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Working-Class Heroics:
The Intersection of Class and Space in British Post-War Writing

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Given this project's topic, it is only right that I dedicate it to my friends and family—both in the U.S. and back home. But it is also dedicated to the memory of Dave Wallace—an irreplaceable and much-missed friend, the one who set this whole thing in motion.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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by

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Working-Class Heroics: The Intersection of Class and Space in British Post-War Writing explores the influence of the built environment on class consciousness as represented in the British kitchen sink realism movement of the late 1950s and early 1960s. As a movement that used gritty, documentary-style depictions of space to highlight complexities of working-class life, the period's texts chronicled shifts in the social and topographic landscape while advancing new articulations of citizenship in response to the failures of post-war reconstruction. I refer to such articulations as the "working-class imaginary"—a stance identifiable across kitchen sink texts in which spaces that prescribe social limitation are remapped as sites of plenitude and potency. This stance, I argue, mirrors incipient youth subculture, situating working-class identities as dynamic and contingent yet susceptible to commodification. In considering the impact of space on class, I address Nigel Thrift and Peter Williams' contention that academic discourse has overlooked the way the built environment informs class identity. Recent analysis in the social sciences has opened the door to such debates, but literary scholarship has yet to

fully embrace this juncture, rendering it as a particularly rich site of inquiry. The result is a project that highlights the settings of a variety of novels, plays, and films, offering a fresh outlook on the way spatial representation in cultural production sustains or intervenes in the process of social stratification. In doing so, the project advances formal methods by which to assess representations of working-class culture in terms of ethical and aesthetic objectives. Given the wave of political unrest breaking across the Western world, *Working-Class Heroics: The Intersection of Class and Space in British Post-War Writing* offers a timely study of the influence of the environment on class identity, looking to cultural production as both a barometer and an engine of contemporary citizenship.

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If you are going to write about the people, then one must do them justice, by writing about them in such a way that you hold their voice with yours, so that no one can detect the seams of such an amalgamation.

—Alan Sillitoe, unpublished note[1]

[1] This particular typescript is titled "Wider Spiritual Horisons [*sic*]" but it is unclear if Sillitoe intended to develop it as a complete essay.

Introduction: The Problem of Space and Class

Concerns about class and class culture are at a boiling point. Political disruptions currently breaking across the Western world are couched in terms of class anxiety, exacerbated by individuals seeking to exploit social division for personal and political gain. The result is the increased scapegoating of minorities as well as the demonization of immigrant refugees—sentiments accelerated by populist and xenophobic rhetoric. Yet, the manipulation of class anxieties has a historical lineage in British culture, and today's concerns reflect the concerns of the past. For example, Conservative MP Enoch Powell's "Rivers of Blood" speech, delivered in April of 1968, mobilized working-class people as part of a nationalist effort to prohibit immigration under the auspices of "preserving heritage." Powell's message was that Commonwealth immigration posed an impending threat to British culture, responsible, he claimed, for an increase in violent crime in urban centers. As Paul Gilroy commented, Powell's stance on immigration policy—and his vocal opposition to the 1965 Race Relations Act[2]—speculated how such a program might "assist[s] in the process of making Britain great again" in that it "restores an ethnic symmetry to a world distorted by imperial adventure and migration" (46). Powell's populist rhetoric sought to link British working-class culture to nationalist concerns, suggesting that issues such as unemployment were the fault of non-white immigrants, leading to a series of hate crimes carried out over chants of the MP's surname. These claims found a surprising surge of support from white dock workers, miners, and laborers

[2] The Race Relations Act outlawed discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity and race. The first Act, however, only addressed racial discrimination in public spaces; the 1968 Act addressed this by extending the law to housing, employment, and advertising.

who, as Camilla Schofield insists, lacked the critical capacity to recognize such brazenly calculating rhetoric (241). As Gilroy adds, it was only after the 1980s that Powell's working-class supporters fully comprehended their exploitation as political pawns in that, concerning policy, they were viewed no differently from the racialized Other that Powell's speech incriminated. Following the unambiguously racist speech, Powell was promptly relieved of his position by Edward Heath and his rhetoric was widely condemned by his peers. Although Margaret Thatcher, MP for the North London region of Finchley at the time, conceded that aspects of Powell's speech were a tad incendiary, his influence resonated through her subsequent politics of disenfranchisement, deindustrialization, nationalism, and penchant for retrograde cultural nostalgia, euphemistically packaged and sold as heritage.

Today's class anxiety echoes much of what Powell accomplished in 1968, only the populist rhetoric deployed today is disseminated through global channels. Having said that, working-class people—as key players in today's political disruption—have sufficient reasons for frustration. The policies of social mobility implemented in the years following World War II only went so far, and, to this day, working-class people experience inordinate barriers in life. The result is that such groups have faced new levels of alienation and demonization, and the proliferation of class stereotypes has led to increased intra-class divisions. In the revised preface to the new edition of *Chavs: The Demonization of the Working Class*, Owen Jones outlines prevalent reasons why working-class people in twenty-first century Britain are viewed so poorly. But Jones also underscores the impact of representations of the working-class on social status, noting

how tabloids and media depictions of class amplify social anxiety further. The result is shared immiseration in search of a populist uprising—an uprising susceptible to the machinations of figures like Enoch Powell who capitalize on such sentiments. Given that working-class cultural identities have become increasingly lucrative, with TV shows like *Shameless* and *Benefits Street* foregrounding gritty lives in a manner described by critics as "poverty porn," it behooves us to pay closer attention to the way class is informed and sustained as a consequence of cultural production. With working-class representation on the rise, discerning authorial intent proves increasingly challenging.

However, what constitutes authenticity in working-class cultural production is a thorny topic, but one that Sherry Lee Linkon helped resolve in a 2010 blog post, "Why Working-Class Literature Matters." Addressing the role of authorial authenticity in working-class fiction, Linkon positions class concerns and characteristics as a theoretical lens through which to read a text, arguing that a critic's focus should be on "describing the qualities of working-class literary texts, rather than policing boundaries that define who has the authority to write them." In other words, a working-class reading is analogous to a queer reading, or a psychoanalytic reading, opening the text itself up to interpretations that sidestep authorial authenticity. Having said that, working-class cultural production tends to privilege authenticity as a broadly-used trope, representing class in a way that borders on documentary-style representation. And it is this particular notion—working-class writing's allegiance to verisimilitude—that anchors this project, allowing for a new framework by which to evaluate depictions of working-class life, gauging authenticity through aesthetics rather than through identities. In doing so, the

project moves us closer to understanding how class anxiety is mobilized in contemporary culture—or, more specifically, the way it is susceptible to manipulation by various means.

Locating the Kitchen Sink

This dissertation centers on what is commonly known as the kitchen sink movement—a short-lived body of British cultural production existing from the late 1950s to the early 1960s. Encompassing novels, plays, television, and films, the movement made a lasting impression on the arts with today's cultural production often citing work produced during this time. Yet, these texts remain relatively sidelined in terms of the canon, prevailing more as cult classics that embody a certain style and sensibility that, in recent decades, has become increasingly commodified. Characterized by their unambiguous embrace of gritty working-class settings—a culture associated with many industrial regions of England—kitchen sink realism's contribution to working-class representation is unique. Yet, despite regular references in contemporary culture, critical scholarship has been lax in fully considering the movement's reverberations. Starting with John Osborne's 1956 play *Look Back in Anger*, and arguably ending with Nell Dunn's 1963 collection of vignettes, *Up the Junction*, the movement responded to a dynamic moment of transition in British culture. It should be taken into account that while 1963 serves as somewhat of a bookend, kitchen sink realism's aesthetics lingered long after in television shows like *Coronation Street* which carried the movement's key tropes well into the twenty-first century.

The movement builds on principles of social realism—specifically through a documentary-style allegiance to verisimilitude that sought neither to glamorize nor hyperbolize class representation. Instead, the movement aimed to give voice to members of the British public historically marginalized from the stage, the page, and the screen—at least in terms of representational fidelity. The movement, in part, offered a corrective to depiction problems of the past, rejecting the stereotypical characterization often associated with the social novel and drawing-room comedies while also testing the limits of realist aesthetics. The "kitchen sink" of the title refers to David Sylvester's 1954 discussion of social realist art such as that of John Bratby, Jack Smith, and Derrick Greaves. Delivered as a pejorative, Sylvester's term referred to an artistic style characterized by morose intemperance, with the author noting how "The post-war generation takes us back from the studio to the kitchen" in which "every kind of food and drink, every kind of utensil and implement . . . the kitchen sink too" is on display (62). But Sylvester's main contention was that such images lack thematic flair: "The point is that it is a very ordinary kitchen, lived in by a very ordinary family. There is nothing to hint that the man about the house is an artist or anything but a very ordinary bloke" (62). While Sylvester's invective addressed a specific group of painters, the name is aptly suited for the movement in that a morose fascination with the conventional is one of its calling cards.

In addition to the kitchen sink label, the movement is sometimes referred to by the inelegant moniker, "Angry Young Men," with key figures granted the shorthand label of "Angries." The moniker emerged from a press agent's promotional material

accompanying the Royal Court Theater's premiere of *Look Back in Anger*, suggesting that Osborne himself was the angry young man. Despite the label's swift rejection by all involved with the movement, it does reflect a key motif that runs through the texts of the period: that of disaffected, alienated youth, failed by a legislature promising to address social issues in the post-war years. The description maps onto the nature of a number of the movement's more notorious protagonists, such as *Look Back in Anger's* Jimmy Porter, and Arthur Seaton from Alan Sillitoe's 1958 novel, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*. Jim Dixon, the hapless protagonist of Kingsley Amis' 1954 novel *Lucky Jim* is often viewed as the original "Angry," but following the release of Osborne's play, critics looked back on *Lucky Jim* to reconsider it as a precursor.[3] Amis' text certainly demonstrates aspects of the characteristic alienation expressed in the work of later "Angry" writers, but the similarity stops there. In fact, it can be argued that Keith Waterhouse's 1959 novel *Billy Liar* acts as a corrective by taking aspects of Jim Dixon and decanting the character into a more fitting working-class context.

While the "angry" label was ill-suited for many of the writers themselves (Osborne is somewhat of an exception), such a characterization does facilitate understanding of one of the movement's more innovative social observations: the fragmentation of monolithic working-class identity into a more disarticulated and autonomous mode of class consciousness, anticipating the nature of an incipient subculture that emerged and calcified throughout much of the 1960s. Texts such as

[3] Bertolt Brecht's *Baal* (1918) is also cited as a precursor, but stylistic and thematic disparities render such comparison a stretch.

Saturday Night and Sunday Morning and *A Taste of Honey* provide clear-cut examples of working-class individuals' renegotiation of class identity in relation to local conditions, echoed in Colin Wilson's 1956 nonfiction text, *The Outsider*—a text that anticipates subcultural identities as well as providing a theoretical framework for the "Angry" motif. Such disarticulation is never fully enunciated, per se, but made apparent by kitchen sink texts' heightened emphasis on isolationism and the characterization of individuals who deliberate on whether or not to remove themselves from their local community. Given that communities represented in such texts are deeply classed, the novels, plays, and films of the time question the value of clinging to working-class traditions, posing instead alternative modes of class identity.

Furthermore, the texts of this period take representation to new levels. On the one hand, the degree of grit associated with kitchen sink realism can be read as an aesthetic technique akin to Victorian spectacularization—a way to shock audiences with candid representations of working-class realities. On the other, social purpose is palpable in that the writers of the time, considerate of the alienating propensities of realism, democratized representational methods for a wider portion of the British populace in that working-class people from northern industrial areas were able to connect with their own representation on new levels. While the writers associated with kitchen sink realism certainly subscribed to literary motifs of local color and tend to rely upon narrative archetypes, their focus is less of an appeal to social justice than a highlighting of a cultural sentiment of frustration surrounding the welfare state's failure to eradicate the class concerns identified in the

Beveridge Report.[4] Much of the work produced during this time is deeply testimonial with writers such as Sillitoe and Delaney recreating the worlds in which they themselves were raised, lending the texts heightened legitimacy, and speaking more directly to a working-class audience that shared their worlds. While nonfiction texts like George Orwell's *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937) and Richard Hoggart's seminal *The Uses of Literacy* (1957) rely on the same kind of ethos, such texts tend toward sepia-tinged nostalgia more commonly associated with conventional representation. The texts of the kitchen sink realism movement largely sidestep nostalgia by presenting lived experience and the struggles unique to working-class people in a markedly visceral manner. As the result, the period in which Britain moved from post-war austerity to post-war affluence marks perhaps the most expressive and vibrant example of proletarian literature to date.

Although the dynamism of the period—combined with the absence of a formal agenda—suggests an organic emergence, the movement was tactically political with specific ethical and aesthetic goals in mind. While proletarian literature of the past emphasized aesthetic and ethical objectives in tandem, the challenge of balancing such categories rendered intent as ambiguous. Consequently, this limited the efficacy of working-class texts, raising questions about allegiance to the subjects represented. For example, one of the earliest literary movements to align itself to working-class culture was the Chartist movement, combining political propaganda with Victorian sensationalist-style narratives. Although the ethical intentions of the Chartists were clear,

[4] The Beveridge Report, or 1942's "Social Insurance and Allied Services" act, is discussed in Chapter 2. In brief, the report summarized social problems in the immediate post-war years, proposing widespread solutions that would mark the emergence of the welfare state.

their aesthetic intentions were not, revealing the way Chartist writing was more grounded in propaganda than authenticity. In contrast, the working-class representation that emerged in realism and naturalism certainly bore a great deal of representational fidelity but was ultimately grounded in formal aesthetics—an institutional approach to writing that alienated working-class readers. It was not until the kitchen sink movement that ethical and aesthetic objectives united in that, while the movement sought to advance realist aesthetics, its intentions were equally ethical: to democratize the arts, granting an authentic voice to those historically sidelined. While this recalibration of intent failed to grant the movement significant notoriety, it does amount to a formal apogee in working-class writing. This particular project considers the way such recalibration raised the bar as regards to representational fidelity, allowing for an extrapolation of aesthetic principles useful in gauging subsequent working-class representation.

In terms of novels, writers such as Alan Sillitoe, Keith Waterhouse, John Braine, David Storey, Stan Barstow, and Nell Dunn are the most commonly associated with the movement. In theater, John Osborne, Shelagh Delaney, Arnold Wesker, John Arden, Michael Hastings, and Thomas Hinde are the prime movers. In film, directors such as Ken Loach, Tony Richardson, Peter Collinson, Karel Reisz, John Schlesinger, and Lindsay Anderson had the greatest impact. Nonetheless, despite its production across media formats, the kitchen sink movement saw a great deal of collaboration, with novelists like Sillitoe producing the screenplay for Reisz's films, and Tony Richardson working closely with Shelagh Delaney to bring her play to the screen. Although significant scholarly criticism exists on the films—also known as the films of the British

New Wave—few scholars touch on the degree of collaboration that existed during the time. Tropes and motifs surfaced across formats, and so it is critical to consider the movement a whole to gauge its efficacy.

Aside from the infamous Angry Young Man figure, the most recurring trope associated with the movement was the representation of space, focusing on visceral, documentary-style depictions that built on the social realist movement that preceded it. Space is no mere backdrop in kitchen sink realism and, as the movement's title suggests, an emphasis on domestic space in relation to the local community was paramount. Often, these representations mirror the spaces depicted by the painters that David Sylvester denounced, yet they sought to do something more. Rather than simply presenting the space as a stage to house narrative action, kitchen sink texts focused intently on exploring the way certain characters navigated their worlds, formulating new conceptions of class in the process. Structured upon spaces rendered unambiguously gritty and rough, kitchen sink depictions allow for a clear understanding of the way environment impacts class consciousness, demonstrating, in the process, potential approaches to sidestepping the limits and restrictions of social class. Individual figures across the movement approached this trope differently, with writers like John Osborne offering a protagonist who fails to fully comprehend the limits reflected in the world he inhabits, and writers like Shelagh Delaney or Nell Dunn offering clear-cut and somewhat radical rejections of domestic norms, transcending social limitations as reflected in their depicted worlds. As a result, kitchen sink realism is a movement that lends itself well to spatial analysis—analysis that

engages with setting to gain new understandings of the way British working-class people navigated a particularly dynamic cultural moment.

The Spatial Turn in the Humanities

The shift toward space and place as viable categories for literary analysis is often understood in the context of Edward's Soja's discussion of the "spatial turn," representing an interdisciplinary attempt to think beyond chronology as an organizing principle in the arts and social sciences. As outlined by Foucault in his discussion of heterotopic space, time has generally dominated space as a way of understanding cultural developments. The spatial turn emerged, in part, as a way to think more critically about the importance of space as the basis for understanding cultural events by destabilizing the dominance of chronology in history. As Leo Mellor has written, "Conceptualising any aesthetic in terms of locale can be useful, since it gives texture to particularity, specificity and the happenstance juxtapositions of geography that could remain obscured" (3). Terms such as "texture" and "particularity" appear often in writing associated with the spatial turn, suggesting spatial analysis' capacity to reveal certain constructs previously taken for granted or overlooked entirely. Mellor continues, "There has recently been the growth of synoptic area studies, and these trace the relationship between literature and the urban experience: with the city as character or at least shaper of a particular consciousness and the possibility of knowledge" (3). What follows is a brief overview of the "spatial turn" to clarify methodology, concepts, and approaches used in this project to read cultural

production in addition considering how the spatial turn intersects with class analysis in a manner that transcends economics and labor.

Barney Warf and Santa Arias provide an excellent overview of the emergence of the spatial turn, building on Foucault's argument of the displacement of space relative to time. Noting how major philosophical contributions to culture were largely temporal, the authors posit that it was not until the 1920s that urban analysis emerged with the Chicago School's study of patterns of immigration and ethnic communities (3). In his 2013 text *Spatiality*, Robert T. Tally registers the rising interest in space and place through his observation of the increased use of geography-specific language outside of the social sciences. Tally surveys prominent figures associated with the spatial turn to build on Foucault's rationale of de-privileging chronology, pointing toward Bertrand Westphal's claim that the Second World War impacted connections between temporality and "progress" (12). But despite interjections by groups such as the Situationist International in the 1950s and 1960s, it was only after the 1970s that a coherent trajectory of spatial theorization emerged in contrast to the more regimented and methodical approaches associate with the social sciences.[5] Henri Lefebvre's 1974 text, *The Production of Space,* is largely responsible for contemporary approaches to spatial analysis as it opened the door to new, revolutionary ways of thinking about the impact of space on cultural development.

[5] While Situationist concepts such as psychogeography certainly suggest new approaches to conceiving of the influence of space on the individual, in relation to the spatial turn, they tend to be more aligned to cartography whereas writers like Lefebvre approach space from less geographically grounded, more philosophical positions.

Warf and Arias add that the revolutionary impetus central to Lefebvre and Harvey's work helped to inaugurate the spatial turn (3). Noting that the "Marxification of space" offered a new way to think about industrialization and the regionalism of industry, the authors add that it also reunited theorizations of space to the projects established by the Situationists through an approach to social theory that sought to challenge spaces produced for purposes of labor and social stratification. This concept was also explored in Raymond Williams' *The Country and the City* (1973) in that he considered literary representations of social structures and the division of space. Moving the analysis of space from the utilitarian and empirical confines of geography into the field of social theory not only allowed for an exploration of class, it also served as the basis for resetting space alongside time as way to gauge culture. While literary theory had approached the unification of time and space through concepts such as M.M. Bakhtin's chronotope, the spatial turn was less tethered to a specific scholarly field, offering instead a broader application. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, theorists built predominantly on Lefebvre's model, expanding the spatial turn into a variety of disciplines and breathing new life into the field of geography by opening interdisciplinary pathways. Reingard Nethersole captured much of this shift in approach, suggesting that the spatial turn follows developments in a number of fields where temporality loses prominence to spatiality. For Nethersole, such shifts represent a move away from traditional conceptions of historicism, subject, and meaning:

> Thus, Foucault's rereading of Nietzsche produced genealogy in the place of Historicism, Lacan's rereading of Freud produced the notion of a forever split subject and Derrida's critique of the linguistic model (de Saussure, Pierce and followers) produced *différance*, indeterminacy and

> constant deferral of signification. Genealogy traces the exteriority of accidents not along logico-temporal lines but in a force-field, Lacan's work is based upon the so-called *Oedipal triangle*, and Derrida's emphasis upon writing (as opposed to speech) stresses spatiality in the form of graphs, gaps, and traces in texts. (63)

For Nethersole, the hope is that such shifts continue so that "stories will no longer begin with 'Once upon a time . . .' but with 'Once upon a place . . .'" (63).

Reliance on cultural production as hard scientific data is a questionable proposition, but Bertrand Westphal's influential *Geocriticism: Real and Fictional Spaces* suggests how fictive representation proves helpful in defining an overall sense of place. Paralogical discourse, Westphal contends—the kind of narrative and metaphorical representation found in fiction—provides a viable dimension of data that "seems to be more sensitive to those qualities of spatial and geographical formations that are most difficult to detect from within the established, formalized explanatory frameworks of the physical and social sciences" (14). He adds that literary representations of a locale such as pamphlets, news reports, and fictional texts enrich empirical information like cartographic data, census reports, and labor statistics to flesh out the grain and patina of a city and its inhabitants. For Westphal, such textured depictions stem from a composite of the real with the fictional in that the fictional "actualizes new virtualities that had remained unformulated" (20). These virtualities, he suggests, "interact with the real according to the hypertextual logic of interfaces," in that "fiction detects possibilities buried in the folds of the real, knowing that these folds have not been temporalized"

(20).[6] What kitchen sink texts offer is a glimpse at what the "possibilities buried within the folds of the real" might look like in that, when grounded in the intensified realism of the genre, they reveal nuanced articulations of lived experience within working-class space that renders visible the way environment informs and *transforms* lived experience on a large scale.

Yet, whereas Westphal's approach explicitly excludes spaces that lack a pre-existing body of cultural work, or spaces that resist recognition as a designated locale (for example, London would be applicable, but deserts are too intangible), Eric Prieto amends Westphal's model by suggesting how established *types* of space can still fit within his framework. Prieto writes that "This aspect of literary discourse, which Paul Ricoeur emphasizes in terms of the *indirect referentiality* of metaphor and fiction, enables them to act as a kind of midwife, drawing nebulous and spatial intuitions out of their conceptual purgatory and making them available for other, nonliterary uses" (14, emphasis in original). So, whereas Westphal makes it known that domestic space is beyond his purview (what he defines as "non-geographical places" [119]), Prieto demonstrates that *types* of place convey a universal charge on par with the study of the sort of physical, singular geographic locations that Westphal would favor. For Prieto, such an example might be squatter cities or shanty towns, and for the purposes of this project, I would argue that the environments that emerge within British working-class writing map

[6] As is true of a number of geographers after Lefebvre, Westphal's approach echoes attempts to think beyond positivist representation, drawing instead on notions of imagined and potential approaches to space.

accurately onto real, existing spaces, permitting a comprehensive depiction of lived experience ideally suited for deeper analysis.

Similar to Westphal's championing of texturizing tangible space through the integration of fictional accounts, Sten Pultz Moslund argues for what he terms "topopoetics"—a focus on the sensory link between language and landscape. Beginning with the premise that language has a physical, presencing effect akin to prosody, topopoetics would attempt to focus on the speech patterns that emerge from certain regions, linking them to the way that language itself has developed in the region. For Moslund, such an approach "may register how place is presenced in language as the product of interactions between human bodies and the world, between culture and nature—for instance, in the ways in which human experience, actions, movements, and features are described or perceived through metaphors drawn from the local climate, flora, or fauna" (37). Whereas Westphal underscores how representations of space add dimension to their real world analogs, Moslund's approach resembles practices seen through GIS integration in which region and production bond through language. While Moslund's approach lends itself to the more poetic and sensual use of language, the notion of the written word as a marker of spatial boundaries is of use to the approach that this particular project will take—especially in relation to the way dialect marks regions. My own interest in the privileging of spatial representation grounds my claim that kitchen sink texts are unique in their emphasizing of spatial interaction in a way that tracks shifts in class consciousness.

The Problem of Class and Space

Historical approaches to class delineation have relied on data distanced from the day-to-day lived experiences of the representative group they delineate. As Nigel Thrift and Peter Williams have written, class is usually registered economically rather than spatially, through quantitative or statistical markers (2). While this traditionally Weberian understanding of the working class relies on market relations for its statistics, the Marxist approach is more socially driven with the working class defined as those whose value is expressed by their necessity to sell their labor. Both approaches de-emphasize the lived experience of the individual in space, tending to situate the working class as disenfranchised statistics whose identity is imprinted upon them against their will. However, E.P. Thompson's eponymous assertion that the working class "was present at its own making" (9) suggests a degree of reciprocity that Weberian and Marxist ideologies fail to accommodate. Writers such as Richard Hoggart and George Orwell have proven instrumental in furthering comprehension of the lived experience of working-class people, yet their work often reflects a sepia-toned nostalgia that undercuts critical distance.

Furthermore, theorists have approached notions of working-class identity and lived experience from social and cultural angles, but as Thrift and Williams add, the role of the built environment in such analyses has remained curiously unexplored. Coincidentally, as Mike Savage has written, analysis of what constitutes a working-class identity has proved to be unstable. Savage points out that from the 1970s to the 1990s, the dearth of critical attention to addressing links between class and identity stems from a

general skepticism that any viable correlations between the two could emerge without reducing either category to the point of total misrepresentation (930). Yet this skepticism, grounded as it is in the positivist regimen of the social sciences, fails to consider the potential of imaginative representations of working-class identities as effective sources by which to connect lived experience with class. Counter to this, and given the nature of their production, the texts of kitchen sink realism yield a consensus of lived-experience which, although artistically sourced, reproduces nuanced working-class attitudes with alarming fidelity due to their adherence to gritty, unsentimental representation of local environs and domestic interiors.

In this regard, adopting a spatial approach to understanding the way working-class people experience their social position grants access to specific aspects of class negotiation ordinarily rendered opaque. It allows for consideration of the way that the production of spaces in culture permits ideological messaging in that encoded within certain spaces are markers that affirm and sustain social stratification. One of the most prominent examples would be the way that proximity to labor reiterates working-class peoples' class status, or how the spaces that they inhabit, which, through lack or deprivation, serve as a continual reminder of their position in society. But the way spaces themselves are coded tends to vary, with certain spaces acting as amplifiers of specific messaging and others acting as the source. Louis Althusser, in his development of Marx's notion of false consciousness, argues that ideology acts as a representation of one's imaginary relationship to the real. Because language always constructs ideology, ideology itself is inescapable. However, Althusser adds how ideology exists materially,

through customs, behavior, and apparatus. The notion of the institutional or repressive state apparatus serves as one of Althusser's more enduring critical concepts, but shifts from the abstract and the ideological to the material and the concrete warrants further analysis. In this sense, the lived experience that Thrift and Williams insist remains masked within class analysis receives new visibility through a dedicated focus on spaces of habitation and interaction with them. Consequently, historical materialism's conditions of production are expanded to consider the way that environment sustains class consciousness.

However, as this project will argue, the years following World War II reveal a shift in class consciousness where a once-monolithic notion of class solidarity begins to fragment into class articulation aligned with the rise of subcultural identities. Expressions of class transform, becoming increasingly atomized and characterized by movements and subdivisions within class perimeters. While a number of factors contribute to this process—specifically shifts in gender relations, generational divides, increasing consumerism, and frustrated social development—the impact of space within such a process is relatively ignored. Given the variety of ways that space impacts individuals, be it through limitation or totemic representations of the state, the nature of such impacts clarifies of one's social position. The novels, plays, and the films of kitchen sink realism tend to such concerns through their dedication to representing the individual in space, elucidating the way social positioning exists as a consequence. Nonetheless, these texts also consider the way ideological messaging through space is contested—a contestation that, given space's impact on class, suggests an attempt to reshape class consciousness. In

this regard, kitchen sink texts are intimately linked to the disarticulation of class in mid-century Britain, simultaneously documenting changes underway but also advancing new modalities of class expression in the process.

For Bertrand Westphal, a geocritical analysis necessitates a palimpsest of representational strategies—a way to map a space by including imaginative and creative responses produced through the arts. While this study certainly reveals the way such methods produce a more lucid understanding of space, my investment is in situating kitchen sink texts within a trajectory of cultural production, demonstrating their value as ways to assess the efficacy of subsequent representation. With the ensuing disarticulation of working-class culture into subcultural entities, class becomes primed for commodification and exploitation. As Dick Hebdige has observed, commodification of subcultural style serves as a lucrative endeavor but also as a way to strip a movement of its revolutionary capacity. In this regard, when signs of the commodification of classed identity emerge—as they do with surprising regularity today—a mode by which to identify degrees of commodification is essential. Given the significant impact of commercial media on culture at large, the ability to discern authenticity in classed representation is vital to knowledge of the way class takes shape. While this project takes a number of turns, addressing a series of innovations produced by the kitchen sink realism movement, its ultimate goal is to show how the movement, through its diligent analysis of the impact of space on individuals, provides a rich set of motifs to consider subsequent representations of class. In this regard, a spatial analysis allows for a clearer understanding of the movement's impact—in the material culture as well as in the world

of the arts—in order to broaden considerations of the way class limits are constructed, reiterated, and potentially contested through the imaginative capacity of the arts.

Overview of the Project

Chapter 1 weighs the impact of shifts in the domestic landscape on representations of working-class people, showing how the kitchen sink movement narrativized the fragmentation of monolithic class consciousness as a partial consequence of post-war redevelopment. Building on recent scholarship as well as my claim that cultural production of the period serves as a high point of working-class representation, this chapter recounts post-war writers' confrontation with the erratic state of housing and its impact on British citizenry as a foundation upon which to advance new articulations of class consciousness. In doing so, I show how concepts of social stratification and spatial restriction are interwoven at the site of the domestic—the space of the eponymous kitchen sink. Working-class representation of the period registers the inefficacy of the domestic to meet the needs of the British populace, echoing the deficiency of the welfare state in addressing social disparities. Through their adherence to portrayals of space, writers associated with the movement not only illuminated such failures—they promoted alternative expressions of class identity in response. The chapter begins with an overview of post-war housing, arguing that new developments based on technological and architectural savvy failed to compensate for the uprooting of established communities. Referring to John B. Calhoun's conceptions of "behavioral sink" and "defensible space," the chapter indexes alienation experienced by working-class people housed in

environments socially encoded as derelict. Turning to three key texts from the period—John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* (1956), Alan Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1958), and Shelagh Delaney's *A Taste of Honey* (1958)—I explore the way kitchen sink writers deploy representations of classed domestic space as symbolic manifestations of social constraint. In doing so, I argue that the texts of the period posed a challenge to traditional class solidarity, advancing instead a posture of autonomous, contingent, and dynamic class consciousness as a burgeoning subcultural form to counter the failure of post-war redevelopment.

Chapter 2 builds on the first by shifting the focus from representations of the domestic space to those of the community at large, exploring how constraint and frustration in working-class texts emerge within shared spaces. Identifying a handful of locales associated with working-class environs—spaces largely universalized in northern working-class communities—I trace their history and their depiction in the literature of the period. In doing so, I consider how spaces of assumed social and cultural sustenance—the factory, the school, the pub—not only fail to provide an adequate substitute for the inadequacy of domestic sanctuary, but also assume a disciplinary stance in that they buttress class boundaries and reinforce social limitation. Turning to Emile Durkheim's notion of collective consciousness, this chapter explores how classed environments sustain collective working-class ideals, doing so in a manner that maintains passivity. Returning once more to Alan Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1958) while introducing new case studies of David Storey's *This Sporting Life* (1960) and Nell Dunn's *Up the Junction* (1963), the relationship between the domestic and the

local is further developed, concluding that such texts reveal how working-class environs are institutionally defined and policed to uphold the status quo. The dreariness of working-class environs is showcased to highlight how such spaces generate social insurgency and retaliation through new modes of class consciousness and states of being. Writers like William Hutchings have referred to such states as "Proletarian Byronism"—an existential crisis in which the ambition to transcend social limits clashes with the compulsion to resign oneself to the hegemonic order. Consequently, kitchen sink texts modify the notion of the collective in their construction of "outsider" ontologies of resistance that dominate the genre as a persistent trope. This chapter, then, expands upon the first to grant a more comprehensive understanding of the way new working-class subjectivities arise in literary representations of classed space, arguing that kitchen sink texts anticipate sub- and countercultural trends through their championing of the individual as simultaneously a part of and apart from the local community.

Chapter 3 complements the previous chapters by illustrating how ontologies modified as the upshot of spatial confines allow for the reconceptualization of working-class spaces as sites of potential and opportunity. Revisiting texts discussed in the previous two chapters, I elucidate the kitchen sink movement's championing of spatial reclamation through the process of undermining a site's intended purpose. Resting on the concepts of Michel Foucault's heterotopic space, Henri Lefebvre's socially produced space, and subsequent evolutions of both ideas developed by writers such as David Harvey and Edward Soja, I consider the revolutionary capacity of modified social relations in regards to the way classed spaces are established and maintained. As

Lefebvre posits, spaces transpire through a combination of the tangible, the conceptual, and the experiential—the latter of which introduces subjectivity into an otherwise objective construction. By privileging the subjective, kitchen sink writers show how spaces like bombsites can be recast as centers of ethnic community, prisons can be recast as spaces of independence, and factories can be recast as hubs of subcultural provenance. Although kitchen sink plots are not known for their optimistic outlook, texts such as Colin MacInnes' *City of Spades* (1957), Alan Sillitoe's *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* (1959), and Nell Dunn's *Up the Junction* (1963) offer enlightening approaches to spatial production in which power dynamics central to social stratification are undermined and, in some cases, reversed. In consideration of the way thinkers like Michel Foucault and Giorgio Agamben theorize subjecthood in relation to state control, this chapter situates kitchen sink representations of class autonomy as a critical component in what I have termed "the working-class imaginary." I conceive of this term as a state of being identifiable across a number of kitchen sink texts in which optimistic potentiality arises, not to transform or dislodge existing models of social stratification, but to sidestep programmatic class designation entirely in a way that responds to Proletarian Byronism's existential dilemma. In doing so, the individual reconstructs his or her social position through a modified subjectivity to provide the kind of Archimedean leverage necessary to "move the Earth" and transform working-class environs into sites that transcend prescriptive constraint. While unambiguously utopian in nature, the emergence of a working-class imaginary is the upshot of kitchen sink writers' desire to

realign political and aesthetic objectives, underscoring the texts' didactic response to the failure of the welfare state to adequately address social inequality.

Returning to the premise that kitchen sink texts represent a formal apogee, Chapter 4 surveys attempts by scholars to totalize tropes associated with the movement, questioning the efficacy of doing so given the dynamism and definitional flexibility of the working-class genre as a whole. Instead, this chapter advances a spatial aesthetics—a summation of the way kitchen sink texts employ environment and settings as part of their political and aesthetic program. The aim of the chapter—and the project as a whole—is to provide a framework by which to assess the social function of subsequent working-class representations across media—expressly their capacity to present alternative modes of existing that counter hegemonic class confines. It should be noted, though, that the goal is not to schematize such texts; instead, the goal is the unpacking of characteristics used in a particular body of work as a point of reference by which to contrast subsequent texts that employ similar characteristics. In light of my claim that working-class writing of the late 1950s and early 1960s sought to reconvene political and aesthetic objectives in order to rethink the basis of British citizenship, such a framework offers a path by which to weigh the efficacy of contemporary working-class representation against the transgressive intentions of the kitchen sink movement. Given the commercial incentive to commodify classed identities through the fetishization of "grittiness," this chapter surveys a number of contemporary texts to gauge their proximity to kitchen sink objectives in contrast to class tourism and egregious exploitation. The chapter presents a series of brief spatial readings of contemporary working-class cultural production to

illustrate the value of such aesthetic comparisons. In doing so, I highlight the impact of the spatial tropes developed out during the kitchen sink era, noting how subsequent working-class representation rarely diverges from approaches developed by the movement's writers. What this evaluation also reveals, however, is that when tropes do deviate, they tend to do so for reasons of gross commercialization by exploiting classed environments and elevating the aesthetic over the political through egregious shock effects and sensationalism. Yet, as this chapter suggests, for every instance of blatant commodification of class identity, a new form of classed representation emerges in protest, certifying working-class cultural production as perennially subversive and contingent.

Chapter 1: "Look at the State of this Place!"—The Impact of Domestic Space on Post-War Class Consciousness

When, on the 8th of May 1956, the curtain of the Royal Court Theater rose for the first time to reveal the domestic setting of John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*—a scruffy attic flat decked out with "shabby leather armchairs" and a prominently-featured ironing board—critics and theater-goers alike were horrified. In fact, the opening night saw a number of theater-goers walk out, partly due to the stage that, according to Bernice Coupe, "was just so depressing." For Coupe, the domestic environment of the play was at odds with theater production of the time in which the audience would ordinarily expect to "see the drawing room, the rather elegant furniture, and the desk, the windows and so on with the long curtains and the charming furniture and charming people" ("Zeitgeist"). More traditional critics declared the play an "insult" (Gilleman 46)—which Kenneth Tynan predicted while recalling his experience of the opening night (Shellard 161). But, as Ann Marie Adams has declared, the setting that so assaulted the sensitivities of the audience on that May evening did so by toppling assumptions about the kind of domestic spaces appropriate for theatrical production (80).What is important here is not just that the play shocked its middle- and upper-class audience of the time by forcing them into the world of the working class, but the fact that the initial knee-jerk rejection of the play came from neither the characters nor the narrative, but from the setting itself, underscoring the critical role of gritty space and environment in kitchen sink texts. At a moment in British culture in which the built environment saw radical transformation following the destruction of World War II, it is especially telling that writers such as

Osborne opted to foreground working-class backgrounds often shied away from in theater, placing them front and center in their work in order to explore the connection between environment and class status.

This chapter considers the impact of the built environment on class consciousness, arguing that a confrontation with domestic limits represented in working-class narratives reflects a disarticulation of monolithic class consciousness identifiable in culture at the time. Consequently, this chapter calls for a reevaluation of a body of working-class writing particularly attuned to the velocity of change underway in the post-war years, showing how such texts elucidate a prehistory of 1960s subculture, repositioning class consciousness as a subcultural identity. Not only do these texts register the influence of the built environment on class identification, they posit new expressions of citizenry that sidestep class assignations prescribed through spatial restriction and environmentally-encoded ideological messaging. As spaces of acquiescence and frustration, post-war working-class environments reveal disciplinary mechanisms that both inscribe and invite the kind of behavioral norms historically tied to working-class stereotypes. The narratives penned during this time confront such mechanisms, hypothesizing modifications to class-consciousness in which domestic limits are contested and remapped to inaugurate a restructuring of working-class attitudes and beliefs. Concentrating on three representative texts from the period, John Osborne's 1956 play, *Look Back in Anger*, Alan Sillitoe's 1958 novel *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, and Shelagh Delaney's 1958 play *A Taste of Honey*, I consider such texts' exploration of post-war domestic frustrations, their account of existential crises in the form of acquiescence and conformity, and their

modeling of new articulations of autonomous citizenry that subvert traditional British class structures to challenge social compliance. Focusing on shifts in the post-war domestic landscape that destabilized tangible working-class communities, this chapter will consider the way kitchen sink realism's documentary-style approach to narrative—as well as the genre's unabashed highlighting of gritty, visceral settings—provides a vivid depiction of shifts underway in class consciousness toward what I conceive of as a working-class imaginary: the renegotiation of classed spaces and social limits structured upon dynamic, contingent articulations of class.

A New Domestic Landscape

The expansion of working-class housing in the British post-war era reflects the lineage of slum clearance that began in the late-nineteenth century but was hastened by World War II. Following the war, the Ministry of Reconstruction (1943-1945) led by conservative statesman Lord Woolton, implemented parliamentary acts to address both housing concerns and the recuperation of the labor force by focusing on issues such as proximity of housing to place of employment, the role of women in society, and the relationship between employers and employees. While British working-class people were no strangers to instability, the period following World War II saw upheavals in domestic experience—which, in turn, reflected the comprehension of class itself. An estimated 750,000 people were in need of housing following the war with 300,000 new makeshift homes proposed as an immediate response coinciding with an attempt to redevelop the workforce to that of pre-war levels. Following the post-war austerity period (1945-1950),

1949's Housing Act[7]—buttressed by a slew of advertising propaganda seeking to assuage the war-torn psyche of the country[8]—furthered the possibility of social renewal through the promise of private home ownership. This included increased subsidization of personal loans, increased government financing for urban renewal, and a proposal for an additional 800,000 homes in the form of mass housing. Aside from practical necessities, an attendant objective of reconstruction was to cultivate optimism in a country crushed by the war—one whose patriotism was further impacted by the collapse of imperialism.

Although a variety of architectural styles emerged during the initial post-war years, three forms of housing construction endured throughout much of the 1950s and 1960s, both reflecting the housing of the past as well as pointing toward that of the future. Despite their differences, these forms shared optimistic attributes such as nods toward community and community well-being, but in most cases, a distinct sense of pessimism was identifiable, due, in part, to the designs themselves and the gloomy, downtrodden habitat they created. As part of a national program of rehousing that coincided with the rise of the welfare state, working-class areas saw an increase in council developments such as housing estates and the emergence of "prefabs"—a form of housing named after the method of production used at the time. Despite their makeshift nature, the design of

[7] The 1949 Housing Act also sought to expand the focus of housing needs by allowing local authorities to provide housing for middle-class citizens in addition to the working class. The incorporation of Health Minister Aneurin Bevin's ideas into the act reflected the utopian socialism of modernist urban planning in that his desire was for a society in which classes were no longer segregated. This was more commonly known as "mixed development" but was never implemented, as temporary rehousing took precedence over urban planning. See Colquhoun (2008) pp.8-10 for a more architectural perspective on the topic.

[8] The kind of propaganda used to promote housing draws parallels to the preponderance of austerity propaganda commonly associated with World War II. Both were invested in elevating spirits and restoring waning national pride.

prefabs reflects an attempt to inaugurate a new British architectural vernacular in which modern, forward-thinking designs met with a reconsideration of traditional construction methods, symbolizing the country's capacity to move forward and bolster national pride.[9] The result was a form of urban renewal that dominated much of the post-war landscape but ultimately failed to elevate spirits, producing instead a host of social problems inadequately anticipated given the constraints of the housing crisis. Prefab materials, combined with simple, utilitarian lines, resulted in housing that many found cold and unwelcoming—a consequence compounded by the displacement and social upheaval of existing communities.

While these developments varied from region to region—especially given the range of destruction from the Blitz—in the industrial towns of Northern England, the general domestic landscape of post-war England reflected a combination of new designs with preexisting terraces from the Victorian era: residential terraces and the kind of terraced homes produced during the rise of industry, such as miner's cottages and housing rows that, despite their functionality, connoted a degree of uniformity and stasis that was at odds with the country's later progressive intent.[10] Despite redevelopment ordinances, many of the original pre-war terraces remained intact, mainly because immediate slum clearance programs tended to focus more on London and densely populated urban areas. Furthermore, housing produced for industry was easier to

[9] It should be noted, though, how this gesture was more evident in later years following the intensification of high-rise development. Due to their scale, high-rises assumed a spectacular visual stance whereas low-rise housing's futuristic appeal was sold under the guise of innovative construction methods.
[10] To clarify, terraced housing in this context has no relation to housing with balconies or extended outdoor space. It simply refers to mass housing in which homes share walls.

modernize than tear down and replace. So, in towns like Newcastle, Nottingham, and Sheffield, aspects of the inner-city landscape remained static while the culture moved forward alongside physical developments underway in the suburbs. The result, as made manifest in many kitchen sink texts, is that inner-city communities felt increasingly spurned by "progress" but their feeling of abandonment was somewhat assuaged by momentary optimism stemming from the potential of moving into new housing developments in the city's outskirts. In kitchen sink texts, new developments are often cast as the material representation of social elevation, but also produce anxiety in that they reflect a betrayal of class roots—an existential dilemma made clear in William Hutching's notion of "Proletarian Byronism."[11] In novels by writers such as Alan Sillitoe, John Braine, and David Storey, dividing lines are drawn between the gritty working-class terraces that monopolize the narrative and the new, pristine estates of the suburbs. These estates are often presented as peripheral to the main narrative, but clearly symbolize social elevation as a goal to aim for. The tension between such spaces forms a critical narrative component while registering the crisis of class identity circulating in Britain at the time.

[11] This concept will be taken up in more depth in subsequent chapters, but it serves as a helpful way to situate kitchen sink texts as part of a larger literary tradition. For a full discussion of this topic, see "Proletarian Byronism: Alan Sillitoe and the Romantic Tradition" in Allan Chavkin's edited collection *English Romanticism and Modern Fiction* (1993).

Housing Types and the Impact of Structural Forms

The built environment has the capacity to connote class through encoded signifiers and therefore needs unpacking if we are to increase awareness of the link between class and space. While the housing terraces that emerged following the Great Fire in London placed emphasis on ornamentation and detail, terraces took a more utilitarian turn in the Victorian era, developing instead as housing best suited to match the needs of rising industrialization. This later style became far more synonymous with council housing projects than the glamorous Georgian terraces of areas like London's Grosvenor Square. Up until World War II, terraces were the most common form of high-density residential housing, offering a format that lent itself well to the categorization of groups based on class designation. The uniformity and repetition of terraces became synonymous with specific areas of Britain, and, up until recently, terrace designs suggested social class.[12] In contemporary times, this has changed somewhat due to the inflation of housing prices across the country in addition to the fetishization of older post-war models,[13] but, for the most part, form still tends to represent class with the standardization of housing terraces in the twentieth century acting more as an index of

[12] A number of contemporary critics, writing about the spatialization of class in Britain, have made this observation. Ben Gidley and Alison Rooke, for example, cite Beverly Skeggs' assertion that "In contemporary Britain, geographical referencing is one of the contemporary shorthand ways of speaking class" in that specific housing styles such as estates or entire regions are classed in a way that conveys derision. See Gidley and Rooke's "Asdatown: The Intersections of Classed Places and Identities" (2010) or Skeggs' *Class, Self, Culture* (2004) p. 112.

[13] One of the more famous examples would be Kensington's brutalist monolith, the Trellick Tower in which a number of the former social housing units are now privately owned.

social positioning and, by extension, class consciousness in a manner that the buildings themselves were unable to renounce.

Following World War II, improvements in terrace design addressed public health concerns—a change that at once made terraces more habitable while expanding their development, rendering a sizable portion of England's working-class housing uniform and increasingly homogenized. Prior to the war, terraced housing reflected patterns of migration to urban centers following industrialization, but these terraces were not designed for the sheer volume of migration that urban centers experienced, leading to severe plumbing problems and subsequent cholera and typhus epidemics. In response, the 1875 Public Health Act led to byelaws that required terraced houses to update bathroom facilities, moving away from communal privies and toward the incorporation of private facilities for each residence. What emerged as "byelaw terraces" became the housing format that dominated much of twentieth-century Britain's domestic landscape and approximately 15% of today's housing stock reflects this development.[14]

In addition to uniformity in facades, the internal design of terraced housing also reflected a nationwide homogeneity, communicating a unified and collective social status. Most terraced houses designed to support industrial labor followed the format of "two-up two-down"—two main rooms on the ground level with two bedrooms above. Following the aforementioned 1875 regulatory act, terraced houses required a private toilet installed at the end of a private open space behind each house.[15] In addition to the private toilet,

[14] This figure, dated to 2007/2008, stems from research published in 2011. See Rosenfield et al. for more.
[15] This open space was generally used for laundry and therefore served more as an extension of the house's domestic function rather than a space of leisure or enjoyment.

byelaw terraces were also required to demonstrate substantial ventilation through the use of specific window designs that let in a requisite amount of natural light—a gesture that doubled as an attempt to prevent such housing from feeling too imprisoning.[16] A later byelaw modification emerged in which a designated scullery space connected to the rear ground floor room with either an additional bedroom or bathroom annexed above. This further reduced the outdoor yard space but allowed for interior expansion with an indoor toilet connected to the main sewerage system. However, the established byelaws dictated the quality of living conditions but played no role in the aesthetic design, so the face of terraced housing tended to be universally dowdy, bordering on oppressive. Although facades were common, basic layouts rarely differed, and what resulted was a sense of community that also signaled class designation through its sameness. While pre-war terraces tended to feature legitimate communal areas as holdovers from tenement housing, byelaw terraces sacrificed such areas for increased privacy. Communal aspects of terraced living became psychologized through design uniformity with amplified insularity whereas the tangible impact of the space was one of atomization and insularity: for what post-war terraced residents lost in tangible communal spaces, they gained through a form of standardization that assured them that they were indistinguishable from the people who lived next door.[17]

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[16] The actual byelaw wording for such a window is "being of adequate size, able to open to their full extent, or if, sash windows, open at the top and the bottom." More specifics can be found in the 1906 Report on the Departmental Committee on Vagrancy, p. 186.

[17] Following the 1980 Right to Buy Act, there was a distinct shift in such aesthetic uniformity in that ownership of one's home allowed for personalization—which, in turn, acted as a way to communicate social elevation. The emergence of non-standard window frames and more decorative front doors signaled personal ownership in addition to individual autonomy. As will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4's coverage of *Shameless*, such expressions were illusory, serving as a way of subdividing communities and

Therefore, the emergence of byelaw regulations played a key role in shaping the post-war landscape while also configuring identity in that sameness affirmed class. Whereas many terraced houses were incrementally improved to meet the needs of sanitation and basic living, pre-regulation terraces—even buildings marked for demolition as part of slum clearance projects—were still extensively populated and often overcrowded due to the housing crisis as well as affordability. The result was that a sizable number of working-class citizens lived in buildings that were not only substandard, but were coded as derelict—which did little to elevate the spirits of those who still lived in them. Pre-war slum clearance programs designed to remove pre-regulation terraces halted in 1939 and did not resume until the mid-1950s. So throughout the post-war austerity period, British working-class people inhabited spaces widely recognized as unfit for dignified habitation.

Post-regulation terraces produced a different set of effects than the lived experience of pre-regulation housing, especially in relation to the way class solidarity decoupled itself from communal living and became increasingly abstract. In 1943, Mass Observation compiled surveys on the difference between pre-1900 terraces and the terraced estates constructed following byelaw regulations, concluding that newer constructions were often favored over the old in terms of the nebulous descriptor of "convenience" ("People's Homes" 57). Convenience, according to this report, suggests design optimization for domestic living, such as the inclusion of a separate scullery to

stoking class antagonism within classed spaces. The negative impact of the Right to Buy is taken up in later discussions as lingering consequences are still being addressed in British culture to this very day.

keep laundry out of the dining room as well as seemingly trivial changes in kitchen design such as double draining boards next to the sink and built-in storage (58). Such reports intimate how incremental changes in design played key roles in reorienting public attitudes toward favoring the new housing, but such design changes were largely superficial, reflecting only minor shifts in usage. The praise of new development tended centered on general, ambiguous changes to domestic life (an increase in convenience and comfort) whereas unfavorable opinions of older terraces were more specific (a lack of indoor bathroom or scullery) (68). What this indicates, however, is that the appeal of post-war terraces had little to do with perceived social movement and more to do with domestic experience which allowed for a greater sense of autonomy—a greater desire to be indoors with creature comforts than out in the community. As terraced housing—both pre- and post-regulation—is central to kitchen sink representation, such details are helpful in discerning how such texts utilized specific details ordinarily backgrounded in literature to explore the way characters negotiated their identity in relation to their environment.

But whereas terraced housing echoed the past—even through post-regulation redesigns with all the modern conveniences—it was the advent of prefabricated housing that saw the most radical changes in the way that working-class domestic life was realized. Like the move from the pre- to post-regulation terraces, prefab housing communicated heightened autonomy and a greater sense of domestic privacy. In this regard, perceived social ascension, rendered material through improved housing, characterizes a distancing from the community and a move toward working-class

independence. Another notable distinction between terraces and prefabs, though, is that prefabs were designed as a temporary solution until more substantial accommodations could be secured. Also, despite the relative ubiquity of fabrication material, a variety of prefab designs transpired, breaking uniformity and permitting a degree of individual domestic expression within well-preserved class parameters. Initial plans allotted for the production of 300,000 prefab homes, yet only half of that number were actually produced. Those that survived beyond their designated lifespan of 10 years suffered much the same stigmatization as other post-war developments such as council high-rises, largely due to their uninspiring exteriors, their interior restrictions, and the method of construction in which shoddy materials undermined the goal of boosting the nation's morale through technological innovation. In essence, prefab housing was sold to the public as both a necessary fix and as a gesture toward modernity. What can be observed is a disparity in the styles proposed; some were hospitable, warm spaces that resembled a traditional home, whereas others were destined to cause problems from the outset due to their shed-like appearance. Next to terraced houses, prefab homes were commonplace for working-class people, and although their presence in kitchen sink realism is not as dominant (or dramatic) as terraced housing, prefabs do make a number of appearances.[18] While more than twenty different styles of prefabs materialized in the immediate post-

[18] It might be argued that timelines played a role in the way prefabs were referenced in literature. For one thing, they emerged at the same time that the kitchen sink figures were writing. We might attribute the more prominent representation of terraced housing as a device of verisimilitude—a backdrop more familiar to the reader. But we might also consider the way that these designs didn't become problematic for several years later. However, several prescient writers and filmmakers do emphasize them, with one of the most notable being the family home in Tony Richardson's 1962 take on Sillitoe's *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* in which several tropes combine: the cramped prefab (what appears to be an AIROH house); proximity to the factory; and the dying father.

war years, the most prevalent and enduring would be the Airey and the AIROH (Aircraft Industries Research Organization on Housing) with the BISF (British Iron and Steel Federation) house and the "Wimpey no-fines" offering the most substantial and traditionally domestic format.

The Airey's popularity is traceable to a 1947 propaganda film named *Country Homes* commissioned by the Central Office of Information that promoted construction in rural parts of the country as a way to rehouse displaced urban communities. Designed by Leeds-based architect Sir Edmund Airey, the majority of Airey construction occurred between 1946 and 1955. Structured around concrete posts reinforced with steel tubing, external walls were made from precast concrete slabs that resembled pebble-dashed planks of wood. Small windows and a traditional sloped roof with chimney system lent the design a quasi-farmhouse look to complement the rural settings where they were often installed. The standard layout of the Airey house mirrored the layout of post-regulation terraces, usually following the same two-up two-down presentation with a separate kitchen and upstairs bathroom. Often, the upstairs layout included a third bedroom that, although modest, acknowledged the needs of expanding families. Small and cramped at about nine hundred square feet, the Airey design was installed in both attached terrace form and in semi-detached form to promote personal ownership as well as independence from the more collective experiences associated with traditional terraced housing. For much of the 1950s, those who sought to leave the pre-regulation slums had the Airey design in mind, largely due to its newness, cleanliness, and its inherent promise of an atomized family experience outside of the problematic urban center**.**

Divergent in design but peddling the same kind of tailored independence was the AIROH, named after a model home produced by the Aircraft Industries Research Organization on Housing. While the Airey promised economical assembly, the AIROH epitomized mass production with the components made in an assembly-line fashion. According to Colin Davies, the same assembly lines that produced Spitfire fighter jets were responsible for the rapid turnaround time, with a single home kit prepared in just twelve minutes (61). The design was rudimentary: four walls of aluminum sheeting packed with aerated cement and lined with insulation and plasterboard. The floors were timber, but the bulk of the structure relied on aluminum trusses, shipped in flat packs and bolted together on site. Although high-tech in design and material choice, the assembled homes looked more functional than welcoming. Stripped of all domestic ornament, AIROH prefabs resembled anonymous sheds, yet they were relatively popular due to the efficiency of the design and modernized production method which granted them a hi-tech edge. Furthermore, their popularity stemmed from the fact that they were free-standing and often featured a sizeable garden space.[19] In this regard, the design conveyed an implicit assurance of independence with aspects of community on offer in a manner similar to the Airey design.

Whereas military-grade aluminum was used to construct the AIROH, the BISF house relied on steel, also produced through a subsidiary operation of the British Iron and Steel Foundation. The BISF house grew from research conducted by the Burt

[19] It is interesting to note that many prefabs actively promoted the practice of gardening with a slew of propaganda-style pamphlets that preach a message of community engagement and sustainability. Such pamphlets were often found included within the Beveridge Social Surveys distributed between 1942 and 1947.

Committee—a think tank established in 1942 to provide guidance on the British housing problem. Considering the slum clearance projects underway and the damage caused by the Blitz, the group produced the Housing (Temporary Accommodation) Act of 1944 that designated the 300,000 prefabs to solve the problem. The BISF house represented early research by the committee, focusing on economical construction—specifically cost efficiency and fast assembly. Similar to AIROH, the BISF house became a follow-up industry for the post-war military factories, but the BISF house was designed with more substantial and sustained intentions. Tubular steel struts served as the basic foundations with windows suspended between. Prefabricated panels, with brick or wood designs imprinted on them, leant the structure a somewhat makeshift appearance despite their intent as permanent homes. Although initially predating the New Towns Act of 1946, BISF construction was largely associated with new, makeshift communities of terraced and semi-detached houses found on the periphery of urban centers, affirming the new community spirit written into rehousing production of the time.

Also prominent was the Wimpey "No-Fines"—a design that differed from other prefab housing through the use of concrete with no fine aggregates.[20] Proposed by a private contractor named George Wimpey, the design offered the substance of a brick build but without the intense labor involved. Two and three-bedroom semi-detached houses and three to four-bedroom terraces were the standard, granting the design enough variation so that new estates could provide a variety of pricing and size options in

[20] Although the name suggests fiscal savings, it simply refers to the method of construction in which cement was mixed with stone as opposed to sand. This produced a more durable wall, but the design was still prone to problems, largely seen in the pebble-dashed exterior and the joint sections of the walls.

addition to diminishing the standardization that tended to make other prefab designs feel so anonymous. However, the grey cement exterior was felt to be disaffecting, and remaining Wimpey constructs have attempted to counter this through the use of pastel paint and external modifications. Although the design has long been out of production, housing estates comprised predominantly of no-fines construction can still be found in Nottingham, West Yorkshire, and the West Midlands. Often pebble-dashed and mundane, the Wimpey design became the design most synonymous with low-rise council estates and the form was also utilized in a number of high-rise constructs in the following years. The gritty aesthetic often attributed to British working-class life was literally embodied within the walls of the Wimpey design as actual grit was a key component in both the structure and the external finish.

While this is just a snapshot of the prefab housing that emerged during the post-war years, it is important to note design details in relation to their emotional impact on the psyche of the British working class during this period. A special report on the 1946 Modern Homes Exhibition in London reveals a burgeoning set of opinions about post-war housing with prefabs dominating much of the report's findings. The report outlines overheard commentary and conversations, concluding with a synthesized overview of the public's perception of prefabs. The main criticism of such designs was the lack of overall light—a problem that commenters noted as the result of small windows that made the homes feel imprisoning. Furthermore, almost no favorable comments exist about the external aesthetics of post-war housing with many commenters noting that steel-structured houses looked especially dismal. In almost all cases, the houses on display

were thought to be constricting and oppressively designed. The survey concluded with many of the commenters noting that they disliked all of the houses on show, with men signaling disdain three times as often as women (8). The report also speaks to the notion of permanence in that the most negative comments declared that the houses "looked temporary" (9). However, the Orlit House, a design that resembles the Wimpey No-Fines, received feedback arguing that it "Looked more permanent. Had personality" (10) suggesting the way "personality" was derived from an impression of stability. The Airey house held little visual appeal for commenters, yet many were enamored with small design innovations such as a serving hatch that aided domestic operations (10). The BISF house, however, saw universal condemnation with guests noting that "They look as though they're barracks. You'd feel as though you were in a camp again" (12). This comment is especially illuminating given post-war rehousing's efforts to rebuild national confidence following the Blitz. That British people affiliated post-war housing design with the war itself seems paradoxical in that, on the one hand, the use of military-grade materials and production methods extends the memory of war in the mind of the occupant; on the other hand, it suggests a military-grade security to assuage the feeling of instability that stems from displacement and social upheaval. The report implies that the aloofness of cement and steel aesthetics was somewhat offset by the desire for such stability, with brick constructs drawing comments such as "The houses would look terrible in a few years" and that "They all look alike" (12). Despite the need for approximately 750,000 new homes during this period, the report concludes with an

overheard conversation between two female visitors that sums up the public's feeling about makeshift post-war housing overall:

> Honestly, I'm not struck on any of them. I'm not sure I didn't the like LCC [London County Council] one best. The insides of them are all so much better than the outsides. I think it's very important how a house looks from the outside. You know we were offered the choice of a pre-fab? Well, I wouldn't have it. They're nice inside, but they look dreadful from the orad [*sic*]. You don't like to feel ashamed every time you get near your own home. (11)

Despite the undisputed dislike of the external design, opinions about internal features and amenities—referred to as "the house engine"—were generally favorable. What this report reveals overall is that British people wanted their homes to appear as substantial as possible in a way that could, at least psychologically, recreate the stability of an older, established community. This desire, though, was at odds with the thrust of modernity, industrial mass production, and innovation writ large. In this regard, prefab construction—one of the most dominant forms of rehousing in the post-war years—can be understood as a unique producer of anxiety in that not only did it suspend the individual between the familiar and the unfamiliar, but it amplified the paradox of desired autonomy in relation to an identifiable community.

In contrast to prefab and terrace developments, which at least aimed to provide a traditional sense of locality, the rise of the tower block in British culture signified the shift toward an ultra-rational approach to post-war housing construction. Although the cultivation of community was certainly a consideration in such developments, the design principles associated with high-rise buildings were modeled upon the International Style of architecture developed by luminaries such as Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe

whose plans echoed Soviet-style architecture with social programming written into the design. As opposed to a lateral row of housing as ordinarily experienced in terraces or as grouped within prefab estates, high-rise construction subscribed to an approach referred to as "streets in the sky" in which buildings and complexes served as vertical communities comprised of retail, leisure, and activity areas. In this sense, high-rise council flats resembled less of an attempt to demarcate urban regions, and more of an attempt to concentrate and constrict groups of people into precise, insular spaces. For the most part, high-rise construction centered upon major urban metropolises—especially in London due to the Blitz's complicating of slum clearance projects already underway—but a number of tower blocks also emerged in northern towns. While high-rise construction does feature prominently in the work of writers like Colin MacInnes, it emerged in the 1950s but did not see widespread expansion until the 1960s, making its presence in northern kitchen sink writing quite rare. Yet, many of the same anxieties perceptible in prefab housing are discernible in high-rise living, and so they must be considered as a part of the shifting urban landscape of the contextual moment.

Much of the initial popularity of tower blocks speaks to the forward-thinking ideologies built into the design, but the main appeal was the promise of spacious interiors combined with improved views. Residents in urban areas were happy to sacrifice personal outdoor space for an increase in interior scale. High-rise popularity was also bolstered by their relatively economical price as construction was often focused on cheap land on the city outskirts. However, it did not take long for high-rise towers to earn a poor reputation—due, in part, to hasty construction that cut corners and abandoned the social

ethics of modernist architecture. A lack of amenities, steady deterioration, and increased crime ensued as the result of designs that, while proportionally lavish, read as largely inhospitable and psychologically alienating. Lax construction proved to be as fraught as in the prefab designs, only in the case of the high-rise, there was a greater distance to fall. The 1968 collapse of the Ronan Point tower illuminated the long-term effects of low-cost, rapid construction that made contractors rich at the expense of the working class.[21] Dubious design choices rendered communal spaces as socially toxic, and, as many of the basic designs arose across the country, a domino effect ensued. By the end of the 1960s, high-rise towers were socially stigmatized, losing all of the initial optimistic gleam that made them appealing to begin with.

It is apparent that changes in the post-war landscape of Britain led to conflicts between tradition and progress, redevelopment and displacement, innovation and familiarity. These conflicts impacted the psyche of those most directly affected by change, such as the disproportionate amount of working-class people whose communities were upended. Buildings and developments formed a contextual grammar by which to communicate class position, gesturing to the resident their relative social worth and prescribing expected comportment as the result. Such spaces resulted in a destabilization of identity, for both the individual and the collective, and increased atomization emerged alongside redefinitions of community. Although the blame for social unrest certainly rests

[21] This collapse took place in 1968 when a load-bearing wall gave out due to a gas explosion. Ronan Point used Large Panel System building techniques in which prefabricated slabs were assembled on site. The incident, which killed four people and injured seventeen more, was exacerbated by the LPS construction method that failed to support an entire side of the building following the explosion. The specific cause of recent Grenfell Tower disaster is still under investigation at the time of publishing this document.

on the corner-cutting methods utilized by LCC contractors (especially in relation to the construction of high-rises), much of the domestic anxiety that emerged from shifts in inhabited space reflects a combination of social changes underway in regards to gender norms, the confinement associated with working-class space, and the way spatial attributes communicated class status and social worth. As domestic environments were upended, taking any semblance of security with them, it was up to the working class to envision new ways of living—a challenge that was, in part, supported by the government through the promise of rehousing and attempts at boosting the morale of a disillusioned populace. Cultural production of the time clearly picks up on these concerns, and the style of kitchen sink realism unambiguously foregrounds the sort of environments presented to working class people, narrativizing and, to a certain degree, speculating on the impact of such developments.

The Living Spaces of Writers

It might be argued that for cultural production to reveal the intricate connection between class and space, an elevated verisimilitude must be implemented and sustained. Kitchen sink realism's attention to the individual in space highlights such an engagement through a confrontation with traditional realism that infuses formal aesthetics with heightened ethical imperatives. As Kenneth Tynan commented following the theatrical opening of Osborne's play, the writers associated with the kitchen sink movement spoke directly to those marginalized by artistic establishments of the past, seeking democratic access to the arts in addition to a more truthful representation of British citizenry. The

fidelity of domestic representation in kitchen sink realist texts can be attributed to the kinds of domestic spaces that the authors themselves inhabited. Alan Sillitoe, for example, was born and raised in Nottingham, the area often featured in his work, and his own circumstances mirror those of his characters.[22] Sillitoe's family was poverty-stricken for much of his early life, living in "a room on Talbot Street whose four walls smelled of leaking gas, stale fat, and layers of mouldering wallpaper" (Hanson 2). The Great Depression shaped much of Sillitoe's childhood, and it was World War II that introduced local prosperity in that Nottingham, due to its proximity to natural resources, became a hub of wartime manufacturing. Despite this, Nottingham was also targeted for airstrikes, engendering domestic anxiety in that Sillitoe lived "only a hundred yards from a vast factory engaged in full war production, which the Germans constantly attempted to bomb and machine-gun" (Hanson 3). This anxiety mirrors the post-war public's erratic feelings toward the spread of prefabs, as factories and assembly lines involved in military production were often the same ones that fabricated housing components. Consequently, the military and housing industry in post-war Britain was deeply interwoven—at least in the minds of the general public—providing the impression of defense while also keeping the memory of the war fresh in people's minds.

At fourteen, Sillitoe joined the labor force, working at the same factory as his father—a move mirrored in the protagonist of *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*. Sillitoe describes the home he shared with his parents as "an odd kind of house on the

[22] It is worth noting that Sillitoe was well traveled, living in Malaya, France, Spain, and Majorca. An argument could be made that, as with many expatriates, distance from home increases the fascination with home and its strange allure. Sillitoe's allegiance to working-class ascension is up for question but is beyond the purview of this project.

edge of some back-to-backs" consisting of "a living room with scullery attached, a bedroom above, and an attic at the top where we children slept on one bed" ("Life" 19). "Back-to-backs" were a more utilitarian version of Victorian terraces in which private yards were omitted with homes sharing a rear wall, or in many cases, that of the factory they served.[23] Many of these houses, anchored to the place of labor, underscore the marriage between home and work in which domestic space reflects a submission of one's life to that of the factory. Sillitoe notes that, between the ages of fourteen and eighteen, his life consisted of daily labor at the factory and a nightly return to a home that was little more than a place of momentary rest before returning to work the following day. His only concession to freedom were weekends spent at his girlfriend's family home in a housing estate on the outskirts of the city. In this regard, Sillitoe's existence is commensurate with that of Arthur Seaton, but also with the domestic experience of many working-class British people at the time.

Like Sillitoe, John Osborne describes his childhood home of Fulham as a "dismal district" characterized by a "succession of identical streets" lined by Victorian terraces and "strange little gnarled stubs of trees" ("Better" 16-17). Osborne's father was notably absent, and he spent his early life living with his mother. A series of moves from one flat to the next marked this period—moves he attributes to his mother's restlessness ("Better" 57), but that also exhibit her desire to find a home with a pulse. She regarded their Highdale flat as "'more modern' and less stuffy than a house. Not as chic as a bungalow

[23] Neaverson and Palmer note that by 1840 there were nearly 8,000 (out of 11,666) back-to-backs in Nottingham which became known as "some of the worst court housing in Britain" (139).

but a step up from the dead-and-alive cul-de-sac" ("Better" 57). Divergent from the more static existences of his contemporaries, continual transition through domestic spaces informed Osborne's worldview, with each move triggering the desire to find another that would be more satisfactory. Much of this movement influenced the approach that Osborne developed in *Look Back in Anger*, but it also signaled the impressions that he felt established writers of the time held of him: "They seem to think I'm a sort of juvenile delinquent, the result of an undesirable background" (Heilpern 100). These anxieties are what fueled Osborne's drive to write class-conscious drama in response to the upper-class dominance perceptible in British theater of the 1950s, and domestic concerns can be read as threads that bind much of his work together.

Osborne's early life in London concluded when he was sent to boarding school in the west of England only to be expelled after physically attacking the headmaster. He then took a job as a stage manager and embarked upon a short-lived career as an actor—a role that, according to his memoir, neither he nor anybody else took very seriously. Work on *Look Back in Anger* in 1951 began while living in a cramped houseboat with the actress Pamela Lane, the first of his six wives. While Osborne's childhood was more cosmopolitan than that of most working-class people, the constant movement in his youth serves as a striking paradox given the relatively static and captive state of a character like Jimmy Porter. In this regard, it seems apt that the domestic spaces depicted in his work are constructed in part by his characters' response to them, rendering a text such as *Look Back in Anger* notably cerebral—a play that is about mental confinement as much as it is a depiction of domestic limitation.

Compared to Sillitoe and Osborne, Shelagh Delaney's autobiographical information about the spaces she inhabited as a young person is sparing. Ken Russell's terse BBC documentary *Shelagh Delaney's Salford* (1960), tracing her formative years spent in Broughton, demonstrates how *A Taste of Honey* replicates the gray industrial area of her youth, and the opening scene of the documentary shows the author entering a standard-fare Wimpey-style prefab home. Delaney informs Russell of her time spent abroad, adding that she develops "terrible homesickness" and that Salford is like "a terrible drug" in that she could never see herself living anywhere else. She describes the town as "alive" but also "dying,"—crumbling, dirty, neglected and yet romantic "if you can stand the smell." She discusses the urban temperament, noting the "alleyways that go on for miles" which separate houses "that seem to have been built on top of one another." Russell transposes Delaney's narrative over images of Salford's Victorian terraces, many of which appear as slums, yet Delaney's voice instructs us that due to the cramped confines, such homes generate "a terrific warmth," signifying the value of community in pre-regulation slums.

Delaney also raises concerns with urban redevelopment, noting that Salford is a place that generates a sense of restlessness but also tethers people to it. She comments that when individuals escape from the area, it is rarely on their terms and is often at the hands of burgeoning gentrification, moving them to sites "far away where there's no city" (Russell). Russell, of course, interjects an imposing image of mass housing in the form of high-rises, distanced from the city, looking ominously prison-like. Delaney adds that the social environment of these developments alienates individuals, separating them from

their original community, decanting them into areas that lack basic amenities and, most importantly, cultural influence such as theaters. Tellingly, she adds that "we had the same experience when we moved to this estate"—the estate, in question, comprised of anonymous three-bedroom prefabs that produced the kind of restlessness that Delaney claims to have replicated in *A Taste of Honey*.

An iconic image of Delaney taken when she was twenty years old shows her standing outside the family home where she lived after moving from Broughton.[24] The house, standing at 77 Duchy Road, is virtually unchanged from its original 1946 design as part of a rehousing estate for slum clearance. It was in this house that Delaney composed her famous play, but it was also a house that, despite serving as an improvement over the slums of Salford she left behind, disrupted the sense of community she had established—a disruption reflected in the capacity of her play's protagonist to reimagine spaces more suitable to her needs. Today, the house sits among indistinguishable council homes, but its presence in Delaney's life is curious given that her play rejects the homogeneity that would reaffirm the restlessness she articulates in Russell's short film. Delaney notes how in places like Salford, young, working-class people faced limited options: to acquiesce and resign themselves to environments specified for them by larger social forces, or to rebel and carve their own path in life. In this regard, *A Taste of Honey* can be comprehended as a play that explores the potential for reimagining one's class identity in relation to space, yet it seems that Delaney herself

[24] Most of Delaney's press photos are taken against particularly gritty backdrops. The 1959 image is less staged than others—more candid and natural.

developed the character as a surrogate—one who reconceives her own class status as an act of defiance.

Domestic Consciousness and Spatial Impact

Environmental psychology helped clarify the impact of the built environment on lived experience by offering speculative insights into the way space affected class-related behavior. Coincidentally, it was during the post-World War II years that the field of environmental psychology came to fruition, branching into specialized sub-fields of architectural psychology, behavioral geography, and urban research.[25] The initial goal of environmental psychology was, as Proshansky et al. proclaim, to uncover problems associated with spatial design to develop solutions for the betterment of society. Yet, as was the case with much of Britain's post-war rehousing, little time or funds were available for extensive research. So, while many post-war domestic spaces offered conspicuous improvements over prior housing, they also became examples of environmental problems in need of further solutions.

John B. Calhoun's "Population Density and Social Pathology" (1962) argued for "defensible space" in response to the phenomenon of "behavioral sink"—a decline in social behavior stemming from overpopulated environments. The principle of "defensible

[25] Further offshoots such as Humphry Osmond and Kyo Izumi's work surrounding the impact of institutional buildings on the human psyche granted new terminology to discuss the social interactions produced through spatial design. In "Function as the Basis of Psychiatric Ward Design" (1957), Osmond sought to build a bridge between the needs of mentally ill people and the architects who design the spaces such people inhabit. Later work such as that of Denis Wood and Robert J. Beck increased the focus of study by considering seemingly innocuous objects within suburban homes and their role in shaping behavior.

space" refers to the incorporation of comforting elements used to create a familiar, territorial sanctuary within a space parsed by the inhabitant as antagonistic or oppressive. Correspondingly, Proshansky et al.'s conception of "place identity" reveals the way one's environment imparts certain values and beliefs about the world. The concept of "place identity" stipulates that an environment's capacity to meet basic cultural and biological needs dictates a person's self-worth. This is buttressed by the concept of "place attachment" in which meaningful links develop between the individual and their space based on connections that run deeper than aesthetic gratification. In other words, for an environment to have personal meaning, visual appeal is not a necessary requirement; the concept suggests that ties can be formed to beautiful and ugly spaces in equal measure. However, in light of behavioral sink, if an environment fails to provide an aesthetically agreeable experience, then surely such a failure would be mirrored in the individuals' identification with the space. Stated in another way, if the space inhabited (by choice or by force) is visibly deteriorating, and the resulting effect on the occupant is construed as symptomatic of social deterioration (through delinquency, for example), then place attachment can be understood as an aesthetic concern—one that reaffirms an individual's social position and, by extension, self-worth. Furthermore, in environments rendered substandard by overcrowding and physical constraint, a decline in social behavior would surely be compounded by a deficiency of defensible space. Therefore, when defensible space is elusive, such spatial poverty can imprint itself on an individual's identity in that their environment operates as a direct reflection of their perceived social worth, reiterating class associations in a forceful manner. The cultivation of sanctuary, then, is of

key import in a world turned upside down by the lingering effects of war, and it becomes increasingly clear as to why kitchen sink writers favored visceral, often graphic examples of working-class conditions to explore the impact of space on the individual.

In efforts to make a home "homely" through decorative choices and creature comforts—emblems of imminent commodity culture as well as attempts to cultivate defensible space in an antagonistic environment—what is implied is that for an environment to be experienced as sanctuary, an a priori sense of security is required. But given the instability of domestic life throughout much of the twentieth century, a sense of stability would most likely emerge from other sources such as class solidarity expressed as "aligning oneself to the Joneses" as opposed to "keeping up with" or racing ahead of them. In this regard, decor has less to do with the creation of a physical defensible space, and more to do with anchorage to tradition and a working-class style. Therefore, concerns of decor reflect the preservation of custom, following Durkheim's notion of class-consciousness.[26] In this regard, it is possible to consider how domestic interiors reflect attempts to make sense of an unstable world, but the very desire to do so signals more psychologized grasps for stability—specifically the kind found in class identification and notions of solidarity. In other words, domestic space is rendered as defensible space not just through commodification, but through a specific kind of decor that communicates adherence to class principles as an attempt to find grounding in a shifting environment.

[26] For Durkheim, class consciousness acts as a set of values and beliefs held by a group and passed from generation to generation to ensure the group's continuity. This will be explored in greater depth in Chapter 2 to show how collective values of solidarity can place limits on a group.

However, as outlined by Christine Atha, design and decor ushered in new anxiety through attempts to refine the aesthetic sensibilities of the working class. This intensified social exclusion by communicating to working-class people that they lacked the taste and style necessary to inhabit new post-war housing. Atha reviews pamphlets and documents penned by Anthony Bertram and Nicholas Pevsner circulated between 1937 and 1954, pointing out how, through the use of language such as "crippled by bad taste," these pamphlets made the tacit claim that the working classes required civilizing as far as style was concerned (207). The implicit promise was that the home—and the successful management of it—would act as the material representation of advanced social mobility, so establishing a sense of aesthetic discrimination, according to the authors, was critical to such elevation. However, as Bertram and Pevsner promoted clean, modernist designs, their suggestions were immediately at odds with the existing tastes of their audience, leading the authors to use denigrating terms such as "vulgar," "common," "crude," "mongrel," and "uncivilized" as styles to be avoided (Atha 208). As Atha reveals, the objective was "to 'heal the social crippledom' of a lack of taste" and assist the working classes in "learning how to live again once they moved into their new modern homes" (214). Nonetheless, such objectives further strained "them and us" dichotomies, and the attempted extermination of traditionally British ornamentation from homes in favor of European minimalism only intensified the physical alienation associated with geographic displacement and the loss of community. Nonetheless, during the 1950s, aberrations in decorative choices emerged—largely in spaces shared by older and younger generations. The sort of decor pegged as "mongrel" and "tasteless" by Bertram and Pevsner appeared

as a bone of contention between a younger generation drawn to emerging Americanized pop cultural commodities and their parents who clung to the knick-knack ornamentation of the Victorian era. In this regard, shifts in decor reflect a departure from familiar aesthetic class-based customs toward a more dynamic mode of self-expression based on shifting trends and fashion. This distinction is captured by writers of the time and is generally understood as part and parcel of a generational divide; yet such nuances reveal the myriad ways in which domestic space impacts class consciousness. Cultural production—especially cultural production with elevated verisimilitude—allows for a more vivid understanding of this impact.

Domestic Frustration in John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*

John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*—perhaps the defining text of the period—echoes class anxiety as the result of social limitation symbolically constructed through the physical constraint of domestic space. From the moment of the play's release, the character of Jimmy Porter gained a cult-like following akin to Alan Sillitoe's Arthur Seaton. But, whereas Arthur is presented to us in a more fleshed-out manner due to the extended structure of the novel, Osborne's protagonist can be read as an assemblage of behavioral ticks and associative processes. These associations, revealed as sociopathic outbursts, stem from a vague sense of ontological persecution that Osborne portrays as just beyond Jimmy's grasp; there is a perpetual sense of imprisonment, but the prison itself is never fully enunciated. Kenneth Tynan registers the ease of identification with this vague persecution in that "The salient thing about Jimmy Porter was that we—the

under-thirty generation in Britain—recognised him on sight. We had met him; we had pub-crawled with him; we had shared bed-sitting-rooms with him. For the first time the theatre was speaking to us in our own language, on our own terms" (Lichtenstein 284). Osborne depicted Jimmy as "of the people" in a manner uncommon for British theater of the time—largely through the use of realistic dialog, but also in his depiction of the way subtle, ideological social forces were experienced by working-class people, producing a heightened degree of discontentment without a defined cause.

Critics tend to read the setting of Osborne's play—a "one-room flat in a large Midland town" (9)—as little more than an incidental thumbing of the nose at the affected drawing-room comedies of Terrence Rattigan and Noel Coward. Nevertheless, the kind of domestic setting that Osborne deploys was becoming increasingly the norm in post-war Britain due to a demographic shift that saw an escalation of smaller households stemming from an increase in early marriages as well as an increase in single-parent families (Hopkins 139). This, in turn, strained housing redevelopment further, resulting in more makeshift arrangements: an increase in maisonettes and local authority flats as well as the need for the occupant to compromise and "make do" in less-than-ideal spaces. Osborne's choice of this setting, as well as his use of notably elaborate stage direction, captures this compromise perfectly. That "the furniture is simple, and rather old" conveys a degree of economic paucity, contrasted against the piles of books that litter the space to signal the intellectual aspirations of the working class following the reform efforts set in place by the welfare state's post-war education acts. On the one hand, such details signal the poverty of the space and its inhabitants; on the other, it signals a failure of defensible

space in that the artifacts featured as part of the set lack cohesion, representing instead a chaotic mix of expressed identities. The space stands in stark contrast to the kind of "tasteful" spaces outlined by Bertram and Pevsner, locating Jimmy as "mongrel" and "uncivilized" despite his education and cultural capital. Furthermore, Osborne's description of the room's absurd proportions is revealing: the "two small low windows" that look out to the street convey a prison-like atmosphere while signaling the theme of myopic perceptions. The opposing wall's window, however, is much longer and more reasonably positioned, but the view that it grants is not of the outdoors, but of an internal hallway—essentially one space trapped inside another. The fact that the flat is crammed into the attic of a large Victorian house encapsulates Jimmy's paradoxical state—elevated, yet held captive within his elevation.[27]

The flat that the Porters inhabit is large yet the text imposes a manifest claustrophobia in that the three inhabitants (Jimmy, Alison, and Cliff), despite attempts to establish their own territory within the room, find it difficult to keep from stepping on each other's toes. Movement in the space is utterly restricted to signify the limited mobility of the social sphere; even when off-stage, Jimmy's presence is still felt through the intermittent bursts of his jazz trumpet which broadcast his unstable psychic state (39). The way characters are granted concessions to privacy is by avoiding eye contact and standing behind each other when talking. This is apparent throughout the play, but is especially noteworthy in the moments when Jimmy's façade cracks in Helena's presence,

[27] This, of course, sums up the cultural moment perfectly considering how the rise of the welfare state promised new opportunities that failed to flourish, largely because the class-system remained so rigid that mobility was rendered obsolete.

revealing the nature of his anxiety: "You see, I learned at an early age what it was to be angry—angry and helpless. And I can never forget it" (58). During this moment, Osborne directs Jimmy to lurk behind Helena, to avoid eye contact, and to "almost whisper" in what reads as a plea for personal space. The flat (arguably a stand-in for a culture that denies men like Jimmy the opportunity to express such anxieties) restricts autonomy which, in turn, produces a strained attempt at independence that manifests itself as class subdivision and isolationism. In this sense, the space lacks any of the comforts required for defensible space—a theme the play embraces by emphasizing the porousness of domestic boundaries in that outside forces continuously penetrate the space, heightening Jimmy's mania.

Because of this limited mobility, the space is strategically subdivided by gender in that Alison and, later, Helena, both find themselves subjugated behind an ironing board while the male figures are generally foregrounded. For Alison, the ironing board serves as a makeshift defense against Jimmy's abuse ("She is used to these carefully rehearsed attacks, and it doesn't look as though he will get his triumph tonight. She carries on with her ironing" [22]), but, like the walls of the space itself, the ironing board is a frail defense as it is the iron that burns her when Jimmy intentionally crashes into it while wrestling with Cliff (26). As each figure carves out his or her own protective space within the room (Jimmy and Cliff are shielded behind newspapers when the play begins), Osborne indexes a rupture in class solidarity as the result of spatial restriction. In this regard, Jimmy's attacks against Alison read as a form of transference from the amorphous assaults he perceives as being made against him but fails to articulate. His

lack of self-awareness is what leads him to situate Alison and her upper-class father as the face of the various cultural anxieties bearing down on him, prompting him to imprison her behind the ironing board in retribution for the very existence of social stratification.[28] Despite this lack of self-awareness, Jimmy seems to understand that the domestic sanctuary has been breached, as the oppressive mood inside tends to reflect what he sees outside: "It's started to rain. That's all it needs. This room and the rain" (21). Osborne signals this breach throughout via media interferences such as the Sunday papers that usher in "them" through their capacity to "make the lower classes feel ignorant" (10), and the Vaughan Williams concert on the radio that distances Jimmy from what he refers to as a simple, British traditional institution (17). These moments read as cultural and ideological intrusions, increasing the internal anxiety and tension felt by the inhabitants in a way that mirrors the alienating effects experienced by young working-class people at the time: ideology is perpetual and perpetually crushing, and restricted mobility denies any attempt to shield oneself from its effects.

Peter Kalliney has remarked that Jimmy's anger is too multivalent to be read simply as Osborne's own thinly veiled critique of class demarcation. Kalliney points out that it makes more sense to read the text and others like it as "ambivalent participants in broader discussions about the changing relationship among the government, the arts, and the public" (120). In other words, the character of Jimmy can be understood as a vessel wherein multiple anxieties converge without direct articulation; Jimmy is essentially cast

[28] Colonel Redfern (Alison's father) and Helena—one of the play's symbolic manifestations of elevated class—function within the text as misplaced conduits for a complex and fluid set of social anxieties that *Look Back in Anger* skillfully exploits.

as a lightning rod for external social forces that he cannot identify but are rendered concrete through the experience of the space itself. The elevated, yet constrained flat is crossed with the cattle-like atmosphere of overcrowding to signal shifts underway in British culture that failed to meet the needs of the populace and only served to further amplify an awareness of social stratification. For Jimmy, Richard Hoggart's eponymous binary of "them and us" is amplified by such confines, represented in the text through his snide condescension toward Alison's aristocratic father. As Hoggart aptly indicates, for the poor working classes, authorities and institutions were felt to be oppositional—abstract bodies that "compose[d] a shadowy but numerous and powerful group affecting their lives at almost every point" (62). This oppositional stance toward such institutional authority, Hoggart adds, was historically what constituted the more solidarity-oriented, unifying aspects of class consciousness in that it [unanimity] "imposes on its members an extensive and sometimes harsh pressure to conform" (72). But *Look Back in Anger* seems to advance internal fragmentation over solidarity as Osborne brings the "them and us" binary to bear on the play's setting by creating an image of a domestic sanctuary that stands in for, and fails to shelter from, ideological impositions that inscribe class onto the bodies of the occupants. The former unanimity of class-solidarity, and the sense of belonging that Hoggart deems historically characteristic of the working class, is demonstrably coming apart in this space—a notion that reflects shifts underfoot in the way that working-class individuals imagine themselves within their own community. Although Osborne offers no definite solution for such concerns, what *Look Back in Anger* successfully portrays is the lived-anxiety of forcefully imposed class-consciousness and

the consequences that it produces. Whereas Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy* provides an ethnographic snapshot that tends to cement preconceptions, a text like *Look Back in Anger* sets ethnography in motion in its ability to portray the oppressive forms of social stratification and its effect on those it seeks to stratify. While Osborne's representation of social immobility is bleak, its utter lack of sentimentality renders it as identifiably authentic and aligned to the lived-experience of many working-class people at the time.

Alan Sillitoe and the Dilemma of *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*

Whereas Osborne's text articulates the degree of frustration experienced by many working-class people as a result of their social position, Alan Sillitoe develops similar themes in his representations of the domestic but invokes the nature of choice to introduce the possibility of existing both inside and outside of designated class boundaries. Commonly heralded as one of the archetypical novels of the period, Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* unleashed Arthur Seaton onto the world—a culturally-revered binge-drinking, womanizing, weekend warrior. Sillitoe's intended depiction of Arthur was that of an existential hero, one whose material world had seemingly improved through what John Goldthorpe has described as embourgeoisement—an increase in perceived affluence through welfare state reform—but who was hamstrung, Sillitoe remarked, by a lack of spiritual values because "the kind of conditions he lives in do not allow him to have any" (Hanson 32). Sillitoe constructs Arthur, like Osborne's Jimmy, as a figure of identification for people living within similar confines—a prototype of sorts of the urban subject inherently oppressed by the

contours of their environment. But whereas Osborne's play simply expresses the consequence of an oppressive milieu, Sillitoe's text poses an existential dilemma in response: rebellion against the "Establishment" or resignation to the status quo. Representations of domestic life are central to this dilemma in that to settle down in a nice home is to submit to drudgery, and Sillitoe's treatment of such representations at least hints at a burgeoning change in conceptions of class away from passive acquiescence and toward a willingness to explore new forms of class consciousness.

Set in Nottingham, the story begins on a Saturday night in a workingman's club to establish Arthur as a hard drinker while disclosing his affair with Brenda, the wife of his co-worker and friend, Jack. During the week, Arthur grudgingly operates a lathe in a factory, but clings to an illusion of self-governing entrepreneurship in his capacity to work hard and make extra money.[29] Like Jimmy Porter, he is the embodiment of a disenfranchised generation, striving for a life beyond that of his parents, but restricted by ideological forces that hover unseen yet prescribe his social position.[30] Although Arthur's character is, as Sillitoe insisted, "untypical,"[31] the environment that he inhabits is exceedingly typical for the time. In fact, many of the western suburbs of Nottingham still resemble that of Sillitoe's spirited portrayal: "trade-marked houses, two up and two down, with digital chimneys like pigs' tits on the rooftops sending up heat and smoke

[29] All of which he blows on expensive suits and beer. This is, after all, the cusp of consumer culture, and Arthur could be considered a proto-mod.
[30] Arthur's plight is well-articulated by Kenneth Tynan's characterization of the archetypical Angry Young Man: "a new sort of hero—a lower-class intellectual with a ribald sense of humour, a robust taste for beer and sex, and an attitude of villainous irreverence toward the established order." See Lichtenstein 283.
[31] Arthur is also the embodiment of Colin Wilson's *The Outsider*—another trope associated with the movement that anticipates youth subculture and the desire to cultivate new social relations while operating within a traditional framework.

into the cold trough of the windy sky" (178). In these environments, factories oversee the space, with rows of housing acting as appendages of industry, rendering the setting as a toxic dystopia:

> burned by the sun with running tar-sores whose antiseptic smell blended with that of dustbins overdue for emptying, drying paint even drier on front doors, rusting knockers and letter-boxes, and withering flowers on windowsills, a summer blue sky up to which smoke from factory-chimneys coiled blackly. (136)

Furthermore, the reminder of industry's watchful domination is persistent through the constant noise of generators and the smell of cut steel that "permeate[d] the air over the suburb of four-roomed houses built around the factory" (23). Whereas ideological forces in *Look Back in Anger* emerge through the encroaching walls of the flat, here they extend into the community to blur the division between domestic space and the factory. The text's tension—and, arguably, the tension experienced by many working-class people at this time—is encapsulated in the paradoxical quandary: the factory offers a facsimile of independence and a simulation of elevated status through newfound affluence, but, like Jimmy's attic space, it is an elevation within a system that limits tangible social ascension.

The first domestic space encountered is that of Brenda and her husband Jack in which Arthur performs the role of surrogate husband and father to Brenda's children while Jack toils at the factory. The fact that Arthur approaches the home as a territory to be conquered ("He released her and, knowing every corner of the house and acting as if it belonged to him, stripped off his coat and shirt" [14]) speaks to his anxiety of not being the head of his own household. Echoing Doreen's fear of "being left upon the shelf," Arthur's affair with his friend's wife reveals more about his own domestic plight and the

unease that cultural narratives of normative domesticity produce.[32] The traditional structure of the domestic space and the nuclear family are what Arthur initially protests through his vicarious surrogacy, but it also reveals his paradoxical desire to attain a traditional domestic arrangement for himself as the world he inhabits dictates that that is what constitutes manhood. The choice of rebellion or acquiescence, therefore, is a consequence of limitations imposed by his immediate environment and his own inability to harness defensible space.

Arthur lives at home with his family, and Sillitoe amplifies the constraining role of this space in that Arthur is made to share a bed with his younger brother—a situation that infantilizes and emasculates him.[33] Furthermore, the home is part of the same system that designates social stratification, at times unfairly. Arthur's friendly superior at the factory causes him existential anxiety because, although "basically they were of equal stock," Robboe's world was different due to his ability to buy a "semi-detached in a posh district" (39). This rests heavily upon Arthur as he shares the lesser housing with his family that includes his father—a man who has dedicated the majority of his life to working at the same factory to which Arthur will, presumably, dedicate his. Arthur's father, like Jack, embodies resignation and is deserving of Arthur's sympathy as the result: "The old man was happy at last anyway, and he deserved to be happy, after all the years before the war on the dole, five kids, and the big miserying that went with no

[32] Doreen Gratton is a young woman who Arthur dates while Brenda is pregnant. She works at a neighboring factory and it bullied by her co-workers to find a husband and settle down.
[33] This forced emasculation can also be read as a contributing factor to Arthur's attempted usurpation of Jack, driving the narrative to Brenda's inevitable pregnancy and her subsequent attempts at illicit abortion.

money and no way of getting any" (22).[34] In fact, the novel's most salient and pressing theme is that of being trapped in a monotonous cycle—a notion most lucidly expressed in the closing scene in which Arthur catches and releases a fish back into a lake, with the narrator noting that "As soon as you were born you were captured by fresh air that you screamed against the minute you came out. Then you were roped in by a factory, had a machine slung around your neck, and then you were hooked up the arse with a wife" (236).[35] The perpetuation of cycles and the importance that Sillitoe places on the drudgery of labor is the material upon which the narrative is constructed. Arthur's father instills fear in him in that he serves as the mirror for Arthur's future; the man's passive haunting of the domestic space outside of work is Arthur's portent of what it means to be "caught."

The Seaton family home masquerades as a space of refuge from the week's labor, yet it is also a space where autonomous agency is tenuous, with family members extolling the virtues of moments of solitude.[36] The arrangement of this home maps onto Hoggart's description of the way two-up two-down housing served multiple, flexible purposes, aimed at integrating the family into the community. The Seaton home, we learn, "function[s] like the neck of an egg-timer: visitors came in through the backyard,

[34] As an aside, the submissive father is an unmistakable trope across many of these texts, and in several (*The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* and *Absolute Beginners*, for example) the father dies (in misery) at a relatively young age, supposedly as a consequence of his labor, emphasizing the existential threat of complacency and resignation.

[35] At several points in the text, the narrative voice changes from third person to second person, rendering it unclear as to whether the narrator has assumed Arthur's character who is now thinking out loud, or whether the narrator is providing a sort of director's cut narrative overlay to the scene, addressing the reader directly in a didactic manner. My money's on the latter.

[36] This option, we might recall, was also unavailable in the Porters' flat of *Look Back in Anger*.

and [are] disgorged with gangs of the family by the front door" (210). Hoggart characterizes Northern working-class households, noting how "a good living room must provide three principal things; gregariousness, warmth and plenty of good food" (33). This is the case in the Seaton's home in that the living room centers on "A bright fire [that] burned in the modernised grate—the family had clubbed-up thirty quid to have it done—and the room was warm and cheerful, the table set, and the tea mashed" (20). In this regard, it is a welcoming space, treated as such by members of the community. But the effect is that the space fails to relieve the occupants from the trials of the workweek as the noise and bustle of the machines is simply replaced by the noise and bustle of family members and neighbors.[37] In other words, the dividing line between home, community, and factory is eradicated, casting the home as inseparable from the community of labor. The upshot is that the characters in the story reach for other forms of defense. For Arthur, it is drinking and philandering; for his father, relief comes through television. Not only does the domestic space fail as sanctuary against repetitive cycles of labor, it operates as a manacle, tying people to the space of labor, and stresses the servility of post-war working-class realities.

Yet *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* is also a critically astute work in its exploration of the way the shackles of the daily grind are broken by the newfound

[37] Incidentally, noise plays a significant role in this text: the factory is metonymically reduced to a series of deafening sounds; the pubs are rarely described as anything but a sea of noise; and the domestic space is equally as noisy. Karel Reisz's excellent film adaptation makes this point as well, with a constant stream of non-diegetic rumbles and groans of machinery. At several points in the narrative, Arthur craves noise, suggesting that he cannot function without it. Sillitoe's intention here is clearly to demonstrate how the environment has inscribed itself into Arthur's DNA in that the factory and labor community will always be a part of him.

affluence of the welfare state and its failed promise of social elevation. The relative prosperity of the period following the war is expressed through material acquisition that functions to offset servility. For example, Arthur rationalizes his father's resignation to the factory to pacify his own imminent compliance, noting that factory work provides him with "all the Woodbines he could smoke, money for a pint if he wanted one . . . A holiday somewhere, a jaunt on the firm's trip to Blackpool, and a television-set to look into at home" (22).[38] Yet the repetitious time cycle inferred by the novel's title is important in that Arthur's father's existence is limited: he is either on the clock or at home preparing himself for his next bout of labor. As the result, "He was either happy and fussy with everybody, or black-browed with a deep melancholy rage that chose its victims at random" (21). An environment that provides limited opportunities produces emotional states that reflect these same limits—expressed as the theme of submission that Sillitoe dramatizes throughout. As Arthur's father is the premonition of his own future, and his friend Jack is heading down the same path of resignation ("You won't knuckle under, Arthur. If you would, you'd enjoy life" [207]), it can be seen that the domestic spaces that Jack and Arthur's father occupy serve as models for Arthur's uncertainty as to whether he should attain such an arrangement for himself or reject it by undermining cultural norms.

[38] Interestingly, Hoggart describes his working-class subjects in almost identical words ("This man is a specially skilled worker and has been doing well for some time, so that he takes his family for a lavish week at Blackpool each summer and bought a television set before anyone else" [53]).

Sillitoe's text is telling in that much of the novel is set outside of the home, underscoring domestic space as desirable as well as something to be avoided.[39] However, the house the Seatons inhabit takes its toll on them in ways similar to Osborne's Jimmy. But whereas Jimmy's anger is symptomatic of amorphous ideological messaging rendered material through spatial confines, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* speaks more to acquiescence and resignation to a domestic milieu wherein labor and domesticity are one and the same. Although the novel ends on an optimistic note to suggest that a balance between homogeneity and independence is the ideal, the tone is one of continual class struggle: "And trouble for me it'll be, fighting every day until I die. Why do they make soldiers out of us when we're fighting up to the hilt as it is?" (238). In his attempt to understand why young people like Arthur Seaton continue to take jobs like that of his father, Paul Willis has outlined the capitalist apparatus that upholds a servile labor force through a controlled sanctioning of insurgence where "penetrations" (the recognition of inequality or the uncovering of capitalist mechanisms) are met with "limitations" (a manipulation of the cultural field to stem rebellion) (174). In Willis' model, Arthur's rebellion is stage-managed by a fixed social structure and is, therefore, ineffectual. Yet, what this novel reveals is the potential for a discrete revolution in class consciousness and belonging—the possibility of imagining classed existence under one's own conditions. In this regard, the novel critiques the consciousness-shaping effect of the domestic environment in a manner that presents submission to established social structures as the

[39] In relation to Osborne's play, this is also due to the novel's extended format that allows for a range of settings in a way that is harder to achieve in the dramatic form.

path of least resistance. Rather than championing a full-blown anarchistic confrontation with the state, the text invites the reader to participate in a mode of cerebral, autonomous insurgence, anticipating the rise of subculture that will occur throughout much of the 1960s, further developing the internal fragmentation of class that Osborne's text outlines in response.

New Domesticity in Shelagh Delaney's *A Taste of Honey*

Whereas Osborne's text articulated the impact of the domestic on the individual, and Sillitoe's text showed how domestic anxiety contributes to existential crises, Shelagh Delaney explores the way shifts in class consciousness confront oppressively classed domestic spaces. As one of the few female writers associated with kitchen sink realism, Delaney was the antithesis of the "Angry Young Man" label, being neither a man nor particularly angry. While still grappling with the same themes of social alienation and class stratification as Osborne and Sillitoe, Delaney's contribution poses a different approach to class-consciousness: whereas Osborne and Sillitoe's work illuminated the subtle and not-so-subtle tensions of nonconformity, Delaney's 1956 play *A Taste of Honey* unapologetically turns social conformity on its head in its brazen discussion of class, gender, race, and sexual orientation. Given this, Delaney's dynamic rethinking of constrained domestic space is especially indicative of the unraveling of working-class temporalities to anticipate the emergence of class identity as an expression of subculture.

Having originally planned it as a novel, the nineteen-year-old Delaney took just two weeks to rewrite *A Taste of Honey* as a play specifically intended to tackle taboo

topics as part of a revitalization of British theater. Raised within a working-class Irish immigrant family in Salford, and initially failing the eleven-plus that would have granted her social ascendency, Delaney imbued her play with a strong autobiographical charge, reflecting the frustrations and limitations of working-class life but with a hint of optimism. In a 1959 interview, the author voiced her desire to represent Salford locals as idiosyncratically unique, noting that "I had strong ideas about what I wanted to see in the theatre . . . Usually North Country people are shown as gormless, whereas in actual fact, they are very alive and cynical" (Lichtenstein 266). The play received a mixed response from the press, with the notoriously conservative Daily Mail condemning the Theatre Workshop for even staging the performance, bleating that "Once authors wrote good plays set in drawing-rooms. Now, under the welfare state, they write bad plays set in garrets" (Lichtenstein 266). Nevertheless, prominent figures of the moment like Lindsay Anderson and Colin MacInnes, praised the play's substantiated depictions of Northern life and its sparse authenticity.

The play tells the story of seventeen-year-old Jo—a teenager largely abandoned by her promiscuous mother, Helen. Following a brief relationship with a black sailor, Jo finds herself pregnant and without resources. In the second act, she rooms with a flamboyant yet tormented homosexual named Geoffrey, and in a total inversion of social norms, the pair transform an otherwise uninhabitable space into a new domesticity. But following the dissolution of her own shotgun wedding, Helen returns to short-circuit this

arrangement, leading the play to its somewhat bleak finale.[40] The text is minimal with terse dialog, allowing for prominent foregrounding of the working-class anxieties that the play addresses—specifically the reimagining of domestic space based on *potential* rather than *actual* conditions.[41]

Set in the author's hometown of Salford, the play centers on two flats in the decaying Manchester slums, both of which are clearly deficient spaces of residence but cemented as a "type" that had become the norm for young people in industrial England. When Helen's fiancé Peter first visits the "ghastly district" containing "tenements, cemetery, slaughterhouse," he exclaims, "Nobody could live in a place like this," to which Jo retorts: "Only about fifty thousand people" (17). The first residence—a "comfortless" space that Jo shares with Helen—is marked as transitory through Helen's aside that "we can always find something else" (9). Despite its dereliction, both Jo and Helen express the working-class trait of "making do" through an optimistic spin: "Everything in it's falling apart, it's true, and we've no heating—but there's a lovely view of the gasworks, we share a bathroom with the community and this wallpaper's contemporary" (9). Similarly, Jo attempts to remodel the space as homely by decorating an exposed light bulb with her scarf—a gesture of defensible space repeated throughout

[40] I would argue that the pessimistic ending that counters Jo's otherwise optimistic worldview is one of aesthetic allegiance. Delaney was clearly in touch with the political dimensions of her play and the audience who would see it. A "happy ever after" ending would have detracted from the play's goals, but such pessimism also echoes the paradox faced by Arthur—a gesture toward resistance that still acknowledges social inevitabilities. This, it seems to me, is the essence of subculture, and does not detract from the imaginative potential of class consciousness that Delaney still manages to evoke.

[41] Whereas Osborne's play functions as a stand-alone work, the framework of *A Taste of Honey* is gaunt and appears more fleshed out in the 1962 Tony Richardson-directed film for which Delaney wrote the screenplay.

the play, and one that speaks to Delaney's symbolic emphasis on light as revealing or concealing of truth. For Jo, masking reality is compensatory; her ability to manipulate light sources parallels her capacity to shape her domestic surroundings as needed. For example, when Geoffrey first enters the larger space of the second act, he reaches for light only to have Jo snap, "No. Don't you dare put that light on" (46). Seconds later, she states that she likes "romantic half-light of the maisonette," and when she demands that he reveal his sexual preference to her, she adds "Come on, let's have some truth" turning the light on in the process (47). While this use of light manipulation as a technical device appears sophomoric, it illuminates the necessity of domestic adaptation as the result of the post-war housing crisis. In this sense, Jo demonstrates a willingness to reimagine her domestic environs and reinvent herself beyond the accepted demarcations of her designated class through creative, spontaneous gestures.

Thus, what Delaney's text explores—perhaps more so in Tony Richardson's film adaptation—is the way that less-than-ideal spaces have the capacity to be overhauled as ideal places. In Richardson's film, there is considerable development in the way the setting is established in that the two rooms of the play are expanded into a more cohesive world. Yet Richardson is sensitive to the claustrophobic intent of Delaney's original text, emphasizing how external spaces can be just as constricting as that of the domestic interiors. For example, in the opening scene, Jo is observed in a schoolyard through a moving documentary-style camera that encases the viewer within a yelling crowd of schoolgirls. Later, when Jo and Geoffrey do escape the confines of the flat, Richardson depicts them as hemmed in beneath "the arches" in a scene that is closely cropped by a

dark, brick frame to echo the state of entrapment that Jo is about to reveal to Geoffrey (her interracial pregnancy).[42] In this regard, spatial confinement plays as much of a role in *A Taste of Honey* as in *Look Back in Anger*, but whereas Osborne's text focuses on dramatizing the prescriptive effects of constrained domestic space on class status, Delaney's text takes the next step in the reconceptualization of space through a reimagining of social designation and the adoption of a new, autonomous class-consciousness.

Yet, Jo's comprehension of domestic space is undeniably optimistic and perhaps naïve. The maisonette is dark, enormous, and decidedly unhomely; we learn that it is unkempt through Geoffrey's quip that "I can tell it's yours from the state it's in; No wonder you won't put the light on" (47); the nearby river is "the colour of lead" and filled with "filthy children" (54); and in Richardson's cinematic treatment, the set looks like an abandoned factory crossed with a barn. Despite this, it fits their unorthodox and idiosyncratic needs, with Jo adding, "There's only one of me like there's only one of you" followed by Geoff's remark, "We're bloody marvellous!" (50-51). No sentimentalizing or romanticizing exists—it is a grim, miserable space. Yet unlike Osborne and Sillitoe's texts, Delaney's play resists the temptation to linger on instances of poverty; instead, it posits domestic plenitude as a combination of the factual and the conceivable—a way to experience space for what it could be as well as what it is. In his discussion of heterotopic space, Michel Foucault describes a similar notion: "a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which real sites, all the other real sites that can be found

[42] The scenes set in "The Arches" were actually filmed under a famous viaduct in Stockport, Cheshire

within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted" (3). Foucault develops this thought, positing heterotopic space as ideal and beyond hegemony, "As a sort of simultaneously mythic and real contestation of the space in which we live" (4). Similar to the way subculture poses an alternative worldview while operating from within the dominant culture, Foucault's conception of heterotopic space is dynamic and contingent, and *A Taste of Honey*, despite its clear allegiance to kitchen sink drama and class anxieties, makes no direct reference to class concerns; instead, its politics is one of hope. The text sidesteps class assignation in lieu of non-hegemonic potentiality, underscored by Jo's comment that Geoffrey would "make somebody a wonderful wife" (55). While Delaney keeps working-class anxieties thematically afloat through the topics that the play engages, her outlook is notably different than that of Osborne or Sillitoe, suggesting a new way of conceiving domestic space in order to sidestep its potential to inscribe class.[43]

Given their unflinching dedication to gritty spaces and domestic setting, it is possible to see how Osborne, Sillitoe, and Delaney's texts suggest a sequence, diagnosing the symptoms of ideological class-prescription encoded within post-war domestic space, meditating on the potential treatments available, and presenting a case study of how such potential remedies might be sanctioned. But what is also apparent is that, by narrating the limitations revealed at the intersection of domestic space and class, these texts suggest alternative class modalities, presented here as existential flight. Kitchen sink texts, I

[43] Perhaps the best way to think of this is not as an attempt to simply ignore class, but rather a state of disinterestedness; the emanation of a set of subcultural ideals.

argue, promote social change in that they link the tangible confines of domestic space to a more intangible, abstract experience of social subjugation at the hands of persistent class dynamics. In this case, kitchen sink texts contextualize and document a critical moment in British social history, one in which the once-monolithic notion of class as shared struggle fragments to produce atomized, autonomous class articulations. While this chapter has argued that such fragmentation occurs as a partial consequence of domestic space, it is important to note that such fragmentation stems from a variety of factors such as generational divides, an increasingly liberalized culture, and advances in women's right that transformed traditional domestic arrangements. However, as texts that document such shifts with precision, kitchen sink realism's underscoring of spatial interaction and negotiations of class identity suggests that concerns about space almost always play a role in such a process—which, in turn, signals the importance of considering environment as a critical component of the way class is written and sustained. While this argument will be further developed in subsequent chapters, what becomes increasingly apparent through such analysis is the way that class disarticulation is less of a shattering of monolithic class consciousness, and more of a tactical move toward a subcultural form in which class becomes an aspect of bottom-up identity formation rather than a top-down social demarcation. The disarticulation of monolithic class consciousness, then, represents less of a breakdown of class, and more of a rethinking of the way the individual identifies with their own social positioning. Kitchen sink texts, I have argued, act as signposts for such a transition.

Chapter 2: "Welcome to the Neighborhood"—Institutional Borders in Working-Class Communities

In 1961, the Cinematic Licensing Committee of the Warwickshire County Council broke new ground by becoming the first committee to recommend a country-wide ban on film that had received international acclaim at the Cannes Film Festival. The chairman of the council, Alderman George Sperryn, commented that the film in question was not only "shocking" with "no redeeming features," but that "it should be banned as harmful to public morals." The film in question was Karel Reisz' 1960 adaptation of *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*—a film that Alan Sillitoe worked to develop alongside Reisz by writing the screenplay himself. While the film contains several scenes of exaggerated violence, in addition to enough strong language to warrant a contemporary X-rating, the justification that Sperryn and his committee provided to support the film's censorship was that "it presents a most unsavoury picture of factory morals" adding that "I have had a lot to do with factory workers, and I think a great deal better of them than the film-makers apparently do" ("County Ban"). Sillitoe, no stranger to factory work himself, discussed the film's production in his 1995 autobiography *Life Without Armour*, noting how the British Board of Film Censors fought him and Reisz every step of the way, resulting in what he considered to be "a much watered down version of the book" (259). But what stands out about the Warwickshire Council's proposed ban is that the complaint is based not the film's violence, the language, or even the eponymous abortion sequence; it is the fact that the film addresses the monotony and drudgery of manual labor, staging factory-floor and anti-establishment rebellion as a

viable option to break arduous cycles of toil. During a moment in British culture in which attempts to reignite the economy through employment were prevalent, it is telling how novels, plays, and films that explore the ramifications of working-class environments on the individual were seen as a threat to the status quo by those who benefit most from its preservation.

This chapter enhances the previous chapter's argument by shifting the focus from depictions of domestic rooms to depictions of the surrounding area. Centering on a ubiquitous locales associated with working-class communities, the chapter traces cultural histories of working-class institutions and their representation in the literature of the period. Furthermore, the chapter explores the way such institutions reiterate class boundaries through their design as well as their cultural relevance, considering the sort of ideological messaging encoded in spaces like the factory, the school, and the pub. Engaging Emile Durkheim's notion of collective consciousness—notably how the collective perseveres through the performance of shared values and behaviors—I argue that classed environments limit social mobility through their capacity to communicate subjugation as a collective value to be upheld. Turning once more to Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1958) while adding studies of David Storey's *This Sporting Life* (1960) and Nell Dunn's *Up the Junction* (1963), I show how the depicted relationship between the domestic and the local reflects the way working-class environs are institutionally driven and contoured to uphold the status quo. Building on my argument from the previous chapter, I contend that kitchen sink writers amplify interactions with space to highlight its impact on the individual. In doing so, they reveal

how the frustrations that emerge from shared immiseration invite social insurgency through new modes of class consciousness and states of being. William Hutchings refers to such states as "Proletarian Byronism"—a predicament in which pressure to resign oneself to the hegemonic order is met with the desire to transcend social limits. As the result, kitchen sink texts contest the notion of the collective through their dedication to "outsider" ontologies. This chapter, then, builds on the last to enrich understanding of the way new, contingent working-class subjectivities perform in representations of classed space, suggesting how kitchen sink texts predict subcultural inclinations through their championing of the individual within the collective.

Working-Class Environs and the Circulation of Ideology

One of the ways that kitchen sink texts successfully explore the relationship between class and space is by resorting to spatial types commonly understood and experienced as classed. While it would be naive to suggest that all industrial towns map onto the same model, noticeable similarities can be identified across working-class communities that, to some degree, can be transposed from one town to the next. For example, Keith Waterhouse's 1959 novel *Billy Liar* goes to great lengths to show how the fictional Yorkshire town of Stradhoughton serves as an archetype for many northern working-class communities in its general layout and in its features. Larger towns such as Nottingham or Manchester tend to be represented in relation of their suburban offshoots or satellite communities, with areas such as Delaney's Salford representing a microcosm of a working-class life that mirrors that of many other northern communities. But even in

texts in which the region is part of a larger metropolis—such as Dunn's *Up the Junction* or MacInnes' *London Trilogy*—writers imply boundaries that are coterminous with the social restrictions imposed on working-class people across the nation. What emerges from these texts is that, despite geographical and regional nuance, working-class communities tend to reflect similar arrangements with the same kind of institutions that communicate consistent ideological messages. Aside from the domestic spaces outlined in the previous chapter, the spaces most commonly inhabited by working-class people in the immediate post-war years are epitomized by the factory (or its equivalent space of labor), the school (or what I would suggest is its equivalent, the borstal), and the pub. While this by no means typifies the entirety of a working-class world,[44] such spaces tend to be prioritized in kitchen sink texts. For the purposes of this chapter, then, "working-class environs" will serve as a placeholder for the pub, the school, and the factory, with each considered in relation to the texts studies within this chapter.

The Pub as Contact Zone

Perhaps the space most synonymous with Britain's working-class culture is the pub—a space whose mercurial history responds to social shifts, signaling class delineations in revealing ways. In his comprehensive history of British drinking, Paul Jennings provides an overview of the development of the pub in Britain, focusing expressly on the way wrinkles in the cultural fabric dictated shifts in pub usage. In his

[44] Additional sites of working-class life will be addressed in Chapter 3 under the auspices of transgressive spaces—spaces in working-class communities that can be transformed and granted new meaning in a manner that reconfigures class-consciousness.

chapter devoted to the physical attributes of pubs, Jennings traces their development as social and economic necessities. Beginning with a survey of "the 'golden age' of the inn," Jennings shows how the pub's primary use was to house travelers such as merchants and judicial servants as well as to operate as a hub of social activity ("History" 72-73). During this period, the clientele of the pub expanded from one "dominated by the male poor to one in which the middling and upper ranks of society and women made greater use of its spaces" (75). However, Jennings notes that, during the Victorian era, the kind of drinks served dictate social divisions, resulting in institutions such as "beerhouses" that were generally considered to be working-class and off-limits for more "respectable characters" (78). But it was not just the drinks served that divided patrons; the spaces themselves reflected social fragmentation, rendering pubs petri dishes of social trends. A combination of cosmetic facades and internal structure shaped pub patronage, revising individual comprehensions of social status in the process.

Jennings states how Victorian pubs tended to resemble houses in the general vicinity but could be identified as pubs by their signage, such as advertisements and lavish decorations like lighting, seating, carved wood, and terracotta tiles. As a result, pubs of the Victorian era promised a respite from the working world with their aesthetic flourishes linking them to the domestic. In the post-war years, Britain saw an increase in pub development, but rather than reflecting the modernist and utilitarian styles emerging alongside the housing of the post-war era, the majority of British pubs tended to maintain either the look of Victorian houses or, as Jennings claims, were built in "a neo-Tudor or neo-Georgian style, attempting to recreate a version of the traditional inn" (86). The fact

that pub design masqueraded as homes of the past, rather than reflecting the kinds of homes developed in the post-war years, clarifies their escapist role in society, particularly the mental comfort that they offered to unstable communities loosely-defined by a sense of Englishness and heritage.

But of equal interest is the way that the internal organization of pubs sustained class division by upholding certain imperceptible boundaries. Jennings notes how Victorian and Edwardian pubs saw internal division that mimicked and dictated social microcosms in that pubs designed to serve a spectrum of social classes tended to have a "best room" to house middle-class patrons. twentieth-century pubs followed a similar plan with interwar pubs renovated to include a "lounge" which Jennings describes as "a gender-neutral space which appealed to some working-class and, in some places, middle-class couples and women drinkers" (86). Even in pubs without physical subdivisions, social microcosms still formed in that "There was the 'public space' of the middle-aged regulars at the bar; the 'negotiable space' of the non-seating areas by various groups of customers; and the 'closed' social space where couples sat alone" (87). The famous opening scene of Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*—a text that will be further considered later in this chapter—is especially astute in this regard, painting the picture of a social hub in which people who would not ordinarily mix are united with less-than-successful results. On the one hand, it would appear that the spatial makeup of the pub reflected preexisting social divisions; on the other, the question can be raised as to how public house design served to sustain social stratification and even stipulate it.

Despite the economic function of pubs, their social capacity is what constitutes their most enduring quality with pubs operating as hubs for communities in which, as Jennings points out, notions of public and private converge in intriguing ways. But the distinction that I want to draw here is between the sort of pubs that grew out of the Victorian era and the pubs that served a designated community in a more utilitarian, bare-bones manner. Whereas the Victorian pubs, with their elaborate decor and quaint character, proposed an escape from reality in their simulation of idealized British heritage, a number of pubs of the post-war era—some of which still exist to this day—provide almost none of the former's aesthetic fanfare. While the most elaborate pubs offer flight from the monotony of working-class lives, many pubs that exist within established communities can be read as little more than serviceable stations of alcoholism and mirrors of the grim surroundings that patrons sought to escape.

One example of the kind of pub designed to serve the immediate community with little flair or aesthetic appeal is the working-men's club—a space whose name alone confirms the ideological messaging of status transmitted through its presence. Working men's clubs began in Australia as private social clubs with recreation and education in mind. They spread to the industrial areas of the Midlands and Northern England in the nineteenth century, accompanying the rise of industry and operating as non-profit organizations. Their impetus and structure divert from that of a traditional pub in that they offered a more institutional space aimed at civilizing rather than just entertaining their patrons. In 1862, social reformer Reverend Henry Solly set out to create spaces that would "persuade young working men to give up drinking at public houses, to carry on

education by means of evening classes, and to develop 'a deep vital interest in religious truth'" (Woodroofe 20). The original intent of Solly's clubs was threefold: to assist working-class men in becoming self-supporting; to engage with local worker's unions; and to maintain an apolitical stance while furthering its own cause (Woodroofe 21). At first, such clubs were alcohol-free, offering instead a space for "social intercourse, amusement, and 'rational recreation'" (Beaven 21), but by the 1870s the ban on alcohol was lifted, increasing membership and moving clubs away from the reformist intent of the clubs' founder (Beaven 28). Although working men's clubs reached their apex in the second half of the twentieth century, their social function at this time was quite distanced from their pre-war origins. By the 1970s, working-men's clubs were known more for their excessive drinking, appearing more like an institutionalized version of the traditional pub. While the public house was a commercial business, working men's clubs were community-run enterprises and therefore acted more as a mirror to the community they served than as an entity that could shape culture. Whereas Victorian pubs provided escape through their design and decor, any sense of escape found in twentieth-century working men's clubs was accomplished primarily through alcohol consumption.

Largely mirroring working men's clubs, community sports clubs offered similar environments with similar community engagement, albeit one structured around local sports teams—usually football or rugby—sports culturally connected to working-class individuals.[45] Whereas working men's clubs were loosely structured by union

[45] While golf and tennis clubs certainly existed, the social dynamic of such clubs was very different than that of football and rugby clubs, underscoring the way that such spaces were classed.

governance, sports clubs tended to subscribe to the politics and organization of sports leagues and premierships. Drinking culture and sports such as football and rugby went hand in hand, and thus sports clubs adopted the same setup as working men's clubs, with a makeshift bar and minimal decor. Whereas working men's clubs acted as community hubs due to their central locations, sports clubs were often found on the peripheries of the community due to the space required for either a football or a rugby pitch. The lack of geographic centrality, though, was offset by people's geographic allegiance to a team. In the post-war years, the interior of sports clubs and working men's clubs were difficult to tell apart, and the function was one and the same. Local sports clubs would embrace community events beyond the realm of sports, using their open spaces for carnivals and community-specific engagement. Even after the decline of working men's clubs, sports clubs exist to this day and, in many cases, operate as "the local"—even when a fancier pub is more convenient to access. In this sense, the degree of allegiance to spaces tagged as "working-class" is perceptible, drawing distinctions between the pubs of the past that reflect traditional heritage and culture and pubs of the present whose appeal is structured by their proximity to classed regions.[46]

With the advent of working men's clubs, the escapist fantasy that traditional public houses sought to simulate faded into the periphery, and clubs centered around sports allegiance reinforced the prevalence of shared local values. The functional and

[46] This point will be taken up more forcefully in Chapter 4 in discussions of TV shows like *Coronation Street* and *Shameless* in which the "local" is granted territorial significance over other nearby pubs. *Coronation Street*'s "The Rover's Return" and *Shameless'* "The Jockey" have become bona fide cultural institutions, despite their not existing in reality. Both spaces signify the importance of classed locality as part of their nature.

utilitarian spaces of the "club" replaced the "local" whereas the dressier "pub" became more of an exotic destination—a destination to take the family to for a Sunday lunch as an excursion or special event. Oftentimes, pubs on the outskirts of villages and towns would cater specifically to such excursions, offering meals that mimicked the kind of Sunday roast cooked at home.[47] Play areas designed for young children tended to be more elaborate than those on local estates, and the scenery often reinforced the sense of change sufficient to suggest respite from the familiar. The upshot of this was that community pubs and clubs tended to feel increasingly like the kinds of spaces where their patrons lived: a working men's club close to a council estate would likely be designed in the same manner as that of the estate with decor resembling unfurnished homes albeit with larger rooms. In many cases, such clubs were built into the housing estates themselves—which, for the heavy drinker, was a convenient feature. What was conceived of and presented as a space of shared comradery was all-too-quickly recast as a space of shared misery and resignation.

The School System's Forking Paths

One of the major shifts in education in twentieth-century Britain stemmed from the 1942 "Social Insurance and Allied Services" or, as it is more commonly known, the Beveridge Report—a document commonly heralded as the nucleus of the modern welfare state. The report, led by economist William Beveridge, identified social problems and

[47] A "Sunday roast" in British working-class communities was often an elaborate but predictable affair, consisting of roast meat, roast potatoes, stuffing, gravy, and a traditional popover named Yorkshire Pudding.

proposed an optimistic, universalized catalog of solutions to combat social ills like squalor, disease, and ignorance. Ignorance was addressed first, and the 1944 Education Act established a comprehensive primary and secondary educational program—as well as developing government subsidies to fund post-secondary education and training. While the universality of the proposal suggests an attempt to close class divides, the secondary educational system was split three ways: the grammar school for those deemed academically astute; the secondary modern school for a basic, practical education; the technical schools for more mechanical and labor-based training. Whereas secondary schools had previously charged fees for attendance, the Education Act removed them, allowing working-class children to gain access to educational opportunities available to middle- and upper-class children. The educational route was determined by the prospective student's performance on the "eleven-plus"—an exam that sought to gauge students' academic ability. As with all standardized tests, however, the exam was susceptible to manipulation, largely through for-profit coaching—an option unavailable to many working-class children. Criticism of the exam was swift, and regional results were telling: children in the southern part of the country scored considerably higher than those raised in northern industrial cities. A 1957 study found that class designation played a critical role in exam success with a disproportionate number of middle- and upper-class children doing well in relation to working-class children. Given the nature of the exam and the social makeup of the country, there were not enough technical schools available to accommodate the amount of students who scored poorly. Thus, the attempt to thwart class bias and the inherent advantages denied to working-class people ended up

reinforcing class bias and privilege even further by limiting access to education of any kind due to a lack of technical school space available.

The pre-war years saw the development of new schools but only in large urban metropolises such as London. In heavily populated areas, multistory construction was emphasized whereas schools in suburban areas favored single level constructs with a greater focus on light and ventilation (Harwood 51). New construction merged with schools from as far back as the seventeenth century, hoping to solve some of the issues that had existed with older constructs such as the spread of illness through large shared spaces. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century schools that remained bore the markings of charitable schools—institutions given the dubious name of "ragged schools" associated with industrial areas and the working poor. Revivalist forms developed in the nineteenth century also remained with what became known as The Queen Anne style spreading to Midlands communities like Sheffield and Leeds (Harwood 42). By the turn of the century, local authorities aimed for a more utilitarian appearance, shifting away from the decorative revivalist style, following the lead of the Derby Education Committee architect George Widdows (Harwood 52). By this point, school design was starting to move away from grandiose statements, leaning instead toward buildings that met community needs more squarely.

The interwar years saw further innovation in school design but little in the way of implementation due to a poor economy. By 1925, cheaper, more makeshift schools were prioritized with interior space sacrificed by reducing ceiling height and introducing open-air schools—buildings that, while somewhat repressive inside, allowed for classes to be

held out in the open to mitigate the experience of being locked indoors. Furthermore, the first half of the twentieth century saw a move toward school design that mapped onto the tripartite system that grew out of the 1944 Education Act: technical schools would adopt more modernist influences whereas grammar schools would remain more traditional (Harwood 70). Continuing the push to produce new schools in an economic manner, the Ministry of Education, in 1943, proposed a turn to prefabricated materials. By 1949, the use of economic methods and ultra-rationalist designs was state mandated (Harwood 73).

Following the passing of Butler's Education Act, the new three-way secondary system called for a vernacular architecture of its own with grammar school relying on existing structures from the past and technical schools adopting the more economic, prefabricated styles. Secondary comprehensive schools lacked an identifiable design of their own, and for many northern areas, the cost of building three schools was insurmountable, so local authorities turned toward the possibility of building "bilateral" schools—buildings in which two of the three educational tracks could be housed (Harwood 77). It should come as no surprise that bilateral schools tended to combine the secondary comprehensive with the technical school, allowing the grammar school to insulate the "academically advanced" from the rest.[48] The period reflected a fascinating moment in architectural history that corresponded with the LCC propagation of modernist high-rise construction, producing canonical designs such as The Smithson's Hunstanton School in Norfolk (1949). However, such designs were not the norm in

[48] It is challenging not to think of this tripartite system as anything other than an allegory for social stratification. In years to come, however, technical schools would become more associated with trade skills such as metal fabrication or car mechanics. It is as though social demarcation was written into the original plan.

communities in which budgets were tight. Open plan, flexible spaces became standardized with a shift away from innovation toward a more doctrinaire approach led by educational authorities seeking utilitarian and economic construction. By the late 1950s, the built environment of the educational landscape, having run the gamut of design approaches, resigned itself to its existing stock with new construction reflecting practicality and frugality—a move that closely resembled rehousing underway at the time but also mirrored trends recognizable in pub culture. As with the pubs that would emerge within housing estate plans, class associations were clearly perceptible through spatial design in which grammar schools acted as signifiers of history, tradition, lineage, and social grandstanding, whereas secondary comprehensive schools were paired with technical schools and placed in prefab, utilitarian spaces that granted little architectural inspiration compared to the grammar schools. As the result of the tripartite system, the socially divisive and privilege-rewarding eleven-plus, the physical space of post-war schools in Britain unambiguously communicated class status and social worth.

In the touching cover letter that Shelagh Delaney included when sending a draft of *A Taste of Honey* to the Theatre Workshop's Joan Littlewood, she states "I want to write for theatre but I know so very little about it. I know nothing, have nothing—except a willingness to learn—and intelligence" (Littlewood 515). Littlewood, of course, would become a major supporter of Delaney's work, although admitting that considerable editing was involved. But Delaney's statement is apt in that a formal education—or a lack thereof—mirrors the experience of a number of the writers associated with the kitchen sink movement. In a 1982 essay on his career as a writer, Alan Sillitoe noted that

having failed the eleven-plus exam twice, it was clear to him "once and for all that [he] was not cut out for education" ("Writing and Publishing"). Delaney also failed the exam (four times), as did Arnold Wesker, Keith Waterhouse and others. Stan Barstow began grammar school prior to the 1944 Education Act, leading him to a career as a draftsman in the engineering industry, and David Storey passed the exam attending first the Queen Elizabeth Grammar School in Wakefield before studying fine art in London. John Osborne's education was funded through an inheritance following the death of his father, and it is his work that critiques the state of education in the welfare state era most pointedly. While the key figures in the movement demonstrated ranging degrees of formal education, few had access to a grammar school education, and those who did clung to their working-class roots rather than parading their social elevation. It can safely be assumed that those in the group who failed the exam—kept from furthering their education in the way that they believed they deserved—incorporated rejection into their work either directly or indirectly.

The Factory as Class Coordinator

Spaces of working-class labor have changed over time, as has the definition of what it means to be working class. In feudal times, "working class" served as an umbrella term to describe those excluded from the aristocracy, so social status was inscribed by divine birthright rather than by profession. Non-aristocratic morals were thought to be the source of the problems that plagued working-class people, but as E.P. Thompson argues, workers themselves formed factions based on collective values and interests. The

Industrial Revolution offered definition and visibility to segments of the working class through urbanization and the transformation of regions into labor-specific zones. Furthermore, the Industrial Revolution was a period in which free-market capitalism ran riot due to the absence of government regulation. This period produced internal hierarchies such as factory owners, managers, and laborers while industry developed in tandem with the rise of the factory system. As the division of labor solidified, social divisions followed suit, and during the Victorian era, 80% of the country were considered working-class with the demand for female and child labor on the rise. The steel industry also boomed during World War I and World War II with Empire expansion calling for increased railroad production as well as increased production of munitions and military supplies. In the post-war years, industry moved toward textiles and services with service gradually taking the lead from the 1960s onward. But for the two decades following World War II, working-class labor was affiliated with coal mining and factory work. Social position was defined and categorized through proximity to sites of labor, and the potential for the factory as a site of ideological production was like no other.

The physical makeup of factory space is rarely studied as a site of architectural curiosity, and, like much post-war construction, the buildings themselves were devised with productivity in mind. With that said, factory architecture reveals a cultural grammar, reflecting changes in society as well as changes in the way labor functioned. Pre-industrialized factories—particularly those in the silk industry—relied on local resources such as rivers and streams to power machinery, so a pastoral and often rural setting played a role in their design. Furthermore, early factories, specifically those designed and

created up until World War I, gained a degree of permanence through the use of brick construction. While such designs were hardly strong enough to withstand the attacks of the Blitz, the symbolic stability of the space conveyed a sense of security for those employed. Yet it was the internal design of factories that saw the most telling shifts with architects and planners considering the building as a machine, the workers reduced to cogs and parts.

As Gillian Darley observes, factory design can be as unassuming as a shed or as sublime as the most grandiose municipal architecture, the latter often acting as "an apt metaphor for progress and change" (8). Darley adds that pre-war factories reflected technological determinism—"potent architectural *icons*" that responded to the early twentieth-century "fascination with the machine and all its works" (8). Furthermore, Gössel and Leuthäuser argue that the link between factory design serves as a promotion of the particular industry housed inside, but also a "nobilization" (94)—a push toward national pride in addition to internal publicity designed to "impress the workers" and instill pride in labor (94). Gössel and Leuthäuser also draw attention to a rift between form and function in industrial buildings: the notion of "architecture" as responsible for iconic civic totems, and "design" aimed at maximizing productivity by meeting the "static requirements calculated by engineers for factory halls" (95). The contention between architect and engineer was underscored, the authors argue, in that factories built without the help of architects tended to serve their overall purposes just as well as those created with. Walter Gropius, safeguarding the importance of the architect, suggested that workers and factory owners alike would benefit from grandiose architectural statements,

noting that "They will work more happily towards the creation of great common values in workplaces which are designed by artists to satisfy the sense of beauty with which we all are born and which enliven the monotony of mechanical work" (qtd. in Gössel and Leuthäuser 95). While some factories in northern industrial communities of Britain—especially those associated with the fabric industry—adopted designs that reflected the gothic revivalism seen in educational institutions, the majority matched their surrounding environs, acting more as an extension of the home in terms of construction materials and general proximity. As kitchen sink texts tend to reveal, the main distinction between the home and the factory was the scale.

Decentralization proposals such as the garden city and subsequent new town movements sought to address health concerns, focusing on separating the worker from the workplace to reduce the impact of pollution.[49] The new town movement thrived between the 1940s and the 1970s, setting a standard for new urban development. But as Anthony Alexander points out, many of these towns were "derided for having unspectacular architecture or dismissed as a failed social experiment" with "reputations [that] have been tarnished by pockets of extreme deprivation and a vicious spiral of decline, and in some cases, chronic problems of maintenance, widespread abandonment and ultimately demolition" (4). Health issues plagued the factories themselves, requiring continual adjustment via mandates and reforms. The fabric industry, for example, required humid conditions of operation and the air contained a lot of dust. Despite the

[49] Although admittedly less of a concern, houses in close proximity to factories during World War II ran the risk of bomb damage—as was the case with Sillitoe's childhood home.

introduction of masks to assist with breathing, problems such as eye inflammation, ear infection, and "mule-spinners" cancer were prevalent. Such work conditions, combined with long hours, also led to accidents, from lost limbs to machine-related fatalities. Prior to the shift from manufacturing to the service industry, the years that followed World War II were characterized by consistent labor with only 4% of the workforce working part-time and unemployment rates hovering around just 1.5% (Denman and McDonald). The average work week was more than forty-eight hours, with 8.7 million workers in manufacturing and approximately 880,000 working in mines. The nefarious health problems that arose from working in coal mines requires no introduction or justification, but production work in factories—especially in manufacturing—proved to be just as troubling with perhaps the most famous example of factory-related poisoning being asbestosis with the first case diagnosed in 1924. Furthermore, the emergence of Taylorism led to an increase in labor based on repetitive motion. When combined with monetary incentives to overwork as well as miscalculations of how much production could be accomplished in allotted times, injuries were often the result. As Mark Jackson points out, employers abused Taylorism in British factories in that production line speeds were incrementally accelerated throughout a shift—a measure that placed physical and emotional stress on the worker (90). The emotional stress, Jackson argues, stemmed from the recognition of power dynamics and greed as demonstrated in Hew Banyon's sociological research in which workers expressed concern that the employer would not stop a production line, even in cases of injury or distress. Workers had no choice but to keep up with the production line or run the risk of replacement (Jackson 90). Given the

ubiquity of factory work in England at the time—and the problems that were rife within the industry—it is no surprise that for many working-class people, the home acted as a space of sanctuary from labor. However, as noted in the previous chapter, the home as a sanctuary was often compromised, and for many working-class people, the distance between the home and the factory was minuscule. Even with the advent of new towns where the home was adequately distanced from the factory, new mortgages functioned as leashes to industry in ways that made distancing oneself from work a challenge. The home, in this regard, functioned as a site of labor reproduction rather than a sanctuary, especially given the unpaid nature of female labor. Whether the façade communicated dominance or ennui, the internal structure of factories veered toward a universalized suffering and collective misery. But as the development of industry produced the rise of unions (and working-class literacy in the process), labor laws addressed issues emerging on the factory floor. Throughout British history, factory regulations largely reflected concerns about the age of workers as well as expected working hours, but later acts brought about in the twentieth century focused more on the conditions of the spaces themselves.

The Factories Act of 1937 centered on the needs of the workers within the immediate work environment, offering comprehensive safety regulations applicable to all types of factories rather than those associated with an individual industry.[50] The act

[50] It is important to consider how labor was also packaged and sold as a gesture of national pride in that, during World War II, a considerable amount of propaganda enticed British people to work in the factories—not for production of goods, but as a way to do one's part for the country by developing military supplies and arms. Perhaps the most famous poster associated with British propaganda is the now-hackneyed "Keep Calm and Carry On," produced in 1939 as a response to potential air strikes that plagued the nation. Despite its popularity today, the poster was rarely used at the time but the sentiment of apathetic

addressed all aspects of factory design, emphasizing specific criteria for cleanliness, lighting, temperature, humidity, and ventilation. Furthermore, it also tackled issues of overcrowding, ensuring that subsequent designs provided significant space for the level of production and workforce size. While the degree of detail included in the act might, as R.C. Wofinden suggests, give the impression that factory owners were little more than cruel taskmasters, many went out of their way to ensure that not only were the stringent requirements observed and met but were surpassed (8)—the assumption being that in a competitive, capitalist environment in which the majority of the population was gainfully employed, the drive to find and entice the most reliable employees was paramount.[51]

While the Factory Act of 1937 was amended in subsequent years, it did not see an overhaul until 1961 in which hazards overlooked in the initial act were brought to light. More so than the 1937 act, building design was emphasized, specifically in relation to the influence of space on the individual worker. Considerations of noise were addressed with the claim made that hearing protection was inadequate within specific proximity to certain machinery, but it was years later, with the publication of government pamphlets such as 1963's *Noise and the Worker*, that subsequent amendments were enacted. Furthermore, the most significant change from previous acts was that the 1961 act placed

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persistence is appropriate for the austerity period, with the era of affluence serving as the reward. Military and war support effort-style posters bled into anti-austerity posters in the immediate post-war years, calling for factory workers to transform Britain into a major site of export production.

[51] While it should be acknowledged that such appeals to the worker stemmed largely from advances made by unions and labor movements, a gesture of company allegiance was fostered by employers who enticed individuals to rise up the ranks, elevating their social position at the same time. Such a gesture is rendered clear in the character of *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*'s Jack—the husband of Brenda—whose allegiance to the workplace is (partly) the reason for his cuckolded status. In this regard, Sillitoe appears critical of such blind devotion to the factory, despite its implicit promise of class emancipation.

almost all responsibility for safety obligations on the shoulders of the company occupying the space rather than the owner of the premises (Saharay 785). Despite such regulations, as well as the pressure to maintain a competitive place of employment, factories in late 1950s and early 1960s Britain were still foreboding spaces. Poor lighting, poor ventilation, cramped work areas and severe noise pollution from the use of machinery all took their toll on workers who were often overworked and underpaid for their labor.

In addition to regulations designed to mandate health standards, further regulations regarding gender impacted the makeup of the factory in ways that also contributed to the transformation of the domestic and social sphere. Historically, factory acts limited the amount of hours that women could work, with the 1884 act setting the maximum hours worked to ten per week. Many of these early acts were based on moral standards of the time—the 1843 Factory Education Bill prevented women and children working underground due to the known dangers involved. Furthermore, women were kept from cleaning dangerous machinery—a gesture that, while also grounded in moral concern, suggests how women were considered too delicate or too clumsy for such labor.[52] While alterations to acts were made over the following century, it was not until World War II that women's roles in the workplace were fundamentally transformed.

In March of 1941, Ernest Bevin forwarded the Essential Work Order to address problems of labor shortage. The order was made law immediately with all skilled workers

[52] This, of course, takes on an even more pronounced significance with the onset of factory work designated as expressly feminine due to physical difference.

required to participate while efforts were made to direct labor toward munition manufacturing as well as mining and agriculture—areas of special need while the nation was engaged in war. While work became mandatory, certain restrictions of the past were waived to meet the needs of the moment. Unions worked closely with government, and factories were restricted from firing workers without government oversight. It was at this time that women between 18 and 60 were required to labor—either through industry work or by signing up for the armed services. While strikes did occur, especially due to the working conditions of mining, the government responded with threats of jail time and fines for dissenters. In the 1920s, working women were made to step down from their positions to make way for men returning from service, but in the 1940s and 1950s, continual economic growth meant that demobilization was lessened and many women who adopted full-time careers in factories were able to keep their jobs. This was also due to the fact that a division of labor had taken place in which a category of "women's work" had emerged—textile factories, electronics, and assembly work became increasingly gendered to the degree that men saw reduced employment opportunities in relation to work designated by gender. Despite these increased opportunities for women to work, they still faced severe limitations that prevented emancipation; their work was still seen as secondary to their official role as housewife and mother. Even with the arrival of labor-saving appliances, women's primary work was to tend to the home and ambition was kept well in check. It was only after the 1970s that successful attempts at wage equality would be undertaken—a time when other progressive measures such as the Race Relations Act of 1968 was already circulating within the public conscience. But it

was during the 1940s and 1950s that women proved that they were perfectly capable of doing the same labor as men.

Women's factory work in the 1950s and especially the 1960s produced a shift in female bonding, with the class signifiers emerging in references as subtle as the headscarf. Middle-class and aristocratic women tended to self-identify through the use of hats, but for working-class women during this time, the headscarf functioned as a sign of allegiance to both class and gender. Texts like Nell Dunn's *Up the Junction*, explore female solidarity in the context of youth and youth subculture—a way for women of the time to emancipate themselves from domestic servitude and seek social elevation in the company of like-minded women. Dunn's elevation of salty language mirrors the intimacy shared between men during wartime, positing dire circumstances as a chance for assertiveness. Whereas it has been argued that homosocial relations between men were amplified during the war due to an environment of shared struggle, the same might be said for female factory workers of the 1950s and 1960s in that their social roles as factory workers elevated them to a level similar to that of their male counterparts, but inferior wages and various other social inequalities held them as subordinate. Texts like *Up the Junction* explore such themes and document the way that the factory becomes a site of connection and solidarity but do so in a way that reveal interior class divides based on gender lines. For example, when the novel's protagonist explains how she discarded her privileged life in Chelsea for a life of factory work in Battersea, stating that she "came to Battersea for freedom," the reader is aware that such freedom is illusory. But what Dunn seems to refer to, and what the character seeks, is the freedom that comes from forging

connections to compatible individuals on a personal level. In this sense, women's factory labor—while as monotonous and mundane as men's—produced a different effect: Whereas a character like Arthur Seaton is situated as a tragic figure whose existence is dictated by the workbench, for the protagonists of *Up the Junction*, the factory is a space in which new identities are constructed in contrast to social expectations.

Collective Consciousness, Shared Space, and the Preservation of Ideology

In thinking about the way that classed environs serve to define and frame class experience through spatial limits as well as ideological messaging, it is helpful to first consider the concept of collective consciousness in relation to environments and class solidarity. The term emerged from Emile Durkheim's 1893 text, *Division of Labour in Society* and was later developed by Lukacs and others. For Durkheim, preservation instincts shape the notion of collective consciousness in that the beliefs and values of a particular group are to be maintained for the group to survive shifts in culture and society. Values and beliefs pertaining to a specific group, then, act as a stabilizing factor and as a mechanism that sustains a group in perpetuity. This is especially important in considering the persistence of social stratification, specifically the continued oppression of working-class people, raising questions as to the value of assuming a secure identity structured on shared group beliefs and traditions. Durkheim saw such endeavors as a positive factor pertaining to a group's survival, citing a "mechanical solidarity" which responds to like-

minded thought and actions that become automatic over time.[53] For Durkheim, the source of shared values that produce collective consciousness are understood as the dominant forces generally associated with ideology: the state, educational institutions, and laws or regulations. From this perspective, ideology is circulated and transmitted within groups and shared spaces, but not necessarily produced by them. However, as this survey of environs has shown, spaces themselves hold the capacity to amplify ideological transmissions and, in the absence of a definable source, they act as the source for the transmission itself in that social institutions often communicate ideology encoded within their structural design. In this case, two possible inferences can be drawn: that the shared values and beliefs that define and sustain a group are produced outside of the group itself; and that such values and beliefs can be circulated through the environment. The implication, then, is that working-class people are complicit in their own oppression by clinging to a narrative of shared immiseration prescribed by external forces and enacted through space. In this context, the embrace of shared struggle (as opposed to the mere acknowledgment of it) sustains a working-class status in a manner that certifies group inclusion, yet also limits social elevation.

It might be said that the built environment that we inhabit is a *reflection* of our social affiliation in that through decorative choices or architectural style, buildings and institutions tend to reflect who we are and the groups we identify with. But concerning social stratification, it is possible to think of class narratives as something imposed on a

[53] Of course, the irony of the machinic nature of the working-class in relation to industrialization is not to be overlooked.

group through a top-down architectural process. This is most clearly observable in terms of post-war rehousing, and perhaps most unambiguous in the form of high-rise construction—essentially a mechanism of gentrification and imprisonment that belies the "social mixer" ideals often associated with high-density housing.[54] This systematic blurring of ideological messaging and shared ideals raises a more bewildering question: If working-class people were granted the ability to design and define the spaces they inhabit, would they replicate the same kind of plans commonly understood as spaces of oppression based on notions of shared suffering that typifies working-class solidarity? In a way, the built environment forms a duplicitous vernacular in that the longer working-class people identify themselves by collective beliefs and associations circulated through their world—a world defined for them by others distanced from their social position—the harder it is to transcend such spaces or upend such conventions. Shared class consciousness then, despite its unifying qualities of solidarity, necessitates exit strategies to counter self-imposed confinement. Kitchen sink realism, I contend, offers a blueprint for such an exit by first revealing the pernicious nature of imposed space, then suggesting alternative ways to navigate it.

In the following pages, I explore how depictions of working-class environs expose the limits of space in culture at the time, positing that kitchen sink depictions are presented in a way that renders the ideological implications of space clearly visible. Furthermore, I want to consider how such depictions seek to bring about tangible social

[54] While it would be inaccurate to consider post-war rehousing as such a pernicious practice rather than the desperate attempt to house displaced citizens, the mediocre construction, egregious corner cutting, and outright corruption revealed in the 1960s, certainly proves that there were few innocent parties.

transformation by showing the restrictions made on working-class people by their environments. In depicting working-class spaces authentically, and showing how they maintain the status quo, kitchen sink narratives communicate an awareness of social limits as well as advancing ways that working-class subjects might parse their world differently. Alan Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, David Storey's *This Sporting Life*, and Nell Dunn's *Up the Junction* all offer visceral depictions of working class spaces—particularly pubs and factories—while critiquing the way such spaces uphold social division. When combined with the analysis provided in the previous chapter, these readings will show how kitchen sink texts illuminate the way classed-environments maintain social norms while advancing new models of class identity in order to escape such limits. In this sense, I argue that kitchen sink texts articulate the kinds of spatial boundaries that inform social class, amplify the way such boundaries impact the individual, and posit new ways of breaching such boundaries without abandoning one's connection to working-class sensibilities.

The Sites and Sounds of Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*

Alan Sillitoe pieced *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* together from a series of loosely connected stories about his hometown of Nottingham. Although the book was published in 1958, and despite the fact that it took several years for Sillitoe to find a publisher to release it, he began writing the text in 1954 at the recommendation of the poet Robert Graves. In an article published in a 1962 copy of *Shenandoah*, Sillitoe describes his time spent in Majorca where he first met Graves in 1953 after sending him

some poems of his own. Upon learning that Sillitoe was from Nottingham, Graves suggested that he write about the place, triggering a sudden recollection of the local environment: "Nottingham: I hadn't seen it for some time, and the word came like a shock, bringing a sudden clear vision of packed streets and factory chimneys, of tar melting between cobblestones in summer, of riotous public houses on Saturday night" (Graves 30). By this point, Sillitoe had already produced a handful of novels that demonstrate thematic experimentation based on topics drastically removed from the realism he would develop in the second half of the 1950s.[55] But after meeting with Graves, he drafted a short story titled "Once in the Weekend" that would become the opening chapter of *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*. In contrast to the novels that Sillitoe had produced up until that point, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*'s structure is comprised of a series of loosely connected vignettes that outlined working-class Nottingham's local color and vernacular. Sillitoe mapped these pieces out as "Short Stories on the Same Theme" assigning some to "LDR" (*The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*) and others to "SNASM" (*Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*).[56] Similarities between the two narratives, then, are no accident as both texts originated from this grouping. Short stories that emphasized specific regions and locales like

[55] Sillitoe's early, unpublished novels are voluminous, including *By What Roa*d (1950), *The Man without a Home* (1952-53), *The Deserters* (1950-53), *Mr. Allen's Island* (1954), and *The Palisade* (1957). Aside from *By What Road*, the rest were written while abroad, so themes of exile and island living run throughout. While all show signs of promise, none has the vitality of *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, highlighting the impact that Graves' had on Sillitoe's work.

[56] This plan was written on a reverse page of the typescript for *The Deserters*. Although it is clearly demarcated, it could easily be overlooked given that the typescript contains an array of hand-written materials. The specific document can be found in mss. II, box 3, folder 15, tab 3 in the Sillitoe mss. at the Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana,

"Canning Circus," and "Once in the Weekend" were incorporated into a larger suite of writing and linked via a series of new stories. The significance of the way Sillitoe structured this text, however, is that it reveals a shift in his production style. Whereas prior novels adopted a traditional form—several of which would benefit from extensive editing—*Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, and, to some degree, *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner,*[57] provide a more comprehensive insight into environs and locals akin to other vignette-based spatial narratives such as James Joyce's *Dubliners* or Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio,* with the main difference being an increased stress on realism and a more unifying narrative threaded throughout.[58]

Sillitoe's capacity to present working-class environs with authenticity stems from the indelible mark left by his own experiences in such environments. For Sillitoe, the working-class spaces that he occupied as a young man are identical to those of Arthur Seaton, and his clarity in defining the world of Colin Smith in *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* can be understood through his own experiences at school. In 1956, hoping to review books on criminology, he instead received an accidental shipment of texts that covered "prisons, borstals and their recidivist inmates, some analysing and commenting on the penalties handed out to anti-social elements of the British population, books written from every point of view except that of the criminal" ("Armour" 226). Given that his own experience growing up in Nottingham did not include prison time as such, the texts he received clearly helped to flesh out gaps in his narrative coverage, yet

[57] In contrast to *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* in which the narrative encompasses the entire novel, *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* exists as a novella with a series of short stories tacked on.
[58] Although texts like *Dubliners* and *Winesburg, Ohio* demonstrate both thematic and narrative links, Sillitoe's texts read as coherent narratives despite their origins as vignettes.

he noted how many of the authors he read on the topic "looked on the lawbreaker as little more than a statistic, giving only cursory attention to individual psychology and social conditions" ("Armour" 226).

Sillitoe's reflections on D.H. Lawrence made his own fascination with space clear, noting that "Place is everything—soil in the throat, under the feet, in the hands, the nostrils clouded with soot and pollen, the first smells and sounds of life still immediate" (qtd. in Meyers 37), but his own obsession with cartography, stemming from his days in the military, helped define his allegiance to locale. For Sillitoe, his childhood obsession with maps prompted him to travel and escape his home, but also signified the importance of understanding the specifics of a place:

> The stronger the sense of place, and mine couldn't have been more rooted, the more I wanted to know the rest of the world. One part of me was bound for ever to where I was growing up, but the other told me I had to know the whole world if my head was not at times to burst from sheer misery. Such a project could not be embarked on until the territory over which it was possible to walk from the front door of the house had been thoroughly mapped and understood. ("Armour" 18)

In this regard, Sillitoe's novels serve to furnish his mastery of locale—not through literal descriptions of place per se (as that was the role of the map), but by parsing the way a space functioned as a composite of its parts. What follows is a brief survey of Sillitoe's treatment of working-class locales, specifically those featured in this particular chapter: the pub, the factory, and, to a lesser degree, the borstal.

Saturday Night and Sunday Morning opens with one of the most memorable scenes of the movement: a Saturday evening in the White Horse Club—the "best and biggest glad-time of the week" (4)—in which a "rowdy gang of singers" watch an inebriated Arthur Seaton stumble toward the flight of stairs which, minutes later he will

tumble down. The pub, ordinarily separated into subdivisions, has adopted a more democratic, larger community spirit for the night "spread[ing] a riot through its rooms and between its four walls" so that "Floors shook and windows rattled, and leaves of aspidistras wilted in the fumes of beer and smoke" (3). The cause for celebration is the Nottingham County football team winning over a visiting team, reflecting the unifying potential of sports in the community. However, a perceptible intra-class subdivision emerges in that the White Horse supporters club "were quarantined upstairs," and Arthur, ordinarily excluded, was able to gain access by taking the place of Brenda's absent husband.

This opening scene is of importance because it demonstrates a carnivalesque loosening of class structures that can occur periodically in spaces ordinarily designed to reaffirm social hierarchies. The fact that the pub breaks down such class boundaries—even if just for a single night—allows Sillitoe the chance to paint Arthur as an intermediary figure. His class designation appears through a series of signifiers—largely the level of social delinquency he reserves for "one of the fifty-two holidays in the slow-turning Big Wheel of the year" in which "the effect of a week's monotonous graft in the factory was swilled out" (4). Yet the space renders Arthur as untethered from his expected class, largely through his ability to navigate the space freely, while his quasi-elevation of gaining access to the supporter's club floor is made precarious by the women who describes him as "Dragged-up, I should think, getting drunk like this. Looks like one of them Teddy boys, allus making trouble" (11). Of course the trouble referenced is Arthur's vomiting on a middle-aged couple—the scene's climactic moment, and the

narrative action that Sillitoe's original short story turned upon. In its original form, the story would merely serve as an example of raucous drinking in a working-class environment. But, when framed in the context of a novel that situates the protagonist in a liminal position—one in which generational divides trouble class boundaries—the act of defiling a middle-aged man of his same social stature is a telling gesture of revolt.[59] As Sillitoe paints the man as working-class through his actions and clothing ("Look at what the young bogger's gone and done . . . My best suit . . . Only pressed and cleaned today . . . It cost me fifteen bob. As if money grows on trees" [10]), Arthur stands out in his age as well as his penchant for expensive suits. The scene is multivalent, representing the complexity of social hierarchies that congregate in social hubs but, most importantly, it is a scene that establishes Arthur's precarious position in society as well as the inner conflicts in which "bliss and guilt joined forces" causing a stubborn dismissal of his delinquency and moral disregard: "Couldn't care less, couldn't care less, couldn't care less" (12).

While *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* is not a text that emphasizes the role of schools in society, the institution itself does play a role. Robboe, Arthur's factory superior, is educated, granting him social ascendancy in his role in the factory as the gaffer but also in his ability to buy a home—which is ultimately Arthur's goal. Sillitoe's depiction of Robboe suggests tenacity, but also resignation: "Robboe was a bloke of about forty who had been with the firm since he was fourteen, having signed on as an apprentice and put in a lot of time at night-school" (37), but in Arthur's eyes, this was a

[59] The fact that the scene is literally "revolting" is most likely an unintended pun.

mistake as Robboe, despite his elevation, is more enslaved to the factory than anyone else in that "he was a human being afflicted with the heavy lead-weight of authority when a rebellion always seemed on the point of breaking out" (38). Like Jack's, Robboe's allegiance to his labor undermines any social elevation that he might have achieved causing Arthur to view him with resentment and envy. As for Sillitoe himself, school appears as a point of contention for Arthur in that his cynicism toward social institutions can only take him so far; he is perpetually mired by the dilemma of choosing a life of acquiescence (one characterized by an institutional education, even if not for Arthur himself) or revolt. The persistence of the Saturday night/Sunday morning cycle conveyed by the title appears in one of his many moments of reverie at the lathe in which he recalls "dim memories of the dole and schooldays behind, and a dimmer feeling of death in front, a present life punctuated by meetings with Brenda on certain beautiful evenings when the streets were warm and noisy and the clouds did a moonlight-fly over the rooftops" (136). Arthur clearly desires to live in the moment, and the novel's position on institutional education seems to be one of cynical dismissal. In the Canning Circus scene where Arthur and Fred witness the young man attempt to steal a vase for his mother's grave, the nearby church and school are described as "standing deserted like unwanted corpses" (119). The inclusion of this reference, while seemingly innocuous, is critical to the scene in that what Sillitoe seems to communicate is that an environment that fails to provide its inhabitants with basic, necessary moral training will be subjected to criminal

and delinquent behavior.[60] The scene, one of the short stories that Sillitoe produced before drafting the novel, is questionably grafted in and feels out of place, but the link to the novel is the delinquency itself. Like the young man's, Arthur's own alienation from school and church links him to the young man's delinquency in that when the shop's window is smashed in the attempted robbery, Arthur is "stirred by the sound of breaking glass: it synthesized all the anarchism within him, was the most perfect suitable noise to accompany the end of the world and himself" (114).

However, Sillitoe develops the relationship—or lack thereof—between the school and delinquency in *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*, a text written at the same time as *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* and cobbled together from the same batch of short stories that produced the Canning Circus scene. Although published a year later than *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, the text contains a number of parallels except that the protagonist, Colin's frustration with society makes him turn to crime to get by. Told in a series of flashbacks while at the borstal, the narrative indirectly conflates school with the prison system. Yet, the novella's message—aside from "undermine authority by any means necessary"—is that, for post-war British working-class people, prison is a space that grants far greater opportunities than either the factory or the schoolhouse. It is the borstal that allows Colin, like Arthur, to nurture his own autonomy. But whereas Arthur resigns himself to what Sillitoe seems to suggest is a non-stop cycle of oppression, the borstal is an illicit space that permits irresponsibility and

[60] This point will be developed further in the following chapter—specifically the way that public utilities as signifiers of social institutions become prime targets for spatial transgression based on their disconnection to working-class life.

recklessness, but combines it with learning. Sillitoe's own conflicted feelings about education are clearly apparent in these texts, yet his animosity does not dominate either one. Instead, by skimping on the presence of the school in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* and by challenging the social value of education in both texts, Sillitoe registers anxieties associated with schools at the time—specifically that, despite the welfare state's promise of equal access, a good education was neither as accessible as promised, nor did it deliver the level of social elevation that was hoped.

On the other hand, the factory is the most prominently featured space in the text in that, for the most part, it symbolically replaces the school and subsumes the home. The presence of the factory in the story is the like the presence of the factory in many northern industrial areas: *omnipresent*. The factory itself is presented as the industrial heart of the area with "streets and terraces hanging onto its belly and flanks like calves sucking the udders of some great mother" (23). Depicted as a maternal supplier of life and as a polluting, life-destroying center of toxicity, the novel's factory maps onto the conflict central to the plot: to succumb to conventionality, resigning oneself to labor, or to strike out by seeking an alternative path. In opposition to the era of affluence's emphasis on the rewards of consumption, Sillitoe draws attention to the relations of production by establishing a sacrifice/gain dichotomy. Whereas external descriptions of the factory reflect the iconic status of factory design—totems of production and economic vitality—images of a surrounding area rendered sick and dependent undermine their eminence. Time spent on and off the clock is informed by the panoptic supremacy of the building, both in terms of air and of sound pollution. In an early scene in which Arthur and his

father leave the house to head to work, Sillitoe registers that the presence of the factory is felt as soon as they step onto the street:

> Once out of the doors they were more aware of the factory rumbling a hundred yards away over the high wall. Generators whined all night, and during the day giant milling-machines working away on cranks and pedals in the turnery gave to the terrace a sensation of living within breathing distance of some monstrous being that suffered from a disease of the stomach. (22)

Sillitoe goes to great lengths to provide full sensory detail of the factory, focusing heavily on the sound that is described as "infernal" and making "the brain reel and ache" (26)—a sentiment that he carried over directly into his screenplay as Karel Reisz's adaptation uses sudden jabs of deafening industrial noise throughout. But of note is the fact that, aside from some introductory details, the factory building—despite its prominence in the text—disappears materially early on, becoming a larger metaphor for labor and imprisonment: "And so it was possible to forget the factory, whether inside it sweating and straining your muscles by a machine, or whether swilling ale in a pub or loving Brenda in her big soft bed at the weekend. The factory did not matter" (42). The intention, it seems, was not to deemphasize the physicality of the factory but to show just how easily labor and drudgery are normalized in working-class culture, written into the fabric of the community as a value system, then reiterated through the shared immiseration that defines working-class people as a group. Sillitoe portrays its impact on the environment—painting the town in dull, matte colors as the result of its smoke—but the overall effect is a space in which labor is cast as abstract and time no longer functions: "Living in a town and working in a factory, only a calendar gave any real indication of passing time, for it was difficult to follow the changing seasons" (137). This

all contributes to the image that Sillitoe's text develops: that a working-class town in which labor is the normative path is largely indistinguishable from other industrial towns in the area, and largely indistinguishable from working-class life more broadly. Consequently, such spaces are classed and class specific, which is ultimately what Arthur rebels against.

Instead, the factory is depicted more as a set of individual workstations to emphasize Arthur's entrepreneurial independence and to demonstrate the fragmentation of unanimity as it occurs within the workspace. The way Sillitoe depicts the workspace is that labor exists as a relationship between the laborer and his machine, and any intrusion into that relationship is met with passive aggression or outright hostility. For example, when Arthur wanders over to Jack's workbench and tells him to "Udge-up" so he can sit next to him, Jack's concern is more that Arthur will disturb the work arrangement he has of "a clamped-on vice and a carborundum wheel" next to "a mug of the firm's tea" (30). While such an interaction might seem incidental, it is wise to recall that unbeknownst to Jack, Arthur has already invaded and disturbed his world by engaging in an affair with his wife, playing a surrogate-father role to his children, and making himself at home in Jack's bedroom when Jack is at work. What Sillitoe reveals is the way that each individual carves out and attempts to defend their own private space from attack, but as Jack's inability to prevent Arthur from invading his work area suggests, attempts to thwart more abstract social insertions are futile. Both Jack and Arthur's livelihood relies on their ability to tend to their own tiny segment of the factory; the only figure who exists beyond such restrictions is Robboe whose social and economic superiority offers him the

ability to survey others as well as spatial mobility, "walking from bench to bench, machine to machine" (59). The factory building, then, reads as a somewhat extraneous presence within the text, replaced instead by the act of labor and the relationship maintained between the worker and his machine. In this regard, the mechanism of Sillitoe's realism is laid bare, and the text encompasses much of what the kitchen sink realism movement aimed to achieve: to articulate the way spaces are experienced more than just represented.

However, most telling about Sillitoe's presentation of the factory is the therapeutic and creative potential that it provides—the kind of potential that positions an individual as a cog in the machine but also provides the space in which fantasies of escape are engaged:

> Gradually your actions became automatic and you forgot all about the machine and the quick working of your arms and hands and the fact that you were cutting and boring and rough-threading to within limits of only five-thousandths of an inch. The noise of motor-trolleys passing up and down the gangway and the excruciating din of flying and flapping belts slipped out of your consciousness and perhaps half an hour, without affecting the quality of the work you were turning out, and you forgot your past conflicts with the gaffer and turned to thinking of pleasant events that had at some time happened to you, or things that you hoped would happen to you in the future. If your machine was working well—the motor smooth, stops tight, jigs good—and you sprung your actions into a favorable rhythm you became happy. You went off into pipe-dreams for the rest of the day. And in the evening, when admittedly you would be feeling as though your arms and legs had been stretched to breaking point on a torture-rack, you stepped out into a cosy world of pubs and noisy tarts that would one day provide you with the raw material for more pipe-dreams as you stood at your lathe. (35-36)

The passage itself, through its drawn-out sentence structure, performs the kind of trance-like state experienced through monotony and repetition; even in relation to words like "din" and "excruciating," the paragraph provides a sense of calm that maps onto the

environment. The factory space, then, while operating as a metaphorical death (underscored by the effect that it seems to have on the patriarchs of the genre) offers a matriarchal notion of nurturing sustenance.

While the text functions to paint an experiential picture of northern working-class life, Sillitoe's emphasis on local environs also serves to depict the way such spaces are the sum of their parts. Just as rows of pre-war terraces created a sense of community—largely through shared suffering—the connection of factory and home with leisure spaces tucked in between suggests spatial limits based on class regions. The fact that the novel focuses on action within spaces and movement between them situates the spaces themselves as archetypes—the factory does not stand out from any other northern factory, and the pub is described in a manner that reflects many working men's clubs at the time. Sillitoe's intent, in this regard, is to paint a picture of a specific world and to provide a protagonist who questions his place within that world, specifically the limits that it will impose upon him. Therefore, the novel is inherently political—not because of the content that caused the film version of the novel to receive an X-certificate—but in that it presents a kind of hemmed-in life with little option for advancement, reinforcing Durkheim's notion of class persistence but raising concern over the severity of its limits for individual growth. Many of the limitations faced by Arthur and others in his community reflect the limits that Sillitoe himself faced. Consequently, Arthur can be understood as Sillitoe's proxy; and like Arthur, Sillitoe himself faced the decision to acquiesce to or reject the life that his immediate environment imposed upon him. But whereas Arthur opted to move to the estates and "settle down" to a life of factory labor,

Sillitoe went in the other direction, not only distancing himself from working-class culture and embracing the bohemian art world, but leaving England altogether, returning only periodically for much of his early years. While *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* takes on the kind of taboo topics associated with the genre—infidelity, abortion, alcoholism, violence—the text's depiction of social limits is conveyed through the setting itself in which the anonymous and mundane spaces of a northern industrial town are shown to be responsible for working-class subordination.

David Storey's *This Sporting Life* and Poetic Romanticism

David Storey's *This Sporting Life* further developed the tropes of kitchen sink realism by injecting social mobility into the narrative archetype, allowing for a closer exploration of the effects of elevation within classed settings. Like others, Storey's novel was transparently autobiographical with many details of Arthur Machin's life matching his own. Like Sillitoe, Storey was responsible for the film adaptation's screenplay which, directed by Lindsay Anderson, opened in 1963 to wide acclaim. The novel itself was equally acclaimed, winning the 1960 Macmillan Fiction Award, its success somewhat due to the ground already paved by writers like Sillitoe, Osborne, and Delaney. The novel tells the story of a traditional Angry Young Man-type figure whose display of violence in a local pub gains him the interest of rugby league recruiters who seek to profit from his aggression. The subsequent narrative documents the broadening divide between his success as a sportsman and his social standing as working class. Aside from the violence, the novel's controversy stems from a subplot in which Machin begins a relationship with

his widowed landlady (Margaret), physically abusing her as she verbally demeans him. The subplot ends in tragedy following the death of Margaret, denying either of them the chance to make amends, and the narrative ends with Machin appearing as little more than a violent animal to be exploited for the profit of his handlers. Much of the subplot functions as a counter to the aggressive masculinity of the main narrative, placing Machin on somewhat equal grounds, with Margaret acting as a threatening figure to his masculinity through her superior age and her life experience that casts him as a naive child by contrast. Similar to the way the recruiters exploit Machin for their own personal gain, Margaret does the same, using him as an opportunity to assuage the guilt she bears from her failed marriage and her husband's subsequent suicide. While the subplot runs parallel to the main story, it is the parallels that develop the motif that is clearly at the novel's heart: the ability to exploit others for personal gain and the compound effect that such practices can have.

While a recent article in Rugby Today celebrates Storey's narrative as one of the most realistic depictions of the sport, the text was not always so highly valued—especially by the Rugby League fans who often thought of it as perpetuating stereotypes ("Northern Powerhouse"). In British culture, rugby league has always been aligned to working-class industrial regions and with players who lack the social graces (and the teeth, as the result of the game) to play more "respectable" or "gentlemanly" sports. Attempts to elevate the class status of the sport have historically failed.[61] Storey wrote

[61] For more on this, see Tony Collins' extensive coverage of the development of rugby in England: *A Social History of English Rugby Union* (2009).

This Sporting Life when he was twenty-one years old, and as William Hutchings has noted, its complexity and nuance is surprising for such a young writer—a point that Hutchings attributes to Storey having already produced several novels prior to its release that remain unpublished (8). Still, Storey's own experience was not enough to deflect the critique of those who felt he provided a poor representation of rugby culture. Of course, this raises the question of verisimilitude: does Storey's work promote a false narrative or reinforce the norm? As Steven Lacey has added, Storey was very much enamored with the idea of moving authenticity forward in that

> What emerged at this time was not simply a particular kind of realism but a new cultural 'moment', in which representations of class would assume an importance not only for the theatre, but also for the way that the myths of affluence and consensus were contested in a range of cultural and artistic forms. (71)

For Lacey then, the depictions of rugby in the novel would be discomforting—not because they portray a cultural stereotype—but because they depict a culture that had, up until this point, never been portrayed with such authenticity. Whereas *This Sporting Life* certainly depicts a brutish, exploited class, the text is much more of a mirror to the reality of the time than a caricature or an exaggeration.

The bulk of the novel is set in and around a series of terraces ("Little black hutches nailed together by those pegs of chimneys" [32]), and the domestic spaces that the novel depicts are clearly insufficient to protect their inhabitants from social and psychological onslaughts ("I banged the door on the way out. The house trembled. I could imagine how she felt when all her house trembled" [41]). However, the novel's underscoring of environs requires close scrutiny in order to unpack the connections that Storey makes between spaces and identity. Storey merges the field with the factory

throughout the novel with Machin often surveying foreground and background simultaneously: "I had my eyes fixed on the twin buds of the power station's cooling towers and watched a cloud of white steam escape across the valley and come over the pitch" (35-36). Throughout, these worlds are considered separate yet linked by their proximity, with Machin's gaze often vacillating between both: "I looked to the life that wasn't absorbed in the futility of the game—to the tall chimney and the two flowering cylinders of the power station, half hidden by cloud" (254). The rugby field, then, is an allegory of the factory floor, and the novel's emphasis on pubs—particularly the distinction between locals and pubs on the edges of town—reveals the novel's dedication to exploring movement through social hierarchies.

As Hutchings adds, a commonality in texts from the period is the way that individuals are cast as automatons in their world, echoing Marx' observation that "[factory work] confiscates every atom of freedom, both in bodily and intellectual activity" (35). Hutchings underscores the role of leisure time as a momentary escape from the monotony of labor but rightly argues that sport is a leisure activity susceptible to exploitation. However, this is not merely an economic endeavor, although financial gain is a chief motivator for both player and manager. Hutchings concludes that the expropriation of athletes as seen in texts like *This Sporting Life* and *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* is a reflection of social dynamics in that such a practice has "its origins in the power of one person or group to 'have the whip-hand over' others, demanding allegiance to an institution, class, city, or state" (46). Whereas the state-driven exploitation of Colin in *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* is considerably

more palpable in that he is not only “owned” but held captive by his owners, Machin is a figure who mirrors the fantasies of many young men at the time. However, the narrative explores the more nuanced and less perceptible ways that a figure like Machin is still owned, not only through contract, but in his capacity as a local celebrity whose position is to represent and, ultimately, perform for the people of his town. The field itself, as opposed to the physical constraints of the borstal or the time-clock based constraints of the factory, is open space, rife with possibility and potential. Nonetheless, it is Storey’s depiction of the space as isolated and distanced from the rest of the community that situates Machin as a figure encased within the equivalent of a glass dome—one to be ogled and provoked for pay. Despite the simulation of a privileged perspective, Machin’s labor alienates him, ultimately casting him out from his community as the result of his social elevation:

> From the top of the valley the sight of the town working normally, but without me, made me feel outcast, an outlaw. I wasn't allowed to live there anymore. I stopped the car by Caulsby Castle. There was that smell of work in the air. The Road Services' lorries were beginning to move off down and out of the valley: the roads were black and moving, and the City itself was almost a forest with these insects moving amongst the scrubbed undergrowth of the buildings and the stunted trees of the factory stacks. The chemical works' six metal chimneys, joined like bandaged fingers, filtered a thin red mist of nitrous fumes over the river. Alongside Harris's Mill a slim black pipe shot up a vivid hush of white steam, which stuck in the air for several minutes before subsiding to a lazy exhausted trickle. Occasionally one of the stocky chimneys jettisoned a great black termite streamer of smoke across the valley to go curling over the ridge and shroud the gloomy Riding Hospital overlooking Highfield. Close up to the valley side, where the road curved through the trees before ascending to Sandwood, and just below the overflowing and overgrown cemetery, the frantic panting of the steam boiler at the brickworks echoed like a railway engine dragging a long line of coaches to life. Its rapid puffs of steam mounted into the air in a bulging column, which burst and disappeared in the wind. And sprawling across the valley, down below the town, with its two huge sprouting limbs like a dead upturned body, was the power station: the only new brick in sight. It seemed to

> dam up the town and stop it overflowing down the valley over the small, high hedged fields to Stokeley. (191)

Despite his newfound labor on the field, Machin's capacity to align his work with that of others is obscured by his apparent social elevation—one in which money and notoriety work to offset servility in a manner not unlike the rise of commodity culture and the era of affluence—neither of which were forceful enough to affect the class system that remained intact despite the promise of social change. In other words, when material rewards act as a distraction from the persistence of power dynamics kept in play, the field and the factory become one and the same. Hutchings adds that the sheer physicality of Machin's profession "provides ample outlet for his anger and frustration" (39), but such an outlet functions in a manner similar to that of Arthur Seaton's factory; it provides a narcotizing effect to obscure the realities of exploited labor as well as the nature of the environment that dictates such transactions. Hutchings is right to note that the exploitation of a character like Machin by the elite is not necessarily for economic gain, but to sustain unequal power dynamics implicit in the class social organization of society. Whereas Machin is a character seemingly spared the misery of the coal mine or the drudgery of the factory, the violence of both—in addition to the subservient role required of the laborer—is perfectly replicated on the rugby field, whose framing by industrial architecture is no mere accident. Whereas the cultural capital attached to a professional sports contract is as glamorous and idealized today as it was in the 1950s, a text like *This Sporting Life* serves to remind the reader that with such dominant social forces acting upon the individual, there is little chance of escaping one's assigned position in the world—even when the illusion of escape is offered up as a lure.

While the dynamics of the field/factory blur the line between levels of social status, Storey makes it clear to the reader that such class assignation tends to be fixed within the post-war world. One of the novel's key moments comes when Machin convinces Margaret to join him on a trip to Howton Hall—"an old country house converted into an hotel and an eating place for the sort of client who can afford to drive out there for an evening, or a week-end" (81). The scene is impactful as it reflects the way pubs operated in Britain at the time, with a stark distinction made between "locals" that served the immediate community and pubs that distanced themselves in a manner that reiterates class division. Storey captures this distinction perfectly, in that Howton Hall was "an equal distance from three large industrial towns, and approachable from two more. The distance used to act as a kind of social sieve. But with the bigger hand-out of cars and other crap propaganda since the war it's stepped down a peg or two" (81-82). While Storey initially suggests that the proliferation of commodity goods reshaped the experience of class, the scene makes sure that the reader understands how forcefully social status is still driven by institutions as expressions of power. Storey describes the way that the building sought to divide its clientele by segregating newly mobile affluence from more traditionally elevated groups by splitting the building in two: "one side, overlooking a deep wooded valley and a lake, is the residential sector and the restaurant, and on the other is a car park, a bicycle rack and a café" (82). This sense of social division is optimized in the text through Margaret's working-class discomfort of entering the upper-class restaurant ("I tried to get Mrs. Hammond to go in the cocktail bar, but one look at the plush interior and the Riding cloth merchants, and she wouldn't budge past the

door" [82]) as well as the way they are treated by the staff: "I did all the talking with the waiter, who made no attempt to hide his feeling we'd strayed over to the wrong side of the hotel. He coughed a lot, and pointed out the big prices to emphasize the dearness of everything" (82). But despite Machin's showing off of his new fortune, he is marked by his class status and reveals the source of his finances in that he is wearing his rugby boots due to him soaking his shoes in a lake prior. The scene, albeit somewhat contrived in relation to the rest of the novel, serves as a device to ensure that the reader is aware of the persistence of class bias as defined by space as well as material signifiers—perhaps more so in the era of affluence when those with the most vested interests in sustaining social hierarchies struggle to discern the dividing line between "them" and "us." In this sense, the restaurant—the sort of space that positions itself as democratic and inclusive—offers a critical look at the way post-war British society fought to preserve class demarcation in light of changes promised by the welfare state. Rather than communicating comfort and social intermingling, the restaurant communicates power and social division through the preservation of its own mythology.

The exclusion that Machin experiences as the result of his inhabiting the field as opposed to the factory is one that he has little recourse to fix. Storey constructs Machin as an oversized brute, but one whose emotional capacity is that of an undersized child. His attempts to navigate emotions are suitably brutish yet they serve to counter the emotional barrenness of Mrs. Hammond, whose world, we are given to understand, has resulted in her frail psychic state. What *This Sporting Life* suggests, then, is similar to other novels of the time: that the environment inhabited by working-class people serves to maintain

working-class positions. But whereas other texts of the period have either raised awareness of the impact of classed confines or have offered hypothetical solutions in the form of alternative ways of being, Storey's text offers little in the way of redemption. Whereas Mrs. Hammond's fate has been sealed by the time we first meet her (arguably the narrative is largely designed in anticipation of her death), Machin's remains to be written but unfolds predictably as the novel progresses. The sports field, despite the fantasies that it tends to generate, provides few of the advantages that it might suggest, relying on monetary success and fame as crutches to disguise the limits of social mobility. Malcolm Pittock has argued that Machin's obliviousness to the effects of his environment suggest that Storey did not want his characters to appear "as determined by their environment" (104), but it seems fairly clear that Machin's chief characteristic aside from his brutishness is his naiveté. Furthermore, Jane Mansfield has suggested that Machin's aggression is consistent with representations of aggressive masculinity seen in other texts of the period that reflect the "period of national insecurity" (34)—a point that is well taken and often said to be especially true of Jimmy Porter. But Storey's exploration of space as a locus of isolation and alienation cannot be overlooked due to the way the field is presented as a part of, yet apart from, the community, and Howton Hall is separate from town but embedded within a national framework of class assignation.

Andy Harvey has suggested that despite Machin's failed attempt at class transgression, the attempt is enough to suggest that alternative modes of existence can be imagined from within oppressive conditions. Machin's failure, he adds, is the result of him being "too inarticulate to succeed" and that his "anxious but unspoken attempt at a

different kind of masculinity thus fails to materialize" (12). Whereas Harvey focuses expressly on Machin's social relations, it is vital to first consider the effect of class confines on one's ability to transform behavior; in a space of systematic oppression—even one as spot lit and elevated as the professional sports field—the ability to imagine alternative articulations of class is hamstrung if one lacks the cognitive faculty or the imaginative capacity to do so. It is wise to recall that Storey clearly intended his protagonist to be likened to a machine through his name alone. And, as a mere cog in an established and well-oiled mechanism, Machin has little capacity to make a significant change. In this regard, Storey's text is a bleak example of the way that working-class environs can be represented to highlight the nature of spatial limits on social ascendency, but it is also a text that speaks to the notion of accumulation and status as simulations of class transgression as opposed to actual class ascension. Even with disposable income and a degree of local notoriety, Machin is still kept in place by ideological messaging against which the bourgeois self-defines through a continual demarcation of what constitutes the working-class, or non-bourgeois. The novel ends with Machin driving toward a game, passing by the factory and noting the way it pollutes the surrounding environment, reminding himself of "the assurance my place of work provides" (242). However, the pollution he describes—"the brown industrial water [that] foamed in great arcs over the weir and swirled in slow volutes past the stone embankment of the factory wall" differs little from the subsequent description of the game in which "the dampness went through to the bone, numbing. Black unknown faces, streaked with skin or blood, slow black limbs. Moved continually past, interlocking, swaying, beating, followed by

steam, seeping from the skin, polluted by the mud, vaporizing in the cold air" (252). By the end of the text, little has changed about the way Machin comprehends his labor—he thinks of it as elevated, yet Storey emphasizes how such elevation is stage-managed and ultimately illusory in the same manner as the rise of affluence and commodity culture. Machin's inability to fully understand the nature of the environment he inhabits situates him closer to Jimmy Porter with the notable difference being that the latter's education allows him a grasp—albeit an overly-cynical one—of the way his environment works against him. Machin, as a relative automaton, lacks Porter's insight, and the novel ends with him tending to his injuries in the locker room baths: "The water rose to my shoulders. It pressed on my chest and I fought for breath, coughing in the steam. Its heat brought my bruises to life" (256). While Machin is doomed to repeat the same cycles of violence and reward, we are given no guarantee that his career will sustain him. But while Storey's novel conveys stasis and limitation, the service that it provides the working-class reader can be understood through its revealing of the way such stasis is established and maintained.

Reterritorialization in Nell Dunn's *Up the Junction*

Nell Dunn published *Up the Junction* in 1963—relatively late for the movement and largely riding the coat tails of the writers who came before. Nonetheless, Dunn's text is important in this discussion as it symbolizes a continuation of the ideas that emerged in earlier texts and, with Ken Loach's 1965 TV play and Peter Collinson's 1968 film in tow, it caused a great deal of social impact by playing a key role in the transformation of

women's public health in Britain. In a 2013 Interview with Margaret Drabble and Jenni Murray, Dunn notes that she did not plan the text to have the degree of social impact that it had, noting that "it would not occur to me that any politician would have read anything that I'd wrote" (Murray et al.). Furthermore, Dunn registers her concerns about exploitation in that her own background was considerably more privileged than the people she observed and incorporated into her novels. However, Dunn adds in the interview that "I didn't know what exploitation meant at the time" certifying her unselfconscious approach to the documentary styles adopted by kitchen sink writers. Rather than exploit, Dunn's text reports with enthusiasm. Dunn, herself, was invested in representing the lives of working-class people with sensitivity, focusing intently on the voices of working-class women as a response to the largely male-dominated voices of the movement up until that point. Whereas writers like Sillitoe pieced together novels from short stories, Dunn's text remains fragmentary, aligning it more with ethnographic writing in that much of the narrative reads like a pastiche of sociological research. Using scraps of overheard conversations and gossip as the source for many of the pieces, the novel tells a loose story of three young working-class women from the slums of Battersea. All three women work in the McCrindle's sweet factory during the week and on the weekend, they head "up the junction"—an area of Clapham known for its bars and nightlife. Less of an engaged narrative and more of a slice-of-life depiction, Dunn's vignettes offer glimpses into the world of these women at a time in which women were gradually gaining equality. The narrative closes with a graphic depiction of an illicit abortion—a scene that the book is perhaps most known for, and the 1967 changing of

abortion laws in Britain is generally attributed to it. Whereas early works of the movement such as *A Taste of Honey* can be said to cast light on the conditions of working-class people, Dunn's narrative—while largely doing the same—demonstrates the importance of social context as cultural shifts already underway helped to bolster its impact and it, in turn, played a key role in furthering British women's rights at the time.

Although Dunn's text is heavily driven by dialog, overheard conversations of female laborers, the text covers expected working-class locales in depth, offering a different perspective from that of the more male-dominated texts and granting the reader a different insight into the way shifts in the period were experienced. The text starts with a chapter entitled "Out With The Girls" which opens with a visit to the pubs of Clapham Junction in which the three central characters establish their goals—to drink and sleep with various men.[62] The scene is followed by boisterous skinny dipping "up the common" in a local coke quarry—an area clearly off-limits due to their need to "clamber over a high wall" (4). Illicit spaces are a regular feature in the text as bombed-out sites, abandoned LCC flats, and underground clubs and brothels are environments that the three women inhabit. The bulk of the text is split between scenes in the factory and various domestic spaces—many of which reflect pre-regulation slums listed for demolition. Similar to that of the rugby pitch in *This Sporting Life*, Dunn's setting contours the community's periphery through images of industrial production and pollution. This effect renders McCrindle's sweet factory as less of an oppressive space and more as one that

[62] *Up the Junction* is a text widely praised for its unambiguous celebration of female sexuality, and one of few texts at the time that depicted women as having sexual agency of their own.

functions as a site of communal well-being. Dunn, herself, noted how the sweet factory where she worked was less laborious than it sounded, with women only working for three to four hours per day and allowed to eat as many of the chocolate liqueurs they packaged as they liked (resulting in many of them getting drunk on the job), painting a different picture than Arthur Seaton at his lathe or Arthur Machin in a scrum. Despite the persistent sense of limitation that the novel depicts through its spaces, in addition to the devastation of war and gentrification, Dunn's text leans closer to Delaney's work in that the characters—despite the various trials they face in relation to women's rights—have a knack for transforming less than ideal space into the places that meets their needs, allowing for a new sense of community to emerge.

The main draw of the novel is the language—colorfully expressive and tonally authentic in its depiction of South London vernacular. However, in a text so driven by its dialog, depictions of space are often colored by flourishes of speech that grant new perspectives on them.[63] For example, in the chapter entitled "Prison Visit," imprisonment is heralded as a viable alternative to working-class spaces akin to that of *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* with a character commenting "They say Borstal's all right—sort of university for them what can't afford Oxford" (104). However, Dunn's text provides one of the more fascinating looks at everyday working-class spaces such as the

[63] During her interview with Philip Fisher, Dunn discusses the process of transforming *Up the Junction* into a Wednesday Play with Ken Loach. She points out that Loach was already an established figure at the BBC, and that the pair spent considerable time walking the streets of South London to discuss the kinds of spaces that the broadcast should reference. This seemingly simple gesture of spending time in the region seems relatively innocuous, but given Loach's own commitment to documentary narrative—in combination with his own background in theater production—the role of space in the text is emphasized as critical to the narrative.

factory floor, the pub, the home, and even the classroom. But for purposes of this particular case study, I want to focus more on the way Dunn demonstrates how new sub-communities can be formed in spaces designated for labor.

The text makes a clear distinction between different types of industry that reflect the nature of post-war "women's work"—a reflection of the rise of women in the workplace but under conditions that are inherently gendered. For one thing, the text's spaces all exist under the shadow of the unambiguously phallic power station—a famous Battersea landmark—that "blows violet smoke" into the surrounding area (49). In contrast, the sweet factory that the women work at is rendered as less of a space of imposing industry, and more as an aspect of the neighborhood for purposes of socialization. As opposed to the individual workstations of Sillitoe's Raleigh bicycle factory in which Arthur Seaton composes his individualist fantasies, the workspace occupied by the characters of *Up the Junction* is designed with conversation in mind: "We laugh, twenty-five women hunched over three long tables, packing cheap sweets for Christmas" (19). During the war, women were employed in specifically gendered production, performing what was often deemed "delicate work" as opposed to the skilled labor of men—work characterized by intricate production such as assembling fuses as the result of smaller hands deemed more appropriate for such labor (Hammond 157). Dunn seemingly pushes back against such notions, describing the factory workers as having "Thick red fingers, swollen with the cold" (19) as a potential knock against such gender assumptions associated with women's work. The space, however, is not without its parallels to those of male labor in that the environment itself is less than ideal. The

factory is small with just two rooms to which the narrator comments that "My eyes begin to ache in the cold electric light. There are no windows in the room where we have been sitting since eight in the morning earning our two-and-fivepence an hour—tenpence an hour for the under eighteens" (21). Furthermore, the space is damp, causing an older employee to "spit into a rag" claiming "'Got the guitar, get it every winter'" adding that the factory "'Used to be a laundry you know—that's why it's so damp'" (20-21). The cafeteria does not exist; the workers take their break in a cloakroom, sitting on a cold cement floor (22). A sign by the lavatory patronizingly instructs workers to "WASH YOUR HANDS AFTER USING THE TOILETS. THIS IS A FOOD FACTORY" (22), while an older employee instructs the protagonist not to bother as "it'll take them five minutes to thaw out" adding that "what the eye don't see the heart don't grieve" (23).

Dunn describes her own work in the chocolate factory as pleasurable, noting the way the space was transformed into a haven of female-specific dialog. Dunn's concern about exploitation of the women she worked with is telling of how close to reality *Up the Junction* was for her. Furthermore, in a separate interview with Philip Fisher, Dunn comments on her talent of recreating authentic voices, noting that "If somebody I got to know in the street, and I then wanted to put them into a situation where they got murdered or something, I would sort of be able to pick up how they spoke" ("Playwright and Author"). In this regard, the setting of the factory itself, while important, takes a backseat to the kind of dialog that the space produces (course, graphic, and often very funny), through the physical proximity created by the workspaces themselves, but also the shared experience of working in a space that is both communal and unsatisfactory.

Given the way the close confines produce a bond between these characters that extends out into the world in that they drink and hunt men together, the reality of the space is notably different from masculinized representations of the factory as seen in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* and *This Sporting Life*—spaces in which oppression results in isolationism rather than community. For men, whose social experience was already one of community and sociability, the opportunities for women to work in factories opened the door to feminine connection unavailable without access to such spaces. It would be easy to think of the narrative's factory as a construct designed to create a literary foil to those in male-dominated texts, but the one represented is identical in nature to the one that Dunn herself worked at, and the dialog produced in such a space is lifted directly from conversations that took place there. In other words, despite its appearance in regards to female social relations, the space is less of a utopia and more of a reality that existed at the time. Yet this does not prevent the narrative from idealizing its utopian possibilities.

In contrast to a text like *This Sporting Life* or *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, *Up the Junction* is centered in the urban-industrial landscape of Battersea—an area that saw heavy gentrification in the immediate post-war years. Furthermore, the region suggests much less of a provincial feel than experienced in northern towns. The result is a landscape that offers a variety of spaces for interaction as opposed to just a handful of pubs or a single school serving the immediate area. The fragmented structure of Dunn's novel allows for a greater sense of movement throughout what is ultimately a sprawling space, and the breaks between each individual narrative allow for a more filmic sense of movement around the area. Clapham Junction—the area referenced in the title—

is the name of a railway station that serves the Wandsworth borough of London, granting links to Clapham Common and Battersea's town center. Consequently, *Up the Junction* is characterized by region (South London) but the spaces themselves are more diverse, with the protagonists often jumping from one pub to another indiscriminately, as well as illicit clubs that emerge—quite literally—from the rubble of the Blitz. The Wandsworth region became a high profile target during the war because of the prevalence of industry in addition to the famous power station in Battersea. This prompted the 1941 creation of one of the eight bomb shelters built across London with enough space to house 8,000 people.[64] Dunn's text reflects the effects of the war as a number of the spaces featured in the individual narratives are best described as remnants of buildings, or sites listed for demolition. But also, like Colin MacInnes in his *London Trilogy*, Dunn suggests that gentrification and commodification is the cause of much destruction and damage, saliently noted in Adrian Henri's introduction to the text: "Battersea, like Brick Lane, like Islington and The Isle of Dogs, has succumbed to the new disease of 'gentrification': affluence at a lower level, of cheap mail-order clothes, rented video sets, hire-purchase furniture, has eclipsed the sort of street culture celebrated in Richard Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy"* (xiv).

Like Sillitoe's Nottingham the locations of the text work to form a cohesive whole—a classed environment in which like-minded individuals congregate, their shared status made clear through an expressly regional Cockney slang that stands in sharp

[64] Incidentally, this bomb shelter was used after the war to house incoming immigrants from the West Indies. The entrance to these shelters still stand unused, leaving behind a constant reminder of the war.

contrast to the narrator's Chelsea Sloane-Speak. Given the emphasis on accent, and Dunn's allegiance to replicating the spoken language of her environment, *Up the Junction*'s spatial dimensions are articulated through narrative description and through the use of vernacular language itself. Early in the text, the narrator heads out shopping with Ruby, and the subsequent scenes demonstrate the effect of consumer culture on the individual in that the narrator—hailing from upper-class Chelsea—notes every detail of war damage while the others' attention is split between the latest fashions displayed in shop windows and gossip from the local area: "Past some torn down prefabs and we walk over the erupted foundations looking for the drains" is directly followed by "There's a gorgeous bloke what works in the breadshop. Shall we go in?" (13). Such contrasts flood the text, offering a hint as to the way poor working-class people sought to offset their dire circumstances by shifting the focus onto commodity culture. Many of these spaces are rendered anonymous and archetypical, yet their significance to the text is telling in that it denotes class in colorful ways: "We are at a party in a block of LCC flats: plates of ham sandwiches, crates of brown ale and Babysham, the radiogram in the lounge, pop-song oblivion with the volume knob turned to full" (27). On several occasions, what appears to be a club or a pub is little more than a vacant space to be inhabited temporarily: "We go through the bricklayers' yard and down some filthy stone steps. The club is an old cellar poshed up with hardboard and flashy paper . . . Outside in the yard the toilet is aswim with piss. Rube blacks her eyebrows" (29). Like those in MacInnes' representations of London, the effect is one of a community that is radically destabilized—constantly shifting and changing, with clubs opening and closing in the blink of an eye. The women,

however, navigate these spaces with ease when in each other's company, and Dunn creates the sense that they have a grasp over the territory that they inhabit, despite its precarious nature.

Aside from the urban nature of the space, its effect on the characters aligns with other texts of the period—specifically in the way that it inscribes class and yet produces the need to seek alternatives. As a later text, albeit one produced prior to its publishing date of 1963, *Up the Junction* responds to shifts underway that reflect turns in affluence. While there is no question that the characters in the novel could never be viewed as affluent, disposable income plays a key role in the undermining of spatial limits. To a large degree, what the book portrays is the recreation of community in areas in which community has been decimated. This stems from the female-centric community that develops in the sweet factory but continues out into the world as the workers who spend their days together over the work bench also spend their evening and weekends together as well. Because the environment on offer failed to meet the requirements of those who inhabited the space, alternative spaces were formed in response. Stephen Brooke has approached Dunn's novel under the auspices of "slumming"—the practice of a member of a higher class taking part in activities or practices deemed to be associated with the working class. He suggests that the texts presents "class consciousness and identity [as] positional and relational, particularly with regard to consumption, geography and the perception of other classes, rather than only rooted in economic structure" (431). While this is certainly true, I would argue that the text underscores a wider turn toward commodity culture as a way to pacify other aspects of social neglect. I would also suggest

that this is a text more about the repurposing of space—the ability to not simply "make do" but to lay claim to space and develop new communities based less on large-scale class assignations than on shared interests and concerns. Whereas characters like Arthur Seaton and Arthur Machin are cast as autonomous individuals, the gendered response to class limits takes a different approach: the formation of new bonds and sub-groups as opposed to going it alone. The fact that the region is densely populated, offering more occasions for connection, would certainly play a role in such a formation, but the way young women of the period seem more capable of imagining new potentialities for class articulation clearly coincides with shifts in women's opportunities in society. As new doors opened for women in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the ability to fire the imagination in creative ways corresponds in terms of class.

Up the Junction, as Henri's introduction suggests, is "a distillation of experience" (Dunn xii)—one characterized by a search for realness that Dunn found through her "symbolic crossing of the River Thames" (Dunn xiv) into areas radically different from her own. While the text celebrates the local color and native vernacular of the area, it also offers a deeper understanding of the way insufficient spaces were reevaluated in manner by which to create new forms of community undermined by the process of gentrification. Whereas Brooke suggests that the text sidesteps politics and acknowledges class solidarity, I would suggest that any solidarity that exists within the text is contingent and fragmented. Close female bonds are formed as a response to spatial limitations in the factory, and these bonds continue out into the milieu, but this is not class-solidarity—but the kind of solidarity that exists within loose contours of class. The relationship between

Rube, Lily, and Sylvie is structured less through a historical sense of social stratification and more through the way groups of people carve out new kinds of identities in relation to the physical environments that they inhabit.

Citing Walter Besant's study of the area in the early twentieth century, Brooke remarks how the Battersea area reflected more of a contained locale: "Its 'dense population' was dependent upon local work, and the social complexion of Wandsworth ranged (according to the cleanliness of their lodgings) from the unrespectable to the respectable lower classes" (434). Nonetheless, the 1960s saw bridges connecting to regions of the capital outside of Wandsworth, expanding geographical boundaries and breaking through class confines. Naturally this opens the door to the consumption that the novel features, but Brooke argues that the text does not belabor poverty. I would argue that the text does in fact portray poverty in spades—largely through the work conditions of the factory that we are told are clearly inadequate in that the young women have to go "Up the Junction" to escape their worlds. Deprivation certainly exists in the environments that Dunn depicts, but it is countered by new forms of community that not only grant the women the ability to travel outside of their local area (they move in packs rather than as individuals) but also to create a new world *within the world they inhabit* in a way that reflects Delaney's Jo. The local environs of working-class spaces, then, can be said to induce either complacency and resignation or the desire for alternative modes of being that Dunn's characters enact so well.

Conclusion

Through their dedicated focus on the working-class subject in space, what the novels of the kitchen sink realism movement reveal, then, is a double bind in which working-class initiatives of solidarity and community conspire with ideological messaging to perpetuate oppressive states and conditions. Sillitoe's novel celebrates the intimacy and convivial spirit of working-class communities while portraying the way such communities are rigidly confined; Storey's novel considers how any porousness in such confines is often illusory; and Dunn's text reveals the way that transgression of such confines requires a rethinking of one's own relationship to class and community. In this sense, Richard Hoggart's "them and us" dichotomy can be read in a new light in that the social stratification is upheld by a voluntary stasis in which working-class people cling to shared ideals as a gesture of what Durkheim registers as self-preservation. This cerebral identity-based stasis is supported by spaces, regions, and institutions that actively preserve social hierarchies through imposed restriction, imprinting class identification from an early age to promote shared struggle as a passive state rather than as a cause for change. In revealing such dynamics so forcefully, it can be surmised that the intent of kitchen sink realist texts was not simply to glorify working-class culture through nostalgia or romanticization, but to propose new models of conceiving class as simultaneously *a part of* and *apart from* traditional notions of working-class culture. Given this, the following chapter explores the way that kitchen sink realist texts develop new modalities of class consciousness that permit and celebrate class solidarity while simultaneously championing autonomous articulations of class through a rethinking of

spatial confines and one's relationship to them. What emerges is a new comprehension of class identity that anticipates burgeoning subculture in structure as well as in practice.

Chapter 3: The Transfiguration of Classed Space and The Working-Class Imaginary

In a recent interview, Nell Dunn discussed her 1959 move from Chelsea to Battersea, implying how gritty working-class environments were "more real" than the relatively privileged life that she and her screenwriter husband, Jeremy Sandford, had known prior. Dunn downplays her move, largely in response to the question of whether *Up the Junction* veered toward cultural tourism: "It [the move] was no big experimental business, you know . . . it didn't have that charge, I liked it and I moved in" (Robertson). However, Sandford reveals the difference between life in Chelsea and life in Battersea in more detail, noting how "Nell and I had become intrigued by North Battersea, just the other side of the river, at the time one of the poorest parts of London" ("Battersea Night 3"). Despite Dunn's dismissal of her true motives, Sandford alludes to the fact that a change in community was part of the appeal: "It was she who had found us a terraced slum house in Lavender Road that, she decided, would suit us better than the Georgian mansion we occupied on the embankment in Chelsea" ("Battersea Night 3"). Upon reflection, Sandford confirms the move as politically motivated, stating that "Both of use were firmly inhibited by the politically correct socialist ideals of the time and both trying to get away, as we say it, from our privileged backgrounds . . . And if there was ever to be a proletarian revolution, North Battersea would be a safer place than Chelsea" ("Battersea Night 3"). Despite the political posturing of such a move—one that *The Daily Express*, Sandford claims, framed as the couple's affront to class and heritage—what seems clear is that Dunn was drawn to the community spirit that existed within Battersea

that Sandford describes as poverty-stricken, but containing "also an unexpected feeling of security" that stemmed from "entering an enclosed society where everyone, it seemed, had been to school together and everyone knew each other" ("Battersea Night 3"). While Sandford concedes that romantic idealism informed their move (and the work that followed), he also demonstrates how communities and environments marked by severe neglect can be revitalized as sites of vigor and life through the cognitive displacement stemming from spatial reclamation and an affront to class narratives.[65]

This chapter supplements prior chapters by illustrating how adapted articulations of class allow for the reconceptualization of gritty, working-class spaces as sites of hope. Returning to texts discussed previously, this chapter outlines the kitchen sink movement's highlighting of spatial renovation through the rethinking of a site's function. Turning to notions of spatial reclamation advanced by figures like Michel Foucault, Henri Lefebvre, and David Harvey, this chapter considers the insurgent potential of modified social relations. As Lefebvre notes, spaces are produced through tangible, conceptual, and experienced components—the latter of which emphasizes subjectivity in an otherwise objective model. In emphasizing the subjective, lived experience of working-class people, kitchen sink writers show how spaces become centers of subcultural possibility in such communities. Although kitchen sink realism is hardly known for its optimism, texts such as Colin MacInnes' *City of Spades* (1957), Alan Sillitoe's *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* (1959), and Nell Dunn's *Up the*

[65] While Dunn produced *Up the Junction* during their time in Battersea, Sandford wrote *Cathy Come Home*—a play shown as part of the BBC's *Wednesday Play* series. Directed by Ken Loach, the play considered the plight of the homeless and parental rights. Hyperbole aside, it is generally considered as one of the most influential plays ever produced for television.

Junction (1963) provide models of spatial reclamation in which the power dynamics central to social stratification are undermined and, in some cases, inverted. I refer to the state in which such practices are engaged as "the working-class imaginary"—a conception of class that exists within class boundaries while actively seeking means of transgression. This state, I argue, responds to the dilemma associated with Proletarian Byronism—the desire to exist simultaneously within and without the community. The working-class imaginary allows the individual to reconstruct their social position through dynamic class expression, transforming the relational notion of working-class space in the process. While largely speculative and utopian, the emergence of a working-class imaginary within this particular body of work speaks to the writers' desire to realign political and aesthetic objectives, resulting in a proletarian literature that advances the realist mode while providing didactic models by which to navigate shifting class designations.

Transgressive Space in Theory and Practice

In light of the spatial turn in the humanities, humanist geographers have defined new ways of thinking about space that relaxes the tie to concrete, fixed notions of space in lieu of new modalities of experience mobilized for productive use. Jen Jack Gieseking discusses such a practice as The Geographical Imaginary, suggesting how "As we move through our everyday routines, it is possible to imagine and enact alternative ways of living" through a process that "involves new understandings and representations of our place in the world" (357). As Gieseking points out, this concept builds upon ideas

developed by both Charles Wright Mills in the 1960s and David Harvey in the 1970s to elucidate the experience of the individual in space as opposed to that of the mass. For Gieseking, such an approach acts as "a tool for reaching greater understanding of self and other, while making plans to change the injustices of everyday life" (357). Gieseking's exploration of the topic tends to focus on mapping identity across global continents, but it is grounded in ideas conceived of by theorists such as Lefebvre, Harvey, Soja, and Foucault. In addition, Karen A. Franck and Quentin Stevens have proposed the concept of Loose Space —sites that are open to a certain degree of play, especially sites "apart from the aesthetically and behaviorally controlled and homogenous 'themed' environments of leisure and consumption where nothing unpredictable must occur" (3). For the purposes of this analysis of the way individuals in working-class and industrial regions of England can reimagine their environments, I want to turn to some of the original arguments presented by humanist geographers to suggest how they might help to conceive of an imaginary specific to working-class people and culture.

Henri Lefebvre's pioneering work *The Production of Space* (1974) establishes the way space is socially constructed and therefore open to transformation through cognitive displacement. For Lefebvre, conceptions of space should be comprehended as the product of interactions broken down into three categories. "Perceived space" or "Spatial practice" encompasses the physical materiality of space—the commonly held understanding of the way a particular space exists in society (38). In its most refined form, perceived space is the physical plane of reality. "Conceived space" or "Representations of space," however, exist as imagined space, or the mental space conceptualized by architects or planners

prior to a space's material formation (39). "Lived space" or "Representational space" reflects the experience of space that is socially constructed (39) but also as the sort of space that an individual views as adaptable for their own needs. Lefebvre contends, however, that these categories should not be considered discretely; instead, they function dialectically, and any attempt to parse a space in the world should account for all three. The challenge, according to Lefebvre, is that social space is hard to identify whereas physical and conceived space can be grasped with little effort. This, he argues, is because we conceive of space as a material construct—something that exists in reality with no deeper meaning beyond its physical presence. Space, in this context, appears like a stage set; it exists only to contain the actions we bring to bear on it. On the one hand, Lefebvre's conception of what is often referred to as a socio-spatial triad posits that there is far more to a space than meets the eye; on the other hand, it suggests the way that space is subject to social manipulation and, by extension, open to our own manipulation of it.

As discussed in the previous chapter, working-class spaces are often coded to relate reduced social status to those who inhabit them, but following Lefebvre's line of thinking, such messaging can be short-circuited and rewired for alternative experiences. Lefebvre refers to such spatial confrontation as "differential space"—oppositional negative space that "carries within itself the seeds of a new kind of space" that is inherently productive "inasmuch as abstract space tends toward homogeneity, toward the elimination of existing differences or peculiarities, a new space cannot be born (produced) unless it accentuates differences" (52). Such spaces are based upon a transformation of social relations in that differential space, as Lefebvre conceives of it:

> will also restore unity to what abstract space breaks up—to the functions, elements and moments of social practice. It will put an end to those localizations which shatter the integrity of the individual body, the social body, the corpus of human needs, and the corpus of knowledge. By contrast, it will distinguish what abstract space tends to identify—for example, social reproduction and genitality, gratification and biological fertility, social relationships and family relationships. (52)

Stated otherwise, locating differential space reveals contestations with social narratives that prescribe specific behavior as biopolitical effects. Lefebvre deems such confrontations to be a form of resistance:

> We know what counter-projects consist or what counter-space consists in—because practice demonstrates it. When a community fights the construction of urban motorways or housing-developments, when it demands 'amenities' or empty spaces for play and encounter, we can see how a counter-space can insert itself into spatial reality: against the Eye and the Gaze, against quantity and homogeneity, against power and the arrogance of power, against the endless expansion of the 'private' and of industrial profitability. (381-82)

However, such resistance should be met head-on, according to Lefebvre, in that counter-spaces need to act in opposition to, rather than in tandem with, spaces of power. For example, he warns against the use of leisure space as an opportunity to resist such spaces of power, mirroring Paul Willis' notion that spaces of recreation appear as expressions of autonomy, but are intricately stage-managed by the state.[66] Lefebvre contends that seemingly emancipated spaces are potential illusions designed to simulate counteraction but with no tangible impact:

> The situation has consequences that seem paradoxical at first. Certain deviant or diverted spaces, though initially subordinate, show distinct

[66] See my discussion of Willis in Chapter 1 which suggests that the rebellion of figures like Arthur Seaton are "safe" simulations of rebellion that appease the individual but pose no threat to the status quo. Lefebvre describes such a process in these terms: "Naturally, too, it happens that a counter-space and a counter-project simulate existing space, parodying it and demonstrating its limitations, without for all that escaping its clutches" (382).

> evidence of a true productive capacity. Among these are spaces devoted to leisure activity. Such spaces appear on first inspection to have escaped the control of the established order, and thus, inasmuch as they are spaces of play, to constitute a vast 'counter-space'. This is a complete illusion. The case against leisure is quite simply closed—and the verdict is irreversible: leisure is as alienated and alienating as labour; as much an agent of co-optation as it is itself co-opted; and both an assimilative and an assimilated part of the 'system' (mode of production). (383)

Thus, Lefebvre's model of understanding the production of space also provides a clue as to how such production might be undermined and transformed for the benefit of those who suffer in such conditions. For Lefebvre, what is required is a radical rethinking of the way that spaces are used as well as the kind of interactions that occur within them. In this sense, the objective materiality of space bears the potential to be altered through subjective intent.

Like Lefebvre, David Harvey's approach to spatial representation considers how the environment analogizes manifestations of capital. Harvey often picks up where Lefebvre left off, and his 2012 text *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution* develops the link between urbanism and capitalism to uncover differential spaces of contention. However, as Harvey suggests, focused collectives must form in unification rather than act as discrete entities in order to thwart neoliberal ideologies as represented by the privatization of public space (25). Harvey's contributions to postmodern thought are unparalleled, and his concept of space-time compression has significant bearing on representations of class in cultural production. But for the purposes of considering spatial rebranding, his 2004 presentation at the Marx and Philosophy Conference is of particular use, principally in his continuation of Lefebvre's notion of spatial production. Whereas Lefebvre posited space as the result of a dialectical triad,

Harvey advances this concept by adding three more categories to merge with perceived, conceived, and representational space resulting in a nine-way matrix. By complicating his original approach, Harvey allows for a more nuanced way of conceiving of Lefebvre's slippery "representational" category—the immaterial component of space structured upon social interactions.

Harvey's additional categories are absolute, relative, and relational space, amplifying the role of subjectivity in the activity of spatial production. Absolute space is simply Euclidian space—fixed, rigid, and grid-like. Nonetheless, what distinguishes it from Lefebvre's *le percu* (perceived space) is that emphasis is placed on the individual's experience of it. Relative space can be conceived of as an overlay of absolute space, comprehended as positionality or worldview. Relational space, however, is understood through the impact of time on a particular space. While Harvey contends that his concept of relational thinking is as slippery as Lefebvre's, a tangible example given of the latter helps to understand how such a development might work. Harvey discusses the site of the 2001 World Trade Center attacks, noting how the space was transformed physically as well as symbolically in people's minds based on a particular event in time. In this regard, spaces are susceptible to alteration due to temporal occurrences, their meaning reconfigured in ways that are not restricted to material transformation. When established alongside Lefebvre's spatial triad, the resulting nine-way matrix resembles a bingo card against which to record spatial examples. However, Harvey points out that the way to approach such a matrix is not as a tool for the categorization of space, but as a way to identify tensions produced when a space can be cataloged across multiple categories. This

is what he refers to as an "aesthetic space of transit," borrowing the term from the artist Judith Barry, and the term is central to understanding the way certain spaces produce tension. By identifying tension, the space's intended purpose is laid bare—be it one of capitalism or one whose purpose is more democratic in nature. While Lefebvre's triad alerts us to the hidden complexity of space, it is Harvey's matrix that allows for a way to understand the nature of such complexity with greater precision.

Although Michel Foucault tends to veer away from Marxist approaches, his writing on space is grounded in concepts of ideology and regulation. Like Lefebvre and Harvey, much of Foucault's work considers space in increasingly complex ways. And, in a series of lectures given in 1967, he outlines how conceptions of space have altered. The essay that emerged from these lectures, "Of Other Spaces," presents an overview of such alterations, discussing the way that space was once understood in terms of structuralism: a church is a church because it is not a market. This understanding, he argues, developed through the exploration of proximity as a tangible space following fifteenth-century painters' devotion to perspective. But during the Enlightenment era, chronology supplanted space as the dominant form of monitoring cultural advancement. Foucault is interested, however, in developing the pre-enlightenment notion of spatial proximity by exploring the significance of the space between two points as a way to unify binaries such as inside/outside and to conceive of them as a single entity. In order to do this, he focuses on places that hold strange relations to one another as utopian parallels with the example being that of a mirror. A mirror, he argues, provides a virtual replica of the real yet it exists within the real, and so the combined real/virtual abstraction is what he refers

to as “heterotopic space”—spaces that act as a counter to their original intention through reversal. In regards to Lefebvre’s perceived or Harvey’s absolute space, heterotopic spaces can be understood as real, physical spaces that somehow rebel against the space where they should exist. Heterotopic spaces are less conceptions of place (which would be the utopia); instead, they offer a way of thinking about the way material spaces are transformed for certain reasons that unsettle and disturb the norm with striking similarities to the way conceptions of subculture have been theorized as new modalities existing both as linked to and separated from dominant ideologies.

Foucault further elaborates his concept through a series of benchmarks: that heterotopias exist in all cultures without exception; that heterotopias emerge through shifts in the way spaces are comprehended by those who experience the space; that heterotopic space can act as a contradiction of the constituted spaces; that it can represent breaks in temporal chronology; and that it is not immediately accessible in that access requires a formal transition (imprisonment, for example, but also with reference to intentional cognitive displacement). Similar to Lefebvre and Harvey, the value of identifying heterotopic space is that it clarifies spatial production (the existence of a heterotopia suggests a desire—be it power or resistance—for such a space to exist). Furthermore, it also proffers revolutionary potential in that a space that does not meet the needs of its inhabitants can be potentially reclaimed and transformed as an Other space. Heterotopias, when realized and consciously accessed, can act as gestures of reclamation and resistance to dominant norms and ideology made manifest through space.

However, building on the Marxist approach to spatial relations but with Foucault's heterotopia in mind is Edward's Soja's concept of Thirdspace or "thirding." Soja's concept is built almost entirely on contingency, following Lefebvre's representational space ("lived space") and emphasizing the complexity of its potential. The concept of Thirdspace can be grasped through its relation to first and second space, with first space most closely aligned to Lefebvre's perceived space or Harvey's absolute space. Firstspace represents the detached, objective perspective of the cartographer and is based on pure rationality. Secondspace is similar to Lefebvre's conceived space in that it allows for our knowledge of a space without our ever visiting it (the kind of experience we may gain of a place by reading travel brochures, for example). Thirdspace, however, reflects a dynamic combination of first and second space. Soja's concept, like much of the spatial turn, demonstrates an attempt to undermine dominant epistemologies about spatial representation by reinserting critical, speculative thought into the rational and empirical approaches to geography that dominated the social sciences. As opposed to the dialectic of Lefebvre's triad or the tension produced by Harvey's matrix, Soja's Thirdspace is largely an attempt to conflate the perceived and conceived spaces of the real and the imagined—an approach taken up more diligently within literary studies in the form of Bertrand Westphal's *Geocriticism: Real and Fictional Spaces*. An example of the way Thirdspace might be engaged is to consider Orientalist notions of the way the West produced the East. By manipulating representations of the East as an exoticized Other partially structured upon perceived representation, the West not only transforms the East into a Thirdspace but it also unwittingly transforms itself in that it establishes itself

as a space with the potential to distinguish itself against its own fabrications. In "thirding" the East, the West colonizes itself as a geographic reality that is dependent upon its own imagination and image making.

The way that Soja conceives of Thirdspace resembles Foucault's desire to reconcile spaces that are "strangely" related as an entity unto themselves. And while Foucault's conception of the heterotopia certainly conveyed the potential for resistance, it is a space that produces a disturbing effect on the individual in that it defamiliarizes and displaces the self. In the example of the space created by the mirror, Foucault finds himself erased: "In the mirror, I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface; I am over there, there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself, that enables me to see myself there where I am absent" (4). Although disturbing, the effect is that heterotopic space unchains the subject from normative temporal and spatial orders, thus opening up the subject to new potentialities. For Soja, Thirdspace is more of a site than an effect, analogous to Lefebvre's claim that for a spatial revolution to occur, counter spaces must be established and understood collectively rather than individually. And this is perhaps the critical distinction—that Thirdspace is a tool by which to comprehend geographic makeup whereas the heterotopic space mirrors a number of Foucault's later tools designed to grant the individual agency.

It should be apparent that these approaches to thinking about space as potentially adaptable and transgressive, as well as potentially dehumanizing and disorienting, are largely interwoven. Such difference can be attributed, in part, to the political imperatives

of the author, yet parallels can clearly be formed between them. For Lefebvre and Harvey, the spaces that we inhabit are not simply the result of physical assembly; they represent the result of certain social constructions and relations that are not immediately perceptible. In this respect, it behooves us to understand the forces that produce such spaces to discern whether or not they are acting in our best interests. For example, the production of council estates was clearly a necessity in the immediate post-war years, but as gentrification established itself as a viable rationale for rehousing unwanted communities, the estates' benevolent nature was brought into question. For Foucault, such emphasizing of intention is critical to the way a space is comprehended. For example, the movement of a working-class community from the urban center to the periphery may read as an altruistic gesture given the nature of industrial pollution, but it also raises questions about the lucrative gains of social cleansing. In such cases, though, spatial investigation is industrious in that it reveals the mechanisms behind the way such sites are produced as well as introducing the possibility of spatial reclamation by imagining how such spaces can be countered and disarticulated from their designated intent. For example, a hypothetical council estate exiled from the city could potentially be rejuvenated as a hub of revolutionary energy were the residents able to adequately comprehend the nature of their upheaval, acknowledge the class-defining capacities of council estates, then taking collective action to rethink the estate as a space of insurgency against such processes.

Biopolitical and Disciplinary Space

The cultural management of bodies has been widely explored by a number of critical voices but tends to center on the experience of corporeal subjugation rather than the way that space itself is employed as part of that process. Such discussions generally overlook the role of the environment with the focus resting squarely on the individual body, the community, and the source of the power enacted upon it. While Lefebvre and Harvey's championing of the relational components of space highlight the push toward understanding power dynamics between individuals and entities, both authors emphasize how subjective dynamics need to be considered in concordance with objective factors.

The original academic source of biopolitics is traceable to the discipline of political science in that interest in the way bodies were managed mirrored concerns over state sovereignty and power. Discussions within the discipline stemmed from a series of lectures in 1970 by Foucault who explored the way state power enacted itself on its subjects, arguing that the power expressed was, complexly, one of sustenance as well as one of management.[67] For Foucault, biopolitics constitutes not just the physical organization of bodies in space, but also the shaping of a space's social production through the management of knowledge and power often expressed through mechanisms such as social contracts and law. However, the topic of biopolitics was also adopted by postmodern theorists who moved the focus from political science toward more ontological concerns. The result is less of a theoretical fork in the road, and more of a

[67] Foucault's discussion of this topic was spread across a number of texts, but the bulk of the discussion can be found in *"Society Must Be Defended": Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-1976*.

series of crossing paths with varied intersections based in an array of disciplines. For Foucault, the rise of biopolitics aligns with a shift in the way that the state conveyed sovereignty over the subject. According to Foucault, prior to the eighteenth century, the sovereign articulated dominance through "the right of the sword": a position of authority sustained by the sovereign's ability to take life away from its subjects at will. In the period following, Foucault registers a shift in the way power is expressed in which the formation of "biopower" encompasses the sovereign's attempt to assert itself as a dominant force, not by its ability to kill with impunity, but by its capacity to sustain life and, therefore, its own elevation. Nonetheless, such a practice is hardly benevolent; the sovereign maintains life because of its own investment in remaining sovereign. In this sense, the move to sustain and control life as an expression of power is written into a larger system of maintenance and organization. In the biopolitical mode, the sovereign can sustain life while simultaneously taking life away. Capital punishment or the prison industrial complex serve as examples of the way the state manages bodies, obfuscating its capacity to destroy them under the auspices of protection. Whereas the pre-eighteenth-century sovereign's ability to take life can be thought of as a visual spectacle, in the biopolitical mode, the management of bodies is largely integrated into the social field, making its existence harder to detect. However, there is a parallel between what Lefebvre and Harvey describe as the social mechanisms that produce space and the social mechanisms that police bodies, both of which can be identified in spaces where the social order of stratification is maintained.

Whereas Foucault's focus centers on the populace as an entity within which the subject is rendered as a passive receiver, other critics have considered biopolitics as enacted upon the individual which, in turn, allows for a way to consider the role of agency in terms of space—at least regarding the way figures like Harvey and Soja conceive of spatial manipulation as a form of resistance. Giorgio Agamben, in his 1998 text *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, builds on Foucault's original conception of biopower, but for Agamben, no historical shift took place to transform the original form of sovereignty into the provider of sustenance that Foucault allocates to modernity (6). For Agamben, sovereign rule is embedded within the modern biopolitical system Foucault describes, and the sovereign's ability switch from a system of management to that of "the right of the sword" is enacted spatially. This rests upon the Aristotelian concept of potentiality in that, even when the state is operating under the auspices of sustaining its citizenry, it has the capacity to flip the switch and take life through what Agamben terms "The State of Exception"—best understood as a legal state of abandonment during which the subject's life is endangered. Such a maneuver reflects the ancient Roman law of *Homo Sacer,* dictating that an individual cannot be sacrificed but can be placed into a position in which they can be killed without recourse. An example of such a space might be a prison or a camp in which the basis of its existence is within the law, but a certain lawlessness within the space renders it more likely that the individual will not survive their imprisonment. Furthermore, because the state can create such spaces at will, the concept of potentiality condemns all citizenry as hypothetically *Homo Sacer*. While Agamben's argument is complex, building on a series of political

models throughout history, working-class environments such as slums, council estates, or high-rise buildings—spaces that are today associated with what Guy Standing has termed to be "the precariat"—represent states of abandonment in which the detritus of society are housed to rot. In legal terms, or in the case of political science, "exception" generally refers to a temporary modification of existing laws (such as the implementation of martial law, for example), but the state of exception, following Carl Schmitt's original notion, can be thought of as liminal space without specified boundaries due to its latent potentiality. When an individual is placed into a state of exception, they are stripped of what Agamben refers to as *bios*—the legal rights and protections that they enjoy as part of society—and are left with *zoē*—which is the simple fact of being a living thing. The process of exception, then, is one in which an individual's right to participate in society is removed, locating the individual as an outcast, exempt from the kind of state-sponsored protection necessary to keep them alive. While such positions impact the individual—be it through the suspension of human rights (imprisonment, for example) or limiting the ability to gain to access to certain provisions that would allow one to climb social ladders (class, for example)—individuals collectively exiled from the state in such a manner tend to converge, and the result is that spaces like council estates or working-class communities held in social stasis form a material boundary of individuals within a state of exception.[68] Given that the etymological root of the word "exception" is "taken outside," (18), it should be clear as to the spatial consequences of such a maneuver.

[68] This point, however, was complicated in Chapter 2 in that not only are working-class spaces formed by individuals who share the same social limitations, such spaces can be comprehended by groups who share similar identifications of class. Such identifications, though, are potentially the result of top-down imposed

For Foucault, resistance comes from first identifying the mechanisms of biopolitics, especially the way they are structured in society. The second approach was expressed in a loose set of ideas developed during a seminar in 1982 referred to as "Technologies of the Self," aimed at developing autonomous modes of existing beyond the control of the state. In his lectures, Foucault points toward religious practices such as asceticism as a renunciation of the world tantamount to voluntarily exclusion from society. "Technologies of the Self," however, are often characterized by Foucault as written narratives that explore "what-if" scenarios in a manner that resembles the aesthetic objectives of the kitchen sink writers. Similarly, Agamben suggests an embracing of the state of exception—a voluntary self-exclusion from the standard operations of society—which, in relation to Lefebvre and Harvey, constitutes the kind of political refusal they champion through counter-space. While the language of writers like Agamben is cast in a juridical and political rather than cerebral or aesthetic tenor, the notion of voluntary exclusion from normative social scripts maps onto some of the ideas put forth by kitchen sink writers—principally in terms of working-class communities and their limits.

Cultural Sites of Resistance

Several novels associated with the kitchen sink movement explore the potential for transgressive, insurgent approaches to space, rejecting the social order that imposes

narratives of struggle which are then amplified by the subjected group in order to secure their own class identification.

limits on an individual's capacity to thrive. However, along the lines of post-war housing and the features associated with classed environments, I want to begin by isolating and analyzing some aspects of the post-war British landscape that might function as space in which meaning can be confronted and new forms of class consciousness are shown to emerge.

The Bombsite

A recurring image across a number of the texts associated with the kitchen sink movement is that of the bombsite—a residual reminder not just of the Blitz, but of a lack of resources available to rehouse and repair damaged communities. From 1940 to 1941, air raids conducted by the German Luftwaffe targeted a number of British cities, but it was the capital that received the most concentrated damage—particularly the attacks that began on September 7th in which the city was bombed for the following 76 nights with only a single day of respite (Bullock 4). In London alone, the bombing resulted in more than 20,000 deaths (Richards 217), and by October of that same year, the Blitz had left 25,000 citizens homeless and in need of immediate shelter (Bullock 4). The initial damage was felt in the East End of the city, but by September, the attacks had moved West, spreading out into the more suburban areas, culminating in the most expansive attack on October 15th. Northern industrial regions were also singled out with Birmingham, Sheffield, and Manchester—cities known for their economic potential—subjected to a series of air raids. While the main targets were factories and transportation hubs, by the end of the attacks, two million homes had been destroyed across the country.

In areas like Manchester, historic landmarks were also destroyed and well-established working-class communities were decimated with regions like Salford losing more than 8,000 homes.

While the state of bombed-out housing might ordinarily necessitate abandonment, given the copious amount of inhospitable slum housing still inhabited by working-class people, bombsites represented one facet of a general state of dereliction and were therefore normalized as part of the landscape. Rather than avoid such sites due to structural risk—or the mere memory of the attacks themselves—British people kept calm and carried on about their business, finding ways to incorporate this new topographic anomaly into their daily activities. Commenting on the shifting public opinion of such sites, Leo Mellor writes:

> For while every bombsite could be a useful metaphor and also a unique ruin, en masse they were to become an unavoidable fact on the ground, and a manifestation of how modern warfare literalised the phrase 'Home Front' with violence. As time passed they could be aestheticised into picturesque ruins or politicised through surrealism, observed through the templates of archeology or natural history or the phantasmagoric—or merely played on by children. (2)

Whereas Mellor's extended argument points toward literary Modernism's reliance on images of decay and destruction as a recurring theme, he also registers the temporal shock achieved through radical shifts in the environment:

> Bombsites contain absolute doubleness. They are inherently both a frozen moment of destruction made permanent; as much as they capture the absolute singular moment, the repeated cliché of the stopped clock exposed, battered by blast but still affixed to a wall in a bombsite: yet they also act as a way of understanding a great swathe of linear time previously hidden or buried, offering history exposed to the air. (6)

By the time the kitchen sink writers emerged, the residual destruction from the Blitz was fully accepted into day-to-day affairs, rendering bombsites as less "activated" and more commonplace—another space to be used or reclaimed as deemed fit. Despite this, the cultural persistence and symbolic valence of such sites was understood by the writers of the 1950s and 1960s.

One of the most prominent examples represented in kitchen sink texts is in John Braine's *Room at the Top* in which the bombsite is mobilized as a symbolic reminder of social and familial dereliction. In the novel, the central character, Joe Lampton, is orphaned after his parents' home was destroyed as they slept through "Dufton's one and only bomb" (82). For Lampton, the space is abstract and alien, "a gap where our house had stood" (98). Recalling the event itself, Lampton engages the memory as if it were a film, granting it the title of "the Bad Morning, the Death Morning," describing the newly transformed structure as an abject deformity: "The pavement had been roped off that morning: among the debris was the bathroom mirror, which somehow had survived the explosion and seemed to wink derisively in the August sun, as if it had survived at my parents' expense" (98). Yet Lampton's experience of the space in the present moment is one of reconstructed memory, leading the character to not just recreate the space in his mind but to recreate conversations he held with his parents and the dynamics of their relationship (102-103). Furthermore, the space's key role in the text—made more apparent in Jack Clayton's 1959 film adaptation—demarcates class distinctions via space. As Lampton contrasts the destruction of Dufton ("Dirty Dufton, Dreary Dufton, Despicable Dufton" [104]) with his new, socially elevated life in Worley ("Worley had

shown me a new way of living; for the first time I'd lived in a place without memories. And for the first time *lived* in a place" [104, emphasis in original]), it is clear that Braine uses the image of the bombsite as a metaphor for working-class communities long since abandoned yet still inhabited. In Clayton's film, when Lampton does return to Dufton, it is characterized by clichéd social markers: children playing on piles of rubble, lacking toys, and "making do" with what they have.

Yet, while *Room at the Top* was a forerunner of the kitchen sink movement, Braine's use of spatial metaphors was perhaps not quite as developed or suggestive as those that followed. While representations of bombsites in the 1950s are generally identified more as expressions of anxiety over the development of the atomic bomb, in kitchen sink realism, representations of bombed out space function to establish the possibility of new community formation and act as material examples of shared suffering. For example, in Nell Dunn's *Up the Junction*, the characters move through spaces with brief descriptions such as "We cross a chaos of grass and rubble to a row of deserted houses" (32), of which the view outside is of a "garden filled with tangled grass and trees" (33). Dunn's text stresses the way that destruction of working-class communities is normalized to the point where residents simply step over remnants of old buildings, and nature has taken its toll in an attempted reclamation of the space. Yet such sites serve a new purpose for the inhabitants; they are transformed into places of social recreation, as Rube clarifies when responding to Sylvie's questioning of what she did the previous night: "I ended up with that Johnny back of the bombed site" (37). This novel will be discussed in more detail toward the end of this chapter as it provides a glimpse into the

way environments cast as socially illegitimate gain new meaning by those who inhabit them while galvanizing shared experience in environments that signify poverty. In environments where destruction and dereliction serve as a reminder to one's social position, texts like *Up the Junction* demonstrate how such ideological coding can be transgressed.

Underground Clubs

Similar to the way discarded sites are repurposed for new social usage, a space depicted often in the novels of the period is the underground club—a space generally portrayed as makeshift. And while the history of underground clubs in the UK is expansive, their development can be located in the 1950s and 1960s, both in the US as well as in Britain. So, not only do these texts narrate the emergence of illicit clubs within culture, they grant us new ways of understanding social relations underway that produce such spaces. In this regard, the working-class motif of "make-do" is given new meaning in that environments unsuitable for leisure activity—environments coded as classed and socially ostracized—are transformed into spaces that demarcate new conceptions of being and existence.

The preposition "underground" is instructive in that it represents a space that sits outside of the mainstream as well as signaling the forced trajectory of marginalized cultural bodies in the post-war years. A lineage might be drawn between underground clubs and the mythical opium scene of East London's Victorian era, but opium dens in London were more a construct of the literary imagination than an actual reality.

According to Dave Haslam, the blueprint for the British nightclub can be found in the genre of the music hall with the earliest nightclub dating back to the mid-1840s (1). But it was the emergence of the jazz club in the 1920s that serves as the earliest representation of what we conceive of as nightclubs today. Referencing the Hambone—a nightclub founded in 1922 in Soho's Ham Yard—Haslam points out how club regular Trevor Allen incorporated the club into a novel called *We Love Bohemia*, prompting a reviewer to recount the space as a "shrine of anti-convention and the home of talented rebels" (2). However, according to Maurice Bottomly, the Hambone was one of several clubs to occupy 41 Great Windmill Street with as many as ten separate clubs sharing the space through the 1920s and 1930s. Bottomly adds that the Hambone was the most notorious of these clubs, drawing an almost exclusively bohemian crowd from the arts that included the painter Augustus John and the poet Radclyffe Hall. Although the Hambone's legacy endured, and the Ham Yard went on to house one of London's most famous clubs of the 1960s (The Scene), the spaces associated with the Ham Yard reflect the way underground clubs themselves were somewhat transitory and mobile.

While World War II led to a decline in club life, and a number of the nightclubs of the 1920s and 1930s saw damage from bombing, in the immediate post-war years, clubs like the 100 Club on Oxford Street emerged and, by the mid-1960s, club life was in full swing. Colin MacInnes' novels *City of Spades* and *Absolute Beginners* document the spread of underground clubs in the post-war capital, with *City of Spades*, in particular, commenting on the previous decade of multiculturalism. The novel offers a tour of London's most diverse and dynamic regions, emphasizing the role of clubs as sanctuary,

but also noting how makeshift they must remain due to police harassment. MacInnes was clearly familiar with the intricacies of black jazz clubs like the Hambone, devoting a chapter in *City of Spades* to a fictional club called The Moonbeam in an obscure location: "Soon we reached the outskirts of Soho; and being already, as I imagined, one of the freemasonry of the street coloured underground, I did not hesitate to ask the way to the Moonbeam club from any dark face I saw" (73). The narrator, Montgomery Pew, emphasizes the illicit nature of the space: "But never had I thought that the bombed site across the way contained, by night, in its entrails, the Moonbeam club" (74). Pew continues to note how the war-torn space was repurposed as a space of cultural necessity, claiming that "the horrid little restaurant was dark and shuttered, and the bombed site alive with awnings, naked lights, and throngs of coloured men" (74). The club itself—an empty basement, marked only by "past coloured photographs of American Negro singers and white starlets" (74)—sells no alcohol, only sodas, teas, and coffees, affirming its underground status through its inability to receive license. As the novel progresses, clubs are raided and shut down, only to open once more in other underground sites. In this regard, MacInnes' text depicts the way that, despite the popularity and prevalence of nightclubs in London at the time, an underground movement was required to cater to the marginalized members of the new society. Given MacInnes' allegiance to countercultural figures, as well as his championing of minority voices, it is not surprising that his representations of clubs resemble the Hambone.

Despite the underground nature of these clubs, London was still considered the central hub of nightlife in England throughout much of the 1950s and 1960s, and it was

the cosmopolitan nature of the city that, for northern communities, marked London clubs as somewhat snooty. Such attitudes were responsible for the popularity of the Northern Soul movement in northern industrial towns in which spaces ordinarily designated for more parochial events were recast as spaces where youth subculture could flourish. Clubs associated with the Northern Soul movement, like the Wigan Casino or the Blackpool Mecca, were adaptable spaces, but more officially recognized as shared community spaces that housed a number of local events. Thus, events associated with such movements are distinct from the sites themselves, in that Northern Soul clubs experienced many of the same problems MacInnes outlined in his novels—the need to pick up and move whenever local authorities took issue. While spaces like the Mecca or the Wigan Casino were officially recognized as semi-permanent community spaces, other clubs associated with the movement repurposed buildings associated with industry, such as the Wolverhampton Catacombs—ironically an upstairs venue housed in an old lead smelting plant in the space where the furnaces once stood. So, just as the bombed-out buildings of London served as the perfect environment for illicit nightlife, and the rise of clubs in northern industrial areas of England also adopted unorthodox spaces as their own, a clear link can be made between ostracized citizens and the need to create places of sociality and belonging from spaces designated for ulterior purposes or disregarded by mainstream society.

Public Facilities

As Anne Power has noted, young people—especially young people in disadvantaged areas with little in the way of resources—gravitate toward public facilities in an attempt to carve out spaces of their own. This, Power notes can lead to conflict in that the spaces where young people congregate are often ones that other members of the community must pass through (85). Public spaces and facilities which invite temporary congregation such as bus stops, phone boxes, street corners, parks, and benches—as well as spaces less frequented, like abandoned buildings, warehouses, or railroad tracks—are claimed by such groups for social activity, especially in areas where designated spaces are not provided. Power adds that such spaces are often territorially marked by graffiti or damage, creating the impression of youthful disobedience and reinforcing stereotypes of delinquency. While this behavior is hardly exclusive to a particular generation or regional demographic, such spaces are largely determined by an extension of the behavioral sink concept in that regions which fail to cater to youth tend to result in young people seeking out nontraditional environments to meet their needs. But in addition to such practices being associated with young people, it is also possible to consider the way that working-class people, whose environments lack similar resources for socialization, are apt to carve out spaces designated for other activities. While the novels of this period tend to focus on the plight of young people, and representations of those young protagonists' parents tend to isolate them in their designated quarters—be it their homes, workplace, or local pub—there are cases in which public space and facilities see social transformation across multiple generations within working-class life. As Brad Beaven has commented,

however, the adult practice of socializing around public facilities is associated more with the nineteenth century term "hooligan"—a term not just limited to youthful loitering, characterized instead as "the culmination of twenty or thirty years of city life, a symbol of the growing lawlessness that seemed endemic to urban living" as well as representing "the spread of a foreign and unwelcome influence" through the term's Irish connotations (115). Yet the term was often used to suggest how antisocial behavior was innate rather than symptomatic of spatial and class-based abandonment.

Just as bombsites became the perfect setting for social engagement in Nell Dunn's *Up the Junction*, young people in working-class communities sought out locations that they could claim as their own in response to limited mobility. Therefore, the social function of such spaces changed to meet the needs of the community that lacked alternative resources. In light of David Harvey's articulation of space as a matrix in which tensions of usage produce conflict, such sites represent a clash between material/absolute space and relative/relational space in which the commonly held understanding of a space's purpose is subverted as the result of cultural shifts. Harvey's conception of relational space is clear in such cases: a senior citizen's understanding of the bus stop, for example, is purely functional and temporary as opposed to the understanding of a teenager who might view such a site as one of social potential. While urban planning dictates that many communities contain regions developed expressly for social purposes, the transformation of sites designated for municipal function into sites of insurgent potential suggests that a larger cultural shift has occurred to produce the need for such site's transformation. If the kitchen sink movement can help us to understand

such shifts, then we might consider the way that the failure of the welfare state to live up to its promises concerning education, housing, and social opportunity, is responsible for the need to reclaim public spaces and take ownership of them. Whereas delinquency is all too readily blamed on upbringing and social relations between individuals, a close analysis of the way space is produced shows how limitation can play a role in such behavior. In this sense, what is often considered to be antisocial behavior can be understood through a text like Alan Sillitoe's *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* (that will be discussed in more depth in subsequent pages) as a spatial inevitability as well as an attempt to enact positive change.

British psychologist Tony Gibson has argued that delinquency—particularly in young, working-class men, reflects a failure of security in the development of a moral compass. Gibson centers on the production of a socially conscripted conscience, arguing that a young person develops a sense of right and wrong not through the act of scolding, but through the threat of losing the approval of an authority figure: "If the child grows up in a condition of affectionate emotional dependence on his parents, withdrawal of parental approval is a very strong sanction" (106). Therefore, if the child has no sense of affectionate emotional connections risked by misbehavior, then there are no consequences for such actions. Given that such training is habitual and will, therefore, continue into one's adult life, it can be said that such a hypothesis is not merely aimed at youth delinquency but delinquency in general. Gibson adds that "Society gets the delinquency rate it deserves" (107), suggesting how behavioral concerns are as much a consequence of space as they are symptomatic of parental neglect. Logic would suggest

how moral abandon stemming from a lack of parental affection might easily be displaced onto an environment that demonstrates a similar lack of care. If a young person's environment fails to communicate an investment in their well-being (perhaps in the sense of community spaces, or through municipal programming aimed at youths)—or, worse, communicates class-based animosity toward them—then, following Gibson's theory above, not only is there no room for allegiance to the environment, but there may even be an active disdain for it. Public spaces such as bus stops, street corners, and lamp posts that often become makeshift social destinations for young people in working-class communities—and are often defaced or destroyed in the process—can be comprehended as symbolic manifestations of an environment that resents their existence. The desecration of spaces that hold the potential to be reclaimed as productive sites can therefore be understood as a) a marking of the territory—a material, tangible method of claiming space as one's own, b) a lack of the kind of consequences necessary to halt such actions—no perceptible threat of the loss of affection from the space itself, and c) a transposing of animosity to the environment through the conquest and destruction of a municipal signifier. Perhaps one of the most stereotypical icons of British heritage and tradition is the red telephone box, so it should be no surprise that they were vandalized with regularity. While spaces designated for public use are clearly repurposed in a way that counters their original function, the reasons for doing so are not simply to adopt a space as one's own, but are, in fact, more complicated.

Prisons and Borstals

As discussed in Chapter 2, in mid-century working-class communities, the dividing lines between the schoolhouse, the factory, and the prison system are less clearly demarcated as than in more socially-elevated communities. As Tony Gibson adds, the criminal justice system is liable to conflate petty crime and delinquency with mental illness as a way to stigmatize people in areas susceptible to spatial oppression or abandonment. Furthermore, Lynsey Hanley has registered how the housing conditions of the 1950s and 1960s simulated imprisonment through "mass-produced barracks" (103), and Owen Jones describes the British class system as "an invisible prison" (182). But it is important to note that the prison system is as much an institution as is the education system, and movement in and out of it is just as likely. The emergence of the borstal in 1895 hints at the general proximity of such institutions and the notion of borstals as reform educational facilities blurs the line even further. For Lionel Fox, the development of the borstal as a midway point between the school and the prison is evident in the language used in criminal sentencing. Fox points out how the development of the Criminal Justice Act of 1948 built upon the 1908 Prevention of Crime Act by using language that suggests how imprisonment could offer social advantages through teaching trade skills (352). On the one hand, such changes might be read as a way to de-stigmatize imprisonment for petty offenders—specifically working-class young people; on the other, such toying with language can be construed as *selling* the services that a borstal has to offer. The fact that criminal recidivism always existed as a blemish on the success of the borstal institution is underscored further by the continual decline in success rates,

confirming that problems of delinquency have more to do with the individual's environment than with the individual themselves. Of course, one of the most well-known literary examples of social reprogramming can be seen in Anthony Burgess' 1962 novel *A Clockwork Orange* in which the protagonist is subjected to "the Ludovico Technique"—a form of behavior modification that aped the social reprogramming provided by borstals, one that, by the end of the novel, has produced little change in the protagonist's behavior. However, the environment that Alex and his fellow droogs inhabit is one characterized by random acts of violence (to which they happily contribute)—a dystopian space that Burgess presents as oppressively classed as well as largely uninterested in the well-being of its residents.

Leisure Space

As Paul Willis has argued, sites of recreation within working-class environs are little more than allowances of joy built into the framework of labor. For Willis, momentary respite—be it through alcohol consumption or, in some cases, vacations—acts as a manipulation of the cultural field to prevent out-and-out rebellion from happening, channeling revolutionary energy in a manageable manner that is easy to contain. Spaces like pubs are met with cultural activities like sports as a way, in Willis' line of thinking, to pacify and subvert the recognition of capitalist exploitation. As Peter Borsay adds, however, following the shift from austerity to the era of affluence, an increase in leisure activity corresponds to heightened income and the general perception of improved economic conditions (88). Furthermore, Borsay articulates a connection

between leisure activities and the support of the local community in that "Investing in the community was a practical way of safeguarding against the risk of falling seriously into poverty, providing a support network that could be called upon when times proved difficult" (87). But from a spatial perspective, all of these activities work within a set boundary, and fueled by alcohol, their function as systems of containment seems clear. Borsay continues to note how leisure is granted passivity in that:

> Heavy drinking and rowdiness have also been frequently associated with the lower orders, and although the accusations of drunkenness and violence were regularly deployed as a tool to stigmatize the common people, there is little reason to doubt that generous corporate and public consumption of alcohol and high levels of inter-personal and inter-communal violence were woven closely into the fabric of (at least male) popular leisure. (87-88)

While activities associated with working-class people of the late 1950s and early 1960s do not diverge too much from the drinking in the local, the kind of leisure activities most commonly practiced would include spaces from those designated for gambling to those carved out for community sports such as cricket and fishing. Churches and working-men's clubs also provided space for bingo and similar events repeated on a weekly basis. Given the cultural limitations of such events—meaning, that they offer little in the way of cultural education or, say, an introduction to the arts—the repetition of relatively mindless leisure requiring little cognition or change, underscores the biopolitical imperative behind Willis' claim—that working leisure spaces and activities were largely dedicated to pacifying laborers. Borsay underscores the intended effects of such leisure practice, noting how:

> Working-class pastimes might be seen as the surviving vestiges of a pre-rational, pre-Enlightenment culture, characterized not only by roughness,

> but also by a deep conservatism, an emphasis upon oral and visual modes of communication rather than literacy, and a naive dependence upon luck, fate, and magical forms of explanation. (88)

In Borsay's view, working-class leisure spaces emerge as Bakhtinian carnival—an atavistic vision of community and community well-being characterized by class immobility at the hands of the stage-managed limitations outlined by Willis (174). Yet, such spaces do hold the potential for transcendent thinking, at least regarding the way class consciousness was experienced.

According to Brad Beaven, the British government took a greater interest in developing leisure activities following World War I, responding to early reports of the failure of borstal detention and thus underscoring the behavioral control mechanisms embedded within communal and state-sponsored leisure pursuits (163). The kind of state-sponsored spaces that emerged included sports facilities developed alongside new communities, multi-purpose community centers that often included sports-related facilities, playing fields and, generally speaking, physical activity-based sites that could double as community hubs. As Beaven points out, the investment in building leisure sites devoted to physical development—at least in the interwar years—is linked to eugenics and nationalism, mapping physical health and well-being to the metaphorical health of the country. Yet, as noted previously, such sites—especially ones without security or direct management—followed the fate of others devoted to the public in that they were repurposed as a counter-offensive to state intervention. David Downes, however, considers such spaces an opportunity to reclaim status by virtue of the sort of leisure activities made available in the post-war years were ordinarily associated with non-

working-class people. He writes that in the decline of craftsmanship and traditional skills, a rise of "do-it-yourself" thinking emerged, inviting working-class people to partake in activities otherwise ignored. To a large degree, this is commensurate with the push toward distinction and the disarticulation of monolithic class identity, but for Downes, it also reflects an attempt at self-elevation: "The growth of such outdoor activities as sailing and rock-climbing, which were previously the exclusive device whereby a leisure class exhibited their superiority, is due, in part, to an increasing *adolescent* pursuit of these 'hobbies'" (133, emphasis in original). Downes adds that such attempts at class transcendence resulted in a "problem of adjustment," emphasizing more nuanced class differences imperceptible previously. However, where the social, economic, and educational limitations of class were relatively fixed, in regards to leisure, the pursuit of competitive and physical goals associated with sports placed the working-class individual on equal grounds to that of the middle- or upper-class individual (134). In other words, leisure spaces—largely designed as methods of pacification—could be mobilized as a way to establish class equilibrium. Such a gesture looms most clearly in Sillitoe's *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* in that the cross country race that Colin Smith and his borstal peers participate in is not against a neighboring borstal, but against a prestigious public school. While the introduction of sports and alcohol into leisure activities can be seen as a kind of pacification mechanism posited by Willis, such practices do point toward the emergence of an imaginative response to social stratification. In such cases, the production of leisure space is extended to those who frequent such sites, allowing them to be transformed from passive participants into active

insurgents who, through, competition can imagine and momentarily achieve social elevation.

Public Parks

In terms of urban planning, one of the most commonly experienced leisure spaces is the public park—the history of which is too expansive to outline in depth but deserves noting in regards to its connection to spaces of reclamation. While Britain is known for its municipal gardens, such spaces masquerade as indicators of class and classed regions simply through their upkeep. In many ways, public parks resemble some of the spaces already discussed in this chapter, acting as material representations of a community's health and its connection to the nation as a whole. While Ebenezer Howard's garden city movement reflected early reformist utopianism, the intention was to counter the overcrowding and pollution of urban industrial centers. Originally developed in the late-nineteenth century, Howard's proposal struggled to find government support, resulting in his purchase of land to develop the concept itself. Although the design never took off, it did contribute to the post-war new town movement, also designed to address concerns of overcrowding and congestion. This movement, headed by Frederick J. Osborn, incorporated much of Howard's conception of the garden city, emphasizing urban planning for self-supporting and self-sustaining developments. Just as open public space formed a critical component of the garden city design, the movement emphasized the social function of a local community through the incorporation of public parks, playgrounds, shopping centers, and spaces that would act as hubs of communal life.

However, whereas Howard's conception of the city balanced diverse categories of class, taste, skill, and labor, the new town movement sought to mirror British society as it currently stood in an attempt to render developments as predominantly working-class (Aldridge 106). The reality, though, was that new towns attracted specifically middle-class skilled workers, and representations of unskilled laborers, ethnic minorities, single-parent families, and retirees failed to reflect national averages, resulting in largely homogenized and class-specific spaces (Crow and Allan 136). While the development of such suburbs stressed the importance of parks and public facilities, spaces designated as working-class—council estates, for example—saw less emphasis on open spaces, and a notable reduction in maintenance in the years following. Whereas the success of new town developments varied based on site choice, proximity to other urban hubs and the mapping of skill sets to local industry, developments aimed at working-class markets demonstrated consistent problems with less focus on community interaction, largely due to reduced resources.

Social and shared communal spaces in working-class estates were generally deemphasized in relation to the social spaces developed in new towns, focusing instead on maximizing residential space. Although social housing has historically taken open, public space into consideration, it is quite distinct from the designs proposed by figures such as Howard or Osborn. Shopping centers are reduced to one or two stores (usually an off-license or a betting shop), spaces to house collective communal activities are rare, resources for children such as playgrounds are minimal and prone to neglect, and central parks are often replaced by open cement spaces deemed more practical in that they

require no municipal upkeep. The result is that public outdoor spaces and patches of green land were little more than open spaces that escaped development, designed to create an impression of openness by which to counter the prominence of uninspired architecture. Furthermore, as Alan Ravetz has written, "There was often an uneasy relationship between housing managers and departments responsible for such things as lighting, cleansing, and parks, which had a material impact on estates" (114). Sacrifices made concerning public recreational space were often commensurate with the density of housing, and residents were required to seek off-site spaces for recreational purposes. The result is that the kind of parks made available for working-class people in the communities they inhabited could be read as a direct reflection of their social position—a material signifier of their worth in relation to the rest of the country's post-war development.

With that said, parks and public spaces, as represented in the movement's key texts, were often mobilized in a way that undermined such narratives of social neglect, with parks represented as spaces of plenitude. Stan Barstow's 1960 novel *A Kind of Loving* represents the public park as a space split between generations, the older of which uses the space during the day in a traditional manner with the younger generation taking ownership in the late-afternoon or early evening, transforming it into a different social atmosphere altogether. While the environment featured in Barstow's novel suggests a more bucolic, pre-war community ("We live in Meadow Lane, in a big old stone-fronted house that my mother talked the Old Man into buying before the war when houses were dirt cheap" [15]), it also emphasizes aspects of municipal space throughout ("You get a

nice view from the bedroom windows with the town on one side and the park on the other with the infirmary sitting on top of the hill where it looks at night a bit eerie, all old and lit up, like Castle Dracula on a party night" [16]). Yet, much of the text centers on protagonist Vic Brown's fantasy of moving into the new estates developed on the edges of the town, largely due to their modern appeal but also the private outdoor space that they offer: "I look up at this little modern semi standing up above the road with the garden tumbling down to the fence. Two thousand five-hundred at today's prices, I reckon" (61). Throughout the novel, the public park appears as a space of illicit interaction, be it the intimate meetings with Ingrid Rothwell ("This is the worst time of year for open-air courting and Ingrid and I mostly go to the pictures on our night out. But now and again, we just have to go into the park, even if it's only a shelter" [233]), or a space of negotiation where plans for her subsequent pregnancy can be determined. In this regard, the park offers a necessary space for social interaction that requires privacy, granting a move away from the more communal aspects of the local environment.

Yet, as a novel that, like Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, situates new, peripheral estates as the symbol of social elevation, additional attention to class disarticulation and independence is perceptible through the appeal of a home with "a garden tumbling down to the fence" (61). Throughout the text, there is an overwhelming sense of confinement, most clearly expressed in Vic and Ingrid's sharing the home with her parents following the news of her pregnancy. This overcrowding produces a desire for freedom that, in Vic's mind, must exist on the outskirts of the community—a park that only he and Ingrid can inhabit. It would seem that the desire to own a home with a private

garden suggests a further atomization of the communal spirit. In this sense, the novel's insistence of the park as a site of intimacy and negotiation suggests the way that such spaces can be mobilized to conceive of new articulations of the self: in the case of Vic and Ingrid, as a family who "makes do" with their current predicament. In *A Kind of Loving*, as well as in other texts of the period, the park is transformed from its designated role of a space of community interaction to a space of personal, isolated reflection. In this regard, its intended use is renovated, mirroring shifts underway in the conception of class, community, and solidarity, acting as a space for reverie and reflection as well as a space for independence and privacy.

Throughout this period, cultural production appears to mobilize seemingly innocuous public spaces as spaces of reflection and transformation, shifting their intended purpose to one that produces disarticulations of class-consciousness and a push toward new modes of defining the self in relation to the mass. The transformation of residual war damage into spaces of cultural emancipation is a theme that emerges in a number of these texts, but it is important to note that they represent the cusp of change with more radical transformations taking place throughout the 1960s. Therefore, the period's texts flesh out a prehistory of sub- and countercultural movements, and the significance of environment in such transformations is especially noteworthy. In this light, the way space is conceived of by writers such as Lefebvre, Harvey, Soja, and Foucault, allows for a rethinking of the way writers of the time understood the significance of the local environment in relation to shifts in class consciousness. Most instructive is Harvey's matrix in which tensions between a space's intended use and the production of countercultural space reveal the

kinds of anxieties central to British post-war culture. For example, the need for underground clubs to remain fluid—more conceptual than fully realized—combines multiple transgressive ideals into a single environment: that an underground club can be considered relative (in that it holds meaning for those who attend but the meaning is not understood as part of the dominant culture) as well as relational (in that cultural events such as the waves of immigration that prompted the rise of underground jazz clubs suggests a temporal component). Furthermore, Foucault's notion of heterotopic space is perceptible in that the clubs exist within a culture that would ordinarily denounce such cultural insurgency against heterodoxy. As these writers posit, spaces such as underground clubs, the transformation of public facilities, and even a transformation of the meaning of imprisonment by challenging the role of the borstal, all point toward a counter approach to heterodox environments—a spatial form of resistance based largely on the inequity of social division and class. What follows is a close reading of three examples from prominent texts of the time to consider the way writers mobilized space not as inert and static, but as active and dynamic. In this respect, kitchen sink realist texts can be understood as not just outlining the kind of restrictions placed on classed individuals as a consequence of space, but as a way to rethink such restrictions through the advancement of a new form of classed citizenship.

Rewriting the Self through Space in Nell Dunn's *Up the Junction*

Although Nell Dunn's *Up the Junction* was published in 1963, it existed prior as a series of fragmented narratives, some of which were published in *The New Statesman*.

Dunn's book was inspired, in part, by the British documentary filmmaker, Dennis Mitchell who instructed Dunn to "keep very close to [her] material" and to "be absolutely true in [her] observation" ("The Writer"). Mitchell's own credo was to use vernacular to "give voice to the voiceless"—a credo clearly identifiable as a key component of Dunn's writing. While the text emphasizes cultural changes underway, resembling other texts of the time, *Up the Junction* offers a rare glimpse into women's labor and the female bonds produced through assembly line work. But whereas other texts of the period highlight alienation and stasis associated with male-dominated working-class communities, Dunn's text presents a world that is less confined and oppressive despite labor conditions. Yet, at the root of this novel is the notion of shared space and the local environment, refracted through the lens of an outside observer in that both Dunn and Lily (the novel's protagonist) enter into the working-class community from a socially elevated position.[69]

Much of *Up the Junction* is set in and around a small working-class region, yet the characters often leave their immediate community and travel to neighboring regions, hence the text's title. In doing so, Dunn demarcates territory and marks difference between home and away through the characters' exploration of neighboring communities. Stephen Brooke has emphasized this demarcation, arguing that Dunn's text "represents 1960s London as a city whose internal borders continue to be based on a strong sense of class difference" (431). Of course, such geographic boundaries are not merely the result of arbitrary class grouping; classed regions of any city are part of the design, in that

[69] The protagonist is named "Lily" in the novel, "Eileen" in *The Wednesday Play* version, and "Polly" in the film. We might be apt to think of all three as versions of "Nell" though.

where industry is present, a labor force will inevitably reside close by. In northern industrial communities, such demarcations are more difficult to discern in that industrial towns tend to be classed as a whole rather than as a district. However, in mass urban sprawls, boundaries are rendered more definite, with industrial areas like Battersea characterized by attributes of the community as much as the built environment itself. As an area known for is landmark power station as well as its copious railroads, Battersea was always destined to be a part of the capital marked by manual labor and laboring communities. However, as Brooke suggests, geographic and physical boundaries are redrawn in *Up the Junction* as ideological ones represented through the spatialization of class in that "Within that boundary, Dunn presents a recognizable, resilient and autonomous working class shaped by both the past and the present" (431). In this sense, the region that the novel centers on is emblematic of Lefebvre's triad in that the area was conceived of as a space of labor, exists as one in reality, but it is also a site in which working-class sensibilities galvanize to form internal divisions of their own as a gesture of spatial reclamation. Given this, it might be said that the text's engagement with space is one of the most salient examples of Lefebvre's *lived* experience—space made manifest through collective consciousness and shared beliefs.

However, the community Lily experiences within the text is hardly monolithic; in this particular case, the space connotes a sub-category of class, or a new conception of working-class culture characterized not just by gender but by cultural emancipation. Therefore, the space encountered in the text is classed, but it is also a contingent, heterotopic space in that it reads as a space in which women actively rethink what it

means to exist within working-class culture. Through their actions, the characters of *Up the Junction* transform a working-class environment into a working-class utopia that meets their specific needs at any given moment. In spite of this, a tension persists between the imagined utopia and its material reality in that, despite the characters' ability to remap space as a stage upon which to enact their own desires, the environment still fails to meet their more pressing needs. This is emphasized by the eponymous abortion sequence scene in which the lack of basic healthcare is at odds with the utopia envisioned. What this suggests is that cognitive displacement of space can only go so far; a transformation of the material reality must follow suit. This, of course, came to pass in that the text was instrumental in the passing of the Abortion Rights Act. In this regard, *Up the Junction* advances an articulation of classed space that allows for a certain imaginative emancipation of social roles while also drawing attention to municipal deficiency in a way that brings tangible change beyond the narrative frame.

Dunn's text was celebrated for its thematic content, building on the kitchen sink movement's drive to foreground topical concerns as part of its realist agenda. The text also faced significant backlash from morality groups upon its release with fundamentalist Christian critic Mary Whitehouse demonizing Ken Loach's 1965 adaptation, arguing that the abortion scene should serve as moral warning to young women that "clean living could cut out a great deal of this problem at the root" (168). The issue that Whitehouse and other conservative critics took with the text was that it depicted women as sexually promiscuous. But as was the case with critics of *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, outrage over content was really a front for more deep-seated discomfort with the

working-class elevation at the heart of the text. While the abortion scene of *Up the Junction* is what the novel is remembered for today, the text broke the mold in other areas such as the depiction of women as autonomous free agents whose labor granted them access to the world that the novel creates. In a 2016 interview, Dunn cited the influence of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) and Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch* (1970) ("Such a Laugh"), yet her text was already complete at the time of Friedan's emergence, suggesting that such liberation was already in circulation as part of a cultural zeitgeist. As outlined in Chapter 1, shifts in the post-war workforce resulted in higher employment rates for women in factories and a subsequent alteration of gender relations in culture. This shift in tradition is what *Up the Junction* captures so saliently, and part of the reason why critics such as Whitehouse took issue.

Aside from the abortion scene, the novel addresses women's rights in society by presenting a cast of characters who reject traditional domestic roles and take ownership of their lives. As Nicola Wilson has written, "the flip side of the home in Dunn's fiction entails entrapment for married women" (161), and therefore much of the novel's action and the freedom that characters express through the use of coarse language is carried out in non-domestic, or at least non-traditional domestic spaces. The use of colloquialism in the text not only upends the class dominance of established literary norms, but it also grants ascendancy to local color to defy traditionally stereotyped representations of regional accents by foregrounding them within the narrative. In this regard, dialect creates a classed boundary—the kind ordinarily associated with other regions of the country—but leaves such boundaries malleable by emphasizing colloquialism as an

exclusive exchange between like-minded individuals rather than merely a factor of the space itself.

The narrative of Dunn's text takes place in a variety of locations scattered through the general Battersea area, focusing heavily on the factory where the main characters work as well as the local hot spots where they congregate. The novel opens in a pub—one of several featured in the text—in which Sylvie, Rube, and Lily stand rather than sit "up against the saloon door, brown ales clutched in our hands" (1). Traditional gender roles are swiftly contested in that the three men who ogle and jeer at the women are seated around a table, suggesting either a reciprocal exchange of attention or a dominance on the part of the women. Both the scene and the dynamics shift immediately, with all three women mounting motorbikes, "each behind a boy," and taking off to swim in an abandoned coke mine (2). Whereas previous kitchen sink texts often positioned female characters as relatively static—most famously characterized by Alison Porter's inert stance behind *Look Back in Anger*'s ironing board—Dunn's text not only grants women new agency and freedom, expressed by movement through space, but also expressed by the way spatial limits (such as the traditional seating arrangement of the pub) are disputable. Furthermore, much of the domestic action—the space historically understood as the realm of female characters—is set aside, with domestic spaces rendered as transitory or little more than places to regroup after a night out "up the junction." Instead, the factory (a space that produces both sweets and female agency), the general vicinity (a space in which female agency can be staged), and the pubs and underground clubs (spaces in which class and gender rules can be undermined) challenge the dreary,

restrictive world of the traditional housewife, situating *Up the Junction* as a text that rethinks the genre of kitchen sink realism by emancipating female figures from the site of the sink itself.

Throughout the text, urban space is repeatedly presented as an alternative to women's domesticity, with aspects of the local environment beautified in the way that someone might decorate their home. For example, the path the women take to the factory reflects aesthetic pleasure: "The exhaust makes wavy patterns in the still air" and "Little tufts of yellow flowers push through the dusty smelling concrete" (38-39). It is important to recall that the environment depicted is essentially a slum—war-torn with many buildings dilapidated and bombed out, others abandoned and left to rot. In his reflection on their moving to Battersea, Dunn's then-husband, Sandford, noted that he "loved the vast derelict area down the road, that [he and Dunn] called 'The Debris'" ("Battersea Night 3"), and Dunn described the area, much like her protagonist, as "very pretty" with "street after street of Victorian houses with gardens in the front and back and lots of animals, pigeon lofts and cats and dogs" (Robertson). Similarly, the women of *Up the Junction* reinvent the spaces they inhabit—not through physical manipulation, but through cognitive displacement of what such spaces represent in their own minds. In doing so, the text highlights the value of community, even when the physical state of the community is in ruins. In essence, Dunn's text paints a working-class community full of life in spite of its visible social and economic poverty, underscoring broader concerns of gentrification while also demonstrating the way that space can be reclaimed by residents and viewed in ways more meaningful.

The fact that the space of labor does not appear in the text until the reader has been well-acquainted to both the domestic and social lives of the protagonists, suggests that work is devalued by these supposedly working-class characters in relation to other class identifiers—an active refusal of the factory space's ideological messaging program. Furthermore, the first mention of the factory at the heart of the narrative is cast in a manner distinct from other representations of labor in kitchen sink texts. For example, whereas Arthur Seaton's lathe in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* symbolizes captivity and potential entrepreneurialism (the narrative dilemma of that particular text), the workbench featured in Dunn's text is a source of life and camaraderie—a space where the novel's protagonists can express themselves freely without judgment. As noted in the previous chapter's discussion of female labor, the factory is cold enough to make the workers' fingers red and swollen, but the space is warmed by friendly jibbing in which "twenty-five women hunched over three long tables, packing cheap sweets for Christmas" laugh and offer to trade each other's husbands (19). While the building lacks the basic amenities associated with labor laws, and the conditions are less than satisfactory, the women support one another by sharing tips on how to sustain themselves within the workspace (23). Dunn's representation of the factory is hardly utopian, but it demonstrates a marked distinction from representations of male labor in kitchen sink texts, suggesting that such spaces can be reconfigured as social hubs if necessary. In this sense, the working-class characteristic of shared suffering is recast as a shared community—one that is less invested in broad class solidarity, looking more to the way intra-class fragmentations can emerge and thrive.

As the protagonists navigate the spaces of demolition and redevelopment, there is a distinct sense that gender roles are also undergoing similar renovations. From the opening scene in which the three protagonists stand over the men in the pub, Dunn's text promotes a form of collective agency that mirrors shifts underway in the social status of women in Britain at the time. In this context, the factory provides an outlet for women to form connections, expressed through the use of vernacular and explicit language that continues out into the local community. As Adrian Henri writes, "One suspects that [Dunn's] symbolic crossing of the River Thames was in search of something more real and somehow satisfying, even at worst, than Chelsea's fashionable bohemia" (xiv). Consequently, the nature of something "more real" is linked to a spatial boundary that designates certain class associations and behavioral patterns. As Henri continues, the area depicted in the text "lacked many of the basic amenities, but their very proximity had given rise to a dense web of family and neighborhood relationships" (xiv). As discussed in Chapter 2, the enclosed nature of spaces like the one depicted in *Up the Junction* confirm notions of class policing and prescribed social status based on ideology circulated through space, but Dunn's text also reveals the way such spaces can be transformed in a productive manner. For example, the temperature of the factory requires the workers to work in close proximity to sustain warmth—a metaphorical gesture for much of the same way the protagonists navigate their local environment. Similarly, the protagonists' capacity to manipulate dominant/submissive roles in society also stems from their closeness as a group. In this respect, the oppressive confines and limitations of space are restructured in a way that produces mutual support. But, whereas such spaces in

the past might be attributed to the sustenance of a mass working-class body, Dunn's text highlights the disarticulation of class-consciousness and its fragmentation into subdivided units within the larger context of class categorization.

Up the Junction splits the difference between representation and didacticism in that it advances the kitchen sink aesthetic by emancipating working-class women from the domestic space, moving the narrative out into the community, and showing how limitations can be transgressed. The use of vernacular—perhaps the text's most salient indicator of class—reveals the regional and dialectical bordering of classed spaces in Britain in that, given the relative proximity of Chelsea to Battersea, the distinction in dialect creates a class boundary around the space that the protagonists must penetrate. For example, Lily is Othered in such a space, outed by Rube early in the narrative as "an heiress from Chelsea," leading a local man to ask "What's it like havin' a ton of money?" (2). By concentrating keenly on slang and vernacular, Dunn contours working-class spatial boundaries rendered unclear by the urban sprawl of the capital. The result is that space is classed from within by the community itself, both as a protective measure as well as a celebration of working-class culture, and this is what Lily (as an avatar for Dunn herself) was so drawn to. Just as Jo in *A Taste of Honey* reinvents the spaces she inhabits to suit a new class consciousness, Dunn's characters confront a community long abandoned to rot, resuscitating it in a way that makes it appealing to outsiders. In this sense, the working-class imaginary—the ability to rewrite the classed-self—conveys a subcultural charge in that the Battersea environment exists within the capital but outside of the norms and supposed burdens associated with working-class life. That is not to say

that the characters in this community are devoid of concerns; the novel's most memorable "set-pieces" (to use Adrian Henri's description of them) are symptomatic of cultural abandonment as well as the devalued role of women in British culture at the time. Yet, Dunn's text pushes through such limitations, acting as if they were not actually limitations at all. Perhaps this is why when the abortion scene does appear, it reads more as a shock considering how the characters have, up until that point, been nothing short of resourceful and fully independent. The real social problems faced by British working-class people, then, are not ignored in the narrative, but the text embodies the working-class imaginary in that it imagines a working-class quasi-utopian community flourishing within a space where such a community would otherwise not exist.

The Subversive Underground of Colin MacInnes' *City of Spades*

Like Dunn's *Up the Junction*, Colin MacInnes' *City of Spades* focuses on the general metropolis yet highlights the increase of social demimondes acting as alternative communities. As part of MacInnes' *London Trilogy* that also includes *Absolute Beginners* and *Mr Love and Justice*, *City of Spades* narrates the events that led up to the 1958 Notting Hill Race Riots, presenting an on-the-ground depiction of the colonial immigrant experience in 1950s London. Taken as a whole, the trilogy indexes urban shifts in the form of social cleansing, but also the renegotiation of British identity following imperial deterioration. However, each individual text offers a window into mid-century Britain through its adoption of cultural voices, granting fresh perspectives on current events ordinarily unavailable to the average reader. MacInnes' preoccupation with such voices is

intriguing, but throughout his career, his dedication to marginalized people, youth subculture, and the working-class rarely wavers.[70] Yet, as Nick Bentley has pointed out, MacInnes' work is often overlooked in relation to the period (150), and he is rarely linked to the work of the "Angry Young Men"—the reason being, perhaps, that his elevated class, professional training as a writer, and open bisexuality, distanced him from writers like Sillitoe or Osborne who, in many ways, adopted a stance of hyper-masculinity as well as rampant individualism. Despite his differences, MacInnes often embraced inclusion, with much of his work celebrating pluralism and integration.

City of Spades tells its story through a dual narrative format that MacInnes would further explore in *Mr Love and Justice*, modulating the narrative voice between two central characters: Montgomery Pew, a social worker with the recently-acquired title of Assistant Welfare Officer; and Johnny Fortune, an eighteen-year-old Nigerian meteorology student from Lagos. The narrative places Pew in the role of the caseworker for Fortune, allowing for an investigation of racial tension in mid-century Britain. But, more revealingly, it also underscores the intersection of race and class in terms of space and environs. Despite his elevated status as a student, Fortune is relegated to the veritable basement of society, living first in a hostel on "Immigration Road" before moving in with

[70] MacInnes' seeming dedication to progressive positions regarding race and sexuality have been read by certain critics as a fetishization of the young men that he was romantically interested in. Furthermore, Lawrence Phillips has suggested that a vocal embrace of the cultural other should be viewed with a degree of skepticism in that "The problematic result of this positive, liberal enthusiasm when coupled with desire, is the (re)creation, at best, of an updated version of the noble savage, and at worst stereotyping" (109). Phillips continues to note that "This was a dilemma prevalent among white intellectuals of the period in response to the changing city" (109). Characters in MacInnes' work such as Montgomery Pew, the narrator of *Absolute Beginners*, and Edward Justice from *Mr Love and Justice* are reflective of such complicated worldviews. MacInnes himself was considerably more progressive.

a drug dealer and dealing drugs himself. The notion of downward movement is palpable throughout *City of Spades*—specifically in the way that subcultural spaces are forced to exist in subterranean enclaves beneath the city. Because *Absolute Beginners* traces movement through and out of the city, and *Mr Love and Justice* registers movement upward into peripheral high-rises, mobility plays a key role in MacInnes' investigation of social shifts underway within the urban metropolis. By using characters that appear, at first, to be opposites, MacInnes' pluralistic desire is laid bare in that his novels demonstrate the process of integration, with oppositional characters often finding themselves in the same social position by the text's end. It might be assumed that the work MacInnes intended his novels to accomplish, then, was to transform the average reader from that of a broadminded ally of immigration to that of an activist by revealing shared issues based on environment and social status. The unnamed narrator of *Absolute Beginners* offers a hopeful, progressive perspective on cultural diversity whereas *Mr Love and Justice* demonstrates how white, middle-class government workers and poor, black pimps become culturally homogenized in housing designed to sequester. *City of Spades*, however, depicts how the city itself is broken up into regions dedicated to specific communities. Just as the industrial areas depicted in *Up the Junction* are rendered as such due to their proximity to factories and railroad, the spaces inhabited by the characters of *City of Spades* are characterized by their proximity to immigrant enclaves. Immigration Road, structured upon the hostels established in the 1950s to deal with the wave of post-war immigration, resembles the makeshift living arrangements found in the East End's Brick Lane region. Therefore, the city's subdivision and territorialization

captured throughout *The London Trilogy* illustrates Lefebvre and Harvey's conception of the way spaces are produced, not just as planned districts, but as regions that develop and exist through social interactions and temporal events.

While the novel was overshadowed by *Absolute Beginners,* which cemented MacInnes' position as an important cultural commentator, *City of Spades* offers a pertinent analysis of the way subculture emerged in the post-war years out of a necessity born of spatial limitations. For a character like Johnny Fortune, the spaces he inhabits so oppress him that he finds himself desperate to move into more comfortable spaces, even if that means placing himself into precarious, criminal situations and potentially undermining his ability to succeed as a student. In this regard, MacInnes outlines the way marginalized spaces produce criminality as the result of environments that act upon an individual in damaging ways. Yet, as noted by Nick Bentley, texts like *City of Spades* do not simply emphasize the nature of oppressive space and its impact on individuals; they reflect a transformation underway in what constitutes Britishness: "The text enters a cultural debate concerned with defining a national identity that has been loosened from its traditional certainties, one that is no longer the property of the dominant cultural institutions, but is in the process of being reconstructed from below" ("Translating" 160). Such a "reconstruction from below" reflects the emergence of a working-class or marginalized imaginary in which new conceptions of cultural identity are produced out of necessity based on delineations of space and its effects on the individual. Consequently, a novel like *City of Spades* reads not only as an analysis of the effects of urban reconstruction and gentrification in light of immigration, but also as a manifesto of

resistance in a manner that echoes Lefebvre, Harvey, and Soja's notion of spatial re-articulation as a response to ideological messaging.

Whereas Dunn's work grappled with issues of gender, MacInnes was one of very few writers at the time to understand the context of race and colonial repatriation. *City of Spades* focuses on then-contemporary issues of pluralism, adopting a clear political stance through its illumination of multiculturalism in post-war Britain. Yet, MacInnes also addresses concerns more commonly recognized throughout the kitchen sink movement—issues such as the housing crisis as well as frustration associated with social reform—showing how, in the era of austerity, dominant cultural anxieties were often offloaded onto racial minorities. *City of Spades* refracts the cultural anxieties inherent in texts like Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* through an intersectional prism, in that the text focuses on dialect as well as a journalistic approach to the recounting of significant events in British culture. According to Nick Bentley, MacInnes adopts this strategy—what Bentley refers to as "experimental realism"—in response "to what he considered to be a misrepresentation of youth and black subcultures in both the mainstream media and in New Left analyses . . . partly driven by an imperative of recording unrepresented voices and positions faithfully" ("Radical" 232).

In addition to the topical themes, a key feature of MacInnes' writing is the use of contrast to lend his subjects definition. Given that the narratives of the *London Trilogy* are grounded in specific environments in which working-class and minority experiences dominate, MacInnes tends to introduce middle-class characters to measure class divides. Whereas the rise of the welfare state carried an implicit promise of social elevation

through various programs stemming from the Beveridge Report, and shifts in commodity culture often created the illusion that class boundaries could be transgressed through consumerism, MacInnes' texts underscore the chasm between social classes, the social effects that keep such boundaries in place, and the increased likelihood that middle-class characters will be demoted to working-class states as opposed to working-class characters seeing sustained elevation to the middle class. Given this, a dominant theme throughout MacInnes' writing is that class boundaries are more difficult to penetrate than social developments might suggest. However, the upside is that MacInnes' characters tend to recognize such limits and form new kinds of communities as the result. The optimistic tone perceptible through much of MacInnes' work—especially identifiable in *Absolute Beginners*—signifies a resignation of social worth along the lines of Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, but combined with the excitement and vitality associated with new outlooks and imaginings of class identity. In this regard, despite the adversity experienced by characters such as Johnny Fortune, *City of Spades* illuminates the potential for class insurrection through the rethinking of social position and the repurposing of spaces designated as derelict or socially bankrupt.

As in *Up the Junction,* the characters in *City of Spades* rethink the urban territory as a field of potentiality, transforming spaces to meet their needs. While MacInnes' emphasis is on the seedy underbelly of the East End of London, the text challenges the notion of "seedy" by presenting such sites as culturally rich despite their physical dereliction. The novel begins with the dueling narrators placed into new environments—Pew into his new office and position, and Fortune to the Piccadilly Circus tube station

where he symbolically attempts to run up a downward-moving escalator, earning him the ire of the ticketing official and setting the tone for the upward struggle he will face throughout the rest of the text as a figure who exists beneath culture. Set in contrast almost immediately, the spaces that Pew and Fortune inhabit are distinct yet become increasingly intertwined throughout the story. Fortune's first place of residence, a "Brixton house [that] stood all by itself among ruins of what I [Fortune] suppose was wartime damages, much like one tooth left sticking out in an old man's jaw" (26) stands in contrast to that of Pew. Pew's flat "two odd rooms and a 'kitchenette', most miscellaneously furnished" is literally and metaphorically elevated "on the top floor of a high, narrow house near Regent's Park with a view on the Zoological Gardens" (33).[71] Yet, despite this elevation, Pew's status is precarious in that "A year ago, the property changed hands, and notices to quit were served on all tenants" (33), rendering the building largely vacant in hopes of redevelopment. After seeking legal action, Pew was able to secure his lease, leaving him as the sole tenant in the way of the landlord's redevelopment plans—a fact that aligns him to Fortune's position of residing in a place that resents his existence. Thus, MacInnes establishes domestic space as hostile and precarious early in the text, causing both narrators to seek out more substantial and supportive ways of being within the city.

Given this, *City of Spades* takes a position similar to that of *Up the Junction* in that the failure of the domestic space to secure and comfort its inhabitants leads to a quest

[71] *Absolute Beginners* opens with a similar scene in which the protagonist surveys the city from the top floor of a new high-rise. The bulk of the text thereafter is set within the streets, but these elevations play a telling role in MacInnes' work.

to find alternative environments. Spaces like The Moorhen—a pub that belies "the legend of the gaiety, the heart-warming homeliness" by undermining the idealized myth of the British institution through its "grim spectacle of 'regulars' . . . sitting morosely eyeing one another, in private silence" (42)—stand in contrast to the makeshift dance halls like The Cosmopolitan that Fortune describes as "the nearest proximity I've seen yet in London to the gaiety and happiness back home" (49). The narrative continues this approach throughout, comparing traditional British institutions and spaces to the creative subcultural spaces that emerge as a counter to hegemonic norms. The remainder of the novel demonstrates a continual movement throughout the city in order to depict the way that, despite challenges, sub- and countercultural movements continue to thrive. However, the story concludes with a unification of the two men's worlds in a courtroom described as "damaged in the Hitler war, which had been redecorated in a 'contemporary' style—light salmon wood, cubistic lanterns, leather cushions in pastel shades—that pleased none of the lawyers, officials or police officers who worked there" (207). As a reflection of the way post-war redevelopment was often unpopular and at odds with the desires of British citizens, MacInnes considers the impact of such spaces on the psyche, noting that those who did work in the courtroom "injected into their behavior an additional awesome formality to counteract the lack of majesty of their surroundings" (207). As the novel closes with Fortune losing his battle against the metaphorical downward-moving escalator in terms of his legal status, MacInnes text deploys various spatial images to show the influence of the environment on the emergence of subculture and cultural difference. *City of Spades*, then, can be read as a text that outlines the

biopolitical and ideological impositions of the built environment in maintaining the status quo.

Devin McKinney has raised concern that MacInnes' novels—specifically the *London Trilogy*—border on mythical naiveté in their optimism. However, McKinney concedes that MacInnes' writing tends to systematically undermine its optimism with moments of bleakness that are then replaced once more by optimistic events (38). The result, according to McKinney is a loop in which hope and resignation are held in perennial tension. However, it is perhaps more helpful to think of MacInnes' texts as performing two distinct roles: the representation of a working-class world and the representation of a particular mindset or response to such a world. The latter veers toward pessimism as the kind of spaces and events depicted within a text like *City of Spades* are gritty and bleak, but the former is idealized and therefore informs the experience of the latter. In this sense, MacInnes' texts do represent mid-century London with fidelity, but accusations of their mythical or utopian leanings can be attributed to the optimistic and buoyant tone that the texts deploy as part of their objective. Consequently, *City of Spades* does not offer a tangible method by which to transform physical space, but suggests a different way of imagining of working-class space instead, reshaping relations that can occur within it. In this regard, the production of space as outlined by Lefebvre is democratized, granting the protagonists a source of power that they can tap into.

The most obvious conceptual repurposing of space in the text is the underground club scene that MacInnes establishes in *City of Spades* and develops further in *Absolute Beginners*. Such spaces also exist in Dunn's *Up the Junction*, revealing the way that,

within working-class and poor communities, cultural uprisings occur that allow for new ways to imagine one's social station. At the core of MacInnes' text, though, is the supposition of cultural difference. Johnny Fortune, for example, finds that his naively upbeat persona is no match for a culture antagonized by his mere existence, and the underground clubs that MacInnes gradually introduces walk a fine line between sub- and counterculture in that they exist within the subterranean folds of the city, both as a part of, and apart from, the city as a whole. Whereas Lefebvre and Harvey's conception of the way space is produced suggests a somewhat fixed nature in that once a space has been established, it is relatively static until changed by an event, the clubs in *City of Spades* are considerably more dynamic, opening and closing with expediency in order to exist outside of the law, positioning immigration and assimilation as a continual and continually contentious event unto itself. In this regard, Foucault's heterotopic space—a space that challenges homogenous, fixed space through momentary recognition of contingency—mirrors the nature of the underground spaces depicted by MacInnes in that such spaces necessitate a new mode of urban citizenry. Whereas Foucault's mirror revealed a replica of space subject to its own laws and regulations, the club exists as a space within a dominant environment, but one that stresses the inequitable nature of the dominant space through its mere existence. Furthermore, given the precarious nature of such spaces and the legal implications of existing for the minority, Agamben's embrace of the Homo Sacer position also rings true. For Agamben, the readiness of the citizen to exist outside of the protection of the state places them into immediate danger; but it is the willed separation from the state that permits personal autonomy. In the case of the

nightclubs, as illegitimate spaces that mandate voluntary departure from prevailing society (Pew has to ask the right people in order to find the space), there is an implicit acknowledgement of one's self-exile from dominant ideological narratives. This is represented by MacInnes as a subterranean descent beneath the city in addition to an acceptance of the kind of threats that loom in the form of the police raids and violence that permeates the narrative.

While Dunn's *Up the Junction* offers a vision of a working-class community in which the unequal balance of gender is under renovation, *City of Spades* demonstrates the way that black and minority-ethnic immigrants also transgress spatialized limitations that prescribe social status by adopting alternative conceptions of normative space. The subversive nature of the underground club—especially concerning strategic instability—underscores the shifting nature of Britain as a whole, emphasizing the disconnect between a dynamic populace and structures and institutions that remain static. MacInnes' opening image of Fortune's attempt to run up the downward escalator illustrates the nature of opposition faced by the waves of immigrants arriving in England following the decline of colonial power. Furthermore, his texts—like that of Dunn's—prove to be representationally authentic as well as instructive in regards to imagining new modes of existence within working-class confines. In relation to the production of space, it can be seen that spaces like underground clubs and makeshift denizens of community negate the two most objective components of Lefebvre's spatial production (the tangible and the conceptualized) in lieu of the subjective identification of space based on social relations. In this context, MacInnes emboldens the notion of the working-class imaginary as a

technical choice by which to dramatize differential space and therefore bypass some of its classed associations. While, as McKinney reminds us, the narrative ends on a somewhat bleak note as represented in the title of the final chapter, "Johnny Fortune leaves his city," what the novel highlights is the way that city is shifting to become a "city of spades" largely due to the way newly arrived immigrants place demands on the space by challenging its present structure and reshaping it to meet their needs. As MacInnes will elaborate in *Absolute Beginners*, such a change results in the boiling point of the Notting Hill Riots of 1958, but it also reflects the tangible way that the physical makeup of the space can be transformed through reconfigured social relations. Like Dunn, MacInnes' optimism is less about the state of the working-class community itself, and much more centered on the capacity of working-class people to counter spatial limitations imposed on them in order to rethink what it means to be a British citizen in the post-war era.

Spatial Reverse in Alan Sillitoe's *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*

Similar to *Up the Junction* and *City of Spades*, Alan Sillitoe's novella *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* illustrates the way classed environments can be repurposed from their intended role as a mode of resistance against ideological narratives of limitation and oppression. Written in 1959 as part of a collection of vignettes, the novella offers a parochial take on similar concerns outlined in MacInnes' text—the way desperate acts emerge as a response to the spatial restrictions imposed upon working-class people. Whereas MacInnes reveals how subcultural space is produced in response to dominant cultural spaces ill-equipped to handle the needs of a shifting populace, Sillitoe's

text highlights the way cultural assumptions about such spaces can be strategically undermined to produce specific effects that benefit marginalized people otherwise relegated as powerless. Although critics tend to gravitate toward Tony Richardson's 1962 film version (for which Sillitoe himself produced the screenplay), the novella has generally been read through the lens of class and class limitations. Anthony Daniels, for example, has approached the text as a way to understand the actions of the protagonist, in that "Crime for him is class war, the inevitable consequence of social injustice and the irreconcilable conflict of economic class interest" (25). Alexis Tadié considers the text in terms of the title, exploring the metaphorical significance of running and its relationship to cultural identity. For Tadié, the image of the runner is paradoxical within the confines of the borstal, yet it is clear that Sillitoe's investment in such an image speaks to the novella's championing of transformed space. And, for the purposes of this study, that is the argument that I would like to expand upon.

The novella tells the story of Colin Smith—a working-class young man who shares a cramped back-to-back home with his family. His destiny as a laborer in the local factory is laid out for him in the example of his father who lays dying from a fatal illness developed, presumably, as the result of his labor. As with Arthur Seaton, Colin find himself at turning point; to succumb to the fated existence of his father or to branch out and take a different path.[72] However, given the limitations of his working-class environment, Colin turns to petty crime, stealing money from a local bakery, only to be

[72] The parallels between *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* and *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* were not lost on Sillitoe who, in his notes for the text, wrote "avoid names, phrases, or situations already apparent in SNASM" ("Novella").

caught and punished by the local authorities. Despite Colin's attempts to assert power over the police by denying his involvement, his plan is foiled when a rainstorm washes the stash of hidden money out of a drainpipe in clear view of the questioning officer. While the novella makes it clear that Colin's intention was not to get caught, the initial assertion of power over authority forms a central theme that is at the root of Colin's spatial transformation. In this regard, the production of space can be seen to amplify the subjective responses of those forced to inhabit such spaces, allowing for a degree of relative agency in spaces ordinarily maligned as oppressive. While in the borstal, Colin discovers ways to assert power over the authority structures that exist there, offering his body as a form of labor to win a national cross country competition that would award the borstal with recognition.[73] As the novella ends, we learn that while Colin has the capacity to win the race for the borstal, he throws the win intentionally to affirm his own agency in relation to the Governor. His ability to humiliate the Governor and undermine the institution's social power is at the root of his intentional loss, offering him momentary supremacy over an environment that would otherwise seek to strip him of agency.[74]

The wider success of the film can perhaps be grasped through the way that the original narrative was conceived of and constructed. Whereas the film is driven by a series of flashbacks presented as montage effects, the text's structure mirrors such flashbacks, allowing for back and forth comparisons to be made between the working-

[73] A tonal distinction can be drawn here between Arthur Machin in David Storey's *This Sporting Life* and Sillitoe's Colin Smith. Whereas Storey's text underscores the submissive and subjugated role of Machin as an exploited subject, Sillitoe's representation is clearly more subversive with Colin acting as a figure imbued with revolutionary potential.

[74] This, of course, reflects Agamben's subversive Homo Sacer who chooses exclusion as a way to undermine the sovereign.

class region that Colin inhabits and the borstal that posits a counter-reality to working-class life. Sillitoe's own notes for the text include a number of critical factors that reveal the intent of the novella, including commentary on the possible collusion between media forms and state governance ("Unpublished Chapter"). While the text's inherent message is relatively clear, Sillitoe conceived of a follow-up narrative, much of which elaborates on Colin's post-borstal story. In the drafts for the follow-up set eight years later, Colin meets with members of a nationalist party and spends copious time researching class warfare in a local library.[75] While the original narrative is political in nature, its success relies upon its allegiance to traditional plot tropes that prevents the text from devolving into propaganda. However, at the root of the story is a clear anti-establishment sentiment.

Sillitoe has noted that Arthur's mercurial position in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* is largely due to a spiritual deficiency—a curious claim given that Sillitoe's work and life were relatively secular. Gillian Mary Hanson posits that in the case of Colin, the spiritual deficiency can be understood as an inability to deal with external realities, turning instead to superficial solutions such as material acquisition. According to Hanson, characters like Colin and Arthur are trapped *until* they can realize that change must come from within (31). However, such a description is better suited for a character like Jimmy Porter who, for the bulk of Osborne's play, fails to articulate the nature of his imprisoned state. Arthur is aware of his predicament but opts to resign himself to stasis,

[75] The manuscript of the follow-up text is messy and arduous. It adopts a heightened political tone that reads more as propaganda, including references to the British National Party and ham-fisted critiques of television's impact on the nation ("Unpublished Chapter"). While the follow-up was never completed, aspects of it can be determined in the film version of the original script with the Smith family's television broadcasting propaganda.

conforming to social norms and implying that he will settle down and learn to behave. But Colin is perhaps one of the better examples of a character who faces his predicament, taking action to change it. Given this, the usual themes associated with kitchen sink texts—poverty, limitation, disenfranchisement—are complicated by a further development of the same existential crisis faced by Arthur. Consequently, *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* adopts and develops the theme of rebellion, exploring how the protagonist not only conceives of himself as transforming classed space, but actively undermines and upends social expectations in the process. Such an act of defiance is not antisocial, though; instead, it reflects social inequality by turning power dynamics on their head to illuminate their presence more clearly. Whereas the justice served Colin for his crime fails to account for the larger social injustice he has experienced throughout his life as the result of class inequality, the narrative is inherently political in that it questions social behavior in light of inequality.

Sillitoe restricts the novella's setting in order to achieve stark contrasts that underscore the class division at the center of the narrative. While other spaces do exist within the text, the bulk of the story takes place in either the working-class community that Colin and his family inhabit or the borstal where he completes his sentence. The malaise of Colin's home is the result not just of neglect and war damage, but the general malaise of the cultural moment—a malaise that he articulates through the overall atmosphere: "autumn and the night foggy enough to set me and my mate Mike roaming the streets when we should have been rooted in front of the telly or stuck into a plush posh seat at the pictures" (28). Whereas it might be assumed that television and visits to

the cinema would pacify disenfranchisement, it has clearly failed in the case of Colin who "was restless after six weeks away from any sort of work" based on the bereavement of his father who had recently died of throat cancer, presumably from the same kind of labor Colin was destined to perform.[76] The text describes an area of Nottingham indistinguishable from many northern industrial communities with requisite terraces punctuated by pubs and chip shops; the antisocial urge that enters into Colin's mind as he wanders the streets arises more as a response to boredom and frustration than out of necessity.

The borstal appears in the text as a lavish environment—one that stems from Sillitoe's momentary fascination with British street crime. While living in Majorca, Sillitoe would order books through the British Council library, becoming interested in the nature of social justice and the recidivism of prison inmates ("Armor" 226). Therefore, the borstal in *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* was born not from personal experience (as was the case in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*) but from an imaginative state that can be parsed as idealized. With that said, the idealization of the borstal in the text serves to clarify the state of working-class environments in Nottingham through narrative contrast. Whereas Colin's attitude to the outside world was one of apathy that led him to seemingly meaningless criminal activity, the Borstal is comforting as well as instructive.[77] At several points, the borstal is described as "not so bad" (10),

[76] The dying patriarch appears in the flashbacks, but in the present narrative, he has just died prior to Colin's entering the borstal. While a character like Arthur might feel inclined to become the head of the household were his father to die—a role he plays when visiting Brenda—Colin find little appeal in such commitments.

[77] Sillitoe's desire to distinguish between *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* and *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* is apparent in moments like this. However, the texts were compiled from

"supposed to be good" (9), and even a space that offers "a good life" (11). Colin Also points out that he "didn't suffer in Borstal at all" and that he "was nearly eighteen months in Borstal before [he] thought about getting out" (14). For him, the space grants clarity to the nature of power and class within culture: "But in another way Borstal does something to me . . . What it does is show me what they've been trying to frighten me with" (14-15). In a number of ways, Sillitoe's description of the borstal sounds more like a country manor or a retreat with time set aside for labor, education, and (most often for Colin) exercise in the surrounding countryside. The freedom depicted in the space sharply contrasts the lack of freedom present in the working world outside. As idealistic as Sillitoe's depiction is, its function is to draw attention to and enunciate the state of working-class environments by suggesting imprisonment as a better option.

But whereas *Up the Junction* and *City of Spades* explore the way urban environs as a whole can be transformed, Sillitoe's text takes a simpler perspective by limiting the represented spaces and showing with greater clarity how power dynamics within such spaces can be inverted. Following Lefebvre, we might conceive of Colin's home environment as a space of assumed freedom and autonomy, despite the dire straits that he and his family live within. This, of course, stands in opposition to assumptions of the borstal which, given the nature of such institutions, signifies tangible restraint and control in the form of a disciplinary system. Sillitoe's text reverses such assumptions by

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autonomous vignettes, suggesting that the both narratives technically started as one. In *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* crime is presented as an act of desperation as demonstrated by the "Canning Circus" scene in which a young man steals a floral arrangement for his mother's grave because he cannot afford one otherwise. Criminal acts in *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* are presented more as symptomatic of frustration and boredom. Separating the two texts clearly took effort as Sillitoe's notebooks are scattered with reminders to keep characters from one text drifting into the other.

presenting the outside world as a space of considerable restraint and limitation while showing how the space of institutional imprisonment can be transformed through cognitive facility. The text's radical inversion of social power structures suggests that similar reversals of power can be actioned across a variety of spaces by manipulating the subjective component associated with spatial production. According to Lefebvre, a space like the borstal exists as a combination of three components: its physical and conceptual structure (both of which can be categorized as objective), as well as its social structure based on assumed power dynamics. In other words, the borstal is imprisoning primarily as the result of its status as an ideologically-coded site of social remediation. Sillitoe's text challenges the subjective construction of such spatial codes through a protagonist who flips the power dynamics on their head, undermining the wishes of the governor and controlling his fate through his own skill.

The power dynamics that Sillitoe engages within the text are established specific to space but are represented as sources of power than can be weaponized:

> It's like me rushing up to thump a man and snatch the coat off his back when, suddenly, I pull up because he whips out a knife and lifts it to stick me like a pig if I come too close. The Knife is Borstal, clink, the rope. But once you've seen the knife you learn a bit of unarmed combat . . . You see, by sending me to Borstal they've shown me the knife, and from now on I know something I didn't know before. (15)

Colin's recognition of power mirrors Foucault's suggested response to biopolitical forces: to unearth and understand their function in order to reclaim control. In this regard, Colin's time there reveals that the borstal is more than just the physical structure; it thrives on the social dynamic constructed by those who inhabit the space combined with its ideological function as an apparatus. Therefore, the borstal's ability to discipline is the result of the

space's social messaging; its efficacy relies upon citizens' comprehension of the space as an institution of punishment. After all, the borstal has no perceptible walls; its capacity to discipline relies upon the social and relational construction of the space. Sillitoe's ability to convey this particular narrative stems from the contrast established between the two main spaces: the binary of inside and out. The physical makeup of the outside—the space of supposed freedom—is depicted as imprisoning through a home connected to the site of labor, streets that offer no refuge, and the incipient promise of the death experienced by his father. The inside, however, is a space largely without walls—one in which inhabitants can run free with access to education and work unavailable outside. Furthermore, there is a shared camaraderie between the inmates that is most perceptible when it becomes apparent that Colin intends to throw the race. For Colin, the ability to redirect spatialized institutional power is disclosed to him by the judge who sentenced him to the borstal in the first place: "We want to trust you while you are in this establishment . . . If you play ball with us, we'll play ball with you . . . We want hard honest work and we want good athletics . . . And if you give us both these things you can be sure we'll do right by you and send you back into the world an honest man" (9). For Colin to agree to the judge's request would be tantamount to following the state's demands and structures, thus maintaining the social narrative of power that sustains the space of the borstal as a manifestation of the state. However, Colin's willingness to manipulate and disobey what is clearly a false promise on the part of the judge places him into a Homo Sacer-type scenario in which he operates outside of the supposed power

structure, rejects the sovereign's protection, and is therefore able to manipulate the space for his own benefit.

While the depicted environments of Sillitoe's text are vital to the narrative, they primarily establish the paradox that the narrative engages—the imposing limitations of the outside space with the expansive, open space of the borstal. Such components certainly align with the objective components of Lefebvre's produced space, but it is the novella's manipulation of socially-created relational space that is at play. Whereas both Lefebvre and Harvey suggest that identifying the social component of produced space is challenging, Sillitoe's text offers a clear perspective on the way such concepts can be recognized. And, of course, once such productions are identified and understood, they can then be reimagined in new ways that are ultimately subjective. In the words of Colin, "They can spy on us all day to see if we're pulling our puddings and if we're working good or doing our 'athletics' but they can't make an X-ray of our guts to find out what we're telling ourselves" (10). *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* renders clear the relational component of special production, in addition to articulating the way it can act as a hinge to transform conceptions of such space, granting the individual agency as well as a new way to imagine their class position. While Colin is still imprisoned for his crimes and still functions under the auspices of the state, it is his frame of mind that proves to be the most powerful tool he has in that he is able to undermine the foundation of the borstal by inverting the hierarchy of control.

Conclusion

What Dunn and Sandford's move to Battersea signals, made clear across many of the texts from this period, is that a new way of articulating class as a counter to oppressive social designation was apparent at the time. Furthermore, writers such as Dunn, MacInnes, and Sillitoe were unusually adept at spotting shifts underway in the built environment but without the critical terminology to define them. In recent years, critics have begun to explore the biopolitical implications of the state's role in prescribing class, but there is much work to be done. Jeremy Crampton, for example, has considered the behavior-shaping potential of GIS, raising concerns as to how surveillance technology enacts oppression by creating a fear-driven political climate (400). Furthermore, Ken Aardse has explored the way that literature—particularly electronic literature for his particular project—offers an aesthetic resistance through linguistic breaks that subvert systems of biopolitical control (46). In addition, Melissa García-Lamarca and Maria Kaika have developed a conceptual framework by which to better understand the way mortgages and home ownership function to submerge the individual into precarious market flows—a framework that, the authors suggest, would produce the contextualization required to challenge the kind of biopolitical forces enmeshed within society (313). While García-Lamarca and Kaika's research is structured upon twenty-first century real estate booms, I would contend that similar processes are discernible in post-war British rehousing—most apparent in the era of affluence in which home ownership was presented as a tangible social step-up, explicitly in the 1980s following the rise of the Right to Buy scheme that trapped working-class people in unsustainable situations. But in

the absence of sociopolitical inquiry of the time, cultural production offers illuminating insights into the way spaces were managed and the effects of such spaces were negotiated by inhabitants. By reimagining spaces in ways that allowed for the production of new subjectivity, kitchen sink writers offered alternatives to social designation prescribed by spatial confines. This quasi-utopian state of reimagining one's working-class station is, I contend, recognizable throughout the literature of the period to a degree that locates working-class writers as critical figures in helping us to understand the shifting nature of class within culture at large. Therefore, it is possible to conceive of this particular moment in cultural production as an apogee of the form—one in which aesthetic verisimilitude and social purpose are productively aligned. As the result, the following chapter will revisit the aesthetic components of what might constitute "working-class writing," taking time to propose criteria for the way gritty settings are used and defined within such texts. Doing so allows for a way to potentially evaluate subsequent working-class writing by contrasting it against the aesthetic imperatives developed in the 1950s and 1960s in order to gauge contemporary texts' efficacy as social documents in light of the way class identities become increasingly commodified as subcultural forms.

Chapter 4: Against Fetishization—Kitchen Sink Spatial Aesthetics as a Guide

In a 2002 essay, Karen Bettez Halnon introduced the term "poor chic" to describe the consumption of working-class symbols as a means by which to establish oneself as "upmarket." This trend, Halnon argues, permeates contemporary culture in ways that seem relatively innocent (shabby-chic decor is one of the examples she provides). Lately, more egregious examples of class fetishism have emerged, from the seemingly innocuous rise of "lad culture" in the 1990s to the wave of "poverty porn" television shows developed throughout the 2000s. Whereas such trends borrow from working-class culture in ways that blur the line between tribute and appropriation, recent examples have rendered such exploitation unmistakable. Documentaries like *Benefits Street* in which images of poor people are repeatedly juxtaposed against images of garbage, make editorial intentions unambiguous, staging poverty as a spectacle. Furthermore, southeast London's "Job Centre" pub and restaurant, appropriates the former social welfare agency's iconic logo—a ubiquitous fixture of poor, working-class communities—as an ironic way to peddle craft beers to the rich. While clearly distasteful, such exploitation of working-class cultural identities is hardly a recent development, and the motivations for doing so—especially concerning corporate or commercial endeavors—are often blatant. Nonetheless, questionable representations of working-class life in contemporary cultural production are not always quite as brazen, requiring careful scrutiny to fully assess their intent.

Building on my project's overarching position—that the kitchen sink movement signifies an aesthetic and ethical recalibration of what might constitute authentic

"working-class writing"—I review critical attempts to systematize tropes associated with the movement, questioning their efficacy given the flexibility of defining of what constitutes "working class." In response, this chapter advances a spatial aesthetics—a summation of the way kitchen sink texts deploy environment and setting as part of their aesthetic endeavor. Doing so offers a framework by which to gauge the intentions of subsequent working-class representation, especially in terms of their capacity to provide alternative models of class articulation that challenge class margins. As working-class writing is highly contingent, structured upon representations of class as they exist within the cultural moment, focusing on spatial aesthetics sidesteps the problem of temporality, allowing for an evaluative framework that functions outside of the particular cultural moment under scrutiny. It is vital to note, though, that the aim of such an endeavor is not to affix a definitive schema; instead, its goal is to demonstrate how tropes developed in the 1950s and 1960s hold purchase on working-class representation today. In doing so, I reiterate the debt owed to spatial tropes carved out during the kitchen sink era, noting how subsequent representations of working-class life rarely diverge from the methods developed by the movement's writers. What is revealed is that when tropes do diverge, they tend to do so for reasons of commercialization, exploiting working-class conditions by elevating aesthetic objectives over ethical impact. Yet, as this chapter suggests, for every instance of fetishized class identity, a new form of working-class representation emerges in protest, certifying working-class cultural production as perennially subversive, contingent, and imminently countercultural.

The Formal Aesthetics of Kitchen Sink Realism

Because the kitchen sink realism movement centers on depictions of working-class life, attempts to totalize motifs prove challenging as definitions of what constitutes working-class life are often in a state of flux. However, identifiable tropes do exist across media formats that provide a general sense of the movement's aesthetics principles and approaches. For example, critics such as Peter Kalliney have explored the motif of domestic anxiety, noting how exaggerated masculinity in such spaces reflects shifts in gender norms (115). David Castronovo, in addition to pointing out how the environments represented veer toward anonymity (134), captures kitchen-sink protagonists' investment in "Aggression, self-assertion, the pursuit of pleasure, the generating of mischief and transgressive humor, the flight from traditional disciplines and codes, the contempt for institutions, the boredom with routine, the struggle to live vitally" (1). Pia Conti references the movement's embracing of taboo social issues that led to the abolition of censorship during the 1960s (Lichtenstein 266). In the same collection, Kenneth Tynan insists that a generational nihilism grounds the movement, stemming from the development of the atomic bomb (283). Although I question the claim that nihilism is a consistent motif, the repercussion of what Tynan signals as generational tension remains consistent across virtually all texts of the period. Generally speaking, the central tenets of the movement are structured around a single disenfranchised character whose frustration stems from rigid social limitations and failed social policy. However, despite general commonalities, the multi-format nature of the movement adds further definitional complexity.

Yet, shared tropes and motifs can be determined across media formats, revealing consistencies that provide insight into the movement's objectives. Surveys of kitchen sink tropes in film have been well-documented by writers such as Samantha Lay, whose *British Social Realism: From Documentary to Brit Grit* offers helpful insight into the movement as a whole while situating the films of the period within a larger cinematic continuum. Lay reiterates the role of verisimilitude, underlining the function of space in that the movement focuses primarily on "characters who are inextricably linked to place or environment" (19). Discussing the way spatial representation blurs the line between documentary and fiction, Lay adds that kitchen sink texts defy narrative resolution in order to highlight the distinction between the real and the imaginary (21). Furthermore, the use of gritty imagery, Lay claims, results in a "tension between 'sociological realism'—which privileges a documenting of situations and events—and a style of social realism sometimes referred to as 'poetic realism'" (22). Poetic realism, according to Lay, is the romanticization of gritty, urban culture—or what Roger Manvell refers to as "industrial romanticism"—most evident in scenes that juxtapose images of factories against sweeping landscapes or bombed-out buildings against pristine blue skies (22). The most instructive filmic trope, however, is developed by Andrew Higson: "That Shot Of Our Town From That Hill"—a cinematic technique in which the protagonist is momentarily distanced from society and granted the ability to look down from above. However, this motif preceded many of the films of the British New Wave as texts like *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* and *This Sporting Life* included notable scenes of spatial reverie, placing the protagonist into a moment of reflective evaluation to heighten

existential crises. Consequently, the films' most stylistic attributes are identifiable across all of the genre's formats. Nonetheless, a definitive blueprint for the movement is difficult to attain as subtle aesthetic distinctions are perceptible.

Kenneth Tynan, in his contribution to Tom Maschler's *Declaration*—the closest document to a manifesto that the kitchen sink movement ever had—assures the reader that formal schematization is tenuous, noting that "From definitions everything follows, so with a definition I shall begin this ragbag of an aesthetic credo in which, very probably aesthetics will not be mentioned at all" (91). Throughout his derisive takedown of drawing room-style theater, Tynan locates frustration and desperation as dominant theatrical motifs. Referring specifically to *Look Back in Anger*, he remarks that "Where there is no desperation, or where desperation is inadequately motivated, there is no drama; characters, for instance, who scream when their noses are tickled or commit suicide the day after falling in love are bad cases of inadequately motivated desperation" (91). Tynan's commentary on the necessity of a working-class presence in theater reads like it came directly from the Beveridge Report in that "poverty, ignorance, oppression and the rest—are theatrically shunned" (92). For Tynan, plays that champion radical social change are often clumsy or inept (93). Instead, what the kitchen sink playwrights were aiming for, in his view, was to broaden perspectives and offer a wider representational spectrum of the British populace at the time, noting how "It is good to have fine plays and fine actors to perform them, just as it is good to have fine cars and fine drivers to steer them. But one also needs petrol, a garage and an open road" (96-97). The gritty credo of kitchen sink realism that Tynan venerates here is structured more

upon the movement's ability to upset patrician sensibilities and democratize the page, the stage, and the screen.

Despite its aristocratic setting and emphasis on high society, Kingsley Amis' 1954 novel *Lucky Jim* is often touted as one of the movement's precursors in that Jim Dixon represents the quintessential outsider who transgresses class boundaries. However, as mentioned prior, it was not until *Look Back in Anger* was released two years later that *Lucky Jim* was recast as the movement's forerunner. In this regard, the first novel of the movement is John Braine's *Room at the Top* from 1957—a text that establishes kitchen sink techniques, albeit it in a cagey manner. As Laing states, the novel's reticent use of motifs did not go unnoticed by the critics in that, after *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* arrived the following year, Braine's text was said to "look like a vicarage tea-party" by comparison (62). What this suggests is that an intensifying trajectory of visceral grit can be identified as the 1950s progresses. Yet, Laing emphasizes how even the most visceral texts sidestepped shock and hyperbole, instead depicting things as they were (65). In this regard, novelists were not simply seeking to shock through exaggeration; like Tynan's observation about kitchen sink theater, authors merely increased the visibility of working-class realities, which in of itself, was more than enough to raise establishment eyebrows.

Yet, whereas the plays and the films sought to innovate the stage and the screen, the novels tend to fall back on traditional motifs that reflect a more sustained literary genealogy. Doing so allowed the novels of the time to challenge the limits of the literary motifs and modes that preceded them. For example, the motif of the diseased or dying

patriarch repeats in several texts of the time, echoing iconic eighteenth- and nineteenth-century deathbed images associated Victorian fiction. In kitchen sink realism, such anachronistic devices are given a more definitive political charge. A common feature in Sillitoe's key works, but also emerging in texts from other writers of the time such as MacInnes' *Absolute Beginners*, the dying patriarch produces a series of specific associations: it functions as a portent of the future for working-class young men; as a signifier of a generational divide; and as a symbol of gender shifts in post-war households following the growth of factory employment of women and an increase in gender-specific labor. But, most importantly, the motif locates kitchen sink novels within a larger trajectory of novelistic development, marking a distinction from the avant-garde sensibilities of other media forms associated with the movement.

Furthermore, as environs depicted in kitchen sink novels tend to be indistinct and ubiquitous, repetition of spatial signifiers can be comprehended as another subtle distinction as to how the movement's aesthetics function across media forms. For one thing, many of the spaces depicted in the novels are highly anonymous, yet fundamentally identifiable as northern industrial towns. Keith Waterhouse's *Billy Liar*, for example, highlights the way that the novel's fictional town serves as a facsimile of many physical sites, acting as an archetypical northern community—one whose resources and features are indistinguishable from others. Writers like Waterhouse deploy patterns of repetition in their notation of environmental details, continuously pointing the reader to smokestacks, factories, or rows of gritty terraces rather than specific geographic signifiers. Such repetition serves little purpose in theatrical writing, or in films in which

such moves tend to appear more as establishing shots.[78] In the novels, however, descriptions of spaces are repeated with regularity, positioning the environment as a persistent feature for engagement. In novels like *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, the environment is largely static, but the repetition of environmental features serves to remind the reader of the limits of classed space. In novels like *Room at the Top* or *Billy Liar*, in which the working-class community is contrasted against more prosperous, thriving spaces, the repetition of gritty details emphasizes how certain spaces are frozen in time whereas others flourish. In this sense, novels certainly operate under the same set of principles that characterize the movement as a whole, but allegiance to the form dictates a modification in approach significant enough to resist schematization.

Toward a Spatial Aesthetics of Evaluation

Having outlined the overarching motifs associated with the movement, in addition to alluding to their slippery nature across media forms, I want to propose a spatial criterion based on kitchen sink principles as a framework for evaluating working-class representation. Whereas the movement is known by various tropes, most consistent is its emphasis on space as a means by which to analyze the way working-class individuals define themselves within their world. Combined with the movement's allegiance to authenticity, rendered clear through the calibration of aesthetic and ethical objectives, the spatial motifs developed during this time can act as barometers by which to measure contemporary depictions of working-class culture, discerning levels of tribute and

[78] It is worth pointing out, though, how detailed and turgid the stage directions of *Look Back in Anger* were.

appropriation with greater clarity. The following overview of components indexes the way kitchen sink realism explored the ramifications of space on individual class articulation across media formats, suggesting a way to think about depictions of working-class conditions more broadly outside of a specific contextual moment.

Working-class environs in kitchen sink texts are universally gritty, with grit generally understood as the attempt to represent working-class space directly without embellishment. Although "gritty" is a subjective term, largely shaped by one's own surroundings, in the texts of the 1950s and 1960s, it is linked to the presence of industry and industry's impact on the individual and the space they inhabit. However, following deindustrialization, grit is also identifiable in environments devastated by such policies. Given this, gritty representation can be characterized by an uninhibited, unmediated perspective on working-class conditions while sidestepping spectacle. For example, the environments featured in Sillitoe's texts appear matter-of-fact with little in the way of editorial commentary; they recreate the streets and factories of industrial Nottingham through an objective, unwavering lens to capture the general malaise and despondency of the area. In contrast, John Braine's *Room at the Top* highlights working-class spaces in relation to affluence, focusing expressly on war damage to remind the reader that working-class locales are commensurate with impoverishment and a lack of developmental resources. Shelagh Delaney emphasizes the inhospitality of her environs but seeks to find value in them. Such spaces are styled as unmistakably gritty, but Delaney challenges the value of "gritty" in the process. The grit of Delaney's Salford is

largely an industry byproduct, and Sillitoe's depiction of the smoke stack's impact on local houses acts as a guide for other novels of the period.

Gritty representation often underlines a space's enigmatic appeal—the kind of appeal outlined by Delaney in her discussion of Salford's magnetism. Given this, authentic depictions of working-class space tend to pair grit with the security and familiarity that stems from either community or tradition. Delaney's characterization of Salford's hypnotic qualities reveals a push/pull dynamic embodied in the space itself in that shared struggle combines with insecurity to placate community members' concerns of destitution. Such effects rely primarily on identification with specific class signifiers but representations of space in kitchen sink realism are rarely linear, rarely engage nostalgia, and rarely produce pathos or elicit empathy. Kitchen sink authors draw attention to the grittier aspects of space to uncover the extraordinary within the ordinary. Furthermore, despite emphasizing the extraordinary, spaces depicted in kitchen sink texts tend to remain anonymous. Although the intended audience of the movement was diverse, the spaces depicted are widely recognizable to multiple social demographics. As the result, they often emerge as interchangeable with few standout or identifying features. This tends to vary across texts, and aberrations to such rules certainly exist, but the general theme of kitchen sink texts is that working-class environs rarely expand beyond the home, the workplace, and a handful of social and leisure spaces with little in the way of variation.

Regarding technique, authors of the kitchen sink movement tend to describe the same environment multiple times, allowing such descriptions to function as rhythmic

pauses in the narrative. Spaces are portrayed from manifold angles, fleshing out details with resolute, documentary-style precision. And, given the movement's dedication to spatial accuracy, the way characters navigate, interact with, and are impacted by the environments they inhabit, warrants significant attention. For example, working-class domestic spaces generally provide a sense of limitation and restriction; they rarely offer comfort. Spaces beyond designated working-class environs appear as contingent: spaces that prompt reverie, reflection, or personal crises. Such spaces appear in texts as momentary breaks, but in light of the "view from our town on the hill" motif, they also read as powerful heterotopic sites of potentiality. As I have argued, the spaces of kitchen sink realism are ones of confinement against which characters negotiate new modes of existence and resistance. Therefore, the texts of the period are rarely set in open spaces or spaces that symbolize freedom. Closed confines (be it rooms or institutions) are matched by encroaching vicinities (collections or groupings of spaces that appear to be physically confined or confining). Kitchen sink realist texts, by their very nature, reflect social limits represented by space, and the novels, plays, and films of the period perform this function consistently.

While these components do not exhaust the characteristics of the movement as a whole, they offer a broad overview of the way the movement approaches space in relation to class. Recalling David Harvey's spatial matrix and the notion of "aesthetic space of transit" is helpful in such circumstances in that focusing on the way allegiance to (or divergence from) such components produces aesthetic or ethical tension. If kitchen sink realism represents an apogee of working-class writing, then such criteria can

function as a gauge to assess subsequent working-class representation—especially representation mired in aesthetic grit. The result is a framework akin to that of Harvey's spatial matrix in that contemporary representation can be evaluated and read against such criteria to gauge its authenticity as well as its objectives. What follows are brief case studies of working-class representation that echo ideas pioneered during the kitchen sink era, either conforming to, or moving away from, the movement's original goals. Whereas a novel like Irvine Welsh's *Trainspotting*, or a film like Mike Leigh's *Life is Sweet* lend themselves to the spatial motifs that balance aesthetic and ethical agendas, TV shows like *Shameless* and *Benefits Street* raise concern through their privileging of aesthetic grit over ethical motives. In this regard, kitchen sink realism sets a standard for working-class representational authenticity, and it is through an analysis of spatial representation that such authenticity can be identified.

Case Studies

Coronation Street

The British soap opera *Coronation Street*—affectionately referred to as "Corrie"—played a critical role in the cementing of working-class aesthetics, specifically in terms of television programming and the development of the British New Wave. However, what a spatial analysis of *Coronation Street* reveals is the way kitchen sink aesthetics can be mobilized without ethical imperatives, revealing such a text to be a purely commercial endeavor. Written by Tony Warren, and first broadcast in December of 1960, *Coronation Street* not only prolonged the kitchen sink aesthetic through the

remainder of the century; it ossified the model for a host of other popular soap operas that dominated British households for decades to come. Although the action takes place in the fictional town of Weatherfield, the show was filmed in Manchester with Weatherfield largely based upon Salford. The bulk of the narrative centers upon the eponymous street of the title—a street named after the 1902 coronation of King Edward VII, the successor to the throne following the death of Queen Victoria. Consequently, the name of the show connotes a modern take on British life, focusing on twentieth-century realities experienced by many working-class people. Nonetheless, the show exhibits the way the spatial aesthetics of the kitchen sink movement were quickly commodified and repackaged for mass consumption.

The enduring success of *Coronation Street* begs the question of why such gritty representations of space gain popularity in relation to more escapist or fantastic soaps. According to Judith Jones, the show's longevity is the result of "its cast of strong characters, its northern roots and sense of community . . . combined with skillfully written and often amusing scripts" (Jones). As Nick Couldry has argued *Coronation Street* provides escape through familiarity in that the show "has offered a continuous fictional reality, operating in parallel to viewers' lives." Couldry adds that the show's appeal to viewers is also due to its ability to operate as "a mnemonic system for events in their own life" (76) in which a shared experience produces "social memory through acts of repetition" (75). To a large degree, this is the function of the soap opera: to generate social narratives that viewers discuss in the real world following the evening's broadcast. However, in terms of most soap opera programming, such behavior would be limited to

die-hard factions of the populace—more aligned to the fan-based discussions that, today, take place online. Nonetheless, in the case of *Coronation Street* (and several of the similarly modeled soaps that followed it, such as *Brookside* and *EastEnders*), the sheer size of the audience elevated the show from a commodity for consumption to that of ritualized behavior undertaken by a surprising number of British people.

The street itself—a set housed at the Granada Studios in Manchester—was relatively simple, and the interior sets bore many of the flaws that lend low-budget soap operas their camp charm. It was the ubiquity of viewership, though, that elevated the street from a mere setting to something closer to a tangible artifact; the street was so universally identifiable, even in its anonymity, that it became a place as real as a material location. Temporal connection made by viewers in relation to their own lives, grounded in the social experience of viewing in a way that transcended the show itself, elevated *Coronation Street* from a fictional narrative to that of a synthetic, analogous reality. As Couldry observes, when people tour the set today, an emotional response emerges that "is hardly trivial" (77). Visitors treat the space as a functional, working environment: "take for example, the apparently banal things people do on 'the Street' set to connect up with the outside. non-fictional world: posting cards in the street pillar-box or using the telephone box" (77). While nobody would ever mistake the street as functioning within the real world, the emotional impact and cultural investment in the space should not be underestimated.

With that said, the overarching motifs developed in *Coronation Street* differed from the contemporary kitchen sink writers and the burgeoning New Wave film

movement in that, while the mundane grit prevailed, the aggressive masculinity and rugged individualism of the early kitchen sink work was replaced by a renewed emphasis on community. Whereas kitchen sink texts were infused with frustration made manifest as aggression and often violence, *Coronation Street* was grounded in the nostalgic romanticism seen in the writing of Hoggart and Orwell. This reveals a distinction between the ethical intent of the original movement and the commercial value of commodified kitchen sink aesthetics in that the focus on community makes for a more palatable and, therefore, more consumable product. At the root of this distinction is a skewing of kitchen sink's aesthetic/ethical balance; it is clear that *Coronation Street* thrives on the aesthetic, rarely adopting a political stance or challenging the status quo. For an audience who would sit down to watch "Corrie" after a day working at the factory, it was no accident that the show eschewed any indications of such labor, cementing its viability as a ritualized and, ultimately, pacifying exercise in the consumption of commodified working-class identities.

The physical makeup of the world of *Coronation Street* appears as an attempt to render the narrative space as a mirror to that of the viewer on the other side of the screen. However, the privileging of aesthetic nostalgia and the shift away from political objectives are reflected in the absence of several key factors and the elaboration of others. First, the spaces depicted in the show are consistently unremarkable and predictable. As Andrew Higson has claimed, the bulk of the spatial representation seen in the show is limited to domestic interiors, the interior of the Rovers Return (the street's pub), a community shop, and, much less often, the local factory where the street's residents

labor. Despite changes made throughout the years to the show's iconic opening sequence, camera angles always emphasize repetition and universality by focusing on rows and rows of chimney pots. Combined with the similarly iconic and morose theme music, the effect of the opening sequence merges the ritualistic repetition and familiarity of viewing with the melancholic familiarity of working-class environs. Even the most recent version of the sequence emphasizes the chimney pots, despite their anachronistic status in contemporary British society. Their effectiveness as symbols of warmth and universality is laid bare.

Given its universalizing appeal, the significance of a show like *Coronation Street* cannot be overlooked in regards to cultural import and the representation of working-class culture in Britain. However, its use of rhetorical devices to appeal to specific emotional needs of the British populace—a populace anxious about shifts in the physical makeup of the built environment—suggests an adaptation of working-class representation developed in the late 1950s. Rather than calibrating the aesthetic with the ethical, *Coronation Street* relies on an aesthetically-centered approach in which the transgressive didacticism of kitchen sink motifs diminish in favor of passive consumption and mass appeal. In spite of criticism aimed at the show's sepia-hued depiction of working-class life, it would be disingenuous to say that *Coronation Street* merely fetishized and commodified working-class identities. Instead, the show appears more as a response to the request for a broader representation of British culture—even if such a representation lacked the ethical imperatives of the kitchen sink movement—appealing to a much wider

audience than the comparatively pedantic New Wave films, serving as a consistent and accessible source of entertainment for more than half a century.

Channel 4 and Film4 Productions

Channel 4, introduced as the most class-conscious TV station in Britain, offered a publicly-owned alternative to the three channels that existed at the time. Prior to 1982, British television was limited to the two BBC license-funded channels (BBC1 and BBC2) and the commercial ITV. The development of Channel 4 saw a series of debates about the form it would take as ITV had initially envisioned the channel to operate akin to BBC2—itself created as a vehicle for more special-interest and culturally sophisticated programming. Both BBC1 and ITV were structured upon a consumerist model with profit motive in mind. As Dorothy Hobson has noted, initial discussions relating to Channel 4's inception focused on decreasing the commercial dominance of the airwaves. As the BBC already dominated viewership through its two channels, and ITV's motivation was to enlarge its advertising potential, public interest dictated that Channel 4 should serve as an alternative to corporate endeavors (2). In doing so, the new channel emphasized the distinction between commercial worth and cultural value—an interest that seems alien by today's standards in which commercial endeavors saturate culture and community. The leading proposition for the channel, presented in September of 1972 by home secretary William Whitelaw, established basic goals: that the channel should be accountable to the public through full transparency of accounting and finances; that it should aim for national programming with the option of more regional programming to follow; that it

should offer a platform for more comprehensive and extended news coverage of topical matters; and that content should be open to more educational and independent producers otherwise excluded from the standard commercial platforms (Hobson 5-7). The channel's first CEO, Jeremy Isaacs, drafted a similar set of proposals a month prior, noting additionally that the channel should cater to "substantial minorities presently neglected" with "broad educational purposes" in mind (Hobson 8). The intent for the channel was not simply alternative programming, but to provide alternative worldviews and diversified cultural experience.

The first show to air on Channel 4 was the long-running quiz show, *Countdown*, followed by the equally enduring (yet low-budget) *Brookside*—a soap opera set in Liverpool, addressing issues faced by working-class families that managed to elevate their social status by moving into the middle-class Brookside Close housing development. The first evening's programming also included the first hour-long news broadcast and concluded with *In the Pink*—a show in which the feminist collective Raving Beauties (Sue Jones-Davies, Dee Orr, and Fan Viner) hosted a cabaret of women's writing performed as poems and songs. The Channel 4 logo itself, comprised of a series of rainbow-colored blocks that form a unified numerical, signaled the channel's commitment to diversity and plurality. Early programming did indeed represent diversity, with content aimed at Asian audiences (*Eastern Eye*, *Bandung File*), Black audiences (*Black on Black, Bacchanal*), and, later, gay-specific programming (*Out on Tuesday, Out*). In stark contrast to commercial television, such programs were largely grassroots, often produced by members of the communities they represented. The first published

report on Channel 4 listed a series of programming that took risks in terms of representation of diversity, placing lesbian documentaries such as *Veronica 4 Rose* (1983) against children's programming like the animated adaptation of Raymond Briggs' *The Snowman* (1982). Working-class concerns and issues surrounding labor in the Thatcher era were well-covered in programming such as the 1984 documentary *Just Like Coronation Street* that "traced the history of an Oldham community uprooted by wholesale slum clearance" (1985 Annual Report), and significant attention went to young voices in current affairs programming such as *Ear to the Ground* (1983) and *Our Lives* (1983) which narrated "the experiences of various young East Enders through a novel mixture of documentary and fiction" (Annual Report 1984). In recent years, however, the channel has come under fire from key figures associated with its inception, such as Brookside creator Phil Redmond who, in January of 2016, remarked that "What's needed on British TV is different voices, working-class voices, something more than elites recruiting from the elites and making TV that doesn't understand the issues affecting ordinary people" (Jeffries). Redmond adds that Channel 4 "was supposed to be for alternative voices. It's not for anything now" (Jeffries). Nevertheless, for much of the 1980s and 1990s, Channel 4 stuck to its original goals offering genuinely alternative perspectives largely unmediated by commerce or ratings.

In addition to providing a platform for multicultural voices, Channel 4 is also responsible for the inception of Film4 Productions—what was originally known as

Channel Four Films or Film on Four.[79] With more than 500 productions to date, Film4 Productions have contributed significantly to worldwide arts culture, featuring work by directors such as Ken Loach, Neil Jordan, Mike Leigh, Ben Wheatley, Derek Jarman and many more. Stephen Frears' *Walter* was the first film produced by the company in 1982 and set a tone for non-commercial representations of diversity and class concerns with Ian McKellan's depiction of mental illness positioning him for The Royal Television Society's Performer of the Year.[80] However, Edmund Dell, a founding chairman of Channel 4, expressed concern over some of the films' content in a manner that speaks to the contemporary reliance upon shock effect—arguably one of the more aberrant holdovers from the kitchen sink era.[81] In an essay included in Peter Catterall's overview of Channel 4 history, Dell signals his appreciation of the film on four series—specifically those produced under the guidance of David Rose (the commissioning editor)—as "a credit to Channel 4," but adds that

> Sometimes I felt that some films, not from the David Rose stable, were being shown more to startle and to prove that Channel 4 had the courage to do what no other channel had dared to do than because of any intrinsic merit. Jeremy [Isaacs] would say of such films that only ten people had complained but that a million had enjoyed them. But there was no evidence that anyone had enjoyed them and sometimes such evidence as we had suggested that no one had enjoyed them. (Dell 8-9)

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[79] To clarify, the film production company owned by Channel 4 was first known as Channel Four Films but was rebranded as Film4 in 2006. For purposes of consistency, I will refer to all films produced by the company as Film4 Productions.

[80] To cover the impact of Film4's contribution to culture is beyond the purview of this project, but key films like Frears' *My Beautiful Laundrette* (1985), Neil Jordan's *Mona Lisa* (1986), and Alan Clarke's *Rita, Sue and Bob Too* (1987) are mere indicators of the diversity represented in Film4 production, and their impact on contemporary film studies is profound.

[81] As noted in previous chapters, while kitchen sink writers did seek to shock traditional audiences, the intention was not shock for shock's sake, but to challenge the outmoded sensibilities of the arts in a visceral manner.

Dell's comments are revealing in that they suggest that certain depictions—particularly depictions of gritty working-class identities—were employed for shock value alone.[82] There is plenty of evidence to suggest that the motifs of classed representation align to such a perspective, which echoes the sensationalist representation of class seen in nineteenth- and twentieth-century writing. But such comments also reflect how deeply inured British people were to tradition and heritage, and how representations of the Other could still be interpreted as somehow threatening to a vaguely-defined cultural morality.

Stephen Frears 1985 film version of Hanif Kureishi's celebrated *My Beautiful Laundrette* offers one of the clearest perspectives into the Thatcher era—especially concerning minority and queer representation, building squarely on the spatial concepts established by the kitchen sink writers. Set in the South London area of Wandsworth, the narrative contrasts left-wing political perspectives against the creeping conservatism and right-wing nationalism of the latter part of the twentieth century. Although originally produced for television and reflecting the kitchen sink-style associated with Channel 4 programming of the time, the film won international accolades, nominated in 1987 for an Academy Award. The intentionally gritty texture of the film was made evident by Kureishi's noting his preliminary discussions with Frears who demanded that they film in February because "England looks especially unpleasant" then (4), and Kureishi's own desire for grit was shown by his appreciation for keeping the production low budget:

[82] Dell does not list specific titles, but Film4 Productions was known to push the envelope in this regard. While the films of what he refers to as "the Rose stable" include titles like *My Beautiful Laundrette* (1985), *Mona Lisa* (1986), and *Letter to Brezhnev* (1985), it was films like Frears' *Walter* (1982) that drew complaints. In 1986, Film4 also instituted "the red triangle" series—films and programming aired after midnight, much of which kept figures like Mary Whitehouse in a perpetual state of anguish.

"There were no commercial pressures on us, no one had a lot of money invested in the film who would tell us what to do. And I was tired of seeing lavish films set in exotic locations" (5). Furthermore, the balance between the aesthetic and the political was palpable in that "the film was to be an amusement, despite its references to racism, unemployment and Thatcherism. Irony is the modern mode, a way of commenting on bleakness and cruelty without falling into dourness and didacticism" (5). In this regard, *My Beautiful Laundrette*—both the screenplay and the film—serve as one of the more pointed developments of working-class representation in that the use of gritty environments and context managed to strike a clear balance between the aesthetic and the ethical.

Kureishi's stage direction leaves room for artistic license yet still resembles the more pointed stage direction as seen in the plays of the 1950s. The opening scene's "large detached house" is quickly registered as a squat by the overtly political signage across the boarded-up windows, reading, among other things, "Your greed will be the death of us all" (9). The squat is clearly designated as a multicultural space of refuge, culturally potent by virtue of the fact that the bulk of its inhabitants are racial minorities. The setting's stage direction, however, is filled with flourishes that draw connections to the paradoxical beauty mobilized in the text and the films of the 1950s and 1960s, most notably in the scenes in which the central character navigates the city: "OMAR walks along a South London street, towards NASSER's garage. It's a rough area, beautiful in its own falling-down way" (13, emphasis in original). Such stabs at poetic realism should come as no surprise, though, as Kureishi was well-versed in the aesthetics of the kitchen

sink movement due to his serving an apprenticeship at the Royal Court Theatre where he would become the official Writer in Residence in 1982. In this regard, the aesthetics that Kureishi developed in his screenplay position him as one of the most appropriate ambassadors for kitchen sink motifs while allowing for critical context to inform the reshape the motifs in an appropriate manner. Frears' decision to make the film at the time when "England looks especially unpleasant" certifies the director's comprehension of the screenplay's social critique—a survey of the conditions of working-class life in the Thatcher era. Although the film was contentious—especially within the British Asian community—it is generally heralded as groundbreaking in its depictions of race, sexuality, and more specifically, the interplay of entrepreneurialism and greed fostered during the period and the working-class culture that acts as the backdrop against which the narrative unfolds. Frears' desire to present environs as economically and culturally classed, allows the dynamics of social elevation and race/class mixing that the film engages to exist in stark relief. Therefore, *My Beautiful Laundrette* handles a number of key concerns associated with working-class representation to great effect, maintaining the equilibrium between aesthetic and ethical impulses established by the kitchen sink writers.

Mike Leigh's *Life is Sweet* (1990) and *Naked* (1993)—two films with opposing styles but similar intent—saw significant production support from Film4 and largely represented the kind of work that the channel was interested in producing. *Life is Sweet* comedically depicts the struggles of a working-class family in a North London estate, narrating their various schemes and plans to escape from poverty and their immediate

environment. Despite the sense of desperation that the film's characters project, the film conveys an unmistakable optimism throughout—largely due to the way that Leigh paints the environment in whimsical, paradoxically pastel hues with a persistent presence of sunlight. The local environs are immediately recognizable, centered upon a neglected working-class suburban community with none of the cosmopolitan flair of the capital, but Leigh still manages to present the space as irradiated and beaming. When desperation mounts—as it does for several of the characters—their humanity is exposed against a backdrop that prompts them to keep seeking a better life. In this regard, *Life is Sweet* manages to illuminate otherwise grim environs, commenting on the value of community in the face of adversity in a manner often overlooked in modern-day representations of working-class people. Leigh's narrative sidesteps working-class idolatry through the refusal of narrative resolution, depicted in the film's environment as one in which class struggle never ends. However, the film's sunny deportment resembles the working-class imaginary engaged in *A Taste of Honey*, offering a return to the value of solidarity and shared struggle in the face of oppression.

But whereas *Life is Sweet* remains buoyant throughout, *Naked* is consistently foreboding regarding content, outlook, and setting. The film sheds pastels for bruised black and blue tones, and the landscape that Leigh presents appears as one that has succumbed to violence.[83] Literally and metaphorically dark, *Naked* conveys a notably different tone than *Life is Sweet*, eschewing optimism for nihilism. Where *Life is Sweet*

[83] The violence, in this sense, is a combination of shifts in the built environment akin to the spatial anxiety addressed in mid-century texts with the damage done to working-class communities by Thatcher's Conservative government.

stressed the value and support of local communities—even in spaces in which suffering was generally shared—*Naked's* spatial system of reference suggests an urban demimonde in which basic survival is the most pressing task. While the story begins and ends in a sinister flat owned by an equally sinister landlord, the setting is more extensive than that of *Life is Sweet*, moving through various back alleys and uninhabited spaces of London, representing them as a psychological assault course. Given the nature of the plot that begins with rape and an attempt to leave the scene of the crime, the film's environment is cast as a series of shadows through which the central fugitive, Johnny, must duck and dive. By inhabiting such spaces, Johnny meets other characters similarly ostracized from life, forced to live meager existences in similarly grim spaces. The film's profound and nihilistic complexity cannot be unpacked with ease, but for the purposes of this study it is worth noting how Leigh's characters reflect working-class destitution—particularly in a post-Thatcher environment—in which community and human connection is largely absent. Leigh's characters are grotesques, often behaving in ways that defy logic. Yet, by amplifying the oppressive nature of the conditions in which they exist, Leigh demonstrates the ability of socially-encoded environments to reduce individuals to subhuman levels. Like MacInnes' scrutiny of the way social division forces individuals underground, Leigh's emphasis asks the viewer what more could be expected from such conditions. While the film is filled with disturbing, visceral violence, the environment itself is the most haunting, malevolent aspect, bordering on apocalyptic—a gesture well-suited for the post-Thatcher years, and a film in which blame is laid squarely on cultural forces that produce and systematize such conditions.

Although these films are especially noteworthy, Channel 4's programming, as a whole, can be interpreted as part of an extension of working-class representation, specifically developing key motifs established in the 1950s and 1960s. The channel favors gritty, desaturated aesthetics—a sullen, kitchen sink-style approach to drama that is resolutely British. However, such programming is, for the most part, attuned to the need to update motifs and approaches for contemporary audiences. This can be seen most saliently in the way spatial metaphors for working-class worlds are used to either ground the aesthetic or to heighten their political significance. In TV shows like *Brookside*, the set itself is uncharacteristically authentic—a real estate that emphasizes and politicizes the complicated nature of home ownership through intensified materiality. The popular *Skins*, however, relies more on past tropes in which young people, whose domestic environments are characterized by generational divides, seek out spaces that they can recapitulate for their own needs. Shows like *Benefits Street* illuminate the way that spatial depictions contribute to the overall visual rhetoric, amplifying the exploitative nature of the show and revealing the motivations along the way. Similarly, the films associated with Film4 are equally invested in the spatial representation of social conditions, with directors like Mike Leigh relying on environmental signifiers to communicate effects as they relate to class limitation. Leigh's work links both optimism and pessimism to community—a gesture that takes on nuanced meaning in the era of Thatcher in which the notion of solidarity and community are downplayed in light of individual autonomy and libertarian idealism. *Naked*'s mapping of rugged individualism to bleak nihilism stands in stark contrast to the community function seen in a film like *Life is Sweet* where, in light

of individual disappointment and frustration with the social sphere, the community tends to rally around and provide support. If *Coronation Street* sustained kitchen sink spatial aesthetics throughout the decades that followed, Channel 4 rebirthed them in the 1980s but with increased emphasis on their social and ethical validity.

Apples

Richard Milward's 2007 novel *Apples* signifies the shift in working-class representation away from the mundanity of kitchen sink realism toward a hyperreal barrage of grit. Given that Milward was as young as many of the kitchen sink writers when he published his first novel, it is possible to think how a text like *Apples* might convey a similar youthful exuberance to a play like *A Taste of Honey*. However, the novel is more closely aligned to the aggressive aesthetics of shows like *Shameless*, depicting little of the optimism of a writer like Delaney, relying instead on an amplification of bleak pessimism. While kitchen sink texts were hardly uplifting affairs, Milward's novel resembles a more contemporary strain of class representation that aims to depict working-class people in a way that borders on stereotype.

The narrative is predominantly told from the perspective of the two protagonists—the sophomorically titled Adam and Eve—and the novel demonstrates a working knowledge of genre by riffing on class representation throughout. For example, the motif of the dying patriarch is referenced in Eve's mother's cancer diagnosis but differs from texts like *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* or *Absolute Beginners* in that the mother/daughter relationship is more strained. Inversions of traditional gender

roles emerge through Adam's relatively subordinate and passive social position—largely the result of his being "on the spectrum"—whereas Eve is portrayed as a dominant and dominating figure throughout despite being drugged and raped at one point in the text. *Apples,* like a number of kitchen sink texts, eschews plot for characterization with extra attention paid to contemporary issues. Adam and Eve, both fifteen years old, live in a world in which cohesive family units are a thing of the past, and the neighborhood exists as a space to be survived rather than navigated. Adam is an outsider in the environment, due in part to his neurotic personality and outmoded musical taste, whereas Eve is the epitome of high school popularity, ruthlessly characterized by her penchant for promiscuity and excessive drug abuse. As both characters encounter severe violence as the result of their environment, Milward's decision to depict them both as somewhat dismissive of their attacks is a telling reflection of the effect an environment can have on the psyche of its inhabitants.

Milward's novel was well received at the time, winning awards and accolades from writers like Irvine Welsh whom Milward cites as a major influence. The novel was adapted for the stage in 2010, with the staged version winning subsequent awards of its own. Yet, Milward's novel deploys strategies used by the kitchen sink writers, amplifying them for the contextual moment. For example, the use of taboo topics in texts like *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* or *Up the Junction* act more as a desensitizing barrage in Milward's work. Whereas the illicit abortion scene of Dunn's text provides the central moment of trauma (although domestic abuse is casually mentioned throughout), *Apples* unleashes a variety of graphic, disturbing scenes of violence—oftentimes depicted

with as much humor as horror. As the result, the text reads more as a catalog of contemporary nightmares associated with council housing estates in a way that complicates the binary of ethical and aesthetic imperatives in that it reads as not only signaling alarm but also as exploitative—a cavalcade of working-class stereotypes generally categorized by the pejorative term "chav."[84] In a 2014 interview, Milward cited "tabloids" as the source material for his 2012 novel *Kimberley's Capital Punishment*, noting that his early writing intentionally echoed Irvine Welsh's *Trainspotting* (Bookslut). Given this, it is possible to see how a text like *Apples* reads as a pastiche of stereotypes and social stigmas—a pastiche grounded in a certain degree of reality, but, like the media that acts as its source, cherry-picked to paint an inauthentic image of working-class lives.

The novel's estate is furnished with standard-fare council facilities, largely comprised of pubs and clubs—several of which act as hosts for immediate community functions. Escape from the estate resemble cheap holidays to places like Ibiza, cementing the limited mobility available within the estate itself. Largely based on Milward's own experience in the town of Guisborough, the environment depicted throughout *Apples* designates a specific way of life to those who live there. However, like Delaney, Milward takes the time to identify the beauty within the mundane, deploying a mode of depiction that reflects the poetic romanticism seen in texts like *This Sporting Life* in which nature is crossed with scenes of industrial destitution. In *Apples*, Milward juxtaposes the natural

[84] For clarification, there is no direct analog to "chav" in American culture, but it is similar to "hick" or "white trash" only with more emphasis on urban, street culture.

environment of North Yorkshire with the effects of living within spaces that pose significant social restrictions: "I walked onto Saltersgill field, and despite the dogshit, needles and dodgy characters there were at least daisies and dandelions and running water" (47). Furthermore, he draws attention to the shifting nature of pubs, noting that while the buildings themselves remain static, they are subjected to cosmetic overhauls: "The Grove was smarter than The Viking, though it had to be done up every time it got torched . . . Often these places were like the OK Corral, except the cowboys in Middlesbrough were all on steroids and dressed in Sherman and trackies" (73). The deficiency of the space emerges in the way that characters attempt to transform their environment rather than leave it, with Debbie's penchant for graffiti ("She was artistic like that" [38]) and the continual stream of designer drugs that act as "an antidote to a boring evening" (39). Yet much of the inhabited space depicted is normalized by the characters barring brief moments when they step into peripheral areas and subtle comparisons emerge. When Eve goes to visit her father, an ominous sign reading "FROM HOPE TO REALITY" greets them (122, emphasis in original). However, the new environment barely differs from that of their own: "South Bank was still pretty scruffy. All the terraces looked like they were lined with shark's teeth, the jagged glass being there to keep out intruders and other unsavories" (122). Similarly, another neighborhood close by is described as "nasty—a lot of the houses were boarded up like in Beechwood, but at least we had a view over the playing field not an orangey scrapyard" (122). Such descriptions reflect a number of earlier texts of the 1950s and 1960s, from MacInnes depiction of Pimlico in *Absolute Beginners* to Dunn's overview of Battersea in *Up the*

Junction. Despite such stabs at poetic romanticism Milward's objective is clear: to present the Middlesbrough area as irredeemably constricting, both physically and psychologically.

Because the narrative centers on two fifteen-year-old students, direct references to work and working-class concerns are limited but their effects are made manifest through the impact on the characters' lives. For example, Adam's father's abusive nature is largely the result of the conditions that he himself has to endure: "He was always going on about his hectic life, working at British Steel and then coming home to a stupid tosser like me. He'd been working on the plant for about twenty years, and with all that pollution and dust in his system perhaps he'd gone clinically insane" (82). In this regard, Milward's text echoes inter-generational concerns seen in mid-century novels, but here such concerns are accompanied by physical violence that clarifies the impact of oppressive conditions on individuals. Adam's father could very well be Sillitoe's Arthur Seaton in this instance, given Arthur's decision to relegate himself to a life of labor and suffer the consequences. As is the case with Arthur, however, a response is established through enunciations of class and style that outweigh attempts to cultivate habitable or defensible space. For example, the houses on the estate are generally understood to be beyond redemption—cramped and poorly maintained—but their ubiquity confers a collective social lack, challenging the inhabitants to find other modes of aesthetic distinction. Eve, for example, cares more about the brand of her shoes than the appearance of her home: "Our lawn was pretty battered, and I tramped in a little mud

before kicking my Ellesses on the pile" (62).[85] The narrative presents itself as a catalog of stereotyped signifiers of class, largely based upon clothing and specific brands maligned in contemporary culture as "chav." Nonetheless, the space itself illuminates similar classed distinctions—even turning narrational duties over to a municipal streetlamp at one point,[86] that illuminates Eve as "cute in our pink and yellow light" but reveals the environment itself to be little more than "rubbish and empty spaces and blinding glow" (141).

Ultimately, the environment depicted in *Apples* demonstrates a diverse set of interactions while emphasizing their homogeneity. Characters struggle to elevate themselves from a subjugated social status, but they succumb to and perpetuate cultural stereotypes as the result of their limited worldview. Although the neighborhoods outlined in the text cover more territory than texts of the past, the basic principle remains intact: that working-class conditions reinforce working-class resignation through signifiers such as spatial restriction and an emphasis on grit as the result of social decline. However, the novel's propulsion stems from its repetition of tabloid-driven class-based stereotypes conveyed within and as the result of the depicted environment. Less optimistic than working-class texts of the past, Milward's characters find no reprieve, and Eve's momentary escape to Majorca only underscores her inevitable return to Middlesbrough.

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[85] Ellesse is a brand of sportswear stereotypically aligned as "chav wear." The text comments on this, noting the way passing trends are adopted as class signifiers: "On the corner of Vaughan Street, Gary wanted to browse in JD Sports, and yet again me and Rachel giggled about his class although we had been known to wear Fila and Adidas and Kappa and Ellesse back in the day. Actually I woke up in trackie bottoms that morning but let's keep that one to ourselves" (80).

[86] Chapters narrated from the position of Adam and Eve are periodically disrupted by "outsider" narration—which can be anything from a child, to a butterfly, to a streetlamp.

Given this, Milward's text is grounded in aesthetic motifs that follow contemporary trends set by work such as *Shameless* and *Skins*. Representation of working-class people is at the root, and the text updates kitchen sink aesthetics for a contemporary audience, but the rapidity and general barrage of social ills that the novel highlights reads more as a parade of grit than as a text that leads to productive identification or transgression of any kind. While there is no questioning the level of authenticity that *Apples* attempts, its contribution ends there—an act of mimesis, grounded predominantly in the aesthetic. While the novel was a relative commercial success, the text reflects a contemporary trend in working-class representation that seeks to transform cultural identity into a spectacle for consumption based on the sensationalizing of classed stereotypes.

Shameless

One of the most celebrated examples of class-centric programming in recent years is Paul Abbott's *Shameless*—a show in which gritty environments, characters, and scenarios appear in a way that pushes the envelope of past representational aesthetics, yet renders ethical aspirations especially unclear in light of commercial imperatives. Whereas representations of council estates in the past have highlighted the nature of a local community to create a sense of shared struggle, the estate featured in *Shameless* sits closer to the tower block depicted in MacInnes' *Mr Love and Justice* in that it functions more as a space of social purgatory. Like the estate in Milward's *Apples*, the residents of Abbott's estate experience little in the way of hope, taking Hoggart's notion of "making do" and showing how, in terms of the spatial effects of social stratification, very little has

changed to elevate poor working-class people in the manner promised by the Beveridge Report. *Shameless* is a show that, despite certain redeeming qualities, is difficult to reconcile as politically- or socially-minded. Instead, it represents the natural evolution of working-class representation as a commodifiable identity—one with lucrative potential to translate across international markets and enter the world of product franchise.

Shameless first aired on Channel 4 in January of 2004 and ran until May of 2013. The creator, Paul Abbott, has noted how the show recreates his own life growing up in council estates of Burnley with a dysfunctional family largely replicated in the eponymous Gallagher family of the series. The show was an instant hit and went on to win critical acclaim, winning a BAFTA in 2005 for Best British Drama and numerous other accolades in the years that followed. Although immediately popular with a wide swath of British viewers, the show divided viewers along class lines: the experience of watching the show differed depending on one's own class status and social position. Michael Brooke has noted that *Shameless* illustrates class-based drama perfectly in that it is "socially conscious yet gleefully anarchic, mindful of the channel's commitment to both innovate and to offer a voice to the marginalized while still remaining true to old-fashioned virtues of solid scripts and outstanding performances" (Brooke). Owen Jones, however, raised concern over the representation of the Gallagher family, suggesting that *Shameless* was little more than class tourism. Jones highlights the consequences of stereotypes on display in shows like *Shameless*, discussing the way that the image of the Gallagher family reinforces negative assumptions of working-class people caught up in real-world news stories. Jones' observation is especially prescient in light of my own

discussion of *Coronation Street* in that it emphasizes the collective social knowledge produced by popular TV shows watched by many. Jones' real problem with the work, though, is that it suggests that the kind of working-class slovenly behavior depicted is somehow innate in that the show fails to sufficiently enunciate the root causes and conditions of the family's behavior (129).

The show is set on the fictional Chatsworth Estate—an estate that, like many other cult favorite TV shows watched in England—has become cemented in the cultural imaginary.[87] However, like *Brookside*, the reason why the estate has seen such material fetishization is that the show was filmed on an existing, functional council estate in West Gorton, Manchester. Although some scenes were filmed on sets built on-site, the general environs that the show depicts reflect a real council estate with very real social problems stemming from social deprivation, deindustrialization, and general neglect. However, as Amena Saleem noted, many of the residents of West Gorton were critical of the show's representation of their area, with one resident positing that "There are no problems on the estate, they're just giving it a bad name. They use extremes, but most people here are all right" (Saleem 20).[88] Such problems form the basis of *Shameless*, although the Gallagher family, in spite of their foibles, emerge as angelic in light of the neighboring Maguires—an extremely violent family of drug dealers. While moral distinctions between the two families surface early in the series, their lives become increasingly intertwined and,

[87] Lefebvre's spatial triad is especially fascinating in regards to imagined spaces. The notion of conceived space can be powerful enough to produce social relations of space, leading to a tangible experience of space in the minds of the viewer.

[88] However, police reports from the area reveal Gorton to be a hotbed of criminal activity, with a history of drug problems and violent crime to such a degree that local neighborhood watch programs have transformed into social mercenaries.

despite their actions which devolve into mafia-style murder, the Maguire family becomes resoundingly humanized as the series progresses. It might be argued that such a humanizing effect was Abbott's intention, but such an assumption is hard to sustain in light of the family's actions. What does seem more likely is the assimilationist effect of the space itself as it acts on both families in a manner similar to the space Colin MacInnes presented in *Mr Love & Mr Justice*. In this context, social conditions serve to assuage subtle intra-class distinctions, with the estate acting as a barometer for social expectations.

The spatial aesthetics of *Shameless* build upon a series of tropes developed in the 1950s and 1960s but advances them in a way that mirrors the post-modern exaggeration seen in Milward's *Apples*. However, as Glen Creeber has commented, the show's working-class authenticity is brought into question through its self-conscious willingness to undermine and reject objective realities, demonstrated by the show's central patriarch Frank Gallagher who, through his alcohol-fueled disorientation, fails to provide a concrete, fixed perspective on the nature of the estate (432). Nonetheless, the effect produced is one of aesthetic instability in that, at times, the show appears as exploitative and guilty of commodifying working-class identity while, at other times, authenticity merges with pathos to transcend the past aesthetics of working-class representation to innovate in a way befitting of Channel 4's remit. Yet, the visual rhetoric of *Shameless* is driven by desaturated tones that bolster the grim appearance, using reality-TV-style shaky camera effects to help communicate decrepitude and disarray. Camera angles are often unflinching in a way that underscores the show's name, providing a voyeuristic effect of

"looking in" to the characters' world—a world often characterized by graphic depictions of sex, violence, and drug abuse, although far more comic than those represented in *Naked*. Whereas a show like *Benefits Street* uses visual rhetoric to situate its subjects as social detritus, *Shameless* tends to focus more on the ubiquity and repetition of the estate's architecture to highlight the shared poverty of Chatsworth's residents.

The name of the estate that hosts the bulk of *Shameless*' action acts as an ironic counter to the lavish Chatsworth Estate forty miles east that houses the sixteenth-century stately home. Furthermore, *Shameless'* estate can be virtually explored on the official Channel 4 website of the show through impressive technological rendering that underscores the way the environment itself is fetishized for commercial gain. Whereas the website is graphically savvy, the space is littered with burned-out vehicles, parts of bicycles, a smashed-up "outdoor donation unit," and various other artifacts that have clearly been destroyed by acts of violence. As a result, the rhetoric of the space is communicated quickly and effortlessly; with minimal effort, the Chatsworth Estate is presented as an apocalyptic wasteland in which violence, crime, and destruction are the norm. The homes are prefab Airey and BISF constructs—homes built in the post-war period to assist with the housing crisis and only designed to last ten years at most. The houses of Chatsworth Estate are evidently past their sell-by date, but, notably, front doors serve to distinguish one household from another. Thatcher's "Right to Buy" scheme represented one of the conservative government's policies that promoted the way British identities could be elevated—through the ability to purchase one's home rather than rent. Once a home was purchased, standard restrictions imposed by landlords were lifted,

meaning that a resident could signal their ownership—and therefore their Britishness—by replacing standard-issue council windows and front doors, or by painting the facade to add a personal touch. While the homes on Chatsworth Estate are largely indistinguishable, placing residents on relatively equal economic turf, social markers and attempts at self-elevation can be determined. For example, number four and five of Anchor Way both sport front doors that stand in contrast to neighboring front doors ordinarily associated with prefab construction. While the message transmitted through such gestures speaks of intra-class hierarchies, the fact that these houses still look out onto the same shared space of trash and torched vehicles underscores the inefficacy of such efforts. The four shops present in what would best be described as the estate's square, are boarded up. The Chatsworth Fryer however—a restaurant that appears to serve a complex menu of British, Chinese, Italian, American, and Indian food (according to its partially torn-down sign)—appears to be open for business. Similarly, Chesco—the off-license liquor store offers "news & mags, food & drink" as well as a "cash converter" to emphasize the priorities of the estate it serves. The shop window displays the remains of three poster frames that appear to advertise a lottery with the offer to "play here." The fact that the posters themselves are missing, reinforces the message that there will be no winners on Chatsworth. While much of the show's depiction of the estate resembles this particular space, it also reminds the viewer that such spaces are utterly anonymous due to their ubiquity—the estate looks just like any poverty-ridden council estate anywhere in the UK.

As can be seen, one of the most significant features of a show like *Shameless* is the degree by which it relies upon background, environment, and assumptions of class stereotypes to do much of the narrative heavy lifting. However, when traditional approaches to narrative are reinforced by narratives based on environmental stereotypes and behavioral assumptions, the show's objectives are made clear. While the plot of *Shameless* is often driven by stereotypes of classed behavior, the show doubles down on such stereotypes by allowing the setting to tell similar narratives in a manner that suggests overdetermination. While the origins of overdetermination can be traced to Freud's discussion of simultaneous causal events on the psyche, David William Foster has defined the term as referring to "a complex of features and strategies of texts that constitute emphasis added to its constituents" (14). For Foster, the function of overdetermination in representation serves to create the desired narrative image with utmost efficiency, limiting the scope of interpretation and guaranteeing that the impression will be received as transmitted. Foster adds that "Trivial cultural texts like advertising, popular songs, greeting card verse, political speeches, religious sermons, most television programming, and the bulk of Hollywood movies . . . are thus viewed, at least by cultural sophisticates, to be ideologically manipulative and therefore pacifying" (15). In this sense, we can read the visual rhetoric of the Chatsworth Estate as symbolically coercive and literal. Nonetheless, overdetermination also functions to capitalize on diverse interests, most specifically seen in advertisements in which technical choices are made to appeal to wider interests than what the product would ordinarily allow for, acting as a kind of funnel effect and thus maximizing the potential for sales.

Foster develops his original position, adding that "overdetermination is balanced with strategies of ambiguity deployed in conjunction with the premise that meaning is, in any event, intrinsically ambiguous, which is why overdetermination is necessary in the first place" (15). While I would argue that in a show like *Shameless*, there is little ambiguity about the subject matter itself, the ambiguity function is perceptible through the different ways that viewers consume the show. For some viewers, the mixed styles of the front doors featured in the estate would suggest intra-class subdivisions; for other viewers, such details are little more than an attempt to make the most of dire straits. Overdetermination, then, functions not only as a way to funnel diverse worldviews into a position in which the show's intended effects can be communicated without being misconstrued, but it can also be read as a way to maximize viewership and thus secure the show's financial stability and potential to exist as a product primed for export to international markets. In this regard, *Shameless* is a clever and a shameless example of the marketability of class identity. While the show should not be simply dismissed as gross exploitation as it does contain attributes worth celebrating, the way in which it mobilizes classed space reveals the way that perceptions about such aesthetic effects can be used to move working-class representation away from the balance of aesthetic and ethical objectives toward a model that will most likely ensure commercial success.

Conclusion

As mentioned prior, what this chapter reflects is less of a way to schematize motifs and tropes of working-class cultural production, and more of an attempt to extract

from one of the most authentic periods of class-based writing, a system of evaluation that grants greater clarity with regard to the nature of contemporary depictions of class. Given that working-class cultural production tends to engage contemporary social issues, evaluating motifs based on their spatial rather than their temporal function allows more expansive, less context-driven ways to gauge authenticity. Furthermore, by focusing on a body of work that manages to reconcile tensions inherent within its genre, comparisons can be made that grant new perspectives on class representation. The fact that working-class representation today veers more toward the exploitative than the authentic says more about the cultural moment than about the work under review. Focusing on spatial rather than temporal aesthetics grants perspective beyond the realm of the text itself, drawing attention to the way our understanding of class, in general, can be continuously refined and developed to better grasp the nature of social division. While the examples I have provided here represent a spectrum of readings, from the commercial of exploitation identifiable in a show like *Shameless*, to the kind of dedication to social interventions seen in films by directors such as Mike Leigh, it should be noted that for every instance of commodification of class identity, another instance materializes to counter it. Whereas many cultural identities, once commodified, lose their charge forever (punk, for example), working-class culture remains perennially unstable and dynamic, meaning that for every example of gross commercialism that it produces, there will always be room for authenticity. In this regard, class representation will remain forever fluid, but we might be advised to look back to the models that worked well and rely on them as guides as to where future representations might head next.

Coda: Aesthetic/Ethical Balance and the Limits of Representation

In an early draft of an unpublished article, a seventy-eight-year-old Alan Sillitoe commented on his authorial responsibility: "to reach those people about whom I was writing, and to write for everyone else as well of course." In order to reach his intended audience, he cites the importance of writing simply and clearly—"to eschew any experimentation with language, or be tempted into unnecessarily complicated structures." He adds that "I never put in a political message, yet hoped the stories or novels would, somewhere, carry a moral message, or at least persuade the reader, by the end of an albeit tragic work, that the world had after all some hope to offer" ("Responsibility"). Like many of the figures involved with the kitchen sink movement, Sillitoe's aesthetic and ethical calibration centered on fidelity, representing working-class lives respectfully. But fictional representation has a contentious relationship with fidelity. In *The Country and the City*, Raymond Williams discusses the "knowable community" and "structures of feeling" in which novels function to organize culture. Referring to texts by writers such as Jane Austin and George Eliot, Williams suggests that the role of realist fiction is to schematize culture, with the novel serving as a way to collate data as a kind of sensory time capsule. On the one hand, kitchen sink cultural production accomplished such a task successfully; on the other, the movement's key tropes never really went out of style, suggesting a distinction between the traditional realist mode and the style advanced by post-war writers.

While this dissertation has argued that the texts of the kitchen sink realism movement index the shift from monolithic working-class solidarity to more individual,

atomized articulations of class, it is critical to note that such shifts reflect the rise of subculture rather than anticipating the 1980s return to neoliberal individualism. For much of the 1960s, youth subculture expanded, largely as a way to establish one's identity in contrast to others while responding to waves of post-war immigration also taking place at the time. Furthermore, almost all incipient youth subcultural movements reveal tangible ties to working-class culture, suggesting how cultural identities are just as susceptible to commodification as prominent subcultural identities. In this regard, subculture might be understood not just as an antipathy toward the status quo, but as a confrontation with social class writ large. As Clarke et al. note, subculture retains its position as part of the dominant culture while forging new ways expressing such a relationship through a "double articulation" from within (15). What the texts of the period present is a double articulation of working-class consciousness in which individual class identities alter yet retain many attributes associated with working-class traditions. One of the goals of this dissertation was to highlight the way cultural production of the period—especially, cultural production marginalized due to canonical bias—proves critical to comprehending how class is conceived and parsed in contemporary culture. I have argued how kitchen sink realism grants access to the lived experience often missing in understanding the way class is negotiated, so critics would be well-advised to revisit such texts—especially in light of porous class boundaries and the state of precarity that has become the norm in today's world. Doing so offers new insights into the way working-class culture is experienced as well as the way representation of cultural identities veer toward fetishization. However, to close this project, I want to resituate these texts within a

schematic literary history to fully emphasize their contribution to the arts and culture.

While it would be inelegant to position realism as simply a response to nineteenth-century Romanticism, the realist mode reflected literary trends dominant at the time that favored plot and spectacle. The realist novel's reliance on the more psychological aspects of character anticipated modernist experimentation and also inoculated literature against mass markets, producing a high-brow corpus that was anything but working-class. But as realist novels employed the most complex and textured representations of the human psyche possible, fictional interactions—often between characters stratified by class—allowed writers to develop interiority in new ways. For example, given the influence of his brother, the novels of Henry James reflect much of the realist impulse to analyze character relations and develop interiority. Characters like Isabel Archer and Gilbert Osmond resist stereotyping associated with more romantic or sentimental texts, producing instead characters often conflicted about their worldview and are therefore identifiable in their complexity. However, germane to kitchen sink realism's attempt to advance the realist mode, the spaces depicted in a text like *The Portrait of a Lady* tend to operate in a manner that resembles romantic and sentimental writing, often advanced as set pieces upon which character interactions can be carried out. It might be argued that the role of space in realist novels acts more as a symbolic set-piece than a realistic depiction of an environment. Whereas traditional realism's emphasis on characterization and interiority began through a heightening of character relations, as realism developed throughout the twentieth century, a more authentic interaction with space and environs is discernible.

The evolution of realism is telling in that it suggests attempts to recalibrate aesthetic and political imperatives, sliding the scale of the novel-as-art-object toward something with greater social impact in mind. As Rosa Mucignat has claimed, spatial representation in realist fiction served primarily as a stage for the action, but also as a technique by which to augment character. Given this, it can be understood how subsequent attempts to advance the realist mode might center on the role of space beyond that of the incidental, or what Roland Barthes referred to as superfluous images.[89] Such a development is traceable through the evolution of realism to naturalism, social realism, and, eventually, kitchen sink realism, but the evolutionary thrust is less of an opportunity to perfect the aesthetic form than it is to transform the novel alongside cultural shifts, granting the aesthetic a political edge that reflects the contextual moment.

The emergence of naturalism, however, deemphasizes psychologized interiority by incorporating the landscape further, allowing for a more recognizable set of relations based upon lived experience. The naturalism pioneered by Émile Zola, most recognizable in the work of writers such as Thomas Hardy, was driven more by the cultural impact of Darwinism and social factors related to environment than just by human interactions. The result was a study of cause and effect in which characters placed into social environs produced new sociocultural awareness. While echoes of romanticism are detectable in this gesture—specifically concerning the meditative impact of nature on the psyche—naturalism often sidestepped the idyllic, focusing on the spread of industry and the burden of factory life on the worker. The naturalism of writers like Thomas Hardy and

[89] See Barthes' 1968 essay "The Reality Effect" in *The Rustle of Language*, pp. 141–148.

George Gissing moved depiction away from traditional narrative structures, relying on ominously indifferent space to fortify narrative function. In this respect naturalism remained very much an academic endeavor—one driven by and aimed at a socially-elevated audience, rendering the mode's allegiance to aesthetic objectives clear.

But whereas naturalism sought to advance a previous realism by shifting the focus from free will toward a deterministic viewpoint, the bourgeois nature of the exercise casts a shadow of illegitimacy over the project, and social realism emerged as the result. In general terms, social realism and naturalism adopt similar strategies of representation—specifically the ramifications of the environment on the human psyche. The merit, however, is discernable in social realism's goal in which political objectives were elevated to match those of aesthetics. As Samantha Lay has pointed out, drawing any firm distinction between social realism and naturalism is tricky because social realism "is both politically and historically contingent" (8)—meaning that definition requires revision as time goes on. In this regard, the way to determine a work of social realism in contrast to traditional realism or perhaps naturalism is to focus on the writers' intent and to discern the degree of political aspiration involved in the work. Given this, social realism demonstrates an increased politicization of the aesthetic imperatives associated with realism and naturalism.

However, when texts adopt such political objectives, they have the capacity to border on pamphleteering and propaganda, losing sight of the aesthetic origins of literary production. twentieth-century social realist texts address such concerns by merging aspects of realism and naturalism in a way that reflects a discursive relationship with

working-class issues in a meaningful way. Kitchen sink realism—arguably a subset of social realism—tends to fine-tune such concerns by focusing the plot around domestic spaces and its immediate environs. While social realism is especially attuned to spatial concerns, kitchen sink realism tends to focus the lens even more, opting for specific environments against which to develop its narrative. In doing so, such texts avoid political proselytizing but align the political with the aesthetic by revealing social conditions of the time to raise awareness. Whereas social realism lacked specific locational grounding, the increased emphasis on space in kitchen sink texts supplements the political dimension lost to either the aesthetic privileging of naturalism or the overt politicization of social realism. In other words, kitchen sink texts recalibrate the political and the aesthetic, yet maintain tension between the two in that kitchen sink texts operate on an aesthetic level but are political in nature, democratizing representation to reflect the strata of British citizenry, often enacting direct social change in the process. Arguably, kitchen sink texts can be seen as a high point of realist representation in terms of the spatial and cultural make-up—one in which historical factors are captured, situating kitchen sink texts as discursive forms of realism most effective in their historical context.

Throughout this project, I have argued that a once-monolithic class consciousness disarticulates in the post-war years, partially as a consequence of ongoing transformations of classed social space. The transformation toward more autonomous, contingent expressions of class reflect the growth of subcultures—which, I have suggested, makes class identity susceptible to commodification. This becomes a problem of representation in that commercially-driven cultural production tends to resort to stereotyping classed

identities, stoking class antagonism in the process. While the goal of this project has been to raise such concerns—in addition to providing a model by which we might assess the legitimacy of contemporary working-class representation—authentic, ethically driven working-class cultural production continues. Unlike most subcultural phenomena that become caricatures over time, working-class culture persists as a dynamic, vital identity. While class is currently seeing an academic resurgence of interest given the nature of political upheavals underway, in spite of clear attempts to commodify aspects of working-class life, as a culture, it remains intact. Furthermore, the notion of working-class solidarity—despite my proclamation of its dispersion—remains constant, albeit in different articulations and formations, preserving its subversive potential to contest dominant power relations. If class is gauged today more as a series of power relations than economic data, then cultural production is well-suited for analyzing such a phenomenon.

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