *New Left* came into existence after the Suez crisis and the Soviet invasion of Hungary, between "Western imperialism and Stalinism" (Hall 2010: 177). The *New Left*, "a heterogenous group of ex-communists, disaffected Labour supporters, and socialist students" (Dworkin 1997: 45), sought a 'third way' political space situated between these two poles and grew, according to Hall, out of two different British traditions: communist humanism and "an independent socialist tradition, whose centre of gravity lay in the left student generation of the 1950s and which maintained some distance from 'party affiliations'" (Hall 2010: 178-179).

Returning to the question whether the shift from a declining Marxism to an emerging postcolonialism is in any way linked to the core concepts of alienation and hybridity, we must ask ourselves to what degree could a different interpretation of the same theory still hold, without discrediting the theory as a whole. This question is especially relevant when it comes to Western Marxism and its tenets once various thinkers tried to "reform" the Western strand of Marxism as a whole. As early as 1978, Louis Althusser perceived a serious crisis within Western Marxism:

> for many of us, something has 'snapped' in the history of the labour movement between its past and present, something which makes its future unsure […] if it is no longer possible, as it used to be, to hold the past and present together, it is because there no longer exists in the minds of the masses any 'achieved ideal', any really living reference for socialism (Althusser 1978: 55, translation is mine).[5]

Would the Western strand of Marxism survive as a theory in a united, post-Communist Europe, or would it follow the fate of its Eastern incarnations? If we are to judge by the dwindling importance of Marxist concepts such as alienation and class today, it seems that the demise of the last bastion of communism, the Soviet Union, has had the effect of

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[5] Text in original: "für viele von uns ist etwas in der Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung, zwischen ihrer Vergangenheit und ihrer Gegenwart ‚zerbrochen' […] Daß man die Vergangenheit und die Gegenwart nicht mehr zusammenbringen kann, ist darauf zurückzuführen, daß für die Massen kein ‚verwirklichtes Ideal', kein wirklich lebendiger Bezug zum Sozialismus mehr besteht" (Althusser 1978: 55).

also discrediting Western Marxism as a "mainstream" theory twenty years after Althusser had first announced its crisis. According to Keith Laybourn, the decline of Marxism as a whole in Britain was inevitable: "Marxism in Britain has declined rapidly since the Second World War. Indeed, the membership of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB), the largest Marxist organisation in Britain, fell from a wartime peak of 56,000 in 1942 to 45,000 in 1945, and further, to a mere 4,750 by the time of its dissolution in November 1991" (Laybourn 2006: 1).

Asking himself how much one can loosen the theoretical core of Marxism without its entire theoretical framework falling apart, Eagleton is of the opinion that the breaking point of the theoretical framework of Marxism has been reached with Althusser's suggested reforms and that this discredited Western Marxism as a whole. Eagleton thinks that the disdain of Western Marxism for "culture" during the 1960s and 70s, its dogmatism and the estrangement from "classical" Marxism of Marxist theorists during this decade led to the general decline of Marxism as a philosophy:

> Julia Kristeva and the TelQuel group turned to religious mysticism and a celebration of the American way of life. Post-structuralist pluralism now seemed best exemplified not by the Chinese cultural revolution but by the North-American supermarket. Roland Barthes shifted from politics to pleasure. Jean-François Lyotard turned his attention to intergalactic travel and supported the right-wing Giscard in the French presidential elections. Michel Foucault renounced all aspirations to a new social order. If Louis Althusser rewrote Marxism from the inside, he opened a door in doing so through which many of his disciples would shuffle out of it altogether. So the crisis of Marxism did not begin with the crumbling of the Berlin wall. It could be felt at the very heart of political radicalism of the late 60s and early '70s […] It was not a question of the left first flourishing and then declining. As far as classical Marxism went, the worm was already in the bud, the serpent curled secretly in the garden" (Eagleton 2004: 38)

Fredric Jameson, on the other hand, goes further and claims that Marxism, whether internally doomed from the very beginning or brought to its knees by the demise of the so-called "existing socialism", cannot fully break with the future in a clear-cut manner. Despite the appearance of any radical change between old and new, be it time periods, literary trends or political change, there are always elements of the old within the new, and at the same time, features of the new which have been also preserved within the old:

One kind of answer […] would raise the whole issue of periodization and of how a historian (literary or other) posits a radical break between two henceforth distinct periods. I must limit myself to the suggestion that radical breaks between periods do not generally involve complete changes of content but rather the restructuration of a certain number of elements already given: features that in an earlier period or system were subordinate now become dominant, and features that had been dominant again become secondary (Jameson 2008: 552).

This in turn leads us to the third aim of my dissertation, namely to try to ascertain whether there is something like a 'trend' or 'motor' in literary theory when it comes to the periodization of various literary currents, and if yes, how does the inner self-fashioning mechanism of literary trends work?

In order to answer this question, we need to consider not only Jameson's, but also Raymond William's theory of dominant, residual and emergent elements, which mutually support and complete each other. Williams claims in his book "*Marxism and Literature*" (1977) that cultural theory is characterized by a continuous negotiation between three different elements: the dominant, the residual[6] and the emergent. Williams maintains the view that 'residual' elements play a very important role in literary production. Based on the Gramscian interplay between dominance and subordination, Williams, like Jameson, supports the impossibility of a clear-cut radical break between literary currents:

A residual cultural element is usually at some distance from the effective dominant culture, but some part of it, some version of it will in most cases have had to be incorporated if the dominant culture is to make sense in these areas […] It is in the incorporation of the actively residual – by reinterpretation, dilution, projection, discriminating inclusion and exclusion – that the work of the selective tradition is especially evident. This is very notable in the case of versions of the 'literary tradition' passing through selective versions of the character of literature to connecting and incorporated definitions of what literature is now and should be (Williams 1977: 123).

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[6] Williams makes a clear distinction between what he calls 'archaic' and 'residual': "I would call the 'archaic' that which is wholly recognized as an element of the past, to be observed, to be examined, or even on occasion to be consciously 'revived' […] What I mean by 'residual' is very different. The residual, by definition, has been effectively formed in the past, but is still active in the cultural process, not only and not often at all as an element of the past, but as an effective element of the present" (Williams 1977: 122). William's *residual* element comes closest to Jameson's view of the *subordinate*.

Terry Eagleton also supports the views of his Marxist colleagues mentioned above, claiming that "just as for Marxist economic theory each economic formation tends to contain traces of older, superseded modes of production, so traces of older literary forms survive within new ones" (Eagleton 1976: 26). Applying this view to Marxist working-class fiction and postcolonial fictions of migration, which are, not incidentally, two consecutive literary trends, and thus chronologically linked to each other (put simply, the proposition is that postcolonialism replaced Marxism), two further questions arise: firstly, what are the subordinate Marxist-influenced elements which have become dominant within postcolonialism and secondly, were these subordinate or residual elements in postcolonial thought dominant within Marxist literary theory? What is more, what is the inner self-fashioning mechanism of literary trends and according to which principles does it work?

The German thinker Ulrich Schulz-Buschhaus perceives the occurring shifts in literary criticism as a matter of fashion or trend of specific literary epochs. He discusses the difference between innovation (which are renewals of the present dominant theory generally perceived as productive) and fashion (which are also renewal attempts but perceived as being less productive). Schulz-Buschhaus finds it likely that the epoch thresholds between literary trends are linked to certain trends (or fashions) within literary criticism itself: "usually, certain questions are seen as prestigious, as long as they […] promise innovations. And their reputation is dwindling when they exhausted themselves after intense exploration, so that the increasingly bored public will perceive as fashionable that which it previously had welcomed as innovation" (Schulz-Buschhaus 1994: 447, translation is mine).[7] Turning back to the initial question of what makes an older idea relevant again, could it be that after span of more than four decades, literary criticism simply got bored of Marxist theory and reoriented itself toward postcolonialism? Could the shift from class to identity represent the transition from an exhausted fashion to innovation, and could this shift be completely detached from the sociopolitical realities of the 1990s?

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[7] In the original: "Normalerweise genießen gewisse Fragen Prestige, solange sie […] Innovationen verheißen. Und es geht mit ihrer Reputation zu Ende, wenn sie sich nach intensiver Thematisierung erschöpft haben, so daß dem allmählich gelangweilten Publikum als Mode erscheint, was es vormals als Innovation begrüßte" (Schulz-Buschhaus 1994: 447).

In my opinion, the answer to this question cannot be simply a matter of fashion without a certain underlying direction-giving phenomenon. Even though Schulz-Buschhaus is right to attribute a certain influence to specific fashions or trends within literary criticism, a trend or fashion alone cannot fully explain the interplay between two literary movements. The underlying phenomenon which is of interest in this case is in my opinion the sociopolitical upheavals experienced during the 90s in Europe. Essential in this case is the concept of class and its repercussion on the emerging literary movement called postcolonialism.

Class, as previously mentioned, has largely been replaced today with aspects of identity, based on the trinity of *race*, *gender* and *culture*. Identity is nowadays an intensely discussed topic by many Western cultural theorists, the majority of which subscribe to the view that virtually all Western European countries have become multicultural and ethnically diverse societies. The 'established' European left, starting from the *New Labour* Party in Great Britain and spanning to Germany's *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (SPD), France's *Parti Socialiste*, seconded by the European Greens, cemented the view of "respecting", "encouraging" and "celebrating" the ethnic, religious and political hybridity of multicultural society, becoming in effect what Paul E. Gottfried termed "the postcommunist left" (Gottfried 2002: 29). Except for a few Marxist theorists (e.g. Eagleton or Žižek), very few contemporary theorists are still concerned with class today (see Chapter 3.4). On the other hand, many postcolonial theorists, such as Gayatri C. Spivak, claimed recently that they no longer have a postcolonial perspective at all, stating that postcolonialism is "the day before yesterday" (in Loomba 2013: 250). Thus, it would seem, we are presently on the threshold of postcolonialism itself becoming obsolete and irrelevant.

Even so, the postcolonial concept of hybridity seems to have been used incongruously during the heyday of literary postcolonial thought. If we understand economic exploitation as an issue of class conflict, it then becomes apparent that the previously dominant, later subordinate, aspect of *class* has been effectively removed from the equation and replaced with the constituent of *identity*. Although postcolonial thinkers declared to be interested in triad of race, gender and class, one cannot overlook the fact that when we

say 'hybridity' or 'diversity' today, we do not mean that the society in question is made up of rich or poor people, working-class individuals and bosses, but we perceive first and foremost a *racially* diverse and *culturally* heterogenous society. It is again Eagleton who boldly claims in his article "*Goodbye to Enlightenment*", that in postcolonial thought, "one is allowed to talk about cultural differences, but not – or not much – about economic exploitation" (Eagleton, *The Guardian*, 1994).Yet, within the postcolonial triad of race, gender and class, class seems to have been largely ignored to the detriment of race.

It was American scholar Walter Benn Michaels, who, in his provocative book "*The Trouble with Diversity*" (2006), drew the attention to the remarkable point that, despite the fact that the concept of race has been dismissed by most scientists (e.g. genetics invalidates the idea different races between humans) in our day and age, we nevertheless rely more now than ever on the very concept of race to celebrate diversity and embrace hybridity as a way to overcome racism. The three main claims of Michaels' book are as follows: firstly, that the current take on cultural diversity, initially declared to be the rejection of racism and biological essentialism, actually "grew out of and perpetuates the very concepts it congratulates itself on having escaped" (Michaels 2006: 7). Secondly, that the endurance of the concept of race in present-day U.S. is bolstered by the diversity campaign itself, and thirdly, that "shifting our focus from cultural diversity to economic equality" would massively alter the terrain of American intellectual life (ibid.).

Michael's highly stimulating argument is that the current concept of 'diversity' should not revolve around the idea of (racial) identity, but that of (class) equality. In itself, this would mean a reorientation of the left from race back to class, and thus, a reversal on a theoretical level to the old Marxist alienation theories so popular in the 1950s. Michaels claims that race has begun to be treated as culture, not biology. He thus correctly remarks that to a certain extent, "culture[8] is now being used as a virtual synonym for *racial identity* […] and to some extent it's also being used as a replacement for racial identity" (ibid.:

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[8] Michaels terms this "anthropological notion of culture", which was invented precisely to signal that what is meant are not the biological differences between humans, but that those differences were "cultural *instead* of biological. So when we talk about black or white or Jewish or Native American culture, we're talking about differences in what people do and believe, not about differences in blood" (Michaels 2006: 40-41, emphasis in the original).

40, emphasis in the original). His credo can be summed up in the sentence "white is not better than black, but rich is definitely better than poor" (ibid.: 10). In other words, the USA is not better off if the upper-classes of American society now emphasize their diversity by also having rich African Americans, Asian Americans or Latino families, while it actually does nothing but solidifying the ever-growing social inequality between the upper and the working-class, whether they are black, white, or Latinos. The same applies not only to the U.S., but also Western Europe and all countries which have a similar economic system everywhere on the planet.

Michaels' courageous thesis not only challenges the current take on identity but also reverts to the old(er) concept of class when analyzing one of the core feature of postcolonialism:

> *We love race – we love identity – because we don't love class*. We love thinking that the differences that divide us are not the differences between those of us who have money and those who don't but are instead the differences between those of us who are black and those who are white or Latino or whatever. A world where some of us don't have enough money is a world where the differences between us present a problem: the need to get rid of inequality or to justify it. A world where some of us are black and some of us are white – or biracial or Native American or transgendered – is a world where the differences between us present a solution: appreciating our diversity (Michaels 2006: 6-7, emphasis is mine).

Given the present-day state of affairs, the following question then arises: is the disappearance of the concept of class from the current theoretical discourse, especially on the left political spectrum, connected with the advent of the postcolonial concepts of race/identity at all? There are strong correlations to support this view, according to thinkers such as Paul E. Gottfried, who links the waning of the concept of class to the dwindling syndicalism in the U.S. and Western Europe. He also writes that "syndicalist politics" of the working-class "stood for certain unshakably anchored positions: drastic income redistribution, the nationalization of heavy industries and more and bigger social programs aimed at the working class" (Gottfried 2002: 29). Likewise, the traditional working-class did not promote "open borders, free trade, sexual self-expresiveness, and the submergence of the dominant Western culture into the flux of incoming ethnic minorities" (ibid.: 30). Instead, the working-class socialists "generally opposed immigration, favored protectionism, and

had no special affinity for multicultural politics" (ibid.). Gottfried thus claims that the present-day leftist obsession with identity is due to the fact that the socialist working-class, symbolized by the syndicalist movement, was replaced with mainly activist intellectuals whose main focus is identity and the multicultural society.

In addition, if race has indeed replaced class, does this replacement have anything to do with the disappearance of working-class fiction (and linked with it, Marxist literary theory as a whole) and the surge of postcolonialism as the main focus of cultural theorists during the 1990s and 2000s? According to Michael's views, the answer is yes: the disappearance of class is due to the change which occurred during the 1990s and which shifted the focus from class to the postcolonial focus on race. The current fascination with race and identity[9] has become the preferred topic of cultural theorists to address the wrongs of the multi- and postracial society, while they are ignoring the fact that essentially the main issue remains even in our present day that of class and not identity:

> The least important thing about us – our identity – is the thing we have become most committed to talking about, and this commitment is, especially from the standpoint of left politics, a profound mistake. What it means is that the political left – increasingly committed to the celebration of diversity and the redress of historical grievance – has converted itself into the accomplice rather than the opponent of the right […] The left today obsessively interests itself in issues that have nothing to do with economic inequality (Michaels 2006: 19).

In the following chapters, my dissertation tries to offer possible explanations for the changes not only within working-class fiction, but also attempts to ascertain which are the underlying cultural phenomena for the theoretical shifts that have occurred in the last two decades and their implications for the rise and demise of contemporary literary movements. The paper consists of a total of 7 chapters. Chapters 2 and 3 make up the theoretical framework of the dissertation; chapter 2 deals essentially with the etymological implications of the term alienation and an overview of alienation theories in philosophy, while

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[9] Not coincidentally, the year 2015 has been named by *The New York Times* "the year in which we obsessed over identity". Wesley Morris' article bearing the same title is indicative of the privileged position identity still occupies cultural discourses of the present day.

chapter 3 offers an outline of alienation in fiction, relying especially on literary diction-
aries and handbooks, with a special focus on British working-class fiction from the 50s
to the 90s. The last part of chapter 3 (subchapter 3.4.2) focuses on the relationship be-
tween the concepts of alienation and hybridity. The following chapters 4, 5 and 6 are case
study analyses, in which chapter 4 focuses on the Angry Young Men Movement during
1950s Britain, chapter 5 looks at the Celtic Fringe of the 1990s, while chapter 6 tries to
establish phenomena of alienation in archetypal postcolonial novels and fictions of mi-
gration. The last chapter, number 7, enumerates the conclusions of the present study.

2. Alienation: Definition, Concept and Meanings

Various attempts have been made throughout history by philosophers, theologians, sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists and last but not least, literary critics, to define the phenomena commonly described as alienation. However, reaching a general consensus has proven to be a Sisyphean endeavour, since this concept is extremely difficult to define in such a manner that one single definition can be accepted by so many scholars, thinkers and adherents to so numerous different disciplines, scientific fields and schools of thought.

Although this research focuses essentially on the concepts of alienation in post-World War 2 British literature, evading the term's history is not possible, if we are to understand its various meanings, shades and nuances as well as its trans-disciplinary potential. The purpose of the present chapter is threefold: firstly, to offer the reader a diachronic overview of the multiple approaches to alienation, the research conducted to the present day and the conclusions drawn by important thinkers without whom an exhaustive comprehension of this phenomenon seems impossible. Secondly, to establish a newer definition of alienation which could function as an effective concept in literary analyses. Finally, yet most importantly, the transformations the concept of alienation has undergone throughout time will be highlighted and discussed.

2.1. Etymological Background and Semantics

Given its various translations in both English and German, one needs to approach the differences and similarities of the existing terms based on the etymology of the term alienation. In the following subchapter, the term's etymology and linguistic development will be discussed, from its Greek and Latin origins to the German "*Entfremdung*" and its English translation, namely "*alienation*".

The earliest occurrences of the term 'alienation' are to be found in Greek (απ)αλλοτιοῦυ from ἀλλότριος (in English "*foreign*") in Aristotle's *Ars Rhetorica* and in the Latin term of *(ab)alienatio* (Alt 1982: 11). The earliest original meaning of alienation can be traced back to the 5th-century B.C. in Greek and 3rd-century B.C. in Latin. The term *(ab)alienatio* has permeated through classic Latin virtually all Romance languages (Italian, French, Spanish) and English, while in German it has been taken over *ad litteram* as a neologism. In the German-speaking areas of ancient Europe, the term *Entfremdung* develops as early as Old High German as an equivalent for *alienatio* and is kept in Middle High German (*enfremeden*) and Early New High German with the same meanings as its Latin counterpart (ibid.: 13).

Starting chronologically, one can identify three main meanings of "*alienation*" in Latin. Firstly, as a legal term, usually denoting the transfer of ownership, e.g. "to make something another's, to take away, to remove" (Murray 1978: 219), stemming from the Latin *alienatio*, *alienare*. Secondly, there is the additional meaning as a mental disorder (Latin: *alienatio mentis*, synonymous *with dementia, insania*), which denotes insanity, while the last and third possible meaning is that of interpersonal estrangement, it being synonymous with *disiunctio*, *aversatio*, i.e. "to cause a warm relationship with another to cool; to cause a separation to occur, to make oneself disliked" (ibid.).

The *Deutsches Wörterbuch von Jacob Grimm und Wilhelm Grimm* similarly mentions *Entfremdung* (as a translation from the Latin *abalienare*, MhG *enfremeden*) as a legal term, and interestingly enough, it also bears the connotation of theft, e.g. "to make strange, to rob, to take, to get rid of something" (Grimm 1999: 490-523, translation is mine)[10]. According to Walter Kaufmann and Richard Schacht, the German term "*Entfremdung*" disappears altogether from German dictionaries by the end of the nineteenth-century, only to reappear in very recent ones, presently referring to the third meaning of alienation mentioned above, i.e. that of interpersonal estrangement (cf. Schacht 1970: 5).

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[10] In the original: "*fremd machen, berauben, nehmen, entledigen*" (Grimm 1999: 490-523).

Ernst Alt underlines that the philosophical term of *alienation* can be traced prior to Hegel's use of the term, namely in the writing of the Social Contract[11] thinkers, H. Grotius, T. Hobbes and J. J. Rousseau (cf. Alt 1980: 20-21). Schacht finds similar evidence even in the case of other Social Contract thinkers, such as for instance John Locke and the subsequent assimilation of the term by Hegel (cf. Schacht 1970: 13).

As far as its first meaning is concerned (i.e. the legal transfer of ownership), another term was more customary: "*Entäußerung* and *entäußern*. […] can be traced to the 17th century" (Alt 1980: 17, translation is mine). Thus, the terms *Entäußerung* and *entäußern* are primarily present in the works of Social Contract Theorists, such as Thomas Hobbes, who uses "not the English alienation or to alienate, but expressions such as to divest oneself or to renounce, that is, a terminology similar to the German *entäußern* and *Entäußerung*[12] (ibid.: 20, translation is mine). Alt agrees with Walter Kaufmann that "just as Rousseau uses the terms *renonciation* and *aliénation* as equivalents, so does Hegel use in his '*Phenomenology*' *Entäußerung* and *Entfremdung* as equivalent terms (ibid.: 21, emphasis and translation is mine).[13] Thus, both German notions of *Entäußerung* / *entäußern* and *Entfremdung* / *entfremden* have been generally understood and translated into English (for Hegel as well as Marx) as *alienation*, and *to alienate*, respectively.

With regard to the third and more recent meaning of alienation as interpersonal estrangement, it is perhaps worth discerning that the original term has undergone a serious and significant semantic mutation: the primarily legal meaning of the term and its subsequent, medical meaning disappeared from linguistic usage in the 18th and 19th-centuries, respectively. Thus, instead of being defined primarily as a legal term, the meaning of the

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[11] The common point of view of the Social Contract Theorists that originated in European Enlightenment is the problem of sovereign authority of the state versus the individual and the relinquishment or transfer of some of man's individual rights to the "community", thus ensuring a better functioning of society as a whole. Grotius and Locke are ardent supporters of such an undertaking, while Hobbes and most importantly, Rousseau, take a more discriminating position.

[12] In the original: "In seinem für die Entwicklung der Theorie des Gesellschaftsvertrags bedeutendsten Werkm dem „Leviathan" (1651), benutzt Hobbes allerdings nicht das englische alienation bzw. to alienate, sondern die Ausdrücke to divest oneself bzw. to renounce, also eine dem deutschen entäußern und Entäußerung ähnliche Terminologie" (Alt 1982: 20).

[13] In the original: "Wie Rousseau die Ausdrücke *renonciation* and *aliénation* äquivalent gebraucht, so gebraucht auch Hegel in seiner '*Phänomenologie*' *Entäußerung* und *Entfremdung* als äquivalente Termini" (Alt 1982: 21).

term is placed on an interpersonal level, its more modern focus now being the relationship or bonds between two or more human beings. In other words, "there is little connection between the traditional uses [of alienation] and its more recent special uses" (Kaufmann 1970: LXI).

The philosophical disputes regarding the concept of alienation play a paramount role in understanding the development of the theory of alienation. The term *Entfremdung* first appears as a concept in philosophy at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th-century, e.g. in the works of Wilhelm von Humboldt and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, which leads us from the semantics to the philosophical characteristics of alienation. Numerous important philosophers have already discussed the concept, therefore, it is sufficient to focus on a few aspects that are particularly relevant for the general argument of my paper. The philosophers who are especially relevant when it comes to the topic of alienation are Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Karl Marx and Erich Fromm, an important philosophical "trinity" whose works are based upon or revolve around the concept of alienation.

2.2. Philosophical Approaches

Before discussing the literary representations of alienation, we must gain a brief overview regarding this concept in philosophy. According to Ernst Alt, the term *Entfremdung* has been introduced to modern philosophy by Hegel in his seminal work *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, first published in 1807 (cf. Alt 1982: 19). Although Hegel seems to have adopted the term from the Social Contract Theorists (cf. Schacht 1970: 13) and in spite of Hegel's ample use of the term, the notion of *Entfremdung*/*Entäußerung* has been mostly ignored by scholars worldwide, until Marx started using it again in his work "*Öko-nomisch-philosophische Manuskripte*" (1844) and *"Das Kommunistische Manifest"* (1848). The terms of *Entfremdung* and *Entäußerung* appear to have gained entrance into philosophical dictionaries only during the 1960s (cf. Kaufmann 1970: XVI).

The following subchapters will give a succinct overview of alienation-based theories within the field of philosophy, focusing on the views of Rousseau, Hegel, Marx and Fromm. This will provide a general idea of the 'mutations' the concept of alienation has suffered in philosophical debates over the last century, delineating each thinker's perspective and definition of alienation.

2.2.1. Jean-Jacques Rousseau: A Philosophical Precursor of Alienation Theories

Jean Jacques Rousseau is a francophone thinker who was born in Geneva in the year 1712 and who became a main representative of the so-called Social Contract Theorists. Although J. J. Rousseau did not explicitly formulate a sociological or philosophical theory of alienation, one cannot ignore his preoccupation with the description of man afflicted by various phenomena of alienation within human society. Rousseau's theory of the Social Contract secularizes and humanizes the religious notion of man's separation from God. Rousseau was the first major philosopher to "transliterate the explanation of Man's

loneliness and despair to his relationship with Nature, rather than with God" (Johnson 1973: 13). His conception shifted from a religious alienation between man and God towards a separation of man from his innate goodness through living in a denaturalizing social milieu.

The phenomenon of alienation in Rousseau is mainly based on a primary antinomy between nature and society, which is the result of developments within the progress of history, i.e. natural catastrophes and exceptional natural occurrences. Originally, Rousseau states, man was living in harmony with himself, his fellow human beings and with nature. Natural Man, was living in harmony precisely because of his freedom. Natural Man, or "l'homme sauvage" (Rousseau 1964: 135), lives in a perfect state of nature, which is defined by Rousseau in complete antithesis to the civil state and Social Man, "l'homme civilisé" (ibid.).

For Rousseau, the essential nature and self of man lies with Natural Man, who is characterized, as Rousseau writes in his "*Discours sur l'origine et les fondemens de l'inégalité parmi les hommes*" (1754), by isolation and general unrelatedness; he lives solitary, is unsocial, lacks the ability of speech. Natural Man has no abstract rationality, no memory and no ability to plan or forecast: "His imagination paints no pictures; his heart asks for nothing […] His projects […] last only till the end of the day"[14] (Rousseau 1964: 144, translation is mine). Natural man lives only in the present and for his immediate needs. There is also no urge for him to socialise, no tendency to mingle or communicate with other humans. Natural Man comes into contact with other humans rather accidentally, as a result of natural disasters or in order to procreate. He is endowed, however, with two main basic needs: "self-love" ("*amour de soi-même*") (Rousseau 1964: 156) which serves as a way to ensure the physical self-preservation of man and "natural compassion" ("*pitié naturel*") (ibid.: 155) which serves the preservation of and reproduction of the species. This state of the Natural Man presupposes that there is no further need for him to try and evolve into a higher stage: he does not have tools, he generally does not work and the amount which he is forced to work in order to survive does not coerce him into

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[14] In the original: "Son imagination ne lui peint rien; son coeur ne lui demande rien […] ses projets bornés […] s´éntendent à peine jusqu´à la fin de la journée" (Rousseau 1964: 144).

socialization: "thus he needs not transform nature to satisfy his needs which would ne-cessitate labour, the production of tools and cooperation with others. [...] Natural Man is materially self-sufficient and autarkic"[15] (Alt 1982: 87, translation is mine).

In this natural state, man is self-sufficient and avoids the company of fellow humans. Thus, there is nothing that could motivate him to hurt, suppress or exploit his fellow human beings. His natural state is in fact a state of freedom – Natural Man lives in a world which lacks personal or political power relationships between humans and since his needs never cross the level of physicality, he is also psychologically free: he lives for himself alone and is independent of other people's expectations. According to Forschner, this lack of dependence, this sovereignty is the state of freedom which natural man enjoys, the very aspect which separates man from animals (cf. Forschner 1977: 30). In this respect, Rousseau breaks with the entire philosophical tradition which states that man is a rational animal; instead, he claims that freedom (in the sense of lack of dependence, "*égalité naturelle*") is what sets man apart from all other animals, as it is the one feature which animals lack. Natural Man lives in perfect harmony with nature, i.e. his surrounding environment and his own nature, his true self. There is no separation between that what he is and that what he feels or wishes he could be, no unbelonging and no feeling of homelessness.

Yet if freedom is the natural state of man, why does Rousseau state in his "*Contrat Social ou principes du droit politique*" (1762) that "man is born free everywhere, yet everywhere man is in chains"[16] (Rousseau 1964: 351, translation is mine)? The answer lies with the process of socialization of man, which Rousseau perceives to be contingent and external, the result of Natural Man's interaction with other humans. Thus, as a tangent of man's socialization, the new attributes which arise are the development of language, rationality, civilization, culture, law, customs and the state. Here we are confronted with the idea of the contingency of human development, which will be later picked up by Existentialism, and most importantly, the idea of externality: not only is human development contingent,

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[15] In the original:"So braucht er zur Befriedigung seiner Bedürfnisse die Natur nicht zu transformieren [...] was Arbeit, Herstellung von Werkzeugen und Kooperation mit anderen erfordern würde. Der Naturmensch ist somit in materieller Hinsicht selbstgenügsam und autark" (Alt 1982: 87).
[16] In the original: "L'homme est né libre, et patrout il est dans le fers" (Rousseau 1964: 351).

but it acts upon man as an exterior force, it forces man to undergo changes which, in effect, lead him away and alienate him from his 'true' self-sufficient nature. This loss of self-sufficiency means in effect that Natural Man is forced to combine his efforts with his fellow humans, develop utensils and tools, engage in systematic work, so that man can survive in his changed environment. This, in turn, badly affects his autarchy, which means that his previous isolated life is no longer possible. Natural Man is thus forced to become a member of human society, with a system of organized labour.

This is the stage where man witnesses the appearance of new, non-physical needs of an affective nature, which are in turn the result of the process of socialization. Rousseau identifies three main stages of historical development of man: the natural stage, the collective stage and the societal stage, which correspond, according to Fetscher, to three historical types of humans: the gatherer, the herder and the peasant (cf. Fetscher 1968: 18). The collective stage is, according to Rousseau, characterized by the emergence of long-term relationships between humans, who are semi-nomadic, small families practising hunting and cattle-rearing, keeping their autarchy. This is a stage in which man still retains his wholeness: this stage knows no division of labour, no private property and generally functions as a state of equilibrium between nature and society: it is "the happiest and most sustainable epoch"[17] (Rousseau 1964: 171, translation is mine).

However, humans also commence to compare themselves to other humans, and so a new need arises: to be respected by other members of the group, which for Rousseau signifies the end of the aforementioned happy epoch: "Whoever sang or danced best, whoever was the handsomest, the strongest, the most dexterous, or the most eloquent, came to be of most consideration: and this was the first step towards inequality"[18] (Rousseau 1964: 169, translation is mine). Thus, Natural Man has lost not only his autarky, but also his mental

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[17] In the original: "Ainsi quoique les hommes fussent devenus moins endurans, et que la pitié naturelle eût déjà souffert quelque alteration, ce période de developpement des facultés humaines, tenant une juste milieu entre l'indolence de l'état primitif et la pétulante activité de nôtre amour proper, dut être l´époque la plus hereuse, et la plus durable" (Rousseau 1964: 171).
[18] In the original: "Celui qui chantoit ou dansoit le mieux; le plus beau, le plus fort, le plus adroit ou le plus eloquent devint le plus consideré, et ce fut là premier pas vers l'inégalité" (Rousseau 1964: 169).

self-sufficiency, since he now seeks appreciation ("*consideration*") through his fellow humans.

The equilibrium is eventually shattered upon entering the next phase, the societal stage, with its introduction of farming. In this stage, people start depending on each other and lose their autarchy completely; rivalry and competition ensues between humans and the formation of Master-Slave relationships; new needs emerge, such as not only keeping one's possessions, but also coveting or stealing those of others; the concept of private property is born and it is used by other men as an instrument of oppression. Man engenders social differences based on the accumulation of wealth. Mentally, the morphing of man's "*amour de soi-même*" into selfishness also occurs at this stage, while the feeling of compassion is slowly disappearing. The process of socialization is seen by Rousseau as an utterly degenerative process: the original kindness in the nature of man has been transformed into something evil. The process of socialization is thus, at least indirectly, a process of alienation from the "true nature" of humans.

Thus, man is alienated not only by physical separation from his natural environment (i.e. nature), but also psychologically: there arise several newly formed needs as opposed to the strictly physical needs of Natural Man. These psychological needs make man more dependent on other humans than on material needs, thus man becomes doubly dependent: he/she suffers from a mental and material dependency. The latter is characterized by man's desire to gain respect from his peers and social standing: "each one began to consider the rest, and to wish to be considered in turn; and thus a value came to be attached to public esteem" (ibid., translation is mine)[19]. By engaging in this process, man loses his natural sense of self, which is replaced with the need to be approved of by other members of society. The need for appreciation is exterior and thus, man becomes dependent on the approval of his fellow man.

As in the case of the material level, man is also estranged affectively, since affect behaves in society according to the material rules of societal barter: Humans only receive approval

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[19] In the original: "Chacun commença à regarder les autres et à vouloir être regardé soi-même, et l'estime publique eut un prix" (ibid.).

if they correspond to society's expectations, demands and imposed norms of society. If individuals obey the societal pressure, they will find others who will approve of their actions. If man does not submit to the rules of society, fellow humans will disapprove of him and ostracize him, thus alienating him from society.

Rousseau thinks that the alienation of man began with his transgression from the state of nature to the state of organized society. The process of socialization inevitably led to the material and psychological alienation of man from his fellow men and his true self-sufficient self, since man was burdened with artificial needs to gain societal standing from his peers by conforming to the rules of society. From an absolute existence, man has moved to leading a relative existence. Man has lost his identity with nature and cannot identify with society; he is thus negating his true nature and his self within society. Alienation for Rousseau in social man is pervasive, it engulfs the poor and the rich, the master and the slave; alienation is what characterizes the individual within society on the one hand, and society as a whole, on the other.

Rousseau's perception of alienation can be seen as the basis for his theory of mankind's development through history. His thoughts on phenomena of alienation make him a precursor of alienation theories, which were later developed by other important philosophers who came under Rousseau's influence. Although not a fully developed concept in Rousseau, alienation plays a crucial role in his writings and his entire philosophy. The ensuing revival of the alienation theories within the philosophical discourse occurs due to G. W. F. Hegel's writings, which will in turn, influence many 19th and 20th-century thinkers, such as Karl Marx and Erich Fromm.

2.2.2. Hegel's Concept of Alienation

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel was a prominent philosopher and representative of German Idealism, born in Stuttgart in 1770. Alienation is discussed by Hegel in his works, where he describes it (using both *Entäußerung* or *Entfremdung* as terms for alienation) as

"*unhappy consciousness*" (German: "*unglückliches Bewusstsein*") (Hegel 2003: 112-131) in which man is doomed to suffer from feelings of frustration and despair, unless man succeeds to re-unite with nature and society in order to abrogate his (alienated) state of being. According to Hegel, unhappy consciousness is "the Alienated Soul which is the consciousness of self as a divided nature, a doubled and merely contradictory being" (Hegel 2003: 119)[20]. Hegel also claims that the world man inhabits is a world that man himself created. Social, political and cultural institutions constitute what Hegel terms social substance; it also subsumes the world of human interactions and the human spirit. In order to be a "whole" person, one must merge one's individual self with the social substance; failure to do so results in separation from the social substance, a separation which results in the condition known as alienation.

As Sean Sears puts it, Hegelian alienation is the process by which the self "doubles' itself, externalises itself, and then confronts its own other being as something separate, distinct and opposed to it" (Sayers 2011: 3). The novelty of Hegel's philosophy lies in his claim that alienation of the self can be overcome by a second type of alienation through the process of *Bildung*. According to Schacht, Hegel uses alienation in two different ways: the first type of alienation (alienation 1) consisting of two characteristics: a) a separation or a discordant relation between individual and social substance and b) self-alienation, i.e. one's actual condition vs. essential nature.[21] The first type of alienation (alienation 1) can be overcome, according to Schacht, through precisely alienation 2, i.e. "a surrender or sacrifice of particularity and willfulness, in connection with the overcoming of alienation 1 and the reattainment of unity" (Schacht 1970: 35). The main difference bet-ween these two types of alienation is that alienation1 is non-deliberate, whilst the latter is intentional: "a conscious relinquishment or surrender with the intention of securing a desired end" (ibid.), which is the reattainment of unity with the social substance.

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[20] In the original: "Die Verdoppelung des Selbstbewußtseins in sich selbst, welche im Begriffe des Geistes wesentlich ist, ist hiermit vorhanden, aber noch nicht ihre Einheit und das unglückliche Bewußtsein ist das Bewußtsein seiner als des gedoppelten, nur widersprechenden Wesens" (Hegel 1952: 158).

[21] Similarly to Rousseau, Hegel conceives man's actual condition as being alienated, living in an artificial society which man himself has built. Opposed to this estranged condition of man, Hegel states that the essential nature of man is to live in harmony with nature and re-attain his sense of wholeness and unity.

Alienation1 can be understood as *separation* due to a loss of unity with the social substance. As Schacht again points out, consciousness of oneself as a distinct individual does not inevitably emerge in the course of one's life. People identify themselves primarily with the roles they occupy and the groups in which they live, and this identification is unconscious and not deliberate, but immediate and unreflective. The relation of individuals to the social substance is complete and immediate unity. This state of complete and immediate unity can easily shatter when conflicts do arise. When this happens, man retracts himself into himself, "ceases to identify with the substance, and comes instead to limit his self-identification to his own particular person and characteristics" (Schacht 1970: 38).

This, however, is a desirable development for Hegel, as these conflicts ensure the emergence of a distinct individuality and independent existence, which is necessary in order to realise man's nature fully. Having lost his/her unity with his/her "essential being", the individual's relation to the social substance is discordant. Absorbed in new distinctness, the individual perceives the social substance as something completely "other"; it is suddenly, something external and opposed to him/her. Rotenstreich argues that, for Hegel, this alienation is transitional but necessary, so that the individual may attain a consciousness of an integral self: "in itself, alienation is a transitional state, the ultimate state of being one of return, or alienation from alienation" (Rotenstreich 1963: 6). The process is desirable, because the self is for Hegel historical, and thus subjected to progress. With the break-up of the ancient Greek polis, humanity goes through a process of fragmentation, refashioning and alienation, yet this also has positive effects: "in and through this process [i.e. alienation], individuality, subjectivity and freedom grow and develop. Finally, in the modern liberal state as it emerges after the French Revolution, free and self-conscious individuals at last find reconciliation with the natural and social world" (Sayers 2011: 4). For Hegel, although alienation is partially a painful process, it also has positive features, playing an important role in mankind's progress in its historical development through the ages.

With regard to the second type of alienation1, namely self-alienation, Hegel claims that man is essentially "spirit" and that universality is essential to anything that is fundamentally spiritual. If the individual loses that universality, he/she alienates himself/herself from his/her inner self and enters a state of disharmony with himself/herself. In other words, Hegel assumes that loss of universality equals loss of man's essence and the result is self-alienation. According to Schacht, the term self-alienation is used by Hegel in two different ways, firstly "to refer to a separation or disparity between the actual condition and essential nature, resulting from the loss (rather than absence of) some element of the latter in the life on an individual" (Schacht 1970: 42). Secondly, alienation refers to a disparity between the individual and the social substance, as "creation of the spirit and its objectification" (ibid.: 43). According to Schacht, this means that, since substance for Hegel is spirit in objectified form, when the substance is alienated from an individual, it is precisely objectified spirit which is alienated from him. Schacht also emphasizes the fact that for Hegel, there is a fundamental identity between the spirit which animates the individual and the spirit which has objectified itself in the social substance – the latter is for Hegel the individual's "true self", resulting in the conclusion that when social substance is alienated from an individual, it is precisely his "true self" which is alienated from him.

Alienation2 in Hegel can thus be understood in contrast to alienation1 as *surrender*: having emerged from its immediate unity with the substance, man's own consciousness can again "make itself one with the substance only through alienation of its self" (ibid.: 46). In other words, "the individual for whom the substance is alienated can overcome this alienation (as separation, i.e. alienation1) and self-alienation (i.e. self-alienation a) only through alienation2 or surrender of his particular self (i.e. self-alienation b)" (ibid.: 42-46).

Put more simply, Hegel's concept of alienation may be understood as a positive phenomenon which can be overcome by a second type of alienation. When self-consciousness comes to the realisation that consciousness is its own substance, it proceeds to take pos-

session of the substance. The process by which the individual does this is that of *Bildung*,[22] through which the individual (re)assimilates the content of society and culture, simultaneously appropriating it and at the same time becoming itself part of it. As Döring puts it, "however, consciousness also stabilizes itself on each level of *Bildung*, since it takes part in it through its own alienation, recognizing itself in each appropriated level of consciousness or world-view" (Döring 1986: 502, translation is mine)[23]. The individual eliminates the gulf that has separated himself/herself from the social substance, the alienation of the social substance is overcome and he/she again retains universality and a "happy consciousness". The individual can overcome his/her alienation from his/her social substance and thus achieve unity with it only through "surrendering his particular self, by sacrificing his particular interests and desires to the extent necessary. This is precisely alienation2" (Schacht 1970: 50).

Hegel's thoughts on alienation also influenced other thinkers and philosophers. One of the thinkers drawing on Hegel's views on alienation is none other than Karl Marx, whose views on the matter played an important role in the post-war reality in Western Europe and the world.

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[22] Hegel's theory of "*Bildung*" is discussed at length in many philosophical treaties and essays, of which perhaps Jürgen Eckardt Pleine's work "*Hegels Theorie der Bildung*" is the most focused on the initial Hegelian concept. Pleine's first volume is published in 1983, the second in 1986.

[23] In the original: "Das Bewußtsein stabilisiert sich aber auch auf jener Bildungsstufe, weil es durch seine Entfremdung an dieser partizipiert, indem es sich in die jeweils anerkannte Bewußtseinsstufe bzw. Weltanschauung hineinbildet" (Döring 1986: 502).

2.2.3. Marx's Concept of Alienation

Karl Marx was a German philosopher born in Trier in the year 1818 who became a revolutionary social theorist and the most notorious protagonist of the worker's movement in Western Europe. Marx eventually created an entire school of thought that came to be known as "Marxism", which dealt primarily with the "class struggle" in any society functioning according to capitalist principles and the free market. Much of Marx's ideas of alienation seem to have been influenced by Hegel's views on the same topic. According to Mark Poster, the young Karl Marx, "with his doctorate in philosophy from Berlin University, was a member of a Hegelian philosophical club. Traces of Marx's Hegelianism appeared most notably in two of his studies from the 1840s, both devoted to a critique of Hegel" (Poster 1975: 32-33). Walter Kaufmann claims that, from a historical perspective, the concept of alienation has not received much attention from scholars until the publication of Karl Marx's early works, which altered the Hegelian concept of alienation. Kaufmann claims that alienation was rediscovered as a philosophical concept much later: "it was only during the 1960s that the term gained entrance into philosophical dictionaries" (Kaufmann 1970: XV). Thus, the alienation theories that became popular after the Second World War were essentially Marxist, yet based on Hegel's previous analysis of alienation.

There seems to be no doubt that the rediscovery of Marx's intellectual works has played an important role in the surge of popularity which theories of alienation have enjoyed in the immediate post World War 2 decades. Thus, Adam Schaff states that the renaissance of alienation theories in the postwar period is due to societal changes, which directly determine this phenomenon (i.e. alienation) (cf. Schaff 1980: 23-45). Equally prevalent is the opinion that Marx himself was under the influence of Hegel and effectively transformed the Hegelian views in a radical way. Starting from a desired condition of man which has positive implications in Hegel (i.e. the attainment of a superior stage of consciousness), Marx imbues the notion of alienation with utterly negative connotations. Marx's view is that alienation can occur between man and his products of labour only under the specific economic and social conditions associated with capitalism and free

market economy, thus transforming the Hegelian "notion of alienated labour from an eternal anthropological notion into a transitory historical notion" (Mandel 1973: 17).

In effect, Marx alters Hegel's views on alienation by claiming that the latter has overlooked the role played by "sensuous life" in man's life: humans are not only defined by their productive skills, but also through man's relation to his fellow man. Marx believes that a man's species life is labour, social life and sensuous life (the first two are also present in Hegel). According to Schacht, man's essential characteristics for Marx are firstly *individuality*, secondly *sociality* and thirdly *sensuousness*[24] (Schacht 1970: 74). Thus, man as an individual for Marx is considered to be unique, free and in harmony with his environment. Man should conceive labour not as a need to earn a wage, effectively selling his time and power to another man in exchange for a wage, but as "the satisfaction of a need rather than a mere means through which other needs can be satisfied" (ibid.: 79). Secondly, man is also a social being; humans are not only characterized by their productive activities, but also by their relationships with fellow men within human society. Last but not least, man is a sensuous being, endowed with feelings and subjective mindsets: "only through the objectively unfolded richness of man's essential being is the richness of subjective human sensibility (a musical ear, an eye for beauty of form – in short, senses capable of human gratification, senses affirming themselves as essential powers of man) either cultivated or brought into being" (Marx 1977: 103)[25].

With regard to labour, Marx claims that the working-classes are oppressed by the capitalist owners, who are in control of the means of production and are *de facto* the actual owners of the working man's wage labour. For Marx, the object produced is man's product of labour, and the object "assumes an *external* existence, […] it exists *outside him*, independently, as something alien to him. It means that the life which he has conferred on the object confronts him as something hostile and alien" (ibid.: 69, emphases in

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[24] What Marx has in mind when discussing the sensuousness of man, according to Schacht, is "the cultivation of the capacity for aesthetic appreciation" (Schacht 1970: 74).

[25] In the original: "Erst durch den gegenständlich entfalteten Reichtum des subjektiven menschlichen Wesens wird der Reichtum der subjektiven *menschlichen* Sinnlichkeit, wird ein musikalisches Ohr, ein Auge für die Schönheit der Form, kurz, werden erst menschliche Genüsse fähige *Sinne*, Sinne welche als *menschliche* Wesenskräfte sich bestätigen, teils erst ausgebildet, teils erst erzeugt" (Marx 1974: 191, emphases in the original).

the original)[26]. Labour, however, should be an end in itself, imbued with human significance and worth; it must also be free, voluntary and spontaneous. Unalienated work should be an activity through which man fulfils himself/herself and develops freely his/her spiritual and physical energies. The opposite of free labour, Marx defines estranged (or alienated) labour as follows:

> What, then, constitutes the alienation of labour? First, the fact that labour is external to the worker, i.e., it does not belong to his intrinsic nature; that in his work, therefore, he does not affirm himself but denies himself, does not feel content but unhappy, does not develop freely his physical and mental energy but mortifies his body and ruins his mind. The worker therefore only feels himself outside his work, and in his work feels outside himself. He feels at home when he is not working, and when he is working he does not feel at home. His labour is therefore not voluntary, but coerced; it is a *forced labour*. It is therefore not the satisfaction of a need; it is merely a *means* to satisfy needs external to it. Its alien character emerges clearly in the fact that as soon as no physical or other compulsion exists, labour is shunned like the plague. External labour, labour in which man alienates himself, is a labour of self-sacrifice, of mortification. Lastly, the external character of labour for the worker appears in the fact that it is not his own, but someone else's, that it does not belong to him, that in it he belongs, not to himself, but to another. Just as in religion the spontaneous activity of the human imagination, of the human brain and the human heart, operates on the individual independently of him – that is, operates as an alien, divine or diabolical activity – so is the worker's activity not his spontaneous activity. It belongs to another; it is the loss of his self (Marx 1977: 70-71, emphases in the original).[27]

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[26] In the original: "Die *Entäußerung* des Arbeiters in seinem Produkt hat die Bedeutung, nicht nur, daß seine Arbeit zu einem Gegenstand, zu einer *äußern* Existenz wird, sondern daß sie *außer ihm*, unabhängig, fremd von ihm existiert und eine selbständige Macht ihm gegenüber wird, daß das Leben, was er dem Gegenstand verliehen hat, ihm feindlich und fremd gegenübertritt" (Marx 1974: 152, emphases in the original).

[27] In the original: "Worin besteht nun die Entäußerung der Arbeit? Erstens, daß die Arbeit dem Arbeiter äußerlich ist, d.h. nicht zu seinem Wesen gehört, daß er sich daher in seiner Arbeit nicht bejaht, sondern verneint, nicht wohl, sondern unglücklich fühlt, keine freie physische und geistige Energie entwickelt, sondern seine Physis abkasteit und seinen Geist ruiniert. Der Arbeiter fühlt sich daher erst außer der Arbeit bei sich und in der Arbeit außer sich. Zu Hause ist er, wenn er nicht arbeitet, und wenn er arbeitet, ist er nicht zu Haus. Seine Arbeit ist daher nicht freiwillig, sondern gezwungen, Zwangsarbeit. Sie ist daher nicht die Befriedigung eines Bedürfnisses, sondern sie ist nur ein Mittel, um Bedürfnisse außer ihr zu befriedigen. Ihre Fremdheit tritt darin rein hervor, daß, sobald kein physischer oder sonstiger Zwang existiert, die Arbeit als eine Pest geflohen wird. Die äußerliche Arbeit, die Arbeit, in welcher der Mensch sich entäußert, ist eine Arbeit der Selbstaufopferung, der Kasteiung. Endlich erscheint die Äußerlichkeit der Arbeit für den Arbeiter darin, daß sie nicht sein eigen, sondern eines andern ist, daß sie ihm nicht gehört, daß er in ihr nicht sich selbst, sondern einem andern angehört. Wie in der Religion die Selbsttätigkeit der menschlichen Phantasie, des menschlichen Hirns und des menschlichen Herzens unabhängig vom Individuum, d.h. als

Marx thus perceives labour in a capitalist mode of production as something imposed on man by society, as something which does not come natural to man. Labour is not spontaneous, free and natural, and thus, the externalization of man's self in his/her products becomes the property of another human. If labour is man's "life activity", then man's life is estranged precisely through his activities. Thus, it becomes clear that the Hegelian concept of alienation has suffered a radical transformation: from a genuinely positive concept in Hegel, it has been transformed by Marx into its complete opposite. Alienation, then, can be defined in Marxist terms as the "process whereby the object produced by men's work comes to be regarded as standing over and against (i.e. as alienated from) the workers and their work" (Rotenstreich 1963: 1).

Marx is the first thinker to root the concept of alienation in labour and concomitantly perceive it as a direct outgrowth of man's economic organization. For the first time, alienation is imbued with negative connotations, which symbolize Marx's rupture from the Hegelian notion of alienation. Marx's idea of alienation as a product of transitory historical conditions effectively links the concept of alienation with the less pleasant aspects of capitalist economics: the plight of the working-classes, the predicament of the consumer and man in general, expanding his theory of alienation into four different types of alienation due to estranged labour. However, Marx, like Hegel, conceives of a solution, a state of "un-alienation": if for Hegel the means to overcome one's alienation was *Bildung*, for Marx it is a new world order and economic thinking, which the proletariat must actively "abolish" (German *aufheben*) through revolution: "We call communism the real movement which abolishes the present state of things" (Marx 1976: 57).[28] It is precisely the negative aspects of alienation which have marked the concept in its modern usage and reception.

Rooting the concept of alienation in economy and labour, Marx's alienation is fourfold (cf. Ollman 1971: 137-153, Fischer 1970: 107-114 and Oppolzer 1974: 187-204): firstly, the concept describes the alienation of the worker from the product of his labour. Thus,

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eine fremde, göttliche oder teuflische Tätigkeit, auf es wirkt, so ist die Tätigkeit des Arbeiters nicht seine Selbsttätigkeit. Sie gehört einem andren, sie ist der Verlust seiner selbst" (Marx 1974: 155).
[28] In the original: "Wir nennen Kommunismus die wirkliche Bewegung, welche den jetzigen Zustand aufhebt" (Marx 2004: 21).

the worker becomes a slave of his/her product and his/her products stands over and against the worker. The means of production are not controlled by the worker, but in the hands of the Capitalist class, which appropriates labour seeking to create meretricious needs in order to maximize profits. This also means that man's life activity (i.e. the working process) is effectively transformed into a commodity itself (i.e. work becomes commodified) and is ascribed a certain exchange value. In a nutshell, the capitalist gains control over the worker, of his intellectual and creative abilities, by promoting a system which translates the workers' labour into a commodity: wage labour. This means that man is compensated in the form of wages at a rate as low as possible for his selling his productive power to another man.

The second type of alienation is the alienation of the worker from the process of working, i.e. the act of producing. Man's productive activity is objectified in a capitalist society because man's product is external to him/her. By forcing the worker to submit to a series of repetitive, mechanical and trivial motions, the worker becomes dehumanized and an appendix of the machine, a cog in the giant wheel of the capitalist system. Because the worker is again not in control of his/her subject of his/her labour, he/she cannot determine how the product shall be used or whether it should be exchanged for something else. The worker also does not exercise his/her intellectual or creative abilities when working, and this alienates him/her from his/her "*species being*" (German: *Gattungswesen*). Since work is not spontaneous and voluntary, man is also alienated by the commodification of his/her work: the worker is given wages in return for his/her labour and time, effectively selling his/her labour and the product of his/her labour in order to survive.

Thirdly, Marx discusses the alienation of the worker from his/her fellow workers due to the fact that workers perceive themselves as "live means of production" in the capitalist system. Capitalism also reduces labour to a commercial commodity to be traded on the market, rather than a social relationship between people involved in a common effort for survival or betterment. The competitive labour market is set up in industrial capitalist economies to extract as much value as possible in the form of capital from those who work to those who own enterprises and other assets that control the means of production. This causes the relations of production to become conflictual; i.e. it pits worker against

worker, alienating members of the same class from their mutual interest, an effect Marx called "*false consciousness*"[29]. Schaff relates this to the Marxist term of "*commodity fetishism*",[30] in which interpersonal relations function as non-personal relations between commodities, which in turn embody human characteristics and powers. This type of alienation also engenders the alienation of the worker from his *species-nature* (*Gattungsleben*).

Fourthly, alienation from himself/herself (self-alienation): Marx refers to this type of alienation as alienation from man's *species being* (German: *Gattungswesen*). Species is the category which defines man in relation to animals, emphasizing the potentialities of man in relation to other living beings: man's value consists in his/her ability to conceive of the ends of his action as purposeful ideas distinct from any given step of realizing them: man is able to objectify his/her intentional efforts in an idea of himself/herself (the subject) and an idea of the thing which he/she produces (the object). Animals, according to Marx, do not objectify themselves or their products as ideas because they engage in self-sustaining actions directly, without sustained future projection or conscious intention. Estranged labour "thus turns *man's species-being*, both nature and his spiritual species-properties, into a being *alien* to him, into a means for his *individual existence*. It estranges man from his own body, as well as external nature and his spiritual aspect, his *human* aspect" (Marx 1977: 74, emphases in the original).[31]

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[29] *False consciousness* (German: *falsches Bewusstsein*) is a term which, despite the fact that it has never been used by Marx, has come to denote for many Marxists the ideological processes that are meant to hide or conceal the true relationship between social classes, especially the oppression and exploitation of the proletariat. The proletariat is thus kept in a state of self-delusion.

[30] *Commodity fetishism* (German: *Warenfetischismus*) is based on the idea that the product is imbued with certain human characteristics as soon as it is produced by man, which in turn leads to people perceiving interpersonal relations as relations between the products themselves. As Marx himself put it, "labour which posits exchange-value […] causes the social relations of individuals to appear in the perverted form of a social relation between things" (Marx 1977: 39) / in German: "es charakterisiert endlich die Tauschwert setzende Arbeit, daß die gesellschaftliche Beziehung der Personen sich gleichsam verkehrt darstellt, nämlich als gesellschaftliches Verhältnis der Sachen" (Marx 1972: 29). Similarly, Adam Schaff defines commodity fetishism as a system in which "the real relations of *people* as producers are concealed and hidden under the guise of relations between *things*, the value relations between commodities appearing to represent only the products of human labour" (Schaff 1980: 40-41).

[31] In the original: "Die entfremdete Arbeit macht also das *Gattungswesen des Menschen*, sowohl die Natur als sein geistiges Gattungsvermögen, zu einem ihm *fremden* Wesen, zum *Mittel* seiner *individuellen Existenz*. Sie entfremdet dem Menschen seinen eignen Leib, wie die Natur außer ihm, wie sein geistiges Wesen, sein *menschliches* Wesen" (Marx 1974: 159).

Hegel's idea of alienated labour can be succinctly formulated as follows: when man produces something, he/she externalizes an idea, an idea which in turn becomes reality; by externalizing his idea, man separates himself/herself from the product of his/her labour. While Marx retains Hegel's idea of alienation being rooted in labour, he takes a somewhat different stance by perceiving alienation primarily in economic terms: thus, man's products are separated from him/her and dominate its producers only in capitalist societies. Marx effectively rejects Hegel's idea of the alienation of labour as being an anthropological, universal and an ineradicable condition of mankind and claims alienation can be overcome, since it is a transitory historical notion. Economic alienation means for Marx firstly, the separation of the people from free access to the means of production and means of subsistence; secondly, alienation is the result of man being driven off his/her land and being forced to sell his/her labour power on the market, it being his/her only way of survival; thirdly, man is robbed of his/her creativity and essence; and last but not least, man becomes alienated from his/her "true self".

2.2.4. Fromm's Concept of Alienation

Erich Fromm popularized the Marxist idea of alienation in Western Europe and the United States after the Second World War. Born on March 23rd 1900 in Frankfurt am Main, the only child of an orthodox Jewish family, Fromm completed his studies of sociology at Heidelberg University during the interwar period. Later on, he became associated with the Frankfurt Institute of Social Research, what would later be termed "the Frankfurt School". After the Nazi takeover in Germany, Fromm fled to Geneva and then to the United States, where he published most of his works in English. Some of his most influential works include "*Escape from Freedom*"(1941), "*The Sane Society*" (1955), "*Marx's Concept of Man*" (1961) and "*To Have or to Be*" (1976), which essentially focus on what he perceived to be the pervasive plight of modern man: the increasing alienation of human beings (not only the working-classes) in an age of mass consumerism and globalist free market economy.

Though heavily criticized by various "orthodox" Marxist thinkers for having translated the "objective" alienation into "subjective" psychological terms, Fromm played an important role in shaping these theories into something the public at large could easily identify: alienation, Fromm argues, is "the central character" of modern society and the whole of mankind. Grounding his theory of alienation on Marx, he contributed to the postwar "mutation" of alienation from a purely philosophical concept into a psychologically identifiable and, in his opinion, undeniable phenomenon:

> Alienation (or estrangement) means, for Marx, that man does *not* experience himself as the acting agent in his grasp of the world, but that the world (nature, others, and he himself) remain alien to him. They stand above and against him as objects, even though they may be objects of his own creation. Alienation is essentially experiencing the world and oneself passively, receptively, as the subject separated from the object (Fromm 1961: 44, emphasis in the original).

According to Fromm, Marx perceives the entire history of mankind as a process of alienation: "for Marx the history of mankind is a history of the increasing development of man, and at the same time of increasing alienation" (Fromm 1961: 43). Fromm identifies the

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first manifestation of alienation in Western thought as "idolatry" (German: *Götzendienst*), which goes back to the Old Testament. To Fromm, idolatry is a form of alienation because it represents man's first attempt to transfer his powers onto an idol, thus effectively reifying himself through submission. While in all monotheistic religions, God is 'unrecognizable' and 'indefinable', in idolatry man bows down and submits to the projection of one partial quality in himself. For Fromm, the projection of man's powers on a 'thing' is a direct link between the concepts of alienation and idolatry as a biblical reference.

Furthermore, seen from a sociological and psychological point of view, the static social system, where every being knew its place in the world, within a God-imposed divine hierarchy, loosens up more and more; however, until the end of the twentieth century, nature and society had not lost their "concreteness and definiteness" (Fromm 1991: 118). Conversely, contemporary man is confronted with a completely different reality: "Man has been thrown out from any definite place whence he can overlook and manage his life and the life of society" (ibid.: 119).

These changes are the result, according to Fromm, of the "characteriological changes" of man in the twentieth-century, which comprise two aspects: firstly, that of abstractification / quantification and secondly, alienation. Regarding alienation, Fromm emphasizes the significant role it plays in modern society:

> I have chosen the concept of alienation as the central point from which I am going to develop the analysis of the contemporary social character. For one reason, because this concept seems to me to touch upon the deepest level of the modern personality; for another, because it is the most appropriate if one is concerned with the interaction between the contemporary socio-economic structure and the character structure of the average individual (Fromm 1991: 110).

Thus, Fromm's view is that today man lives in a "total" alienation, a far more intensified phenomenon than in Marx's time. While Marx claims that the working-class is affected most severely by alienation, Fromm generalizes the effects of alienation in the present day: it is not only the workers who are alienated, but also every individual in modern society: "the clerk, the salesman, the executive, are even more alienated than the skilled manual worker. The latter's functioning still depends on the expression of certain

personal qualities like skill, reliability, etc., and he is not forced to sell his 'personality', his smile, his opinions in the bargain" (ibid.: 57). Fromm also blames consumerism and bureaucratization for provoking artificial needs in humans, who are dominated by the only wish to own goods, further alienating society: "they all crave for things, new things, to have and to use. They are the passive recipients, the consumers, chained and weakened by the very things which satisfy their synthetic needs" (ibid.). The result of this deviation is, according to Fromm, 'objective alienation', by which all of mankind is affected (cf. Fromm 1961: 58).

Though much criticized by other Marxists for having transformed and mistaken alienation for self-alienation, concomitantly limiting the concept to its mere psychological manifestations, Fromm's definition of alienation is substantially broader than Marx's and comes closer to the existentialist definition of the term as a 'literary attitude'. Fromm defines his concept of alienation as follows:

> [A] mode of experience in which the person experiences himself as an alien. He has become, one might say, estranged from himself. He does not experience himself as the centre of his world, as the creator of his own acts – but his acts and their consequences have become his masters, whom he obeys or whom he may even worship. The alienated person is out of touch with himself as he is out of touch with any other person. He like the others, are experienced as things are experienced; with the senses and with common sense, but at the same time without being related to oneself and to the world outside productively (Fromm 1991: 120-121).

Thus, Fromm's opinion is that alienation is all-pervasive (it can be a mode of experience, a failure to have a certain kind of experience, an act, a sickness, an attitude or a process). In other words, alienation can denote anything which is not as it should be. He identifies, among a multitude of other aspects, so-called phenomena in 'alienated culture', which relate in one way or another to issues such as the bureaucratization of society, consumption, instrumentality, the automatisation / routinisation and repression of awareness of the basic problems of human existence or the passage of mankind from the 'hoarding orientation' (e.g. to acquire things in order to have them) of 19th-century society to the modern 'receptive orientation' (e.g. the need to have something new all the time) (cf. Fromm 1991: 136).

We can conclude the chapter dealing with the concept of alienation in philosophy with the remark that the negative connotations which Marx attributes to alienation permanently shape the postwar meaning of alienation in philosophy, as Fischer aptly remarks: "the term alienation seems to be invariably linked with the definition given by Marx in his Parisian Manuscripts"[32] (Fischer 1970: 18, translation is mine). Alienation-related phenomena[33], themes and concepts such as dehumanization, separation, surrender, unbelonging, powerlessness, the separation from one's 'true self', estrangement, have all found in contemporary, and especially Marxist and Existentialist literary criticism a productive environment in which these phenomena were subjected to various 'mutations' over time.[34]

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[32] In the original: "Der Begriff Entfremdung erscheint heute fest mit der Form verbunden, die Marx ihm in seinen Pariser Manuskripten gab" (Fischer 1970: 18).

[33] Alienation also plays an important role in Existentialist philosophy and literature. The main difference between Marx's concept of alienation and Kierkegaard's Existentialist views, as is the case with virtually all Existential thinkers, resides in the fact that for the latter, man's alienation is to be perceived as an inescapable "*conditio humana*". Thus, for Existentialists, man's alienation is a metaphysical fate, a primordial feature of human existence and does not stem from, nor can it be changed through "historical conditions" or forms of production of man. If we are to exemplify the differences between the two schools of thought, we can easily see that while Marx grounds his theory of alienation on alienated labour, Existentialist such as Sartre and Camus view man's alienation as rather based on Heidegger's idea of "throwness" (German: *Geworfenheit*), i.e. man's feeling of having been 'thrown' into existence and the resulting feelings of anguish and estrangement. As Joachim Israel put it, there is a difference between the existentialist view of alienation as an ontological-ethical issue, while Marxists perceived alienation as a social-psychological one (cf. Israel 1985: 41).

[34] Other sociological or psychological definitions of alienation have been suggested by sociologists such as Arnold Kaufmann, Kenneth Kenniston, Robert Merton, Melvin Seeman, and various others. Sociological alienation, where individuals are aware of their alienation has also been discussed in relation to the term '*anomie*', first employed by Emile Durkheim.

3. Models of Alienation in Literary Studies

3.1. Alienation in Literary Dictionaries and Handbooks

A review of German and English-language literary dictionaries, thesauri and guides reveals very interesting aspects of the concept of alienation and its reception by the academe in the last fifty years. In the following subchapter, literary handbooks and dictionary entries in both English and German will be reviewed for their definitions of alienation in the field of literature. All the reviewed literary dictionaries and handbooks have been surveyed according to the following criteria: firstly, is there a specific entry of the term alienation as a literary concept? Secondly, are the origins of the literary definitions of alienation mentioned? Last but not least, do the surveyed sources offer information about whether alienation as a literary concept is still relevant (i.e. still mentioned) in the newer editions compared to those from earlier decades?

The German-language "*Themen und Motive in der Literatur*" (1995) by Horst S. and Ingrid G. Daemmrich claims that the literary concept of alienation is largely based on Marx's concept of alienation:

> Man is subjected in the 20th-century to a process of progressive alienation. This sentence can be the motto of a constantly growing number of sociological, philosophical, social and literary investigations. Although these works arrive to different conclusions, they are to a large extent in line with Karl Marx's research of this phenomenon. Alienation is rooted in the social commotions of the 19th and 20th-centuries. The growing process of technocratization of industry brought about a fundamental change of interpersonal relations and of the relations between individuals and society. The term was used to depict the experiences of people who feel pitted against the norms created by society, the political system, fellow humans and even their own work. Furthermore, the term characterizes not only the feeling of the individual's helplessness faced with bureaucratic state apparatuses, which elude his/her grasp and control, but also the sensation of permanent instability felt by people when they cannot find something to hold onto within a binding system of thought (Daemmrich 1995: 133-134, translation is mine). [35]

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[35] In the original: "Der Mensch ist im 20. Jahrhundert einem Prozeß fortschreitender Entfremdung ausgesetzt. Dieser Satz kann als Motto über eine ständig wachsende Reihe soziologischer, philosophischer,

The *Reallexikon der Deutschen Literaturgeschichte*" defines alienation as "a state of alienation of social subjects and their self-created objects, to which art is set in opposition" (Hucke & Kutzmutz 1997: 449, translation is mine).[36] According to the authors, the term alienation has been initially introduced into philosophy by Hegel in his "*Phenomenology of Mind*" (1807), and has been further discussed by Karl Marx and later on by Theodor Adorno as part of Critical Theory (German: "*Kritische Theorie*") of the Frankfurt School.

In the *Metzler Lexikon Literatur- und Kulturtheorie*, the term "alienation" (German: *Entfremdung*) is relegated under the general term "*Marxist Literary Theory*", which the author calls "an umbrella term"[37] (Strasen 2008: 457, translation is mine), concomitantly emphasizing the fact that the works of Karl Marx contain "very general and basic considerations about literature and culture" (ibid., translation is mine)[38]. The entry discusses the relations between base and superstructure and refers to the Marxist concept of ideology as well as the Frankfurt School, Louis Althusser, Frederick Jameson, Theodor W. Adorno and Terry Eagleton. From all reviewed German dictionaries and thesauri, only the *Reallexikon* dedicates a separate entry to the term "alienation", with the remark that the concept has not been sufficiently analyzed from the perspective of literary criticism. (Hucke & Kutzmutz 1997: 450).[39] The vast majority of current German literary dictionaries and thesauri either subsume the term under the larger topic of "Marxism / Marxist Literary Theory" or make no reference to alienation at all.

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gesellschafts- und literaturwissenschaftlicher Untersuchungen gestellt werden. Obwohl die Arbeiten zu unterschiedlichen Ergebnisse gelangen, stimmen sie weitgehend mit der Untersuchung des Phänomens durch Karl Marx überein. Die Entfremdung wurzelt in den sozialen Erschütterungen des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts. Die zunehmende Technokratisierung der Industriegesellschaft brachte einen grundlegenden Wandel in zwischenmenschlichen Beziehungen und im Verhältnis der Menschen zur Gesellschaft mit sich. Der Begriff wurde verwendet, um die Erfahrung des Menschen zu beschreiben, der den von der Gesellschaft geschaffenen Normen, dem politischen System, den Mitmenschen und selbst seiner eigenen Arbeit fremd gegenübersteht. Außerdem charakterisiert der Begriff sowohl das Gefühl der Hilflosigkeit einzelner angesichts bürokratischer Staatsapparate, die sich dem Zugriff entziehen, als auch die Empfindung der ständigen Labilität, in der Menschen leben, wenn sie keinen Halt in verbindlichen Gedankensystemen finden" (Daemmrich 1995: 133-134).

[36] In the original: „Entfremdung: Zustand der Fremdheit gesellschaftlicher Subjekte und ihren selbstgeschaffenen Objekten, zu dem die Kunst in Opposition gesetzt wird" (Hucke & Kutzmutz 1997: 450).

[37] In the original: "Sammelbegriff" (Strasen 2008: 457)

[38] In the original: "K. Marx' und F. Engels' bieten lediglich sehr allgemeine und grundsätzliche Überlegungen zu Literatur und Kultur" (Strasen 2008: 457).

[39] In the original: "Die literaturwissenschaftliche Verwendung des Begriffs ist noch nicht untersucht worden" (Hucke & Kutzmutz 1997: 449).

Reviewing English-language dictionaries and handbooks, we find that Seigneuret's "*Dictionary of Literary Themes and Motifs*" (1988) identifies precursors of alienation as a literary theme in "the vigorous romantic challenge to reason, its belief in emotion as the key to apprehension of beauty, truth, and the hidden self […] Thus the romantic age lends new depths and richness and new refinements to the tradition of alienation in Western literature" (Díaz 1988: 38). According to Díaz, most notably in Modernism, "literature expression of alienation follow patterns established in the nineteenth-century, and yet these become ever more searchingly analyzed and deeply experienced" (ibid.: 40) in authors such as Marcel Proust, Robert Musil, James Joyce and Franz Kafka. Díaz goes on to mention existentialism as a movement whose core term is alienation, whose "figure of the outsider, the isolated and alienated protagonist, becomes one of the predominant types in fiction" (ibid.). As exemplary representatives of French existentialists, she names Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus, while no mention is made about Marxism or working-class fiction. This proves that the author perceived literary alienation to be closer to the existentialist school of thought, as opposed to her German-language colleagues, who are generally inclined to view alienation as a concept related to Marx and/or Marxist theory.

Apart from Seigneuret's *Dictionary of Literary Themes and Motifs*, where one can find a separate entry for alienation (which the author traces back to the Bible and identifies in almost every literary movement up to postcolonialism) and *The Cambridge Guide to Literature in English* by Jan Ousby, published in 1992 (which erroneously seems to define Brecht's term of *Verfremdung* under its entry of alienation), the vast majority of English language dictionaries, companions and guides do not contain a separate entry for the term "alienation" or "estrangement".[40]

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[40] English language literary dictionaries lacking any entries of alienation as a relevant literary concept include: Barton Edwin & Hudson, Glenda – *A Contemporary Guide to Literary Terms* (1997); Blamires, Henry – *A Guide to Twentieth-Century Literature in English* (1983); Drabble, Margaret – *The Oxford Companion to English Literature* (1990); Harris, Wendell – *Dictionary of Concepts in Literary Criticism* (1992), Ward. Alfred – *Longman Companion to Twentieth-Century Literature* (1975), while Jan Ousby's *Cambridge Guide to English Literature* (1983) states that "the use of the word 'alienation' (or 'alienation effect') to describe a particular theatrical intention (or technique) derives from the critical writing of the German playwright, Bertold Brecht" (Ousby 1992: 18). Obviously, it erroneously merges the Marxist concept of *Entfremdung* with the Brechtian concept of "*Verfremdung*". Both terms have been translated into English with "alienation".

Turning to the present day, the missing entries of alienation in both German and British dictionaries prove, in my view, that contemporary literary criticism either feels that the concept of alienation has become redundant, relegating it to a theme or strand of Marxism or subsuming it under umbrella terms and more general concepts. These findings suggest that contemporary literary critics are no longer interested in alienation, either due to the advent of poststructuralist school of thought, or because of the fact that alienation theories have gradually slipped out of the critics' view after the radical change brought about by the fall of communism in 1991 and the completely overturned political realities of modern-day Europe.

3.2. The 'Travelling' of Alienation from Marxist Philosophy to Fiction

In order to gain a better understanding of the different approaches to alienation in the post-war period, one has to assess the similarities and differences between the two seemingly similar schools of thought which reached their zenith during 1950s in Europe: Marxism and existentialism. Since the similarities and differences between the two philosophical trends are complex and multifaceted, the present chapter will focus only on the main characteristics of the two in relation to the idea of alienation.

While Marxism teaches that alienation is an outgrowth of "specific historical conditions which have been brought into existence by man's unwitting activity and which can be changed at a higher stage of economic and social development by man's collective action" (Mandel 1973: 6), existentialists view alienation as being part of the very nature of man: nothing more than a castaway on this planet, having received the gift of life which he/she himself/herself has not asked for, man is doomed to endure existence, being fully conscious of the fact that it is both inescapable and inexorable. Existentialists claim that man cannot possibly overcome his/her alienation, due to man's being aware of the meaninglessness of his/her existence and the absurdity of life.

It is very interesting to note that existentialism was, as opposed to Marxism, a cultural movement that relied first and foremost on literature as a source of inspiration, and not philosophy. In the case of existentialism, literary existentialism was the portent of existential philosophy, and not the other way around, as it was the case with Marxism. This can be explained on account of the unexpected popularity of existentialism in the postwar period, due mainly to literary works such as Sartre's *Nausea* (*La Nauseé*), first published in 1938, and Camus' *The Stranger* (*L'Étranger*), first published in 1942, rather than on philosophical treaties such as Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* (*L'Être et le néant: Essai d'ontologie phénoménologique,* first published 1943). In the case of existentialism, literature and philosophy dispute with each other the primordial role in shaping the movement as such. Often characterized in the immediate postwar period as a "literary attitude" (cf. Schaff 1977: 92, Barret 1962: 9) or a "literary mode of philosophizing" (cf. Malpas

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2012: 291), existentialism is unique due to its focus mainly on literature and not philosophy in spreading its ideas.

While some thinkers are of the opinion that this fact has been detrimental to the reception of existentialist philosophy as being merely an "attitude" of teenagers and coffeehouse intellectuals, other theorists hold the view that "existentialist literature provides an important means of access to existentialist thinking" (ibid.: 292), given the fact that key existentialist works are literary, rather than philosophical works. Camus, for instance, never perceived himself as a philosopher, but as a writer first and foremost.

Both existentialism and Marxism agree in one point, namely that "the tormenting forms of alienation suffered by men and women today disclose extremely significant aspects of their lives which call for a theoretical explanation and a realistic remedy" (ibid.). Sartre wrote shortly after the liberation of France in the communist paper *Action* that both philosophies had certain affinities for each other: firstly, the idea of freedom of man, claiming that man was the true "master of his own destiny" and that both existentialism and Marxism were primarily philosophies of action in which "thought was a project and a commitment" (cf. Poster 1975: 109).

As a preliminary conclusion, existentialism is besides Marxism the school of thought whose core features focus on the concept of alienation. Due to the fact that both Marxism and existentialism witnessed their heyday in the first two decades after World War 2 accounts for the unprecedented popularity of alienation theories during the 50s and 60s. The transplantation of the concept of alienation from philosophy into the realm of fiction has fully come to surface during the 50s, thus contributing to the development and propulsion of a new type of literary hero and attitude.

In accordance with Mieke Bal's idea that concepts "travel – between disciplines, between individual scholars, between historical periods, and between geographically dispersed academic communities" (cf. Bal 2002: 24), one can ask in what way (and to what extent) the concept of alienation can account for its travel from the realm of Marxist philosophy into the realm of and fiction. Two possible answers might shed light on the transmutation of alienation: firstly, existentialism is the first literary current which focuses on its very

specific idea of alienation, which is related to, yet also different from the Marxist concept of alienation. The two different literary evolutions of the concept of alienation support Bal's theory of travelling concepts and the ensuing mutations in each area or field of study. In the case of alienation, I suggest that there was a double translation of the concept from philosophy into fiction and vice-versa: on the one hand, French existentialist authors such as Camus and Sartre became highly popular after World War 2 and have popularized the existential strand of alienation as the inescapable fate of mankind, a feeling of malaise and ennui as a core feature of both Sartrean and Camusian literary heroes. Concomitantly, there also was a migration from French postwar literature to philosophy – symbolized by Sartre's philosophical writings in *Being and Nothingness* and his slow metamorphosis into a Marxist-Existentialist.

On the other hand, it is also the period immediately after the Second World War (see Introduction) in which Marx's writings are rediscovered and experience an unprecedented popularity in Western Europe. They mainly operate within the field of philosophy, from which the concept of alienation "travels" to the field of social theory. The reception of Marx's concept of alienation by various thinkers and social theorists, especially in Germany (mostly representatives of the Frankfurt School, such as T. Adorno, Max Horkenheimer, and others) led to a flourishing of the concept not only in Germany, but in Western Europe as a whole. This in turn, led to the emergence of the *New Left*, which culminated in the student protests of 1968 in Western Europe.

From, or more aptly put, through the emergence and spread of social theory, the concept of alienation effectively travelled from philosophy into fiction: starting with Rousseau's Enlightenment, continuing with Hegel's German Idealism, alienation theories travelled to Marx's communist and socialist ideas, from which it travelled further to social theory sciences (German: *Gesellschaftstheorie*). A good example for this is the reception of alienation by Erich Fromm (see Chapter 2.2.4) and Herbert Marcuse, who both influenced the student activism in both the United States and Germany.

The Marxist-strand of alienation theories which became important in social theory was different from the existentialist one: not only was alienation not inescapable, it was also revolutionary in its essence; as Marx himself put it, the reach of full communism would

mean a "state of unalienation", as alienation is the result of transitory historical conditions present in capitalism. This revolutionary undercurrent of the Marxist strand of alienation was far more popular, in my opinion, with students of the 50s who felt empowered and encouraged to actively take part in overturning existent social hierarchies. The main actor for social change was for Marx the proletariat, which was meant to assume the means of production and institute the state of communism. As a result, the working-classes of Western Europe received unprecedented attention not only from social theorists, philosophers and psychologists, but also from various writers of fiction.

It is thus no coincidence, in my opinion, that the British working-class fiction also had its peak during the 1950s. As Lucien Sève's put it, we can equate feelings of alienation with those of anger, frustration and powerlessness against institutions which dominate the postwar individual. During its heyday, alienation had become an important feature that was broadly discussed by both cultural theorists and the public at large during the 60s and 70s:

> The term alienation – for a long time, familiar only to specialists – has become today more popular and is used even as an adjective in colloquial speech: one is "alienated" from one's work, through money, commercials, sexual taboos, through the "ruling ideology" […] and many other things. Thus, a common term of alienation has come into being, which, with just one word (which simultaneously hints at a mental illness), reflects the extraordinary heterogeneity through which various forces, social institutions take hold of me by alienating my freedom, my own self […] In this respect, the term alienation seems related to another theoretical term […]; frustration (Sève 1978: 67, translation is mine).[41]

Britain's working-class fiction of the 1950s represents the best example of this brand new trend in fiction. The Angry Young Men movement, which originates in Britain, leaves no doubt about the disenchantment and anger felt by the younger generations towards the

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[41] In the original: "Der Begriff Entfremdung – lange Zeit nur Spezialisten geläufig – wird heute viel gängiger gebraucht und ist sogar als Adjektiv in die Umgangssprache eingegangen: man ist von seiner Arbeit 'entfremdet', durch das Geld, die Werbung, durch sexuelle Tabus, durch die 'herrschende Ideologie' [...] und durch viele andere Dinge mehr. So hat sich in gewisser Weise ein gemeinsamer Begriff der Entfremdung herausgebildet, der einfach mit einem Wort (in dem gleichzeitig Geisteskrankheit mit anklingt) die ungemeine Verschiedenartigkeit aller erlebten Prozesse wiedergibt, durch die verschiedene Kräfte, soziale Institutionen mich besitzen, indem sie mich meiner Freiheit, meiner selbst entäußern. [...] In dieser Hinsicht erscheint die Entfremdung mit einem anderen theoretischen Begriff verwandt [...] die Frustration" (Sève 1978: 67).

society they live in. Obviously, while certain theoretical similarities and intersections between Marxism and Existentialism and working-class fiction can be established, my view is that working-class fiction heroes are fundamentally different from the estranged characters of Sartre and Camus, taking into consideration the movement's strong dichotomy between the working- and the upper-class. During the 1950s, British working-class fiction starts to play an important role for the first time in human history: "this period can justly be termed a golden age for working class literature" (Haywood 1997: 94).

The "travel" of the concept of alienation from Marx's social theory to fiction, I claim, is more relevant in my analysis of iconic working-class novels of the 50s, due first and foremost to the stark dichotomy between the working-class and the upper-class present in all discussed novels in this paper (see chapters 3.3.1 and 3.3.2). Virtually all working-class heroes depicted in the novels of the Angry Young Men ground their frustration (and their ensuing feelings of alienation) not an existentialist strand of ennui, but on psychosocial aspects which affect their daily lives. That is the reason why my definition of alienation binary in working-class fiction of the 50s will focus on the "us" versus "them" divide, which I perceive to be far more influenced by the Marxist (and thus very different from the existentialist) definition of alienation.

The following chapters will focus on how this stereotypically working-class fiction (from the 1950s to the 1990s) revolves around the concept of alienation in fiction. Alienation as a concept also suffers 'mutations' within fiction, as it is the link not only between philosophy, social theory and fiction, but also between the refashioning of literary trends and currents within fiction itself.

3.3. The Classical Alienation Model in Fiction

3.3.1. Alienation in British Postwar Fiction of the 1950s: Us versus Them

Numerous literary critics have discussed the apathy, lethargy and outbursts of angry re-belliousness of the working-class heroes of the 1950s. While some occasionally veer towards an existentialist sort of inexplicable *malaise* (such as Gindin and Allsop), they have always been reluctant to connect the working-class novels of the 1950s to the Marxist alienation debate[42]. My contention is that the Marxist strand of alienation plays an important role in the working-class fiction of the 50s, an alienation which I define as stemming from a deeply flawed relationship between the two opposing constituents of an "us" vs. "them" binary, where the "us" represents the working-class and the "them" the upper-class. I would argue that the working-class vs. upper-class binary is perhaps the most resilient feature of working-class fiction, manifest in all working-class novels of the 1950s.

This strong mental "us" versus "them" split is based on the one principle shared by the working-class since the beginning of the industrial revolution: working-class people are *not* like the middle-class bourgeoisie or the ruling upper-class aristocracy. One could even say that the working-class man defines himself rather antithetically against the latter: he/she *is* everything the other classes *are not*. Great pride is taken in being 'different' and in following an almost perfectly reversed aristocratic philosophy: prized values and wor-king-class virtues are sincerity, vigour, resilience, endurance, industriousness, roughness and frankness, modesty and hard work; these make up the working-class credo.

Let us analyze this instance of alienation by closely following the characteristics of each constituent within the "us and them" binary. Firstly, I shall discuss the broader category of "them". In the case of working-class fiction, the "them" is effectively the middle- and upper-class: people who are not only the opposite of the working-classes, they also

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[42] An exception to this rule is German critic Ingrid Kreuzer, who does link the concept of alienation with the psychosocial changes occurring in the working-class hero of the 1950s (Kreuzer 1972: 113-119).

represent a sort of natural adversary. As a rule, all representatives of the state are auto-matically part of the "them": policemen, teachers, judges, magistrates, lawyers, minor state officials such as clerks and civil servants or local authority state employees. According to Richard Hoggart, these groups belong to the "them" constituent, since it is they who act as the pillars of the state; it is they who ensure the continuation of life as it is and, in Althusserian terminology, it is they who actively contribute to and help maintain the "ruling ideology" of the ruling classes. In short, this is the world of the bosses:

> the people at the top', 'the higher-ups', the people who give you your dole, can call you up, tell you to go to war, fine you, made you split the family in the thirties to avoid a reduction in the Means Test allowance, 'get yer in the end', 'aren't really to be trusted', 'talk posh', 'are all twisters really', 'never tell yer owt" (e.g. about a relative in the hospital), 'clap yer in clink', 'will do y' down if they can', 'summons yer', 'are all in a click [clique] together', 'treat y' like muck' (Hoggart 2009: 58).

On the whole, the wide-ranging feeling of the working-class towards the "them"-constit-uent is consequently a severe feeling of alienation, characterized by the existing gap between these two social classes. Fear and distrust are prevalent. The exacerbated feeling of suspicion towards the representatives of state authority can also be interpreted as a profound doubt towards the state and its ideology and its protégés, the upper-classes who thrive from the hard labour of the "us".

Conversely, the pervading feeling towards the "us" is a feeling of belonging, of loyalty, of solidarity, of being at ease within the group. The "us" in this case would be the lower middle-class and the working-class. Living outside the working-class or social class is perceived as a deeply alienating experience, and the world of the upper-classes is indeed a strange and at the same time estranged environment, where the working-class man feels as an intruder or someone who does not belong. The "us" represents the local, the familiar, a world "of extremely local life, in which everything is remarkably near" (ibid.: 47). The group is "our sort", it gives one strength, it represents the philosophy of "one of us"; it is the awareness that survival can only be ensured if the group is united against vicissitudes and hardships of life. Thus, the group existence is characterized as being welcoming, supportive, neighbourly, where an individual is inevitably part and parcel of the group. Identification with the group is almost total; all members are mainly concerned with living

and preserving a way of life which is opposed to the luxury and overindulgence of the upper-classes. The traits which are frowned upon by the upper-classes are precisely those which are happily embraced by the working-classes: a disinterest in success, or in a flourishing business, "keen types" or money altogether.

The aspects deemed crucial by the working-classes are enjoying life, a spirit of belonging and togetherness, marriage and family, love and a good home. If the outer world is an alienating environment, then the concrete world of the "us" represents the state of unalienation; life in this case is "a life whose main stress is on the intimate, the sensory, the detailed and the personal" (ibid.: 88). As a social class, working-class members are mainly interested in people and the individual's behaviour rather than social standing or affluence.

The "us"-constituent is a close-knit and delimited social cluster, with rigid rules and complex and intricate regulations. The clinging to old beliefs and old traditions has always been a characteristic of the working-classes. Their resilience to change is due to the fact that the group functions as a social whole, as a very distinct and idiosyncratic social class. Not only is the "us"-constituent diametrically opposed to its counterpart, the "them", but interactions between these two social classes are also perceived as an anathema; conformity with the rules of one's social standing are considered paramount: "the group imposes on its members an extensive and sometimes harsh pressure to conform; […] the group seeks to conserve, and may impede an inclination in any of its members to make a change, to leave the group, to be different" (ibid.: 68).

The characteristic which has generally been observed within the working-class set values and beliefs is the fixed, prescribed roles which working-class people have to fully assume. Thus, the "we" is always in antithesis with society as a whole; the "we" in working-class has the meaning of "a sense of a personal, the concrete, the local: it is embodied in the idea of, first, the family, and, second, the neighbourhood" (ibid.: 22). The differentiation between the family, neighbourhood, "your sort" and the rest of society can be perceived as yet another case of social estrangement. The retreat to the strictly intimate, personal and familiar shows a disposition to feel somehow ill at ease when one has to abandon the accustomed surroundings; it follows then that working-class people have a tendency to

feel somehow estranged when finding themselves in any other different social surrounding and situation.

The "Angries" in Britain of the 1950s dare to be different and do precisely that which is 'forbidden': they take the leap and dare trying to become part of the "them", in this case, the upper-class. It is the decade of transformation, and the ground-breaking changes that could to be felt in the 50s for the first time threaten to tear away at the very fabric of the traditional British working-class: the Education Act of 1944 allows the future working-class authors to go graduate from secondary school and later on get perhaps a scholarship and continue their education, thus obtaining a university degree; interconnected with the level of education is the kind of job one will get, the sort of income and thus, social standing. In short, this process has been termed as "*embourgeoisement*" or "social / upward mobility", which effectively means that individuals in possession of the necessary skills can successfully climb the social ladder unhindered. This in turn signifies that intelligent young working-class men and women are, for the first time in history, given the opportunity to leave their class of origin and become members of the middle- and upper-class. These social, political and educational changes go to the extent where class boundaries become blurry and fluid. Society as a whole was changing rapidly at the time: it was no longer the world of the Empire, where the aristocracy has the say, but the "age of consensus", the world of mass consumption, of economic boom and unprecedented affluence for the working-classes.

Thus, the educated youth which came of age in the 50s was radically different from the generation of their fathers and mothers of the pre-war era: some were keen on leaving a life of hardships and deprivation behind and thus abandon their own social class; some toyed with the idea but never actually tried, and some others were stuck in the traditional divide between working-class and upper-class. Painstakingly elaborated upon in the novels of the Angry Young Men, social mobility proves to be a painful endeavour, since the hero either cannot make the leap or, if he does, he will perceive himself as an intruder, an outsider, someone who does not really belong to the world he himself has chosen. In virtually all of the novels of the Angry Young Men, the first instance of alienation is the working-class versus upper-class divide, resulting in the alienation of the main character

from his fellow human beings and his social class. The working-class heroes are marked by their wish to escape from the poverty and cultural background of their own class, now faced for the first time in history with the opportunity to climb the social hierarchy unimpeded. Accordingly, virtually all heroes of 1950s working-class fiction, ranging from Amis' Jim Dixon to Braine's Joe Lampton and Waterhouse's William Fisher, want to be part of the new world of success, and the means to achieving their goals is affluence.

3.3.2. The Angry Decade: British Working-Class Fiction in the 1950s

"Let's be frank about it, most of our people have never had it so good" (Sandbrook 2005: 75), announced British Prime Minister Harold MacMillan during a Conservative party rally in Bedford on July 20th 1957. Though it is not clear who "most people" who benefitted from the postwar changes are, MacMillan's statement is a sound claim. After the end of the Second World War, British's elections were won by the Labour Party on the 26th of July 1945, marking a major turning point after the economically gruesome 1930s and the period of the Second World War. The new Labour government actually implemented some of the earlier Chartist demands for universal suffrage and embarked on a series of very important reforms: "full employment based on Keynesian economics; nationalization of the staple industries; the creation of a welfare state and a National Health Service; universal free education; and a state patronage of the arts" (Haywood 1997: 89). The welfare state, the National Health Service, the Education Act, became emblems of the new so-called "age of consensus" for the Great Britain of the 50s, which would "last over thirty years, until the New Right came to power under Margaret Thatcher, and began to dismantle most of these core postwar reforms" (ibid.: 90).

Concomitantly, the British government invested heavily in the public sector, urging reforms which were meant to lead to the economic and social recovery of Great Britain from the near-bankruptcy conditions of the war era. This new age of affluence, especially for the "lower" strata of British society, brought about "a new working-class consciousness" (cf. Thompson 1961: 29), which engendered in turn a transformation in the structure of society especially related to "food, dress styles, manners and social attitudes" (cf. Hennessey 2006: 8). At the same time, paramount importance was attributed to the immediate postwar historical events: the Suez Crisis (1956) and the Budapest Uprising in the same year. While the first event was a fiasco for Britain, the second one echoes as a totalitarian quelling of a popular rebellion in the Eastern Block. Both events have had far-reaching consequences and a great impact on the decades to come: the Suez crisis was a testimony to the fact that the colonial days when the British Empire could behave as it pleased came to an end, whilst the Budapest revolt signaled to the Western European

public that the Soviet Union was in reality a far cry from the peaceful "workers and peasants' paradise" hailed by Soviet propaganda.

As a direct result of these new political realities in Europe, the bulk of the working-classes in Western Europe became increasingly disenchanted with the politics of "existing socialism" of the Soviet Union and were looking for a new political realignment, a new left, especially after the clampdown was repeated by the Soviet Block in Czechoslovakia in 1968: Jimmy Porter captured this sense of disillusionment and the end of ideology in the famous line from John Osborne's play *Look Back in Anger* which appeared on the British stage a few months before the Suez invasion: "There aren't any good, brave causes left" (Osborne 1996: 69). After the disillusionment with the grim realities of Soviet-style communism, the traditional British working-class and its newest literary representative, the young unmarried male workers (a core feature of virtually all novels of the Angry Young Men movement), distance themselves from the totalitarian Soviet orthodoxy. The same is valid for most of the working-class authors of the 50s, such as John Braine, Allan Sillitoe, Keith Waterhouse and others: "clearly the old guides and formulas have vanished. Two world wars, the threat of the hydrogen bomb, and disillusion with the Marxist version of world brotherhood have left these writers skeptical about the value of banners and causes" (Gindin 1963: 9).

At the same time, I would like to mention the fact that this feeling of skepticism present in the working-class fiction of the 50s is not one-sided; the authors are generally skeptical not only towards the Soviet Union, but also towards the traditional British Victorian attitude[43]: they feel as much opposed to the upper-classes of their own society as they scorn the supposedly international brotherhood of workers and peasants of the Eastern Block. This dual rejection is reflected in the alienation of the fictional characters of working-class fiction, characters who, much like the authors themselves, cannot appropriate and internalise the realities of any options given at the time; as a result, the main character finds himself on a quest for identity, confronted throughout the novel with a sort of moral

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[43] Allsop's sardonic interrogations reflect this opposition to the Angry Young Men Movement: "Gertrude Stein called her contemporaries of the Twenties the Lost Generation. This one might be described as the All Found Generation. And are they grateful, this plebian elite who have been creamed off from the admass for higher education and managerial duties? Not in the least" (Allsop 1969: 27).

and existential relativity which stresses the feeling of estrangement and alienation of the characters who are trying to come to terms with a daunting reality (cf. Gindin 1963: 11).

Similarly, it is also highly interesting to note that the established literary orthodoxy of the day was unable to understand the newer generation of writers precisely because of the previously ascribed ambivalence and "despondency". Most authors of the new literary movement were not explicitly regimented into a certain philosophy, political party or school of thought: they were neither communists, nor were they capitalists or existentialists, they did not attend party meetings; they were not explicit supporters of capitalism, nor did they wear black clothes and read Kierkegaard. Thus, they gave the false impression of political inconsistency, immaturity and childish whim:

> the Jimmy Porters are not even angry about the dominant problem of our time, which soaks invisibly like fall-out into every minor problem and contaminates it – the unresolved struggle between capitalism and communism. Not only are the Jimmy Porters not angry about this: it bores them deeply […] even their concern with the deeper plight of the pervading loss of spiritual direction is utterly introspective. Their anger is a sort of neurological masturbation, deriving from the very problems they cannot bring themselves to confront. It is a textbook psychotic situation: the emotional deadlock in a person caused by a general conviction that certain major man-made problems that man is facing are beyond the capacity of man to solve (Allsop 1969: 28-29).

Allsop emphasizes the fact that the Angries were in fact opposed to by the literary orthodoxy of the times:

> […] overtones which might be listed as irreverence, stridency, impatience with tradition, vigour, vulgarity, sulky resentment against the cultivated and a hard-boiled muscling-in on culture, adventurousness, self-pity, deliberate disengagement from politics, fascist ambitions, schizophrenia, rude dislike of anything phoney or fey, a broad sense of humour but low on wit, a general intellectual nihilism, honesty, *a neurotic discontent and a defeated, reconciled acquiescence that is the last flimsy shelter against complete despondency*" (ibid.: 18, emphasis is mine).

This feeling of "despondency" and lack of interest for the "big issues" of the day, the basically quasi-leftist approach and the social origin of most of working-class authors (and heroes) coupled with their refusal of political regimentation also puzzled many contemporary critics.

The apparent despondency is nothing but an artistic expression of the character's estrangement throughout the novel, negotiating his place "in a society and culture that is itself in a moment of flux" (cf. Bentley 2012: 136). Since virtually all novel characters are in effect constantly pensive regarding various aspects of society, changes in politics and culture, shifting attitudes and new economic realities, these cannot be seen as anything else than attempts to overcome their sense of estrangement, a constant mutiny against that what they perceive undue, their striving for meaning, order and recuperation of that what they perceive has been lost at a certain point in time. Thus, as Allsop puts it, "an artist, broadly speaking, is for or against civilization, but he does not have to be embroiled in it. The new set of writers who have got the Fifties named the angry decade *are* involved. Some are deliberately so, some hate it. But they are coloured by the period and they colour it" (Allsop 1969: 36). The authors of this period prefer the self-imposed exile, the offside over active political militancy; they advocate taking a step back and taking hold of the situation in its entirety, yet that does not mean that they are completely absent from and disinterested in the sociopolitical realities of their time. The sense of anger and revolt which characterize the novels and the decade effectively stem from their refusal to assist helplessly in the continuation of a state of affairs which they perceive as rather disquieting.

Consequently, this new attitude is heavily reflected in working-class fiction; most importantly, the generalized attitude of passive dissent signifies a major shift in fiction from the previous literary traditions:

> Our age is essentially unheroic. Heroism is individualism. We live in an age of numbers and labels; workers clock-in and clock-out, and discuss the football results or last night's television programmes […] The basic human craving for a sense of purpose reasserts itself as a desire to re-create the heroic: to recreate it indiscriminately in the heroes of Everest and Kon-Tiki, in the film star or popular crooner, the 'rebel without a cause'" (Wilson 1958: 15).

This unheroic age has also produced in fiction an unheroic novel, along with the unheroic hero. The working-class rebel is to be seen as an active challenge aimed at the already established authors and their "antiquated" fiction. The thematic shift offered by working-class authors in the early 50s has established itself as a "Mini-Epoch" (cf. Kreuzer 1972:

18) in the history of fiction, and is characterized by certain original and recognizable features: the opposition to and distance from the tradition of the "elevated" novel, which is meant to be acknowledged as a work of art, and the already discussed thematic groups and the new type of anti-hero.

Thus, according to Ingrid Kreuzer, the style of the Angry Young Men novel is opposed to previous "elevated" novels as far as content, meaning, style and artistic quality are concerned; the stations and situations the hero faces in these novels are only seldom deemed to be causally determined. Their only function is to advance the plot:

> the authors impose their voluntary restrictions on their inventiveness. They use – without any claim to originality – worn-out motifs from the sphere of the burlesque, extract the punch lines from droll stories and farce, from the (trivially) humourous or detective novels. Such 'significant' elements of the novel as 'destiny', 'character', 'conscience', 'tragic conflict' etc. are purposefully left out. Serious problems, which sometimes brush on the proximity of tragedy, are deviated either into comedy or the grotesque or [alternatively] diluted into sentimentality (Kreuzer 1972: 19, translation is mine)[44].

Secondly, in contrast to the impression at first sight that this type of novel has more in common with "popular fiction"[45] than suspected, Kreuzer insists that this is consciously employed by the authors as a means of artistic understatement which is meant to be read as an insult against the "Bloomsbury man" and the corresponding literary orthodoxy of the immediate postwar period in Britain.

Thirdly, Kreuzer's analysis of the working-class novel further supports my view of the existing conflicts between the constituents of the "us" versus "them" binary. The novels of virtually all working-class authors fully correspond in my view to the mindset of the "us" constituent and concomitantly function as a sort of pastiche of the literary canons of the middle and upper-classes. The working-class novels are, in effect, constructed almost

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[44] In the original: "Die Autoren erlegen ihrer Invention freiwillig Beschränkungen auf. Sie verwenden, ohne jeden Originalitätsanspruch, abgenutzte Motive us dem Bereich des Burlesken, entnehmen die stofflichen Aufhänger aus Schwank und Posse, dem (trivial-)humoristischen oder dem Kriminalroman. Solche ›wertigen‹ Elemente des traditionellen Romans wie ›Schicksal‹, ›Charakter‹, ›Gewissen‹, ›tragischer Konflikt‹ usw. bleiben absichtsvoll ausgespart. Ernsthafte Probleme, die zuweilen sogar die Nähe des Tragischen streifen, werden in Komik oder Groteske abgeleitet oder im Sentiment erweicht" (Kreuzer 1972: 19).
[45] In the original, Kreuzer uses the German term of "Trivialliteratur" (ibid.: 20).

antithetically when it comes to the "high" literature of the 50s: the roughness of the main character, the use of the working-class sociolects, the hero's conscious opposition and anger vented towards the establishment, his very struggle to adapt, survive, fulfill his dreams are mere artistic devices of "othering". Simply put, the working-class hero is the exact opposite of the gentleness of synthetic heroes and characters of "elevated" fiction; the working-class hero is "rough but real", as opposed to the "fake and phony" characters of high fiction.

Kreuzer's account can be meaningfully connected to the "us" versus "them" binary, the "us" is completely estranged and separated from the "them"; this divide seems to be eternal and predetermined; those who disrespect the rules cannot but eventually fail: these are quintessentially the working-class (anti-)heroes à la Joe Lampton, the products of the postwar social mobility scheme. They either end up inhabiting a classless in-betweenness or a third space within this binary (neither working-class, nor upper-class, but merely a "class hybrid"). Alternatively, as in the case of Sillitoe's Arthur Seaton, they never attempt to break out of the parent working-class culture, refusing to engage in the social mobility which is offered to them. The third instance also inescapably leads to a form of alienation, such as in the case of Billy Fisher, the working-class type of hero who attempts to break away from the parent culture, but eventually fails and accepts his fate. Virtually all working-class heroes classified by Kreuzer in the three aforementioned categories find themselves inhabiting a third "space of the impossible" (Acheraïou 2011: 4), ultimately condemned to social, cultural and psychological alienation.

3.3.3. The Alienated Working-Class Hero of the 1950s

The phrase "Angry Young Men", this loosely applied label of which Gindin notes that the "writers […] share no group moral position, as they share no specific political doctrine" (Gindin 1963: 8), originates from a play written by John Osborne called "*Look Back in Anger"* (1956), which has shot to fame rather inexplicably to many contemporary critics in May 1956:

> both the author and his fictitious hero, Jimmy Porter, were regarded to the same extent as the prototype of the 'angry young man'. Soon afterwards, this term was subsumed to the bulk of a literary 'generation': that of the 'young' English Authors of the Fifties, which in the meantime has entered into literary studies under the name of "Angry Decade" (Kreuzer 1972: 8, translation mine). [46]

The new working-class hero is angry: his sense of resentment, dissent and anger become the key words in this postwar decade which defines the heterogenic young authors who challenge the literary establishment of the day. The phrase "Angry Young Men" gives its name to the new movement: "lights flashed. Bells rang. Overnight '*angry'* became the code word" (cf. Allsop 1969: 24, emphasis is mine).

The "Angry Decade" has given birth to fresh literary representations of the working-class, depicting mainly a new working-class anti-hero, who is characterized by three constant characteristics: he is male, white and working-class. The common features of the "angry" young British hero and writer of the 50s are, according to Leslie Fiedler, as follows:

> [He] is able to define himself against the class he replaces: against a blend of homosexual sensibility, upper-class aloofness, liberal politics, and avant-garde literary devices. When he is boorish rather than well-behaved, rudely angry rather than ironically amused, when he is philistine rather than arty – even when he merely writes badly, he can feel he is performing a service for literature, liberating it from the tyranny of a taste based on a

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[46] In the original: "Sowohl der Autor wie sein fiktiver Held, Jimmy Porter, galten in gleichem Maße als Prototyp des »zornigen jungen Mannes«. Wenig später wurde dem Begriff das Gros einer literarischen ›Generation‹ subsumiert: der »jungen« Autoren der englischen fünfziger Jahre, die inzwischen als »Angry Decade« in die Literaturwissenschaft eingegangen sind" (Kreuzer 1972: 8).

world of wealth and leisure which has become quite unreal (Fiedler 1958: 3).

Discussing these changes occurring in society and fiction in postwar Britain, Gindin similarly agrees that the heroes of Amis, Wain, and Waterhouse, share many common traits:

> These heroes are all better educated than their fathers were, although they frequently retain an emotional allegiance to their fathers' habits and attitudes; they are all concerned with getting jobs and women in a competitive society; they care about how one behaves in pubs and at cocktail parties; they all berate the aristocracy's emotional vacuity, although they often, in varying degrees, envy the aristocracy's smooth composure; *they all worry about how they can operate in a world in which they exert only very limited control* (Gindin 1963: 2, emphasis is mine).

Although Gindin comes very close to the classic definition of alienation of the worker established by Marx in the above mentioned quotation (i.e. a world in which the worker is dominated by the product of his labour, thus experiencing the world passively, as an object, rather than as a conscious subject, see Chapter 2.2.3), he fails to connect the depiction of the postwar British working-class hero with the concept of alienation. The reluctance of various critics such as Gindin and Allsop to connect the novels of working-class fiction with alienation theories is surprising, yet prevalent with many literary critics, despite the obvious affinities between the two.

The new working-class hero is also young and "Northern"[47]: if not a teenager, then a youngster in his early twenties. For the first time, centre stage is given to the young Northern male, whose depiction is often problematic because of its dual character: on the one hand there is an emergence of a new class of consumers of fashion, music and film due to the possession of free capital without the financial constraints of family and children, a distinct "movement" which fuels postwar consumerism in Britain (as noted by Hoggart); on the other hand it is precisely this (consumerist) movement which understands itself as having a new cultural identity to which its members can adhere and

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[47] The term "Northern" in this instance should be understood as Northern-English, so as to reflect the Northern-English geographical location of the working-class hero, usually the counties of Yorkshire and Nottingham.

thereby escape (or at least postpone) their assimilation into the parent or dominant culture. Thus, the young men of the 50s were "both a cultural manifestation of emerging postindustrial consumerism and a point of resistance to that economy" (Bentley 2005: 68).

Focusing on solely one aspect of this dual representation of the angry youngster, namely the process of consumerist assimilation[48], Richard Hoggart describes this levelling of British youth in his book *The Uses of Literacy* as "shiny barbarism" (cf. Hoggart 2009: 146). His view is effectively that consumerism, Americanization and the idea of class-lessness seriously endanger the traditional, northern, "organic" working-classes. As Dominic Strinati argues, Hoggart's view is focused on "a belief that 'genuine' working-class community [was] in the process of being dissolved into cultural oblivion by mass culture and Americanization" (Strinati 1995: 31). In Hoggart's description of British youngsters during the 50s, he emphasizes the differences between the superficial youngsters, or 'Juke-Box' boys, as he calls them, and the older generations of working-class culture:

> The milk-bars indicate at once, in the nastiness of their modernistic knick-knacks, their glaring showiness, and aesthetic breakdown so complete that, in comparison with them, the layout of the living-rooms in some of the poor homes from which the customers come seems to speak of a tradition as balanced and civilized as an eighteenth-century town house (Hoggart 2009: 220).

Hoggart's dichotomy – youngsters or teenagers versus the older, traditional and "organic" working-class mostly associated with the 1930s – effectively engenders a new subdivision within the "us" versus "them" binary. Discussing this binary in terms of a double conflict of the young working-class hero (i.e. the opposition to his parent culture and his

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[48] Ian Haywood also discusses the aspect of cultural assimilation and virtual dissolution of the traditional working-class, emphasizing the threat of social mobility and financial affluence: "The central concern of many observers was not political but cultural and even spiritual […] It was felt that material advance and social mobility were devitalizing working class culture: if the working class possessed some of the material security that they struggled to attain for more than a century, wouldn't their class identity, which was forged in such struggles, be eroded? In other words, the anxiety was that affluence would assimilate working class into an expanding bourgeois lifestyle (the process of 'embourgeoisement') or into classless mass culture" (Haywood 1997: 92-93).

clash with the upper-classes) only amplifies the feeling of alienation which is prevalent in the fiction of the 1950s. This shift in binary constituents also allows for a different age-related negotiation of identity and cultural expression of the angry young man:

> The 'Them/Us' attitudes seem to me stronger in those over thirty-five, those with memories of unemployment in the thirties and of all the 'Thems' in those days. Younger people, even if they are not active in the unions, here inhabit a different atmosphere from that their fathers grew up in: at least, the atmosphere has a different emotional temperature. At bottom the division is still there, and little changed in its sharpness. Young people are likely to be less actively hostile, or contemptuous, or fearful towards the bosses' world; nor are they likely to be deferential. But this is not always because they are better able than their parents to cope with that world, that they have come to terms with the great outside in a way their parents have not*: they often seem to be simply ignoring it, to have 'contracted out' of any belief in its importance; they have gone into their own worlds, supported now by a greater body of entertaining and flattering provision than their parents knew*" (ibid.: 61, emphasis is mine).

However, in both cases, the flawed relationship between the two conflicting categories (be they "us" versus "them" or "young" versus "old") is the common feature of both binaries, further strengthening the view that the alienation of the working-class hero stems from this oppositional space between two binary constituents.

Coming back to the "us" versus "them" binary, the antagonistic constituents find them-selves interacting in an area of conflict: a core characteristic of many young working-class heroes of the 50s is the attempt to sever the ties of belonging to their own class (the "us" constituent) in order to root themselves into its historical counterpart (the "them" constituent). This process of social mobility or otherwise named *embourgeoisement* is particularly interesting, since it is in the 50s that social mobility schemes are genuinely occurring in greater numbers than ever before[49]. However, the failure of a successful pro-cess of *embourgeoisement* leads in most cases to yet another instance of alienation of the working-class hero, who is eventually falling through the cracks and is faced with the

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[49] Ginding writes: "Class lines, throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, were not prescribed with absolute, immutable rigidity, although the problems and the stresses holding back the young man of energy were invariably greater than the opportunities before him. In the twentieth century, however, and particularly since the end of World War 2, the young man finds moving from one class to another superficially easy" (Gindin 1958: 3).

lack of acceptance of the upper-classes. As a result, the working-class hero is plagued by a crisis of identity and self-alienation:

> they [i.e. the authors of the Angry Decade] are a new *rootless*, *faithless*, *classless class* – and consequently, because of a feeling of being misplaced and misprized, also often charmless – who are becalmed in the social sea […] They are acutely conscious of lacking the arrogant composure of the ruling-class line: *they are strangers to their own sort.* They feel a mixture of guilt about renegading from their hereditary background and contempt for the oafish orthodoxy of their families (Allsop 1969: 27, emphasis is mine).

Effectively, the working-class hero feels nowhere at home; despite the fact that critics such as Allsop and Gindin meticulously examine the literary phenomenon of the Angry Young Men, they tend to analyze their situation first and foremost in terms of the hero's education, class affiliation and *embourgeoisement* or social mobility. Although these characteristics are of great importance when dealing with the works of all authors of working-class fiction, both Allsop and Gindin unjustly tend towards a sort of inexplicable, whimsical and childish "anger" of the working-class protagonist, whom they classify as "psychotic" or "schizoid", thus leaning towards some sort of existential feeling of *ennui* or *malaise*.

Several important critics (Allsop, Gindin and Kreuzer) noted and discussed the attitude of gloominess of the young generation in Britain's 1950s. This apathy of the working-class hero, though often branded as an existentialist kind of lethargy, also bears an underlying anti-establishment characteristic, Gindin claims: "the existential attitude also has a public corollary in the constant iconoclasm directed against the established religious, political and commercial order so evident in the works of Amis, Wain, Alan Sillitoe, and many others" (Gindin 1963: 12).

This anti-establishment feature, so prominent in working-class fiction, reinforces the idea that the "us" versus "them" binary functions as the underlying manifestation of alienation in all working-class novels of the 50s. Although Gindin is right in asserting that skepticism has engulfed not only the working-classes but also the upper social strata of postwar Britain (ibid.: 103-105), I claim that this is not the genuine reason for the phenomena of alienation of the hero in working-class fiction, as the working-class hero is trying to

(re)refashion his identity, in order to escape poverty and hardships which historically have been part and parcel of his social fabric. The hero's quest for identity is, I claim, by no means an existentialist, inexplicable or unfathomable one. The roots of this process of alienation and re-appropriation of the world do not stem from existentialist *malaise*, but are entirely and completely psychosocial.

This view is also supported by German literary critic Ingrid Kreuzer, who identifies the working-class hero's new realism as follows:

> this hero, always a negative 'antihero', is, judging by [his] formation or attachment, also an intellectual, even if he does not admit or effectively denies his intellect. His character is made up of paradoxes; his relation to the world illustrates a conglomerate of diverging attitudes. He constantly finds himself in a state of alienation from his environment, which is embodied for him as society in its entirety. The shared theme of the novels [..] is the hero's attempt to break through this alienation through a refashioning of his ego and his quest for a place, which would make the breakthrough possible[50] (Kreuzer 1972: 15-16, translation is mine).

According to Kreuzer, the main instances of alienation in the novels of the Angry Young Men can be grouped into three main categories, even if variants and combinations of the three categories can be identified in particular working-class novels. Firstly, we have the attempt of the hero to break away from his original social class. This breakout or escape signifies a search for his self and a new, adequate way of life; the novel in this case portrays the path of the hero as a repetitive consequence of his confrontation with reality which corresponds to his paradoxical personality and leads to various attempts of adaptation and re-appropriation of reality.

The second group consists, as opposed to the first one, of the rather static type of novel which deals with a "state of alienation of the hero, which has become permanent"[51] (ibid.:

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[50]In the original: "Dieser Held, immer ein negativer 'Antiheld', ist, nach Ausbildung oder Anlage, immer auch ein Intellektueller, selbst wenn er sich nicht zu seinem Intellekt bekennt oder ihn sogar verleugnet. Sein Charakter setzt sich aus Paradoxen zusammen; sein Weltverhältnis stellt ein Konglomerat divergierender Einstellungen dar. Er befindet sich immer im Stadium der Entfremdung von seiner Umwelt, die für ihn die Gesamtgesellschaft repräsentiert. Gemeinsames Thema der Romane [...] ist der Versuch des Helden, diese Entfremdungssituation durch eine Neukonstituierung des Ichs und die Suche nach einem Existenzort, der sie zuläßt, zu durchbrechen" (Kreuzer 1972: 15-16).

[51] In the original: "Entfremdungszustand des Helden, der permanent geworden ist" (ibid.: 16).

16, translation is mine). Adaptation in the new environment will essentially fail if attempted, or is not present at all. The breakout from the hero's social class has either failed or, once more, is not even attempted. If the breakout occurs, it remains largely ineffective, since the hero does not identify himself with the reality of his chosen offside, or he inevitably fails to find the much sought-after freedom he once envisaged or hoped for. In this type of novel, the hero's existence is hopelessly predetermined and stagnant.

Last but not least, Kreuzer's third group consists of a combination between the first and the second group. The breakaway from the hero's original social class and his separation have occurred; however, the new milieu seems inadequate to the hero's own character, which in effect leads to the same instance of alienation I have described in the second group. Since the refractory wrath and frustration of the outsider cannot be turned against the negated establishment, official constraints, rules or institutions, the hero is left with no alternative but to direct all this anger inwards. This anger is also expressed by the hero's wish to impress his fellow characters and perturb or faze interpersonal relationships: he desires to amaze his fellow characters – a close friend, a woman, or even a complete stranger. According to Kreuzer, "the only possible escape from this form of existence is represented by the migration into his inwardness, the retreat into his own ego, the emigration into a paradoxical 'out', which materializes itself only on an imaginary level" (ibid.: 17, translation is mine).[52]

What is more, the traits of the working-class hero are also a solid feature of working-class fiction in the 50s: the personality of the hero dominates throughout the novel and the plot is monomaniacally focused on the hero. The secondary characters are usually unimportant, as Kreuzer calls them, "ornamental ballast"[53] (ibid., translation is mine), mechanical catalysts for the hero's reactions. The new type of hero is anchored in a reality which is dysfunctional and has no other option than to take refuge in the inner world he often inhabits, as Allsop poignantly put it: "this, I think, is the first difference that strikes you

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[52] In the original: "Den einzig möglichen Ausweg aus dieser Existenzform bildet die Flucht in die Innerlichkeit, der Rückzug auf das eigene Ich, die Emigration in ein paradoxes ‚Out', das sich nur noch in der Imagination verwirklicht. Dieses Abseits in der Phantasie wird zum einzigen Ort, an dem sich dieses Ich noch konstituieren kann" (ibid.: 17).
[53] In the original: "dekorativer Ballast" (ibid.).

when you take a panoramic view of the creative work being done in the 50s. It is *highly introspective*" (Allsop 1969: 37, emphasis is mine).

What links Kreuzer's three groups is precisely the defective interplay between the "us" and "them" binary, resulting in various phenomena and feelings of alienation. The hero's alienation results, I claim, either from (a real or attempted) endeavour to successfully cross barriers within the deeply flawed relationship between two opposing constituents of the "us" and "them" binary, whose common relational category is that of class, or from his clear refusal to participate in the social mobility scheme, thus paradoxically maintaining the traditional "us" and "them" divide. As previously mentioned, these diametrically opposed constituents of the "us" versus "them" binary function as almost completely antithetic and mutual antipodes: the world of the "us" is the reversed and inverted world of the "them". There is either no change or interaction between the "us" and the "them", or the attempt will fail – in both cases, the alienation of the working-class hero is almost a certainty.

What is more, the text corpus which I am going to discuss reinforces not only the "us" versus "them" binary model, but also respects Kreuzer's classification: thus, the first novel which I will discuss, *Billy Liar* (1959) by Keith Waterhouse, corresponds to Kreuzer's first type of alienation, i.e. the hero's failed attempt to break away from his environment; the second novel, *Saturday Night Sunday Morning* (1958), written by Alan Sillitoe, matches Kreuzer's second instance of alienation, i.e. the hero's constant and predetermined, permanent state of alienation[54]; last but not least, Kreuzer's third instance of alienation is fully reflected in the third novel to be discussed, *Room at the Top* (1957), by John Braine, in which the separation of the hero from his own social class has already occurred, but he finds himself trapped in a wholly inadequate and alienating environment.

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[54] Despite the fact that Kreuzer does not include Sillitoe's novel in her analysis of Angry Young Men fiction, due to the hero's lack of education (i.e. not an "intellectual"), she still draws on Sillitoe's novels in her analysis for reasons of comparison, showing that both the working-class and the "intellectual" heroes share common traits. However, Kreuzer's distinction between intellectual and non-intellectual has no bearing on the us versus them binary and will not be taken into account in the following analysis (cf. Kreuzer 1972: 15-16).

3.4. The Multidimensional Model of Alienation

3.4.1. Alienation in Post-Industrial Fiction of the 1990s: North vs. South

Moving from working-class realism and phenomena of alienation which characterize most working-class novels of the 50s to working-class fiction in the 90s, it is necessary to reassess the previously discussed alienation model, firstly in terms of binary persistence and secondly, with regard to the binary constituents. The emergence of a so-called "*Celtic Fringe*" in working-class fiction during the 1980s and 1990s holds the necessary clues to the changes within the alienation model previously discussed: this "*Celtic Fringe*", made up of authors based mainly in Scotland (who are also geographically linked to a very specific region or area, e.g. Kelman (Glasgow) and Irvine Welsh (Edinburgh)) are representatives of a distinctively working-class, Northern, Scottish consciousness, counterposed to the more affluent, conservative, middle- and upper-class English South[55]. Their novels offer a fresh view on alienation as a concept, based on the conflict between a poorer and more "backward" Celtic North and an affluent, more dynamic Anglo-Saxon South. The former dichotomy of working-class versus upper-class from the 50s becomes, as I will try to show, subordinated to the North-South binary.

The sheer number of Scottish authors writing fiction dealing with working-class subjects and aspects coming from Scotland cannot be put down to mere chance. As Craig Cairns put it, "Scottish culture has more affinity with the working-classes than English culture, is more imbued with a continuing sense of a living 'folk' culture" (Craig 1989: 3). Thus, it may be asserted that the Celtic Fringe authors are, at least conceptually, focusing on various aspects of alienation in working-class fiction. Although the present-day authors, much like their predecessors from the 50s, refuse to let themselves be included in a literary current, the similarities are nevertheless visible: not only do they share the same

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[55] As suggested by Cairns Craig, Scottish authors not only construct their narratives as part of a Scottish consciousness, but "they generally do so by locating their narrative within strictly demarcated regional boundaries" (Craig 1990: 221).

cultural identity, but also their collective focus on contemporary working-class individu-als from Scotland in the age of Thatcherism or its immediate aftermath. Despite small differences between the authors, they generally focus on a specific region within Scot-land, have a similar style of writing or insist on the literary (re)construction of the ver-nacular. What is more, the focus of most of their narratives seems to be the same: the deep feelings of alienation and estrangement of working-class individuals and their at-tempt to come to terms with it in one way or another.

Thus, an insight into the more recent guise of the alienation model can be gained if we are to interpret the Celtic Fringe novels through the lens of a North-South divide within Great Britain, which would function as a different type of consciousness in relation to regional identity. Thus, the reconceptualization of alienation during the 90s resides in the shift which occurred in our previously discussed binary model: the previously discussed "us" versus "them" constituents are replaced with "North" versus "South", Celtic Scot-land versus Anglo-Saxon England. The shift from class to geographic distinctiveness occurs in virtually all novels of the Celtic Fringe, where the previous class antagonism is still present, but subordinated to that of regional identity.

In order to fully understand this process, it is necessary to briefly discuss the increasingly waning concept of class in contemporary cultural and literary criticism: perhaps the most important category in Marxist literary theory during the 50s and 60s, the concept of class has nowadays fallen out of both fashion and use in contemporary academia. Thinkers such as Malcolm Bradbury, Zygmunt Bauman and Richard Bradford ascribe the current lack of interest in the concept of class to either the advent of multiculturalism (i.e. the "multicultural turn") or the postmodernist view of a fluid, classless society. However, the "class blindness" of both of these currents in fiction and culture is still being challenged by prominent (Marxist) thinkers such as Terry Eagleton, Stephen Ross, Philip Tew and Slavoj Žižek. They generally believe that the concept of class has been largely replaced

with the multiculturalist trinity of race, gender and sexuality[56], once Marxism had been challenged by the advent of postcolonialism.[57]

Further proponents of the resilience of class in current sociopolitical discourse world include thinkers such as John Kirk, who claims that "class itself becomes the 'Third Space' which disrupts any notions of celebration of difference" and that "anxieties around class arise in the dialectic of simultaneous working-class absence and presence" (Kirk 2003: 191). Guy Standing maintains the view that "as inequalities grew, and as the world moved towards a flexible open labour market, class did not disappear" (Standing 2011: 7). Drawing on Raymond William's classification of dominant, emergent and residual cultural forms, Maria McGlynn commendably states that the working-class fiction of the 50s has been "incorporated" into dominant culture, reinforcing instead of challenging the status-quo and that it falls on a newer, emergent and local sort of fiction which must enforce a paradigmatic change of working-class fiction. McGlynn further claims that a new working-class narrative should resist incorporation through the shifting of perspective and through use of emergent, rather than dominant formal techniques. Contrary to William's formulation, which predicates itself on an ideal of global proletariat, "the local, rather than being residual resistance, through its refusal of the dominance of the metropole, offers emergent forms" (McGlynn 2008: 7).

It appears that in the 1990s, the emergent element is the post-industrial "Celtic Fringe" fiction, with its greater emphasis on the local and its opposition to the centre. All class narratives of the 50s, anticipating the numerous cultural, political and social changes which have occurred in the last forty years, have led to an emergent, Northern, Scottish "subculture". Not only has Britain shifted, according to Eagleton, "from a national culture with a single set of rules to a motely assortment of sub-cultures, each one at an angle to the others" (Eagleton 2004: 16), but also from the concept of class to the concept of

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[56] Stephen Ross suggests the concept of class does not have the power it once had, but that is currently being used as "shorthand for economic inequality" (Ross 2001: 2).
[57] Researchers such as Adonis Andrew and Stephen Pollard maintain that class is actually more present than ever in our contemporary society and literature, their findings suggesting that social mobility nowadays is no greater than the Industrial Revolution and that presently the underclass is not a new class, but quite simply a new "Servant Class" sprung from the traditional working-class (Andrew and Stephen Pollard 1997: 12).

national identity within the previously mentioned binary model. Thus, my contention is that within Celtic Fringe fiction, Welsh's drug subculture and Kelman's disaffected underclass are nothing else than the contemporary, newer rendition of alienation phenomena in what can be termed British postindustrial working-class fiction in the 90s.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the North versus South divide is also an incipient characteristic in the fiction of the 50s; characters such as Billy Liar, who dreams about making a career in London, or Joe Lampton's co-worker, Charles, who lands a job in London, already operate within a North versus South framework. However, in the working-class novels of the 50s, the North-South divide is merely hinted at and subordinated to the class divide, which plays the primordial role. Conversely, in the fiction of the Celtic Fringe during the 90s, the concept of class is still present, but becomes subordinated to both the regional and national aspects of contemporary Britain. It is interesting to note that the concept of class seems to have been replaced with the concept of nation, since in a postindustrial society, in which the traditional working-classes have almost disappeared and the British Labour has given up on much of its leftist tradition[58], the class awareness of the populace has seriously diminished; on the other hand, Scottish nationalist tendencies within Great Britain have gained momentum in the last years[59]. This may be one of the reasons why this hierarchical shift from class to nationality has also occurred in contemporary British fiction.

Jim Sillars, a Scottish MP and Deputy Secretary of the Scottish National Party (SNP) stated in an interview with John Foley that "Britain is a fiction. It is the state of England with Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish appendages. The whole thrust of policy is bound

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[58] Slavoj Žižek claims that Blair was in fact more Thatcherite than Thatcher herself. The coming to power of the New Left in Britain is seen as a signal that nothing was going to change: "the Thatcher revolution was in itself chaotic, impulsive… it was only the 'Third Way' Blairite government that was able to *institutionalize* it, to stabilize it into new institutional forms" (Žižek 2008: 189).

[59] Perhaps the best proof in this respect is the much debated Scottish Independence Referendum, which has taken place on 18th of September 2014. The Scottish National Party (SNP) was urging the Scottish electorate to vote for Scotland's independence from the United Kingdom and become a sovereign country and nation. The Yes-Campaign lost, with 45 % voting for Scotland's independence, and 55 % voting for remaining a part of the UK with a promised "devo max" by the then British Prime Minister, David Cameron. After the final decision to leave the EU, Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has again expressed her party's intention to hold a second Independence Referendum which would enable Scotland to break away from England and remain in the European Union.

to be English" (Foley, *International Socialist Group*, 2014). But it is not only politicians who support the rhetoric of the United Kingdom being effectively a broken union, in which the Celtic North has been suffering under English colonialism. Well-known authors of the Celtic Fringe such as Irvine Welsh and James Kelman were both in favour of an independent Scotland and encouraged the Scottish electorate to vote yes in the Scottish Referendum in 2014, thus further cementing the dividing line between the South and North in the United Kingdom. In an interview published in *The Independent*, Irvine Welsh makes public his view that the United Kingdom is formed on imperialist and hegemonic structures of powers:

> This state has stopped England from pursuing its main mission, namely to build a post-imperial, multi-racial society, by forcing it to engage with the totally irrelevant (from an English perspective) distractions of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. From the viewpoint of the Scots, it has foisted 35 years of a destructive neo-liberalism upon us, and prevented us from becoming the European social democracy we are politically inclined to be (Welsh, *The Independent*, 2013).

In the same article, Welsh describes the concept of Britishness as essentially being a form of "assumed Englishness". As Welsh sees it, "Britishness" has become very different from what it was immediately after World War 2. If during the late 40s and early 50s, Britishness was intrinsically inclusive, its main task having been the creation of the welfare state, nowadays "the Union Jack is the increasingly shrinking fig leaf that strives to cover the growth of an English nationalism and consciousness, which is visible in almost every aspect of life in these islands over the past 30 years" (ibid.).

Similarly, James Kelman claimed that Scottish independence gained through the referendum might reinforce a Northern consciousness which today is subordinated to a Southern English paradigm. Kelman's personal take on this issue is meant to stress the fact that Scottish independence should not be influenced by economic repercussions, it being essentially (and far more importantly) a question of Scottish self-respect (Kelman, *National Collective*, 2012).[60] Advocating the cultural distinctiveness of Scottish literature

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[60] As Kelman sees it, "independence is not an economic decision, it concerns self-respect. How many countries do we know in the world where the people need a debate about whether or not they should determine their own existence. Ultimately it concerns survival. For whatever value our culture has it is ours,

and consciousness, Kelman resents the idea of incorporating what he perceives as being distinctly Scottish literature in the broader term of British literature. Drawing on the same concept of "assumed Englishness" as Welsh, he effectively claims that "what is being pushed here as 'British Literature' is what we already know as English literature" (ibid.), making a clear-cut distinction between English literature and English-language literature:

> People have been forced to use English, their own languages have been debased, proscribed; shelved, set aside or withdrawn. Not simply Scottish, Irish and Welsh writers but writers from the English regions too; writers from Jamaica, Trinidad, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, India, Pakistan, South Africa, Singapore, Australia, USA, New Zealand, Canada and all those other cultures who make use of a force-fed English, the language of imperial authority, to create their own poetry, prose and drama in a process that may eventually reestablish their own identity. (Kelman, *The Independent*, 2012)

Thus, as Böhnke puts it, we might regard Scotland as "independent and distinct from the rest of the United Kingdom and from England in particular" (Böhnke 1999: 13). It becomes clear that the Celtic Fringe, as the cultural movement which underpins the broader political and social tendencies in Scotland, should be seen as equally Scottish and un-English. Its role as a major supporter of a distinctive Scottish national identity is hard to negate, since, if we agree with Böhnke, "the political concept of the nation itself has a fictional quality. Literature is thus nation's *alter ego*"(ibid.: 26, emphasis in the original). Not only were the main representatives of the Celtic Fringe deploring Scotland's subnational status in fiction, but they were also politically active and very much in favour of Scotland's independence and the yes vote in the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum. This in turn put Scottish national identity back on the European political agenda, "even if an independent Scottish state is still *Zukunftsmusik*" (ibid.: 26, emphasis in the original). The Scottish nationalist current can be perceived as a clear strengthening of the

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and like Sorely MacLean once said about the Gaelic language, even if it was a poor thing, it would still be loved, and those who used it would still have the desire to see it flourish" (Kelman, *National Collective* 2012).

North versus South dichotomy, which functions as the underpinning of virtually all literary narratives of the Celtic Fringe authors and British politics as a whole, increasingly so during the last twenty years.

As Katharine Cockin puts it, within the North – South opposition, the "stark binary serves to fix the subordinated North, reinforcing the hegemony of the South […] The North therefore *functions strategically as the Other*" (Cockin 2012: 4, emphasis added). The process of 'othering' functions in the exact manner of the previously discussed "us" versus "them" divide, while the binary model remains intact. In the case of the North-South binary, the two constituents are also antithetically constructed and function as perfect opposites; alienation stems from, as previously mentioned, a dysfunctional relationship between the two opposing binary constituents.

This divide between Scotland and England also functions as a form of internal colonialism, characterised by Scottish sectarianism and English expansionism, as Kilfeather remarks:

> the Irish, and more particularly the Scottish and Welsh differ in one significant way from other minorities in that the imagined communities described by the terms 'the United Kingdom' and even 'Great Britain' depend on the fiction of their consent to inclusion within Britishness, and for the last fifty years that fiction has been under increasing pressure. (Kilfeather 2000: 11)

In effect, many authors and thinkers believe that Scotland and Northern Ireland have been ruled by a southern English Westminster, which has had little mandate from the Celtic North, an aspect which has greatly contributed to the feeling of being "internally" and "culturally colonised". In the case of Scotland, this feeling of national alienation stems from its double status within the United Kingdom: both historically and politically, Scotland has been part of Great Britain for more than three centuries, yet the lower status felt by many Scot testifies to a perception of being somehow being colonised; the authors' focus on Scottish subnational awareness, attitudes and mindframes, especially in the case of Irvine Welsh, demonstrates their interest in "Scotland's subnational status within the United Kingdom" (Schoene 2010: 66). Similarly, according to Craig, the internal colonialism of Scotland also stems from the fact that, despite its partnership with England,

Scotland has never "been integrated into the culture values of the British state. The texture of Scottish life, in its religious, educational, legal linguistic forms, remains distinct from that of England to an extent which is little recognised in England, let alone the outside world" (Craig 1989: 3). In this case, a whole nation can be said to have been subjected to feelings of alienation, due to what Craig calls "unstable identity": "an instability which, in comparison with the surety of other cultures' certainties – and particularly England's – gave rise to the conception of the Scot as, in some sense, schizophrenic, self-divided" (Craig 1989: 7).

Moving from the more general aspects of the North vs. South dichotomy, I should also discuss the concrete, sociopolitical developments during 1980s Britain, developments whose repercussions can be still felt today. The decades' long reign of Margaret Thatcher, Britain's first female Prime Minister from 1979 till 1990 has brought about an un-precedented assault on working-class communities all over Britain, but the heavily industrialised North was hit hardest by the Thatcherite reforms (cf. Sinfield 1997: 296-297). Her attempts to privatize the public services and the heavy industry, to crush the power of the trade unions, to deregulate and to give far more power to the free marked (the so-called 'liberalization' of the market) have produced unparalleled effects for working-class communities, especially miners (cf. Marwick 1991: 138-146). Thus, the recession in Scotland during the 1980s brought with it mass unemployment and a radical change of the fabric of Scottish society: "Scotland, along with much of the industrial North in the United Kingdom, saw a rapid decline in manufacturing jobs […] 1.5 million jobs were lost, and unemployment rates ran between 15 and 20 percent in the North, Scotland, and Wales" (McGlynn 2008: 2).

Similary, Ronald L. Martin claims that Thatcher's reforms have led to a "two-nation project" (cf. Martin 2010: 27), which in turn produced dramatically uneven results in Britain, with a finance- and service-oriented, prosperous South and an industrialized, state-owned manufacturing industry North. The brunt of the Thatcherite deindustrializa-tion process "was borne by the older industrial areas and cities of Northern Britain" (ibid.). Two of Thatcher's most notorious policies featured the so-called idea of "trickle-down" economy, which meant re-distribution of wealth according to the inner workings

of the free market and the extremely unpopular "poll tax". Hardest hit were again the British working-classes, according to Ian Haywood:

> The Tories set about undoing not just the reforms of the postwar years but the whole socialist heritage of the last 150 years. The British working class was to be returned to a condition in which there was no right to job security, no right to organized self-protection and in which the discourse of social relations was ruthlessly commodified: the 'cash nexus' became the primary signifier of the value and quality of the social fabric. (Haywood 1997: 139)

Given the fact that the much more heavily industrialized North has had to suffer most from Thatcherite reforms (cf. Davies & Sinfield 2000: 53), this has further deepened regional tensions between the Scottish North and the English South. As Arthur Marwick puts it, stiff opposition to Thatcher from the Scottish electorate already engenders a feeling of a different, un-English distinctiveness: "there was, by the early eighties, a great surge in the sense of a separate Scottish identity" (Marwick 1991: 141).

Thus, we can conclude that the vacuum left by the disappearance of the traditional, "organic" working-class has been felt far more intensely in the North than in the South of the Britain. This seems to be the case not only because the North was much more industrialized than the South, but also due to Scottish insistence on the local. As predicted, the transformation of the working-class into a consumer class has *de facto* occurred in Scotland; the working-class hero of the 90s is either characterized by a deep and total disaffection (such as in Kelman's *How Late it Was, How Late*) from which there is no possibility to escape, or, alternatively, the only escape is offered by drug abuse (i.e. Welsh's *Trainspotting*).

What is more, the view that during the 1980s and 1990s, the tendency of (previous) subcultures to replace mainstream culture is prevalent in the fiction of the Celtic Fringe. This reshaping of mainstream culture is accompanied by the social downgrading of the working-class into a consumer underclass. As Dominic Heads sees it, "the rise of the underclass in the 1980s and 1990s […] installs new levels of inequality, and a potentially more damaging kind of social disjunction" (Head 2002: 73). However, Head fails to link the Northern working-class fiction of the 80s and 90s and its "social disjunction" to the alienation debate, which in my view is especially visible when it comes to the

representation of working-class youth in the Celtic Fringe novels. The newer, Northern perspective is markedly characterized by a deep sentiment of alienation and emotional disaffection: "the army of cleaners and menial service workers, paid a pittance, often working only a few hours here and there, cash-in-hand, no questions asked, ministering to the world above in its homes, offices, hospitals and schools" (ibid.) replace in fiction the hard-working yet financially affluent young heroes of the Angry Young Men novels.

It is this newer generation of youngsters who have far bleaker perspectives than their working-class predecessors in the 1950s; the massive reduction (if not complete disappearance) of the traditional working-class has caused (even if through no fault of its own) the emergence of the so-called precariat[61], made up especially of "women, youngsters, the de-skilled, immigrant workers […]. Thus, the face of the modern 'working world' is made from illegal guest-workers exploited by the building industry, the supermarket till-girls, the fast-food employee" (Autain 2012: 37, translation is mine).[62] The new precarious hero is to be found in virtually all works of fiction of the Celtic Fringe. Thus, this should be seen as a distinctive trait of contemporary Northern consciousness and an immediate result of the Thatcherite decades of social reforms implemented in Britain. The definitive transformation of the working-class hero of the 50s into a de-skilled, part-time jobber or jobless person waiting for the "gyro", a social reject and outcast plays a crucial role in the works of Welsh and Kelman, which I will discuss in detail later in chapter 4.

Moving away from sociopolitical aspects of a North-South divide to the level of aesthetics and voice in British working-class fiction, we find that, as Cockin puts it, "the North is audible […]. In the novel, the northern character is especially identifiable by a distinctive accent" (Cockin 2012: 10). Horst Prillinger notes that the unsuccessful attempt at Scottish

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[61] "Precariat" is a portmanteau word made up of the morphemes "precarious" and "proletariat"; presently perceived as being a "class-in-the-making", it was used by French sociologists in the 1980s to define seasonal workers, but since then has acquired a more complex meaning, referring to those members of society who live without job security and have few employment rights. Thus, in Italy, the term "*precariato*" has come to signify "a precarious existence as a normal state of living", while in Germany the term "*Prekariat*" describes "not only temporary workers, but also the jobless who have no hope of social integration. This is close to the Marxian idea of 'Lumpenproletariat'" (Standing 2011: 9).

[62] In the original: "Cette précarité touche essentiellement les femmes, les jeunes, les non-qualifiés, les travailleurs étrangers. Ainsi, le visage du "monde ouvrier" moderne, c´est celui des travailleurs sans-papiers exploités dans le bâtiment, des caissieres des supermarché, des jeunes de la restauration rapide" (Autain 2012: 37).

devolution in 1978 failed to ensure a political independence of Scotland, but it did greatly affect the Scottish intelligentsia: "it seems that after *political* efforts had turned out to be in vain, all energies were then directed towards establishing a *cultural* independence from England" (Prillinger 2000: 17, emphasis in the original). The 1980s witnessed an unprecedented upsurge in Scottish fiction, with writers such as Alasdair Gray, William McIllvaney, James Kelman and Irvine Welsh. Both Kelman and Welsh reject standard English and use a Scottish vernacular (in the case of Kelman, we have Glasgow working-class vernacular, while Welsh uses a variety of Standard English with a heavy Scottish Edinburgh-type pronunciation, a certain kind of demotic Scots).

The role of the Scottish vernacular is threefold, as I will try to demonstrate: not only does it represent the hybrid pronunciation of the Scottish "uneducated" working-classes, but it concomitantly disempowers and marginalizes Standard English, effectively rendering it as "abnormal" when the reader encounters it, such as for instance in the novels of Welsh, who uses Standard English to narrate only four chapters in *Trainspotting*. What is more, the use of "written stylization of 'uneducated' speech" (cf. Whyte 1998: 274) also effectively empowers the underclass, bringing it to the foreground and establishing its sociolect as the norm. Robert A. Morace perceives the use of vernacular as a declaration of Scottish subcultural identity. The concentrical levels range from underclass youth, i.e. the new Northern, Scottish working-class hero, to working-class Leith, incorporated into a cultured Edinburgh, contained within Scotland, which is in itself contained within Britain, whose capital is London and language is Standard English (cf. Morace 2001: 27-28). As Welsh himself puts it, vernacular is an exclusive symbol of the underclass: "the last thing I want is all these fuckers up in Charlotte Square putting on the vernacular as a stage managed thing. It's nothing to do with them" (Farquarson, *Scotland on Sunday*, 1993).

The "Northern character"[63] of the newer working-class novel represents an attempt of the authors to assert their own distinct consciousness and difference from the English. Not

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[63] As Tim Lott aptly writes in *The Guardian*, the vast majority of present-day working-class authors (and fiction) is located in Scotland. The English working-class novel and novelist has long disappeared, as Lott points out, in the mid-60s: "since that brief dawning, working-class writes and working-class narratives have more or less disappeared from the world of literary fiction in England. All the above narratives – and

only does the use of the Scottish "voice" mark a linguistic and textual subversion of social hierarchies, but also a claim to the equality of working-class language, culture and experience:

> through the power of a poetic tradition that ennobles the language of the working man and makes him the equal of the high born – 'A man's a man for a' that' – the peasant who has been 'sair held to the grindstone' is allowed to become the equal of his author in his statement of political idealism. Far from being the language of the gutter, Scots, in this context is the language of an ultimate ideal of solidarity, the medium of a higher morality which is the more powerfully articulated precisely because it enacts equality between 'high' and 'low', the literary and the oral, through the very history of its development as a language and a dialect (Craig 1999: 80).

Siobhán Kilfeather goes as far as asserting that the Celtic re-emergence starting with the 80s has established a distinctive and idiosyncratic Celtic identity which will further enlarge the North-South divide in what effectively constitutes a "disunited kingdom" (cf. Kilfeather 2000: 9). She also supports the view that the positive reception of Northern Celtic fiction and film worldwide has established a certain "Celtic chic" and "Celtic iconoclasts" – "it is now fashionable to be Celtic, in ways such as Kavanagh could never have imagined" (ibid.: 26). Her inclusion of both Irvine Welsh and James Kelman in this trend further cements the importance of the two authors within the so-called Celtic fringe fiction of the 90s.

The popularity of both the Angry Young Men Movement during the 50s and the Celtic Fringe during the 90s is yet another aspect which connects the two literary movements. Peter Russell writes that during the 1950s and 60s, with the publication of John Braine's "*Room at the Top*" (1957) and Richard Hoggart's "*The Uses of Literacy*" (1957) "northern literature, film, television and popular music penetrated the national culture to an extent hitherto unknown. Indeed, there was a kind of 'northernisation' of the national culture" (Russel 2004: 18). What functions as a red thread connecting the movement of the Angry

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writers, [i.e. Ali Smith, Irvine Welsh, AL Kennedy, James Kelman], incidentally, are northern" (Tim Lott. *The Guardian*. 2015).

Young Men and the Celtic Fringe is precisely the plethora of alienation phenomena stemming from a faulty relationship between two opposite constituents within an indissoluble binary framework. The narratives of Scottish authors such as Kelman, Welsh and others, offer a new perspective on the same concept of alienation, not only under the guise of class, but of also national identity. In effect, by identifying the alienation phenomena of the main characters, we see the major sociological, political and economic changes which have occurred in the preceding four decades mirrored in a general mood of disaffection and impotence. As Cairns Craig puts it, in the case of Kelman and Welsh, the focus is not on the traditional working-class location, such as the mine or the factory (as is the case in the fiction of the 50s), but on the ex-working-class and now disaffected individuals, on the total breakup and disintegration of postindustrial Northern realism:

> the traditional [i.e. working class] life has been decimated: founded on heavy industry and on a mass society whose masses could be brought into solidarity, it has been wiped out by the destruction of the traditional Scottish industries. Kelman's central characters are the leftovers of the collapse of working class life and of the languages which sustained it: they inhabit a fragmented linguistic community which is mirrored by their own inner fragmentation (Craig 1999: 100).

Nevertheless, it is my opinion that the Celtic Fringe novels must not be perceived as a structural monolith; there are differences between the authors that surpass style and use of orthography. Firstly, I would like to emphasize the differences between Kelman and Welsh: for instance, when dealing with Welsh, we can ascertain a certain generational shift when compared to his older peers, such as Kelman; Welsh focuses more on the newer generations, the youngsters and their subcultural expressions of identity, while Kelman's focal point is the disaffected working-class individual in his forties. Not only is Welsh's literary debut (1990) far more recent than Kelman's (1970), but he manages an effective breakaway from the "Glasgow bias" (Kelman, McIllvaney and others) who have established themselves as a sort of Celtic working-class literary orthodoxy. Though Welsh retains in his novels many features of working-class fiction, he goes beyond the self-imposed limits of his peers: his focus is no longer on disaffected bus conductors as symbols of Scottish working-class representatives, but the Scottish youth, "composed of characters that have never worked, and in all likelihood never will" (McGuire 2010: 21), their bleak perspectives in a postindustrial world, their dependency on the state for

financial help and on drugs. Thus, Welsh focuses on the what-is-to-come, on the end-of-an-era feeling, the subcultural elements of Scottish youngsters, the impending changes in society and, a rather important aspect, not their alienation due to work, unemployment or the interference of the "them", but on their own attempt to escape everyday estrangement while insisting on the youngsters' behaviour and actions in their spare time: the clubbing scene, the party mile, music, film and fashion. As McGuire has noted, Welsh's "work deals with a decidedly post-Thatcherite world, a place where, as the arrival of the New Labour in the 1990s would soon demonstrate, there were no longer any viable alternatives to capitalism" (ibid.).

The same is also valid for the North-South divide, for it cannot be perceived as a clear-cut, unambiguous separation between a Celtic North mired in poverty and an affluent Anglo-Saxon South. The controversial and stereotypical picture of the North-South divide conjures up stark differences between a prosperous England and a deprived Scotland; these two regions being separated by a demarcation line drawn from the Wash to the Severn should be seen as a metaphor and not a real territorial divide. As Kevin writes, the North-South divide "has its economic origins in the collapse of the imperial spatial division of labour in inter-war Britain" (Morgan 2008: 150) and the so-called Barlow Report[64], which had created the intellectual basis of a North vs. South regional policies: "at the heart of this pioneering report was the argument that over- and under-development were two sides of the same coin and the solution, as elegant as it was simple, consisted of containing growth in Greater London and diverting it to the depressed areas of 'Outer Britain'" (ibid.: 151).

Ever since the Barlow Report, the highly controversial donor-recipient framework has been intensely discussed, questioned, supported or refuted, resurfacing during the 1980s (cf. Martin 2010: 15). For many, this idea of a dividing line between the North and the

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[64] In 1938, the then-Prime Minister of Great Britain, Neville Chamberlain, assigned a commission to report on urban concentration and industry. This Royal Commission was led by Sir Anderson Barlow and the Barlow Report, published in 1940, became after World War 2 a "best practice" manual for the following British governments. Essentially, the Barlow Report was based on a so-called "donor-recipient" model of regional policy, in which, an affluent London area would also financially assist the more deprived Northern regions of Great Britain.

South of Britain seems to be a gross simplification of a complex reality. Starting with the 1980s, there was intensive talk not only of a territorial divide (something which in turn became a much disputed issue during the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum), but also an income-divide, health-divide, class-divide and sociopolitical divide. Opponents of this idea refer to the fact that there is no uniform large area of poverty in the North of Britain, as there are no uniform areas of affluence in the South of Britain. According to them, the poorer London East-End, for instance, proves that the South can be as poor as Northern towns of Leeds or Edinburgh, thus invalidating the theoretical wealth-divide between Scotland and England.

Although pockets of inequality are ubiquitous in Britain and the world, these, in my opinion, do not persuasively refute the idea of a North-South divide. Martin again rightly points out, it is the "relative concentration of pockets" within a certain region that will effectively prove whether (or not) there are intra-regional differences within Britain today. The regional disparities between the North and South of Britain have been shown to be consistent in our day and age as far as economy, employment, housing, health and political preference are concerned. Not only are these imbalances persistent, but also accentuating: as Paul N. Balchin puts it, "the gap between the two parts of Britain has widened in recent years" (Balchin 1990: viii).

The same factors are observable in the north of England, a region that is geographically situated in England, but has many aspects in common with Scotland, which makes the North-South divide even more complex. In the words of Danny Dorling from the University of Sheffield, "in the north [of England] there are 'islands of affluence' in a sea of poverty. In the south, the sea is of affluence. And the contrast is growing" (No author, *The Economist*, 2015). The same article emphasizes the fact that life expectancy of people in Northern England is significantly lower than in the South (in 2008, 20% of men in Northern England are more likely to die under the age of 75 than men in Southern England) and that the Tories are broadly mistrusted, a feature which brings Northern England politically closer to Scotland than to England. Northern England is, according to Dave Russel, also subjected to a subordinate status within England itself: "Attempts at defining the North are more frequently made than is the case for other English regions. This is

clearly suggestive of its status as England's most important region, but it also underlines its essentially subordinate relationship to the 'South'" (Russel 2004: 14).

On a more humorous note, there is also the petition calling for the North of England to become part of Scotland, which, despite its extravagant demands, gathered more than 12,000 signatures. As Helen Pidd put it in *The Guardian*, "the petition says the northern English cities 'feel far greater affinity with their Scottish counterparts such as Glasgow and Edinburgh than with the ideologies of the London-centric South' and demands secession from the UK" (Pidd, *The Guardian*, 2015).

3.4.2. Alienation and Hybridity Post-2000: The Space of the Impossible.

The current-day post-2000 status quo of working-class fiction in Britain has been perhaps best described by Tim Lott in his article published in *The Guardian*:

> More recent narratives of working-class fiction have been published – but only incidentally so. Because stories of "the streets" now tend to come from post-colonial voices, such as Zadie Smith, Courttia Newland, Andrea Levy, Monica Ali and Hanif Kureishi. Their narratives explore multiple identities – ethnic, religious, cultural. These explorations may include class identity, but it is unlikely to be a primary concern" (Lott, *The Guardian*, 2015).

This seems to be true, given that the advent of 1990s triggered a paradigmatic shift to postcolonialism, multiculturalism, in short, a move from the previously relevant concept of class to that of identity as a nation. In effect, it seems, "the politics of identity has replaced the politics of class. Thus 'working-class' writing has come to mean little more than 'white' writing" (ibid.).

The disintegration of the old-fashioned postwar bourgeois society, i.e. the traditional middle-class, has engendered a new social change, by giving way to what Perry Anderson perceives as a complete postmodern breakdown of rules and norms, "the Disneyfication of protocols and tarantinization of practices" (Anderson 1998: 86). Other thinkers, such as Marxist literary theorist Aijaz Ahmad, oppose this view of the disappearance of class within postcolonial theory and perceive its conservation in postcolonial theory itself: "Postcoloniality is also, like most things, a matter of class" (cf. Ahmad 1994: 16). Amar Acheraïou even goes as far as accusing postcolonial scholars of an "anti-Marxist orienta-tion" (cf. Acheraïou 2011: 122) due to the fact that they either ignore or discredit the concept of class altogether.

If we focus on post cold-war Britain, it was John Prescott, British deputy Prime Minister under Tony Blair, who declared in 1997 that the underclasses (i.e. what remains of the

working-classes after the Postindustrial and Thatcherite reforms) have successfully become a thing of the past, since everybody was middle-class,[65] due to the fact that social barriers have been removed and upward mobility has become the norm in British society. This assertion further signals the repeated attempts by British politicians to solve the problems of the class system in Great Britain, by declaring that class has ceased to exist and that Britain, faced with a new age and a new reality, must reorient itself in order to master the challenges of today rather than dwell on aspects from the past which have little to no influence on the Britain of today. The increasing influx of immigrants from South Asia, the end of the East-West conflict in Europe and the beginning of the War on Terror, which began in 2001, have brought multiculturalism in Britain increasingly to the foreground of intellectual debate, an aspect which has also manifested itself in British fiction with the advent of postcolonialism and Southeast-Asian authors such as Hanif Kureishi, Salman Rushdie and Black Jamaican-British authors like Zadie Smith rising to national and international cultural acclaim. What these authors had in common was not their social standing according to the British class system, but their own histories of personal and cultural estrangement, as well as their identity struggles living in a country that was, not long ago, a former imperial centre ruling over its colonies, including the very countries and cultures some of these authors originally come from. In other words, these authors have found themselves transplanted from the former imperial "periphery" to the very "centre" of the Empire – Britain itself.

Strikingly, it is also in the year 2001 that the then British Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Robert Cook, famously announced not only – yet again – the end of class, but also of racial homogeneity in Britain. His famous Chicken Tikka Masala speech tries to convey the message of a multinational, racially heterogeneous country[66], by emphasizing the fact that Chicken Tikka[67] is considered a truly British

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[65] "Profile John Prescott." *BBC* 27 Aug. 2007. Web. 19. June. 2014. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/-politics/6636565.stm.

[66] Similarly, Prince Charles stated during the SS. *Windrush* Reception, emphasising that Britain was now a multicultural society: "by multicultural, I mean not a Britain where different cultures co-exist in sealed compartments, but one inhabited by individuals whose own culture has been enriched by contact with people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds" (quoted in Beck & Schröder 2006: 367).

[67] The origins of Chicken Tikka Masala are uncertain at best: some claim the dish was invented in New Delhi during the 1940s, others state that it was invented by a Bangladeshi cook in Glasgow in the 1960s.

"national dish". Cook went on to explain that this is so "not only because it is the most popular, but because it is a perfect illustration of the way Britain absorbs and adapts external influences: "Chicken Tikka is an Indian dish. The Massala (sic) sauce was added to satisfy the desire of British people to have their meat served in gravy" (Cook, *The Guardian*, 2001). What the Labour Secretary of State intended to signal with his message was Britain's full acceptance of multiculturalism, of a diverse and dynamic society, based not on race and ethnicity, but on a set of commonly shared values, a truly postracial[68] society. In the same speech, Cook challenges the idea of Britain as a quintessentially Western European, racially white, Christian monolith by asserting that throughout its history, from the Roman Conquest of Celtic Britain to the arrival of Anglo-Saxon settlers and the French-speaking Normans, Britain has always been a hybrid multiracial nation, a nation which has assimilated various and very different influences throughout its history, and has thus given birth to something new. Cook essentially dismisses the idea of a uniform, "pure Anglo-Saxon Britain", which existed prior to the arrival of Indian, Pakistani, African and Caribbean immigrants, as a "fantasy" (ibid.). Much like the amalgamation between Chicken Tikka and the masala – the result of which is neither Indian, nor Pakistani or English – all the aforementioned races, cultures and traditions have melted into and mingled with one another, creating something new from two or more previously separated and very dissimilar elements: the British hybrid. This, or so the theory goes, is "*how newness enters the world*" (Rushdie 2010: 394, emphasis in the original).

Only one year later, the 9/11 attacks shocked the whole world and brought Islamist terrorism to the attention of the Western World. Less than a decade later, Cook's successor, the Secretary of State Jack Straw, openly apologized to the British public for opening the

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Due to the numerous variants circulating, the origin of this dish has become an urban myth. The dish itself usually consists of marinated chicken pieces (tikka), various spices and yoghurt, its typical bright colour coming from the addition of the food-colouring tartrarzine. According to various surveys conducted in the UK, Chicken Tikka Masala dish has become the most popular dish in Great Britain and is exported to India and Bangladesh (Jackson 2010: 171-172).

[68] The "postracial society" is defined as a social order in which racial prejudice and racial discrimination of any "Other" no longer exists. Thus, the postracial society is by definition a multicultural society in which cultural homogeneity is not monolithic, but diverse and multi-centric.

British borders to Polish workers in 2004, candidly admitting that the British government's decision to open its borders to Eastern European immigrants was a "spectacular mistake" (Philipson, *The Telegraph*, 2013). There is also the sweeping victory of the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) at the 2014 European Elections, which campaigns for the capping of "EU immigration", especially from Eastern Europe. UKIP's main goal, as repeatedly stated by its leader, Nigel Farage, was for the United Kingdom to leave the European Union and take control of the country. After the "Brexit" referendum held on June 23rd 2016, the United Kingdom decided to leave the European Union, with the current Prime Minister of Great Britain, Theresa May, appointed as Prime Minister by the Conservative Party, in charge of implementation of the referendum outcome.

Given this daunting state of affairs of the postracial society in present-day Britain, and what is more, the discrepancies between the above-mentioned lofty theory of a mutually beneficial cultural hybridization and the political realities in Britain and Western Europe, perhaps the Chicken Tikka Masala is, after all, not the best symbol of benign and benevolent (cultural) hybridity, but a mere reaction to a rather blunt demand: as one of the invention myths goes, the dish was actually conceived merely because a disgruntled British customer asked a Bangladeshi cook (who had already prepared a traditional Bangladeshi[69] chicken tikka) where his gravy was. Faced with this surprising demand, the cook simply added a can of tomato cream soup and a few spices, and thus, he produced a "mongrel dish" (cf. Collingham 2006: 3), combining the tikka with the sauce (masala). If this is true, Iqbal Wahhab, the Indian restaurateur and editor of *Tandoori* magazine, is in fact right when he claims that the Chicken Tikka Masala was in fact not the symbol of a successful multicultural British society, but "a made-up dish, concocted to soothe the sensitive British palate" (Jackson 2010: 177). As noted by Peter Jackson, Wahhab also criticizes the dish as having "no real provenance" and for typifying yet another "concoction", namely that of benign British liberal British multiculturalism in our day and age. He concludes his article with a sobering remark: "Eating curry and breaking down racial barriers are two entirely different things" (ibid.: 178).

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[69] John Lloyd claims the dish originated in Glasgow in the late 1960s, from which it reached London. Also, he claims the cook who invented the dish was Bangladeshi, and not Indian or Pakistani (Lloyd 2009: 33).

The following pages will focus on a short critique of Homi Bhabha's idea of hybridity, taking into account aspects which Bhabha has not considered in his work. Not only will I succinctly discuss the term's etymology, its recent semantic change from negative to positive connotations, but also shortly deal with the socio-political realities concerning cultural hybridity in the UK and linguistic inexactitudes of the term as defined by Bhabha.

Seen through a postcolonial lens, the chicken tikka masala metaphor is supported by many postcolonial theorists, first and foremost Homi Bhabha, who defines this blend between two or more cultures with the help of the concept of hybridity. Bhabha has been the first to challenge the rigid binaries of colonizer/colonized, ruler and ruled, which represents the core of much of the theoretical work of Edward Said, Frantz Fanon and Aimé Césare. Bhabha perceives culture and identity as "fluid and ambivalent, rather than fixed and one-dimensional" (cf. Acheraïou 2011: 90). Hybridity is for Bhabha a prolific concept that reconstructs postcolonial theory in opposition to Said and Fanon, by erasing the binaries the latter always employed:

> All forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity. But for me the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the 'third space' which enables other positions to emerge […] the process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation (Bhabha 1994: 211).

Bhabha's views on hybridity, mélange, inbetweenness or the "third space" have become celebrated metaphors for cultural theorists in the postcolonial assault on previous binaries of prevalent concepts such as nation/foreigners, homogeneity/heterogeneity and purity/hybridity. However, as Acheraïou poignantly remarks, for Bhabha hybridity or the third space is a "space of translation and constant negotiations of meaning and identity. From his [i.e. Bhabha's] perspective, the act of translation is a significant, unsettling process of pluralization; it estranges the individuals from cultural sameness as it familiarizes and immerses them in cultural Otherness" (Acheraïou 2011: 92). According to Bhabha, the third space is constantly in flux, effectively subjecting the monolithic constituents to processes of self-alienation and resulting in a neither-nor, something which is different and yet similar to both opposing constituents at the same time.

Bhabha's assault on binaries had been largely adopted by many postcolonial critics who actively advocated hybridity as the most important characteristic of our times. Previous dichotomies such as centre and periphery, even within postcolonialism itself, are effectively challenged and deconstructed based on the idea that the constituents themselves are of a hybrid nature. As Vanessa Guignery suggests, "postcolonial theory adopted the idea of hybridity to designate the transcultural forms that resulted from linguistic, political or ethnic intermixing, and to challenge the existing hierarchies, polarities, binarisms and symmetries (East / West, black / white, coloniser / colonised, majority / minority, self / other, interior / exterior)" (Guignery 2011: 3). Bhabha's definition of hybridity is described by the *Metzler Literaturlexikon* as anti-essentialist, "an inseparable and mutual permeation of centre and periphery, oppressor and oppressed"[70] (Griem 2008: 297-298, translation is mine). Notwithstanding the recent success of such theories against binaries and cultural, social, racial homogeneity, Bhabha's views on hybridity have been challenged by many theorists who disagree with the exclusively positive connotations he ascribed to the concept.

Taking the term's etymology into account, it is interesting to note that hybridity[71] had become a celebrated term in literary criticism during the end of the 90s / beginning of the 2000s due mainly to the aforementioned definition of Bhabha (cf. Ashcroft et al. 1998: 118) and the meanings attributed to the concept by writers such Salman Rushdie, Derek Walcott and others. According to the *Longman Dictionary of Language and Culture*, hybrid means "a living thing produced from parents of different breeds" (Summers 1998: 653), while *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* defines hybrid as "an animal or plant that is the offspring of individuals of different kinds (usually, different species)" or "a person of mixed descent or mixed ancestry. Now usu. *derogatory*" (Brown 1993: 1285, emphasis in the original). Furthermore, the following meaning of the word is also given:

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[70] In the original: "eine unlösbare und wechselseitige Durchdringung von Zentrum und Peripherie, Unterdrücker und Unterdrücktem" (Griem 2008: 297-298).
[71] Kuortti and Nyman suggest that there are three other similar terms denoting "cultural transfer", namely *syncretism*, *metizaje* (or *métissage*) and *creolization*. The authors advocate the view that syncretism describes cultural mixing in the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, while creolization is often understood "as a general (but often seen as peculiar to the Caribbean region) process of 'intermixing and cultural change that products a Creole society'" (Kuortti & Nyman, 2007: 4).

"a thing derived from heterogenous sources or composed of incongruous elements" (ibid.).

German-language dictionary definitions of hybridity also emphasize the incongruity between the original elements which are going to blend[72], which in turn reinforces the different, diametrically opposed constituents of a given binary structure. Last but not least, the etymology of the term itself is imbued with undesirable connotation: *hybridus* is the Latinized version of "hubris", having in Greek the meaning of "presumption or insolence against the Gods" (Acheraïou 2011: 87). The terms "hybrid" and "hybridity" originate from and have till recently always been connected to biology and genetics, where a hybrid signifies a cross between two different species, an animal or plant which is the result of two genetically unlike individuals. Nowadays, hybridity is no longer confined to biology, but manifests itself in many different forms, such as linguistic hybridity, cultural, racial, political or social hybridity (cf. Ashcroft et al. 1998: 118).

However, criticism of Bhabha's theory of hybridity encompasses far more than merely the etymological aspects. First of all, despite Bhabha's unprecedented attack on binaries and dichotomies employed by previous thinkers, his own clear-cut distinction between hybridity as an essentially positive and progressive and a regressive and negative binary-model is, essentially, still a binary in itself. As Acheraïou rightly points out, postcolonial thinkers still unintentionally adhere to a pattern which they vigorously criticise in other discourses, namely the very existence of binary models *per se*: "for all its assault on Manichean aesthetics, the postcolonial discursive paradigm eventually boils down to a stark opposition between, on the one hand, a valued progressive hybridity, and, on the other hand, a negative, despised binary model" (Acheraïou 2011: 139). As a result, the accuracy of Bhabha's declared effacement of all binaries becomes highly questionable.

Secondly, Bhabha seems to have ignored all the negative association with the term, ascribing solely positive qualities to a term previously tainted by its racial and colonial

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[72] In German, the *Duden* dictionary defines the term hybrid (German: 'Hybride') as stemming from the Latin *hybrida*, signifying "half-breed", "bastard" or "ambisexual, androgynous, hermaphrodite-like", the original German terms used being "*Mischling*", "*Bastard*" and "*zwitterhaft*" (Scholze-Stubenrecht 2011: 891-892).

implications. Analyzed from a diachronic perspective, the term "hybridity" has come to bear positive characteristics only in the last three decades, as opposed to centuries in which its meaning was deleterious (ibid.: 88). The term itself originates from Latin, as Robert C. Young observes, meaning "the offspring of a tame sow and a wild boar" (Young 1995: 6). Young also draws on the racial implications of the term, which according to him, can be traced back to the 19th-century, meaning the human offspring of "parents of different races, half-breed" (ibid.). Similarly, Acheraïou criticises Bhabha's definition of hybridity further by claiming that Bhabha "adopted the term 'hybridity' and divested it of its colonial connotations of ontological and racial degeneration" (Acheraïou 2011: 7). The timing of this shift in meaning seems to coincide with the writings of Bhabha during the late 1990s. Acheraïou ascribes this pivotal change in meaning also to the fact that prior to the 90s, the concept of hybridity has been discussed mainly by white European intellectuals from the imperial centre, while in the last two decades it was mainly intellectuals based in Western universities but from the former non-European colonies (ibid.).

Thirdly, Bhabha's perception of hybridity becomes problematic if we take into account the socio-political realities in the UK. Bhabha seems to have completely failed to take into account the challenges immigrants from former British colonies are confronted with. Rajagopalan Radhakrishnan challenges the very essence of Bhabha's views and accuses postcolonial critics of "mendacity" (cf. Radhakrishnan 1996: 174), condemning them for their disregard for immigration realities and the ensuing phenomena of deep alienation of a vast majority of immigrants from former British colonies. Radhakrishnan blames what he calls "metropolitan" theorists for their purely theoretical approach to the concept of hybridity by appropriately claiming that avant-garde theories of hybridity effectively de-politicize hybridity and turn it into a "subjectless" concept (ibid.: 159). Furthermore, he complains about the neglect of metropolitan theorists for the felt reality of many immigrants from former (mainly Asian) colonies to Western Europe:

> their [i.e. the theorists] celebration of 'difference' is completely at odds with the actual experience of difference as undergone by diasporic peoples in their countries of residence. My diagnostic reading is that in these instances, high metropolitan theory creates a virtual consciousness as a form of blindness to historical realities. The metropolitan theory of the

diaspora is in fact a form of false consciousness that has to be demystified before the diasporic condition can be historicized as a condition of pain and alienation (Radhakrishnan 1996: 174).

Discussing the realities omitted by mainstream postcolonial literary criticism, Mita Banerjee also criticizes the trend of "highlighting" hybridity, which "seems to be a form of catering to the mainstream taste for toned-down Otherness: Indian food, in the Western metropolis, is never quite as spicy as in India" (Banerjee 2002: 32). Banerjee concurs with Radhakrishnan, adding that "a reading of migrancy that refuses to point out the flip-side of the metaphor in terms of lived experience is clearly complicit in dismissing this experience itself. Happily aloof from the world outside the text, the theory of migrancy has then become self-sufficient" (ibid.: 41).

Fourthly, Bhabha's definition of hybridity seems to have contributed significantly to the previously discussed postcolonial shift from class to identity generally embraced by post-colonial critics who drew on Bhabha's ideas of hybridity. The postcolonial conflation of the concept of race and class into one newer, politically loaded concept of "blackness" is disapproved of by some thinkers for whom the terms "immigrant" and "refugee" have come to signify all the former attributes of "black" [73], i.e. not the racial denomination for Africans or Caribbeans, but the political category including all non-European minorities, regardless of their Indian, Arab or African origins. Tabish Khahir thus claims that in our times the immigrant worker attracts Western racial prejudice and hatred: immigrants are perceived as 'parasites', a 'burden' on the welfare system and 'inassimilable' (Khahir 2001: 129-130). Similarly, there is a sort of apartheid between native Britons and the immigrants, which is wholly based on the fact that "postwar Britain inherited a tradition of imperial arrogance" (cf. Dawson 2007: 5) and an "insular sense of cultural superiority" (ibid.: 6).

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[73] As Dawson remarks, In Britain the term "black" does not mean racially black African or Caribbean, but is a term which functions as a label or "form of conscious affirmation based on political solidarity" to unite all non-white immigrants from the former British colonies who have moved to the metropolis. Derogatory terms such as "niggers", "blackies", "darkies", "nig-nogs" or "Paki" were employed interchangeably "to represent non-whites as outsiders, an invading force of dangerous aliens who threatened British identities that were conceived as pure and perpetual" (Dawson 2007: 19)

What is more, the term "hybridity" as used by Bhabha in his work is somewhat problematic seen from a linguistic point of view. Bhabha seems to have failed to specifically give an exact definition of hybridity, as Monika Fludernik noted in her grammatical analysis of the term in Bhabha's work: "Hybridity rarely appears in conjunction with a verb that would designate its active intervention in affairs; nor is its precise definition a prominent concern of the text" (Fludernik 1998: 25). Furthermore, Fludernik convincingly demonstrates that the term hybridity "primarily comes to be located in contexts rather than a thing in and by itself, with very little room for active directionality. Hybridity, the grammar suggests, is a kind of surface structure that determines the situationality of its contexts of existence" (ibid.). Given the linguistic looseness of the term and the various instances in which Bhabha uses it interchangeably, Fludernik concludes that Bhabha employs, when using the term hybridity, two different meanings: firstly, hybridity "as a *condition* of (post?)colonial culture and of colonial discourse" and secondly, "as a *function* that operates on sites and localities, but does not adhere to these" (ibid.: 30, emphases in the original).

At first glance, the concepts of alienation and hybridity, respectively, have few things in common. However, one easily identifiable aspect concerning the two concepts is that they became very popular ideas in the literary criticism of the day (cf. Broeck 2007: 43-58). Drawing on the aforementioned criticism of Bhabha's definition of hybridity, Khahir redefines hybridity as being located "in the site of possible alienation by assigning to the hybrid two or more possible identities" (Khahir 2001: 79). For Aijaz Ahmad, hybridity, far from being quintessentially postmodern, has always been a common process throughout the history of virtually all of humankind, while the idea of inventing oneself is merely an illusion: "that frenzied and constant refashioning of the Self, through which one merely consumes oneself under the illusion of consuming the world, is *a specific mode of postmodern alienation* which Bhabha mistakenly calls 'hybridity', 'contingency', 'post-coloniality'"(Ahmad 1996: 291, emphasis is mine).

Despite the apparent difference between the two concepts, I think that both Khahir and Ahmad are correct in linking hybridity to the concept of alienation. I perceive Bhabha's third space as a flawed, unbalanced relationship between the (former) imperial centre and

periphery, i.e. between native (Christian) white Europeans and (Hindu or Muslim) immigrants from the periphery, the former colonies of the British Empire. The hybrid characters between these two antagonistic constituents are depicted in postcolonial fiction more often than not as being the opposite of a successful and mutually accepted hodge-podge; instead, this third space is to be seen as "a space of the impossible":

> The space of the impossible is a site of extreme psychological, cultural and racial alienation in which the duplex, unique identity of mixed-blood offspring is subject to a double denial: it is tacitly or explicitly rejected by both sites of identification – the Western and non-Western – of which hybrid subjectivity is constitutive (Acheraïou 2011: 79).

Thus, grounding my own definition of hybridity on the criticism of Homi Bhabha's definition, I suggest that hybridity should not be seen as a theoretically positive umbrella term for all strands of cultural differences which is at odds with the experienced reality of diasporic communities, but rather, as Kuortti and Nyman put it, a concept which "implies a markedly *unbalanced relationship*" (Kuortti & Nyman 2007: 2, emphasis is mine), i.e. a relationship between two (or more) constituents within a given framework. By accepting the idea that hybridity is based on a flawed, unbalanced relationship between two opposing constituents (in the case of all three novels discussed in this chapter dealing with hybridity, the constituents would be the centre, Britain, opposed to the former periphery, the former British colonies), my definition of alienation as a dysfunctional relationship between two opposing constituents within a given binary model seems plausible. Correspondingly, Khahir remarks that the concept of hybridity within post-colonial discourse has effectively replaced the previously Marxism-based concept of alienation: "the positioning of hybrid/ity in the so-called postcolonial discourse and its connections to the now unfashionable term alienation, whose place it has also usurped, is highly problematic" (Khahir 2001: 78-79).

The issue of the concept of hybridity replacing the dated Marxism-inspired concept of alienation is problematic insofar as this aspect might clarify the self-fashioning of literary currents and the tendencies of much of the academic discourse, an issue which this study also attempts to elucidate. What is striking is that alienation phenomena such as social and cultural estrangement, fragmentation, marginalization, unbelonging and rootlessness

play a very important part in postcolonial literature, especially in novels whose main characters are somehow connected to hybridity. If that is so, could we assume that hybridity can be seen as alienation under a new guise? Perhaps a modified version of it to fit the realities of the post-Cold War period following the collapse of the Soviet Union? If we agree with this hypothesis, then the question arises why alienation has almost completely vanished from literary criticism in the last two decades. And also, are literary phenomena previously referred to as "alienation" still relevant in fiction today? If yes, how can we explain the fact that literary theory stopped discussing them altogether, after a long period in which alienation has played such an important role in fiction? Last but not least, how can the rift between the endurance of these phenomena in fiction and the present blindness of present-day literary criticism be explained?

It is my contention that hybridity more often than not acquires a very different significance from the original positive connotations of the concept if one incorporates it into the centre versus periphery framework. The third space which is interstitially negotiated between the two constituents is perceived not as a productive, but rather alienating place for the literary characters which inhabit it. Contrary to Bhabha's views, the third space does not "displace the histories that constitute it, set[ing] up new structures of authority, new political initiatives" (Bhabha 1990: 211), as I will try to show in the case analyses of three iconic novels discussed in chapter 4, namely Salman Rushdies' *Satanic Verses* (1988), Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990) and Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* (2000). Despite these novels being "manifestos for a liberatory hybridity that promises to transform Britain into a more genuinely multicultural society" (cf. Su 2011: 86), the analysis will focus on discussing hybrid characters in postcolonial fiction from a new perspective, namely that of alienation theory.

Given the fact that in all three novels, despite their claims of reinforcing a positive function to hybridity, we are dealing with very similar phenomena formerly ascribed to alienation theory (e.g. social and affective estrangement, deep psychological despair, a feeling of unbelonging, rootlessness, etc.), one can claim that the novels of Salman Rushdie, Hanif Kureishi and Zadie Smith are, at least in this respect, not only similar to

the working-class novels of the 50s and the Celtic Fringe authors of the 90s[74], but also the newer guise of the concept of alienation within the postcolonial discourse of the 2000s.

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[74] These seemingly unusual similarities between the diasporic novels and the Scottish-based working-class fiction of the 90s have also been observed by researchers dealing with the topic of internal colonialism in Great Britain. For instance, Böhnke claims that "there are striking similarities in the development of both the new English literatures and Scottish literature" (Böhnke 1999: 14).

4. The Angry Young Men Movement (1950s): The Consciousness of Class

4.1. Alienation as Inward Migration – Keith Waterhouse's *Billy Liar* (1959)

The novel *Billy Liar* by Keith Waterhouse, first published in 1959, is a first-person narrative describing the events unfolding during one single day in the life of the eponymous hero, the nineteen-year-old Billy. He is a teenager from the imaginary Yorkshire industrial town of Stradhoughton (most likely a fictional representation of Leeds, Waterhouse's own home town), still living with his parents and grandmother after his graduation from Grammar School. Although strictly seen a lower middle-class hero (his father owns a small garage), Billy is to be seen in my opinion as displaying all working-class traits other typical working-class heroes possess, such as Sillitoe's Arthur Seaton or John Braine's Joe Lampton. As is the case with all novels of the Angry Young Men fiction discussed in this study, Waterhouse focuses primarily on Billy's feeling of alienation: he "perceives himself to be on the margins of his society" (Bentley 2012: 30). The feelings of Billy's alienation stem from the flawed relationship between his working-class origin and his upper-class goals of *embourgeoisement*. These opposing constituents (i.e. working-class and upper-class) reinforce the broader "us" vs. "them" dichotomy explained in chapter 3.3.1. Billy a sort of insider-outsider, constantly (re)negotiating his own self following his frequent oscillations between identification with and rejection of his own social class.

Billy's complexity of character emerges if discussed in juxtaposition with other characters depicted in the novel: firstly, the members of his family; secondly, his colleagues and superiors from work, and thirdly, his multiple fiancées. The first aspect the reader learns is that Billy has an exceptionally vivid imagination and a penchant for fabulation. His real name is William Fisher, but he is known by all other characters as Billy Liar, precisely because of his imagination – something best exemplified by his best friend Arthur's characterization: "the problem with you, cocker, is you're a bloody liar" (Waterhouse 1962: 43).

Though lying is a common feature of most working-class heroes (Arthur Seaton, Joe Lampton and others are expert liars, especially with women), this unreliability is perhaps Billy's most prominent feature in the novel. Perhaps this is due to the fact that Billy

creates a whole world in order to escape from his feeling of estrangement, an inner fantasy world which enables him to take refuge in whenever he is faced with feelings of discomfort and anxiety in the real world: *Ambrosia*. Thus, Billy takes lying to the next level: it ceases to be a mark of distrust directed against "them" or a mere strategy to get women to have sex with him; with Billy, lying comes to signify a form of escape from the anxieties of the world he inhabits, an attempt of becoming, in his own words, "invisible": "I have a sort of – well, it's an imaginary country, where I go. It has its own people […] This is more than a town, it's a whole country. I'm supposed to be the Prime Minister" (ibid.: 152). As Kreuzer argues, "the lie serves [Billy] primarily as a negation of reality: through lies he [manages] to shield himself against reality and to disempower it"[75] (Kreuzer 1972: 82, translation is mine).

Simply put, Billy constructs a different reality through lying, a world in which (as opposed to genuine reality) he would feel at ease. Not only does he admit taking refuge in this fantasy world, but he also imagines an almost perfect world which includes Woodbine Lizzie, the girl he truly loves:

> I want a room, in the house, with a green baize door […] It will be a big room, and when we pass into it, through the door, that's it, that's Ambrosia. No one else would be allowed in. No one else will have keys. They won't know where the room is. Only we will know. We'll make models of the principal cities, you know, out of cardboard, and we could use toy soldiers, painted, for the people. We could draw maps. It would be a nice place to go on a rainy afternoon. We could go there. No one would find us. […] It would be our country (Waterhouse 1962: 153).

Billy operates within the identical "us" versus "them" model. His adversity is aimed mainly at his bosses, Councillor Duxbury and Shadrack, his own family, his industrial hometown, his other fiancées and his predetermined existence. The attempt to escape from reality (at least mentally) into a fabricated utopia manifests itself clearly throughout the novel. As Kreuzer's first instance of alienation suggests, Billy's alienation from his environment is total, the environment meaning society as a whole. His attempts at refashioning a new identity of belonging in reality are unavoidably thwarted: "I wish it

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[75] In the original: „in Billys Dasein fungiert die Lüge primär zur Negierung der Wirklichkeit: Durch sie schirmt er sich von dieser ab, entmächtigt er sie" (Kreuzer, 1972: 82).

was something you could tear up and start again. Life, I mean. You know, like starting a new page in an exercise book […] I turn over a new leaf every day […] but the blots show through the first page" (ibid.: 144).

However, the inward migration symbolized by his frequent flights into *Ambrosia* is not his only way to deal with his alienation. Not only does he invoke an "Ambrosian repeater gun" (ibid.: 163) which comfortably obliterates all other characters that somehow inconvenience him in the real world, but he also operates in two alternative modes of thinking: "I had two kinds of thinking (three, if ordinary thoughts were counted) and I had names for them, applied first jocularly and then mechanically. I called them No. 1 thinking and No. 2 thinking. No. 1 thinking was voluntary, but No. 2 thinking was not" (ibid.: 15). As Bentley argues, "No.1 thinking […] relates to his dreams, and No. 2 thinking […] contains his anxieties" (Bentley 2012: 130). Billy constantly oscillates between these two modes of thinking throughout the novel, thus showing that he is torn between two worlds, with the world of dreams (i.e. No. 1 thinking) functioning as a flight from reality (i.e. No. 2 thinking).

On the subject of family, Billy describes his own as being typically Northern English. His description of a typical family breakfast is archetypal for the Northern working-class extended family:

> Ay York-shire breakfast scene. Ay polished table, one leaf out, covahed diagonally by ay white tablecloth, damasc, with grrreen stripe bordah. Sauce-stain to the right, blackberry stain to the centre. Kellogg's corn flakes, Pyrex dishes, plate of fried bread. Around the table, the following personnel: fatha, motha, grandmotha, one vacant place (Waterhouse 1962: 8-9).

Similarly working-class are also the descriptions of his family members: his father always speaks vernacular Northern English and resents what he perceives to be the inappropriate behaviour of his son. He disapproves of Billy's coming home late and not helping him with the small family business. The father's traditional working-class attitude towards learning and education is clearly manifested in his numerous arguments and quarrels with Billy:

> With his bloody fountain pens and his bloody suéde shoes! […] Don't look me! With your look this and look that! And you get all them bloody papers and books and rubbish thrown out, anall! Before I chuck'em out first, and you with'em! […] It's ever since he left school, complaining about this and that and t'other. If it isn't his boiled eggs it's summat else. You have to get special bloody *wheat* flakes for him cos he's seen'em on television (ibid.: 80-82).

Billy's mother is also depicted as being typically working-class: firstly, she has no job and seems to be a housewife, the typical working-class "our mam". Another working-class trait emerges when Billy refuses to post her letter in which his mother requested a radio station to play a song she especially liked. Caught red-handed later on in the book, the reason he invokes for not posting the letter is related to his mother's spelling mistakes and poor command of grammar. Though his mother boasts in her letter about Billy's writing his own songs, she mentions that he had not had the proper training, his family being "just ordinary folk" (ibid.: 19). Even if tender and loving, Billy's mother usually reprimands him for his lack of interest in hard, honest work: "you can't switch and change and swop about just when you feel like it. You've got your living to earn now, you know!" (ibid.: 21). Reluctant to express her emotions clearly and directly, Billy's mother manages (not without hesitation) to confess her feelings towards her son in an exceptional moment of weakness, following the death of Billy's grandmother: "we don't say much […] but we need you at home, lad" (ibid.: 174).

The working-class flair of Billy's family and also the "us" versus "them" binary are further accentuated if we analyze his No. 1 thinking mode. In this thinking mode, Billy invents a pair of hip, modern, London-based and obviously affluent parents, who function as an antithesis of his real, No. 2 parents; thus, while his real parents are part of the working-class "we", his imaginary parents are perfect renditions of upper-class "them": "They were of the modern, London, kind. They had allowed, in fact *encouraged* me to smoke from the age of thirteen (Marcovitch) and when I came home drunk my No. 1 mother would look up from her solitaire and groan: 'Oh God, how dreary! Billy's pissed again!'" (ibid.: 15, emphasis in the original). The working-class versus upper-class binary is constructed in such a way that even details such as the cigarette brands are diametrically opposed: while *Woodbine* features in all working-class novels as the preferred cigarette

brand of working-class people, *Marcovitch* is a an expensive and refined tobacco brand preferred by English aristocracy and elites[76].

Furthermore, still engaging in his No. 1 mode of thinking, the support Billy imagines to give to his real No. 2 family is also a remarkably typical working-class wish of social mobility: "riding home to Hillcrest loaded with money, putting the old man on his feet […] My mother would be put into furs, would feel uneasy in them at first, but would be touched and never lose her homely ways" (ibid.).

Apart from the members of his own family, the working-class traits of the novel are also revealed if we discuss the geographic location of the novel. The fictitious town of Stradhoughdon is located somewhere in County Yorkshire. This is by no means coincidental, since this Northern working-class location is also the preferred setting of many writers during the 50s, such as Braine's *Room at the Top,* Sillitoe's *Saturday Night Sunday Morning,* Wain's *Hurry on Down*, Storey's *This Sporting Life* and many others. Billy imagines entering a dispute with an old-school conservative journalist who signs his articles in the local press with the pen-name "Man o' the Dales":

> 'The very name of Stradhoughton', Man o' the Dales had written in the *Stradhoughton Echo* one morning when there was nothing much doing, 'conjures up sturdy buildings of honest native stones, gleaming cobbled street, and that brackish air which gives this corner of Yorkshire its own *piquancy*'. Man o' the Dales put piquancy in italics, not me. My No. 1 thinking often featured long sessions with Man o' the Dales in whatever pub the boys from the *Echo* used, and there I would put him right on his facts. The cobbled streets, gleaming or otherwise, had long ago been ripped up with tramlines and relined with concrete slabs of tarmacadam – gleaming tarmacadam I would *grant* him, stabbing him in the chest with the stocky briar which in this particular role I affected. The brackish air I was no authority on, except to say that when the wind was in a certain direction it smelled of burning paint. As for the honest native stone, our main street, Moorgate, was – despite the lying reminiscences of old men like Councillor Duxbury who remembered sheep-troughs where the X-L Disc Bar now stands – exactly like any other High Street in Great Britain. Woolworth's looked like Woolworth's, the Odeon looked like the Odeon,

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[76] Marcovitch was the brand favoured by English aristocracy and especially King Edward VII, who, according to online sources, encouraged the producer to open a tobacco shop. One of the vintage tobacco advertisements depicted in various websites bears the inscription "A King Takes His Ease" (see Roan, *Passion for Pipes*, 2013).

> and the *Stradhoughton Echo's* own office, which Man o' the Dales must have seen, looked like a public lavatory in honest white tile (ibid.: 23).

The gist of Billy's mockery is, of course, intended to gainsay the views of Man o' the Dales: not only does Billy imply that he does not agree with the time-honored and idyllic values of the working-class architecture lauded by Man o' the Dales, but he is also critical of the newly emerging postwar Yorkshire. In effect, he perceives the tradition as being falsely romanticized and contemporaneity as having an effacing and depersonalising character. Thus, though the sheep-troughs have been replaced with modern venues of entertainment, this development also brings about the loss of regional and social distinctness. This criticism is refuted by the Man o' the Dales in the same imaginary discussion, stating that the two directions are mutually exclusive: "That's the problem, with you youngsters, […] You want progress, but you want all the Yorkshire tradition as well. You can't have both" (ibid.: 24).

The Yorkshire town of Stradhoughton is portrayed as a hybrid space: originally a Northern English industrial town, significantly altered after the war, it effectively becomes an incongruous space, in which working-class "honest" stone and "sturdy" buildings are next to venues of youth entertainment (i.e. the X-L Disc Bar) and consumerism (i.e. Woolworth's). Stradhoughton can be perceived, in my view, as a heterotopia, being, as Foucault suggests, a space which is capable of "juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, *several sites that are in themselves incompatible*" (Foucault 1986: 25, emphasis is mine), and corresponds fully to Billy's multiple personalities. Additionally, the town is also a chronotopia, since "heterotopias are most often linked to slices of time" (ibid.). According to Foucault, heterotopias function best when people reach an absolute break with their traditional time, and this is again the case with Stradhoughton: the time of the genuine working-class generation (personified by Councillor Duxbury) has been replaced with the time of a new age and a new generation, symbolized by the Disc Bar and supermarkets.

Throughout the novel, Billy constantly oscillates between a utopia and two different kinds of heterotopias. The utopia he builds for himself, Ambrosia, functions as an unreal space which has an "inverted analogy with the real space of society" (ibid.: 24). In Billy's case,

this utopia represents the ideal world and perfect society, a direct inversion of the "real" Stradhoughton and its inhabitants; Billy is always aware of the fact that Ambrosia is a site with no real space and consequently, utterly unreal. However, there is another, real space that functions in the same way: the southern metropolis of London. London is portrayed by the author as what Foucault termed "heterotopia of compensation", that is "a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed and jumbled" (ibid.: 27). Antithetically, London is the real, yet opposite space to Stradhoughton: it is perceived by Billy as being large and thus a true metropolis, as middle- or upper-class (i.e. lacking the working-class aspects of his native small town), as genuine, free, cosmopolitan, modern and progressive. London thus symbolizes Billy's real-world dream city: "Do you know why I'm so fascinated by London? […] A man can lose himself in London […] London is a big place. It has big streets and big people" (Waterhouse 1962: 145).

This Yorkshire-London dichotomy engenders a North-South divide in terms of cultural representation which is present in many working-class novels of the 50s, and which will become a dominant trait of working-class fiction of the 90s. I will discuss the importance of the North-South binary in detail in the following chapter; for the moment, it is sufficient to discern an understated yet common feature of many working-class novels written during the 50s: the North is often portrayed as being different from and lagging behind the South. Metaphorically, this view is conveyed by Billy in his sardonic description of the newly refurbished coffee bar:

> The Kit-Kat was another example of Stradhoughton moving with the times, or rather dragging its wooden legs about five paces behind the times. The plaster sundae was all that was supposed to be left of a former tradition of throbbing urns, slophouse cooking, and the thin tide of biscuit crumbs and tomato pips that was symbolic of Stradhoughton public catering. The Kit-Kat was now a coffee bar, or thought it was. It had a cackling espresso machine, a few empty plant-pots, and about half a dozen glass plates with brown sugar stuck all over them. The stippled walls, although redecorated, remained straight milk-bar: a kind of Theatre Royal backcloth showing Dick Whittington and his cat hiking it across some of the more rolling dales (Waterhouse 1962: 44).

Just like the whole town, the café in question is a heterotopia and functions as a micro-version of Stradhoughton. The North is portrayed as not only lagging behind the South, but accepting its status-quo without much opposition. Not only do people from the North take pride in their origins, as we can see in Man o' the Dales descriptions of Stradhoughton, they also seem to feel unconcerned with economical progress: "it seemed to be the same group every Saturday, having the same argument. 'Have you ever realized', I said to Man o' the Dales – puff, puff – that your blunt Yorkshire individuals are in fact-interchangeable, like the wheels on a mass-produced car?" (ibid.: 65).

Furthermore, even when Billy is indulging in future fantasies with one of his three fiancées, Barbara, whom he calls "The Witch", the chosen geographical space for his dream life is Southern English Devon. The quintessentially English symbols abound in his description of their dream place: they would live in an village in Devon, together with two imaginary eponymic children, who will be taking part in village activities; the house they would live in is a thatched cottage, the epitome of Englishness, with a "lovely garden […] with rose trees and daffodils and a lovely lawn with a swing for little Billy and little Barbara to play on, and we'll have our meals by the lily pond in summer" (ibid.: 60). Thus, Billy seems not only to want to escape from his lower middle-class environment in order to join a hierarchically higher social and income class, but also from his native Yorkshire, northern, industrial, working-class background; his dream is to move to and succeed in London, which he perceives as an English metropolis that is the very opposite of Stradhoughton.

The "us" and "them" divide is also clearly visible in Billy's relationship with his superiors at work, his use of language and the choice of his three fiancées. As far as his workplace is concerned, Billy's basic attitude is one of mocking rejection: he ridicules Councillor Duxbury, a character that symbolizes the old, traditional Yorkshire working-class, and dislikes Mr. Shadrack, who discovers Billy's misdemeanors at the office. The fact that he describes Mr. Shadrack as a having the appearance of a "second hand car salesman" is, in my view, not accidental – thus we have a subtle indication of the Hoggartian view that mass consumerism has turned the working-class into a consumer class. Billy seems to like only his co-worker Arthur, with whom he shares many jokes and a common lingo

consisting of role-play and cliché repartees: "never use a preposition to end a sentence with", "I must ask you not to split infinitives" or "hear about the bloke who shot the owl? It kept saying to who instead of to whom" and "shouldn't it be Who's Whom instead of Who's Who?" (ibid.: 33).

The manner of conversing between the two is also revealing: their role-play is to be seen in my opinion as a pastiche of the working-class versus upper-class conflict. Let us consider the following dialogue between Arthur and Billy while they enjoy a walk through the town. A memorial vase erected for a certain Josiah Olroyd placed in Shadrack's window repeatedly triggers a humorous "trouble at t'mill routine" (ibid.: 41) between the two, in which Arthur plays the role of traditional working-class Yorkshire father, opposed by a university educated Yorkshire son:

> Arthur: - 'Ther's allus been an Olroyd at Olroy'd mill, and there allus will be. Now you come 'ere with your college ways and you want none of it!
>
> Billy: '- But father! We must all live our lives according to our lights – '
>
> Arthur: - 'Don't gi' me any o' yon fancy talk! […] You broke your mother's heart, lad. Do you know that?' (ibid.).

In my opinion, this is a perfect example of the parent-culture binary, which is rendered through the use of sociolect together with a high amount of irony and an overdose of discrediting melodrama. Although the general tone of describing the working-classes is often farcical, humorous or amusing[77], the sheer number of these references reflects the importance this topic plays with both interlocutors. Language as cultural marker also plays a very important role throughout the novel and reveals the negotiation of identity Billy is engaged in. He changes his sociolect throughout the novel on many occasions, and, as Bentley suggests, his "self-awareness towards language is often not a form of empowerment but a mark of his anxiety" (Bentley 2012: 134). A "heteroglossic figure" (ibid.: 136), Billy uses language as a mask, in his attempt to become part of his interlocutor's world, only to hide the fact that he inhabits a secluded place with no language of

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[77] The overwhelming impersonations of Councillor Duxbury are almost always comical and tongue-in-cheek, especially when both Billy and Arthur engage in imaginary dialogues enacting discussions or interviews given by Councillor Duxbury.

its own. In other words, his alienation from all the possible worlds presented in the novel is exemplified when he uses language either to blend in with or to defy his interlocutor. For example, Billy feels unable to escape the baby-talk when in the presence of Barbara, i.e. his inability to pronounce "darling" the right way, pronouncing it every time "*dal-ling*", should be perceived as a linguistic marker of upper-class affectation. He also uses sociolect whenever he talks with Councillor Duxbury, who cautions him to "talk like thi mother and father brought thee up to talk" (Waterhouse 1962: 92) and with Rita, who "spoke as though she got her words out of a slot machine, whole sentences ready-packed in a disposable tinfoil wrapper" (ibid.: 47). Conversely, Billy's use of standard English when admonished by his father to "talk bloody properly" (ibid.: 80) is actually a linguistic device to emphasize himself as different from his parents.

The working-class versus upper-class binary is also reflected by the linguistic attitude of the new generation towards the older generation: while Billy, Arthur and Liz are seen as part of something new, of an emergent culture, characters such as Rita, Stamp and Barbara have already accepted the traditional culture as their own. Trying to negotiate his class identity through language as well, Billy becomes a neither-nor, an outsider-insider with his own, his flawed language symbolizing his deep alienation: "I would begin to talk to myself, the words degenerating into senseless, ape-like sounds and then into barnyard imitations, increasing in absurdity until I was completely incoherent" (ibid.: 67-68).

Last but not least, Billy's alienation is also evident if we discuss his deeply defective relationship with his three fiancées. The first one, Rita, is described as being blue-collar and working as a barmaid in the café which Billy frequents. She is physically attractive and endowed with all traditional working-class qualities: she is straightforward, hard-working, outspoken, merry, full of *joie de vivre* and often ribald. Antithetically construct-ed, Billy's second fiancée is Barbara, whom he nicknames "The Witch". Barbara possesses the typical upper-class qualities (despite her not being genuinely upper-class): she is conservative, frigid, affected, pretentious, conventional and unadventurous. Billy's feeling towards Rita can be classified as genuinely sympathetic, while when it comes to Barbara, he feels nothing but repulsion:

she was completely sexless. She was large, clean, and, as I knew to my cost, wholesome. I had learned to dislike everything about her. I did not care […] for her face: the scrubbed, honest look, as healthy as porridge. I disliked her for her impeccable shorthand, her senseless, sensible shoes and her handbag crammed with oranges […] What I most disliked her for were the sugar-mouse kisses and the wrinkling-nose endearments which she seemed to think symbolized some great passion (Waterhouse 1962: 44-45).

The girl Billy truly loves, Liz, represents precisely what Billy wants to become: a break-away, an active subject. She simply leaves Stradhoughton, instead of thinking about leaving. She also wants, like Billy, to become invisible, to break away from a stifling world of predictability in which she does not feel she belongs anymore.

It is also Liz who most accurately describes Billy's indecision and reluctance to break away from his inner world cocoon. Thus, she actively encourages him to take up the job offered to him in London and try his luck, no matter the consequences:

my lad, the trouble with you is that you're – what's the word – intro-spective? You're like a child at the edge of a paddling pool. You want very much to go in, but you think so much whether the water's cold, and whether you'll drown, and what your mother will say if you get your feet wet (Waterhouse 1962: 144-145).

Liz's description of Billy portrays him as the frightened, isolated teenager he really is: alienated from reality in what Kreuzer terms "embryonic character", his attempts to break away from his inner world into the real world, from his lower middle-class status, from his Yorkshire background, from his parents and home eventually fail. Billy is the embryonic character par excellence: "Billy Fisher [has] not left the 'womb' of society. Out of all our heroes, he remains withdrawn the furthest from historical and social reality (Kreuzer 1972: 78-79).[78]

Billy's final decision, after much hesitation, not to go to London and stay home is also based on reasons of financial nature; his first thoughts about the real world reinforce his anxieties: "I started to get clear, frightening thoughts. Nine pounds. Less the fare, call it

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[78] In the original: "so ist Billy Fisher aus dem <Mutterleib> der Gesellschaft noch gar nicht ausgetreten. Von allen unseren Helden bleibt er der historisch-sozialen Wirklichkeit am weitesten entzogen" (Kreuzer 1972: 78-79).

seven. Seven pounds. If I can get a room for two pounds ten a week, that's two weeks and a quid a week for food. I can always get a job of some kind, maybe washing up" (Waterhouse 1962: 176). His repeated attempts to break away, his constant oscillation between leaving and staying and eventually his failed break-away attempt truly make Billy the prototype of Kreuzer's first type of alienation as an inward migration: Billy is not able to refashion his identity, and nor can he successfully re-appropriate reality different to that of his social class.

4.2. Permanent Alienation – Alan Sillitoe's *Saturday Night Sunday Morning* (1958)

The novel first published in 1958 by Nottingham-born author, Alan Sillitoe, became iconic first and foremost due to its main character, the young Nottingham factory worker named Arthur Seaton. In his early twenties, Arthur is portrayed as an almost perfect pro-totype of the young, working-class English youngster of the 50s: he is a "tall, iron-faced, crop-haired youth" (Sillitoe 2008: 12), who besides working as a pieceworker at a bicycle factory all week, likes to spend his time and money each Saturday in the pub, flirting with women and enjoying life to the fullest:

> it was Saturday night, the best and bingiest glad-time of the week […] The effect of a week's monotonous graft in the factory was swilled out of your system in a burst of goodwill. You followed the motto of 'be drunk and be happy', kept your crafty arms around female waists, and felt the beer going beneficially down into the elastic capacity of your guts (Sillitoe 2008: 9).

Thus, from the very beginning, the reader is introduced to Arthur's working-class envi-ronment: the working-class vs. upper-class divide is easily noticed throughout the novel, much more openly and directly than in the case of Billy Fisher. Arthur is depicted as a young member of the working-classes, living together with his extended family in the same house. He shares a bed with his brother Sam and works at the same factory as his father, Seaton Senior. Due to his immediate contact with the older working-class, he constantly filters reality through the perspective of the extremely harsh times endured during the 1930s by the generation of his parents – "a point of reference, a language of shared misfortune and revolt" (Hall 1956: 2). Although critical of his own job and the realities of the 1950s, Arthur acknowledges the important progress for the working-classes after the Second World War.

For example, Arthur remembers when his mother had to work constantly until the war, experiencing great poverty: "When Seaton's face grew black for lack of fags she had trotted around to various shops asking for some on tick till Tuesday dole-day" (Sillitoe 2008: 47). Similarly, his father recalls not even having wireless before the war, yet now owns a brand new television set:

> the old man was happy at last, anyway, and he deserved to be happy, after all the years before the war on the dole, five kids, and the big miserying

> that went with no money and no way of getting any. And now he had a sit-
> down job at the factory, all the Woodbines he could smoke, money for a
> pint if he wanted one […] a holiday somewhere, a jaunt on the firm's trip
> to Blackpool, and a television set to look into at home (Sillitoe 2008: 26-
> 27).

Arthur knows the hardships working-class people have had to endure before the war. The somewhat tense relationship with Robboe, the factory gaffer, is an inherited one: "the enemy in them stayed dormant, a black animal stifling the noise of its prowls, as if com-manded by a higher master to lie low, an animal that had perhaps been passed on for some generations from father to son on either side" (ibid.: 42). The inherited values on each side make the class divide dominant in the novel, although the conflicts between the worker and the gaffer are diminished due to economic and financial gains. The general feeling Arthur has towards his parents' generation is one of "empathy and recognition of the tough times they have lived through" (Bentley 2012: 141). Arthur's identification with and embracing of the working-class way of life stems from his view according to which an escape is virtually impossible; the working-class will always be manipulated and controlled by the upper-class:

> as soon as you were born you were captured by fresh air that you screamed
> against 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 by the
> arse with a wife (Sillitoe 2008: 217).

Thus, Arthur perceives his whole life not as an active agent, but more like a passive object in the manner of Marx's definition of alienation. And since attempting to escape cannot but fail, Arthur chooses to reluctantly play his part, while always perceiving himself as a thinking, perceptive working-class individual who must not give in, must not "weaken": "There's bound to be trouble in store for me every day of my life, because trouble it's always been and always will be" (ibid.: 219). Consequently, Arthur perceives his boozing and binging during weekends as a form of resistance directed at the system. As long as he can do that, drink and get married women to sleep with him, he has not yet "weakened", not yet given in. Every weekend spent at the pub is thus a small victory against the establishment. Working-class life is, according to Arthur, all about the conflict between the workers and all others – a generic 'them' symbolized by the upper-class:

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And trouble for me it'll be, fighting every day until I die […] Fighting with mothers, and wives, landlords and gaffers, coppers, army, government. If it's not one thing, it's another, apart from the work we have to do and the way we spend our wages. […] Born drunk and married blind, misbegotten into a strange and crazy world, dragged-up through the dole and into the war with a gas mask on your clock, and the sirens rattling into you every night while you rot away with scabies in an air-raid shelter. Slung into khaki at eighteen, and when they let you out, you sweat again in a factory, grabbing for an extra pint, doing women at the weekend and getting to know whose husbands are on nightshift, working with rotten guts and an aching spine, and nothing for it but money to drag you back there every Monday morning (Sillitoe 2008: 219).

Aware of the window of opportunity which the weekend provides for him, Arthur lives his life the way he pleases merely on Saturdays and Sundays, only to be again caught in the grinding machinery of the factory on Mondays. Excessive drinking and hedonistic pleasure is Arthur's way of escaping the drudgery of his job for a short period of time. As John Brannigan aptly suggests, Arthur "feels as if he is fighting against an authoritarian system and has an anarchic attitude towards the state […]; [this] is the product of an older, working-class culture" (Brannigan 2003: 56). It is also thought-provoking to note that in this respect, Arthur's views on work correspond to Marx's definition of alienated, forced labour, characterized by mindless repetitive physical work. Arthur goes to work on "Black Mondays" only because he has to, not because he derives any satisfaction from it. Work is imposed on him during weekdays, and he is only able to shake it off during weekends. This aspect identifies Arthur as a genuine member of the working-class.

Arthur's alienation is permanent, which is due, in my view, to his dogged resistance to any external influence from the "them" constituent. Arthur believes only in himself and his ability and endurance to face it all defiantly; he is determined not to give in, but to continue his existence as it is, in constant rebellion:

so you earned your living in spite of the firm, the rate-checker, the foreman, and the tool-setters, who always seemed to be at each other's throats except when they ganged up to get at yours […] You worked […] spinning the turret to chamfer in a smell of suds and steel, actions without thoughts so that all through the day you filled your mind with vivid and more agreeable pictures than those around you (Sillitoe 2008: 32).

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In my view, Arthur never contemplates breaking away from his world; instead, he accepts it wholeheartedly and entrenches himself in a fight he knows only one party can win. This is the reason why Arthur operates throughout the novel in a state of permanent alienation. However, Arthur is not merely a mindless member of the working-class, he is a thinking, questioning and critical individual. Quite often, he resents his fellow workers as well, men who are "slow" and do not take care of their wives or gossipers like Mrs. Bull who "won't let a bloke live" (ibid.: 105). Arthur distrusts his openly Communist colleagues, since he does not believe in the principle of sharing. However, he likes the Communists more than he does "the big, fat Tory bastards in Parliament […] and them Labour bleeders too. They rob us of our wage packets every week with insurance and income tax and try to tell us it's all for our good" (ibid.: 35-36). By effectively rejecting all the "escapes" of his colleagues, he consciously chooses the role of an outsider, even if a thinking and judging one.

Much like the novel's drunkard smashing the windows of an undertaker's, Arthur is similarly shaped by his environment: although the drunkard could easily break away from the uniformed policewoman holding his arm, he is unable to move. In the same way, Arthur could theoretically try and break away from his working-class environment, but chooses not to, although he is aware of the fact he is also in the same situation as the drunkard: for both men, the policewoman is the a representative of the establishment and thus, the enemy. However, opposed to the drunkard who eventually escapes due to the intervention of the crowd, Arthur never breaks away from his social class; he is forever entrenched and resisting outside forces: "Me, I'll have a good life: plenty of work and plenty of booze and a piece of skirt every month till I am ninety" (Sillitoe 2008: 183).

The only potential escape is for Arthur not individual, but collective: a revolution of the working-classes against the upper-classes, precisely as envisioned by Marx. Arthur often thinks about shooting those who have drafted him in the army and vociferously claims he would blow up the factory; he also has no use for the democratic way of electing one's leaders – Arthur's preferred way is that of action. Arthur reflects on how technological change has also benefitted the working-classes, yet he is also aware of the fact that television has become a means of manipulating his co-workers. He envisages a revolution of

the underclass in case all TV sets would be smashed to pieces. And in the event of a revolution, he thinks, the old working- versus upper-class antagonisms will once more come into play:

> that big fat-bellied union ponce'll ask us not to muck things up. Sir Harold Bladdertrab'll promise us a bigger bonus when things get put right. Chief Inspector Popcorn will say: 'Let's have no trouble, no hanging around the gates there'. Blokes with suits and bowler hats will say: 'These chaps have got their television sets, enough to live on, council houses, beer and pools – some even got cars. We've made them happy. What's wrong'? (Sillitoe 2008: 203).

Thus, Arthur seems to be incapable of conceiving an individual breakaway or going a different way than the one which has been already set out for him. Despite his frequent rebellions, Arthur exists in a state of enduring alienation, his resistance to the "system" is undaunted: "I'll never let anybody grind me down because I'm worth as much as any other man in the world, though" (ibid.).

The only instances when Arthur steps out of his mode of resistance are his fishing trips. The factory, with its smells and noise, the hundreds of men working in the same place, and the whole town, which Arthur describes as an extension of the factory, represent the complete opposite of the solitude, harmony, fresh air and sense of freedom he experiences in open nature, fishing and thinking about his life. This city versus nature divide functions as a locational rendition of spaces of alienation (the dirty, smelly, crammed industrial town) and un-alienation (the clean, fresh, open spaces of nature): when fishing out in the open, Arthur is in harmony with himself and the world surrounding him: "there's nowt I like better than going out into the country on my bike and fishing near Cotgrave or Trowel and sitting for hours by meself" (ibid.: 148-149).

Yet another mark of Arthur's alienation seems to be manifest if one focuses on his relationships. Just like Billy Fisher, Arthur also has relationships with three different women at the same time. In Arthur's case, he is "carrying on" with Brenda, who is married to Jack, a co-worker of his; with Brenda's sister Winnie, who is married to a soldier who is stationed in Germany; last but not least, he also enters a shifty relationship with Doreen, the only woman he has a relationship with who is still unmarried. All three of Arthur's relationships are characterized, as is the case with the previously analyzed hero, by lies

and deception: "lie until you're blue in the face, was his motto, and you'll always be believed, sooner or later" (ibid.: 77). Arthur has no moral qualms about sleeping with a married woman with two children, since he places the blame squarely on his co-worker Jack, Brenda's husband, whom he characterizes as "slow". His ideas of getting women to sleep with him are based on lies, cunning and deception: "Cheat? Of course I cheat! I allus cheat!" (ibid.: 82).

Brenda's background is also working-class, marked in the novel by her use of the same sociolect as Arthur. The reason Arthur chooses to have an affair with Brenda (and later on, her sister Winnie) is (in spite of his genuine sympathy for her) the very fact that she is already married; thus, Arthur does not have to commit himself to the role of a husband or doting father; his merry bachelor life can go on unaltered. His views on women are ambivalent: though he prefers married women for the reason of "safety", when it comes to his future wife, his views are conservative and typically working-class:

> instead of boozing in the Match she should be at home looking after her two kids, the poor little sods. If I ever get married, he thought, and have a wife that carries on like Brenda and Winnie carry on, I'll give her the biggest pasting any woman ever had. I'd kill her. My wife'll have to look after any kids I fill her with. Keep the house spotless. And if she's good at that I might let her go to the pictures now and again and take her out for a drink on Saturday (Sillitoe 2008: 145-146).

Arthur's attitude towards marriage is a further indication of his working-class background. His reluctance to get married comes from the fact that for working-class people, marriage is generally seen as an end of one's youth and freedom: "for both sexes, the main dividing line in a working-class life is this, not a change of job or town or going up to a university or qualifying in a profession. Marriage is the end of this temporary freedom for a woman and the beginning of a life in which 'scraping' will be normal" (Hoggart 2009: 38-39). However, in this case, though a man, Arthur is much more reluctant to get married than Doreen. The views on marriage expressed by Arthur, besides reinforcing the idea that marriage is the end of one's easy life and independence, stem from a male working-class attitude: "on Friday night I'd have to run home with my wages, drop 'em in her lap, and get nagged for not droppin' enough, but now I can go home, change and tek mysen off to the White Horse for a pint or two" (Sillitoe 2008: 168).

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His expectations of a wife and mother are gleamed off his parents' generation. Though Arthur says little about his own mother, the reader is given the depiction of a true working-class mother in the person of his aunt Ada. Not only does she instruct him what Brenda needs to do in order to end an unwanted pregnancy he has caused, but she fully corresponds to the working-class traditional description of "the shapeless figure the family known as 'our mam'" (cf. Hoggart 2009: 42), there for all members of the family. Aunt Ada has had numerous children with her husband, the majority of whom have been sent to Borstal after engaging in juvenile delinquency: "a horde of children who grew up learning to fend for themselves in such a wild free manner that Borstal had been their education and a congenial jungle their only hope" (Sillitoe 2008: 75).

Doreen is keen on getting married, since her already married or attached female colleagues from the hairnet factory where she works have already made fun of her for not having a boyfriend. As young as nineteen, Doreen is "afraid of being left on the shelf" (ibid.: 155). In effect, the end of the novel depicts Arthur as becoming Doreen's fiancé and finally "going steady", after he is beaten up by Winnie's husband in a dark alley. Arthur's "determination not to conform to standards of respectability" (Haywood 1997: 100) comes to an end and his alienation grows stronger: not only is he supposed to live a life which is imposed on him by establishment during the week, he is also about to lose the little independence he has enjoyed so far: the Saturday nights and the Sunday mornings, the two days in which he lived as he himself pleased. In effect, the novel's ending reflects Arthur's own transition from the merrymaking of Saturday night to the quiet Sunday morning of his own existence. The Sunday is not necessarily to be seen merely as a time for regeneration from physical exertion; it is "a temporal order not of recovery, but of flux" (Brannigan 2003: 58), a point of renegotiating and refashioning his personality.

Another aspect I would like to discuss is working-class subculture expressed in the novel especially with the help of sartorial elements. A distinct characteristic of the English working-class youth during the 1950s was their own sense of fashion, music and films; thus, postwar Britain saw the emergence of the "Teddy-Boys" (also called "New Elizabethans"), a group of young working-class teenagers who dressed very fashionably, listened to Rock'n'Roll music, wore the same hairdos and became synonymous with

youth delinquency (cf. Bentley 2010: 8). Their sense of fashion was "hijacked" from the upper-classes and molded to their own working-class paradigm of rugged manliness, an attempt which had been felt as a "'theft' of upper class style" (cf. Hebdige 2005: 83) or a "'proletarianization' of an upper-class style" (cf. Jefferson 1975: 81).

Originally, the Edwardian style was introduced by Saville Row tailors and was aimed especially at young, affluent aristocratic men. However, once the working-class Teds started to wear the Edwardian suits, making their own distinct modifications, the upper-classes renounced the fashion altogether. The sartorial modifications of the Teds that served as a sort of "subculture markers" were the bootlace tie, thick-creped suede shoes or Oxfords, drainpipe trousers, moleskin or satin collars to the jackets and the addition of vivid colours. Further sartorial symbols of the Teddy Boys are drape jackets, dark sunglasses and the greased hair, whiskers and the famous quiff which became emblematic for the entire Rock'n'Roll (male) youth[79]. The main reason why this dress code has been adopted by the working-classes is, as Hebdige suggests, firstly, in order to compensate the factory routines during weekdays with expensive suits and dress codes during their weekend binging: "Effectively excluded and temperamentally detached from the respectable working-class […] he [i.e. the Teddy boy] visibly bracketed off the drab routines of school, the job and home by affecting an exaggerated style" (Hebdige 2005: 50) and secondly, to sartorially assert his oppositional subcultural identity to both the upper-class and his parent culture.

Right from the beginning of the novel, Arthur is described by the woman he later throws up on as a Teddy boy, "allus making trouble" (Sillitoe 2008: 16). The throwing up on publicans can be seen as a metaphor for the rejection of bourgeois morality. According to Bentley, the cultural practices of groups of subculture such as the Tedds are to be seen as "sites of resistance for youth: resistance both to dominant culture and to the working-class 'parent culture' against which they set themselves" (Bentley 2010: 17). As Kalliney

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[79] The BBC documentary "*British Style Genius*" (2008), especially part 1, "*The Street Look,*" contains a detailed portrayal of the Teddy Boys and Girls of the 50s (www.youtube.com/watch?v=EsAwqT61Gzg&-index=3&list=WL).

put it, Arthur fully corresponds to this definition, being an individual who has at times a deep ambivalence about him:

> at times, he seems to side with an anonymous legion of the discontented working class, denouncing the government, commodity culture, and the life of regular employment. Elsewhere, he discards his oppositional stance and eagerly participates in the new culture of affluence and the economic stability of the welfare state (Kalliney 2001: 93).

Arthur perfectly fits this description: his language of anger "both encodes and disguises the protagonist's political ambivalence" (ibid.); he perceives himself fighting against the system and is concomitantly aware of his belonging to a newer working-class, different from the working-class society of his parents. It is also important to note that Arthur's sartorial and behavioural attitude is a stylistic realisation of his life philosophy, according to which he is worth as much as any other human being; this is, in effect, a negation of the privileged status of the upper-classes.

In effect, Arthur fully complies with this "exaggerated style" for his own social class. For instance, his typical weekend outing is a sartorial celebration of elegance and stylishness:

> Up in his bedroom he surveyed his row of suits, trousers, sports jackets, shirts, all suspended in colourful drapes and designs, good-quality tailor-mades, a couple of hundred quid's worth, a fabulous wardrobe of which he was proud because it had cost him so much labour. For some reason he selected his finest suit of black and changed into it, fastening the pearl buttons of a white silk shirt and pulling on the trousers […] The final item of Friday night ritual was to stand before the downstairs mirror and adjust his tie, comb his thick fair hair neatly back, and search out a clean handkerchief from the dresser drawer. Square-toed black shoes reflected a pink face when he bent down to see that no speck of dust was on them. Over his jacket he wore his twenty-guinea triumph, a thick three-quarter overcoat of Donegal tweed (Sillitoe 2008: 169).

In this respect, Arthur represents the typical Teddy Boy working-class youngster of the 50s, keen on showing his difference, as Stuart Hall poignantly remarked: "They [i.e. wor-king-class youngsters] are sensitive to appearances – to how things look, to how things strike them" (Hall 1959: 2). Arthur invests so much money in clothes because he feels he is entitled to wear them, since he also invested a tremendous amount of physical work in earning the money in order to be able to buy them. As previously stated, this is not only

Arthur's way to place himself on the same footing as his upper-class counterparts, but also an effective means to show monetary potency: "I get good wages […] and spend'em on clo'es. It's good to be well dressed" (Sillitoe 2008: 184). Although he is complimented on his clothes by his Aunt Ada, we are told that he is wearing his expensive suits and shirts "over his greasy, soiled underwear" (ibid.: 66) and keeping all his suits on an iron-bar. Both these powerful images function as unambiguous markers of his affiliation to the working-class. Although he is dressed elegantly, he remains pretty much a working-class individual – a metaphor symbolizing Arthur's inability and unwillingness to successfully transcend his working-class condition.

All in all, Arthur stands out as a working-class hero due to his lack of interest in attempting to break away from his social class or alter his existence voluntarily. Sillitoe, unlike most of the other working-class authors of the 50s, is completely uninterested in topics such as social mobility, education and breaking away (cf. Haywood 1997: 105). His characters are usually following the opposite trajectory, that of a downward mobility into a world of delinquency and disaffection. In my view, Arthur leads his life in a state of permanent alienation stemming from the working-class versus upper-class conflict. Thus, he fully corresponds to Kreuzer's second type of alienated hero. His alienation is only amplified by the novel's depressing ending: his staunch resistance to working-class conformity is eventually broken and he reluctantly accepts his fate. In effect, he ends up doing precisely what he previously abhorred: he "goes steady", is engaged to be married and will live the life he always despised during his bachelor days.

4.3. Alienation as (Un)Successful Embourgeoisement – John Braine's *Room at the Top* (1957)

The last novel of this chapter which I am going to analyze, namely *Room at the Top* (1957), by John Braine, introduces us to the third and last type of character alienation according to Kreuzer: the apparently successful breakaway of the working-class hero from his own (working) class, his successful transition to and eventual transplantation to the upper-class have occurred. However, despite the realization of his life goals, the readers will note that the hero's alienation is an omnipresent characteristic in the narrative and functions as a red thread of the entire novel. The novel's rendition of the working-class versus upper-class binary is exemplary; it manifests itself in almost every aspect of life: between the working-class and middle- / upper-class origin, between jobs, friend-ships, love relationships, lifestyles, the towns which are mentioned in the novel, speech and sartorial references.

The novel's main character, Joe Lampton, is the son of a working-class family who is brought up in the imaginary industrial and Northern English town called Dufton. He is raised by his working-class aunt and uncle, due to the fact that his parents have been both killed in a bombing raid during the Second World War. Having served in the RAF during the war, he is assigned to Warley Town Hall after the end of the war, where he works as a minor clerk. In effect, Joe is the quintessential social mobility beneficiary, the first wor-king-class member of his family who is given the chance to escape his environment due to his education.

Once Joe arrives in Warley, he rents a room with the upper-class Thompsons, who live "at the top" (Braine 2002: 9) of St. Claire Road. Joe's feeling of not really belonging, of being somehow different, inferior, starts to manifest itself right from the beginning. Thus, we learn that Joe was wearing his best clothes on his first trip to Warley in order to make a good impression, but the older (upper-class) Joe, who narrates retrospectively, notes that, as is the case with Arthur Seaton, clothes cannot convincingly cache his working-class origin: "my hair is plastered into a skullcap, my collar doesn't fit, and the knot of my tie, held in place by a hideous pin shaped like a dagger, is far too small" (ibid.: 7).

Right from the beginning, the reader is introduced to Joe's world and his feeling of doing something wrong and consequently being caught and mocked at: "I took a good look at myself: I had an uneasy feeling that my fly was open or my shoelace broken or that I'd put on odd socks" (ibid.: 127). This sensation is based on Joe's feeling of inferiority due to his working-class origins and his wish to meet the expectations of middle- and upper-class people, which he is keen to emulate. Thus, Joe's alienation at the beginning of the novel is portrayed as a sort of feeling of uncertainty about what to do and how to react, a general feeling of unbelonging and being ill at ease.

Antithetically constructed, Mrs. Thompson possesses all the qualities Joe is lacking: she is self-possessed, calm and well-dressed. Mrs. Thompson eventually agrees to rent the room to Joe, after what he describes as a feeling of "having passed some kind of test" (ibid.: 9). Although Mrs. Thompson addresses him by his first name, Joe dares not to think of her as anything else but Mrs. Thompson, due to her upper-class appearance; Joe also notes her use of standard English as opposed to the vernacular of his own environment: "she had a low, clear voice, with no hint either of the over-buxom vowels of Yorkshire or the plum-in-the-mouth of the Home Counties" (ibid.).

Mrs. Thompson's family, house and the very room Joe is about to get are described as opposed to what Joe has known so far: all descriptions firmly place the Thompsons and their house in the upper-class constituent: her husband, Cedric, is an English teacher, and their dead son, Maurice, whom Joe resembles physically, are an almost stereotypical representation of a carefree upper-class family life. Joe also notes the elevated standard of living of the family, by contemplating the silver tray and fine porcelain tea cups and milk jugs, "thin and translucent and enamelled in dear primary colours – red, blue, yellow, orange – and I knew that they were expensive because of their lack of ornament" (ibid.: 15). The Thompsons' life seems free from worries, idyllic and meant to give pleasure: "it was as if every sound – the wood fire's friendly crackling, the tinkle of crockery, the splash of running water – were invented especially for my pleasure" (ibid.: 22).

Conversely, the world Joe is coming from is described as the exact opposite, firmly rooted in the working-class constituent of the binary model: the usual sort of landlady Joe has known so far is "smelling of washing-soda and baking powder" (ibid.: 9), the room he

rented is described as becoming "impersonal by the very number of others there before me, living on the verge of departure to another station or death" (ibid.). Similarly, we also find out about his background during his adolescence and youth in a stern Yorkshire working-class family:

> Nor do I count my room at Aunt Emily's; it was strictly a bedroom. I suppose I might have bought some furniture and had an electric fire installed but neither my uncle nor my aunt would have understood the desire for privacy. To them a bedroom was a room with a bed – a brass-railed one with a flock mattress in my case – and a wardrobe and a hard-backed chair, and its one purpose was sleep. You read and wrote and talked and listened to the wireless in the living-room. It's as if the names of rooms were taken quite literally (Braine 2002: 11).

Joe's own family is the working-class pendant of the Thompsons. While his actual parents are hardly mentioned in the novel, we find out more about Joe's environment during his visit to his Aunt Emily. As in the case of Arthur Seaton, his aunt proves to be the archetypal "our mam", who reminisces about the 30s, serves him tea with rum and urges him to get married with a woman from his own class: "get one of your own class, lad, go to your own people" (ibid.: 90). She also considers Joe to be extremely lucky due to his position at the Town Hall and perceives him as one of the working-class persons who finally benefits from the perks of the "them": "T'Town Hall can't go bankrupt. Tha'll never go hungry. Or have to scrat and scrape savings for thi old age" (ibid.: 89).

The same working-class versus upper-class dichotomy applies if we discuss the two towns featuring in the novel: the town of Warley is described as a town for middle- and upper-class families, with the upper-classes living right on the top, and the middle-classes in its vicinity, the height of the house functioning as a statement of wealth and status, a reflected hierarchy of society as a whole. Joe is impressed with the neatness, cleanliness of Warley, and its proximity to nature: "what impressed me most was Cyprus Avenue. It was broad and straight, and lined with cypresses […]. Cyprus Avenue became at that instant a symbol of Warley – it was as if all my life I'd been eating sawdust and thinking it was bread" (ibid.: 10). Dufton, on the other hand, is described as a drab, industrial, impersonal town: "'Dead Dufton', I muttered to myself. 'Dirty Dufton, Dreary Dufton, Despicable Dufton […]'. There were lights in the windows but they seemed put there to

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deceive – follow them and you were over the precipice, crashing into the witch's cave to labour in the mills forever" (ibid.: 97). On his return to Dufton to visit his aunt Emily, Joe finds the best pub in town "too small, too dingy, too working-class" (ibid.: 85-86) and confides in his friend Charles that he couldn't bear Dufton while being sober.

With regard to his career, much like Billy Liar, he has one friend at work he confides in, Charles, who is also dismissive of Dufton and eventually lands a job in London. The Town Hall is described as being the same as thousands others in Britain, a queer mixture of Gothic and Palladian, and the people working there, most notably the senior clerks are being described by Joe as "Zombies". A curious aspect which should be discerned is that as opposed to all the others whom he names Zombies, Joe does not perceive himself as being one, although he works there as well. As a matter of fact, Joe and Charles are the only clerks who are "alive" and dislike and deride their bosses. Both of them are keen on social mobility and perceive almost the whole world in terms of money, wealth or income. The grade scale they invent and use for women, perceiving women first and foremost as a means to wealth and social advancement is exemplary in this respect.

As far as his relationships are concerned, as Billy Fisher and Arthur Seaton, he is involved with more than one woman. However, a distinctive feature of Joe is that he does not lie to the women in order to gain sexual favours; instead, he is driven by an obsessive determination to climb the social ladder and marry the woman whose father is richer, despite truly loving a different woman. This makes his character somewhat unique in the working-class fiction of the 50s. Joe falls in love with Alice, a fellow Warley thespian whom he meets at the drama classes in Warley. Alice is an upper-class and middle-aged woman who is living in a dysfunctional marriage with a wealthy wool merchant. She falls in love with Joe, who perceives her as being far superior to his former dates; first and foremost, he describes Alice as "a woman who would neither weep with shame afterwards nor eat fish and chips whilst she was doing it" (ibid.: 47), thus she is portrayed as an emancipated, uninhibited upper-class woman. We also find out that she drinks beer with Joe and jokingly admits she has "low tastes" (ibid.: 55).

Joe's relationship with Alice is also interesting if we analyze how they perceive each other: while Joe perceives her as a liberated upper-class woman, "shameless in love, with

no repugnances, no inhibitions" (ibid.: 98), she perceives him as a sort of exotic virile working-class prototype. Her remarks are often concerned with his looks, his manly appearance and attitude. For example, she compliments Joe for his body being hairy, but not too hairy (ibid.: 97), she feels that he is the sort of man she likes, "big and beefy. There's too many pansies today" (ibid.: 105) and calls him a "beautiful uncomplicated brute" (ibid.: 98). Similarly, Eva, another thespian who eventually rejects his advances is complimenting him on the size of his biceps and tells him she would run away with him when Joe tells her he used to box: "I couldn't resist a big, brutal, sweaty boxer" (ibid.: 46).

Susan, the upper-class girl he eventually marries, not because of sincere love, but because of her father's wealth and status, also describes Joe in a similar fashion: she compliments him on his hair, "lovely, so smooth and soft and fair" and his sturdiness: "you've got '*normous* bones. And a great big strong neck" (ibid.: 136, emphasis in the original). Susan also compliments him on his hands "they're beautiful. Square and strong" (ibid.: 139). Joe, on the other hand, perceives Susan only as a means to break away from his own class: "I was taking Susan not as Susan, but as a Grade A lovely, as the daughter of a factory-owner, as the means of obtaining the key to Alladin's case of my ambitions" (ibid.). Joe is not satisfied with the middle-class status, he is doggedly pursuing to climb to the very top: "I'll make her daddy give me a damned good job. I'll never count pennies again" (ibid.: 137).

The second antithesis the readers encounter is between Joe and his male rival, the upper-class John Alexander Wales, Susan's boyfriend before Joe's arrival to Warley. Again, Braine constructs these two characters as perfect opposites: if Joe is perceived to be a perfect example of rugged working-class masculinity, John is described as perfectly aristocratic: "bags of money, about seven foot tall and a beautiful RAF moustache" (ibid.: 39). Even during the war, these two were effectively class enemies, although they both fought against the Germans on the same side: while Joe was captured by the Germans and put into a POW camp, where he dedicated his time to educate himself, John managed to escape from German captivity and continued to fight against the Germans.

Joe feels intimidated and threatened by John's status and general demeanour from the very beginning, despite the fact that there is hardly any actual interaction between the two characters and no initial reason for antipathy between them. The antagonism felt by Joe is a class-inherited one, I claim, which functions as an augmentation of Joe's class-inherited complexes: "I felt myself being pushed into the position of the poor man at the gate, the humble admirer from afar" (ibid.: 39). What is more, Joe's use of the Yorkshire accent when the two of them meet face to face for the first time is yet another clear mark of opposition to John's "genuine officer's accent, as carelessly correct as his tweed suit" (ibid.: 41) Also, while Joe was self-educated during his time spent in German captivity and thus a beneficiary of the social mobility scheme in postwar Britain, John is to be sent to study at Cambridge:

> I had a mental picture of Port wine, boating, leisurely discussions over long tables gleaming with silver and cut glass. And all over it the atmosphere of power, power speaking impeccable Standard English, power which was power because it was born of the right family, always knew the right people: if you were going to run the country you couldn't do without a University education (Braine 2002: 56).

Thus, the class antagonisms which are so clearly expressed in the working-class versus upper-class binary engender feelings of alienation in Joe, who repeatedly feels insecure about his presence in a socially higher and financially superior entourage; later on, this sense of inadequacy is replaced by a deep feeling of identity loss. Joe's only response to his alienation is his dogged obstinacy to challenge, compete with and eventually penetrate the upper-class; that is to be followed by his appropriation of what in effect is an upper-class lifestyle, i.e. a migration from the working-class to the upper-class within the class binary.

However, though the actual breaking away from his working-class environment has successfully taken place, there is plenty of evidence that Joe's apparent success story is not at all what the reader expects it to be. Behind all the glamour, status and affluence, we find out that the "old Joe" has disappeared, replaced by his *alter ego*, the "successful Zombie" (ibid.: 123), who also narrates the plot retrospectively. Behind the surface of apparent success, the alienating feeling of alienation is the only aspect both young and old, working- and upper-class Joe Lampton share: he is in effect a class hybrid, living in

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a space where successful transplantation is not possible; he gained socially and financially, but lost his working-class roots. This class hybridity is to be seen as a state of alienation of the character:

> I'm like a brand-new Cadillac in a poor industrial area, insulated by steel and glass and air-conditioning from the people outside, from the rain, from the cold and the shivering ailing bodies. I don't wish to be like the people outside, I don't even wish that I had some weakness, some foolishness to immobilize me amongst the coolie faces, to let in the rain and the smell of defeat. *But I sometimes wish that I wished it* (Braine 2002: 124, emphasis is mine).

Thus, Joe's feeling of losing his real self on his way "to the top" should be perceived as a process of alienation: he realizes in hindsight that he has lost his chance to become a "real person" and has in effect become precisely what he initially despised: a successful Zombie. As Kreuzer points out, "the achieved goal is thusly not factually cancelled, but theoretically-reflexively taken back: it has led from the warmth of human community into alienation, and at the same time in a sort of outsiderness which the youngling hoped to escape from precisely by [social] ascent" (Kreuzer 1972: 40, translation is mine).[80]

The mutations which Joe undergoes are both mental and physical; his feeling of self-estrangement and awareness of alienation are to be seen as failed attempts of refashioning his identity; describing the expectations of his upper-class wife, Joe realizes the price he must pay for his social transplantation: "I must transform myself into a different person for her. She had, I felt instinctively, a conception of a Joe Lampton which I'd never to depart from in the smallest detail. Self-pity and class-consciousness weren't included in that conception" (Braine 2002: 139). Joe's transformation has only apparently succeeded; in effect, he has become an alienated being, morphing from a warm, feeling person into a Zombie he so much loathed at the beginning of his career; his alienated *alter ego* has deep feelings of distrust towards his younger self precisely because of the latter's ability to feel: "I didn't like Joe Lampton. He was a sensible young accountant […] He always

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[80] In the original: "Das erreichte Ziel wird so nicht faktisch, aber theoretisch-reflexiv zurückgenommen: es hat aus der Wärme der menschlichen Gemeinschaft in die Entfremdung geführt und zugleich in eine Art von Außermenschentum, dem der Jüngling vom Beginn des Romans gerade durch den Aufstieg für immer zu entfliehen hoffte" (Kreuzer 1972: 40).

said and did the correct thing and never embarrassed anyone with an unseemly display of emotion […] I hated Joe Lampton, but he looked and sounded very sure of himself sitting at my desk in my skin" (ibid.: 219).

Joe's mental alienation is also doubled by his apparent physical mutation[81]: besides learning the unspoken sartorial rules of the upper-classes, he mutates from the masculine prototype of rugged virility to what I have previously discussed as Bloomsbury man: if at the beginning of the novel his hands were described by women as big, red and brutal; later on they are described as square and manly, the hands of a working man, the last chapter of the novel describes Joe's encounter with Mavis, a working-class "tart". Mavis functions here, just as Susan had previously, as a focalizer whose primary role is to divulge extra information and a different point of view from the narrator's. In Marv's case, she compliments Joe on his hands, describing them not as big and brutishly male working-class, but as "lovely soft hands […] like a woman's" (ibid.: 231). The morphing seems to be complete.

To sum up, Joe Lampton is, in my view, a perfect example of Kreuzer's third type of alienated hero: although the factual breakaway from his working-class has occurred, the hero is faced with the estranging effects of this breakaway; the hero's attempts of re-fashioning his identity cannot but end in failure and alienation. A class-hybrid between the working-class and the upper-class is thus impossible; the relationship between the two binary constituents is always flawed and diametrically opposed; they are mutually exclusive and the divide is eternal. Since there is no vent for his estrangement, the alien-ation of the main character is always directed inwards, against himself. The retrospective narration of events further supports the identity split of the novel's hero. He is inescapably trapped in a sort of unbearable space: "and all the darkness […] all the emptiness of fields and woods long since built over, suddenly swept over me, leaving no pain, no happiness, no despair, no hope, but simply nothingness" (ibid.: 230).

All in all, the three novels discussed in this chapter reinforce the perception of alienation as an essentially flawed relationship between two opposed constituents of a binary model.

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[81] Jan Haywood describes this mutation as a process of "feminization" (Haywood 1997: 98).

In the case of the Angry Young Men and working-class fiction of the 1950s, as I have tried to demonstrate, the constituents of the broader "us" versus "them" binary are overwhelmingly based on the aspect of class: alienation stems from the flawed relationship between the working-class versus the upper-class. The first constituent of this binary model represents the local, the immediate, the humane, yet closed working-class traditional community, an organic social class in Hoggartian terms, while, by a process of othering, the second constituent represents exactly the opposite: the impersonal, the socially mobile, ruthless upper-classes, a typology of illusoriness, lack of warmth and inherited privilege.

The relationship between the two binary constituents is deeply flawed, dysfunctional and oppositional; possible interactions between the two ineluctably lead to alienation and estrangement. Thus, the focus of the working-class fiction of the 50s on the aspect of class and such social climber characters as Joe Lampton and Billy Liar (or on the rejection of social climbing in the case of Sillitoe's Arthur Seaton) further proves the great importance phenomena of alienation have played in the whole literary discourse of the time. The typology of the breakaway character, always a rebel, is virtually centred on the character's alienation and estrangement, reflecting the first attempts of working-class heroes to make use of the chances offered to them by the postwar British realities. The fact that in all cases, the envisaged *embourgeoisement* fails, in one way or another, further shows that the binary framework remains valid in this type of fiction during the 50s.

The constituents of the alienation binary shift later on, in my view, from the working-class versus upper-class divide into a "North" versus "South" (or Scottish versus English) divide, especially in what can be perceived as working-class fiction in the 1990s. With the class divide becoming less and less relevant, it was eventually replaced with a geographical and cultural rift within British society during the 1990s. What Haywood calls "*Celtic Fringe*" literature is a mainly Scottish resurgence of Northern working-class heroes who define themselves antithetically against the idea of Englishness: "the twin forces of de-industrialization and nationalism have combined to produce a renaissance of Scottish proletarian and vernacular novelists: William McIllvaney, James Kelman […] Irvine Welsh" (Haywood 1997: 151).

However, despite the fact that many basic 1950s working-class characteristics have been preserved (i.e. the antihero is still the young, white, working-class or unemployed male), class aspects function in this newer model merely as a support or back-up of the more prominent North versus South conflict portrayed in many of the novels of the Celtic Fringe authors, especially Irvine Welsh and James Kelman, whose fiction focuses on the working-class poor, disaffected, alienated characters in the wake of a post-Thatcherite Scotland part of a disunited Britain.

5. The Celtic Fringe (1990s): The Subordination of Class

5.1. "Nay Point in Hoping for the Best" – James Kelman's *How Late it Was, How Late* (1994)

"Ah've never met one Weedgie whae didnae think that they are the only genuinely suffering proletarians in Scotland" (*Trainspotting*, 191), Renton says in *Trainspotting*. This wry accusation is aimed at the Glasgow-based working-class authors and the Industrial or the so-called Glasgow novel (cf. Böhnke 1999: 44), a subtle attack on Scottish author James Kelman[82] and his acclaimed novel "*How Late it Was, How Late*", first published in 1994. As opposed to Welsh's best-selling novel *Trainspotting*, Kelman's novel was not so much a success commercially, but a rather contested novel, acclaimed by some literary critics, and despised by others. Despite stiff opposition by some members of the jury[83], the novel has been awarded the Man Booker Prize for Fiction in the year of its publication, which contributed greatly to the James Kelman's literary success.

Written as an interior monologue, the novel focuses on the alienated working-class individual of present-day Scotland; the usual literary "heroes" of Kelman are "temporary workers, unemployed men, disaffected youths, vulnerable women, struggling pensioners, street hustlers, and solitary drinkers – estranged economically, geographically, spatially, linguistically, psychologically and socially" (Macdonald 2005: 132). *How Late it Was, How Late* respects this authorial convention, too: the novel's main character, Sammy Samuel, is a working-class unemployed Scot, a shoplifter and an ex-convict who gets into a fight with some plainclothes policemen, whom he calls "sodjers", "the generic name for all uniformed authority" (cf. Fordham 2009: 143) after a night of heavy drinking. On

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[82] James Kelman has been described as a "Scottish" writer, a "working-class writer", a "Glaswegian", even a "West of Scotland" author, a "post-colonial" writer, an "existential" writer, and a "political" writer. Macdonald suggests that all these aspects converge when naming him a "radical" writer (Macdonald 2005: 129).

[83] The award was contested due to its extensive use of "profanity" (i.e. the numerous swearwords which occur in the novel) and the lower-class, seemingly insipid protagonist. Rabbi Julia Neuberger, a member of the jury, has publicly deplored Kelman's victory by stating that it is "crap" (Julia Neuberger, *Evening Standard*, 14. October 1994). Similarly, Simon Jenkins, a columnist for *The Times*, has called the book "literary vandalism" (Sarah Lyall, *The New York Times,* 28 Nov. 1994), while Kingsley Amis took offence with Kelman's book and attacked the decision of the Man Booker Panel in his book "*The King's English*" (2011).

slowly regaining consciousness, Sammy realises he has been robbed, badly beaten and has become completely blind.

In what has been called a realist rewriting of Kafka's *Metamorphosis* "stripped of anything redolent of metaphysics" (Klaus 2004: 83), the novel opens with the sudden transformation of the main character, Sammy. He transforms not into an insect, but into a dysfunctional, disempowered member of society, the archetypal character for Kelman, "*the* senior Scottish fiction writer of urban alienation" (Kövesi 2007: 3, emphasis in the original). The novel describes Sammy's attempts to come to terms with his new disability and the ensuing difficulties which make his life harder. Finding his way home, a nondescript flat in Glasgow, he finds out that his girlfriend Helen has left him. The reader finds out that Sammy was involved in a fight the previous day with Helen, and that although he feels sorry for her leaving, Sammy undertakes no attempt to find her, merely passively accepting the blow and trying to come to terms with his new existence.

According to Mary McGlynn, a characterization of emergent postindustrial Scottish working-class fiction is difficult, but she does identify some core traits which can be loosely applied to newer Scottish working-class fiction in general:

> emergent local literature that retreats from nationalism and working class stereotypes: authors decline to use quotation marks, transliterating dialect on page; all include dialect – including profanity – within any normative narrative voice; and all favour less plot-driven novels, regularly privileging mundane, local, everyday experiences through elliptical endings and unfinished sentences. Narrative voice is not straightforward, revealing tonal shifts, competing discourses, and challenges to notions of standard or proper English (McGlynn 2008: 8).

McGlynn thus identifies several core characteristics which can easily be recognized in Kelman's works, such as the use of the vernacular, the heavy use of profanity, the seemingly dull plot, the focus on everyday life of working-class people in Scotland and the mixed first and third-person narration. However, there are 4 main aspects of alienation which are also recurrent in *How Late it Was, How Late*: firstly, and similar to Welsh, the use of (vernacular) language and orthography; secondly, the pervasive use of psychonarration, which reflects the fragmented and incongruous psyche of the main character;

thirdly, the "us" versus "them" binary when we read about interactions between disaffected people such as Sammy with various state institutions and fourthly, the emergence of the North-South binary at the end of the novel. In the following, I will shortly discuss each of these aspects.

Firstly, let us discuss the novel's language and orthography. Kelman employs a vernacular and an orthography which accurately reflects the pronunciation of a certain geographically restricted area and social class. In Kelman's case, the geographic setting of his novel can be easily identified as the city of Glasgow. Kelman's technique of focusing on the relationship between speech and locality is underlined, in my view, by rendering his main character, Sammy, blind. Thus, the reader is in turn forced to focus more on the character's voice, rather than vision.

The attempts by the "them" through state institutions to regulate and effectively alter working-class vernacular in favour of standard English have the function of maintaining and also reinforcing Sammy's state of alienation and impotence *vis-à-vis* the state and its clerk-apparatus. The standardization of language can also function as a form of ridicule, which is reflected in the novel when Ally, the shifty character who offers Sammy his help when dealing with state institutions, discusses the letter he had sent to a newspaper in which he misspelt the word "victimisation" (in the novel, the form "*victomising*" appears); the newspaper published the letter *ad litteram*, with the annotation SIC in order to ridicule, deride and invalidate what is being said. Also, the use of swear words is likewise perceived as being unacceptable and thus another direct attempt to adjust and censor the working-class vernacular: while being interrogated by the Police, Sammy is told to abstain from using profanity: "don't use the word 'cunts' again, it's doesnay fit in the computer" (Kelman 1998: 160).

For Simon Kövesi, Kelman's use of mixed Glaswegian, working-class vernacular and personal "Kelmanese" is also related to the "us" versus "them" conflict. He maintains that, in effect, Kelman uses two languages concomitantly:

> there are two languages, and so there are two cultures: us and them. This model of language relations is that of a hostile class war; the hostility is all Kelman's, and what is being resisted in the endemic authority of 'standard

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English', the supposed 'superiority' of 'the language of the books. 'The language of the books' only serves to de-legitimise, belittle and 'other' any other language (Kövesi 2007: 9).

What is more, as is the case with Welsh, Kelman use of the vernacular also intends to render Standard English as freakish, unnatural, fake and artificial. By contrast, the vernacular gives the novel a specific Northern identity, locating it politically, socially and geographically in a coagulated and recognisable area of Great Britain. The willfully monotonous, repetitive language is in fact also a consciously employed technique used by Kelman to make Sammy's alienation from society more visible and perceptible to the reader. According to Craig, virtually all of Kelman's heroes are longing for a lost community, a Scottish working-class identity which they have never abandoned and are trying to recreate through their dialect:

> the estranged and monologuing voice of James Kelman's protagonists, seeking after a community in the residue of the industrial city, in an urban environment where the isolated individual becomes the site of a multiplicity of competing voices, a dialogue between dialects no longer distributed between different characters in the narrative but interiorised in an inner dialectic (Craig 2008: 238).

Thus, the decidedly un-English spelling and use of dialect function as a regional, cultural and social marker of both author and novel: the "non-standard orthography […] stands for respect and celebration, rather than misrecognition and depreciation, of their cultural difference" (Miller 2010: 89). What is more, the use of the Scottish vernacular and alternative orthography aims at breaking free from the internal colonialism of Scotland by England. It is my opinion that the Northern voice's main function is to assert the North's own cultural centrality in relation to England and put an end to its subnational status within Britain.

As far as Kelman's use of narration is concerned, the stream of consciousness narration he employs is a stylistic device used by the author to reflect Sammy's deep alienation by highlighting the fragmentation of the novel's main character. Böhnke suggests that this narrative has a subverting effect on standard English: "a subversion of any kind of conventional (English) literary practice whatsoever, including plotting, scene-setting, atmospheric descriptions, the structure of beginning-middle-end, and 'British' value systems of

good vs evil. Niceness vs nastiness, etc." (Böhnke 1999: 59). Likewise, Kövesi's view is that Kelman's rejection of both first-person and omniscient narration reflects his opposition to the traditional style of narration of bourgeois novels; Kövesi calls the inclusive "ye" used throughout the novel "the collective possibility of any reader" (cf. Kövesi 2007: 130) and since "you" can mean either singular or plural, male or female, its ample use suggests, according to Kövesi, "the sort of alienation the characters variously experience, while being specifically rooted to a locale, to a certain context of life and language" (ibid.).

According to Craig, the narration of the novel oscillates between Sammy's own thoughts and those of the narrator without any distinction between the two. This fusion between the extra- and intradiegetic narrator, the constant gliding between first- and third-person narrative, dialogue and monologue, the combination of written and spoken is, according to Craig, is "an act of linguistic solidarity, since it thrusts the narrative into the same world which its characters inhabit" (Craig 1999: 103). Kelman's narration is static, claims Craig, not interested in progression along a temporal trajectory of events, but with an unchangeable world in which his characters are thrown and from which there is no escape:

> they are concerned fundamentally, therefore, not with the progress implied by a narrative sequence but with repetition – repetition as the systematisation and dehumanisation to which working-class people, above all others, are subjected, a subjection which is the denial of their existence as human subjects and the affirmation of their status as subjects of the Great British realm (ibid.: 105).

Additionally, the lack of any meaningful action as far as the main character is concerned, combined with the endless repetition of apparently meaningless rituals, such as making coffee and rolling a cigarette, is to be seen as an extreme form of claustrophobic realism, with the author resisting as much as he can to alter or falsify the real. Thus, the reader perceives Sammy's despondency as absolutely real, unaltered, unadulterated by artistic or poetic language. The repetitive, meaningless actions and passivity in the plot also suggest the characters' awareness of the fact that their state of alienation is permanent, inescapable and cannot be reversed. The only thing that Sammy can do is to resist the external influences on his life on a strictly personal, isolated level, and to continue leading a disempowered life. Kövesi calls Sammy "a sightless prophet not of a possible or ideal

future, but of a material, at times oppressively close, concrete present" (Kövesi 2007: 142).

Taking into consideration the broad critical agreement that Kelman is an iconic postindustrial Scottish author of working-class fiction focusing mainly on numerous sociopolitical aspects of everyday life of the disaffected, marginal and estranged members of Scottish society, we can conclude that he is a contemporary and politically engaged author. This appears to confirm the literary authorship and scholarship regarding the newer concept of alienation in Scottish literature. What is more, despite the Kafkaesque, existentialist manifestation of Kelman's alienated characters, he is invariably linked to the entire Post-Marxist debate on British working-class fiction and its related phenomena of alienation. Thus, Kelman's Sammy consistently reflects the social and political realities of present-day Scotland and the genuine voices of the urban Scottish underclass in a new type of postindustrial fiction:

> [it] highlighted the victims of late capitalism in the urban despoliation within the previously colonial centres of Bristol, Glasgow, Edinburgh and London in robust vernacular styles of language […] [These novels] edge British narrative away from the centre of traditional literary concerns and create a centrifugal space reaching outward both in geographic and class terms. Such texts confront the epiphanic notions of transcendence and wish fulfillment conventionally associated with the literary, drawing in underclass subjects who articulate profoundly non-conventional senses of community and self via dialect, humour and profanity (Tew 2004: 111).

Kelman's Sammy is not merely a character suffering from an existentialist strand of alienation, but the embodiment of the present state of economic reality for previously well-defined working-class communities. He represents both the antithesis and the immediate reality of the working-class hero. He is not a working-class subject who is actively involved in a struggle against the establishment, but a passive protagonist who is merely struggling to survive, yet most importantly, someone who essentially retains his working-class characteristics. Kelman accurately depicts in this novel the powerless working-class Northern male who finds himself in a world in which class as a critical concept has ceased to play the important role it had played in previous times. As John Fordham puts it:

> previous working class authors rely on class as a secure or justified marker of social identity; their successors in the later decades begin to register its

disintegration. The clearly drawn lines of conflict of a firmly established modernist culture – whether of class, gender, or political conviction – were now becoming blurred, or atomized, into multiple nodes of "difference", "plurality", "fragmentation" (Fordham 2009: 142).

Thirdly, we must discuss a further instance of the "us" versus "them" framework present in this novel, this time expressed more directly than through the use of vernacular and sociolect. In the novel, readers find out that it is not only the judges, lawyers and the "sodjers" – "there's nay such thing as a good fucking uniform" (Kelman 1998: 195) – who are opposing the working-class individuals, but also the very institutions created by the welfare state to combat the old class divide.

The scenes in which Sammy is being examined by the doctor for "sightloss" and the interview with the female clerk constantly interrogating him and typing on a computer stand out as perfect instances of the old "us" versus "them" divide. The antithesis is made clear by Sammy himself, who upon thanking a nurse for her help and not getting a reply, asserts the class differences between him and the state employees: "Some of these middle-class bastards don't. They talk to ye and ye'r allowed to reply but you cannay speak unless spoken to" (ibid.: 216). Additionally, there are also numerous instances throughout the novel of Sammy being caught in utterly meaningless, bureaucratic procedures, which are employed not to help him, but to discourage him from seeking compensation in order not to lose Community Gratuities. The role of these authorities has been effectively inverted by Kelman, who is thus reinforcing the upper-class versus working-class opposition in his novel:

> the questioning by the doctor is not accompanied by manhandling, the threats may be more veiled (benefits cuts), the insensitive formalistic procedures and protocols of a Kafkaesque bureaucracy are carried out in public rather than behind closed doors, but the intended effect of these is to be intimidated and discouraged, in short disciplined" (Klaus 2004: 85).

Sammy finds himself in the "us" constituent again and again; in this case, the "them" is comprised in the concerted action between police, medical and social security state authorities: "They were robbing him, they were thieving it off him. Telling ye man that is what they were fucking doing. Bastards. The sodjers and the DSS, the Health and

Welfare. They were all stringing him along" (Kelman 1998: 246). Through its institutions, the state forces Sammy into a sort of Catch-22 situation: having been violently beaten by the police, he loses his sight; in order to get state benefits, he must officially state the reason for his sightloss, which in turn would either force him to take legal action against the police or to be a key witness in an official state inquiry. Both of these prospects are staunchly avoided by Sammy due to fear and the conviction that he cannot win against the system. He is forcefully pushed in a sort of third space, invisible to the large public, due to the obvious discrepancies between state official discourse and actual behaviour of state institutions. The "us" vs. "them" binary is also reflected in Kövesi's assertion that the relationship between the individual and the state is inherently defective, due to the opposition of the two constituents: "the state is standardising, homogenising, essentialising; the individual is inconsistent, variegated, distinctive, but is repeatedly told not to be, or that he cannot be" (Kövesi 2007: 150).

Last but not least, the North versus South, Scotland versus England binary is also conveyed, albeit dispassionately, only at the very end of the novel. Although the prospect of getting out of Scotland and moving to England is mentioned again and again throughout the novel, England is far from holding the positive features such as are present in Welsh. Kelman describes Sammy's going to England in a matter-of-fact style, deprived of any positive or negative connotations: "Fucking England man that was where he was going, definitely: down some place like Margate or Southsea, or Scarborough, fucking Bournemouth" (Kelman 1998: 291). If up to this point, national identity has been rather concealed in many of his writings (cf. Böhnke 1999: 33), the end of this novel has Sammy joining the Scottish diaspora, as the reader is told he is heading South, with the help of his son's savings to pay for the cab and bus fares. Again, as opposed to Welsh, we are given scarcely any motivation why Sammy decides to leave and, what is more, why he is leaving to London and not a different British metropolis.

All in all, Kelman is to be regarded as an author "deeply concerned about the dispossessed of British society, […] he enacts this concern in his literature, to be observed in his characters and subject matter, in his narrative techniques, and in his use of language" (ibid.: 55). Born and bred into a Glaswegian working-class family, Kelman has always

felt that the stories of the people he knew and wanted to write about have always been marginalised in British fiction. Thus, as an act of rebellion and defiance against the structure of conventional fiction in Great Britain, he has begun to record and recover "uninteresting" lives traditionally alien to mainstream or "serious" fiction (cf. Macdonald 2005: 130 & McGlynn 2008: 4), exploring the lives of working-class individuals in a postindustrial Scotland from within. As Craig put it:

> founded as it was on heavy industry, on the idea of a mass society whose masses could be brought into solidarity, has been wiped out by the destruction of the traditional Scottish industries. Kelman's central characters are symbols of the collapse of working-class life into a dispirited and isolated endurance; there is no hope of transformation; there is no sustenance in community. In Kelman's fiction, there is a brutal awareness that the Scottish working class […] are now the leftovers of a world which has no need for them; their choices are limited to acceptance of the atomisation of social improvement, or submission to becoming fodder for the only industry they have left – the poverty industry (Craig 1994: 101-102).

Thus, Kelman's *How Late it Was, How Late* is truly grounded in "the stark reality of the rough working class" (Klaus 2004: 83) and undoubtedly represents an important illustration of postindustrial working-class fiction, with its emphasis on the alienated individuals in present-day Scotland: the de-skilled, the state-assisted, the disaffected. These characters belong to a long tradition of Scottish division, "with their failed struggles to articulate an adequate sense of self-identity they reflect the difficulties in the search of a Scottish identity" (Böhnke 1999: 63). Sammy is the perfect example of the plight of modern day working-class members of the present-day Scottish society, a man suffering from a deep alienation, symbolizing the degradation of the previously empowered, skilled working-class heroes of the 1950s into the de-skilled, state-assisted precariat of the 1990s.

5.2. "Scotland Takes Drugs in Psychic Defense" – Irvine Welsh's Northern Scottish Hero(es) of the 1990s: *Trainspotting* (1993), *Porno* (2002) and *Skagboys* (2012)

The following subchapter will focus on Irvine Welsh's trilogy, made up of *Trainspotting* (first published in 1993), its sequel, *Porno* (first published in 2002) and prequel, *Skagboys* (first published in 2012). In order to highlight the transformation of the concept of alienation and the shifts occurring within the working-classes in Great Britain from the beginning of the 1980s till the year 2000, Welsh's entire trilogy will be the focus of my analysis, although *Trainspotting* is primarily the novel which achieved cult status and also high critical acclaim (due to the great success of the eponymous film),

Irvine Welsh's *Trainspotting* was nominated in 1993 for the Scottish Arts Council Book Award and has been reprinted sixteen times, selling 150.000 copies by 1996 (cf. Morace 2001: 73). After the success of the movie, it went on to sell half a million copies. Almost overnight, it became a literary sensation of the 90s, "the fastest-selling and the most shop-lifted novel in British publishing history" (Arlidge: 1996, n.p.). In all aforementioned novels published by Welsh, we are confronted from the very beginning with a new(er) working-class hero typology and the changes of the working-classes which have occurred in Great Britain during and after Thatcherism. The main setting of all three parts of the trilogy is situated in Edinburgh, and more precisely, working-class Leith, not coincidentally also the birthplace of Welsh himself. Welsh deals first and foremost with the realities of Scottish youngsters who come from traditional working-class families, young people who are faced with the squalor and grim realities of a postindustrial Scotland within the United Kingdom.

In my analysis of the novels, I will try to demonstrate that this new generation is essentially paradoxical: although the youngsters depicted by Welsh differ from the working-class hero of the 1950s in their perception of the world, i.e. the Hoggartian 'organic' working-classes represented by the generation of their parents, they do retain certain characteristics which unambiguously link them to the previously discussed typology. Also, the constant between the two, the classical working-class hero of the 1950s and the new(er) working-class hero created by Welsh, is precisely their feeling of alienation, of impotent anger, be it against societal rules and norms, against their families or against state politics. It is

anger that connects the two, accompanied by their rogue and rebellious traits which lead them to challenging and breaking the taboos of British society. Thus, the punk, and later raver of the 90s, feel the same rebellion as the Teddy Boy of the 50s, what has changed is merely the fact that Rock'n'Roll music has been replaced with Punk and Techno, radio has given way to television and film, economic growth to long-term unemployment. Although theoretically better equipped than their parents' generation, the outcome remains the same: the hero inevitably rejects society and finds himself on the fringes of societal "normality".

Like the other two novels of the trilogy, *Trainspotting* has an episodic structure and is made up of forty-three loosely connected stories which are narrated by one of the main characters of the novel: Francis Begbie (Franco), Simon David Williamson (Sick Boy), Danny Murphy (Spud) and Mark Renton (Rents). Although there is no "main character" in the traditional sense of the word, we may agree that the character who comes nearest to being a central character and antihero would be Mark Renton.

Continuing in a way the tradition of Arthur Seaton as a member of the same working-class, only with a far more exacerbated repugnance against the established order of the day, Renton is at the same time very different from Arthur in that he belongs to a different, Northern consciousness, in a time and place which could pass as the opposite of Arthur's. Straight from the beginning, the reader is introduced to the distinctly Scottish attitude of Renton, who often shocks his mates (and readers) by being extremely critical of the romanticized Scottish virtues many of them praise:

> Fucking failures in a country of failures. It's nae good blamin it oan the English fir colonising us. Ah don't hate the English. They're just wankers. We are colonised by wankers. We can't even pick a decent, vibrant, healthy culture to be colonised by. No. We're ruled by effete arseholes. What does that make us? The lowest of the fuckin low, the scum of the earth. The most wretched, servile, miserable, pathetic trash that was ever shat intae creation. Ah don't hate the English. They just git oan wi the shite thuv goat. Ah hate the Scots (*Trainspotting*, 100).

Engaging in what Peter Childs calls "the creation of a dialectic with Englishness" (Childs 2005: 242), it is usually Renton who criticizes his friends' nationalistic tendencies and opposition to England. However, more than a mere rant, his critique of Scotland and

Scottishness is, in my view, rather a personal frustration with what Renton perceives as lack of reaction from his fellow Scotsmen than a genuine sympathy for the English. In other words, Renton feels alienated from his Scottishness precisely because of its subordination by Englishness. Since the Scots refuse to actually change their status-quo within Britain, this leads to Renton's personal rebellion not only against Britishness, but also Scottishness. This is more evident in his attitude towards the Irish, when he reluctantly expresses a certain grudge against the Irish for having actively asserted themselves against the English dominance, a quality which the Scottish are lacking, much to Renton's despair: "some say the Irish are the trash ay Europe. That's shite. It's the Scots. The Irish hud the bottle tae win thir country back, or at least maist of it" (*Trainspotting*, 240-241).

Similarly, we encounter the same derogatory attitude in *Skagboys,* in the opening scene of the novel describing the miners' protest against the closure of the pit during the height of Thatcherite Britain. It is also young Renton who remarks that "those boys at the back ay the bus start stampin their feet and singing these Irish Republican ballads of defiance, then a couple of pro-IRA chants come into the mix. Soon, they're exclusively belting out Irish Republican ballads" (*Skagboys*, 19). This could prove my point that working-class Scots with nationalistic tendencies actually perceive the Irish Independence as an example to follow and admire the courage of the Irish to challenge English hegemony in the British Isles. From time to time Renton even engages in the overt nationalism of his friends, such as in the episode in which Begbie sings a song which stirs Scottish nationalistic feelings in everybody present. Renton cannot help but join in, stating that "we join him in the chorus and we're aw the gather as one, sharin that broken dream" (*Skagboys*, 267). In my view, the broken dream that Renton mentions could mean a distinct Northern consciousness and a breakaway from Scotland's subaltern status within the United Kingdom.

In *Porno*, it is the professor of Scottish literature who is ironised by the English student Nikki Fuller-Smith: "McClymont is lecturing to the smattering of patriots and wannabe Scots […] You can almost hear the soundtrack of pipes playing in the background, as he spouts his nationalist propaganda […] Ross, the 'American Scat' in front of us is probably

hard as a rock in his Levi's as he scribbles, filling pages with tales of English cruelty and injustice" (*Porno*, 25-26). The character of Nikki, is constructed as a sort of *aide memoire* of Scotland's active participation in the expansion of the British Empire, despite its sub-national status and Celtic aspirations of purity and nobility. Nikki acts as a sort of moral guardian, the (English) historically aware student who reminds Scottish purists that they must engage in self-critique for their participation in what has been the British Empire:

> It's funny, but I always thought that 'North Britons' was a term used in irony, in sarcasm, by nationalists in Scotland. I was surprised to find out that it was coined by Unionists who wanted to be accepted as part of the UK. […] So it was an aspirational term, as no English person has or probably ever will refer to themselves as 'South Britons'. In much the same way as 'Rule Britannia' was written by a Scotsman. It was a plea for an inclusion you can never have […] But on the other hand, it's a bit sad that Scotland hasn't been able to obtain its freedom from the Union. It's been a long time. I mean, look at what the Irish have achieved (*Porno*, 220).

Again, by ironically referring to the Irish independence, Nikki mocks the complexes of Scots, who perceive themselves as being stuck in the situation of being considered a sort of second-class British citizen, and what is worse, with their own accord. Similarly, the death of Renton's brother while serving with the British Army in Northern Ireland functions also as a reminder of Scotland's dual status within the United Kingdom: it was part of a colonizing Britain, yet also internally colonized by England. Pondering on the death of his brother, Renton fails to see any glory in it: "he died a spare prick in a uniform, walking along a country road wi a rifle in his hand. He died an ignorant victim ay imperialism. […] The cunt died as he lived: completely fuckin scoobied" (*Trainspotting*, 266).

During a trip to London, Renton enters a pub which is called "*Rule Britannia*". Reflecting on his own nationality, and pondering whether he should be proud to be Scottish or not, Renton cannot help but blurt out another rant:

> The Britannia. Rule Britannia. Ah've never felt British, because ah'm not. It's ugly and artificial. Ah've never really felt Scottish either, though. Scotland the brave, ma arse. Scotland the shitein cunt. We'd throttle the life oot of each other fir the privilege ay rimming some English aristocrat's piles. Ah've never felt a fucking thing aboot countries, other than total disgust (*Trainspotting*, 284).

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Yet again, Renton's criticism of Scotland can be seen as his way to vent his frustration with Scottish attitude towards England. The above quote further reinforces Renton's impression of belonging to "a failed British national identity" (Childs 2005: 243), underpinned by the rampant consumerism that has gripped Scotland in post-Thatcherite Britain and the widespread embrace of middle-class values by representatives of a by now pointless working-class. As Schoene puts it, "Welsh encourages us to regard his characters' choice of drugs over drudgery as a nationalistically inspired strategy of "psychic defense" (Schoene 2010: 66).

Feeling alienated in Scotland and from his wished-for Scottish identity, it is Renton who flees twice from Great Britain, firstly to Amsterdam in *Trainspotting* and again in *Porno*, this time to San Francisco. As Peter Childs remarks, these "other cities have a cultural life that is vastly different from Britain's: San Francisco and Amsterdam represent places of possible freedom away from the binary of a colonizing England and a colonized Scotland" (Childs 2005: 243). However, it is my contention that before actually fleeing from Britain, the place in which Renton is trying to escape from estrangement is cosmopolitan London. London functions as a perfect opposite to Leith, Edinburgh and Scottish working-class environment. The fact that London is also in the English South of Britain is no coincidence. London functions in this instance, just as it is the case in *Billy Liar*, as a heterotopia of compensation: if Leith is described as "ay place fill ay noisy cunts who willnae mind their ain business. A place ay dispossessed white trash" (*Trainspotting*, 214), then London is perceived as "fun and debauchery" (*Skagboys*, 246).

Similarly, Sick Boy perceives London as a place where he can reach his full potential, as a location which prevents him from the working-class prejudices of Scottish Edinburgh: "Ye can be freer here, no because it's London, but because it isnae Leith" (*Trainspotting*, 285). It is interesting to note that when he is about to have sexual intercourse with an English woman from London, called Lucinda, Sick Boy is perceived as an exotic character, an outsider, since the woman asks him not to speak Italian during the sex, as he usually did in Scotland, but in his "Scottish voice" (*Skagboys*, 246). This goes to show how the Scottish – English binary works: for each constituent perceives the other as the Other, exotic and axiomatically different.

However, this inversion is also valid for the old "us" versus "them" binary, which does not disappear completely in Welsh's books. If in Edinburgh Sick Boy feels hemmed, restricted by working-class prudery, as far as the women go, in London he feels

> urbane, sophisticated, and most of all miles away from fucking Edinburgh, where there's always some heidbanger fae Leith who staggers intae a sophisticated city-centre wine bar for a late drink to catch me canoodling wi some out-of-town lovely and blows my cover, usually with the blood-curdling cry ay 'SICK BOY, YA CUNT, WHAT UR YOU FUCKIN WELL DAEIN HERE?! (*Skagboys*, 249).

From Sick Boy's description of London, we may agree that London and his new stance are actually reflecting an upper-class outlook, which is directly opposed to his usual attitude in Scotland. Not only that, but encouraged by Southern libertarianism, he produces so-called "love cards", which he uses in order to meet a well-to-do young English woman whom he could eventually use as a source of income.

This sudden change of attitude when the characters of the novel are in the English South occurs not only in Sick Boy, but also in Renton, who is also described as different, a far more menacing character than back home in Scotland, where he usually tacitly accepts Begbie's abuse without protesting, thus playing the role of a less "hard type" sort of person, a kinder, softer, more feminized individual. However, when in London, Renton appears to be adopting a Begbie-like attitude: he scares two young English drug addicts with his Northern 'hardness' and dialect: "You want a fuckin burst mooth, cunt? […] whenever ah go doon south, ah seem tae huv that kind ay attitude. It goes eftir a couple ay days" (*Trainspotting*, 297). This bears in my opinion strong similarities with the different perception of Joe Lampton, with the one observation that in the case of latter, he is perceived first as a manly brute due to his working-class background, while with Renton, he is perceived more menacing than he is first and foremost because of his Northern, Scottish accent.

These sudden behavioural changes in both Sick Boy and Renton can further indicate the North versus South binary in Welsh's trilogy. Welsh plays here with the preconceptions which both parties have against each other: the English who are "lazy and posh Ingloids" (*Skagboys*, 259), somehow less manly, but more affluent, liberal and more tolerant than

Northerners, somehow always engaged in personal profit only and "ridiculously pompous to the last" (*Porno*, 33). Conversely, Scots are perceived as being usually poorer, more conservative, manlier and more working-class. Scots, called "porridge wogs" by the English (*Trainspotting*, 241), are seen as generally less attractive: "What do you call a good-looking girl in Scotland? A tourist!" (*Trainspotting*, 377) or as untrustworthy spongers, for instance by the English Nicksie: "I enjoy ripping orf the farking state as much as the next geezer, but you Jocks are something else; you see it as a sort of birthright" (*Skagboys*, 254).

In my view, the North versus South binary is a key characteristic which features prominently in Welsh's *Trainspotting* trilogy. The Scottish identity, the Celtic North, is dialectically opposed to the English, Anglo-Saxon South, the faulty relationship between these constituents resulting in a sense of alienation felt and expressed by the characters. Thus, in order to truly escape his alienation, Renton realizes that he must leave Scotland and Britain permanently: "Ah huv to git oot ay Leith, oot ay Scotland. For good. Right away, no jist doon tae London fir six months" (*Trainspotting*, 254), finding in Amsterdam and Los Angeles, as previously mentioned, places of freedom and independence from a colonizing England.

The North versus South divide is also reflected in the use of the vernacular in all of Welsh's novels. As previously mentioned, the Scottish spelling as well as orthography make the few chapters which are narrated in Standard English by a third-person narrator (as opposed to the first-person narration using Scottish vernacular in all other chapters) appear freakish and abnormal. Language also separates the Northern Scottish characters from the Southern English characters in these novels. It is again Childs who remarks that "Welsh takes care to identify each narrator with particular patterns of speech and expression in their use of dialect. Thus, though it is not always clear to the reader from the content or context at the outset as to who is narrating each chapter, the language is an immediate clue" (Childs 2005: 246). The linguistic markers in question are for instance the use of the noun "cat" by Spud, adjectives such as "wide" and "hard cunt" by Begbie, the use of Italian words and expressions by Simon, as well as colour references such as "ginger", which help the reader understand immediately that the narrator is Renton.

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In *Skagboys*, for example, the inner struggle which is going on in Renton's head between his Scottish identity and British formal education is also rendered both graphically and semantically in the novel. For instance, when Renton starts writing his diary, he uses Standard English orthography without even realizing it. Only after consciously deciding not to write in Standard English does he begin to use Scottish dialect:

> ~~I know that once I get moving I'll be fine, even though I'm a little untidy~~ FUCKIN DAEIN IT AGAIN!! Ah <u>ken</u> that once ah git movin ah'll be fine, even though I'm a bit scruff order […] Glasgow. That was how we learned tae spell it at primary school: Granny Likes A Small Glass Of Whisky. It is still pitch dark and Weedgieville is spooky… (*Skagboys*, 4-6).

The fact that Renton emphasises that the Standard British orthography of Glasgow had to be taught with the help of a mnemonic trick only highlights the fact that Standard English sounds strange to Scots, almost like a foreign language which is imposed on children through state institutions. It is an accurate rendering of Renton's perception of Scotland being colonized by a hegemonic England, which acts merely as a colonizing power, ruling over a territory which is essentially non-English.

Conversely, the English dialect is used to indicate the region of origin of various English minor characters, by using typically English nouns such as "geezer", the pejorative "Jock", phonetic pronunciation such as "bastid", "cahnt", "fing", "roice" or sentences such as "that's joost wot oi was tro-ing to tell to the bastid" (*Trainspotting*, 238). This technique also serves to expose the artificiality of Standard English as perceived by Scotsmen and underline the differences between the Scottish North and the English South of Britain, rendering Britain in effect as an artificially constructed country.

Another aspect which indirectly relates to working-class consciousness is Welsh's pervasive use of grotesque and humour in his fiction, which can be seen as an aggressive, working-class and overly masculine attack on middle- and upper-class sensibilities. It corresponds fully to the working-class philosophy of the 1950s, i.e. the conscious antithesis to the aristocratic Bloomsbury typology. The macabre humour functions much as a shock therapy, making the generally shunned and invisible underclass perceptible to "mainstream" society and the upper-classes. In my opinion, its directness and shocking frankness is used by the author to characterize the rugged Scottish working-classes, which is

of course antithetically opposed to English humour, and seems more sanitized, insincere and effete.

Numerous bizarre incidents involving bodily fluids, excrements, urine, faeces are described in great detail and represent a constant feature of the novels. Certain critics have perceived this sort of interest in bodily fluids as a way of the author to describe the damage done to the Scottish body (cf. Morace 2001: 36), a damage which is physical, psychological, political and economic. It is interesting to note that many such potentially disturbing scenes have an intrinsic humour, which, although perhaps repugnant to some of the readers, manage to produce laughter. To exemplify what I mean more accurately, I would like to mention a peculiar defecating competition between Renton and his workmates, where the defecation is commentated by one of Renton's work colleagues as if it were a sporting event: "excellent result, coming in at a fourteen and a quarter inches n the undisputed winner. No a weak link in it, nice and compacted but sliding oot intae a nice line" (*Skagboys*, 39).

A similar scene can be found in the chapter "Traditional Sunday Breakfast" (*Trainspotting*, 118) in which David Mitchell wakes up in a strange bed, realising that he is covered in his own vomit, urine and faeces and that he is in the house of a girl he wanted to woo, who was still living with her parents. Embarrassed by the situation, David gathers the soiled bed sheets so he can wash them at his place, when he is invited by Mrs. Houston, the girl's mother, to join the family for Sunday breakfast. Refusing to hand the bundled sheets over, a tug-of-war between David and Mrs. Houston ensues, ending in a metaphoric yet faecal scene:

> the sheets flew open and a pungent shower of skittery shite, thin alcohol sick, and vile pish splashed out across the floor. Mrs Houston […] ran, heaving into the sink. Brown flecks of runny shite stained Mr. Houston glasses, face and white shirt" (*Trainspotting*, 121).

The scene is comparable with the throwing-up incident of Arthur Seaton, and fulfils the same symbolic function: the rejection of middle- and upper-class values (here perhaps more visible, since Mr. Houston is wearing a white shirt signifying he is white-collar).

Other chapters derive their humour from linguistic puns, either based on Scottish pronunciation (such as Simon's prank call at a bar, with the female employee asking for a "Mark Hunt", or the "Inter Shitty Express", a phonetic reference to Sean Connery's accent) or puns and word games, such as "A Leg Over" (where the title is understood as a euphemism for sex), while the reader finds out the chapter is about a drug addict whose leg had been amputated. The same interplay is to be found in "Eating Out" (again a euphemism for cunnilingus), in which the reader finds out that that a Scottish waitress is putting copious amounts of her period blood into the soup of two discourteous Englishmen, followed by samples of urine and faeces, which she also mixes in their food.

As a conclusion, I would suggest that a key feature of Welsh's trilogy is the depiction of an alienation which is grounded on the dichotomy between the Scottish North and English South of Britain. Even though Welsh's book is said to have spawned a decade of so-called "lad lit" [84], the novel can more importantly be perceived as a portrayal of a different, Northern, Scottish consciousness diametrically opposed to English, Southern affluence and upper-class aloofness. As Childs notes:

> *Trainspotting* marked a literary shift because it created *a new beststeller that was distinctly Scottish as well as distinctly working class*; it dealt with a subject and with an underclass that both society and fiction had largely chosen to ignore, – in a dialect and a demotic language it had also largely chosen to ignore – which is why Allan Sinfield compares its significance with that of another working class novel that appeared 35 years earlier: Allan Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*" (Childs 2005: 241, emphasis added).

This literary shift to a clearly Scottish and working-class consciousness is crucially important: although the old class constituents of the alienation binary of the 50s have been largely replaced with the new North versus South components, class as a feature has not disappeared from Celtic Fringe fiction. Welsh is caught in "a doubly marginalised position […]: from a regional Scottish position against the hegemonic centre of "English"

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[84] 'Lad lit' is a marketing term which appeared in 1990s Britain, referring "to a kind of popular fiction concerning the '*lad*' of that period, a supposedly carefree hedonist devoted to football, beer, music, and casual sex: a figure created in contrast to the feminist-defined 'New Man' of previous decades." (Baldick 2007: 181).

Britishness, in a time of political devolution; and from a variety of oppositional subcultures against hegemonic middle-class values" (cf. Herbrechter 2000: 10). What Herbrechter actually terms "oppositional subculture" can be seen as the old organic working-class, which has been traditionally the antithesis of middle- and upper-class 'mainstream' British society, taking us back to the "us" versus "them" dichotomy of the working-class fiction of the 1950s. There are many additional similarities between the discussed novels of Welsh, his anti-heroes such as Renton or Simon and the archetypal anti-hero of the Angry Young Men fiction of the 1950s. Effectively, the alienation binary has changed insofar as the new constituents, North versus South, have come to the foreground, while the old constituents, the working-class versus upper-class, have been relegated to the background, but not disappeared completely. Although subordinated to the aspect of identity, the issue of class is still present in all discussed novels by Welsh.

As Cairns Craig aptly puts it, Welsh's fiction is depicting an alienated "community of dependency – welfare dependency, drug-dependency, money-dependency – which is the mirror image of the society of isolated, atomized individuals of modern capitalism" (Craig 1999: 97). The most important characteristic of Welsh's *Trainspotting* trilogy is, however, that it has effectively re-introduced two main phenomena to the public and intellectual discussion: the alienated working-class individual in the guise of a Scottish drug addict and the rift between Scotland and England within the United Kingdom. According to Schoene, "not only did the novel [i.e. *Trainspotting*] succeed in reactivating public debates about drug consumption, it proved equally successful in asserting Scottish sub-national awareness and giving voice to the attitudes, desires and concerns of a late capitalist urban underclass" (Schoene 2010: 68).

5.3. The Angri(er) Young Man: The Northern Yob

In order to be able to establish the typology of the newer working-class heroes of the 1990s, I shall focus on Irvine Welsh's *Trainspotting* trilogy. Renton, for example, is an archetypical representative of the new, Scottish working-class of the 90s, who has few similarities with the prosperous and industrial working-class hero of the 50s. The economic realities which Renton faces could not be further apart from the realities of the 50s and the age of consensus: the new working-class white male finds himself in a world of mass unemployment or seasonal work at best, forced into accepting benefits from the state and often living on the fringes of society. Renton and all the other characters come close to what Gorz described as a "neo-proletariat, defined as a non-force, without objective social importance, excluded from society" (cf. Gorz 1982: 73). While Renton's anti-establishment attitude connects him with all working-class heroes of the 50s – "Nae friends in this game. Jist associates" (*Trainspotting*, 7) – he is at the same time different from his forerunners in two very important aspects: he rejects consumerism as a whole and has the impression that the only refuge from his alienation is to be found in drugs that chemically alter reality.

Renton is a youngster born in Leith, Edinburgh, a 25-year old with ginger hair, born into a working-class family, one of the three sons of his Protestant father and Catholic mother. His elder brother Billy is a soldier in the British Army and his younger brother, "wee Davie", is handicapped and eventually dies at a very young age. Renton's teenage years are spent trying to distance himself from the religious conflict in his family, from the disadvantageous influence of Begbie, from his working-class environment and from Leith, Edinburgh and Scotland as whole. As Childs puts it, for Renton, "the book culminates in a rejection of home, family, religion and friends" (Childs 2005: 247). Renton can thus be seen as nothing but the incarnation of the new and altered traditional working-class of the 50s, "the voice of punk grown up, grown wise and grown eloquent" (Hughs-Hallett: 1993, n.p.), who paradoxically retains some features of the old, traditional working-class, yet is also different from the generation of his parents in as far as general attitudes and level of political commitment are concerned. Although working-class aspects are visible in virtually all characters, it is Renton who comes closer to a "main

character" in *Trainspotting* and *Skagboys*, while in *Porno* it is Simon who narrates most chapters in the book.

Let us analyze the new working-class young male of the 90s. Mark Renton grows up during the heyday of Thatcherite reforms undertaken in Great Britain. His deep working-class allegiances are shown on different occasions in *Skagboys* and *Trainspotting*. For instance, after the beating he takes from a policeman during the demonstration against the reforms initiated by Thatcher, he concedes that the working-classes have effectively lost the class struggle: "I'm thinking that we've lost, and there's bleak times ahead, and ah'm wonderin: what the fuck am ah gaunny dae wi the rest ay ma life?" (*Skagboys*, 21). Both the disillusion and his acknowledgement that "we" lost the war are to be considered generational, since Renton speaks not only for himself, but an entire age group of working-class youngsters who find themselves in the exact same position. The escape from his anxiety about his future is in drugs: "So we rap oot some stuff at each other, gaun ower auld times, aboot the strike and the class war. *Good fuckin speed*" (*Skagboys*, 33).

Instances of the old working-class versus middle- and upper-class thinking still occur in all three of Welsh's novels. For instance, when Renton is asked to stay overtime by the boss, he refuses to do so, along with all his other colleagues. He perceives his employer as a typical "them" representative:

> "he's a moaning-faced straightpeg, the kind ay small businessman Thatcher loves; a grasping, spiritually dead, scab-minded cunt whae continually trumpets on aboot 'how hard he works for his family' […] So we're thinking: *fuck* your family, ya fud-faced bag ay Barry White; your family are *fuckin vermin* who should be exterminated before they cairry oan your work n make this world an even mair intolerably boring n evil place than it already fuckin well is" (*Skagboys*, 27).

The sentimental allegiance of Renton and Simon, both youngsters coming from a working-class Scottish background, lies clearly with the working-class "us". The gradual defeat of this traditional working-class is keenly observed by Renton, who narrates the episode in which he and Sick Boy get a job on the *Sealink*, a ferry on which they are supposed to do menial jobs. Renton aptly notes the change in the relationship between the workers and their bosses: the days of the workers' unions are gone, their rights largely disregarded, their training ignored, and total obedience is a must:

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The ferries were union shops for years but Maggie's mob fucked them over with new contracts after this privatisation lark and the split of the BR. So no bullshit about industrial militancy, workers' rights, n all that 'it ain't my job' shit. What Benson wants is flexibility. He wants you to say you'll work anywhere – kitchens, cabins, car decks – and you'll do anything – cleaning up the puke, unblocking the shithouses. That you'll do double shifts of he needs you to, and you'll do it with a farking big smile on your face" (*Skagboys*, 262).

As far as the economic decline is concerned, due to the fact that long term employment is a thing of the past, the alienation of the new working-class hero comes not from the workplace, but from a complete lack of perspective and boredom associated with being pushed in the state-assisted underclass. As far as work is concerned, Renton notes that the neo-liberal reforms have massively backfired in reality, making things far worse than they had been:

We're experts at avoiding work; no just the seasonals, but the established staff tae. They've aw been issued new contracts ay employment, which means longer hours fir far less pay, so motivation is non-existent. […] Oan occasions when we ur visible, we strut aroond the ship wi a phoney expression ay purpose oan oor faces, eiwys in flight fae real graft" (*Skagboys*, 348).

Instead of working hard and going out during the weekends, youngsters are now defrauding the state in order to procure money for their drug addiction. Although Renton is unemployed, he always has money, we are told, because he claims benefit at five different addresses (*Trainspotting*, 185). The "gyro" is their only way of getting by and their periodical interviews with social security employees are perceived as a total nuisance. Other differences of the new working-class emerge if we compare Renton to his parents' generation: Renton is not racist, such as Mrs. Curran, who complains about the Indians and Pakistanis living in her neighbourhood, or Swanney, who exposes his racist views in front of his mates:

Ah've nowt against darkies as such, but thaire's way too many ower here now. Pakis tae. That sort of unselective breedin dilutes the fortitude of ay race. The morals go tits up. If the Germans invaded now, we'd huv nae chance […] It's a well-known fact that niggers just come ower here to sponge offay the state, but. It's like revenge fir aw they years ay slavery wi the British Empire n that. Post colonialism or some shite, that's the fuckin scientific term (*Skagboys*, 190-191).

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Renton's views are far more liberal than Swannie's; he is decidedly more tolerant than his parents and some of his mates. He dislikes their narrow-mindedness, violent outbursts and prejudice: "I hate cunts like that. Cunts like Begbie. Cunts that are into baseball-batting every fucker that's different; pakis, poofs n what huv ye" (*Trainspotting*, 100). Begbie represents "the prototypical hard man who, whilst openly castigating his friend's heroin use, is himself addicted to violence. *Trainspotting* deconstructs the myth of the working-class hard man, depicting Begbie as a bullying wife-beater, fearfully indulged by his friends" (McGuire 2010: 24), while Renton displays a prejudice-free mind frame when it comes to accepting the other and openness in discussing sexuality, which was, more or less, a taboo for the previous working-class generation.

Renton readily admits, for instance, that he always considered having sex with a man, merely out of curiosity. In *Trainspotting*, he meets Gi, an older Italian homosexual man. After initially responding violently to Gi's sexual behaviour, Renton feels sorry for him and takes him with him to a party. Renton also admits having had oral sex with a trans-vestite in London once, concluding that "It's aw aboot aesthetics, fuck all tae do with morality" (*Trainspotting*, 291). As opposed to most of his friends, Renton "values educa-tion and reflection, reads books (to Begbie's disgust), discusses youth cultural reference points, has temporarily attended university, and is by far the most cerebral of the main characters" (Childs 2005: 248).

If the anti-heroes of the 1950s were all enjoying consumerism and their newly found prosperity, in the case of Renton and the others, the reader is confronted with the unpleas-ant realities of postindustrial Britain. They do not have good wages, they are unemployed with virtually no hope of getting a well-paid long-term job, and the only spending they do is related to procuring their drugs and enjoying their next "hit". Renton and virtually all the other male characters are not able to form affectionate relationships with women; as is again noted by Childs, "drugs have replaced courtship […] expressions of love in *Trainspotting* are for the most part limited to romancing suppliers" (ibid.: 249) and drug consumption: Alison describes the penetration of the syringe in sexualized terms, as a "hit" which is better than real sex: "that beats any meat injection… that beats any fuckin

cock in the world" (*Trainspotting*, 10). In the same scene, Sick Boy confesses his "love" for Swanney, his drug dealer (*Trainspotting*, 11).

In this respect, Renton's incapable of seeing himself married and in a genuinely affectionate relationship. Thus, when his girlfriend Fiona suggests marriage, he reacts with a hostility that reminds us of Arthur Seaton's views on marriage:

> she'd talked about us findin a flat together next year. Then graduation, nine-to-five jobs and another flat wi a mortgage. Then engagement. Then marriage. A bigger mortgage on a house. Children. Expenditure. Then the four Ds: disenchantment, divorce, disease and death. […] Ah kent […] that ah could never be like that" (*Skagboys*, 172-173).

His other relationships in the novels are also dysfunctional: when together with Hazel, their sex life is catastrophic, due to Renton's drug-induced impotence; Dianne is underage and consequently avoided, while Fiona is dumped by him so that he can continue with his drug addiction. Similarly, Sick Boy is using women as a source of income, at times pimping them in order to earn enough money for the drugs; he is also the father of baby Dawn, who dies of starvation due to both her parents' frequent drug-induced stupor. Begbie is constantly physically abusing all the women he comes in contact with and is unable to feel anything for his children. It is "a society in which masculinity has been stripped off its dignity to such an extent that the only outlets for male pride are violence and sexual promiscuity" (Childs 2005: 247). Thus, their inability to genuinely enter an affectionate relationship can be seen as a phenomenon related to the Marxian definition of alienation: they are alienated from human community, from their fellow man and live in a state of social atomization.

Another aspect which has changed dramatically under Thatcher is education and linked with it, the chances of success in one's life. Renton is the first member of his working-class family to go to university on a state grant. Although intellectually gifted and interested in his study, Thatcher's reforms affect him directly, when his study grant is to be turned into a state loan: "My grant's soon tae be abolished and made intae a loan, then it's game over. Fuck accruing arrears ye'll never be able tae pey oaf. Might as well have a baw n chain fastened to yir ankle aw yir puff" (*Skagboys*, 148). As a result, he drops out of university and becomes involved with his working-class friends in petty crimes

which help him earn enough money to sustain the rather expensive habit of doing drugs. This is in stark contrast with the "scholarship boy" so much discussed in the 50s; the reader is confronted with a far bleaker perspective for the working-class hero nowadays than it was the case with the heroes of the 50s working-class fiction.

It is Spud who remarks that the traditional working-class has virtually disappeared and politics had long ago ceased to mean anything for the underclasses: "they political gadges aw seem like they come fae posh hames, students n that. No thit ah'm knockin in, but ah think, it should be the likes ay us that agitate for change, but aw we dae is drugs. No like in the General Strike n that. What happened tae us?" (*Porno*, 259). It is also he who reflects on the differences between present-day Britain and the Britain of his parents, when discussing present-day Leith:

> But the place was a ghost town. Davie looked down a set of old railtracks leading into the defunct docs, recalling the swarms of men toing and froing from the shipyards, docks and factories. Now, a pregnant girl rocking a pram on a street corner argued with a flat-topped youth in a shell-suit. A lonely baker's shop in a rash of TO LET retail outlets had one window smashed in and boarded up. […] A stray black dog sniffed at some discarded wrappers, displacing two seagulls, who screeched in protest as they glided above him. Where had all the people gone? he wondered. Indoors or hiding, or down in England (*Skagboys,* 288).

Thus, *Trainspotting* introduces the reader to a major theme in Welsh's fiction: the disappearance of traditional Scottish working-class and its transformation into an underclass of economic, social and cultural dependency. The setting is Leith Central Station, closed in 1958 and now a derelict place, Renton and Begbie encounter a homeless drunk who turns out to be the latter's father. Much like the train station itself, the Scottish working-class has become displaced in the present-day world. The demise of the working-class parent culture "represents a key factor in the younger generation's despondency and lack of direction. There is no escape from their dilemma either since the last train that might be spotted left the station a long time ago. Their only means of transport into another, seemingly better world is drug consumption" (cf. Schoene 2010: 65). This scene plays a

very important role in the novel, since it is the very scene where the title of the novel appears for the first time[85].

Surprisingly, even though Simon is far less overtly opposed to capitalism, he also turns out to be a "class warrior" at the end of *Porno*. Against his countless schemes, pimping attempts and other such petty crimes which he perpetrates in order to earn a lot of money and thus escape his working-class background, he eventually appropriates the beliefs of the working-class, reducing it quintessentially to an "us" versus "them" pattern, which seems to manifest itself in class conflict:

> I believe in the class war. I believe in the battle of the sexes. I believe in my tribe. I believe in the righteous, intelligent clued-up section of the working classes against the brain-dead moronic masses as well as the mediocre, soulless bourgeoisie. I believe in punk rock. In Northern Soul. In acid house. In mod. In rock n roll. I also believe in pre-commercial, righteous, rap and hip hop. That's my manifesto (*Porno*, 483).

The three discussed books are based on a *mise-en-abyme* encompassing various concentric layers, each with a different focus: the reader starts with the youths presented, representatives of the working-class, within working-class Leith, within a more modern and prosperous Edinburgh, which itself is the Scottish capital within a Britain based in London, England. Opposed to the working-class hero of the 50s, Welsh's characters are strongly rejecting consumerism and find themselves despising the sort of world and society it has created. Technological advances are no longer a status symbol for the affluent working-class, but a dystopian form of alienation which has affected the whole of society. The consumerist ideology is all encompassing and has become the new mantra of the times. In his famous "choose life" voiceover, which introduces the film adaptation of *Trainspotting* by Danny Boyle, it is Renton who becomes the ultimate rational rebel, rejecting the cultural values of the society he is living in and emphasizing the fact that non-participation in the consumerist culture is not allowed. Talking with his therapist,

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[85] Literary critics have been discussing the meaning of the term "trainspotting" for some time, trying to ascertain its relevance to the plot of the novel. Thus, Bert Cardullo has suggested the term is a metaphor for shooting heroin, while Patricia Horton has claimed that it refers to the process of finding a vein prior to injecting heroin (in Schoene 2010: 65). The traditional meaning of the term refers to a hobby in Great Britain, consisting of writing down the numbers of trains passing by, hoping to eventually know all the trains in the country.

Tom, he concludes that his drug consumption and depression are both rooted in his alienation from society:

> So it goes back tae ma alienation from society. The problem is that Tom (i.e. his therapist) refuses tae accept ma view that society cannae be changed tae make it significantly better, or that ah cannae change to accommodate it. Such a state ay affairs induces depression on ma part, aw the anger gets turned in. That's what depression is, they say. However, depression also results in demotivation. *A void grows within ye. Junk fills the void, and also helps us tae satisfy ma need tae destroy masel, the anger turned in bit again*" (*Trainspotting*, 235, emphasis is mine).

Renton's point here is that drugs are used by the underclass as a way of escaping from their alienation which is caused by the dysfunctional role they play in the society they live in. He and his friends see no alternative to escape from a bleak reality than through injecting drugs, filling – though merely chemically and artificially – a void which they all are aware of: "displaced to the socio-economic margins of society, their lives cannot be rendered by the cosy and predictable plots of bourgeois life. Heroin utterly annihilates all other narratives – work, family, sexual relationships – replacing them with the terminal logic of drug addiction" (McGuire 2010: 21-22).

This alienation is only made worse by the fact that society will not accept genuine, real dissidence, due to the fact that in Renton's context, a systemic refusal is considered a sign of society's failure as a whole. The struggle between Renton, symbolizing the rebellious individual turning his back on society and the latter is narrated by Welsh in the form of an aggressive TV commercial, which "satirizes the vacuous freedoms of modern consumer culture" (ibid.):

> they won't let ye dae it, because it's seen as ay sign ay thir ain failure. The fact that ye jist simply choose tae reject whit they huv tae offer. Choose us. Choose life. Choose mortgage payments; choose washing machines; choose cars; choose sitting oan a couch watching mind-numbing and spirit-crushing game shows, stuffing fuckin junk food intae yir mooth. Choose rotting away, pishing and shiteing yersel in a home, a total fuckin embarrassment tae the selfish, fucked-up brats ye've produced. Choose life. Well, ah choose no tae choose life (*Trainspotting*, 237).

Thus, as mentioned before, the refuge in drugs and narcotics is, for Renton, as for the other characters, a refuge from a deeply alienated existence and it represents their antidote, as paradoxical as it may seem, to mass induced disaffection in real life. In other words, Renton – like Scotland – takes drugs "in psychic defense"[86], his only way of remaining sane in a society he feels estranged from. Reality, for the postindustrial working-class is far more difficult to endure than the psychodysleptic visions of utopia; drug induced "trips" are in effect perceived as a form of personal escape and liberation from the everyday constraints of a suffocating environment:

> Whin yir oan junk, aw ye worry aboot is scorin. Oaf the gear, ye worry aboot loads ay things. Nae money, cannae git pished. Goat money, drinkin too much. Cannae git a burd, nae chance ay a ride. Git a burd, too much hassle, cannae breathe withoot her gittin oan yir case. Either that, or ye blow it, and feel aw guilty. Ye worry aboot bills, food, bailiffs, these Jambo Nazi scum beatin us, aw the things that ye couldnae gie a fuck aboot whin yuv goat a real junk habit (*Trainspotting*, 169).

The fact that Renton expands this alienation (and also drug abuse) to the whole of Scotland is also an important clue. In my opinion, this may signify the working-class status of the North of Britain, and inherently, their useless existence in a postindustrial world, as well as a distinctive national or regional characteristic. *Trainspotting* and *Skagboys* are repeatedly describing the whole of Scotland and Edinburgh as the drug capital of Great Britain (due mostly to sharing needles when injecting drugs) while in *Porno*, Sick Boy describes life in Scotland by emphasising the drug consumption (and disaffection) of its inhabitants:

> We're jaded cunts, in a scene we hate, a city we hate, pretending that we're at the centre of the universe, trashing ourselves with crap drugs to stave off the feeling that real life is happening somewhere else, aware that all we're doing is feeling that paranoia and disenchantment, yet somehow we're too apathetic to stop. Cause, sadly, there's nothing else of interest to stop for (*Porno*, 5).

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[86] The expression is an adaptation of Iggy Pop's song called *Neon Forest* from his album *Brick by Brick*, released by Virgin in June 1990.

It is rather unclear whether the drugs are taken to reduce the feeling of passively experiencing life as a Scot or as a member of the working-class. My contention is that a combination of both may accurately represent the main sources of alienation of virtually all of Welsh's working-class characters: "Welsh's characters are not only alienated from the world of their elders, but being Scottish, they are also alienated from greater British society" (cf. Senekal 2010: 153). These two characteristics, of belonging to the postindustrial working-class and, at the same time, being Scottish, represent the core narratives of alienation in the *Trainspotting* trilogy.

The alienation of virtually every character described in Welsh's trilogy is, in my view, the main aspect of Welsh's fiction. The manifestation of alienation is again connected with the two previously discussed aspects: belonging to the dispossessed working-class and their Scottish identity. Welsh specifically identifies both aspects as sources of alienation through his characters. For example, while on the methadone programme, Renton rationalizes the causes of drug consumption:

> Oan the methadone programme ye huv tae report daily at the Leith Hoaspital Clinic. It feels a bit like the dole, but wi mair ay a sense ay belonging. Ye meet ay lot ay skag-heids thaire. […] Some ur bams, pure and simple. If it wisnae skag it would've been something else. Most urnae, thir just ordinary boys who've drugged themselves into nothingness tae avoid the shame ay daein nothing. Boredom has driven them crazy, drug crazy. By and large, they keep aw this inside, maintaining the mask ay composure, through fierce, mocking talk and gallows humour. They cannae afford tae care, and ken if they front apathy for long enough, it'll soon embrace them. And they're correct (*Skagboys*, 379).

Renton effectively ascribes the drug addiction experienced by many working-class youths in Leith to joblessness and lack of perspective. These youngsters cannot come to terms with their new status as "underclass". Their desperation is all encompassing and their anger is turned in, effectively increasing their sense of estrangement. The working-class youth is not only bored, but also discriminated against and rejected by the British upper-classes, it being perceived as "filthy, subhuman and devoid of basic emotions […] or – as the *Daily Mail* put it more succinctly, – the 'feral underclass'" (cf. Jones 2011: 11). The extremely limited scope of a young new working-class youth in 90s Britain drives Renton to a rather nihilistic worldview, from which no escape in real life is possible. Substance

abuse and the ensuring chemically induced visions are to be seen as unsuccessful attempts of young working-class Scotsmen to break away from their own alienation. In Renton's own words:

> Life's boring and futile. We start oaf wi high hopes, then we bottle it. We realise that we're aw gaunnae die withoot really finding oot the big answer. We develop aw they long-winded ideas which just interpret the reality ay oor lives, withoot really extending our body ay worthwhile knowledge, about the big things, the real things. Basically, we live a short, disappointing life; and then we die. We fill up oor lives wi shite, things like careers and relationships tae delude oorsels that it isn't aw totally pointless. Smack's an honest drug, because it strips away these delusions. Wi smack, whin ye feel good, ye feel immortal. Whin ye feel bad, it intensifies the shite that's already thair. It the only really honest drug. It doesnae alter yir consciousness. *It just gies ye a hit and a sense ay well-being. Eftir that, ye see the misery ay the world as it is, and ye cannae anaesthetise yirsel against it* (*Trainspotting*, 115-116, emphasis added).

The use of drugs is in this manner to be perceived as the only possible escape from a deeply frustrating existence led by working-class youths in Scotland, which also functions as a catalyst when it comes to perceiving the surrounding world of the consumer. Drugs also eventually prove to be not a real escape from their social alienation, since after the effects wear off, the gloom and sadness which they find in the real world seem to take control of their lives, again and again.

All in all, the new type of the Northern Yob present in Welsh's work is a direct, if altered, continuation of the 1950s Angry Young Men. The changes which have occurred between the two types are best exemplified if we compare the two archetypes of young, male working-class characters of both periods. Not only do these changes refer to socio-cultural norms, but also to political change and self-perception of working-class heroes throughout British working-class fiction. What these two characters have in common are precisely the phenomena of alienation felt by the working-class hero in both Angry Young Men and the Celtic Fringe fiction.

6. Fictions of Migration (1980s-2000s): 'Classless' Hybridity

6.1. "Clowns in Search of Crowns". Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* (1988)

The first contemporary iconic novel to deal with the postcolonial concept of hybridity is Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, which was first published in 1988. *The Satanic Verses* is a highly complex book that deals with the history of Islam, the life of the prophet Muhammad and, most importantly for the present work, with feelings of alienation connected to the issue of cultural hybridity of South Asian immigrants in Britain. The novel is best known for the religious controversy it has sparked worldwide, having been banned in India and much of the Muslim world for insulting Islam and the prophet Muhammad.

The Satanic Verses controversy ignited an international struggle between Britain and many former Muslim colonies, such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, but most importantly, also with the Islamic Republic of Iran, whose spiritual leader, Âyatollâh Ruhollah Khomeini placed the infamous *fatwā* [87] on the author on February 14th 1989, calling the book blasphemous against Islam, the prophet Muhammad and the Qur'an[88] and concomitantly sentencing the author, as well as all translators and publishers of the novel to death. In Britain, the publication of novel caused violent reactions from Muslim minorities, who publicly burnt copies of the book and protested violently against its publication. Salman Rushdie went into hiding, was placed under Police protection; several translators and publishers have been attacked, seriously injured or even killed.

However, for the present paper, the most important aspect of the novel is not its alleged blasphemy against Islam, but its take on hybridity. Hybridity is "one of the germinating ideas of this novel" (Chon 2001: 73), while the process of hybridization is "the novel's most crucial dynamic" (Rushdie 2010: 430). Rushdie characterizes the novel as follows:

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[87] *Fatwā* (Arabic: فتوى) is a *"*technical term for the legal judgment or learned interpretation that a qualified jurist (*mufti*) can give on issues pertaining to the *shariʿa* (Islamic law) (Tyan & Walsh 1960: 866).
[88] The text of the *fatwā* proclaimed by Ayatollah Khomeini contained a plea to all Muslims to kill the author of the Satanic Verses and all those who are involved in the publication, translation or commercialization of the novel: "I inform the proud Muslim people of the world that the author of the Satanic Verses book, which is against Islam, the Prophet and the Koran, and all those involved in its publication who are aware of its content are sentenced to death" (Author unknown. "*On this Day: 1950-2005*", *BBC,* 2014).

If *The Satanic Verses* is anything, it is a migrant's-eye view of the world. It is written from the very experience of uprooting, disjuncture and metamorphosis (slow or rapid, painful or pleasurable) that is the migrant condition, and from which, I believe, can be derived a metaphor for all humanity" (ibid.: 394).

This subchapter will deal only with the aspect of hybridity due to reasons of relevance and scope. In the following, I shall discuss the supernatural journey of the two main characters of the novel, Saladin Chamcha and Gibreel Farishta, and their translation from the periphery to the centre, from Bombay to London, and the ensuing feelings and manifestations of alienation present in the novel. The phenomena of alienation can be perceived as resulting on the one hand from the characters' experienced process of hybridization, and secondly, from the process of migration *per se*. Both main characters of the novel perceive their migration as a traumatic experience: as the author writes in his memoirs *Joseph Anton* (2013): "The act of migration […] puts into crisis everything about the migrating individual or group, everything about identity and selfhood and culture and belief" (Rushdie 2013: 72).

As Nilanshu K. Agarwal noted during an interview with Tabish Kahir, "Indian English fiction is pervaded by the element of alienation […] A whole breed of contemporary novelists talk about the disturbed psychological condition of the individual on account of mankind's enormous alienation" (Agarwal 2009: 75). While Khahir perceives alienation merely in terms of the Coolie-Babu class division and the issue of representation, my understanding of alienation, differs from a reductionist class division, focusing instead on the similarity between the previously described phenomena of alienation and their postcolonial reception under the umbrella term "hybridity". Rushdie himself declares that *The Satanic Verses* is a novel that celebrates hybridity as a subversive, yet positive and productive contamination of an absolute pure, a definition very similar in many respects to Bhabha's idea of "third space" as a locus of productive forces. One of the most widely used quotes to define the novel is the following description by the author himself:

The Satanic Verses celebrates hybridity, impurity, intermingling, the transformation that comes of the new and unexpected combinations of human beings, cultures, ideas, politics, movies, songs. It rejoices in mongrelization and fears the absolutism of the Pure. *Mélange*, hotchpotch, a bit of

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this and a bit of that is *how newness enters the world*. It is a great possibility that mass migration gives the world, and I have tried to embrace it. *The Satanic Verses* is for change-by-fusion, change-by-conjoining. It is a love-song to our mongrel selves (Rushdie 2010: 394, emphases in the original).

While it is perfectly true that there are many optimistic features of hybridity present in the novel, mainstream literary criticism has largely ignored the negative phenomena of the concept also present in the novel. Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* is one of the first works of fiction that greatly influenced the mainly positive register in which hybridity has been defined and conceptualized by a great number of postcolonial critics.

In my view, Rushdie's perception of hybridity is by no means a simplistically positive one, as the author also discusses various phenomena of alienation experienced by migrants, what it means to be affected by migration and the plight and the suffering many of his characters deplore in the novel. In Rushdie's novel, the migrant characters experience the process of mutation (the premise of hybridization) not necessarily as something entirely positive, but by engaging into something forbidden, breaking the taboos of their own cultures: migrants are "Hindus who have crossed the black water, […] Muslims who eat pork" (Rushdie 2010: 15). The result is that their identity has been *nolens volens* mutated, changed, hybridized. The migrants are from India, but are also part of Britain. Their translation is by no means smooth and uncomplicated; as Rushdie himself admits, the aspect of class is by no means irrelevant: "I can't escape the view that my relatively easy ride is not the result of the dream England's famous sense of tolerance and fair play, but of my social class, my freak fair skin and my 'English' English accent" (ibid.: 18). The journey from the former colonial periphery to the centre is effectively also a journey of uprooting, engendering feelings of irretrievable loss. The physical alienation of migrants from India is thus doubled by a psychological alienation, characterised by feelings of unbelonging; many of them eventually take refuge in an imaginary "third space", or as Rushdie put it, "imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind" (ibid.: 10).

The following pages will deal with hybridity based on the analysis of the two main characters of the novel, both of whom are split personalities and also "hybrid beings" in search of a "wholeness" which they have lost on their unlikely journey from India to England. The processes of transmutation and translation from the (colonial) periphery to the centre

are the premise of their hybridization; a hybridization, which in turn manifests itself through phenomena of alienation similar to, if not identical with, the very phenomena discussed in previous chapters of the present paper. As Rushdie again puts it, these two characters are British Muslims who are "struggling with just the sort of great problems that have arisen to surround the book, problems of hybridization and ghettoization, of reconciling the old and new" (ibid.: 394). Their journey from colony to centre is depicted in the novel as a sort of mythological rebirth, a sudden break with the past and their old selves, contrasted with a new beginning and new identities in Britain; the leitmotif of their journey is described by the first sentence of the novel: "to be born again, first you have to die" (Rushdie 1992: 3).

The religious and mythological implications abound in the opening scenes of the novel, the given impression being that an entire new and miraculous cosmogony is being created: not only are the physical places altered, (i.e. London, the centre, and Bombay, the former periphery) but also the characters themselves, who are unintentionally experiencing the processes of hybridization independent of their will. London plays an important role in the novel, not only as the historical location of the previous colonial centre, but also as a metropolis which functions as a metaphor for "multiplicity and hybridity" (cf. Kuortti 2007: 127).

The opening scenes of the novel bear many religious similarities with the Christian concept of the *felix culpa*, the "fall from Grace", i.e. the expulsion from Paradise of Adam and Eve (cf. Cormorau 2007: 160). The new beginning of Saladin and Gibreel resembles the postlapsarian world of Adam and Eve; both of Rushdie's characters find themselves tumbling down from the heavens towards the Earth, after an Air India plane has been blown up by Sikh separatists over "Proper London, capital of Vilayet" (Rushdie 1992: 4). Interestingly, the idea of an expulsion from Paradise is further supported by the fact that the name of the plane is *Bostan*[89], one of the gardens of the Islamic Paradise.

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[89] The word *bostan*, originally from the Persian '*bostân*' (بستان) or '*bustân*' (بوستان) has been translated into English with the renderings "garden of fragrance", "pleasure garden" or "fragrant herb garden" (cf. Wickens 2000: 573). Although the Persian-German Dictionary defines *bostân* as merely a "garden, vegetable garden, watermelon field" (Junker & Alavi 1968: 98, translation is mine), the religious connotations

During their fall from heaven, having miraculously survived the explosion of the plane, the two characters begin their process of hybridization:

> equally fragmented, equally absurd, there floated the debris of the soul, broken memories, sloughed-off sleeves, severed mother-tongues, violated privacies, untranslatable jokes, extinguished futures, lost lovers, the forgotten meaning of hollow, booming words, *land, belonging, home*" (Rushdie 1992: 4).

Surrounded by hybrid clouds, the two characters are tumbling down toward London; Gibreel is singing a song about his Indian heart[90], while Saladin sings the lyrics to "*Rule Britannia*", his "lips turning jingoistically redwhiteblue" (Rushdie 1992: 6). The two characters thus represent the conflicting relationship between (cultural) resistance (i.e. Gibreel) and assimilation or mimicry (i.e. Saladin). The two are subjected to a process of mutual hybridization, symbolized by their embrace in mid-air and the merger of the two into one hybrid being: "Gibreelsaladin Farishtachamcha, condemned to endless but also ending angelicdevilish fall" (ibid.: 5). Saladin is gripped by the sensation that he is changing and morphing into something different, that he "had acquired the quality of cloudiness, becoming metamorphic, hybrid, as if he were going into the person whose head nestled now between his legs and whose legs were wrapped around his long, patrician neck" (ibid.: 7). Kuortti notes that the "opposition between the two men, however, is not necessarily divided – they could be seen as different sides of the same character, as 'doubles'" (Kuortti 2007: 129).

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are also clear in the case of Rushdie's novel, considering the work of the Persian poet Sa'adi Shirâzi, who wrote his *Bostân* in 1257 A.D. (usually translated into English as "The Orchard"), followed by *Golestân* (Persian: گلستان) in 1258 A.D. (usually translated into English with the title of "The Rosegarden"), both volumes of poems referring to the gardens of Paradise. The Qur'an mentions "gardens of perpetual residence" in surah 13 (Ar-Ra'd, ayat 24), thus *Bostân* and *Golestân* came to represent the twin gardens of Eden (Persian: جنت عدن, *janat-e adan* or بوستان عدن, *bostân-e adan*). In his novel, Rushdie uses the term "perfumed garden" (Rushdie 1992: 245) and thus refers to the mythical garden of Islamic Paradise.

[90] The title of the song is "*Mera Joota Hai Japani*" (English: "*My Shoes are Japanese*"), a Hindi song made for the Bollywood film "*Shree 420*" (English: "Mr. 420"), starring Raj Kapoor and produced in 1955. In the movie, a poor country boy comes to Bombay in order to find fame and fortune, but eventually becomes a trickster. The movie's title is a reference to Section 420 of the Indian Penal Code, which regulates the punishment for cheating. "Mr. 420" thus can be seen as a derogatory term for "cheat". The song is relevant to the topic of Indian identity due to the line "O, my shoes are Japanese, These trousers English, if you please. On my head, red Russian hat; my heart's Indian for all that" (Rushdie 1992: 5).

During their fall, the two characters also begin to morph into hybrid beings resembling ancient mythological beasts and saints: Gibreel gives the first sign of his slow transformation into Archangel Gabriel. Important clues are to be found in the names of the characters, such as for instance the birth name of Gibreel, Ismail Najmuddin, "the star of the faith" (Rushdie 1992: 17); his mother often calls him "*farishta*", which is the Urdu variety of the Persian "*fereshteh*" (Persian: فرشته), both terms meaning "angel" in English (cf. Childs 2005: 183). The more obvious saintly implications of Gibreel become clear if we refer to the name "Gibreel", the Islamic version of and a clear analogy to the Archangel Gabriel. Interestingly, Gibreel is a hybrid also from a class perspective, having worked as a *dabbawalla*[91] in his youth, inheriting the Coolie occupation of tiffin-carriers in Bombay. He is adopted by a police officer after the death of his father; his adoptive father raises him and when the time comes, arranges an interview with a filming company on Ismail's 21st birthday. Gibreel rises to great fame, playing various roles in the so-called "theologicals" and effectively becomes in the eyes of the great public the personification of the Archangel Gabriel, i.e. Gibreel Farishta.

Constructed as Gibreel's perfect antipole, Saladin Chamcha, originally Salahuddin Chamchawalla, is born into a Babu Indian family. Very early on, Saladin becomes disappointed with India and enthralled by England and London. He wishes to leave Bombay for London. He constructs the mental image of an idealized England, with London functioning as the perfectly inverted Bombay, a place of order, restraint and moderation that Saladin decides is much better than the noise, turmoil and chaos he encounters in Bombay on an everyday basis:

> Salahuddin Chamchawalla has understood by his thirteenth year that he was destined for that cool Vilayet full of the crisp promises of pounds sterling […] and grew increasingly impatient of that Bombay of dust, vulgarity, policemen in shorts, transvestites, movie fanzines, pavement sleepers and the rumoured singing whores of Grant Road who had begun as devotees of the Yellamma cult in Karnataka but ended up here as dancers in the more prosaic temples of the flesh. He was fed up of textile

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[91] *Dabbawalla* (also spelt *dabbawallah*) is a person who delivers hot meals to office employees in special metal containers either on foot or on bicycle. The term itself is a portmanteau made of the Persian lexeme "*dabbeh*" (Persian: دبّه) meaning "box, container" and the Hindi suffix "*walla(h)*" meaning "doer, holder". A more precise translation of the term in English would be "lunch-box delivery man".

factories and local trains and all the confusion and superabundance of the place, and longed for that dream-Vilayet of poise and moderation that had come to obsess him by night and day" – elloween deeowen (Rusdhie 1992: 37).

Saladin has dedicated his love to London, and not to the Bombay of his birth. As Comorau aptly puts it, both Saladin and Gibreel perceive London, the centre of the former colonial Centre, as "a synecdoche for Britishness" (cf. Cormorau 2007: 161). However, Saladin's view of a purely British London is shown to be erroneous, "a fictive London, London as a floating signifier, as a dream of a 'great metropolis', which exists, in a sense, as a *metronym*" (cf. Brannigan 2003: 196). Thus, it is Saladin who will come closer to the unpleasant parts of the immigrant experience, finding refuge in immigrant-filled East London. The London which readers encounter in the novel is depicted as a postcolonial hybrid metropolis, signalled by the various appellations such as "Mahagony", "Babylon", "Alphaville", "Elloween-Deeowen". Hybrid London is "Proper London itself, Bigben Nelsonscolumn Lordstavern Bloodytower Queen" (Rushdie 1992: 38).

Postcolonial London is a conurbation in which migrants from the former colonies have settled down; special emphasis being put on immigrants from the Indian subcontinent. London seems not to be able to integrate the immigrants from the former colonies effortlessly. As Ashley Dawson and Brent Hayes see it, this is because of London's imperial legacy: "even in decolonization, the old imperial maps still influence the circuits of capital, underneath and in tension with 'new imperialisms' of economic globalization" (cf. Dawson & Edwards 2004: 3). This means that the immigrants from the Indian subcontinent may have turned the formerly colonial London into a "postcolonial city, but it can never be a fully postimperial one" (Cormorau 2007: 161). London is both a real and imagined geographical location, both a visible and invisible metropolis: "the cities of Bombay, Karachi and Quetta are cities of Rushdie's past and belong to his 'imagined homelands' – India and Pakistan. London, however, is the city of his present. Yet he is much an 'inside-outsider' as he is in the cities of Bombay or Karachi" (Bharucha 2001: 54). Last, but not least, London functions in Rushdie's novel as a heterotopia of compensation, just as the mythical kingdom of "Ambrosia" in Waterhouse's *Billy Liar*. London functions for Saladin in the same way as for Welsh's Renton or Sick Boy, namely as a magnet, a fabled city, it being the centre "only in its capacity for drawing into itself the

stories and images of its diverse, migrant population, and in giving expression to the effects of diaspora, dislocation, cultural hybridity and diffusion" (cf. Brannigan 2003: 198).

Saladin constructs his new, imagined identity based on an idealized view of Imperial England. With clear reference by the author to the infamous "cricket test"[92], Saladin roots wholeheartedly for England's team and against the Indian one. The implications of this mean that his personal loyalties lie with England, the centre, and not with India, the former periphery. Saladin comes closest to the understanding of what it means for Coolie Indians to be translated from the periphery to the centre: It is Saladin whose mutation and translation result in his hybridization, while his hybrid character engenders the phenomena of alienation such as unbelonging, impotence, estrangement from his family and social environment, from both the place of origin and the place he chooses as a new home. On travelling from the periphery to the centre, from Indianness to Englishness, Saladin inhabits a third space; he is "abandoned by one alien England, marooned within another" (Rushdie 1992: 270-271). Thus, Saladin does not belong to either the centre or the periphery, as a hybrid being, he falls through the cracks of this dichotomy. Saladin becomes aware of the fact that he has become neither Indian nor English, "that something had been lost which he would never be able to regain" (ibid.: 45). What is more, the rejection of Englishness by Saladin, reinforced by his re-translation to Indianness is a common feature of very many novels of migration, including the other two discussed in this chapter. Thus, in Kureishi's "*The Buddha of Suburbia*" (1990) it is Haroon and his friend, Anwar, who also migrate back to their old, Indian roots, while in Smith's "*White Teeth*" (2000), it is Samad who undergoes the same rejection of Englishness; in all three novels, the main characters reject England and Englishness, symbolizing the centre, and

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[92] The so-called "cricket test", also known as the "Tebbit test", refers to the controversial question asked by Lord Norman Tebbit, a senior UK conservative MP, who declared during an Interview given to the *Los Angeles Times* that the loyalty of immigrants to England can be established by ascertaining which team the "immigrants" will cheer for during a cricket match: "A large proportion of Britain's Asian population fail to pass the cricket test. Which side do they cheer for? It's an interesting test. Are you still harking back to where you came from or where you are?" (John Carvel. *The Guardian.* 2004).

start re-embracing their original roots, which stand for the re-fashioning of their identity as part of the former imperial periphery.

The England of young Saladin functions initially as a perfect inversion of India, with Bombay as the antithesis of London. Saladin's England is also an imagined England, which functions as an absolute model of purity. For Saladin, we are told, the debasing of Englishness by the English was a thing "too painful to contemplate" (ibid.: 75); seeing drunk Englishmen on the plane – thus not conforming to the stereotype of reserved Englishness – is for him a great discomfort, it representing fissures in his idealized centre. During his early days in England, Saladin never truly feels at home. Saladin is determined to refashion himself as an Englishman, to take on a new identity as part of the centre and discard his subordinate one:

> He would be English, even if his classmates giggled at his voice and excluded him from their secrets […] he began to act, to find masks that these fellows would recognize, paleface masks, clown-masks, until he fooled them into thinking he was *okay,* he was *people-like-us*. He fooled them the way a sensitive human being can persuade gorillas to accept him into their family, to fondle and caress and stuff bananas into his mouth (Rusdhie 1992: 43).

As we can see, Saladin's feeling of unbelonging is very similar to the sentiments encountered in the working-class fiction of the 50s. The feeling of doing something wrong, of wearing the wrong clothes, having the wrong accent, of having to conform to a code previously unknown is a decisive feature of characters of working-class fiction. The difference between the two is that, in Saladin's case, this feeling of unbelonging is caused not by his social origin, but by his colonial identity. However, in both cases, this feeling of not being accepted by one's social environment, but tolerated at best, can be interpreted as a phenomenon of alienation. Even if the move from one social class to another or from one identity to another is successful, the engendering feelings of alienation cannot be ignored. Thus, much like Joe Lampton's sacrifice, Saladin experiences his hybridization as something deeply unnatural, living a life of torment and hiding his true self:

> A man who seeks to make himself up is taking on the Creator's role, according to one way of seeing things; he's unnatural, a blasphemer, an abomination of abominations. … Not all mutants survive. … most migrants learn, and can become disguises. Our own false description to

counter the falsehoods invented about us, concealing for reasons of security our secret selves (Rushdie 1992: 49).

In this case, we could say that the alienation from his social environment felt by Saladin is intensified by a feeling of estrangement from his real self, his true Indianness, which he must conceal in order to make his life in England possible; it is a perfect example of how a self-imposed self-alienation, as disguise, becomes in a way the only possible way for the Indian immigrant to be accepted by the centre. Thus, hybridity for Saladin is not only a positive feature of his existence, on the contrary, it is the source of his increasing feelings of alienation described in the novel.

The move from the periphery to the centre is also symbolized in the novel by Saladin's dream of making love to the British Queen: "she was the body of Britain, the avatar of the State, and he had chosen her, joined with her; she was his Beloved, the moon of his delight" (ibid.: 169), yet the reality Saladin is experiencing while returning to Britain in his hybrid form is far from harmonious. As Kuortti writes, the love-making to the British Queen represents the worst fear of colonialists: the native violating a white woman. Since the woman in question is the Queen, the sexual act represents "the ultimate transgression" (cf. Kuortti 2007: 131).

After what seems to be a second gestation period in the plane called *Bostan*, in which the passengers "were all dead to the world and in the process of being regenerated, made anew" (Rushdie 1992: 84), both Saladin and Gibreel acquire their slowly-developing hybridity while safely landing in London after the explosion of the airplane. While Gibreel acquires angelic features (e.g. his breath is sweetened and a "golden glow" (ibid.: 133) appears around his head, symbolizing a halo), Saladin's emerging features are that of the Devil: beneath his bowler hat, two bumps appear on his temples and his breath becomes malodorous.

On landing on the British shores, Saladin and Gibreel are found by Rosa Diamond, a senile old woman who offers them to stay at her house. The British Police arrive at the house, overlooking Gibreel because of his halo and immediately arresting Saladin. Shocked by their behaviour, Saladin immediately distances himself from the immigrant

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stereotype: "I am not one of your fishing-boat snickers-in, not one of your ugando-kenyattas, me […] I am a British, he was saying, with right of abode, too" (ibid.: 140). Being derided by the Police officers for his claim to be a British citizen, he is unceremoniously taken to the Police van where he is also physically abused by the Police. Unaware to Saladin, his hybridization has produced effects that people seem to find frightening: he has grown two horns on his forehead and his thighs have been covered with thick, black, curly hair. His body changes make clear that he is turning into a creature that is half-human and half goat, a direct reference to the folkloristic representation of the Devil[93]. His appearance corresponds to the incarnation of the Devil, making his father's assumption that he is possessed by the Devil seem correct:

> his thighs had grown uncommonly wide and powerful, as well as hairy. Below the knee the hairiness came to a halt, and his legs narrowed into tough, bony, almost fleshless calves, terminating in a pair of shiny, cloven hoofs, such as one might find on any billy-goat. Saladin was also taken aback by the sight of his phallus, greatly enlarged and embarrassingly erect, an organ that he had the greatest difficulty in acknowledging as his own (Rushdie 1992: 157).

Saladin Chamcha thus becomes the incarnation of evil, which in the present context is doubled by the perception of immigrants by the British as something alien, foreign, hideous and dangerous. If Saladin in his hybridized form represents the alien foreigner, the perfect and absolute Other, the three policemen beating him up (ironically bearing non-English names such as Stein, Novak and Bruno) convey the widespread clichés of the white centre towards the periphery: "'Animal', Stein cursed him as he administered a series of kicks, and Bruno joined in: 'You're all the same. Can't expect animals to observe civilized standards. Eh?'" (ibid.: 159). Being forced to eat his own excrements by the policemen, Saladin realises that despite all his efforts of attaining Englishness, he is left out and assigned the role of the immigrant, once the signifiers of class are taken away.

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[93] The Devil has been portrayed as a goat for a long time, bearing many similar characteristics with the animal in folkloristic depictions: horns, goatee, hooves, and lewdness. According to medieval iconography, the billy-goat is a lewd animal, which lusts for intercourse, its eyes always looking salaciously sideways. It was believed to be an animal so hot that its blood would melt diamonds (cf. Unterkichner 1986: 59). Saladin's erect phallus is thus a direct reference to the salaciousness of the Devil, along with the horns, hooves and sulphurous smell, all attributes of the Devil incarnate.

This is the decisive moment which starts the process of Saladin's ultimate rejection of Englishness and the centre. As Chon aptly puts it:

> the England he experiences is as an arrested illegal alien is not the England of democracy, liberty, and human rights protection he knew it to be. This 'new' England is responsible for the much maligned monsters Saladin meets in the hospital where Africans, Asians and other non-Europeans who have been partly transformed into animals forms under the gaze of the prejudiced English are interned (Chon 2001: 74).

This is the onset of Saladin's struggle against his assumed identity, being relegated from successful British citizen to a character which symbolizes the uprooted condition of the immigrant who has undertaken the voyage from the colonial periphery to the centre As Rushdie poignantly puts it in his memoirs:

> Chamcha would be a portrait of a deracinated man, fleeing from his father and country, from Indianness himself, towards an Englishness that wasn't really letting him in, an actor with many voices who did well as long as he remained unseen, on radio and doing TV voice-overs; whose face was, in spite of all his Anglophilia, still 'the wrong colour for their coulour TVs' (Rushdie 2013: 69-70).

One of the policemen calls Saladin a "fucking Paki billy. Sally-who? – What kind of name is that for an Englishman?" (Rushdie 1992: 163). Not only does Saladin look to the policemen like any other immigrant from the Indian subcontinent, but Saladin also begins to perceive the three policemen as looking identical, united in their stiffness and anxiety, a state which is not at all alleviated when the policemen find out that Saladin really is a British citizen.

The clear demarcation between the homogenized native group of Englishmen symbolized by the three policemen is also visible later on in the novel, especially in the scenes in which Saladin finds himself in what seems to be a hospital, surrounded by other "undesirables" from the periphery. Weirdly enough, they all seem to share a crucial characteristic with one another, namely their hybridity, which makes them appear as mythological monsters, human-animal hybrids. Much like Saladin, who in his goatish appearance, finds himself overtaken by animal instincts – from the loss of taste and the nibbling of bedsheets and newspapers to the uncontrolled defecation in the police van, the other inmates are also plagued by incontrollable beastly urges: for instance, at the hospital he is greeted by

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a manticore[94], a former male model in Bombay, who in his hybrid form has the body of a human and the head of a tiger with three rows of teeth, complaining that he has suffered changes and warning Saladin of his animal-like tendencies, namely in his case, breaking wind uncontrollably. The other inmates are all hybrid half-beasts, we are told, and all foreigners:

> The manticore ground its three rows of teeth in evident frustration. 'There's a woman over that way,' it said, 'who is now mostly water buffalo. There are businessmen from Nigeria who have grown sturdy tails. There is a group of holidaymakers from Senegal who were doing no more than changing planes when they were turned into slippery snakes' (Rushdie 1992: 168).

Drawing on the conceptual similarities between monstrosity as a "radical heterogeneity" and hybridity, Christian Gutleben emphasizes the fact that in *The Satanic Verses,* the monstrous is closely akin to the concept of hybridity employed by Rushdie by claiming that "the monstrous overlaps the idea of conjuction, combination and amalgamation" (Gutleben 2010: 34). For Gutleben, addressing the issue of monstrosity creates an "effect of ontological defamiliarization" (ibid.: 35), the result being the blurring of the boundaries between the human and the animal, the human and the supernatural, the divine and the satanic. The foreigners trapped inside the detention centre / hospital are monstrous creatures precisely because of their hybridity, their heterogeneity, their dissimilar conjoinings which make them seem aberrations of creation, abnormal, deviant anomalies: these are "beings [one] could never have imagined, men and women who were also partially plants, or giant insects, or even, on occasion, built partly of brick or stone; there were men with rhinoceros horns instead of noses and women with necks as long as any giraffe" (Rushdie 1992: 171).

Thus, as Gutleben aptly concludes, "monstrosity constitutes undeniably an apt metaphor for the supreme hybridity of the mixed realities coexisting in a world of globalization"

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[94] The manticore is a mythical creature which has three rows of teeth, the face of a human, grey eyes, is of blood-red colour, has the body of a lion, a tail with a scorpion-like spike and penetrative voice and which constantly craves for human flesh. In the original: "In India nascitur bestia, que manticora dicitur. Triplici dentium ordine coeunte uicibus alternis, facie hominis, glaucis oculis, sanguineo colore, corpore leonine, cauda uelud scorpionis aculeo, spiculata, uoce tantam sibila, ut imitetur modulos fistularum. Humanas carne auidissime afectat." (Unterkichner 1986: 47-48, translation is mine)

(Gutleben 2010: 42), yet it is the hybrids themselves who are effectively rejected by and alienated from the majority, i.e. the periphery rejected by the centre. While escaping from the detention centre, Saladin and the other monsters ironically flee eastwards to get to London, something representing a reversal of the colonial process: this escape represents, according to Kuortti, an act of the periphery's resistance against the centre, "done in the name of re-humanising those who had been demonised by the colonial centre" (Kuortti 2007: 131).

The powerful image conveyed by various hybrid immigrants from the periphery confined to a mysterious laboratory in London is a potent metaphor of the plight of people who, like Saladin, have undertaken the voyage from periphery to the centre, from "Indianness" to "Englishness". It is precisely their commonly shared features which separate them as immigrants from the British natives, i.e. their hybridity. Through and because of their hybridity, they experience a plethora of feelings of alienation, which are very similar to the phenomena encountered in the working-class fiction of the 50s and 90s. Asking the manticore how the English transform them into hybrid freaks, the manticore tells Saladin that it is the English (i.e. the centre) whose "description" still matters: "They describe us […] That's all. They have the power of description, and we succumb to the pictures they construct" (Rushdie 1992: 168). As Kuortti sees it, this is "a powerful image of the power of the pointing finger, the imperial move to subordinate" (Kuortti 2007: 130), and Saladin finds himself on the side of the subordinated periphery. It is the flawed relationship between centre and periphery within the binary framework, which in this case engenders Saladin's feelings of alienation: "I am the incarnation of evil, he thought. He had to face it. However it had happened, it could not be denied. I am *no longer myself*, or not only. I am the embodiment of wrong, of what-we-hate, of sin" (Rushdie 1992: 256).

Saladin Chamcha's carefully constructed English identity is shattered by his acknowledgement of hybridity, by the rejection from the country he idolized, who suddenly, perceives him as a strange and dangerous freak. His idealized perception of Englishness and submission to an idealized England has borne no fruits:

> Had he not pursued his own idea of *the good*, sought to become that which he most admired, dedicated himself with a will bordering on obsession to

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the conquest of Englishness? Had he not worked hard, avoided trouble, striven to become new? Assiduity, fastidiousness, moderation, restraint, self-reliance, probity, family life: what did these add up to if not a moral code? […] What mean small-mindedness was this, to cast him back into the bosom of *his people*, from whom he'd felt so distant for so long! (Rushdie 1992: 257, emphasis in the original).

Saladin's view of "his people" is at first, ironically, identical with the predominant point of view of the native Brits, which suggests a severe alienation from his Indian identity, as well as a rejection of the periphery and complete assimilation in and of the centre. This is shown in the novel in the scene in which Mishal and Anahita bring Saladin a *masala dosa* instead of cereals and Saladin bursting into a fit of rage and expressing his disgust towards "filthy foreign food" (ibid.: 258). Embarrassed by his outburst, Saladin explains that he perceives himself as British, a feeling which is also shared by the two youngsters, who tell Saladin that they have no ties whatsoever to the country their parents were born in.

Rushdie offers in the novel the two opposing viewpoints on change, metamorphosis and mutation, by discussing Lucretius' as opposed to Ovid's idea regarding mutation. While Lucretius' view is that mutation invariably means overstepping boundaries and creating something new, which is also different from the previously existing thing (Carus 1992: 229)[95], Ovid's view is exactly the opposite, that the quintessence of a thing is immutable, even if the thing itself changes its shape like wax (Naso 2010: 422)[96]. Saladin is faced with precisely this choice, to either choose the death of his "fake" British self and embrace his true identity or continue a life of estrangement, clinging to the idea that his self remains unaltered, even if the identity he himself constructed has been shattered. Saladin eventually chooses Lucretius over Ovid and starts a journey of rejecting Englishness for "Indianness", discarding the centre in favour of the periphery.

He chose Lucretius over Ovid. The inconstant soul, the mutability of everything, das Ich, every last speck. A being going through life can

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[95] Rushdie refers to Lucretius' quote regarding mutation from *De Rerum Natura* (1st century B.C.), namely that "For whatever by being changed passes outside its own boundaries, at once that is death for that which was before". In the original: "nam quodcumque suis mutatum finibus exit, continuo hoc mors est illius fuit ante" (Carus 1992: 229).
[96] Ovid's quotation from his *Metamorphoses* (1st century A.D.) is as follows: "Just as soft wax stamped with a new design / Does not stay as it was or keep its shape / But it is still the same wax / So I teach the soul / Is always the same but migrates into new forms" (Naso 2010: 422).

> become so other to himself as to be *another,* discrete, severed from history. He thought, at times, of Zeeny Vakil on that other planet, Bombay, at the far rim of the galaxy: Zeeny, eclecticism, hybridity. The optimism of those ideas! […] Life just happens to you: like an accident. No: it happens to you as a result of your condition. Not choice, but – at best – process, and, at worst, shocking total change. Newness: he had sought a different kind, but this was what he got. […] Bitterness, too, and hatred, all the coarse things. He would enter into his new self; he would be what he had become: loud, stenchy, hideous, outsize, grotesque, inhuman, powerful. He had the sense of being able to stretch out a little finger and topple church spires with the force growing in him, the anger, the anger, the anger (Rushdie 1992: 289, emphasis in the original).

By choosing Lucretius' views, Saladin consciously embarks on a back-to-the-roots journey, which will eventually take him back to Bombay, where he reconciles with his "Indiannes", his life as part of the former colonial periphery. The newness is thus for Saladin not a celebrated hotchpotch, but a place of extreme alienation, anger and hatred. The third space is for Saladin a constant tussle between England and India, West and East, London and Bombay, his alienation stemming from his undecidedness when it comes to choosing. Just as Rushdie describes the character of Certainly-Mary in his short-story "*The Courter*" (1994), Saladin is constantly drawn into the oppositions between the two binary constituents, being unable at first to choose: "

> So it was England that was breaking her heart, breaking it by not being India. London was killing her by not being Bombay […] Or was it that her heart, roped by two different loves, was being pulled both East and West, whinnying and rearing, like those movie horses being yanked this way by Clark Gable and that way by Montgomery Clift, and she knew that to live she would have to choose? (Rushdie 1994: 209).

Saladin's ultimate choice is for the periphery, for his roots, for the embrace of all that which he had initially rejected, something which can also be interpreted as a form of resistance to the hegemonic influence of the centre. As Graham Huggan suggests, "to think at, and from, the margins is to challenge the authority of the mainstream, a mainstream usually defined in some combination of white, male, heterosexual, middle class" (Huggan 2001: 83).

If one agrees that separation is a premise for alienation, the whole novel can be read as a quest of two divided, estranged selves to overcome their alienation and attain their

"wholeness", a state of 'unalienation'. However, both Gibreel and Saladin fail to effort-lessly attain their wholeness: Gibreel eventually dies after succumbing to his insanity, while Saladin finds peace only by rejecting his constructed, "fake" English identity; Saladin returns to India, where he finally reconciles with his dying father, attaining peace of mind by deciding to remain in India. Within the centre versus periphery framework, alienation is finally overcome upon Saladin's choosing the periphery, doubled by his final rejection of England as the centre of his existence.

Although the novel has been hailed by critics and even the author for its positive take on hybridity, this chapter has offered an analysis that questions this reading; I maintain that defining hybridity in this novel as solely positive is an oversimplification of the concept and also a one-sided interpretation of this concept. As Rushdie confides in his *Imaginary Homelands* (2010), *The Satanic Verses* is first and foremost a novel about separation and the ensuing attempt to overcome it:

> the story of two painfully divided selves. In the case of one, Saladin Chamcha, the division is secular and societal: he is torn, to put it plainly, between Bombay and London, between East and West. For the other, Gibreel Farishta, the division is spiritual, a rift in the soul. He has lost his faith and is strung out between his immense need to believe and his new inability to do so. The novel is 'about' their quest for wholeness (Rushdie 2010: 394).

All in all, Rushdie managed to not only actively define the concept of hybridity, but also linked it to the process of alienation, which seems to affect both main characters in the novel in more ways than one. Rushdie himself defines alienation as "the sensation of not belonging to a part of oneself" (Rushdie 2015: 33). The complex and often overlapping phenomena are present throughout the novel and play an important role in understanding the underlying relationship between alienation and hybridity, a relation in which it seems that both concepts share a multitude of identical and similar phenomena.

6.2. "A Funny Kind of Englishman" – Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* (1990)

Hanif Kureishi was born in 1954 in the suburban town of Bromley as the son of a wealthy Pakistani father, Rafiushan Kureishi, and an English mother, Audrey Buss. An author whose writing deals with "identity politics in a 'dis-united Kingdom'" (Yousaf 2002: 50) due to his own experiences growing up as a mixed-race child in postwar Britain, his semi-autobiographical novel, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, first published in 1990, sold over half a million copies (cf. Thomas 2005: 63), was translated into more than twenty languages and won the Whitbread First Novel prize of the same year. It is one of the first novels to focus on the concept of hybridity, "a constant presence in the book" (cf. Childs 2005: 143). While the novel has been discussed as a picaresque, 'multicultural *Bildungsroman'* (cf. Sommer 2001: 75), coming of age, initiation, pop-culture, 'condition of England' novel or social novel (cf. Bentley 2008: 161), it has never been interpreted from the perspective of alienation theory, which constitutes the objective of the following analysis.

Though difficult to see at first glance, Kureishi's novel is linked to the previously discussed working-class fiction of the 50s and also 90s, insofar as it presents phenomena of alienation, a view partially corroborated by Susie Thomas:

> with its young man on the move and on the make, naïve but opportunistic, engaged in comic and often humiliating amorous adventures, *The Buddha* extends a tradition that stretches back to the 1950s novels of social mobility by John Braine (1922-1986), Kingsley Amis (1922-95) and Allan Sillitoe (born 1928) (Thomas 2005: 62).

The present analysis will focus primarily on the issue of hybridity in respect to two characters in the novel, Karim Amir and his father, Haroon. Karim is the incarnation of the second-generation immigrant; as Schoene puts it, Karim identifies himself not as "post-colonial 'in translation', but primarily as English, or British" (Schoene 1998: 111). His father, on the other hand, exemplifies the problems that first-generation immigrants experienced with social, religious, racial and cultural hybridity. As Yousaf eloquently writes, the novel commences with both father and son embarking on a voyage that should resolve both their identity issues:

> Karim hopes that 'he is going somewhere', and so partially mirrors his father who is going somewhere else: leaving his wife and children, his life as an employee in the Civil Service, and finally the suburbs. Concomitantly, Karim is taking leave of his mother and brother, his life as an adolescent, and the suburbs. It is no accident that Haroon tells his son that 'we are growing up together' (Yousaf 2002: 47).

Besides analyzing the development of Karim and his father throughout the novel, I shall also examine Karim's family and its relations to other families presented the novel in order to substantiate my claim that phenomena of alienation linked to the concept of hybridity effectively constitute not only the core feature of the main character, Karim, but also the leitmotif of the entire novel.

Let us begin with the characterization of Karim's father, Haroon. Haroon finds himself deeply estranged from his previous life in England and consequently goes through a process of morphing and reinventing himself: he turns from a previously Muslim Pakistani – via a British clerk – into a Buddhist guru, thus becoming "a renegade Muslim masquerading as a Buddhist" (Kureishi 1990: 16). On arriving in Britain, Haroon quickly realises he is ill equipped for living on his own in a foreign country: not only is he unaccustomed to the cold temperatures, he also realises "how complicated practical life could be. He'd never cooked before, never washed up, never cleaned his own shoes or made a bed. Servants did that" (ibid.: 23). Life in Britain for Haroon seems strange and unfamiliar, all factors contributing to his gradual alienation and retreat to his Indian identity, a retreat from the centre to the colony, eventually.

Haroon's identity crisis also affects his marriage and the lives of each member of his family. Despite working for many years as a clerk and all his efforts to fit in, there is throughout the novel a lingering feeling of unbelonging, similar to alienation phenomena present in the working-class fiction of the 50s dealing with social mobility. Much like the working-class heroes of the 50s, Haroon feels somehow ill at ease with his life in England: "the whites will never promote us […] Not an Indian while there is a white man left on the earth. You don't have to deal with them – they still think they have an Empire when they don't have two pennies to rub together" (ibid.: 27). He is plagued by the symptoms of the first generation migrant, growing up in a different country, a different time, with no "real" knowledge of genuine England:

> Dad was amazed and heartened by the sight of the British in England, though. He'd never seen the English in poverty, as roadsweepers, dustmen, shopkeepers and barmen. He'd never seen an Englishman stuffing bread into his mouth with his fingers, and no one had told him the English didn't wash regularly because the water was too cold – if they had water at all. And when Dad tried to discuss Byron in local pubs no one warned him that not every Englishman could read or that they didn't necessarily want tutoring by an Indian on the poetry of a pervert and a madman (Kureishi 1990: 25).

Coming from a wealthy Pakistani family, Haroon was sent to England to be educated and never returned to Pakistan. The new realities of his life in England seem very different from what he expected his life to be: "his life, once a cool river of balmy distractions, of beaches and cricket, of mocking the British, and dentists' chairs was now a cage of umbrellas and steely regularity. It was all trains and shitting sons, and the bursting of frozen pipes in January, and the lighting of coal fires at seven in the morning" (ibid.: 26).

Haroon's immigrant condition has never left him in Britain. No matter how hard he tried to fit in, he is always managing to appear "strange" or "foreign" to the native Brits. Karim is oftentimes perplexed and embarrassed by his father's peculiar behaviour, his shared features with the newly arriving Indian immigrants, despite his fathers' long stay in England:

> Dad had been in Britain since 1950 – over twenty years – and for fifteen of those years he'd lived in the South London suburbs. Yet still he stumbled around the place like an Indian just off the boat, and asked questions like, 'Is Dover in Kent?' I'd have thought, as an employee of the British Government, as a Civil Service clerk, even as a badly paid and insignificant a one as him, he'd just have to know these things. I sweated with embarrassment when he halted strangers in the street to ask for directions to places that were a hundred yards away in an area he'd lived for almost two decades (Kureishi 1990: 7).

Becoming utterly distressed by the boredom of his life and disillusioned with the British society of his time, he undertakes a reversed journey from an assumed yet never achieved Britishness back to an invented Indianness, from a feeling of alienation and unbelonging to a feeling of identity and connectedness. Haroon's back-to-the-roots journey is accompanied by the concomitant refusal of his old friend Anwar to accept the social mores of England; he goes on a hunger strike because his daughter Jamila opposes his plans for a

traditional, arranged marriage with a young man from Pakistan. Karim remarks that his father and Anwar were both pleased to lead the lives of Englishmen for years, but "now, as they aged and seemed settled here, Anwar and Dad appeared to be returning internally to India, or at least to be resisting the English here" (ibid.: 64). Haroon similarly states: "we old Indians come to like this England less and less and we return to an imagined India" (ibid.).

Kareem's mother, an English working-class woman, is also confronted with the opprobrium of a great percentage of English society, which is still somehow uncomfortable with the idea of mixed marriages. She is ashamed of her marriage and tries to elevate Haroon from the mere status of an immigrant by reiterating the upper-class, Babu origins of her husband:

> If Mum was irritated by Dad's aristocratic uselessness, she was also proud of his family. 'They're higher than the Churchills,' she said to people. 'He went to school in a horse-drawn carriage.' This would ensure there was no confusion between Dad and the swarms of Indian peasants who came to Britain in the 1950s and 1960s, and of whom it was said that they were not familiar with cutlery and certainly not with toilets, since they squatted on the seats and shat from on high (Kureishi 1990: 24).

While her husband retreats to his Indian roots and starts an affair with a suburban hippie, Margaret is exasperated by what Thomas calls "an utterly defeated sense of suburban Englishness" (cf. Thomas 2005: 65). She is deeply dissatisfied with her life and the end of 'traditional' pre-war England. Not only does she burst into tears while eating fish and chips, shouting that her life is terrible, she is also painfully aware that her way of life is irredeemably lost: "I am only English!" (Kureishi 1990: 5), she remarks, not without a sense of deep self-pity.

The character constellation becomes even more complex if we acknowledge the fact that the couple formed by his parents is located in the novel between two additional, very divergent and distinct couples, which also exert a certain influence on Karim. Firstly, on his father's side, there is the couple made of Uncle Anwar and Aunt Jeeta, the former being Haroon's best friend, and the latter Anwar's wife, an Indian princess turned shopkeeper in England. They do not live in the suburbs, but in London "in one dirty room in Brixton. It was no palace and it backed on to the railway line" (ibid.: 26). They inhabit a

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parallel microcosmos of their own in England, have virtually no contact with the indigenous population and are oblivious to the realities of the new country they inhabit: "They also knew nothing of the outside world. I often asked Jeeta who the Foreign Secretary of Great Britain was, or the name of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but she never knew, and did not regret her ignorance" (ibid.: 51).

Secondly, on his mothers' side, we have uncle Ted and auntie Jean, made up of Margaret's sister, Jean, and her husband, Ted. They are both native Britons, who are affluent and live in Chislehurst, a well-off South-London suburb. Jean is the epitome of the well-to-do English who is ashamed of being related to Pakistanis and looks down on immigrants generally. Thus, as Karim mentions in the novel, they never called his father by his Indian name, Haroon. "He was always 'Harry' to them, and they spoke of him as Harry to other people. It was bad enough his being Indian in the first place, without having an awkward name too" (ibid.: 33). The couple is systematically subjected to mockery and ridicule by Karim's father, who calls them in turn "Gin and Tonic". Thus, the uncomfortable position Karim's parents inhabit, being situated between the families of Uncle Anwar and Auntie Jean represents an allegory to the hybrid condition, linked to two very different, often antagonistic constituents of the centre-periphery binary model. The forces interacting between these opposed constituents effectively create a third space, traits which are personified by Karim himself, the "product" of these antagonistic third space connections.

Moving on to the novel's main character, Karim, the mixed-race teenager, we learn that he lives with his parents. The mixed marriage of Karim's parents is in itself a sort of class, racial and religious hybrid between an upper-class immigrant Muslim Indian father and a working-class native Christian English mother. One can easily note Karim's most prominent feature right from the beginning of the novel: his hybridity, and linked with it, his alienation stemming from his inability to choose an identity, a lover or a place to live.

In the following analysis, I will try to demonstrate that Karim is an alienated individual due to his threefold hybridity: Karim is a racial, sexual and a class hybrid. Furthermore, I will try to demonstrate that at least three aspects of Marx's theory of alienation can be identified in Karim's case. These instances of Marx's concept of alienation are as follows:

firstly, Karim is alienated from his social environment, due to his class affiliation– he is portrayed in the novel as being lower middle-class, thus rejected by both the upper- and the working-classes; secondly, he is alienated from his identity, being neither Pakistani, nor English, subjected to a double rejection, from white Britons as well as his Pakistani relatives; and thirdly, closely linked to his ethnicity, Karim is alienated from himself, from his perceived identity which is constantly (re)negotiated between his British and Pakistani heritage.

Firstly, Karim's alienation as a social hybrid is reflected by the implications of class described in the novel. The most obvious instances of class affiliation in the novel are, of course, the marriage between his upper-class Indian father and his working-class English mother. The intermingling of these two class extremes has led, in Karim's case, to a life led as what could be described as low middle-class. The novel can be interpreted, according to Susie Thomas, as "a novel of upward mobility" (cf. Thomas 2005: 74), given that the aspirations of Karim, in common with the antiheroes of the working-class fiction during the 50s, to "provide[s] a critique of social values" (ibid.).

Thus, the issue of class becomes relevant, if we are to conceive the low middle-class of the suburbia as opposed to both the upper- and the working-classes. The middle-class would come to signify the '*petite bourgeoisie*' which is derided by the upper-class and disdained by the working-class alike. In the words of Rita Felski, "being lower middle class is a singularly boring identity, possessing none of the radical chic that is sometimes ascribed to working-class roots" (Felski 2000: 34), while at the same time being perceived as "unrefined" by the upper-classes. Thus, the overwhelming feeling which Karim experiences is that of hopeless boredom, resulting in the revolt against his drab middle-class life.

The instances of unbelonging, much as in the working-class fiction of the 50s, are fully realised by Karim when confronted with genuine, upper-class representatives. Karim notes that when dealing with more affluent persons, he would experience a certain feeling of being ill at ease in their presence:

> what infuriated me – what made me loathe both them and myself – was their confidence and knowledge. The easy talk of art, theatre, architecture,

travel; the languages, the vocabulary, knowing the way round a whole culture – it was invaluable and irreplaceable capital (Kureishi 1990: 177).

Schoene also remarks the endurance of class differences in the novel, stating that opposed to the suburban, middle-class which "scramble after an identiy, […] the upper-class is still seen as traditionally English and impervious to post-imperial cosmopolitanism" (Schoene 1998: 114), thus drawing on the idea of a traditionally white, protestant English centre and the culturally mixed periphery. Karim's parents are equally aware of class divisions and somehow display a certain feeling of alienation during encounters with upper-class characters: "Mum and Dad always felt out of place and patronized on these grand occasions, where lives were measured by money. […] Somehow they always seemed to wear the wrong clothes and look slightly shabby (Kureishi 1990: 42).

More importantly, though, Karim's social alienation is determined not only by the marriage of his upper-class Indian father with his working-class English mother, but also by the heterotopia present in the novel: namely the conflict between the suburb and the metropolis, the periphery and the centre. Thus, the location of his home in the suburb is not at all coincidental. By living in a suburb, Karim inhabits the "third space" between the ethnically homogenous, traditional English countryside and the heterogenous, multicultural space of the metropolis: the suburb functions, J.C. Ball notes, as "a hybrid space between nature and community, country and city" (cf. Ball 1996: 20). Similarly, Susan Brook argues that "the suburb […] emerges as a space of in-betweenness, albeit of an unfashionable kind – of the lower middle classes, of middle England" (Brook 2005: 216). Nahem Yousaf also perceives the suburb as "an 'in-between' space" […] which function[s] metaphorically in the novel as the liminal space Karim inhabits as he negotiates his way from adolescence to adulthood, and from margin to center" (cf. Yousaf 2002: 39).

Opposed to the suburb is London, the metropolis, a symbol of openness, freedom and empowerment. However, Karim experiences at first multiracial London not as a successful, culturally diverse, cosmopolitan metropolis, but rather as a troublesome place to live in, racially divided, rife with civil unrest and a cultural war between the native white population and various groups of the newly arrived immigrants. The train ride from the

suburb into London with his Uncle Ted exemplify the existing conflict within the city of London. Karim notes the disintegrating Victorian houses of slums such as in Brixton, Herne and Hill, places where, his uncle explains, "the niggers live. Them blacks" (Kureishi 1990: 43). London is also the home of Anwar, Jeeta and Jamila, whose lives greatly differ from the more tranquil life in the suburb:

> The area in which Jamila lived was closer to London than our suburbs, and far poorer. It was full of neo-fascist groups, thugs who had their own pubs and clubs and shops. On Saturdays they'd be out in the High Street selling their newspapers and pamphlets. […] At night they roamed the streets, beating Asians and shoving shit and burning rags through their letter boxes. Frequently, the mean, white, hating faces had public meetings and the Union Jacks were paraded through the streets, protected by the police. There was no evidence that these people would go away – no evidence that their power would diminish rather than increase (Kureishi 1990: 56).

In the novel, the metropolis functions as the perfect opposite of Bromley, the suburb where Karim lives. This feature is also a preserved link to the working-class novels of the 50s, where Billy's town of Stradhoughton bears many similarities with middle-class Bromley, not only in function, but also in their portrayal.

The same dichotomy is also a recurrent feature in the novels of the Celtic Fringe, as shown in the case of Welsh's trilogy. As previously mentioned, Karim's alienation stems not only from the racial abuse he encounters, but also from the heterotopia he inhabits, namely the suburb as a hybrid between the centre (or city, metropolis) and the country (village, countryside). Alienation phenomena resulting from the faulty relationship between the constituents of the centre-periphery model are doubled in the novel by the racial conflict between the centre (the former British Empire) and the periphery (the Indian subcontinent). The city versus country binary has expanded in fiction during the age of the British Empire, being "reconfigured on a global scale as a set of dynamic interactions between Britain as a whole and her colonies. The country (in the sense of "nation") became metaphorically the city (the new "metropolis"), while a significant portion of the rest of the world became a new version of "country" (cf. Ball 1996: 8). This very conflict is mirrored at a micro level in the conflict between metropolitan London and its suburbs in Kureishi's novel dealing with the postcolonial realities of 1970s Britain: "Karim's move from the suburbs to "London proper" becomes a local, miniaturized

version of postcolonial migrancy and culture-shock – the move from ex-colony (country) to the metropolis (city)" (ibid.: 21).

Secondly, we must also discuss Karim's social alienation present in the novel that is also inextricably linked not only to class, but also to his racial hybridity. Right from the opening paragraph of the novel, the first instance of Karim's alienation from his societal environment becomes easily discernible:

> My name is Karim Amir, and I am an Englishman born and bred, almost. I am often considered to be a funny kind of Englishman, a new breed as it were, having emerged from two old histories. But I don't care – Englishman I am (though not proud of it), from the South London suburbs and going somewhere. Perhaps it is the odd mixture of continents and blood, of here and there, of belonging and not, that makes me restless and easily bored (Kureishi 1990: 3).

Karim's racial identity is not fixed, clearly determined, but presented as something which would have to be negotiated, something which for Karim seems to be sometimes at odds. More importantly, Karim's social alienation from the British society of his day is deeply enmeshed with his racial hybridity, which, despite the novel's alleged erosion of racial binaries and homogenous culture attributed by many critics – resembles in this case less the positive characteristics attributed by Bhabha but more Acheraïou's definition of the third space as a "space of the impossible". Kureishi himself has stated that he is far from comfortable with identifying with his country of birth, due to the impossible task of choosing one of the two cultures available. As he puts it in his essay *"The Rainbow Sign"* (1986), "'My country' isn't a notion that comes easily. It is still difficult to answer to the question, where do you come from. I have never wanted to identify with England [..] I would rather walk naked down the street than stand up for the National Anthem" (Kureishi 1986: 35); however, he acknowledges the fact that "some kind of identification with England remains" (ibid.).

Similarly, Karim is always caught up in the third space created by the two opposed constituents of the centre-periphery, English-Pakistani binary frame, perceiving himself as a neither-nor rather than a successful, empowered, mixed-race Brit: "sometimes we were French, Jammie and I, and other times we went black American. The thing was, we

were supposed to be English, but to the English we were always wogs and nigs and Pakis and the rest of it" (Kureishi 1990: 53).

On the one hand, his Pakistani relatives living in Pakistan tell Karim they are Pakistanis, but he will always be a Paki[97], while on the other hand, Karim is perceived by white Britons as an exotic Mowgli figure. Shadwell, who assigns Karim the role of Mowgly in a play, says to him "you're just right for him […] In fact, you are Mowgli. You're dark-skinned, you're small and wiry" (Kureishi 1990: 142-143). When Karim expresses his reluctance to wear a loincloth, being smeared with brown colour and to put on a fake Indian accent, Shadwell tells him that he has been "cast for authenticity and not for experience" (ibid.: 147). Eva, his father's new lover remarks when seeing him: "Karim Amir, you are so exotic, so original! It's such a contribution!" (ibid.: 9). Karim seems to feel as alienated from his Pakistani heritage as the author himself, who states that "from the start I tried to deny my Pakistani self. I was ashamed. It was a curse and I wanted to be rid of it. I wanted to be like everyone else" (Kureishi 1986: 9). Karim's assimilation has inevitably failed and resulted in a deep feeling of alienation, which stems directly from his mixed-race condition.

As we can see, the diachronically negative perceptions of racial hybrids as half-caste, "impure blood" damaging the "purity" of the host-nation are still present in Kureishi's novel and most importantly, shape the life and experiences of Karim, the novel's main character. Despite being born in England and "far more English than the first generation immigrants" (cf. Wohlsein 2008: 50), the most discernible feeling for Karim, the racial hybrid, is a feeling of estrangement, which comes in stark contrast with the almost exclusively positive ideas put forward by theorists such as Bhabha. Similarly, as Anthony Ilona puts it: "from the politics of J. Enoch Powell and Duncan Sandys, to the televisual and print media, the classroom and the playground, Kureishi demonstrates how the principle of Othering and exclusion is woven into the fabric of the nation with dehumanizing psychological effects" (cf. Ilona 2003: 96).

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[97] 'Paki' is a British derogatory and offensive term used to describe any person from Pakistan or South Asia by birth or descent, especially those living in Great Britain.

As is true of both the fiction of the 50s and the Celtic Fringe, there is a great discrepancy between the imagined London and the real and imagined location in fictions of migration. If previously, the disillusionment had been a matter of class, which later morphed into a conflict between a Northern Scottish versus Southern Anglo-Saxon identity, the "us" versus "them" divide is conceived in Kureishi as a matter of race. In Kureishi's novel, the alienation seems to stem from the flawed relationship between the British centre and the former colonial periphery. Thus, the only common feature between London as a metropolis and the suburbs is the racial discrimination immigrants are confronted with.

Both Jamila (who is depicted as a politically active immigrant responding to a racial conflict going on in London) and Karim experience very aggressive forms of rejection. Karim faces perhaps his most outspoken instance of racial abuse when trying to talk to Helen, a girl he sees while visiting his aunt Jean in Chislehurst, a richer suburb than the one the Amirs are living in. Karim becomes infatuated with Helen, whose father warns him that he should not attempt communicating with his daughter, simply on account of Karim's skin: "She doesn't go out with boys. Or with wogs. […] However many niggers there are, we don't like it. We're with Enoch. If you put one of your black 'ands near my daughter I'll smash it with a 'ammer. With a 'ammer!" (Kureishi 1990: 40). Karim feels racially avenged later on by having sex with Helen and being driven in her father's car.

Last but not least, the third instance of Karim's alienation can be found if we discuss his sexual hybridity: just as he cannot choose one identity, he is equally confused as to which gender he is sexually attracted to. Although he is infatuated with Charlie, Eva's son, he engages in sexual intercourse with various women throughout the novel. Charlie is depicted as being endowed with the greatest beauty attributes of white, Western Europeans:

> He was a boy upon whom nature had breathed such beauty – his nose was so straight, his cheeks so hollow, his lips such rosebuds – that people were afraid to approach him, and he was often alone. Men and boys got erections just being in the same room as him; for others the same effect was had by being in the same country (Kureishi 1990: 9).

This description echoes the idea of Frantz Fanon's mental alienation of the black man's objectification of his self-image as a repository of negativity[98], thus revealing the deep psychological alienation of Karim. He adulates the quintessentially white English appearance of Charlie, this being also the reason why he is obsessed with his looks rather than experiencing genuine feelings of affection for him: "My love for him was unusual as love goes: it was not generous […] It was that I preferred him to me and wanted to be him. I coveted his talents, face, style. I wanted to wake up with them all transferred to me" (Kureishi 1990: 15). As Steven Connor eloquently put it, Charlie represents for Karim a perfect, integrated Other, "the golden English boy who is both object of desire for the bisexual narrator and the model of effortless success and perfection" (Connor 1996: 95).

Karim's confusion and inability to choose a gender is directly linked to his powerlessness to choose an identity, his constant fluctuation between the English and Pakistani identity. He equally does not feel at ease with this confusion, stating that he merely enjoys what he himself perceives to be a rather unusual state of affairs:

> It was unusual, I knew, the way I wanted to sleep with boys as well as with girls. I liked strong bodies and the back of boys' necks. I liked being handled by men, their fists pulling me; and I liked objects – the end of brushes, pens, fingers – up my arse. But I liked cunts and breasts, all of women's softness, long smooth legs and the way women dressed. I felt it would be heartbreaking to have to choose one or the other, like having to decide between the Beatles and the Rolling Stones (Kureishi 1990: 55).

Not only does Karim not conform to the traditional heterosexual values of British society (i.e. marriage, family life, children) by engaging in bisexual behaviour, but he is also disillusioned by his homosexual inclinations towards Charlie. Thus, as a sexual hybrid, he finds himself partly rejected by both genders: Charlie avoids him after their sexual encounter, while his sexual life with Jamila is depicted as merely carnal longing, deprived of much warmth and affection. His alienation becomes visible yet again by inhabiting a

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[98] Franz Fanon defines this objectification as follows: "I start suffering from not being a white man insofar as the white man discriminates against me; turns me into a colonized subject; robs me of any value or originality […] that I have no place in the world. So I will try quite simply to make myself white" (Fanon 2007: 78).

sexual third space of gender, while constantly negotiating his feelings and desires throughout the novel, concomitant with his negotiation of national identity.

As a conclusion, we can assert that the phenomena of alienation resulting from Karim's hybrid condition again contradict the putatively positive features of hybridity as being a progressive "third space", a fruitful and dynamic creator of newness and empowerment. Quite the opposite is happening in the novel, where Karim's hybridity "is reflected back to him as a handicap" (Childs 2005: 148). While a superficial escape is possible for Karim's father, by reverting to his Pakistani identity, albeit an invented one, Karim is in a state of permanent limbo. For the father, a journey back to the roots is possible, because he has had contact with his native India; conversely, for Karim, there are no Pakistani roots to which he can return to. John Su poignantly remarks that "to the extent that Kureishi's protagonists occupy a state of 'inbetweenness', it is a terrifying and unstable position" (Su 2011: 101).

Finally, Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* reinforces the idea of an occurring shift in the binary model of alienation. As becomes clear in the novel, no longer is the binary conflict focused exclusively on the issue of class or regional British identity, it becomes more and more an issue of (racial) relationship between centre (Britain) and colony (India, Pakistan), due to the new realities and immigration during the age of globalization in Britain. This shift from class to race, from former colonial centre, Britain, has not escaped Kureishi, who portrays the immigrant condition as being riddled with racial, cultural, social and political tensions.

6.3. "Half Blacky-White" – Zadie Smith's White Teeth (2000)

Another novel dealing with the topic of hybridity is Zadie Smith's critically acclaimed "*White Teeth*" (2000), which has also been awarded the Whitbread Prize for best first novel in the same year, the Guardian First Book Award, the Commonwealth Writers First Book Award and the Betty Trask Award. Zadie Smith, born in London in 1975 is the daughter of a Jamaican mother, Yvonne Bailey, and an English father, Harvey Smith. She grew up in London, and similar to Hanif Kureishi, partly depicts her own childhood experience in the book (cf. Squires 2007: 9), although her experiences are somewhat different from those of Kureishi's 1970's Britain.

Critics such as Laura Moss[99], perceive the novel as a "portrait of hybridity in a North London borough […] as part of the practice of everyday life" (cf. Moss 2000: 11) while others, such as John Su, claim that Smith's approach to hybridity is less controversial and confrontational than that of previous authors (such as Rushdie and Kureishi), precisely because "Smith represents a third generation of Black British writers who can finally take for granted that the United Kingdom is their home" (Su 2011: 103). Su is also of the opinion that Zadie Smith's novel reconceptualises the previously celebrated multicultural hybrid à la Rushdie, claiming that "novels published since the mid-1990s have largely abandoned Rushdie's celebratory vision of a hybrid nation" (ibid.: 104), relying instead on much more complex and differentiated aspects of hybridity – both for the English majority and for the immigrants.

White Teeth is written in the form of a *Bildungsroman* which follows the lives of three families and their offspring in present-day Britain: the Iqbals, a family of Bengali immigrants who came to Britain after World War 2, the Joneses, in itself a hybrid family made of Archibald Jones, a white Englishman and Clara Bowden, a black Jamaican immigrant and the Chalfens, a family of left-leaning, middle-class, white, British intellectuals. As Nick Bently aptly puts it, the "nexus of family relationships […] offers a microscopic image of multicultural Britain at the end of the millennium" (cf. Bentley 2008: 53). Since

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[99] Laura Moss refers to the so-called idea of "post-post-coloniality" expressed in the review "Pulling Teeth", published in *The Economist* on February 17th, 2000.

the book does not have a main character, the idea of hybridity effectively functioning as an inescapable leitmotif throughout the novel, the present chapter will focus on the two hybrid families, the Iqbals and the Joneses, with special emphasis on the twin brothers Magid and Millat, the sons of Samad Iqbal and Alsana. They develop antithetically to each other and thus, taken together, symbolise the two opposing constituents of the binary framework of alienation (Magid opts for the centre, for Western secularism, while Millat is constantly searching for his Eastern roots, thus representing the periphery). Dominic Head similarly sees in the couple Millat-Magid the schizophrenic split of the "two extreme responses of the migrant self – the willing integration of Magid and the repudiation of Millat" (cf. Head 2003: 114).

As Ulrike Tancke comments, the novel is a hybrid even as far as its narrative framework is concerned, it being based on the mechanism of deception. The novel's ironical tone and comical situations alternate with more serious questions about multicultural reality in contemporary Britain:

> Although this ethnically diverse and heterogenous character cast might invite associations with the playful hybridity fetishized by certain strands of postcolonial criticism, the underlying message is diametrically opposed to this stance, as it centres on the characters' fates as first- and second-generation immigrants in Britain, and on the painful effects of ethnic mixing and the blurring of racial and cultural boundaries (Tancke 2013: 28).

I shall firstly draw on the differences between the first- versus second-generation immigrants within the Iqbal family, while also attempting to ascertain the fact that the only feature shared by the two are the mutual instances of alienation. Secondly, I shall discuss the antagonistic relationship between the two twin brothers, Magid and Millat, which is nothing but the diametrically opposed and dysfunctional relationship between alienation and its counterpart, assimilation. Last but not least, a comparison between the two families and their offspring will be made, i.e. between the Iqbals (Bengali immigrants, representing the Other) and the Joneses (English-Jamaican, the mixed-race hybrid), focusing on the phenomena of alienation which manifest themselves between and within each family, thus trying to establish the interdependence between hybridity and the phenomena of alienation.

Let us start with the Iqbals: firstly, the head of the family is Samad Miah Iqbal, an Indian (colonial) soldier who served in the British Army. Samad, though immensely proud of his ancestor Mangal Pande, who is said to have started the Indian Mutiny of 1857, fought in his youth for the British against the Germans during the Second World War somewhere in Bulgaria. Even as early as his army days, Samad Iqbal is somehow torn between his Indian roots and the promise of a better life in England, asking himself what he would do after the war: "What am I going to do after the war is already over – what am I going to do? Go back to Bengal? Who would have such an Englishman there? To England? Who would have such an Indian?" (Smith 2000: 112). Right from the start, Samad inhabits to a certain extent Acheraïou's "space of the impossible", being disavowed both by his own Bengal, who perceives him as a foreign, Babu-class pseudo-Brit, but also by the white British, who perceive him as equally alien. This feeling of estrangement increases dramatically later on in the novel. His wife is Alsana Begum, who hails from a well-educated Bengali family and is much younger than Samad. The Iqbals, both Babu class, now live in Willesden Green, London, where Samad works as a waiter in an Indian restaurant, and Alsana as a seamstress for a S&M shop in Soho called Domination, unsuspectingly making various latex suits for paying customers coming from the S&M scene.

Samad's exaggerated stories of wartime bravery and understanding are relativized in the book with the help of J. P. Hamilton, a retired army officer, who is visited by Samad's children later in the novel. Mister Hamilton, upon hearing that Magid and Millat's father has served in the British Army, claims that "there were certainly no wogs as I remember – though you're probably not allowed to say these days are you? But no… no Pakistanis… what would we have fed them?" (ibid.: 172). This sort of discrimination and rejection is the very reason why Samad, now in his old age, feels betrayed by the English, by his wife, by both of his sons, abandoned by God and completely rootless:

> These days, it feels to me like you make a devil's pact when you walk into this country. You hand over your passport at the check-in, you get stamped, you want to make a little money, get yourself started… but you mean to go back! Who would want to stay? Cold, wet, miserable; terrible food, dreadful newspapers – who would want to stay? In a place you are never welcomed, only tolerated. Like you are an animal finally house-trained? Who would want to stay? But you have made a devil's pact…. It drags you in and suddenly you are unsuitable to return, your children are

unrecognizable, you belong nowhere. […] And then you begin to give up the *very idea* of belonging. Suddenly this thing, this *belonging*, it seems like some long, dirty lie…and I begin to believe that birthplaces are accidents, that everything is an *accident.* But if you believe that, where do you go? What does anything matter? (Smith 2000: 407, emphasis in the original).

Samad's feeling of unbelonging is, in my opinion, an instance of alienation, of not recognizing his own self and his inability to be in harmony with his environment. As Wohlsein comments, Samad continuously oscillates between "the two phrases he has decided to base his life upon: 'To the pure all things are pure' and 'can't say fairer than that'" (Wohlsein 2008: 72). In Samad's case, his hybridity (and the resulting phenomena of alienation) is still closely linked to his social class (i.e. his Babu status and his knowledge of English); for his sons, however, hybridity will be a much more complex phenomenon, not only linked to class issues, but also to racial and cultural identity, language, religion and feelings of uprootedness. Hybridity, in the case of Samad, is first and foremost a source of anxiety, as he perceives any form of mingling and mixture a weakening of his own purity: "the symbiotic relationship of multiple cultures reduces the purity and autonomy of one culture; disrupting his culture also disrupts his sense of self" (Childs 2006: 8).

Even Alsana, a person who is "aware of the hypocrisies of both West and East, of secularism and religion" (Squires 2007: 31), depicted as being more malleable and adept at living in Britain than her husband, sometimes fears a sort of loss of identity and cultural unity offered by the colony. Thus, she is sometimes concerned about her children's (racial) hybridity, and of her grandchildren turning out "half blacky-white" (Smith 2000: 61), thus referring to a possible future offspring between her own offspring and the mixed offspring of the Jones'. Alsana is apprehensive about the lives her children will lead, somehow foregrounding the phenomena of alienation and discrimination Millat will be facing; her children, Alsana worries, will be caught in a constant struggle between their past and their present, bearing the mark of their parents' move from the margin to the centre, from the colony to the Empire: they "will always have daddy-long-legs for fathers. One leg in the present, one in the past [..] Their roots will always be tangled. And roots get dug up" (ibid.: 80). Alsana worries even more about her grandchildren, and what she

dreads is precisely the loss of their identity ("Bengali-ness") in a postracial society like that of multicultural Britain:

> Even Alsana Iqbal would regularly wake up in a puddle of her own sweat after a night visited by visions of Millat (genetically BB; where B stands for Bengali-ness) marrying someone called Sarah (aa, where 'a' stands for Aryan), resulting in a child called Michael (Ba), who in turn marries somebody called Lucy (aa), leaving Alsana with a legacy of unrecognizable great-grandchildren (Aaaaaa!), their Bengali-ness thoroughly diluted, genotype hidden by phenotype (Smith, 2000: 327).

Samad and Alsana have two sons, twin brothers, Magid and Millat. Due to the fact that Samad's feeling of estrangement in Britain is constantly growing in his old age, Samad decides to send one of the twins back to Bengal, in order to become a "true" Bengali Muslim, receive a good education in the margin, thus preventing his "corruption" by the decadence of the centre. Samad cannot cope with what he perceives a godless state of affairs and is filled with remorse that his accidents will become his children's destinies (ibid.: 102). Samad regrets coming to England due to the temptations his sons are subjected to:

> I should have never come here – that's where every problem has come from. Never should have brought my sons here, so far from God. Willesden Green! Calling-cards in sweetshop windows, Judy Blume in the school, condom on the pavement, Harvest Festival, teacher-temptress (ibid.: 145).

Samad's inner conflict between adaptation and resistance, between corruption and purity leads to a strong feeling of alienation from the British majority, a separatedness that functions both as a refuge and a form of defense. Although being sexually attracted to Poppy Burt-Jones, the attractive teacher of the twins, Samad draws on this unbridgeable separation between his colonial culture and the culture of the centre:

> we are split people. For myself, half of me wishes to sit quietly with my legs crossed, letting the things that are beyond my control wash over me. But the other half wants to fight the holy war. Jihad! And certainly we could argue this in the streets, but I think, in the end, *your past is not my past and your youth is not my youth and your solution – is not my solution* (Smith 2000: 179, emphasis is mine).

In the words of Shiva, his colleague at the Indian restaurant, friendship or love between the margin and the centre is impossible, due to "too much bloody history" (ibid.: 145). Having spent years in England, Samad wants a return to roots and purity, to the margin, the former colony. In his eyes, assimilation is nothing but corruption by the centre; to combat this corruption, Samad rejects the idea of a modern man and desires to live a traditional life, a refuge back in the Indian margin: "I want to live as I was always meant to! I wish to return to the East!" (ibid.).

Both Samad and Alsana represent the alienation and disillusionment of the first-generation immigrants. Theirs is a failed attempt of social mobility, which, at least in this respect, reminds us of the working-class novels of the 50s. Their migration from periphery to the centre having been a shock, first generation immigrants inhabit (just as the working-class heroes of the 50s and 90s) a third space of the impossible, belonging neither to the margin, nor to the centre; they find themselves nowhere and everywhere. The back-and-forth between the centre and the margin is the source of their estrangement. As Smith herself puts it:

> Immigrants have always been particularly prone to repetition – it's something to do with that experience of moving from East to West or from island to island. Even when you arrive, you're still going back and forth; your children are going round and round. There's no proper term for it – *original sin* seems too harsh; maybe original trauma would be better. A trauma is something one repeats and repeats, after all, and this is the tragedy of the Iqbals – that they can't help but re-enact the dash they once made from one land to another, from one faith to another, from one brown mother country into the pale, freckled arms of an imperial sovereign (Smith 2002: 161-162, emphasis in the original).

Returning to the second-generation, Magid and Millat, whose experience with the negative aspects hybridity in modern-day Britain is also the cause of the twin's feelings of alienation, the reader learns that even from a very early age, the striking differences between the two brothers become clear: while Millat seems to be the archetypal trouble-maker, Magid seems to be of a much calmer nature. While Millat seems to be an extrovert, very much attuned to street fashion and urban coolness, Magid is more of an introvert, bookish child:

> Magid and Millat: Both twins had always been determined to choose their own clothes, but where Millat bullied Alsana into purchases of red-stripe Nike, Osh-Kosh Begosh and strange jumpers that had patterns on the inside and the out, Magid could be found, whatever the weather, in grey pullover, grey shirt and black tie with his shiny black shoes and NHS specs perched upon his nose, like some dwarf librarian (Smith 2000: 134).

While Milat is the extrovert, Magid seems to be much more comfortable with blending in. There is a scene in the book in which friends of Magid's from school ask Alsana if they could speak to "Mark"; Magid calls Alsana when his white English friends are present not the usual "*amma*" in Hindi, but the British English "mum". Samad is incensed by this and poignantly remarks his son's eagerness to assimilate and embrace the values which go against the beliefs of his father: "I give you a glorious name like Magid Mahfooz Murshed Mubtasim Iqbal … and you want to be called Mark Smith!" (ibid.: 151). Magid is soon after sent by his father Samad and without Alsana's knowledge or approval back to India and the readers are only given the development of Millat, his twin brother, who remains with his parents in London. However, following the same pattern, it is foregrounded that Magid's evolution will be the perfect opposite of Millat's, since the twins are constructed as perfect opposites.

Millat develops into a very rebellious teenager, who breaks wind in mosques, smokes and has sexual intercourse with English girls, something which is perceived by his parents as completely unacceptable and outrageous. However, Millat, we are told, is far from being the only immigrant child to do so; in reality, his rebellious behaviour seems to be symptomatic of all second-generation immigrants:

> Mujib (fourteen, criminal record for joyriding), Khandakar (sixteen, white girlfriend, wore mascara in the evenings), Dipesh (fifteen, marijuana), Kurshed (eighteen, marijuana and very baggy trousers), Khaleda (seventeen, sex before marriage with Chinese boy), Bimal (nineteen, doing a diploma in drama). *What was wrong with all the children?*" (Smith 2000: 218, emphasis in the original).

The conflict between the parents, i.e. the first generation immigrants and their children, i.e. the second-generation immigrants, born and bred in England, seems to stem from the inability of both to surmount the gulf which separates them. In the words of Samad, "the children have left us […] they are strangers in strange lands" (ibid.: 425), while Millat

remarks that "these parents were damaged people […] these parents were full of information you wanted to know, but were too scared to ask" (ibid.: 379). Both parents and children seem to be deeply alienated from each other, both being unable to successfully negotiate the differences between them.

Millat becomes a teenage gang member, and is described as very handsome and well-built. He soon becomes an important leader of a teenage gang, due to the fact that he is self-confident and determined to challenge everything that stands in his way, including the conflict with his own father:

> he knew himsef to be no follower, no chief, no wanker, no sell-out, no scrub, no fuckwit – no matter what his father said. In the language of the street Millat was a rudeboy, a badman, at the forefront, changing image as often as shoes; sweet-as, safe, *wicked*, leading kids up hills to play football, downhill to rifle fruit machines, out of schools, into video shops. (Smith 2000: 217, emphasis in the original).

Millat does not experience London as an open, friendly metropolis, but as a racially mixed megalopolis, in which the white Anglo-Saxon versus colonial immigrant segregation is still intact. The hybridity Millat experiences with his gang is actually a mixture of various groups of second-generation immigrants belonging to numerous subcultures, united only through their opposition to the white English predominant culture. Again, just as Kureishi, Smith tries to show the violence and rebellion of teenage cultural hybrids as stemming from a culture of racial discrimination they had been subjected to by the English majority, even back when the teenagers were trying their best to integrate themselves. Thus, their readiness for violence, their rebelliousness and alienation from society is not an action, but a reaction to their rejection by British society itself:

> [Raggastani] was a new breed, just recently joining the ranks of the other street crews: Becks, B-boys, Indie kids, wide-boys, ravers, rude-boys, Acidheads, Sharons, Tracies, Kevs, Nation Brothers, Raggas and Pakis; manifesting itself as a kind of cultural mongrel of the last three categories. Raggastanis spoke a strange mix of Jamaican patois, Bengali, Gujarati and English. Their ethos, their manifesto, if it could be called that, was equally a hybrid thing: *Allah* featured, but more as a collective big brother than a supreme being, a hard-as-fuck geezer who would fight in their corner if necessary; Kung Fu and the works of Bruce Lee were also central to the philosophy; added to this was a smattering of Black Power (as embodied by the album *Fear of a Black Planet*, Public Enemy); but mainly, their

mission was to put the Invincible back in Indian, the Bad-aaaass in Bengali, the P-Funk back in Pakistani. People had fucked with Rajik back in the days when he was into chess and wore V-necks. People had fucked with Ranil, when he sat at the back of the class and carefully copied all teacher's comments into his book. People had fucked with Dipesh and Hifan when they wore traditional dress in the playground. People had even fucked with Milat, with his tight jeans and his white rock. But no one fucked with any of them anymore because they looked like trouble. They looked like double trouble (Smith 2000: 232).

Millat gets increasingly involved with a street gang of Muslim religious fundamentalists – clearly a pastiche of the *Nation of Islam* – which stands out through wearing green ties and their humourous acronym KEVIN, which stands for "Keepers of the Eternal and Victorious Islamic Nation". As a result, Millat participates at the burning of Rushdie's "*Satanic Verses*", despite not having read the book, claiming instead that Indian immigrants should stand up to the English: "It's a fucking insult! … We've taken it too long in this country. And now we're getting it from our own, man. Rhas clut! He's a fucking bador, white man's puppet!" (ibid.: 233).

Although Millat's image is that of a group leader and troublemaker (very similarly to the Teddy-Boys' culture of the 50s), behind the façade of coolness we can find an immigrants' anxiety and disquiet: "underneath it all, there remained and ever present anger and hurt, the feeling of belonging nowhere that comes to people who belong everywhere" (ibid.: 269). Millat participates at the book burning of Rushdie's book because he falsely associates the book as being anti-immigrant. As Smith puts it herself, Millat may not have read or known Rushdie's book, but what he knew was enough to make him rebel against the prejudices he and his friends had been confronted with in 90s Britain:

> he, Millat, was a Paki no matter where he came from; that he smelt of curry; had no sexual identity; took other people's jobs; or had no job and bummed off the state; or gave all the jobs to his relatives; that he could be a dentist or a shop-owner or a curry-shifter, but not a footballer or a film-maker; that he should go back to his own country; or stay here and earn his bloody keep; that he worshipped elephants and wore turbans; that no one who looked like Millat, or spoke like Millat, or felt like Millat, was ever on the news unless they had recently been murdered (Smith 2000: 234).

Millat is thus the masculine second-generation rebel, a cultural hybrid by birth, not by choice like his father, for whom the third space does not function as a productive space creating newness and for whom hybridity does not entail only positive features and characteristics. The rather bleak prospects of cultural hybrids in the novel and the resulting phenomena of alienation are in fact the only commonly shared features both Samad (first-generation) and Millat (second-generation) share, despite the fact that father and son are greatly at odds with each other. As Dawson puts it, this could represent "a salutary reminder of the intractable character of racial inequality by tracing the homologies that link the experience of different generations of black and Asian Britons" (cf. Dawson 2007: 153). In the novel, this similarity between father and son is noted by Alsana, who tells Irie that Millat "doesn't know his arse from his elbow. Just like his father. He doesn't know who he is" (Smith 2000: 284). Millat inhabits the hybrid space of the impossible, being constantly torn, just as his father, between centre and periphery, between West and East: Millat "stood, schizophrenic, one foot in Bengal, one in Willesden. In his mind, he was as much there as he was here" (ibid.: 219).

Opposed to his twin brother Millat, Magid is expected to turn out as "pure" and uncontaminated a Bengali as Samad, given the fact that he grew up in Bangladesh, in the margin, thus being shielded from the corruption of the centre. However, much to the shock of his father, Magid returns to Britain as the incarnation of the colonial *burra sahib*, the pukka English gentleman: "his hair was not brushed forward on his face. It was parted on the left side, slicked down and drawn behind the right ear. He was dressed in a tweed suit and what looked – though one couldn't be sure, the photo was not good – like a cravat. He held a large sun hat in his hand" (ibid.: 287) – holding hands with Sir R.V. Saraswati, of whom Samad says he is a "colonial throw-back, English licker-of-behinds" (ibid.). Instead of finding God, as his father intended, Magid has found science, which is also perfectly opposed to Millat's coquetries with Islam. Magid resents his heritage and wants to be more English than Bangladeshi; he becomes a secularist, an intellectual who gets involved with Marcus Chalfen's "future mouse" project, fascinated by the ability of bio-genetics to alter one's naturally given characteristics. Magid's transformation is thorough: he goes as far as ordering a bacon sandwich in Abdul-Mickey O'Connell's Pool House while his father is also present, who claims his son is trying to break his heart, having

transformed into a "white-trousered Englishman with his stiff –upper-lip and his big white teeth" (ibid.: 454), being "more English than the English" (ibid.: 407).

Magid and Millat actually function within the novel as a hybrid construct *per se,* similar to Rushdie's Gibreel and Saladin. What the twins symbolize is the constant tension between the forces of assimilation (Magid) and alienation (Millat) present in every immigrant's life. Much like the flawed relationship between centre and periphery, the dysfunctional relationship between assimilation and rejection of a dominant culture results in both cases in phenomena of alienation, which the characters display throughout the novel. Even taken together, the twin brothers dismiss the idea of a positive hybrid hotchpotch: the insurmountable gap between the opposing constituents often results in no evolution, but in an inescapable state of permanent estrangement.

There is neither progress between the twin brothers, nor is there any progress between the twins and their father. The first-generation immigrants are disillusioned by the way their children develop, blaming the corruption on the centre, while both strands of the second-generation immigrants (secularist liberals and religious conservatives) reject the actions of their parents'. As Samad puts it in the novel:

> Believe me, Magid will do Millat no good and Millat will do Magid no good. They have both lost their ways. Strayed so far from the life I had intended for them. No doubt they will both marry white women called Sheila and put me in an early grave…. You teach them but they do not listen because they have the "Public Enemy" music on at full blast. You show them the road and they take the bloody path to the Inns of Court. You guide them and they run from your grasp to a Chester sports centre (Smith 2000: 406-407).

Let us discuss the other hybrid family present in the novel: that of Archibald Jones, a white Englishman and good friend of Samad's, and Clara, the daughter of a Jamaican immigrant. Archibald meets Clara at a party, having been saved from his attempted suicide by Abdul Mickey; Clara, a Jehovah's Witness who goes door to door proselytizing, falls in love with Ryan Topps, abandons her faith and rebels against her mother Hortense Bowden. Archibald Jones and Clara eventually marry and have a girl called Irie. Archibald is Samad's best friend and his fellow soldier during the war. As opposed to Samad's Babu status, Archie is English working-class: "I'm a Jones, you see.

'Slike a Smith. We're nobody… My father used to say: "We're the chaff, boy, we're the chaff". Not that I've been much bothered, mind. Good honest English stock" (ibid.: 24).

Irie grows up together with the Iqbals' twins, Magid and Millat. Although Clara is exultant to learn from the physician that her daughter might be white and blue-eyed, it turns out that Irie's blue eyes lasted only for two weeks after her birth and that she was "not a pretty child: she had got her genes mixed up, Archie's nose with Clara's awfully buck teeth" (ibid.: 149). Later in the novel, we find out that Irie also struggles with her hybrid identity and, as Tancke puts it, "reacts to her sense of alienation with aggression, in her case, directed against herself" (Tancke 2013: 35). This aggression is symbolized in the novel by Irie's fight against her Afro, her curled hair as a biogenetic marker of Black ethnicity. Being in love with Millat as a teenager and thinking he does not like her on account of her ugliness, Irie goes to a hairdresser in order to straighten her hair, thus symbolizing her attempt to hide her Black Jamaican heredity; Irie wants to "whiten" her-self, because she thinks she is unattractive to Millat: "I'm ugly. And fat. With an Afro" (Smith 2000: 284). Thus, Irie is trying to mimic the English girls Millat is constantly involved with and she ends up wishing "straight, long black sleek flickable tossable shakeable touchable finger-through-able wind-blowable hair" (ibid.: 273). However, by being unable to escape her biological traits, she feels alienated from her country of birth: "There was England, a gigantic mirror, and there was Irie, without reflection. A stranger in a strange land" (ibid.: 266).

Equally revealing is also the short conversation she has with Millat about possible off-spring, Millat saying that their children would be 'freaks': "Imagine what our kids would look like… browny-black. Blacky-brown. Afro, flat nose, rabbit teeth and freckles. They'd be freaks" (ibid.: 229), thus drawing on Alsana's derogatory term of "blacky-white" for racially mixed children. After an initial denial of her Jamaican heritage, Irie rejects her effort to mimic Britishness towards the end of the novel in order to return to a "rootless cosmopolitanism" (cf. Su 2011: 104). According to Su, Irie's growing interest for the life of her Jamaican grandmother, Hortense Bowden, is not guided by Irie's desire for a personal alternative history, but represents "the possibility of escaping her existing ties to family and England" (ibid.).

As a conclusion to the novel, Zadie Smith's poses a direct challenge of the overtly positive features of postcolonial hybridity. Smith effectively undermines the metropolitan take on hybridity and Bhabha's "third space" by showing that there are also alienating phenomena which stem from postcolonial cultural hybridity. Zadie Smith is a post-2000 author who challenges what could be perceived as a one-dimensional take on the concept of hybridity, a definition and paradigm which does not hold in our day and age anymore: "sweeping claims for the cosmopolitan and progressive character of diasporic communities seem far too simplistic in the wake of events such as the Rushdie affair" (cf. Dawson 2007: 162).

The definition of hybridity put forward by Bhabha and its appropriation by conventional postcolonialism generally entails that cultural hybrids (or mixed-race second-generation Brits) would be inherently progressive, not interested in the past, racial origin or cultural purity. By being constantly on the move and suffusing the two opposing poles of any given binaries, these new "hybrids" would be the direct opposite of a stationary and culturally similar majority. As Dawson again puts it:

> since the approach of cultural critics like Homi Bhabha contains precious little analysis of differentiating social factors such as class, gender, regional provenance, and religious affiliation, it often appears that postco-lonial migrants are inherently, even biologically, destined to adopt anti-essentialist, cosmopolitan identities" (Dawson 2007: 160).

As is the case in the previous case studies of Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, Smith's "transcultural-hybrid"[100] (Sommer 2001: 76-77, translation is mine) novel, *White Teeth*, portrays phenomena of alienation which are inherently linked to the concept of hybridity throughout the novel. What is more, Smith's novel can also be incorporated into the binary framework model of alienation, the constituents changing from local identity within Britain into the Britain as (former) colonial centre versus colonial periphery, the Empire versus the colony. *White Teeth* is a reminder that the relationship between the former colonial centre and the colony is (still) flawed and consistently results in feelings

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[100] Roy Sommer proposes two major categories of fictions of migration, namely the "multicultural novel" and the "transcultural" novel. Whereas the first category perceives unbelonging and uprootedness as a problem for the migrant, the "transcultural" novel celebrates uprootedness and fragmentation as liberation. The "transcultural novel" is again divided into two categories, namely "the historical revisionist novel" and the "transcultural-hybrid novel" (Sommer 2001: 70-77, translations are mine).

of alienation and estrangement between these two constituents, or as Smith's formulates it, in the relationship between "past tense and future imperfect" (Smith 2000: 459).

7. Conclusions

Alienation seems to have disappeared from the present-day public discourse, not only in the academia, but also as general a topic of interest: thinkers, philosophers, political commentators, sociologists, literary theorists and authors of British fiction have largely been silent in recent years about the previously widespread concept of alienation. Swamped by so-called "post-factual" debates in what some would describe as a "post-democratic" world, readers are hard-pressed to find anything related to alienation (or class) in today's newspapers or academic journals. The previously hailed Marxist idea of the worker's alienation (and intrinsically linked with it, the 'class struggle') seems to have fallen into desuetude, starting its decline with the advent of the so-called "postcolonial turn" during the beginning of the 1990s. The then-novel Fukuyamaist view of a post-communist world, whose main trait was – purportedly – the very end of history unfolding, seemed to loom large on the cultural horizon in both Western Europe and the USA.

Today, one can claim with certainty that history has indeed *not* stopped developing after the collapse of Soviet communism. In a globalized world finding itself in a moment of flux, the challenges that emerged after the fall of communism made possible a paradigmatic change: Marxism seems to have been shown the door, while the race/identity aspects of postcolonial thought seem to have been invited to replace the formerly relevant views. More than two decades after the changes occurring in the 1990s, the concept of alienation can offer us quite a few interesting insights, not only into its various "mutations" it has suffered in the last decades but also into the self-fashioning mechanisms of literary trends and currents. The comparison between the Marxist concept of alienation and its postcolonial successor, hybridity, brings out not only the similarities between the literary connections linking these two seemingly unrelated concepts but also offers a valid explanation of how massive socio-political changes can influence the self-fashioning mechanisms of literary trends and vice-versa, how the emerging literary trends themselves reflect (and are related to) the changes in mores and attitudes of the population at a given moment in time, once a certain 'threshold' has been crossed.

My alienation model based on the defective relationship between two diametrically opposed constituents of a binary can be ascertained in the British working-class fiction of

the 50s, in novels whose main characters are almost exclusively male working-class youngsters, faced with a world which is in a moment of flux. This binary model of alienation can be applied not only to Marx's definition of alienation (working-class vs. upper-class or the proletariat vs. the bourgeoisie), it also remains valid when it comes to the theoretical structures of important forerunners of alienation theories prior to Marx's works: Rousseau's dichotomy between Natural Man vs. Civilized Man and also Hegel's opposition between 'happy' vs. 'unhappy consciousness'.

As far as literary representations of alienation are concerned, the same binary model can be identified in the working-class fiction of the Celtic Fringe in the 1990s (see chapter 3.4.1). An important aspect which should be noted is that, while the general binary framework remains unchanged, its constituents seem to have changed significantly over the last five decades. As my model helps to demonstrate, the older Marxist concept of *class* has begun to shift from the 'dominant' foreground of the 50s alienation model to the 'subordinate' background of the more recent, 90s alienation model, due to the advent of postcolonialism and the multiculturalist debate with its primary focus on *race*. However, it is necessary to specify that while it is true that the older concept of class has become less relevant in fiction and less interesting for the critics, it has not completely disappeared in the Celtic Fringe novels analyzed in the present paper. As I have tried to demonstrate earlier, both Kelman and Welsh retain numerous class-related characteristics of the working-class prototype of the 50s, despite the fact that their focus shifts from the class conflict between the working- and upper-classes onto the antagonisms between geographic location and national identity within a post-Thatcherite United Kingdom.

The subsequent, more dramatic (and perhaps, more surprising) mutation of the binary model of alienation occurs in the postcolonial novels published after the year 2000 (see Chapter 3.4.2 and Chapter 6). The newer set of British authors of what Roy Sommer calls "fictions of migration" is also different from the previously two discussed groups (i.e. the Angry Young Men in Chapter 3.3.2 and the Celtic Fringe in Chapter 3.4.1) in that the former would not necessarily perceive themselves as literary representatives of a mainly working-class consciousness. Instead, they identify themselves by focusing much more on the idea of race and the "hybrid" society that Britain has become. In this society, the

new buzzword *race* has by and large replaced *class*. Accordingly, despite the fact that the binary model remains valid also in the case of hybridity, the literary theoretical conceptualization changes more dramatically than in previous "mutations": we are presented with a transfer of characteristics from the Marx-based concept of alienation to a race-based concept of hybridity.

However, as I have tried to show in my introduction (see page 9), if we agree that there are no clean-cut divisions between one literary movement and its successor, we can also agree that relevant concepts of working-class fiction are not completely irrelevant when discussing postcolonial concepts such as hybridity. On the basis of this idea, the findings of my dissertation can be summarized as follows: firstly, I have tried to illustrate that the concepts of alienation and hybridity – up to this point thought of by a vast majority of thinkers and literary critics as being wholly distinct and dissimilar – are in fact much more interwoven than one would initially suspect (see Chapter 3.4.2). Despite the current focus on race and identity, the underlying phenomena of alienation are still prevalent in postcolonial fictions of migration. These can be easily identified in many iconic postcolonial novels, an aspect which further strengthens my view that the endurance of phenomena of alienation in fiction lays bare the existing rift between the change in literary theory (i.e. the postcolonial turn) and the underlying phenomena of alienation this very theory relies upon.

Secondly, and intrinsically linked with the development of the concepts of alienation and hybridity, I attempted to demonstrate that the mechanism of self-fashioning in literary trends is not to be considered merely a "fashion", devoid of any factors of sociopolitical tendencies and directions. Thus, the previously dominant phenomena of alienation theories can be identified in what has been described as hybridity as well, just as the subordinate aspects of hybridity can be linked with certain features in alienation theories (see Williams' theory of residual and emergent elements, pp. 10-11). I have tried to argue the fact that the shift within the binary model from class to race is linked with the general sociopolitical change which took place after the collapse of communism. Indeed, as Terry Eagleton put it, with the advent of postcolonialism, "the nation had become the major form which the class struggle against this antagonist (i.e. "the West") had assumed […]

Some of the new theory (i.e. postcolonialism), by contrast, saw itself as shifting attention from class to colonialism" (Eagleton 2004: 11). The ensuing focus on racial identity enforced the shift within the binary model of alienation, effectively replacing the constituent of class with that of race.

Thirdly, I have attempted to ascertain that, based on the similarities between the two concepts of alienation and hybridity, one could consider hybridity to be the essentially older concept of alienation in a new guise, one to better reflect the socio-political changes that have occurred after the demise of Marxism.

The general discrediting of many of its tenets (of which alienation and class were, perhaps, the most important on a theoretical level) and the ensuing power vacuum which has led to a 'reorientation' of the Western world (including the literary and academic strata) toward the nowadays prevalent race/identity discourse. The concept of alienation (especially its "mutations" along the last five decades) can also be viewed as a very helpful device in ascertaining the main causes of the general demise of Marxism as a whole in the present day and age, and linked with it, the crisis of the political left in Western Europe.

All in all, it appears that literary theorists (and most English-speaking authors) relied on what could essentially be termed phenomena of alienation in order to buttress the newer literary theory of postcolonialism. This may seem surprising, given the fact that literary theorists seem to employ the (postcolonial) concept of hybridity to describe what I take to be (Marxist) phenomena of alienation. My dissertation contradicts the "postcolonial turn" in alienation theories and gives weight to the view that the previously popular concept of alienation is still a relevant and useful concept in British fiction today.

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