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**The Portrayal of Women Characters in the Works of the
Generation “Angry Young Men.” Kingsley Amis and Alan Sillitoe.**
(Bakalářská práce)

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Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto práci vypracovala samostatně a že jsem uvedla úplný seznam citované a použité literatury.

V Olomouci dne

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1. Introduction

The movement Angry Young Men started in the 1950s and its life span was not long. Nevertheless, the authors of the generation were publishing during other decades as well. The writers were concerned mainly with the male characters and their rebellion against the society. The aim of this thesis is to explore and analyse their approach towards the women protagonists and how it varied throughout the second half of the twentieth century.

The authors, that were chosen for the analysis, are two seemingly uncomparable representatives of the movement – Kingsley Amis and Alan Sillitoe. Their differences are obvious – they wrote about different social classes, even their classification to the generation is rather doubtful. In reality, the label and the common features of the generation were part of a big discussion as we will see later in this chapter. Our goal is not to provide any solution to the problem but to discuss the approaches of the two writers.

In the 1950s they were both young and their published novels marked the beginning of an era. Moreover, few writers of the generation were productive in the 1980s, those two remained more or less popular and influential until their deaths. That is why we have decided to analyse those two authors. One of our concerns is to provide sufficient evidence that those authors may be compared and that they are even comparable.

The society of the 1960s was called permissive and its start is already reflected in the work of the Angry Young Men. We will analyse what influence it had in the 1980s and how the changes in the society, in the general attitudes towards women and their position were shown or not in the works of the mentioned authors. Therefore we have chosen one novel by Kingsley Amis and one novel by Alan Sillitoe of the 1950s and of the 1980s. *Take a Girl Like You* (1960) is not a debut of Kingsley Amis, he was already an established writer. On

the other hand, it fits to the time span and moreover comments on the era from a female perspective. *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1958) by Alan Sillitoe was his first success and he became a speaker of the 'working-class'. In the later decades Kingsley Amis published novels dealing with the relationships between men and women such as *The Green Man* (1968), *Jake's Thing* (1978) or *Stanley and the Women* (1984). We have analysed the last one because it is the youngest and best reflects some features of the society. The final decision about the most suitable novel by Alan Sillitoe was more difficult. His work of the 1980s is not primarily concerned with female characters. What is more, the availability in the Czech Republic is practically zero. From the few possibilities we have decided to analyse *Her Victory* (1982) which does have a main female protagonist and therefore it is relevant for our thesis. The novel is concerned with more relationships and only one of them takes place in the 1970s. That is why we have decided to analyse only those parts that deal with the contemporary couple and its connected affairs.

Concerning the secondary sources, we have consulted three main types of works. The general historical and social researches were used to provide basic details for the introductory part. Moreover, we have contrasted its points with approaches of the authors in different decades, dealing mainly with divorce, women employment or domestic violence. Another important source was, of course, literary criticism that helped us to back our opinions. We have also employed works concerned with the culture, society and its changes, such as *Society and Literature 1945-1970* or *The Impossibility of Auto/Biography* by Mary Evans.

We have used the structural approach to the novels. David Lodge comments on its advantages and disadvantages in his work *Language of Fiction*. He uses this methodology mainly to the language, though. We apply it to the general presentation and progress of the characters. We discuss the works in their whole lengths and we do not emphasise on part over another. On the other hand, we have to take into account the complexity of the texts and thus, as Lodge

suggests, we have employed the technique intuitively, throughout the reading itself.¹

At the beginning we introduce historical and social background of the second half of the twentieth century. We include a separate part on the position of the women in the society because the sex is the main concern of our thesis. Then we continue with the explanation of the term Angry Young Men and provided the discussion it created. There is an introductory part to the main body of the thesis dealing with the general characteristics of the female protagonists. For the sake of the length of the thesis, we explore those significant points contained in the analysed novels: family background, relationships between women, relationships between men and women and marriage and motherhood. The last two parts are probably the most important as the changes of the society in those areas are the most crucial. To the section called *Marriage and Motherhood* we include not only those two problems but it is also concerned with connected elements such as divorce, abortion or domestic violence.

1.1. Political and Social Background

The post-war Labour government had to deal with the immense debt and its task was to lead the country from economic and social uncertainty. The vision of the Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, was to nationalize main sectors of industry and British economy (almost 20%) and to promote and systematise the education. One of the most important events was the establishment of National Health Service in 1948. It was quite a controversial topic as it encouraged “the publicly-financed social welfare, popularly dubbed 'the welfare state'.”² Next year Britain joined the N.A.T.O. As for the international relations, Attlee was concerned with the possibility of third-world war and it was the reason for his conciliatory attitude in the Korean war.³

1 see David Lodge, *Language of Fiction. Essay in Criticism and Verbal Analysis of the English Novel* (New York: Columbia UP, 1967) 78-82.

2 H. C. G. Matthew and Kenneth Owen Morgan, *The Oxford History of Britain. The Modern Age*, Vol. 5. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1992) 118.

3 see André Maurois, *Dějiny Anglie* (Praha: Lidové noviny, 1995) 442.

In the 1950s there were the Conservative governments of Sir Winston Churchill (1951), Sir Anthony Eden (1954), of Harold MacMillan (1957), and of Sir Alec Douglas-Home (1963). They supported denationalization (steel industry, road transport) and building of new houses. It was an era of relative prosperity as people got in touch with “luxurious” articles such as televisions, cars or refrigerators. In 1952 Queen Elizabeth II acceded to the throne and she reigns until these days.

The biggest international issue of the 1950s was the Suez crisis in 1956 when Egyptian President Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal. Joint armies of Britain, France and the Israel invaded the canal without the consent of the United Nations and the USA. The government had no support of British people and, shamefully, had to retreat.

The 1960s was the era of freer moral standards as the contraceptive pills allowed sexual possibilities. It also led to smaller families and to the low birthrate in the 1970s.⁴ It was called the 'permissive' society, “in which drink and drugs were freely available, skirts spectacularly shorter, sexual restraint much less in evidence.”⁵ It is the origin of changing social attitudes and values, not only towards the standard family and the position of a woman, but towards homosexuality, abortion and divorce as well. All those changes are closely connected with the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament which had its supporters mainly among young people, particularly students.

From 1964 to 1970 it was the time of the Labour governments of Harold Wilson marked by the devaluation of the pound sterling in 1967. Wilson was succeeded by the Conservative Edward Heath and during this cabinet Britain became a member of the E.E.C. (European Economic Community, the contemporary European Union) in 1973, after 10 years from the first attempt in

4 see Susan McRae, “Women”, in *Contemporary Britain: an annual Review 1990*, ed. by Peter Catterall (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1990) 385.

5 Matthew, *The Oxford History of Britain* 128.

1963 when the attempt was vetoed by the French President de Gaulle. Nevertheless, it was also a year of the state of emergency which led to a great tension and consequently, to many strikes. According to Kenneth Morgan, “Britain now provided a classic example of the post-Keynesian phenomenon of 'stagflation', with industrial recession and high inflation at one and the same time.”⁶ Thus the 1970s were not so prosperous as the preceding decade and hand in hand with this situation went the growing uncertainty and discontent.

In 1974 Harold Wilson from the Labour Party won the elections again and in 1976 he was replaced by James Callaghan. At that time the big exploitations of oil reserves were started at the British shore which helped the economy significantly. It is important to mention the Irish question which no government successfully solved during the second half of 20th century.

Margaret Thatcher became the first female Prime Minister in 1974. She was known for her strict policy and firmness. The most important affair was the war of the Falkands when Argentina invaded the islands in 1982. Britain sent its troops there and Argentina had to yield. It increased national patriotism and British people were once again proud of their country after almost 40 years of loosing colonies all over the world. This led to the establishment of the British Commonwealth of Nations which replaced the British Empire. It was a severe blow for British self-confidence and pride. It meant gradual decline in the role of the world power.

Notwithstanding, the economy did not go so well and it went to the increase of prices and of unemployment. The government used the policy of privatization which quite helped the situation. Another important event was the Channel Tunnel Treaty, signed in 1986 between Margaret Thatcher and the French president François Mitterand. The tunnel was built and set to work in 1994. It was the symbolic end of the British policy of isolation (*splendid isolation*⁷) and great

6 Matthew, *The Oxford History of Britain* 133.

7 see Maurois, *Dějiny Anglie* 452.

change in the typical anti-Europeanism.

The late 1980s became quite prosperous and the society was calmer and more optimistic. For example, the home-ownership was spreading till it reached the rate of two-thirds of population.⁸

In 1990 John Major, another Conservative, replaced Margaret Thatcher in the position of the Prime Minister and had to deal with another great recession and with painful international affairs such as the Gulf War.

1.2. Position of a Woman in the Society of the 1960s and onwards

For our thesis the crucial period is between the 1960s and the 1980s. Nevertheless, the cradle of the women's rights is found at the beginning of the 20th century. Therefore we include a brief account of the first steps towards the acknowledgment of women's position in the society. The most important event that marked and changed the general development of women's question was the Representation of the People Act from 1918. It introduced the suffrage for women over the age of 30. In the same year women got right to be elected into the House of Commons. It was called the Parliament (Qualification of Women) Act. In 1928 the minimum voting age was equalled with the men's, to 21. Another key difference was that women started to enter paid employment and it was the beginning of becoming equal with men. On the other hand, the jobs contained only the typical women occupations such as catering, hairdressing or education.

Nevertheless, it was crucial to change the general attitude towards women. Thanks to the Great Wars when women contributed in various ways they could start working in more technical jobs or got more responsible positions (as in the political sphere). Of course, during the peace the circumstances were not the same but the change has continued. In the 1960s and the 1970s a renewal of feminist

⁸ see Matthew, *The Oxford History of Britain* 140.

movement helped to promote important acts of equality between men and women. It was the Equal Pay Act from 1970 which, as its name suggests, meant the same pay conditions. The Sex Discrimination Act from 1975 prohibits any kind of discrimination in employment and in other areas. To supervise the fulfillment of the acts there was established the Equal Opportunities Commission. As for the social benefits the Social Security Pensions Act from 1975 was promoted that guarantees the equality in this area.

In the 1970s the general pattern for marriage was this: weddings were becoming more common and the brides were younger (average age was 22). More than 90% of women were married before celebrating 30. Families had less children.⁹

Since 1986 there is the Ministerial Group on Women's Issues which cares for health, employment and education topics. In the 1980s there were some amendments to the Sex Discrimination Act to meet European standards. It is important to mention that the results of those acts were not always success. For example, in the 1990s the women's pay was three-quarters of the men's despite the Equal Pay Act 1970.

1.3. General Characteristics of the movement Angry Young Men

As the symbolic beginning of the movement is considered the introduction of the play *Look Back in Anger* by John Osborne in 1956. Nevertheless, the whole 1950s were full of the type of protagonist represented by Osborne's Jimmy Porter – young, unhappy, misunderstood and rejected by society, unsuccessful and consequently angry. It is closely connected with The Movement, a group of poets writing in the 1950s. Carter describes the distinction between the Movement (1946-1957): “A group of writers seen as sharing anti-romantic, lower-middle-

⁹ see United Kingdom National Commission for Unesco, *Status of Women in Britain. Women in Britain: National Inventory for the Programme “Exchange of Information and Experience between Women in Member States and the Encouragement of Women's Efforts for Peace”*, ([UNESCO], 1976) 1-2.

class values, in both poetry and the novel” and the Angry Young Men (1956-1965): “Playwrights and novelists introduced a feeling of bitterness and political discontent. Another movement at the same time was kitchen-sink drama where realistic plays were set in lower-class homes rather than the drawing rooms of rich people.”¹⁰ We note the similarities in the point of view and applied tone.

The movement is named after a novel by Leslie Paul *Angry Young Men*. Eighteen autobiographical essays are already marked by the “angry” tone. However, it is only the predecessor of the authors as well as are, for example, the works by Angus Wilson at the end of the 1940s.

Cándido Pérez Gallego sums up those significant features of the generation (my translation)¹¹:

1. Impossibility of the family life.
2. Tendency to solitude or uncommunication.
3. Lack of religious, political or social ideals.
4. Desire to advance in the social class.
5. Eroticism.
6. Distrust of institutions.
7. “Life is a competition.” (John Wain)
8. Rebellion against the Establishment.
9. Violence as a norm of conduct.
10. Lack of defined interest.

It is obvious from what we have said that the main interest of the authors is social criticism. As for the desire to make a progress in the social class, a lot of protagonist adopt bourgeois attitudes (“aburguesamiento”, my translation; such as

10 Ronald Carter, and John McRae, *The Penguin Guide to English Literature: Britain and Ireland* (Suffolk: Penguin Books, 1996) 149.

11 see Cándido Pérez Gallego, *Literatura y rebeldía en la Inglaterra actual: los “Angry Young Men”, un movimiento social de los años cincuenta* (Madrid: Consejo superior de investigaciones científicas, 1968) 5.

Arthur Seaton in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*)¹². The novels are often written as a documentary or in a documentary form.

According to Pérez Gallego, the main protagonists were: Kingsley Amis, Lindsay Anderson, John Braine, Shelagh Delaney, Bill Hopkins, Doris Lessing, Iris Murdoch, John Osborne, Alan Sillitoe, Kenneth Tynnan, John Wain and Colin Wilson. He also adds Arnold Wesker, Keith Waterhouse, David Storey or William Golding but those are yet very loosely connected.

Nevertheless, the end of the movement was as abrupt as its beginning and yet in the 1960s the group ceased to have at least some things in common. Many critics think that in reality it has never existed. Martin Hilský claims that the term is inaccurate and was used even if the authors themselves protested.¹³ The same opinion Malcolm Bradbury holds: “. . . the most common description being that it was the fiction of “angry young men.” This was somewhat narrow, since a lot of authors were not angry, many were not young, and a lot of them were women.”¹⁴ It is true that the label is very imprecise. Kingsley Amis himself, when interviewed by Dale Salwak, adds another possible explication to the beginnings of the movement:

As always, I think it was all certainly not one or two things. Rather, it was a combination of accidents. One was that it so happened that three or four writers (myself included), none of whom were from upper-class backgrounds or had been to public schools in the British sense, emerged at about the same time. And they were all roughly of an age, and it so happened that there had been a kind of delayed action effect after the war. John Wain appeared, it so happened in 1953. I think there was feeling of exhaustion after the war ...¹⁵

12 see Gallego, *Literatura y rebeldía* 6.

13 see Martin Hilský, *Současný britský román* (Jinonice: H&H, 1992) 29.

14 Malcolm Bradbury, *The Modern British novel* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1994) 318.

15 Quoted in José Antonio Zabalbeascoa, *Teatro contemporáneo en lengua inglesa* (Alcalá de Henares: Universidad de Alcalá, 1998) 39.

Thus in fact, almost any author who somehow criticised the establishment fits in the description and it has never been very homogenous a group. However, our aim is not to analyze its features or title. For our purpose it is enough to generalize the term as we already have in this chapter.

2. Kingsley Amis and His Work

Born in 1922, Kingsley Amis is probably the most successful of the Angry Young Man. He was educated at St. John's College at Oxford. He edited *Oxford Poetry 1949* together with James W. Michie. He was lecturer at Swansea, Cambridge or at Princeton. He died in 1995.

His debut, *Lucky Jim* (1954), is one of the most significant works of the movement. Moreover, thanks to its university setting it has anticipated the campus novel. *That Uncertain Feeling* (1955) is, according to Kenneth Allsop, “that of the contemporary sexy madness that can drive a man into situations which he knows can bring only disaster and ruin, but which he cannot resist.”¹⁶ It is clear that Amis uses broad variety of themes and of genres. Nevertheless, he does not approve of experiments as well as others of the movement. The Angry Young Men are also considered as a reaction against the modernists such as Virginia Woolf or E. M. Forster (especially the Bloomsbury group) and against any experiment in the British novel.¹⁷

Among other important works are *Ending Up* (1974), *The Old Devils* (1986) or *The Riverside Villas Murder* where he tries the genre of a detective story. *The Folks that Live on the Hill* (1990) or *You Can't Do Both* (1994) belong to his last novels. He was also interested in science fiction (*New Maps of Hell*, 1961) and a specialist on James Bond. He wrote several collections of poetry as well (*A Frame of Mind*, 1954; *A Case of Samples*, 1956). Bernard Bergonzi says about his poetical work: “As a poet, Amis was one of the progenitors of the Movement: he composed astringent moral observations in tight, severely metrical forms in a manner fairly close to that of his friend Philip Larkin, dedicatee of *Lucky Jim*.”¹⁸ There we see the close connection between the Angry Young Men and the Movement.

16 Quoted in Gallego, *Literatura y Rebeldía* 67.

17 see Bernard Bergonzi, *The Situation of the Novel*. (Aylesbury: U of Pittsburgh Press, 1970) 162.

18 Quoted in Gallego, *Literatura y Rebeldía* 60.

3. Alan Sillitoe and His Work

Alan Sillitoe was born in 1928 in Nottingham. He came from the working-class that is, together with Nottingham, the basis of his work. He served with RAF in Malaysia that is reflected in *Key to the Door* (1961). He died in 2010.

Saturday Night and Sunday Morning (1958) is his first work and both the novel and the short story *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* (1959) were made into movies. Later novels and short stories include *The Ragman's Daughter* (1963), *Men, Women and Children* (1973), *Down from the Hill* (1984) or *The German Numbers Woman* (1999).

After the 1960s he remained consistent in his work as Ronald Carter suggests: "Sillitoe has not been tempted away from the subject matter he knows best, and has thus remained the most consistent of the new writers of the 1950s – his semi-autobiographical *Raw Material* (1972) is particularly vivid."¹⁹ It is important to point out the contrast between Sillitoe and Kingsley Amis who employs more varied genres and points of view. Another important difference is that Sillitoe's protagonists come from the working class background whereas Amis's from the lower-middle or middle class. What is more, according to Martin Hilský, Sillitoe's characters lack the desire to advance to a higher social class.²⁰ Nevertheless, Hilský also mentions some discrepancies with what Carter says. *The Death of William Posters* (1965), *A Tree on Fire* (1967) and *The Flame of Life* (1974) shows certain progress and change in the work of Sillitoe²¹. Still the theme he knows best is the Nottingham worker and his harsh life.

19 Ronald Carter, and John McRae, *History of Literature in English* (London: Routledge, 1997) 505.

20 see Hilský, *Současný britský román* 34.

21 see Hilský, *Současný britský román* 34.

4. Brief Summary of the Novels

4.1. *Take a Girl Like You* by Kingsley Amis

The novel's main character is a twenty-year-old Jenny Bunn. She is a girl from a small town in the north of Great Britain who comes to south to teach. She wants to become more independent and find out what it is like to live on her own. She rents a room in the house of Martha and Dick Thompson. Another lodger in the house is an attractive French girl Anna le Page. She starts dating Patrick Standish, a young teacher, who is infamous for his affairs with women. But Jenny is different. Her small-town morality and family upbringing tells her to marry as a virgin. Patrick thinks she will sleep with him at the very first date but he is rejected. Patrick accepts dating her for some time hoping he will eventually be satisfied. Moreover, he has to be faithful to her and that is another novelty in his life. On the other hand, Jenny's system of values is continuously being shaken and she doubts her philosophy. In the end Patrick gives her an ultimatum: she will give in or they will broke up. They split but at a party Patrick takes advantage of Jenny being drunk and thus she losses her virginity. When she finds out what has happened, naturally, she is angry with him. After all, she accepts the situation and they reunite.

The whole novel deals with the problem of marriage, loss of virginity, relationship between men and women, between women and women. That is why it is a great example of Amis's work with respect to the image of women he describes in his novels.

4.2. *Stanley and the Women* by Kingsley Amis

The novel describes a middle-aged editor Stanley and his relationships with women. His wife Susan has just thrown a successful party when the doorbell rings and there is Stanley's son from the previous marriage, Steve. Apparently, he is disturbed. He spends some days in their house and then he visits his mother Nowell and there he suffers a mental breakdown. So he is taken to a hospital and treated with schizophrenia. After some time, his doctor, Dr Collings, decides that he is able to spend nights at home, even though Steve does not look better at all. Consequently, he visits the Jabali Embassy and gets arrested. It turns out that the Arabs wanted some information from him but the plan did not work out for them.

Moreover, Susan finds a knife in Steve's bedroom and the situation is tensed up. One day, Stanley gets a message to go home immediately. There is Susan with injured arm and she accuses Steve of attacking her. Nevertheless, he does not remember it at all. Surprisingly, Susan tells Stanley that she knows he thinks she has invented the attack and that he thinks she has done it herself. That is why she leaves him.

Stanley is totally upset not only because of Susan but also because Steve's state is not getting any better. He meets his friend Lindsey in a pub and talks about Susan and she reveals to him that Susan is not the perfect woman she seems to be. She does not like lack of attention and is able to do anything to be in the centre of events. This suggests that she really did injure herself. The novel ends when Susan calls Stanley and begs him for forgiveness.

4.3. *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* by Alan Sillitoe

The novel is set in the working-class background. Arthur Seaton is a man of twenty-one (years) and works in a bicycle factory in Nottingham. He has a relationship with a married woman, Brenda. She gets pregnant and wants to abort. She does it by having a bath in a very hot water and drinking a lot of gin. Later on Arthur gets involved with her sister Winnie as well. Of course, both husbands suspect that something is happening and are jealous. John, Brenda's husband, is Arthur's friend and he does not want to harm him. He warns him that Winnie's husband has hired rough men to get him beaten. Nevertheless, Arthur stays careless and continues in both relationships. Moreover, he starts dating a girl Doreen who falls in love and wants to marry him. John loses patience and tells the guys where Arthur is and he gets beaten. Doreen helps him to recover. He breaks up with Brenda and Winnie and starts dating Doreen more seriously. In the end he gets engaged to her and wants to lead a secure life.

One of the major themes in Sillitoe's writings is the fight between us (the working-class) and them (such as government, police, etc.).²² This is one of the reason why the protagonists act as rebels. We see it in the example of Arthur who protests against the establishment by drinking, by destroying families and having affairs with married women or by his unwillingness to get married. This is what makes him an angry young man.

²² see Stanley S. Atherton, *Alan Sillitoe. A Critical Assessment* (London: W. H. Allen, 1979) 73.

4.4. *Her Victory* by Alan Sillitoe

The main protagonist of the novel is Pam. She leaves her husband George because she is unhappy in the marriage. She starts living in a London flat where she meets independent Judy. Nevertheless, Pam is not able to find the certainty she has been looking for and tries to commit suicide. Her neighbour Tom, sailor who has come back from the sea, wants to borrow sugar and smells gas. Thus he saves her. They start an affair that develops into a relationship. Tom is on shore because he has inherited property after his aunt's death. His mother died shortly after his birth and he was brought up in an orphanage. The inheritance makes it possible for him to discover the truth about his origin and about himself. He goes with Pam to his family country house and studies old diaries. He finds out that he is a Jew and that his mother committed suicide. Later on, they come back to London and he starts learning Hebrew to get to know the culture he comes from.

George does not want to come to terms with the separation and goes with his brothers to London to bring Pam back home to Nottingham. He attacks her in her flat but Tom saves her again. They decide to go travelling to Europe. There Pam reveals to Tom that she is pregnant and they return to England. She gives birth to a girl called Rachel. However, Tom is unsettled in England and he wants to go to Israel. They decide that Tom will travel there and after some time Pam and Rachel will follow him.

5. Women Characters in the Works of Kingsley Amis and Alan Sillitoe

5.1. General Characteristics of Women Characters

In the first part of the analysis we present basic characterization of female protagonists. It is a generalized overview of the types of women appearing in the novels. We have chosen only those characters that reflect the position of a woman in the society. Moreover, other protagonists are mentioned in the following parts of the thesis.

In *Take a Girl Like You* by Kingsley Amis the narrative is focused on the main female character Jenny Bunn. She is a strange mixture of an independent and naïve girl. The characteristics of an unexperienced woman is moreover emphasized by her name (Bunn) that refers to a bunny. It implies her innocence and even naïvity. She has no big problems with adaptation in a new environment, even though she often mentions what someone from her family would say or says, especially her father.²³ Bergonzi suggests that even though she clings to the idea of virginity before marriage she has left the traditional values of her home by going to London.²⁴ Therefore she represents the slow and gradual giving up of the past. She is only twenty but she is able to be respected by the children at school. She has an advantage that she has a younger brother and uses some of their tricks on unruly kids.²⁵ Thus, despite her age, she is successful in her first job even on her very first day. It is also her beauty that helps her to carry on the role of a young nice teacher. Concerning her occupation, she represents a typical working woman of the time.²⁶

Anna le Page, Jenny's flatmate, functions as a foil for Jenny, open-minded,

²³ see Kingsley Amis, *Take a Girl Like You* (London: Penguin Books, 1962) 54.

²⁴ see Bergonzi, *The Situation* 166-167.

²⁵ see Amis, *Take a Girl* 25.

²⁶ see Unesco, *Status of Women* 24.

free from any moral prejudices, with artistic feeling. She is not a stereotype of a girl as Jenny is. She is described without any clichés. However, Amis overturns this depiction in the end, because we find out that she has pretended to be a French, as she explains: “Playing a part's the only thing left these days, it show you won't deal with society in the way it wants you.”²⁷ This revelation changes our whole view of her. She is presented as an open-minded, independent girl, but actually her reputation is based on a lie and pretentiousness. We trace in her character elements of masculinity which started to be visible in women at that time. An example of the masculine influence is Twiggy as the ideal of female beauty in the 1950s.²⁸ With this prototype we rather associate slim Jenny than Anna. On the other hand, Mary Evans also finds another features of this effect on women: “The influence of masculinity can equally be seen in the dress and the behaviour of women. Wearing trousers and choosing short haircuts became a fashion for women.”²⁹ Descriptions of Anna le Page are never so accurate to tell us something about her clothes or haircut but, nevertheless, the refuse to shave her armpit can be considered as a revolt against the acknowledged rules for women.³⁰ Thus Anna approaches herself more to men than to women. Moreover, her unsuccessful attempt of intercourse with Jenny is seen through the conventional view of a lesbian at that time: a masculine and nonconforming archetype.³¹

Susan from *Stanley and the Women* by Kingsley Amis is an example of a perfect woman. She is described as caring, successful, yet listening to her husband and supporting him. She is practical as well. For example she gets new clothes for her stepson³². However, as the novel develops, her character becomes rather unclear and so the real causes of her confusing and ambiguous behaviour. As in the scene where she gets angry with a police officer because of his attitude, “And the way he sneered at me for being your second wife . . . Who the hell cares *he*

27 Amis, *Take a Girl* 299.

28 see Alan Sinfield, *Society and Literature, 1945-1970* (London: Methuen & Co, Ltd., 1983) 42.

29 Mary Evans, *Missing Persons: The Impossibility of Auto/Biography*, 1999, *PROJECT EBRARY*, 15 Feb. 2011, <<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/upol/Doc?id=10017171&ppg=118>>. 110.

30 see Amis, *Take a Girl* 89.

31 The status and development of lesbians is described in Paul Addison, and Harriet Jones, eds, *A Companion to Contemporary Britain 1939-2000* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007) 145-156, 393-395.

32 see Kingsley Amis, *Stanley and the Women* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1985) 72.

thinks?”³³ Actually, he only assumed Steve being her son and it was her who corrected him abruptly. The climax comes when Susan herself accuses Stanley that he does not believe her that Steve has cut her, “I was watching you when Cliff told you Steve had said he didn't know anything about it and you stood there weighing it up. Weighing it up.”³⁴ This comes totally unexpected because Stanley has never doubted it was Steve but it is this statement that makes him uncertain. Moreover, Susan even indirectly confesses her reasons: “Or rather what it reveals about what you think of me. You think I'm so neurotic, so self-centred, . . . just for what? Attention? Is that what I was after?”³⁵ The same opinion gives Stanley's friend Lindsey when they are discussing the situation. It is the first time she reveals to him everything she knows about Susan as they went to school together. There we find out that she really is capable of doing anything to be in the centre of attention. Still, the conclusion is not altogether clear. Stanley, as the narrator, does not know what to believe and the resume ends up ambiguous. The same way as Susan is. She resembles Anna le Page from *Take a Girl Like You* in the independent behaviour and ambiguity of their character. We may also compare Susan with Jenny from *Take a Girl Like You*. We see a slight change concerning the occupation. As Jenny represents the typical working woman, Susan's job (she is a writer) is not very common for women. On the other hand, the numbers of men and women in this area were very similar at that time.³⁶ In Sillitoe's *Her Victory* he mentions the impossibility for women to be sailors but he thinks that with proper training they might become ones in the future.³⁷ Therefore there is progress concerning the approach towards women's job.

Another important woman in Stanley's life is his exwife Nowell. As in the example of Jenny Bunn her name tells us a lot about her. Nowell stands for Noel, Christmas, but misspelled by her mother and by Nowell herself. As Christmas is a time of peace and tranquility the wrong spelling implies her opposite features. She

33 Amis, *Stanley* 248.

34 Amis, *Stanley* 267.

35 Amis, *Stanley* 268.

36 see Nicholas Abercrombie, and Alan Warde, et. al., *Contemporary British Society* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1992) 113.

37 see Sillitoe, *Her Victory* (London: Granada, 1982) 460.

is hysteric, nervous, pathetic. “No well” is what her name would actually mean. Lindsey describes her through a role she had on television: “she was . . . the woman who shoots her boyfriend and then says he was trying to rape her when really he was trying to ditch her. We, uh, we thought she was just right for that.”³⁸ This statement agrees with Stanley's opinion about his ex-wife which he repeats throughout the whole novel: “it was Nowell, no question, not just the tune being more important than the words . . . but also the sort of substitutional effect, saying A and meaning X, or rather talking about A but *really* talking about X, and not caring who knew it.”³⁹ He even compares her to the communists: “She makes the past as she goes along. You know, like communists.”⁴⁰ Those anti-left opinions of Amis are apparent throughout the novel. For example, Susan's exlover was a left-wing playwright or a male character compares women to the Russians. Amis's political opinions were displayed in a lecture at Oxford where he explained why he changed his preferences for the right-wing policies.⁴¹ According to Stanley, Nowell has the idea that he did not care properly for his son and did not spend much time with him, which he denies. As it is the first-person narrative, it is highly subjective and thus it is difficult to judge the actions. Nevertheless, Nowell surely acts according to what is most suitable for her, as we will see in the chapter 5.5.5. called *Marriage and Motherhood* where we explain her reasons for new marriage.

In *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* by Alan Sillitoe the narration is centered on the main male protagonist, Arthur Seaton. That is why he is the most developed and most profound character. On the other hand, his affairs with women are the most interesting and most elaborated relationships that makes the novel worth comparing. We have to say that the female characters are not so deeply analysed as in Amis's work or if we compare it to Arthur himself. One of the reasons is that the working class environment was dominated by men.⁴² Nevertheless, we examine the women protagonists as minutely as possible.

38 Amis, *Stanley* 28.

39 Amis, *Stanley* 248.

40 Amis, *Stanley* 123.

41 see Kingsley Amis, *Lucky Jim's politics* (London: Conservative Political Centre, 1968).

42 see Abercrombie, *Contemporary British Society* 168.

Brenda is the one who introduces her lover Arthur to the world of adults. She is very mature and she is able to run family, raise children, care for her husband and her lover at the same time. It is astonishing that she lets her children to meet Arthur and he even plays with them as an uncle. Moreover, they had no scruples and kiss before the kids. After a night spent together, Brenda prepares breakfast for Arthur the same way as a good housewife does.⁴³ It implies that their relationship is a bit more serious than just an affair. Arthur himself admits he would like to live with her.⁴⁴ The obstacle is her husband and the fact that Brenda is married makes their relationship as it is. All in all, breakfast obviously is a sign of the functionality of a relationship. As Hoggart writes “women are simply expected to look after such things.”⁴⁵ Brenda has no problems with cooking for Arthur but Pam from *Her Victory* by Alan Sillitoe refuses to cook for her husband George all the time and it reflects the disagreements they face. What is more, George finds the cooking a crucial thing of marriage and what a wife is supposed to do.⁴⁶

Brenda from *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* by Alan Sillitoe is aware of certain ephemerality of love, “I know you love me now, but you might not in six months.”⁴⁷ This fatalism and lack of naïvity makes her more mature than Jenny from *Take a Girl Like You* by Kingsley Amis. The same way of thinking is present in Sillitoe's *Her Victory* as well.⁴⁸ Arthur also realizes there is no future for them. It seems he thinks about them quite seriously because in reality there is no danger of real commitment.⁴⁹ The maturity and decisiveness makes Brenda similar to Susan from *Stanley and the Women* by Kingsley Amis. Brenda also shows a great deal of determination when she does not want to argue about having a baby or not and she herself decides she will have an abortion. What is more she accuses Arthur of the pregnancy that he was not more careful. This disagreement is contrary to Hoggart's idea that women were expected to take

43 see Alan Sillitoe, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (London: Flamingo, 1994) 22.

44 see Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 128.

45 Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1966) 42.

46 see Sillitoe, *Her Victory* 14.

47 Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 136.

48 see Sillitoe, *Her Victory* 510.

49 see Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 58.

care of contraceptive precautions.⁵⁰ It suggests that she is more unconventional than it might seem. On the other hand, she also shows more sensitive side when she cries because of the situation⁵¹. However, it seems that she does not feel any remorse over the unborn baby and thus the cry is rather over the circumstances than a loss of a child.

Doreen, Arthur's girlfriend, resembles Jenny from *Take a Girl Like You* by Kingsley Amis in many ways. She is young, naïve, eager to get married. Therefore the desire to get married is the same throughout the social classes.⁵² On the other hand, she does not care about being virgin or not before the wedding night. That is why she consequently gives up to Arthur, though it takes quite a while comparing to the other women. The crucial thing for her is being engaged. She cares about what other people say, especially women at work.⁵³ He is her first serious boyfriend and therefore she tolerates his drinking, lying or even unfaithfulness. In the end, she gets what she was up to, they get engaged and plan a life together. Another similarity with Jenny is their naïvity. Same as Jenny, Doreen believes in changing a man. "But I'll tame you, you see if I don't,"⁵⁴ she says to Arthur. It resembles the situation when Jenny dreams about taming tigers.⁵⁵ On the other hand, Doreen is more realistic than Jenny when she is aware of certain compromises she has to do in order to get what she wants – get married. As an example we have already stated her tolerant behaviour towards Arthur's faults.

Pam from *Her Victory* by Alan Sillitoe is surprisingly unexperienced. She resembles Jenny Bunn from *Take a Girl Like You* by Kingsley Amis even though she is two generations older. The lack of experience is caused by the unsuccessful marriage. She is frozen in the unhappy state and cannot develop herself. Therefore the true growing up comes after she leaves her husband. Yet before we trace

50 see Hoggart, *The Uses* 45.

51 see Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 72.

52 see Abercrombie, *Contemporary British Society* 243.

53 see Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 155.

54 Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 208.

55 see Amis, *Take a Girl* 264.

certain development in her character, for example when she speaks at a literary course, “she had broken her quietude and didn't care what he said, even if she had sounded a fool . . . she had done it, and would speak again whenever she felt like it.”⁵⁶ As we see the inertness is created by the marriage, “she found something to do which excluded him, George realized that she had done so because there was no part of his life he would let her share. As a way of getting back at her he decided there would be even less in the future.”⁵⁷ Therefore it is the oppression in the marriage that makes her the way she is. The break-up enables her to awaken, “her eyes in the mirror were not flat and vacuous in their expression any more. They were coming back to life.”⁵⁸ She changes also physically. The emptiness of the marriage is expressed by the hollowness of her eyes. The change implies that it is the freedom that helps her to start living again. She also awakens sexually.⁵⁹ The freedom makes her similar to animals, “if George had tracked her she would bit him like a wolf. The feel of freedom made her wolfish at the idea that it might end.”⁶⁰ The usage of animal metaphors is quite common in Sillitoe's work as we will see in the chapter 5.5.4. called *Relationships between Men and Women*. On the other hand, Pam is not a strong character as we see in her attempt to commit suicide.⁶¹ She is unable to cope with the problems caused by the independence and solitude. The reason for her uncertainty is the “overdose of matrimony.”⁶² However, she gradually becomes more and more determined to fight for her rights and for herself. She matures thanks to the love she feels for Tom, “she felt like a child, not yet a woman, an unexpected innocence which had nevertheless been hoped for.”⁶³ Therefore we assume that she was not unexperienced before. She was nothing and the new love helped her to be innocent (in the positive sense) and grow up to be herself, “she was herself first and a woman second.”⁶⁴ Thus it is the individuality she was looking for and that she lacked in the marriage. That is also the reason why she does not feel any sympathy for wrecked George, as she

56 Alan Sillitoe, *Her Victory* (London: Granada, 1982) 54.

57 Sillitoe, *Her Victory* 54.

58 Sillitoe, *Her Victory* 142.

59 see Sillitoe, *Her Victory* 151.

60 Sillitoe, *Her Victory* 149.

61 see Sillitoe, *Her Victory* 226.

62 Sillitoe, *Her Victory* 240.

63 Sillitoe, *Her Victory* 390.

64 Sillitoe, *Her Victory* 515.

explains.⁶⁵ However, the love is possible only when it does not interfere with the gained self-knowledge.⁶⁶ All in all, she starts as unexperienced Jenny from *Take a Girl Like You* by Kingsley Amis and ends up as Brenda from *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* by Alan Sillitoe in the way that she gains the determination, decisiveness and even maturity.

All in all, in the 1950s younger and naïve female characters prevail, whereas in the 1980s the authors were concerned with mature and experienced women.

5.2. Family Background

The family background is considered to be very important in shaping the character of a woman and it even influences her future. Those features are found in the analysed novels and they determine the development of female characters.

In *Take a Girl Like You* by Kingsley Amis Jenny's way of thinking was clearly shaped in her childhood. It is the influence of her father that is seen throughout the whole novel. It is logical because all her refusing of having sex with Patrick has its basis in her training and origin, as Patrick says to her after she did not come on the very date: "I'm fed up with you and your bloody little small-town conscience."⁶⁷ Even though, her life style in London does not have much in common with the big city life, she changes her way of thinking. All the same, she maintains certain rules she was said to be crucial.

It is Jenny's father who is the supreme authority for her. It seems that she is a "daddy's girl". Notwithstanding, it is the figure of mother who is supposed to have the biggest influence on the children. Mary Evans explains the idea: "We have to acknowledge that it is from their relationships with these mocked,

65 see Sillitoe, *Her Victory* 429.

66 see Sillitoe, *Her Victory* 535.

67 Amis, *Take a Girl* 290.

despised (and very much feared) mothers that the authors of *Look Back in Anger* . . . acquired much of both their creativity and imagination.”⁶⁸ Even though she talks about John Osborne and Germaine Greer, this feature can be ascribed to Kingsley Amis as well. The motherly character in *Take a Girl Like You* is Martha Thompson, though childless. She takes care of the whole house but fails. She is mocked, attacked by everybody but altogether misunderstood. The same says Mary Evans about Osborne's mothers: “To their children these faults are unforgivable, yet as readers we can see that the other side to these qualities . . . is an understanding of fantasy and an irreverence for the apparent rules and boundaries of the everyday world.”⁶⁹ She is an unsympathetic character throughout the novel but she describes very well the unrealizable requirements on housewives and thus she gets to the core of the problem of the position of women in the 1960s. She also shows the naïvity of Jenny in this question. Moreover, Jenny has acquired this naïve point of view during her childhood. The observation is supported by Mary Evans when she describes Amis's point of view, comparing him with Bourdieu: “What the two men never abandoned was recognition of the relationship between class and culture.”⁷⁰ It is logical that Amis's characters are determined not only by education but by class as well. However, Saul Maloff holds quite a different opinion, “for all the comedy of class and manners, Amis's protagonists are classless, deracinated, occupying ground that allows them a wide – though superficial – comic perspective.”⁷¹ Sillitoe confirms this statement about his own characters: “People do not live in classes and masses, nations or groups. They are all of them individuals.”⁷² Stanley Atherton sees the idea rather as a gradual development that starts already in the 1970s, “the later work should be seen as a series of explorations, some tentative and some more boldly assured, of the ways in which individuals are directed and controlled by environmental and social influences.”⁷³ It is mostly seen in Sillitoe's *Her Victory*, for example in George's violent behaviour that is influenced by his brothers or in the meeting of

68 Evans, *Missing Persons* 115.

69 Evans, *Missing Persons* 116.

70 Mary Evans, *Killing Thinking: The Death of the Universities*, 2005, PROJECT EBRARY. 15 Feb. 2011. <<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/upol/Doc?id=10250558&ppg=1>>. 11.

71 Saul Maloff, “Eccentricity of Alan Sillitoe,” in *Contemporary British Novelists*, ed. Charles Shapiro (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois UP, 1965) 96.

72 Alan Sillitoe, *Mountains and Caverns* (London: W. H. Allen, 1975) 159.

73 Atherton, *Alan Sillitoe* 181.

Pam and Tom through her suicidal attempt. Thus the generalizations about classes are not so important in both authors' cases. Therefore we see their characters as general representatives of the whole society, without emphasising any particular social class.

On the other hand, the class criticism is apparent when lady Daly in *Stanley and the Women* appears on the scene. "Mum was what I had called my first mother-in-law but this one had other ideas. I thought they were on the wrong lines. Lady Daly had to be dodgy thing to be called in the first place and the nickname or whatever it was reminded you of that dodginess."⁷⁴ Amis implies the double relationship with the upper class where lady Daly belongs. Stanley calls her mum but at the same time maintains certain distance and insecurity. She is his mother-in-law and he feels the real parental relationship with her but the disdain prevails.

Also I very much doubted whether she had ever done what I once had out of curiosity and looked up the word in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*. Apparently to use it in the vocative and the singular, which was what I had just been up to, could only be either poetical or vulgar, nothing in between. I thought that was very interesting.⁷⁵

This is Stanley's relation towards the upper class – a mixture of typical British pride and refusal. The stiffness of higher society is supported by the image of a chain on the glasses lady Daly wears.

Stanley feels the same attitude towards Susan's sister Alethea, "although we have met a dozen of times over the years I had never learnt to be altogether ready for the way she talked, which sounded to me like a fellow trying to get you to hate and despise the upper classes by ridiculously overdoing their accent."⁷⁶

74 Amis, *Stanley* 33.

75 Amis, *Stanley* 33.

76 Amis, *Stanley* 222.

Here he points out another feature of the higher society and even mocks it. He does not know how to behave with her and so he directs himself more cordially towards lady Daly. He seeks a sanctuary of her and this again supports the idea of the maternal relationship with older upper class. Margaretta Jolly also finds crucial the difference between conduct and class.⁷⁷ Therefore we have to emphasise this difference between the older and young upper class. Even though Susan comes from this family, she has accepted Stanley's middle class way of thinking and way of life. On the other hand, her attention-seeking attempts derives from the childhood. As Lindsey suggests, she was a spoiled child. Mainly the relationship with her father was the typical one of the highly proud father and a girl getting everything she wants. This supports the idea that Susan really did cut herself because she was not in the centre of actions and through this she wanted to get what she wanted – the attention. There comes the possibility of comparing her to Jenny from *Take a Girl Like You* by Kingsley Amis. Both women are influenced mainly by their fathers but the result is much different. Susan becomes an unbalanced individual whereas Jenny, though naïve, is able to cope in the new conditions.

In *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* by Alan Sillitoe the family background of female characters is not described at all. Nevertheless, Arthur's family is. That is why we are going to analyse the character of his mother. She has influenced him, especially his perception of a woman and her role in the man's life. This is the reason why she represents the family background in the novel. Richard Hoggart also stresses the importance of working-class mother.⁷⁸

One of the first references to her is when Arthur presents her opinion about work, “so he settled for a comfortable wage of fourteen pounds. Anything bigger than that would be like shovelling hard-earned money into the big windows of the

⁷⁷ see Alan Sinfield, and Alistair Davies, eds., *British Culture of the Postwar: An Introduction to Literature & Society, 1945-1999*, 2000, *PROJECT EBRARY*. 15 Feb. 2011.
<<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/upol/Doc?id=2002695&ppg=70>>. 58.

⁷⁸ see Hoggart, *The Uses* 41-53.

income-tax office – feeding pigs on cherries, as mam used to say . . .”⁷⁹ This comment resembles Jenny's father from *Take a Girl Like You* by Kingsley Amis. He has also influenced Jenny that she recalls similar quotations throughout the novel. However, in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* Arthur's mother functions as a single character. For example, she cares for her son after having been beaten. She gives him advice to stop getting involved with married women, “you can't play with fire without getting your fingers burnt.”⁸⁰ She represents the typical common-sense approach of experienced mothers. As opposed to John Osborne who, according to Valerie Walkerdine and Helen Lucy, “the focus of his anger was a working-class kitchen, with a mother leading a stultifying life,”⁸¹ Alan Sillitoe rather idealizes her personality. He does a similar thing with Arthur's Aunt Ada, “as a character in the novel, she is a wholly sentimental conception – not so much a woman as a kind of working-class earth-mother, an emotional and psychic cornucopia . . . keeper of birth and death.”⁸² She resembles Arthur's mother in the sentimentality and on certain occasions she even replaces her, for example at Christmas, or when Arthur asks her for advice about the abortion. Arthur's mother is a motherly woman as Martha Thompson from *Take a Girl Like You* by Kingsley Amis. However, Arthur's mother does not fail in her role. It is influenced by the class system and its possibilities. We will see in the chapter 5.5.5. called *Marriage and Motherhood* the problem of domestic violence, that is connected with Arthur's mother and her position, and of divorce within the working class.

The importance of family background is clearly shown in *Her Victory* by Alan Sillitoe. Yet at the wedding of Pam and George his brothers get into conflict with her and her family. George's brother wants to seduce Pam. It obviously is a normal behaviour in their family.⁸³ George's brothers are the biggest problem and they cannot come to terms with her family which is richer and higher on the social

79 Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 32.

80 Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 182.

81 Quoted in Evans, *Missing Persons* 123.

82 Maloff, “Eccentricity” 110.

83 see Sillitoe, *Her Victory* 63.

scale, though not so much.⁸⁴ Both George and Pam are determined not to have anything in common with them. George runs a successful business, contrary to his brothers who cannot find a decent job. It is mainly Pam's decision, "in order to prevent him behaving in the way his brothers were seen to treat their wives . . . she helped him through the complications of starting his business."⁸⁵ Nevertheless, in the end it is the family or his brothers, to be specific, who make him to attack Pam in order to come back to him. Thus George stays the same as they are and it is impossible for him to break the connections with them. As we will see in the chapter 5.5.5. called *Marriage and Motherhood* the family background influences also domestic violence that is present in the marriages of all the brothers. To sum up, fathers have the biggest influence on women, whereas male characters are influenced by mothers.

5.3. Relationships between Women

Relationships between women are never uncomplicated, maybe more complicated than between women and men. That is why this chapter dealing with women's friendship, jealousy and sisterhood is included.

We see in *Take a Girl Like You* by Kingsley Amis that Anna's and Jenny's formation and family background is very different. It is impossible for Jenny to maintain a conversation with Anna in the way she wants⁸⁶ as it is difficult to maintain the typical girl friendship with her. Jenny after their first big conversation describes her as "mercurial."⁸⁷ She sticks to the labelling throughout the novel and the revelation of Anna not being French even emphasizes the description. Etymologically, the expression refers to the god Mercury.⁸⁸ He was the Roman god of protection, messenger and a guide. He is derived from the Greek god Hermes.⁸⁹ That is why Anna functions as a guide for Jenny. As Anna is

84 see Sillitoe, *Her Victory* 68.

85 Sillitoe, *Her Victory* 71.

86 see Amis, *Take a Girl* 89.

87 see Amis, *Take a Girl* 97.

88 "Mercurial." *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, 7th ed, CD-ROM, Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005.

89 see Ludvík Svoboda, ed., *Encyklopedie antiky* (Praha: Academia, 1974) 230.

more experienced, she is someone like a mentor to her. She embodies the motto that Simone de Beauvoir stated as the first one: “You are not born a woman, you become one.”⁹⁰ This opinion gradually became true in the 1970s and Anna with her recreated “French” individualism is the example of its realization.

Another common feeling among women is that of jealousy. In *Take a Girl Like You* Martha acts very hostile towards Jenny because she is afraid she will seduce her husband. In fact, it is the other way round. It is Dick who wants to seduce her and as it is natural to Jenny she refuses any such a relationship. Generally speaking, Martha leaves her husband because of those false accusations. We will analyse her reason more deeply in the chapter 5.5.5. called *Marriage and Motherhood*.

Similar situation of jealousy is revealed in *Stanley and the Women* by Kingsley Amis between Susan, Stanley's wife, and Lindsey, his friend and exlover. The feeling is also present between Susan and Nowell, though Susan has never said anything against her until the end of the novel. Stanley comments on these relations that there ought to be: “. . . the regular blanket ban on mentioning as much as the name of one female to another unless it was absolutely necessary.”⁹¹ It is important to point out the usage of word *female* instead of *woman* in the citation. It does not imply any scornful feelings towards women but rather it is an alienation from the description and this way Amis's sense of humour works. All in all, the female behaviour is a bit exaggerated but it well demonstrates women in the novel. They are overwhelmed and ruled by their own feelings, for example when Susan cuts herself. Another example is when dr. Collings wants to seduce Stanley. She accuses him of not caring enough for his son. It is probably her mode of flirting. Susan gives her point of view of it to

90 Quoted in Sinfield, *Society and Literature* 64.

91 Amis, *Stanley* 144.

Stanley: “None of it would have been conscious. She'd have said she was doing a perfectly ordinary piece of objective analysis. You know what women are like.”⁹² Not only Susan but also Nowell has the same opinion. What is crucial is that women are capable of the analysis of one another but in fact everyone of them acts the same way. Both Susan and dr. Collings act according to their emotions and sudden ideas created on the spur of the moment.

Talking about dr. Collings and her attack on Stanley, it is important to mention that in this scene we find the example of typical women cooperation. Nowell, his exwife, and dr. Collings unite their forces to blame Stanley of his son's illness, “she went and sat down on a chair just like mine but ended up rather nearer Collings than me, underlining the two-to-one effect. Intentionally? Not a useful word when talking about Nowell.”⁹³ Here again Amis suggests that women do not act deliberately but rather unknowingly. It applies especially to Nowell as we have seen in the previous chapters. It is very similar to the idea that she talks about something but actually means something else.

Lindsey, whose character functions more as a commentator rather than a protagonist itself, sees the situation clearly when she talks with dr. Collings. However, she does not understand the situation the same way as Susan does. Collings tries to get some information on Susan from Lindsey and with Stanley present it seems like they are lovers. Collings says it was just “gathering information”⁹⁴ which confirms the theory of Susan that the doctor is not aware of what she is doing. Lindsey's function as a commentator makes her character too flat, the same way as Jenny is inert. Patrick Swinden provides an interesting opinion dealing with this problem. He suggests that Amis does not want to insult them as he does with men. Because of this carefulness he is not able to create free characters.⁹⁵ On the other hand, we will see in the chapter 5.5.4 called

92 Amis, *Stanley* 143.

93 Amis, *Stanley* 151.

94 Amis, *Stanley* 132.

95 see Patrick Swinden, *The English Novel of History & Society, 1940-1980* (London: The Macmillian Press Ltd., 1984) 187.

Relationships between Men and Women that this explication is not black and white and carries other disadvantages for women characters.

The relationships between women in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* by Alan Sillitoe are not so developed as in Amis's works because the novel is focused on the male character of Arthur and his relationships with women. Stanley Atherton provides the reason for this concentration on men: "Sillitoe prefers to focus on his male characters, who can be expected to have a range of practical experience unavailable to the average 'mum'."⁹⁶ On the other hand, we have already seen the importance of mother in the working-class background. All in all, the main section for this work is the next chapter 5.5.4. called *Relationships between Men and Women*. Notwithstanding, we are going to analyse certain aspects between women as well.

Even though Winnie and Brenda are sisters, we do not know much about their relation. They go to pubs together and thus we suppose they are friends. However, Winnie gets angry when she finds out Arthur is Brenda's lover as well, "Winnie knew all about Brenda and called him a dirty dog and a naughty boy."⁹⁷ There we see that she also has no scruples as Brenda as we have mentioned before in the chapter 5.5.1. called *General Characteristics of Women Characters*. Nevertheless, it does not end their affair despite her obvious jealousy. This feeling is not much analysed, though it would be quite opportune considering the "love quadrangular". Certainly, jealousy is present but seen rather from the men's point of view. As Arthur comments: "Anything satisfies them if they get jealous."⁹⁸ It is clearly true for Jack, Brenda's husband who the statement is about. On the other hand, we have to emphasise that he is Arthur's friend and they get on well. That is why he is able to suppress his desire for revenge which Winnie's husband is not capable of. In the end Jack betrays Arthur cowardly, though. It is astonishing that the women do not know about their opponents. Actually, it does not mean much as both Winnie and Doreen, when she finally discovers the truth, forgive him and

96 Atherton, *Alan Sillitoe* 106.

97 Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 150.

98 Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 48.

suppress their jealousy. Compared with Kingsley Amis, jealousy is much more complex feeling in his works than in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* by Alan Sillitoe.

The most serious confrontation between the women from *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* by Alan Sillitoe takes place at an annual fair in Nottingham. Arthur takes both Winnie and Brenda as his date, managing that no one of the girls is aware of it. A situation worth exploring develops with Winnie and Brenda when Arthur buys them hats, “‘Kiss me quick’ hat for Winnie and ‘You’ve had it’ hat for Brenda.”⁹⁹ A moment later Brenda thinks she has lost her hat, then she finds it. It suggests that she lost control over the relationship (the situation of abortion) but she managed to get it back. After a ghost ride they change the hats. It implies that their situation, though changing all the time, is comparable and similar. Not only because they are sisters but mainly because Arthur clearly does not prefer one over another. Then Doreen sees them in the crowd and later on disappears, disappointed with him. Sillitoe describes the situation that “she had been swept away into a sea of swaying heads and paper hats.”¹⁰⁰ As Winnie and Brenda wear the paper hats, Doreen clearly is the one who loses at this point, being defeated by the sisters. She is the one who gets engaged to Arthur after all, though. We have to mention that it is only her goal and not of the sisters because they are already married and do not care about the legal state at all.

Contrary to *Take a Girl Like You* by Kingsley Amis, the notion of lesbian relationship is completed in *Her Victory* by Alan Sillitoe. Pam gets involved with her neighbour Judy. The connection between them is rather of companionship and shared suffering as both have left their husbands. Judy is the one who is most radical in her ideas about men, “men are the most boring objects in the world as far as I’m concerned.”¹⁰¹ In her opinion the position of the women has not changed much from the previous generations, “you work like hell for a Lord of Creation

99 Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 160.

100 Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 164.

101 Sillitoe, *Her Victory* 111.

because that's what your mother told you to expect out of life.”¹⁰² Nicholas Abercrombie does not agree with her in his research *Contemporary British Society*, especially in the question of marriage.¹⁰³ Judy is more experienced than Pam is and therefore she gives her advices for life, “you've got to beat the system, because if you don't it'll beat you, specially when you're a woman.”¹⁰⁴ She is quite successful in that area as she is able to live out of National Assistance and children's allowance.¹⁰⁵ It also suggests that system for allowances was more reliable than in the 1960s.¹⁰⁶ There is apparent the development of Sillitoe's work. In *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* it was Arthur, a man, who fought against the establishment. In *Her Victory* it is a woman who gets her chance to survive in the society. Pam is not concerned so much with the opinion about men in general. She mostly thinks about George and Tom individually. On the other hand, she differs the unfaithfulness with a woman and with a man.¹⁰⁷ She considers her affair with Judy a part of the relationship with Tom because, according to Pam, it represents the secret that is needed for every couple.

We have found out that women are able to cooperate, especially the older ones. On the other hand, the most common feeling is jealousy that is not, surprisingly, deeply analysed in the novels as we may think.

5.4. Relationships between Men and Women

This chapter is going to provide the analysis of the relationships between men and women. We will be concerned mainly with love, behaviour inside the couple and with the men's attitude towards women. We do not include marriage because we have a separate chapter on the issue (5.5.5. *Marriage and Motherhood*).

102 Sillitoe, *Her Victory* 115.

103 see Abercrombie, *Contemporary British Society* 292.

104 Sillitoe, *Her Victory* 113.

105 see Sillitoe, *Her Victory* 244.

106 see Howard Glennerster, *British Social Policy. 1945 to the Present*. 3rd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007) 89-91.

107 see Sillitoe, *Her Victory* 471.

In *Take a Girl Like You* by Kingsley Amis the narration is centered on Jenny and her relationship with her suitors. Nevertheless, in the beginning we find a hint that marks the mood of the whole novel. There is a writing on a wall near school: "All the boys we know are nasty and ugly."¹⁰⁸ The little girls are able to comprehend the treatment that supposedly awaits them in their future, it affects them even now. "All that horrible universe of men, it's miraculous how we manage to survive."¹⁰⁹ This statement made by Anna le Page indicates that the opinion towards men survives from the childhood to the very adulthood. However, the opinions of women said by men are more often and more emphasised. Patrick visits a nightclub with his friend Julian Ormerod who expresses his masculine ideas about women and, we can say, even about "their function":

Same sort of thing goes for Monroe and Bardot and that lot – sexy without being stimulating, so there are all those curves and black stockings and stuff, and all that propaganda, and here we are feeling just cheerful and benevolent, jolly impressive and normal for us, what?¹¹⁰

Thus it seems that it is the woman who wants a man to feel like this. Patrick says something similar about his lover Joan: "In fact not having to be talked to was the second best thing about her."¹¹¹ The same goes for the thought Patrick has after a quarrell with Jenny: "Patrick first expounded to himself the concept of hysterical, then the larger one for women."¹¹² It also happens in another argument, where Patrick attacks her: "You realize what you sound like? Like a bloody woman. *I know it's bad, but*. I thought you were supposed to be cut above that."¹¹³ In all those statements Amis provides what Patrick thinks about women: unpleasant companions, exaggerating and contradicting themselves. In *Stanley and the Women* by Kingsley Amis the idea is put even further: "I naturally wondered,

108 Amis, *Take a Girl* 29.

109 Amis, *Take a Girl* 201.

110 Amis, *Take a Girl* 211.

111 Amis, *Take a Girl* 235.

112 Amis, *Take a Girl* 157.

113 Amis, *Take a Girl* 282.

when he came out with that about all women being mad.”¹¹⁴ The "women madness" goes along with the mental illness of Stanley's son. At/in the point when Susan cuts herself it even equals. Nevertheless, older man provides this opinion and there again we see the slowly changing attitude towards women. On the other hand, Cliff, who is not so old, provides a similar opinion. He compares women to the Russians. According to him, a woman can be realistic if a man treated her as she wants.¹¹⁵ This is a far more analytical view than the first opinion, still with certain traces of sexism (we will be concerned with sexism later in this chapter). Patrick Swinden argues that in this cases, especially when they are concerned with sex, male characters state Amis's own opinions.¹¹⁶ Those attacks on women are found in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* by Alan Sillitoe as well, for example when Arthur goes from his lover's house after she aborted their child or in his rage against women in general. We will comment on his feelings later in this chapter.

Nevertheless, we find men's admiration towards women as well. In the only scene in which Stanley and his exwife Nowell get along with each other, Stanley notes that: “the Eternal Woman once more looked out of Nowell's eyes.”¹¹⁷ The view is quite ambiguous because he knows Nowell very well and knows what to expect from her. She goes away with the air of “the Eternal Woman” and she stays this way, despite all her faults and bad qualities. Therefore it is both negative and positive label.

Jenny Bunn from *Take a Girl Like You* by Kingsley Amis is very attractive and so many men seduces her. Her ideas about men are, though, quite childish. She tries to change Patrick and even thinks it is possible, even though she realizes what he is really like as she tells him: “I know all about you and you won't do anything. I've read about you in books.”¹¹⁸ We can go even further and apply this

114 Amis, *Stanley* 74.

115 see Amis, *Stanley* 164.

116 see Swinden, *The English Novel* 188.

117 Amis, *Stanley* 259.

118 Amis, *Take a Girl* 59.

on her whole opinion about life and how things work because she often uses a tactics she has read in a magazine for women, “asking Patrick to do the choosing for her - a good tip from *Woman's Domain* -”¹¹⁹ Those magazines supported the typical view of a woman. Martin Pugh holds this opinion as well: “The post-war backlash against feminism flourished through the 1950s, especially in the pages of the women's magazines.”¹²⁰ The situation did not change much even in the 1970s, “stories in the magazines recreate the dilemmas that women face . . . with a final resolution in a traditional direction.”¹²¹ Thus the very propaganda against the change of the role of a woman was lead in magazines of both periods.

Jenny's feeling towards Patrick and her refusal is described using the metaphor of flower (Patrick) and thirst. Towards the end of the novel she muses on the sexual abstention between them: “Her eye felt on the yellow-berried plant, and she felt guilty for not having wateraed it for so long. She really must give it a drink soon, leaves and all. But not just yet.”¹²² She feels her conviction not only cannot stand in the changing society but moreover her own conscious and body is against it. Therefore she continuously allows Patrick to heighten the pressure more and more.

Natural metaphors, especially of animals, are used in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* by Alan Sillitoe as well. The author compares a furious woman, who gets in conflict with Arthur in a bar, to a tigress.¹²³ At the end of the novel Sillitoe employs the metaphor of a fish in several different ways. Arthur goes on a walk with his girlfriend Doreen and they buy a lemonade from a woman who apparently knows Arthur. She asks him if he is going fishing¹²⁴ and he answers that he is on a serious date now and adds: “There'll still be time for fishin', I

119 Amis, *Take a Girl* 48.

120 Quoted in Andrew Wyllie, *Sex on Stage: Gender and Sexuality in Post-War British Theatre*, 2009, *PROJECT EBRARY*, 15 Feb. 2011, <<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/upol/Doc?id=10288763&ppg=15>>. 14.

121 Abercrombie, *Contemporary British Society* 225.

122 Amis, *Take a Girl* 264.

123 see Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 16.

124 see Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 205.

expect.”¹²⁵ Therefore the fishing means enjoying unimportant affairs as was typical for Arthur before. Still he thinks that even though he is dating seriously with Doreen he could go back to this life again. It implies that he does not take the relationship so earnestly and supposes it will not last forever.

Another natural image explored in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* by Alan Sillitoe is the water. The canal which Arthur and Doreen are passing by is shallow but seems clear, deep and silent¹²⁶ as their relationship is at this very moment. The calmness is not eternal, though, “a ripple appeared in the middle of the water, expanded in concentric rings, and burst by a timeless force of power.”¹²⁷ It implies that Arthur will after all give in and will marry Doreen, disregarding what he wants. It is natural. It always has been and always will be so.

One of the biggest differences between the main pairs in Amis's works (Patrick and Jenny, Stanley and Susan) is the way they behave towards each other. As Susan is not a naïve girl as Jenny is, she is able to get what she wants from Stanley. On the contrary, in *Take a Girl Like You* it is the man (Patrick) who in the end gets what he wants whether Jenny likes it or not. However, Susan's tactics is apparent to Stanley: “Susan did it just right, appealing to me without putting the pressure on . . . Susan knew that perfectly well, and I was just going to remind her of it when I realized she had not tried to use my perhaps difficult son as an extra reason why I ought to be around. I thought that was excellent.”¹²⁸ An essential label Amis uses is the “female freeze-out.”¹²⁹ It is the ability to ignore a man and behave coldly towards him when he has done something inappropriate. It is another tactics Susan uses. Her greatest “achievement” is cutting herself in order to be in the centre of attention but it is this very action Stanley is not able to see through. It is Lindsey who helps him to understand it, although he remains very perplexed. Thus Stanley who seems to be a great expert on women behaviour fails

125 Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 206.

126 see Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 206.

127 Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 206.

128 Amis, *Stanley* 25.

129 Amis, *Stanley* 260.

to recognize the most important situation.

Another difference in the two pairs is the way they communicate with each other. Stanley and Susan talk between themselves with respect and equality, even with love¹³⁰. It is this older couple that uses the words like darling, love and so on, in contrary to the younger pair that does not do so. This can also be put alongside with Susan's tactics: to be nice to a man and he will do what she wants. Compared with both Sillitoe's novels, the pairs employ the expression "duck"¹³¹, not "love" as in *Stanley and the Women* by Kingsley Amis. We have to mention that in *Her Victory* by Alan Sillitoe it is only the husband who uses it as Pam is unhappy in the marriage.¹³² Oxford Dictionary presents the definition of duck: "a friendly way of addressing somebody"¹³³, compared to love: "a person, a thing or an activity you like very much."¹³⁴ It suggests that their relationship is less serious, more friendly, less deep. Nevertheless, it has to be mentioned that we compare two different social class, the working-class and middle or upper-middle class, so the vocabulary used differs and this is an example of such difference.

The changing status and attitude towards women is suggested in the description of a bar Stanley visits, La Botella, which used to be only men's local. Even though women could enter now, they still were treated with disrespect.¹³⁵ Similar treatment, only a little bit more cruel, we find in *Her Victory* by Alan Sillitoe. The approach to women is conditioned by the family background which we see at the wedding of Pam and George, "most of the women talked among themselves at other tables, knowing better than to bother hearing jokes that could make them feel as if every man in the world wanted them only for *that*."¹³⁶ According to Mary Evans in her work *Missing Persons: The Impossibility of Auto/Biography*, the opportunity of equality imposed on men "some degree of

130 see Amis, *Stanley* 14.

131 Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 50.

132 see Sillitoe, *Her Victory* 13.

133 "Duck." *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*.

134 "Love." *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*.

135 see Amis, *Stanley* 26.

136 Sillitoe, *Her Victory* 67.

uncertainty about 'being' male.”¹³⁷ That is why the situation for women was far from ideal as it was in the society itself. It is questionable what difference there is between not being allowed to enter to the bar and to be allowed to enter but not to be served. Therefore the difference in the social classes is connected with a kind of hypocrisy in the middle class. Those types of question can be asked about the state of society as well.

Physiologically, what Stanley appreciates most on women are the breasts. Nevertheless, those of dr. Collings do not have the usual effect which suggest his uneasy feelings towards her. Moreover, a couple of times Stanley emphasises that she is a doctor. The uneasiness can be traced to this very opinion about doctors-women and certain prejudice against them, “I just felt a dull horror that a doctor, a woman, anybody could turn a madmann loose to avenge a passing slight.”¹³⁸ Notwithstanding, the idea is less intensive when Stanley realistically judges the situation that it could be done by anyone. Still the feeling of sexism prevails. It also supports the main theme of the novel that is assumed to be “women’s conspiracy against men.”¹³⁹ The misogynistic behaviour of some Amis's characters is a subject of big discussion to what extent we should connect characters' opinions with Amis's ones. According to Patrick Swinden, his characters “are expressions of his own temperament, usually in a very direct way . . . they tend to 'stand for' him.”¹⁴⁰ On the other hand, later on Swinden alters his point that “male characters speak in his tone of voice though they might not invariably express his own opinions.”¹⁴¹ We trace elements of contradiction In Swinden's comments. Ralph Caplan provides a better explanation. He suggests that in Amis's works it is not important what somebody is telling but the way he is telling it.¹⁴² David Lodge holds the same opinion.¹⁴³ Amis himself talks about the issue in an interview for Paris Review. Even though he explains the anti-

137 Evans, *Missing Persons* 111.

138 Amis, *Stanley* 281.

139 Merritt Moseley, *Understanding Kingsley Amis* (Columbia: U of South Carolina P, 1993) 154.

140 Swinden, *The English Novel* 186.

141 Swinden, *The English Novel* 187

142 see Ralph Caplan, “Kingsley Amis,” in *Contemporary British Novelists*, ed. Charles Shapiro (Carbondale and Edwardsville: S Illinois UP, 1971) 6.

143 see Lodge, *Language* 47.

Americanism in his novel *One Fat Englishman*, it clearly shows that he does not always use his own opinions.¹⁴⁴ Nevertheless, the critics mostly agree in the point that in reality the characters do speak for the author, especially in Stanley and the Women. Thus there are two possible explanations, either the critics do not understand Kingsley Amis or he does not want to admit that the protagonists reflect his own attitudes. As we will see later in this chapter, the danger of misinterpretation is present and therefore we have to be very careful and not to analyse the novels outside the context. Moreover, his rough sense of humour adds an air of aggression to his characters. All in all, it is important not to connect everything a character says with the author.

The same effect of breasts is traced in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* by Alan Sillitoe. The main protagonist Arthur even gets hold of important information from the shape and size of breasts.¹⁴⁵ He also imagines how they talk to him and what “message” they contain, “you touch me, they said, and see what a smack you get.”¹⁴⁶ Therefore Sillitoe gives his female characters certain independence and advantage, considering the breasts, not so Amis in *Stanley and the Women*, even less in *Take a Girl Like You*. In Sillitoe's other novel *Her Victory* the physical appearance of a woman is connected with self-revelation and self-knowledge. For example Pam finds her freedom through masturbation and through cutting her hair short.¹⁴⁷

Stanley from *Stanley and the Women* by Kingsley Amis often comments on the character of women in general. He provides such a commentary after a conversation with Nowell that also emphasises her characteristics described in the previous chapters: “It was also the sort of thing some females did in real life distracted or not, and that went to show, really show, how wrapped up in

144 see Michael Barber, Interview with Kingsley Amis, “The Art of Fiction No. 59.” *Paris Review* 64 (1975), *THE PARIS REVIEW*, 26 Aug. 2010, <<http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/3772/the-art-of-fiction-no-59-kingsley-amis>>.

145 see Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 148.

146 Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 95.

147 see Sillitoe, *Her Victory* 78.

themselves they were.”¹⁴⁸ As we see the novel is sometimes quite critical towards women, still we find traces of admiration as in the scene with the Eternal Women already described. The criticism continues in the description of the women's tactics on men. Stanley suggests that “in fact women only want one thing, for men to want to fuck them . . . if you want to fuck a woman she can fuck you up. And if you don't want to she fucks you up anyway for not wanting to.”¹⁴⁹ Therefore a woman can do anything with a man not only because he wants her sexually but also for not wanting her sexually. This concludes the whole women's tactics described in the novel, mainly in the character of Susan. *Take a Girl Like You* also deals with women's strategy and with “the war between men and women.”¹⁵⁰ It confirms the idea that similar themes Amis employs throughout his work.¹⁵¹ All in all, the ambivalent attitude towards women is present not only in *Stanley and the Women* by Kingsley Amis but also in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* by Alan Sillitoe as we will see later in this chapter.

Saturday Night and Sunday Morning by Alan Sillitoe is more concerned with the men's approach towards the women. Yet at the beginning we are presented an opinion that prevails throughout the whole novel, “you followed the motto of 'be drunk and be happy', kept your crafty arms around female waists, and felt the beer going beneficially down into the elastic capacity of your guts.”¹⁵² Therefore a relationship with a woman is a part of spending the free time pleasantly and may be equaled to the very drinking. Also when Arthur reads newspaper he looks for pretty women but when he does not find them, he gets bored.¹⁵³ Women are clearly a part of his free time and rather a 'hobby' than a part of his whole life.

Nevertheless, it has to be stated that the opinion towards women is very

148 Amis, *Stanley* 45.

149 Amis, *Stanley* 314.

150 see Caplan, “Kingsley Amis” 7.

151 see Clive James, *From the Land of Shadows* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1982) 145.

152 Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 9.

153 see Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 46.

ambiguous and changing. Arthur says he does not “believe in tormenting women”¹⁵⁴ when he lies to his boss that he did not frighten his fellow-worker, a woman, by a mouse. He might not believe in it but he certainly does it, as with Doreen. In the end he gets engaged to her that suggests that he really does not like to torment them. When he realizes that he has been hurting her he wants to undo his doings. Arthur embodies this opinion with his ambivalent and changing opinions towards women that we will continue to analyse in this chapter.

Arthur also presents some nicer ideas about women. They “were more than ornaments and skivvies: they were warm wonderful creatures that needed and deserved to be looked after, requiring all the attention a man could give, certainly more than the man's work and a man's own pleasure.”¹⁵⁵ However, Arthur adds that “a man gets a lot of pleasure anyway from being nice to a woman.”¹⁵⁶ Therefore the former idea suits him because he gains enjoyment from this attitude. This behaviour is explored in *Society and Literature* as well: “Men are strongly individuated, whereas women exist primarily to ratify men . . . they are appreciated as givers of pleasure.”¹⁵⁷ Later on, Arthur's musing develops to an attack on women, “then on the other hand where were women who wouldn't let you be nice to them . . . who rattle a big fist at you and roar: 'Do this, do that, do the other, or else' - and you could try all you liked to be kind to them, but they wouldn't have any of it.”¹⁵⁸ Sometimes those generalization are made more particular, for example. when Arthur comments on Nottingham women.¹⁵⁹ This changing way of thinking represents Arthur's life as a roller coaster and confirms the ambiguity which the novel presents, both Arthur's dependence on women and his revolt against it. Still the first statement presents a nicer side of Arthur. Moreover, it confirms one of the features of the movement, “the Angry Young Men emphasized the importance of instinct and will.”¹⁶⁰ That is why Arthur's behaviour is not so coherent, rather instinctive and spontaneous.

154 Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 31.

155 Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 44.

156 Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 44.

157 Sinfield, *Society and Literature* 69.

158 Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 44.

159 see Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 154.

160 Sinfield, *Society and Literature* 27.

The central relationship developed in the majority of the novel is that between Arthur and Brenda. Its importance for Arthur lays in the danger that is connected with an affair with a married woman. It also introduces him to the world of adult men but he is not aware of it, “Brenda had known this room for seven married years, yet could not have become more intimate with it than did Arthur in the ten seconds while she fumbled with the key.”¹⁶¹ We see Arthur's ability to get acquainted with new situations such as being in a house of his opponent – Brenda's husband. He stumbles on a bike, though, that refers to the dangerous future there is for him if he continues in the relationship.¹⁶² It is a friendly warning made unconsciously by Jack himself but Arthur is unable to recognise it.

Arthur is aware that there is no future for him and Brenda and she, as we have seen in the chapter 5.5.1. called *General Characteristics of Women Characters*, thinks the same way. This mutual comprehension makes the relationship the way it is, “Brenda was a good woman to know, and he wouldn't stop until things cracked up, as they must, he didn't doubt, sometime, one way or another.”¹⁶³ It enables Arthur to get involved with her more freely, without any serious thinking or problems. It even seems that the abortion does not mean anything important for him, “he couldn't have cared less . . . if he had made twenty thousand women pregnant and all their husbands were at his back, brandishing sickles and after his blood.”¹⁶⁴ On the other hand, it is important to mention that a vision of Brenda in the bath comes a while later and he is not altogether unaffected as it might be supposed from the last citation, “it's her fault for letting such a thing happen, he cursed. The stupid bloody woman.”¹⁶⁵ This citation clearly resembles Patrick from *Take a Girl Like You* by Kingsley Amis as we have already seen at the beginning of this chapter. On the other hand, contrary to Patrick, Arthur “is possessed by a nihilistic destructive energy.”¹⁶⁶ It may seem

161 Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 18.

162 see Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 18.

163 Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 58.

164 Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 93.

165 Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 93.

166 Swinden, *The English Novel* 183.

at first sight that Arthur is cruel and insensitive but he is rather enraged with the whole situation of unexpected pregnancy as we have to take into account his former carelessness and the infuriated behaviour later. There we see that he is quite unstable and immature yet as he cannot grasp and comprehend the situation. However, it would not be Arthur if his next steps did not lead to the bar where he starts an affair with Brenda's sister.

This type of behaviour reflected in both Arthur from *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* by Alan Sillitoe and Patrick from *Take a Girl Like You* by Kingsley Amis is studied in *Society and Literature 1945-1970*: “The celebration of masculine vigour and the contempt for physical and moral weakness had for them an ostensibly political purpose. The conservatives, they believed, had appeased Hitler; the socialists had appeased Stalin.”¹⁶⁷ Both Patrick and Arthur embody the appraisal of masculinity. The hidden political importance is represented mainly in Arthur's character whose anger is not directed to anyone, it is just anger against nobody in particular. Mary Evans suggests that this behaviour is a part of defense against the changing patterns of society: “The crisis of masculinity . . . is not, therefore, a crisis about the disappearance of the social and political power of masculinity, but about its legitimacy.”¹⁶⁸ Therefore Arthur's behaviour is instinctive. Another example of the defensive tactics we will find in the paragraph concerned with the bar La Botella in *Stanley and the Women* by Kingsley Amis in this chapter. Nevertheless, we should add that similar behaviour some women also presents, for example when Brenda's friend Em'ler argues with Arthur during the abortion, “I'm not so daft as you think. Not half so daft as you men, I can tell yer.”¹⁶⁹ Therefore it is important to mention, to be just, that not only negative opinions of women are stated but of men as well.

The anger with women develops to the anger with the whole society. Arthur gets mad with a policewoman who does not want to let go a man who

167 Sinfield, *Society and Literature* 26.

168 Evans, *Missing Persons* 112.

169 Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 86.

threw a stone through a window, “she's a bitch and a whore.”¹⁷⁰ The cursing becomes an attack on all the “others” which is the most important theme in Sillitoe's work. The policewoman represents everything Arthur hates, police, establishment, government's tool of oppression, emphasised by female sex. In this point we clearly see the difference between Sillitoe's and Amis's characters. Ralph Caplan suggests that “instead of being blinded by rage, Amis's characters are able to see clearly by its light. Anger is an instrument of revelation. And of self-revelation.”¹⁷¹ On the other hand, Arthur is obsessed with the anger but it is also a tool of self-revelation for him. “He courts, not women, but violence.”¹⁷² Women stands for the violence or, in a broader sense, for the society. Therefore the rage with women is just a representation, a tool, or rather part of his rage with the whole world.

When Arthur falls in love in the end, it is quite a battle for him. He is aware that he must give up one of his rebellious missions – the one against love and even marriage, “if he was not pursuing his rebellion against the rules of love, . . . there was still the crushing power of government against which to lean his white-skinned bony shoulder.”¹⁷³ Thus the opposition against establishment goes on. At the end Arthur gets settled with the new way of life,

Arthur was subdued, his mind blocked with questions and unsatisfying answers, fighting the last stages of an old battle with himself, and at the same time feeling the first skirmishes of a new conflict. But he was good in his heart about it, easy and confident, making for better ground than he had ever trodden on before. I must be drunk, he thought. No I'm not. I'm stone-cold sober.¹⁷⁴

There we see the gradual development of giving up the old system of

170 Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 113.

171 Caplan, “Kingsley Amis” 9.

172 Maloff, “Eccentricity” 108.

173 Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 203.

174 Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 214.

thinking and rebellion against conventional love, represented in his affairs with married women. Saul Maloff argues that what Arthur feels is not love, rather class loyalty.¹⁷⁵ It is true that Arthur stays within his own class. On the other hand, we have to point out that no other women are present but those from the same environment. It is a question what Arthur would have done if he had met a woman from different society. Concerning his anger, Frank Kermode suggests that “he represents the indesstructible cunning and evasiveness . . . admirable in some ways, his is a way of life that has to be destroyed on the way to self-fulfillment.”¹⁷⁶ Even though Kermode talks about another Sillitoe's character Bill Posters it applies to Arthur as well. The novel explores his gradual way towards self-discovery¹⁷⁷ and towards love, or even certain freedom, that is represented by the drunkenness mentioned in the citation above. Doreen represents “Arthur's refuge from a rampaging sexuality that is fed as much by bitterness as desire.”¹⁷⁸ Thus we get to the beginning of this thesis where we have written that drinking was a part of pleasantly spent free time. Therefore the “normal” love becomes a part of it.

Her Victory by Alan Sillitoe describes two relationships relevant for this thesis – the one between Pam and Tom and the one between Pam and George. We will deal with the later in the next chapter called *Marriage and Motherhood* as they were married, contrary to the relationship with Tom. The essential reason why the relationship with Tom functions is that he is not George. Moreover, he is obviously different¹⁷⁹, he likes silence and lets her be silent¹⁸⁰, he gives her freedom.¹⁸¹ They are connected not only by being lonely but also by the search for the personality and individuality. Tom looks for his origin, Pam for the person she really is. Moreover, contrary to George, he treats her like a human being.¹⁸² George thought about her more machine-like, “he

175 see Maloff, “Eccentricity” 101.

176 Frank Kermode, *Continuities* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968) 231.

177 see Maloff, “Eccentricity” 97.

178 Richard Bradford, *The Life of a Long-Distance Writer. The Biography of Alan Sillitoe* (London: Peter Owen, 2008) 47.

179 see Sillitoe, *Her Victory* 269.

180 see Sillitoe, *Her Victory* 270.

181 see Sillitoe, *Her Victory* 393.

182 see Sillitoe, *Her Victory* 275.

treated anyone close to him like a machine, and only those people he had to deal with in business like human beings.”¹⁸³ He thinks that everything might be expressed in calculations.¹⁸⁴ It is conditioned by his ambition to be successful businessman and to cut off the bonds with his family.

In conclusion, we have seen that in the 1950s both authors fought against the new approach towards a woman. In the 1980s they already came to terms with the situation and found in women useful material for their work. We have noticed that the friendship between a woman and a man is not very common.

5.5. Marriage and Motherhood

Marriage is considered to be the ultimate goal in a woman's life. Therefore it is crucial to include a chapter dealing with this issue. It is closely connected with motherhood that is also analysed in this chapter. Other similar topics discussed are domestic violence, divorce or abortion.

Above all, the topic is dealt in *Take a Girl Like You* by Kingsley Amis. Jenny is all the time obsessed with what is right and what is not. It is not only the virginity or marriage but she analyses in this way almost everything, for example Anna's free behaviour and manners.¹⁸⁵ There are many reasons why Jenny is against sex before marriage. It is not only her education but also the naïvity and the search for "the Right man". All the books and magazines makes her believe in it and what is more she does not admit any other possibility, “The reason I'm still a – it's just that I don't believe in any of that kind of thing before I'm married.”¹⁸⁶ It is really vague to put it like that but in principle this is the way it is. It must be in her education because basically all the other women characters in the book talk about virginity differently. Even Mrs Thompson, the landlady who is older than she, almost criticises her: “She's a reet champion lass with her head screwed on

183 Sillitoe, *Her Victory* 46.

184 see Sillitoe, *Her Victory* 28.

185 see Amis, *Take a Girl* 89.

186 Amis, *Take a Girl* 92.

and her legs together, is our Jenny.”¹⁸⁷ Notwithstanding, Martha's character functions as the prototype of a housewife, despite her setback. The failure suggests the cracking perception of a housewife that started to be visible at that time. On the other hand, women's sexual engagement before marriage was slightly criticised even in the 1970s and the 1980s.¹⁸⁸ Therefore it is the permissive society of the 1960s that is visible in Amis's work that makes it possible for him to treat the theme in more open way.

But finally, Jenny surrenders to Patrick. The whole 'virginity-thing' even haunts her in dreams where we find out that it is essential to give men what they want, because then they may be more tamed and in favour of doing things they do not want to do,

She dreamt that she had found out the best way of taming tigers: you gave them a lot of green apples and then a lot of ice-water to drink. Then when their stomach-aches got really terrible you rubbed their stomachs for them, which they could not do themselves, and after that they would do anything for you.¹⁸⁹

Amis presents the circumstances of her changing attitude throughout the whole novel and in the end suggests that even a woman can be happy if she gives a man what he wants. Therefore Jenny's conviction is not so strong in the end and she even asks her companions at a party. The people attending the party are generally from upper-class society and moreover they lead bohemian way of life so it is obvious that their opinions will be different but here we get to the very point of the problem, as Wendy comments on it: “I told you, it's no use asking me. I thought it was all to do with arranged marriages and betrothals and dowries and purdah and all that. I thought the whole thing had more or less blown over.”¹⁹⁰ There we see that, generally speaking, it is Jenny's old-fashioned, traditional

187 Amis, *Take a Girl* 150.

188 see Abercrombie, *Contemporary British Society* 227.

189 Amis, *Take a Girl* 264.

190 Amis, *Take a Girl* 297.

feeling that creates the whole exaggerated problem with the loss of virginity.

Notwithstanding, the change in the role of a woman came in the 1950s. The movement Angry Young Man was the reaction against this progress because the men were no longer certain of their position.¹⁹¹ Mary Evans comments on it: “The British class system . . . was sufficient to create an unhappy negotiation between class and gender, in which women were often forced to identify with a masculine symbolic and intellectual order . . .”¹⁹² Therefore Jenny struggles in order to keep up with values that are no longer relevant. David Lodge provides the same opinion, “no alternative set of values is established in the novel which would make Jenny's preservation on her virginity meaningful.”¹⁹³ The new system is missing not only in the novel but in the society itself. It is why a woman actually follows the path of a man.

Marriage and the role of a woman in it is the crucial theme in the novel. Logically, for Jenny it is something she desires the same way as Doreen does from *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* by Alan Sillitoe. Jenny wanted “a hero for a husband, and . . . the hopes invested on that hero limited the likely success of a real marriage.”¹⁹⁴ It is the reason why her conviction and ideas about marriage does not survive. As we will see later in this chapter Martha used to have the same ideals about the institution and the failure is the reason why she leaves Dick in the end. Throughout the novel we find remarks about the real marriage, not the one Jenny has the notion of:

And even marriage itself, coming back to that, could have its less ideal side, as she had heard at first hand (reading it was different) from the married woman on the staff at Albert Road. Mrs Carter seemed to divide her time between school, trying to get her husband to *leave her alone*, and

191 see Wyllie, *Sex on Stage* 52.

192 Evans, *Missing Persons* 125.

193 Lodge, *Language* 259.

194 Evans, *Missing Persons* 128.

baking steak-and-kidney pies for him.¹⁹⁵

That is why Jenny is forced to gradually give her ideology up. Mrs Thompson provides us, and Jenny herself, with one of the most realistic views on marriage. Martha Thompson knows what she is talking about, she has been married to Dick for a long period of time. Actually, it is an attack against these type of girls as Jenny who are oldfashioned and unrealistic in their ideas and who thought everything is easy and idyllic in marriage and that they can read everything about it from books and magazines.

How would you know? You think you could handle the whole thing, don't you? - putting on your smart little apron and getting going with your little wet rag and your polishing cloth on the house and Dick until they're both as bright as new pins, just like *Woman's Domain* says they ought to be.¹⁹⁶

Jenny's opinion about wife's duties is identical with the opinion of men in the 1950s when "the good housewife still cooked and cleaned and sent home reports of domestic competence and good behaviour."¹⁹⁷ In her monologue, Martha protests against this system and she demonstrates it more rebelliously in her departure. She symbolizes the cracking system of values in domestic life. Jenny is supposed to be the last one who wants to live by those rules. In the end, even she finds out that the change is inevitable.

Of course that Martha's monologue was said theatrically. Moreover, it is surely influenced by her relationship to Jenny that is quite hostile. She is jealous of her appearance and is afraid that she will "steal" her husband from her. That is why she mentions his name as Jenny's potential partner. Even though, it does not change the impact it successively has on Jenny, which ends up with her surrender

195 Amis, *Take a Girl* 50.

196 Amis, *Take a Girl* 198.

197 Evans, *Missing Persons* 123.

to Patrick and gradual maturity. As we observe in the end, the opinion of Susan, one of the participants at the party mentioned before, is also a realistic one, although a little bit more sour than Mrs Thompson's: "Oh, I was the same, I used to think a lot about meeting Mr Right and the rest of it, but the way I look at it nowadays, I'm lucky if I can hold on to Mr Not-too-bad."¹⁹⁸ Even though this point of view is that of the upper class, we observe that the opinion on marriage does not differ much between social classes.

Obviously, the author wants to examine the impact of marriage on women rather than on men. When Patrick meets lady Edgerstoune, he comments on her: "Patrick decided he had never seen anyone who more clearly bore the marks of multiple marriage – something about eyebrows, was its, or the vertical hair-do?"¹⁹⁹ David Lodge sees the whole situation concerned rather with sexual weariness than with marital tiredness.²⁰⁰ Nevertheless, the two concepts do not contradict each other, rather on the contrary. The sexuality and marriage are closely connected. If we compare lady Edgerstoune and Martha Thompson, it is evident that the influence of marriage is the same in every social class. Even in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* by Alan Sillitoe the same idea of physical influence of marriage but on a man.²⁰¹ As Arthur has a system of husbands (as we will see in the chapter 5.5.5. called *Marriage and Motherhood*), he also has a system of single and married women that is again based on the appearance.²⁰² Thus we have enlarged the term of social class with the lowest one and therefore we apply this feature to the whole society that the physical influence is visible everywhere.

In Amis's works it is usually men who play the major role in the novel. However, in *Take a Girl Like You* they are somewhat in the background. It were the male demands that created the perfect housewife. As Mary Evans comments

198 Amis, *Take a Girl* 298.

199 Amis, *Take a Girl* 237.

200 see Lodge, *Language* 258.

201 see Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 109.

202 see Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 147.

on it: “To be a 'good woman' you had to accept both sets of male assumptions about the world: the code which assumed male heterosexual desire and the code which assumed female responsibility for male morality.”²⁰³ That is why Patrick goes to a strip club after the unsuccessful encounter with Jenny. What is more, he makes her responsible for it. And she changes. At this point, we see that “Amis longed for apparently undomesticated women and fantasised about living lives unlike those of their mothers.” That is why Martha leaves the role of a housewife and that is why Jenny changes her attitude towards virginity and the role of a woman in general.

Nevertheless, it might be said that it is a man who wins. Mary Evans observes it in her work *Missing Persons: The Impossibility of Auto/Biography*: “Thus a generation of women and men came together in a protest against a domestic role for women, but it was a protest which, perhaps inevitably, was weighted towards male interests.”²⁰⁴ Jenny loses her virginity with Patrick and that is what he wanted. By Martha's leaving, she allows Dick to do whatever he wants now, even though we do not know his reaction to her conduct. As we have already stated she also used to have the same ideas as Jenny has. However, the ideal prototype of a perfect housewife and spouse fails because of both women's and men's unrealistic demands. Lynne Segal comments on the changes in the 1950s when the system tried to “trap, tame and emasculate men . . . turning their anger against the ideals of heart and home . . . against women, against powerful mother in the home . . .”²⁰⁵ Naturally, men were afraid and this fear is symbolized by the failure of Thompson's household. Andrew Wyllie suggests that “these masculine anxieties, which were eventually given literary expression through the 'angry young men', had their roots in the presence of less biddable women at home . . .”²⁰⁶ It is evident that the generation Angry Young Men had a lot to do with those preoccupations, Kingsley Amis is no exception. Moreover, the importance of education and family background is supported by this observation.

203 Evans, *Missing Persons* 124.

204 Evans, *Missing Persons* 124.

205 Quoted in Willie, *Sex on Stage* 14.

206 Wyllie, *Sex on Stage* 14.

Although Martha tried to be a good housewife, she fails and thus Dick cannot rely on her anymore. She represents the loss of men's ideals and expectations they have had.

In *Stanley and the Women* marriage and family itself is one of crucial themes. Despite all Susan's faults, Stanley is quite happy in the marriage: "You don't think I know what I'm getting, do you? Well, I think I do, by and large. I like most of it, and the bits I don't like so well I can put up with quite easily. . . ." ²⁰⁷ Amis also analyses the reasons for marrying someone, especially in Susan's and Nowell's case. Lindsey says that Susan has married Stanley because he is successful enough but not so much to compete with her. According to her, she "was as fond of him as she could be of anybody." ²⁰⁸ Nowell also had reasons different from love for marrying him. And for divorcing as well. She chooses a man who is inside the film business to help her with the movie career. She is described as a typical golddigger. ²⁰⁹ Because of that and because of all her character, Bert, her contemporary husband, has invented a rule how to survive in marriage. He has to be upset or angry all the time which means no trouble with her. In reality, whole novel is full of tricks how to be happy in marriage. Harry, an acquaintance of Stanley, analyses the situation: "When I got married I told myself I could be happy or I could be right, and I've been happy now for twenty-two years." ²¹⁰ Thus the conclusion of the institution is quite bitter. Nevertheless, there is no criticism of the marriage itself.

Moreover, if the marriage is unhappy it has nothing to do with the person involved, as Stanley comments: "I had never felt I had had too much to do with either marrying Nowell or not being married to her." ²¹¹ On the other hand, he later contradicts himself a little by saying: "Stopping being married to someone is an incredibly violent thing to happen to you, not easy to take in completely, ever." ²¹²

207 Amis, *Stanley* 30.

208 Amis, *Stanley* 301.

209 see Amis, *Stanley* 205.

210 Amis, *Stanley* 202.

211 Amis, *Stanley* 45.

212 Amis, *Stanley* 49.

It is not only cruel from the pair perspective but also because of the children or the relationship child-parent in general. Therefore Stanley is not able to remember any details from Steve's childhood. In the 1970s and the 1980s there was an increase in the mental illnesses such as schizophrenia as it is described in the novel. Many psychologists such as R. D. Laing blamed the changing pattern of the family.²¹³ It is obvious that *Stanley and the Women* reflects this particular problem of society.

The attitude towards women in marriage can be full of fear and uncertainty. It is Harry, Stanley's friend, who is afraid of the costs connected with family life. He suggest that it is the ideal for most women but not for every men.²¹⁴ Notwithstanding, the seemingly idyllic institution is disrespected by the commentary on the assaults in marriage, “twenty-five per cent of violent crimes in England and Wales is husbands assaulting wives . . . You'd expect it to be more like eighty per cent. Just goes to show what an easy-going lot English husbands are . . .”²¹⁵ It is not surprising that Amis was criticised for mysogyny. Yet it was also connected with the masculine sexual anxiety that was traced in the whole movement.²¹⁶ On the other hand, he does a lot of those statements in the name of humour and moreover, the character adds to the commentary: “No, it does not mean that, does it?”²¹⁷ Therefore in the works of Amis there is great danger not only of misinterpreting what a character says but also of interpreting the citations outside the context. We have seen a similar point in the previous chapter when we were talking about the effect of breasts. We have already stated that he also reflects the attitudes of the society in the 1980s.

As we have seen in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* by Alan Sillitoe, Arthur is settled with the idea that the relationship with Brenda is not forever, he is even happy about it as divorce is out of the question, “he would never make a

213 see Sinfield, *Society and Literature* 61.

214 see Amis, *Stanley* 289.

215 Amis, *Stanley* 314.

216 see Sinfield, *Society and Literature* 65.

217 Amis, *Stanley* 314.

divorce. It would cost too much, one way or another. And no woman is worth making a divorce over.²¹⁸ We see that in the 1960s the divorce was not a common act to do²¹⁹. And if it was it was connected with a certain ridicule, for example when Doreen's mother celebrates the silver wedding, even though she is separated from her husband.²²⁰ The gradual change in this area is seen in the 1980s novels such as *Stanley and the Women* by Kingsley Amis where the separation is a normal part of life and nobody contributes it much importance. The same feature is visible in Sillitoe's *Her Victory* where Pam signs the divorcing papers and does not have to hear more about the matter.²²¹ Even the attitude towards divorcing a woman expressed by Arthur is a clear demonstration of his anger at women and at the establishment at the same time as the divorce is perceived as a tool of government to control the people.

An essential feature present in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* by Alan Sillitoe is domestic violence. It is very common in Arthur's environment, his mother and sister are both among the victims. Obviously, the pattern is changing. Arthur says that his father has not beaten his mother since the children has grown up.²²² Therefore it is possible to assume that most of the violence is present when men are young as Arthur is. However, Arthur is violent in his own way and does not aim his anger at anything in particular. Moreover, the access of technological innovations has influenced the situation as well. Arthur's sister says: "So whenever he gets on me, I can just switch on the pictures and forget him."²²³ It is cruel to state it this way, nonetheless it is the reality. Hard to say if it is much of a consolation. All in all, the situation was changing but the government was not interested in the problem until the 1970s.²²⁴ That is why the novel does not provide any solution. Domestic violence is realistically described as a part of the family life as it was at that time. In other Sillitoe's novel *Her Victory* the domestic violence is again present but obviously conditioned by the family background.

218 Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 53.

219 see Glennerster, *British Social Policy* 159.

220 see Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 149.

221 see Sillitoe, *Her Victory* 484.

222 see Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 73.

223 Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 184.

224 see Glennerster, *British Social Policy* 153.

George's brothers has no problems with hitting a woman²²⁵ and, however, George does not want to be like them he does it all the same.²²⁶ We may also draw a parallel between *Take a Girl Like You* by Kingsley Amis and *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* by Alan Sillitoe. In both novels the violence on women is present. In the first case, Patrick actually rapes Jenny when he takes advantage of her being drunk. We have already described the violence in Sillitoe's work.

Another change that is visible is reversed domestic violence. At Christmas party his cousin Jane breaks a glass on her husband's forehead accusing him of saying something inappropriate but not mentioning what exactly he has said. The man is unable to react.²²⁷ That is where Arthur realizes he wants to control everything in his own way, "to break any man, or woman, that came for him, to turn on the whole world if it bothered him too much, and blow it to pieces."²²⁸ He clearly sums up everything that he loathes not men or women individually but the society altogether. It is a changed attitude, before he directed this anger to women, "If ever I get married, he thought, and have a wife that carries on like Brenda and Winnie carry on, I'll give her the biggest pasting any woman ever had."²²⁹ Nevertheless, it is also his influence that makes Brenda and Winnie the way they are. They are his lovers and those free affairs make their behaviour freer, as might be expected. Another influence that enables this kind of relationship is the absence of husband at home as is implied in the Arthur's first flirting with Winnie when she says: "I might as well not be married, with him in the army."²³⁰ Therefore the blame for those affairs lays not only on Arthur but on the husbands as well, especially on soldiers and the 'slow ones' as Arthur calls them. Later on, Arthur again directs the anger on a singular person, in this case on Doreen. Doreen is able to threaten him with violence as well, though. He pays her back with the same coin, again only verbally.²³¹ It suggests that future might be more just, in the sense of 'an eye for an eye', more equilibrated and more equal.

225 see Sillitoe, *Her Victory* 427.

226 see Sillitoe, *Her Victory* 73.

227 see Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 201.

228 Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 201.

229 Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 145.

230 Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 95.

231 see Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 208.

The situation of wives gets better over the time. It is, for example, present in the marriages that already last a long time and the children are already grown up. Arthur's mother is no longer being beaten by her husband and manages a lot better with more money in the household. His aunt is able to run an incredibly big family. The women get their dignity by degrees. Some women are even superior to men as Mrs Bull makes her husband to visit Arthur and investigate him whether he shot at her from an air gun, "when Fred saw his punched and harassed face he knew he had bullied into the visit by his wife . . . Some women won't let their husbands live, he thought. Some won't let anybody live."²³² This way of thinking seems as Arthur's but actually it is his brother Fred. Therefore we assume he lives the same life as Arthur does and has the same or at least similar problems as Arthur has. That is why we generalize a bit on the characters. Arthur says something similar as Fred after Mr Bull's mission has been unsuccessful: "The poor bleeder's got to face his missis now . . . some blokes are born unlucky."²³³ It is obvious that some women are able to have their husbands henpecked and make them do what they want. Nevertheless, the process towards this kind of independence is continuous that we see in the difference between the naïve tolerance of Doreen or Jenny from *Take a Girl Like You* by Kingsley Amis and the maturity and self-consciousness of Brenda and Winnie.

In *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* by Alan Sillitoe the sense of motherhood is explored in the character of Brenda, Arthur's lover. She has two children and she cares for them quite good, at least we are not told otherwise. What is surprising is that she lets them get in touch with Arthur and call him uncle. She even kisses with him in front of them. We have already discussed this in the chapter 5.5.1. called *General Characteristics of Women Characters*. However, the fact that she already has children influences her decision over the abortion.²³⁴ It was a typical reason for the decision at that time. Mothers were convinced they could not provide the same care for other child and therefore

232 Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 123.

233 Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 124.

234 see Sillitoe, *Saturday Night* 70.

decided to concentrate on the education of the born children.²³⁵ Moreover, until the Abortion Act in 1967 the possibilities for legal abortion were very limited.²³⁶ As we have already stated no remorse over the unborn child is visible in Brenda's behaviour. It is important to mention that the expected blame over the pregnancy is directed both ways – Arthur blames Brenda, Brenda blames Arthur. She has the last word about the abortion, though. It is her decision. Nevertheless, it seems that Arthur does not care much as we have also seen in the first chapter.

The reasons for the break-up of Pam's marriage in *Her Victory* by Alan Sillitoe are not easy to explain. She herself admits she does not have the answer.²³⁷ Bradford suggests that it is “for the simple reason that she wants to.”²³⁸ Another of possible explanations is that she was not able to develop her personality. We have already talked about her awakening that starts after she has left George. Saul Malloff provides the same opinion about *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, “the intention of *Sunday Morning*, and of the novel, is reconciliation.”²³⁹ Therefore Sillitoe's aim remains the same throughout the decades. The idea of self-revelation is emphasised by the image of mirror that is present throughout the novel, “before marriage there had been one mirror in the house, over the bathroom sink. The bond had broken under the strain.”²⁴⁰ It is obvious that the mirror cannot reflect the marriage, there is nothing to reflect because the relationship does not function. The metaphor is like the one of fish that Sillitoe employs in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* we have seen in the chapter 5.5.4. called *Relationships between Men and Women*.

George is content in the marriage and does not want her to leave him. He fights to get her back and even accepts help from his brothers with whom he does not want to be in contact. The reason for his strong feelings is that she is like a

235 see Paul Addison, and Harriet Jones, eds., *A Companion to Contemporary Britain 1939-2000*. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007) 44.

236 see Glennerster, *British Social Policy* 158.

237 see Sillitoe, *Her Victory* 19.

238 Bradford, *The Life* 292.

239 Malloff, “Eccentricity” 112.

240 Sillitoe, *Her Victory* 20.

mother for him.²⁴¹ He probably feels some love for her but it is not love that should be present in the marriage. On the other hand, Pam is not sure that she loves Tom because in the relationship with George they thought there was love between them but it was not so.²⁴² Therefore she is not certain about the new relation either but, at least, it is better than with George. The conclusion we get from the book is the unimportance and even nonsense of marriage. That is why Tom and Pam do not get married, “I feel we've been married for decades.”²⁴³ Sillitoe suggests that the document is not what is important but the feeling inside the pair.

The changes concerning marriage or divorce are best reflected in the works of both authors. For example, in the 1950s divorce was not a common thing to do whereas in the 1980s we find it not only in the society but in the analysed novels as well.

241 see Sillitoe, *Her Victory* 32.

242 see Sillitoe, *Her Victory* 43.

243 Sillitoe, *Her Victory* 551.

6. Conclusion

In this thesis we have studied the portrayal and development of female characters in the works of Kingsley Amis and Alan Sillitoe. We have concentrated on the progress from the 1950s to the 1980s. We have taken into account how they reflect changes in the society that were happening during those decades. *Take a Girl Like You* by Kingsley Amis is concerned with the break up of the system of traditional values. It is described through the importance of virginity for a young girl. *Stanley and the Women* by the same author reflects the changes of the pattern of a family and its influence on the children. Alan Sillitoe describes different social class but still he reflects the same changes. In *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* we see the limited possibility of divorce and abortion. On the other hand, in *Her Victory* when protagonist is unhappy with his or her life, he or she may actively change it.

In the 1950s both authors were concerned with young girls. They all are naïve and unexperienced. The desire that connects them throughout the classes is to get married. Moreover, they also express the immature idea that they can change a man to behave as they want. The only exception is Anna from *Take a Girl Like You* who, however young, acts as a mentor and an example how to become a woman.

The class differences that are supposed to be present in those authors are not so apparent if we talk about women characters. One of the reasons is that the troubles and preoccupations of a woman are the same in all social classes. Of course, there are traces of different background such as vocabulary or domestic violence that is more visible in the lower class. It is the domestic violence that is described by Alan Sillitoe as inherited and determined by the family background. Nevertheless, themes as love, marriage, divorce or abortion are so universal that they connect all the female characters. Even the domestic violence is described in the middle class, though only in the scene of Jenny's rape in *Take a Girl Like You*

by Kingsley Amis. We have seen that Sillitoe emphasises the role of a mother in the lower class. He idealizes her and she has the biggest influence on her sons. Fathers have the main impact on female characters and that is how we explain the greater masculinization of women that started in the 1960s.

The changes that were taking place in the 1960s in the so-called permissive society are reflected in the works of both authors. In reality the destruction of the system of traditional values started the movement Angry Young Men. Both authors were afraid of greater emancipation for a woman and they protested against it. They were uncertain about their own position and how they should manage in the new society. Therefore in the novels of the 1950s they appraised the image of masculinity. The uncertainty was also created by the masculinization of a woman. The change in a woman was supported by society. Only women magazines led the campaign supporting a typical woman caring for her husband or giving tips concerning the tactics on men. Thus woman had to stay a woman but at the same time adopt the new masculine features. That is why not only men but women as well protested against this new vision of womanhood. In the 1980s both authors already came to terms with the idea and reflected different issues of the contemporary society. It was influenced by the realization that the emancipation of a woman means advantages for men as well. The society of the 1980s provided greater opportunity to get divorced and that could not be left without consequences. Amis reflects the problem in *Stanley and the Women*. The new pattern of a family were the reason for an increase of psychological problems of children from those families. The most common illness was schizophrenia. Sillitoe describes rather the positive changes of society in the issues of divorce, abortion or social care.

We see the greater possibility for divorce in the 1980s in Sillitoe's *Her Victory*. In *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* he describes this change of status as unrealistic whereas in the 1980s it became an option for an unhappy marriage. The same opinion is valid about Amis's works. Only the question of domestic violence was not satisfactorily solved. In both decades it is a crime that goes

unpunished. The only new solution in the 1980s was the already mentioned divorce. In both novels from the 1980s authors criticise the institution of marriage. They do not ascribe any real importance to marriage and reflect the problems that are caused by the legal connection.

Male characters often criticise women and that is why the authors were accused of mysogyny. We have found out that in both cases we cannot take what a character says to be the same what the author thinks. Mainly Amis caricatures his men protagonists through their hatred of women. What is more both authors celebrate the womanhood in many ways. Nevertheless, female characters are rather flat and inert, often described through clichés. The reason for it is that Amis does not want to insult them the same way as he insults men and Sillitoe finds better material for his work in the male world (at least in the 1950s).

The authors clearly reflect the changes in the society in the second half of the twentieth century. At the beginning they were afraid of the progress and fought against it. Gradually, the uncertainty faded away and in the 1980s they were already concerned with stronger and emancipated female characters. It was enabled by the development of the society and greater possibilities for a woman in the real world. Therefore it established greater options for a writer to deal with a female protagonist.

7. Summary

Cílem této bakalářské práce bylo zachytit zobrazení ženských postav v dílech generace Rozhněvaní mladí muži. Kingsley Amis a Alan Sillitoe jsou jedni z nejvýznamnějších představitelů tohoto hnutí a právě jejich romány z padesátých a osmdesátých let 20. století byly analyzovány. Pozornost byla soustředěna na společenské změny, které v těchto dekadách probíhaly ve Velké Británii a bylo porovnáno, jakým způsobem se odrážejí v jejich díle.

Zatímco Alan Sillitoe se zabývá spíše dělnickou třídou, Kingsley Amis píše o střední společenské vrstvě, ale i přesto najdeme v jejich díle společné prvky. Navíc jako jedni z mála představitelů tohoto hnutí byli produktivní celou druhou polovinu 20. století a jsou považováni za jedny z nejúspěšnějších „rozhněvaných mladých mužů“. Celé hnutí začalo v padesátých letech a také velmi rychle skončilo. Název generace je velmi diskutabilní a spousta autorů se proti němu i ohradilo. Takto označování byli hlavně literárními kritiky a historiky a sami spisovatelé nevytvořili organizované hnutí. Nicméně cílem této práce není rozebrat problém pojmenování. Termín jsme použili pouze jako zařazení obou autorů do časového období s tím, že je navíc spojuje i jistá rebelie a protest proti soudobé britské společnosti.

Vybrali jsme román *Dívka jako ty (Take a Girl Like You)* od Kingsleyho Amise. Ačkoli byl vydán v roce 1960, zobrazuje změny, které začaly již v padesátých letech a jejich dopad se posléze projevil v letech šedesátých. Román Alan Sillitoea ze stejného období se jmenuje *V sobotu večer, v neděli ráno (Saturday Night and Sunday Morning)*. Je to jeho první a zřejmě i nejúspěšnější počín. Tyto knihy jsme porovnávali s jejich dílem z let osmdesátých, konkrétně s Amisovým románem *Stanley a jeho ženy (Stanley and the Women)* a s knihou *Její vítězství (Her Victory)* od Sillitoea.

Argumenty byly podloženy třemi základními typy sekundárních zdrojů. V

úvodu byly použity historické a sociologické studie, které popisují dané období. Navíc byly využity i ve vlastní analýze, abychom porovnali reálnou situaci a její zobrazení ve vybraných románech. Dalšími důležitými zdroji byla samozřejmě díla literární teorie a kritiky, které se zabývají zkoumanou generací. V neposlední řadě byly zařazeny výzkumy, které kontrastují literaturu a společnost podobným způsobem jako tato bakalářská práce. Přístup k románům byl striktně strukturální, romány byly rozebrány jako celek a nebyla zdůrazněna ta či ona část.

V úvodní části byl stručně nastíněn historický a sociální vývoj Británie od padesátých do konce osmdesátých let. Šedesátá léta byla dobou takzvané permissivní společnosti. Díky novým technologickým a lékařským poznatkům se rozšířilo nejen vlastnictví televize, lednice a dalšího spotřebního zboží, ale i užívání antikoncepčních metod. To vedlo k uvolnění mravů a postupným změnám v legislativě v oblasti rozvodu, interrupce nebo ženské otázky. Další kapitola se zabývala právě vývojem ženských práv. Elementární změny proběhly již na začátku 20. století. Nicméně hlavní vývoj vnímání a postoje vůči ženám začal až v jeho druhé polovině a zapříčinil vlastní emancipaci a legalizaci ženských práv. Také byly shrnuty základní znaky generace Rozhněvaní mladí muži. Bylo vysvětleno úskalí jejího pojmenování a proč vzbudilo takovou diskuzi. Hlavními charakteristikami literárního protagonisty je nespokojenost s vlastním osobou, životem a celou společností, dále osamělost, nedostatek ideálů, silný erotismus a násilí jako norma chování.

V hlavní analýze byly nejdříve charakterizovány hlavní ženské postavy v dílech obou autorů. Bylo zjištěno, že v padesátých letech převládají mladé, naivní a nezkušené dívky. Jejich společným přáním je vdát se a také jsou si podobné ve snaze změnit muže k obrazu svému. V mladších románech se již autoři zabývají vyzrálějšími a silnějšími charaktery. Tyto ženy jsou většinou rozvedené a používají typickou taktiku jak muže ovládat a ovlivnit jeho chování.

Další podkapitola byla nazvána *Rodinné prostředí (Family Background)* a

zabývá se vlivem rodiny a dětství na hlavní postavy. U žen očividně převládá vliv otce, kdežto u mužů matky. Hlavně Alan Sillitoe zdůrazňuje její roli v nižších společenských vrstvách a idealizuje tuto postavu jako matku-zemi, která poskytuje zrození i smrt. To ale není jediný rozdíl týkající se popisu sociálních tříd, který u obou autorů najdeme. Liší se také v užití slovní zásobě (oslovení „láska“ nebo „miláčku“ mezi partnery střední vrstvy a „kotě“ nebo „kočko“ v dělnickém prostředí), v chování mezi partnery nebo v míře domácího násilí. Právě Sillitoe popisuje poslední znak jako podmíněný sociálním prostředím. I přesto ho najdeme i v Amisově díle, konkrétně ve scéně kdy je mladá dívka znásilněna svým přítelem. Nicméně témata jako láska, manželství nebo rozvod jsou natolik univerzální, že se projevují nejen ve všech vybraných dílech, ale i přístup ženských hrdinek k těmto námětům je stejný bez ohledu na společenskou vrstvu.

Další část se jmenuje *Vztahy mezi ženami (Relationships between Women)*. Ty častokrát komplikovanější nežli vztah mezi mužem a ženou. Bylo zjištěno, že všechny protagonistky jsou si podobné v tom, že jsou velmi ovlivňovány vlastními pocity, někdy až nekontrolovatelně. Jak již bylo naznačeno, v románech je patrný rozdíl mezi mladšími a staršími ženami. Vyvrálé ženy jsou schopné spolupráce mezi sebou i využívání taktického chování. Nicméně Amisovy hrdinky občas postrádají hloubku i uvěřitelný vývoj. Důvodem je to, že autor nechce ženy urážet stejným způsobem jako muže. Ty totiž zesměšňuje skrz své protagonisty, kteří se často vyznačují antipatiemi k ženám. Sillitoe, narozdíl od Amise, nenachází v ženách vhodný materiál pro své psaní a tak se věnuje raději mužům. Tento přístup se změnil v osmdesátých letech, kdy napsal analyzovaný román *Její vítězství (Her Victory)*, jehož hlavní postavou je žena. Častěji než přátelství se mezi ženami objevuje žárlivost. Překvapivě ale není v románech prozkoumána do hloubky, i když bychom to díky milostným zápletkám očekávali.

Čtvrtá podkapitola je jednou z nejdůležitějších, jelikož se zabývá vztahem mezi ženami a muži. Jak již bylo řečeno, jedná se hlavně o vztahy milostné. Také se objevuje popis taktických manévrů žen, aby dosáhli od mužů toho, oč usilují. Bylo zjištěno, že jedním z hlavních důvodů změny v postavení ženy byla kampaň

vedená v časopisech pro ženy. Podporovaly vizi typické ženy v domácnosti, která se stará o svého manžela i dům a přitom dokáže být stále upravená a krásná. Na druhou stranu se objevila tendence maskulinizace ženy. Projevovalo se to nejen v oblékání, ale i ve změně vnímání ženské krásy. Vzpomeňme si na klučičí vzhled modelky Twiggy. Generace Rozhněvaní mladí muži se bojí o svoji pozici a ve svých dílech protestují proti těmto změnám. Jejich obranou je oslava extrémně maskulinního muže. Proto se v jejich knihách objevují hlavně silní protagonisté. V osmdesátých letech se už smířili s emancipací ženy a díky tomu se mohli věnovat zajímavějším a vyzrálejšími hrdinkám. Amis vidí vývoj v postavení ženy i v možnosti navštěvovat bary, které dříve byly určeny pouze pro muže. Je si vědom této změny, ale druhým dechem dodává, že situace stále ještě není ideální. Stejně nevýhody jsou patrné i v románu *Její vítězství (Her Victory)* od Sillitoea.

Poslední část se zabývala manželstvím a mateřstvím. Byla zmíněna i úzce spojená témata jako je rozvod, interrupce nebo domácí násilí. Vlivem permissivní společnosti došlo k rozpadu tradičního systému hodnot, což se Amisově románu *Dívka jako ty (Take a Girl Like You)* projevuje v postavě Jenny. Úzkostlivě si chrání své panenství a čeká na toho pravého. Paradoxně o panenství přijde, když je znásilněna svým přítelem Patrickem. Amis tedy naznačuje, že podobné hodnoty nemůžou v moderní době přežít. Stejný názor je vyjádřen v postavě Marthy, která selhává jako žena v domácnosti. Sillitoe zobrazuje permissivní společnost ve větších možnostech kontraceptivních metod i interrupce. V románech z osmdesátých let byl více kladen důraz na možnost rozvodů, které byly díky změnám v legislativě častější. Následkem byl rozpad tradičního modelu rodiny, který ovlivnil větší počet psychických problémů u dětí z těchto manželství. Příkladem za všechny je Steve z Amisova románu *Stanley a jeho ženy (Stanley and the Women)*, u kterého se objeví schizofrenie, jejíž výskyt v osmdesátých letech prudce stoupl. Sillitoe v šedesátých letech zdůrazňoval hlavně vliv vlastnictví televize na snížení výskytu domácího násilí, o dvacet let později vytyčuje možnost rozvodu a zlepšení státní péče o matku a dítě, hlavně v oblasti sociálních dávek.

Oba autoři při vyjadřování těchto názorů hojně využívají metafor a symbolů. Amis naznačuje povahu protagonisty skrze jeho jméno (Jenny Bunn, Nowell). Sillitoe používá metaforu rybaření k popsání manželství i milostných afér, konkrétně v románu *V sobotu večer, v neděli ráno (Saturday Night and Sunday Morning)*. Podstata vlastního flirtování je viděna jako chytání ryby. Rybou může být nejen žena, ale i muž. Obraz vody využívá Sillitoe k popsání vztahu mezi Arthurem a Doreen, který se v danou chvíli jeví jako klidný. Pak ale hladinu rozčechá kámen a objeví se kruhy, které symbolizují prudkou změnu, která ale má trvalejší charakter. Tou změnou je sňatek, ke kterému se mezi nimi schyluje a očividně nebude procházkou růžovým sadem. Kritika manželství se objevuje nejen v díle Alan Sillitoea, ale i u Amise. Oba dva naznačují, že vzniklé problémy jsou způsobeny právě tímto svazkem.

V dílech obou autorů se viditelně odrážejí změny, které probíhaly v druhé polovině 20. století. Ze začátku, tedy v padesátých letech, měli z vývoje obavy a bojovali proti němu. Nejistota, která vznikla zdánlivým oslabením pozice muže, ale postupně zmizela a v osmdesátých letech se autoři mohli plně věnovat silnějším a emancipovaným ženám. Důvodem odlišného pojetí protagonistek byly výše popsané změny ve společnosti a větší možnosti pro ženu v reálném světě. Oba autoři se tak mohli věnovat zajímavějším ženským postavám, které dokázali komplexněji zpracovat.

Anotace / Annotation

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Abstrakt: Práce se zabývá zobrazením ženských postav v dílech generace Rozhněvaní mladí muži. Je zaměřena na romány Kingsleyho Amise a Alana Sillitoe. Cílem je nastínit vývoj zobrazení ženských postav a jak se v dílech odrážejí společenské změny, které proběhly mezi padesátými a osmdesátými léty.

Abstract: The thesis deals with the portrayal of female characters in the works of the generation Angry Young Men. It is concentrated on the novels by Kingsley Amis and Alan Sillitoe. Our aim is to provide the development of the description of female characters and how the authors reflect changes in the society from the 1950s to the 1980s.

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