

University of Pardubice
Faculty of Arts and Philosophy

Anger in John Braine, John Wain

Petra Fikejzová

Bachelor Paper
2010

Univerzita Pardubice
Fakulta filozofická
Akademický rok: 2009/2010

ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

(PROJEKTU, UMĚLECKÉHO DÍLA, UMĚLECKÉHO VÝKONU)

Jméno a příjmení: **Petra FIKEJZOVÁ**
Studijní program: **B7310 Filologie**
Studijní obor: **Anglický jazyk pro hospodářskou praxi**
Název tématu: **Hněv v díle Johna Brainea, Johna Waina**
Zadávací katedra: **Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky**

Z á s a d y p r o v y p r a c o v á n í :

Předmětem práce budou "Angry Young Men", kteří významně přispěli k rozvoji a změnám románové a divadelní tvorby v poválečné Británii. Cílem autorky bude v úvodní kapitole nastínit důvody vzniku této skupiny právě v padesátých letech dvacátého století. Jádro práce vytvoří na základě detailní analýzy vybraných textů (John Braine - Room at the Top, John Wain - Hurry on Down) s důrazem na dopad tehdejšího společenského kontextu na povahu těchto děl. Dále bude charakterizovat aspekty, které texty sdílí s obecnými tendencemi autorů zařazených do této skupiny (např. Kingsley Amis). Práci uzavře kapitola shrnující výsledky předchozích zjištění a úvah.

Rozsah grafických prací:

Rozsah pracovní zprávy:

Forma zpracování bakalářské práce: **tištěná/elektronická**

Seznam odborné literatury:

Primární zdroje: Braine, John. Room at the Top. Eyre & Spottiswoode: London, 1957. Wain, John. Hurry on Down. Martin Secker and Warburg, Ltd.: London, 1953.

Sekundární zdroje: Allsop, Kenneth. The Angry Decade. John Goodchild Publishers: London, 1984. Marwick, Arthur. British Society Since 1945. Penguin Books: London, 1990.

Vedoucí bakalářské práce:

Mgr. Ladislav Vít

Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

Datum zadání bakalářské práce: **30. dubna 2009**

Termín odevzdání bakalářské práce: **31. března 2010**



prof. PhDr. Petr Vorel, CSc.

děkan

L.S.



Mgr. Šárka Bubíková, Ph.D.

vedoucí katedry

V Pardubicích dne 30. listopadu 2009

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Petra Fikejzová

Ráda bych poděkovala všem, kteří mají podíl na vzniku této práce. Děkuji především Mgr. Ladislavu Vítovi, vedoucímu mé bakalářské práce, za cenné rady, komentáře a podporu během psaní této práce. Děkuji také svým rodičům za podporu během celého studia.

ANNOTATION

This bachelor paper deals with a group of writers generally referred to as 'Angry Young Men' and their particular works. The aim of the thesis is to outline the reasons of the emergence of this group just in the 1950s in Great Britain. It occurred as the reaction to the post-war situation and social changes. The theoretical part describes the situation after the World War II and mentioned changes. Furthermore, it focuses on the reasons of anger, the aims and a new type of character of Angry Young Men writers. The major aim of the paper is to work up detailed analysis of chosen texts with an emphasis on the influence of the 1950s social context over these books. So the practical part deals with work *Room at the Top* by John Braine and *Hurry on Down* by John Wain. Referring to these books and their main characters there are showed particular examples of what is spoken about in the theoretical part.

KEYWORDS

Angry Young Men; conflict; society; stereotype; John Braine; John Wain; Kingsley Amis

ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá skupinou autorů nazývanou Rozhněvaní mladí muži a jejich konkrétními díly. Cílem práce je nastínit důvody vzniku této skupiny právě v 50. letech ve Velké Británii. Vznikla jako reakce na poválečnou situaci a společenské změny. Teoretická část popisuje situaci po druhé světové válce a zmíněné změny. Dále se zabývá důvody hněvu, cíly a novým typem hrdiny Rozhněvaných mladých mužů. Hlavním cílem práce je vypracovat detailní analýzu vybraných textů s důrazem na dopad tehdejšího společenského kontextu na tato díla. Praktická část se tudíž zabývá díly *Místo nahoře* od Johna Braina a *Pospíchej dolů* od Johna Waina. Na základě těchto knih a jejich hlavních hrdinů jsou v práci naznačeny konkrétní příklady toho, o čem se mluví v teoretické části.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Rozhněvaní mladí muži; konflikt; společnost; stereotyp; John Braine; John Wain; Kingsley Amis

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1. Introduction

This bachelor paper deals with particular works of John Braine and John Wain, the members of a group Angry Young Men. This was the group of writers that appeared in Great Britain in the 1950s as the reaction to the post-war situation and social changes. The major aim of the paper is to work up detailed analysis of chosen texts with an emphasis on the influence of the 1950s social context over these books. Methodologically this is based on the book *The Angry Decade* which is the publication dealing with the Angry Young Men writers in detail written by Kenneth Allsop.

The paper consists of theoretical and practical parts. The former is further divided into two chapters dealing with the situation in Great Britain after the World War II. After the war the government came with new policy called Welfare state and brought some changes in several branches. That policy should have been better than the overall radicalism of the 1930s politics but many people were not happy of the changes new politicians made.

There were different reactions to the situation in the 1950s. The opinions were publicly showed mainly in cultural life, by writers or singers. Several literary groups emerged in that time, such as The Movement, which was the group of poets who reacted to the post-war neo-romantic poetry, or already mentioned Angry Young Men whose aims are expressed in the second chapter.

That was the group of novelists, poets and playwrights reacting to the post-war Britain. They were angry about the politics, the new stereotypes and changes that appeared in 1950s. Those authors had courage and were not afraid of writing about tabooed topics or expressing disagreement with the new government's programme.

Furthermore, it deals with Angry Young Men in detail. There is mentioned who were the writers of this group, why they appeared, whether they had some common programme or not, etc. Of course, the reasons of their anger are discussed in this part of the thesis as well as the new character. The characters in the books written by Angry Young Men authors are different from the typical ones presented until that time. The members of the literary group, who were for example Kingsley Amis, John Braine, John Wain, John Osborne, etc., introduced a new type of a hero who is a very individualistic and young man discontented with his current life situation and looking for some resort

from it. The description of the main character is followed by some information about the authors.

The practical part deals with application of the general knowledge of the 1950s period to the particular matters in the books. The main primary sources were *Room at the Top* by John Braine and *Hurry on Down* by John Wain. The characters of these books are solving their current positions in the society which they are not content with and meet only with misunderstanding of others. The problems they have to overcome were the main issues of ordinary people in that time and the authors reflected them into the lives of their characters. Each of the heroes has different but still similar conflict in some way and the subchapters deal with a particular problem. The first part concerns the characters' clashes with society, the second one focuses on their inner dilemmas and the last one deals with the influence of these problems over characters' friends and families. In the practical part of the thesis there is a comparison of Joe's and Charles' attitudes towards particular situation or matter. Furthermore, there is also a comparison to the hero of the work *Lucky Jim*, Jim Dixon, written by perhaps the most known author of the group Angry Young Men Kingsley Amis. Concrete situations are commented upon with an emphasis on the context of the 1950s. The last chapter of the paper summarizes previous argumentation of the theoretical and practical parts.

2. Post-war Britain

The first chapter deals with political background of the 1950s, the new policy called Welfare State, the important events and social changes that occurred in Great Britain after the war. These include health issues, housing, education and other important matters.

2.1. Post-war Political Situation

After the World War II, whole Europe, including Great Britain, was in very bad condition. In 1945 there were held elections. Labour Party won them and established new policy of so called 'Welfare State'. In 1951 there were next elections and they were won by Conservative Party which took power until 1964. The Conservatives continued with policy of Welfare State and the period of the 1950s is considered as time of relative prosperity and stability.

The early 1950s are called as an era of 'butskellism' which is the ligature of the names of two politicians – Conservative R.A. Butler and Labour H. Gaitskell). This time was the time of optimism. Mainly due to Prime Minister Macmillan who declared that British people "never had it so good" (Hilský, 8). This famous sentence seemed to be true:

it seemed that mass unemployment, poverty and sharp social conflicts of thirties are warded off. Fridges, televisions, washing machines and cars became social symbols of new consumer society where middle-class people had much better life than the one before the war. (Hilský, 8, translation mine)

In 1956 the Suez War emerged. And it was the important year for political and intellectual atmosphere of the 1950s. One of the greatest results of Suez crisis was the formation of a peace movement. And in this time the term Angry Young Men was firstly used.

2.2. Welfare State

As it was already mentioned, in 1945 there were elections and Labour Party won. It took power over the state and established new policy, called policy of Welfare State as the opposite to Hitler's Warfare State. Its objectives were to solve several main problems of society.

Most fundamental of these problems is that of income or 'social' security: people can fail to have enough to live on through being unemployed, through being unemployable, through being too old, through having too many children, through being injured, through being pregnant, and through being ill. But if people are ill, they don't just need an income while they are out of work, they need treatment: the second problem is that of the provision of medical services. Sickness, in the past, had often been engendered by bad housing; good housing for everyone, in any case, was the mark of a civilized society. Housing, then, was the third problem to be dealt with by the welfare state. If individuals were to participate fully in a civilized society they should also have a decent education – the fourth problem. But what point in having national insurance benefits, free medical care, proper housing, and wise schooling if there were no jobs? It was a fundamental assumption of the war and post-war period that all of the different pieces of welfare state legislation would be packed up by an economic policy deliberately designed to create jobs and avoid unemployment. (Marwick, 45)

Referring to these aims, several changes occurred. Let's start with the health issue. Before the war, hospitals were only for poor people and the rich ones had personal medical services provided by nursing houses. In the early 1940s it changed. The National Health Insurance scheme abolished free medical services for families of insured workers. In 1946 the National Health Service Act stated that the treatment is not dependent on insurance contributions but it is open to everyone. Very important change concerning the health issue was the nationalization of hospitals. The new hospital organization needed administration therefore the Minister of Health appointed fourteen regional hospital boards.

As Marwick says in his book, bad health could be the result of bad housing (Marwick, 45) which was also an important issue to be changed. In the 1940s there were two types of Housing Acts, each for a different class. After several years there was made a new one for all classes. The situation was that the local authorities borrowed the money for building new houses and repaid them from several sources (such as the rents, the annual Government subsidy, etc.). The aim was to ensure living with all modern conveniences for everyone and keep the rents low. The typical house of working-class people was called "two-up two-down" which meant that there were two rooms on the ground floor and two bedrooms on the first floor.

Third mentioned issue concerns education. In 1944 the Education Act was passed. It promised free education to all children under the age of 15. But still they had to pass so called 'eleven-plus' examination which divided pupils into two groups. The

first one could come to grammar school and the second one had to continue to secondary school. The grammar school ensured possibility to get higher education and the secondary school was the route to working-class jobs. Unfortunately, the success at this exam was not much high and the reason could be in children's homes.

“Social assumptions, moral attitudes, and everyday behaviour are first learned home.” (Marwick, 61) And although there were several kinds of school, as it was already mentioned, the choice where the child should go depends on his parents. In the 1950s the relationship between children and parents changed a lot. After the war, after all terrible experiences, the importance of loving care was emphasized. In working-class families, the girls were treated to be good wives and mothers, and in middle-class families parents sent their girls to private schools while their sons to the state schools.

Parents certainly influenced also personal life. When there was a housing shortage, many couples had to move to the parents of one of them. They moved usually to wife's parents therefore the wife's mother played the key role in the couple's life.

According to Marwick, the position of women had been changing since the beginning of the century but changes were accelerated by the World War II. (Marwick, 63) Until this time women had responsibility for cleaning house and feeding children. Though this responsibility still lasted, domestic duties started to be separated between wife and her husband. Even the choice of how many children they will have was not the decision made only by man.

In 1947 there was a baby boom. In the 1950s unskilled workers tended to have many children but finally they had the smallest number of children whereas the middle and upper classes had larger and larger families. In 1949 the Legal Aid Act gave married couples possibility of divorce so it became quite common matter.

2.3. Social Classes

Probably there would be about as much agreement that Britain in the late forties and early fifties could be divided up into a number of social classes, though there would also be much disagreement about how and where lines should be drawn. (Marwick, 34)

There were several types: working class, middle class or lower-middle class and upper-middle class, upper class or aristocracy.

As Marwick says, there were three elements that made up class as it actually was. (Marwick, 35) The first of them is the history. Second one is that “class has a very strong subjective element” (Marwick, 35). And the last element is an “inequality in modern society: in power, authority, wealth, income, job situation, material conditions, and culture and lifestyles.” (Marwick, 35)

The war had an influence on the classes and the relationships between them. The working class felt the biggest impact of the war. People managed to push their earnings up by over 50 per cent and the solidarity between them strengthened.

3. Angry Young Men

As it was already mentioned, post-war situation in Britain was difficult. The economic collapsed, people had no place where to come back and everybody was totally exhausted by all those events. And the intellectual reaction was the emergence of two famous literary groups.

3.1. The Movement

In that time, approximately in the middle 1950s, several poets reacting to the post-war neo-romantic poetry appeared. This group of writers was called the Movement. It included the most of the best-known poets such as Donal Davie, Philip Larkin, Kingsley Amis etc. Many of these authors were university teachers. The main feature of this group of writers was a satire of snobbery, they hated romantic bohemianism or modern poetry. "The Movement was the result of the sudden release of a great deal of pent-up working-class angst." (Mike Wallerman, *An Angry Decade in British Literature*)

3.2. Angry Young Men

In 1954 one of the poets of the Movement published his first novel which became a bestseller. That man was Kingsley Amis and he called the novel *Lucky Jim*. Some time before Amis' *Lucky Jim*, *Hurry on Down* was written by John Wain. His novel was as successful as *Lucky Jim*. Both novels were welcome with delight. In 1956 the Royal Court Theatre in London was open and in the same year a drama called *Look Back in Anger* by John Osborne was presented there. This drama became a fundamental work of Angry Young Men.

Angry Young Men was the group of novelists, poets and playwrights who reacted to the current situation in post-war Britain. Several of them were already mentioned but we can name others such as John Braine, who was also very important novelist of that time, Alan Sillitoe etc. Those authors reflected the social changes in post-war Britain. They dealt with changing attitudes to some aspects of life. They did not have any formulated programme. They wrote independently but they were very similar to each other in the background they came from, in the age and mainly in the issues they dealt with in their works.

The term 'Angry Young Men' was firstly used in *The Times* newspapers in May 26, 1956 by some journalist. It was not thought-out by authors themselves, they even did not like this label. As it was mentioned they had not any programme but in 1957 *Declaration*, by Tom Maschler, was published. The contributors to *Declaration* were invited to express their view on the state of our civilisation and "their role in society". (Allsop, 67) In this work there was a recommendation that the author should write for the largest reading public and deal with problems of ordinary people.

3.3. Reasons of Anger

Generally, the first works of these writers reacted to the social changes. They also paradoxically criticized the values of the Welfare State. Angry Young Men "provided an interesting commentary on aspects of social change, on educational opportunity which yet brought no real opportunity, for example." (Marwick, 82) They criticized society for its lack of understanding, upper class for its shallowness, hypocrisy, and division of people into classes.

The phrase Angry Young Men carries multiple overtones which might be listed as irreverence, stridency, impatience with tradition, vigour, vulgarity, sulky resentment against the cultivated and a hard-boiled muscling-in on culture, adventurousness, self-pity, deliberate disengagement from politics, fascist ambitions, schizophrenia, rude dislike of anything phoney or fey, a broad sense of humour but low on wit, a general intellectual nihilism, honesty, a neurotic discontent [...]. (Allsop, 18)

According to Allsop, anger is not accurate word for their feelings. He would call it dissentience – they disagree with majority sentiments and opinions (Allsop, 17). They did not much "rebel against the old order of authority and standards" (Allsop, 17) but they wanted "to refuse to vote for it." (Allsop, 17) These dissentients were mostly working-class or lower-middle-class boys who graduated at grammar schools, spent some time in uniform and then went to university.

What were they angry about? Allsop thinks it is difficult to say. It would be easier for any other decade, such as the 1920s, the 1930s, the 1940s. One of the reasons why they were angry was the struggle between capitalism and communism which could not be solved for long time. (Allsop, 28) "They are angry at having nothing

they dare to be angry about.” (Allsop, 29) In *Spectator*, Ian Hamilton wrote as a reaction to Amis’ *Lucky Jim*:

“Your average New Hero is egocentric, [...] He is also, of course, for a large part of the time an Angry Young Man – without knowing, naturally, what he is angry about.” (Allsop, 22)

3.4. New Character

This literary group had a great social value as the literature ended to be a domain of only middle and upper classes because most of writers came from working class background. And it is bright that with a ‘new type’ of authors new heroes came.

Kingsley Amis, John Wain, John Braine, John Osborne in drama, they introduced a young, disenchanted, individualistic intellectual, by different way and different measure discontent with the state of post-war British society and with role which that society assigned him or wanted to assign. This intellectual usually came from lower middle class, sometimes from working class family, and due to Butler’s Democratization Act from the year 1944 he gained university grade thereby a possibility of social rise. (Hilský, 7, translation mine)

As it was said, heroes come from working class or lower-middle-class society, they envy people from upper class that they have parents thanks to them they can do whatever they want and have whatever they only think about. We can say that heroes hate upper-class people, their snobbery and shallowness because of envy. Heroes are not much interested in political situation, they are angry mainly because they have problems and want to change their current situation and they do not know how to do it. Their problems seem to be unsolvable by themselves. Though they do not want help from anyone, they want to manage everything by own will and tactics:

to the main characteristic of new hero of novels of fifties belongs social ambivalence: Amis’ Jim Dixon, Wain’s Charles Lumley and Braine’s Joe Lampton come from lower class but in the end they get higher on the social ladder thanks to marriage with erotically attractive girl from upper class. This situation is repeated so often in Amis’, Wain’s and Braine’s novels that we can speak about plot and characteristic model. It is typical for this model that there blends erotic and social status, that erotic takes social value whilst the status of upper social class is edited, and at the same time faked, by erotic attractiveness. (Hilský,7, translation mine)

Some heroes of Angry Young Men’s works reflect authors themselves thus their works are partly autobiographical.

3.5. John Wain and John Braine

That is why this chapter provides some information about authors who wrote novels which will be dealt with in next chapters.

The first one is John Wain. He was born in 1925 and he died in 1994. He was born into family of a dentist. Wain was an English poet, critic and novelist usually considered to be a member of Movement. But he belonged also to the group of Angry Young Men. He graduated at University in Oxford and taught at Reading University and then he became a lecturer in English literature there. He wrote many poems, novels, short stories, etc. but the most of his life he wrote and reviewed for newspapers and radio. He became famous thanks to his novel *Hurry on Down* which is about young graduate of university who does not know what he wants and what to do and rejects all standards of society. And what is the similarity between hero of the novel Charles Lumley's and Wain's life? Of course, they both came from working or middle class society and graduated at university which seems to be all. But what is the same are the opinions and attitudes of Wain reflected to Charles' character.

Wain said: "... Thus, when I wrote *Hurry on Down* the main problem which had presented itself in my own existence was the young man's problem of how to adapt himself to 'life' [...]." (Allsop, 68)

His *Hurry on Down* was said by the journalists to be inventive, impulsive, funny and "brave attempt at the picaresque." (Allsop, 69)

The second of them is John Braine. He was born in the family of a corporation sewage works supervisor in 1922 in the village near Bradford and he died in 1986. He won a scholarship at Bradford school but he left it at the age of 16 and got the School Certificate at twenty-two. He changed job several times. Firstly he was a shop assistant, then worked in laboratory, after that worked in a factory, then served as a Naval telegraphist and finally became a librarian. "He began writing *Room at the Top* (1957) while recovering from TB in a sanatorium." ([http://www.jrank.org/literature/pages/3428/John-Braine-\(John-Gerard-Braine\).html](http://www.jrank.org/literature/pages/3428/John-Braine-(John-Gerard-Braine).html)) There is not much similarity in Braine's and Lampton's life except they both came from working-class background. But what they had in common were attitudes towards the post-war situation and society. Braine reflected own feelings into the character of Joe. He criticized, as other authors of Angry Young Men, hypocrisy,

snobbery and shallowness of upper-class people. And he mainly criticized that politicians promised after the war the way to the 'top' via socialism. But everybody knew that it is not possible for ordinary working-class man to get that high.

It was something about authors and now let's deal with their works. Next part of the thesis is divided into three subchapters in which those works are compared according to the particular topic.

4. Angry Young Men Characters and Their Conflicts

This chapter deals with conflicts of the main characters. As it was mentioned it focuses on three books of three different authors of the group Angry Young Men. The first one is called *Hurry on Down* and is written by John Wain. The main character of this book is Charles Lumley. Second one is written by John Braine and is called *Room at the Top*. The hero of this work is Joe Lampton. And the last book is *Lucky Jim* by Kingsley Amis. The main character is, according to the title, Jim Dixon.

Each of these characters has own conflicts. Firstly, this part deals with their conflicts with society, continuing with their inner conflicts with themselves and finally focusing on influence of these two conflicts over their friends, families and close people.

4.1. Characters' Conflicts with Society

As it was indicated in the last paragraph, each of these three characters has a kind of conflict with society. This conflict is very closely connected to the next one, which is his inner conflict and these two influence each other.

Each of the characters is different from the two others, but all of them meet lack of understanding from the society. Let's start with Joe Lampton who is the main character of the novel *Room at the Top* written by John Osborne. Joe Lampton graduated from grammar school and due to Butler's Democratization Act of the year 1944 he could graduate from university despite his origin of working class. Until this time only people from middle or upper classes could study at university because they had money and influential parents. University was a privilege of the rich. After that he became a part of British army in the World War II as most of boys of the same age did. Of course it was a duty during the war to enter the army and fight against the enemy. Men from upper classes gained higher positions. Joe lived in a small industrial town called Dufton, where his parents were killed during a bomb attack. His life dream is to be rich, have an Aston-martin, a girl from Riviera, a luxurious house and a well-paid job. It is clear that he cannot gain all these things in Dufton and it is the reason why he comes to Warley. Warley is not much bigger than Dufton but there live middle-class or upper-middle-class people who are very rich. Joe longs for property and money and knows that the quickest way how to gain it is to marry a rich girl. He is very ambitious, cynical,

innocent and wide-eyed. He exactly knows what he wants and does anything for penetrating to the upper-class society. Joe Lampton “has a single-mindedness, a beautifully brutal simplicity of purpose, that is not a characteristic of the heroes of other contemporary novels.” (Allsop, 89)

Joe Lampton has a clear plan how to achieve his goal and acts according to it. It is possible to say the same about Charles Lumley who is a hero of John Wain’s novel *Hurry on Down*. Lumley graduates from university and lives in a small town called Stotwell where he was born. Charles is attempting to find out which class he belongs to and his aim is clear: he wants to be out of the whole class structure and “to take life as it comes” (Allsop, 73). He has a plan for achieving his goal, too: he finds his place somewhere ‘down’ where he does not have to pretend anything, where he can be neutral and free. The society does not understand and ridicules him as he shows aversion against class division, snobbery and pretending. Charles changes his jobs nine times because he cannot find what is best for him. On the other hand, Jim Dixon from the novel *Lucky Jim* by Kingsley Amis is absolutely aimless and futureless. His only goal is to keep his present job as a lecturer at university and have money for cigarettes and beers. But he does not do anything for it. Jim does not make an effort to achieve his aim or to make his life standard better.

Speaking about Joe, when he comes to Warley he feels like in paradise. There are no factories, no smog, and expensive residences everywhere. He rents a room at house of Thompsons who are very friendly and kind people living in the part of the town called Top. Joe likes the place because there live the richest people of the town but Thompsons are not snobbish as most of the rich. The Thompsons live in semi-detached house and it is clear for the first sight that they have a lot of money. The interior is arranged elegantly. It is the first time when Joe has own room and he is very keen on it, it is very nice:

wallpaper vertically striped in beige and silver, a bay window extending for almost the whole length of the room with fitted cushions along it, a divan bed that looked like a divan and not like a bed with its depressing daylight intimations of sleep and sickness, two armchairs, and a dressing-table, wardrobe and writing-table all in the same pale satiny wood. On the cream-painted bookcase was a bowl of anemones and there was a fire burning in the grate, [...]. (Braine, 22)

He quickly gets used to it and when visiting his aunt for only three days at Christmas, he cannot enjoy it because he does not like it there when he has already known another standard of living. His aunt has two children and a husband so there lived five people with Joe and as the working-class family they have no money therefore their house is arranged modestly and now Joe does not like it. He thinks:

I couldn't endure the chilly bedroom with hideous wallpaper and view of mill-chimneys and middens, the bath with its peeling enamel, the scratchy blankets – my aunt and uncle were unselfish and generous and gentle, they spoke only the language of giving, but no virtue was substitute for cool smoothness of linen, the glittering cleanliness of a real bathroom, the view of Warley Moor at dawn, and the saunter along St Clair Road past the expensive houses. (Braine, 112)

In comparison to Charles, Joe becomes a bit spoiled by new world around him. Charles lives at a dormitory as many people from working class who work somewhere else than they have a permanent residence. As it was already mentioned, Charles looks for neutrality so when he finds out that his ex-schoolmate lives with his girlfriend in the garden shed, he does not hesitate and moves there to them. It is clear difference between Joe and Charles. The first man longs for luxury but the second one wants as simplest home as possible. Concerning Jim Dixon, he does not care about his living. He lives in the rent flat with other three men and does not mind it because he is phlegmatic and perhaps modest.

Going back to Joe, he becomes an accountant in the Town Hall as he is very clever and able to do his work perfectly and thoroughly. He spends his free time in the local theatre which was one of the typical free time activity of middle-class people in 1950s. This theatre is called Thalia and most of people from Warley play there or at least often come to see the performances. Joe meets here a very beautiful girl and immediately falls in love with her. Later he finds that her name is Susan Brown and she is a daughter of the richest man in the town. Now Joe realizes that he has no chance to gain the girl of this level, despite of his earlier idea of gaining a rich girl to get money and property, and in addition he meets her boyfriend Jack Wales. Joe starts to hate him a few seconds after seeing him because of noticing man's expensive clothes and a bit haughty behaviour. Joe learns that Jack is a son of another rich man who has a big company as well as Susan's father and that they are going to merge their companies. Lampton is desperate

after finding this information and begin to think about his position in the first person of plural:

we shall begin with examining Joseph Lampton. Born January 1921 at Dufton. Father John Lampton, occupation overseer. Education Dufton Grammar School. Junior Clerk, Treasurer's Department, Dufton U.D.C., 1937. Sergeant-Observer, 1940. 1943-1945, Stalag 1000, Bavaria. Present post, Senior Audit Clerk, Warley U.D.C. Salary, A.P.T. Two. Resources, £800, from accumulated R.A.F. pay, gratuity, and insurance on parents. Prospects: he might be a Treasurer of Warley one day. Shall we say a thousand a year at the age of forty if he's very fortunate ? Lampton has risen remarkably high, considering his humble beginnings, but, in our considered opinion, he has not the capacity to succeed in our sense of the word. He lacks the necessary background, the poise, the breeding : in short, he is essentially vulgar, and possesses no talents which might compensate for this drawback. (Braine, 166)

It is clear that Browns want man like Jack for their daughter because of social stereotypes that a girl from rich family should have a man at least at the same level. Jack is clever as well as Joe, handsome as well as Joe, but has 'better' breeding, money, higher position in the war and has been studying at Cambridge University. Joe is a pessimist in this case concerning Susan and hates the society for its prejudices. He has to fight against opinions of people who strictly follow unwritten rules how this or that should be done and it is very difficult for him. He firstly has to find the courage to do it and show these people that even a man from working class can get his place in the upper class if he wants and makes everything for it despite all of stereotypes.

The evidence of the idea that a woman should marry a man of higher level is showed also on the marriage of Alice and George Aisgills who are other people Joe meets in Warley. Alice comes from lower-middle class and got married with George who is rich and has big factories outside the town. Everybody, including Alice, knows that George has a mistress but his wife stays with him perhaps because of comfort although she feels to be alone. Alice and Joe become friends and often have a drink together. Once George overtakes them in the restaurant and instead of jealous scene he invites Joe to their house for a dinner. Lampton stares at their wealth and is really surprised when Alice brings many sandwiches with roast beef which Joe refuses with reason that they must cut up their ration, because in the 1950s almost everything was for ration. George explains that he has cloth and farmers have meat and so that they have much more beef. Joe envies and eats then as much as he can. In 1950s it was common that poor people

had only a little good food unlike the rich ones had much more than the quantity which was rationed to everyone.

As time goes on, Joe dates with both women, innocent Susan and erotically attractive Alice. At the beginning he keeps meeting Alice just to fulfil his sexual needs because the relationship with the younger girl is innocent, but it changes with time and he falls in love with the older woman. He is cunning so he keeps the relationship also with Susan because he wants to become a member of her family and it means to become a rich person. The author of the novel John Braine describes Joe's sexual experiences with Alice quite openly which can function very provocatively in the 1950s. One of the paragraphs speaking about their making love is following:

she pulled me down beside her. I accompanied her almost immediately into an agony of pleasure ; we sank into a different dimension from which we emerged shaking and frightened – it was as if we'd been fused together, melting into each other like amoebae but violently, like cars crashing head-on. (Braine, 198)

In that time sex was a taboo and nobody spoke about it publicly but the authors of the group Angry Young Men wrote about sexual needs and experiences quite often so it cut a dash. They wrote about it to provoke and to go against the stereotypes and excessive conservatism. The novelists achieved their goals, the public immediately paid attention to their books and was indignant by them. Concerning three novels mentioned in this thesis (*Room at the Top*, *Hurry on Down*, *Lucky Jim*) they speak about sex mainly in the first book. In the others there are notes about sex of course, but not as many. Charles, the character of *Hurry on Down*, solves another problem. He finds that friend's girlfriend is unfaithful and decides whether to say it or not. Finally, he does not tell it to his friend and does not care about it. Faithlessness was also common in 1950s and of course it was taboo to speak about it publicly so writers did it.

Let's come back to Joe who is invited to his senior Mr. Hoylake's office. The senior invites him in order to warn him of the relationship with Susan. Hoylake does not say anything directly but the point of his monologue is that Joe should end the relationship with Miss Brown because he is not good enough for her. The senior likes Joe and also his performance at work so he draws his attention to the fact that he is very clever and skilled worker, who has a big chance to be promoted and so gain more money, but the promotion depends on the counsellors and Mr Brown is one of them. So it would be better for Joe to leave Susan in order to his success. Joe expresses understanding but has

own attitude to that matter. It is again the same issue – Hoylake thinks Joe should not meet Susan anymore because he is not at her level and should find a girl from working class.

Every year there is a Civic Ball held in Warley. Joe invites there Susan but she refuses him because of Jack who is darling of her mother and it is not suitable to go to this kind of action with a low-grade man. He comes alone then and tries to participate in the conversation of Hoylake, Jack and Browns. Browns ask him difficult and greasy questions, such “Do you know -? and Surely you’ve met -? and You must have come across -?” (Braine, 181), in order to let him down but Joe answers surprisingly leisurely. In spite of this he leaves them.

In a few weeks Mr Brown invites Joe to the Conservative Club. Joe is surprised by it but accepts because he is curious how the place where the important decisions are made looks like. He thinks about it:

I felt a cold excitement. This was the place where the money grew. [...] Here was the place where decisions were taken, deals made between soup and sweet; here was the place where the right word or smile or gesture could transport one into a higher grade overnight. Here was the centre of the country I’d so long tried to conquer ; here magic worked, here the smelly swineherd became the prince who wore a clean shirt every day. (Braine, 222-223)

Joe is amazed by the place. He feels importantly there because this is the Club where the most powerful and influential people meet and Joe sits there with them now. An ordinary working-class man has no chance to get into this kind of place. First thing which Mr Brown asks Joe is if he has ever been to this Club and he answers: “This or any Conservative club, [...] My father’d turned in his grave if he could see me.” (Braine, 226) In that time, politic conviction was a matter of family as well as religion. Usually children voted the same party as their parents. According Joe’s reaction, his father probably voted Labour party so Joe does not feel very well there because he has perhaps qualms toward his dad. Mr Brown offers Joe own company on the condition he will leave Susan. Joe gets angry and convinces him that he loves her a lot and will not leave her because of money. It is just a trick, Mr Brown examines Joe if he only does not derive the benefit from Susan and is satisfied with Joe’s reaction so he gives him a permission to marry Susan. Mr Brown offers Joe also a well-paid job in his company and a luxurious company car on the condition he will leave Alice. Joe does it and gets

everything he always wanted which means he penetrates from working class to upper class although it was not common in the post-war society.

Joe's conflict with society is that he has to overcome social prejudices and on the other hand, has to overcome the lack of understanding of society. Lumley, who is the hero of John Wain's novel *Hurry on Down*, has a similar problem and meets lack of understanding from the society. As it was mentioned he does not want to be a member of any class, he wants to be different from all other people, be individual, but it is not easy in this type of society where everything is predetermined. Charles realizes that he was shaped and instructed by someone and when he makes a step out of conventions, other people feel insulted or disappointed. He decides not to behave like others expect and how it would be suitable.

After a decision to be a window-cleaner, Charles has to borrow some money from his wealthy uncle. He lends him the money with pleasant but Charles cannot say him that it is for the equipment for his new job. The uncle thinks it is for betting because if he knew that Lumley wanted to voluntarily do such a low-grade job he would not give him anything. When he cannot find another place where to clear windows he goes to the school he studied at. When Charles asks the boss for permission to clean all the windows there, he thinks the ex-student makes a fun of him and shows that his school is not able to educate people for better jobs than this one and Charles is hustled out. The boss takes it as a mere mockery.

Another day, Charles meets his ex-schoolmate Edwin Froulish who was weird and wanted to be a novelist so everybody made fun of him at university. They speak together and Charles finds that Froulish still wants to be a novelist and lives with his girlfriend in the garden shed. Lumley comes to a conclusion that their shed could be good not only for his equipment:

but there was something else more important: an escape that seemed to be offering itself from the problem of environment, of the clash of outlook and status. He, who had rejected and been rejected by both the class of his origin and the life of the 'worker', might find the classless setting of his dreams in sharing a roof with a neurotic sham artist and a trousered tart. (Wain, 43)

He moves there then and pays rent with Betty (a girlfriend of Froulish) because the novelist has no money due to writing a book all his life. Charles is content that he finds the place for living where he is totally neutral, nobody takes care of him and his

attitudes. He absolutely does not mind the level of his new home in contrary to Joe who wants everything to be the best – home, job, car, woman, etc.

One day Lumley wants to try being a member of upper class, goes to the Oak Lounge, an expensive restaurant, buys expensive cigarettes and drink, wearing his best clothes.

Dressed once more in the uniform of the class he had renounced, he surveyed himself critically in Betty's looking-glass. [...] A cheap haircut had left him with an ugly match-stick-length crop, but that was the only class badge he was wearing, and it was not a conspicuous one. (Wain, 73)

The clothes were the most visible mark of what class one belonged to. Charles never wears himself according to the conventions. It is one of the reasons why his ex-girlfriend's sister Edith and brother-in-law Robert do not like him. "If he had worn a uniform of a prosperous middle-class tradesman, like Robert, they would have approved of him." (Wain, 16) Although Charles has his best clothes in the Grandhotel's restaurant the waiter does not hurry up with drink and meal. When drinking sherry a couple enters the room. They have luxurious suit and dress and the waiter services them as quickly as he can. Charles falls in love with that woman at first sight and is sad because of knowing she is another category and thus unreachable for him. And now he has another reason why to hate a society and its stereotypes. He loves her so much that he thinks how to earn more money to be more acceptable for such a girl.

After some time, Charles meets Arthur Blearney who introduces him to the couple Charles saw in the Oak Lounge, Mr. Roderick and Veronica, and invites all of them to the party. That evening Lumley meets different types of people but does not like any of them. He speaks to Veronica and when telling her that his last job was a window-cleaner, one of the men comes and shouts at others that Charles is telling a joke about a window-cleaner. When he admits doing this job, people make fun of him and preach him down. He gets angry and decides to go. It is the evidence how the society disdains people who do perhaps low-grade but useful work. People in that time thought that everybody should do a job according his education and breeding. Therefore the society at Blearney's does not understand why Charles voluntarily does such a bad job. Fortunately, Veronica does not mind that and dates with Charles regularly.

Thinking where to gain more money, Lumley accidently finds out the company called Export Express Bureau which supplies drivers to manufactures and except this,

the drivers help the black trading with drugs. He comes to a conclusion that it is the best way how to quickly gain quite a lot of money and starts to work for the firm. One day the delivery of drugs goes wrong. Charles and his boss steal the car and crash. When Charles wakes up lying in the hospital, he slowly remembers what happened. After recovering he cannot imagine going out and trying to assimilate the world where he did not succeed twice. Therefore he becomes an orderly in the hospital:

[...] he was tolerated and kept busy on humble tasks; which suited him perfectly. Anonymity, obscurity, a relief from strain, the situation was exactly what he had prescribed for himself. Finally, he found with gratitude that hospital life, being so grotesquely unlike anything in the world outside, did not admit of any of the usual social classifications. It was not considered strange that he should be working at a manual occupation and still sounding his aitches. (Wain, 165)

Charles is happy in the hospital because he gets good tasks, nobody knows him, nobody finds what his origin is and why he does this job and nobody lets him down because of his work, attitudes, conviction. Charles is not denounced by anyone because everybody cares about himself in this kind of environment. Lumley can imagine working there for the rest of his life. Everything he wants is neutrality which he has as an orderly. Unlike Joe who does his best for not doing such a low-grade working-class job but gaining as good position as possible. Joe wants to run from the 'down' to the 'top' and he manages it due to his foxiness.

In the hospital Charles meets his ex-schoolmate who invites him to the party. A short while after coming, Charles notices a man and recognizes him:

his ears picked up a familiar braying noise, and a broad back that had been turned towards him was abruptly reversed, becoming a broad chest. The same immature, arrogant face, the same cold eyes behind glasses. It was Burge, one of the medical set who had been at College with him and possibly the only one of his contemporaries for whom he had ever felt a really vivid dislike. (Wain, 170)

This man is now ripping up their ex-schoolmate back and Charles decides to stand up for the absent and the argument starts. They insult each other and all the company listens to them.

Burge took a step forward. [...] 'And there's another thing,' he said, raising his voice, when his challenge was received in silence. 'Just what the bloody hell do you think you're playing at, Lumley, eh? They tell me you've taken a job at the hospital as an orderly. Carrying buckets about and emptying bedpans. What the bloody hell's the big idea? [...] 'Do I understand, Burge,' he said, with a

hint of a choke in his voice, 'that you are interfering with my right, the absolute right of a citizen, to do just whatever work I may choose?' [...] 'Yes, you bloody well do understand it,' he cried. 'That sort of work ought to be done by people who are born to it. You have some sort of education, some sort of upbringing, though I must say you don't bloody well behave like it. You ought to have taken on some decent job, the sort of thing you were brought up and educated to do, and leave this bloody slop-emptying to people who were brought up and educated for slop-emptying.' [...] Burge had expressed one of the prime articles of all their faith. (Wain, 173-174)

This quarrel is the evidence how people from upper-class disdain with those ones from working class. They also cannot appreciate the important manual work that these people do. Burge clearly signifies that men who were born in middle or upper-class family and were bred there should behave according to it. They should have a good job which appertain to them and should not voluntarily score off themselves by doing such a bad, low-grade job. The society supposes the one born to upper-class couple automatically wishes to get as good position as possible and follows the steps of his parent. Nobody wants to voluntarily descend to the lower class or to the absolute bottom of the class structure. So the quarrel ends by throwing Charles out. This is the next evidence how the society treats with people who decides individually about their lives and jobs. And it is the reason why Charles wants to be different. He wants not to be the same as these people who behave arrogantly to others who do not follow the stereotypes.

When working as an orderly, Charles meets a multimillionaire who lies in the hospital. His name is Bracewight and he offers Lumley a job as his personal driver which Lumley accepts because of having a nice relationship with him:

Charles liked him; he had the faint, but genuine, appeal of the harmless and ordinary character. He, on his part, seemed to find in Charles his one ray of hope. The doctors overawed him, the nurses domineered him, the charwomen were too large and healthy for his peace of mind, and Charles fell into an intermediate category. He asked Charles his name, and addressed him punctiliously as 'Mr' Lumley, confiding in him at every stage of his circuitous road to recovery. (Wain, 169)

During working at Mr Bracewight, Charles meets George Hutchins, his ex-schoolmate, who comes to the Bracewights' house to help them with their son. Lumley goes for him to the station and when Geroge finds what his familiar does, he shows feeling sorry for Charles' being 'down on his luck'. Lumley gets angry with George because he is another person who thinks that Lumley is jitney because of doing such a

work. After some time, Lumley realizes that this world is not for him and decides to leave his job.

He belonged with Froulish thumping his typewriter in a derelict loft, with Dogson getting himself murdered in the quest for a story, even with earn serving a prison sentence or Mr Blearney getting up dreary leg-shows in the provinces. The people he belonged with were ill, disgusting, unsuccessful, comic, but still alive, still generating some kind of human force. This expensive bucolic setting had offered nothing more than an escape down a blind alley, and it had taken a crack-brained mechanic, a nymphomaniac, and a deranged careerist to show him that. (Wain,223)

Charles leaves his current job because he does not feel well in the society of these people. He likes Mr Braceweight but concerning Hutchins, Lumley cannot abide him. George is arrogant and shows that he is something more than Charles. Charles feels that he is closer to people who have some problems. He understands with Froulish, who manages nothing and is totally poor, Dogson, who was killed during black trading with drugs, or Mr Blearney, who seems to be normal. He does not judge Charles for what he does, in contrary, he shows understanding and helps him. After leaving his last job, Charles becomes a bouncer in Mr Blearney's night club but it bores him so he accepts the offer to be a 'joke collector' as Froulish did. He earns quite a lot of money with fixed contract and is satisfied.

As mentioned, Joe's major clash with society is that it is full of prejudices and stereotypes so he has to use a woman to get higher on the social ladder and it is not so easy for anybody. Therefore if somebody in the 1950s had not enough courage to be a bit cunning, he could not gain a better position in the society. Charles' conflict with society is that it is full of conventions and if somebody takes another way than one which is given by already mentioned stereotypes, he is out-casted from the society. Lumley does not mind a lot that he is an outcast, on the contrary he is content that he is not one of the people who behave arrogantly to the others. Jim Dixon, the main character of Kingsley Amis' novel *Lucky Jim*, has a similar problem. He hates upper-class people because he envies them their money and success and he wants to be like them but he does nothing for it in contrary to Joe. And what also annoys him is a class division which was the topic number one in the 1950s.

Jim is a junior lecturer at university who is in a probationary year's engagement. His senior is Neddy Welch who is, according to Jim, a bit crazy, but Jim must cringe to him

because the decision whether to sign firm contract or not depends mainly on him. He does anything Welch wants even it is stupid. Dixon's only aim is to keep this job as easily as possible. Contrary to Joe, he does not want the most, he wants only money for cigarettes and beer, that is all. He would be happy if he gets higher on the social ladder but does nothing for it. His character can be described like that:

[...] Dixon is craven, dishonest, toadying, oafish, shifty, temporising, philistine, crude and juvenile – yet that is not the man who emerges from the pages of the book. Despite his flaws and his foolishness, Lucky Jim is likeable, good-hearted and sympathetic, and you know that he is essentially a decent chap. (Allsop, 59)

Dixon has little respect to work and authorities. He is angry that he cannot say anything and cannot choose anything, just has to listen to orders. And he has own way how to face it up:

he has a battery of mocking funny faces – his Eskimo, crazy peasant, Evelyn Waugh, sex life in Ancient Rome, Edith Sitwell, lemon-sucking and ape faces – with which he expresses his true feelings about situations in which he has to pretend interest or agreement, and behind his back his hands twist into obscene gestures while he talks to the people upon whose favours he depends for a living. (Allsop, 55)

As it was mentioned, Jim hates orders from authorities. He has to control himself not to say anything bad because it would cause his sacking from work and perhaps some more consequences. He pretends agreement and understanding but in his mind he is totally angry so he uses mentioned grimaces to let the speaker down and make fun of him behind his back. Jim hates that he cannot express his opinions and attitudes because his life depends on these arrogant people who always order him what to do and can manipulate with him as they like.

As these three characters have conflicts with society, which were mentioned and analysed, these influence their states of mind and they have inner problems to solve.

4.2. Characters' Inner Conflicts

This chapter deals with mentioned inner conflicts of the characters. Joe's most important matter to think about is whether to prefer money to love or not. Charles firstly solves the problem how to adapt the world around him, but finally he makes an effort to

be at full fart different from it. Jim's biggest problem is how to keep the job at university and not to behave badly to people he hates.

As it was already mentioned, Joe Lampton is a young, ambitious man who wants to be higher on the social ladder, to have an Aston-Martin, a rich girl and a lot of money. He knows that the easiest and the quickest way how to gain these things is to marry a girl from a rich upper-class family. Joe, in contrary to Charles or Jim, has no fear to use a woman and all the other unsuitable 'weapons' to gain his dream.

He exactly knows what he wants and when seeing Susan Brown and finding whose daughter she is, he starts to act. Joe also learns that Susan is supposed to marry Jack Wales and envies him because of his wealth and better position. Lampton divides the society into several grades according to the income and he belongs to the grade seven or eight while Susan with Jack into the grade one or two. So he tries to think out how to beat Jack Wales and gain Susan with all her money. Situation gets complicated when Joe meets Alice Aisgill. She is a woman about thirty-five, not that beautiful as Susan, but really nice. Joe and Alice become friends and understand each other very well.

Joe starts his relationship with Susan who is naïve, innocent and trying to keep in secret their meeting because of her parents. They imagine somebody else for their daughter, somebody with money and property, somebody like Jack Wales. Joe also keeps meeting Alice and their friendship starts to be closer than one of friends. They make love and borrow the flat from Alice's friend Elspeth for it. Lampton then has two relationships. The one with Susan is innocent and maintained because of wealth, at the beginning perhaps because of love, and that one with Alice is sexual but only at the beginning. Alice tells him: "please don't fall in love with me, Joe. We will be friends, won't we? Loving friends?" (Braine, 98) But things get complicated and they fall in love with each other.

Meanwhile Joe takes Susan to the theatre, goes with her on the trips and does not really mind that she does not want to make love with him because he has this pleasure somewhere else. It was surely common also in the 1950s society that man tricks his wife but it was kept in secret because it was a taboo and Braine writes about it very openly.

Lampton leaves Alice because of finding out that she made a nude photo but still misses her and thinks about his own past and present:

looking back, I see myself as being near the verge of insanity. I couldn't feel like that now; there is, as it were, a transparent barrier between myself and strong emotion. I feel what is correct for me to feel; I go through the necessary motions. But I cannot delude myself that I care. I wouldn't say that I was dead; simply that I had begun to die. I have realized, you might say, that I have, at the most, only another sixty years to live. I'm not actively unhappy and I'm not afraid of death, but I'm not alive in the way that I was that evening I quarrelled with Alice. I look back at that raw young man sitting miserable in the pub with a feeling of genuine regret ; I wouldn't, even if I could, change places with him, but he was indisputably a better person than the smooth character I am now, after ten years of getting almost everything that I ever wanted. I know the name he'd give me : the Successful Zombie. (Braine, 139-140)

Joe thinks about his life several years ago and compares it to the life he lives now. He says that he was much better and more honest person than he is now but poor and discontent with his working-class job. Joe realizes that he changes his pure mind and honesty for luxury, money and success. He is not proud of himself but is content that he is successfully gaining the things he always wanted such as a good position in the upper-class society, an expensive car and a beautiful girl from rich family. Joe seems to be empty, without any feelings after the split up with Alice. He feels real love to her and is indescribably happy next to her so they finally start their relationship for the second time but some while after that Susan and Joe meet again and Mr Brown invites Joe to tea. He wants to look into his purposes and finally finds out that Lampton really loves his daughter who is now pregnant. Brown offers him a well-paid job in his company, a company car and marriage with Susan. Joe gains everything he wants. But there is a problem and it is the condition to immediately end the relationship with Alice.

Joe tries to solve his inner conflict whether to choose love or money. When being with Alice he is happy, but their situation would be complicated as Joe's friend Charles said:

a man of twenty-six can marry a girl of sixteen, [...]. The only reaction will be the one of envy. Look at all these society weddings : grooms of thirty and thirty-five and brides of nineteen and under. And all these elderly film stars buy dewy-eyed young brides, too. Sometimes a man marries an older woman for her money – people call him nasty names, but as long as he's got the money why should he care? In our class we marry women of our own age, which I suppose is the most decent arrangement. But you want to make the worst of both worlds. You want to marry an older woman who hasn't any money. It would be bad enough if she were unmarried ; but in addition to everything else you'll be dragged through the midden of the Divorce Courts. (213-214)

Charles reminds Joe the stereotypes of the society and thinks that it would be better to follow them. As it was already mentioned, in the post-war society it was common that elderly men married very young women, maybe girls. Marriage of a young man and an older woman was acceptable only in the case that woman is wealthy. The only reaction of others is envy. Joe wants to do something completely crazy and it is to marry woman who has no money and is much older so the wedding can be a social suicide, regardless the fact that Alice is married. Charles recommends Joe to be with Susan because he would have everything he longs for. Finally Joe shows his hypocrisy and ends the relationship with Alice as Mr Brown asked for.

The next day he finds that Alice is dead. After their split up, she drunk a lot, drove too fast and had an accident, she died in the hospital. First Joe's reaction is cold, he goes to the pub and slowly realizes what happened. He puts the guilt on Geroge, Alice's husband who has a mistress and did not care about his wife. He just tried to exorcize the qualms of conscience but unsuccessfully. Joe gained a rich and beautiful girl, a luxurious car, a well-paid job in the biggest company in the town, but he lost his self-esteem and freedom. He will never forget Alice, who was his life love, and be happy again.

He looks at a photo from the time he came to Warley before several years:

I found a photo of myself taken shortly after I came to live at Warley. [...] For my face is, not innocent exactly, but *unused*. I mean unused by sex, by money, by making friends and influencing people, hardly touched by any of the muck one's forced to wade through to get what one wants. (Braine, 18)

Joe realizes what he lost and caused so now he blames himself of all the things that happened because of his ambitions, insatiability and hypocrisy. He gains the property, the rich woman and very good position in the big company but now he feels it is not all. He is sure that he will never be happy again and never stop to blame himself of Alice's death.

Charles Lumley from the novel *Hurry on Down* on the other hand has a different problem. He does not have to think what to choose, whether love or money, he thinks about where he belongs to. When asked about his future, he answers,

'sorry,' [...] 'but I'm not making major decisions just now. One thing at a time, you know. At the moment I'm working for an examination – and,' he would add pompously, 'trying to live like a normal human being at the same time. When all this comes to an end, I'll turn my attention to the problem of earning

a living, without trying to isolate it from all the other big problems.' It had all been very comforting. (Wain, 10)

It is evident that Charles has absolutely no idea about what to do. He makes an excuse by learning for exams but in fact he is lazy to think about his life. Charles does not want to participate in the world where everybody is manipulated by stereotypes and prejudices. He wants to be neutral and individual but does not know how to do it. It is the reason why he is not able to answer the question about his future. He simply does not know what he wants at the beginning of his story. After some time, his aim becomes more and more obvious and it is not to follow stereotypes but live the life by own way. He gets this idea when sitting in the local pub in his native town:

it was obvious, even to a mind dulled, like his, by exhaustion and disappointment, why he was getting nowhere. The establishment, or at any rate this particular room of it, was predominantly working class in atmosphere; consequently it was peopled by raw, angular personalities who had been encouraged by life to develop their sharp edges. His sharp edges, on the other hand, had been systematically blunted by his upbringing and education. From the nursery onwards, he had been taught to modulate the natural loudness of his voice, to efface himself in every possible way, to defer the others. And this was the result! (Wain, 25)

Charles learns that his nice upbringing is for nothing in the working-class society. As it was mentioned he was directed to be nice to other people, not to raise his voice, not to be violent and rude. But the result of all of this is that he is not able even to order a drink in the local pub. Charles gets angry with it and decides then not to follow the way other people adjudged him. In the post-war society a man had to have courage to get what he wanted. It was hard period for living and people from lower class who could not fight for their rights and positions were neglected and nobody cared about them. This finding is quite shocking for Charles who was bred in absolutely opposite way than the one he must now follow. So he decides to try manual work like a window-cleaning to get sharper edges and thanks to it the chance to have the same possibilities and strength as those people in the bar.

When sitting in the Oak Lounge trying to be a member of upper class, he notices a girl entering there and falls in love at first sight with her. He is surprised by himself because he always considered it as a mark of immaturity and a kind of irrational and romantic obsessions. The group Angry Young Men was a reaction to romanticism and its ideals and the hero proved the evidence of it. Charles cannot stop to think of her and

tries to find out the way how to earn much money to be as good as possible for this kind of girl.

As mentioned several times Charles changed his job nine times. Finally he becomes a 'joke collector' and gets good wage. He still meets Veronica and is satisfied with it. At the end of Charles's story, Mr Blearney comes to see him and starts their conversation:

'you never wanted to get into it because it hadn't got what you wanted.' 'And what's your idea of what I want?' [...] 'Neutrality,' said Mr Blearney calmly and without pausing to take thought. [...] Charles was humbled. The man understood him perfectly. His very choice of a word was absolutely right. (Wain, 248)

This is the very end of the story when Charles is finally content with his job, with his position. It is the time when Charles finds what he was looking for quite long time. He finds neutrality and Mr Blearney is the only person who understands him, supposes him and knew from the first time he saw Charles what this man wants.

In comparison to Joe and Charles, Jim Dixon from *Lucky Jim* is annoyed by another different thing and it is that he cannot oppose the authorities and people from upper class. Jim could study a university thanks to the Educational Act in 1944 which stated that also working class people can study there. After graduating he becomes a lecturer at another university teaching medieval history which he is not absolutely interested in. It was quite often that fresh graduates got the job as teachers at other universities in the 1950s. Dixon is very bored with his job but needs it. He is lazy to do anything more complicated and considers this job as something easy and comfortable. But he is in probationary year's engagement and has to impress not to be sacked until the end of the semester. The man who is responsible for his staying or sacking is Neddy Welch and as Jim's economic situation is hard and his character too convenient, he cringes the head of the department Neddy although he does not think nicely about him.

Dixon accepts Neddy's invitation to his house to the 'arty get-together' weekend although he thinks that people who do arts are effeminate. He meets there Christine and Bertrand (Neddy's son and his girlfriend) and does not like them because of their social belonging and luck. Jim envies Bertrand being a painter because he can afford it thanks to his parents and Jim wishes having also such parents who would support him in this way. But in the 1950s it was impossible for working-class parents to help their children

to become a part of upper-class. Usually working-class children had working-class parents. Bertrand and his mother keep reminding Jim his social status by unsuitable remarks or gestures and he gets annoyed by them.

Dixon is not interested in his job but he should lead a course following semester and write the syllabus as soon as possible to students can think about it. But he is irresponsible and lazy and does not anything for it as he does not know whether he will be there or not.

Except Jim is lazy and comfortable, he is also sarcastic, nervous and sometimes aggressive and impulsive especially while having conflict with authorities who he cannot oppose to. His attitude to surrounding is defiant but candid.

When Dixon meets Christine at Welches, he falls in love with her, but knows that he cannot succeed at this kind of girl. But finally they start to meet and Bertrand wants to revenge for it and reminds Jim where he belongs to and that such a girl can belong only to him because he is at her level. He says:

when I see something I want, I go for it. I don't allow people of your sort to stand in my way. That's what you're leaving out of account. I'm having Christine because it's my right. (Amis, 208)

Dixon shows also his positive qualities and one of them is honesty. He knows about the sexual relationship between Carol Goldsmith and Bertrand, but does not say anything not to hurt Christine despite it could be his occasion how to get rid of Bertrand. Bertrand only derives benefit from Christine because he wants to act in a capacity of her uncle's company.

Jim meets her uncle Gore-Urquhart at the ball and does not try to impress him. But finally he finds that Mr Gore-Urquhart and Christine like him because he does not show anxieties of gaining the higher social status. He just gains their favour thanks to being himself and not pretending anything.

Dixon is finally sacked from university and desperate of his situation. But Mr Gore-Urquhart offers him the job which Bertrand wanted, Jim accepts it without hesitation and following week he moves to London which was his dream although he never did anything for it. Another surprise coming a day after that and it is breaking up of Christine and Bertrand. Finally Jim is very lucky because he gains a great job and a woman of his dreams without any effort. And after all these events, he can say to Welches what he thinks about them and sneers at their faces.

Lampton, Lumley and Dixon have different inner conflicts and two of these solve them well. Lumley finds his position in the society and gains Veronica, a girl of his dreams, and becomes happy. Dixon gets his dreamy job and upper-class woman and becomes happy too. But Lampton, who gets all he always wanted – penetration to the upper class, a well-paid job and a wealthy, beautiful girl – will never be happy because he loses his real love and honesty.

4.3. Influence of Characters' Inner Conflicts over Their Friends and Family

It is obvious that if someone has problems, which he cannot solve, it influences his friends, family and other people around him.

As it was already mentioned several times, Lampton starts relationships with Susan and Alice. Firstly, he falls in love with Susan and wants Alice only for sex and understanding, finally he falls in love with Alice but decides to be with Susan because of her wealth to get higher on the social ladder.

Susan is very young, beautiful, innocent and naive girl who falls in love with Joe after a few meetings. Sometimes she behaves like a child but she is clever and her language is at a high level. They go to the theatre, to the trips and spend some days in the week together, but she does not want her parents to know it because they want a better man for her. She behaves normally and does not speak arrogantly therefore everybody likes her. It is typical that people from upper class behave arrogantly to the others and almost all their stories are only boasting.

Susan loves Joe very much but he is bored with their relationship and compares his two women in his mind starting with Susan:

she held me tightly as we kissed, and I thought of the difference between her and Alice. Alice held me tightly too, but she was fully aware of my body against hers ; Susan held me tightly out of a kind of childish abandon. Her embrace was clumsy like a bad dancer's. (Braine, 152)

Joe prefers passion to this kind of cold behaviour which is similar to a child's one. He likes Alice more than Susan because she is so passionate and natural in contrary to Susan who controls herself not to do anything unsuitable. Joe is proud of himself that he managed to manipulate with Susan and she is now totally dedicated to him, he thinks:

I've got her, [...] she's mine and I can do what I like with her. I've beaten that bastard Wales. I'll marry her if I have to put her in the family way to do it. I'll make her daddy give me a damned good job. I'll never count pennies again. And, every now and again, sharp as toothache, the loneliness, the torment of needing the one person I didn't want to need – those were my thoughts. (Braine, 154)

Joe is happy that he manages to get Susan where he wants to get her. She is totally dedicated to him and able to do anything for him. Joe is sure that Susan will marry him and plans his future with money, well-paid job in her father's company. He is proud of himself that he took over Susan to Jack. When finding Joe has a relationship with Alice, Susan leaves the country. She is very sad and disappointed but Joe does not mind her feelings, he is only afraid of losing her wealth and his new potential position.

Meanwhile Joe spends time with Alice and loves her very much but when Susan comes, they start their relationship again and Alice gets afraid of it because she wants to spend the rest of her life with Joe. But he promises Mr Brown who offers him perfect position in their upper-class society which Joe has been longing for almost whole his life that he leaves Alice. Neither Susan nor Mr Brown sees that Joe pretends love because of money. Susan is pregnant and very happy that they will have a baby and a content life.

Joe still meets Alice and she gains her self-consciousness back with him and feels sexy again in her age. She is indescribably happy with him and wants to spend a rest of her life with him.

He feels the same but keeps on meeting both women. Alice knows about Susan and Joe thinks about the current situation:

it seems surprising now that I should have got away with it for so long. Alice knew that I was going about with Susan ; but she didn't to outward appearances let it bother her. [...] She was sure that Susan wouldn't marry me, and she was sure that she could hold me. She wasn't going to waste her strength in fits of jealousy ; she would simply wait for the inevitable break-up. It happened rather differently than she had anticipated, however. (Braine, 189)

Alice knows how the society functions so she is sure that Susan will leave Joe because of her social status and mainly because of her parents who want someone better for their daughter. Alice never saw that young beautiful rich girl got married to poor lower-class man therefore she has no doubt that Joe will stay with her. Although he loves Alice that much, he decides to end their relationship on behalf of his own success. And after their

split up, she killed herself in the car crash. Joe blames himself: 'I murdered Alice,' I said, and began to cry. [...] 'Oh God,' I said, 'I did kill her. I wasn't there, but I killed her.' (Braine, 257-258) Joe realizes that Alice's death is the result of his hypocrisy, selfishness and ambitions.

It is caused by Joe's inner conflict whether to choose money or love. He will never put up with it. In this case, the influence of hero's inner conflict has a fatal consequence.

Concerning Charles Lumley, there are not many people who can be affected by his problems. He meets a few people, but they have not a close relationship with him so they are not influenced by him.

The person, who strongly felt Charles' irresolution and finding himself, was his ex-girlfriend who he left alone without saying a word. But that is all what is said about her in the book. Another person Charles meets is Edwin Froulish, his ex-schoolmate. They live together in the shed, but are not interested in each other a lot. Froulish absolutely does not know what Charles feels and vice versa.

But there is a man who Charles trusts and they like each other. His name is Arthur Blearney and it is better to say that Blearney influences Charles not vice versa. He tries to help him and gives him advice for life and what is the most important, he understands him.

Another man Charles meets is Mr Braceweight. They meet at hospital and he offers Charles a job as a personal driver. Braceweight likes Lumley from the first time and his favour lasts until his departure for a holiday when his son crashes in the car and Charles takes the blame on himself. It would not be such a problem if somebody would not have stolen Braceweight's expensive figure from the bedroom and put the blame on Charles. Mr Braceweight is then disappointed by him and Charles feels blue because of it.

The person who stole the figure was Geroge Hutchins. He works for Mr Braceweight, too, as a tutor for his son. They hate each other with Charles, they did so at the university yet. Hutchins was always very obsequious and disdained Charles because he was not as ambitious as Hutchins was. And now he is still the same. They keep doing the dirty on each other and the figure was one of George's spites.

There are two women who are influenced by Charles' problems. The first one is Veronica. She is young, beautiful girl who pretends being a niece of Mr Roderick, a wealthy man who travels a lot. Charles falls in love with her, but knows he cannot gain

her attention as she comes from upper-class. To his surprise, she starts to meet him and they keep on doing it until the time Charles has a car accident. After that, he knows from Mr Roderick that Veronica is his lover not a niece and warn him to leave her alone. From this time until the end of the story, there are no remarks what Veronica does, but at the end, she comes to Charles and wants to be with him. She changes a wealthy man for ordinary man from lower class.

The second woman is Rosa. She is a nurse and Charles meets her in the hospital when he works there as an orderly. They fall in love with each other. They are both satisfied and Charles decides to marry her. Therefore he firstly refuses the offer of Mr Braceweight to work for him. But once, sitting in the pub, he realizes that he does not want to be with Rosa, with Veronica, with anybody. And he accepts then a job at Mr Braceweight. Rosa gets very sad and disappointed, she does not understand and cannot put up with it:

‘you sinned against me,’ her expression and stance told him. ‘You injured me in the one way that can never be forgiven. Because, ultimately, you were committing the one great offence against a fellow-creature : you tried to use me. Not to give, not to combine, but to use me.’ (Wain, 196)

The influence of Charles’ conflict with himself is not that serious, but again he hurts a woman because he needs to be alone and think about his life. Jim Dixon also hurts a woman, but not because of not wanting anybody, but mainly because his phlegmatic attitude toward her.

Jim has a friendship with Margaret who is a lecturer as well as he is. Jim likes her, but thinks about her that she is labile and hysterical which is a truth. She has stronger feelings than Jim and she tried to commit suicide only to arouse public notice. And it helps, Dixon behaves well to help her, but she stills whimpers and complains. Margaret comes from upper-middle class unlike Joe but she is full of stereotypes and wants him to pay for her every time because a man should pay for woman despite of the fact he has less money than the woman. She is jealous and wants Jim for herself, but does not want to sleep with him. When she finds that he meets with Christine, she makes a hysteric scene, but it is for nothing. Finally, she gets calm and expresses understanding.

Another woman Jim meets is Christina who is a girlfriend of Bertrand. She does not love him and know that he does not love her, too. Jim sees that he only derives benefit from her to gain the job at her uncle’s company and Jim tells her that Bertrand is very

selfish and does not care about her at all. Christine comes from upper class so she does not want Jim to pay for anything. She has a sense of humour in contrast to Margaret, she is tasty in contrast to Margaret and mainly she is not hysterical. Jim falls in love with her because of her character, not for her money and it is perhaps the reason why she wants him – he behaves naturally and does not show any effort to penetrate to upper class. Jim opens her eyes, she leaves Bertrand and decides to be with himself.

Some people of that mentioned get sad and some become happy because of heroes' conflict and it is common that one's problems influence familiar and it must end like this or like that.

Joe, Charles and Jim more or less solve their problems in a different way and take a hindsight from their experience. All these characters are different from each other but have similar qualities and attitudes to the post-war society as they are the characters thought out by the authors of the group Angry Young Men.

5. Conclusion

To conclude this thesis, the aim of it is to analyse in detail chosen books of Angry Young Men with an emphasis on the influence of social context of the 1950s over the works. It is done through a theoretical background given in the second chapter of this paper.

The theoretical part outlines the reasons of an occurrence of the group Angry Young men. This assembly of writers emerged as a reaction to the post-war political situation and social changes and these are among others the matters the theoretical part deals with. Referring to particular resources there is mentioned that a new policy was brought by politicians in the 1950s. The government introduced the policy called 'Welfare State' as an opposite to Hitler's policy of 'Warfare State'. The political situation after the war influenced most of spheres of life so that many social changes occurred. People's opinions to them were different. Some of men who did not like the changes founded groups expressing their disagreement publicly.

One of them was The Movement which was the group of poets writing about the negatives of the Welfare State. More information about this assembly could be found in the chapter two of the theoretical part. Furthermore, this chapter includes information about perhaps the most important group of authors reacting to the bad political situation of the 1950s. It is called Angry Young Men and its members wrote about the cons of the new policy. The authors of that group did not have any common programme, they wrote independently but on the same topic. In this chapter there are explained the reasons of their anger, a new type of character that they created and some personal data of three authors whose books are talking about in the practical part. These are: John Braine – *Room at the Top*, John Wain – *Hurry on Down*, Kingsley Amis – *Lucky Jim*.

As it was already mentioned the practical part is divided into three subchapters and they give concrete examples of how the changes after the war influenced people's lives. This is showed on the life situations of the characters of mentioned books. These are: Joe Lampton, Charles Lumley and Jim Dixon. The first subchapter deals with characters' conflicts with society, it concerns matters like job, money, social status. It is interesting to see that both Joe and Charles want totally different things but their attitude towards gaining them is similar. Both have very coherent plans and follow them step by step. The heroes' attitudes are compared between each other and among others they are

compared also to the situations and opinions of Jim Dixon who is the main character of *Lucky Jim* written by Kingsley Amis. It is done so to show the difference or similarity between the two famous novels from the 1950s and perhaps the most known one. It is outlined in this chapter that in contrary to Joe and Charles, Jim is absolutely aimless, futureless and does nothing for getting better position in the society.

Next chapter focuses on heroes' inner conflicts which means the dilemmas they have. Concerning Joe it his irresolution whether to choose money or love. Finally, he chooses money and success and it results in a death of his real love. Speaking about Charles, he is not able to find where he belongs to. He longs for neutrality and anonymity which he finds after the long way. In comparison to Jim Dixon, he has to solve the only problem which is how to keep himself in his current job. Jim has not any ambitions so he does not have to solve a problem of preferences.

In the last subchapter there is indicated how their own clashes influences other people around them. When starting with Joe, his decision to prefer wealth to love causes the death of his lover. He hurts her so much that she kills herself while driving drunk. This the biggest influence of hero's choice over his familiars. This chapter obviously focuses also on the fact how Charles' and Jim's inner conflicts influence the others. And it was found that in comparison to Joe, Charles' and Jim's problems do not seriously influence the people around them.

The concrete examples of the heroes' clashes they have to solve are the evidence of the common problems of ordinary people in the 1950s. The authors wanted to point out the negatives of a new policy with an emphasis on the lives of lower- or middle-class citizens and this paper provides particular evidences of it.

6. Resumé

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá konkrétními díly Johna Brainea a Johna Waina, jenž se řadili to skupiny tzv. Rozhněvaných mladých mužů. Tato skupina vznikla v padesátých letech devatenáctého století jako reakce na poválečnou politickou situaci a s ní spojené společenské změny. Hlavním cílem této práce je vypracovat detailní analýzu vybraných textů s důrazem na vliv tehdejšího společenského kontextu na povahu těchto děl. Metodologicky je práce založená na knize nazvané *The Angry Decade* („Rozhněvané desetiletí“) napsané Kennethem Allsopem. Zmíněná publikace se podrobně zabývá společenskou situací padesátých let, ale hlavně reakcí literárních umělců na ni.

Práce začíná úvodem do tématu a stručným popisem jejího obsahu. Dále je pomyslně rozdělena do dvou hlavních částí, a to části teoretické a praktické. Teoretická část slouží k tomu, aby si čtenář vytvořil představu o životě v poválečné Anglii, jenž bude analyzován na konkrétních případech v praktické části práce. Teoretická část zahrnuje dvě hlavní kapitoly. První z nich je nazvaná „Poválečná Británie“ a zabývá se tématy jako je politická situace v padesátých letech, nově zavedenou politikou nazvanou „Stát blahobytu“ a také sociálními změnami.

Po válce byla celá Evropa vyčerpaná a lidé byli velmi pesimističtí ke své budoucnosti, nevěřili, že se ještě někdy budou mít lépe. V roce 1945 se konaly volby, které vyhrála Dělnická strana. Ta nastolila novou politiku nazvanou „Stát blahobytu“. Tato politika měla být jasným protikladem k Hitlerově politice válčení a teroru. Padesátá léta byla obdobím optimismu, politici tvrdili, že se lidé nikdy neměli lépe. Přesto se však našly hlasy, kterým se nový politický postoj nelíbil, a někteří z nich se nebáli projevit svůj nesouhlas veřejně.

„Stát blahobytu“ se zaměřil na několik problémů, které chtěl vyřešit. Prvním z nich byla sociální jistota, které se lidem v těžkých životních situacích nedostávalo. Další z problémů bylo zdravotnictví. Politici chtěli, aby se léčby dostalo každému, to znamená i chudým. Se zdravím souvisela další věc, a to bydlení. Většina chudých obyvatel žila ve špatných životních podmínkách, a proto byla častěji nemocná. Nová politika měla zajistit slušné bydlení pro každého. Otázka vzdělání také nebyla opomenuta a vláda chtěla v tomto ohledu rovnost příležitostí pro každého.

Po stanovení hlavních cílů, vláda provedla několik změn. Důležitou změnou ve zdravotnictví bylo znárodnění nemocnic. Ty dříve sloužili pouze chudým, o bohaté,

kteří si platili pojištění, a jejich rodiny bylo postaráno v ošetřovacích domech. Po nastolení nové politiky byla lékařská péče otevřena každému nezávisle na pojištění. Co se týká bydlení, obecní úřady stavěly nové domy za účelem dopřát moderní bydlení všem za co nejnižší nájem. V roce 1944 se změny dočkal i vzdělávací systém. Vzdělání bylo poskytnuto všem dětem do patnácti let zdarma a vysoké školy nebyly dále výsadou mladých z vyšších tříd, byly dostupné každému.

Otázka tříd byla v padesátých letech devatenáctého století jedním z nejdiskutovanějších témat. Obyvatelstvo bylo rozděleno do několika společenských vrstev a k člověku bylo přistupováno na základě jeho pozice na společenském žebříčku. S tím souvisí i problém předsudků a stereotypů. Poválečná Anglie jich byla plná a lidé byli vůči nim neoblomní. Kdo se vydal jinou životní cestou, než jaká mu byla společností předepsána, stal se okamžitě vyvrhelem a každý jím opovrhoval. To byla jedna z věcí, jež kritizovali literární umělci, kteří byli odpůrci nového politického systému.

Tito umělci s podobnými názory jsou řazeni do dvou literárních skupin reagujících na poválečnou situaci ve Velké Británii. Jednou z nich byla skupina nazvaná „Hnutí“, kam patřilo mnoho známých básníků jako na příklad Philip Larkin, Donal Davie nebo Kingsley Amis. Díla těchto básníků vyjadřovala nesouhlas s moderní poezií a hlavně snobismem. Druhé, výraznější seskupení autorů bylo nazváno „Rozhněvaní mladí muži“. Tito muži už nebyli pouze básníci, ale byli to i dramatici a romanopisci. Neměli žádný společný program, psali nezávisle na sobě, avšak o podobných tématech. Ve svých dílech odráželi situaci v poválečné Anglii a postoje k přicházejícím změnám. Název Rozhněvaní mladí muži tito autoři dostali od jednoho novináře a vůbec se jim nelíbil. Do této skupiny spisovatelů patří na příklad Kingsley Amis, John Wain, John Osborne, John Braine nebo Alan Sillitoe. První vydanou knihou Rozhněvaných mladých mužů je kniha *Hurry on Down* („Pospíchej dolů“) napsaná Johnem Wainem. O rok později byla vydaná publikace *Lucky Jim* („Šťastný Jim“) od Kingsleyho Amise a obě byly přijaty s velkým nadšením. Za ústřední práci této skupiny je považováno drama *Look Back in Anger* („Ohlédni se v hněvu“) od Johna Osborna.

Hlavním důvodem hněvu těchto spisovatelů je podle Kennetha Allsopa fakt, že neexistuje v podstatě nic, na co by mohli být naštvaní. Ovšem oni ve svých dílech kritizují rozdělení společnosti na třídy, nedostatek porozumění jednotlivci, vyšší vrstvu

pro její pokrytectví a snobismus. Díky těmto autorům není literatura výsadou pouze vyšších tříd. Tito spisovatelé většinou pocházeli z dělnické nebo nižší třídy, absolvovali střední školu, sloužili v armádě a pak vystudovali vysokou školu. Jejich hrdina pocházel z podobného prostředí a byl nespokojený s pozicí, která mu byla společností předepsána. Novým typem hlavního hrdiny je mladý intelektuál nespokojený se svojí životní situací a toužící po změně.

Především o hlavní hrdiny konkrétních děl jde v praktické části této bakalářské práce. Ta se zabývá knihou *Hurry on Down* („Pospíchej dolů“) od Johna Waina, kde je hlavním hrdinou Charles Lumley, a prací Johna Brainea *Room at the Top* („Místo nahoře“) s hlavním hrdinou Joe Lamptonem. V práci je okrajově analyzována i kniha *Lucky Jim* („Šťastný Jim“) napsána Kingsley Amisem, kde je ústřední postavou Jim Dixon. V praktické části této bakalářské práce jsou promítnuta zjištění uvedená v teoretické části do konkrétních situací hlavních postav. Díky podrobné analýze těchto situací je možno představit si život člověka z nižší vrstvy v poválečné Británii a vliv sociálních změn na jeho společenskou pozici.

Praktická část je rozdělena do tří podkapitol zabývajících se určitým tématem. První podkapitola pojednává o konfliktech hlavních hrdinů se společností. Zde jde především o otázku stereotypů, snobismus a pokrytectví vyšších tříd, zaměstnání a financí. Joe Lampton i Charles Lumley mají své sny, za kterými chtějí jít, ale společnost a její stereotypy jsou překážkou. Oba dva tedy vymyslí přesný plán, jak svých cílů dosáhnout, a ten se snaží dodržet. Joeho největší přání je být bohatý a úspěšný. Jenže jakožto syn rodičů z dělnické třídy nemá téměř žádnou šanci vypracovat se do vyšší třídy a získat to, po čem touží. Uvědomuje si, že nejjednodušší a nejrychlejší cesta, jak svého snu dosáhnout, je oženit se s bohatou dívkou. Proto účelně manipuluje s mladou dcerou velmi vlivného, úspěšného, bohatého člověka, aby se do něho zamilovala a on se mohl přiřazenit do jejich rodiny. Joe jde tak zarputile za svým cílem, až ho dosáhne, ovšem štěstí mu to stejně nepřinese. Charlesovo přání je být jiný než ostatní, nezapadat do žádné společenské vrstvy, rozhodovat se a jednat podle svého úsudku, ne podle názorů ostatních. Charles touží po anonymitě a neutralitě. Proto se rozhodne dělat obyčejná zaměstnání, která musejí vykonávat lidé z nižších vrstev, ačkoliv má titul z vysoké školy. Lumley vystřídá devět zaměstnání, aby zjistil, kde je jeho místo a kde bude nejspokojenější. Na cestě za svým snem se samozřejmě setkává s nepochopením a

pohrdáním ostatních, což je jeden z důvodů, proč nenávidí společnost a její předsudky. Na rozdíl od Joeho a Charlese, Jim Dixon je neambiciózní mladý muž, který je ve zkušební době jako lektor na univerzitě, a jeho jediným přáním je udržet si toto zaměstnání co nejdéle. Jelikož je líný a flegmatický, nedělá pro to téměř nic, avšak nakonec získá vše, o čem se mu ani nesnilo. Dostane dobře placenou práci, vstoupí do vztahu s krásnou bohatou dívkou a to vše bez vynaložení sebemenšího úsilí.

Druhá podkapitola se zabývá vnitřními konflikty hrdinů. Každý z nich řeší ve své situaci určitá dilemata, která ovlivňují jejich chování. Joe se musí rozhodnout, jestli upřednostní peníze před láskou nebo naopak. Jak už bylo zmíněno, snaží se přimět bohatou dívku, aby se do něj zamilovala, to se mu povede a mladá žena si ho chce vzít. Tím by Joe získal vše, po čem kdy toužil. Ale mezitím potkává jinou, starší ženu, do které se hluboce zamiluje, a ví, že jedině s ní by mohl být opravdu šťastný. Nakonec se rozhodne pro peníze a úspěch na úkor lásky. Charles má jiný problém. Nejdříve se snaží nějakým způsobem přizpůsobit okolnímu světu, ale vzápětí poznává, že mu tento svět plný stereotypů a předsudků nevyhovuje a že do něj nechce zapadnout. Proto hledá způsoby, jak se vymanit z této pokrytecké společnosti a být jiný. Vyzkouší několik zaměstnání, spolupracuje s různými typy lidí, než opravdu přijde na to, kam patří. Jim Dixon řeší jedině to, jak si udržet práci na univerzitě, ostatní záležitosti ho nezajímají.

Poslední podkapitola pojednává o vlivu vnitřních konfliktů hrdinů na jejich přátele, známé a rodinu. Joeho problémy mají nejhorší dopad na jeho okolí. Upřednostnění peněz před láskou způsobí smrt jeho milenky. Lampton tedy dosahuje svého snu, ovšem ví, že nikdy nebude opravdu šťastný s vědomím, že sám způsobil ztrátu milované osoby. Charlesovy konflikty nemají tak dalekosáhlé důsledky, ale také způsobí bolest blízkému člověku. Lumley začne vztah s mladou zdravotní sestřičkou, která ho má opravdu ráda a chce si ho vzít. Mladík to zpočátku cítí stejně, ale nakonec si uvědomí, že potřebuje změnit prostředí, proto dívku opustí. Jim také ublíží jedné ženě, které na něm záleží, ovšem ne tím, že by šel za svým cílem, ale svým flegmatickým přístupem k životu i k ní.

Praktická část se tedy podrobně zabývá analýzou životních situací hlavních postav, která poskytuje náhled do společnosti padesátých let devatenáctého století ve Velké Británii. Závěrečná kapitola shrnuje předchozí zjištění a úvahy a uzavírá tím celou práci.

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