

The Representation of Englishness in Shane Meadows's film *This Is England*

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<p>The main aim of this thesis is to analyze the representation of Englishness in Shane Meadows’s film <i>This Is England</i>. The study concentrates on Englishness from the point of view of the working class, and includes such themes as violence, masculinity and national identity, which are all connected to the film’s perception of Englishness.</p> <p>Before analyzing the film itself, this thesis discusses cultural theories that are related to my reading. The studies I have chosen to use in this thesis present themes that I later use to analyze <i>This Is England</i>. In this section, I have discussed the idea identity, more specifically national identity, and related these concepts to the theme of Englishness in itself. Furthermore, I have discussed the concepts of subculture and particularly the idea and ideology of skinheads since they affect the reading of the film immensely.</p> <p>In my analysis, I have looked at the film from various aspects, keeping in mind the background influence of the working class. Firstly I have discussed the idea of community in relation to the film. I have argued that community is important to the group the film represents and that it becomes almost like a family to them. I have also argued that the notions of work, violence and masculinity are strongly connected to the idea of Englishness in the 1980s working class mentality and therefore they are very much present in the film as well. In addition to these themes, I have studied the diversity of Englishness in the form of characters and their ideological differences. I have also discussed the use of symbols that the film uses in order to enhance a specific view on Englishness.</p> <p>In conclusion, I have offered an analysis of the representation of Englishness in Meadows’s <i>This Is England</i>. My reading shows that the film presents Englishness in various forms and therefore the concepts is complex and multisided. Englishness is not merely an idea but it is present in everyday and in every person.</p>			
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1. Introduction

I have been interested in skinhead and mod culture for quite a while. As the lifestyle and especially the music often associated with skinheads, including ska, punk and rock steady is close to my heart, I decided to write my MA thesis on a topic dealing with them and chose Shane Meadows's film *This is England* as my study subject. Since Meadows is famous for depicting the life of the Midlands' youth, I chose the film that represents the 1980s skinheads since I find it brings out the struggle of finding an identity.

1.1 Aims and Structure

The aim of this thesis is to analyze the depiction of Englishness in Shane Meadows's movie *This Is England*. In my study I will utilize mostly the tools of cultural studies since cinema is a part of our modern culture. In addition to placing the main focus on Englishness, my study will address such themes as identity, nationalism, subculture and the working class. The concept of the working class is especially important for my study since all of the characters in *TIE* belong to the working class and thus identify themselves accordingly.

In my thesis I will first discuss theoretical aspects of Englishness. Firstly, I will explain the concept of identity since it is a key term to understanding Englishness. Secondly, I will explain the term nationalism, which is closely related to Englishness. Thirdly, I will take a closer look at the term Englishness itself. Then, I will study the term subculture and furthermore the concept of skinheads since I find that they are important terms to understand in relation to the representations of Englishness in the film. Finally, I will discuss the

concept of working class England in more detail in order to create a sense of background to the analysis of the film.

In the analytical section, I will apply the previously discussed ideas and theories to the film. When analyzing the film, my focus is on the working class community in particular, I will discuss such issues as how masculinity and violence correlate with the English working class in *This Is England*, and how Englishness means different things to different characters. I will, for example, concentrate on comparing how Englishness is portrayed in the behaviour of the film's white English and non-native characters. In addition to these themes, I will also analyze the symbols of Englishness depicted in the film. In this section, I will show how Meadows utilizes music in creating certain kind of atmosphere for specific scenes. I will also discuss the landscape of the film since it is clearly linked with the view of Englishness that the film depicts. In addition, I will study the documentary material that Meadows uses to connect the film to the 1980s.

In order to analyze the material correctly, one has to keep in mind that the film was released in 2006 and therefore, it can be said that it is a representation of the past Englishness, particularly that of the 1980s. The story is told as a representation of the past from the viewpoint of the present day. Therefore, it might emphasize certain features of the past to make the story more affective.

1.2 Director and the Film

According to Shane Meadows's unofficial website, *This Is England* was Meadows's breakthrough film after he had been making films with a low budget and very limited

success (online). Meadows's official UK website states that Shane Meadows was born in Uttoxeter, Staffordshire on 26 December, 1972 (online). Meadows's first connection with the film industry took place in 1994 when he volunteered his services to Intermedia Film and Video Ltd. In exchange for his free labour, he would be able to borrow camcorders and use the editing equipment to make his own films (online). Eventually, one of Meadows's short films, *Where's the Money, Ronnie?*, caught the eye of Channel 4 that consequently commissioned Meadows to film a documentary. The documentary provided Meadows with the money to start making his own films: in the following years he filmed several projects such as *Twentyfour Seven*, *A Room for Romeo Brass* and his critically acclaimed film *Dead Man's Shoes* (online).

This Is England is Meadows's biggest success so far. It is semi-autobiographical and thus is loosely connected to Meadows's own experiences as a young skinhead. According to the official *This Is England* website, the film has received many prizes at film festivals, which include the British Independent Film Awards for the best movie and the most promising newcomer (online).

The movie *This is England* (later referred to as *TIE*) is set in the 1980s England where hippies have vanished and the 1980s influences in music, culture and politics have started to make their way into the people's lives. The protagonist of the movie is Shaun Field, a lonely pre-teen who has recently lost his father in the Falklands War. At the beginning of the film, Shaun is a young-looking 12-year-old who is bullied at school. After another painful school day, he comes across a group of teenage skinheads led by Woody. Shaun is accepted into the group and he becomes somewhat of a little brother to Woody. The gang influences Shaun's sense of identity and the change in Shaun is clearly visible: he is shown wearing a new Ben Sherman shirt, a new haircut and Dr. Marten boots. Most importantly, though, he

begins to change from the boy being bullied into one who is an accepted member of a “tough” skinhead group.

The group is later rejoined by an old friend, Combo, who has just been released from prison. Like many other disappointed skinheads, Combo has been recruited by the National Front. Combo then introduces the right wing, openly racist, party to the group which subsequently begins to fracture. Some of the skinheads, including Shaun, decide to join Combo. This new group, now led by Combo, beats up a Pakistani shopkeeper and attends a National Front meeting. The film meets its climax with Combo’s mental breakdown. Close to the end of the movie, Combo beats up Milky, the only black member of the apolitical group. Shaun witnesses this violent act and consequently starts questioning his loyalty to Combo. The film ends with Shaun throwing a St. George’s Cross flag into the ocean.

The film received great reviews especially in the British Press. Mark Kermode comments the following in his review in *The Observer* that is quoted on the film’s official website: “A terrifically open, honest and engaging portrait of British skinhead culture in the early Eighties. One of the most valuable and important films of the year” (online). Peter Bradshaw comments the film in his review in *The Guardian* in the following way:

Meadows boldly attempts to reclaim the skinhead from the traditional neo-Nazi image, explicitly distinguishing his characters from a separate racist influence, and presenting them as an anarchic youth tribe that idolised West Indian music. He sees their susceptibility to the extremist right as a poignant and even tragic part of their fatherless culture, literally and figuratively orphaned by the times. (Bradshaw, online)

All in all, *TIE* has received good reviews from all over Europe and has claimed a good reputation to the point that the story of the film continues in a TV spin-off. The TV series consists of two independent mini-series that are called *This Is England '86* and *This Is*

England '88. According to several sources, such as Meadows' official website, there will, in all probability, be a *This Is England '90* as well.

1.3 Representation of Englishness in English Cinema

Along with literature and music, cinema is one of the key media that enhances the feeling of togetherness in specific communities. Andrew Higson argues in his study *Film England: Culturally English Filmmaking since the 1990s* that cinema reminds people of why they are tied to each other, what their national history is, and why they belong to a certain nation that differs from other countries (Higson 1). Higson continues to argue that cinema creates this sense of nationality by creating certain kind of stories that appeal to the audience (Higson 1). These stories often consist of the everyday life of the nation: the mundane, the landscapes, and “the unremarkable” that are represented so that they are a part of the nation's identity (Higson 1). Cinema enables to tell a story of what a nation appears to be like, “what its people look like, and how they speak and behave and dress” (Higson 1).

As Meadows's *TIE* is a representation of the past, particularly of the 1980s, it is important to look at other representation of the 1980s Britain. One of the best known examples of this is Stephen Daldry's film *Billy Elliot* (2000). Daldry's movie tells a story of a miner's boy who wants to become a professional ballet dancer. The background of the 1980s is essential in this film because Billy's dad and his brother are both miners and thus a part of the miners' strike of 1984. Steven Blandford argues in his study *Film, Drama and the Break-Up of Britain* that *Billy Elliot* is essentially a “part of a long-standing tradition of presenting English identity in terms of class and regional conflict” (30). While the movie represents traditional class anger, it also gives a new perspective on the 1980s. Blandford

states that *Billy Elliot* introduces the possibility of change and individual will than can separate a person from “the collective action of the kind that fails so badly in the film’s background” (30). Like *TIE*, *Billy Elliot* also studies the questions of class and regionalism.

Other rather famous representations of the 1980s England are Julian Gilbey’s *Rise of the Fightsoldier* (2007) and Alan Clarke’s movies *The Firm* (1989) and *Made in Britain* (1982). These movies, along with Danny Boyle’s *Trainspotting* (1996), are often seen to depict the violence and aggressiveness of the 1980s and the early 1990s. According to Carl Neville’s essay collection *Classless: Recent Essays on British Film*, the decade in British cinema is known as a decade when “a certain amount of non-specific, seemingly apolitical large-scale civil disobedience happened every Saturday, where the Football Hooligans were thorn in the flesh of the Party of Law and Order” (36). Neville goes on to argue that especially Clarke’s films have a “certain punk revelling in the antisocial, the negativity and nihilism of the central characters, a core of intransigently oppositional subjectivity that can neither be co-opted into the comfort of bourgeois living nor broken by the apparatus of State” (36).

These movies, along with many other films that represent the 1980s, are violent, aggressive, full of drugs and told from the proletarian point of view. Just like *Billy Elliot* and *TIE*, these movies represent the social conflicts of the 1980s, whether in the form of football hooligans, like in *The Firm* and *Rise of the Fightsoldier*, or miner strikes, as in *Billy Elliot*, or skinhead and the radicalized right (as in *Made in Britain* and *TIE*).

In addition to being a representation of the 1980s, *TIE* is also a representation of the past since it was filmed in 2006. Higson discusses the matter of cinema being able to represent the English past, and argues that “representations of the past play a vital role in establishing images of identity – and indeed, identities of both place and people” (191). Some films that

are considered to represent the past play with the “exotic otherness” of the unfamiliar past and others try to establish the similarities of the filmed past to the present situation (191). Higson argues that British films that have adopted the past as its subject can be divided into groups according to the timeframe they represent (191). The cinema of the past seems to be mainly interested in the period between the years 1800-1939 (192). The representation of the very recent past, as is the case with *This Is England*, is also a part of the British cinema making but not necessarily as popular as other period representations (Higson 192).

The representation of Englishness in English cinema has a long and a complex tradition. The movies that represent the 1980s Englishness are often associated with a certain kind of violence and aggression that the most popular English movies of the 1990s, for example *Notting Hill* and *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, lack. The films depicting the 1980s are often told from a proletarian perspective and therefore they have a working class point of view that is often missing from the 1990s movies.

2. Theory of Englishness

In this chapter, I will discuss key concepts related to the notion of Englishness. I will introduce concepts such as identity, nation, subculture, and class. I have chosen these particular issues for discussion because they are important to understand in order to interpret *TIE*. The section that discusses the concept of skinheads, for example, is essential since it unveils the background of the 1980s skinheads.

2.1 Identity

Identity as such is a familiar term for the common man. The precise definition of such a popular term, however, can be difficult. Identity has been researched in many fields of study, especially sociology. The concept of identity has been reflected on, for example, by famous thinkers such as Descartes, Kant and Hume (Baumeister 11-13). In this study, however, I am interested in the cultural aspect of identity and therefore, I will concentrate on the ways in which culture and identity interact with each other.

Chris Barker defines the term identity in his *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice* “as an emotionally charged discursive description of ourselves that is subject to change” (216). Barker divides identity into two categories: self-identity, which is a person’s own view of oneself, and social identity, which is the picture other people have about us. Self-identity is shaped by biographical stories, but instead of being something that one can possess, it “is a mode of thinking about ourselves” (217). As self-identity changes throughout a person’s life, it is not a concrete picture of oneself but an ever-changing image that entails one’s past, present and also one’s hoped-for future (Barker 217-8).

In addition to Barker, various other sources state that the outside world influences a person's identity. George Schöpflin, for instance, divides the field of identity into two subcategories in his study *The Dilemmas of Identity*: the identity of an individual and the identity of a collective (51). These two categories are seen to impact each other (51). According to Schöpflin, "identities are anchored around a set of moral propositions that regulate values and behavior, so that identity construction necessarily involves ideas of 'right' and 'wrong', desirable/undesirable, unpolluted/polluted etc" (53). These collective norms are important to the identity of the group, and every collective seeks recognition and acceptance for their values (55).

Roy F. Baumeister defines identity briefly in his study *Identity, Cultural Change and the Struggle for Self* in the following way: "identity is a definition, an interpretation, of the self" (4). In line with the views of Baker and Schöpflin, Baumeister argues that identities only live within a society (or in Schöpflin's terms, collective) and that they cannot be separated from their outer context (264). According to Baumeister, the outer context of identity can, for example, consist of a society whose laws direct the way a person living in the society thinks and what kind of moral views they may have (264). In so doing, the society provides a context for identity. Another example of an outer context given by Baumeister is religion, which can in some cases restrict the way in which people form their identity (264).

In addition to religion and society, family also has a major influence on people's identity. It sets rules, restrictions, and expectations to an individual. But because society and family have become less rigid in controlling people, the modern individual can find fulfillment of identity outside family, too (Baumeister 265). According to Baumeister, "(s)ociety – both the general society at large and the specific family and social world of the individual – thus forms a rather incomplete context for identity" (265).

What makes identity so hard to define is the fact that a person has many qualities that are intertwined with each other. National identity, for example, can be one quality in a person but it is connected to the other qualities that a person has: ethnicity, sexual orientation and so forth. Identity is therefore a difficult concept to define precisely. Although in the most basic form everyone's identity consists of the personal and the social, everybody's identity remains different.

2.2 National Identity

This section examines the concepts of nation and national identity with their many varying uses. I will mostly concentrate on national identity from the point of view of culture, since it differs from what is seen as political nationalism. I will also mainly concentrate on the national identity of Britain since it is relevant to my study.

2.2.1 Nation and Nationality in General

Nationalism in general is a concept that is hard to explain explicitly since most uses of the term overlap with each other. Anthony Smith has defined the term in his study *Nationalism* in the following way:

The ideology of nationalism has been defined in many ways, but most of the definitions overlap and reveal common themes. The main theme, of course, is an overriding concern with the nation. Nationalism is an ideology that places

the nation at the centre of its concerns and seeks to promote its well-being. But this is rather vague. We need to go further and isolate the main goals under whose headings nationalism seeks to promote the nation's well-being. These generic goals are three: national autonomy, national unity and national identity, and, for nationalists, a nation cannot survive without a sufficient degree of all three. This suggests the following working definition of nationalism: An ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy unity and identity for a population which some of its members deem to constitute and actual or potential "nation". (9)

James Tilley and Anthony Heath have argued in their study "The Decline of British National Pride" that nationalism is often seen as something that promotes solidarity within a nation (661). David Miller says that "In acknowledging a national identity, I am also acknowledging that I owe a special obligation to fellow members of my nation which I do not owe to other human beings" (Miller qtd. in Tilley and Heath 661). According to Tilley and Heath, nationalism is thus "a basis of mutual obligation and social solidarity: one feels obligation to one's fellow nationals, for example to provide for them in their old age, that one does not feel towards member of other nations" (661). Consequently, nationality is seen as something that holds a nation together both mentally and culturally.

Tilley and Heath argue that the modern age has rapidly decreased the value of nationalism in Western countries (662). Globalization and economic integration are influencing traditional national identities; individuals are nowadays more free to choose their own identity than ever before (662). As well as national identity, also national pride has shown signs of decline in the modern world (662).

2.2.2 Nation and Nationalism in Britain

Tilly and Heath take modern Britain as an example of the state of national identity. In their view, Britain has been a multinational state from the beginning. Britain's constructed national identity

was built in the course of the eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries on conflict with the 'Other' of Catholic France, on the common project of the British Empire with its economic and military successes and opportunities and on shared Protestant religious and cultural traditions[...] More recently the foundation of the welfare state has been a major source of pride and perhaps in a literal as well as metaphorical sense, of social cohesion. (662)

Tilly and Heath also argue that Britain has been particularly vulnerable in the process of modernization. They have lost the clear 'Other', and their influence in political issues of the world has declined. Britain has also seen a decline in religiousness, and the nation has been challenged from within by the rise of Scottish and Welsh nationalism (662). In addition to inner turmoil, Britain has been dealing with immigration and ethnic pluralization. These matters bring another level to the question of national identity: can immigrants fit into the mould of British identity and is the search for common culture and a common nation left unaccomplished?

Michael Billig speaks about nationalism from the perspective of the mundane. In *Banal Nationalism* he takes the period of the Falklands War as an example of the strong sense of nationality in the British public. According to Billig, the war was not fought merely with guns but with national rhetoric, such as the speeches of Margaret Thatcher, that

influenced the minds of the public (3). Thus, language, especially the rhetoric of language, and nationalism are strongly linked with each other. Nationalism and nationalist rhetoric however, are more than war-time concepts; they live and are reproduced in the everyday life on the nation (Billig 6). For this specific notion of nationalism Billig introduced the concept of *banal nationalism* which he defines as “the ideological habits which enable the established nations of the West to be reproduced” (6). Billig argues that in order for the daily reproduction of nationality to occur, people have to repeat the beliefs, habits and practices of the nation. This repetition, however, must be done in a mundane manner for it to be almost unseen and unnoticed (Billig 6).

Nationalism and national identity are a part of people’s daily lives no matter how little they may show. According to Billig, it is in a time of crisis when people’s national identity emerges and starts to form firmer ground (7). Furthermore, Billig states that

nationhood provides a continual background for their (Western countries) political discourses, for cultural products, and even for the structuring of newspapers. In so many little ways, the citizenry are daily reminded of their national place in a world of nations. However, this reminding is so familiar, so continual, that it is not consciously registered as reminding. The metonymic image of banal nationalism is not a flag which is being consciously waved with fervent passion; it is the flag hanging unnoticed on the public building. (8)

In addition to nationalism in the large scale, nationalism is more shown in the everyday life of the citizens. Tim Edensor argues in his study *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life* that national identity is still present in the present since it is a part of the

mundane, everyday and the popular (vi). Edensor argues that national identity is performed at symbolic stages that include particular symbolic sites such as statues and so forth and more importantly to my study, “the everyday landscape of the domestic and routine life” (69). Like Billig, Edensor says that the everyday performances are important in creating national identity and that they are the key to its persistence (88). National identity can be enhanced with such simple activities as watching sports or drinking alcohol in a certain manner (89). This, in turn, creates a certain “this is what we are” mentality, which in itself helps to enable the national identity (91).

To conclude, national identity, especially cultural national identity, lies in the mundane. Nationality is in people’s language, phrases and in such simple things as the flags in school yards’ poles.

2.3 Englishness

Keep St George in my heart,
 Keep me English,
 Keep St George in my heart,
 I pray,
 Keep St George in my heart,
 Keep me English,
 Keep me English till my dying day. (online)

So sing the English football fans in chorus at football stadiums. Although the lyrics of this song might be interpreted as marking their confidence in being English, according to Simon

Featherstone in its center lies worry, not confidence (2). Featherstone argues in his *Englishness: Twentieth Century Popular Culture and the Forming of English Identity* that the message of these lyrics is that “the English national saint might forestall any alarming change of nationality during a lifetime. The singer, it implies, might one day wake up as someone else – not English, without nationhood or, most worryingly of all perhaps, of another nation“ (2).

Englishness has been reflected on as long as England has existed. According to Jopi Nyman’s *Imagining Englishness: Essays on the Representation of National Identity in Modern British Culture*, several scholars have argued that the key moment in the formation of Englishness occurs in the late nineteenth century when idealized ways of being English were needed in order to fight the economic crises and many internal others, such as homosexuals, and external others such as France (39). Some scholars have also argued that Englishness was born earlier than in the 19th century and therefore the 19th century Englishness would only be the description of modern Englishness. However, the 19th century Englishness is the most relevant to my study and thus I will concentrate on explaining it further.

Englishness in the nineteenth century differs from earlier versions. Philip Dodd argues in his *Englishness: Politics and Culture 1880-1920* that the remaking of Englishness took place in many areas and that it was born from the ideas of many different social groups. Therefore, it is hard to say that the progression of Englishness had a common intention (9). Dodd takes the example of the working class and argues that their sense of Englishness is different from that of the rich upper class (9). Dodd also points out that the working class’s “way of live [is] simple (not complex), their mode of address direct (not sophisticated), their skills practical (not theoretical), their appropriate sphere of activity, local (not national)” (9).

Many scholars have sought to analyze the picture of Englishness by separating “us” from “them” (or “the Other”). One of these scholars is Antony Easthope who states in his study *Englishness and National Culture* that national identity is a product of modernity. Easthope argues that it is the concept of empiricism that has been present in the conversations dealing with Englishness. He presents a chart of great oppositions that divide the meaning of identity into “us” versus “them”.

objective/subjective

concrete/abstract

practice/theory

clear/obscure

fact/fiction

serious/silly

common sense/dogma

sincere/artificial

amateur/professional

hard/soft

truth/pleasure

right/wrong

Protestant/Catholic

English/French

home/foreign

centre/extreme

virility/effeminacy

masculine/feminine (Easthope 90)

As seen in the chart, Englishness could be depicted as masculine, right, hard, serious and perhaps most importantly home. The Other, on the other hand, is seen as feminine, soft, silly, artificial and so forth. This means that Englishness is often seen as strong and powerful whereas the Other, as in the case of *TIE* the immigrants, is seen as feminine and silly. This means that being English means having power and masculinity and being the Other means lacking power and being otherwise less than the English.

In recent years, Englishness has become a widely studied theme in literary and cultural studies. Research has been conducted for example of the ways in which writers from T. S. Eliot to George Orwell address Englishness in their works. Featherstone argues that until recently literary studies have been the primary investigators of English identity (4). By the turn of the twentieth century other fields of study, such as sociology and historical studies, have also taken part in the discussion about Englishness and English identity. Featherstone also mentions the importance of film and cinema in the shaping and studying the modern English identity (4).

In present-day England, an uncomplicated definition of Englishness is hard to come by. David Gervais states in the preface of his book *Literary England: Versions of 'Englishness' in Modern Writing* that it has been a long time since England has been seen as “precious stone set in the silver sea” (xiii). Gervais argues that ever since the Great War England has become somewhat nostalgic and that nowadays England is too complicated to inspire simple patriotism. Despite its complicated nature, Englishness lives in the popular

culture of the present day England. The football stadiums, for example, roar with songs like the one mentioned in the beginning of this chapter. Featherstone suggests that this kind of popularity of nationalism can be

partly explained by a historical willingness to subordinate national expression to broader domestic and global structures of colonial and imperial power. Such a process has also led to the absence of the cultural imperatives that shaped the intellectual foundation of other national revivals in the United Kingdom. England has no threatened indigenous language such as Welsh or Gaelic; it has no urgent need to record and preserve residual social formations or traditional cultures that might encode national identity; and it acknowledges no tradition of resistance to an outside cultural hegemony that is represented in the United Kingdom by England itself. (3)

The contemporary Britain with its multicultural inhabitants generates a need to adjust its once exclusive notion into one that is more inclusive. Nyman argues that:

The belief in the British race and nation as embodiment of the national character has been called into question, and different constructions of British identities have emerged – terms such as Black British and British Asian now challenge the traditional division into the four traditional ethnicities. Similarly, the increased migration from the Commonwealth and former Dominions since the 1950s, and contemporary immigration from various part of Europe,

has called into question migration policies and notions of citizenship that can no longer be based on a racial basis. (47)

Nyman also argues that in contrast with the more inclusive view of modern Britain, many feel the need to go back to the more traditional view of Britishness or Englishness, which often also includes racial views. Immigrants are therefore seen as the Other that influences the once homogeneous social space (47).

Englishness as a concept is ever changing and therefore hard to define precisely. The term in itself is vague and, depending of the person and context it has different meanings.

2.4 Cultural Behavior

In this section I take a look at the terms subculture and how it relates and differs from the term *culture*. I will also shed some light on the term skinhead since I have found that its original use is not widely known and I find it is important to understand it in order to understand my thesis on Englishness.

2.4.1 Subculture as a Social Identity

In order to define properly what the term subculture entails, one needs to understand the concept of culture. In *Encyclopedia Britannica*, for example, the concept of culture is defined in the following way:

Culture (is) the integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior. Culture, thus defined, consists of language, ideas, beliefs, customs, taboos, codes, institutions, tools, techniques, works of art, rituals, ceremonies and other related components. The development of culture depends upon humans' capacity to learn and to transmit knowledge to succeeding generations. ("Culture", Encyclopedia Britannica)

The term culture is often divided into smaller units, which can entail, as written above, matters such as art and language. Culture can be seen to consist of different types of subdivisions of culture called subcultures. According to Sarah Thornton, subcultures are often defined as social groups that have organized themselves according to similar interest and practices (1). Some subcultures are quite secretive whereas others showcase their specific culture for example by the way they dress, what kind of music they listen to or their overall behavior (Thornton 1).

Milton M. Gordon delineates subculture in "The Concept of the Sub-Culture and Its Application" in the following way. Subculture is a concept

used to refer to a sub-division of a national culture, composed of a combination of factorable social situations such as class status, ethnic background, regional and rural or urban residence, and religious affiliation, but *forming in their combination a*

functioning unity which has an integrated impact on the participating individual. (41; original emphasis)

The prefix ‘sub-’ in the term subculture ascribes a lower or secondary position to its main term ‘culture’. This secondary position of subcultures therefore makes the assumption that subcultures are subordinate. According to Thornton, there are two main ways in which subcultures have been considered to be beneath but within society (4). Firstly, subcultures themselves, as well as outsiders, often differentiate them from the mass culture (4). The deviance of a subculture can be seen for example in criminal “underground” subcultures that are differentiated partly from above because they do not obey the law set by their society, and partly from below by their own members (4). Secondly, subcultures have often been othered because of their specific age, ethnicity or social class (4).

Subculture can be a hard term to define precisely since many other terms such as ‘community’ and ‘public’ are closely linked to its meaning. Therefore, making distinct differences between common terms associated with the term ‘subculture’ such as ‘community’ and ‘culture’ can be difficult. According to Sarah Thornton, the term ‘community’ is the closest one to subculture (2). Community usually refers to a group of people that are a somewhat permanent population (2). Such a community would for example be a neighborhood in which the term ‘family’ is an important constituent. Subcultures, on the other hand, are often studied apart from the immediate influence of family (2). Subcultures can thus in a sense create their own family away from their blood family.

The term ‘public’ is also associated and contrasted with subculture. The public is often seen as “a body of rational individuals, responsible citizens who are able to form their own opinion and express it through officially recognized democratic channels” (Thornton, 2).

Subcultures, on the other hand, tend to be unofficial and somewhat disaffected (2). Unlike the 'public' or the 'mass', subcultures are usually also automatically associated with some sort of opposition, whether it is to so called mass culture or something else (2).

Subcultures can be approached from several viewpoints such as those mentioned above: gender, ethnicity and social class. An example of a study conducted about subculture and social class is Phil Cohen's "Subcultural Conflict, Working-Class Community". In his study Cohen defines sub-culture from the perspective of the working class youth of the later part of the 20th century such as skinheads and mods. In his view, the function of a subculture is to express and resolve the contradictions that the upcoming youth have with their parents:

There are basically four subsystems [of a subculture], which can be divided into two basic types of forms. There are the relatively 'plastic' forms – dress and music – which are not directly produced by the subculture but which are selected and invested with subcultural value in so far as they express its underlying thematic. Then there are the more 'infrastructural' forms – argot and ritual – which are most resistant to innovation but, of course, reflect changes in the more plastic forms. I'm suggesting here that mods, parkas, skinheads, crombies are a succession of subcultures which all correspond to the same parent culture and which attempt to work out, through a system of transformations, the basic problematic or contradiction which is inserted in the subculture by the parent culture. (94)

In addition to Cohen's view on the importance of social class, Dick Hebdige discusses the importance of style in subcultures in his study *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*. Hebdige argues that

Style in subculture is, then, pregnant with significance. Its transformations go 'against nature', interrupting the process of 'normalization'. As such, they are gestures, movements towards a speech which offends the 'silent majority', which challenges the principle of unity and cohesion, which contradicts the myth of consensus. (18)

Subculture is a term that entails many different views and thus it can be hard to define precisely. The term is often associated with youth culture and studied continuously to this day. As old subcultures, such as those of the skinheads and mods, slowly disappear, new subcultures such as goths and metal take their place in the center stage.

2.4.2 Skinheads

When most people hear the word "skinhead" they immediately think of a bold, rough looking person with a white pride ideology. Although this might be true in most cases of today's world, the Skinhead Movement did not begin as a right wing racially motivated phenomenon. Instead, according to various sources, it began in the late 1960s as a multicultural movement which modelled itself on mod culture. Whereas the mods were

sharply dressed in expensive suits and upwardly mobile, the skinheads wanted to return to the roots of the mod culture and represent the working class.

The gradual shift from the mod culture to the skinhead culture is described by Timothy S. Brown in his study *Subcultures, Pop Music and Politics: Skinheads and "Nazi Rock" in England and Germany*:

With the mod subculture swerving ever closer to the commodified, Carnaby-street hippie style of "swinging London," certain mods began to emphasize the more proletarian aspects of the look, cutting their hair shorter and replacing dandified suits and expensive shoes with jeans and heavy boots. These no-frills "hard mods" prefigured the arrival of the first skinheads. (156)

Phil Cohen describes the change from mods to skinheads in the following way:

Their life-style [skinheads], in fact, represents a systematic inversion of the mods – whereas the mods explored the upwardly mobile option, the skinheads explored the lumpen. Music and dress again became the central focus of the life-style; the introduction of reggae [...] and the 'uniform' signified a reaction against the contamination of the parent culture by middle-class values and a reassertion of the integral values of working-class culture through its most recessive traits – its Puritanism and chauvinism. (95)

In addition to mod culture, the rising skinhead culture received its inspiration from the Jamaican immigrants who modeled themselves on the rude-boy look of the Kingston ghettos of Jamaica (Brown 157). The roughness of the Jamaican culture and the cleaner, stripped down version of mods combined resulted in the look that became to be called with the term skinhead (Brown 157).

The most noticeable feature of the original skinhead was in all likelihood their outer appearance. Firstly one would notice the bold head, cropped hair, or short hair on women. The pieces of clothing that were worn were very specific: Ben Sherman button-down shirts; heavy boots, preferably Dr. Martens; Fred Perry tennis shirts; tight blue jeans, in most cases Levi's; braces and a bomber-style jacket; a Harrington jacket or a Levi's denim jacket (Brown 158). In the evening skinheads would most likely wear suits. The look was masculine and a representation of the working class youth (Brown 158).

One of the most important elements of the skinhead culture is music. Unlike the mods who mostly listened to the American soul music, the skinheads adopted the Jamaican reggae as their own, and as Brown suggests, artists like Desmond Dekker became a prominent element of the people who identified themselves as skinheads (158). So the original identity of the skinhead was far away from the white power identity of the later skinhead. The original skinheads were proud listeners of Jamaican black music and also proud friends of the immigrants. They were the face of the working class.

Later on, in the 1970s, the skinhead culture declined only to be reborn in the late 1970s. This time, though, their culture was gradually splitting into two groups: the apolitical, so called traditional skins, and the right-wing politically motivated group. Hilary Pilkington describes the rise of the second-wave skinheads in "No Longer 'On Parade': Style and the Performance of Skinheads in the Russian Far North" in the following way:

(The) second-wave skinhead [...] appeared alongside the punk scene from 1976. In the United Kingdom, this was a period of economic decline and increased immigration and, given their territorially defensive predisposition, skinheads quickly became a target for recruitment by racist movements, such as the National Front and the British Movement, that were gaining momentum at the time. This racist strand of the skinhead movement was associated with the use of Nazi symbols and Oi! Music. (190)

The radical right-wing skinheads also started to dress differently from the traditional skins. Boots became taller, tattoos became more visible, and the former jacket style was replaced with military surplus MA-1 jackets (Brown 159). Although the meticulous dress code might sound unimportant, it often was the only external difference between the traditional skins and the radical right (159). Both groups made an effort to differentiate themselves from each other so that everybody would know in which group people belonged to but yet the appearances of the two groups were never completely different.

Although clothing styles cannot be said to be straightly political, the concern of the traditional skins to stay true to their roots was most visibly emphasized in their insistence on the right kind of clothing and the right kind of music. Skinhead culture, like any other subculture, is still ultimately about being in the company of likeminded people. Their outer appearance was just one way of expressing to the others that there was a group in existence.

The traditional skinheads were working-class. Their outer appearance was visibly masculine, hard and also aggressive. Their short hair represented their proletarian attitudes and also differentiated them from the “feminized” hippie man of the 1960s (Brown 160).

2.5 Class in Film

Class as a concept has existed for as long humans have ranked each other's above one another. As class can mean multiple things, it is important to clarify that what class means in this study and how it is relevant to it. *Oxford English Dictionary* defines class in the following way: “[A class is a] system of ordering society whereby people are divided into strata of this type; the pattern of social division created by such a system; a person's position in society as defined by this” (online). The concept of class is important to my study since I will analyze *TIE* utilizing the concept. Because my study material is a film, I will discuss how the working class is represented in film in general. Since the characters of the movie are a part of the working class, I will concentrate on the working class and leave the other classes, such as the middle-class and the upper class undefined.

According to Roger Bromley's essay “The Theme That Dare Not Speak Its Name: Class and Recent British Film”, the working class has been presented in British cinema as an ‘underclass’ that people seem to want to belong to (54). Bromley talk about working class identity in British cinema and argues that

[O]ne medium where the issue of class is still alive is film. Many recent British films [...] are shaped by the processes which have, however implicitly or idiosyncratically, a class-belonging nature. [...] Other representations of class – for example in *Regeneration*, the Merchant Ivory films or *Land and Freedom* – are sanctioned by periodization or otherwise distance in time. (Bromley 52)

Bromley also argues that there is no specific working class since it has various forms depending on who is talking about it. The definition is influenced by such matters as ethnicity, gender and regionalism (54).

Chris Haylett talks about the ‘underclass’ of working class in his essay “This Is About Us, This Is Our Film!”. Haylett describes “the mud” of the working class as follows:

‘underclass’ is generally held to refer to social groups at the base of the working class whose characteristics are those of long-term unemployment or highly irregular employment, single parenthood and criminality, where some or all of those characteristics are tendentially if not causally related. (70)

Haylett also associates the concept of underclass with “dangerous masculinities and dependent femininities; of antisocial behavior; and of moral and ecological decay” (72)

Aytül Özüm argues in her essay “The Representation of the Working Class and Masculinity and Alan Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*” that working class writing began in the 1950s as a result of the economic and industrial fluctuations (online). In this new economic scenario the men of the working class had more power than women because they had a better chance to be employed. Certain changes were taking place in the society from youth education to marriage and this affected especially the younger proletarian generation. The younger generation began to have its own view on life that was fundamentally different from that of the middle class. There was a new division between “us” versus “them”: working class’s mistrust and anger towards the middle class. According to Özüm,

[c]lass happens when men start to share the same interests as a result of similar experiences which differ from those of the other men with different experiences and social institutions but in addition to this working class was able to preserve its traditionalism and its values through different periods of time. (online)

Özüm also argues that especially the young working class is often considered to be more masculine than feminine (online). Men are the bread-winners and they are the head of the households. According to Özüm, the masculine youth of the working class seem to have a more laid-back attitude and a great deal of self-respect (online). Their group consensus is strong especially in small industrial towns and their families tight-knit.

3. Analyzing *This Is England*

In this chapter I am going to analyze *TIE* from the point of view of Englishness. I will firstly discuss the change in the working class and its effects on the creation of a new identity. Then I will discuss the representation of the film's new working class identity in more detail. I will divide my analysis into sections which entail themes such as violence, masculinity, work, and the symbols of Englishness.

3.1 The idea of Community

TIE is essentially a representation of the British working class in the 1980s, and I find it important to discuss how class and community are represented in it. Most of the characters in *TIE* seem to identify themselves as being a part of the English working class. The working class mentality is a well-defined part of the English culture, and certain features are often associated with it. One of these features is a strong sense of community and togetherness and, as Özüm for example argues, a tight-knit family. The group represented in the film is a heterogeneous and almost a random gang of people: their ages, for example, vary from the youngest character being 12 years old in the beginning of the film to the oldest character being middle-aged. However odd this particular group of people seems to be, they have a strong sense of community.

In the beginning of *TIE*, Shaun is a troubled boy who does not have any friends. After he runs into Woody and the other boys on his way home, he starts to feel as if he belongs

somewhere and, more importantly, that he is a part of some sort of community and no longer an outsider. As Shaun comes from a single parent home and has lost his father in the Falklands, he has no family to speak of and the new group of people takes over its role. He seems to bond with Woody immediately and adopts him as a sort of a big brother.

The almost ritualistic baptism of Shaun to the group takes place when Shaun's head is shaved by Lol and the other skinhead girls. Shaun's mum has bought him a new pair of jeans and boots and the final part of the ritual goes as follows:

[Lol switches on razor]

Lol: Right. Here we go.

Woody: Get that mop off.

Lol: It's coming off.

[. . .]

Woody: Honestly mate, it's sterling. Really smart, in't he? In't he smart, eh? Mate, I'm well impressed.

Girls: There we go, mate. That's you done. Look at that!

Woody: Brush him down. He looks like a Yeti! Oh, mate, so smart, that. Honestly mate you look sterling.

Shaun: So, am I in the gang now?

Woody: Well, not yet. Get your shirt on. Let's see your Ben Sherman.

Shaun: I... I ain't got a Ben Sherman.

Woody: You telling me you've not got a shirt?

Shaun: No. You just told me to get jeans and the boots.

Woody: You having a laugh? You can't go out all nippy, can you? You're gonna have to come back next week. I'll see you, mate.

Shaun: Honestly, have I really gotta go?

Woody: Yeah, really, really. Go on. You're have to get off. Shut t'door behind you, there's a good lad. Oh, hang on, I forgot about summat. I were fucking lying!

Come here and give me a big hug. Come here, fella. I'm really proud of you, mate. You look brilliant. Absolutely brilliant. Get that body covered up before t'girls go mad!

[Shaun puts his shirt on.] (*TIE*)

The ritual of shaving one's head to become a skinhead seems to be important to the group. In order to belong, one needs to look similar. Shaun is told to buy such clothes that are considered important to the image of a skinhead. When Shaun does not have a Ben Sherman shirt, the group makes him believe that he cannot be with them. As Thornton argues, subcultures, such as skinheads, are often known for their similar interests and practices (1). Subcultures have certain kind of rituals that the skinheads of *TIE* also seem to follow: as well as thinking similarly and listening to the same music, the practice of dressing in the same way is also considered to be essential.

The group also seems to be important to its members. The importance of the family is not much discussed in the film since like Shaun, nearly all of the main characters seem to

come from broken homes and therefore, they seek the comfort of family from their friends. Because they do not have a strong sense of belonging with their family, they have created one of their own. This is a common feature of subcultures as well. Like Thornton argues, subcultures are usually formed outside of the immediate family (2). Although the group splits into two groups as the movie progresses, these new groups seem to have the same kind of bond with each other as was the case of the larger group. On one occasion these two groups come together to celebrate Smell's birthday. Smell is a part of the original group and not really keen on Combo and his friend Banjo and the trouble they seem to bring along with them. When Combo's group arrives, Woody's group decides to leave the party in order to avoid causing trouble on Smell's birthday. Neither side seems to be happy about the situation but they can still act respectfully towards each other.

The idea that their friends are their community, or almost their family, seems to be important to the characters of the film. They rely on each other when they feel they need someone to talk to, and just "hang around" with each other when they do not have anything else to do. They seem to have all the love they need in the group and they seem to be happy with their social situation.

3.2 Work

Another important feature associated with working class England is work and the mentality of going to work and providing for your family. As Robert Colls argues in his study *Identity of England*: "Class structure had always been built on occupation – a view of work as basic to human identity" (190). Colls goes on to argue that, unlike the working class, the upper class does not base its identity on work because they have the option not to do so (190). The

middle-class on the other hand likes to refer to work more likely as “profession” than as plain work. In *TIE* work is not emphasized, and the only character that is actually seen going to work is Lol. The role of a provider, unlike Özümler argues of the 1950s situation, is left for the female characters. In addition to Lol, Shaun’s mother has to provide for her son and therefore she is the provider of the family.

In the film, some of the characters are still at school like the main character Shaun. Most of the older characters of the movies are unemployed and they do not seem to be looking for jobs, either. Generally their days seem to pass without any specific purpose, and their attitude seems to be care-free and idle. Their behaviour suggests that they are not taking themselves too seriously but rather want to enjoy the fun parts that life has to offer. Their identities do not seem to include diligence and determination but rather their days are spent at a pub, in the streets or playing football. This suggests the film’s new working class youth have an identity base that does not include work in any sort of way and by avoiding work, they also avoid adulthood and responsibility.

Although the characters belong to working class or even the ‘underclass’ their concept of what that term means seems to differ from that of the previous generations. As Özümler suggests, their philosophy of life seems to be fatalism: everything will come to an end anyway, so why bother to try. This generation seems to be unable to take responsibility for its actions and therefore they live and behave more like children than adults. Woody, for example, seems to be unwilling to stand up for what he feels is right and rather lets others make the harsh comments for him and thus avoids taking responsibility. Meggy, a minor middle-aged character, also seems to avoid adulthood by hanging out with a group of people much younger than he is.

Although work would by default seem to be a major part of the working class identity, in the case of the film's new working class characters this does not seem to be the case. While some of the characters do work, their jobs do not seem to be important to them. Most of the characters seem to ignore the expectations that society and their parents have towards them in issues such as growing up and getting a job and rather decide to live their own lives the way they want to.

Another feature often associated with work and working class and especially the underclass, is a below average income. Since all of the main characters of *TIE* come from working class families, not having a lot of money is familiar to them. They seem to know that they do not have the means to do whatever they want and thus seek to find creative ways to entertain themselves. They play football, listen to music and simply just hang around. The poverty of the characters is shown for example in the way that many of the characters live: their homes are unfurnished and not well looked after. Combo's apartment, for example, seems to be messy, dirty and unfurnished. His idea of a sofa seems to be a mattress of the floor and his curtains are made of old sheets. In addition to cheap living arrangements, the group's choice of clothing partly suggests that they are not the wealthiest people: bomber jackets and boots are durable and inexpensive and the short haircuts do not require a barber.

Work, or the lack of it, is not a priority in the lives of the characters. They seem to have decided that their lives have more to it than working from nine to five and therefore, their days are spent doing something completely different besides hard labour. By not working, the characters ignore the responsibility the society is eager to give them and rather live as they please.

3.3 Masculinity

Masculinity is also frequently associated with the working class England. The characters' masculinity is most visibly showcased in the way they dress. In the beginning of the film Shaun is wearing wide trousers to school and is bullied. As his flare trousers seem feminine and unfashionable to him and the other pupils at the school, his masculinity seems to be compromised by the choice of clothes. Shaun even has a conversation with his mother about the credibility of his outer appearance:

Shaun: I've been picked on three times today. All because of my trousers.

Cynthia: What's wrong with your trousers?

Shaun: Look at the fucking size of them!

Cynthia: Stop swearing. There's nothing wrong with them. Your dad bought you them.

Shaun: They're too big for me!

Cynthia: If you didn't want to wear them, you should have put your school ones on.

Shaun: It's non-uniform day, mum.

Cynthia: What do you want me to do, Shaun? I don't know what to do. (*TIE*)

Since Shaun is a 12-year-old boy, his masculinity is especially vulnerable to harsh comments on wrong kind of clothing. Shaun is also small for his age and therefore seems to feel the need to prove his masculinity in other ways such as by swearing and being aggressive.

After meeting Woody and the other skinheads, Shaun starts to dress like them in order to look tougher and to be a part of the group. Their outer appearance is rough: shaved hair, Ben Sherman shirts, jeans with rolled up legs and Doc Martens boots. Jeans are rolled up to show the shoes that are often associated with the army and thus masculinity and power.

Most of the female characters of *TIE* also dress in a typical skinhead manner. They do not emphasize their femininity but instead wear the same type of clothing than the men: buttoned-up shirts, or Fred Perry polo shirts, jeans (that are the embodiment of working class clothing) or jeans skirts and heavy boots. The girls also have similar haircuts than the male characters of the movie: their heads are at least partly shaven and none of the characters, with the exception of Smell, have long hair that is often associated with being a woman. These girls do not seem to want to be traditionally feminine. Their outer appearance conveys a certain kind of toughness that is often only associated with masculinity. They do not wear high heels and pretty jackets, but prefer combat boots and masculine looking, plain Harrington jackets.

Some of the male characters also have tattoos in visible places: Woody and Combo, for example, have crosses tattooed on their foreheads. Later on, Shaun also has a similar cross tattooed on his finger by Combo to express unity and belonging. As Michael Atkinson says in his study *Tattooed: The Sociogenesis of a Body Art*, “(c)ultural stereotype has long held that tattoos are marks of shame worn only by outlaws, misfits or those fallen from the social grace (23). Along with the outlaws, tattoos are often associated with a masculine toughness

and therefore as in many other subcultures, skinheads also wear tattoos in order to showcase these features. The cross tattoo, whether just a small cross or a picture of a skinhead that has been crucified, is often seen as a symbol of the working class skinhead. It works as a symbol of the sacrifice that a skinhead makes in order to separate his identity from that of the middle class. With these tattoos skinheads brand themselves in the eyes of the “common people” as members of the working class and therefore lesser than the middle class, for example. Combo also has a swastika tattooed in the back of his neck. This, along with his other visible neck tattoos, shows that he is committed to his life as a skinhead and that he is not willing to hide neither his beliefs nor his tough attitude.

Masculinity seems to be important to the characters and their identity as working class youth. In addition to the male character of the film, also the female characters also seem to want to portray a tough outer appearance. Their attitudes, clothing styles and tattoos show their masculinity and enhance the picture of a 1980s skinhead.

3.4 Violence

The masculinised working class is also often related with violence. In *TIE* violence occurs in three different forms: as violence towards friends and family, violence towards material goods and violence towards non-English people. The threat of violence is present right from the beginning of the movie to its very end. In the beginning of the movie Shaun is bullied at school and attacks his verbal abuser, Harvey, after he makes a joke about Shaun’s dead father:

Harvey: Fucking hell, look at them flares. Goof! Goofy! Oi, oi.

Shaun: Talking to me? What?

Harvey: Never knew Keith Chegwin had a son.

Shaun: Piss off.

Harvey: What the fuck are these? [points at Shaun's trousers]

Shaun: These? I'm wearing 'em for a bet. What's your excuse?

Harvey: Cheeky bastard. Woodstock's that way, pal.

Shaun: Fuck off. At least I don't look like Count Dracula.

Harvey: Think you're funny, you little spaz?

Shaun: Yeah. Yeah.

Harvey: Wanna hear a fucking joke, yeah?

Shaun: Yeah, go on, then.

Harvey: How many people can you fit in a Mini?

Shaun: I don't fucking know. How many?

Harvey: Three in the back, two in the front and your fucking dad in the ashtray.

Shaun: You fucker!

[Start fighting] (*TIE*)

Violence seems to be the only way Shaun knows how to solve problems. His aggression seems to be triggered the moment someone mentioned his late father or the Falklands War. Shaun's behaviour suggests that he does not have the correct tools to deal with situations that make him feel anxious or angry. Since Shaun has not had a male figure to look up to in his life, he seems to think that violence is the way in which men deal with problems. It seems to be working for him until the end of the movie when Shaun realizes that violence does not solve the underlying issues.

Violent behaviour also seems to be a fun spare time activity for the characters. The male characters of the film enter an abandoned house armed with sledgehammers and other items in order to destroy the place. Their aggressively violent behaviour seems to be accepted in the group as a part of their identity. Violence is the way the characters express themselves and a mutual activity that they can do together. Their communal aggressive activities seem to bring them joy and entertainment when they feel bored.

The group also uses aggressive behaviour to exclude people from the gang. Gadget, a tubby boy close to Shaun's age, is picked on mainly because of his weight. He seems to be the one who has to do all the chores that no one else wants to do and is to be blamed when something does not go the way the group wants it to. Gadget also operates as a living target for the others to shoot stones at when the group destroy the old building. By choosing not to respect him, the group leaves Gadget almost emasculated and he also has to settle for the position of a servant. Woody even calls him by the nickname "Tubbs", which in the end results in Gadget leaving Woody and the other apolitical skinheads in favour of Combo's group where he can feel empowered and masculine again. Gadget seems to be tired of being bullied and is therefore glad to be a part of a group that provides him with a purpose.

Violence towards non-English people occurs after some of the characters adopt Combo's radical view on white nationalism. The first non-English character to be violated is the local shopkeeper Mr Sandhu. The 12-year-old Shaun goes to his shop and presents the following order:

Shaun: Get me... a hundred fags, two bottles of wine, a bottle of whisky, and ten cans of lager now.

Mr Sandhu: You know what you're gonna have? Nothing.

Shaun: What?

Mr Sandhu: You know you're not supposed to be here. Go. Out.

Shaun: Just fucking get 'em you Paki bastard!

Mr Sandhu: What did you say?

Shaun: Get them, you filthy Paki bastard.

Mr Sandhu: Right, that's it. (*TIE*)

In this section Shaun is clearly using the words and behavioural patterns that he has learned from his older friends, especially from Combo. They have practised insulting phrases and a particularly aggressive looking walking style together in Combo's apartment. Although Shaun has been disrespectful towards Mr Sandhu before, his behaviour and choice of words indicate that he is in the store to cause trouble and make Mr Sandhu feel like a worthless servant. Shaun's rhetoric consists mainly of swearwords and imperative verbs that a

“normal” 12-year-old boy would not use when talking to his local shopkeeper. Shaun, who is clearly still a child, chooses these particular words and verb forms to make a grown man obey him as if he was the child. The scene in Mr Sandhu’s shop goes on as following:

[Mr Sandhu chases Shaun around the store until Combo walks in.]

Combo: What’s going on, mate? Problem?

Mr Sandhu: He’s been calling me a Paki bastard. Open the door.

Combo: Get your fucking hands off him now!

[Slashes a machete at Mr Sandhu.]

Combo: Fucking hands off him. Take what you want, kid. Take the fucking whisky and the ciggies.

[The rest of the group show up and they trash and rob the place.]

Combo: Picking on a kid, fucking hell. Picking on a kid, was you? Eh?

Mr Sandhu: Take what you want and go.

Combo: Shut up! I’m talking. I’m your fucking size. Fuck with me.

Mr Sandhu: You got what you want. Just go now.

Combo: Don’t you fucking dare backchat me, cos I will slay you now where you fucking stand, you fucking Paki cunt. Right? You listen to fucking me! That fucking kid’s dad died for this fucking country. What have you fucking done for it? Fuck all, but take fucking jobs off decent people. Now, listen, son, listen good. We’ll be back here whenever we want, right, cos this is fucking *ours* now. Don’t forget that. Any

fucking time. And clean the place up. It fucking stinks of curry. Fucking stinks. Reeks of the fucking shit. (*TIE*)

Combo's aggressive behaviour towards Mr Sandhu seems to be planned and mechanical. He uses the threat of violence to make Mr Sandhu obey him and listen to his speech about how foreigners do not do anything for England and that they are valueless, almost not human. To add insult to injury, Combo makes a final comment about how the shop "stinks of curry". This can be seen as a typical way to undermine ethnicity and foreign culture. The use of the verb "stink" instead of a neutral verb like "smell" enhances the sharpness of the message. The odour of ethnicity and non-Englishness has to be cleaned up.

Another example of the use of violence towards the non-English occurs when Combo and his white nationalist group disturb three young Pakistani children playing football. The group enters the scene looking and behaving aggressively. They are ready to fight although their enemy consists of three young children. This fact speaks about the nature of the nationalists' violent and racist acts in *TIE*: a group of adults decides to threaten small children or a shopkeeper. In these scenarios where the nationalists initiate violence against foreigners, their targets are always secluded and their numbers fewer than those of the nationalists. The following scene takes place in a secluded alleyway:

Combo: Look at these little fucking sewer rats. Look. Fucking vermin. Oi! [Takes the football from the children.] Now, that's our ball now. Right? And we're playing here. So, I suggest you take fucking Tweedledum and Tweedledee and fuck off home. If I

see you on my streets again... [Takes out a knife.] I'll slash you. And it'll be a hundred times fucking worse. Alright?

Boy: Yeah.

Combo: Now run home, cos Mummy's cooking curry. Go on. (*TIE*)

The stereotypical idea of foreigners eating, cooking or stinking of curry is present here as well. Combo also uses strongly racist rhetoric when threatening these children. He talks about the immigrants being vermin and sewer rats. These are nouns choices that are commonly used in discourse on immigrants.

Gerald V. O'Brien has discussed the issue of metaphors used with reference to immigration in his paper "Indigestible Food, Conquering Hordes, and Waste Materials: Metaphors of Immigrants and the Early Immigration Restriction Debate in the United States". O'Brien argues that by using certain metaphors when talking about immigration, the speech is not mere semantics (31). Immigrants as an organism, for example, has been a popular metaphor that differentiates the body of the immigrant from the body of the natives. O'Brien says that "[j]ust as the integrity of our own bodies may be threatened by contamination external elements, so too is the social body vulnerable to corruption by invading sub-groups" (36). O'Brien argues further that immigrant groups that are especially targeted for control, such as "The Pakis" in *TIE*, are referred to as "parasites or 'low animals' capable of infection and contamination" (43). In *TIE*, the immigrant children playing football are compared to rats and vermin. These two metaphors act as descriptions of immigrants: these pests are the lowest of the low. The idea is that rats are filthy, filled with diseases, and can be considered to be filthy because their skin is brown. Nobody

respects rats; they have to be killed because they spread diseases and are otherwise not wanted.

The film culminates in Combo's violent act against Milky while they are smoking a joint and having a casual conversation at Combo's flat:

Milky: I've got to tell you, mate, you're a good geezer, man. Seriously, I mean, this... this music, this sort of music is the sort of stuff that I listen to, my uncles listen to. [listening to soul music]. Yeah, to me, this is good music.

Combo: What you've gotta remember, Milks, right, is... is I'm an original skinhead. 69', me. But it was people like your uncle, your uncle that introduced that stuff to me. The soul of that music just fucking resonated within us, do you know what I mean?

Milky: And it's people...it's skinheads, like you, true skinheads, like you, keeping that flame alive.

Combo: Yeah. It was fucking unity. It was black and white, together. Know what I mean?

Milky: It should not be forgotten. It shouldn't die.

Combo: You're still flying that flag in that fucking get-out that you're wearing. It's proper. It's real man. That's it, man, we're like brothers now. Yeah? [Shaking each other's hand]

Milky: Serious. For life.

Combo: Yeah, for life. (*TIE*)

At this point Combo and Milky seem to be the best of friends despite all the negative things that have happened between them. The conversation takes an ugly turn, though, when Combo starts asking Milky about his family:

Combo: So how many uncles have you got?

Milky: Erm...I've got three uncles and two aunties.

Combo: So, a big family, then.

Milky: Yeah. I've got...What is it? 22 cousins. One uncle's got, what, seven kids. [...] They're always round at Christmas and stuff like that. We all get together. A big party till late in the morning. It is nice having a big family.

[---]

Combo: Fucking hell, you've got everything, haven't you?

Milky: What?

Combo: You've got the whole lot. You've got the whole fucking perfect package.

Fucking hell. (*TIE*)

The film implies that Combo comes from a broken family and therefore his attitude towards happy families is somewhat distant and almost aggressive. Instead of getting irritated because of Milky's skin colour or because of his heritage, Combo starts to behave aggressively because he realizes that he has never had what Milky has: a happy family. Combo realizes that the immigrant, in this case Milky, has what he does not have and wants

to take it away from him. In addition to his aggressive behaviour, Combo seems to be sad and almost tearful. The conversation continues:

Combo: What do you think makes a bad dad?

Milky: I don't know, mate. I'm not a dad, am I?

[...]

Combo: Niggers [make bad dads].

Milky: What's with the 'nigger'?

Combo: Because you are, aren't you? You're a fucking nigger. Aren't you? Fucking coon.

Shaun: Combo, just leave him!

[Milky just sits and smiles and Combo attacks him.] (*TIE*)

Instead of owning up to his own problems, Combo's reaction to his own sadness and frustration is to attack Milky with a racist agenda. By calling Milky 'a nigger', Combo is distancing himself from the situation and starts treated Milky like a stranger, an unknown immigrant, who deserves to be kicked and punched almost as if Milky were the source of Combo's own problems. With the use of the word 'nigger' Combo chooses to use the term that is often considered to be the most insulting word. As Randall Kennedy says in his study *Nigger: The Strange Career of a Troublesome Word* 'nigger', is a diminishing word that is used to make black people feel like they are the inferior race and its intent is to injure the

person in question (5). This is true in Combo's case as well. His intention seems to be to hurt Milky and take away the pride he feels when talking about his family. Combo also tries to provoke Milky so that he would attack him and not the other way around. If that were the case, Combo would be able to say that he is not to blame for the fight.

3.5 The Diversity of Englishness: rhetoric and ideology

TIE presents many diverse aspects of Englishness. The concept of Englishness is not the same for all of the characters. For some, true Englishness can only be attached to those born and raised in England, while for others Englishness means a cultural unity. In this section I will analyze the varieties of Englishness that can be found in *TIE*. Firstly, I will discuss what the concept of Englishness means to skinheads and the White National Front. Secondly, I will discuss the contradiction of Englishness between the white working class and the foreigners, and finally, I will discuss three different characters to show the diversity of Englishness.

3.5.1 Skinheads versus the White National Front

When the film begins, the skinheads as a group presumably share similar ideas of Englishness. The group includes characters such as Woody and Milky who are the best of friends despite their different heritage. Milky is black and his family comes from Jamaica.

Woody, on the other hand, is a white boy born and raised in England. The group also includes characters such as Gadget, a fat boy with difficulties in school, and Shaun whose father has died in the Falkland War.

To this original group of people, being a skinhead means that those who call themselves skinheads live somewhat peacefully and that they are united mainly because of their similar taste in music and clothing. They wear their Ben Sherman shirts and Doc Marten boots, listen to old soul music, ska and reggae, and have a good time. Although their outer appearance may seem to be tough, they do not seem to want to cause any trouble to anybody. To the group of skinheads represented in the film, skinheads are apolitical and therefore they do not seem to have unified view on who is particularly English and who is not. Quite simply put, they do not care about where people come from; all they care about is what kind of people they are.

The group dynamics in *TIE* change though when Combo and his loyal follower Banjo are released from jail. As Combo used to be a part of the group, he is welcomed back with open arms. The jail, however, has changed Combo's views on life and he comes back with a political agenda. After a while of idle chatting, Combo starts telling a story about a fellow inmate that bothered him in jail:

Combo: I mean, it's just... I mean, for three weeks, right, this fucking wog...Right? Proper horrible. [Milky looks at him with disgust] Sorry, mate, sorry. Didn't mean nothing by it. You know, just slip of the tongue, like. Sorry, This, you know, this brown gentleman...who...he was a bully, he was a horrible bully. No matter what colour he was, he was a bully. And I hate bullies. Don't I, Wood?

Woody: Yeah

Combo: I can't stand them, man. I can't stand 'em. But for three weeks, right, this fella was robbing my pudding.

Gadget: What kind of pudding was it?

Combo: Doesn't matter what pudding it was. The pudding's not the point. The point is, he was taking my pudding off me. And I just thought "Nah, I'm not having it. I don't care. You're not getting my pudding that's it." So, I grapped it and I've gone, "No, mate, no, you're not having it." He was like... [Mimics his Jamaican accent]: "White boy... Give me your pud-pud." Proper! Do you know what I mean? And I've just thought, "No, man." This one day, right, I've been grafting all morning just shovelling shit, constantly, all morning, non-stop. Weren't I? And I'm fucking starving. You know, like that proper hunger. And I'm thinking, "Right, Just eat my pudding, just go and eat my pudding." I've just finished the last mouthful and then, this big black, sweaty hand has just wallop, right in my pudding. Do you know what I mean? Proper big cigar fingers, all over my fucking crumble and custard... I just thought, "No. I'm not having it, I don't care. You're not getting my pudding, that's it." I just took his hand out and just looked him right in the face and I've gone... [Piano music drowns speech] (*TIE*)

At this point Combo starts to get some of the members of the group on his side. Woody, Lol and Milky, however, do not seem to want anything to do with him. As his newfound ideals seem to be discriminating and hard, they seem strange to several characters.

Once again, Combo's rhetoric and choice of words make his innocent-looking storytelling racially motivated. Instead of black or Jamaican, Combo chooses to use the word "wog" when talking about a black man in prison. After Milky looks at him with disgust, Combo supposedly corrects himself by replacing the insulting word with the phrase "brown gentleman". The phrase does not make the comment any less racial since the term is used in an ironical way to further diminish the value of black people. Furthermore, by mimicking a Jamaican accent Combo identifies it as an object of ridicule, as if Jamaican English were not as "proper" as their own accents. Some of the other members of the group laugh at Combo's Jamaican accent and consequently participate in diminishing the value of the inmate in question. More importantly, in so doing they also make Jamaica and especially Milky appear ridiculous.

In addition to this, Combo also talks about the hands of the inmate being big, sweaty, and cigar-like. This way he creates an image of a threatening situation where someone who is bigger in size is able to bully him. In this scenario Combo is the victim of "the cigar fingers" and therefore he is entitled to trash talk him. By using the phrase "cigar fingers" Combo is also making the black prisoner a sexual rival that can either do harm to him or, as stereotypical in racial discourse, steal *our* women.

Next day the group seems to feel confused about the situation. Combo, however, asks them to come around to his place where he makes a speech about what Englishness is and what it used to be. He asks people to join him in evicting the non-English from the country and makes what almost seems like a sales pitch or even a political speech that could be compared to Enoch Powell's "Rivers of Blood" speech. Just like Powell, Combo also uses what Charteris-Black argues in his "Britain as a Container: Immigration Metaphors in the 2005 Election Campaign" is the basic structure of a good political speech: "*logos* (reasoned

argument), *pathos* (appeal to the emotions) and *ethos* (establishing the speaker's ethical credentials)" (567).

The setting of the scene is important since it affects the effectiveness of his speech. The room is almost empty, the curtains are drawn to cover the window, and most importantly, Combo and Banjo are the only ones standing while the others sit on the floor. This makes Combo superior; he is above the rest of the characters and therefore justified to utter them his opinion as the truth:

Combo: I bet you all though I was a right fucking horrible, horrible, horrible little bastard the other day, didn't you?

Woody: A little bit.

Combo: A bit? Tell the truth, Wood, man. I was fucking horrible, weren't I?

Woody: A bit of a bastard, man.

Combo: Yeah. Yeah, well you were a snake. You were a fucking serpent from the Bible, weren't you? Do you wanna know why, Wood? Do you want me to tell you why? Yeah? Cos see that man there, Milky? [Points at Milky] That man there took abuse off me. And I said some horrible things, Milk, and I'm fucking sorry. You let me abuse him. And what did you do? What did you do, Wood?

Woody: I didn't do anything.

Combo: Exactly. Nothing. Fuck all. Neither did any of yous. Not one of yous stood up and made yourself count for that man there. And that was fucking wrong. Milk, honest to God, I'm really glad you came here today. And I mean that, mate, I really mean that.

Cos I've got one question to ask you. Just one question. When you've heard it, if you want to leave, you can leave, that's fine by me. But I've got one question to ask you. Do you consider yourself English or Jamaican? [Silence]

Milky: English

[Combo and Banjo start clapping] (*TIE*)

The importance of being English and furthermore the importance of considering oneself to be English seems to be important to Combo and his nationalist follower Banjo. Combo also stresses the issue of being loyal to one's friends, which could be seen as an expression of *ethos*, the ethical side of Combo's speech. If a friend is in trouble he should not be left behind but instead he should be defended. In his view an Englishman should defend the honour of an Englishman.

Combo then carries on with his speech:

Combo: Lovely. I love you for that. That's fucking great. I'm proud, man. Learn from him. That's a proud man, there. That's what we need, man. That's what this nation has been built on. Proud men. Proud fucking warriors. Two thousand years, this little tiny fucking island has been raped and pillaged by people who have come here and wanted a piece of it. Two fucking world wars, men have laid down their lives for this. For this, and for what? So we can stick our fucking flag in the ground and say, "Yeah, this is England, and this is England [points at his heart], and this is England [points at his head]." And for what? So we can just open the fucking floodgates and let them all come in? And say, "Yeah, come on, come in." Get off your ship. Did you have a safe journey?

Was it hard? Here y'are, here's a corner, why don't you build a shop? Better still, why don't you build a shop and then build a church? Follow your own fucking religions. Do what you want." When the single fucking parents out there, who can't get a fucking flat and they're being given to these... And I'm gonna say it, cos you're gonna have to fucking hear it. We're giving the flats to these fucking Pakis. Right? Who've got 50 and 60 in a fucking flat on their own. Right? We're giving that to them. There's three and a half million unemployed out there. Three and a half million of us, who can't get fucking work. Cos they're taking them all. Cos it's fucking cheap labour. Cheap and easy labour. Fucking cheap and easy, which makes us cheap and easy. Three and a half fucking million! It's not a joke. It's not a fucking joke. (TIE)

This part of Combo's speech is especially interesting since it is very much like a rehearsed political speech. His arguments are strong and his use of language is colourful. He engages his listeners with rhetorical questions about the state of matters. His speech begins with him talking about pride: the pride of being English both at heart and in mind. Being English is being a warrior, being proud to defend a tiny island. As O'Brien argues, war metaphors are powerful because they have the *us against them* imperative (O'Brien 41). The same matter can be analyzed from the perspective of Easthope's great oppositions (90). Whereas England represents *truth* and *right*, the others, in this case the immigrants represent *pleasure* and *wrong*. English are the *masculine* warriors who fight for their land and the immigrants are considered *feminine*, they cannot take care of themselves. This in itself compared to Combo's story about the big, sweaty Jamaican hand wanting to take what is his creates a good opposition. The nationalist "are not having it", they are ready to stand up for their country that has supposedly "been raped and pillaged" for centuries. Combo's exaggeration and specific choice of scenarios leaves the listening characters mesmerised. Combo's speech

strategically leaves out the things that England has perhaps done to other nations. In Combo's mind, England is the only victim.

The speech also attacks the rights of immigrants. Interestingly enough, Combo brings out the freedom of religion. Although none of the characters seem to be especially religious, the right religion, in this case Christianity, still seems to be a big part of what is considered to be the right kind of Englishness. Jonathan Charteris-Black argues that one's own culture is the basis of values and that other cultures and their religions, for example, are thus strange (566). Combo seems to argue that foreign religions are penetrating the core of Englishness and thus destroying the traditional culture.

In addition to religion, Combo also compares immigrants' situation to those of single parents. England cannot house its own people, and still the apartments are given to foreigners who have their whole families living in the same apartment. Next come the facts about the unemployment rates: "Three and a half million of us, who cant' get fucking work. Cos they're taking them all." Here are the facts, Combo's reasoned argument (*logos*). The numbers do not lie, many people are unemployed, which makes it possible for Combo to argue that England does not need any more unemployed people looking for jobs that are scarce to begin with.

In this part of the speech, Combo also uses the strong contrasts of *us* versus *them*, which is a common opposition used both by the working class and by racial groups. *They* are taking something that is *ours*. By stating facts based on numbers, Combo adds more credibility to his speech and gets people to listen to it even more carefully. *They* are the ones that *we* can blame for whatever is wrong in *our* lives. Combo almost seems to suggest that there may be no problem of unemployment if only the jobs were given to English people instead of immigrants.

Combo's speech continues with a critique of the political system:

And that Thatcher sits there in her fucking ivory tower and sends us on a fucking phoney war! The Falklands? What the fuck's the Falklands? Fucking innocent men, good fucking strong men. Good soldiers, real people losing their lives, going over there thinking they're fighting for a fucking cause. What are they fighting for? What are they fighting against? Fucking shepherds!

Shaun: Shut up about The Falklands. [. . .] My fucking dad died in that war.

[. . .]

Combo: You want your dad's life to mean something do you? And it breaks my fucking heart to say this. We shouldn't have been there. She lied to us. She lied to me. She lied to you. But, most importantly, she lied to you dad. If you don't stand up and fight this fucking fight that's going on on the streets, your dad died for nothing. He died for nothing. You've got to carry it on, man, in here. [Points at Shaun's heart] (*TIE*)

At this point the speech becomes personal for one of the characters, and thus enters *pathos*, appealing to emotions. Combo hits Shaun in a sensitive spot and therefore makes the speech even more affective to him. Combo essentially says to a 12 year old boy that his father died for nothing if he does not get up and fight the battle of adults, if he does not defend the country. In so doing, Combo manipulates Shaun into believing that his duty is to fight the battle of his father. Combo also associates the Falklands War with the racial battle going on in Britain. He seems to make Shaun believe that these two distinctive events have a common purpose and thus Shaun has to be a *man* and fight to make his father proud. Combo also

states that the government is not on their side and that *she*, Margaret Thatcher, lied. Once again, Combo distances himself from Thatcher and thus makes her an enemy as well. Combo's provocative speech results in the following scenario:

[Combo makes a line with his spit]

C: Here is the line boys. That means you're all quite welcome to just leave and leave now and never come back and that's it, the end of it. But if you wanna stay, this is a proper fight. Now yous all either cross that line and go your merry little way... or you stay where you are and you come with me. The choice is yours, boys. (*TIE*)

Combo is essentially recruiting the other characters to join the National Front. To these people Englishness is about respecting the land that their fathers have fought for. To them, the only true English are those who are born and raised in England. Although the National Front is presented in the film, it is not on the centre stage and its core ideology is left for the viewer to find out. The main focus of the National Front in the film is immigration. According to the official National Front website, the party wants the majority of the country to stay white and thus other cultures with their own customs should be "repatriated" (online). Although National Front is often considered to be an extreme party, Michael Billig argues in his study *Fascists: A Social Psychological view of the National Front* that while National Front can be considered to be a fascist group, its members are usually careful to distance themselves from great fascist leaders such as Hitler or Mussolini (4). According to Billig, the National Front does not display swastikas on their marches but rather show their loyalty to their country by carrying a Union Jack (4). So is the case in *TIE* as well. When

Combo's group go to a National Front meeting, Shaun steals a Union Jack in order for the group to hang it up in Combo's wall. Later on, Combo gives Shaun his own Union Jack to hang on his window to show that he is English and proud of it.

Whereas the apolitical skinheads, such as Milky and Woody, are united through their common interest in music and a specific clothing style, the National Front of the film finds common ground in hatred towards immigration. They hate, despise and violate what they think is wrong and not English. They are violent and aggressive, and the targets of their hatred are foreigners who supposedly do not deserve to live in England.

Although it may seem that the film's National Front has a specific goal of evicting non-English people out of the country and bringing England back to its roots, to the characters of *TIE* it seems to be a mere excuse to target their hate and aggression towards someone or something. Gadget, for example, seems to join the National Front so that he would be respected: "Gadget: I'm sick of you, Woody. This is why I'm staying, because you're always taking a piss, making me feel about that fucking big. [Gestures with his fingers]" (*TIE*). Shaun on the other hand finds comfort in the National Front because they offer him an outlet for his anger that he feels because of his father's death. He wants to make his father proud and is therefore ready to act as Combo tells him to. In other words, to Shaun, the National Front seems to bring a short relief to his grief.

3.5.2 White working class versus "foreigners"

As most of the characters in *TIE* are white, working class and born in England, it seems justified to argue that the film mainly concentrates on their views on life. The concepts of

Englishness and English identity are present throughout the movie and the way the characters are presented showcases many different viewpoints on what the term Englishness may include.

For most of the characters in *TIE*, being English is almost like living a stereotypically English life: they go to pubs, have a drink with their friends, watch some football and have a good time. As most of the white working class characters are just shallow representations of a stereotyped Englishness, this is as far as the term Englishness can be analyzed from their point of view. There are, however two white male characters who can be further discussed on the basis of what being English means to them, namely Woody and Combo.

Contrasting Woody and Combo with each other is essential since they both play a similar role in their groups. They are both slightly older than the rest of the characters and act as if they need to protect the others. They seem to fill the role of an older brother particularly in the case of Shaun who seeks comfort and security in them. In the beginning of *TIE*, Woody takes Shaun under his wing and provides him with a group of friends lacking from his life. In so doing he offers Shaun a sense of security and a new identity: now he is a skinhead, now he has a family.

Combo, on the other hand, supplies Shaun with the means to revenge his father's death. Although Combo is a sort of a big brother to Shaun as well, he fails to deliver the comfort and security that Woody provided him with. Combo can only provide fear, aggression and hatred. By the end of *TIE*, Shaun seems to be torn between Combo and Woody. Whereas Combo's view on Englishness provides Shaun with a sense of emotional relief, Shaun seems to miss the easiness and comfort of Woody's company. Combo and Woody have very similar roles in their groups but their views on Englishness are very different, which ultimately leads Shaun to return to Woody's company.

Although most of the characters in the film are white and thus follow the message of either Woody or Combo, there are also a couple of non-native English characters that have a role in the story. The most visible of the “foreign” characters is Milky, Woody’s best friend and an important part of the skinhead group. Milky’s roots are in Jamaica and his heritage seems to be important to him. Although Milky might be considered to be a foreigner by some of the other characters, most of them consider him to be an equal in regards to his human rights. Milky seems to belong with his friends and mostly acts accordingly.

According to Sarita Malik’s study *Representing Black Britain: Black and Asian Images on Television*, the African-Caribbeans on British TV are often associated with comedy, sports and music (174). Malik goes on to argue that this extensive representation of black people in sports and comedy enhances the split between white and black, “between body and mind, superiority and inferiority, excess and lack, which positions and maintains ‘Blackness’ as ‘different’, exceptional, and as poles apart in either from the White norm” (175). The African-Caribbean masculinity which Milky also represents, is often depicted as criminal, violent, feckless and sexual (Malik, 176). By nature, Milky seems to be submissive but he does not seem to be violent. He does not want to cause trouble and even if he is picked on by Combo, he does not fight back. His criminality in a sense comes across when Combo comes to buy weed from him and it is suggested that Milky always has some. At the end of the movie when Combo and Milky are having a chat and a joint, Milky talks about the importance of a close family and unknowingly triggers Combo’s aggression. When Combo tries to agitate Milky to fight him by calling him a nigger, Milky instead of becoming aggressive and violent like the stereotypical African-Caribbean, just smiles as if he knows that Combo will attack him no matter what he does. When Combo attacks, Milky does not fight back. This can be seen to represent the submissive behaviour of the immigrants in general. Most of the immigrants shown in *TIE* do not seem to know how to

fight back when an English person attacks them, and therefore they just wait for the situation to pass. Another way of looking at the situation is that Milky practises non-violent resistance: he wants to act as he would want others to act and therefore is not willing to attack Combo for no apparent reason.

Another “foreign” character represented in the film is Mr Sandhu. Malik argues that Asian masculinity, which would include Mr Sandhu, comes across as patriarchal, assiduous, orthodox and timid (176). Unlike Milky, Mr Sandhu is a hardworking businessman who makes his living by running a small shop. He also seems to be more eager to fight back the nationalistic skinheads and he does not submit to the violence as easily as Milky seems to. His timid behaviour shows best when Combo and his group come to trash his shop. In this situation he seems to be nervous in a sense that he knows when not to fight back and thus lets the group rob the place. However, Mr Sandhu does not seem to be as timid as Malik’s stereotype would suggest. This might be due to the matter that Mr Sandhu seems to have assimilated himself into the British society quite well. Although he seems to be very aware of his position as the “Other”, he seems to be aware of his rights as English. He, for example, instantly reacts when Shaun calls him “a Paki bastard” and tries to get Shaun to leave the shop because his pride has been hurt. This indicates that Mr Sandhu thinks that he has equal rights with Shaun and therefore he has the right not to serve him when he is called with a racially motivated name.

Both for Milky and Mr Sandhu Englishness is a concept that they seem obligated to have an opinion on. Whether they consider themselves English or not, society seems to think that they are not of pure English blood but they have to prove their worth to the society. For Milky, Englishness seems to include his Jamaican heritage. He seems to think that one does not have to be born in England in order to be considered to be a part of the

society. Mr Sandhu, on the other hand, seems to want to adapt to the mainstream culture but wants still to keep a trace of his own traditions with him.

The views on who is English and what Englishness is vary depending on whose view point one wants to discuss. Although one would firstly think that the basic difference is between the views of the white working class and the foreigners, it seems that the crucial difference is within the white working class itself. During the course of *TIE*, their united front divides into two sections that are poles apart and have very distinct views on what Englishness is. The foreigners, on the other hand, do not seem to have a cohesive opinion on Englishness and therefore they either join the likes of skinheads, like Milky does, or defend their own beliefs, as in the case of Mr Sandhu. Immigrants seem to be excluded from the society so that they either choose their own groups according to their friends, like Milky, or they are left to defend themselves and their views in the manner of Mr Sandhu.

3.6 Symbols of Englishness: Landscape and Music

In addition to the characters in *TIE*, the use of specific symbols also enhances the particular view of Englishness and national identity that the film wants to convey. These symbols include the choice of landscape, the representation of the living environment of the characters, and the use of real archive footage of the events depicting the 1980s. In addition to these elements, the music used in the film is also an important enhancer of the story line.

Landscape, for example, plays a big role in the story since the specific use of landscape is relevant to the national identity that the story tries to convey. The film was mostly shot in Nottingham but the specifics of the town remain unclear. However, it is

indicated that the town of the story is located somewhere in the East Midlands. It is pictured to be a peaceful seaside town that does not offer the youth a lot of activities. Most of the scenes seem only to include the characters of the story and otherwise the streets seem to be almost abandoned. The buildings portrayed are traditional English brick buildings and nearly all of them appear poorly looked after. Fences that are full of graffiti guard homes and churches have disgraceful messages written on them. The Church of Christ, for example, has the tag “Maggie is a twat” written on its wall. A subway where Woody first meets Shaun promotes a white power skinhead band named Skrewdriver. The public places are not respected, and the value of a beautiful environment seems to have been lost.

This sort of scenery aims to depict a stereotypical small English town that is slowly decaying. While there is nothing out of the ordinary in the landscape and everything seems to have its place, at the same time everything seems to be somewhat run down. As Meadows uses a lot of landscape imagery to set the mood of the film, the viewer sees a lot of images of the seashore, the empty streets and rundown, destroyed buildings. These images portray the feeling of what a small English town in the 1980s was going through: a change due to unemployment and other social problems.

A visual Englishness of this kind seems to signify that what has traditionally been seen as English is slowly dying. The traditional, stereotypical English towns have slowly started to rust: the buildings are not looked after, people seem to have moved to bigger cities, and there is nothing left to hold on to. The atmosphere is neither inspiring nor welcoming, and it almost seems as if the town itself has given up the fight against the changing world.

The homes of the characters can also be analyzed from the perspective of what they say about Englishness and the lives of the characters. Similarly to the outer appearance of

some of the buildings, the homes of the characters seem poorly looked after. They lack furniture and are dull and grey looking. Especially Combo's apartment is portrayed as an empty, cold place that lacks the warmth of a home. His small flat seems to lack all personal items, such as photographs, books or any other objects that usually seem to belong to a home. Combo's home can be contrasted with Shaun's home since there seems to be a totally different atmosphere there. Although Shaun's home does not seem to be in a very good shape either, there is a homelike feeling in it. Shaun, for example, has pictures of his father on his bedside table, the house is clean and looked after, and there are fresh flowers in the living room.

In addition to the powerful feeling created by the landscape of the film, the specific music choices also help the movie to carry out a certain kind of mood. Meadows uses mainly ska, contemporary music from the 1980s and soft instrumental music to set and change the mood of the film. The film starts with a legendary ska song from one of the well-known Jamaican ska band Toots and the Maytals. The song is called "54 46 Was My Number". This upbeat ska song, along with the scenery of a rundown English town, instantly creates the mood of the film and leads the viewer to the life of an English skinheads. The song itself tells a story of a prisoner wrongly judged and thusly can be vaguely interpreted from the point of view of Shaun, for example since Shaun joins Combo's group on the wrong grounds.

The film also includes other songs from Toots and the Maytals such as "Louie Louie" and "Pressure Drop" that are also famous ska classics. Along with Toots and the Maytals, Meadows also uses other ska classics such as The Uppsetters' song "Return of Django". By choosing such well known ska tunes, Meadows introduces the film to the viewer from the point of view of the past: the 1960s is still present in the 1980s England in the form of music and skinhead culture. These upbeat ska songs are used in scenes when the group is strong

and happy. “Louie Louie”, for example, is used when the group goes out for the first time since Shaun has joined them. They walk in the empty streets of their hometown with their hands in the pockets of their Harrington jackets, boots shining and hats tilted just in the right angle. They spend time with each other and seem to be enjoying life. This image, along with the music, conveys a picture of the skinheads of the 1980s. Ska is their music of choice and being a skinhead their way of life.

In addition to classic 1960s Jamaican ska, Meadows also utilizes 2 Tone and pop music from the 1980s. These choices include Dexys Midnight Runners “Come on Eileen”, Soft Cell’s “Tainted Love” and The Specials’ “Do the Dog”. These songs create the mood of the decade. They are upbeat and catchy songs that the younger generation of the 1980s listened to.

Meadows’s choice to include soft and melancholic instrumentals in the movie changes the mood from an upbeat, fun portrayal of a generation to a film with more depth. The use of Ludovico Einaudi’s soft piano music, for example, makes the atmosphere of the film more melancholic than upbeat. Meadows mentions on the comment track of the movie that he initially thought about using Oi! music, which is a sub-genre of punk-rock, instead of soft piano music, but then realized that Oi! would create an atmosphere of aggressiveness and hard attitudes. As Oi! music is also sometimes linked to the National Front and other right wing groups, it would not support the view point of the story.

The only aggressive punk song in the movie is UK Subs’ song “Warhead”. The song is played when Combo and his group go to the National Front meeting. The atmosphere is aggressive and waiting, six people have stuffed themselves into a small car, and Shaun, the smallest character, sits in the front with Combo. The lyrics of the song depict the situation:

While the heads of state are having their fun
Are they ready?
We're looking at the world through the barrel of a gun
Are we ready?
And you stand there beating on your little war drum
Are you ready?
And it won't be long before your time has come
Are you ready? (“Warhead”, online)

The group is ready to fight for their country and their beliefs. They are ready to take arms and go to the streets to get the non-English out of there. The mood is anticipating and aggressive.

At the end of the movie when Shaun throws a Saint George’s Flag that Combo gave him to the sea, Clayhill’s version of a famous Smiths song “Please, Please, Please Let Me Get What I Want” plays in the background. The lyrics of the song almost seem to portray what is on Shaun’s mind:

Good times for a change
See, the luck I’ve had
Can make a good man turn bad

So please, please, please
Let me, let me, let me
Let me get what I want
This time

Haven't had a dream in a long time

See, the life I've had

Can make a good man bad. ("Please, Please, Please Let Me Get What I Want",
online)

It appears that Shaun has made the wrong choice and now seems to regret it. He seems to wish that he could have what he wants for once in his life: the return of Woody. With the help of these lyrics, Meadows is able to tell what is on Shaun's mind without having to make the characters utter the words.

Meadows uses music to emphasize the mood of the film. According to Annabel J. Cohen's essay "Understanding Musical Soundtracks" soundtracks of films often work because of the psychological association (113). Cohen argues that if the viewer of the film hears sad classical music as opposed to happy tunes, they are more likely to associate these scenes as sad. Happy music, or "pleasant background music" as Cohen calls it (114), can enhance the personality characteristics of the person filmed (114). As in the case of *TIE* sad classical music brings depth to the scenes and the happier songs bring out the characters' personalities.

In addition to landscape, setting and music, the film uses real, filmed material to enhance the atmosphere. *TIE* begins with a variety of different fragment of news and TV footage: the mood of the film is created by showing footage of Britain's Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher on various locations, for example setting off a bomb and being overwhelmed by the sound of the explosion. Margaret Thatcher is also seen to give a speech to the soldiers leaving for the Falklands. These short clips seem to portray Thatcher in a

comical light. A leader sends soldiers to war but is herself baffled by the sound that an exploding bomb makes. This seems to indicate that she does not have any idea of the realities of the war.

Besides politics, the document material includes aspects of the 1980s pop culture, specifically youth culture. In the beginning of the movie the viewer is shown images for example of Jane Fonda's aerobic class, young people going to music shows as well as Princess Diana's wedding, to mention a few examples. The pop culture footage is contrasted with the footage of the riots and marches which took place all over England in the 1980s, most likely including such famous incidents as the Brixton riot of 1980. Meadows has chosen to show for example fragments of street marches of the National Front as well as a brief look on the damage that the right wing skinheads have done to the immigrants' properties. These fragments create a background to the film and start the story by indicating the importance of the events of the 1980s.

This material shows the helplessness of the situation in the 1980s. The National Front and other antagonists of immigration are able to take over the streets and claim England as their own. The clash of different ideologies is obvious. Meadows uses brief clips of document material to create a contrast between the helpless looking immigrants and the aggressive marchers. While the immigrants are trying to cover their broken windows with newspapers in order to protect their homes, the English are beating up the police, tearing down fences and shouting violent phrases on the streets.

The film also includes scenes from the Falklands War. This footage enhances the picture of the brutality of the war. Near the end of the film there is a scene where the soldiers of the Falklands War are coming back home victorious. Although Britain won the war, the clip that is shown in the movie shows the bittersweet side of the war: there are

images of adult British soldiers carrying the bodies of young Argentine soldiers, dumping them on the ground and having a drink afterwards. The juxtaposition of the happy homecoming and the corpses of young soldiers who never returned home is a powerful reminder that both wars, both the one happening abroad and the one in England, have horrific consequences no matter how victorious they might have been. The scene also reminds the viewer of the fact that Shaun never experiences the joy of welcoming his father back home like some of the people shown on the clip.

The destructiveness of the war seems to remind the viewer and the characters of the film that the glory of England is not what is used to be. England is not at the top of her game nor are the characters. Both seem to have lost the fight and seem defeated by the constant battle of being English. All hope of a better future is not abandoned, though. At the end of the film, Shaun goes to throw the flag in the ocean and in to the horizon he sees a rainbow, the symbol of hope.

4. Conclusion

The main aim of this thesis has been to study Shane Meadows' film *This Is England* from the point of view of Englishness. I have used theories from cultural studies in order to analyze the material. I have also given a theoretical background to my study that enhances my view of the film.

I began my thesis by writing a short note on Meadows's directing career. I also briefly discussed the representations of Englishness in English Cinema. The theoretical background of the study addressed the concept of Englishness and related matters such as identity and nationalism. In addition to self-identity and social identity, I discussed the view of national identity which I have chosen to examine from a general and a specifically British perspective. In the section dealing with Englishness, I discussed Easthope's chart of great opposition that I later on used to depict the situation in *TIE*. The final part of my theory section consists of the discussion of such terms as subculture, skinhead and class.

As *TIE* tells a story of skinheads, I have also briefly described the concept of skinheads. Although skinheads are nowadays commonly presumed to have a white pride attitude, I have pointed out that the origins of the culture lie in the late 1960s where the Britain's mod culture began to change and adapt the influences of the working class and reggae, as Cohen, for example, argues.

In order to utilize the concept of class in my analysis, I have briefly discussed it in my theory section. I have focused here on the concepts of the working class since it is the only class relevant to my study. I have brought out the idea that the working class is considered to be masculine rather than feminine and that it has a subdivision called underclass in which most of the characters of *TIE* belong to. In discussing the viewpoints of different scholars and different themes, I have suggested that the term Englishness entails a lot of concepts and

therefore it is not as simple as it might seem but rather a complicated matter of different aspects and layers.

I began my analysis of the film by discussing the idea of community in *TIE*. I came to the conclusion that rather than putting emphasis on the family, the characters of the film emphasize the friendship that they have with each other and thus regard each other as family. Shaun joins the group and immediately gains a big brother on Woody and thus the characters seem to create their own family. I have also suggested that the outer appearance of the group is important since they consider themselves to be skinheads and thus their clothing style, as Thornton has argued, is very specific. In order for Shaun to be a member of the group, he has to go through an outer change from a “regular boy” into a skinhead.

In my analysis of the relationship between the working class, work and masculinity, I have argued that although the characters seem to belong to the working class, their attitudes toward work are dismissive. I have also suggested that rather than being a part of the working class, the characters of the movie would belong to the underclass that Haylett has argued is a subclass of the working class: their homes are unfurnished and dirty and their days are filled with idle free time activities.

In addition to work, or the lack of it, the working class identity comes across in the characters’ masculinity. This shows in the way the characters dress, Shaun for example seems to consider himself less masculine when he is wearing flare trousers than when he has boots and jeans on. Female characters of the movie, with the exception of Smell, seem to want to convey the skinhead image and thus dress and act rather masculine.

Another major theme of the story of *TIE* is violence which is depicted itself in three different forms: as violence towards friends and family, violence towards material goods and violence towards non-English people. Shaun’s problem solving skills, for example, seem to consist of violent acts and thus he attacks a guy at school when he makes a joke

about Shaun's dead father. The group also showcases the acceptance of violence when they go to an abandoned house in order to destroy the place. I have suggested that their aggressive behaviour seems to be accepted in the group as part of their identity.

Violence towards non-English people is the most visible type of violence in the movie. As Combo's group starts to practise their newfound National Front ideology, they use violence in two separate occasions: towards Mr Sandhu and his store and towards three young Pakistani children in the streets. Although the violence towards Mr Sandhu is only mental and material, the use of violent rhetoric by Combo is meant to leave permanent scars and to intimidate the local shopkeeper into their dominance. Combo's use of violent rhetoric repeats itself in front of the children whom he calls with classical immigrant related metaphors 'vermin' and 'sewer rats'. The violence against non-English culminates when Combo attacks Milky because he is 'a nigger' and beats his former friend nearly dead.

In the next section I differentiated some of the main lines of Englishness in the film. In the first section dealing with the apolitical skinheads and the skinheads that have a National Front attitude, I have argued that although both groups are in a sense skinheads, the other is apolitical and the other racially motivated. In relation to the National Front movement and racial prejudice in general, I gave examples of Combo's use of rhetoric filled with hate and otherwise explained Combo's behaviour. In the second section I compared the white characters with the foreign characters of the film to show that the essential difference concerning the idea of Englishness does not lie in the separation of these two groups but rather it lies in the different viewpoints of the whites. I compared the two important foreign characters Milky and Mr Sandhu with each other and the stereotypes of Asian and black people that Malik has introduced in her study. Although both Mr Sandhu and Milky fill some of the characteristics of the stereotypical immigrant, they also differ in some aspects. In addition to the foreign characters, I also compared the polar opposite characters Woody

and Combo and their relationship with Shaun to whom both of them are an influence. Whereas Woody supplies Shaun with comfort and security, Combo can only provide aggression, hatred and fear and thus in the end it is suggested that Shaun chooses to return to the concept of Englishness that Woody provides.

In the last section of this thesis I discussed the symbols of Englishness that can be found in the story including such topics as landscape, the representation of the living environment of the characters and the use of real archive footage of the events of the 1980s. The landscape used in the film conveys a picture of a rundown English town that has not been able to keep up with the changing world. The walls are full of graffiti and the traditional brick building seems to be crumbling down slowly. The apartments of the characters suggest that they are not cared about and that they do not necessarily need to feel like homes for the characters. The homes of Shaun and Combo seem to be on the opposite ends of the line in this matter: whereas Shaun's home has somewhat of a homely feeling in it, Combo's apartment is nearly empty, dirty and unfurnished.

The use of the archive material gives the viewer a background as to what kind of situation the film tries to depict. As the footage is shown mainly in the beginning and at the end of the film, it shows how Meadows contrasts the real events with the situations in the film.

In addition to these elements, I also analyzed the music Meadows uses in the film. The soundtrack of the film creates a powerful feeling to the film that could be totally different if the music choices were changed. Meadows uses a lot of ska classics to bring the film the mood of the 1960s skinhead culture but then contrasts it with the decades pop tunes that bring the viewer back to the 1980s. The choice of this particular music suggests that

Meadows seems to want the viewer to look deeper into the mindset of the characters rather than just scrape the surface.

To conclude, there are many more ways in which the story of *TIE* can be analysed. Although Shane Meadows has directed the film from the backwards looking point of view, the story told in *TIE* is a comprehensive representation of the Englishness in 1980s. In this thesis I have represented different aspects of Englishness that can be found in the film such as the differentiation of the two skinhead groups and the use of a specific landscape and music. For future research the story seems fruitful since it has been continued by a TV series. Meadows' has produced the two short series *This Is England '86* and *This Is England '88*, which take the story of the characters further and thus create a new perspective onto Englishness. In addition to my study theme, it would be interesting to study for example the female characters of the story that have a bigger role in the spin off series. It would also be interesting to take both the movie and the TV series and create a picture of the representation of the decade that Meadows is trying to convey.

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APPENDIX

Character list:

Shaun Field: A 12-year-old boy, who is bullied at school. He joins the skinhead group led by Woody.

Woody: Leader of the skinhead group. He becomes somewhat of a big brother to Shaun. He owes Combo his freedom. Lol is his long-term girlfriend.

Combo: A thug just released from prison. Used to be part of the gang, but he has changed in jail and becomes the leader of a new, right-wing skinheads.

Milky: Woody's best friend. His origins are in Jamaica.

Mr Sandhu: He is a local shopkeeper.

Gadget: A tubby boy who is picked on by the group. Later he joins Combo's group just because he does not want to be bullied any more.

FINNISH SUMMARY

Shane Meadowsin ohjaama *This Is England* on kuvaus 1980-luvun englantilaisista nuorista, jotka taistelevat oman identiteettinsä kanssa. Tutkielmassani tarkastelen elokuvan välittämää käsitystä englantilaisuudesta ja sen representaatioista eri tasoilla, kuten esimerkiksi miten englantilaisuus näkyy maisemakuvauksessa, elokuvan henkilöhahmoissa sekä elokuvaan valitussa musiikissa.

Tutkimukseni tavoitteena on luoda kokonaisvaltainen kuva elokuvassa esitetystä englantilaisuudesta eri näkökulmista katsottuna. Englantilaisuuden representaatiota elokuvissa on tutkittu myös aikaisemmin. Esimerkiksi Higson esittää, että elokuvan avulla ihmisiä voidaan muistuttaa siitä, miksi he kuuluvat tiettyyn kansakuntaan ja mikä on ominaista tälle kansakunnalle. Elokuvan avulla englantilaisuus voidaan esittää arkipäiväisessä valossa, ilman että siitä tehdään erityisen suurta numeroa.

This Is England – elokuvan luentaa varten olen koontanut teoriapohjan, jonka avulla tulen myöhemmin analysoimaan teosta. Teoriaosuudessa käsittelen teemaani oleellisesti liittyvistä käsitteistä, joita ovat esimerkiksi identiteetti, nationalismi, alakulttuuri ja englantilaisuus.

Identiteetin käsite on historiallisesti ollut vaikea määriteltävä, sillä siihen liittyy niin monia eri puolia. Tässä tutkielmassani olen kuitenkin erityisesti kiinnostunut tutkimaan identiteettiä kulttuurisesta näkökulmasta. Baumeister esittää, että identiteetti on tulkintaa omasta itsestä. Muut tutkijat kuten Baker ja Schöpflin ovat argumentoineet, että identiteetti rakentuu kahdesta osasta: ensimmäinen osa on minäkäsitys, jonka henkilö rakentaa omasta historiastaan. Toinen osa identiteettiä on sosiaalinen identiteetti, johon vaikuttaa myös ihmisen ympäröivä maailma, kuten perhe, ystävät ja hänen uskontonsa.

Nationalismi ja kansallinen identiteetti kuuluvat tiivisti yhteen identiteetin käsitteen kanssa. Nationalismilla ja kansallisella identiteetillä tarkoitetaan tässä tutkimuksessa sitä, miten kansallisuus ja etenkin brittiläisyys ja englantilaisuus näkyvät ihmisten arjessa ja ajattelutavassa. Tilley ja Heath argumentoivat, että nationalismi edistää kansalaisten yhteenkuuluvuutta ja yhteistä vastuuta kansakunnasta. Billig ja Edensor puolestaan pohtivat kansallisuuden käsitettä arkipäivän näkökulmasta. Heidän tutkimustensa mukaan kansallisuus näkyy erityisesti arkipäivässä ja yleisessä retoriikassa. Ihmisten on heidän mukaansa toistettava kansalaisuudelle ominaisia uskoja, tottumuksia ja käytäntöjä arkipäivässä, jotta nationalismi säilyisi ihmisten mielessä. Näiden asioiden toistamisen on kuitenkin tapahduttava niin huomaamattomasti ja arkipäiväisesti, että niitä ei juurikaan edes huomata.

Englantilaisuuden käsite on joidenkin tutkijoiden mukaan syntynyt jo 1800-luvulla, mutta esimerkiksi jotkut tutkijat esittävät, että englantilaisuus nykyisellään on syntynyt 1900-luvulla. Doddin mielestä englantilaisuus tarkoittaa eri asiaa esimerkiksi eri yhteiskuntaluokista oleville ihmisille. Se, mitä työväenluokkaan kuuluva ihminen käsittää englantilaisuutena, ei välttämättä merkitse englantilaisuutta esimerkiksi yläluokkaan kuuluvalla ihmiselle. Englantilaisuuden käsitettä on useasti luoto myös tekemällä ero *meidän* ja *heidän* välille. Tällaista erottelua on tehnyt muun muassa Easthope, jonka lista suurista vastakkaisuuksista erottaa englantilaisuuden toiseudesta, kuten esimerkiksi katolilaisesta Ranskasta. Tässä erottelussa englantilaisuus nähdään muun muassa vakavana, vilpittömänä, totuutena sekä kotina kun taas ranskalaisten edustama toiseus nähdään hölmönä, pinnallisena, nautintona ja ulkomaalaisena. Näiden oppositioiden avulla luodaan englantilaisuudesta kuvaa parempana kuin muut kansalaisuudet. Nykyisessä Britanniassa selvät erottelut eivät kuitenkaan yksinomaan toimi, sillä kansakunta on monikulttuuristunut ja uusia kansalaisuuksia kuten Aasian Englantilaiset ja mustat Englantilaiset on

muodostunut. Nyman argumentoikin, että vanhasta rotuun perustuvasta ajatusmallista on jouduttu osittain luopumaan uusien kansalaisuuksien myötä. Nyman kuitenkin sanoo, että osa kansalaisista on palannut takaisin rotujatteluun, jonka mukaan muut kuin Englannissa syntyneet ovat ulkomaalaisia ja täten he eivät voi olla englantilaisia.

Alakulttuuri nähdään usein kulttuurin alalajina. Alakulttuurille on Thorntonin mukaan ominaista, että sen jäsenet jakavat keskenään samanlaiset kiinnostuksenkohteet ja tavat. Näihin tapoihin voi kuulua esimerkiksi tietynlainen vaatetyyli, musiikkimaku tai arvomaailma. Alakulttuurit nähdään usein valtakulttuurin alaryhmänä ja täten usein myös vähempänä merkitykseltään joskus alakulttuurin omasta tahdosta ja joskus valtakulttuurin asetettua heidät toiseuden asemaan.

Skinhead on käsitteenä nykyään usein yhdistetty oikeistoon ja rasistisiin näkökantoihin. Liikkeen juuret ovat kuitenkin 1960-luvulla, jolloin se oli enemmänkin nuoria yhdistävä liike yhteisen musiikkimaun ja vaatetyylin mukaan. Meadowsin elokuvan skinheadit kuuluvat liikkeen uuden tulemisen aaltoon 1980-luvulla, jolloin skinhead-nimikkeeseen alle kuuluivat sekä National Front -liikkeeseen kuuluvat oikeistomieliset skinheadit sekä epäpoliittiset skinheadit, joihin suurin osa tarinan skinheadeistakin kuuluu.

Teoriaosani viimeinen käsite on luokka. Olen määritellyt luokan systeemiksi, jonka mukaan ihmiset jaetaan erilaisiin luokkiin, jotka määrittelevät ihmisen aseman yhteiskunnassa. Keskityn erityisesti työväenluokan kuvaamiseen, sillä se on ainoa oleellinen luokka elokuvan kuvauksen kannalta. Työväenluokka nähdään useiden tutkijoiden mukaan maskuliinisena ja osittain myös väkivaltaisena sekä käytännönläheisenä.

Elokuvan analysoinnin edellä mainittuja teorioita hyödyntäen aloitin puhumalla yhteisön käsitteestä elokuvassa. Sen sijaan, että elokuvan henkilöhahmot painottaisivat perheensä tärkeyttä, heidän itse luomansa yhteisö on heille tärkeämpi. Esimerkiksi Shaun pitää

Woodya isoveljenään, ja näin ollen osana hänen perhettään, vaikka he eivät olekaan sukua keskenään. Yhteisöllisyys näkyy läheisten ihmissuhteiden lisäksi myös esimerkiksi siinä, että elokuvan henkilöhahmot toistavat yhteenkuuluvuuttaan pukeutumalla samankaltaisesti. Shaunista tulee rituaalisin menoin ryhmän jäsen, kun hänen hiuksensa leikataan ja hänet puetaan vaatteisiin, jotka ovat ominaisia skinheadeille.

Seuraavaksi analysoin elokuvan henkilöhahmojen yhteyttä työväenluokkaan. Vaikka suurin osa henkilöhahmoista samaistuu työväenluokkaisuuden ajatusmaailmaan, he eivät silti esimerkiksi käy töissä. He ovat kuitenkin omaksuneet työväenluokalle ominaisia piirteitä, kuten maskuliinisuuden ja väkivaltaisuuden.

Väkivaltaisuuden analysoimisen olen jakanut kolmeen osaan: väkivalta materiaa kohtaan, väkivalta englantilaisia kohtaan ja väkivalta ulkomaalaisia kohtaan. Väkivalta on läsnä elokuvan alkuhetkistä lähtien, sillä se kuuluu elokuvan henkilöhahmojen identiteetteihin. Vaikka elokuvassa väkivallan kohteena ovat esimerkiksi vanha talo sekä englantilaisen ihmiset, suurin osa elokuvan väkivallasta kohdistuu kuitenkin ulkomaalaisia kohtaan, jotka saavat osakseen Combon johtaman ryhmän raivon ja vihan, sekä fyysisenä että henkisenä väkivaltana.

Seuraavassa osiossa käsitelin elokuvassa esiintyviä englantilaisuuksia. Vertasin keskenään epäpoliittista Woodyn johtamaa skinhead ryhmää sekä Combon johtamaa rasistista ryhmää. Lisäksi vertasin näitä kahta englantilaisuuden käsitettä elokuvan ulkomaalaisten henkilöhahmojen käsitteisiin. Johtopäätökseni oli, että suurin ero englantilaisuuden käsitteessä on skinheadien välillä eikä englantilaisten ja ulkomaalaisten välillä, kuten olisi helppo olettaa.

Viimeisessä analyysiosiossa käsitelin elokuvassa esiintyvää symboliikkaa, kuten maisemakuvausta, elinympäristön kuvasta sekä 1980-luvun arkistomateriaalin käyttöä.

Elokuvan maisemankuvaus ja henkilöhahmojen elinympäristön kuvaus välittävät katsojalle kuvaa pienestä englantilaisesta kaupungista, joka on hiljalleen kuolemassa. Rakennuksista ei pidetä huolta eikä kotien viihtyisyydestä juuri välitetä. Arkistomateriaalin käyttö puolestaan luo yhteyden elokuvan fiktiivisen maailman ja todellisen 1980-luvun Englannin välille. Arkistomateriaalia näytetään lähinnä elokuvan alussa antamaan katsojalle taustan elokuvan tapahtumia varten. Meadows käyttää elokuvassa pätkiä muun muassa populaarikulttuurin ilmiöistä, kuten Dianan häistä sekä nuorista konserteissa. Tämän lisäksi myös politiikka tuodaan esille näyttämällä katsojalle materiaalia Falklandin sodasta sekä Margaret Thatcherista.

Edellä mainittujen asioiden lisäksi olen analysoinut myös elokuvassa käytettyä musiikkia ja sen tarkoitusta. Meadows käyttää elokuvassa paljon ska-klassikoita, sekä 1980-luvun pop-musiikkia. Ska:n avulla korostetaan elokuvan henkilöhahmojen skinhead-identiteettiä ja pop-musiikilla 1980-luvun läsnäoloa ja vaikutusta. Näiden lisäksi Meadows hyödyntää myös pehmeämpää, instrumentaalimusiikkia luodakseen elokuvaan syvyyttä ja tunteiden aitoutta.

Johtopäätösteni mukaan elokuva luo kattavan kuvan 1980-luvun englantilaisuudesta. Tässä tutkimuksessa olen käsitellyt englantilaisuutta muun muassa kahden eri skinhead ryhmän näkökannoilta sekä maisemankuvauksen ja musiikin kautta. Mahdollista tulevaa tutkimusta varten aihe on hedelmällinen, sillä elokuvan tarina jatkuu kahtena erillisenä minisarjana, joissa elokuvan henkilöhahmot esiintyvät. Käsittelemieni teemojen lisäksi olisi kiinnostaa tutkia myös esimerkiksi elokuvan naiskuvausta, sillä kyseisillä hahmoilla on isompi rooli tv-sarjoissa.