

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

WORK IT: THE CREATION OF ANGRY YOUNG SPACES IN
NORTHERN SOUL MUSIC AND KITCHEN SINK DRAMA

by
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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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This thesis presents a comparative reading between Northern Soul music and kitchen sink drama and literature in working class contexts in 1950s and 1960s Northern England. Conducting the reading on different genres of texts will allow for a more thorough and inclusive understanding of the working class pop and literary cultures in postwar Britain. The reading will allow for a better understanding of the different private spaces that the working class in postwar Britain has created for itself, and how the subcultural identity of the angry young man articulates similar and different practices and understandings of race, power and gender between the dancefloor and the literary text.

The introduction will provide the sociopolitical background of Britain in the 1950s and 1960s, followed by Chapter 1 where the literature review will be presented along with a summary of some of the major critical paradigms to be used, mainly those of hegemony and private spaces. Chapter 2 will focus on three major kitchen sink plays: John Osborne's *The Entertainer* and *Look Back in Anger* and Shelagh Delaney's *A Taste of Honey*. The theme of anger will be the major focus, especially in the ways it defines and create the working class protagonists' different private spaces as different reactions to the socioeconomic status quo. These spaces will be then be compared to the space that is the dancefloor in Northern Soul venues, from the dancing techniques to the dynamics that helped define the subcultural identity of dancers and fans. The comparative reading will follow more thoroughly in Chapter 3, drawing on two major Northern Soul songs that will be lyrically analyzed and compared to a major kitchen sink novel: John Braine's *Room at the Top*. In this conclusive chapter, social mobility, or lack thereof, will be examined and compared across the different private spaces between the working class literature and the Northern Soul dancefloor, with specific attention to the issue of race as a major component of the formation of postwar British white working class.

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To my mother Loubna, who made me from scratch...

INTRODUCTION WHAT IS IT GOOD FOR? A PREFACE

When the Education Act passed in 1944 Britain, the working class had unprecedented access to education opportunities. Poor scholarship teenagers who had previously avoided risking their jobs and pursuing their literary passion finally got the push they had always needed thanks to full employment and less working hours. Since then, Britain has witnessed a proliferation of working class literature in different genres.

In *The Reconstruction of the Post-War Working Class*, Blackwell and Seabrook note how the process of reconstitution “that was already under way, and which ejected a whole group of individuals whose marginal, and sometimes tormented, relationship to these changes compelled them to express experiences in which they were both agents and victims (89). Such working class cultural products have been the subject of different critical studies of sociology, advanced by the likes of Raymond Williams and Ingrid Von Rosenberg.

In his *Working-Class, Proletarian, Socialist: Problems in Some Welsh Novels*, Raymond Williams notes the mere breakthrough of publishing a novel about the working class of the time, describing it as “a significant and positive cultural intervention” (111). The subject of these works, being the working class itself, and coupled with the working class background of the authors, are two major components that, for Williams, differ from “objective realist fiction [and] the bourgeois mode” (116). The significance of British writers’ working class background in the 1950s is further noted in Rosenberg’s *Militancy, Anger and Resignation; Alternative Moods in the Working-Class Novel of the 1950s and Early 1960s*. The author notes that “it is a highly significant phenomenon if the bulk of working-class literature in a certain period is written by people from that class. Since they

can be regarded as in some way the voice of self-representation of the class, these works form an interesting subject for literary sociological research (146).

Accordingly, attempting to discuss these works should start with their corresponding cultural, societal and political background, in order to perform a thorough understanding of their cultural value. For the purpose of this thesis, two major movements that emerged in postwar Britain will be analyzed: the working class literature, known as kitchen sink drama which emerged in 1956, and Northern Soul music, which emerged in 1963 in working class areas in Northern England.

While the literature about kitchen sink drama on the one hand and Northern Soul music on the other hand is abundant, works that have attempted to compare these two movements, in any way, do not exist, despite the common chronological and social factors. It is the purpose of this thesis to introduce a unique reading and comparison of the two movements in many ways, to show how the working class music and literature in postwar Britain articulate and share similar practices and understandings of power, class, race and gender, as means of expressing their socioeconomic status and challenging the status quo.

In Chapter 1, I will introduce the historical and political context of postwar Britain and investigate how it helped define and shape the emerging working class literature and pop culture of the time. Then I will present the theoretical framework of this thesis, where I will be defining notions of hegemony, private spaces and the Black Atlantic.

In Chapter 2, I will use these notions to perform close and comparative readings of three canonical working class plays in 1950s postwar Britain: *A Taste of Honey* by Shelagh Delaney, *The Entertainer* and *Look Back in Anger* by John Osborne. Although the working class literary output continued to exist until the late 1960s, it is the purpose of the thesis to

choose the earliest trendsetters of the movement due to overlapping and common political, socioeconomic and racial content. Later kitchen sink literary texts, such as Nell Dunn's *Poor Cow* (1968) and Eliot George's *The Leather Boys* (1964), mainly cover notions and issues that are not the (only) focus of the thesis, such as sexuality and feminism, in addition to the time different with respect to the emergence of the movement.

This said, the political, socioeconomic and racial content of the chosen primary texts will be discussed, where I will use Gramsci's notions of hegemony and private spaces to see how the chosen literary works reflect similar and/or different anti-hegemonic practices within the political and social context of the working class. This reading will help understand the formation of spaces of working class literature protagonists, and will further explore the different characteristics and notions that define these spaces differently across the literary texts. Furthermore, the different private spaces will evidently reflect different understandings and reactions to the official dominant, i.e. hegemonic, culture that surrounds the protagonists.

The notion of private spaces will help introduce the Northern Soul dancefloor, which will be the main focus in Chapter 3. Applying the same paradigms used in the previous chapter will allow for a comparative reading of the dancefloor as the private space of the Northern Soul fan, in order to start drawing similarities and differences between the anger on the dancefloor and the anger in the plays from Chapter 2. It will be shown how, and to which extent, the dancefloor successfully expresses and reflects a rejection of the official music culture, i.e. hegemony, which consists of otherwise commercial and mainstream music as opposed to the rarity and scarcity that defined Northern Soul songs. This particular comparison will be mainly performed on two major Northern Soul songs,

using their lyrics. The comparison of private spaces will follow more thoroughly with respect to the success, or lack thereof, of social mobility that the working class individual is seeking and/or fulfilling on the dancefloor and in kitchen sink drama. Owing to the racial complexity of Northern Soul song as African American music that is consumed by a white audience in Northern England, the aspect of social mobility on the dancefloor will also have racial significance in this chapter where it will be compared to socioeconomic endeavors of middle-class black individuals in the United States on the other hand.

The theme of social mobility will constitute an opening for the last chapter, where I will use a major kitchen sink novel that was published in the 50s: *Room at The Top* by John Braine. The analysis will focus on social mobility among working class individuals and the different means of expression of their social and economic endeavors within their spaces. Furthermore, Chapter 4 will discuss the racial component of Northern Soul music and compare its particularities to some major black movements in the United States of America of the time. Such reading will allow for a more complex understanding of postwar Britain working class.

CHAPTER 1

LANDSLIDE: POSTWAR BRITAIN

This chapter will present the theoretical framework of the thesis in order to perform thorough close readings of the primary texts involved. The paradigms to be discussed below will be used to promote a better understanding of the working class literary output in postwar Britain, I will draw specific attention to the formation of private spaces in kitchen sink drama that are mainly triggered by class differences and that seemingly articulate a rejection of the ruling class pop culture.

For this particular purpose, the theoretical output on the class component of popular culture, in addition to Gramsci's theory of hegemony will be of significant value. Together, these two paradigms will allow for a more thorough study of kitchen sink drama as a literary and cultural output that emanates from the working class socioeconomic status and expresses particular views towards the ruling class. The same will follow for the literature that surrounded Northern Soul music and which gave particular attention to the component of class as a defining aspect against the mainstream ruling music.

In *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels write that "the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas" and that "the class which has the means of material production at its disposal has control at the same time over the means of mental production" (176). While these ideas express the dominant material relationships and social lives of their corresponding subjects/individuals, they maintain the ruling class by sustaining social inequality. The nature of this inequality places the economic component at the base of every outcome. The economic structure is, for Marx, the "real foundation on

which rises a legal and political structure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness” (Marx, 389).

Among the cultural outcomes that Gramsci refers to in the second of volume of his *Prison Notebooks* (1975) is music, and more particularly, his reference to Verdi’s operas where he sees them as an “extraordinarily fascinating way of feeling and acting, a means of escaping what [the people] consider low, mean and contemptible in their lives and education in order to enter a more select sphere of great feelings and noble passions” (378).

The significance and implication of pop culture, as Gramsci puts it, is applicable on the working class in England as much as the upper class in Italy. Opera fans seek their own space (the sphere) as means of escapism away from everything they resent. This direct effect of economy on cultural trends is, for Gramsci, a relationship of mutual exchange between class and culture. The dominant culture is referred to by Raymond Williams as the “knowable community”, in his *The Country and the City* (1975). Williams refers to knowable communities as spaces where people’s relationships are familiar and knowable to the public, thus minimizing the alienation factor to the greatest extent (206-207).

The official culture, as Gramsci considers, characterizes what he refers to as “hegemony”, which is the social order and process through which one culture dominates and transmits its set of beliefs and practices across its surroundings. In her *Gramsci’s Concept of Egomania* (1960), Gwyn A. Williams gives a concise, yet fulfilling account of the notion of hegemony as a social order in which “a certain way of life and thought is dominant [and] diffused throughout society in all its institutions and private manifestations, informing with its spirit all taste, morality, customs, religious and political principals, and all social relations, particularly in their intellectual and moral connotations.” (17).

Hegemony thus occurs when one social group dominates another and accordingly, the ideological beliefs and practices of the former prevail.

In addition to the class component, the notion of race in the working class popular and literary cultures will be significantly discussed, especially when it comes to Northern Soul music which consisted of the consumption of rare African American soul records in underground venues in Northern England, after having been imported from record labels in the United States of America. The analysis will use Paul Gilroy's notion of the Black Atlantic, in order to give more significance to the geographical and racial complexities of Northern Soul music. Furthermore, Gilroy's work will also be used to address the black presence, albeit less obvious, in some of the kitchen sink drama texts that were chosen.

Gilroy's *Black Atlantic* challenges the static notion of race and argues against the homogeneous understanding of racial identities and racial nationalisms. Instead, Gilroy favors a shared and heterogeneous culture across different communities in Africa, Europe and American and describes race as a dynamic and active category that evolves with time and across space. The space, being the Atlantic, becomes one whole unit in a "transnational and intercultural perspective" (15). It is Gilroy's argument, however, that this kind of exchange often challenges the predominantly imposed cultural, social and political norms of societies.

The specificity of the modern political and cultural formation I want to call the Black Atlantic can be defined, on one level, through desire to transcend both the structures of the nation state and the constraints of ethnicity and national particularity. These desires are relevant to understanding political organizing and cultural criticism. They have always sat uneasily alongside the strategic choices forced on black movements and individuals embedded in national and political cultures and nation-states in America, the Caribbean, and Europe. (19)

Trying to establish Black cultures as an intrinsic component of their corresponding national cultures, Gilroy challenges paradigms that have often resulted in marginalizing the black people and misrepresented it as a subculture that is independent of an overall larger and more encompassing culture. For Gilroy, the Black travels that have made way for transnational cultural Diasporas result in what Du Bois refers to as Double Consciousness in his *The Souls of Black Folk*, an important component of the expressive culture of the Black Atlantic.

The term “double consciousness” term was originally coined to refer to the challenges of reconsidering an African heritage with a European upbringing in slavery. The first account of this dual experience is found in Wamba’s novel *Kinship* (1999) which presents its author’s own past experience and double identity of an American and an African individual having been brought up in Tanzania, and later attending Harvard University to finally settle in California.

The notion of the “double” soul and “two-ness” that DuBois refers to in his *The Soul of Black Folks* is consistent with Gilroy’s critique of the marginalizing attempts that race has undergone, attributing equal importance to both “sides” of the Atlantic, i.e. the American and the black individual.

It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (38)

The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife — this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He does not wish to Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and

Africa. He wouldn't bleach his Negro blood in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of opportunity closed roughly in his face. (94)

This multi-faceted perception of one's self creates what one may refer to as an identity that is often torn between its racial roots of color and burdens of former slavery, i.e. between Africa and the United States. This African American experience comes from a distorted understanding of the African cultural legacy, which can be traced back to American plantation systems where different African dialects have been mixed amidst different ethnicities, in attempt to undermine a unified racial cultural and belonging that would otherwise revolt.

In addition to mixing of dialects within the same plantation, Wamba mentions that slaves were not allowed to dance or use drums (89). The author's account of different practices that undermined the cultural legacy of Africans results in feelings of disconnections between both the American and the African cultures and challenges the somewhat naïve assumption that kinship is purely linked to race. Wamba's personal experience, alongside his family, to reconcile with the struggle makes way for the reader to understand DuBois' double consciousness on one hand, and deploy Gilroy's understanding of race as a culturally evolving notion that is always subject to change.

The experience of diaspora and dislocation from culture and history between Africa and America makes the Middle Passage that is the Black Atlantic a "cultural and political unit" (Gilroy, 49) across which complex identities form, a space and time frame that deploys different narratives and brings them together. The medium that "carries out" this

exchange is the slave ship, an archetype or emblem in Gilroy's book that takes the Middle Passage beyond notions of race, color and ethnicity:

I have settled on the image of ships in motion across the spaces between Europe, America, Africa, and the Caribbean as a central organizing symbol for this enterprise and as my starting point. The image of the ship – a living micro-cultural, micro-political system in motion – is especially important for historical and theoretical reasons. Ships immediately focus attention on the middle passage, on the various projects for redemptive return to an African homeland, on the circulation of ideas and activists as well as the movement of key cultural and political artefacts: tracts, books, gramophone records, and choir. (4)

This conceptual framing recalls earlier works that discuss intercultural globalization such as Edouard Glissant's notion of Antillanite in his *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays*, translated to English by J. Michael Dash in 1989, where he provides a complex and non-linear reading of cross-cultural relations between America, the Caribbean and Africa. Glissant uses the expression "true shapelessness of historical diversity" to denote the complex cultural and aesthetic effect of the cross-cultural relation across the Atlantic (258-259).

Perhaps another rendition of the Black Atlantic is what Roger Hewitt refers to as "black through white" syndrome which refers to the cultural dialogue takes place between white audiences and black cultural products, such as popular music, and how the identity of the black product changes when it is consumed by a white audience (31-32). The use of the expression "black through white" in this thesis will refer to the consumption of black products, i.e. African American Soul music, by white audiences, specifically the white working class in 1960s Northern England. The expression denotes how and if the black identity of this product is formed and fulfilled by its white consumers. As the analysis progresses and close readings follow, I will coin and use the expression "white through

black” which will refer to a process in the reverse direction, mainly in order to study the formation of the working class white identity through the cultural appropriation of African American records.

The “black through white” syndrome can be sharply observed in Dick Hebdige’s *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, because it traces how Jamaican cultural products acquired new values through their consumption by the white working class in London. The subject being early 1960s Britain, Hebdige brings forward the emergence of English skinhead styles as a youth style that embodies the history of “race relations”: the subculture of skinheadism consisted of young white working class Londoners who listened to African American soul and were greatly influenced by Jamaican music and fashion.

Another work by Hebdige, published in 1981, further examines this hybridity in postwar Britain and focuses on the social status and the identity of the working class of the time. In his *Skinheads and the Search for a White Working Class Identity*. Hebdige observes that skinheadism emerged in the working-class districts to the south and east of London, areas marked by protests in relation to gay politics and feminism, among many other social movements. As the author states, “the dance of the skin” has become a mime of masculinity “even for girls”. (28)

With a distinct sense of style of Doc Marten boots and tight jeans, the industrial working class was able to produce an image of its own, a cultural statement that is associated with the working white audience’s own interest in Jamaican and American soul music. Fans of skinhead style invested significant dance moves and all-nighters on Tuesday nights to enjoy authentic Jamaican and reggae recordings (Healy, 72), as is shown in *Gay Skins: Class Masculinity, and Queer Appropriation*. Here, black through white is clearly

enacted as black music is consumed by a particular white audience in a particular context of economy, fashion and dance which has come to redefine the product itself and to give the music new implications.

So involved was the white audience in black music that they came up with their own synthetic genre, combining reggae and skinheadism in what Marc Griffiths refers to as “skinhead reggae” in his *Boss Sounds: Classic Skinhead Reggae*. The emergence of Jamaican and reggae recordings has not only been signed, sealed and delivered by the ship across the Middle Passage, but it resulted in a reciprocating music movement which reflects the cultural and spatial complexity and hybridity of race: skinhead reggae became a subculture within the subculture of skinheadism.

Up north, working class individuals adopted different African American cultural products to coin their own cultural expression as well. Northern Soul is an English movement that fed on obscure African American soul records, which the white worker of Northern England would not only play and dance to, but also travel to often overlooked record labels (such as King, Federal, Cameo and Champion) across the Atlantic, to retrieve such records (Nowell, 19).

The emergence of this movement and its expansion across northern England was in large part due to the efforts of British journalist Dave Godin, a dedicated and compulsive fan of Tamla Motown record label. Mojo Collections writer Chris Hunt recalls an interview with Godin, published in 2002, where he quotes the African American soul music fan:

I had started to notice that northern football fans who were in London to follow their team were coming into the store to buy records, but they weren't interested in the latest developments in the black American chart. I devised the name as a shorthand sales term. It was just to say 'if you've got customers from the north,

don't waste time playing them records currently in the US black chart, just play them what they like - 'Northern Soul'. (17)

The extent of Godin's involvement was highlighted in the Independent obituary on October 11th, 2011. Columnist Phil Johnson gives an account of Dave Godin's official position as the Tamla Motown ambassador and consultant in the UK, who helped transform popular culture in Britain through obscure African American recordings. Having been the co-owner of Soul City, the first specialist music record shop in Europe opened in 1967, Dave Godin compiled 4 album collections entitled "Deep Soul Treasures" which were issued under the British record label, Kent.

Godin's efforts were a stepping stone in the Northern Soul music scene. White DJs would so be influenced by Godin's travels and cross-Atlantic music endeavors that it was with utmost competition that they started travelling to the United States and retrieving records themselves. Dave Godin's Soul City articulates and embodies Gilroy's use of the ship archetype and Glissant's Middle Passage, unleashing further cultural exchange with even more complex racial components.

In his *Long After Tonight is All Over* (1982), Stuart Cosgrove refers in particular to African American soul Jimmy Radcliffe's song of the same title, recorded in 1964, and that had become one of the major Northern Soul anthems in every single venue. The significance of the song lies not only in its status as an anthem, but also as one of the three pillar songs that conclude every all-nighter in the mid-1960s (38). Cosgrove's account of the immortality of the song is further asserted when the song was revived towards the late 70s, more than a decade later (38).

Cosgrove clearly states that if it were not for Detroit, such rare gems would not have seen the light and Northern Soul scene may not have existed to begin with. Not only does Cosgrove refer to Detroit as the “mythical capital of the scene” (40), but he also attributes religious significance to the cross-Atlantic DJ movement between both continents, comparing the long distances to “pilgrimages” and the Northern Soul venues to “shrines” (39). The focus later shifts to the spatial significance of the venues when Cosgrove refers to the utopian nature of the closed space, especially with drug abuse, DJ cults and allegiances with the dancers (42).

Other later works give a more historical account of the Northern Soul scene, with emphasis on its cultural significance in postwar Britain, among the youth. Iain Chambers, in his *Urban Rhythms: Pop Music and Popular Culture* (1985), traces what can be called an American Invasion of popular music charts in Britain back to 1956. According to Chambers, the British youth’s fascination with African American recordings initiated a two-way cultural exchange across the Atlantic, noting that “U.S musical forms were taken up and eventually translated into British cultural concerns, later becoming an integral part of British pop. In this two-way traffic, the ‘America’ displayed in the teddy boy style, the Elvis fan, or the later rhythm and blues and soul fanatic, had a lot to say about British popular culture” (23).

Another reading reveals the not so coincidental fact that the first Northern Soul venue, the Twisted Wheel, originally opened its doors as a Beatnik coffee shop, invested mainly in the Beat and Mod pop culture, as featured in Dave Haslam’s *Manchester, England: The Story of The Pop Cult City* (1999). Haslam attributes major significance to the industrial component that came to affect pop culture in Manchester. From a “famed and

feared industrial city in the world”, Manchester has soon become a city marked by pop music and football (Preface x): these two components had even more in common, as Dave Godin coined the term Northern Soul after Manchester football players started coming to his shop from the North, asking for obscure African American soul recordings (1).

Haslam’s note on this shift takes into consideration the cultural emergence of punk, with which emerged a different commercial musical infrastructure that is “less corporate than London” (260). This particular differentiator with respect to the city/capital has also created “a tradition [and] job” that pertained solely to Manchester industry workers. Despite the industrial shift in Manchester and the emergence of a new pop culture scene, North and South remained separated. Richard Lester, in his *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964), notes the Beatles’ trip from Liverpool to London, where they would be able to appear on television. This trip strongly reflects a significant geographical and spatial segregation that presents London as the best opportunity for success at the time.

Emerging movements such as Northern Soul, have had their impact on the music industry, challenging the official pillar that London used to portray. Kate Milestone, in her *Regional Variations: Northernness and New Urban Economies of Hedonism* (1996), identifies a “rebellion against mainstream culture as well as a negotiation of the *spacialisation* of this resistance” (99). The core of the music industry culture no longer became restricted to London, and while the Beatles had to travel from the country to the city to appear on television, Manchester started developing its own cultural image, with independent record labels and venues that echoed all outside London.

For Milestone, such cultural production and lifestyle changes reflect a widespread rejection of London’s dominance in the music industry and other cultural products such as

arts, movies and fashion in the early 1960s (94). The power status quo has been challenged, and this made way for other pop culture scenes to emerge, further defining and differentiating Manchester in particular, and the North of England in general.

Milestone's contributions to the study of pop culture as a product are primarily found in her 1995 dissertation *The Production and Consumption of Pop Culture in the Contemporary City*, where she dedicates a whole chapter on the Northern Soul music scene. Entitled *Living in the Past: Northern Soul and the Production and Consumption of Place and Identity*, the chapter traces the history of Northern Soul venues in Manchester such as the Twisted Wheel club, the first Northern Soul venue to open its doors as early as 1963.

The subsequent analysis of Milestone accounts for previously mentioned issues such as those of travel and pilgrimage, drug (ab)use and the northerners' quest to own a different type of culture and scene. Drawing on different interviews with DJs from the scene, such as Dean Johnson, Milestone found that Northerners wanted to challenge the commercial and mainstream pop culture, which is why they did not go to the same source, but actually looked elsewhere. "Nobody wanted to see the Temptations", said Johnson to Milestone. They "wanted to be neat sharp [and] urban" (124).

The Northern subculture was a response not only to the commercial and mainstream African American soul music, but more importantly to British rock that was centered in London, albeit with suburban origins. Chambers' *Urban Rhythms* (1985) characterizes Northern Soul, first and foremost, as a music philosophy that not only dug into obscure African American music labels, but that also came to define a current of its own that

brought together white working class teenagers under specific repertoires, dance movements and “sartorial” rules (146).

Such rules were coupled with social judgements against fellow citizens in London, even by key figures in the Northern Soul scene, such as the late Tony Wilson, commonly referred to as Mr. Manchester. A former broadcaster and record label owner in Northern England, Wilson’s views on the dominant UK industry are, to say the least, not friendly. In his 2002 *From Joy Division to New Order: The True Story of Anthony H. Wilson and Factory Records*, Mick Middles conveys Wilson’s famous perception of London labels owners as “those bastards from London” (224).

Commercial music fans from London were not the only ones who were looked down upon. Among the subcultures themselves, racial complications surfaced, as noted by George Marshall in his *Spirit of 69: A Skinhead Bible* where the author uses the testimony of a black skinhead called Darryl, who was torn between two extremes: skinheads who disown him because of his color, and black people who disowned him because of his music taste (122).

Just like Marshall retraces the revival of punk through more modern Jamaican records towards the late 70s (199), Milestone confirms the longevity of working class subcultures in Northern England as accomplished through travel (124). The current revival culture of Northern Soul music takes places beyond the movement’s original space, encompassing different cities in England overall, which takes away the racial and societal roots of the movement. Here, Northern Soul becomes homeless in a sense that is not located in a fixed space in the present, and void of any class or race signifi- cance (129). This sense of homelessness is already enhanced due to the obscure and overlooked nature of this

escapist scene, but seems to overlook the rather complex issues of class and race that characterized the Northern Soul movement.

In their 1999 *Last Night A DJ saved my life*, Brewster and Broughton describe the Northern Soul scene as one that has been “long ignored and treated with contempt by the sophisticates of music journalism and London club land, allowing it to develop largely undisturbed and unobserved” (77). The authors associate the underground nature of the scene not only with rare and previously unreleased American soul records, but also with the drug habits.

Brewster and Broughton’s account of Northern Soul as “music that the rest of the world had forgotten” (78) insinuates an overall neglect and lack of acknowledgment of the working class individual of Northern England. Furthermore, the current account of Northern Soul music as a mere genre ignores and overlooks the cultural complexity of the movement and the crucial component of class. The homelessness of Northern Soul undermines the importance of space that the working class was able to create for itself in the early 1960s and further marginalizes this community by overlooking its major contribution to the scene.

CHAPTER 2

WHAT HAPPENED TO YESTERDAY?

This chapter will briefly introduce the literary background and political context of working class literature in postwar Britain, which emerged in 1956 and became known as kitchen sink drama. The subject of this literary output is predominantly working class individuals who exhibit anger and rejection with respect to their societal and political contexts, and they have come to be defined as “angry young men”. For this purpose, I will perform a close reading of the angry young characters in the three pivotal works mentioned in the introduction and trace similarities and contrasts between the different forms and implications of their anger. The close reading will take place through defined paradigms in order to relate the theme of anger to its socioeconomic context.

A. Dust My Broom: Postwar Anger and the Working Class

Only two years after the Second World War ended, 800,000 cases of unemployment were documented in Britain, after Britain had depleted its financial resources and accumulated debts of 3000 million pounds (23). The majority of the British population held jobs as small shopkeepers, publicans, factory and mine workers (41). In his *British Society since 1945*, Marwick examines the different social and political repercussions of Britain’s participation in WWII and the subsequent reforms that dealt with its socioeconomic repercussions. Different bills saw the light, none of which was able to restore Britain to its pre-war prosperity.

When the Labor party came to power in 1945, one of its main missions was to establish a “national health service, adequate state pension, family allowances and near-full employment.” (75). Judt’s *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* accounts for different reforms and bills such as the full employment policy that would pay family allowances among all classes, for every child they have. The National Insurance Bill would also grant “financial aid for work capable individuals, against possible illness and unemployment” (73), which has been further lifted the hopes of the working class in bettering their lives.

As the National Insurance Bill was not enough in the case of emergencies, the Labor party implemented further changes, especially by passing the National Assistance Act in 1948, which tackled particular communities in England, mainly the homeless, the handicapped and single mothers, by providing them different services such as shelter, healthcare and public transport. These promising changes were deemed “inefficient” however, as implementation often neglected or was unable to access those who needed it the most (Marwick, 53).

Further economic changes were to take place, especially that power supplies were cut, as a result of the unprecedented decrease of industrial production. The government decided to claim ownership over different industries in the country such as “coal, iron and steel industries, road haulage, the railways and public utilities such as gas and electricity” (Davies and Sinfield, 3). In their *British Culture of the Postwar: An Introduction To Literature and Society 1945 – 1999*, Davies and Sinfield refer to the transfer of ownership to the state as “mixed economy”, one that the Labor party had hoped would bridge the gap between the working and middle class in postwar Britain.

After the Labor party's defeat in 1951, and the British invasion of the Suez Canal in 1956, began the "angry decade", as a cultural and societal movement that responded to futile postwar reforms that did not meet the public's needs and expectations. The significance of the political context, from the Suez Canal invasion and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), is articulated by Gamini in his in his *Introduction to English Drama*. Gamini argues "these political events left many people in England, especially among the younger generation, embittered and disillusioned about the possibilities of individual political action within existing political institutions" (29).

Literature, and mainly theatre, was a well of anger expressed by different playwrights of the time. According to Hoggart in his *The Use of Literacy*, the angry playwright did not necessarily belong to the working class, but rather identified with their problems and sympathized with their hardship (239). Hoggart's thorough and lengthy use of metaphors describes the working class angry man and conveys the roots of his anger as he moves from adolescent years to the work industry.

He is unhappy in a society which presents largely a picture of disorder, which is huge and sprawling, not limited, ordered and centrally-heated; in which the toffee apples are not accurately given to those who work hardest nor even the most intelligent: but in which disturbing imponderables like 'character', 'pure luck', 'ability to mix' and 'boldness' have a way of tipping the scales. This world, too, cares much for recognizable success, but does not distribute it along the lines on which he has been trained to win. He would be happier if he cared less, if he could blow the gaff (i.e. talk and express loudly) for himself on the world's success values.

Hoggart's account for this state of anger reflects general dissatisfaction towards the government reforms in postwar Britain, and became typical of the dystopian state that does not credit those who work hardest or are the most intelligent. The disdain would not wait long after the war. Orwell's *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937) set the tone of later playwrights and novelists of kitchen sink drama and made it possible to establish a "liberal world-view [and] socially attentive writing" (13). In fact, many earlier works by Orwell have particularly influenced postwar novelists and playwrights. Raymond Williams himself recognizes Orwell's contribution to the working class literature when discussing *The Road to Wigan Pier*. Williams describes it as "an essay on class and socialism" (12). While autobiographical in nature, Orwell's book depicted the working class communities' hardships in Northern England, where he was meant to observe and document the conditions of the working class. However, Orwell's outcome and personal documentation in the work may have triggered negative responses and has been seen by many as inhumane and demeaning. For example, his description of a working class woman he sees from the train is as follows:

At the back of one of the houses a young woman was kneeling on the stones, poking a stick up the leaden waste-pipe which ran from the sink inside and which I suppose was blocked. I had time to see everything about her - her sacking apron, her clumsy clogs, her arms reddened by the cold. She looked up as the train passed, and I was almost near enough to catch her eye. She had a round pale face, the usual exhausted face of the slum girl who is twenty-five and looks, forty, thanks to miscarriages and drudgery; and it wore, for the second in which I saw it, the most desolate, hopeless expression I have ever seen. (6)

In his *The Making of George Orwell*, Keith Alldritt points to the lack of "evidence of memorable contact with any member of the social group", i.e. the working class. (26).

This aspect of ambiguous, vague and unreliable writing was also a main reason behind the

emergence of kitchen sink drama, which aimed to clearly portray facts and living conditions vis-à-vis the disappointment and anger of the young working class. In his *Hurry On Down* (1953), John Wain expressed the disdain and disappointment that met the failure of societal and financial progresses in postwar Britain:

During the five years of combat, in which social and political arrangements have necessarily been stalemated, an undercurrent of discontent has been gathering - discontent with the England of the Thirties, with its luke-warm snobberies and social fossilizations, its dole-queues, its slumbering Empire, the general feeling that the country is like a gutter choked with dead leaves. The sweeping Labor victory of 1945 appeared to usher in a new revolution. I see no sign of that revolution ... I want hampering old conventions, particularly class distinctions, to be swept away. I want freedom, activity, adventure, and I do not see them in the society around me (57).

Such disappointment and realization were behind the rise of a new literature movement that embodied its pioneers' anger towards the status quo. In his *The Cambridge Introduction to Modern British Fiction, 1950-2000*, Dominic Head traces the roots of the 50s working class literature to the literary movement that challenged modernism. "The shared values of the central Movement writers, Amis, Davie, and Philip Larkin, were expressed as impatience with complexity, symbolism, and opacity. For Amis, it was retrograde to admire the modernists – Joyce, Woolf, and Proust all attracted his disapproval" (50).

Aiming for more straightforward, simple and clear writing, the 1950s witnessed "the rise of a new generation of writers, directors, and artists opposed to what they saw as the innate conservatism of the political and cultural establishment" (140). Protagonists of these works are working class individuals who face the hardships of their communities and struggle to fulfill the bare minimum level of a decent life. In his *The Angry Decade*,

Kenneth Allsop enumerates different qualities that the angry man possesses such as “irreverence, stridency, impatience with tradition, vigor, vulgarity, sulky resentment against the cultivated and a hard boiled muscling-in on culture, adventurousness, self-pity, deliberate disengagement from politics, fascist ambitions, schizophrenia, rude dislike of anything phoney or fey, a broad sense of humour but low on wit” (Allsop, 18). The term has since signified a “new state of mind in the Britain of the Nineteen-Fifties” (12).

B. Every Day I have the Blues: Look Back In Anger

Perhaps the most loyal embodiment of the angry kitchen sink literature is John Osborne’s *Look Back in Anger*, first performed in 1957. The title of the play inspired the term “angry man” that came to define the working class drama movement that started in the late 50s until the late 60s. The protagonist, Jimmy Porter, is the typical angry man who set the tone of kitchen sink drama characters. Critic John Russell Taylor referred to the play as the “beginning of revolution in British theatre”. In his *John Osborne’s Look Back in Anger* (1968) Taylor refers to John Osborne as “the first of the angry young men and arguably the biggest shock to the system of British theatre since the advent of Shaw” (37). This revolution, as far as Raymond Williams is concerned, acquires another layer that he deems important: that of class. In his *New English Drama*, Williams views Osborne’s play as “the beginning of a revolt against orthodox middle-class drama” (27).

Angry Jimmy Porter, the protagonist, has become an icon of the working class youth of the time. He is a working class graduate student who works at a jazz club at night and co-owns a candy stall. He lives with his middle class wife Alison Porter in a cramped attic in the Midlands. The play opens on a Sunday afternoon, where Alison is ironing while

Jimmy is constantly criticizing and making fun of her societal background. In act 2, we soon discover that Alison is secretly pregnant, and her best friend, middle class Helena, has asked Alison's father to come and bring his daughter home. Act 3 opens on another Sunday afternoon: Alison had left with her father, and Helena is ironing in her stead, now in a relationship with Jimmy. The play ends on Alison's return, announcing she has lost the baby which makes Helena feel guilty about what she did. Helena leaves and Alison and Jimmy reconcile.

Throughout the play, the character of Jimmy Porter is in constant outburst mode, to say the least. Simply put, he is angry at almost everything, and the entirety of the play has other characters either victims of or witnesses to his outburst and abuse, even when they are not present. From Alison to Helena, to the Church and the Conservative Party, William Wordsworth (which Porter refers to as "Auntie Wordsworth") and people who are not fans of jazz.

To begin with, Porter believes that it is "pretty dreary [to live] in the American age [and] the Edwardian Age" (I.17). Helena, Alison's actress friend, finds Porter's anger quite "futile", claiming that "people like [him] have no place in sex, or politics, or anything" (III.ii.90). In his *Saints and Human Beings: Orwell, Osborne and Gandhi*, Carnall gives a thorough account of Porter's futility in the context of the working class youth, to argue that Porter finds himself futile is his environment, which is the main reason behind his state of anger.

This helplessness is as distinctive as the anger: much of the appeal originally made by the play clearly came from its driving, remorseless energy. But its deepest fascination comes from the association of this energy with a sense of futility. Energy usually needs a sense of effectiveness. *Look Back in Anger* contrives to

dispense with the need. In an increasingly bewildering world, it is an achievement calculated to awaken a response in many people". (130)

Alison's assessment of Porter's case in his reading of the angry young man recalls Hogart's comparison of Jimmy's madness to Luther's or Hitler's: anger is the only possibility of creativity and creation and it becomes "a necessary condition before a new identity, a new style of life can be discovered" (248-249). Samuel A. Weiss' *Osborne's Angry Young Play* (1960) questions Jimmy's ability to actually induce positive change in the society, as he "does appear submerged in futility, ineffectual in action and disengaged except in the confines of his garret" (285-288).

Jimmy himself blames an unknown influence or power for his futility where he goes on saying that "somebody has been sticking pins into [his] wax image for years" (III.i.76). Porter fits Hogart's description of the angry young man as he finds himself lost between university and career. With more than 16 thorough literary references throughout the play, Jimmy proves that he learnt so much, but can do so little because "the injustice is almost perfect! The wrong people going hungry, the wrong people being loved, the wrong people dying" (III.ii.94).

Osborne's prolific use of literary references through Jimmy not only represents the intellect of the working class, but also criticizes the middle class, embodied in Alison, with much satire. A noteworthy reference made by Jimmy is T.S Eliot's *Wasteland* at the very beginning of the play, which might well explain the choice of Jimmy's family name, Porter, by the playwright: "You bet you weren't listening. Old Porter talks and everyone turns over and goes to sleep. And *Mrs Porter* gets 'em all going with the first yawn". This satirical

reference not only concerns the middle classes then, but also the British literary product just after the First World War, of which Eliot's *Wasteland* remains a strong icon:

Oh the moon shone bright on Mrs Porter
And on her daughter
They wash their feet in soda water. (II.i.53-57)

Osborne's reference to lines 209-211 of Eliot's canonical work echoes the latter's satirical work with respect to the middle class. Through this reference, Osborne is criticizing the inherited notions and attitudes of the middle class, as they indulge in leisure and unnecessary pleasures (symbolized by washing their feet in soda water) while the working class, symbolized by *Old Porter*, has little to no value in society. Porter's constant reference to Alison's mother as "Mummy", the *Mrs Porter* who passed down her class and pleasures to her daughter, shows to which extent he despises the middle class and challenges it, even when it is not present around him.

The fact that Alison's mother is always mentioned but never materialized on stage is part of the invisible powers behind Jimmy's futility. Sarcastically, Jimmy is well aware that the feeling might as well be reciprocated: "Mummy and I took one quick look at each other, and, from then on, the age of chivalry was dead" (II.i.52), he says to Alison, using the words of Edmund Burke in his *Reflections* where he talks about the decay of France and Europe after the French Revolution.

C. Tainted Love: A Taste of Honey

The daring, straightforward and angry work of John Osborne was behind the rise of a whole new literary output that defined the working class of the time. Soon after the play

was first performed, Shelagh Delaney's debut play, *A Taste of Honey*, saw the light in 1958, taking Osborne's anger to another level: the angry young woman. The play explores complex social issues and advancing provocative content and opinions of race, feminism and sexuality.

A Taste of Honey tells the story of seventeen-year schoolgirl Jo, and her single mother Helen, a prostitute and an alcoholic. The events quickly unfold as the mother gets married to one of her guy friends, leaving Helen alone in an attic flat in Salford. An unexpected encounter with Jimmie, a black sailor who leaves Jo pregnant and never returns despite the promise ring he gave her. Geoffrey, a homosexual friend who has been kicked out of his flat because of his orientation, moves in with Jo and attends to her needs during the pregnancy. Their friendship deteriorates after Jo's mother returns which results in Geoffrey moving out. The play ends with Jo confessing to her mother that the baby might be black. Helen leaves for a drink, and the curtains close on Jo in labor pains.

Throughout the play, Jo's encounters and interaction with different characters have significant cultural and personal impact. As opposed to Jimmy, however, Jo rarely complains about her financial means and rather voices more "abstract" concerns, such as feminism and independence, which have surrounded the working class of the time. "Why should I slave away for anybody but me?" (Delaney, 40), asks Jo, merely exhibiting frustration, but rather a decision to live her life the way she wants against Helen's beliefs and predisposition to reluctantly accept and succumb to societal norms.

As Helen articulates this overall working class attitude of reluctance and indifference, comparing herself and her daughter to "drunken drivers" who are "at the steering wheel of [their] own destiny" (29), Jo's reaction seems to challenge that attitude,

especially as she sarcastically voices her opinion on motherhood and compares breastfeeding to “being eaten alive” as “a little animal [nibbles] away at [her]” (56).

Jo’s sense of independence can be seen across *A Taste of Honey* in different instances: the first instance is her encounter with the black sailor and her acceptance of the promise ring around her neck, albeit an unfulfilled promise by the sailor. The second instance is her acceptance to live with Geoffrey, well aware that he was vacated from his lodge due to his homosexuality, a decision that had her being called a “silly little whore” by her mother and others (40, 42, 62). The third instance, being the most important, is her mother’s return, which brings forth Jo’s defiance and challenge of the societal norms as clearly articulated above.

But there remains a factor, at the very end of the play that would potentially bind Jo to an unknown fate, confirming the steering wheel that her mother compared their lives to. After making Geoffrey’s life a living hell and making him leave the apartment, and after realizing that Jo’s baby could be black, Helen hopelessly rushes out for a drink, leaving her daughter in labor pains. Helen’s last words to Jo, as she leaves before the curtains close are: “Put [the baby] on stage and call it Blackbird” (.77), while Jo is still unaware of Geoffrey’s departure. “Smiling a little to herself”, the heroine starts humming a song she learnt from her friend.

Jo is left physically marked by Jimmie’s baby, and emotionally marked by Geoffrey’s song. The respective emergence and disappearance of the black sailor and the homosexual friend are pivotal events in the play; not only do they bring forth social and cultural controversies, but they also highlight the racial and sexual complexities of the working class individuals in Northern England. Here, different observations can be made

regarding race and sexuality in kitchen sink drama, through the different critical paradigms in the literature.

Jimmie's career as a sailor, characterized by its nature of constant mobility, foreshadows a strong and constant possibility for coming back, which reflects an ongoing exchange across the Atlantic. The significance of his character also recalls The British Nationality Act in 1948, which allowed all citizens of British colonies to acquire the citizenship and introduced a previously subtle or absent racial component. Soon after the act passed, hundreds of Jamaicans travelled to London across the Atlantic on the famous Empire Windrush ship, making way for a new wave of postcolonial literature. Along with the West Indians, the "latest" British citizens found themselves lonely, among the working class, as Sam Selvon refers to them as "The Lonely Londoners" (1956).

D. Ruler of my Heart: Inverting Official Cultures

In the current and following section, I will start a preliminary discussion of Northern Soul music before tackling the last kitchen sink primary text *Room at The Top*. This choice takes into consideration the complex aspect of Northern Soul music that is determined by geography, class, culture and race at the same time. Because the dancefloor articulates particular and complex understandings of these notions, the analysis will start with a comparative reading of the component of race between the dancefloor and *A Taste of Honey*, the anger on the dancefloor and Jimmy Porter's anger, and the component of class and white identity between Northern Soul music and Osborne's next play *The Entertainer*.

Concluding this chapter, these comparative readings will constitute the main ground and basis of Chapter 3 where I will perform a close reading of the lyrics of two major

Northern Soul songs, in order to reflect and further elaborate on the comparisons above, in order to finally introduce the notion of social mobility which will be examined in Chapter 4, owing to the different components of race, geography and class that it combines, on the dancefloor and in Braine's novel.

The first comparison starts between Delaney's play and Northern Soul music. Jimmie's emergence across the Atlantic, and the subsequent creation of Jo's private space through the black presence mimics the emergence of Northern Soul music. mainly for similar racial and geographical factors that have defined the fans' sphere of the time, owing to the exclusivity of the spaces where the cultural product is consumed: venues in Northern England such as The Twisted Wheel, Cleethorpes, Blackpool Mecca and Wigan Casino have become the official spaces for the working class Northern Soul fan.

Articulating sharp and strong opposition to the other spaces outside those venues, the Northern Soul culture was one that came to exist, originally, around an overall British minority, confined within and restricted to certain spaces in the country. In other words, it was a culture of minorities, one that sought to oppose the dominant culture. Their exclusive music, dance, fashion and drug practices are their own means of escaping what they consider low and which does not reflect their economic background. Through this discourse, the working class has created its own anti-hegemonic hegemony.

In particular, the aforementioned Northern Soul venues may have been seen as "non-official" spaces with respect to the hegemonic music culture of the time, but they did come to constitute their consumers' own official culture or "sphere", just like the operas of Verdi had come to define the sphere of the upper class in Italy. Northern Soul dance floors

have become a major emblem for the working class and its venues expressive spaces for a minority that was louder than a majority it rejected and refused to identify with.

These spaces are differentiated not only by the class background of their attendees or the African American roots of the consumed product, but also by exclusive fashion trends and dancing moves. Former DJ resident of Stafford Top of the World club in the 1970s, Keb Darge, recalls the “dress of the day” trend in the Northern Soul club which adapted skinhead style traits: “men wore Spencer’s trousers, Ben Shermans, bowling shirts, red or lime-green socks and loafers or brogues [and] women wore long, flowing full-circle skirts and sandals (Ware and Back, 102).

This eccentric sense of fashion enhances and betters the dancing moves on the floor, in addition to talcum powder which was used by Northern Soul dancers to reduce friction on their leather-sole shoes, as Darge recalls. The cultural relevance of talcum soul to Northern Soul fanatics persisted with time. More than 25 years later, in 1998, a 4 CD collection entitled “Talcum Soul” was issued, bringing together more than 100 Northern Soul hits that celebrated the Stafford Top of the World club in the same playlist that moved the dancers on the floor all night long. The Northern Soul way of dancing has evolved to become yet another marker and differentiator of the scene.

Backdrops, spins and dives are but minor examples of how distinctive the dancing culture was. In her *Love factory: the Sites, Practices and Media Relationships of Northern Soul* (1997), Milestone considers that Northern Soul dance moves have, in fact, inspired breakdance (145) due to their distinctive acrobatic style. Furthermore, dancers used to “predict almost every beat and soul slap in a thousand unknown sounds (146) and how it manifested in the physical experience on the dancefloor.

In his *Clubbing: Dancing, Ecstasy and Vitality* (1999), Ben Malbon offers an extensive and thorough approach to the cultural meaning of dancing, defining it as “a conceptual language with intrinsic and extrinsic meanings, premised upon physical movement, and with interrelated rules and notions of technique and competency guiding performance across and within different situations” (86). Here, the cultural meaning of dance is created and defined on the dance floor.

The different characteristics of Northern Soul culture, from music and fashion to dance and talcum powder, are spatially bound by the dance floor, the “sphere”/space that deploys the exclusive characteristics of Northern Soul. Gilroy’s *There Ain’t No Black in The Union Jack* (1991) presents the dance floor as cultural space that is marked by its dancers’ move, and that challenges the social order that exists outside that space. On one hand, the racial characteristic that determines the African American roots of the product manifests the challenge that Northern Soul music poses against the mainstream rock music in England as much as it challenges the mainstream African American soul music across the Atlantic. On the other hand, the societal characteristic of the working class individual that defined the scene empowers that individual by enjoying a product that was his, and his only. This sense of power and ownership was articulated, to say the least, by Keb Darge: “It was such a big fuck off to record companies and clothes companies and all these folk that were trying to sell you something and tell you the way you should be”, in his reference to Northern Soul “nitters” in Wigan Casino venue, where “everyone was so pleased to have something that was theirs, that was created by them.” By creating and claiming the movement as their own, and their own only, Northern Soul fans are applying the same discourse of hegemony they are meant to oppose.

This “fuck off” recalls the characters of Jimmy Porter and Jo, who have come to create their own space of expression, albeit in different ways: Jo’s attempt to create her own world in her shabby flat is successful across different instances in the play: when her mother is “removed” from the attic/space, when her homosexual friend moves in and when she faces Helen and voices her feminist opinions. These tastes of honey, of the socially and culturally exotic and challenging, invert the norms outside the attic in the same way Northern Soul and skinhead movements invert the norms outside the venues, as previously noted.

The analogy between the attic of kitchen sink drama and the dance floor of Northern Soul uses Gilroy’s emphasis on the importance of space and recall the Gramscian sphere. Both spheres (the attic and the dancefloor), share similar racial “peculiarities” that culminate in the black British identity: when black acts such as Billy Butler, Jackie Wilson and the Imperials were drawn to Northern Soul venues across the Atlantic, they are as emergent and “inverting” as the black sailor’s appearance and Jo’s pregnancy, which embodies a successful and fertile product of racial interactions between Europe and America, and also signifies a non-official culture that was able to infiltrate an official culture, the white race, and forever leave its mark behind.

The “black through white” racial “peculiarity” of skinheadism and Northern Soul lies in the black roots of all records that were ever played across all venue and is, mostly, related to the geographical factor as well. Gilroy’s Black Atlantic as the middle passage between the United States of America and Europe has made way, as it were, for further cultural exchange between African Americans and the working class white individual in Northern England.

The white working class individual has actually “evolved” through the black product that is music. This has further marked the working class sphere as one of racially and geographically complex traits. With white audiences acquiring a *taste of honey* of their own, the racial Jo’s pregnancy embodies the black British as the product of “exchange” between her and Jimmie, which has further differentiated her sphere with respect to her surroundings.

Jo’s pregnancy not only recalls Paul Gilroy’s Black Atlantic in the sense that it embodies a successful and fertile product of racial interactions between Europe and America, but also signifies a non-official culture that was able to infiltrate an official culture, the white race, and forever leave its mark behind. The black travel of Jimmie has physically resulted in Jo’s double consciousness, one that is clearly enacted when she refuses Geoffrey’s gift, a white doll, claiming that “the color is wrong” (Delaney, 74) and “violently flinging the doll to the ground”. Refusing the white doll already entails Jo’s acceptance of that racial exchange and positions the working class as a receptive and acknowledging end of that exchange. Paul Gilroy’s metaphor of the ship is embodied in Jimmie’s sailing career, as is Hebdige’s “black through white” racial and cultural hybridity.

Jo’s reception of the different, and her readiness to change, seem to be missing in Porter’s character however, whose futile attempts to change have caused his anger. The protagonist’s restlessness, as opposed to the “lump of dough” of life that his friend has and his wife’s dull almost robotic ironing, already marks his desperate and futile attempts to change the space around him or at least share his zeal for change with others around him: “No one can raise themselves out of their delicious sloth. . . . Oh heavens, how I long for a little ordinary human enthusiasm. Just enthusiasm—that’s all. I want to hear a warm,

thrilling voice cry out Hallelujah! I'm alive. . . . Oh, brother, it's such a long time I was with anyone who got enthusiastic about anything (1.15).”

In his “Look Back in Anger” (1959), Dyson shows how the affair between Porter and middle-class Helena reflects the conflict between the official and non-official cultures of each one of these characters. Despite their affair, Helena remains untouched by Porter’s working class anger and a strict follower of the “book of rules” as a necessity to sanity (18). The middle-class book of rules spares its individuals from the efforts of pondering and contemplating any attempt to change, just as long as it remains the “official” book of conventions. While Helena seems to very easily betray her friendship with another middle-class fellow, i.e. Alison, she seems paradoxically and hypocritically too loyal to betray the official book of that middle class.

Osborne’s account of Helena at the beginning of Act 2 positions her femininity as a “middle class woman hood” that “arouses all the rabble-rousing instincts of his spirit.” (II.i.39). She has moved long ago to her “lovely little cottage of the soul cut right off from the ugly problems of the twentieth century altogether” (II.i.56). Jimmy attacks Helena for her passive indulgence, recalling once more his reference to Alison as *Mrs. Porter*, as he prefers to be “cut off from all the conveniences that others fought to get for centuries” (II.i.56).

The economic nature of the conflict situates Helena and Porter as two characters from different class backgrounds. Helena, with her indulgence in the middle class luxury and convenience, embodies a practice of class rule that Porter lacks and rejects at the same time. While she actually lives by a certain “book of rule”, Porter seems to be wandering aimlessly, as he tries to establish his own “book of rule” but in vain. In addition to his

condescending attitude towards Helena's official culture, Porter wants to be part of a world where individuals are, simply put, human beings.

For Porter, his friend, wife and mistress, seem to want to escape the pain of being alive, the pain of "messing up [one's] nice, clean soul". His opinion is that such would be the only way to become a human being (III.ii.93) is accounted for in his description of his wife as a "monument to non-attachment" (I.21) and when he tells Helena: "either you're with me or against me" (III.i.86).

Between Helena's "lovely cottage" (III.i.88) and Porter's offensive outrage, there seems to be no meeting point for our protagonist. In fact, in his account of the working and middle classes as two exclusive spaces that may never meet, the character of Porter expresses an impossibility of reconciliation between the non-official culture he belongs to and the official culture Helena and Alison belong to.

E. I Hurt on the Other Side: The Entertainer

The clash of private spaces continues in John Osborne's *The Entertainer*, with Archie Rice, the angry and "futile" protagonist in Osborne's *The Entertainer* (1960). The play takes place in 1956, during the Suez Canal crisis, and tells the story of the retired music hall entertainer Billy Rice and his family. The main focus of the play is Billy's son, Archie Rice, who is suffering from major financial problems due to the decay of the music hall entertainment business in England. Archie's son, Mick, is on military duty in Cyprus, and his mother, Phoebe, has sublet his vacant room to a black man, in order to make some money. Archie has not paid taxes for more than twenty years and is always at risk of being

imprisoned by the government. Phoebe's brother offers him a job opportunity in Canada, but Archie refuses and insists on staying. At the end of the play, Billy is dead from old age and Mick, Archie's son, is killed in battle.

The description of the setting of the play is as real and morbid as in the case of Jo's flat in *A Taste of Honey*. Osborne's account of the setting sets the tone of the play and foreshadows, satirically, the anger and complexity of his character and the Rice family:

The action takes place in a large coastal resort. The house where the Rice family live is one of those ugly monuments built by a prosperous businessman at the beginning of the century. Only twenty-five minutes in the brougham to the front. Now trolleybuses hum past the front drive, full of workers from the small factories that have grown up round about. This is part of the town that holiday makers never see—or, if they do, they decide to turn back to the pleasure gardens. This is what they have spent two or three hours in a train to escape. It is not residential, it is hardly industrial. It is full of dirty, blank spaces, high black walls, a gas holder, a tall chimney, a main road that shakes with dust and lorries. The shops are scattered at the corners of narrow streets. A news agent's, a general grocer's, a fish and chips shop (11).

The settings of Archie's music hall picks up the tone and reflect Archie's disdain and anger, to say the least. The music he chooses for his performances is "the latest, the loudest, the worst" with the kind of lighting "you expect to see in the local Empire; everything bang-on, bright and hard" (I.i.12). This kind of staging foreshadows Archie's downfall and reflects the music hall business decay, as Osborne himself notes that "the music hall business is dying."

Archie's failure in the business, in addition, has made him incompetent and unable to continue what his father has started. The futility of Archie's efforts eventually catch up to him, and the "entertainer" he once was becomes a mask he wears, with much satire and indifference, to hide the bitterness of what his life has become. Between the new entertainment trends and the dying business, Archie does not try to compromise. He mimics

Porter's "either you're with me or against me" and chooses his own side, clinging to the dead business, despite the facts. Archie's anger is deeper and more "embedded" than Porter's outbursts, and it is actually expressed with satire and indifference.

Archie's acquired attitude finds his wife, Phoebe, as an easy target that represents the dullness of life, in the same way Alison does. Phoebe is always ready to complain and share the details of Archie's downfall. We learn that the family has been displaced more than once, and would always end up in some "bloody digs somewhere" where they would sometimes have to live on "penny pieces of bacon from the butcher's" because Archie either "had lost money" or "was out of work" (II.vi.50). Archie's response to Phoebe is as sarcastic as Porter's anger towards Alison. "This is a welfare state, my darling heart. Nobody wants, nobody goes without, all are provided for" (II.vi.56), he says, undermining the financial troubles to the extent that he considers them ordinary and not worthy of discussion.

The entertainer acknowledges his own indifference and explains, most insightfully, how the biggest role he has ever played, how the most pretentious, yet most professional acting he's done is himself as Archie in society. "You know when you're up there you think you love all those people around you out there, but you don't. If you learn it properly you'll get yourself a technique. You can smile, darn you, smile, and look the friendliest jolliest thing in the world, but you'll be just as dead and as smug" (II.viii.72).

Even if Porter was able to find the "Hallelujah" he has long been seeking, Archie believes that it would be a fake one, and the only song that still means anything for him is one of indifference, because, as simply put, Archie can't give "a damn about anything" (II.viii.71). However, their anger is a result of society's failure to give them what they

believe they deserve; Archie stops trying, and the song “Why Should I Care” (I.vi.16) is nothing more than a pledge to indifference.

This song is among many examples of sociopolitical satire and criticism that Archie performs. The rhetorical question of whether Archie should care already implies an indifference towards the current situation of his country, especially after the Suez Crisis uncovered the end of British Imperialism on a worldwide level. Archie’s share of the crisis has cost him his son’s departure to fight, coupled with tax accumulations and the former’s death towards the end of the play. Coming to terms with the losses caused by his country’s decision to go to war, Archie finds it useless to care or be angry about anything.

Archie’s next song, “Number One’s The Only One For Me” (II.iv.64), directly recalls the Suez Crisis and expresses a sharp irony towards and a criticism of patriotism. Archie refers to his country as “Dear Old England” in a way to blame his government for its political endeavors that have caused the financial and social decay of his family and left the working class with much need and despair. The fact that England should “remember that charity begins at home” (II.iv.69) reflects the angry man’s reaction towards the Suez Canal crisis. Archie also points at the failures of different political reforms that took place, such as the national health act mentioned earlier, singing to the government that “the national health won’t bring you wealth”.

The use of the plural first person pronoun “we” in the song satirically reflects a disintegration of Empire and the decay of its once collective patriotic values, which has further widened the social and financial gap. The line “We’re all out for the good old number one” mourns the loss of those values that once characterized Britain’s superiority, as Union Jack drops on the set (i.e. the British flag) and Archie refers to it as the “old red,

white and blue” symbolizing the fall of Britain. Here, Archie is raising the white flag of surrender as it makes it clear to the audience that “number one” is no longer within reach.

Archie’s following performance “Thank God I’m Normal” (II.vii.47) is coupled with imagery, as “a spotlight behind gauze reveals a nude in Britannia’s helmet and holding a bulldog and a trident”. As Archie performs the song, the British patriotic “Land of Hope and Glory” plays in the background. Here, one can only recall John Osborne’s own political stand of the time, especially that he was part of the nuclear disarmament protest that took place in the 1950s, according to John Helipern’s *The Many Lives of the Angry Young Man* (256). The element of nudity and the use of a 2000 year old emblem of classical mythology echoes Archie’s lyrics and his implicit satire of Britain’s attempt to dress up a dying imperialism in a classic rhetoric of nationalism.

The bare-breasted Britannia also reflects a weak and naked postwar Britain that can no longer be hidden, no matter how prestigious or superior it imagines itself to be. This imagery that accompanies “Thank God I’m Normal” also recalls “Number One’s the Only One For Me” and the imagined superiority that can no longer be attained. In his *Theatre Language*, John Russell Brown sees in Britannia a symbol of “god and country” and a “living equivalent of the Union Jack that drapes Billy’s coffin” (142). Here, the metaphor of the Union Jack is used to mark the end of an era and the destruction of all past values that Britannia stands for.

While Britannia symbolizes all the norms and codes that once characterized Britain and constitute the subject of Archie’s satirical “Thank God I’m Normal”, its imagery has significant racial implications. In *Patriotism and Empire*, Penny Summerfield refers to music hall entertainment as the “fount of patriotism” and points at how this entertainment

was used to manipulate the working class opinions “particularly in favor of exploitative imperialist policy” (17). John Osborne’s notes to the play regarding the death of the music hall entertainment business are of significant value in a sense that they become physically enacted when Billy dies. The state of the business and Archie’s family embodies the true state of postwar Britain and uncovers the failure of the Suez Canal exploitative imperialist project.

The lyrical satire through Archie’s songs remains in the movie adaptation of the play in 1958. When Osborne adapted the script for television, he added one fragment of a song for Archie’s father, Billy, to perform. The retired entertainer sings “Don’t Let’em Scrap The British Navy” just before he receives the news of his grandson’s death on the Suez front. The verb “scrap” is slang for “beat”, with clear implication that the retired reminiscent entertainer is also aware of the empire’s decay, and only hopes that it is not beaten and defeated.

In the play and its movie adaptation alike, Billy’s supremacy transcends stereotypes in post-imperial Britain against any “other”: “Bloody Poles and Irish! I hate the bastards. Dirty, filthy lot. Animals. Like animals! (I.i.74). Further complaining to his granddaughter Jean about her mother Phoebe: “You know who she’s got upstairs now, don’t you? Some black fellow, it’s true. I tell you, you’ve come to mad-house this time!” (I.i.78). These racial and national stereotypes reflect a space where the white individual is no longer in control, and they represent a general frustration regarding the matter, now that Billy’s image of his Number One Britain is distorted.

Billy is reminiscing about the cultural unity that once characterized the country and the times when he was still famous and known for his music hall entertainment shows: “We

all had our own style, our own songs, and we were all English. What's more we spoke English... We all knew what the rules were" (II.ii.45). The double nostalgia for good "old" days Britain and music hall entertainment is bound by rules that determine the dominant culture and achieve the classic hegemony that Billy longs to, be in on the real music hall stage or the stage of war.

The considerations of race and identity in Billy's discourse reflect that hegemony is lost on both these stages. On the one hand, Billy can no longer sing his own songs, and on the other hand, the Suez Crisis was the perfect stage for the defeat of the empire values. The presence of the other in the space that is postwar Britain is symbolized by the black resident in the Rice family's house to whom they rent their son's room in order to make some money and overcome the financial burdens that come with Archie's business decay. Here, accepting the other into one's space ironically saves the space and prevents its collapse, which brings into question Billy's comments about the black man's presence and how the space has turned from all white and pure into a madhouse.

The invisible yet present otherness in the Rice family space recalls the otherness that invades the protagonist's space and body in *A Taste of Honey*. The black sailor's presence and effect on the characters' space and psyche becomes stronger as the play progresses after he leaves Jo's space across the Atlantic. Through Jo, Delaney gives the same racial implication of otherness as John Osborne does through Billy, but with a relatively more progressive account. Using Billy's own terms of hegemony, Jo seems to look for a new style, a new song, beyond the English rules. With her relationships with the black sailor and the homosexual roommate, Jo's acceptance of otherness and defiance of

prewar British hegemony confirm Billy's fears of an emerging other who is invading the previously white imperialist space.

The contrast between Jo's and Billy's respective responses to otherness in their spaces can also be noted through the former's progressive attitudes with respect to the female gender, be it her own prospective motherhood or her relationship with Helen. Scene 2 of Act 2 in *A Taste of Honey* has Jo and Geoffrey talking about motherhood, where she clearly says that "she does not want any man" and that she does not even want to be a mother or a woman for that matter. Jo explains that the only way she can be with a man is if he asks nothing from her, saying that she would want to be with somebody like Geoffrey (71-76), which further alludes to his homosexuality in a sense that their prospective relationship would not be subject to static notions of gender and sexuality.

Geoffrey's physical presence, coupled with Jo's possibly black baby denotes the otherness that Billy is angry about, one that Jo not only accepts but also embraces as means to invert the official culture starting with her own space. Helen tries to control that space once more upon her comeback. Here, Helen and Billy share common hegemonic understandings and practices towards the presence of otherness as a destructive intrusion that threatens their respective spaces. She showers Geoffrey with insults and condescending comments, shouting that the place is "filthy", indirectly blaming him for the "pigsty" he and Helen live in like "pigs" (82), using the same terms that Billy uses to refer to the other presence, i.e. the black inmate, in their house.

Helen's attempts to preserve the official culture that used to mark her and her daughter's space almost succeed at the end of the play: while she manages to indirectly kick Geoffrey out, the play ends with Jo remembering him and repeating his song, denoting

the longevity of Geoffrey's otherness well beyond his physical presence in Jo's space. Furthermore, upon her knowledge of the baby's possible race, she leaves her daughter's space and the play ends before she returns. Here, Helen succumbs to alcohol once more as means of escaping her official culture's defeat, just like Billy succumbs and dies, "escaping" the decay of his beloved past that has "officially" died too.

Looking forward to the future of Jo, both her character and the audience are left wondering what could happen next, just like they are left wondering about Archie's future after he announces his retirement. In the same way that Delaney ends the play with a reprise of one of Geoffrey's songs, Osborne ends *The Entertainer* with a reprise of *Why Should I Care*, further stressing on the indifference of his protagonist, i.e. Archie, especially after announcing that he will no longer make appearances on stage. While the reprise of Archie's song mourns the death of music hall entertainment and the Empire alike, Jo's reprise of Geoffrey's song, along with the delivery of her baby and Helen's exit, assert the death of that Empire and make way for "new blood" to emerge and a new form of culture to dominate.

The emergence of the new culture puts former Number One prewar Britain at the bottom of the list. With Billy longing to the supreme Empire days as previously mentioned, the black sailor's emergence puts an end to his nostalgia and marks the beginning of an uncharted territory: one where the emerging culture might as well rise up and become Number One instead. Jo's account of the upcoming new culture that is about to "emerge" from her body uses the exact title of Archie's song *Number One's the Only One For Me* when she tells Geoffrey: "I want to call the baby Number One. It will always be Number One for itself." (76). In addition to the fact that the baby is the product of Jo's "first time",

Delaney's use of Osborne's words can be interpreted as proof that the emergence of the new racial component embodied by the baby constitutes reflects the inversion of Britain's supremacy and fall of the empire that was everybody's Number One.

Here, the reading of Jo's newly created space in progress implies that the Number One Billy reminisces about, is undermined by the emergence of new non-official subcultures that will come to define their own official corresponding cultures. The inversion of the official spaces of Billy and Jo mimic the inversion that Northern Soul venues embrace, as soulful dancers will only accept uncharted territory in the world of music, with strong opposition and dismissal of African American songs on the UK charts and the US billboards. In other words, any song that is Number One or close to Number One on the commercial music charts is not welcome in the venues, with Northern Soul DJs and fans alike solely and deliberately looking for songs that do not appear on the charts.

CHAPTER 3

OUT ON THE FLOOR: STAGING PRIVATE HEGEMONIES

This chapter will further explore notions of space and hegemony on the Northern Soul dance floor and how the corresponding subcultural identity practices its own hegemony within the private space. I will perform a lyrical interpretation and reading of two major Northern Soul hits, and compare these two texts to the three plays discussed previously. This comparison will differentiate the expression of anger and creation of spaces between the dance floor and the literary text, as a reaction to the socioeconomic status. The analysis will also give a racial account of the working class anger, by comparing it to the Black Power movement in 1960s United States of America.

A. The In-Crowd: The Northern Soul Subculture

In *Retromania*, Simon Reynolds says that Northern Soul was a “scarcity economy” where the “rarity of the records governed the status of DJs, the competition between clubs and what ruled the dance floor” (307). With the best DJ being judged for the number and exclusivity of obscurities and uncharted songs he could find, Northern Soul has become an official culture of its own, inverting the Number One songs of mainstream pop charts. Reynold’s historicizing account of Northern Soul as a “non-hit” cult (308) also gives refers to the financial component of the movement. In many cases, the rarest single would go up to 50 British pounds (311).

Because Northern Soul is about how to “set oneself apart from the herd” (305), the working class individual was eager to seek what’s rare at the expense of his financial status. Not only DJs, but also fans, use to chase down the commercially obscure 45 rpm records

from junk shops such as cigarette kiosks (306) where the average rare soul single price was sold at 5 British pounds, which was “fifteen times the standard price of a single then, when your average working-class youth earned about 5 British pounds a week” (307). With the working class individual willingly spending his/her weekly wage to differentiate himself/herself from other Northern Soul fans, the more money s/he spent on the 45 rpm single, the more “elitist” s/he becomes (306).

The official culture of Northern Soul is one that feeds on the financial status as means of expression. When the working class individual opposes the official culture of mainstream songs and attempts to invert that culture by creating his/her space, s/he does so at the expense of his/her working class status. In other words, the more money the working class individual spends, the more different, non-official and culturally unique s/he becomes. This indirect proportionality reflects a unique interaction or symbiosis between the two separate spaces of the working class, i.e. its financial space and cultural space. Here, the working class community of the Northern Soul movement challenges the official spaces in culture and society alike and feeds on the inversion of each of these spaces.

This indirect proportionality also characterizes *A Taste of Honey* and *Look Back in Anger*, particularly when it comes to the relationship between the world of Helen and Billy on one hand and the world of Jo and Archie on the other. As the new culture within and around Jo emerges, the official culture of Helen seems to deteriorate, since she exits the stage and does not come back before the play ends. Jo’s labor constitutes a cornerstone of her new space with emergent non-official cultures that were previously “unknowable”.

The inversion of the knowable communities through *A Taste of Honey*, *Look Back in Anger* and the Northern Soul movement, works by challenging the status quo of the

protagonist in question. Jo challenges the racial, social and gender related status quo, inverting the world of Helen and making way for an unknowable community and non-official culture to appear. Archie's frustration with "unknowable" community is a result of the failure of the knowable British Empire and subsequently the death of the knowable community signified by the failure of the music hall entertainment business, along with the "unknowable" black fellow. As for the Northern Soul fan, s/he challenges the knowable community of mainstream African American recordings and aims for his/her very own and obscure community of songs.

This anti-hegemonic aspect of Northern Soul has come to define the movement's own hegemony. Blackpool Mecca DJ Ian Levine gives an important account of the rarity and exclusivity of the records as a crucial and necessary factor for those records to be welcome on the floor. In an interview with Reynolds, Levine says that "our rule was that as soon as a record was bootlegged" –which means leaked and made available to other DJs – "we dropped it like a hot potato" (310). In fact, a major aspect of the Northern Soul competitive "spirit" has come to be known as the "cover-up" phenomenon, where DJs came up with tricks and cheating methods to protect the exclusivity of a certain rare single they own in order to remain the most wanted and popular DJ in the Northern Soul scene. One of these methods was to "cut out the label center of an inferior, more easily obtained record and stick that over the rarity, in the process sending rival DJs off on a fruitless quest for the wrong record" (328).

Because the rarity and exclusivity of records has come to mark the Northern Soul culture, the "unknowable" aspect of the songs has come to shape the "knowable community" aspect of the movement with respect to its fans. They identify with the

unfamiliar, just like Jo identifies with the unknown that awaits her in the other unknowable spaces beyond motherhood, race and gender stereotypes. The working class attempts to create its own knowable community by identifying with the unknown characterizes Delaney's Jo as much as it characterizes the Northern Soul fan and DJ alike. Both sides are eager to create their own hegemonic worlds through different tastes of honey and they both use and embrace the unknown and the obscure for this purpose.

For instance, Jo refers to her black sailor as a dream (Delaney, 77) and a loyal Twisted Wheel fan tells Reynolds: "we wanted to pretend we were black, we danced like we were black" (310). Furthermore, Dave Godin's own account of the Twisted Wheel scene in the early 60s mentions the "fluent grace of the dancing and noticed that everyone on the floor was an expert in Soul Clapping in the right places, and with a clipped sharp quality that only adds an extra something to appreciation of Soul music" (328). The fantasy that the black sailor represents for Jo is the same that Black music represents for the white working class individual in Northern England, and both "protagonists" get to not only live the dream, but also bring it to life "on stage", i.e. in their own space, as means to reject what's "real" and knowable.

Just like Jo rejects the knowable practices of race and gender, Northern Soul fans reject the knowable practices of African American music. Reynolds refers to the latter's practices as a "no-funk please ethos" (308) that has marked the Northern Soul music movement from the early 1960s until the early 1980s. So strong and imposing was this ethos that Levine's very attempt to include funkier and more mainstream beats such The Carstairs "spawned the 'Levine Must Go' campaign" within the Blackpool Mecca scene with regulars wearing "anti-Levine T-shirts and badges, and even, in one case, held up a

twelve foot banner in protest on the dance floor” (309). Although Northern Soul has come to defy the official culture around it, the movement has also come to create and impose its own anti-hegemonic hegemony due to the specific standards such as the availability of the record and the tempo/genre of the song.

B. The Right Tracks: Songs of Allegiance

The anti-hegemonic hegemony within Northern Soul can be linked to one of its most famous anthems. Entitled “The In-Crowd”, performed by African American singer Dobie Gray and released in 1964 by the obscure label Charger, the song celebrates what former Twisted Wheel club promoter David Thorley describes as a “secret society” (317). The opening line of the song already suggests hegemony where the character “goes where the in-crowd goes” while the line that follows signifies an official culture that transcends the group’s behavior and knowledge where the character “knows what the in-crowd” knows. So special and exclusive is that official culture that “other guys want to imitate us” which is the case for both music fans and DJs who seek acknowledgement and belonging in this new community.

“Going where the in-crowd goes” brings all Northern Soul fans to one single space: the dance floor, the space where the subculture is created, and that bounds the knowledge of what is otherwise obscure and unknowable outside the space: from the rarity of the songs (“the original is still the greatest in-crowd”) to the dancing moves (“I know every latest dance”) and the use of talcum powder, along with a differentiating sense of fashion (“dressing fine”) and drug consumption habits, the in-crowd gets “respect from the people”.

In a nutshell, “other guys imitate [them]”: the song celebrates the Northern Soul culture’s superiority and special knowledge of what to wear, where to go and the new dance steps.

Gray’s *In Crowd* echoes the “sacred shrines” that Cosgrove used to describe Northern Soul and its fans’ cultural identity. With fans wanting to be black and borrowing Reynolds’ use and description of the white fantasy to be black, it becomes clear that the Northern Soul fan’s double consciousness fulfills the “black through white” paradigm that was previously presented. The black product consumed on the dancefloor is received by the dancers as a secret fantasy that only they can access. However, it is worth noting this paradigm is achieved through the “awareness of the other”, and not “consciousness”. In his *Modernity and Self Identity*, Anthony Giddens talks about the possibility of creating one’s self-identity “through” the other, by “taking over traits or patterns of behavior of the others which are relevant to the resolution or diminishing of anxiety-creating patterns” (46).

The otherness in Northern Soul is mainly present via 45 rpm singles, whereby the scene becomes an extension of the black presence in Britain, because it further provides authenticity of sound which is crucial for the in-crowd’s unique identity. By consuming the black product that is music within the Northern Soul anti-hegemonic hegemony, the working class in Northern England is in fact fulfilling a new and unknowable kind of British whiteness, thereby fulfilling an identity formation at the expense of the black product, which I refer to as “white through black”. The African American nature of the recordings becomes an integral part, i.e. middle passage, for the working class to form, understand and differentiate its new white identity.

Paul Gilroy’s ship thus becomes the emblem of the cross-Atlantic dialogue between the working class in Northern England and African American music. The dialogue suggests

that Gilroy's Black Atlantic is in fact "black through white": the double consciousness, as one entity, is not a fixed point, but ambivalent, according to Stuart Hall in his *Ethnicity: Identity and Difference*. The identity is formed through the ongoing and ever-changing "dialogic relationship to the Other" (25) and by understanding the black otherness through music. This way, the working class in Northern England breaks not only geographical boundaries, but also previous hegemonic practices of race in Britain.

The gramophone records on Gilroy's ship (4) and the DJ's deck signify the formation of identity and becomes an essential component of the "black through white". However, and because the performer of the song is almost always absent from the scene, the black identity of the product is in fact destroyed through its white consumption. In the other direction, the new white identity of the audience is created through the consumption of the black record in a symbiotic relationship where the Northern Soul scene feeds on African American records to the extent of destroying their identity. The 45-RPM 7-inch vinyl record fulfills the white identity at the expense of the record's black identity and is (ab)used by the working class to mark its white territory.

This sense of power that the working class negotiates with the status quo on the dance floor takes place, essentially, on the deck. However, the dialogue does not take place between the white and the black identities, because the latter is reduced to a 45 rpm single. The mediator, in addition to the 45 rpm, is the DJ, another working class white person. The relationship between the dancers and the DJ articulates the act of becoming "white through black", because the black 45 rpm becomes a conversational tool or bridge between the in-crowd and the DJ to create their own white culture and invert the status quo.

Owing to the rarity of the 45s as a crucial component, the inversion of the status quo has been previously shown to transcend hegemony within the Northern Soul. In the *Northern Soul Top 500* book, Kev Roberts lists 500 Northern Soul hits from the era, in order of their 45s' rarity. This rarity explains the emotional and financial values such singles had: here, the criterion used in the Northern Soul scene inverts the criterion used by mainstream pop charts. The private space that is "Northern Soul chart" challenges the public/official space that is the UK billboard in that it popularizes what the latter does not.

The rarest, most popular 45 rpm is actually a 1965 Motown obscure recording by Frank Wilson entitled "Do I Love You" since it occupied number 1 on the Northern Soul "charts". The very fact that the most wanted and most popular Northern Soul song is a Motown recording presents the sound of Detroit as the original virtual space where the movement was born. Any Northern Soul fan on the dance floor visits that place that brings together the whole in-crowd under African American music. The title of the song, which the singer repeats many times throughout his performance, asks for allegiance. Repeating the question twice before and after every couplet, Frank Wilson gathers the in-crowd around him, as the background vocals respond to the questions by joining in and singing, answering that "indeed, they do" love him.

C. I Got the Power? The Dancefloor as White Meccas

The communal love expressed in Wilson's "Number One" is coupled with a strong sense of solidarity. The movement's logo, a clenched fist, signifies a Northern Soul fan whose loyalty and allegiance to the movement are so firm, making the culture a question of faith. Hence, the slogan "Keep The Faith" or simply KTF, calls out all those fans to own up

to their allegiance and always keep the faith on the dance floor. The question of otherness and Dubois' "black through white" is of relevant value here, especially that the Black Power clenched fist is clearly rendered in the Northern Soul logo, which seemingly suggests an underlying white identification with African Americans in the United States.

One of the components of "Black Power" is socioeconomic in nature, signifying African Americans' self-determination, racial pride, self-sufficient economy and collective values of culture and politics (Ogbar, 42). In that sense, the black anger in the United States and the working class white anger in England share similar backgrounds as well as economic and political endeavors. Although the literature has not shown any knowledge or political/social interaction between African Americans in the United States and the working class in Northern England during the early 1960s, the resemblance may not be overlooked.

Between the logos of both movements, KTF might as well be a call to action that Black Power identifies with across the Atlantic. With the dance floor being the expressive space of the white working class, the Black Power movement was most strongly established in particular American cities that are referred to as Meccas, such as Atlanta and Philadelphia. In the November 1991 issue of US magazine *Black Enterprise*, Margaret C. Simms noted the particular financial significance of certain American cities for black professionals seeking jobs. Her article entitled *What Cities = More Black Jobs* refers to Atlanta and Philadelphia as black meccas (41).

In contrast, the dance floor of the white working class becomes its own Mecca, in postwar Britain, because it is a particular space of expression that draws Northern Soul partisans and empowers them with respect to their socio-political status. In his *Money Talks*, Terry Williams draws particular attention to Atlanta's status as the black Mecca

because it holds the highest percentage of middle-class Africans-Americans in the United States (92). Accordingly, the socio-economic factor behind the rise of the Black Power movement is of utmost significance, as social mobility was one of the drives behind African American individuals seeking and identifying with certain states in 1960s United States.

As Black Power aims to establish its own space in these Meccas, the white working class in 1960s Northern England marks its territory in its own Meccas, i.e. venues, such as The Twisted Wheel, Cleethorpes, The Golden Torch, Wigan Casino, and most importantly, in a special underground venue in the town of Blackpool in North West England. The very name of the venue, Blackpool Mecca, has not been explored by the literature so far, although it is highly suggestive of the notion that dance floor for the white working class in early 1960s Northern England is what Meccas such as Atlanta are for African Americans seeking Black Power.

As the 45 RPM vinyl of African American recordings celebrates the White Power of the working class, Black Power becomes a means for that class to express its own Power, and vice versa. Here, the original “black through white” paradigm and what we have come to define as “white through black”, become a matter of fact on the dance floor, through the 45 RPM that brings both races together. The superiority comes with a sense of differentiation that challenges the status quo, as Doobie Gray’s song ends with “If it’s square, we ain’t there”. This particular verse rejects what is square/knowable and “shuns” it in the cultural sense that a venue or group that consumes commercial and mainstream songs is one that the Northern Soul in-crowd rejects. The sense of superiority that characterizes the official culture of the in-crowd echoes the failed white superiority of the British Empire

that Billy longed for, and that Jo herself challenged, where the status quo surrounding the working class social, economic and cultural conditions is challenged and inverted. In other words, the fall of Billy's old Mecca that was the Empire makes way for new Meccas to appear, and Jo's new Mecca (in progress) seems to embody both the black and the white power.

However, the use of the fist of Black Power movement as a Northern Soul emblem can be questioned in terms of social mobility of the working class in Northern England: while the black middle-class seek social mobility, among many other endeavors, the white working class in England remains static and futile with respect to social mobility. The clenched fist of Northern Soul brings loyal working class youth to let their futile anger out on the dancefloor, while the clenched fist of Black Power it reflects a real and active ambition to achieve social mobility by leaving old spaces to the new Meccas.

The original black clenched fist thus becomes void of meaning on the dancefloor. As a "product", the clenched fist's black identity has the same fate of the 45 RPM Vinyl when they are consumed by the white working class, i.e. when they become that working class's own cultural "white" products. The cultural appropriation of African American records that achieves the "white through black" identity of the working class is coupled with a misuse and misunderstanding of the Black Power movement, to the extent that one can say the movement itself is appropriate by a class that does not reflect it and/or is not aware of its nature and goals. The "white through black" identity on the dancefloor is further feeding on the misuse of Black Power and on the failed "social" appropriation of social mobility.

CHAPTER 4

MOVE ON UP? SOCIAL MOBILITY BETWEEN MUSIC AND FICTION

In this last chapter, I will first introduce a major kitchen sink novel by John Braine, entitled *Room at The Top* and published in 1957. I will analyze the protagonist's motive of social mobility and relate it to the interaction between two conflicting spaces. This comparison will shed more light on Northern Soul working class fans and other kitchen sink characters previously discussed, in an attempt to further explore the effect of their socioeconomic status on their spaces.

A. At The Top of the Stairs: Hegemony and Prosperity

Published in 1957, John Braine's *Room at The Top* tells the story of Joe Lampton, a former prisoner of war in Germany. The story, narrated by the protagonist, starts with his arrival in Warnley, a Mid-lands manufacturing city after having left his Northern home town, Dufton. He moves in with The Thompsons in the fancy T'top area and lives in the vacant room of their son who had died during war. The events take place between 1946 and 1947 and they narrated by 10 years later. The plot follows Joe's mobility from his working class background – his father was a mill worker – to the middle class in Warnley. The main character's mission is to reach the room at the top, and Joe's behavior is most pragmatic when it comes to fulfilling this goal.

Joe falls in love with a prosperous businessman's wife, Alice Asigill, who is a middle-class actress. He also has an affair with Susan Brown, the daughter of one of the

wealthiest men in Warnley, who is betrothed to a middle class businessman Jack Wales. Joe makes his way towards the top at the expense of Alice's feelings and in an attempt to overthrow Jack. Alice ends up overdrinking and dying in a car accident upon the news of Susan and Joe's marriage. Although Joe climbs towards the top, just like he has always dreamed of, he blames himself for Alice's death: "Oh merciful God, I thought, she's committed suicide and left a note blaming me. That's finished it. That's finished me in every possible way. Teddy's eyes were a pale blue, as if all the colour had been drained from them; they were probing my face now" (217).

The title of the novel already suggests an aspiration, a destination of class mobility that Braine portrays through the character of Joe more than Osborne does through the characters of Jimmy and Archie. Joe is not presented as angry young man, be it towards the present or towards the past. He does not "look back in anger", but actually puts his anger to the best and most pragmatic use possible: moving up the social ladder, and leaving his working class roots behind.

This goal is obvious from the very first pages of the novel, as Joe sees a young man enjoying his "Aston-Martin, wearing a guinea linen shirt, with [his] girl with a Riviera suntan". Such convenience and luxury are the first trigger that moves Joe's anger in the novel, especially that he regards them as a "signed and concealed legacy", which he believes he deserves and was deprived of before. This attitude mirrors Osborne's protagonists, and more particularly, Jimmy Porter.

However, Joe seems more "methodical" than Jimmy, as he actually sets a plan to "conquer Warnley" that is "waiting to be possessed". While some might view the protagonist as ruthless, Braine himself stated that "the young man on the move has to be a

bit tougher and learn how to fiddle more cleverly” (J. Lee, 54). Joe’s character, albeit clever, does manifest much anger. He refers to the rich as his “enemies” (75) and regards Warnley as a battlefield he deserves to claim once he moves “into the attack” (125). This direct use of war related terms by the author is significant in tracing the character’s evolution and providing a comparative approach between Lampton’s different states throughout the novel.

Joe comes to Warnley hoping that his experience would grant him freedom from all those he refers to as zombies, such as “the councilors and chief officials and anyone [he] didn’t approve of”. These individuals consist of those who conform to society as if they were dead from the inside. By wanting to be a “successful zombie” as he points out, Joe understands the necessity of transforming his character to fit in the society of Warnley in order to reach the top: from traits to style and even dialect. James Lee stresses that Joe’s success “depends on his ability to assume the dress, deportment, and speech of the middle class of Warnley” (54). Such necessity dictates Joe’s choice of relationships and encounters, socially, emotionally and sexually.

The official culture of Warnley’s middle class in its dress, deportment and speech is of utmost importance to Joe’s mission, and him becoming part of the “knowable community” of Warnley is an essential path that his social mobility has to take. The anger seems to knowingly invest exactly what it is projected at: middle class values and ways of life. Braine presents us with a protagonist whose anger is aware, conscious and active. Unlike Jimmy Porter whose anger goes in circles in vain and Archie Rice whose anger has turned into bitterness, Joe Lampton’s anger is not only managed, but it is also the main drive behind the protagonist’s social mobility. Beyond questioning the motives and barring

any judgment of Joe's character and intentions, the character uses his anger to look forward, and not look back.

Joe's aspiration as an individual seems to find in the official culture an opportunity, not a challenge, and an authority that is worth blending in with, not moving away from, in order to reach the top. The transition between the two cultures lead to a conflict between Joe's past values and future endeavors, and this conflict is clearly reflected in his relationship with Alice on one hand and her death on the other hand. Joe sees in Alice an extension of his past values and a "loose end" that he needs to deal with in order to climb, especially when their jeopardizes his career and his relationship with Susan.

Upon Alice's death, Braine voices his not-so-dormant opinion about postwar Britain through Joe who finds himself free; nothing and nobody stands between him and the new official culture he has "worked" so hard to become a part of. The good old values that Alice stands for also die, and her character obviously becomes a symbol of these values and of a possibility of going back to the way things were, before the war.

What killed the values of the past are Joe's attempts to acquire the values of the present. He thinks that marriage to Susan is a direct reason for Alice's drunkenness that eventually leads to her violent car accident, and this relation suggests the impossibility of a common ground between the two cultures. More importantly, and to Joe's surprise, the car crash was not an accident; Alice has in fact committed suicide: she "had been drinking all night" (128) and drove at "one hell of a pace all the way up Sparrow Hill, "the last place that God made [where] she ran her car into a wall" (129).

Both characters willingly make the choice of sacrifice, but for completely opposite purposes: Joe's decision to become part of the middle class community of Warnley

sacrifices his relationship with Alice, while Alice's decision to remain true to her love for Joe sacrifices her marriage to the middle-class Jack Wales as well as her life. By sacrificing his relationship with Alice, Joe Lampton fulfills the complete move and transition into the new official culture and irreversibly embraces Warnley's hegemony.

The private and public spheres of both characters are closely tied and they express opposing accounts of the surrounding official culture: the private sphere symbolized by Alice and Joe's affair threatens to invade the public sphere of both characters. When Susan gets pregnant with Joe's child, both her father and Alice's husband threaten to destroy Joe's career if he does not leave Alice. Joe's future in and acceptance by the official culture of Warnley is jeopardized by his relationship with Alice. In addition, Alice's own marriage to middle class George Brown, which was also Alice's means to become part of the middle class official culture, is also at stake.

Here, Joe chooses the official culture while Alice does not. In fact, these two choices are co-dependent. Joe's choice directly results in Alice's, whose death in turn paves the way for Joe and Susan's marriage. While they both come from working class background and seek the same social mobility towards the middle class status in Warnley, Joe willingly decides to invert his past official culture in order to become part of the new one. As a result, Alice willingly decides to invert the new official culture for the sake of the old one.

The "fatality" of Alice's fate in *Room at The Top* mirrors Osborne's "you're either with me or against me" and similarly takes the reader back to Joe's first exposure to the theatre community where the fellow actress Eva tells him that "he can't get everything he wants at once" (47). Joe's realization that he can't get everything he wants is articulated

upon Alice's death and, with it, the death of Dufton's values in postwar industrial Britain. The protagonist himself compares the chain of events to a "huge machine that now only functioned out of bravado: it had been designed and manufactured for one purpose, to kill Alice (220). Alice's death as a result of Joe's decision to rise, has also made one fact clear for the narrator after a time lag of ten years later: the machine has also triggered his death as a person:

I wouldn't say that I was dead; simply that I had begun to die. I have realized, you might say, that I have, at the most, only another sixty years to live. I'm not actively unhappy and I'm not afraid of years to live. I'm not alive in the way that I was that evening I quarreled with Alice. I looked back at the raw young man sitting miserable in the pub with a feeling of genuine regret I wouldn't, even if I could, change places with him, but he was indisputably a better person than the smooth character I am now, often ten years of getting almost everything that I ever wanted, I know the name he'd give me: the Successful Zombie. (227)

Joe's bitter account of his decision reveals that affluence comes with a high price tag that may not be affordable, with Alice's death being only the first payment. Her suicide triggers the second payment that Joe has to settle every day as a middle class individual: being a zombie that is void of feeling, albeit successful. These two characteristics symbolize the outcome of Joe's sacrifice, where Alice's death signifies the death of the "better person" in him for the sake of the "smooth" and successful character he has become.

It can be argued, however, that the main trigger of Joe's rise and Alice's death is his sexual encounter with Susan. Beyond mere speculation, Joe makes the choice when Susan gets pregnant and her father finds himself obliged to marry her, against his will, to an individual from a lower class. Mr. Brown promises Joe a "thousand a year" job, as long as he leaves Alice and marries Susan. The affair with Susan is thus the first instance of Joe's

attempt to invert the official culture, marking the middle class community with working class “seeds”, in order to start climbing up.

The quest to reach the top entails an absolute departure away from Joe’s roots in Dufton, symbolized by his relationship with Alice, and the luxury that awaits him in Warnley, symbolized by his marriage to Susan. Joe seems quite aware the contrast between these two women and the values they represent. He sees himself “complete” with Alice, as he able to talk to her in the same way he would talk to Charles, his childhood friend from Dufton (53). Furthermore, he compares his strongly rooted relationship with Alice to that of his late parents, one that he would never be able to have with Susan (151).

Fulfilling this kind of life meant that he had to choose between Alice and Dufton on one hand and Susan and Warnley on the other hand. In his own words, he knew that he “couldn’t have both her and Warnley” (214). The contrast between both worlds surfaces as soon as Joe steps into his new flat at T’top in Warnley and recalls, in comparison, “the background of Dufton, the back-to-back houses, the outside privies, the smoke which caught the throat and dirtied the clean linen in a couple of hours, the sense of being always in a charade upon Hard Times” (24).

The industrial Dufton still haunts Joe throughout the novel, not only with its architecture, landscape and smoke, but also with its “country” values that Joe works hard to let go of. Upon his knowledge of Alice’s past career as a model, he exhibits a typical Dufton reaction that regards such jobs as “indecent”. He refers to Alice, and those who make similar choices, as people who are “not quite professionals, but simply the kind who couldn’t be bothered to say no” (123). To that, Alice’s response is, in the least, anti-misogynistic in content: “I can just see you in Dufton now, looking at nudes in the

magazines, drooling over them. Saying you wouldn't mind having a quick bash. But blackguarding the girls, calling them shameless" (124).

While the focus remains Joe's character as an angry young man, Alice herself earns the "angry young woman" description. This feminism is similar to Delaney's Jo who shows no less courage and straightforward manners to criticize masculinity and stereotypes that surrounded women's roles in society. Alice's response further highlights the sharp contrast and struggle between Joe's old values and the new values he seeks in his quest for improving his financial status. This contrast refers to the memory of Joe's prison years, separating the old values of prewar Britain in Dufton from the new values of postwar Britain in Warnley.

The character of Alice is a strong embodiment of this contrast and portrays a space of conversation between the old and the new: she is married to Warnley's middle class Jack Wales, despite her working class background. Here, Alice is also making her way towards the top but does not hesitate when it comes to criticizing the new culture's perception of women. Her reaction echoes Joe's recollections of his parents and family when it comes to the values they represent. When Joe visits the site of his demolished home in Dufton, he remembers, the good old moral and social code of his hometown, from which he is moving away. Be it his mother's pride as a working class individual, whose husband "would starve before he'd sell himself for a handful of silver" (94) or his aunt's opinion that a girl like Susan is no good for him, and that he should get married to someone of his own class, his "own people" (95).

Joe "overcomes" these values through his carefully planned plot above. Furthermore, his ways allow him to defy and go around the hegemonic standards that

prohibited the working class individual from marrying another individual from a higher class. This challenge strongly mirrors Delaney's play and the infiltration of social and racial official cultures by Geoffrey's sexuality and the black sailor's prospective baby, respectively. Furthermore, the intertwined spaces of Alice and Joe and their corresponding account of hegemony recall, in their interaction and co-dependence, the relationship between Billy's space in *The Entertainer* and Jo's space in *A Taste of Honey*. The fall of Billy's business and empire vis-à-vis the rise of Jo's new non-official values can be compared to Alice's fall vis-à-vis Joe's rise in *Room at The Top* in a way that signifies an inevitable fact where decay of the old culture is coupled with the rise/emergence of a new one.

On another level, Alice's death is as impactful on Joe as Frank's death on his father Archie. Both protagonists - Joe and Archie – realize that fatality is inevitable: be it the fatality of affluence and Alice's death for Joe, and the fatality of hardship during war for Archie, the component of death drives Osborne and Braine's works, whether literally or symbolically. With Billy and Alice physically dead, Archie and Joe are zombies. The inert and static state of the zombie that is the middle-class Joe is similar to Archie's indifference and his mask of entertainment. Both protagonists' anger seems to be "tamed" unlike Porter who refuses to settle and comes to define his very own and private official culture, hanging between two worlds.

B. The Real Thing: Angry Spaces VS Peaceful Spaces

The contrast between the old official culture of Dufton and the new official culture-to-be in Warnley is worthy of noting. The first stepping stone into the new culture is a local

theatre community that Joe joins upon the request of the Thompsons: he finds in this society the perfect starting point to meet the right people of the middle class and make his way to the top. The significance of this local community is not only in its transitional value between the two classes that Joe envisions. In fact, it is a space that embodies a distinguished set of norms and codes which Joe ought to adapt.

The theatre society in that space is a sharp articulation of Williams' knowable communities and Northern Soul's in-crowd. It is where everybody identifies with everybody under an umbrella of specific and unique norms and values. It is Joe's mission to become part of this knowable community and change consistently in order to reach the top. Ironically, his decision to change his character and assume a new role and fake behavior finds its fulfillment in the theatre group, a knowable community where everybody wears masks. Joe's ability to assume a role in society, however faking or acting it, seems to grant him the approval of the official culture and assert his belonging to the new space he seeks.

One of the masks that Joe starts to slowly wear is his own language and dialect, reflecting the contrast between his working class Northern roots of Dufton and the new image he is trying to build for himself. Particularly, Joe reflects the stereotypical perception of the northern England working class as a "counter-attack [against Jack] Wale's genuine officer accent" (75). In fact, it is only when he angrily criticizes the middle class at the beginning of the novel that he shows his true working-class colors. Shouting out "Tha doesn't have to coax me to sup some ale, las" (74), Joe's typical Northern accent reveals a sharp contrast with respect to the proper urban English he needs to "learn" in order to impress the top and eventually get there.

Despite the hollow relationship with Susan, Joe seeks nothing but to fulfill the long-sought materialism and to climb up the ladder to reach the Aladdin's Cave of Warnley's elite (139). Joe understands that, in return, he will feel "lonely" but "rich" and much obliged to "transform [himself] into a different person" (138). Ironically, Alice's death puts an end to the conflict, after which Joe marries Susan and starts living *Life at The Top*, which is the second novel by Braine that follows the story of Joe's marriage to Susan and their lives as a middle class couple.

Jimmy's refusal to become a zombie challenges the collective identity of the world around him with much anger, while Joe uses this very identity (through joining the community theatre), putting his anger to "good use". As for Billy Rice, he fails to accept that his official culture, embodied by the music hall entertainment business, is dying, and with it the former collective imperialistic identity that used to characterize the supremacy of prewar Britain. On the other hand, Billy's son, Archie, repeatedly refuses to pay government taxes. However, all three protagonists must pay at the end: Jimmy pays with more anger, Joe pays with his values and Alice's death, while Billy pays with his death and Archie with his son's life, his career, and possibly his freedom.

Kitchen sink drama's protagonists seem surrounded with death on different levels. It seems that the war, that very machine that crushes Alice's body, is also crushing Osborne's protagonists in a postwar country where economic burdens have widened the gap between classes and exerted more pressure on working class individuals. The pressure exerted on Joe Lampton is one that comes out of conviction, however, and a total awareness that "there were no dreams, no mercy left in the world, nothing but a storm of violence" (221). Despite this realization, Joe goes ahead and marries Susan, ultimately

fulfilling his ambition and endeavors. At the same time, he admits that “the game was worth the candle” and that if he sold his independence at least he would get “get a decent price for it” (113). From his room at the top, overlooking the neighborhood, to his middle-class life, Joe has not become independent per se. In fact, he has become detached from the old life and attached to a new one.

Joe’s room at the Thompsons and the community theatre are two spaces that reflect a new life of its own with its specific rules and styles. They reflect, in other words, the character’s transition into a new official culture and his endeavor of social mobility. In other words, Warnley is Joe’s own Mecca. When he assumes the acting roles in the community theatre, he is assuming what Lee referred to previously as the “dress” and “code” and “speech” of the middle class. The new official culture transcends Joe’s behavior for him to become an accepted member of the community, a member who copies its moves or, in Joe’s previous words, a “successful zombie”.

This success comes at a price, however: Joe has willingly become a mechanic part of the huge machine: while he “had [his] chances to be a real person” (124), he finally chooses to become a successful zombie at the expense of that opportunity. Joe Lampton’s new collective culture becomes that of an “in-crowd of zombies”, recalling Doobie Gray’s Northern Soul anthem in a way that portrays the middle class culture, starting with the theatre community and ending with Joe’s *Life at The Top* with Susan, as a culture that is in fact “square”. While Northern Soul practices its own hegemony on the huge fan base, it does so by challenging the status quo. Lampton’s account of hegemony has him embrace the status quo as means of dealing with this hegemony in the most pragmatic way, irreversibly becoming part of a certain crowd in a certain space, with a certain social code.

C. Gotta Keep Moving: Futile Private Spaces

The irreversibility of Joe Lampton's path is the same that leaves Jimmy Porter stuck and refusing to bargain and compromise, and preferring to stay in his "in-between" space that is bound by anger. What is futile in Porter's attempts to change the world around, enraging him more as the play progresses, is in fact fruitful for Lampton. Joe's anger diminished with time, as he came to accept what he thought was the inevitable reality - namely, that he may not change the world around him, that he should change himself. Joe's direct use of war-lingo earlier is, to say the least, indicative of the toll the war has had on the protagonist's psyche, driving his social endeavors in what seems to be a plot to exact revenge against war and compensate the losses that it has brought upon him: his imprisonment, his parents' death and his social status.

The final state of being a successful zombie portrays Joe Lampton as one who is another kind of prison: his social mobility achieved, he is now living by the working class book. The plot he has carefully planned to exact revenge against war has also had its toll on Joe, ironically in the same way the war had: his new social status is now his new prison, and Alice is dead. War seems to take away more and more, and the damage that Joe seeks to reverse is further aggravated. Despite all that, Lampton remains content with the "successful zombie" state.

Between becoming a "successful zombie" and staying who he is, Jimmy would choose the latter, as it would mean changing something in him to satisfy the world and blend in with a chronic mask on his face. It is the same chronic mask that Archie seems to wear, not in order to blend in, but as means of looking back with mourning at first, then

bitterness, and eventually indifference. Archie also refuses to accept the new official culture, be it with the changing values and practices in the entertainment business, or by having to pay taxes in the new economically burdened postwar British system. Archie chooses to stay put, just like Jimmy does, but his actions could be more detrimental, as his refusal to pay taxes throughout the years would send him to prison.

The financial component is an important and particular factor when it comes to kitchen sink drama protagonists: postwar British literature of the working class is in particular expressive of anger towards the economic burden and a long chain of failures that culminated with the Suez Crisis. While Jimmy and Archie choose their own sphere over the public, and Joe dismisses his own space, *A Taste of Honey*'s main character, Jo, embodies a fruitful and healthier intersection of these spheres, as previously mentioned, be it with the "interracial" aspect of her pregnancy or her progressive social opinions regarding marriage, motherhood and homosexuality. Jo's space remains the same throughout the play; it does change from within, especially when it receives the non-official newcomers, i.e. Geoffrey and the black sailor.

Only one space changes geographically however, between all spaces of the four protagonists, and this "relocation" seems to be associated with a successful social mobility. Joe Lampton's social mobility would not have been successful if he had not physically moved from Dufton to Warnley. This is not the case for Jo whose social mobility is not achieved, despite the evolution of her own space from within. Also, Archie Rice's decision to remain in his geographical space and not travel to Canada for a business opportunity further aggravates his status and jeopardizes his future. In *Look Back in Anger*, on the other

hand, the play ends on the same space it opened on: Jimmy's attic, while Alice is ironing just like before.

It is Joe Lampton, the character who is least angry and emotional, who takes an actual decision of changing spaces in order to achieve social mobility. Jimmy looks back in anger all the time, Archie looks back in bitterness, while Jo looks forward and achieves a sort of "cultural mobility" through her progressive opinions without improving her socioeconomic status. Joe Lampton's physical move to Warnley fulfills social mobility and his ambition embodies the socioeconomic significance of the black clenched fist, at least in a more loyal way compared to Northern Soul dancers and Jimmy Porter. The Northern Soul dancer on the dance floor remains trapped in his own angry space of futile spins and backdrops and the anger of the young dancer remains contained in his private space, which eventually sustains the status quo in the public space. Here, the anti-hegemonic hegemony within the private space is serving the hegemony within the public space by keeping the angry young inside as he goes in circles. This movement mimics the futile anger of Jimmy Porter, as opposed to Jo's "projected anger" through which her private space evolves.

Behind the decks, however, the Northern Soul DJ has physically travelled across the Atlantic to retrieve the 45s and spin them for the Northern Soul dancer who would only dance to something that was never heard in other official spaces, geographically outside the venue or in London or in Detroit. The 45 embodies the spatial and geographical transition between the dancefloor and the record label vaults and repertoires on the other side of the Atlantic. In that sense, the DJ who is physically travelling is virtually taking with him every Northern Soul fan, as he clearly retrieves the records he knows will make the in-crowd answer YES to "Do I Love You". It is the kind of undeniable loving that Northern Soul

dancers feel towards their DJs so genuinely, but only within their private space. It is also the kind of blind love that brings them all together in that space and generates a blind hate of everything outside that space. This said, the subject being loved is questionable: is it the vinyl? Is it the white DJ? Is it black performer? Or is it the dancer speaking to himself/herself back and forth as s/he spins around?

The futile white love that the working class recycles on the dance floor is in fact as selfish as the fruitful love Joe Lampton has for himself, and as helpless as Jimmy Porter's anger. The taste of honey in the Northern Soul experience is sweet only because it caters to the white identity, while Jo seems to positively embrace that taste as an intrinsic part of her new identity. In the case of *The Entertainer*, Archie Rice believes there are no more reasons to answer YES in a postwar Britain that has taken away everything he loves. Instead, Archie recycles his bitterness and always blindly rejects any opportunity to change. The kitchen sink protagonists seem to struggle much more than the Northern Soul fans in finding answers, any answers. The quest to find the answers on the dancefloor seems futile in itself: originally dancing "against" the public sphere, the working class angry young man fails to move anywhere forward or beyond his private space, recycling his bottled up anger and keeping it locked away from its main trigger down South.

CONCLUSION

LONG AFTER TONIGHT IS OVER: I CAN'T HEAR YOU CRYING

In her interview with online magazine *Rhythms*, Australian first-time director Elaine Constantine said she “never understood the Northern Soul thing” until she heard Darrell Banks’ song *Open up the Doors to Your Heart*. This Northern Soul song opened the eyes of Constantine, the Australian who was “used to open spaces”, to other spaces she never saw before. Her directing debut film entitled *Northern Soul* came out in October 2014. It tells the story of two British working class friends whose worlds change upon the discovery of African American music in 1970s Lancashire.

Much can be said about the director’s account of the open spaces she grew up around in Australia with respect to the closed spaces and venues she got exposed to in modern Britain. Constantine’s movie is a sharp reflection of such account in the way that it depicts kitchen sink drama settings that recall Jo’s flat and Jimmy’s attic. Her interview is the first and only account of the parallels between Northern Soul music and British kitchen sink genre.

In her movie, Constantine revisits the theme of social mobility from the 1950s and the 1960s where the protagonist has “dreams of going beyond what their circumstances would normally offer” and she makes it a point that there is much more opportunity to rise up nowadays than in postwar Britain. This faith in rising up has been “kept” since 1957 as the interviewer admits he was expecting all the characters to die because of the kitchen sink drama context of the film. This stereotypical assumption is consistent with the fatality

depicted in the stories of Jimmy, Archie and Joe Lampton almost 60 years before the present day. The depiction of death in kitchen sink drama haunts not only the protagonists of the plays and novels, but also the general public in the present day.

Constantine's movie is not the first contemporary attempt to depict and tell the lives of Northern Soul fans on screen. In 2010, Shimmy Marcus directed a movie entitled *Soulboy*, based in 1974 Stoke-On-Trent. The story follows Alfie Allen's character, Russ, who falls in love with a young girl who is a dedicated Wigan Casino all-nighters attendee. Russ is first introduced to the northern soul scene after he stalks the girl and follows her to a record shop near his house. To his surprise, some records are absurdly overpriced, but as he becomes more involved in the scene, he starts to understand the scarcity and value of hundreds of northern soul singles.

On May 1st 2009, BBC News reported that another original 7 inch record for northern soul number one hit *Do I Love You* surfaced. The article *Record Price for Rare Motown* mentions that the vinyl was sold for more than 25,700 British Pounds in a special online auction by Kenny Burrell. It is the very vinyl that kept spinning for hundreds of all-nighters from the Twisted Wheel to Wigan Casino. Only one other copy exists: it was purchased in for more than 15,000 British Pounds, and it had the autograph of Frank Wilson himself.

The rarity of the record made it more desirable among Northern Soul fans. The BBC article reveals that all other 45s of the song were destroyed by Motown's owner Berry Gordy, after Frank Wilson terminated his contract and refused to write and compose songs for famous Motown acts such as The Supremes and The Four Tops. The recently found

original has disappeared since 1978, and it was recently purchased by a dedicated fan who wished to be anonymous.

As much as such an original and rare record can say about that most original yet anonymous “in-crowd” member, the decision to remain anonymous is more than justified: every other northern soul fan would stalk that guy home. For fans, this original 45 record of their Number One song symbolizes every spin, backdrop, all-nighter, talcum powder bottle, needle, etc. It is simply the dancefloor and the private space of the Northern Soul fan reincarnated. Craving the original 45 is but a minor sign of the need to keep the faith that has never subsided since Wigan Casino was shut down by the authorities in 1983 due to the associated drug scene that emerged. The reminiscence for the Northern Soul era can’t but recall Billy Rice’s state of mind and his longing for the good old days of the Empire.

The emotional value of the 45 single, along with the social and economic implications of its rarity, have recently become a topic of significant interest that gives a deeper account of the Northern Soul culture. The revival scene nowadays has surpassed the actual record and has acquired a cultural and media taste, with *Soulboy* and *Northern Soul* as two contemporary movies that depict the lives of the fans outside the dancefloor and beyond their official spaces. BBC 4 recently produced two documentaries entitled *Keeping the Faith* and *Living for the Weekend* in 2012 and 2013 respectively. These documentaries not only give a historical account of the Northern Soul scene but focus on the socioeconomic context of the working class of the time.

The socioeconomic context of the scene is similar to the one that surrounds kitchen sink protagonists and constitutes the reason behind their emotional state and their reaction to the status quo. It is important to note that the primary texts that were discussed in this

thesis are but an example of the kitchen sink drama literature and should in no way be seen as the only representative works.

In fact, there exist many other working class literary canons that were not discussed in the thesis, because they were not the trendsetting works of the movement as they were written and published more than 7 years after kitchen sink drama emerged. Such works include, but are not limited to, *Poor Cow* (1968) by Nell Dun and *The Leather Boys* (1964) by Gillian Freeman. These two texts particularly explore themes of feminism and homosexuality in postwar Britain within working class and rural areas, which shows that the working class space is not only bound by its social status but also by issues and notions of significant cultural value.

Similarly, one Northern Soul song of significant cultural value was not covered by this thesis: *Tainted Love* (1964) by Gloria Jones. The value of this song does not lie in its lyrics and content, but in its racial implications. Unlike the original version, the cover of *Tainted Love* by Soft Cell in 1984 met with instant success and the song climbed up the UK charts as soon as it was released.

Gloria Jones' Northern Soul hit marked its uncharted territory in Northern Soul venues and was "confined" to that private sphere to the extent that contemporary fans of the cover song fail to recognize its African American roots. By doing so, they also fail to recognize that Soft Cell's lead vocal, Marc Almond was a cloakroom boy in the Northern Soul venue, Cleethorpes Warehouse, where he first heard the song, fell in love with it and made it number 1 on the UK charts 20 years after its original release (Broughton, 81). Covered 20 years later, *Tainted Love* echoed the continuous separation of the two spaces even after the scene "officially" died when Wigan Casino was shut down. The original

version's failure to be a UK chartbuster reflects its success as a Northern Soul chartbuster, ranking 24th in Kev Robert's book.

The whiteness of *Tainted Love* would not have been achieved if it were not for its black roots. By performing an original black song, the white band is creating an all new identity that has surpassed its black roots and rose much higher on music charts. The success of the white cover 20 years later as opposed to the lack of mainstream success of the black original fulfills what I previously coined as *white through black* at the expense of *black through white*. This fulfillment mimics the working class's creation of its own "white through black" identity in the Northern Soul era.

The revival scene in the late 20th century and early 21st century Britain seems to further enact the supremacy of the white identity through what is originally black, i.e. the Northern Soul songs. Furthermore, the notion of race and otherness is absent from the present cultural output which focuses solely on the economic context of the scene and disregards other components. The BBC documentaries and Constantine's movies introduce the Northern Soul scene strictly in terms of its dance culture and its economic background during the 1970s, failing to give any account of its earlier roots and racial implications.

These implications on the other hand were strongly and clearly explored 60 years ago by Osborne and Delaney: *The Entertainer's* account of the black presence in his (home) country, Jimmy's embrace of Jazz music and Jo's physical embrace of blackness reflect the authors' clear interest in the notion of race within the working class in postwar Britain. Almost 60 years after the working class created its very own space that has come to define Northern Soul music, the literary output of that class in the 1950s portrays a better

understanding and appreciation of the complexity of that class, by tackling and reflecting the different notions and issues of class, gender and race that have come to define it.

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