has been brushed forward and he sports a silk pocket handkerchief, hinting at the embryonic mod style which would soon invade the south London estates.

The boys have already declared their interest in clothes in a discussion in the club where one asserts that he would spend 15 guineas on a suit (£15.75) – probably a week's wages for a working man. They also discuss the morality of shop-lifting and the case for and against capital punishment which was then still legal.

The Lambeth boys and girls have apprenticeships or work as unskilled labour in a variety of places including a butcher's, a post office, a dress-maker's, a factory and an office reception. This is a period of full employment and while it is not mentioned, most of these young men will be among the first generation not called up for National Service, enabling them to experience freedoms previously unavailable. Nonetheless we are reminded of the powerful class divide in Britain at the time on the boys' annual trip to Mill Hill public school for an afternoon of cricket, swimming and socialising. While these educational divisions still exist, young people today share a more common popular culture which in 1958 was hardly widespread and appears not to have touched the public school at all.

On the evening of the cricket match back in Lambeth there is more dancing with chips to follow while the commentary reassures us that 'a good evening for young people is much as it always has been'. Would a contemporary version of the film be able to make the same claim?

Further Reading

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DAVE ALLEN

SATURDAY NIGHT AND SUNDAY MORNING (1960)

[Production Company: Woodfall Film Productions. Director: Karel Reisz. Screenwriter: Alan Sillitoe. Cinematographer: Freddie Francis.

Editor: Seth Hilton. Cast: Albert Finney (Arthur Seaton), Shirley Anne Field (Doreen), Rachel Roberts (Brenda), Hylda Baker (Aunt Ada), Norman Rossington (Bert).]

Released in 1960, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* is rooted in the new cinematic and literary movements of its day. Its screenplay, written by so-called 'angry young man' Alan Sillitoe, was based on his novel of the same name, and its director Karel Reisz was involved in the Free Cinema movement of the late 1950s. This, Reisz's first fiction feature, was at the forefront of the short-lived 'British New Wave' (1959–1963). With its working-class protagonists, focus on controversial yet ordinary issues, and a commitment to represent working-class life, this ground-breaking movement included films that took a resolutely humanistic, poetic and non-commercial approach to cinema. They were also collectively known as 'kitchen sink' films.[1]

The 1960s saw the rise of the independent film company as a significant force in British cinema and Woodfall was a prestigious example. Formed by another of the 'angries', John Osborne, in partnership with Tony Richardson, it was financed by the proceeds of Osborne's stage success, *Look Back in Anger*. Woodfall's aim, according to Richardson, was 'to get into British film the same sort of impact and sense of life that the Angry Young Man cult has had in the theatre and literary worlds' (Hill 1986: 40).

Independent production gave directors the freedom to represent their society in original ways and tackle issues previously considered taboo. They were helped in this by the new 'X' certificate, introduced by the BBFC in 1951 and granted to all the 'new wave' films apart from *Billy Liar* (John Schlesinger, 1963). This allowed them to be more daring in content, albeit within reason: for example, Arthur (Albert Finney) was allowed the contentious use of the word 'bloody', but 'bugger' was too much and had to be changed to 'beggar'; likewise, a reference to the gin and hot bath abortion had to be cut.[2] Nevertheless, the frank presentation of Arthur's sexual attitudes, Brenda's (Rachel Roberts) adultery, and the unwanted pregnancy seemed adult and contemporary next to Hollywood films still labouring under a draconian Production Code.

It is unsurprising therefore that *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, like *Room at the Top* (Jack Clayton, 1959) before it, hit a nerve with the cinema audience. Despite a small publicity budget, it was the third most successful film at the box office in 1961, won the BAFTA for Best Film and was the first film to take £100,000 in the three weeks of its London run alone. This film reflected the political and

social changes shaping British society at this time. It was released in the middle of the prosperous consumer boom of the 1950s, but before the 'swinging sixties'. Considered daring on its release for its representation of sexuality and working-class youth, its moral values look old-fashioned even compared to *Georgy Girl* (Silvio Narizzano, 1966) and *Alfie* (Lewis Gilbert, 1966), let alone *Blow Up* (Michelangelo Anonioni, 1966) and *Performance* (Donald Cammell and Nicolas Roeg, 1970). By 1963, gritty realism and working-class angst were no longer box-office draws.

Nevertheless, the fact that radical representations of working-class life were at the heart of these new literary and cinematic movements is explained by contemporary changes in society. The economic boom of the 1950s had brought unprecedented prosperity to a class used to defining itself in terms of the battle for a living wage. This led to new tensions around class identity and working-class masculinity in particular, defined as it was in its opposition to oppression in the workplace. After the 'hungry thirties' and the austerity of the war years, the 1950s were the 'never had it so good' Macmillan years. Wages doubled between 1951 and 1959, inflation and bank rates were low. Between 1957 and 1959, television ownership went up by 32%; between 1952 and 1959 ownership of cars doubled. Advertising investment increased fourfold between 1947 and 1960. In 1959 alone 200,000 motorbike licences were issued (Sandbrook 2006: 97).

Jack's (Bryan Pringle) motorbike and sidecar and his promise to buy Brenda a television; Robbo's (Robert Cawdron) outrage at Arthur's pay packet of over £14; Doreen's (Shirley Anne Field) comments about Arthur's suits – 'Are all these clothes your'n? They must have cost you a pretty penny' – are all precise contemporary details. A class that had previously defined itself as producers now had to redefine itself as consumers. Increased wealth plus access to university education offered greater class mobility than ever before, but also challenged established ideas of what it meant to be working class. From the perspective of 1960, it seemed conceivable that the working class as it had been was an endangered species, and *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* reflects these feelings of uncertainty, confusion and social paranoia.

The seminal text setting the agenda for intellectual debate about working-class identity was Hoggart's *Uses of Literacy* (1957). Hoggart contrasts the 'good' authentic working-class culture of the past with the 'shiny barbarism' of the modern consumer culture he sees as destroying it. Most of the 'new wave' films produce representations of working-class life premised on this binary opposition. Sillitoe read

Hoggart after writing *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, but agreed that his novel 'pointed out more or less the same thing' (Hill 1986: 203). The opening shot frames Arthur as traditionally working class, shirt sleeves rolled up and working at his lathe, voicing his combative attitude to authority and his determination not to be ground down. Doreen's new council house, with its modern furnishings, is seen as an unfriendly and repressive place set against the homely welcome of Arthur's traditional terraced home, reflecting the distrust of middle-class aspirations. Arthur's scathing comment that television produces people who are 'dead from the neck down' is a recurring motif found in most of the 'new wave' films.

Saturday Night and Sunday Morning pushes beyond this fixed ideological model to present a more ambivalent view. Jack, staid on his motorbike, seems more old-fashioned than Arthur on his pushbike; in the club, the younger generation listens to their pop music and the older generation enjoy their sing-song: neither group is held up as more desirable than the other. This is different from the clear privileging of the rich brass band concert over the television quiz show in *A Kind of Loving* (John Schlesinger, 1962). Even the final sequence, where Arthur throws a stone at the modern housing development and expresses his preference for an older house, finishes with a resigned acceptance that he and Doreen may live there. Moreover, several times in the film, Arthur himself expresses disdain for 'the good old days'. While this is framed within an awareness of how hard those times were, there is no nostalgic admiration for the people who lived through them.

Most of the 'new wave' films sidestep uncomfortable exploration of class identity by projecting all the problems onto the female characters, who become embodiments of the threats posed to traditional working-class culture. A stereotype of the new wave is the woman obsessed with consumer goods and middle-class aspirations. This neat containment of the debate lets the men off the hook; demonising the women prevents further uncomfortable debate over class identity. *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* shares this misogynistic tendency, but whereas in other new wave films, the male view is privileged, this one is more ambivalent in its audience positioning. Effective examples include the sequence where Arthur deliberately tips a pint of beer over the woman in the club, the sequence where he puts a dead rat on the bench of a female worker and the sequence where he shoots Mrs Bull (Edna Morris). In the first two incidents there is a lack of clear motivation, while in the third we are encouraged to assume it is a payback for Mrs Bull helping to bring about the arrest

of the man who threw the brick through the shop window. Reaction shots of Arthur laughing after each incident suggest this is part of Arthur's rebellious streak, or his addiction to 'having a good time', but in neither sequence are Arthur's values prioritised as superior. The messages regarding class and gender remain quite ambivalent.

The extremity of Bert and Arthur's hatred for Mrs Bull is disturbing. They call her 'a bitch and a whore', 'rat face', 'old bag', and suggest she 'wants pole-axing'. Because this hatred cannot be masked by the more acceptable guise of class resentment, it can be seen as straightforward antagonism towards women. It is tempting therefore to read the film as emphatically sexist. The sexually attractive 'good girl' gets her man, while the transgressive woman is punished for her deviance.

Doreen seems to fit this first stereotype, described by some as 'a smashing bit of stuff', but 'first kiss and she'll expect a ring'. When Arthur does agree to marry Doreen, despite the film's analogies between marriage and fishing, the film is ambivalent about their relationship. Has Arthur's rebellious masculinity been tamed like Jack's before him (as suggested by the shot of the brick-throwing man being restrained by a group of threatening women), or does his relationship signal a more adult recognition of who he is? In the final sequence his comment that it will not be the last stone he throws, and the mildness of Doreen's rebuke, further resist misogynistic readings about the female emasculation of the male.

Similarly, while Brenda's agency in the narrative (adulterous wife who is punished for her transgression) seems unambiguous, the representation of her is more complex. For example, in the 'Sunday morning' sequence we see her in three conflicting stereotypical roles: in bed with Arthur confirming her pleasure with their sexual relationship; serving him breakfast in a way which recalls the servile role of Mrs Seaton; and, finally, hugging her child. Her ease and confidence in all these roles of lover, wife and mother constructs a representation at odds with the more misogynistic elements of the film. Her courage in deciding to go ahead with the pregnancy and 'face whatever comes of it', her speech about what it means to be a mother, and the final shot we see of her in the film, trapped in the spotlight with a crowd of hostile spectators around her just after she has been publicly slapped by Jack, invite the audience to sympathise with her. Meanwhile, in the penultimate sequence of the film where Arthur consummates his relationship with Doreen after their engagement, the camera privileges Doreen's unease. This, combined with the sequences involving Brenda, gives a complex and empathetic

look at the female experience of sexuality and marriage in the late 1950s, before the contraceptive pill and the abortion law started to have a real effect on women's lives.

Saturday Night and Sunday Morning is unusual in its implicit criticism of the ways in which challenges to working-class male identity manifest themselves. Like the 'angry young men' of the time, Arthur's anger is real but its focus remains unclear. The film gives a real sense of Arthur's unhappiness with his situation but is less clear about why he feels like this or what the solution may be. Arthur articulates this crisis of identity in juxtaposition with searching shots of his face in the mirror: 'I'm me and nobody else. Whatever people say I am that's what I'm not. . . . God knows what I am'. To this extent the film is a more provocative and searching exploration of its time than some of the other 'kitchen sink' films which present a more apparently coherent picture of what 'working class' might mean.

Notes

1 Susan Hayward, 'Free Cinema', in *Cinema Studies: The Key Concepts*, London & New York, Routledge, 1996, pp. 132–135.
2 Tom Dewe Mathews, *Censored*, London, Chatto and Windus,1994, pp. 151–152.

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JEAN WELSH

PEEPING TOM (1960)

[Production Company: Michael Powell (Theatre). Director: Michael Powell. Screenwriter: Leo Marks. Cinematographer: Otto Heller. Editor: Noreen Ackland. Music: Brian Easdale. Cast: Carl Boehm (Mark Lewis), Anna Massey (Helen Stephens), Moira Shearer (Vivian).]

It is always creepy and fascinating when the cinema screen looks back at you, turning that fundamental element of film – the gaze – back onto the viewer. This is what Michael Powell's *Peeping Tom* does