

Working-class Realism and Sexual Reaction: Some Theses on the British 'New Wave'¹

John Hill

When *Room at the Top* hit the screen in 1959, it signalled the beginning of one of the most exhilarating bursts of creativity in the history of the British cinema. During the following five or six years new film-makers with fresh ideas brought to the screen a sense of immediacy and social awareness that had people queuing again after nearly a decade of decline.²

Nina Hibbin

There can be little doubt that the conventional perception surrounding British cinema of the fifties has been that of a period of decline and stagnation, dramatically rescued towards its close by a breakthrough of new films and new talents. It is not, of course, that it was novelty per se which was significant, but rather the way in which the 'new' cinema sought to break with the habits of the 'old' by inserting a whole area of social experience hitherto suppressed or treated as marginal. That is to say, what crucially defined the breakthrough was the new cinema's determination to centre upon the lives of the industrial working class, and to do so, moreover, in a way that would break with the false theatricality of conventional commercial cinema by developing a style that was in some way more 'authentic' and befitting of the novelty of its subject-matter. Raymond Williams has suggested³ that a concern with social extension (the inclusion of persons of 'lesser' rank) and contemporaneity has consistently marked the terrain on which 'realist' innovations have worked themselves out. If this is the case, the British 'new wave' is clearly no exception.

Now, having said all this, it would clearly be a perversity to argue that this period of British cinema was not a significant one after all (it clearly was, if only in terms of the legacy it has bestowed upon our sense of cinematic history and judgement) or to deny that a

breakthrough of sorts did occur. What I do want to suggest, however, is that the breakthrough was not as important as has often been suggested and certainly cannot be accepted as an unproblematically 'Good Thing', as Sellars and Yeatman might have put it. The doubts here are of two kinds. The first has to do with the adequacy of the realist form fashioned for the expression of those social experiences with which the films sought to deal (I shall discuss this in the 'Addendum'; see below). The second, and for my present purpose more important doubt, arises from the way in which the handling of issues of class in such films has characteristically produced a representation of women and female sexuality which works against and ultimately undercuts their claims to be 'progressive'.

What I mean by this might best be illuminated by reference to one of the few contemporary observers to have noted such a process. Writing in 1962 on *A Kind of Loving*, Penelope Gilliatt had this to say: 'The sad thing is that with an ounce more courage it could have been a genuine, affronting original: for if it had the candour to say so its real theme is not social discontent . . . but the misogyny that has been simmering under the surface of half the interesting plays and films since 1956.'⁴ Although Ms Gilliatt does not push her point very far, it does nonetheless seem that she is by and large correct. Indeed, misogyny is not only 'simmering under the surface', but is embedded in the very structures of the films themselves. The narrative patterns adopted in such films not only revolve around characters who are working-class but who are also male and whose progress 'along' the narrative is characteristically worked out in terms of their relations with the other sex. Questions of the hero's identity in relation to a class thus never appear 'pure', but are crucially 'overdetermined' in relation to questions of sex.

This is clearest in those films based on works by writers of the Movement, like Kingsley Amis and John Braine, and their 'Angry Young Man' successor, John Osborne.⁵ In practically all such cases (*Lucky Jim*, *Only Two Can Play* (after Amis' novel *That Uncertain Feeling*), *Room at the Top*, *Look Back In Anger*) the central theme and organizing principle of the narrative is that of social mobility, of a working-class or lower-middle-class character coming to terms with an upper-middle-class milieu. And central to this process of upward social mobility is the seduction of or marriage to a woman from a higher social class.⁶ Indeed, Blake Morrison suggests, in a discussion of the relevant literature, how the combined connotations of the word

'class', as both social and sexual (the hero is a member of the 'lower' class'), work to produce a narrative of social and sexual involvements of the male hero remains within the limits of the 'respectable'. In *A Kind of Loving*, this is the contrast between the 'rough' and the 'respectable', the hero representing a social class, the female hero (for example, Doris Hammond, whose name contrasts to the 'ape-like' name of the hero).

The two groups of characters are working out their hero's identity might justifiably be contrasted. The women function either as conventional social/sexual partners, or, in a different way, must be brought into Mulvey's notion of film as a spectacle.⁹ Mulvey, in her discussion of the respectability of the hero's castration (alternative to the reservations about both procedures whereby it is achieved in cinema, it does nonetheless have value in describing the devaluation and punishment of the hero. In the example of *film noir*, the hero's sexuality is often either reasserted. What I hope to show is that the apparently very different

Indeed, although the American *film noir* are characterized by stylistic conventions, the theme of similarity. What has been said of *film noir*, is the absence of social and marital relations. The hero is characteristic of the *film noir* that it portrays. Crucially, in *Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*, Lampton's parents are remembered. Porter remembers his

'class', as both social status and physical attractiveness ('She's got class'), work to produce a sense of the ambivalent social/sexual involvements of the male hero.⁷ And so, even in those films where the hero remains within his class (*Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, *A Kind of Loving*, *This Sporting Life*) a contrast is still to be found between the 'rough' and 'respectable' working class with the woman representing a social refinement or 'classiness' desired by the male hero (for example, Doreen in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* or Mrs Hammond, whose 'noble suffering' in *This Sporting Life* stands in contrast to the 'ape-like' qualities of Frank).

The two groups of films, moreover, share a particular way of working out their heroes' sexual involvements – according to what might justifiably be called the patriarchal principle.⁸ By and large, women function either as elusive objects of desire or as threats to the conventional social/sexual order (mainly via adultery), and, either way, must be brought under some kind of male control. Laura Mulvey's notion of films having a sadistic structure is helpful in this respect.⁹ Mulvey, in fact, introduces such a notion in the context of a discussion of the responses of the male unconscious to the threat of castration (alternatively fetishism and sadism), and although I have reservations about both the psychoanalytic model employed and the procedures whereby it might be applied to an understanding of the cinema, it does nonetheless have at the very least a clear metaphorical value in describing those films whose narratives are centred on the devaluation and punishment of women. Mulvey herself suggests the example of *film noir*, in which excessive and disruptive female sexuality is often either punished or destroyed and male control reasserted. What I hope to indicate is its further application to most of the apparently very different films of the British 'new wave'.

Indeed, although it is clear that the British 'new wave' and American *film noir* are very different in their choice of narrative and stylistic conventions, there are nonetheless some illuminating points of similarity. What has been made much of, for example, in the case of *film noir*, is the absence, noted by Sylvia Harvey, of 'normal' family and marital relations.¹⁰ And, in many ways, what is also a central characteristic of the British 'new wave' is the fragility of the families that it portrays. Crucial here is the absence or weakness of fathers. Joe Lampton's parents are dead in *Room at the Top*, while Colin in *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*, watches his father die. Jimmy Porter remembers his father dying in *Look Back In Anger*, while

Archie Rice's father dies after collapsing on stage in *The Entertainer*. Doreen in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, Ingrid in *A Kind of Loving* and Jo in *A Taste of Honey* all live with their widowed or separated mothers, while Mrs Hammond's husband in *This Sporting Life* is also dead. Arthur Seaton in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* does have a father, but he is effectively impotent (introduced sitting catatonically in front of the television set), as is Joe Lampton's surrogate father, his uncle (preoccupied with his modelling and silent). What might be suggested, indeed, is that, while so much of the British cinema hitherto had been characterized by its deference to strong father figures, what is notable about the new British cinema is precisely their absence, and the search, as a consequence, for the re-establishment of the 'law of the father'.¹¹ And this, in turn, has consequences for the treatment of women. By and large, the British 'new wave' offers its own modest equivalents to *film noir*'s femme fatale and nurturing woman, and part of the plot in such films focuses on the making of a choice between them. Thus, in *Room at the Top*, *Only Two Can Play* and *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, for example, the three adulterous women (Alice, Liz and Brenda) are rejected, while the hero returns to or enters into marriage. As such, the triumph of the hero is not unequivocal. For he too must adjust to marriage and family. Paul Hoch has distinguished 'two major conceptions of masculinity': the 'puritan' (committed to an ethic of production and family), and the 'playboy' (more orientated to consumption and sensual indulgence).¹² And although the word 'playboy' carries with it associations of an aristocratic life-style, in Hoch's extension of its meaning it has a clear application to the heroes of the films under review. Precisely because of his lower social status, the working-class, or 'rough' working-class, hero is characteristically compensated by the 'caste of virility' and thus becomes defined in terms of his sexuality and preference for a 'good time' (Arthur Seaton in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* is archetypal here).¹³ Therefore his ultimate rejection of extra-marital sex must go hand in hand with a transition from 'playboy' to 'puritan' masculinity. And thus, while the 'patriarchal solution' of the movies works in favour of the male hero, it also in part works against him, for it is also containing and repressing his sexual desires.

Two examples should help clarify the argument. *Look Back In Anger* (a 1958 film after the 1956 play), for example, draws a number of such threads together: the transposition of questions of class onto

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those of sex, the need for an assertion of male sexual control, the association of this with absent or impotent father figures and the partial depression of the male hero's 'virility'. Jimmy Porter (Richard Burton), the archetypal 'angry young man', is married to an upper-class woman, Alison (Mary Ure), the daughter of a retired colonel. As such, she stands as the representative of a particular social order and Jimmy's 'anger' thus becomes reduced to an abuse of her (a process considerably helped in the film by its excision of most of the play's direct political references). As Stuart Hall has put it, 'Alison becomes for him the embodiment of their society . . . and the sexual and human relationship between Jimmy and Alison is a metaphor for the social relationship between Jimmy and the world.'¹⁴

But what then is striking about the relationship is its clear association with loss – the memory of Jimmy's father's death, the trauma of Ma Tanner's death and the failed power of Alison's father. The death of the imperial era thus becomes dramatized in terms of loss to the family (as it does, even more clearly, in *The Entertainer*). Lucy Bland and her two co-authors have noted, in relation to the *Wolfenden Report on Homosexuality and Female Prostitution* (1957), how 'debates over national decline and Empire are linked to the proliferation of "perverse" and "degenerate" sexual practices',¹⁵ and something of an analogous process occurs here. In *Look Back In Anger* the failed confidence in colonial certainties goes hand in hand with a failed confidence on the terrain of sexuality, and, in the process, becomes a struggle for the reassertion of 'manhood' and the patriarchal principle (as Jimmy puts it to Alison, 'I want to be there when you grovel').

Without wishing to labour the comparison with *film noir*, I think that the process here seems interestingly similar to that described by Pam Cook in relation to *Mildred Pierce*.¹⁶ Cook suggests that the ideological work of such a film should be understood in the context of the need to reconstruct a failing patriarchal order. And part of this process, she argues, is the undermining of the 'matriarchy' represented by Mildred's relationship with Ida and the 'castration' of Mildred by an enforced separation from her daughter, Veda, which is tantamount 'to an act of physical mutilation'.¹⁷ This is also what occurs in *Look Back In Anger*. The 'matriarchal' defence found by Alison in Helen (Claire Bloom) collapses as the latter sexually submits to Jimmy (and thus has her threat defused), while Alison herself makes her own submissive return to Jimmy, 'castrated' by the loss of her unborn child (a result Jimmy had himself wished upon her). It is

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perhaps not surprising, then, that the style and setting of Alison's return to Jimmy at the railway station should be so replete with associations with *Brief Encounter*, with its similar reinsertion of female sexual desire into the 'normality' of the family.

Such a process also seems central to the apparently very different *A Kind of Loving* (1962). One sequence here is crucial. This begins with Vic (Alan Bates) in the kitchen with his wife and mother-in-law. He has been sent two tickets for a brass band concert in which his father is performing, and an argument then ensues about whether he and Ingrid (Julie Ritchie) will be attending. The scene ends with Vic deciding, 'We're going anyway,' but he is hemmed in in the middle of the frame by Ingrid (rear left) and his mother-in-law (foreground right). We then cut to a long shot of the brass band, followed two shots later by Vic's father playing a trombone solo. His wife and younger son are watching, while the camera tracks past them and his sister and brother-in-law onto two empty seats. A cut to a close-up of a television set follows, with a question-master beginning the show, 'Spot Quiz'. A competitor is introduced whose hobbies include 'gardening' and 'looking at people' before we cut to a three-shot of Vic, Ingrid and her mother, all watching.

Although Peter Cowie has cited this as a prime example of the film's meretricious realism (its calculated effect and 'non-natural' use of space),¹⁸ at another level it brings together a number of basic themes. First, and most noticeably, it contrasts the old traditional working-class culture of the brass band (corresponding to declining imperialism in *Look Back In Anger*) with the new, trivial and facile mass culture represented by television.¹⁹ But, second, this juxtaposition of values is effected in terms of a contrast between men and women. While the brass band is all-male, the superficial values of the new 'affluence' are linked inextricably with women, whose obsession with house, television, clothes and physical appearance is persistently emphasized throughout the film.²⁰

This opposition is most decisively worked out in terms of the presence or absence of a father. While the brass band soloist is father to a family in the audience, the family watching television has no father, a change from the novel. The corresponding domination of Vic by womenfolk is tantamount to 'castration' (Vic and Ingrid cease to make love in the house). In this context the film reasserts the 'natural order': Vic has to take up his 'proper' role as father and husband. Structurally, this involves the son re-uniting with his father to break

up the relationship between father for advice, and father counsels asserting

And thus, as with *s* *Loving* works to end patriarchal family, the irony. The moral centre her husband – the 'id' couple seem heavily repression. The husband an ugly modern flat, v in. It is more than a l *Trees In The Street* – a its appeal to 'gormles

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up the relationship between mother and daughter. Vic returns to his father for advice, and from the 'natural' base of his allotment the father counsels assertive control: 'She'll live where she's bloody put.'

And thus, as with so many of these films, the ending of *A Kind of Loving* works to endorse the normality and naturalness of the patriarchal family, though not perhaps without a certain amount of irony. The moral centre of the film is represented by Vic's sister and her husband – the 'ideal marriage' which has eluded him. But the couple seem heavily weighed down by an aura of containment and repression. The husband is bespectacled and balding, and they live in an ugly modern flat, with a solitary tree outside, strapped and fenced in. It is more than a little reminiscent of the opening imagery of *No Trees In The Street* – a film aptly denounced by Raymond Durgnat for its appeal to 'gormless conformism'.²¹

So it is within this context that the achievements of the British 'new wave' have to be assessed. As we have seen, it has often been represented as a 'breakthrough' in the British cinema, not only because it came to terms with the lives of ordinary working-class people but also because it did so through an honest treatment of adult sexuality. (The two factors are not unrelated, insofar as the association of sexuality with socially defined subordinate groups has been historically quite common, as, for example, in the case of the sexual mythologies surrounding black peoples.)²² Indeed, 'sexuality' in such films was something that cinema could offer and television could not, and thus became crucial to the films' box-office exchange-value. But this is not to assume that such an increasing explicitness in sexual content represented some unproblematic march forward to sexual liberation and 'permissiveness'. Indeed, I am suggesting the opposite – namely, that the films' handling of sexuality in fact constitutes what Marcuse would call a 'pseudo-liberation' – that is to say, it is ostensibly liberating but actually repressive.

This is especially so if we consider the context in which such films appeared. For in many ways British society was undergoing a 'boundary crisis' in relation to the role of women and attitudes to sexuality.²³ Indeed, the Birmingham Feminist History Group have argued that 'the expansion of the number of married women working, the "compressed fertility" typical of the period and the increasing importance of home consumption all called for a new view of the role of women and their place in the family'.²⁴ Increasing female participation in the labour force was prompting reassessments of the

role of the family, while the increasing availability of methods of contraception made not only such participation possible but contributed to an increasing acceptance of non-procreative sexuality ('sex as pleasure'). Perhaps it is not surprising that the Royal Commission on Marriage and Divorce set up to reflect on Britain's increasing divorce rate, should have called for less permissiveness when reporting in 1955.

So far from being 'progressive', then, the ideological work of the British 'new wave' can be assessed. By and large, such films end by reproducing an ideology of marital and procreative sexuality which punishes extra-marital and non-procreative sexuality. Indeed, films like *A Kind of Loving* find it difficult to concede the possibility of such activity at all: extra-marital sex, it is assumed, always leads to pregnancy. These films also reaffirm the need for male regulation of female sexuality within the marriage institution, against a vision of a world where such an institution is under threat. The 'new wave' can therefore be seen to be reactionary both within the context of the ideological tensions of the period and in its relation to earlier British cinema. Charles Barr, for example, draws on Ernest Bevin's notion of a 'poverty of desire' as a metaphor for British cinema in general and the work of Ealing in particular – a cinema quintessentially characterized by a dampening of energy and the repression of emotional and sexual desires.²⁵ If my analysis is accepted, the conclusion must be that the 'new' British cinema of the late fifties and early sixties is not so very different from the old.

Addendum

Although I have primarily focused on what I have called the 'sexual reaction' of the British 'new wave', I should also like to pass a few comments on the aesthetic strategies adopted in such films and the type of working-class experience which these allowed to be projected. In doing so, I should like to consider another implication of Mulvey's idea of sadism. For she also suggests that there is a strong association between sadism and most narratives, insofar as it is male heroes who are the main protagonists of the action and in the development of the plots. And, insofar as the makers of the British 'new wave' films have adopted tightly developmental narrative forms, carried by sharply accentuated male heroes – witness, for example, how the translation of *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* from novel to film effected a

tightening-up of the 'redundant' auxiliary 'masculinization' in the course, by the powerful working-class actors,

Two points are such films' concern to deal with the ideology of individualism. The turn is often picked up by the 'outsider', set apart from the world, and *Sunday Morning*, the 'poor beggars' around this has led to a failure of aesthetic'. Whenever a sense of collectivity could generate a loosening of structure and a multi-layered 'new wave' films, on the other hand, tightly wrought narratives tended to experience a working-class experience of working-class life and an 'atmosphere'.

Two devices become 'surplus' establishing a series of shots much to denote a local ambience in which *Night and Sunday Morning* a number of shots necessary to the narrative in its context (for example, the development of this form a complete syntagma'). Once again, without any particular found particularly in effect is the same: which, nonetheless,

tightening-up of the cause-effect narrative chain and a removal of 'redundant' auxiliary characters – so they have embedded a type of 'masculinization' in the very structures of the films (underwritten, of course, by the powerful, charismatic performances of the rising young working-class actors, like Albert Finney).

Two points are suggested by this. First, running alongside the films' concern to deal with the working class as a group, there is an ideology of individualism cemented into the narrative form which in turn is often picked up thematically – the male hero is treated as an 'outsider', set apart from the rest of his class. Thus, in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, Arthur Seaton is clearly counterpointed to the 'poor beggars' around him who have all been 'ground down'. Second, this has led to a failure to develop what we might call a 'collective aesthetic'. Whenever the British cinema has attempted to project a sense of collectivity on the screen, as in wartime, this has tended to generate a loosening of narrative form in favour of a more episodic structure and a multiplication of characters. The makers of the 'new wave' films, on the other hand, precisely because of their adoption of tightly wrought narrative and of a dominating central character, tended to experience difficulty in projecting a sense of collective working-class experience.²⁶ As a result, this sense of the collectivity of working-class life tended to become exteriorized into iconography and 'atmosphere'.

Two devices become particularly noticeable. First, the use of 'surplus' establishing or linking shots. Thus, before an action is initiated a series of contextualising shots will be employed, not so much to denote a locale for action as to connote the environmental ambience in which the action is occurring (for example, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*). Likewise, an action will be extended over a number of shots – again, not so much to provide information necessary to the narrative as to offer 'atmospheric' information about its context (for example, *A Kind of Loving*). The second device is a development of this whereby such 'surplus' shots are extended to form a complete sequence (the equivalent of Metz's 'descriptive syntagma'). Once again, typical shots of a place or locale are presented without any particular narrative function. Such examples are to be found particularly in the films of Tony Richardson. In both cases, the effect is the same: the creation of 'images' of working-class life – which, nonetheless, lack integration with the narrative as a whole.

- 40 W. D. Wall and E. M. Smith, 'The film choices of adolescents', *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, Vol. XIX part 2 (June 1949).
- 41 P. Addison, *The Road to 1945* (London, Quartet, 1975), p. 115.
- 42 K. Marx, *The German Ideology* (London, 1974), p. 64.
- 43 For example, the case of *Chance of a Lifetime*, which faced distribution problems. See accounts in the *Evening Standard* (22 February 1950) and the *Daily Worker* (26 February 1950).
- 44 C. Mercer, 'After Gramsci', *Screen Education*, 36 (autumn 1980), p. 8.
- 45 With thanks to Jane Clarke, Richard Collins, John Ellis, Paul Kerr and Robert Murphy for their helpful comments on a draft of this article.

Chapter 17

- 1 Quoted in John Ellis, 'Made in Ealing', *Screen*, vol. 16, no. 1 (spring 1975), p. 119.
- 2 Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 113.
- 3 Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 117.
- 4 S. Freud, *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* (London, Penguin, 1976).
- 5 Charles Barr, *Ealing Studios* (London, Cameron and Tayleur/David and Charles, 1977), pp. 52-3.
- 6 In Monja Danischewsky, ed., *Michael Balcon's 25 Years in Film* (London, World Film Publications, 1947), p. 13.
- 7 I should like to thank Vincent Porter and Christopher Williams for their support. I am thoroughly indebted to the writings on Ealing of John Ellis and Charles Barr. I hope this piece serves as a modest complement to their work.

Chapter 18

- 1 The ideas in this paper are very much the distillation of a larger project on the British cinema 1957-63 to be published by the British Film Institute as 'Class, Sexuality and the British Cinema'.
- 2 Nina Hibbin, 'The British "New Wave"', in *The Movie*, Partwork, chap. 57. London, Orbis, 1981.
- 3 Raymond Williams, 'A Lecture on Realism', *Screen*, vol. 18, no. 1 (spring 1977).
- 4 Penelope Gilliatt, *Observer*, 15 April 1962.
- 5 The exact delineation of the Movement, and of the 'Angry Young Men', is of course complicated. I use them both here as labels of convenience.
- 6 This was a process noted by Geoffrey Gorer in his essay, 'The Perils of Hypergamy', (in Gene Feldman and Max Gartenberg, *Protest* (London, Quartet, 1973). However, the political sophistication of the piece can be judged from the following conclusion: 'In this English pattern, there is a

- much better fit with themselves indulged: and made their well-born husbands
- 7 Blake Morrisson, *The Movie* (Oxford University Press, 1975).
- 8 Because of the confusions the term with a certain amount of confusions, and a conclusion by Barrett, 'Women's Oppression: A General Acquiescence', (London, New York, 1975).
- 9 Laura Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and the Narrative Cinema', *Screen*, No. 3 (autumn 1975).
- 10 E. Ann Kaplan, ed., *Women's Film* (London, BFI, 1978).
- 11 In his survey of British cinema, 'Class and the Cinema', Raymond Williams, 'The Cinema in Britain: A Survey of the Cinema in Britain', (London, Pluto Press, 1975).
- 12 Paul Hoch, *White Hero* (London, Pluto Press, 1975).
- 13 'The literature of the past', in *The Cinema in Britain*, (London, Virago, 1977), p. 100. Then, that in 1960 a film of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (the now notorious trial).
- 14 Stuart Hall, 'Jimmy Porter', *Screen*, February 1960, p. 100.
- 15 Lucy Bland, Trisha McCune, 'The Cinema in Britain: A Survey of the Cinema in Britain', (London, Pluto Press, 1975).
- 16 "Duplicity in Mildred Pierce", *Screen*, pp. 68-82.
- 17 *Ibid.*, p. 79.
- 18 Peter Cowie, *The Abortive*, (London, Pluto Press, 1975).
- 19 Such an opposition is central to the subject further in 'Ideology and the Cinema', (London, Pluto Press, 1975).
- 20 In his essay, 'Looking Back at the Cinema', (London, Pluto Press, 1975). Cooper sums up an attitude of these writers really attacking

- voices of adolescents', *British*
X part 2 (June 1949).
quartet, 1975), p. 115.
974), p. 64.
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this English pattern, there is a
- much better fit with female hypergamy, for both sexes feel
themselves indulged: and, as far as I know, chorus girls were happy, and
made their well-born husbands happy, in the old Gaiety days' (p. 333).
- 7 Blake Morrisson, *The Movement: English Poetry and Fiction in the 1950s*
(Oxford University Press, 1980).
 - 8 Because of the confusions surrounding the concept of 'patriarchy' I use
the term with a certain amount of hesitation. For a discussion of these
confusions, and a conclusion with which I largely agree, see Michele
Barrett, 'Women's Oppression Today: Problems in Marxist Feminist
Analysis', (London, New Left Books, 1980).
 - 9 Laura Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', *Screen*, vol. 16,
No. 3 (autumn 1975).
 - 10 E. Ann Kaplan, ed., *Women in Film Noir* (London, British Film
Institute, 1978).
 - 11 In his survey of British cinema, 1945-58, 'the climax period of a middle
class cinema', Raymond Durnat concludes as follows: 'The feeling for
military-style paternalism, for the system and for the police, are special
forms of a general acquiescence to father figures of a quietly heavy kind'.
(*A Mirror for England*, London, Faber and Faber, 1970, p. 140).
 - 12 Paul Hoch, *White Hero Black Beast: Racism, Sexism and the Mask of
Masculinity* (London, Pluto, 1979).
 - 13 'The literature of the past thirty years provides a staggering number of
incidents in which the caste of virility triumphs over the social status of
wealthy or even educated women' (Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics*,
London, Virago, 1977, p. 36). It is perhaps not merely coincidental,
then, that in 1960 a film of *Sons and Lovers* should have been made and
Lady Chatterley's Lover be published by Penguin (an event followed by
the now notorious trial).
 - 14 Stuart Hall, 'Jimmy Porter and the Two-and-Nines', *Definition*,
February 1960, p. 100.
 - 15 Lucy Bland, Trisha McCabe and Frank Mort, 'Sexuality and Repro-
duction: Three 'Official' Instances', in Michèle Barrett *et al.*, ed.,
Ideology and Cultural Production (London, Croom Helm, 1979), p. 84.
 - 16 "Duplicity in Mildred Pierce" in Kaplan, ed., *Women in Film Noir*,
pp. 68-82.
 - 17 Ibid., p. 79.
 - 18 Peter Cowie, *The Abortive Renaissance* (Axle Publications, 1963).
 - 19 Such an opposition is central to nearly all the 'new wave' films. I discuss
the subject further in 'Ideology, Economy and the British Cinema', in
Barrett *et al.*, *Ideology and Cultural Production*.
 - 20 In his essay, 'Looking Back On Anger', in Vernon Bogdanor and Robert
Skidelsky, ed., *The Age of Affluence* (London, Macmillan, 1970), D. E.
Cooper sums up an attitude tailor made to fit *A Kind of Loving*: 'What
these writers really attack is . . . effeminacy . . . the sum of those

qualities which are supposed traditionally, with more or less justice, to exude from the worst in women: pettiness, snobbery, flippancy, voluptuousness, superficiality, materialism' (p. 257). Of course, the basis of such an attitude is not just 'traditional' but embedded within the contemporary critique of the 'affluent society'. Viewed as the prime beneficiaries of the explosion in consumer durables ('gadgets for the home'), women can thus be made to carry the responsibility for a process whose dynamic (social and economic) is clearly something rather more than an expression of 'feminine qualities'.

- 21 Durgnat, *A Mirror for England*, p. 59.
- 22 'What seems to be at stake . . . is the attribution of certain dark and unclean, even animalistic, practices – especially sexual practices – to rebellious, outsider or subordinate groups' (Hoch, *White Hero Black Beast*, p. 54). Hoch suggests an explanation for this in terms of a ruling group's projection of their own forbidden sexual desires: 'Someone had to serve as the source of the repressed desires, and the men of the lower classes and castes were (and are) the obvious targets' (ibid.)
- 23 See Kai T. Erikson, *Wayward Puritans* (London, Wiley, 1966).
- 24 Birmingham Feminist History Group, 'Feminism as Femininity in the Nineteen-Fifties', *Feminist Review*, 3 (1979).
- 25 Charles Barr, *Ealing Studios* (London, Cameron and Tayleur, 1977), p. 17.
- 26 *The Kitchen* (1961) is probably unique in this respect, with its concern to project work as a collective process. However, in order to achieve this the film was forced into an attenuation of narrative and dialogue in a central sequence which stands at odds with the rest of the film.

Chapter 19

- 1 W. Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (London, Macmillan, 1956; 1st ed. 1922), p. 96.
- 2 Richard Dyer, 'The Role of Stereotypes', in J. Cook and M. Lewington, *Images of Alcoholism* (London, British Film Institute, 1979), p. 19.
- 3 Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics* (London, Routledge, 1975), p. 145.
- 4 Vicki Eves, 'Britain's Social Cinema', *Screen*, 10, no. 6 (November/December 1969).
- 5 Benny Green, *I've Lost My Little Willie* (London, Elm Tree Books, 1976), p. 29.
- 6 George Orwell, 'The Art of Donald McGill', in *My Country Right or Wrong* (London, Secker and Warburg, 1968; 1st ed. 1941), p. 159.
- 7 Ibid., p. 157.
- 8 Green, *I've Lost my Little Willie*, p. 120.
- 9 Orwell, 'The Art of Donald McGill', p. 157.

- 10 Green, *I've Lost my Little Willie*, p. 120.
- 11 Raymond Durgnat, *A Mirror for England*, p. 187.
- 12 Green, *I've Lost my Little Willie*, p. 120.
- 13 Ibid., p. 68.
- 14 It is perhaps of use in estimating the number of appearances to list the number of appearances: Kenneth Williams (24), James (19), Kenneth C. Williams (14), Bernard B. Williams (9), Terry Scott (7). Joan Williams (1), any significant change in the number of appearances.
- 15 Orwell, 'The Art of Donald McGill', p. 157.

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