

**University of Pardubice**

**Faculty of Arts and Philosophy**

**The Depiction of Social Frustration in *Look Back in Anger* by John Osborne**

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**Bachelor Thesis**

**2017**

Univerzita Pardubice  
Fakulta filozofická  
Akademický rok: 2014/2015

**ZADÁNÍ BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE**  
(PROJEKTU, UMĚLECKÉHO DÍLA, UMĚLECKÉHO VÝKONU)

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Studijní program: **B7310 Filologie**  
Studijní obor: **Anglický jazyk pro odbornou praxi**  
Název tématu: **Vykreslení sociální frustrace ve hře Look Back in Anger od  
Johna Osborna**  
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 :*

Práce se zaměří na zobrazení sociální frustrace v divadelní hře Look Back in Anger od Johna Osborna. V první části se autor bude zabývat společenskými změnami v britské společnosti, které souvisí s poválečnou situací. Autor rovněž zasadí dílo do kontextu britského dramatu daného období, vysvětlí, proč se tato hra stala fenoménem a objasní potřebné termíny (např. angry young men). Analytická část se pak bude soustředit na vyobrazení frustrace ve výše zmíněném díle a na její projevy např. v partnerském soužití. Práce bude založena na kvalitních sekundárních zdrojích a zakončí ji přehledné shrnutí daných zjištění.

Rozsah grafických prací:

Rozsah pracovní zprávy:

Forma zpracování bakalářské práce: **tištěná**

Jazyk zpracování bakalářské práce: **Angličtina**

Seznam odborné literatury:

1. Osborne, John. *Look Back In Anger*. London: Faber & Faber; Reprint edition, 1978.
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Datum zadání bakalářské práce:

**30. března 2015**

Termín odevzdání bakalářské práce:

**30. března 2016**



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Souhlasím s prezenčním zpřístupněním své práce v Univerzitní knihovně.

V Nové Městě na Moravě 29. 11. 2017

Michal Dědič

**Poděkování:**

Na tomto místě bych rád poděkoval vedoucímu práce, Mgr. Michalu Kleprlíkovi, Ph.D., za jeho ochotu a trpělivost při jejím zpracování.

## **NÁZEV**

Vykreslení sociální frustrace ve hře *Ohlédni se v hněvu* od Johna Osborna

## **ANOTACE**

Tato práce se zabývá vykreslením sociální frustrace v divadelní hře *Ohlédni se v hněvu* od Johna Osborna. Teoretická část popisuje poválečnou dobu ve Velké Británii z politického a sociálního hlediska. Dále se teoretická část zaměřuje na skupinu Rozhněvaných mladých mužů a konkrétně nejznámějšího z nich, Johna Osborna. Analytická část se soustředí na vykreslení sociální frustrace hlavního představitele ve studované hře.

## **KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA**

John Osborne, *Ohlédni se v hněvu*, Rozhněvaní mladí muži, sociální frustrace, poválečná literatura

**TITLE**

The Depiction of Social Frustration in *Look Back in Anger* by John Osborne

**ANNOTATION**

This bachelor thesis focuses on the depiction of social frustration in a play by John Osborne titled *Look Back in Anger*. The theoretical part describes the post-war era from political and social point of view. Furthermore, it focuses on the movement of Angry Young Men, specifically on the most famous of them, John Osborne. The analytical part focuses on the depiction of social frustration of the main protagonist in the studied play.

**KEY WORDS**

John Osborne, *Look Back in Anger*, Angry Young Men, social frustration, post-war literature

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## **Introduction**

The aim of this thesis is to analyze social frustration in John Osborne's pivotal play titled *Look Back in Anger*. Osborne's most prominent time as a playwright came a decade after the Second World War and the post-war state of Britain is strongly criticized in his masterpiece of a play. After the war's end, Britain saw an era of ever-changing politics with a lot of new Acts being introduced in order to acquire the situation of a welfare state – where everyone's well-being is secured.

1950s and 1960s were a harsh time for British people. The war left Britain in a decimated state and in a deep economic crisis. There were a large number of different Prime Ministers during those years and each PM had different problems to deal with. This period of time is sometimes called the American Age, since the US had a huge influence on Britain, thanks to the help they provided during and after the war. The Labour party shockingly came into power after the war, and brought new legislature to help introduce the welfare state. This idea had its roots in the Beveridge Report which is discussed in the theoretical part of the thesis, along with the main areas that saw the introduction of new acts as a result of the government trying to achieve the welfare state.

These improvements brought a certain change, but not as significant as had been expected and therefore the whole concept of the welfare state was one of the main targets of criticism by the newly emerged group of playwrights and novelists, labeled the Angry Young Men. Besides the welfare state, their criticism was also aimed at class distinctions or on the problems of the working-class population. John Osborne, whose most famous play will be the topic of the practical part of this thesis, was the main representative of this so-called movement. His plays tended to be autobiographic and the topic was usually the same – an angry young person, whose disillusion with the world prevented him from belonging somewhere, takes out his rage on those around him.

*Look Back in Anger* is the most famous work by this author and its main protagonist Jimmy Porter is probably one of the angriest heroes ever to reach the stage. The themes of his anger and frustration are going to be analyzed in the practical part. This part will try to determine why he behaved the way he did by analyzing practical examples from the play.

## **1. Post-war era in Britain**

The Second World War left the whole world shattered. It was the worst conflict the world had seen for quite some time and the casualties were massive. It is estimated that more than 17 million members of the armed forces of the various belligerents perished during the conflict.<sup>1</sup> Of course, military personnel were not the only people who lost their lives in the conflict, since the number of deceased civilians was even larger. As far as Britain was concerned, the casualties did not reach the same number as the casualties of the previous war conflict, but still, it was a large number.

The end of the war was not the end of difficult times for the British people. Despite the fact that Britain was on the winning side of the war, it did not feel like it. “Britain had survived and recovered the territory lost during the war. But its prestige and authority, not to mention its wealth, had been severely reduced.”<sup>2</sup> This meant that the country was faced with a challenge to overcome the post-war state. This task would eventually fall into the hands of the newly elected Prime Minister Clement Attlee, and later to his successors.

### **1.1. Political situation in Post-war Britain**

#### **1.1.1. Attlee’s Government 1945-51**

The general election in 1945 brought a surprising result. Not many people believed that The Labour Party could beat the Conservatives, but that is exactly what happened. The party which held office only twice before defeated the favorites. Winston Churchill, the man who won the war for Britain, was defeated. The reason of his defeat is accurately described by David Childs in his book *Britain Since 1945: A Political History*: “Many people, it seems, felt that although he (Churchill) did well during the war, he was not the leader Britain needed for the post-war reconstruction.”<sup>3</sup>

After the loss to the Labour, Churchill handed in his resignation from the position of Prime Minister of Britain. Therefore, a new PM was needed. This position, formerly advocated by Churchill, now belonged to the leader of the Labour Party Clement Attlee. The fact that it was a surprising result is apparent from the words of Attlee himself. “This is the first time in the

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<sup>1</sup> “Britain and World War II,” Daily Mail, accessed September 27, 2017, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-400277/Britain-World-War-II.html>.

<sup>2</sup> “Britain, the Commonwealth and the End of Empire,” John Darwin, accessed September 27, 2017, [http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/modern/endofempire\\_overview\\_01.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/modern/endofempire_overview_01.shtml).

<sup>3</sup> David Childs, *Britain Since 1945: A Political History* (London: Routledge, 2001), 3.

history of the country that a labour movement with a socialist policy has received the approval of the electorate.”<sup>4</sup>

### **1.1.2. Financial help from the US**

A shocking victory of the Labour Party was followed by the termination of the Lend-Lease policy, which had been in effect since 1941. At that time, it had become clear that Britain is going to need some kind of financial help to get through the war. The United States, on the other hand, were not yet directly involved in the ongoing war. Therefore, a deal between Britain and The US was made. This deal, called Lend-Lease, authorized the president of the United States to transfer arms or any other defense materials for which Congress appropriated money to the government of any country whose defense the President deems vital to the defense of the United States.<sup>5</sup> In other words, this meant that Britain did not have to pay for American war materials. This deal was terminated in September 1945 by the American president Harry S. Truman.

Britain, being virtually bankrupt at that time, needed to secure further financial help after the war had ended. Unsurprisingly, that help came from the US again. Many people thought it would be easy to gain financial support from Washington, even Attlee’s chief negotiator, Lord Keynes. Little did he know that it would actually take months of negotiations to secure the loan. In the end, Britain was offered a credit of up to \$3,750 million at 2 per cent interest with first repayments starting in 1951.<sup>6</sup>

### **1.1.3. Introduction of nationalization**

One of the major changes brought by the Labour government was definitely nationalization of certain industries. The nationalization itself will be discussed further in the next chapter. During the war, the government played an important role in the economy and therefore, there was a wide spread of interest in public ownership among the people. Furthermore, the Red Army, which was also thought to be based on a successful economic system created by the state from nothing, had a lot of successes during the war years.<sup>7</sup> Of course this did not mean nationalization of every single business, just the most important ones.

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<sup>4</sup> David Kynaston, *Austerity Britain* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2007), 75.

<sup>5</sup> “Lend-Lease Act,” accessed September 27, 2017, <http://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/lend-lease-act>.

<sup>6</sup> Childs, *Britain Since 1945: A Political History*, 10.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* 11.

However, the importance of nationalization measures for many communities should not be underestimated.<sup>8</sup> Despite the fact that there was a continuation of policies of earlier governments, the nationalized industries saw a lot of positive changes. For instance, the working conditions in coal mines had been terrible, as well as the wages or working hours of the workers. With the introduction of the National Coal Board, all these areas became a little more sophisticated.

#### **1.1.4. Constitutional reform**

Another important step was a constitutional reform. Despite the fact, that this reform was thought to be long overdue, it brought three significant changes. Firstly, the power of the House of the Lords to delay legislation was cut from two years to one.<sup>9</sup> One year is still a long time when talking about implementing new legislation, but at least there was some reduction. This power was possessed by the House of the Lords since the Parliament Act of 1911.<sup>10</sup>

Second important change was the Representation of the People Act of 1948. This act abolished all plural voting and university constituencies which had been ‘notional, not geographical, bodies of electors, comprising the graduates of particular universities’.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, people affiliated with a university no longer had the option to vote both in their university and home constituencies. The same rule applied for property owners, if they had a property that lay in a different constituency than they lived in, they would also be limited to a single vote. This change was quite reasonable, because it brought all people on the same level. Formerly, people with the possibility of two votes could have been considered as people with a more important opinion.

Lastly, the Trades Disputes Act of 1927 was repealed in 1946. This meant that if a member of a trade union affiliated to the Labour Party did not wish to pay his political levy, he had to seek out his branch secretary and sign the appropriate form.<sup>12</sup> The political levy is “a financial contribution made by a member of a trade union to a political party, usually deducted from the membership fees.”<sup>13</sup> The Labour government needed trade unions more than ever before,

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<sup>8</sup> Childs, *Britain Since 1945: A Political History*, 12.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* 17.

<sup>10</sup> “The Parliament Acts,” accessed October 19, 2017, <http://www.parliament.uk/about/how/laws/parliamentacts>.

<sup>11</sup> “The House of Commons and the right to vote,” accessed October 19, 2017, <http://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-information-office/g01.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> Childs, *Britain Since 1945: A Political History*, 17.

<sup>13</sup> “Political levy,” Oxford Dictionary, accessed October 19, 2017, [https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/political\\_levy](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/political_levy).

given the unfavorable economic situation after the war. Additionally, there was a growing fear of Communist influence inside the government and unions, which increased even more with the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950. However, the fear of communists was greatly exaggerated. The fact was that most of the ordinary Communists were basically law-abiding citizens who would never have got involved in sabotage or tried to interfere with defense supplies, which were the most feared courses of action by the communists.<sup>14</sup>

### **1.1.5. Beginning of the end of the British Empire**

Strikes were a common way of showing dissatisfaction in the post-war period. A lot of strikes occurred inside the Royal Air Force, since the men were forced to implement colonial policies they did not agree with. Slow pace of demobilization and poor living conditions were other problems the men were angry about.<sup>15</sup> Of course, not only people who were communists were striking, but with the aforementioned fear of them, they were the ones who were being watched most closely.

Royal Air Force was not the only place that saw a large number of strikes. In February of 1946, a naval mutiny occurred in Bombay. Other mutinies followed shortly after that. At that time, it had become clear that Britain could not maintain its world-wide Empire.<sup>16</sup> It was evident that it was simply a matter of time, before Britain would have to relinquish control over its Indian Empire. During World War Two, Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian National Congress tried to force Britain to 'quit India', but all they got was a promise that India will be given full independence once the war was over.<sup>17</sup> Obviously, it did not happen immediately after the war's end nor did it happen on a day-to-day basis. The official transfer of power took place on 15 August 1947 and the last British troops left on 13 February 1948.<sup>18</sup> One could argue that partition of India was one of the first signs of weakness of the empire. Following losses of other colonies in the 1950s, as well as the Suez Crisis of 1956 can be considered as other signs of The British Empire losing its power.

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<sup>14</sup> Childs, *Britain Since 1945: A Political History*, 20.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. 20.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. 27.

<sup>17</sup> "Britain, the Commonwealth and the End of Empire," John Darwin, accessed October 22, 2017, [http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/modern/endofempire\\_overview\\_01.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/modern/endofempire_overview_01.shtml).

<sup>18</sup> Childs, *Britain Since 1945: A Political History*, 28.

### 1.1.6. Conservatives return to power

Having won the post-war election with a staggering victory, the Labour party sought to retain control of the Commons in the election in 1950. However, the election of 1950 decreased the difference between elected members of the Conservatives and the Labour to only 17 seats. The Labour party, which previously held almost twice as much seats as the Conservatives, was now almost evenly matched by their opposition. The following year, the Labour government called for another general election, with the hope of increasing their parliamentary majority. What happened was not as unexpected as Labour's victory in 1945, but it did again bring a change in the British politics. Despite the fact that Labour won the popular vote (i.e. received the majority of votes), it was actually the Conservative party, who won the majority of seats. As David Childs puts it in his book *Britain Since 1945: A Political History*: "Only the peculiarities of the British electoral system had given the Conservatives a majority."<sup>19</sup> Labour won in a smaller number of constituencies, but with greater margins than Conservatives received in their constituencies.

The victory of Conservatives meant that Winston Churchill would return to the helm. This was his third and last spell as the Prime Minister. He was 77 at that time and he was already deaf, it was expected that he would not remain in the leading role for a longer time.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, the way he ran the cabinet was often 'too reminiscent of bygone times'.<sup>21</sup> Due to his poor medical condition and the fact that over his life, he had suffered a lot of strokes, one could ask the question of who was in charge when Churchill was officially ill. Churchill relied heavily on R.A. Butler, who he appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer, to hold the fort in his absence. Butler in turn relied on his subordinates, Lord Plowden and Lord Armstrong, who had much larger knowledge of economy than he did.<sup>22</sup>

Eventually, Churchill had to resign and in 1955 he was replaced by his deputy prime minister, Anthony Eden. Like Churchill, Eden also had serious health problems and these problems continued to trouble him throughout his days as Prime Minister. One of his first steps as Prime Minister was to decide on an election in May. He was afraid that the economic situation was becoming worse and worse and that twisted his hand. The election, which took place on 26 May 1955, gave the Conservatives 345 seats, whereas Labour only gained 277.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Childs, *Britain Since 1945: A Political History*, 44-45.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* 52.

<sup>21</sup> Norman Gash, *The Conservatives: A History from Their Origins to 1965* (Crowns Nest: Allen & Unwin, 1977), 428.

<sup>22</sup> Childs, *Britain Since 1945: A Political History*, 53.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.* 56.

Compared to 1951, both parties lost a lot of votes. While the Conservatives had to deal with losing nearly half a million, Labour lost more than million and a half.<sup>24</sup> One of the main contributors to Labour's defeat was believed to be a large number of strikes. The defeat in these elections was one of the reasons Attlee finally gave in and retired. Hugh Gaitskell succeeded him as the new leader of the Labour party, beating Aneurin Bevan and Herbert Morrison in the leadership contest.

### **1.1.7. The Suez Crisis**

Eden's time spent as the Prime Minister of Britain is mostly remembered thanks to the Suez Crisis which started in October 1956. Since its creation in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Suez Canal provided Britain with a shorter sea route to its empire. Therefore it was essential for Britain to keep this strategic place accessible.

The crisis itself had roots in the post-war upsurge of nationalism in Egypt.<sup>25</sup> First, in 1951 the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936 was revoked. This treaty had established a 20-year military alliance that allowed Great Britain to impose martial law and censorship in Egypt in the event of international emergency, as well as it provided for the stationing of up to 10,000 British troops and 400 Royal Air Force pilots in the Suez Canal Zone.<sup>26</sup> The abrogation of this treaty was a clear sign of Egypt wanting to limit British influence.

In 1954, Colonel Gamel Abdul Nasser came to power. He had three goals in his mind: to make Egypt independent by ending British occupation; to build up Egyptian forces for a successful attack on Israel and to improve Egypt's economy by constructing a high dam at Aswan to irrigate the Nile valley.<sup>27</sup> After his rise to power, Nasser signed a new treaty with Britain. This treaty ended more than seventy years of British occupation of the Suez Canal Zone. Egypt also agreed that British forces would be allowed to return and use the canal in case of war.

In 1956, Nasser became president and it was his announcement of the nationalization of the Suez Canal Company that sparked the crisis. As a result of the treaty signed in 1954, last British troops left the Canal in June 1956, a few months before the eruption of the crisis. The

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<sup>24</sup> Childs, *Britain Since 1945: A Political History*, 56.

<sup>25</sup> "The Suez Crisis," Laurie Milner, accessed October 27, 2017.  
[http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/modern/suez\\_01.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/modern/suez_01.shtml).

<sup>26</sup> "Anglo-Egyptian Treaty," Encyclopedia Britannica, accessed October 27, 2017.  
<https://www.britannica.com/event/Anglo-Egyptian-Treaty>.

<sup>27</sup> "The Suez Crisis," Laurie Milner, accessed October 27, 2017.  
[http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/modern/suez\\_01.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/modern/suez_01.shtml).

nationalization of the Canal was a reaction to the Britain and the US refusing to provide promised financial aid to build a new dam at Aswan.<sup>28</sup>

Therefore, in October 1956 a pretext for an Anglo-French invasion of Suez was made. Prime ministers of France, Britain and Israel secretly met and concluded that Israel should attack Egypt. The invasion of the canal began on October 31. The British and French governments told the world that they had to invade in order to separate Egyptian and Israeli forces, and thus protect the freedom of navigation on the canal.<sup>29</sup> The invasion was eventually halted under a ceasefire ordered by the United Nations. What was most ironic about this operation was that it was actually counterproductive. The main objective was to ensure international passage through the waterway and aside from the fact that the invasion undermined the prestige of the invading countries, under Nasser's orders a large number of ships was scuttled in the canal. Therefore The Suez Canal was totally blocked. In the end, the Suez Crisis can be seen as Britain's last roll of the imperial dice.

#### **1.1.8. Late 1950s**

After the Suez Crisis, Eden did not remain in the leading role. In January 1957, he resigned, giving ill health as his reason.<sup>30</sup> He was replaced by Harold Macmillan, despite the fact that the likeliest candidate to replace him looked to be Butler. Butler was far more experienced for the role, but what cost him the victory were the similarities between his economic policies and those of Gaitskell. There was a term used to drawing attention to these similarities – 'Butskellism'.<sup>31</sup>

'Butskellism' is a consensus predicated on the recognition of the power of trade unionism, the importance of addressing the needs of the working class, and the necessity of collaboration between social classes.<sup>32</sup> The whole period of the 1950s in Britain are often called 'Butskellism'. One of the main ideas behind the phrase was that people then were living in an affluent, open and democratic society, in which the class escalators are continually moving and in which people are divided not so much into "haves" and "have-nots", but into "haves"

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<sup>28</sup> "The Suez Crisis," Laurie Milner, accessed October 27, 2017.

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/modern/suez\\_01.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/modern/suez_01.shtml).

<sup>29</sup> "1956 and the end of empire," The Guardian, accessed October 27, 2017.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2001/mar/14/past.education1>.

<sup>30</sup> "Anthony Eden," Encyclopedia Britannica, accessed October 27, 2017.

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Anthony-Eden>.

<sup>31</sup> Childs, *Britain Since 1945: A Political History*, 66.

<sup>32</sup> "Britain Since 1945," Encyclopedia Britannica, accessed October 27, 2017.

<https://www.britannica.com/place/United-Kingdom/Britain-since-1945#ref978017>.



and “have-mores”.<sup>33</sup> This division is connected to the division of classes, which will be discussed in in a later chapter.

One of Macmillan’s first objectives was to deal with the aftermath of the Suez Crisis. Before the crisis even began, Macmillan was the first to suggest that Nasser needs to be overthrown and that Israel should be brought into alliance against Egypt.<sup>34</sup> One can look at this with a bit of irony, since it was again he, who tried to back out of the operation the night before it started. William Roger Lewis in the lecture titled *Harold Macmillan and the Middle East Crisis of 1958* lists two reasons for Macmillan’s reversals, one being a colossal misjudgment and the other Macmillan’s ability to change his mind and reverse course.<sup>35</sup> Macmillan had misjudged the reaction of the US to the invasion. He had thought that the US would not participate in the crisis and that secretly they had hoped that the British would succeed in overthrowing Nasser. But much more important was his incorrect report that reserves of sterling had largely depleted in the first week of November. This made him want to resign from the position he held during Eden’s spell as Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Exchequer.

When he came to the office, Macmillan did not think that his administration could last very long.<sup>36</sup> Demoralized and dispirited after Suez, the Conservative government needed to gain confidence and reassure the world that Britain was not finished. Remarkably, Macmillan managed to do both. Despite his assertion that the government will not last, the next election in 1959 they returned with an increased majority.<sup>37</sup>

From Macmillan’s perspective, Britain’s future still “lay with the Commonwealth and especially with the United States.”<sup>38</sup> In 1957, Britain joined the United States and the Soviet Union and became a nuclear power with its first H-bomb test in the Pacific near Christmas Island.<sup>39</sup> Some other countries accredited this to the ‘special relationship’ between the British and the US. In other words, they thought that Britain had only achieved success in developing an H-bomb thanks to the assistance of the US and this led to Britain being cast into the same

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<sup>33</sup> Gregory Elliott, *Labourism and The English Genius* (London: New Left Books, 1993), 69.

<sup>34</sup> “Harold Macmillan and the Middle East Crisis of 1958,” William Roger Louis, accessed October 29, 2017. <https://www.britac.ac.uk/pubs/proc/files/94p207.pdf>.

<sup>35</sup> “Harold Macmillan and the Middle East Crisis of 1958,” William Roger Louis, accessed October 29, 2017. <https://www.britac.ac.uk/pubs/proc/files/94p207.pdf>.

<sup>36</sup> “Harold Macmillan,” *The Guardian*, accessed October 29, 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/1986/dec/30/obituaries>.

<sup>37</sup> Childs, *Britain Since 1945: A Political History*, 69.

<sup>38</sup> “Harold Macmillan and the Middle East Crisis of 1958,” William Roger Louis, accessed October 29, 2017. <https://www.britac.ac.uk/pubs/proc/files/94p207.pdf>.

<sup>39</sup> Childs, *Britain Since 1945: A Political History*, 70.

mold as the US rather than Europe in their eyes. But being ‘best friends’ with the US was not the case for Macmillan, since he was the first British Prime Minister to appreciate that Britain’s future lay with Europe.<sup>40</sup> Macmillan remained Prime Minister until 1963, when he resigned from the office. Once again it was due to medical reasons, just like many of his predecessors.

## **1.2. Social situation in Post-war Britain**

When it comes to the social side of things in Britain after the war, there are two important points that need to be discussed. Firstly, it is The Beveridge Report. The Beveridge Report, drafted in 1942, gave grounds to the idea of the welfare state. By the time the Second World War ended, British people had been longing for a social reform for more than a couple of years. Possibly, it might have been ever since the end of the First World War. The Beveridge Report outlined what should happen after the war, social-wise. It gave people the insight on what is to come.

Secondly, it was clear after the war’s end that a social reform needed to happen, no matter who was in charge of the politics. If the aforementioned election of 1945 had turned out differently, it would not change this fact. The welfare state dealt with the most fundamental needs of every person. There were five: the need for income or “social security”, the need for medical care, the need for sufficient housing, the need for a decent education and last but not least, the need for employment.

### **1.2.1. The Beveridge Report**

In November 1942, Sir William Beveridge presented The Beveridge Report to the British parliament. It was a paper which proposed a system of social security which would be operated by the state, to be implemented at war's end.<sup>41</sup> In this report, William Beveridge lists three guiding principles of recommendations, the first one being that no proposal for the future, while it should use experiences from the past, should be restricted by consideration of sectional interests established in the obtaining of that experience.<sup>42</sup>

In the second principle, Beveridge mentions social insurance and argues that a fully developed social insurance may provide income security. He then goes on to name five “giant evils” that need to be tackled in order to create a welfare state. His opinion was that on the

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<sup>40</sup> “Harold Macmillan and the Middle East Crisis of 1958,” William Roger Louis, accessed October 29, 2017. <https://www.britac.ac.uk/pubs/proc/files/94p207.pdf>.

<sup>41</sup> “Fact File: Beveridge Report,” BBC, accessed November 2, 2017,

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/timeline/factfiles/nonflash/a1143578.shtml>.

<sup>42</sup> William Beveridge, *The Beveridge Report* (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1942), 6.

road to reconstruction, one must face Want, Disease, Ignorance, Squalor and Idleness. By creating these five giants, Beveridge showed the British people their ‘enemies’ and he gave them something to believe in and hope for after the war ends.

The main theme of the third principle of The Beveridge Report was social security. This principle insisted that the state and any individual need to co-operate in order for the individual to achieve it. Moreover, it said that ” The State in organising security should not stifle incentive, opportunity, responsibility; in establishing a national minimum, it should leave room and encouragement for voluntary action by each individual to provide more than that minimum for himself and his family.”<sup>43</sup>

### **1.2.2. Introduction of the welfare state**

The phrase “welfare state” came into widespread use during the war to point a sharp contrast with Hitler’s “welfare state”. The phrase essentially means the totality of schemes and services through which the central Government together with the local authorities assumed a major responsibility for dealing with all the different types of social problems which beset the individual citizens.<sup>44</sup>

If we look at the definition of the term “welfare state”, it is obvious that it was something every person would benefit from. A popular way of describing the idea behind the welfare state was that every person would be protected ‘from cradle-to-grave’. If one is to consider the five main areas that were mentioned in the previous chapter, they are all connected.

If one should have problems with social security, in layman’s terms it can be said that the person is unable to provide finances for himself or for his family. People can get into financial struggles for a variety of reasons. They can become unemployed and therefore they will not earn a living, they can become too old to work or they simply fall ill or get injured. This is where other problems that needed solving come in. If one is injured or ill, in some cases a medical assistance is required. Furthermore, the injuries or illnesses very well may have been caused by terrible living conditions. Last but not least, if a person wants to participate fully in a civilized society, some form of decent education should be provided.

Long it had been clear that these issues needed to be dealt with, no matter what government deals with them. The first piece of legislation passed after the war was carried out by a provisional Conservative government, who held office for a brief period of time between Churchill’s resignation and the assumption of the newly elected Labour government. It was

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<sup>43</sup> William Beveridge, *The Beveridge Report* (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1942), 6.

<sup>44</sup> Arthur Marwick, *British Society Since 1945* (London: Penguin Books, 1982), 45.

actually a sign of a rising feminist influence on social legislation, since the main part of the passed legislation determined that family allowances, payable in respect of second and later children in all income groups were payable to the mother.<sup>45</sup> On the other hand, it was not an issue anyone would disagree with. Furthermore, it prevented husbands from spending the money on redundant things.

#### **1.2.2.1. Social security**

In 1946 Attlee and his government passed the first important act, The National Insurance Act. It was a sign of universality, for the whole population was brought, for the first time, into a comprehensive system covering unemployment, sickness, maternity, guardianship, retirement and death.<sup>46</sup> Minister James Griffiths, who introduced the act, declared that it marked the introduction of the principle of a National Minimum Standard.<sup>47</sup> In spite of all that, the benefits were at around forty shillings, which was already behind the cost of living. The reason for the minimum standard being so inadequate was that almost 70 per cent of National Insurance expenditure was taken up by old-age pensions, which were to be paid immediately at the beginning of every month. Therefore, another piece of legislation would soon have to arrive. National Assistance Act, which came in 1948, was a way of getting the necessary funds for people who found the insurance benefits inadequate to their needs. But there was one thing that deterred many people in need from applying for it. A personal needs test was required to receive it.

In his book *British Society Since 1945*, Arthur Marwick asserts that this misstep was accidental. If one was to compare these documents with those of the previous decades, one would find that documents of this new era were much friendlier and not at all bureaucratic like in the preceding decade. All in all, there was a spirit of social democracy and welfare for the whole public.

The failure was one of misunderstanding how ordinary, bemused, ill-educated people react, rather than one of deliberate harshness; it was, indeed, a failure very much in keeping with the consensus which had developed during the war between upper-class politicians, upper-class civil servants, and self-educated working-class representatives of lofty vision.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Marwick, *British Society Since 1945*, 47.

<sup>46</sup> Childs, *Britain Since 1945: A Political History*, 14.

<sup>47</sup> Marwick, *British Society Since 1945*, 48.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.* 49.

### **1.2.2.2. Medical care**

When it came to dealing with medical problems, it was not so easy. Health maintenance requires a large scale of services. To begin with, these services need to be provided by qualified professionals in a specially designed office. Before the war, rich people mostly used private nursing homes, whereas hospitals were for the poor only. In the thirties, there were two major types of hospitals – the voluntary hospitals and the local authority hospitals. This division was valid until emergencies of war brought a merger of both types into one general project called the Emergency Hospital Scheme. The introduction of this scheme meant that all hospitals were organized on a regional basis, rather than on the rich/poor division.

The new National Health Service, which came into being in July 1948, was another monumental expression of universality. “It was based on three core principles, that it meets the needs of everyone, that it be free at the point of delivery and that it be based on clinical need, not ability to pay.”<sup>49</sup> Until the early post-war years, people from the working class relied on The National Health Insurance scheme provided by private companies, which provided free medical service to them, but not to their families. Additionally, there were some people who were excluded from this scheme. Therefore, some doctors provided private services, charging what the patient could pay. Moreover, what they prescribed to these people had to be something they would be able to buy. The most essential change brought by the new health service was that treatment in no way depended upon insurance contributions.<sup>50</sup> What it meant was that there was no question of having to recover the payment after one had paid it. A clear distinction between the question of income need and the question of health need was finally made.

### **1.2.2.3. Housing**

A public opinion polls held in 1945 revealed, that the issue people felt most strongly about was housing. Before the war, people lived in crowded housings which were way below the standard, during the war they had to suffer bombings which eventually forced them to be shunted around. When the war finally came to an end, people looked forward most to having a place of their own. However, as Marwick points out, housing is also the area of social policy to which it is most difficult to apply a universalist philosophy.<sup>51</sup> Compared to the actual cost

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<sup>49</sup> “About the NHS,” accessed November 2, 2017, <http://www.nhs.uk/nhsengland/thenhs/about/pages/nhscoreprinciples.aspx>.

<sup>50</sup> Marwick, *British Society Since 1945*, 51.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* 54.

of medical treatment, which does not vary much, prices of houses, lands or even opinions on what is considered “normal” when one talks about standards vary enormously.

In addition to the fact that there is a huge difference in what is standard for each individual, the housing legislation that existed at that time was explicitly selective. They were called housing Acts ‘for the working classes’. The new housing post-war legislation, introduced in 1946, made no deviation from the established principles. Despite that, ministers responsible for the introduction of this legislation (Aneurin Bevan and Joseph Westwood for England and Scotland respectively) both agreed that the phrase ‘working classes’ would refer to “all sections of the working population.”<sup>52</sup> This phrase was finally dropped with the introduction of The Housing Act of 1949.

#### **1.2.2.4. Education**

Then, of course, there was the problem of education. The policy of education after the war was mainly governed by the Education Act of 1944. “The major strength of the Act was that it ensured that all pupils would, around the age of eleven or twelve, move on to a form of secondary education which would, at the least, be continued till the age of fifteen.”<sup>53</sup> Implementation of this act meant that every child would have to take a test that would determine if the child would go to a grammar school or to a secondary modern school. The test became known as eleven-plus examination.<sup>54</sup> While grammar schools led to higher education and better jobs, the secondary modern school led to the traditional working-class jobs. Although some people strongly supported the system, there were many of those who resented it. When one imagines this test in the long run, it was ultimately a question of passing or failing. Getting to a grammar school obviously meant passing and getting to a secondary modern school was seen as a failure. The test itself usually consisted of three main parts. The arithmetic part was a simple mathematics test, the writing part required the student to write an essay on a given subject and finally, there was the third part, which was basically a test of general knowledge.

#### **1.2.2.5. Unemployment and Nationalization**

It is not always easy to see eye to eye about the first four areas when one is a politician, but when it comes to the fifth and last area, there is no doubt that both Labour and Conservative Governments were fully committed to a philosophy of the avoidance of mass

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<sup>52</sup> Marwick, *British Society Since 1945*, 54.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* 55.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.* 56.

unemployment.<sup>55</sup> In order to get the industry going and prevent depressions, the Government used the Marshall Plan of 1948, otherwise known as Marshall Aid or Foreign Assistance Act of 1948.

The government nationalized the road haulage, railways and coal industries in 1947 and steel in 1951. By adopting the ideas in the economist JM Keynes's book - the "General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money" (1936) - the government learned how to keep the economy vibrant by increasing public spending. This meant that there has never been a depression like the one of the 1930s again.<sup>56</sup>

As can be understood from this quote, nationalization was a way of showing that Government cared more about its people than its profit. By nationalizing many key industries such as those mentioned above, the Labour government proved that they wanted to fulfil their promises about full employment. In order to run nationalized businesses, the government needed to find a way to control them. Therefore, an introduction of public corporations or so-called 'boards' followed. "These boards were given the necessary freedom to operate outside of government 'interference' and they were only indirectly answerable to Parliament."<sup>57</sup> As a result, working conditions in many work places improved significantly. Since the government was responsible for management of these places, health and safety conditions were much more acceptable for the workers than they had been used to. The mining industry in particular welcomed these improvements with open arms. Also, unemployment was low, below 3 per cent. Although there were some negative effects, nationalization of industries like coal, railways or steel must have been seen as a step towards a better future by the British people.

### **1.2.3. Social Classes in Britain**

The concept of social class is without doubt a crucial topic, when one talks about the post-war period in Britain. "Britain in the late forties and early fifties could be divided up into a number of social classes, though there would be also much disagreement about how and where lines should be drawn."<sup>58</sup> For that reason, class distinction in Britain cannot be simply put into several basic categories. There is a lot of ambiguity when it comes to asserting if one is e.g. middle class or upper-middle class. Additionally, after the war the differences between certain classes started to become less and less evident.

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<sup>55</sup> Marwick, *British Society Since 1945*, 57.

<sup>56</sup> "The Welfare State," BBC, accessed November 6, 2017.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/history/mwh/britain/welfarestaterev1.shtml>.

<sup>57</sup> "The Labour Government 1945-51 – The Welfare State," BBC, accessed November 6, 2017.

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/intermediate2/history/cradle\\_to\\_the\\_grave/welfare\\_state/revision/11](http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/intermediate2/history/cradle_to_the_grave/welfare_state/revision/11).

<sup>58</sup> Marwick, *British Society Since 1945*, 34.

Class is usually reflected not only by what people do for living, but also in the way they dress or speak. When comparing e.g. the wardrobe of a working class man to the one worn by an upper class man, one would find substantial differences. Working men wore clothes that were appropriate for manual labour, while upper class men were distinguished by white collars, suits and hats.<sup>59</sup> A clear difference could also be found in the way people expressed themselves when they opened up their mouth. This takes us back to the problem of education, since conditions were not equal for everybody and not everybody could receive the same amount of learning.

One of the main points that need to be made about class is that it only exists when people themselves recognize its existence and behave in ways which reflect its existence. According to Marwick, there are three fundamental elements that make up class as it actually is. First of all, class is shaped by history. Originally, the notion of class dates back to the Industrial Revolution, which “steadily replaced an older society of estates and orders by one made up of the more fluid and imprecise social class.”<sup>60</sup> It is indisputable that that social class as it was in the post-war Britain, had been shaped by a lot of different events or traditions since the Industrial Revolution.

Second, class has a very strong subjective element. It is by studying what people say and write about class, by studying, that is, ‘images’ of class, that we are best able to map out a social structure which conforms with life as actually lived in the period under review, as distinct from merely being an abstract tool of analysis.<sup>61</sup>

Last of these elements is the following fact. “We can quite unequivocally perceive areas of inequality in modern society: in power, authority, wealth, income, job situation, material conditions, and culture and life styles.<sup>62</sup> If one is to put the above mentioned areas in contrast with class itself, it becomes clear that contours of class coincide with major social inequalities. In other words, if one is e.g. powerful, authoritative or wealthy, it is unlikely that this person would belong to the lowest area of class. On the other hand, if one is poor, has difficult working or living conditions, this person cannot be classified as a member of the upper class.

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<sup>59</sup> “Britain 1950,” Roland Quinault, accessed November 6, 2017. <http://www.historytoday.com/roland-quinault/britain-1950>.

<sup>60</sup> Marwick, *British Society Since 1945*, 35.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.



Before the war, the distinction between classes was rather clear. The upper-class consisted of “true landed aristocrats and successful industrialists.”<sup>63</sup> The middle-class, which was often divided into upper-middle and lower-middle, was believed to be rule the country. Sometimes, they were called *bourgeois*, which can be translated as ‘middle-class’. Then, there was the working class, which created well over 60 per cent of the employed population.<sup>64</sup> There was little ambiguity about the composition of the working class, but the basic fact remained. To be working class meant performing manual work.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Marwick, *British Society Since 1945*, 37.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.* 43.

## 2. Angry Young Men

Angry Young Men were a group of novelists and playwrights who emerged in the 1950s. The term was used for the first time in 1956 by a journalist in the Royal Court Theatre to describe John Osborne, the author of the play that became the representative work of the movement, *Look Back in Anger*.<sup>66</sup> Although they are considered a movement, it is important to note that each prose or drama writer placed under this 'label' had a different point of view on the problems of post-war Britain. The idea to put them all into one category became popular, since most of their works shared one important feature, an angry young man who was dissatisfied with a political or social situation and was letting the world around him know. Aside from John Osborne, other known 'Angry Young Men' were Kingsley Amis, Alan Sillitoe, John Wain, Colin Wilson or John Braine.

A vast majority of these intellectuals came from a working class background. The heroes or rather anti-heroes of their works despised the British class system, bore hatred towards upper-class families and their criticism was frequently aimed at the values of the welfare state. Despite all this, these anti-heroes do not seem to be interested in solving the problems that frustrate them. From their perspectives, the problems seem to be insolvable or they have resigned on trying to solve them because they did not believe that it was within their abilities. Their vigorous antipathy towards the upper-class sprung from the craving to have the same status. They desired to belong to that group, but at the same time, they could not stand the people who were somehow connected to it.

### 2.1. John Osborne

John James Osborne was born in London on 12 December 1929 and is considered to be one of the most prominent playwrights of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was born into a family of a commercial artist and a barmaid and he remained with his family until the early years of the war, when he was sent to a boarding school in the west of England.<sup>67</sup> His father died when he was 10 and Osborne never truly got over his father's death. He had a deep respect for his father and he would wail his death for the rest of his life. His mother, on the other hand, was a different story. One could go as far as to say that Osborne hated his mother. From his first success in the theatre until the day she died, he paid all her bills and invited her to all of his plays openings, only to be embarrassed by her lack of knowledge of theatre. John

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<sup>66</sup> "Angry Young Men," Encyclopedia Britannica, accessed November 10, 2017. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Angry-Young-Men>.

<sup>67</sup> Simon Trussler, *John Osborne* (London: Longmans, Green & Co. Ltd, 1969), 5.

Heilpern identified that ‘the key’ of his hatred towards his mother was provoked by the unending sense of devastation and loss caused by the death of his father.<sup>68</sup> Both of these elements are often depicted in his plays.

Osborne married five times and on top of that he had a lot of mistresses. Three of his wives were actresses and two were literary critics, which is surprising, since his opinion on actresses was that they “made impossible mistresses and even worse wives” and he famously dismissed critics as ‘treacherous parasites.’<sup>69</sup> His first four marriages turned out to be absolute disasters and it was only his fifth wife, Helen Dawson who, by the way was the only wife who took his name, with whom he was truly happy. “Until he met Helen Dawson, women defeated him. Women drove him mad.”<sup>70</sup>

John Osborne revolutionized the scene of the British theatre with his most significant play *Look Back in Anger* in 1956 and Christopher Innes shrewdly labeled him ‘the rhetoric of social alienation’.<sup>71</sup> The first performance of his masterpiece in May 1956 marks the real breakthrough of ‘the new drama’. The passion of the dialogues, together with a deliberately unglamorous depiction of everyday life, established fresh criteria for authenticity and contemporary relevance.<sup>72</sup> In the main protagonist Jimmy Porter, people saw an anger and dissatisfaction they could relate to. From the perspective of the working class, this play hit the nail on the head by locking into how people felt, since it is clear that the fundamental fury of the play is about the class wars, the marital war and the sex war.

This play is strongly biographical and does not only reflect the way Osborne felt towards his parents, but the relationship of Jimmy Porter and Alison is based on Osborne’s first marriage to an actress Pamela Lane. Although Lane’s parents came from the middle class, they disapproved of their daughter’s relationship the same way Alison’s parents did in the play and just like Alison’s mother, they hired a private investigator to trail Osborne’s activities. Another similarity can be drawn from the fact that, like Alison in the play, Lane also had a miscarriage. The way in which these two resemble is remarkable. Both Pamela and Alison were beautiful women who eluded their husband and both married impulsively despite their parents’ objections.<sup>73</sup> One final connection of the play to Osborne’s real life that needs to be

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<sup>68</sup> John Heilpern, *John Osborne: A Patriot for Us* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2006) 41.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.* 4.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.* 334.

<sup>71</sup> Christopher Innes, *Modern British Drama 1890-1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 98.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.* 98.

<sup>73</sup> Heilpern, *John Osborne: A Patriot for Us*, 114-117.

mentioned is the character of Cliff. His presence in the Porter 'ménage' also has autobiographical justification, since Osborne and his first wife lived with Anthony Creighton (who collaborated on Osborne's early plays) in his flat.<sup>74</sup>

When considering the plot of the play, one cannot seem to overlook similarities to a play written by an American playwright Tennessee Williams *A Streetcar Named Desire* in 1947. It was no secret that Williams was Osborne's inspiration when writing the play. The following point, made by John Heilpern in Osborne's biography backs this claim.

In both dramas, a refined upper-class woman was married into the lower class. Stanley Kowalski/ Jimmy Porter has blowtorched his way into "society". Each wife is brutalized by a furious outsider who wants to bring her down to his animal level. And in each play, another woman intrudes in the role of the wife's genteel sister/best friend whose facade of propriety is shattered when she's raped/seduced by the hero.<sup>75</sup>

In 1957 Osborne accomplished his second theatrical success with *The Entertainer*. This main theme of this play is again social protest, just like in *Look Back in Anger*. The main character of this play is Archie Rice, a failing music-hall performer, and like Jimmy Porter, he is of a lost generation. If one could say that Osborne's first play was about the isolation of a man and a wife, *The Entertainer* is about barriers which separate generation from generation and also about the estrangement of one whole generation at one moment in history.<sup>76</sup>

Some of other Osborne's following works were *Epitaph for George Dillon* (1958), a play he wrote with Anthony Creighton, *The World of Paul Slickey* (1959), the only musical Osborne ever attempted, *Luther* (1961), a play depicting the life of Martin Luther, *Inadmissible Evidence* (1964) and of course the very last play he ever wrote called *Déjàvu* (1992), which was a sequel to *Look Back in Anger* and it depicted the life of Jimmy Porter and Alison 30 years after the events of the first play.

Although he is considered to be one of the leading members of the Angry Young Men, the question whether he was really angry still remains. As was mentioned earlier, playwrights and novelists who were put under this name refused it and did not like to be called 'angry'. One could say that 'Angry Young Men' were just a myth. Colin Wilson analyzed Osborne's feelings in his book *The Angry Years: The Rise and Fall of the Angry Young Men* by saying

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<sup>74</sup> Innes, *Modern British Drama 1890-1990*, 99.

<sup>75</sup> Heilpern, *John Osborne: A Patriot for Us*, 116.

<sup>76</sup> Trussler, *John Osborne*, 12.

that Osborne was not angry – he was just full of sadness and nostalgia for an England that ceased to exist in 1913.<sup>77</sup>

### **3. Depiction of social frustration in *Look Back in Anger***

As was indicated earlier, social frustration in the studied play is represented by the main protagonist Jimmy Porter. The play is divided into three acts, all of which take place on Sunday in Jimmy and Alison's apartment. Jimmy is an educated young man, and cannot be labeled as working-class thanks to his education. He is "first-generation, university-educated, emerging middle-class."<sup>78</sup> His wife Alison comes from the upper-class and that is one of the reasons he takes all his anger out on her. In a way, she represents the class he loathes and detests. She married him despite her parents' protests, but that is still not enough for Jimmy. They both live in an apartment with their friend Cliff. Later in the play, Alison is visited by her friend Helena, who Jimmy vigorously hates, but who also replaces Alison as Jimmy's housewife when Alison initially leaves Jimmy.

If one is to consider the political side of the play, it can be said that the play is not a political one. Shortly after the premiere, Osborne himself declared that he is not a politician but a playwright, and therefore the only valid statement he could make is in the theatre.<sup>79</sup> On the other hand, there are some political references. In one of his outbursts, Jimmy is attacking the preferential treatment of the upper-class people, namely Alison's brother Nigel. Despite the fact that Jimmy has a university degree, it is the upper-class Nigel who will 'make it' in the politics.

Have you ever seen her brother? Brother Nigel? The straight-backed, chinless wonder from Sandhurst? (...) He'll end up in the Cabinet one day, make no mistake. (...) Now Nigel is just about as vague as you can get without being actually invisible. And invisible politicians aren't much use to anyone – not even to his supporters!<sup>80</sup>

In this case, Jimmy is angry because everything is the same. He is attacking the status quo of society. That is one of the themes throughout the whole play. He is angry, because even though he has the proper education, Nigel, as a representative of the upper-class will always be ahead of him, no matter what he does. Jimmy feels that he is being denied political

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<sup>77</sup> Colin Wilson, *The Angry Years: The Rise and Fall of the Angry Young Men* (London: Pavilion Books, 2014) 94.

<sup>78</sup> Heilpern, *John Osborne: A Patriot for Us*, 174.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.* 233.

<sup>80</sup> John Osborne, *Look Back in Anger* (London: Faber & Faber, 1978) 26-27.

opportunities for changing the world around him.<sup>81</sup> He expected to leave behind his working-class origin by using higher education, but at the same time he is aware of the fact that he cannot change his social status only by a university degree and that frustrates him. One could go as far as to say that Jimmy is a man who has tried and failed to become middle-class.

Jimmy's anger with everything being the same is mentioned later in the play, when Alison is packing her bags and talking with her father, Colonel Redfern. Alison remarks that he is hurt because everything is changed, whereas Jimmy is hurt because everything is the same and none of them can face it.<sup>82</sup> In the play, the Colonel functions as the symbol of the Edwardian era, the peak of British colonization. But Osborne's nostalgia for this period has no political ground; it is rather a link to the imagined era of his father, who was born at the close of the century.<sup>83</sup> As it was mentioned before, Osborne loved his father very much and his feelings about his father's untimely death are projected onto the play, since Jimmy also lost his father, when he was very young.

Jimmy has a huge obsession with his father's death. The way he describes it makes one think that he wants everyone to feel just as he did when he lost his father. He would like to see everyone angry and helpless like he was. In his opinion, only people who have experienced the death of a loved one can be considered human beings.

Anyone who's never watched somebody die is suffering from a pretty bad case of virginity. For twelve months I watched my father dying – when I was ten years old. He'd come back from the war in Spain, you see. And certain god-fearing gentlemen have made such a mess of him, he didn't have long to live. Everyone knew it – even I knew it. (...) But I was the only one who cared! (...) I had to fight back my tears. At the end of twelve months, I was a veteran. (...) I learnt at an early age what it was to be angry – angry and helpless.<sup>84</sup>

Jimmy's frustration and anger could be attributed not only to the death of his father, but also to the fact that he is married to a woman above his social status. One could go as far as to say that Jimmy is not only an 'angry young man', but also a frail one. It is because of this insecurity, that he suspects Alison's devotion and loyalty, as displayed in the following quote:

When she goes out, I go through everything – trunks, cases, drawers, bookcase, everything. Why? To see if there is something of me somewhere, a reference to me. I want to know if I'm being betrayed. (...) She gets letters. Letters from her mother, letters in which I'm not mentioned at all because my name is a dirty word. And what

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<sup>81</sup> Innes, *Modern British Drama 1890-1990*, 98.

<sup>82</sup> Osborne, *Look Back in Anger*, 105.

<sup>83</sup> Heilpern, *John Osborne: A Patriot for Us*, 234.

<sup>84</sup> Osborne, *Look Back in Anger*, 86-87.

does she do? She writes back to Mummy and never mentions me at all, because I'm just a dirty word to her too.<sup>85</sup>

As for Alison's mother, Jimmy's hatred towards her is quite immense. The difference between his impression of his mother-in-law and father-in-law is enormous. As was mentioned before, Osborne based Alison's mother on the mother of his first wife, who e.g. also hired detectives to trail his activities. Alison's mother is without doubt the one responsible for all the 'bad-blood' between Jimmy and them. The hatred is mutual and as Jimmy says, it has been there ever since they first met: "Mommy and I took one quick look at each other, and, from then on, the age of chivalry was dead."<sup>86</sup> This meant that there were going to be no acts of kindness or graciousness between these two. Jimmy then goes on to describe Alison's mother with a burning rage.

I knew that, to protect her innocent young, she wouldn't hesitate to cheat, lie, bully and blackmail. Threatened with me, a young man without money, background or even looks. (...) Mummy may look over-fed and a bit flabby on the outside, but don't let that well-bred guzzler fool you. Underneath all that, she's armour plated. She's as rough as a night in a Bombay brother, and as tough as a matelot's arm. (...) That old bitch should be dead!<sup>87</sup>

On one hand, his description sounds like he is talking about a terrible human being, but on the other hand, one can see that she was just trying to protect her daughter from what she thought was going to be a painful marriage. And as it turned out, she was right. Of course, Alison does not respond which frustrates Jimmy even more and when he finds out that she is going to church with Helena, he starts raging and shouting insults at her: "You Judas! You phlegm! She's taking you with her, and you're so bloody feeble, you'll let her do it!"<sup>88</sup> It is Alison's inertness that makes Jimmy furious, but the more offensive Jimmy gets, the more Alison withdraws.

Jimmy is longing for everyone, and especially his wife to be emotional and to let her feelings show, but he rarely gets any reaction. In every single one of his attacks, he is desperate to get a response from her, rather than the silent treatment he receives. He wants her to break and start screaming at him and let him have it, but gets no response and that drives him even madder. After one of his outbursts, his remark makes it clearer how much he hates Alison's emotionlessness.

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<sup>85</sup> Osborne, *Look Back in Anger*, 49.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid. 76.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid. 77-78.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid. 88.

I rage and shout my head off, and everyone thinks “poor chap!” or “what an objectionable young man!” But that girl there can twist your arm off with her silence. I’ve sat in this chair in the dark for hours. And, although she knows I’m feeling as I feel now, she’s turned over, and gone to sleep.<sup>89</sup>

Alison is well-aware of the fact that her silence is one of the things that triggers Jimmy’s outbursts of anger. She even says this herself when she is talking to Cliff alone. It seems that both she and Jimmy always take the more difficult road, rather than taking the easy way out by giving the other person what they want.

I pretended not to be listening – because I knew that would hurt him, I suppose. And – of course – he got savage, like tonight. (...) I suppose it would have been so easy to say “Yes, darling, I know just what you mean. I know what you’re feeling. It’s those easy things that seem to be so impossible with us.”<sup>90</sup>

In the same conversation, Alison reveals to Cliff that she is pregnant and they go on to talk about her relationship with Jimmy. The hypothesis that Jimmy wants Alison to speak her mind, no matter what she feels, is supported by what Cliff says when Alison talks about her virginity and how Jimmy felt about it. “I’ve never heard you talking like this about him. He’d be quite pleased.”<sup>91</sup> However, the problem is that she would never tell it to Jimmy directly, since that is exactly what he would want and she cannot give him the satisfaction.

At one of the rare moments when Alison, strengthened by Helena’s presence, openly reacts to Jimmy’s insults, the stage direction says: “The wild note in her voice has re-assured him. His anger cools and hardens. His voice is calm when he speaks.”<sup>92</sup> In other words, by reacting to his bait, Alison gives Jimmy exactly what he wants from her. He wants her to stand up to him and to actually say what is on her mind. It makes him feel better when people express their anger openly.

Jimmy’s desire for people around him to be emotional or even enthusiastic is apparent from the start of the play. Even though he is assaulting her throughout the whole play, Jimmy wants Alison to interact with him and to give him a piece of her mind. However, she and Cliff just let him rant about whatever he is feeling angry about at the moment and that is another thing that frustrates him. The way he tries to motivate them to express their opinions suggests that he considers them to be ignorant and passive. He wants them to embrace their emotions and to express them.

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<sup>89</sup> Osborne, *Look Back in Anger*, 90.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid. 38.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid. 41.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid. 76.



Oh heavens, how I long for a little ordinary human enthusiasm. Just enthusiasm – that’s all. I want to hear a warm, thrilling voice cry out Hallelujah! Hallelujah! I’m alive! I’ve an idea. Why don’t we have a little game? Let’s pretend that we’re human beings, and that we’re actually alive. Just for a while. What do you say? Let’s pretend we’re human.<sup>93</sup>

Another great example of Jimmy’s eagerness for people expressing their minds is his opinion on Alison’s friend Webster. Despite the fact that he actually comes from the upper-class Jimmy hates, he says he respects him. Alison goes on to refer to something Jimmy had said about Webster sometime before, and that is that he is the only person among her friends who speaks Jimmy’s language.

Jimmy: Different dialect but same language. I like him. He’s got bite, edge, drive –

Alison: Enthusiasm.

Jimmy: You’ve got it. When he comes here, I begin to feel exhilarated. He doesn’t like me, but he gives me something, which is more than I get from most people. (...) He’s the only one of your friends who’s worth tuppence.<sup>94</sup>

This example shows that Jimmy is willing to compromise to get what he craves for, in this case enthusiasm. Webster and Alison’s father are the only two people Jimmy speaks of with at least a bit of respect and dignity. After a brief discussion about Webster, Jimmy goes back to badmouthing Alison’s friends, and again does not forget to throw her parents in the mix as well. “They’re either militant like her Mummy and Daddy. Militant, arrogant and full of malice. Or vague. She’s somewhere between the two.”<sup>95</sup>

Jimmy’s focus shifts back to Alison, after he circles back to one of the cores of his anger – Alison’s lack of expressiveness. When describing her and her brother, he uses words like sycophantic, phlegmatic and pusillanimous. By using words like these, Jimmy is showing off his knowledge of English and the fact that he is well-educated. He even starts using the word ‘pusillanimous’ as a name for Alison. In this scene, Jimmy asserts that with Alison’s upper-class background, she could have chosen a more suitable man than he is, who could have offered her a ‘better world’ than he did. On top of that, he invents a name for himself to be called in this ‘story’ – Sextus.

Not just an adjective in the English language to describe her with – it’s her name! Pusillanimous! It sounds like some fleshy Roman matron, doesn’t it? The Lady Pusillanimous seen here with her husband Sextus, on their way to the Games. (...) The

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<sup>93</sup> Osborne, *Look Back in Anger*, 17-18.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.* 23.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.* 25.

Lady Pusillanimous has been promised a brighter easier world than old Sextus can ever offer to her.<sup>96</sup>

Jimmy's need for Alison to experience the feeling of losing someone close leads to a cruel prediction. He feels that a personal experience in this particular field is what she needs to understand his frustration; she needs to be personally confronted with death. Alison is already pregnant at this stage, but Jimmy does not know it yet.

Oh, my dear wife, you've got so much to learn. I only hope you learn it one day. If only something – something would happen to you, and wake you out of your beauty sleep! If you could have a child, and it would die! Let it grow; let a recognizable human face emerge from that little mass of indiarubber and wrinkles. Please – if only I could watch you face that. I wonder if you might even become a recognizable human being yourself. But I doubt it.<sup>97</sup>

Jimmy's wish is revisited in the second act of the play when Alison goes to church with Helena. He feels betrayed that Alison is going to church despite the fact that she does not believe in any religion. Therefore, he again expresses his wish to see Alison hit rock bottom. His exact words are: "I want to stand up in your tears, and splash about in them, and sing. I want to be there when you grovel. I want to be there, I want to watch it, I want the front seat. I want to see your face rubbed in the mud – that's all I can hope for. There's nothing else I want any longer."<sup>98</sup>

His prediction could be seen as a curse against the future as well. If one is to consider the child as a symbol of a meaningful future, after Alison miscarries, this future has vanished. In the last act, when Alison returns and informs Jimmy that she had lost the child and that he got what he wanted, Jimmy finally realizes what she had gone through and suddenly switches from being offensive and insulting to being consoling and comforting.

Alison: Don't you understand? It's gone! It's gone! That helpless human being inside my body. I thought it was so safe, and secure in there. (...) But it's lost. All I wanted was to die. I never knew what it was like. I was in pain, and all I could think of was you, and what I'd lost. I thought: if only he could see me now, so stupid, and ugly and ridiculous. This is what he's been longing for me to feel. This is what he wants to splash about in! I'm in the fire, and I'm burning, and all I want is to die. It's cost him his child, and any others I might have had! But what does it matter – this is what he wanted from me! Don't you see! I'm in the mud at last! I'm groveling! I'm crawling!

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<sup>96</sup> Osborne, *Look Back in Anger*, 29.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.* 52.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.* 91.

Jimmy: Don't. Please don't. I can't. You're all right. You're all right now. Please, I-I... Not anymore. <sup>99</sup>

It is at this point in the play that Alison has finally hit rock bottom. Only when she finally breaks down in tears and shows Jimmy that she can express her emotion by expressing her thoughts about their lost child does Jimmy finally stop being hurtful towards her. To relieve her from the pain, he resorts to the 'bear and squirrel' game. They often fantasize about these two creatures in order to forget their problems. This fantasy world offers them the feeling of safety and tenderness and that is why Jimmy uses this fantasy when he sees Alison struggling at the very end of the play.

We'll be together in our bear's cave and our squirrel's drey, and we'll live on honey, and nuts – lots and lots of nuts. And we'll sing songs about ourselves - about warm trees and snug caves, and lying in the sun. And you'll keep those big eyes on my fur, and help me keep my claws in order, because I'm a bit of sappy, scruffy sort of a bear. And I'll see that you keep that sleek, bushy tail glistening as it should, because you're a very beautiful squirrel, but you're none too bright either, so we've got to be careful. There are cruel steel traps lying about everywhere, just waiting for rather mad, slightly satanic, and very timid little animals, right? <sup>100</sup>

Jimmy's relationship with both women in the play is quite similar. At the beginning of both acts one and three, Alison and Helena respectively are depicted as submissive housewives. Yet, towards the end of the play their actions are more directed to Jimmy's well-being rather than their own. This symbolizes the inferiority of women at that time. Although Osborne has been accused of being a misogynist by many critics, he asserted that he was trying to restore a vision of true masculinity into twentieth century culture that he considered to be increasingly feminized.

When Helena decides to leave Jimmy upon Alison's return, Jimmy again attacks both women's attitude towards his insults, by claiming that "they all want to escape from the pain of being alive and most of all, from love."<sup>101</sup> He suggests that rather than experiencing pain and hurt, they both chose to run away. He is referring to Alison's departure as well, since she chose to leave him, before returning to him at the end of the play. Before Helena leaves, he mentions another deep thought about love.

It's no good trying to fool yourself about love. You can't fall into it like a soft job without dirtying your hands. It takes muscle and guts. And if you can't bear the thought of messing up your nice, clean soul, you'd better give up the whole idea of

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<sup>99</sup> Osborne, *Look Back in Anger*, 150-151.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid. 151.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid. 147.

life, and become a saint. Because you'll never make it as a human being. It's either this world or the next.<sup>102</sup>

In this scene, Jimmy again goes back to one of his pivotal thoughts – that to be a human being, one must ache and feel some kind of pain. He is describing the darker side of love; he asserts that it is not all sunshine and rainbows when one is in love and that when struggles come, one must face them and rise to the challenge in order to prevail. That is what both Helena and Alison lack in his opinion.

Earlier in the same act, when Cliff tells him that he is leaving, Jimmy says to Cliff: “You’re worth a half a dozen Helenas to me or to anyone.”<sup>103</sup> This suggests that his friendship with Cliff is more important to him than his relationship to Helena. He goes on to wonder “why do we have to let these women bleed us to death”<sup>104</sup> to proclaim that he feels that behind every failure in the world, one must look for a woman. This might be yet another reason for his frustration and for the way he acts towards the two aforementioned women.

Although it was asserted that the play is not a political one, the political situation of the time seems to be one of the things, Jimmy is concerned about. When reading the Sunday papers, he repeatedly discusses politics, as well as religion. In the last act this is observed by Helena, when she says: “Jimmy, can we have one day, just one day, without tumbling over religion or politics?”<sup>105</sup>

Helena seems to be understanding Jimmy more and more as the play goes on. At the end of the play, she claims to have discovered the problem behind Jimmy’s attitude towards everything.

He was born out of his time. (...) There’s no place for people like that any longer – in sex or politics, or anything. That’s why he’s so futile. Sometimes, when I listen to him, I feel he thinks he’s still in the middle of the French Revolution. (...) He doesn’t know where he is, or where he’s going. He’ll never do anything, and he’ll never amount to anything.<sup>106</sup>

Jimmy’s struggle seems to be about the lack of opportunities to fight for something. Idealizing the past, he sees himself as a product of Britain’s past. All the conquests and empires compared to the present unfulfilling American age, Jimmy’s anger and dissatisfaction are often intertwined with nostalgia. The following quote is a perfect example of that.

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<sup>102</sup> Osborne, *Look Back in Anger*, 148.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid. 131.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid. 123.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid. 142.

I suppose people of our generation aren't able to die for good causes any longer. We had all that done for us, in the thirties and the forties when we were still kids. There aren't any good, brave causes left. If the big bang does come, and we all get killed off, it won't be in aid of the old-fashioned, grand design. It'll just be for the Brave-New-nothing-very-much-thank-you. About as pointless and inglorious as stepping in front of a bus.<sup>107</sup>

Jimmy uses a specific example of Britain defeating the Nazi's in World War II as Britain's last great cause. He would like to have something to fight and maybe even die for, something he could channel his anger into, but his impression is that there is nothing like that left. Therefore, he takes his frustration out on those around him. He is an angry young man, whose frustration can be attributed to the shortage of things he would like to have, such as 'good causes to die for', expressiveness and enthusiasm of the people around him and, of course, a class to belong to.

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<sup>107</sup> Osborne, *Look Back in Anger*, 132.

## 4. Conclusion

John Osborne was definitely one of the most famous authors who were titled ‘Angry Young Men’. The autobiographical segments projected onto his masterpiece *Look Back in Anger* point at social frustration of a working-class man, longing to belong into the detested upper-class, which was the main desire of all these authors. Despite the fact that they refused to be labeled as a movement or a group, it is abundantly clear that their anger came first and foremost from the class distinction in Britain.

Jimmy Porter in particular is a peculiar young man, who likes to express his anger openly and besides upper-classes, he also hates when people cannot express their feelings. His hatred towards his wife Alison is fueled by the mixture of these two. He hates the lack of enthusiasm in people in his life, as well as he longs for everyone to feel as frustrated and angry as he feels. This desire can be traced back to the death of Osborne’s own father, which is one of the many autobiographical aspects of the play. The disillusionment of Jimmy Porter can also be attributed to the criticized inefficiency of the policies of the welfare state, which is why he feels it is useless for him to pursue a political career. Politics of his time is one of other matters that get Jimmy going. Although there are rarely remarks aimed at a specific political problem, by reading the papers every Sunday and commenting on them, he is indirectly criticizing the political side of things in Britain as well.

The introduction of the play marked the new era of British drama and it introduced a new angry anti-hero who represented the way many people felt back then. That is why it was such a success - the raw emotions of Jimmy Porter along with his criticism showed people something they had not seen before in a theatre. Additionally, it is definitely Jimmy’s nostalgia for the days gone, which is a source of his frustration. He feels like he was born out of his time and that there is nothing for him to fight for. That is why he just spits around insults and torments his wife, as if she was the one responsible.

A similar wave of authors to the Angry Young Men emerged in America and they were called The Beat Generation. It can be said with certainty that both these movements focused on anti-establishment literature and their works paved the way for the upcoming movements. They broke down the doors of censorship and opened the way toward social liberation. One of the main thoughts behind these so-called movements was that Man is not a robot, but a creative, spontaneous living being.

## 5. Resumé

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá vykreslením sociální frustrace ve stěžejním díle anglického dramatika Johna Osborna, *Ohlédni se v hněvu*. Osborne byl považován za jednoho z hlavních představitelů Rozhněvaných mladých mužů, anglické literární skupiny, která vznikla v 50. letech 20. století.

První oddíl teoretické části se věnuje politickému vývoji v poválečné Británii. V prvních poválečných volbách se překvapivě k moci dostala Labouristická strana, která porazila konzervativce, což vedlo k tomu, že pozici předsedy vlády obsadil Clement Attlee. Ačkoliv Churchill se osvědčil jako skvělý předseda vlády během války, v Británii převládal názor, že by nebyl správnou volbou pro poválečnou rekonstrukci.

Británie byla po druhé světové válce v hluboké ekonomické a finanční krizi a zoufale potřebovala peníze. Během války byl v Americe schválen tzv. Zákon o půjčce a pronájmu, který umožňoval prezidentu USA zapůjčit nebo pronajmout válečný materiál zemím, jejichž obranu považoval za nezbytně důležitou pro obranu USA. Na základě této dohody po válce vznikl tzv. Marshallův plán, který měl Británii pomoci dostat se ze zmíněné finanční a ekonomické krize.

Vzestup Labouristické strany přinesl spoustu změn v britské politice. Jednou z nejdůležitějších bylo zestátnění jistých průmyslových odvětví. Další důležitou změnou byla konstituční reforma, která přinesla tři zásadní změny. První z nich bylo snížení moci Sněmovny Lordů pozdržovat novou legislativu ze dvou let na jeden. Druhým byl zákon z roku 1948, který zakázal veškeré pluralitní hlasování. Třetí změna se týkala odborů a placení tzv. politických poplatků.

Ve zmiňovaném období v Británii bylo mnoho stávek ve spoustě odlišných odvětvích a po určité době bylo zřejmé, že Británie si nedokáže udržet svoje rozsáhlé Impérium. Jedním z prvních náznaků této skutečnosti, bylo udělení nezávislosti Indii v roce 1947. Po Indii následovali další země, které se postupně začaly osamostatňovat.

Konzervativní strana se vrátila k moci v roce 1951 po předčasných volbách, ve kterých si labouristé chtěli pošetile upevnit svoji pozici. To se jim ale nepodařilo a potkal je stejný osud jako konzervativce v poválečných volbách. Paradoxem bylo, že Labouristická strana sice získala více hlasů, nicméně konzervativci vyhráli ve větším počtu volebních obvodů, a proto se ke kormidlu jako předseda vlády vrátil Winston Churchill, pro něhož to bylo již třetí

období v této funkci. Nicméně už nebyl nejmladší a při nemoci zapříčiněnými absencemi musel spoléhat na R.A. Butlera, který vykonával funkci ministra financí. Churchillův zdravotní stav nakonec vedl k jeho rezignaci, po které ho nahradil jeho tehdejší zástupce, Anthony Eden. Jeden z prvních kroků Anthonyho Edena byly předčasné volby, které konzervativcům zajistili 345 míst, zatímco labouristé jich získali 277. Tato porážka dále vedla k rezignaci Clementa Attleeho, kterého v čele Labouristické strany nahradil Hugh Gaitskell.

Další důležitou událostí tohoto období byla Suezská krize z roku 1956, která měla kořeny již v událostech z Egypta z předchozích let. Egypt se po vzoru Indie snažil získat nezávislost, a když se k moci dostal plukovník Gamel Abdul Nasser, nakonec se mu tohoto podařilo dosáhnout. Samotná Suezská krize spočívala v anglicko-francouzské invazi Suezského průplavu. Další zemí, která byla do tohoto konfliktu zapojená byl Izrael, který po tajné domluvě s Brity a Francouzi zaútočil na Egypt, čímž krize začala.

Konec 50. let 20. století se nesl v duchu takzvaného Butskellismu, což byl termín pro podobnosti v ekonomických záměrech R.A. Butlera a Hugh Gaitskella. Po Suezské krizi se však do pozice předsedy vlády nedostal ani jeden z nich, nýbrž Harold Macmillan, jehož prvním úkolem bylo vypořádat se s následky Suezské krize. Macmillan si nemyslel, že jeho administrativa vydrží dlouho, jelikož vláda byla demoralizovaná a deprimovaná zmíněnou krizí. Jeho vláda potřebovala nabít sebevědomí a ujistit svět, že Británie ještě neskončila. Z jeho perspektivy ležela budoucnost Británie s Commonwealthem a především s USA. I přes toto byl Macmillan prvním předsedou vlády, který uznal, že budoucnost Británie leží spíše s Evropou než s Amerikou.

Druhý oddíl teoretické části se věnuje sociální situaci v poválečné Británii, se zaměřením na konkrétní oblasti, které zaznamenaly změny prostřednictvím určitých reforem. Veškeré reformy, které v Británii po válce nastaly, měli kořeny v tzv. Beveridgeově zprávě, kterou její autor předložil britské vládě v roce 1942. Šlo o vyznačení cesty, kterou by se Británie měla po válce vydat, co se týče sociálních reforem a jejím hlavním cílem bylo dosažení tzv. sociálního státu.

William Beveridge přednesl v roce 1942 britskému parlamentu svoji zprávu, ve které analyzoval systém sociálního zabezpečení, který by měl stát implementovat na konci války. Ve zprávě identifikoval 5 základních problémů, které byly chťič, nemoc, ignorance, bída a nečinnost.



Převedení jeho zprávy do skutečnosti znamenalo reformy v následujících 5 odvětvích. Sociální zabezpečení, zdravotní péče, ubytování, vzdělání a nezaměstnanost. V poválečném období se na všech 5 oblastí vztahovaly nové legislativy, aby bylo dosaženo kýženého blahobytu pro všechny.

Další kapitola je věnována rozdělení na sociální třídy, které v Británii existovalo již od Průmyslové revoluce na přelomu 18. a 19. století. Podle Arthura Marwicka existují 3 základní elementy, které tvoří sociální třídu a ty jsou v této kapitole zmíněny. V poválečném období začala na povrch vystupovat nová třída, která byla většinou nazývána dělnická střední třída. Členové, kteří patřili do této třídy měli díky sociálnímu státu poněkud vyšší vzdělání, než jejich předkové z dělnické třídy, a tím pádem toužili po lepších zaměstnáních, kterým se jim však nedostávalo. Toto vedlo k jejich frustraci, stejně jako tomu bylo v případě Jimmyho Portera ve studované hře *Ohlédni se v hněvu*.

Posledním oddílem teoretické části je zmínka o Rozhněvaných mladých mužích a konkrétně potom o Johnu Osbornovi. Rozhněvaní mladí muži byla skupina novelistů a dramatiků, kteří ve svých dílech kritizovali sociální stát a poválečný stav Británie. Většina těchto autorů pocházela z dělnické třídy, a proto byla jejich kritika mířená hlavně na vyšší třídu. Výjimkou nebyl ani zmíněný John Osborne, jehož nejznámější divadelní hra *Ohlédni se v hněvu* značí v Británii počátek moderního dramatu. Osborne divákům prostřednictvím Jimmyho Portera představil nový druh anti-hrdiny, jež dává najevo svoji nespokojenost a hněv. Důvod proč tato hra měla tak obrovský úspěch je jednoduchý. Drtivá většina lidí z dělnické třídy se cítila naprosto stejně, jako Jimmy Porter.

Analytická část této práce se soustředí na Jimmyho Portera a jeho hněv a frustraci ve zmíněné hře. Jimmy žije v bytě v podkroví se svojí manželkou Alison a jejich přítelem Cliffem. Jimmy pochází z dělnické třídy, zatímco Alison pochází z vyšší třídy obyvatelstva a to je jeden z důvodů, proč si na ní Jimmy vybíjí svůj vztek a frustraci. Alison pro něj reprezentuje třídu, kterou vášnivě nenávidí, ale zároveň by do ní rád patřil.

Tato hra není hrou politickou, ač by se tak mohlo zdát, nicméně vyskytují se v ní nějaké politické reference. Tato práce se soustředí na analýzu hlavního protagonisty, respektive na analýzu jeho hněvu a frustrace. V analytické části jsou použity specifické příklady ze hry, které jsou rozebrány a je na nich příkladně definován zmíněný hněv a frustrace.

Po analytické části lze jednoznačně říci, že Jimmy Porter je frustrovaný ze tří důvodů. Prvním z nich je jeho nenávisť k vyšší třídě. I přesto, že svoji ženu miluje, její původ je neustále předmětem jeho útoků a urážek. Zároveň Jimmy hoří nenávisť k její rodině, která stále patří do vyšší třídy. Druhým je fakt, že Jimmy nesnáší, když lidé nedokáží vyjádřit svoje emoce a raději je v sobě dusí. Tohle je opět ve hře častým důvodem sporů mezi manžely. Alison raději mlčí a tím podněcuje Jimmyho agresivitu. Posledním důvodem jeho frustrace z nedostatku věcí, pro které by člověk mohl bojovat. Protože se hra odehrává v poválečné době, Jimmy si myslí, že nemá za co bojovat, jelikož všechny války už byly vyhrány předchozí generací.

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