UNIVERZITA PALACKÉHO V OLOMOUCI

FILOZOFICKÁ FAKULTA

KATEDRA ANGLISTIKY A AMERIKANISTIKY

HERO OR ANTIHERO

Development and Transformation of Literary Protagonist in Contemporary
British Literature

Diplomová práce

Autor: Bc. Veronika Vřetionková

Vedoucí práce: PhDr. Libor Práger, Ph.D.

Olomouc 2015

Místopřísežně prohlašuji, že jsem tuto diplomovou práci na téma „Hero or Antihero - Development and Transformation of Literary Protagonist in Contemporary British Literature" vypracovala samostatně pod odborným dohledem vedoucího práce a uvedla jsem všechny použité podklady a literaturu.

V Olomouci dne   Podpis

Table of Contents

Introduction

The aim of this diploma thesis is to describe the historical development of the protagonist with regard to his heroic or antiheroic nature, and to prove the predominating antiheroic character of contemporary protagonists, with special focus on British literature and with respect to selected literary works written by British authors in the period after Second World War. The literary works, whose protagonists were selected for analysis are: *A Clockwork Orange* by Anthony Burgess, *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* by Muriel Spark, *The Remains of the Day* by Kazuo Ishiguro and *Solar* by Ian McEwan.

The first part of the diploma thesis is concerned with the concepts of heroism and anti-heroism, including the definitions of both terms and the explanation of heroic and antiheroic archetypes.

The second part of the thesis follows the historical development of the heroic and antiheroic ideal from Ancient times to present day, especially with regard to protagonists of British literature. The focus is put on the gradual transformation of the protagonist's heroic nature into antiheroic. The factors that influenced the transformation and changes that protagonist underwent in the course of time are discussed.

In the third part of the thesis the selected literary works are analyzed. The focus is aimed especially on the detailed analysis of protagonists of the literary works. The aim of the analysis is to prove the antiheroic character of the protagonists, and to demonstrate the heterogeneous nature of antiheroic archetype and the complexity of the antiheroic ideal, which represents the predominating tendency in twentieth and twenty-first century literature.

Methodology

The first part of the thesis is concerned with concepts of heroism and antiheroism. As these two concepts represent the crucial themes of the thesis it is necessary to provide the definitions of these two terms. The definitions included in the thesis were drawn up on the basis of research of dictionary entries and of the various definitions of the terms in the literature concerning the issues of heroism or anti-heroism.

The thesis also deals with the concept of heroic and antiheroic archetypal image. The definition of the term is provided, based on the theory of archetypes and collective unconscious by Carl Gustav Jung and followed by the concise survey of some of the most influential works, in which the authors focused on study of mythology and folktales and in which they aimed to create lists of general characteristics concerning the cross cultural phenomenon of the heroic and antiheroic archetype.

Second part of the thesis follows the survey of historical development of the heroic and antiheroic ideal by the application of diachronic approach. This survey is based on the research of literature concerning the issues of heroism and antiheroism, the history of literature and of various literary movements as well as literary criticism. The works that represent the crucial field of the study and whose ideas were the most influential in the drawing up the survey are following: *The Praise of Antiheroes, Figures and Themes in Modern European Literature, 1830-1980,* by Victor Brombert, *The Heroic Ideal: Western Archetypes from Greek to Present* by Matthew G. Kendric, *A World without Heroes, The Modern Tragedy* by George Roche, *The Archetypal Antihero in Postmodern Fiction* by Rita Gurung, *The Anti-Hero: his emergence and transformations* ed. By Lilian R. Furst, James D. Wilson *Anatomy of Criticism* by Northrop Frye, *Poetics* by Aristotle and *The Penguin Short History of English Literature* by Stephen Coote. The aim of the survey is to describe the transformation of heroic and antiheroic ideals in the course of time and to support the theory of gradual replacement of once prevailing heroic ideal by the antiheroic ideal on the position of protagonist as well as the theory of antihero being the predominant protagonist of the twentieth and twenty-first century literature. The factors that influenced the transformation and changes that protagonist underwent in the course of time are discussed. The focus is also on reader's perception of the protagonist, on his ability to admire or idealize him, to identify himself or sympathize with the character and thus experience the final catharsis.

The third part of the thesis includes the analyses of four selected literary works written by contemporary British authors. One of the aims of the analyses is to prove the complex and heterogeneous nature of antiheroic concept. Due to that the emphasis is put especially on the detailed analyses of nature of protagonists with focus on their antiheroic traits, as another aim is to prove that each of the protagonists represent the distinctive prototype of antiheroic archetype.

1   The Concept of Heroism and Antiheroism

The oldest literary character that meets the requirements of the idea of hero and heroic tradition is widely considered to be Gilgamesh from the old Sumerian epic, but the heroic ideal entered Western literature together with Homeric epics *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, which laid the basis of Western heroic tradition. Since then the character of hero represented and occupied prominent place in the world of western literature. But, in the course of time and under the influence of literary and social evolution, the heroic ideal started to change. The hero lost his superior position of ideal and started to resemble an ordinary man, his nature and behavior gradually developed into the hero of unheroic traits and deeds. In the modern era the line between heroism and anti-heroism slowly disappeared and the hero was replaced in the position of the protagonist by the antihero, because the idea of heroism was no longer suitable to the needs, requirements and tastes of modern authors and readers.

The character of the antihero entered the world of literature very early, practically hand in hand with the character of the hero. First antiheroic traits can be traced as far as Ancient Greece and a number of antiheroic figures, or rather figures with unheroic features, emerged in Western literature since its very beginning. But the antihero gained his permanent position as protagonist in the literature of the nineteenth century, when great scientific, political, industrial and social changes started and when the failure of ideas of French revolution and fall of Napoleon shattered the faith in heroic ideal. In the course of the twentieth century, which was the era of general disillusionment, the antihero practically replaced the hero in the position of protagonist and became the predominating literary character.

1.1 Definitions of the Terms 'Hero' and 'Antihero'

1.1.1 Hero

A person, typically a man, who is admired for their courage, outstanding achievements, or noble qualities.[1]

The chief male character in a book, play, or film, who is typically identified with good qualities, and with whom the reader is expected to sympathize.[2]

In mythology and folklore a person of superhuman qualities and often semi-divine origin, in particular one whose exploits were the subject of ancient Greek myths.[3]

To begin with it is necessary to specify the term "hero". With regard to many various definitions and sources and with respect to historical development and changing perception of the heroic concept a kind of universal definition can be created. The general conception of heroism is derived from Ancient Greece, where the hero represented a person of semi-divine or human but noble origin with godlike qualities. A man with exceptional talents and abilities, who usually gained his fame in battle and his deeds meant benefit for his people and brought him enduring fame and honor after terrible but glorious death, which was followed by creation of a cult of hero.

Aristotle in his *Poetics* defined the hero as "better than the ordinary men"[4], which provided him with kind of a superior quality. It suggests that the hero stands above others in sense of origin, morals, virtues, aims and actions. It is true that, in the course of time, hero might have lost his original divine and military status, but he became an ideal image of moral perfection worthy of admiration, imitation and following, a courageous man or woman admired for their brave deeds and noble qualities, who are willing to sacrifice themselves for the sake of others, for greater good, and who give up life for ideas larger than life. The hero represents spiritual model guiding all men. As such, he gains his mythical status and becomes an archetypal image, which occupies the central position or the position of protagonist in literary works for centuries.

---

[1] "Hero," *Oxford Dictionaries*, accessed August 13, 2015, http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/
[2] "Hero," *Oxford Dictionaries*, accessed August 13, 2015, http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/
[3] "Hero," *Oxford Dictionaries*, accessed August 13, 2015, http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/
[4] Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. Stephen Halliwell (London: Loeb Classical Library, 1995) 85.

1.1.2 Antihero

A main character in a book, play or movie who does not have the usual good qualities that are expected in hero.[5]

A central character in story, movie, or drama who lacks conventional heroic attributes.[6]

The chief person in modern novel or play whose character is widely discrepant from that which we associate with traditional protagonist or hero of serious literary work.[7]

These are only few dictionary definitions of the term "antihero". According to them, the antihero represents a literary character, whose main or probably only trait is the lack of heroic qualities. But is it really possible to define the literary antihero in such a simple way or does he represent a character more complex and complicated? Victor Brombert suggests that a single definition or description of the term is practically impossible, due to the existence of many different types of antiheroic characters, and he describes the antihero as a man of many faces.[8] The range of antiheroes is really colorful. The tragic victim, meek scapegoat, born loser and outsider, clown, fool or freak, but also hypocritical opportunist, rebel without cause, devilish manipulator or unscrupulous criminal, these are only some of the types of modern antihero, which proves that the term really represents great variation of literary characters.

The nature of the antihero seems to be even more complicated than that, as it covers a wide range of traits and emotions. The antihero can be passive, patiently bearing all the strokes of fate and all his failures, naïve fool and loser. Man of melancholy, depression and disillusion silently suffering in the world of alienation and lost communication. He is also an indecisive coward, insecure and interested only in himself. But he can be also greedy, envious, lustful, hypocritical opportunist. Among antiheroic features belong also skepticism, cynicism, irony and nihilism. Even though he is on one side identified as the hero of inaction, he can be also a man of rebellion, revolting actively against social norms and rules. He is also a man of anger and aggression whose dark side is connected with danger, violence and cruelty. These are only few antiheroic characteristics which go far beyond the general definition of the term that can be found in dictionaries. It is true that the antihero lacks the heroic

---

[5] "Anti- hero," *Merriam-Webster: Dictionary and Thesaurus.*, accessed August, 13, 2015, http://www.merriam-webster.com/

[6] "Anti-hero," *Oxford Dictionaries*, accessed August 13, 2015, http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/

[7] M.H. Abrams, *Glosary of Literary Terms* (Forth Worth: Harcourt B. College Publishers 1999)11.

[8] Victor Brombert, *In Praise of Antiheroes* (Chicago:The University Chicago Press, 1999) 1.

qualities, but his nature is too complex to be defined in such a simple manner because the antiheroic protagonist represents quite a difficult and ambiguous literary concept, which allows many various interpretations.

1.2 Heroic and Antiheroic Archetypes

According to Carl Gustav Jung's theory of collective unconscious, which is shared by all men and represents the mental base of humankind, there is an existence of universal, archaic inherited patterns, ideas, images, and symbols called archetypes. They are part of the collective unconscious and represent fundamental motives of human experience. Our unconscious, as well as the archetypes, are hidden forms but they can be, according to Jung, projected and examined in dreams, folklore, fairy tales and myths. In fact the whole mythology can be seen as a projection of the collective unconscious and studying myths enables us to understand general psychological, cultural or social truths.[9]

Several influential studies of myths, folktales or fairy tales, whose main aim was to draw up a list of universal signs common to all world mythologies, were published in the first part of the twentieth century. These studies included also an analysis of the heroic archetype with attempts to create general patterns of heroic traits and behavior. Some of these studies are e.g. Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale,* in which he created a structural analysis of Russian fairytales. *The Myth of Birth of Hero* by Otto Rank, who followed the Freudian psychoanalysis and compared myths with dreams, and who, as well as Lord Raglan in his study *The Hero: Study in Tradition, Myth and Drama,* tried to create the list of cross-cultural traits common for heroes of mythologies and folk tales. Joseph Campbell, in his book *The Hero of Thousand Faces,* came up with an idea of monomyth of the hero and his journey. According to these theories, there is an existence of a universal archetype of hero across different cultures. It shares a certain number of patterns, symbols and common traits that can be traced down in myths, tales and legends of different nations all over the world. This archetypal hero, the cross-cultural and cross-societal phenomenon, represents a system of traditional values, which are generally admired, praised and imitated. Hero, as the image of ideal behavior, according to Campbell, undergoes a lifetime journey consisting of departure, initiation and return. As hero archetype and following of heroic ideal represent projection of unconscious mind, they are essential for psychological development of

---

[9] Carl Gustav Jung, *Archetypy a nevědomí*, ed Helmut Barz et al., trans. Eva Bosáková , Kristína Černá, Jan Černý (Brno: Nakladatelství Tomáše Janečka, 1997) . 100-117.

every man and hero's journey thus effects maturation of each individual, who is able to recognize his place in the universe and who takes action in accomplishing his lifetime goals.[10]

Antihero gained the status of archetype much later, together with his predominant position of protagonist in literature of twentieth century. Antiheroic archetype represents the image of breakdown of modern world, the era of lost hopes, ideals, morals and faith. He became a symbol of postwar disillusion, when old order and traditions lost their sense in the world of chaos, in which man lost his independence of individual and became part of mass culture. The antihero is an image of failure, alienation and everyday mundane existence and struggle for survival in the postwar wasteland.

---

[10] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with Thousand Faces* (New Carolina: New World Library 2008) 1- 40.

2 Hero's Journey through Ages

In the following paragraphs the historical development of the heroic and antiheroic literary concepts is described, as well as the changes that image of hero underwent in the course of time until his transformation into antihero. The main reasons and causes that reshaped the image of hero and influenced his development are discussed.

2.1 Epic Hero – Warrior, Leader and Protector

The oldest works concerning the idea of hero and heroism in Western literature are the Homeric epics *Iliad* and *Odyssey,* which formed the basis of epic genre and established the Western heroic tradition. Epics, long narrative poems that recount stories of heroic deeds of man of divine or noble origin, whose courage, exceptional talents, militant and leading skills and willingness to sacrifice himself for the sake of its people, found its inspiration in myths and legends. The epic hero settles on a journey, faces many difficulties, fights in battles and earns his glory on the battlefield and uses all his abilities for the benefit of others. At the end of the poem the hero usually dies in terrible manner but at the same time his death elevates him among the gods and brings him posthumous glory and enables him to become a part of mythology. The hero is mourned and honored after his death and this honor leads to creation of hero cult.

The hero in epic poetry can be described as a warrior or leader and "heroism of ancient times can be regarded as military virtue"[11]. As M. Gregory Kendrick in his book *The Heroic Ideal* suggests the image of the hero as a warrior was influenced by the fact that the ancient times were a period when the question of protection of family, community and city, its welfare and security was of the highest importance. And it was the warrior or leader, who possessed the skills and equipment necessary to maintain the social order and to protect his people and found his glory on the battlefield.[12]

2.1.1 Ancient Antiheroism

Even though ancient literature is famous for its epic heroes, at first it also introduced into the world of literature not entirely heroic figures. One of the first unheroic characters appeared probably in Greek New Comedy, which later developed into Comedy of Manners. According to Northop Frye's theory of modes this type of comedy belongs to the mode of low mimesis. The characters of low mimetic mode lose

---

[11] Dean A. Miller, *The Epic Hero* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopskins Universty Press, 2000) 6.
[12] Matthew G. Kendric, *The Heroic Ideal, Western Archetypes from the Greeks to the Present* (North Carolina, Mefarland Company, 2010) 14-16.

their superior quality and resemble ordinary men and thus partially lose their heroic status. Some of the comic and buffoonish characters who appear in the New Comedy and who exhibit unheroic traits are e.g. *eiron*, the cunning slave, or *alazon*, boastful soldier.[13] But these are not the only unheroic figures that can be found in Ancient literature. Some antiheroic features appear also in Homeric epics in the nature of the heroes. According to Rosette C. Lamont Odysseus can be considered the first true antihero in literary history. Not only because *Odyssey* contains the elements of comedy and thus may belong to the rank of low mimetic literature, but mainly because the character of Odysseus possesses features which are, from present day point of view, in contradiction of what is considered to be heroic or noble behavior. He possesses features such as extreme pride and arrogance, he is also crafty trickster, who is capable of adultery, theft or murder.[14] Another heroic character whose heroic nature can be considered to be problematic, is Achilles, whose fury, obstinacy, vindictiveness and inability to forgive, make him rather unheroic character. As Victor Brombert suggests, the epic heroes "are capable of killing the monster, but they themselves are often dreadful even monstrous."[15]

But it is important to add that the ambivalent nature of ancient epic heroes, whether their features or behavior can be considered heroic or antiheroic, depends on different historical point of view. Because the usage and development of term 'antihero' is connected with the literature of the nineteenth and especially twentieth century, and it was completely unknown to the ancient authors or readers or audience, as they worked only with the concept of hero as protagonist. And thus what is nowadays considered to be nonheroic behavior or falling short of heroic ideal could have been perceived quite differently in ancient times. The heroic qualities such as bravery, ability to fight and protect the people were of primary importance and the faults and qualities, which we nowadays consider unheroic behavior, were very often overlooked or regarded as unimportant. And thus if the hero met the requirements of brave and skillful warrior and protective leader, his faults were tolerated. So even if the ancient heroes committed crimes, acted against ethics or failed to live up to the heroic ideal, they were not considered as antiheroes, and should not be regarded as antiheroes even nowadays, even if they posses traits, which are from modern point of view in contradiction to definition

---

[13] Northop Fry, *Anatomie kritiky*, trans. Sylva Fycová (Brno: Host, 2003) 33-52.
[14] Rosette C. Lamont, "From Hero to Anti-Hero", in *The Anti-Hero: His Emergence and Transformations* ed. by Lilian R. Furst, James D. Wilson (Georgia State UP: Atlanta, 1976) 1-23.
[15] Brombert 3.

of heroism. Because they were in their nature always exemplary figures, superior to others, and their deeds were admired, no matter how imperfect their personalities were.

2.2   Knight - Hero of Medieval Chivalric Romance

The role of hero as warrior, leader and protector continued also in the Early Middle Ages, because this period was, despite the spreading spirit of Christianity, a time full of violence and danger, when European peoples moved across the continent and fought for new territories and when battles and combats were part of everyday life. It was the period when heroism was considered essential to the further development of European society. Therefore the early medieval heroic code was associated with war, violence and cult of manliness. The hero of medieval epic is usually a man of noble origin, a highly skilled warrior who is fond of fighting, hunting, monster slaying, feasting and drinking. Such a hero can be found e.g. in Old English epics such as *Beowulf,* or *Waldere.* Other epic narratives that gained popularity in the eleventh and twelfth century and consisted of heroic tales were *chansons de geste*, the songs of heroic deeds, such as *Chanson de Roland,* written in old French. Due to the Norman Conquest they found their way also into English literary tradition. These epic poems, which were originally sung by minstrels, recount stories of heroes of the so called Matter of France and they represent the transition between two medieval heroic literary genres, epic and romance. They already introduce a new type of medieval hero–knight, who is the mixture of heroism of epic warriors with new concept of feudal loyalty and Christian ideals, but they still lack one of the main attributes of medieval romances, which is the theme of courtly love.

English medieval romances, such as *Le Morte d'Arthur*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* or *Lancelot, the Knight of the Cart* represented a very popular and widespread literary genre during the Late Middle Ages and their popularity continued also in the period of the Renaissance. They followed the heroic tradition of epic and found its inspiration especially in the old Arthurian legends, which were popularized by Geoffrey of Monmouth and his *Historia Regnum Britannie*. The adventures and heroic deeds of king Arthur and the Knights of Round Table, who go on quests, defeat monsters and giants, which wins them their ladies' favors represent the chief themes of medieval romances.

The knight, the hero of chivalric romance, still follows the heroic tradition of ancient warriors but his image is influenced by the code of chivalry, a moral system

which combined the warrior *ethos*, knightly piety and courtly manners which played a significant role in medieval society and literary tradition. Books of conduct were written, in which the rules and requirements of chivalry were set down and which explained what it meant to be a perfect knight. The new feudal system required the knight's absolute loyalty and service to his king. The knight should have been noble, honest, loyal and good warrior who never committed any treason and was willing to sacrifice his life for the protection of his king or weaker sex. The Christian religion demanded the hero´s piety and chastity and also introduced the motif of quest of a sacred object. The hero was meant to be a kind of pilgrim looking for the Holy Grail and salvation. But the most significant change that the hero of medieval romance underwent, in comparison to the hero of epics, was connected with the new literary conception of courtly love. The emphasis was put on heterosexual kind of love and worship of a lady put on a pedestal in contrast to ancient epics or *chanson de geste*, in which the military heroism predominated. The hero ceased to represent a mere warrior, he became a lover. He set out on adventure and performed heroic deeds to win the lady's heart.

2.2.1 Failure of Chivalric Conduct

But even in the tales of honorable, brave knights and their heroic deeds and love adventures the problem with ambiguousness of their heroic nature emerges, as in the case of ancient epics. According to Neil Cartlidge also some of the heroes in medieval romances fail to carry out their heroic duties or live up to the definition of chivalric heroism. Some of these ambivalent heroes who possess unheroic traits e.g. Gawain, who fell short of his own reputation, as his failure revealed his cowardice, fear of death and lying, or Tristan and Lancelot. They, by having adulterous affairs, broke their vows of loyalty and committed treason against the king, which was in contradiction with the very code of chivalry.[16] But even if the knightly heroes of romances failed to fully fulfill the requirements of code of chivalry, they were still considered to be heroic. Because, as Mathew Kendrick suggests: "heroes are neither honored nor remembered because of their misdeeds but because of their achievements"[17]

---

[16] Neil Cartlige, introduction to *Heroes and Anti-heroes in Medieval Romance*, ed. Neil Cartlige (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2012) 1-9.
[17] Kendrick 187.

2.2.2 The Genre of Mock-Romance and Antiheroic Characters

The medieval literature, which followed the heroic ideal of epic narrations and invented its own heroic code of behavior – chivalry, introduced also some truly nonheroic characters, who entered the literary world through the genre of parody on the fashion and popularity of medieval romances. Geoffrey Chaucer, the greatest author of medieval England, was a man of many literary talents, which he exercised especially in his masterpiece, the ironic and critical portrait of medieval English society, *The Canterbury Tales,* in which he presented various literary genres, such as allegory, sermon, fable, fabliau and chivalric romance e.g. in story of "The Knight's Tale" and of course the parody of the genre of romance in the "Tale of Sir Thopas". The protagonist of the tale is an unknightly knight, whose appearance and behavior are rather feminine, which is in contradiction with the ideal of manly, brave knight. The fair and gentle Thopas lacks the heroic qualities of chivalric hero and thus may be considered as antiheroic. Another character of unheroic knight, who by raping young lady, negates the very definition of chivalry and courtly love, is the protagonist of "Wife of Bath's Tale."

Probably the most known parody of chivalry and literary genre of romances is the novel *The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote of La Mancha* written by Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra. This novel represents a mixture of heroism and antiheroism, as it portrays the heroic behavior of an antihero in an unheroic world. The protagonist, dazzled by the ideals of chivalric behavior and heroism, which are already old-fashioned and incompatible with the new ideas and conceptions of the world, sets on his chivalric quest. But his ridiculous appearance and behavior that are not understood by others make of him the sad antihero of the novel, the fool, the laughing stock, who is considered to be mad by others. The greatest irony is that it is his attempt for heroic behavior and belief in ideals of chivalry that are the causes of his antiheroism.

As the protagonists of parody on chivalric romances, these figures possess nonheroic traits and lack the qualities of heroes, so that they could ridicule the heroic fashion of romances. These protagonists of mock-romance may be considered as antiheroic figures, because they were, by their authors, intentionally created to be so, unlike the heroic characters of romances, which may exhibit some unheroic traits but were written with intention to be heroic.

2.3   Saints and Martyrs – Heroes of Patient Endurance

New Christian religion and its influence that started spreading across European continent in the Early Middle Ages affected many areas of human activity, including literature. It helped not only to reshape the image of the epic hero, the warrior, as he gained his religious nature but it also introduced a new type of heroes, those of passive resistance and patient endurance – martyrs and saints. This new type of hero followed the example of Jesus Christ and, in contrast to the epic hero or hero of the romance, who fights enemies and monsters, faces difficulties, goes on a journey for a quest, saves damsels in distress and finds his glory in his heroic deeds and actions the martyrs and saints find glory and fame in their suffering. Martyrs and saints represented highly moral, pious and virtuous characters. They were not seen as poor, helpless victims anymore but were regarded as heroes who accepted their suffering instead of giving up their faith or principles. Saints, according to M. Gregory Kendrick, possessed qualities similar to those of ancient heroes. "Saintly folk consisted of people of noble origin, who enjoyed divine favor, possessed special abilities and powers and who were accorded places of honor in the afterlife."[18] Lives of martyrs and saints, their deeds, miracle making, resistance, glorious death and the posthumous cult were recorded in sacred bios or performed in public in form of miracle plays.

Even if one may suggest that among these holy heroes cannot be found antiheroic traits the opposite is true. Even though they may not be found in the medieval stories of lives of saints and martyrs, there were some of the Christian ideas that changed the original image of epic hero and shaped the image of the medieval knight. According to Mathew Kendrick the Christian religion and its influence, rules and restrictions not only reshaped the image of hero but in course of time destroyed the epic heroism and helped to create the antiheroic tradition. By introducing a morality of slaves, when meekness, obedience, weakness and self-denial were celebrated and heroic features such as pride, strength or free will were considered to be sinful.[19] It was the example of martyrs and their patient endurance and passive resistance that inspired the figure of meek, obedient scapegoat of modern literature, who accepts his hopeless position and fate, bears his everyday suffering, sneers, insults and jokes of others with patience and never fights back like e.g. Isaac Bashevis Singer's "Gimpel, the Fool".

---

[18] Kendrick 93.
[19] Kendrick 156.

2.4 Tragic Hero – The Hero of Renaissance

The English Renaissance, often described as the golden age of England, is considered to be an era of flourishing not only of the kingdom and its society but also of the art and literature. The epoch of Renaissance is connected with the rediscovery of ancient art and literature, which inspired authors all over the Europe including England. The genre of medieval romance was still popular as can be seen e.g. in Edmund Spencer's allegorical romance *The Faerie Queene,* but new literary genres emerged as well, such as sonnets or pastoral literature. But the golden age of England is famous especially for the development and flourishing of theatre.

Drama, as it was known in Ancient Greece and Rome, lost its former glory in the Middle Ages, when it was more or less connected with religious themes and their presentation. Miracle and mystery plays that portrayed lives of saints and biblical stories were performed in front of the churches. Later on the more secular themes emerged in plays such as morality plays, interludes or masques. But it was the Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre which returned to drama its long lost fame and importance. This rebirth went hand in hand with the rediscovery of Aristotelian ideas and it followed his concept of tragic hero.

According to Aristotle, the hero of tragedy is a man of noble origin or high social position. He is a virtuous man of qualities, morals and talents, who is better than other men, but is still capable of human errors. He cannot be too perfect, because it would unable the spectator to identify himself with the hero, and thus prevent him from experiencing fear and pity, which he can feel only for misfortunes of man like himself. This experience according to Aristotle leads to spectator's catharsis. The tragic hero is a man not too good, whose misfortune and fall are caused not by some vice or villainy but by some tragic error. [20] He possesses either tragic pride –*hybris* that brings his fall and anger of Gods, like e.g. in Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, or tragic flaw, error or simple mistake – *hamartia,* which leads to the reversal of hero's fortune from good to bad and to his downfall, like e.g. protagonist of William Shakespeare's *King Lear, Othello, Macbeth* or *Hamlet,* who represent exceptional, noble, gifted individuals with certain kind of weaknesses or faults in their natures, which causes their tragic downfalls.

---

[20] Aristotle 69-102.

2.4.1 The Ambiguous Nature of Tragic Hero

Some of the traits of the tragic hero can be also considered as nonheroic and he is sometimes put under the label of antiheroism. But this categorization and opinion is based, similarly as the idea of antiheroism of epic and medieval heroes, on the contemporary points of view, which judge only the antiheroic behavior of protagonists, e.g. Othello's strangulation of Desdemona, but they do not take in full consideration the definition of tragic heroism in whole. Even though the antihero and tragic hero may share some similar traits, and some of the tragic heroes e.g. Hamlet, who can be considered existential antihero or Richard the Third, who exhibits some of the traits Byronic hero or Gothic villain, have very ambiguous natures, the tragic hero is rather one of the predecessors of antihero then character of the same rank. He represents the figure from which the antihero derived or from which the authors of modern literature draw the inspiration. The reason why the tragic hero should not be fully labeled with the mark of antiheroism is that he represents a man of noble origin and personality, he is someone to whom the audience can look up to and relate to. He possesses the qualities of the hero unlike the antihero, who lacks them. And his fall and tragic end are caused not by vice or villainy or unheroic nature but by his tragic flaw or error.

2.5 Milton's Satan – The Archetypal Antihero

Even though a number of characters with greater or lesser number of antiheroic traits already appeared in English literature, some of them standing on the very edge of antiheroism, it was always the character of hero who occupied the position of the protagonist in works of literature. But this predominant position of the hero was shattered by the publication of *Paradise Lost* by John Milton as it introduced, for the very first time, the dark, evil and unheroic figure on position of protagonist. The character of Satan caused great confusion among the readers, because he represented the protagonist with whom one was able to greatly sympathize or admire him but on the other hand wished him the fall and destruction. Since the publication of the poem the necessity to differentiate between heroic and nonheroic protagonist arose. Because evil and vice cannot be seen as heroic feature and thus the dark character on the position of protagonist can be hardly described by the term "hero".

According to Edith Kaiter and Corina Sainduc the character of Satan represents a tragic hero of the poem. Especially in its first part, when he is described as a courageous person, who fights for his rights and who wants to overthrow the reign of hypocrite and tyrant God and tries to free himself and its comrades from God's

oppression.[21] His purpose seems to be noble and causes great sympathy among readers, who identify themselves with the character and his situation. Satan also possesses the tragic pride *hybris*, which causes God's disfavor and Satan's punishment. He also exhibits *hamartia*, which causes his fall. His tragic flaw is his inability to submit to God's will, to ask for or accept God's forgiveness and thus refuses the salvation. But as the poem progresses, he starts to lose his heroic nature as his evil side gains prominence and he becomes an antihero of the poem. He changes from the charismatic leader of the oppressed, who is fighting for his rightful cause into ambitious, arrogant egoist, who is only interested in himself, his own profit and glory. His only intention is to deny God's authority, to destroy everything that God creates and to spread evil around the world. Satan is portrayed as a charismatic speaker at the beginning of the poem, who is able to persuade not only his comrades but also the readers that his intentions are good even if they only cause chaos and destruction. He represents the seductive type of evil that tempts not only Eve but also the readers, who believe in his heroic nature only to discover that it was mere disguise. He changes not only in his nature in the course of poem, but also in his shape. This transformation goes hand in hand with his fading heroism. At the beginning of the poem he represents a heroic magnificent fallen angel but at the end he is degraded into the nonheroic form of a deceitful snake.

According to Rita Gurung Satan can be considered to be also the first existential antihero, because he knows very well that his rebellion against God is pointless.[22] God represents the omnipotent, omniscient and undefeatable ruler and creator and Satan is aware of the fact that his defeat is predestined and that his rebellion is kind of a Sisyphean labor but he still tries to revolt even though he knows there is no chance for success and that he is only a toy in God's hands.

Even though *Paradise Lost* contains also the characters of Adam and God that comply with the idea of heroic ideal, it is the seductive, charismatic and evil character of Satan that has fascinated readers since the publication of the poem and thus they proclaimed him as the protagonist of the poem instead of the heroic figures. The character of Satan inspired many future authors, e.g. poets of Satanic school, and laid the basis for creation of dark charismatic antiheroic rebels against social norms such as e.g. the character of Byronic hero.

---

[21] Edith Kaiter, Corina Sandiuc, "Milton's Satan: Hero or Anti-Hero?" (presentation, International Conference of Scientific Paper, Brasov, Romania, May 26-28 2011).
[22] Rita Gurung, *The Archetypal Antihero in Postmodern Fiction* (New Dehli: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 2010) 24- 26.

2.6 Rise of a Novel – The Hero as One of Us

The literature of Civil War and Commonwealth is connected especially with the genius of John Milton, but writing of that time was more or less based on political problematic and tended to express social, political or religious opinions. The following period of Restoration introduced the writings of wit, logic but also skepticism of Alexander Pope and John Dryden. It was also a period when the genre of mock-epic, form of a satire, was flourishing. Authors employed the exalted style and techniques of Classical heroic epics and applied them to trivial subjects. The mock-epic genre was not intended to mock the ancient epics, but it satirized the trivial subjects as it assigned them the importance they did not deserve. Some of the examples of mock-epic genre are e.g. *Hudibras* by Samuel Butler or *The Rape of the Lock* by Alexander Pope. After the reopening of theatres developed especially the genre of the Restoration Comedy, the Comedy of Manners which derived from the Ancient Greek New Comedy and whose unheroic hero was the rogue and the seducer, who usually deceived the dishonored noble husband. But it was the beginning of the eighteen century that brought significant changes not only to English literature but also to the development of the literary hero as the popularity of novel writing and reading gained its prominence.

According to Nothrop Frye's theory, as he introduced it in *The Anatomy of Criticism*, all literary works can be divided into five modes – mythic, romantic, high mimetic, low mimetic and ironic. Each of these modes belongs to a certain literary epoch and Frye suggests that their development comes hand in hand with the development of Western civilization and that the European literature moves from the higher modes to the lower ones, from mythology to irony. The categorization is based on the action potential of the hero, if it's bigger, smaller or the same as that of other men, and on his relation to the environment and other men, if he is superior or inferior. Heroes of myth, romance and high mimesis that are represented by tragedy, are according to Frye superior to other men and its environment. But heroes of low mimesis are neither superior nor inferior, they are the same as other people, they are one of us. The literature of low mimesis comes hand in hand with a new kind of middle class culture and with the rise of the novel at the beginning of eighteen century. It predominates in English literature since then until the end of nineteenth century, when it is replaced by ironic mode.[23]

---

[23] Frye 33-52.

The eighteenth century meant a breaking point in the literary culture. Reading was no longer the aristocratic entertainment and the higher amount of printed books and economic prosperity of middle class enabled the spreading of literature also among the lower classes. New reading public had new literary tastes and demanded new types of heroes with whom they may identify and whose stories, adventures and problems resembled those of readers. The popular genres of the period were e.g. journals, travel books or epistolary novels. As Percy G. Adams suggests the novel of real life also popularized the first-person narration, which heightened the authenticity of the narrated story.[24] The old heroic tales of heroes, monsters and damsels in distress were replaced by the novel of real life, such as those of Daniel Defoe, Henry Fielding, Samuel Richardson or Jane Austen, in which the ordinary people acted in everyday situations. This popularity continued also in the nineteenth century in the works of Thomas Hardy, George Elliot or Charles Dickens. Eighteenth century being the part of the Age of Reason, it can be also seen as period of further development when scientific, psychological and industrial changes begun, which started to reshape public opinion and traditional social arrangements, which influenced also the evolution of literature and its protagonist. But despite those changes there was still craving for brave, virtuous, admirable literary figures, to which reader could look up to.

2.6.1 Hero of Medieval Revival

One of the attempts to reintroduce the hero of the past back into the English literature was connected with the revival of medieval culture. It was the reaction to the Age of Enlightenment, which was based on reason and scientific knowledge and which criticized the idea of epic and medieval heroism as primitive, irrational, only interested in fighting and considered it a noble butchery. Medieval revival was the forerunner of Romantic Movement of the nineteenth century as it sets the romantic mood of glorious past of myths and romances. It found its inspiration not only in European mythologies but also in the collecting of folk stories, poetry, ballads and legends. The interest of medievalist in folk tales led not only to the recovery of folk heroes but also to the identification of national spirit in connection with national heroic past, which was supported e.g. by controversial publication of James Macpherson's *Fragments of Ancient Poetry, Collected in the Highlands of Scotland, and Translated from the Gaelic or Erse Language* or by the forged pseudo-medieval poetry of monk Thomas Rowley

---

[24] Percy G. Adams, "The Anti-Hero in Eighteenth Century Fiction," in *The Anti-Hero: His Emergence and Transformations* ed. by Lilian R. Furst, James D. Wilson (Georgia State UP: Atlanta, 1976) 29-51.

written by Thomas Chatterton. The poets of medieval revival found their inspiration mainly in the literature of English chivalric romances. Poems such as *Lady of the Lake* by Walter Scott, *La Belle Dame sans Merci* by John Keats or *Lady of Shallot* by Alfred Tennyson were based on the old Arthurian legends. The rebirth of heroic character in fiction was connected especially with figure of Walter Scott and his historical novels of heroic Scottish past, such as *Ivanhoe* or *Rob Roy,* in which he reintroduced the character of noble hero, the fearless warrior and protector of his people. Hand in hand with movement of Romantic nationalism he created "old heroes that fitted new needs."[25]

2.6.2   The Hero of Sensibility

Another major literary genre of the eighteen century, which was the reaction on the ideas of Enlightenment as it preferred the emotions over reason and whose main aim was to cause the emotional response of the readers and move them to tears as they strongly sympathized with the suffering of hero or heroine, was the sentimental novel. It can be said that this type of fiction in some ways reintroduced the image of the hero of patient endurance as it put emphasis on the virtuous, chaste and pious nature of its heroes, who most of the time bore the mistreatment, injustice and hardship with patience and preferred suffering instead of giving up their principles, which at the end might be rewarded as in case of Samuel Richardson's *Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded* or might lead to the tragic death of a martyr as in case of his *Clarissa; or, the History of a Young Lady*. The heroes or especially heroines of sentimental novels were usually hypersensitive, prone to weeping, fainting or having fits in reaction to emotionally moving situation or distress. Such a sensitive nature was not considered to be a weakness but it was regarded as the evidence of strong morals and virtues. Sensibility was considered to be one of the heroic features and its admiration led to the creation of the cult of sensibility. It gained enormous popularity in the eighteenth century and entered also the area of conduct books, which were aimed especially on young women and instructed them how act in properly sensitive manner. The novels of sensibility, which were highly popular especially among female readers, who admired the suffering heroines and tried to imitate their sensitive behavior, also helped to create the cult.

---

[25] Miller 19.

2.7   Unheroic Heroes

At the moment when the heroes of novels lost their superior, noble status and came down from the pedestal into the world of common man and became one of us, their heroic nature started to change and became problematic. They slowly started to gain features that cannot be considered heroic anymore, in comparison to ancient and medieval heroic ideal. They started to lose their idealized perfection and began to resemble ordinary men with all their faults and vices. Despite the fact that protagonists were not purely heroic characters anymore, they still possessed qualities that enabled reader to sympathize with them, to admire them rather than despise. Readers were able to identify themselves with the protagonist, his feelings and actions because he was of the same rank as them, dealt with the same problems, shared similar opinions, emotions and coped with lifetime situation and problems in similar way as readers. The possibility of identification with the protagonist started to change and became rather complicated with romantic heroes with mysterious dark sides, who stood on the very edge of anti-heroism, or even sometimes crossed the border. This new kind of unheroic heroes that emerged in the literature of eighteenth and nineteenth century begun a gradual transformation of the heroic ideal into the hero of ironic mode of twentieth century - the antihero.

2.7.1   Picaresque Hero – The Rogue

The picaresque fiction first emerged in Spanish literature in the sixteenth century with the character of Lazarillo del Tomes but it entered the English literature hand in hand with the rise of the novel. The character of *picaro* represents a protagonist who is, contrary to ancient and medieval heroes, of low origin and comes from poverty-stricken environment. His main goal in life is struggle for his own survival and well-being in the unsympathetic world and corrupted society. He tries to reach his goal by any means possible and is not afraid to cheat, outwit someone or lie. He always takes advantage of every opportunity that helps to improve his situation. The *picaro*, in contrast to heroes of the past, is not willing to sacrifice himself for the others. He is not interested in greater good or higher ideals, he is neither warrior nor saint. He does not save damsels in distress nor searches for the Holy Grail. Matthew G. Kendrick calls him "the master of survival"[26], whose only interest is to reach his own economic security and live a prosperous life. Even though the *picaro* lacks great amount of prototypical heroic

---

[26] Kendrick 190.

21

features, he is still far from the utter villainy or antiheroism. His unrelenting efforts to survive and succeed, the fact that he never gives up hope and rises again and again gain him the sympathy among the reading public. An important part of the *picaro*'s character is also his ability to hold a mirror up to corrupted society.[27] He possesses the ability to expose follies, cruelties, weaknesses and hypocrisies of supposedly better men that gives him kind of satiric quality. His talent to ridicule and outwit them brings him popularity and admiration among readers, because he shows them how to survive in the cruel world and teaches them how to cope with enemies who are stronger, richer or more powerful than them thanks to one's wit and trickery. He also suggests that it is possible to succeed in one's life and be elevated from rags to riches. The most known *picaros* of the English novel of eighteenth and nineteenth century were e.g. Moll Flanders, Tom Jones or Becky Sharp. All these characters represent the unheroic heroes of nonheroic deeds.

2.7.2   Romantic Hero - The Disillusioned Idealist

The romantic period can be described, according to Lilian Furst, as the last heroic age in the history of literature.[28] Romanticism started with medieval revival of the glorious past, which reintroduced the image of ideal hero - the warrior, leader, knight. This idea contributed to the feeling of need for a heroic figure and to attempt to achieve the heroic ideal. Such a living model of a hero was Napoleon Bonaparte, who was admired by his followers as well as by his enemies. He was a man of great talents, intelligence, courage, leading abilities and strong spirit. His fall together with the failure of ideas of French Revolution meant great disappointment to many, and it caused the fact that the heroic ideal started to change its nature.

The nineteenth century can be considered as the age of disillusions. Lost ideals of heroism were accompanied by dissatisfaction with social development and changes caused by urbanization, growth of population and industrialization. Writers and poets started to escape from cities to the nature, where they found lost beauty, sense and aesthetic experience. They also disagreed with ideas of Enlightenment and preferred one's emotions and intuition to one's reason and rationality. The emotional intensity of the individual together with introspection of inner feelings were one of the main traits of romantic hero, who, as he entered the literature of the nineteenth century, absorbed all

---

[27] Kendrick 190 – 192.
[28] Lilian Furst, "Romantic Hero or is He an Anti-Hero," in *The Anti-Hero: His Emergence and Transformations* ed. by Lilian R. Furst, James D. Wilson (Georgia State UP: Atlanta, 1976) 53-66.

maladies of the century. His feeling of primal enthusiasm and illusions were replaced by disappointment, vainness and weariness. His reactions to the disillusionment with the world and *status quo* were of double nature. One type of the romantic hero was the melancholic, artistic, hypersensitive young man or woman. Their dissatisfaction with society, in which they did not belong, as well as with conventions of that time and with the emptiness and pointlessness of their lives, caused their sorrows and depression. They found their escape from the world in suicide as in novel *The Sorrows of Young Werther* by Johann Wolfgang Goethe or in *Madame Bovary* by Gustave Flaubert. The other type of hero represents the passionate, willful, proud and emotionally intense man revolting against society and its conventions, who prefers to escape into isolation rather than to live in society he despises. Such a type of hero was found in the works of George Gordon Byron and entered the world of literature and heroic pantheon under the term of Byronic hero.

Even though that romantic hero possesses many characteristics common with the antihero, he can be still considered as a kind of heroic protagonist. As Lillian R. Furst suggested romantic hero shares traits both heroic and antiheroic. And even though he is more similar to the antihero in nature of his disillusion, withdrawal from society, introspection, inaction, self-interest, weakness or dark sides of his soul he still has not reached the level of disillusionment, alienation, lost hopes, bitterness and cynicism of the antihero of twentieth century as he still has dreams, hopes and believes in nature, art or love.[29]

2.7.2.1   Byronic Hero – The Outcast

One of the romantic heroes that stand on the verge of anti-heroism is the character of Byronic hero, which entered literary field with the publication of George Gordon Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and appeared also in his later works such as *Manfred* or *Don Juan*. Even Byron himself is considered to be a living model of his own literary character. This type of protagonist can be described as a mysterious, intelligent, proud, arrogant, moody, cynical, highly experienced, emotional, violent and adventurous man of irresistible sex appeal. His disdain for society, its conventions and morality makes him a rebel, who revolts against the social rules and restraints. Because he does not fit into the society and at the same time longs for freedom, he becomes an outcast, who usually sets off on a journey and spends his life in exile or isolation. He

---

[29] Furst 53-66.

also possesses a dark side, an unknown secret that causes his fatal sickness and depression. He mentally tortures himself and suffers from great agony, which leads to his self-destruction. Despite his cynicism, revolting nature and frustration he is also a person capable of sympathy and affection. According to Percy G. Adams even though the Byronic hero does not follow the heroic model it is his dark, mysterious, torn and tortured nature that fascinates and thrills readers who feel the sympathy for the outcast. [30] This type of dark and in the same time charismatic character got his inspiration from the character of Milton's Satan. The character of the Byronic hero captivated and inspired also writers e.g. Bronte sisters. The demonic and dark characters of Heathcliff from *Wuthering Highs* and of Rochester from *Jane Eyre* are some of the followers of the Byronic model. The definition of Byronic hero sometimes blends with the definition of another type of hero – Gothic Villain. These two literary types share similar traits and they are sometimes hardly distinguished one from another.

2.7.2.2 Gothic Hero - The Villain

One of the phases of romantic medieval revival was also the phase of ghotic revival, which inspired not only literature but also architecture. It all started with Horace Walpole and his construction of pseudogothic mansion Strawberry Hill and especially with his publication of *The Castle of Otranto,* the first gothic novel, which drew inspiration from medieval romances. The stories, which included dark mysteries, curses, damsels in distress, haunted castles or hidden passages introduced also the figure of the Gothic villain, dark, sinister and cruel character in position of protagonist, which follows as Byronic hero does the antiheroic tradition of Satan from *Paradise Lost*. The gothic hero is usually a man of noble origin, gifted, talented, person of great abilities, who, due to his desire for wealth, power or knowledge becomes perverted, egoistic and vicious. He surrenders to the temptation of his dark desires and crosses the border of sin or taboo. Such dark characters appear e.g. in Matthew Gregory Lewis' *The Monk*, Marry Shelley *Frankenstein; or the Modern Prometheus*, or later in Victorian Gothic in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, or Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Even if a noble and chivalric heroic type can be also found in Gothic fiction, he does not represent the protagonist of the story. The central position is occupied by the purely dark, nonheroic, very often villainy character who,

---

[30] Adams 29-51.

according to Percy G. Adams, follows as the Byronic hero the tradition of Milton's Satan and thus can be labeled with the mark of antihero.

2.8 Ordinary Man – Hero of Realism

The Eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was the period of rapid industrial economic scientific and social changes. The invention of the steam engine influenced the increase of factory production which led to the expanding economy and rise of newly enriched middle class. It also caused the decline of agriculture and migration of people from rural areas to the cities which led to growing urbanization. The Romantic Movement was just one of the reactions on the changes. In second half of nineteenth century Realism started to gain its popularity and became the prominent literary style of Victorian era. In contrast to works of Romanticism, which put emphasis on emotions and feelings of the characters, Realism is based on reason and rationality. It focuses on realistic and detailed description of everyday life of middle and lower classes without any idealization. Realist novel resembles rather a critical social study, a social analysis that reflect moral decline of society. It depicts the development of the hero and his mind. The realist hero is not exceptional or unique character unlike e.g. Romantic hero. According to Matthew G. Kendrick he is an ordinary man, typical representative of his social milieu, who bears traits common for the society from which he comes out.[31] He is one of us, living common and unheroic life. He represents the hero with whom readers can easily identify, because they are alike. The realistic portraits of life of middle class society can be seen e.g. in the works such as *Middlemarch, A Study of Provincial Life* by George Eliot or in *The Chronicles of Barsetshire* by Anthony Trollope.

The industrial revolution, hand in hand with urbanization, led also to the creation of slums, in which the workers from factories lived in poverty and where working and life conditions were hard. Realist authors believed that literature should have been informative of the true state of things, should have contained a moral message and should have helped to improve the wrongs of society. They tried to describe the social problems of Victorian period and thus many of them focused on the life and difficulties of working class. They tried to depict the poverty, hard work, conditions in factories, child labor, violence and criminality in the slums in their works. By such a description they aimed especially at the conscience and emotions of the middle class readers. The

---

[31] Kendrick 133.

heroes of those novels were usually men or children from working class, who struggled for survival in the cruel, unsympathetic world. Their difficult life situation and the way they try to deal with all the troubles gain them sympathy among readers. The authors of so called social or working class novels were e.g. Elizabeth Gaskell and Charles Dickens.

2.8.1 Human Beast – Hero of Naturalism

One of the crucial points that brought significant changes that had great impact on the social development and thus affected also the world of literature was the publication of the book *On the Origin of Species* by Charles Darwin, which introduced his theory of evolution by natural selection. This theory according to George Roche, in the eyes of many, deprived man of his superior position and degraded him to mere social animal, a beast struggling for survival.[32] The theory of evolution influenced especially writers of Naturalism, an offset of Realism, which used detailed and dehumanized description and scientific almost microscope like analyses of human fate and detached observation without moralizing. The author's prevailing pessimistic view led to their focus on human vices, misery and social corruption in urbanized scientific and industrial civilization. They believed that one's life is determined by heredity, race or environment and that there is no possibility for escape or change and that only the strongest and the most fortunate survive and the weak become victims. Authors put emphasis on themes such as poverty, sexuality, violence, degeneration, filth, disease or death. The typical protagonist of naturalist literature is the nonheroic creature of unheroic deeds, man living on the edge of society, lifetime outsider that is marked by kind of physical or mental deviation. He struggles for survival in a harsh world and in order to survive he follows the basic human instincts. He is driven by passions such as lust, greed, violence or desire for power. The fact that his fate is predetermined and thus sealed without any chance for change or improvement makes his struggle pointless and vain and deprives him of heroic potential. Naturalism was a prominent genre especially in French or American literature, in English literature can be found in the works of e.g. George Gissing and some of the traces of can be seen also in works of Thomas Hardy.

The eighteen and especially nineteenth century represent the period of significant changes that influenced traditional arrangements in the society and which had impact also on the development of the literature and transformation of the heroic

---

[32] George Roche, *A World without Heroes, The Modern Tragedy* (Michigan: Hillsdale College Press, 1987). 113 -133.

ideal. The expansion of novel writing and the popularization of reading novels among lower classes brought the necessity of new types of heroes that better corresponded with the tastes and demands of readers. The hero lost his superior status and became an ordinary man, the real man living ordinary, but real, life. He became a *picaro*, a rogue hero of unheroic deeds, who tried to find economic security and prosperity, the Romantic disillusioned melancholic or rebel against social norms following the example of Milton's Satan and under the influence of Darwin's theory of evolution he became a human beast. All of these characters exhibited more or less unheroic features and represented the literary tendency of decline of heroic ideal. This transformation culminated in the period following the end of First World War, since when the antiheroic characters started to predominate in role of protagonist. As Victor Brombert in his book suggests the nineteenth and especially the twentieth century are overcrowded with antiheroic literary characters and the modern era can be considered as the age of the antihero. [33]

2.9   Twentieth Century – The Age of Antihero

As it was already stated the idea of antiheroism entered the world of literature at its very beginning and developed hand in hand with the concept of heroism. And thus the antihero can be hardly considered to be a phenomenon of twentieth century. But it was the modern era with all its changes and development that enabled the character of the antihero to become predominant in the position of protagonist. According to Rosette C. Lamont it can be said that the antiheroic characters appeared in literary works especially in times when humanity faced some kind of cultural decline or social crisis and when it was threatened with loss of hope, faith, ideals, values and morals. [34] Milton's Satan was his reaction on the development of Civil War and Commonwealth, Romantics, Realists and Naturalists reacted on social and cultural changes caused by industrialization and scientific development. But it was the period of twentieth century in which wars, end of colonial regime, postwar conflict between East and West etc. culminated into longtime crisis and disillusion, which led to loss of faith in heroic ideal and the abandonment of heroic values. The modern hero, antihero, who lacks the largeness, nobility, grace and power of classical heroes, meets the requirements and needs of modern period and thus is a typical representative of all the crisis which modern men has to face.

---

[33] Brombert 1-10.
[34] Lamont 1-23.

2.9.1   Antihero - Protagonist Inferior to Us

According to Northop Frye's theory of modes, the literature of twentieth century belongs to the ironic mode, in which the protagonist is inferior to the reader in intelligence, power and freedom and thus he is deprived of heroic potential, he is not the ideal the reader is looking up to, he is the one the reader is looking down at. Frye also suggests that the development of literature is cyclic and that in modern literature the ironic mode of inferior protagonist might meet the mythic mode of superior, divine hero like e.g. in works of James Joyce or Franz Kafka. But this merging does not lead into the elevation of the protagonist back to his heroic status but it even heighten the irony of the unheroic life and deeds of the antiheroic protagonist.[35]

The inferior nature of the protagonist of the twentieth century is connected also with the problem of identification of reader with literary character. The reader is always asked to identify with the hero, with his struggle and deeds, emotionally or psychologically. The ability to sympathize and admire or relate oneself to the protagonist leads to the final purifying experience of catharsis. But in the moment, when the identification becomes difficult or even impossible the hero transforms into an antihero. The actions, motives, morals or behavior of antiheroic protagonist might be incomprehensible, unacceptable or even repulsive, and thus is sometimes hard or even impossible for reader to empathize with the character and the experience of final catharsis becomes complicated. Even though the reader might understand the motivations and feelings of the antihero or even sympathize with him because he represents general condition and universal experience of modern world and modern man, he does not want to imitate the antiheroic behavior, does not want to descend to the same level. As George Roche suggests: "antihero tries to bring us down to his own level, make us his own image."[36] The character of the hero represents the ideal that the reader admires and tries to imitate, but he feels quite contrary in the case of antihero. The reader subconsciously desires to be or to become better than the antiheroic protagonist, and thus to be elevated into more heroic position. As Victor Brombert suggests: "the negative hero, more keenly perhaps than traditional hero challenges our assumptions, raising anew the question of how we see or wish to see ourselves."[37]

According to Victor Brombert antihero also functions as a kind of a mirror to the reader as he represents all the vices, failures and problems of modern man and society

---

[35] Frye 33-52.
[36] Roche 15.
[37] Brombert 2.

and thus reflects the state of affairs of the modern world.[38] Regardless of the fact that he may have a shape of a rebel revolting against, social order, passive resigned sufferer, scapegoat or egoistic hypocrite he always holds a mirror up to the state of the society.

2.9.2   The Modernist Antihero

The turn of the nineteenth and twentieth century was an era called 'belle époque'. It was the time of economic prosperity, scientific and industrial expansion and progress and it was also the period of flourishing of art. Several art movements developed at that time which can put under the label of Modernism. The Modernist authors reacted against the rigidness of Victorian culture and also against the form of realist literature. They wanted to break free from old rules and restrictions and tried to introduce new aesthetics by breaking with traditional style and experimenting with new forms. Influenced by Sigmund Freud's ideas of psychoanalysis they put emphasis on individualism, introspection and on the inner world and self–conscious of their characters. They exercised new methods such as stream of consciousness and inner monologue and they searched for authentic responses to the rapidly changing world. But the period of prosperity, carefreeness and flourishing ended with the outbreak of First World War, when the cultural and social stability was replaced by horrors of war and political uncertainty.

The Great War represents the symbol of shattered illusions and general collapse. Traditional world order broke down, old morals, values and religion lost its meaning. The horror of trenches and the death of millions of soldiers and civilians proved the fact that war is nothing glorious or poetic but a mere parade of senseless violence and cruelty. The lost hopes and senseless existence projected themselves into the world of literature. The authors of the 'lost generation' continued in the modernist movement, which was interrupted by the war years. Their protagonists were confused, disoriented, wandering men searching for meaning in the postwar wasteland, in the world of chaos, where old order did not exist anymore and new order was missing and out of reach and where nothing have sense. All this confusion caused some kind of paralyses and the modern antihero became a man of inaction and passivity. The modernist authors were not only under the influence of postwar climate, but also of some prewar theories and philosophies. Darwinism changed man into instinctive beast determined by heredity, and undermined also the religious stability when it questioned the very theory of

---

[38] Brombert 1-10.

Creation. Another heavy blow to the religious belief was caused by Friedrich Nietzsche with the proclamation of death of God. Karl Marx's theory about economics made of man subject of economic changes. And Sigmund Freud´s psychoanalyses inspired the techniques of stream of consciousness and inner monologue that allowed the greater inspection into happenings of mind, feelings and moods of the modern protagonist, passive, alienated, cynical and disillusioned antihero, who is trying to find the meaning in a confusing life and world. Such a wandering, confused, alienated, inactive and disillusioned antiheroic characters lost in their inner universes and searching for the sense of own existence represent the antiheroes of postwar period and can be found e.g. in the works of James Joyce, D.H. Lawrence or Virginia Woolf.

2.9.3 The Protagonist after Second World War

The Second World War meant the fatal blow for the already dying concept of heroism. The pseudoheroic leaders, who caused the war tragedy and were responsible for all the destruction and death of millions of people, caused the final decline of the heroic ideal. The modern man became ashamed of his own history and the feeling of guilt and responsibility for the massacres of war and for his participation on mass murder spread into the minds of people and caused the prevailing pessimistic feeling of twentieth century. According to Joseph Campbell all the scientific and industrial discoveries together with the horrors of both wars and feeling of disillusionment caused that in the second half of the twentieth century the world of old symbols and mysteries was definitely gone. Old gods were dead as well as all the spiritual values. The biggest mystery of modern world is now man himself, trying to find his personal harmony and peace of mind in the modern chaotic world.[39]

2.9.3.1 The Postmodern Era

The literature of the period following Second World War is described by the term 'postmodern'. The exact definition of postmodernism is quite difficult as it includes great number of themes, genres and of course antiheroes. It goes hand in hand with postwar capitalism, with the flourishing of consumerism and mass culture, with growing importance of information technology and media. It is connected with ideas of skepticism, relativism and subjectivism and found its inspiration in the theories of poststructuralism and deconstruction. It rejects old truths and puts under the scrutiny all existing principles and approaches old definitions with skepticism and tries to

---

[39] Campbell 148 – 152.

deconstruct already existing structures, meanings, rules and order of things. As everything is relative in the modern world the authors very often employ ambiguity, contradiction and confusion. Postmodern authors also believe in subjective truth and subjective interpretation and thus they put great emphasis on the importance of the reader and his active role and interpretation. The author's intention and interpretation is not important anymore and once the literary work is created it becomes open for all the readers to interpret it in their own ways. There is nothing such as one ultimate and correct interpretation. This theory goes hand in hand with the application of first-person narration and with the employment of character of unreliable narrator. The postmodern themes the authors usually deal with, are absurdity of modern life, moral relativism, loss of faith in religious, political and moral authority and alienation of the characters, who are lost in chaotic, absurd and meaningless world. Their works usually represent social satire and they often employ irony, playfulness, black humor and parody.

2.9.3.2 Antihero as Revolting Angry Young Man

The postwar political situation of The Great Britain was influenced by the rise of the working class connected with the rising popularity of Labour Party and process of nationalization and other reforms, which should have provided the necessary changes and improvement of social situation especially of lower middle class and working class. The postwar spirit of change influenced also the world of literature. A group of young, educated, intellectual authors called Angry Young Men tried to write against the hypocrisy of upper classes. They criticized the rigidness of British class system and the elitism of Oxford and Cambridge. Their protagonists are usually lower class men, educated at redbrick universities, who are full of anger and frustration with failure of postwar reforms, and are in never-ending conflict with authorities, and social order based on class system as they, even if they are educated, are unable to move upward in the social system and to find suitable job. Their rebellion is usually connected with satirical point of view and criticism of British society. But despite their revolt against conventions they are not able to achieve any changes or improvement. Among Angry Young Men belong e.g. Kingsley Amis or John Osborne.

2.9.3.3 Existential, Absurd and Passive Antihero

The postwar literature was also influenced by the ideas of Existentialism, which appeared in literature already in nineteenth century in the works e.g. of Fyodor Dostoevsky. It gained great popularity after the Second World War, especially in

French literature in works of Jean Paul Sartre and Albert Camus. The Existentialist believe that every man is responsible for his own existence in a meaningless world in which the life is nothing else than an absurd joke. The existentialist antihero, a man absorbed by the feelings of fear, anxiety, isolation, angst, boredom and nausea, represents nothing more than a puppet in the greater scheme of things. The improvement of things is impossible and every attempt to change the *status quo* is mere labor of Sysiphus. According to Rita Gurung the postwar antihero exhibits also the feelings of alienation and estrangement. He is not able to enter social relationships with others and he is lost in the world where communication lost its meaning and is unable to transfer or communicate information anymore and the character has no other chance than to passively accept his hopeless position.[40] Unlike the heroic characters, who are driven by the "principle of will and action"[41], these antiheroic figures have no ability to struggle or to change their destiny. They are victims of their own inaction. Such a passive and absurd figures appeared e.g. in the plays of Samuel Beckett or Tom Stoppard.

2.9.3.4 Antihero against Conformity

The period following the Second World War can be described as the time of economic prosperity and flourishing, which went hand in hand with the rise of materialism and mass culture and the society became more and more consumerist. The individual nature of man started to disappear and he became a part of the mass, one of many. Some of the young authors of Beat Generation disagreed with the life of conformist society and felt a strong need to rebel against the capitalism and consumer culture as well as against the prudence and rigidness of the previous generation. They experimented with drugs and the rhythm of jazz music and eastern religions. Their rebellious protagonists felt trapped in an existence that lacked meaning, freedom and sexual openness. They tried to embrace the real life and experience, and tried to escape from the materialist society and to reach personal purification and illumination.

These three prototypes of protagonists represent just a small fragment of the wide range of antiheroic figures, who flooded the world of literature in the period following Second World War. The antihero of twentieth century is according to Victor Brombert "multifaced"[42], which means that he represents great variety of characters and

---

[40] Gurung 15-22.
[41] Brombert 3
[42] Brombert 3.

emotions. He ranges from passive absurd antihero, born loser and victim on one side of the scale, through the disillusioned, confused, lost man searching for the meaning of life and existence up to the revolting, angry and frustrated man or even social misfit and outcast on the other side. "He is a figure that lies between the rebellious Prometheus and the stoic victim Sisyphus"[43]. But no matter which shape or face he exhibits, he became a prototypical representative of the spirit of twentieth century. He personifies the chaos, horrors and rapid changes of the modern age to which people have to face and with which they try to cope. The antihero, in all his shapes, communicates the universal message understandable to all men. He also functions as kind of a mirror of modern alienated world, as he challenges the values of the society and condition of contemporary man. The antihero's universality, his variability, and multiplicity as well as the fact that he, unlike a hero who represents one prototypical ideal and practically invariable image, covers various types of different characters better suits the needs of modern age and the needs of contemporary reader because he better complies with the conditions of modern man. These are some of the reasons due to which he became the predominant protagonist of the twentieth century literature.

2.10 Heroic Ideal in Postwar Period

The twentieth and twenty first century is considered to be the age of the antihero. The amount of antiheroic figures started to outnumber heroes, the line between heroic and unheroic began to disappear and the hero as literary protagonist seems to be replaced by antihero, who became the typical protagonist of the literary works of the twentieth and twenty-first century. In fact he became a new type of modern 'hero'. But it does not mean that the idea of heroism completely disappeared from the world of literature. It just had to overcome many obstacles and prejudices that demonized the heroic idea in the course of twentieth century and it had to find its way back to the prominent literary genres.

The period following the First World War was accompanied with feelings of disillusion, lost hopes and ideals, futility and despair together with economic uncertainty. People were searching for a new order, new ideals that would replace the lost old ones. It was the era in which many demagogic utopias gained its popularity, because they promised order, economic security, peace and better future. Many of these ideas were based on the theories of romantic nationalism and heroic vitalism. These

---

[43] Gurung 254.

theories combined the importance of national myths, legends, folk tales and history with the idea of hero being the sense of human existence and engine of historical development. The postwar period represented the time when people, due to disappointment and vulnerability, inclined to utopian ideas and so were easily manipulated by demagogues. The great need for hero and leader, especially in times when "people long for somebody to ride in on a white horse and save the day"[44], the man of great strength, intellect and talent, who will lead them out of misery to better times, led to the flourishing of ideas of Nazism and Socialism and to the rise of pseudoheroic figures of Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin.

The period of the Second World War and the following era of Cold War led to the demonization of heroic ideal. The heroic idea in the era of possible mass destruction caused concern and it started to be treated with great caution and suspicion. The postwar heroic ideal really gained the image of butchery but not as noble as it was in era of Enlightenment. People perceived traditional heroism as something that is responsible for human misery and heroic figures, such as knights during crusades, Napoleon, Hitler or Stalin, as someone who "have done enough harm over centuries by transforming history into a vast graveyard"[45]. Even writers were aware of the generally agreed idea that heroes and their actions have a destructive effect and tried to avoid heroic narration. "What is curious about modern literature is the absence of corresponding heroic figure, against whom the antihero is measured".[46]

"Unhappy the land that breeds no heroes"[47] says one of the characters in Bertold Brecht's play *The Life of Galileo*, and one has the need to add 'unhappy the century that has no heroes'. It seems that the modern world completely abandoned or even condemned the heroic tradition and lost its faith in the heroic ideal and the twentieth century became a period when "the antiheroic mode has become the only viable form of moral and social honesty left available"[48]. The disappointment with the heroic ideal that spread through the twentieth century allowed the antiheroic protagonist to dominate the literary scene. But even in the age of skepticism, absolute disillusion and lost hopes there still exists at least small longing for the ideal worthy of following. There is always

---

[44] Kendrick 196.
[45] Brombert 80.
[46] Lilian R. Furst, James D. Wilson, "Editor' s Notes," in *The Anti-Hero: His Emergence and Transformations* ed. by Lilian R. Furst, James D. Wilson (Georgia State UP: Atlanta, 1976) 9.
[47] Bertold Brecht, *A Life of Galileo* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013) 115.
[48] Lilian R. Furst, James D. Wilson, "Editor' s Notes," in *The Anti-Hero: His Emergence and Transformations* ed. by Lilian R. Furst, James D. Wilson (Georgia State UP: Atlanta, 1976) 6.

need for the moral and spiritual leader that one can admire and imitate, who is so brave that he can do something we can only dream of. Because the history was always created by men or women who dared to cross their boundaries, fight for ideals larger than life and whose deeds inspired the others. Even though the antihero replaced the hero on position of protagonist in the course of twentieth century, he can never replace him on the position of ideal that one can look up to, want to follow or imitate because he is, in his essence, negation of all ideals. As George Roche in his book *The World without Heroes* describes the nature of antiheroes:

> They constitute a sweeping denial of value and purpose to human life, setting adrift in an existence without meaning or hope. They hate life. Over centuries they have gained force, reaching a malignant ascendance in modern times, our times, that is destroying civilized life. They are against us.[49]

The modern period is also, according to Roche, connected with the process of demythologization.[50] The power of myths weakened in course of time. They lost their primary meaning of being a narrative form of ritual, personification of natural phenomena, recounting of historical events, allegorical story or instruction of ethical behavior and became false, pure invention without any further sense or meaning. The denial of importance of myths together with demonization of heroic character could have led to the complete disappearance of the hero and heroic narration from the world of literature. But, as Rita Gurung suggests in her book *The Archetypal Antihero in Postmodern Fiction:* "every society has and needs heroes. They reflect the values we revere, the accomplishments we respect and the hopes that give our lives meaning"[51]. And if Carl Gustav Jung's theory of mythology being an expression of our unconscious and hero being one of the archetypes is also taken into consideration, the necessity of myths and heroic ideal in one's psychological development is unquestionable. The importance of mythology and fairy tales for one's psychological development was discussed e.g. by Bruno Bettelheim in his work *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*, in which he described the positive influence of fairy tales on the emotional growth of children. And so if the old myths lost their meaning it became necessary to create new ones. The indispensability of myths, folktales and fairy

---

[49] Roche 7.
[50] Roche 121-133.
[51] Gurung 6.

tales, as they all belong to the genre of heroic narration, and the necessity to create new heroic examples, which will restore the hope and illusions in readers' lives was felt also by some of the authors writing in postwar period. J.R.R. Tolkien or C.S. Lewis found their inspiration in ancient European pagan and Christian mythologies and created their own fantasy worlds, new mythologies and new larger than life heroes in their works such as *The Lord of the Rings* or *The Chronicles of Narnia*. The literary genre of fantasy fiction reintroduced the heroic ideal into contemporary literature. The hero of fantasy primarily follows the heroic ideal and hero's journey of mythic and epic narrations but contemporary writers enriched him also with the characteristics of the following heroic types and thus he represents kind of a heroic mixture. They also endowed him with more complex personality, so he does not have to be considered as primitive or an only black and white character anymore, and thus he better complies with the needs and tastes of modern readers. The popularity of fantasy fiction and heroic narration is growing higher every day thanks to the publication of e.g. *Harry Potter* series written by J.K. Rowling or by saga *Song of Ice and Fire* by George R.R. Martin.

Another type of heroic narration, which was very popular in the period preceding Second World War and regained its popularity in recent years and thus helped to reintroduce the heroic ideal into the world of literature, is the genre of superhero comics. Superheroes follow the heroic code and represent the people of extraordinary qualities, skills, talents, intelligence or godlike powers. They live secret lives, and use disguises to serve to greater good. They struggle against criminality, fight with villains, dedicate themselves to the protection of public and are willing to sacrifice themselves for the ideas larger than life. Such popular superheroic figures are e.g. Batman, Superman or Ironman.

3 Fiction Analyses

As it was already suggested the twentieth and twenty-first century can be considered the antiheroic age in which the concept of heroism lost its original predominating status, as the heroic protagonists appear mainly in specific genres such as fantasy fiction or comics literature, and was replaced by concept of antiheroism. As it was stated the terms 'antihero' and 'antiheroism' are rather complex and ambiguous, and thus cannot be defined in a single way. The aim of the third part of the thesis is to analyze four different types of protagonists of the novels written by British authors after Second World War, and to prove that each of them represents a distinctive prototype of antiheroic archetype of contemporary British fiction. The analyzed novels are the following: *A Clockwork Orange* by Anthony Burgess, *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* by Muriel Spark, *The Remains of the Day* by Kazuo Ishiguro and *Solar* by Ian McEwan.

3.1 Alex, the Rebel and Victim of *A Clockwork Orange*

The first antiheroic character to be discussed is Alex, the protagonist of *A Clockwork Orange* by Anthony Burgess. Rita Gurung, referring to Ihab Hassan's theory of modern antiheroism, suggests that some of the postmodern antiheroes follow the concept of rebel-victim model, which means that they are rebellious in their nature and try to revolt against social order, conventions and existing state of affairs. But antiheroic rebellion, unlike the heroic revolt, that brings positive changes to the society, like e.g. in case of Prometheus, is usually negative, including elements of chaos, violence, destruction, anarchy and evil. The antiheroic rebellion is often useless and vain. The revolt is usually suppressed and antiheroes become victims of society, in which they have to live and are unable to change it.[52] Alex, the protagonist of *A Clockwork Orange*, meets the requirements of the suggested model of postmodern antihero as he undergoes the transformation from antisocial rebel to a victim of a scientific experiment and the modern society.

"'What does God want? Does he want woodness or the choice of goodness? Is a man who chooses the bad perhaps in some way better than a man who has the good imposed upon him?'"[53], asks Anthony Burgess, through the character of prison

---

[52] Ihab Hassan, *Radical Innocence* (New Jersey:Princeton UP, 1961) 32, quoted, in Rita Gurung, *The Archetypal Antihero in Postmodern Fiction* (New Dehli: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 2010) 17.
[53] Anthony Burgess, *A Clockwork Orange* (London: Penguin Books, 1972) 76.

chaplain, in his dystopian novella *A Clockwork Orange*. His social and political satire is aimed at totalitarianism and repressive politics of the Soviet Union and at the growing consumerism and materialism that lead to the creation of mass society. They both, in their own way, lead to the suppression of individuality of human beings and transform them into the mere segments of mass. It criticizes also the theory and ideas of behaviorism, which introduces the brainwashing techniques and thus threatens the essential parts of human existence - free choice and free will. The questions of man's individuality and self, capability of free will and freedom of choice are crucial themes of the story. As they represent the very essence of humanity they cannot be, according to the author, denied to anyone, not even to the most monstrous and rotten of men. And Alex, the protagonist of *A Clockwork Orange,* represents such a kind of evil. As it was already stated the figure of antihero has many faces and shapes and includes great variety of different literary characters. Alex represents the rebellious face of the modern antihero. He revolts against authorities he disrespects, against social norms he despises and ridicules as he tries to preserve his individuality, freedom and self in the mass society and in an absurd world where is " no law nor order no more."[54]

Alex, the protagonist and our humble narrator of Anthony Burgess' novella, is a representative of the rebellious youth culture that develops in a postwar society governed by totalitarian and repressive government and influenced by consumerism and conformism. These three factors influence the inception of an absurd world in which individualism and self start to disappear. Young generation is under the influence of growing pop culture. They try to imitate the lifestyle seen in television or magazines and spend their free time hanging around milk bars, but otherwise they lack any higher purpose in their lives. They have no higher ideal to fight for, or any cause to fight against, unlike previous generations, and thus they are deprived of chance to become heroic. Alex shares feelings of such aimlessness: "'But myself, I couldn't help a bit of disappointment at things as they were those days. Nothing to fight against really. Everything as easy as kiss my sharries'"[55]

He is a member of a conformist society, where everyone has his place, and which is absorbed by apathy, neutrality and mediocrity, and in which everyone "sell liberty for quieter life"[56]. Together with his peers, he is swallowed by feelings of

---

[54] *A Clockwork Orange* 15.
[55] *A Clockwork Orange* 14.
[56] *A Clockwork Orange* 126.

boredom, indifference, disdain and disinterest. These feelings and especially their consequences, growing youth violence and formation of gangs, threaten the order of the conformist totalitarian society, which tries to understand them and to eliminate them: "'What gets into you all? ... You've got a good home here, good loving parents, you've got not too bad of a brain. It is some devil that crawls inside you.'"[57]

Alex represents one of the young who is not willing to integrate into conformist society and to become part of a herd. He tries to rebel against every form of authority and against conforming to the consumerist life of his parents, which he finds ridiculous. He, being quite intelligent himself, despises the system of education and tries to negate and destroy any form of intelligence that is superior to him. But even if he stands in opposition to the social order and negates all the rules, he does not seem to have any urge to change the norms against which he revolts. As Matthew G. Kendrick suggests such a behavior is typical for some of the revolting antiheroes, as they are: "rebellious by nature, they espouse no causes, offer no remedies for ills of the world and constitute little if any threat to *status quo*."[58]

His negative rebellion against society and its order is in fact only a way of escape from a conformist life that he considers senseless, boring and mundane. He tries to find some fun, some excitement, something that pulls him out from everyday existence in an ant-like society. And he finds his escape in drug abuse. Every man is, under the influence of drug intoxication, deprived of his free will and human status and is turned into a mere thing. Such a transformation Alex undergoes not only in a milk bar but also in the course of his treatment in second part of the story. According to George Roche: "drugs are the flawless reflection of anti-heroism, a denial of life and statement that there's nothing more to us than satisfying animal feelings."[59]

Another form of escape from everyday life and boredom he finds in ultra–violent behavior. Vandalism, robbery, assaults of weaker, fights, rapes and murders, everything connected with violence and aggression arouses him, gives him great pleasure and makes him feel alive. A little monster is hidden behind the mask of a good and polite boy that is driven by cruelty and aggression and evil. According to Rita Gurung, the aggressive behavior against self or society is one of the traits of postmodern

---

[57] *A Clockwork Orange* 33.
[58] Kendrick 195.
[59] Roche 18.

antihero as it represents his frustration, disappointment or impotence to change the *status quo* or the repression of inner feelings and desires.[60]

The violence occupies a crucial place in Alex's life. For him it is not just part of fun or something to kill time with or to make money with, unlike for all his friends. He finds it amusing as well, but for him it represents the ultimate aesthetic and religious experience, he sees it as the finest piece of art and he experiences the greatest ecstasy of violent emotions when listening to the classical music, especially to Ludwig van Beethoven. But he goes even further than that. Because being violent and cruel by his own choice means that he is able to express himself and to define himself as autonomous individual, who is more than just a part of mass society. The possibility of free choice and free will are the fundamental elements of humanity and human nature. And Alex chooses to be evil, which is the natural part of his character, rather than submission to the moral order or conventions of society that stands on the side of goodness. Because the submission would deprive him of his independence and individuality and he would become just part of a herd, a victim of modern age and society. And thus his free choice of evil represents his rebellion against the social order:

> '"They don't go into the cause of goodness, so why the other shop? If lewdies are good that's because they like it, and I wouldn't ever interfere with their pleasures, and so of the other shop. And I was patronizing the other shop. More, badness is of the self, the one, the you or me on our oddy knockies, and that self is made by old Bog or God and is his great pride and radosty. But the not-self cannot have the bad, meaning they of government and the judges and schools cannot allow the bad because they cannot allow the self …But what I do I do because I like to do.'"[61]

It is not only his antisocial rebellion or aggressive behavior that makes him really monstrous, evil and threat for the society and its order. His brutality and aggression, together with egoism, lack of conscience and empathy and mercilessness, makes him a real sociopath, who has no remorse and who hypocritically renounces the responsibility for his merciless behavior. He, like Pilate, washes his hands and refuses to take blame for his actions: '"It was the adult world that could take the responsibility for this with their bombs and nonsense … so we young innocent malchicks could not take blame.'"[62]

---

[60] Gurung 14-18.
[61] *A Clockwork Orange* 34.
[62] *A Clockwork Orange* 35.

When his negative rebellion against society and his misdeeds cross all borders of social tolerability he is sent to prison to be punished and improved. But this kind of punishment does not bring any change or improvement of his nature or behavior. It even heightens his animal-like conduct as he becomes a part of human zoo and he continues with his negative rebellion and disdain of social order. It is the moment when he agrees with the Reclamation Treatment, when the real punishment for his misdeeds begins. But, as the author suggests, this punishment is disproportionate to his transgression. The price he has to pay is too high. He is deprived of his free will and possibility of free choice and thus loses some of the essential parts of human existence. The process of his treatment, when he is being made good and thus sane and healthy, is the process of his dehumanization: "'They have turned you into something other than a human being. You have no power of choice any longer. You are committed to socially acceptable acts, a little machine capable only of good.'"[63] When he loses the possibility to choose, even if his choice is evil and socially unacceptable, he loses his individuality and he ceases to be a human being. He becomes a mere thing that may be used by others without any chance for defense or resistance. Victor Brombert suggests that the principle of free will and choice is crucial for nature of hero. And so if he loses this part of his nature he is unable to fulfill his heroic potential anymore and thus he turns into antihero.

From the moment Alex agrees with the treatment he ceases to be the rebel and transforms into a victim. He becomes the victim of a scientific experiment which deprives him of his elementary rights and freedoms. He is also a victim of the repressive government and its totalitarian regime, whose only interest is to eliminate criminality and to maintain order by using the force and will sapping and brainwashing techniques. After his release from prison he is rejected by his parents and ends up homeless. He becomes also the victim of assault by his previous victims and former friends, who seek their revenge. He changes from the tyrant who brought the suffering upon others into the poor sufferer. "'I've suffered and suffered and suffered and everybody wants me to go on suffering.'"[64] At the end he turns into a mere puppet in the schemes of group of dissidents who try to use him for overthrowing the current repressive government and to make of him "a martyr to the cause of Liberty."[65] According to Rita Gurung, the role of

---

[63] *A Clockwork Orange* 122.
[64] *A Clockwork Orange* 108.
[65] *A Clockwork Orange* 128.

victim is typical for post modern antihero as he is victim not only of society but also of himself."[66]

Alex is unable to face his new position of victim and to cope with all the suffering, so he decides to end his life and commit suicide because "death was the only answer to everything."[67] This violent act committed against the self by his own choice represents the ultimate rebellion against society that deprived him of his free will and turned him into a suffering victim, a mere thing that is used by others. And because he is not willing to be treated like a thing anymore he decides to jump out of the window. The attempted suicide represents the escape from the role of victim and the return to his old revolting, violent self.

The interesting thing about the antihero of *A Clockwork Orange* is that he undergoes the process of rebellion and victimization twice in the story. Once he changes from rebel to victim, he is allowed to return to his initial rebel position, only this time stronger, and supported by the government itself, against which he rebelled. Albert Camus suggests that: "rebellion though apparently negative, since it creates nothing, is profoundly positive in that it reveals the part of man, which must be always defended."[68] And because it is Alex's violent and negative rebellion and cruel behavior that represent the expression of his free will, one of the fundamental elements of human being that has to be defended, it is preferable that he becomes his old aggressive and merciless self again, the autonomous individual being, regardless of what kind of a threat he represents for a society. And thus he returns to his antiheroic rebellion once again, but he is not doing the nasty work himself anymore. This time he is just giving orders to the others. He becomes a leader that he desired to be at the beginning of the story because, as he uses the rhetoric of the repressive government: "'there has to be a leader. Discipline there has to be … somebody has to be in charge.'"[69]

As the end of his narration approaches he starts to feel that something is wrong with him, that something is growing inside of him, some kind of disease. The name of the disease is maturity. Alex feels that he has already grown up and that it is time to give up his rebellion and to begin new chapter of his life: "'Perhaps I was getting too old for the sort of jeezny, I had been leading, brothers. I was eighteen now, just gone.

[66] Gurung 13-20.
[67] *A Clockwork Orange* 111.
[68] Albert Camus , *The Rebel: An Essay on Man in Revolt* (New York: First Vintage International Edition, 1991) 19.
[69] *A Clockwork Orange* 26.

Eighteen was not a young age.'"[70] He is planning to find a wife, start a family and to live quiet, respectable life. And at this moment he changes from a rebel to a victim once again. Because by giving up his rebellion and accepting the comfortable life of conformist society he gives up also his freedom and individuality and he becomes part of a herd, just another segment of mass society, which he so despised and rebelled against. He will be, after all, swallowed by consumerism, materialism and order. Because, as Rita Gurung suggests, in postmodern world the escape is not possible as the antihero is locked in kind of invisible prison.[71] And so Alex exchanges the liberty of his rebellion for the quiet life of adults and turns into "the poor old, the pitiable starry"[72] he so much ridiculed. He becomes a victim of the modern age once again, but this time by his own free choice.

"A novel needs a hero, and all the traits of antihero are expressly gathered together here"[73] says the protagonist and narrator of *Notes from Underground* written by Fyodor Dostoevsky, as he summarizes narration of his memoirs. But, without any doubt or objection, exactly the same words might be uttered by Alex, the protagonist and our humble narrator of *A Clockwork Orange* at the end of his story, as he symbolizes the very essence of postmodern antiheroism. He represents a kind of an existential antihero, who follows the model of rebel-victim, and who struggles for the preservation of his autonomy and free will in the absurd world, but his struggle is vain as he is at the and swallowed by the very society against which he rebels. Similar protagonists can be found e.g. in works of authors of the Angry Young Men movement or in *Trainspotting* by Irvine Welsh. But even if he fights for 'noble' purposes and revolts against the oppressive society, it is his violent, cruel, merciless and sociopathic nature together with his horrible actions that makes of him a character that reader can sympathize with only with great difficulty. His egoism, hypocrisy and absolute inability to remorse together with his final abandonment of rebellion as if nothing serious had actually happened because all his previous actions were just a part of natural development of things disable reader to fully empathize with the protagonist despite his punishment, victimization and suffering. Another fact that makes it hard for the reader to identify himself with the protagonist is the first person narration of the story, in which Alex plays the role of persuasive and manipulative unreliable narrator.

---

[70] *A Clockwork Orange* 147.
[71] Gurung. 25-27.
[72] *A Clockwork Orange* 40
[73] Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from the Underground* (New York: Dutton, 1960) 114.

3.2   Dougal Douglas, the Demonic Fool of *The Ballad of Peckham Rye*

The second type of modern antihero to be discussed is the demonic character of Dougal Douglas, the protagonist of *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* by Muriel Spark. He follows the long literary tradition of dark and evil antiheroic protagonists, which began with the character of Satan in John Milton's *Paradise Lost* and continued with the characters of Byronic hero or Gothic villain. Muriel Spark found her inspiration for the creation of the diabolic protagonist in traditional Scottish border ballads that feature great variety of demonic characters such as fairies, ghost, witches or devils and also in the Scottish Gothic fiction, which includes evil characters with hybrid identities and split personalities. But the character of Dougal Douglas is not only a representative of antiheroic tradition of evil figures. He also, in certain ways, follows the tradition of another significant antiheroic type and that is the character of fool.

Dougal Douglas, young Scot, comes to Peckham to work there as an assistant of personnel manager, an Arts man, in Meadows, Meade & Grindley. His main task is to make connection between art and industry, study the productivity of employees, causes of absenteeism and to "bring vision into the life of workers"[74]. And so he starts his human research including the inner life of inhabitants of Peckham, their morals and fatal flaws and history of the suburb. As a side effect of his research, he completely shakes and turns upside down the once peaceful life of the London industrial suburb as he brings the chaos and destruction with himself. His mischievous actions result in rise of absenteeism as he advises all workers to take days off, in the cancelled wedding of Dixie Morse and Humprey Place, in a nervous breakdown of Mr. Weedin, in a stroke of Miss Frierne and in the murder of Merle Coverdale by her lover and boss Mr. Druce. According to Rita Gurung it is symbolic for antiheroic evil characters to spread destruction, descent and death across the community, which they inhabit.[75]

"'But it's my belief that Dougal Douglas is a diabolical agent, if not in fact the Devil'" [76] says Mr Weedin on the verge of his nervous breakdown and this is just one of many indications of the evil character of Dougal Douglas in the novel. Muriel Spark, being inspired by folk tales, legends and Scottish ballads, employed many traditional ideas and superstitions connected with evil and its manifestation to hint the devilish nature of her protagonist. Firstly it is his physical appearance. His red curly hair, his physical deformity – crooked shoulder, often considered an evil omen, his claw-like

---

[74] Muriel Spark, *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* (London: Penguin Books, 1963) 16.
[75] Gurung 23.
[76] *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* 81.

grip, and especially the two lumps on his head which are, as Dougal says, the remainders of his removed horns: "'Douglas himself showed me bumps on his head where he had horns removed by plastic surgery.'"[77] There is also suggestion of his connection with witchcraft: "'Have you properly looked as his eyes? That shoulder…He's bewitched.'"[78] This idea is supported by one of the ancient superstitions about the inability of evil spirits to cross the running water. Dougal, being an evil spirit himself, also cannot cross the running water as he refuses to go on the other side of the river to visit Maria Cheeseman: "'I don't like crossing the water when I am in the work of arts.'"[79] One of his jobs is also ghostwrite the autobiography of the retired singer Maria Cheesman. And in connection with that he describes himself as a ghost-like character: "'If you only want to write a straight autobiography, you should have got a straight ghost, I am crooked.'"[80]Another demon-like quality he possesses is his ability of shape-shifting. Dougal changes from shape to shape to heighten his manipulative influence over others. His different shapes include e.g. interviewer, monkey- puzzle tree, divorce judge, lady columnist, inquisitor, corpse or the statue of angel-devil on the tombstone. Besides shape-shifting, he is very good impersonator too. He also possesses the clairvoyant abilities of an oracle as he expresses his prophecies about upcoming events like in case of Marble Coverdale: "[Marble] 'I've had a rotten life'…[Dougal] 'And it isn't over yet. There might be worse ahead.'"[81] He describes her long neck as "maniac's delight"[82] and she is in the end killed by maniacal Mr. Druce, who stabs her neck with corkscrew. He, as an evil character, has also no respect for traditional religious values and ridicules them as in case of joggling with the bones of death nuns.

Muriel Spark found her inspiration also in the Scottish gothic fiction, especially in the motive of Gothic double, *doppelganger*, as it appeared in novels e.g. *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson or in *The Private Memoires and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* by James Hogg. Dougal Douglas also possesses the split or at least very ambiguous personality that is manifested in several ways. Firstly it is his unclear origin. He is a Scotsman but he is often mistaken as being Irishman by Peckham inhabitants: "'If I didn't know you were Scotch I'd swear you

---

[77] *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* 82.
[78] *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* 82.
[79]*The Ballad of Peckham Rye* 76.
[80]*The Ballad of Peckham Rye* 76.
[81] *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* 100.
[82] *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* 101.

were Irish.'" [83] Another evidence of his double nature is his ambiguous sexual orientation. He has a girlfriend, Jinny, and gets involved also with other female characters, nevertheless he is considered to be homosexual or versatile by some of the Peckham inhabitants. He is also referred to be a succubus, the female demon seducing men. Another evidence of his doppelganger nature is the second personality he invents, when he starts to work for the rival company and changes his name from Dougal Douglas to Douglas Dougal: "'My Christian name is Douglas on this side of Rye'" [84]. But it is not only his appearance based on the traditional view of evil characters or his double nature reminding the characters of Gothic fiction that makes him the evil antiheroic figure. It is mainly his devilish behavior, his schemes and manipulations that make of him a wicked antiheroic protagonist. His evil nature is suggested e.g. by his former girlfriend Jinny, who calls him "a callous swine or a worm." [85]

"'I know where you got all these disgusting ideas from. You've got them from Dougal Douglas.'" [86] Dougal's main evil traits are his abilities to manipulate and trick other people, to put ideas in their heads, to tempt and confuse them, and to make fun of them and to ridicule them. His sinister tricks and wicked games are aimed especially on the suggestible, narrow-minded, superstitious and provincial middle and working class inhabitants of Peckham. He is searching for their fatal flaws such as avarice, lack of vision or ignorance and uses them in his plans. He believes that everybody possesses such a fatal flaw, even Dougal himself has one and that is his absolute intolerance of sickness. As in the case of tragic heroes, these fatal flaws lead to the reversal of people's fortune from good to bad, e.g. Dixie's avarice leads to the wedding cancellation, Mr. Weedin's lack of vision to his nervous breakdown and Dougal's intolerance of sickness leads to the break up with his girlfriend.

He is also very persuasive and ingratiating speaker, too, and presents himself also as an attentive, understanding and nonjudgmental listener and thus he becomes a confidant of several inhabitants of Peckham. They open up to him and confess him their secrets, wishes, desire, and fears: "'I feel I can really talk to you. … I feel we've know each other for a years.'" [87] He uses this information in his manipulation schemes. He, as a Devil himself, tempts others by giving them advices and proposing the easy, and

---

[83] *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* 63.
[84] *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* 70.
[85] *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* 22.
[86] *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* 8.
[87] *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* 118.

usually right, solutions for their problems, even if he knows they will never follow his advice. But it is the exposure of hidden secrets and emotions, together with truth once spoken aloud, as well as seemingly honest advices that lead to great confusion and to the reversal of their situation: "'The words of the double-tongued are as if they were harmless, but they reach even the inner part of the bowels.'"[88]

His manipulating skills also include the ability to put his ideas in the heads of the suggestible people, who adopt them as their own, as it happens in case of Humprey Place. Dougal advices him to not marry Dixie and literally puts the phrase "to be quite frank I won't", which Humprey utters in front of the altar, into his mind and mouth. Another example of his manipulation and persuasion is his version of his ghostwritten autobiography of Maria Cheeseman. Dougal, by employing his imagination and findings of his research of inner lives of inhabitants of Peckham and its history, writes a brilliant and amusing story that has practically nothing in common with the life of Maria. Nevertheless, she, despite her initial skepticism, objections and disagreement with Dougal's way of writing, is thrilled by the final version of her autobiography.

Another of his devilish roles is that of a trickster. He enjoys to outwit the inhabitants of Peckam and to spread confusion among them. He knows very well their follies, superstitions, fears, vices and narrow-mindedness and plays mischievous game to disturb them, to ripple the peaceful surface of Peckham life and to tease and unsettle its inhabitants: "'You'll sent me mad if I let you.'"[89] As a part of his wicked game he pretends to be an archeologist, a policeman, a spy or an informer. It is probable that he pretends also his devil-like nature, just to provoke the superstition and bad conscience of Peckham inhabitants: "[Humprey] 'You supposed to be the Devil then?' … [Dougal] 'I'm only supposed to be one of the wicked spirits that wander through the world for the ruin of souls'"[90]

Dougal Douglas walks around Peckham, plays his mischievous games, and unsettles the once peaceful lives of its inhabitants as he tries to uncover their fatal flaws and use them in his devilish game. The provincial world of industrial suburb seems to be a place without religion or faith, where God has no possibility of intervention and thus it is a perfect place for devilish Douglas' schemes. The only manifestation of religious faith in the story is represented by the gabbling of old drunkard Nelly Mahony,

---

[88] *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* 132.
[89] *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* 102.
[90] *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* 77.

which is not taken seriously by the inhabitants of Peckham and in which she uncovers the true evil nature of Dougal Douglas:

> "Six things … there are which the Lord hateth, and the seventh his soul detesteth. Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shad innocent blood. … A hearth that deviseth wicked plots, feet that are swift to run into mischief. A deceitful witness that uttereth lies … And him that soweth discord among bretehen"[91]

Probably the most interesting thing about the character of Dougal Douglas is that in fact he is not the exact wrongdoer of the story. The inhabitants of Peckham are the culprits themselves. Dougal's primary function is that of the catalyst for all the incidents that happen in Peckham since his arrival. He is the one who influences the thinking of others, puts ideas in their heads and manipulates them. He pushes them over the edge and his wicked interventions into the life of others usually lead to more or less disastrous consequences. But he is also the one who exposes the dark side of the seemingly peaceful life of Peckham and its inhabitants. He discovers their fatal flaws, the evil in their minds, their hidden secrets, sometimes dark desires and vices, and he brings them into the surface. He calls himself an exorcist: "'I have powers of exorcism…The ability to drive devil out of people.'"[92]

As it was already suggested the tradition of evil and sinister antiheroic characters is not the only one that can be taken in consideration in the case of antiheroism of Dougal Douglas. He may be considered also the follower of long literary tradition of fools. This category is, as the category of the antihero, very vast and it is also practically impossible to come up with the exact definition of the term. The scale of literary characters of fools ranges from the village idiots, through clowns, buffoons and jesters up to the tricksters and evildoers. Probably the most famous representatives of this literary character are Shakespearian wise fools e.g. Touchstone, Feste or Fool from King Lear. Fools have their representatives and place also in modern literature. As Faye Ran suggests: "in twentieth century it is more likely that the fool as devil or vice figure will appear as trickster or rogue."[93]

Even if the exact definition is a bit problematic there is a certain number of patterns common for all the types of this literary character. Fools are usually divided

---

[91] *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* 107
[92] *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* 102.
[93] Fye Ran "Modern Tragicomedy of the Fool," in *Clowns, Fools and Picaros: Popular Forms in Theatre, Fiction and Film,* ed David Robb (Amsterodam: Rodopi, 1994) 31.

into two basic categories, natural and artificial. The first category includes the fools with some kind of physical or mental deformation, the second category includes fools that mock the others by usage of wit. Dougal represents sort of a mixture of both categories as his crooked shoulder represents physical deformation, but, unlike most of the natural fools, he is not the one to be mocked but he is the one doing the mockery as he plays his wicked games and tricks and outwits the others. According to Vicki K. Janik, the character of fool is very hard to define, as he is master of contradictions. The other characters very often do not know what to make of him.[94] Similar problems have the inhabitants of Peckham with Dougal. Some of them like him, some of them dislike him and the rest are not sure what to think about him or where to put him. But most of them come to an agreement that "'he's just different.'"[95] Vicki K. Janik also suggests that fools are usually masters of the spoken word, and some of them seem to possess some kind of magical powers.[96] And thus Dougal, being a persuasive and manipulating speaker and also the devil-like character, meets this two patterns common for the character of fool. Another thing typical for the fool figure is, according to Faye Ran, that he usually has problem with adaptation into the society and thus he represents some kind of nonconformist misfit or outcast.[97] "'You are unnatural'"[98] says Mr. Weedin to Dougal, meaning that he is different, not acting in normally expected or acceptable way. His behavior is nonconformist and thus Dougal Douglas definitely stands on the margins of the society and is unable and unwilling to fit in. But the most important role of the fool is that he always holds a mirror up to the true nature of things usually by bringing the chaos and disorder to the society. He, with his behavior, tricks and witty remarks, challenges the values and morals of a society or community in which he lives. He is able to perceive and to expose the weaknesses, vices and follies of others. As Rita Gurung suggest: "the antiheroic outcast or misfit often becomes the conscience of community by becoming its destructive force."[99] And Dougal Dougals, with all his games, tricks and manipulations, which lead to the number of unpleasant incidents, uncovers the darker face of Peckham: "'What guilty wee conscience you've all got.'"[100]

---

[94] Vicki K. Janick, Introduction to *Fools and Jesters in Literature, Art and History*, ed. Vicki K. Janick, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1998) 1-24.
[95] *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* 25.
[96] Janick 1-24.
[97] Fye 25-35.
[98] *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* 74.
[99] Gurung 23.
[100] *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* 127.

      "'It wouldn't have happened if Dougal Douglas hadn't come here.'"[101] This peculiar phrase is uttered by the inhabitants of Peckham every time they recall the strange incidents that happened when Dougal Douglas lived in their suburb. He becomes a part of a local legend, folk story, a ballad of Peckham that partly inspired Muriel Spark when she was creating her mischievous demonic protagonist. After his departure from Peckham he continues in making havoc around the world e.g. selling the tape recorders to African witch doctors or becoming a novice in Franciscan monastery. Dougal Douglas is another representative of contemporary antiheroes, not only for his evil nature, but also for his connection with the literary tradition of folly. But he is, unlike the protagonist of *A Clockwork Orange*, quite likeable and sympathetic character. He is, as well as e.g. the character of Milton's Satan or Byronic heroes, a very tempting and charismatic figure. Readers, even though they might not approve of or relate to all his actions, still sympathize with this wicked Scot, who is rather a cunning imp than a devil, and share feelings similar to that of Connie Weedin, one of the characters of the story: "'But you can't help, but like him. He's different.'"[102] But Dougal Douglas is not the only evil and manipulative protagonist in the work of Muriel Spark, whose influence leaves its marks on the lives of other characters. In her novel *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* the main protagonist, school teacher and keen admirer of fascism, creates her own little army from her favorite and devoted students. But, unlike Dougal Douglas, who pretends to be the Devil, Miss Brodie prefers to play God of Calvin, as she believes to be the providence.

---

[101] *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* 7.
[102] Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day* (London: Faber and Faber, 2005) 71.

3.3 Stevens, the Passive and Dehumanized Antihero of *The Remains of the Day*

Another antiheroic character to be discussed is Stevens, the protagonist of *The Remains of the Day* by Kazuo Ishiguro. He, unlike the previous two antiheroic characters, Alex and Dougal Douglas, lacks the attributes of active rebellious misfits who transcend the social norms and conventions, as he represents the very opposite of these two characters. He is the antihero of passivity and inaction, whose life is based on conventions and traditions connected with his profession and with the aspects of Englishness and its values and norms of behavior. In connection with these factors he also exhibits some of the problems of the modern age and modern man such as feeling of loss of old order and traditions, estrangement and mechanistic dehumanization. As he tries to live up to the expectations of his employer and to his reputation of a great butler he, as Rita Gurung suggests, accepts his fate as well as his inferior and unchangeable position in the society and he manages to turn this kind of antiheroic defeat into some kind of his personal moral victory.[103]

The Remains of the Day is a story of Mr. Stevens, the butler of Darlington Hall, and it resembles kind of a diary. It is composed of memories of the protagonist and narrator, which he recollects during his journey to the West Country. In the course of his narration he seems to try to come to terms with all the events, decisions and actions that influenced his life. He reveals that the main mission and sense of his life is to become a great professional butler. As he tries to fulfill his ideas, expectations of others and meet all the requirements which are according to him necessary for becoming a great butler he is swallowed by his professionalism and becomes kind of a cold dehumanized robot that is unable to express any emotions or opinions or to keep any relationship. He turns out to be the embodiment of professionalism at the expense of his humanity, his private life or happiness.

The story takes place in the period following the Second World War. It is the time when the old order is replaced by the new one, when the world of old traditions and aristocratic way of life starts to decline and is replaced by the modern way of life. Stevens, for whom new changes are connected especially with decline of professional standards, and with difficulty to find suitable staff members, reacts on this new order

---

[103] Gurung 17.

with certain displeasure: "I have reluctance to change too much the old ways."[104] The new way of modern life is represented in the story by his new American employer, Mr. Farraday, who represents spontaneous, friendly and familiar behavior. He, being enchanted by the old English traditions and way of life, purchased the old English mansion with authentic English butler and turns Darlington Hall into some kind of museum. His interactions with Stevens, who is the embodiment of old traditions and of Englishness, represent, not only the clash of two different cultures, but also of the two social orders with completely different points of view. The old, already fading, world of English traditionalism and conservatism with all its rigidness, conventions and "emotional restraint, which only the English race is capable of"[105], is put in opposition to the new, dynamic, progressive way of American life which spread its influence in postwar period. It is difficult for Stevens to cope with the new state of affairs as he follows the traditional social arrangements and his ideas and norms of professionalism and lacks some of the traits necessary for successful dealing with new situation, such as e.g. spontaneity.

The emotional restraint, together with his own concept of professionalism, mainly that of butler's dignity, are the main causes of his dehumanized nature which is, according to Rita Gurung one of the attributes of modern antihero, who resembles a machine like, robotic creature without emotions or unable to express them.[106] Stevens suggests that true butlers: "'will not be shaken out by external events however surprising, alarming or vexing.'"[107] And thus he never expresses any emotional excitement. Every situation that provokes emotional response is thoroughly analyzed and judged. He never reacts spontaneously as he always has to think everything over and to prepare the most suitable response. This e.g. causes his problems with bantering as it requires immediate and spontaneous reaction that he is not capable of. After analyzing the new unexpected problem he decides to response to bantering with: "smile in the correct manner"[108]. But he considers it to be: "new sort of duty required of me"[109] and so he is determined to learn it and thus please his new employer. He also despises any form of distraction and entertainment because he feels it to be in contradiction with his professional role and that it might disrupt his respectable image

---

[104] *The Remains of the Day* 8.
[105] *The Remains of the Day* 44.
[106] Gurung. 28.
[107] *The Remains of the Day* 44.
[108] *The Remains of the Day* 16.
[109] *The Remains of the Day* 18.

of great dignified butler. His cold and reserved nature is mirrored also in his room, dark and unwelcoming, without sunlight and "resembles the prison cell …one could imagine condemned man spending his last hours there."[110] He is also unable to display curiosity or at least interest in affairs that are happening around him because it is not his position to act or at least thing like that. His duty is to remain discreet and thus he pretends to be ignorant. But sometimes he drops out of his role and shows a small hint of emotion or his human face: "'can't it be that be that our Mr. Stevens is flesh and blood after all.'"[111] Such a moment occurs e.g. in the case of reading sentimental novels, which he admits to enjoy. But he claims to read it just for the improvement of his language skills. These two situations are not the only ones, when he pretends or deliberately lies or conceals the truth: "'Why, Mr. Stevens, why, why, why do you always have to pretend?'"[112] He e.g. pretends to be a gentleman, who had certain influence over the foreign policy before Second World War, or at least he does not try to disprove the confusion. He also pretends several times to have no connection with Lord Darlington, as if he were ashamed of him, even if he claims his respect, admiration and gratitude to be servant of such a great man. He, like a St. Peter, denies Lord Darlington three times. He pretends and prefers to tell white lies to prevent unpleasantness and embarrassment. But it is rather a sign of hypocritical behavior and cowardice, as he always tries to avoid conflicts. It goes hand in hand with his attempts to explain and justify all his mistakes, misconducts and misjudgements, because he hypocritically wants them to be seen in a better light. As if he tried to persuade and assure reader as well as himself that his behavior is right and that he always acts with the best intentions, especially with regard to his profession and professional reputation. Another situation in which Stevens pretends and is not able to admit the truth is connected with mistakes that occurred lately in his work. Stevens is unable to admit that they are caused by his old age and claims them to be just a fault of the shortage of staff members. This inability to acknowledge the truth can cause the fact that one day he may look for the lost jewels of his professional honor and dignity as it happened to his father.

All attempts of explanations and justifications of his conduct, his constant pretending, frequent misunderstandings or misjudgements, all the uncertainties, self – deception and ambiguity in his narration are the evidences of him being an unreliable

---

[110]*The Remains of the Day* 174.
[111] *The Remains of the Day* 165.
[112] *The Remains of the Day* 162.

narrator of the story. As in the case e.g. of Miss Kenton's letter that he keeps rereading so much that he imagines things that are not written there, but he wishes them to be:

> She does not at any point in her letter state explicitly her desire to return; but that is the unmistakable message conveyed by the general nuance of many of the passages, imbued as they are with deep nostalgia for her days at Darlington Hall.[113]

Another antiheroic trait, which goes hand in hand with dehumanization and which is characteristic for the modern antihero, is the feeling of estrangement, which according to Rita Gurung, causes the antihero's inability to enter or establish a relationship with other people.[114] This is also a problem of Stevens, whose emotional restraint, machine-like behavior and requirements of his profession disable him to create or keep any personal relationship, as the personal level always seems to interrupt his professional duties. The only kind of relationship he is capable of and which has real meaning to him is connected with his employment, and it is either based on a professional level, as in case of his devotion to the Lord Darlington as his employer, or in his professional relationship with Miss Kenton or his father. Stevens does not know how to react properly every time a relationship crosses the border and changes from formal level into personal one. He has problems with the informal interaction with other people. He is unable to express emotions such as compassion, empathy, understanding, care, sympathy, affection or love, because according to his theory any emotional display affects his professionalism. His relationship with his father is based on their mutual admiration and respect for their professional achievements but otherwise lacks the familial affection common for father–son relationships. They are not able to communicate on other than formal or professional level. In the cases of his father's stroke and death Stevens shows slight hints of emotional distress: "'You look as though you're crying.'"[115] But he is unable to react or behave properly because it could influence his service and dignity of a great butler. He is not willing to neglect duties of his service and to abandon the role he inhabits. And he is proud of the fact that he is able to maintain his dignity even in such an emotionally tense situation and thus he deserves to be considered worthy of the rank of great butlers: "For all its sad associations, whenever I recall that evening today, I find I do so with a large sense of

---

[113] *The Remains of the Day* 50.
[114] Gurung 29.
[115] *The Remains of the Day* 110.

triumph."[116] He is also unable to express or even realize his true feelings for Miss Kenton. He, as in case of his father, admires her professionalism and devotion to the service at Darlington Hall. But her departure does not represent for him the loss of potential partner but only a loss of a good and skilled employee. As love represents for Stevens just a foolish emotion that had a bad influence on one's professionalism and means great threat for the staff plan, he tries to avoid it or suppress it, because it might once again influence or disrupt his image of great butler. He is not able to truly appreciate Miss Kenton as a friend and cannot see her as an object of his love or affection until it is too late and nothing can be done or changed: "'why should I not admit it? – at that moment my heart was breaking."[117] But once again he is not able to admit his true feelings to her.

Stevens can be considered a passive character or protagonist of inaction. According to Victor Brombert one of the main traits of hero is the principle of will and action and thus, if he is deprived of the free will and loses his potential of action, he becomes an antihero.[118] Stevens' passivity lies in his absolute indifference towards his own life and the affairs happening around him and to him. He lets his life slip through his fingers because he cannot imagine that there could be anything more meaningful or of greater importance than his profession and reputation: "'Here you are, after all, at the top of your profession …I really cannot imagine what more you might wish for in life.'"[119] His profession is his essence, it defines who he really is and what he really is. He is also unable, due to his subordinated nature, to fight for anything or against anything, because the only purpose of his life is the fulfillment of his duties, e.g. he is not able to defend Lord Darlington and his reputation against the slandering of others. He cannot fight for his relationship with Miss Kenton and he is unable to raise his voice against the injustice as in the case of dismissal of Jewish housemaids. His passivity in all these cases is connected with preservation of his dignity and professionalism: "'our professional duty is not to our own foibles and sentiments but to the wishes of our employer.'"[120]

It is his subordination, professional duty, his devotion to the role he inhabits and his ideas of what it means to be a great butler that deprive him also of the second heroic

---

[116] *The Remains of the Day* 115.
[117] *The Remains of the Day* 252.
[118] Brombert. 1-10.
[119] *The Remains of the Day* 182.
[120] *The Remains of the Day* 157.

principle – the principle of free will. As a servant he always follows the orders and wishes of his employer, without any objection. He gives absolute trust and puts his life fully into the hands of his employer and thus becomes willingly only a puppet in the greater scheme of things: "Our best course will always be to put our trust in an employer we judge to be wise and honourable, and to devote our energies to the task if serving him to the best of our ability."[121] It also seems that he has no personal values and opinions as he expresses only those adopted from Lord Darlington. One of the adopted ideas is e.g. the opinion that common people are rather ignorant and subordinated in their knowledge. And thus they are not competent enough to be involved in politics or to be part of decision making about state affairs, which are some of the basic principles of democracy. He believes those affairs should be in hands of great gentlemen who possess all the knowledge necessary for the right decisions: "The fact is, such a great affairs will always be beyond the understanding of those such as you and me."[122] The lack of principle of free will and action makes of Stevens truly an antiheroic character. As George Roche suggests, one of the main traits of anti-heroism is that it makes of men "helpless pawns, unable to act or even think on their own, fully shaped and determinate by outside forces."[123]

"'You can't have a dignity if you are slave'"[124] says Harry Smith, passionate fighter for the rights of lower classes. The inability to express his own opinions or exercise his free will, together with his constant subordination, are the symbols of Stevens' slave-like nature. The effort to become a great butler, the eagerness to please his employment and to fulfill his professional duties, cross the border of mere employment and his devotion to the role of butler changes from service to servitude. He becomes a slave not only of his profession and traditional expectations of others but especially of his own reputation, ideas and restrictions that he invented. According to Stevens the ideal butler possesses qualities such as greatness, pride, loyalty, duty, honor and dignity. All these are attributes characteristic for epic and medieval heroes. He also believes that by carrying out his duties and by serving to the great gentleman, he helps to serve to higher purposes, to greater good and that he actually participate on the creation of better world: "'the opportunity to contribute to the making of a better world …it was the a very similar urge which led me to become involved in great affairs before

---

[121] *The Remains of the Day* 211.
[122] *The Remains of the Day* 209.
[123] *The Remains of the Day* 8.
[124] *The Remains of the Day* 196.

the war.'"[125] He believes to possess all those heroic qualities, but his explanation of them is in contradiction with their heroic connotations and only demonstrates his quite deluded and distorted vision of life, and intensifies his antiheroic nature. E.g. he connects pride and honour with subservience, greatness with carrying out his duties and loyal service, and his contribution to the greater good of humanity with the quality of silver polishing: "it is not simply my fantasy that the state of the silver had made a small, but significant contribution towards the easing of relations between Lord Hallifax and Herr Ribbentrop that evening."[126] He, as a knight in shining armour, also sets on a kind of heroic journey to the West Country, which represents crossing his previous boundaries. His aim is to save a damsel in distress, represented by Miss Kenton or now Mrs. Benn trapped in unhappy marriage, and bring her back to Darlington Hall. But he fails to accomplish his mission and thus is unable to live up to his heroic potential and becomes antihero.

"Why should I not admit it? – at that moment my heart was breaking.'"[127] It is probably for the first and also the last time in the novel when Stevens admits that he is not entirely dehumanized and that even he is capable of emotions, even though he is unable to admit such a thing to Miss Kenton. He always hid his emotions from her because he tried to preserve his dignity. But it is probably for the first time that, by not expressing his emotions, he really lives up to its principle. He feels that there is no point in telling her how he feels about her, because it would make no sense anymore. The wheel cannot be turned back and the information, which comes too late, may only hurt her. And so it is also for the first time in a novel that he expresses the empathy. *The Remains of the Day* can be seen as a story of lost opportunities and regrets. It also suggests that following of the traditions, restrictions and false ideals may influence one's life in irreversible way. Stevens who tries to live up the traditional English concept of great butler is swallowed by the idea of professionalism and turns out to be its embodiment. He becomes a robotic, dehumanized being that is placed in subordination and deprived of free will, emotions and ability to establish any personal relationship. He always believed that by serving great gentleman with noble purposes he contributed to the creation of better world. But, as the ideas and actions of his employer turn out to be false and misguided, he is disappointed and feels deceived, because he

---

[125] *The Remains of the Day* 199.
[126] *The Remains of the Day* 144.
[127] *The Remains of the Day* 252.

realizes that he devoted his life to an unworthy cause. The antiheroic nature of Stevens is intensified by the presence of the character of Miss Kenton, who functions as his counterpart and features all the positive traits and emotions that Stevens lacks. She is a kind, warmth, friendly, just, brave, loving, caring and autonomous individual who is able to act and to express her own opinions, emotions and decisions. The antiheroic protagonist of *The Remains of the Day* represents passive, emotionless, cold, machine-like behavior, connected with subordination against which he does not fight, rather on the contrary, he accepts it, even embraces it as the part of his professionalism. As the antihero exhibits traits of mechanistic dehumanization and slave-like nature it is hard for readers to identify with him or even sympathize with his insensitive behavior.

3.4 Michael Beard, The Hedonistic Opportunist of *Solar*

The last antiheroic character to be discussed is Michael Beard, the protagonist of *Solar* by Ian McEwan. He represents another face of modern antiheroism, completely different from those antiheroic characters previously discussed. Michael Beard is a textbook example of hypocritical, hedonistic opportunist, and incorrigible and insatiable womanizer who follows, in certain ways, the long literary tradition of picaresque protagonists. He can be also considered the embodiment of vices of modern civilization with his laziness, overweight, abuse of alcohol, emotional hollowness, cynism etc. One of the greatest ironies of the novel is the fact that such an antiheroic and absolutely unadmirable person should be the one that is supposed to save the world from the upcoming apocalypse.

Solar, Ian McEwan's social satire that focuses mainly on the problems connected with global warming, recounts the story of Professor Michael Beard, a physicist and Nobel Prize laureate. The story is divided into three parts. In the first Beard faces not only a personal crisis as his fifth marriage falls apart, but also a professional crisis caused by lack of new ideas and burnout. As kind of escape he goes for a trip to Spitsbergen with a group of artists interested in the problem of global warming, even though he is "caring little for art or climate change and even less for art about climate change."[128] After his return he plays quite an unfortunate part in the death of Tom Aldous, which consequences brings him unexpected profit. In the second and third part of the story Beard becomes a keen fighter against global warming as he tries to promote his project of solar energy based on the ideas of Tom Aldous, and to get rich. He also maintains relationships with two women, Melissa and Darlene, becomes the father of a baby girl and at the end of the story is diagnosed with skin cancer and accused of plagiarism.

Fat, bald, short man who, when being naked, is a disgrace to the image of man. This is the physical description of Michael Beard, who despite the lack of physical attractiveness has a reputation of incorrigible and sexually insatiable womanizer, because some beautiful women believed that: "he was a genius in need for rescue."[129] According to Rita Gurung hedonism, lustfulness, and increased sexual appetite might be also the traits of modern antihero.[130] And being a real hedonist, Michael Beard is a man

---

[128] Ian McEwan, *Solar* (London: Vintage Books, 2011) 101.
[129] *Solar* 3.
[130] Gurung 39.

who "is taking his pleasures seriously."[131] Among his greatest pleasures belong food, sex and women. His insatiable appetite, especially his weakness for crisps, causes his constantly growing overweight, contributes to his inattractiveness and bad health condition. His weakness for women and his sexual desire are the reasons of his five unsuccessful marriages, which usually end due to a great number of his adulterous affairs. His relationships with women and his hedonistic pleasures aimed on food and sex are partly influenced by the mother-son relationship, which results in a kind of Oedipus complex: "She lived for her son and her legacy was clear: a fat man, who restlessly craved the attention of beautiful women who could cook."[132] That might be the reason why he is not able to leave Melissa, because she represents the perfect replacement of motherly figure. But his adultery is not the only reason he is unable to keep any of his marriages. It is also due to the fact that marriage or family represent two social establishments, which he does not respect or take seriously at all. Another reason of Beard's failing marriages is the fact that he is a self-absorbed egoist, unwilling to give up his comfort and pleasures, or to share attention of his partners and thus he is reluctant to become a father. He successfully evades fatherhood by talking many women into terminations of their pregnancies because he feels himself to be "worthless, unreliable pseudo-husband, and this was what would make a worthless, unreliable pseudo-father of him." [133] When Melissa becomes intentionally pregnant he feels deceived, blackmailed and trapped, being betrayed by his own sperms:

> His cell door had been open for months, years, and he could have walked free. Too late…one of his own sperm, as brave and cunning as Odysseus, had made the long journey, breached the city wall and buried its identity into her egg.[134]

His self- absorbedness, insensitivity to women's feelings, the fact that he is not very fond of the equivalence of both sexes, not even great supporter of feminisms bring him into great trouble. His ideas about genetic determinism and his opinion of women's representation in scientific fields cause huge public scandal during which he becomes a social outcast and is called e.g. 'women-hater', 'exploiter', 'Nobel love-rat' or 'Neo-Nazi'. In the course of the affair he also exhibits kind of a masochistic behavior, as he

---

[131] *Solar* 168.
[132] *Solar* 265.
[133] *Solar* 247.
[134] *Solar* 239.

finds perverted pleasure in reading about himself in newspapers. He experiences feelings of disappointment and emptiness when there is no insulting article about him that would describe him as a modern monster.

Beard is not only a great womanizer, but at the same time a great hypocrite, who cheats constantly on his wives but is unable to bear the idea of being the one who is cheated. This happens in case of Melissa and her made-up lover Terry, but especially in case of his fifth wife, Patrice, who made of Beard a real cuckold: "Yes, yes he had been a lying womanizer, he had it coming."[135] He feels it to be kind of deserved punishment for all his previous adulteries, but still he is not able to cope with the new situation: "Beard was surprised to find how complicated it was to be the cuckold … he was paralyzed with shame by the extent of his humiliation."[136] The fact that even heightens his feeling of humiliation is that Patrice is cheating on him with men who are inferior to him in their social position or intelligence. Beard, who is never able to fully love his wives or partners or anyone except himself, now realizes that he wants and loves Patrice, but only because he cannot have her. He sinks into depression: "he settled into a state of mild and extended psychosis"[137], and tries to solve the marital crisis and to make her love him again e.g. by pretending to have an affair as well. But it is not Patrice's adultery that represents the ultimate punishment for his infidelities. It is the fear that he might have lost his penis during the urinating in Spitsbergen that causes him greatest distress: "Of course he would survive. But this was it, a life without penis. How his ex-wives, especially Patrice, would enjoy themselves."[138]

Besides the marital crisis Beard faces up also the professional one, caused by the lack of interest and ideas, which might be described as a burnout. The emptiness, lack of purpose or sense in life that might result in depression are according to George Roche traits of modern antihero.[139] Beard once used to be a young enthusiastic scientist, full of great ideas. Nowadays he is just an aging man, more a bureaucrat than a scientist, doing only pseudo-work, not real research. He lost his previous interest and craving. It was long ago when he felt the old excitement "to do some thinking, to have an original idea, hypothesis, play with it, pursue it, tease it into life…He lacked the will, the material, he

---

[135] *Solar* 30.
[136] *Solar* 4.
[137] *Solar* 29.
[138] *Solar* 82.
[139] Roche. 33-37.

lacked the spark."[140] The feeling of vain is even intensified by the fact that in the Centre he is surrounded by fresh, enthusiastic minds of young post-docs, who are full of new fresh ideas, which seem to be too complicated for him: "much of the time he did not know what they were saying."[141] This causes his irritation. But the thing that irritates him even more is the fact that this young blood of science does not treat him, the Nobel Prize laureate, with proper respect. They also undervalue his theory of Conflation, which for Beard represents the only meaningful and valuable thing in his life: "Beard had nothing beyond his Conflation, or his half of it. Like a shipwrecked man, he had clung to his single plank."[142] During the trip to Spitsbergen he meets Jesus, the Spanish ice sculptor, who gives him a moral lecture about the importance of hope and ideals in one's life. He also assures him that it is never too late to start a new life and that there is always time for inner change. Beard, inspired by these words, promises himself to change his life, to lose weight, to start to work again. But this promise is never fulfilled.

Other two antiheroic traits that are typical for Beard's behavior and go hand in hand are hypocrisy and opportunism. Beard, who, on the basis of being Nobel Prize laureate, gets great number of honorary degrees, gives speeches, represents several institutes or is a member of Royal Commission on Science Funding, never misses the chance for the well-paid position: "Beard was always on the lookout for an official role with stipendium attached".[143] Profit is also the main reason why he becomes the head of The National Centre for Renewable Energy, which focuses on the invention of technologies that would produce energy from renewable natural sources, and thus tries to reduce the impact of global warming. Beard hypocritically becomes the leading man of the Centre, because it is well-paid and because it is prestigious post, but he is not interested in the problematic of global warming at all: "his interest in technology was even weaker than his interest in climate change."[144] He has doubts about the whole issue concerning the climatic changes, or better said he finds it exaggerated, because he thinks that people have always had talent for hysteria and apocalyptic tendencies, and that there is always the end of the world lurking around the corner, since the Old Testament: "he was unimpressed by some of the wild commentaries that suggested the

---

[140] *Solar* 19.
[141] *Solar* 22.
[142] *Solar* 69.
[143] *Solar* 22.
[144] *Solar* 32.

world was in 'peril' that humankind was drifting towards calamity."[145] The technology he is most skeptical of and finds it ridiculous is the solar one: "the term had a dubious halo of meaning, an invocation of New Age Druids in robes dancing round Stonehenge at Midsummer's dusk."[146] But his skepticism disappears when he realizes that solar energy can be very profitable business. The chance to make a lot of money from the solar technologies and at the same time become the savior of the devastated planet presents itself with the death of Tom Aldous, who invented the technique of artificial photosynthesis and whose ideas Beard steals. The death of Tom Aldous offers several opportunities to Beard. Firstly he can restart his declining scientific carrier and become rich, as he always wanted to be, and secondly it offers him his private revenge on the lovers of Patrice; on Tom, that is accidentally killed during the argument with Beard, who, being the coward and weakling, cannot face him as a man but only misuses his superior position: "Deeply irrational to make love to boss' wife"[147]; and later on also on Tarpin, by putting the blame for Tom's death on him. As he is convicted and sent to prison for sixteen years, Beard thinks, without the smallest hint of remorse, it to be the fair punishment for his crimes: "That a man guilty of two crimes, fucking Patrice and blacking her eye, should go down for another of which he was innocent never troubled Beard much at all."[148] Beard continues in his hypocritical behavior by promoting the solar energy, which he always ridiculed, and by pretending that he cares about the common good. He presents himself as a hero, the savior of the planet, but he is only a cunning opportunist who takes advantage of the situation. All that interests him is money, which can be earned if he persuades others to invest in his business. Beard is not only the hypocrite and opportunist, he is also a kind of a parasite that takes advantage of others and misuses ideas, successes and merits of others. It happens e.g. in the case of all his marriages and relationships, because he, being the self-absorbed, emotionally hollow egoist, is able only to take but gives nothing back. Another example is the case of plagiarism of Tom Aldous' technology. He parasites not only on his ideas, but he also steals his rhetoric:

---

[145] *Solar* 21.
[146] *Solar* 34.
[147] *Solar* 119.
[148] *Solar* 259.

"[Aldous] 'That rain is our sunlight…it drenches our planet, drives our climate and its life. A sweet rain of photons'"[149]… "[Beard] 'That rain is our sunlight. An energy source drenches our planet, drives its climate and its life. It falls on us in a constant stream, a sweet rain of photons.'"[150]

As it was already stated the character of Michael Beard features some of the characteristics typical for protagonists of picaresque fiction, which began with the character of Lazarillo del Tomes and continued with Moll Flenders, Becky Sharp, Tom Jones or Huckleberry Finn. One of the most typical traits of *picaros* is that they are masters of survival. They can fall many times but they are always able to stand up and continue in their lifetime journey and struggle for survival. This is also the case of Michael Beard, as he undergoes five divorces, suffers the burnout, endures huge public scandal or figuratively escapes the gallows as he puts the blame for the death of Aldous, which was not his fault either after all, on Tarpin etc. He is like a phoenix, always rising from the ashes of his personal or professional disasters. According to Bernard Malkmus the modern *picaro* is a hollow man who is aware of his condition. He is also, like the traditional one, a very flexible and adaptable character who is able to fit in any social circle, even if he does not belong there. Thanks to his adaptability he usually occupies higher positions on the social ladder and his only interest is represented by his own profit.[151] Michael Beard is aware of his not very likeable nature, but he does not care much what people think about him, or if they like him or not. He is "self-sufficient, self-absorbed, his mind cluster of appetites and dreamy thoughts…solipsist at heart and in his heart was nugget of ice."[152] He is also very adaptable to new environments and circumstances. E.g. in the case of seducing his first wife Maisie, he, a student of physics, reads and studies John Milton's work and learns some of his lines by heart. Another example of his adaptability is a e.g. his trip to Spitsbergen with group of artists, where he has to live in the community of scientific illiterates, not liking to be the part of group but not wanting the group to know it. He, who has no interest in art whatsoever, participates in artistic activities and becomes the darling of the ship, because he is the only one who really tries to save the planet. Thanks to his talent of being in the right time in the right place he achieves the highest honor the scientist can get as he is

---

[149] *Solar* 37.
[150] *Solar* 212.
[151] Bernhard Malkmus, "Picaresque Narratology," in *Clowns, Fools and Picaros: Popular Forms in Theatre, Fiction and Film,* ed. David Robb (Amsterodam: Rodopi, 1994) 214-233.
[152] *Solar* 234.

awarded with Nobel Prize. But it seems to be only by accident or good luck: "Perhaps it was true that the Committee, angrily divided between three front-runners, had settled for its fourth choice … some muttered that the Committee in its compromise had confused Michael Beard with Sir Michael Bird."[153] He is also an unscrupulous opportunistic parasite whose only interest is the satisfaction of his needs and personal profit, for which he is not loath to steal the ideas of other people. He even believes that he has the right to participate in the success and profit of solar energy as his ideas inspired Aldous in the creation of his technology: "he was the one who was keeping alive the spirit of that young man …true value of Tom's work, which in turn was built on Beard's, as his was built on Einstein's."

"You deserve almost everything that's coming to you. So go fuck yourself"[154]says Hammer to Beard at the end of the novel, when he realizes that all the hard work, all the investments he put into their business with solar energy and especially all the money they were supposed to earn are irretrievably gone. The reason of it is that Beard is accused of plagiarism and theft of intellectual property. To make things even worse he is diagnosed with skin cancer and his two lovers, Melissa and Darlene, want to discuss with him their future in a not very friendly and peaceful manner. It seems that Beard has run out of his good luck for good. The end of the novel is left open so readers can only guess what will happen next, but if the character of Beard follows the tradition of picaresque fiction, he will find his way out of the problems and troubles as always. The antihero of *Solar* is not a very likeable character nor has any intention to be one and it seems that the only person, or rather the only character, in the whole world who can really, truly and unconditionally love him is his little daughter. The irony is that if it was on Beard to decide she would have never been born. And so it is hard for the reader to identify himself with the protagonist because Michael Beard represents the embodiment of many vices of modern man as well as of modern lifestyle and problems, and thus he holds a mirror up to the state of modern society. He is quite the cynical, lazy, egoistic, lustful, hedonist and hypocritical, unscrupulous, greedy, opportunistic parasite that follows the literary tradition of *picaros*, unheroic masters of survival. All these characteristics make him the true antihero of the twenty-first century. Similar character can be considered e.g. John Self from *Money* by Martin Amis.

---

[153] *Solar* 69.
[154] *Solar* 384.

Conclusion

The aim of the thesis was to draw up a concise survey of the historical development of heroic and antiheroic concepts, with special focus on British literature. The survey includes the description of gradual process of transformation of the heroic protagonist of ancient epics into the antiheroic protagonist who predominates the twentieth and twenty first century literature with regard to the factors that influenced the changes and also with regard to the reader's perception of the protagonist, with his ability to admire or idealize him, to identify himself or sympathize with the character and thus experience the final catharsis. The aim of the survey was also to prove the theory that the position of protagonist of the twentieth and twenty-first century literature is predominated by antihero.

The heroic ideal entered the world of literature at its very beginning. Hero, the protagonist of myths and fairy tales represent the archetypal image common to all mankind, the moral and spiritual model guiding all men, and as such he predominated on the position of protagonist of literary works for centuries. Even if the heroic ideal follows the precise set of rules of heroic conduct, its shape and nature underwent significant changes since it first appeared in the myths of Gilgamesh, stories of Old Testament or Homer's epics. The hero of ancient epics, semi-divine or noble warrior, which appears e.g. in *Beowulf,* was replaced by the knight, the hero of chivalric romances based on Arthurian legends, the genre which predominated the medieval literature. The era of Renaissance, the golden age of English theatre, reintroduced the Aristotelian concept of tragic hero, a noble and admirable character who possesses hybris or tragic flaw, which causes his downfall and which was employed e.g. by Christopher Marlowe or William Shakespeare. Up to this point the position of the hero as the protagonist of literary works was unshakable and indisputable. But it was the period of Restoration when things started to take different direction. The publication of John Milton's *Paradise Lost* meant the breaking point in the transformation of the heroic nature of the protagonist. Until then it was always the hero who occupied the central position of literary work. But suddenly it was the charismatic and evil character of Satan that was by many readers considered the protagonist of the poem and also the first representative of the antiheroic archetype. The objection can be made that several other antiheroic characters emerged in the world of literature before the publication of *Paradise Lost*, e.g. in works of William Shakespeare. But those characters followed the concept of heroism and its basic principles and only possessed several traits common

for antiheroes rather than being entirely antiheroic figures. But the character of Satan represents evil, the ultimate villain on the position of protagonist. However, the era of real decline of heroic ideal began with the rise of novel and of middle class society in eighteenth century. The hero lost its superior status, which he possessed in myths, epics, romances or tragedies and became equal to the reader. Hand in hand with the loss of superiority he began to gain nonheroic traits as he started to represent and reflect common man with all his everyday problems and struggles and with them he adopted not only his virtues but especially vices. The demands of new reading public for heroes to whom they may relate led to introduction of new types of protagonists with more or less nonheroic features. Great number of them represented the reaction on the rapid industrial, scientific and social changes or political situation in Europe influenced by the Napoleonic wars. The picaresque hero, the rogue and master of survival, such as Becky Sharp of *Vanity Fair* by William M. Thackeray, or the Byronic hero, the charismatic, mysterious outcast and rebel against social norms such as Heathcliff of *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë, or the hero as a human beast ruled by determinism, such as Tess of *Tess of D'Urberville* by Thomas Hardy, are some of the characters that entered the world of literature in the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. All of these characters possessed a number of antiheroic traits and each of them played an important role in the process of transformation of heroic ideal into antiheroic.

The twentieth century, with both World Wars and with Cold War, with scientific and technological inventions, together with a growing influence of the media, and with the development of materialism and consumerism, offered the ideal conditions and fertile ground for flourishing of the concept of antihero. And flourish he does. The modernist antihero, confused, disillusioned man lost in his own thoughts, wandering without hope or faith around the wasteland without order or meaning emerged in the world of literature after First World War together with Leopold Bloom of *Ulysses* by James Joyce. The postmodern antihero, a man of inaction, a mere puppet in the greater scheme of things that can be found in plays of Samuel Beckett or, on the other hand, the social rebel whose revolt is vain as there is no chance for change of the absurd world as the heroes of the Angry Young Men movement. These are just very few of the characteristics that can be assigned to the concept of anti-heroism which played for a long time only a marginal role in the world of literature. But it was during the eighteenth and nineteenth century when it started to gain its influence as the protagonists began to exhibit constantly greater amount of nonheroic traits up to the

moment when their antiheroic nature prevailed by which the protagonist lost its equal status with the reader, became inferior to him in intelligence, power and freedom and thus was deprived of his heroic potential. In the course of twentieth century the line between heroism and anti-heroism slowly disappeared and the antihero became a new "hero", who with all his vices and problems functions as a mirror reflecting real state of modern society and condition of modern man. Despite the fact that heroic ideal lost its former glory and was no longer suitable to the needs of the readers or authors it found its way back into contemporary literature in genres such as fantasy or comics literature.

The second aim of the thesis was to prove, on the basis of the analysis, firstly the antiheroic nature of four protagonists of selected literary works from contemporary British fiction and secondly that antiheroism is not only a prevailing literary tendency in the contemporary literature but that it also represents the complex and heterogeneous concept, which includes great variety of prototypical protagonists and thus it is very hard to create single description and definition of the term.

The first analysis of the protagonist of *A Clockwork Orange* by Anthony Burgess tried to prove that the protagonist follows the rebel-victim model, one of the prototypes of the antiheroic archetype. Alex being a young boy revolting against authorities and social norms, who tries to preserve his individuality and free will in the absurd world where brainwashing techniques changes human beings into mere things and who at the end becomes a part of herd, of a society he despises and ridicules lives up to the requirements of the suggested model and thus can be considered the prototypical rebel –victim antihero.

The second analyses of the protagonist of *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* by Muriel Spark tried to prove that Dougal Douglas follows the tradition of evil characters on the position of protagonist, which began with Milton's Satan and continued with Byronic hero and Gothic villain, and that he also follows the literary antiheroic tradition of fools. Dougal Douglas, who features traits common for demonic characters of Scottish border ballads as well as those typical for characters of Scottish Gothic fiction, e.g. the motive of *doppelganger,* and who possesses wicked, deceptive, manipulative and devil-like nature can be considered the follower of the tradition of evil antiheroic protagonists. Dougal is also a physically deformed misfit, who makes the havoc and with his wicked commentaries and wit mocks the others. He is able to recognize follies and vices of others and expose them and thus he holds up mirror up to community in which he lives. These are the traits common for the character of fool, so it can be considered that

Dougal Douglas is the prototypical antihero following the tradition of evil trickster or demonic fool.

The third analyses of the protagonist of *The Remains of the Day* by Kazuo Ishiguro tried to prove that Stevens exhibits some of the features typical for modern antihero such as passivity, loss of old order and traditions, mechanistic dehumanization and estrangement. He is an English butler, which is one of the most traditional English employments and also one of the most typical manifestations of Englishness. He is obsessed with old ways and traditions and especially with his professionalism and dignity. As he tries to live up to his reputation and standards he loses his emotional side and becomes cold, indifferent, machine-like being whose life is slipping through his fingers and who is not capable of any emotions. Stevens is not able to keep any relationships except for the professional ones. The absurdity of his life exposes itself when he realizes that he dedicated all his life to unworthy purpose. All these features make of him the prototypical, passive, estranged and dehumanized antihero.

The last analyses tried to prove that the protagonist of the *Solar* by Ian McEwan can be considered the prototypical antihero of the twenty-first century as he represents the embodiment of all vices and problems of modern society including lifestyle diseases, high divorce-rate, low birth-rate or problematic of global warming, and that he also follows the literary tradition of unheroic heroes of picaresque fiction. Michael Beard is a physicist and Nobel Prize Laureate who tries to save the world from apocalypse and to get rich at the same time, or vice versa. He is a hedonist and womanizer, who has weakness for crisps and sex. The first thing causes his overweight, the other five divorces and a lot of trouble. He is also an egoistic, hypocritical opportunist, who is like the characters of picaresque fiction a highly adaptable master of survival, who is interested only in his own profit and welfare. These traits make of him the prototypical modern antihero as his nature reflects the state of modern society. These four prototypical protagonists of the antiheroic archetype represent just a small fragment of the complex and heterogeneous concept of antiheroism that includes a great variety of literary characters which confirms its predominating position in the literature of twentieth and twenty-first century. Nevertheless, different nature of the analyzed protagonists, together with the fact that they are all distinctive representatives of antiheroic concept, is the proof that the antihero is the protagonist of many shapes and many faces.

Resumé

Cílem této diplomové práce bylo vytvoření stručného přehledu historického vývoje hrdinství a antihrdinství, se zaměřením na britskou literaturu. Přehled zahrnuje popis procesu postupné transformace hrdinského literárního protagonisty starověkých eposů až po antihrdinského protagonistu, který dominuje literatuře dvacátého a dvacátého prvního století. Přehled se zabývá rovněž vlivy, které vedly ke změnám protagonisty a také možnou interpretací čtenáře a jeho pojetím a vnímáním protagonisty, se schopností idealizace, ztotožnění, pochopení, empatie s protagonistou a tedy s možností následné katarze. Cílem historického přehledu bylo také dokázat správnost teorie, že postava antihrdiny převládá na pozici literárního protagonisty dvacátého a dvacátého prvního století.

Hrdinský ideál se v literárním světě objevuje hned na jeho počátku. Hrdina, protagonista mýtů a pohádek, představuje archetypální, všeobecně platnou představu morálního a duchovního modelu lidstva, a jako takový zastává dominantní pozici protagonisty literárních děl po celá staletí. Přestože hrdinský ideál je přesně definován souborem daných pravidel jeho podoba a povaha se od dob Gilgamešových, starozákonních či Homérových významně měnila. Hrdina antických eposů, polobůh nebo válečník vznešeného původu jako např. *Beowulf*, byl nahrazen rytířem, hrdinou rytířských romancí inspirovaných legendou o králi Artušovi, které dominovali na poli středověké literatury až do nástupu renesance. Ta bývá v Anglii označována za zlatou éru anglického dramatu, která navázala na Aristotelovský koncept tragického hrdiny, vznešeného a obdivuhodného muže, který v sobě nese tragickou pýchu či vinu, která je příčinou jeho pádu a utrpení. Tento koncept následoval např. Christopher Marlowe nebo William Shakespeare. Do této doby byla pozice hrdiny na postu literárního protagonisty neodiskutovatelná a neotřesitelná, ale v období anglické Restaurace věci dostaly trochu jiný směr. Publikace *Paradise Lost* Johna Miltona znamenala zlomový bod ve vývoji hrdinské povahy protagonisty. Do této doby to byl vždy hrdina, který představoval hlavní postavou literárního díla, ale byla to právě ďábelsky charismatická postava Satana, kterou mnozí považovali za protagonistu Miltonovy epické básně a která je dodnes mnohými považována za prvního archetypálního literárního antihrdinu. I když mohou být vzneseny námitky, že se jiné antihrdinské postavy objevily na literárním poli dávno předtím než *Paradise Lost* spatřil světlo světa a to např. v dílech Shakespearových. Avšak tyto postavy měly spíše jen určité antihrdinské vlastnosti či rysy, ale ve své podstatě naplňovaly hrdinský ideál a proto se nedají považovat za zcela

71

antihrdinské. Ovšem postava Satana znázorňovala představu největšího možného zla na pozici protagonisty. Ale k postupnému ústupu hrdinského ideálu došlo až o něco později a to na počátku osmnáctého století s nástupem románu a s rostoucím významem střední vrstvy. Hrdina postupně ztratil své nadřazené postavení, které mu náleželo v literatuře mýtů, eposů, romancí a tragédií a začal být roven čtenáři, stal se jedním z nás. Ruku v ruce se ztrátou nadřazenosti začal hrdina rovněž získávat nehrdinské rysy a to osvojením si vlastností čtenáře, ať už to byly jeho neřesti či ctnosti nebo starosti a každodenní problémy. Nová čtenářská základna vyžadovala také nové hrdiny, se kterými by byla schopna se lépe ztotožnit a proto se na literárním poli v průběhu osmnáctého a devatenáctého století objevilo velké množství postav s tu více tu méně antihrdinskými vlastnostmi. Většina z nich představovala jakousi reakci na překotné průmyslové, vědecké a společenské změny, které byly rovněž ovlivněny politickými událostmi právě probíhajících napoleonských válek. Na literární scéně se tedy objevil pikareskní hrdina, vychytralý darebá a mistr přežívání a sebezáchovy jako byla např. Becky Sharpová z *Vanity Fair* Williama M. Thackeraye. Dalšími z nových protagonistů byly např. Byronský hrdina, charismatický, záhadný vyvrhel a rebel proti společenským normám jako např. Heathcliff z *Wuthering Heights* Emily Brontëové nebo hrdina ve formě lidské bestie podléhající determinismu jako např. Tess z *Tess of D'Uberville* Thomase Hardyho. Všechny tyto postavy měly určité množství antihrdinských rysů a sehrály důležitou roli v transformaci hrdinského ideálu v antihrdinský.

Dvacáté století s oběma světovými válkami následovanými tou studenou, s ještě větším množstvím vědeckých a technologických postupů, spolu s rostoucím vlivem médií a rozvojem materialismu a konzumu nabízelo ideální podmínky a živnou půdu pro rozkvět konceptu antihrdinství. A ten opravdu kvetl s vervou. Antihrdina modernismu, zmatený, zbavený iluzí a pohroužený do vlastních myšlenek, toulající se bez naděje či víry pustinou bez jakéhokoliv řádu či smyslu vstoupil do světa literatury spolu s Leopoldem Bloomem, antihrdinou z *Ulysses* Jamese Joyce. Postmoderní antihrdina je, na jedné straně nečinný člověk, který je pouhou loutkou podléhající vyššímu řádu jako v absurdních dramatech Samuela Becketta, nebo na straně druhé rebel marně vzdorující svému osudu bez nejmenší šance na jakoukoliv změnu absurdního světa jako např. v dílech skupiny Angry Young Men. Koncept antihrdinství je však velmi rozmanitý a tito moderní antihrdinové představují jen špičku ledovce velkého množství antihrdinských postav, které se objevují v literatuře dvacátého a dvacátého prvního století. Koncept antihrdinství stál dlouhou dobu ve stínu hrdinského

ideálu, ale v průběhu osmnáctého a devatenáctého století z tohoto stínu vystoupil a začal získávat na důležitosti. Jak jeho vliv rostl a sílil, protagonista získával stále větší množství nehrdinských vlastností a zároveň postupně opouštěl rovnocennou pozici a začal se stávat podřazeným čtenáři jak inteligencí, tak mocí či svobodou. Skutečnost, že je čtenář protagonistovi nadřazen a tudíž je lepší než on, znesnadňuje ztotožnění čtenáře s protagonistou a tím pádem i dosažení pocitu katarze. V průběhu dvacátého století se vlivem mnoha okolností stal hrdinský ideál nadále nevyhovujícím potřebám moderního autora i čtenáře a byl proto nahrazen ideálem antihrdinským. Hranice mezi hrdinstvím a antihrdinstvím se postupně smazávala, až se antihrdina stal novým „hrdinou" dvacátého století. Jako takový lépe vyhovuje potřebám a vkusu moderního čtenáře, protože představuje všechny problémy, chyby, nedostatky a neřesti moderního světa a proto také funguje jako jakési zrcadlo moderní doby, které odráží její skutečný stav a obtížnou životní situaci moderního člověka. Přestože hrdina, zejména vlivem druhé světové války, ustoupil z pozice protagonisty a přenechal své místo antihrdinovi, našel si i on své místo v současné literatuře a to v žánrech fantasy a komiksové literatury.

Druhým cílem diplomové práce bylo zaprvé dokázat antihrdinský charakter všech analyzovaných protagonistů vybraných literárních děl ze současné britské literatury a to na základě jejich literární analýzy. A za druhé na základě této analýzy dokázat, že antihrdinství není jen převládající literární tendencí současné literatury, ale že je také velmi komplexním a rozmanitým konceptem zahrnujícím velké množství rozličných antihrdinských protagonistů, což značně stěžuje vytvoření jednotné definice termínu antihrdinství. První analýza protagonisty *A Clockwork Orange* Antonyho Burgesse si kladla za cíl dokázat, že vývoj protagonisty v průběhu příběhu následuje model navrženého antihrdinského prototypu rebel – oběť. Alex je chlapec bouřící se specifickým způsobem proti autoritám a společenským pravidlům. Tím si snaží uchovat svou individualitu a svobodnou vůli ve světě, kde existují techniky na vymývání mozků, které dělají z lidských bytostí pouhé věci. Nakonec se však i on stane obětí konformity, pouhou součástí stáda, právoplatným členem společnosti, kterou tolik pohrdá. A tím tedy naplní požadavky navrhovaného antihrdinského prototypu rebel-oběť a může být teda považován za prototyp antihrdinského archetypu.

Druhá analýza protagonisty *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* Muriel Sparkové si kladla za cíl dokázat, že postava Dougala Douglase pokračuje v tradici ďábelských a temných postav na pozici protagonisty. Tato tradice začala postavou Satana z Miltonova *Paradise Lost* v jehož stopách šli Byronští hrdinové i protagonisté gotických románů.

Dalším cílem bylo dokázat, že protagonista je také pokračovatelem antihrdinské literární tradice bláznovství. Dougal má vlastnosti charakteristické pro démonické postavy ze skotských hraničních balad a také má některé rysy typické pro skotské gotické romány jako např. motiv dvojníka. Má rovněž velmi škodolibou, manipulativní a ďábelskou povahu a tudíž může být považován za následovníka literární tradice ďábelských protagonistů. Dougal má také fyzickou vadu a je společenským vyvrhelem, který vyvolává zmatek všude, kam přijde a jeho zlomyslné poznámky a vychytralost slouží k utahování si z druhých. Má také schopnost rozeznat neřesti a pošetilosti ostatních a dokáže je vynést na světlo a tudíž má funkci zrcadla, které odráží skutečný stav komunity, ve které žije. Tyto rysy jsou typické pro postavu blázna, a proto může být Dougal považován za prototypického antihrdinu a pokračovatele v tradici ďábelského podvodníka nebo démonického blázna.

Třetí analýza protagonisty *The Remains of the Day* Kazua Ishigura si kladla za úkol dokázat, že Stevens má vlastnosti typické pro moderního antihrdinu jako jsou např. pasivita, pocit ztráty starého řádu a tradic, mechanistické dehumanizace a odcizení. Jako anglický majordomus je představitelem jednoho z nejtradičnějších anglických povolání, které je typické pro své projevy angličanství. Je posedlý starými pořádky a tradicemi, a zvláště pak profesionalismem a důstojností. Zatím co se pokouší naplnit svou reputaci a standardy, ztrácí svou emocionální stránku a stává se netečnou mechanickou bytostí, které život proklouzává mezi prsty a která není schopna jakékoliv emocionální reakce. Stevens také není schopen udržet si žádný vztah kromě profesních. Absurdita jeho života mu dojde v okamžiku, kdy zjistí, že svůj život obětoval něčemu, co za to nestálo. Všechny tyto vlastnosti z něj dělají prototypického a pasivního, odcizeného a dehumanizovaného antihrdinu.

Poslední analýza si kladla za cíl dokázat, že protagonista *Solar* Iana McEwana může být považován za prototypického antihrdinu dvacátého prvního století, protože reprezentuje zosobnění všech neřestí a problémů moderní společnosti jako jsou např. civilizační choroby, vysoká rozvodovost, nízká porodnost nebo problematika globálního oteplování. Protagonista také pokračuje v tradici nehrdinských hrdinů pikareskní fikce. Michael Beard je fyzikem a držitelem Nobelovy ceny, který se snaží zachránit svět před apokalypsou a na tom zbohatnout a nebo obráceně. Je to požitkář a sukničkář, jehož slabostí jsou smažené brambůrky a sex. Ta první neřest způsobuje jeho nadváhu, ta druhá mu přinesla pět rozvodů a spoustu dalších potíží. Beard je také egoistický a pokrytecký oportunista, který je podobně jako postavy pikareskních románů vysoce

adaptabilní v každé situaci a proto je mistrem v přežívání, jehož jediným zájmem je jeho zisk a blaho. Tyto vlastnosti z něj dělají prototypického antihrdinu, jehož povaha zrcadlí stav současné společnosti. Tito čtyři typičtí protagonisté a představitelé antihrdinského archetypu představují pouze malý zlomek komplexní a různorodé koncepce antihrdinství, která zahrnuje velké množství různých literárních postav a tím si zajišťuje převahu na poli literatury dvacátého a dvacátého prvního století. Nicméně rozdílnost analyzovaných postav a skutečnost, že představují svébytné představitel antihrdinského archetypu, jsou důkazem, že antihrdina má opravdu mnoho tváří a podob.

Bibliography

Works Cited

Abrams M.H. *Glosary of Literary Terms.* Forth Worth: Harcourt B. College Publishers 1999.

Kaiter Edith and Corina Sandiuc."Milton's Satan: Hero or Anti-Hero?." Presentation, International Conference of Scientific Paper, Brasov, Romania, May 26-28 2011.

Adams, Percy G. "The Anti-Hero in Eighteenth Century Fiction." In *The Anti-Hero: His Emergence and Transformations,* edited by Lilian R. Furst, James D. Wilson, 29-51. Georgia State UP: Atlanta, 1976).

"Anti- hero." *Merriam-Webster: Dictionary and Thesaurus.* Accessed August, 13, 2015. http://www.merriam-webster.com/

"Anti-hero", *Oxford Dictionaries*, accessed August 13, 2015, http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/

Aristotle. *Poetics.* Translated by Stephen Halliwell. London: Loeb Classical Library, 1995.

Brecht, Bertolt. A *Life of Galileo.* London: Bloomsbury, 2013.

Brombert, Victor. *In Praise of Antiheroes, Figures and Themes in Modern European Literature, 1830-1980.* Chicago:The University Chicago Press, 1999.

Burgess, Anthony. *A Clockwork Orange.* London: Penguin Books, 1972.

Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces.* New Carolina: New World Library 2008

Camus, Albert. *The Rebel: An Essay on Man in Revolt.* New York: First Vintage International Edition, 1991.

Cartlige, Neil. *Heroes and Anti-heroes in Medieval Romance*, edited by Neil Cartlige. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2012.

Dostoevsky, Fyodor. *Notes from the Underground*. New York: Dutton, 1960.

Frye, Northrop, *Anatomie kritiky*. Translated by Sylva Fycová. Brno: Host, 2003.

Furst Lilian R. "Romantic Hero or is He an Anti-Hero." In *The Anti-Hero: His Emergence and Transformations*, edited by Lilian R. Furst, James D. Wilson, 53-66. Georgia State UP: Atlanta, 1976.

Furst, Lilian R. and James D. Wilson. "Editor' s Notes." In *The Anti-Hero: His Emergence and Transformations*, edited by Lilian R. Furst, James D. Wilson (Georgia State UP: Atlanta, 1976) 1-9.

Gurung, Rita. *The Archetypal Antihero in Postmodern Fiction.* New Dehli: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 2010.

Hassan, Ihab. *Radical Innocence.* New Jersey:Princeton UP, 1961. 32, quoted, in Gurung, Rita. *The Archetypal Antihero in Postmodern Fiction.* New Dehli: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 2010.

 "Hero."*Oxford Dictionaries*. Accessed August 13, 2015. http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/

Ishiguro, Kazuo. *The Remains of the Day.* London: Faber and Faber, 2005.

Janick, Vicki K. *Fools and Jesters in Literature Art and History*. Edited by Vicki K. Janick Westport: Greenwood Press, 1998

Jung, Carl G. *Archetypy a nevědomí, Výbor z díla.* Edited by Helmut Barz et al., Translated by EvaBosáková , Kristína Černá, Jan Černý. Brno: Nakladatelství Tomáše Janečka, 1997

Kendrick, Matthew G. *The Heroic Ideal, Western Archetypes from the Greeks to the Present*. North Carolina, Mefarland Company, 2010.

Lamont Rosette C. "From Hero to Anti-Hero." In *The Anti-Hero: His Emergence and Transformations* ed. By Lilian R. Furst, James D. Wilson, 1-23. Georgia State UP: Atlanta, 1976.

Malkmus, Bernhard. "Picaresque Narratology." In *Clowns, Fools and Picaros: Popular Forms in Theatre, Fiction and Film,* edited by David Robb 211-233. Amsterodam: Rodopi, 1994.

McEwan, Ian. *Solar.* London: Vintage Books, 2011.

Miller, Dean A. *The Epic Hero*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopskins Universty Press, 2000.

Ran, Fye "Modern Tragicomedy of the Fool." In *Clowns, Fools and Picaros: Popular Forms in Theatre, Fiction and Film,* edited by David Robb, 25-35. Amsterodam: Rodopi, 1994.

Robb, David – *Clowns, Fools and Picaros: Popular Forms in Theatre, Fiction and Film*

Roche, George. *A World without Heroes, The Modern Tragedy*. Michigan: Hillsdale College Press, 1987.

Spark, Muriel. *The Ballad of Peckham Rye*. London: Penguin Books, 1963.

Works Consulted

Bettelheim, Bruno. The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales. New York: New Vintage Books, 2010.

Bradbury, Malcolm. The Modern British Novel. London: Penguin, 1994.

Coote, Stephen. The Penguin Short History of English Literature. London: Penguin, 1993.

Guthke, Karl S. "A Stage for Anti-Hero, Metaphysical Farce in the Modern Theatre." In The Anti-Hero: His Emergence and Transformations, edited by Lilian R. Furst, James D. Wilson, 119-130. Georgia State UP: Atlanta, 1976.

Lehan, Richard D. – Realism and Naturalism: The Novel in Age of Transition. Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2005.

Ker, W.P. Epic and Romance, Essay on Medieval Literature. New York : Dover publications, 1957.

Mirsa, Karuna S. The Tragic Hero through Ages. New Dehli: Nice Printers, 1992.

Neimneh, Shadi – "The Anti-Hero in Modernist Fiction: From Irony to Cultural Renewal" *Mosaic: a Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature* 46, no. 4 (2013): 75-90.

Propp, Vladimir J. Morfologie pohádky a jiné studie. Translated by Miroslav Červenka, Marcela Pittermannová, Hana Šmahelová. Jinočany : H&H, 1999.

Peprník, Michal. Směry literární interpretace 20. století. Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci, 2004.

Thody ,Philip: "The Anti-Heroes of Sartre and Camus: Some Problems of Definition" In The Anti-Hero: His Emergence and Transformations, edited by Lilian R. Furst, James D. Wilson, 107-118. Georgia State UP: Atlanta, 1976.

Annotation

The first aim of this diploma thesis is to draw up the concise survey of the historical development of the protagonist with regard to his heroic or antiheroic nature, and to prove the predominating position of antiheroic protagonists in contemporary British fiction. The second aim of the thesis is to prove the complex and heterogeneous nature of antiheroic concept on the basis of analysis of protagonists of four selected literary works written by authors of contemporary British literature after Second World War, namely: *A Clockwork Orange* by Anthony Burgess, *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* by Muriel Spark, *The Remains of the Day* by Kazuo Ishiguro and *Solar* by Ian McEwan.

Key words: hero, antihero, heroic, antiheroic, heroism, antiheroism, protagonist, representative, ideal, image, archetype

Anotace

Prvním cílem této diplomové práce je vytvořit stručný přehled historického vývoje literárního protagonisty s ohledem na jeho hrdinskou či nehrdinskou povahu a dokázat převládající pozici antihrdinských protagonistů v současné britské literatuře. Druhým cílem této diplomové práce je dokázat komplexní a různorodou povahu antihrdinské koncepce a to na základě analýzy protagonistů čtyř vybraných literárních děl napsaných autory současné britské literatury po druhé světové válce, jmenovitě: *A Clockwork Orange* Anthonyho Burgesse, *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* Muriel Sparkové, *The Remains of the Day* Kazua Ishigura a *Solar* Iana McEwana.

Klíčová slova: hrdina, antihrdina, hrdinský, antihrdinský, hrdinství, antihrdinství, protagonista, ideál, obraz, představitel, archetyp