

# **Jim and Arthur as ‘angry young men’**

A study of *Lucky Jim* and *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*

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# 1. Introduction

*The 'Angry Young Men' cult . . . is a cheap, journalistic fiction . . . Fleet Street . . . created the AYM . . . It didn't matter much whether they were Angry or even Young.*

(John Osborne, quoted in Carpenter x-xi)

This statement was uttered by the playwright John Osborne in 1957. He was the first author to be titled an 'angry young man' and he strongly disapproved of it. Many writers at the time concurred with Kingsley Amis' view that the 'angry young men' movement was a "phantom creation of literary journalists" (Carpenter x) rather than an appropriate literary classification.

The so-called 'angry young men' expressed discontent about life in post-war Britain in their novels. Several writers of the 1950s were grouped into this literary movement despite the distinctions and diversities of their novels. The authors of *Lucky Jim* and *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, Kingsley Amis and Alan Sillitoe, did not feel rightfully placed in this group. Why have journalists, literary critics and others nevertheless put them in this category? What was this 'angry' label meant to signify in literature? And, importantly, is it an appropriate appellation for *Lucky Jim* and *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* and their protagonists?

## 1.1 A post-war vacuum

'Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive/But to be young was very heaven.' The new spirit was soon christened romanticism, and in the hands of poets like Byron and Shelley, it taught Europe to see visions and dream dreams. Then something strange happened. With the death of Shelley and Byron, all the optimism evaporated. Suddenly, the poets became convinced that it had all been an illusion, a beautiful dream, and they were now awake in a world of dreary ordinariness . . . For nothing in this boring practical world could bring the ecstasy of dreams. A pall of pessimism, like the smoke from an industrial city, descended over the nineteenth century. (Wilson 210)

What the quotation above illustrates is that a literary vacuum reigned and that everybody waited for something new and different to happen in literature after the war. "What was expected – and what stubbornly failed to materialize – was a 'movement'" (Salwak 5). Kingsley Amis, one of the authors whose writings were grouped into this category, states that "for some reason no new writer of any fame, any note, had appeared for seven or eight years" (Salwak 16). England's place as a leading nation had come to an end after the Second World

War, the success of the British Empire was now over and many families lived in poverty. Nevertheless, a positive element in a difficult time was that after the Second World War, England became a welfare state and everyone “was able to enjoy a privilege previously available only to the rich: ‘social security’ or the freedom from the fear of poverty” (Jones and Lowe 5). This was an attempt to correct a class system that treated the poorest badly, with the aim of providing help for everyone. The establishment of the welfare state was supposed to get rid of Britain’s class divisions and inequalities for good. “But to many young people who grew up in the post-war period, and benefited from the 1944 Education Act, it seemed that the old pre-war upper classes still maintained their privileged position because they commanded the social and cultural high ground” (Lodge qtd. in Amis xi). The author of *Understanding Alan Sillitoe*, Gillian Mary Hanson states that: “[f]or many, however, this new prosperity lasted only as long as the war itself, and much of the literature that emerged shortly after this time reflects this sense of discontent and a feeling of restlessness and resignation in the ironic acceptance of one’s fate” (6). Sensations like these came to be components of the ‘angry young men’ movement and Zachary Leader describes the situation as follows:

1950s Britain might not have been affluent but the war was over . . . mass unemployment had been banished, the British Empire had been surrendered, the Welfare State had been established to provide free education and health, and corruption and scandal seemed to have gone . . . ‘The agony of the time is that there is no agony’. (29)

However, on the whole, society was developing positively and there was not much to be angry with; the war was finally over. As the contemporary to the acclaimed ‘angry young men’, Samuel Beckett, states it in his play *Waiting for Godot*: “[w]hat do we do now, now that we are happy?” (Bloom 124). This is from where the core problem of this dissertation emerges. If the young generation was disappointed with their situation after the war, does it make sense to connect this to what came to be understood as anger in the literature of the time?

## 1.2 The rise of anger

While England was working itself upwards with the new welfare and educational system, a new type of literature eventually arose. Critics interpreted it as voices of dissatisfaction with what England had become and they were soon labeled the ‘angry young men’ of literature. It was originally a journalistic term that grouped together a number of authors and their fictional



heroes from the mid-to-late 1950s that assumedly were expressing their discontent with life in contemporary Britain (Lodge qtd. in Amis ix). This discontent, typically voiced by male protagonists, mostly concerned the social and political structure of England after the war. At least, this was what literary critics of the period argued. The extent to which the new systems that were supposed to help create equality in some areas of society were actually successful, became open to question.

[W]hat better *purpose* can the modern world offer the talented young? The Welfare State was already seven years old; and clearly, no one is going to quarrel with a society that does its best to provide its members with the basic necessities. But what about the total unfulfillment of the individual in this land of plenty, this society run by businessmen, civil servants and politicians? . . . 'Force me into a system, and you negate me'. (Salwak 6)

This quotation describes the resentment many young people at the time felt about the new society which limited and restrained their lives instead of offering liberation, as was expected after a war. The British novelist and critic Colin Wilson writes that for him, it seemed as if the authors that came to be grouped in the 'angry young men' movement had simply failed to detect new pathways into the future. "They had come to a halt in front of this great fallen tree of pessimism that blocked the road, and assumed, like Beckett's tramps, that there was 'Nothing to be done'" (Wilson 210). In other words, there was a sense of a generational conflict where young people for the first time in Britain felt the need to revolt through literature because they had been divested of the new life they had envisioned for themselves in this post-war period.

As late as a decade after the end of the war, no new generation of writers had appeared. But suddenly, in 1956, a combative young critic lavished much praise on a play called *Look Back In Anger* and within days, its playwright John Osborne was being labeled an 'angry young man' (Wilson 20). Colin Wilson asserts that the man behind the term was the drama critic Kenneth Tynan, who had launched Osborne to fame by giving him this epithet (20). One could claim that by doing this, Tynan also launched himself to fame, as the label was subject to much attention and discussion. Wilson suggests that "[w]hat the newspapers really wanted from this new generation was scandal" (*The Outsider* 7) and the 'angry young men' were supposed to rise up to overthrow the establishment by being young and brilliant (*The Outsider* 7). "For a short time, the press wavered between calling the new rebels 'Outsiders' or 'Angry Young Men'" (Wilson 37) but because the latter was more explicit, the gossip columns of the press referred to them as the 'angry young men' and so the name was

established (Wilson 37). Thus, John Osborne got the credit for introducing the ‘anti-hero’ Jimmy Porter, who is the prime example of the typical ‘angry young man’. He is extremely rude and violent, treats his girlfriend badly, has no respect for other people and is in general discontented with everything in society, on which he blames all his misery. Jimmy’s personality is also in concordance with how the *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* defines the appellation:

A term applied by journalists in the 1950s to the authors and protagonists of some contemporary novels and plays that seemed to sound a note of protest or resentment against the values of the British middle class. The most striking example of the angry young man was Jimmy Porter, the ranting protagonist of John Osborne's play *Look Back in Anger* (1956). Other works then taken to express ‘angry’ attitudes included Kingsley Amis's campus novel *Lucky Jim* (1954), and John Braine's novel of social ambition, *Room at the Top* (1957), but the label is more appropriate to the anti-heroes of these works than to the authors, whose views were hastily misinterpreted as being socially radical. (Baldick *n. pag.*)

Put differently, novels containing young male protagonists who express dissatisfaction, violent behaviour and speech, together with impertinence and anger would be the fundamental essence of the movement. D.J Taylor’s claim that “[i]f the post-war English novel has a public theme, that theme is decline” (xxii) suggests that such opinions were what the ‘angry’ literature supposedly contained.

Interestingly, Wilson described Osborne’s play as realistic: “[w]hen the curtain went up on a cramped suburban attic bedsit with a housewife slaving at the ironing board, one member of the audience wondered why she had gone to the theatre to find herself back at home” (31). Accordingly, the audience could sense the reality of this play; it portrayed life as it was in 1956. Thus *Look Back In Anger* could be said to have presented post-war youth as they really were, as it contained “the drift towards anarchy, the instinctive leftishness, the automatic rejection of ‘official’ attitudes” (Wilson 35). And so the ‘angry’ literature had been established. But was it necessarily an appropriate denomination?

### 1.3 The opinion of the authors

The ‘angry young men’ label was consistently rejected by most of the authors to whom it was applied. Colin Wilson, who himself was placed in this movement, dismissed the term: “[t]he press labeled us ‘angry young men’. In my case, nothing could have been more grotesquely inappropriate. I was aggressively nonpolitical” (*The Outsider* 290-291). He supports the idea

that the label was just something the critics and journalists had created, not an appropriate description of a deliberate social statement from the writers:

It was the highbrow press that made us successful. England has a large number of critics who delight in nothing so much as the discovery of new artistic talent. But they tend to turn very peevish if their enthusiasms are taken out of their hands and accepted by the popular press. This is what happened with the Angry Young Men. (*The Outsider* 291)

Kingsley Amis also “explicitly repudiated the label of Angry Young Man, but it stuck to him as such things tend to do” (Lodge qtd. in Amis ix). Amis describes his feelings as a young man thus: “what I had thought when I was younger [...] – the view that Britain is a very rigid, structured, separated society, and that it is very difficult to break through from one class to another – was quite untrue. In my youth, England was not very stratified and it’s less so now” (Salwak 15). He seems to point out that the misery identified and emphasized by critics was exaggerated. Amis explained to Salwak in an interview that:

There was this lag of eight or ten years after the war when nothing happened. Then by a series of coincidences, within three years . . . I appeared, John Osborne . . . and Colin Wilson all appeared. And others. Now that looks like a movement, and I can quite see, since there was this business of non-upper-classness . . . people could be forgiven for mistaking this for a sort of minor revolution or turning point in English writing. (16)

In other words, Kingsley Amis did not think it really was a literary movement, but rather that it had the look of being one. “Amis was irritated by the critical and journalistic inclination to treat literature like politics, to subsume individual writers within a broader doctrine” (Bradford 147). Amis wrote to his friend Philip Larkin that literature needs to be “instantaneously comprehensible” and that one should not use the “difficult simplicity” (Bradford 149). They should rather come up with their own, new style that reflected how people actually spoke at the time. Amis seems to have wanted his literature to be easy and readable rather than striving to be refined and hard for the sake of cultural recognition from his contemporaries. “Amis welcomed the free publicity but hated the enclosure of his work as part of yet another trend, a class-conscious extension of the Angries” (Bradford 175). Amis described his way of writing fiction quite simply as follows: “what I think I am doing is writing novels within the main English language tradition. That is, trying to tell interesting, believable stories about understandable characters in a reasonably straightforward style: no tricks, no experimental foolery” (Leader 21).

In a similar fashion, also the author of *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, Alan Sillitoe, explained that he did not “feel part of the ‘angry young man’ movement, if such there was, and I can’t think of any writers who did, for the label was used by journalists and others who wanted to classify those who wrote in ways they didn’t understand” (*Life Without Armour* 265). He was zealously trying to avoid the angry label:

I’ve never thought of myself as angry, particularly. In fact, I never write when I’m angry, or sad, or happy. I like to write when I’m feeling dispassionate and detached – so as to get things down right. As for being a member of a group called ‘the angry young men’, I have never quite understood how that idea developed. (Hanson 163)

Moreover, in an interview, Sillitoe told Travis Elborough that “I was just interested in writing about characters that were independent-minded, people who aren’t that well known” (qtd. in Sillitoe 5). According to himself, he was plainly giving a voice to those who did not normally have one, such as the working-class youth, represented by Arthur Seaton. Other than that, he would not acknowledge the label, but claimed that this was just how life was in the 1950s, portrayed realistically by the authors of the time.

The paradox of Kingsley Amis’ and Alan Sillitoe’s consistent denial of belonging to the ‘angry young men’ together with the fact that the novels have been placed here is the contradiction which motivates this literary analysis and evokes curiosity about their perceived anger. In what follows, I will analyse *Lucky Jim* and *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* separately in order to explore whether they could be justified as writings of the ‘angry young men’ movement. By breaking up the three established elements angry, young and men and analysing them individually, I will investigate how they find expression in these two novels. Anger will receive the most attention because it modifies the entire phrase and is of particular thematic importance in the two novels.

The main focus will be on the two male protagonists, Jim and Arthur, who have recurrently been designated angry within the popular definition of this group of literary texts. I will analyse their anger, their youth and their masculinity in light of the common understanding of the ‘angry young men’ movement. The purpose of this is to see whether the ‘angry’ designation is relevant for the interpretation of the novels. I will explore whether they can be perceived to be ‘angry young men’ for the modern reader, within the framework of what was defined as ‘angry’ literature.

## 2. *Lucky Jim*

*Lucky Jim* was published in 1954, two years before the invention of the term ‘angry young men’. It was perceived as a comical campus novel, but most importantly for this thesis, also as a novel belonging to the ‘angry young men’ movement. The hero of *Lucky Jim* is a junior lecturer in a provincial university who is revolted and enraged by anything he regards as ‘highbrow’, such as folk dancing and classical music. ‘Highbrow’ can be understood as a cultural construct, as something derived from people aspiring to high cultural values. “The highbrow was a largely self-proclaimed creature” (Humble 28), which suggests that this was a preoccupation among the middle and upper classes and it also appears to be the main reason for conflict in *Lucky Jim*.

The author Kingsley Amis’ personal notes before writing *Lucky Jim* shows that incorporating these class related features was a deliberate decision, with key words such as ‘crappy culture’ and ‘fellow who doesn’t fit in’ (Wilson 47). It contains a protagonist who is revolted by the idea of middle-class respectability and it, strikingly according to Colin Wilson, seems to embody the ideas that would later be regarded as typical of the ‘angry young men’ (49). According to the British novelist, biographer and critic D. J. Taylor, *Lucky Jim* is a key post-war English novel (xxv). Hence, *Lucky Jim* is deployed in this thesis to discuss whether the ‘angry young men’ movement actually was a suitable label for all of the novels which were placed in this group. It will be contrasted to *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* to discuss whether it can be regarded as right to call *Lucky Jim* an ‘angry’ novel. Through an analysis of the aspects angry, young and men, a closer look at how Jim fits into these respective categories will be taken.

Jim Dixon is apparently a normal guy with a normal job. His academic appointment “carries a certain amount of prestige, but it is a temporary post and the university is clearly undistinguished” (D.J. Taylor 72-73). Jim has to put up with the many irritations of his life, but towards the end his luck enables him to get a job in London and eventually he gets the girl he has dreamed of and gets out of his monotonous situation at the university. He ends up lucky despite all his bad luck throughout the story.

Wilson argues that in addition to the ‘angry young men’, another category rising from the 1950s was that of the ‘outsider’: “a man who cannot live in the comfortable, insulated world of the bourgeois, accepting what he sees and touches as reality” (*The Outsider* 15) and this could undoubtedly be a key tag for a man such as Jim Dixon. “The Outsider is he who

cannot accept life as it is, who cannot consider his own existence or anyone else's *necessary*" (*The Outsider* 82). In other words, a fellow who does not fit in, as described in the personal notes of Amis. According to Wilson, "[t]he curse of our civilization is boredom" (*The Outsider* 245-246) and the basic problem of the 'outsider' is that he rejects the everyday world and considers it to be boring and unsatisfying (*The Outsider* 293). This could be an accurate description of Jim since he, even in many situations where the reader expects enthusiasm, is persistently bored and indifferent. Subsequently, Jim's daily life seems uninspiring and he is misplaced because he does not subscribe to the social and cultural values of neither the people he is surrounded by nor the university as an institution (Lodge qtd. in Amis xi).

Even if the occupation with class had reached its peak already in the 1930s, it is still an important aspect in relation to *Lucky Jim* and the 'angry young men' movement. René Cutforth sums it up thus:

The universal game was class assessment and judgement, as it had been in England for a very long time. You presented your 'all present and correct' act for inspection and duly inspected the inspector. I think it's true to say, though it makes me sad to think of it, that for millions of people in England in the Thirties, to score well at this game was the chief reason for existence. (Humble 84)

Traditional attitudes concerned with class, considered to belong to a time before and during the war, apparently still remained. The expectations of life after war had failed to be fulfilled. Thus, understanding how the resentment of the young generation led to a pessimistic view upon society after the war is key when considering the novel's anger. Is it more accurate to classify Jim as an 'outsider' rather than as a typical 'angry young man' with a mission to convey social criticism about British society? Jim is after all a man with a strong loathing of 'highbrow' values who is not willing to change his personality or his values to conform to a world teeming with what he perceives as constant social advertisement.

## 2.1 Angry

Mentally, however, he was making a different face and promising himself he'd make it actually when next alone. He'd draw his lower lip in under his top teeth and by degrees retract his chin as far as possible, all this while dilating his eyes and nostrils. By these means he would, he was confident, cause a deep dangerous flush to suffuse his face. (Amis 8)

Throughout the course of *Lucky Jim*, the reader is made aware of Jim's many facial expressions reflecting his mood. These turn out to be signals about Jim's emotional affections, or, more frequently, disaffections. The story begins with a conversation between Jim and the snobbish Professor Welch. Because Jim is dependent on staying on the good side of him to secure his job, he also feels obliged to accept an invitation to a music weekend at his home. The Welches have a pre-war bourgeois lifestyle with a house containing a music-room and maidservants (Lodge qtd. in Amis x), for which Jim only can "express his apathy and disgust by calling upon his repertory of faces – his Chinese Mandarin face, his Eskimo face, his Edith Sitwell face. But even those are insufficient to express his loathing of the Welch's son Bertrand" (Wilson 51). The facial expressions are the only way Jim allows himself to express his anger towards bourgeois values, and he only does it when he thinks no one is watching. The faces can arise from the darkest parts of Jim's emotional register, but it makes him very discreet in uttering his real opinions. When he is together with Mr. Welch or in company with Bertrand and other people he dislikes, he keeps making these grimaces in despair. As a consequence, he is restraining his emotions from being expressed; he is covering his true reactions and is thus hiding his real self.

The British author and literary critic David Lodge describes Mr. Welch as absent-minded and obsessed with vanity and eccentricity. By deploying this comical character, Amis drew a critical portrait of academic institutions which seemed to tolerate people like Mr. Welch and Jim Dixon in their senior staff (qtd. in Amis viii). As Jim himself reflects in the novel: "[n]o other professor in Great Britain, he thought, set such store by being called Professor" (Amis 7). By repeated satirical comments like this, we sense how Jim loathes all high-cultural affectation and is angry at how a man like Mr. Welch is able to hold a high post at the university. This helps Mr. Welch stand out as what is typically termed an 'ironized character' (Goring, Hawthorn, and Mitchell 35), frequently made fun of both by Jim and the narrator who together depict his awkward behaviour in humorous terms.

The frustration Jim feels about Mr. Welch is partly uttered through his satirical comments or by his angry faces: "[Jim] thought what a pity it was that all his faces were designed to express rage or loathing" (Amis 250). This underlines that rage and loathing towards bourgeois values are his most frequent emotions; he seldom displays a happy face. His frustration seems to reach a peak within him, where he feels an urge to let it out. Since he keeps it inside it results in these grimaces among people with whom his identity crashes or

who has power over him, it is barred from coming out. This may indicate anger, albeit expressed through facial expressions rather than uttered verbally.

In *Lucky Jim* we quickly make acquaintance with Mr. Welch's snobbish and arrogant son, Bertrand. He becomes an important counterpart to Jim in the novel, in that he stands for everything that angers him. Besides, it is with Bertrand that Jim finally manages to stand up for himself and state his honest opinions. The first prediction of them becoming a competitive couple is given to us when Jim is invited to the pretentious music event at the Welch's. Mr. Welch tells Jim that "Bertrand's going to try and come himself, of course, but he doesn't know yet if he can get away" (Amis 17), an indication that even his father helps Bertrand to maintain his elevated position above Jim. Mr. Welch also manages to push Jim further down with his condescending comment on why he has invited him: "[w]e'll probably call on you to lend a hand with something" (Amis 17), as if he is invited mainly for that purpose. Jim's own idea is that: "[h]e wants to test my reactions to culture, see whether I'm a fit person to teach in a university" (Amis 24). Jim strongly detests this ambition for 'highbrowism' and he does not think that his teaching abilities should rely on his understanding of culture. Therefore, he reacts to Mr. Welch's invitation by bursting out to his colleague Margaret: "[m]y God, what the hell does he think he's playing at?" (Amis 24). Jim looks upon this as a fake life, only caring about appearances. These are the things that really annoy Jim; not political issues as the common descriptions of the 'angry young men' movement include, but trifles during social interaction.

His anger is also partly derived from his inability to stand up for himself against Mr. Welch's demands. He is a coward when it comes to explicitly expressing his real opinions, but that does not mean that he lacks negative opinions about others: "[h]e disliked this girl and her boy-friend so much that he couldn't understand why they didn't dislike each other" (Amis 69). When he initially finds out that he is fascinated by Bertrand's girlfriend Christine's looks, she arouses a mess of feelings inside him and even these are negative: "indignation, grief, resentment, peevishness, spite, and sterile anger, all the allotropes of pain" (Amis 72). He always primarily makes place for the negative feelings. When Jim is frustrated because Mr. Welch cannot give him a clear answer on whether or not he will keep his job, Jim turns to class-antagonistic thoughts and secretly fantasizing to: "tie Welch up in his chair and beat him about the head and shoulders with a bottle until he disclosed why, without being French himself, he'd given his sons French names" (Amis 85). This indicates that he does not directly blame Welch's incapacities as a professor, but focuses on the class signifiers he



feels that the he flaunts. Moreover, it suggests that Jim's anger is just as much directed towards class and the sophisticated values Mr. Welch and Bertrand stand for, and since he is unable to express it he becomes very dispirited and despondent, sensations which can be considered to comfortably belong to the 'angry young men' framework.

It is not only when it comes to stating his opinions that Jim is a coward, but also with women. "I'm sticking to Margaret because I haven't got the guts to turn her loose and let her look after herself, so I do that instead of doing what I want to do, because I'm afraid to" (Amis 201), which reveals both his actual concern for her and his personal issues with problems with standing up for himself. He realizes that he is neglecting his true feelings here; he strongly senses a connection with Christine while he still holds some consideration for Margaret, his colleague and occasional lover. Christine is also harder to get, since she is Bertrand's 'property' and appears unattainable.

D. J. Taylor also focuses on the main reasons for Jim's potential anger: "Jim Dixon notes bitterly of his professor's wife that 'she liked to think of herself as a Western European first and an Englishwoman second'. To Dixon this is simple affectation, cultural posturing of the most pretentious sort" (50). This is what Jim is mainly angry about; he is simply bored and irritated by the cultural and social pretensions of the people around him. The Welches still lead the obsolescent lifestyle of the thirties where class and status were defining elements. Jim sees them as pompous people who have frozen in their roles. As a consequence, he is advocating attitudes that could be referred to as anti-culturalist (Bradford 114). "Dixon is intelligent, articulate, informed, but no element of high culture is immune from his acts of ridicule" (Bradford 152). This may suggest that his anger is also partly directed at himself. He feels a need to strongly criticize every aspect of the social class he is surrounded by in negative terms because these values are to a large extent imposed upon him in his dependence on Professor Welch. This social stratum is far away from where he is comfortable and since he obviously does not fit in, his real identity becomes disproportionate to their expectations of him and it results in indignation. Jim seems to redirect this anger back at the people around him as a defence mechanism. He has decided to set himself against this, before anyone notices how much of an 'outsider' and how insecure he is. By this consistent loathing, he can always blame his incapability to fit in on the fact that he dislikes everything of their affection and he can feel excused for being who he is.

The question of whether or not Jim is actually angry does also concern his dependency on Mr. Welch for keeping his job. Even though Jim does not prosper at the university, he still needs his income. Mr. Welch is thus the arbitrating factor for him being explicitly angry or not. The whole Welch clan could be considered as the main reason for his anger, but Mr. Welch is the one who neglects him from letting it out, because he has got the power to fire him. Anger is the strongest indication within the hallmark of the 'angry young men' and presumably what would place a novel in this group. As the discussion above has shown, the anger in *Lucky Jim* most frequently comes out as class antagonism and is in concordance with Collins English Dictionary's definition that the 'angry young men' uttered "hostility towards the established traditions and ruling elements" of Britain (collinsdictionary.com). Jim's anger is mainly directed at the Welches who are holding on to outdated traditions and conservative values to maintain a high social status of which Jim strongly disapproves.

## 2.2 Young

Another thing you'll find is that the years of illusion aren't those of adolescence, as the grown-ups try to tell us; they're the ones immediately after it, say the middle twenties, the false maturity if you like. (Amis 125)

This statement from the novel is told to Jim by his insightful older friend Carol. It expresses one of the central thoughts that have been discussed in relation to the 'angry young men' movement, namely how the younger generation expected something more after the war, a new aspect of life that never came into existence. Carol tries to explain to Jim that while you are young, you expect certain things of life, which usually ends in disappointment. She feels that having overcome adolescence herself, she is still just as confused. However, Jim seems to think mostly about his immediate future, about keeping his job and not about life in ten years' time. So, although the disappointing illusion of a blissful post-war life was a common subject matter in novels from the 1950s, Jim does not appear occupied with this. He lives in the here and now, being annoyed with the people before him, hoping to survive the upcoming weekend at the Welches'. This thought is also supported by D.J. Taylor who claims that the heroes of the post-war novels often are "fatally upper-class figures, carefully deployed to mock the prospect of a better post-war world" (14) which could be applied to the Welches and Bertrand in particular. They are an example that class and social dominance were still a

preoccupation among many people at the time, and helped by Jim's opinions they are ridiculed.

Even if post-war life was not as refreshingly free as expected, Jim's timid personality obstructs him from changing his situation. Moreover, he is attracted to Christine, but he fears that he may have to settle for the weird Margaret, "who is much closer to his concept of the social category in which he reposes" (D.J. Taylor 75-76). His inability to do something about his current life is depressive, and he becomes an indifferent character. He strongly feels like he belongs neither at the university nor at the Welches' where most of the novel's action takes place. His lack of confidence combined with his indifference makes him do all the wrong things. When he in addition is reluctant to instill in himself the values of his social sphere, identity issues seem to arise. This evokes even more insecurity in him and he appears to have decided to persistently set himself against pretentious values to cover over his feelings of being inferior.

*Lucky Jim* is filled with thoughts and statements that substantiate the 'anti-highbrow' feelings Jim holds. All his secret, upset thoughts about the Welches, only expressed through his grimaces, make it easy for the reader to grasp his emotions. By this, Jim is advocating a sort of "confident 'lowbrowism'" (Leader 267), but it is a rather immature way to express one's opinions. He seems to have decided to consistently disregard all 'highbrow' affectation and adheres to 'lowbrow' attitudes instead. In addition to feeling misplaced around these people, he ends up making mistakes, such as setting fire to the bed sheets at the Welches'. He does everything wrong in this social arena, which underlines that he does not belong there. He seems quite confident about his 'lowbrowism' inside his own head, but in public he is not. "Amis' [...] young man is concerned, perhaps unreasonably so, with status, social uncertainty, his ability to fend for himself in a world to which he has rather surprisingly been allowed an admission ticket" (D.J. Taylor 168). Jim is almost constantly thinking about this, which makes him even more awkward around the people he dislikes. This lets him stand out as the clumsy, immature 'outsider' of every social arrangement.

Even if Jim is not as young as Arthur Seaton in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, he exhibits many childish traits, such as telling lies frequently and behaving badly towards Margaret. He does not seem to feel bad about his simple reasons for disliking her such as on "the arbitrary grounds of bad make-up and arty skirts" (D.J. Taylor 76) or thinking "[i]t was a pity she wasn't a bit better-looking" (Amis 37). Jim's obsession and mockery with Margaret's

physical appearance might simply be an expression of his malcontent about their relation. Bradford explains it as “a way of emphasizing his dissatisfaction at being attached to a woman he finds unattractive” (96). This makes him appear angry about a situation he is fully capable of changing by himself. Furthermore, as D.J. Taylor argues, “Dixon’s speciality is a sort of infantile practical joking. Adept at exposing the pretensions and limitations of the people he runs up against, Jim is also notably good at exposing his own” (76). Put differently, the only way he can bear to be around all these ‘pretentious’ people is if he can joke to himself about it. It could be a way to let some of his anger out.

Another aspect which underlines Jim’s childlike features is his appearance, which seems to lack significant masculine traits since he looks quite weak and his physique is similar to that of an adolescent (Kiesow 23): “Dixon on the short side, fair and round-faced, with an unusual breadth of shoulder that had never been accompanied by any special physical strength or skill” (Amis 8). Thus, his looks are in concordance with his personality which also seems to lack strength and fits to his clumsy behaviour. His lack of masculine characteristics also makes him appear more inferior and immature than he really is.

The climax of immaturity is perhaps reached for Jim when he burns the bed-sheets at the Welches’ with his cigarette. He does not dare tell Mrs. Welch about it, because he is afraid that it will lead to him being fired. He rather hopes that they will not notice it, which is a cowardly and immature decision. Moreover, he writes on the mirror in the bathroom: “Ned Welch is a Soppo fool with a Fase like A Pigs Bum” (Amis 64), he removes it immediately afterwards, but his infantile need of doing such a thing is striking. Also Margaret points out, with an obvious tone of jealousy that Jim’s behaviour when he starts flirting with Christine is “rather silly and childish” (Amis 75). He is also overtly occupied about three pretty girls at the university who plan to take his special subject. He feels honoured that they will take it simply because they are pretty. This is quite an immature concern, being a lecturer at a university. It adds to the many traits he holds which are normally unexpected of a traditional lecturer and makes him seem more of an ‘outsider’ in this manner. He does not seem to care much about taking a moral stance which is in concordance with his profession. In addition, his immorality when he is pretending that he is someone else when he calls Mrs. Welch and Bertrand (Amis 99) strongly underlines this point and strengthens the reader’s perception that he is an amateur in his life in general. He keeps on playing in a field where he does not belong and does not care to follow the rules, because they are beyond what he is willing to understand. He disrespects the Welches here, but it does not seem to affect him very much. He remains

indifferent even after he has misled Mr. Welch. These are just some of the mistakes he makes during the course of the novel. Most of the times he seems indifferent to what he has done, but when he burns the sheets he gets very upset for once. This last incident is nonetheless important since it is what starts to drive his and Christine's social attachment forward.

After having made a fool of himself several times during the weekend at the Welches' he sees no other option than to start making up his own rules wherever suitable, and this is another aspect of his immaturity which he shares with the protagonist in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*. For instance, when he is going home from the Welches' with his dream girl Christine, he hijacks the taxi someone else has called for. When Christine confronts him with this unethical act and whether it feels wrong, he replies that: "[i]t does, at least it would in the ordinary way, but it was more important for us to get a taxi than for them, wasn't it?" (Amis 134). Since Jim looks upon many of the people at the Welches' as hypocrites and fools, he sees no damage in doing such a thing. Because of this, one could argue that Jim's immorality is his most stereotypically masculine trait, at least how he shows the most courage. His immorality thus enables him to be courageous, and this enhances his masculine identity which will be discussed in the following chapter.

However, Jim's immaturity is not mainly characterized by an apparent resignation of what post-war life had become as was perceived common for 'angry' literature. His clumsiness seems to be included for comical purposes of the novel and it serves to portray his clear distinctiveness from the other characters in the story. He is a young man, but his youth does not seem to directly contribute to any of Jim's anger and the fact that he is young for his job at the university merely helps to substantiate that he is an 'outsider' there as well.

## 2.3 Men

The working title Kingsley Amis set for *Lucky Jim* was actually *D and C*, for Dixon and Christine (Bradford 74). This indicates the importance of their relationship to the plot of the novel. Christine and Bertrand are almost engaged and she is looked upon as a "socio-cultural trophy" for the Welches in being the upper class girl she is and due to the fact that she is well connected with the arts establishment in London. Her preference for Jim towards the end therefore "registers as an 'act of revenge'" (Bradford 83). Thus, Christine appears to be, according to Kiesow, the only person who can free Dixon from his emotional attachment with

Margaret and from his “rather undermined masculinity” (34). This supports the assumption which will be suggested here, that Jim’s masculinity is undermined by his ‘contestant’ Bertrand Welch’s constant verbal harassment and social humiliation. Furthermore, Jim has women around him such as Margaret and Mrs. Welch who are his superiors because of their job and social status respectively and this does not enhance his position as a man. In what follows, an analysis of Jim’s role as a man will investigate whether this could make his affiliation to the ‘angry young men’ legitimate.

The Australian sociologist R. W. Connell speaks about different forms of masculinity (76-81). One of them is the hegemonic category which is the all time dominating form of masculinity. The subordination category does naturally group together those men who are oppressed by the hegemonic category, while the complicit category contains those men who have respected the need to compromise in marriage, fatherhood and community life. It contains those who for instance take their part of the housekeeping and respect their wives and mothers. The last category of Connell’s theory is the marginalized group. It refers to “the relations between the masculinities in dominant and subordinated classes or ethnic groups” (80). The marginalized form of masculinity is the ‘outsider’s’ masculinity, for those who do not fit into the hegemonic category. According to Jørgen Lorentzen, black or gay men belong in this category (44), but one could also discuss whether Jim can be placed here. Jim is an ‘outsider’ at work and the Welches’ events which are the two arenas we learn most about in the novel.

In Connell’s theories, the concept of masculinity contains relations between the different kinds of male types, these are relations of alliance, dominance and subordination (37). “These relationships are constructed through practices that exclude and include, that intimidate, exploit, and so on. There is a gender politics within masculinity” (37). They are not, however, fixed categories and the hegemonic category does not mean total control (37). The term ‘masculine’ points beyond categorical sex difference to the ways men differ among themselves in matters of gender (69).

From Jim’s perspective, his rival in romance, Bertrand could belong in the hegemonic category. Bertrand would probably place himself there, at least. Moreover, as the hegemonic masculinities claim the leading position in social life (Connell 77), one could argue that both Mr. Welch and Bertrand strive for this position. However much they behave like hegemonic masculinities, Christine’s wealthy uncle and Jim’s future boss Gore-Urquhart is the man who

most naturally fits in this category. Because as Connell states it: “the most visible bearers of hegemonic masculinity are always the most powerful people”, which is true for Gore-Urquhart as both Bertrand and Mr. Welch seem to look up to him. Mr. Welch has power to affect Jim’s future career and his hegemonic position is helped by the fact that Jim is dependent on him for keeping his job. Mr. Welch is not necessarily powerful at the university in general, but Jim’s inferior role earns him power. To have cultural dominance in society seems to be the Welches’ dream and that is why they invite people to their home to partake in cultural activities and show off their extravagant house and lifestyle. They do not succeed in becoming dominant in this way, only in the company of themselves and among those who support the same values.

By performing well acted-out snobbishness, the Welches provoke people like Jim who perceive this solely as proclaiming of their social status. Consequently they give way to people resisting even more their behaviour of ‘highbrowism’, as Jim does. Their identities stand out as very distinct. It does not seem to enhance their cultural value and their hegemonic power other than among their peers. This is emphasized by Connell as well, who concludes that not many men actually meet this hegemonic standard, so the number of men practising the hegemonic pattern is quite small (79). Even if Mr. Welch has some power over Jim, I think one can argue that Jim is more of a coward than he needs to be and thus passes more power over to Mr. Welch’s hands than necessary. He does not dare to stand up for the things he disagrees with at work and joins the Welches’ events even though he strongly claims to dislike everything about it.

How Mr. Welch and Bertrand undermine Jim’s importance both socially and professionally is potentially weakening for his masculine identity. This leads to frustration for Jim as he cannot talk back to Mr. Welch. Through the way Jim is viewed by Bertrand and Mr. Welch he could be said to belong in the subordination category of masculinities. Bertrand makes use of his artistic references to push Jim down and Mr. Welch indirectly forces Jim to behave corresponding to conformity despite Jim’s frustration. This frustration builds up to anger further into the novel.

That’s the fellow; the painter, you know. The great painter. Of course, he knows he isn’t great really, and that’s what makes him behave like this. Great artists always have a lot of women, so if he can have a lot of women that makes him a great artist. (Amis 120-121)

According to this, Bertrand uses women and his artistic reputation to appear superior. He cannot rely on his painting skills to be successful, but needs to front his attraction to women and show off affluence and 'highbrow' opinions. Especially, he employs these means against Jim who is his primary contestant. "The hero of the Victorian novel demonstrated his superiority over the villain by being 'better' than him" (D.J. Taylor 76). Even if *Lucky Jim* was published a century after the Victorian era, this is what Bertrand constantly strives for, to maintain his possible position in the hegemonic masculinity group, claiming dominance over men like Jim.

Bertrand manages to make himself more important than he actually is and thus fortifies his masculinity by saying things like "I have miscellaneous concerns in London that need my guiding hand" (Amis 40). He makes it sound as if he is a man who other people depend on even if that is far from the truth. He knows that Jim cannot exceed that. "Bertrand's speech, which, [...] had clearly been delivered before, had annoyed him in more ways than he'd have believed possible" (Amis 41) and when Jim is forced to admit to Bertrand that "I'm one of your father's underlings", Bertrand definitely scores a point in their internal fight. The asserted anger in Jim may be derived from his social environment that consists of men of hegemonic masculinities by whom he feels oppressed and subordinated. As long as he has to stay in this milieu, he may keep on making unconstructive decisions and thus remain in the subordinated category.

However, Bertrand has weaknesses, as Jim's friend Carol says: "[h]e always thinks he's being got at. He often is, too" (Amis 46). He does probably not have the solid self-esteem he puts on, but with his masculine ambitions he has to overcompensate to cover it. Additionally, Christine describes him as being "extremely understanding and kind one minute, and completely unreasonable and childish the next" (Amis 138). As a consequence, she never fully understands what he wants or where she stands with him. This substantiates Bertrand's instability and irrationality as a man and could come from issues concerning his identity, as for instance problems with knowing exactly who he is when he so frequently puts on a mask. His job as a painter and his reputation of having a lot of women is what his masculinity relies on, and he consistently has to keep up his 'extraordinariness'. Even Christine points out that "[h]aving a relationship with an artist's a very different kettle of fish to having a relationship with an ordinary man" (Amis 141). Since this is expected from Bertrand, he has to execute this perception others have of him to maintain his masculinity.



Bertrand gains his second point over Jim when he reveals that he has been promised a meeting with the affluent Gore-Urquhart concerning a job. “And yet here was the Gore-Itchbag fellow, not on the face of it a moron, listening to this frenzy of self-advertisement without overt protest, even with some attention” (Amis 112). This quotation is interesting, because Jim becomes irritated when others do not react actively to such behaviour, while he in fact is just as passive himself. He does not dare to speak up against his annoyances until the very end of the novel. He is listening without protest too, just as Gore-Urquhart is, Jim is just inwardly objecting. “He wished there were some issue on which he could defeat Bertrand, [...] violence would be justified. [...] For a moment he felt like devoting the next ten years to working his way to a position as art critic on purpose to review Bertrand’s work unfavourably” (Amis 50). Bertrand reaches one of his most despicable peaks in his personality when he utters to Jim that he happens to like rich people, “because they’ve learnt to appreciate the things I happen to like myself” (Amis 52). So far, these issues are what make Jim the angriest; conservative ideas aspiring life to remain as before the war, coming from a class-oriented generation, perfectly portrayed by the deployment of the Welch family. There is not much political anger in him over all, but this loathing of cultural pretentiousness and in his eyes fake people, is what arouses anger in him. One can argue that this is a kind of political anger aimed at how values of society had developed after the war, but rather than Jim being a typical ‘angry young man’ in this respect, it is how people put on a façade that is the root of his annoyances.

Also, Bertrand’s way of telling about all the women he has had an affair with states his masculinity; he provides an image of being more than just the regular men around him, like Jim. He stands out as someone special with his power to seduce women and this would particularly appeal to other men for admiration. In accordance with what has been claimed earlier, Kiesow also argues that Bertrand is crucial for the plot “as he contrasts Dixon’s whole personality and masculinity, secondly their quarrel is not only about power and status but also about Christine” (29). In other words, what first appeared to be a fight between two men where one has a need to prove his social power, results in a ‘masculinity fight’ with Christine as the now attainable prize.

Bertrand also deploys speech to mark his status with a frequent use of the word “alas” and French expressions in English sentences: “[n]o no; just pictures, mere pictures, pictures *tout court*” (Amis 41). He knows that people like Jim does not understand the exact meaning of this, but uses it regardless to stand out as someone special. Deborah Tannen states in

Michael Kimmel's *The Gendered Society* how men use language to establish their position in a hierarchy and that: "[t]o men, conversations 'are negotiations in which people try and achieve and maintain the upper hand if they can, and protect themselves from some others' attempts to put them down and push them around'" (Kimmel 78). This applies to Bertrand who always answers to Jim in very condescending speech with words such as "charming, charming" as a reaction to Jim being a lecturer. He is also deliberately calling Jim "Dickinson or whatever your name is" instead of Dixon to show how little value he assigns him.

Margaret thinks that Bertrand "feels that when he's got an audience he's got to play up to it and impress everyone" (Amis 46). This highlights how the whole conversation between Jim and Bertrand is a fight and Jim feels afterwards that "[i]t was Bertrand who won the little contest" (Amis 51). The tension between them dilates from this point on. The fight is also seemingly obstructing them from being content for as long as it lasts because it dominates their interaction negatively. Sally Johnson argues that "[i]t was claimed that if they were able to free themselves of this competitive masculine ethos, men could be more satisfied and fulfilled human beings" (qtd. in Kiesow 10). Jim's frustration is now reaching a peak and he is for the first time explicitly angry. The verbal harassment has evolved into a very hostile verbal fight, when Bertrand utters that Jim should pick someone his own size, which is condescending and emasculating for Jim. Then, Jim fights back with what seems to be the core of his anger where from all is derived: "[y]ou think that just because you're tall and can put paint on canvas you're a sort of demigod. It wouldn't be so bad if you really were. But you're not: you're a twister and a snob and a bully and a fool" (Amis 208). After this, "[i]t was clear that Dixon had won this round, and, it then seemed, the whole Bertrand match" (Amis 209). Hence, what makes Jim truly angry is how Bertrand acts and speaks, his whole way of being. He has not hitherto been this angry about issues at the university and in his romance with Margaret, but when he is a victim of high-cultural humiliation, he becomes very critical.

In the case of the concept of a 'crisis' of masculinity, Connell states that we speak of a disruption or a transformation of masculinity (84). An historical explanation for such a crisis is "a historical collapse of the legitimacy of patriarchal power, and a global movement for the emancipation of women" (85). Thus, the main problem was that women gained more power, because there was a vast growth in women's employment after the war (Connell 85). Since he cannot utilize his gender characteristics to excel in his work, Jim is rather reducing his masculine status through his job than increasing it, in that he feels threatened by other men

like for instance his student Michie who seems to have more knowledge than Jim on the subject Jim is supposed to teach. Jim is in constant danger of being made a fool of and feel emasculated: “Michie was, or seemed, able to make a fool of him again and again without warning” (Amis 29). It seems as if Jim suffers from an inferiority problem where he is at constant risk of others making it obvious that he is not fit for his job. Besides, he is dependent on participating in the social environment, for keeping a job he actually does not like. This makes Jim behave like a hypocrite, even though he strongly despises the people around him because *they* are fake, he is forced into that behaviour himself.

Despite Jim’s potential inferiority problem, it does not seem as if Jim is negatively affected by Margaret’s position above him at work. The fact that she is a woman, slightly younger than Jim and holds a higher post than him at the university could make him feel less masculine, but his annoyance of her does more concern her personality, which he inwardly criticizes. Margaret often annoys Jim with her hysterical and often irrationally emotional outbursts. His opinion is that Margaret is too emotional, and this is a familiar theme in patriarchal ideology and thus masculinity – that men are rational while women are emotional (Connell 164). This can be perceived as a condescending thought by men and it is “one of the leading ideas in sex role theory” (Connell 164). It seems as if angry men are associated with toughness and a well-defined masculinity, whereas angry women are perceived as emotional and hysterical, and this is a mindset to which Jim appears to subscribe.

In the novel’s final pages, the Welches are the ones who lose their faces as Jim sees them strolling around with their strange hats, as comical figures. Nicola Humble claims that the problem of the upper middle class in the 1950s was that “their own cultural and linguistic usages were no longer assumed to be correct” (104). Their role in society has become outdated. Since Jim won Christine he can laugh at Bertrand, and it feels as if laughter is a stronger weapon than hatred towards him. Jim has now become the masculine hero and the high cultural life ends as something farcical. The roles are turned and ultimately Jim is the one who can make fun of the Welches and have a good laugh at their expense, even out loud.

This analysis has shown that the core point in ascribing Jim’s anger is through malice towards people in his social milieu. He does not seem to detest power and authorities in general, just when it is displayed before him as Bertrand tends to do. To better explain Jim’s loathing of other people, he divides people into categories of those he likes and dislikes, “each of you belongs to the two great classes of mankind, people I like and people I don’t” (Amis

143). He criticizes Bertrand for being a bore and only interested in himself and his anger does not go much further than this aversion to like people around him. He is not particularly angry about social issues, but about how other people act. He is somewhat egotistical himself in that most of his actions are exercised for his own benefit, namely for keeping his job. Most of the social criticism such as that expressed about academia does not come directly from Jim, but from other characters in the novel, for instance his colleagues. Hence, one cannot claim that the novel as a whole lacks social criticism, but in the discussion of whether or not the protagonist Jim is angry at society, there is not much proof of this. The anger is aimed at another target, namely snobbery and outdated values rather than the authorities, as was the customary ground for anger in this literary movement, according to the definitions provided earlier.

*Lucky Jim* is straight-forward both in language and the story itself. The novel has a good-natured humour and as Kingsley Amis' close friend Philip Larkin noted: "while *Lucky Jim* is miraculously and intensely funny... I think it is over-simple" (Bradford 44). Larkin's comment strengthens the assumption of this dissertation that the novel was not meant to be a piece of social criticism. The formal 'simplicity' of the book may have been a deliberate decision from the author in an attempt to stray from the 'highbrow' culture, rather wanting the story to be accessible to all, regardless of social stratum. *Lucky Jim* is thus a contribution to the opposition of upper middle-class literature which had dominated the literary field for decades. Jim Dixon despises 'highbrow' affectation and through constant testing by Mr. Welch, his inability to understand and participate in cultural activities is frequently disclosed. This makes his connection to the upper class appear as a class war. He is discontented because he is an amateur in his job, because his real identity is undermined and because he for the main part of the novel is stuck in a social arena he scorns. This is what makes him an 'outsider', and that, in turn, seems to be the main reason for his anger.

### 3. *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*

*Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* by Alan Sillitoe was published in 1958, two years after the emergence of the 'angry young men' movement. Alan Sillitoe grew up in a working-class home, and from the current edition's cover blurb by the *Daily Telegraph*, indications are given that this is a story from a working-class perspective: "a genuine, no-punches-pulled, unromanticised working-class novel" (qtd. in Sillitoe). The protagonist of the story is the 22-year-old Arthur Seaton who works as a lathe operator at a bicycle factory. He is a young man in Britain during the post-war years, but is he an 'angry young man'?

Central to both Jim Dixon in *Lucky Jim* and Arthur Seaton in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* is that they both undermine those who are regarded as their superiors and according to Bradford, Arthur refuses "to pay the literary, cultural and social establishment even the back-handed compliment of resentfully acknowledging its existence" (Sillitoe 2). This results in Arthur's behavior being far from exemplary. His most evident immoral trait is his frequent affairs with married women. He sleeps with Brenda, his co-worker Jack's wife, regularly and he also sees Brenda's sister from time to time. He does not appear to see Brenda for any affectionate reason, but only because of their sexual relation. This is supported by Bradford, who suggests that Arthur seems to derive as much pleasure from observing the naivety and suspense of his betrayed workmate, with whose wife he is having an affair, as he does from the sex (Sillitoe 2). He does not put much emotion into it, but rather seems to behave like this because he has no better things to do in a life dominated by boring routine.

Nick Bentley argues that "Sillitoe's fifties texts have suffered from their own success: critics have tended to locate them firmly within their historical period and their sociological environment" (193), in this case within the 'angry young men' movement. *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* is therefore chosen for this analysis to show whether or not this novel together with *Lucky Jim* are applicable for the category of the 'angry young men'. The placement within this group encourages a certain approach for the reading and interpretation of the novel, it is assigned to the same category as other 'angry' writings and this label serves as the main perspective from where it will be understood. Is this the crucial angle for gaining proper insight into the story? The analytical method will be the same as with *Lucky Jim*; with an exploration of the aspects angry, young and men to investigate in what ways this story could belong in this literary movement despite the resistance from the author.

The novel is divided into two main chapters called 'Saturday Night' and 'Sunday Morning'. The first part depicts Arthur's regular life up until one of his lovers' husband Bill attacks him. The second part describes how life has become after this moment, it portrays the general feeling after a party, where everything seemed so easy the day before but it turns out to be dull and full of worries the next. Additionally, this second chapter gives way for a new start, a new morning where he finds himself for the first time together with a girl who is not married, but free to be his own. This yields an opportunity for him to turn his life around and diverge from the mixture of indifference and contempt Bradford claims him to exhibit (qtd. in Sillitoe 2). A potential change of personality in this second part can be determinate of whether he will remain a young and rebellious man and thus arguably fit into the 'angry' label, or if he will develop an identity which distinguishes him from this category.

### 3.1 Angry

I like 'em though, because they're different from these big fat Tory bastards in parliament. And them Labour bleeders too. They rob our wage packets every week with insurance and income tax and try to tell us it's all for our own good. (Sillitoe 35-36)

This politically charged quotation illustrates Arthur's suspicion towards those who rule over him. He detests the infringement of his individual freedom, caused by, in his eyes, the government. This makes him utter critical comments of disbelief about authority and media alike. "Anyway, yer never believe what the papers tell yer, do yer? If yer do then yer want yer brains testin'. They never tell owt but lies. That's one thing I do know" (Sillitoe 26). Here, Arthur's brother voices his distrust towards those who have power in society, and this seems to be a general feeling in Arthur as well. He appears to look upon society with resentment, but also seems to live a quite pleasant life in the working class where he has found his comfortable place. This makes him indifferent towards many societal issues, but at the same time he loathes authority figures that frequently make him angry during the course of the novel. "Everybody's happy. It's a fine world sometimes, if you don't weaken, or if you don't give the bastards a chance to get cracking with that carborundum" (Sillitoe 40). By this, Arthur demonstrates fear of what he cannot control, namely the authorities, and it makes him resist fulfilling the demands he feels that they impose upon him. It seems as if he has resigned in trying to have faith in society, he thinks that his life is fine enough anyway, which does not stand out as a particularly angry attitude.

Once a rebel, always a rebel. You can't help being one. You can't deny that. And it's best to be a rebel so as to show'em it don't pay to try to do you down . . . Factories sweat you to death, labour exchanges talk you to death, insurance and income tax offices milk money from your wage packets and rob you to death. And if you're still left with a tiny bit of life in your guts after all this boggering about, the army calls you up and you get shot to death. (Sillitoe 202)

This aggressive comment from Arthur is filled with antagonism and it is probably the kind of anger that literary critics stated as the hallmark for the typical 'angry young man'. According to the author Alan Sillitoe, he considers neither himself nor his work as belonging to the 'angry young men' movement. He claims that the content of *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* is merely a description of how life was for many working-class people in the 1950s. Nevertheless, the book's reiterated explicit anger towards society was by contemporary journalists and literary critics interpreted as social criticism. Arthur seems to be angry with the government, factory life, the army, insurance and taxes of which he openly voices his criticism: "it amounts to the same in the end whatever you vote for because it means a government that puts stamps all over your phizzog until you can't see a hand before you" (Sillitoe 202). This could illustrate helplessness and his feeling of being unable to do much about his situation. Carpenter claims that "[t]here was a general feeling that ordinary people were powerless, and the country was run by a clique – 'the Establishment'" (88). He blames the government for having destroyed him and put limitations to his life and this could be interpreted as social criticism.

Moreover, it is interesting how Arthur is also angered by women who are regularly disloyal to their husbands, when he is a part of it himself. He puts the blame solely on his female lovers, and sees himself only as a contributor of love, since they do not appreciate intimacy with their own husbands. So even though he uses Brenda for his own benefit and shows some affection towards her, "there was something about her and the whole situation that made him want to hurt her, something to do with the way she was deceiving Jack" (Sillitoe 51). He understands that disloyalty is wrong, but mainly blames it on the women, because they are the ones who directly deceive someone even if he is involved as well. Also when he sees a woman he does not like, he is very harsh when he is explaining to his friend that he disapproves of her: "'[b]ecause she's a bitch and a whore,' Arthur cursed. 'She's got no heart in her. She's a stone, a slab o'granite, a bastard, a Blood-tub, a potato face, a swivel-eyed get, a Rat-clock'" (Sillitoe 111). He does not necessarily have a reason to hate this woman wearing a uniform, but he immediately resists people of authority which the uniform is a symbol of. This is seemingly often his general opinion of a woman as well, and he gets

easily fired up by their gossiping or adulterous behaviour, when he decides to see it as contradictory to his own values.

Otherwise, there is generally not much sexism to be traced with Arthur. He has a complicated view on women and especially women in relation to their husbands. But still, he has some respect for them and is able to see them as equal to men at many instances in the novel. He thinks they deserve better than ignorant husbands around them, but if this is something he simply says to keep satisfying his own needs or to justify his unethical actions is hard to say. What he really hates is gossiping women like his neighbour Mrs. Bull. He ends up shooting at her with an air-gun because she has been spreading the word about Arthur's affairs. She is capable of damaging Arthur's reputation which makes him react actively. This highlights his apparent need to set himself against everything that in any way tries to restrict his liberal identity. He is happy as long as he can keep on drinking, sleeping with married women and earn money in peace and quiet. He will not be swayed by people trying to inflict morality upon him. He manages even to justify the shooting incident by claiming that he did it for everyone's good. The same applies to his relations with married women; he sees it as his responsibility to do something about it, and he shoots at her to make her stop gossiping. In the novel, Mrs. Bull is referred to as a "cleverdick", so it is easy to sense the condescending tone and by this, the narrator helps the reader dislike her behaviour as well. The hostility to gossip was, according to Ross McKibbin, a normal, but problematic component of working-class neighbourhoods and "represented an attempt to defend privacy in conditions where that was almost impossible" (199). This suggests that this type of anger is not necessarily typical for the 'angry young men', but a realistic problem of working-class life and an element which contributes to depict it authentically.

If ever I 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 . . . But if I thought she was carrying on behind my back she'd be sent back to her mother with two black eyes before she knew what's happening. (Sillitoe 145-146)

Still, there is some male chauvinism to be observed when Arthur above utters how his potential wife should be. This is a paradoxical opinion for him to have, considering how he has made others' wives behave like this. It shows that he has reflected about the actions carried out by these women and found that he actually despises this kind of behaviour, but he does not bother to occupy a moral high ground by desisting from this attitude himself. In spite of this, some parts of his anger are apparently triggered in his involvement with women.



Arthur is very physical with his discontent and often fights with other men over trifles. “Arthur is basically not a criminal type. He may have something against society but he doesn’t carry it off to the extent of letting go all his reserves of energy and self-respect” as Gillian Mary Hanson argues (39). However, Hanson further claims that Arthur does incidentally choose criminal acts to define his existence (31), but this interpretation is problematic. He is not criminal and his dubious actions are not motivated by cruelty, they are rather concerning his lack of morality. For Arthur, it seems as if fighting is more of an occasional and common activity at the pub among people from the working class rather than a productive way to affect people of contradictory opinions. Nevertheless, he is a rude and vulgar type and this could strengthen his position among his male companions. He does generally have an aggressive attitude towards issues concerning work, taxes and wages. He believes that the price of his dignity is “to sell his labour for a reasonable wage and then he can look the world in the face and have a good time without feeling guilty” (Hanson 39). By this, he exercises a kind of vindictiveness at the world, which does not seem to be easily tamed. This kind of anger from Arthur could be a way to define and defend his own social position. Through putting the blame on everything else outside his scope of influence, he substantiates the fact that he is not the cause of the problems he experiences around himself.

“I’ll never let anybody grind me down because I’m worth as much as any other man in the world, though when it comes to the lousy vote they give me I often feel like telling ‘em where to shove it, for all the good using it’ll do me” (Sillitoe 40). This quotation of the novel summarizes what appear to be grounds for Arthur’s anger. He feels helpless and that his vote will not make any change, so he rather chooses to reject society as a whole and make up his own rules, an interpretation which is also supported by Gindin, who claims that “[i]f Sillitoe’s characters can be classified as supporters of any kind of government, they are anarchists” (20). His sense of helplessness regarding his one vote could be a symbol of his minor influence, compared to people of authority. This kind of resignation towards government was a common trait in literature categorized in this movement and in this manner rightly places *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* here. A feeling of resentment and anger towards people of more power are recurring themes of the ‘angry young men’ movement, and Arthur explicitly utters his displeasure with the state and thus qualifies as ‘angry’. Arthur is generally more active in his choices and decisions than Jim. He decides for himself that doing things looked upon as immoral is fine for him to do, by justifications he has initiated on his own. He fights with those he thinks deserves it and he sleeps with married women because he wants to

and because he thinks that their husbands fail to take proper care of them. Moreover, he hates the government and authority for, in his opinion, neglecting him his idea of a perfect life, which will be further discussed in the chapter about his youth.

However, the anger is just a small part of the novel, functioning as a fair emotional response from Arthur upon societal issues he cannot control. The story is not determined by anger; it merely serves as a factor of its authentic portrayal of working-class life, which could be brutal at times. Anger, resentment and discontent needed to be incorporated into the story to portray it realistically rather than stand out as a main theme in its own right.

### 3.2 Young

Arthur's father is frustrated with Arthur's immaturity: "[y]ou're crackers, Arthur. You'll grow-up one day and stop telling these tales. You're nearly twenty-two. You should know better. I thought they'd a cured you on it in the army, but I can see they didn't" (Sillitoe 29). Arthur leads a quite carefree life in his parents' house where he believes that he can get away from things due to his age. He is undoubtedly immoral in many ways, and as Jim Dixon in *Lucky Jim*, he sees no problem about making up his own rules when that is appropriate and fits him well. For instance, he tells his boss at work that it is against his principles to torment women right after he has put a dead mouse on the work desk of one of his female colleagues. He is also himself well aware of his unethical behaviour as when he is talking to his colleague Jack, whose wife he is having an affair with. He then thinks for himself: "[t]ime to change the subject. Like treading on a haystack, he told himself, you dirty sinner" (Sillitoe 34). Being a sinner in his own eyes does not bother him, as he keeps on making the same immoral choices throughout the novel. It appears as if he sees such roguery as common for guys of his age and thus can be excused for it.

"[H]is weeks and weekends were divided between Brenda and Winnie. [...] the pleasure and danger of having two married women had been too sweet to resist" (Sillitoe 156). He juggles Brenda, Winnie and Doreen crazily around and Arthur reflects to himself: "like a man on the stage, throwing himself up into the air as well each time and always landing safely in one soft bed or another. A dangerous life" (Sillitoe 170). But he seems to find this thrilling, like a leisure activity to entertain himself while he is waiting for Saturday night, the one highlight of the week. This sense of boredom and meaningless daily life was

considered a general theme of the 'angry young men' movement and Arthur keeps on with his romantic activities to occupy himself from the unbearable daily rituals.

Ingunn Haugland argues that Alan Sillitoe by this novel draws a 'romanticised' picture of the working class (42) in terms of giving an impression that working-class life is more desirable than it actually is. This is highly disputable, but through several of Arthur's negative comments about the repetitive work at the factory and his dull pastime, it is valid to assume that he is young and angry about this situation. However, he does not seem to complain about it, but includes such aspects in the story to avoid it from lacking crucial constituents of the reality of working-class life. He presents his daily life at the factory as boring and not glorified, but it earns him money and he seems to view it as a necessity and not something to be cross about.

Through most of the novel, Arthur holds youthful attitudes, such as looking upon marriage as a restrictive institution and viewing government in much the same light. "[B]y going out with a single girl he may one day – unwittingly and of course disastrously – find himself on the dizzy and undesired brink of the hell that older men called marriage" (Sillitoe 156). This may indicate that he is afraid of this situation and speaks of it in harsh words to cover his fear of ending up with a boring life as a husband. He knows much about a life dominated by routine and boredom, and that is probably why he is so dependent on his Saturday night, which is the one night off where he can stray from the monotonous path. Moreover, he mentions older men when he is reflecting about marriage and this stresses that he regards marriage as something older people do and that because of his young age this is far away from his reality. It is very condescendingly spoken of, and it seems as if he detests that institutions like the government and arrangements like marriage can put limitations to his enjoyment of a free life. These are examples of attitudes that give insight into how the young post-war generation could have felt. Arthur's opinions thus fit in with the fundamental framework of understanding about the values of which the 'angry young men' movement consisted.

In spite of his radical comments and behaviour, Arthur is very good at justifying his immoral and immature actions, such as affairs with married women. Initially, he thinks married women are easier to get acquainted with than single ones, since they are often less priggish. Besides, many of the married women he knows are lonely according to Arthur, and he feels that their husbands are letting them down by being unaware of their worth. He

appears to see it almost as a duty and his responsibility to keep such women company. Since he is only 22 years old, marriage and children are distant elements of his reality and more like an obscure illusion. Therefore, when Brenda gets pregnant with Arthur, he takes responsibility in finding out how to get rid of the baby, due to her wish. He is too young to see himself as a provider yet, which according to the Norwegian gender researcher Jørgen Lorentzen was a crucial aspect of masculinity around the Second World War (37). But Arthur's ideal life is revealed further into the novel when he thinks to himself that: "[i]t must be good to live all the time with a woman, he thought, and sleep in a bed with her that belonged to both of you, that no one could turn you out of it if they caught you there" (Sillitoe 128-129). His young age is probably the main reason why he does not strive to attain this yet; he seems indifferent towards it until he ultimately meets Doreen and changes his mind. This proves that Brenda's husband Jack is right when explaining to Arthur that: "[e]verybody thinks they'll never get married at your age. [...] You think you can go on all your life being single, [...] but you suddenly find out that you can't" (Sillitoe 135). Arthur's controversial answer is "[d]on't get married until you've got to, that's my motto" (Sillitoe 135) as he likes to go against the rules and conformity set by, in his eyes, the restrictive authority. His naïve view of a good life underlines his youthful immaturity as well: "[m]e, I'll have a good life: plenty of work and plenty of booze and a piece of skirt every month till I'm ninety" (Sillitoe 183). The fact that he actually ends up with plans to marry Doreen, emphasizes that immature attitudes like these are temporary components of his young age and not stubborn, antagonistic opinions towards marriage which remain in him.

There is much moral ambivalence in both Jim Dixon and Arthur Seaton. Jim can have disgusting thoughts about superficialities like Margaret's looks and the way she dresses, at the same time as he feels a certain compassion for her. Arthur can also be occasionally compassionate, while he at other situations does not hesitate to fight with someone or help Brenda with the abortion of her unborn child. "He shows consideration towards women, is capable of considerable generosity [...] and is able to cultivate warm, if guilt-ridden, feelings towards the man with whose wife he is having an affair" (D.J. Taylor 118). This comment presumes that Arthur is not exclusively immoral and careless. He also reflects about women and finds that they are: "warm wonderful creatures that needed and deserved to be looked after, requiring all the attention a man could give" (D.J. Taylor 228). This seems to be a realization he comes to at the end after falling in love with the unmarried girl Doreen.

Arthur seems to a great extent content with belonging to the working class. Andrew Spicer writes that: “young men were becoming ‘teenagers’ with their own culture, rather than carbon copies of their fathers” (3), which may indicate that after the war, the young generation experienced the ability to make their own culture and not only follow in their fathers’ footsteps. The country had changed and they could not go on as their parents had done before. This could have yielded freedom and an opportunity for change, but also lead to frustration and confusion which substantiate the feeling of helplessness as discussed previously as a trait of the ‘angry young men’. This does not completely apply to Arthur Seaton, because if we compare him to Jim Dixon, Arthur’s “vigour is in sharp contrast to the vacillations or inaction of Jim” (D.J. Taylor 114). Jim’s constant fear of being sacked, for instance, “holds no terrors for Arthur Seaton. Neither would someone like Professor Welch” (D.J. Taylor 114). Arthur is too self-confident at work to bother worrying about that, he seems cocky on the surface, most likely due to his age and immaturity and as a means to compensate for his insecurities in his emotional life. He seems to be in a state of self-denial about the fact that a stable life with a woman of his own is what he ultimately desires, until he decides to settle with Doreen. However, he appears quite content and proud in his working-class affiliation as if he has settled there willingly among the choice of other classes. He knows that he does not have to pretend to be someone he is not, because no one expects anything from a working-class bloke like him. He has got most of the personal characteristics anticipated for this group, and no one seems to frown upon his rebellious action because this was ordinary for young men like him. This helps him have a well-defined identity in his social class where he has found his place.

The question of immorality is also discussed by D.J. Taylor who proposes that “[t]he protagonists of the immediately postwar novel might have been distinguishable by their inability to live moral lives” (Wilson 216). This can be applied to Arthur, because “[I]e until you’re blue in the face, was his motto, and you’ll always be believed, sooner or later” (Sillitoe 77). Arthur is also blatantly immoral in his behaviour and his lack of concern for the husbands and children of the women he has affairs with. Crucially, towards the end of the novel, Arthur’s personality seems to change, which opens up for arguing that his rebellious tendencies is just a temporary phase until he realizes that he actually wants to conform to expectations and get himself a wife.

They spoke of getting married in three months, by which time, Arthur said, they would have collected a good amount of money, nearly a hundred and fifty pounds . . . So they would be sitting pretty, Doreen

replied, because Mrs Greatton had already offered to let them stay with her for as long as they liked, paying half the rent . . . Arthur said he would be able to get on with Mrs Greatton, because living there he would be the man of the house. (Sillitoe 217)

This provides an illustrative example of Arthur's growth towards the end of the novel. He develops into thinking differently about marriage and settling down with a woman. He seems more willing to adjust to the demands he feels that society has imposed upon him (B. F. Taylor 125). His rebellious behaviour is tamed at the end, and this strengthens the assumption that his anger could have been only a part of his youth, which he develops away from as he matures. The quotation also suggests that he finally sees value in being the man of the house and fit into the breadwinner ideal representing "the male household head as the sole provider for his dependent wife and children" (Janssens 1). The change Arthur undergoes makes him fit less into the scheme of the 'angry young men', as it does not apply to the common family man. Nonetheless, it is fair to perceive him as angry in the first half of the novel where he takes immoral decisions and explicitly blames the authorities for his trouble. As he develops, he strays further away from the typical understanding of this literary movement and the second half of the book is depicting his development from an irresponsible adolescent towards becoming a married man.

### 3.3 Men

With Connell's theory on masculinity in mind, Arthur Seaton and Bertrand Welch in *Lucky Jim* are the type of men who are striving for dominance in their respective milieus. Jim Dixon and Brenda's husband Jack are more suitable for the subordination category, as they frequently let other men rule over them which is not favourable for their masculine identities. One can define masculinity by saying it is what men ought to be and the sociologist Michael Kimmel suggests that "[s]ome cultures, like our own, encourage men to be stoic and to prove their masculinity" (3). Arthur Seaton seems to be maintaining and proving his by continuously performing stereotypical masculine habits. This chapter will investigate if Arthur's role as a man is connected with anger.

To define his own position and significance as a man, Arthur classifies husbands into two categories: those that look after their wives and those that he considers slow. He places Jack in the latter one. He has little pity for slow husbands as he thinks they are lacking something. He claims that they are not looking after their wives well enough and since he,

according to himself, looks upon women as more than ornaments, rather as warm wonderful creatures that need to be looked after (Sillitoe 44) he finds it perfectly all right to sleep with them. According to Arthur, the slow men do not deserve loyalty from their wives and he merely justifies his actions by these thoughts. “Arthur did not assess men on their knowledge or achievement, but by a blind and passionate method that weighed their more basic worth. It was an emotional gauge, always accurate when set by him, and those to whom it was applied either passed or did not pass the test” (Sillitoe 42). This way of categorizing men is interesting, and he looks down on men such as Brenda’s husband Jack because he considers him to be slow and weak. Hence, he does not feel particularly bad about ‘stealing’ his wife from time to time. In addition, by categorizing other men he manages to have a conscious view on where he stands as a man. By placing weak men below himself, he defines his place above them and accentuates his own worth. Perhaps this is a way for Arthur, who often feels oppressed by authorities, to demonstrate power over somebody else.

Jack never stands up for himself and Arthur even doubts that he knows about his and Brenda’s affair, yet he cannot help feeling pity for Jack sometimes. Jack bears resemblances to the ‘winking cuckold’ who by definition has “turned a blind eye to his wife’s infidelity” (Turner 90). This signal of weakness annoys Arthur and:

[He] thought again about Jack, this time with a feeling of irritation that he should be so weak as to allow his wife to go off with other men. It was funny how often you felt guilty at taking weak men’s wives: with the strong men’s you have too much to fear, he reasoned”. (Sillitoe 53)

He puts much effort and concern in ‘not to weaken’ which is mentioned several times in the novel, where the ‘cuckold’ image could have been one of the frightening outcomes. This reflects how he looks upon masculinity as a matter of strength, endurance and courage: “[t]he thing was: not to weaken. Like Jack, for instance” (Sillitoe 100) where the dichotomies strength and weakness stand out as the two defining elements of a man, with strength being typically regarded as a masculine trait. This suggests that fulfilling the masculine specifications is a crucial objective of the male gender and thus serves to make Arthur content.

On the other hand, Arthur is dependent on slow husbands to make headway as a man in relation to women, which could be perceived as Arthur’s masculine soft spot. He reflects about women and finds that it will be hard for a girl to stay with him because he likes to go to the pub for a drink habitually. He comes to the conclusion that in the end “I have to be careful

and find the most loving women of all – nearly always married women who don't get much love, who have slow husbands" (Sillitoe 45). He nearly admits to himself here, that he has bad habits in his life, like drinking, which he knows could be negative in relation to women and this could also be a perception of his development towards the end of the novel. He does not see how he will ever be able to give up drinking, but at the same time understands that this could be frowned upon by a future wife. Because of this, he focuses on the slow husbands' wives for company, which is safer for his manliness. He seems to be more afraid of his true feelings than of a fight. This is much due to his suspicion towards women, he does not hold their loyalty in high stock: "[i]f they do it to their husbands they would do it to you if you gave them half the chance" (Sillitoe 51). This reveals insecurity with women and a fear that he will once be cheated on. This is clearly a weakness for a man with Arthur's ambition of masculine character and could be a problem resulting in frustration and anger, but it does not seem to bother him much.

Arthur feels that he is doing a good job in a way, taking care of women with slow husbands which is a safe arena for his emotional register: "[t]hey're too selfish to bother with wives, and that's where blokes like me step in" (Sillitoe 67). This displays insight into his own role and that he has reflected and come to the conclusion that he does nothing wrong, and is able to justify it by blaming the husbands instead of himself.

Arthur was surprised at [Jack's] appearance as he walked down the gangway: he seemed to have shrunk in size during the last month: he was sallow in the face, his lips were half open as if he were talking to himself, the black hair remembered as so glossy was now lank and dead, and he came into the shop looking as though he had no right there. (Sillitoe 98)

Here, it seems like Jack is going through a personal crisis after having found out that Brenda is unfaithful on a regular basis. Arthur is feeling sorry for him now and tries to cheer him up at work, even if he is the one contributing to Jack's pain. Yet, he looks upon his actions as his right because Jack is weak. He sees it as his prerogative, to take care of the wife if the man is not, in Arthur's eyes, fully capable. He has made up his own set of rules for morality, so in his own world he is a man belonging to the hegemonic pattern, according to Connell's theories, while Jack would best fit into the subordinate category. As a strong man, Arthur has a leading role at work, where he is one of the most effective and profitable employees in the factory. This lets him hold a high and respectful position among the men he is working with, and by these means his masculinity could be defined as hegemonic. He is not afraid of a fight of which there are several episodes in the novel. Even if he occasionally feels powerless under



government's rule, he is powerful at work and in social life. This could be seen as valued among post-war men that had lost their clear role after the war (Lorentzen 37) and needed strong, masculine role models in their immediate surroundings. The Second World War had affected men on many levels. After World War II, men's role in society was marginalized. Those who had participated in the war came home to a situation where they were no longer for the same apparent use. They lacked a new, well-defined manly role to adopt (Lorentzen 37-38). Arthur does not seem to suffer from this as he utilizes alternative activities to enhance his masculinity, through violence and drinking. "Arthur Seaton is always in fights, either fending off angry husbands or simply being bloody-minded" (D.J. Taylor 112), behaviour which coincides with the expected constituents of the 'angry' literature.

Manual workers, such as Arthur are also able to let their masculinity be defined through labour. Heavy manual work demands strength, endurance, a degree of insensitivity and toughness (Connell 55), all of which are typical traits of masculinity. Connell further points out that "[e]mphasizing the masculinity of industrial labour has been both a means of survival, in exploitative class relations, and a means of asserting superiority over women" (55). Arthur holds the capability to be superior over women, and his vocation which is typical for a man helps define his masculinity. He is also occupied with his wage and he earns more money than most of his co-workers, this also strengthens his manliness as Andrew Tolson argues that "in our society the main focus of masculinity is the wage" (qtd. in Connell 93). This quotation does apply to *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* wherein wage is discussed several times by Arthur and other characters. It stresses how much Arthur's vocation means for his masculine identity. "The expansion of industrial production saw the emergence of forms of masculinity organized around wage-earning capacity" and mechanical skills (Connell 196), and here Arthur excels well on both. Additionally, the expulsion of women from heavy industry contributed in emphasizing the formation of the working-class masculinity (Connell 196). Arthur can thus make use of his working skills and his wage to easier avoid a crisis in his manliness.

Despite the assumptions that Arthur can be considered an authority figure in his social milieu, Kiesow claims that he belongs to a marginalized group in society: "[h]e feels subordinated by hegemonic masculinity, which is embodied in institutions and authorities of the state" (41). If one looks upon it from a governmental point of view, with government as the hegemonic power, Arthur is subordinated in society over all. But what the novel mostly concerns is his social environment at work, at home or at the pub, all of which are institutions

wherein he is not subordinated but rather a part of the authority himself. Besides, since Connell claimed that the hegemonic masculinity does not always have to mean total control (37), he appears to be more of a hegemonic masculine figure than a marginalized one.

Connell claims that “[t]he male role literature took it for granted that being a breadwinner was a core part of being masculine” (28). The concept of the breadwinner originates from around the middle of the nineteenth century (Connell 29), but neither Jim nor Arthur fulfils the requirements for a breadwinner; they are not the typical masculine providers of their home. Arthur gives away some of his wage to his mother, but still lives at home with his parents who mostly provide for him. Jim lives in a lodging-house and he is almost primarily provided for by the lodging-lady who makes him food. “Based on early powerless experiences in working-class childhood, men excessively strive for power, which is generally connected to their sex in Western societies and often results in violent behaviour” (Kiesow 15), as frequently seen in Arthur. “[I]t is fairly important for young men to have their own income and their entering in the workforce has a strong effect on them” (Kiesow 14). This point applies to Arthur as well, who is dependent on his job for economical reasons but more importantly to maintain and strengthen his manhood. It would feel like failure to be a man without a job, because then you were automatically excluded from the breadwinner ideal which was an important manifestation for a man at this time.

In the 1950s, the idea of manhood was that it was something one had to achieve by demonstrations of physical strength, sporting ability, sexual prowess and the like (Kiesow 5). For Arthur, all his fights and his recurring tendency to be violent is a proof of his masculinity. His need to fight can be explained in that “[i]t is common for different groups of men, each pursuing a project of hegemonic masculinity, to come into conflict with each other” (Connell 215). According to this discussion, Arthur is able to maintain his solid and blatant masculine identity since he is able to transcend other men in the arenas looked upon as manly. Jim, on the other hand, is less capable of stating his manhood in any ways as he has a hard time standing up for himself at work, with women and in his social life. He keeps much of his aggression inside and thus his masculinity is not performed explicitly. This is why one can possibly argue that they suffered from a post-war masculinity crisis rather than advocating the regular social issues of the ‘angry young men’ movement. Arthur makes use of the outside world, such as work and the pub, to satisfy his identity, while Jim who keeps all annoyance and anger internally cannot save himself by his own means; he is merely lucky and ends up

happy by chance. For both of them however, their male role is what frequently is related to their roots of anger.

Arthur seems to be happiest at the pub in which he spends his Saturday nights. The pub is a safe arena for working-class men like Arthur, because “it was a desirable place to be and hardly needed to be defended against middle-class disapproval” (Earnshaw 258). However, Arthur is not often surrounded by people from other social classes than his own, and it is fair to assume that in his mind, working class is the only class existing, at least in his social sphere. He appears to be quite powerful compared to his peers at the local pub or at the factory; this helps him have a well-defined masculine view of himself, because in his understanding of classes, he is often the authority figure. Paradoxically, the fact that he belongs to the working class does not originally comply with being powerful. But because of the lack of other classes in his surroundings, he does not need to defend himself against superior company. *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* thus appears to have less class-antagonistic opinions than *Lucky Jim*. Class is not something Arthur needs to relate to at a daily basis and his life does not seem to be much affected by it.

Throughout the novel *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, Arthur seems more often content than angry. He has found his place in the working class and is comfortable there. He does not stagger between different social spheres like Jim. He is also aware of himself as being privileged compared to many of the men around him for having enough money and access to women: “[h]e knew then what he was in for, telling himself what a lucky bastard he was” (Sillitoe 97). Arthur tends to get out of trouble such as shooting at the neighbour, being rude and sleeping with married women. He can occasionally show discontentment with society, but is able to ignore this in coming to a realization that he cannot do much about it and he just has to be happy about his life as it is. He is able to realize that he is lucky since he, helped by his own moral codes and a strong masculine identity, is allowed to do what makes him happy. He simply blames his problems on slow husbands or the government when he has got any. In contrast to Jim, Arthur is not an ‘outsider’. He has found his place in a social milieu among people with whom his identity corresponds. Because of this, his anger is not connected to his personal traits, as with Jim, but rather to things outside the scope of his own influence.



## 4. Conclusion

The claim that disappointment was the dominating sensation for young men after the Second World War seems to be very relevant for *Lucky Jim* and *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*. The young generation encountered a new daily life which they had expected to be different. They came to realize that it had not changed much after all; the British Empire was no longer something to take pride in and the class society from before the war was still a dominating part of everyday life. As argued by D.J. Taylor, “[t]he revolt of the novelists of the 1950s, then, was an extremely limited rebellion: the few battles that emerged along the way were indecisive and had more to do with characters’ resentment of their own inadequacies than with outrage at a genuine collective hurt” (88). This fits well with the representation of Jim’s social and Arthur’s emotional inadequacies. Richard Bradford is also concerned with the fact that Jim is frustrated and irritated, but maintains that he is never offered as a means of diagnosing contemporary states of angst or alienation (101). Instead, *Lucky Jim* rather seems to attempt to make fun of certain types of people of the post-war time who were trapped in the past, trying to show off their prosperity. According to Colin Wilson, where many of the novels from the ‘angry young men’ movement were driven by irritation with post-war England and its outdated values, Jim’s anger is on a personal level with an intense dislike of certain people (50). This could understandably have been seen as ‘angry’ traits while the ‘angry young men’ movement was in force.

The novels do not appear to be pieces of blatant social criticism. “As Amis himself has so often claimed, his primary intention is to write funny books” (Gindin 50) and he insisted that “I was trying to tell some truths about human nature in a contemporary setting” (Carpenter 68). This point also seems to count for *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* which according to Bradford was a novel that “disclosed without apology or pity the worlds of ordinary people in 1950s England but refused to conform to the prevailing ordinance that social injustice should be its topic” (qtd. in Sillitoe 3). Sillitoe himself stressed that his purpose of writing was to “portray ordinary people as I knew them and in such a way that they would recognize themselves” (6).

All Amis seemed to be saying was that he was bored by many cultural activities that other people enjoyed (Wilson 52) and that bad behaviour and immorality are not necessarily social criticism: “Lucky Jim does nothing particularly outrageous; his most rebellious escapade is to get drunk before delivering a public lecture” (Salwak 6). Jim’s mistakes and

bad decisions are primarily comical, to show how awkward and ill-placed he is almost everywhere he goes throughout the story. He is an 'outsider' because he does not fit in socially or professionally. The most political purpose of Jim Dixon is to give a sarcastic view upon the post-war British way of life with an emphasis on voicing how universities were dysfunctional when professors like Mr. Welch could be in charge. This results in a subtle ridicule of the 'highbrowism' that was seen to reign among many middle and upper-class people in this period.

Arthur Seaton can more comfortably be ascribed the title of an 'angry young man'. He exclaims that "if you don't stop that bastard government from grinding your face in the muck, [...] there ain't much you can do about it unless you start making dynamite to blow their four-eyed clocks to bits" (Sillitoe 202). This shows anger towards how society had developed, but at the same time Arthur's attitudes reveal an immature perspective on how society functions. His disbelief that taxes are for people's own good lets his youthful reflections shine through.

*Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* could thus more suitably be deemed a novel of the 'angry young men' movement than *Lucky Jim*, because it better coincides with what was expected of 'angry' literature. This is supported by Carpenter who maintains that: "Arthur Seaton, makes Jim Dixon, [...] seem prim and timid by comparison" (203). Since *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* is a working-class novel, one can also claim that it was easier for men in the working class to maintain one's masculinity. The protagonists' relation to other men is a factor which recurrently triggers their anger. Jim is often forced into conformity of social events where he has to be like the Welches to portray a hegemonic masculinity, which would potentially yield status as being a man with power. Even if this could be just a play for the gallery, much of Jim's frustration derives from the conflict of not wanting to be a part of the social life meanwhile he needs to partake in order to keep his job. Furthermore, *Lucky Jim* seems to encourage the reader to have a good laugh at the expense of the people who desperately hold on to their bourgeois traditions to maintain their social status, while *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* portrays working class life, 'unromanticised', just as it was for men in the post-war years. It also conveys a fear of the new society, government and voting, infringement of systems and negation of freedom. Consequently, it appears more political than *Lucky Jim*.

These novels could represent a new literary spirit containing attitudes of the youth of the 1950s, depicting life in the post-war years and as Sillitoe said, giving voices to new type

of men. Arthur was, for instance, a new literary character; rude and straightforward. Readers were not used to this rough honesty, and this could have contributed in settling him as 'angry'. When you give a literary voice to someone who has not previously had one, it could legitimately stand out as a 'new wave'. The rebellion and the youthful, immature opinions are those of a young man, and since these novels are the stories of two young men, it is natural to see them in this light. To know the historical background of the novels is useful, but it is not crucial for understanding and appreciating these entertaining novels.

There was a mania for literary groupings in the 1950s (D.J. Taylor 66) and the 'angry young men' movement was born through this, which participates in concluding that the movement was a grouping made up from journalists. This could result in interpretations with much focus on the anger, at the expense of the entertainment aspect. Nevertheless, Salwak argues that by 1958, it was clear that there never had been such a thing as an 'angry young men' movement (9). In conclusion, then, *Lucky Jim* and *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* have attributes on the surface which justify them being seen to belong to the same group. However, the 'angry young men' movement seems more of a myth than a strong literary movement. It may well be fruitful to analyse these novels against the backdrop of the situation for the young post-war generation in Britain, but their anger is nonetheless not their defining feature.





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