“We’re Punk Rockers, Brick Chuckers, Finger Fuckers”:

Masculinities in John King’s *Human Punk*

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract

This thesis examines masculinities in John King's novel *Human Punk*. The novel is about Joe Martin and his friends who, in the course of the novel, grow from 15-year-old working-class punk boys to punk men in their early forties.

The theoretical background of this study consists of theories of masculinities such as Raewyn Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity and Judith Butler's theory of the performativity of gender. In addition, the theoretical background includes studies that examine the intersection of masculinities with violence, nationality, class, and subculture. As *Human Punk* involves the themes of Englishness, working class and punk subculture, these are given an emphasis in the theoretical background.

In the analysis, I discuss the complex relations between masculinities and Englishness, working class, and punk subculture in *Human Punk*. Notably, performances of hegemonic masculinity are connected to the Othering practices of sexism, homophobia and racism. Furthermore, violence is used as a practice of hegemonic masculinity in the novel. The version of hegemonic masculinity portrayed in the novel is affected by Englishness and working class , concepts that undergo changes in the course of the novel. In addition, the working-class punk style of the main characters resonates with hegemonic masculinity. Strikingly, punk subculture attempts to constitute an alternative for hegemonic masculinity, but as exemplified by the ending of the novel, this alternative cannot surpass the deeply rooted structure of hegemonic masculinity.

Avainsanat – Keywords
Englishness, hegemonic masculinity, Human Punk, John King, masculinities, performativity, punk subculture, violence, working class

1. INTRODUCTION

Stealing cars lost in bars
Treating hard-to-be's like superstars
I wanna come home at 3AM
I love my records
Alright and I'm going to play 'em
(The Damned 1977)

The opening lyrics of the song "Problem Child" by the punk band The Damned describe the life of a young punk in the England of the late 1970s. In the song, the first-person narrator describes his life that involves breaking the law, idealising toughness, leading a lifestyle that allows one to stay up very late (unemployment), and the meaning of music. The narrator simultaneously breaking the law and, as the song is called "Problem Child," the rules set by the parents. He finds meaning in music and the records that he owns. The lyrics are located in the intersection of ideals of working class and punk subculture. As the lyrics are sung by a male singer, it can be argued that they represent an ideal way of being a punk man. The Damned is one of the bands that is mentioned in John King's novel *Human Punk*, the primary source for this study.

There are two reasons to why I chose to study *Human Punk*. Firstly, I was lured by my personal relationship with the punk subculture. Upon the first reading of the novel, I felt its intensity. *Human Punk* has a sense of authenticity because of its extensive, if not exhaustive, list of punk songs, bands, and records. King's realist hold was mesmerising, and I felt as if I was attending a real punk gig in London in 1977, travelling on the Trans-Siberian train in 1988, or strolling down the already familiar streets of Slough in 2000. At

the same time, I found myself wondering why so few women were present in the novel, and why the women who were described felt one-dimensional and empty as characters. Was not punk supposed to be the movement where women could finally gain an equal foothold in the music industry? Why was there such an emphasis on men? The novel seemed to present interesting images of masculinity and embody powerful discourses on the ideal ways of being an English working-class punk man.

Secondly, the novel seemed to have a strong anti-academic attitude, which sparked a rebellious response in myself. As Claus-Ulrich Viol writes, "*Human Punk* is an (only partly successful) attempt to wrest punk away from academic and popular discourses and restore to it some of its perceived authenticity" (218). Indeed, King as well as the protagonists of *Human Punk* have a clear attitude towards academics: they are regarded as posh poseurs who are unable to incorporate into their work the authenticity that working class embodies. *Human Punk* not only implies but states directly that working-class and punk topics ought to be kept apart from academic research. This provoked resistance: I decided to study the novel. I will continue with *Human Punk* and John King in section 1.2. Next, I will account for the aims and the structure of this study.

1.1. Aims and Structure

The topic of this thesis is masculinities and how they are interconnected with and performed in relation to Englishness, working class and punk subculture in John King's novel *Human Punk*. My aim is to discuss hegemonic masculinity and examine how it is produced, reproduced, and sustained in *Human Punk* in the framework of nationality, working class, and subculture. Of particular interest is the relation of punk subculture and

hegemonic masculinity, and my aim is to inquire into potential alternatives to hegemonic masculinity. Furthermore, I will discuss violence as a crucial practice in hegemonic masculinity. To support my interpretation, I will use secondary literature from the fields of literary studies and gender studies as well as relevant theories from sociology and cultural studies.

The introductory first section will be followed by a section exploring the theoretical background of this study. This second section discusses masculinities and reviews R. W. Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity, Judith Butler's theory of the performativity of gender, as well as other relevant research on masculinities. This will be followed by a discussion on violence and masculinities in which a particular emphasis will be placed on discussing violence as a significant practice of hegemonic masculinity. After this, nationality, class, and subculture will be examined as configurations of masculinities. The theory will be concluded by a discussion of recent literary research about masculinities and their relation to class and nationality.

The analysis will start with a discussion hegemonic masculinity in *Human Punk*. After this, I will consider violence as a significant practice of hegemonic masculinity in the novel. In the following section, I will examine how Englishness and working class are represented in relation to masculinities in *Human Punk*. This will be followed by a section which considers the relation of punk subculture and masculinities. Finally, I will draw conclusions of my study and contemplate on future research ideas regarding *Human Punk*. Next, however, I will take a look at John King and his novels and review his critical reception.

1.2. John King and *Human Punk*

John King (b. 1960) hails originally from Slough, a suburban industrial town near London. As this seems to be all that can be read about his personal life, King appears to prefer staying in the background. Claus-Ulrich Viol and Marianne Roivas, whose studies will be discussed in more detail later, state that John King is one of the writers of 'the repetitive beat generation', a term coined by Steve Redhead (Viol 127; Roivas 38). According to Viol, these writers "operate in an alternative cultural space, set against the mainstream and its media, and take their roots in a post-punk culture of DIY publishing, fanzines, and working-class concerns" (127). Roivas states that King discusses the collapse of the welfare state as well as the altering working class and suggests that King's writing can be classified as a literary-political project that comments on the social inequality in the UK (41). Susanne Rupp locates John King at "the so-called 'blank generation,' whose novels tell the story of England's […] disaffected youth" (82). Furthermore, Rupp suggests that "King makes strong claims for the authenticity of his novels, and his fiction aspires to 'faction'" (83). In addition, the researcher of British literature Miguel Mota incorporates King into the group of British authors "who have attempted to define what it means to be 'English' in a postcolonial age" (Mota 262).

To this date, John King has published seven novels of which *Human Punk* is the fourth. According to Rupp, King "published in literary fanzines and later moved from the literary off-scene into established publishing houses with his football-trilogy" (83). Indeed, King's first three novels form *The Football Factory Trilogy* that deals with the culture of football violence. *Human Punk* was first published in 2000, and it is the first part of a loose trilogy called *The Satellite Cycle* which also includes the novels *White Trash* and

Skinheads. King has mentioned that "I took most of my education from punk and by punk I mean the ideas and music, not the bondage gear and funny haircuts" (Redhead qtd. in Viol 129). Add to this the fact that *Human Punk* is set in King's hometown, and it seems likely that *Human Punk* involves autobiographical elements. King is currently working with Turnstyle Films to produce a film version of *Human Punk* ("John King" Online).

Human Punk has not been subject to a large quantity of academic research. However, Susanne Rupp, who is Professor of British Literature and Culture at the University of Hamburg, has written an essay called "Writing Punk: Punk Narratives in the 1990s and John King's Novel *Human Punk*". In the article, Rupp discusses contradictory punk narratives and focuses on *Human Punk* "which presents punk as social practice, deeply rooted in the 'ordinary life' of 'ordinary people' (as King puts it)" (79). Rupp compares *Human Punk* to other punk narratives such as Jon Savage's account of the history of punk *England's Dreaming* and states that "Savage conceptualizes punk as art and thus ascribes different ideological and aesthetic functions to punk determining and defining its place in contemporary cultural memory" (79). As Rupp's viewpoint and discussion of *Human Punk* differs significantly from mine, I will not review her essay further.

Human Punk is told in first-person narrative and divided into three parts. The first part is called "Satellite," and it is set in Slough in 1977, the golden year of punk. The second part, "Asylum," is set in China in 1988. "Dayglo" is the name of the third part set, again, in Slough, in 2000. London Books remark on their website that *Human Punk* "follows [the] life [of the protagonist] through the eras of fading Old Labour, rampant New Tory, and emerging New Labour governments" ("John King" Online). Furthermore, "*Human Punk* is about the importance of informal education and the power of friendship" ("John King" Online). In an interview with Benjamin Brill, King describes the protagonist

Joe as “more of a loner, who has broken out and does his own thing, his education coming out of punk. He doesn’t compromise as much as [the protagonist of *The Football Factory*]” (Brill Online).

Human Punk tells the story of Joe Martin who is at the beginning of the novel a 15-year-old schoolboy into punk subculture. He lives in Slough and spends his spare time with a group of friends: Dave, Chris, and Gary a.k.a. Smiles. The boys go to school reluctantly and often skip lessons; they use profane language, taunt teachers and fellow students, and break rules whenever they can. Joe goes to work in his spare time in order to be and feel independent. In addition to school and work, their life consists of going to parties and punk gigs, drinking alcohol, experimenting with drugs, fighting and engaging in criminal activity such as stealing cars and driving to London. One night, Joe and Smiles are on their way home when a group of adolescent men attacks them brutally for no reason and throws them off the bridge into the canal. Joe survives with relatively little physical damage, but Smiles is badly injured and slips into a coma. He regains consciousness eventually but never recovers fully. Later, he suffers from severe mental problems.

In the second part of the novel, Joe is in China after travelling in Asia for a few years. When he finds out that Smiles has committed suicide, he decides to travel back home. He travels by the Trans-Siberian express train from China to Moscow. On the way, Joe contemplates his travels and experiences in the past few years, as well as the time when he was still living in England, and tries to make sense out of his troubled past and his relationship with Smiles.

In the third part, Joe lives in Slough and supports himself by various sources of income. When he visits Smiles’s grave, he meets Smiles’s son Luke unexpectedly. After spending time with Joe, Luke visits Wells to confront him about what happened to Smiles.

When Wells assaults Luke and Joe learns about this, he is enraged and avenges Wells by assaulting him. The next day, Joe meets Dave who recounts that he followed Joe to Wells's house and killed him after Joe's assault. The novel ends with Joe feeling a sense of brotherhood and belonging with Dave.

2. MASCULINITY: THEORY AND PRACTICE

In this section, I will review and discuss theories of masculinity relevant to my study. I will begin with a general discussion of masculinities in section 2.1. The concept of hegemonic masculinity is the topic of section 2.2. in which I will concentrate on the theories of Raewyn Connell and Judith Butler as well as discuss the similarities and differences between them. As violence is a significant practice in hegemonic masculinity and a major theme in *Human Punk*, it will be discussed separately in section 2.3. In section 2.4., I will discuss the relevant configurations of masculinities: class, nationality and subculture. Finally, I will conclude the theoretical chapter with a brief consideration of recent literary studies dealing with masculinities.

2.1. Masculinity, Masculinities

Masculinity or masculinities, which is better? This issue has been discussed by the Australian Raewyn Connell, one of the most influential theorists in the field of masculinity studies. Before transitioning, she published under the names R. W., Robert or Bob Connell ("Raewyn Connell: Bio" online; "Raewyn Connell: Research" online). In her study *The Men and the Boys*, Connell gives three reasons for why the plural form 'masculinities' is more accurate than the singular 'masculinity'. Firstly, gender and masculinity do not appear identical at all periods of time or in all cultures (Connell, *Men* 10). Secondly, masculinities vary according to the setting: at school, at work, and at home, one may learn "different ways of enacting manhood, different ways of learning to be a man, different conceptions of the self and different ways of using a male body" (Connell, *Men* 10).

Thirdly, masculinities are hierarchical: some forms are dominant while others are subordinate (Connell, *Men* 10).

Masculinities cannot be discussed without defining 'gender'. Connell considers gender as a process where "the everyday conduct of life is organized in relation to a reproductive arena, defined by the bodily structures and processes of human reproduction" (*Masculinities* 71). For her, this reproductive arena is "a historical process involving the body, not a fixed set of biological determinants" (*Masculinities* 71). Connell writes about gendered institutions that are not only metaphorically but also substantively gendered, and she uses the state as an example of a masculine institution:

> The overwhelming majority of top office-holders are men because there is a gender configuring of recruitment and promotion, a gender configuring of the internal division of labour and systems of control, a gender configuring of policymaking, practical routines, and ways of mobilizing pleasure and consent. (*Masculinities* 73)

For Connell, the triangle of power, production, and cathexis, or emotional attachment, constitutes the structure of gender (*Masculinities* 73-74). Power relations are dominated in the West by the patriarchal gender order that "exists despite many local reversals [… and] persists despite […] feminism" (*Masculinities* 74). Production relations involve the gendered division of labour and capital as well as the wage gap, and cathexis in the context of the structure of gender refers to "[t]he practices that shape and realize desire" (*Masculinities* 74). In *The Men and the Boys*, Connell updates the triangle into a four-fold model; owing to Sylvia Walby's analysis of patriarchy, Connell includes in the model a fourth structure, symbolism (24-6). As Connell argues, "[t]he symbolic structures called into play in communication – grammatical and syntactic rules, visual and sound

vocabularies etc. – are important sites of gender practice" (*Men* 26).

In *Masculinities*, Connell distinguishes four main strategies for defining masculinity. Firstly, in essentialist accounts of masculinity, the core of the masculine substance is often formed by a key feature such as activity or risk-taking (Connell, *Masculinities* 68). In other words, it is thought that masculinity comprises a stable natural essence. However, the determination of the essence is, according to Connell, rather arbitrary, and essentialist views seldom correspond with each other (*Masculinities* 69). Secondly, positivist social science defines masculinity simply as how men are perceived empirically, this is, in terms of life patterns (Connell, *Masculinities* 69). These approaches, however, fail in the sense that they disregard the concept of standpoint and tend to have presumptions about gender (Connell, *Masculinities* 69). Also, positivist approaches assume already existing categories of 'women' and 'men' and fail to explain that if masculinity is about empirical observations of men, why there are women who act in 'masculine' ways (Connell, *Masculinities* 69). As Connell asserts, the terms "'masculine' and 'feminine' point beyond categorical sex difference to the ways men differ among themselves, and women differ among themselves, in matters of gender" (*Masculinities* 69). Thirdly, masculinity may be described normatively, in terms of the expected male behaviour (Connell, *Masculinities* 70). However, since most men cannot identify with the images of ideal tough men in the media, and thus Connell asks: "What is 'normative' about a norm hardly anyone meets?" (*Masculinities* 70). Finally, Connell introduces semiotic approaches that "define masculinity through a system of symbolic difference in which masculine and feminine places are contrasted" (*Masculinities* 70). Here, masculinity is the opposite of femininity, and masculine qualities are defined through difference, as non-feminine. Also, while femininity is subordinate and lacking power, "masculinity is the unmarked term, the place

of symbolic authority" (Connell, *Masculinities* 70).

In *The Men and the Boys*, Connell addresses two politically influential understandings of gender that leave room for criticism: sex role theory and categorical theory. According to Connell, the former refers to sex-based proper behaviour that is learned through socialisation, and the latter "treats women and men as pre-formed categories" (*Men* 18). Connell criticises sex role theory for overlooking power relations and the possibility of change, and while the categorical theory approaches the topic of power, the understanding of gender of both theories is oversimplifying (*Men* 18). In addition to Connell, the masculinity researchers Chris Haywood and Máirtín Mac an Ghaill have discussed sex role theory. They argue that it encompasses femininity and masculinity as ahistorical polar opposites that can be measured (7). As they claim, "effeminate boys and gays[] are seen as *not having enough masculinity* […] [while] black boys and white working-class boys are seen as *having too much masculinity*" (7-8; original emphasis). Connell argues that poststructuralist and postmodernist theories are far more satisfactory in the sense that they approach gender as complicated and unstable (*Men* 19). In a similar vein, for Haywood and Mac an Ghaill, "the living of sexual/gender categories and divisions is more contradictory, fragmented, shifting and ambivalent than the dominant public definitions of these categories suggest" (5). Furthermore, Haywood and Mac an Ghaill argue that sex/gender are complex in the sense that they are interlinked with "different forms of power, stratification, desire and subjective identity formation" (5).

As masculinity may be viewed as an identity, defining identity is useful here. Chris Barker describes identity "*as an emotionally charged discursive description of ourselves that is subject to change*" (216; emphasis original). While self-identity may be defined as a project which is constructed by and about oneself, social identities refer to "the

expectations and opinions that others have of us" (Barker 215, 217-218). They are formed in social processes, and they depend on and vary with social and cultural contexts (Barker 218). Furthermore, social identities are related to cultural identities which are comprised of "identifications of class, gender, sexuality, age, ethnicity, nationality" (Barker 229). According to the cultural theorist Stuart Hall, social and cultural identities are about togetherness and belonging, but at the same time, "it is only through the relation to the Other […] that the 'positive' meaning of any term [...] can be constructed" (Hall 4-5). Self-identity appears to be formed by a collection of cultural identities. While masculinity is connected to social and cultural identities, it may also be part of a person's self-identity.

This section will be concluded by Connell's one-sentence definition of masculinity:

> 'Masculinity', to the extent the term can be briefly defined at all, is simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture. (*Masculinities* 71)

As Connell asserts, masculinities form complex relations, which will be discussed in the following section.

2.2. Hegemonic Masculinity and Its Critique and Alternatives

Hegemonic masculinity is perhaps Raewyn Connell's most influential concept. Connell has borrowed the term 'hegemony' from the famous social theorist Antonio Gramsci. In *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci distinguishes between 'private' and 'the State', equivalent "to the function of 'hegemony' which the dominant group exercises throughout society and […] to that of 'direct domination' or command exercised through the State and

'juridical' government," and these functions "are precisely organisational and connective" (12). For Gramsci, hegemony is manifested as "'domination' and as 'intellectual and moral leadership'" (57). Furthermore, social hegemony and political government are enabled through two functions: firstly, through disciplinary measures imposed by the state, and secondly, through a consent that the majority of population gives to the dominant group (Gramsci 12). In the words of Gramsci, "this consent is 'historically' caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production" (12). The consent is made possible and conveyed through newspapers and associations (Gramsci 80), or today usually through the media.

Stephen M. Whitehead discusses Gramsci's theory of hegemony and its application to the theory of hegemonic masculinity in his study *Men and Masculinities*. According to Whitehead, Gramsci's hegemony is a critical structuralist concept that "assumes power as […] a contested entity between social groups, in [the] case [of hegemonic masculinity,] women and men" (91). As Whitehead illustrates the domains of hegemony:

> key structural entities such as the state, education, the media, religion, political institutions and business, being historically numerically dominated by men, all serve the project of male dominance through their capacity to promote and validate the ideologies underpinning hegemonic masculinity. In the same way that (neo)Marxists understand contested class relations to be immanent to the social, so the concept of hegemonic masculinity takes as given the 'project' of cultural and numerical dominance of heterosexual men across not only key decision-making arenas but also across society generally. (91)

Regarding the individual level, Whitehead suggests that in Gramsci's theory, "[t]he agentic capacity of the individual is recognized, but this potential for free will and transformation

exists in a state of constant tension and struggle with ideological and structural determinants" (91). What this appears to mean is that hegemony is about power that is hierarchically distributed as well as a site of concession.

Whitehead's discussion of hegemony is not dissimilar to Connell's definition. According to Connell, hegemony "refers to the cultural dynamic by which a group claims and sustains a leading position in social life" (*Masculinities* 77). In *Masculinities*, Connell defines hegemonic masculinity "as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees […] the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (77). In *The Men and the Boys*, Connell argues that hegemonic masculinity is comprised of the most valued and appreciated conduct for males in a society or a culture, and this ideal varies with the cultural and historical setting (10-11, 69). Furthermore, Connell writes that "[t]he hegemonic form need not be the most common form of masculinity, let alone the most comfortable" (*Men* 11). In fact, it appears impossible for anyone to become a full epitome of hegemonic masculinity.

Pinpointing hegemonic masculinity and the features related to this is not simple. Chris Barker, a scholar in the field of Cultural Studies, provides a list of characteristics that are traditionally affiliated with hegemonic masculinity in his handbook *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice*. According to Barker, these traits include "the values of strength, power, stoicism, action, control, independence, self-sufficiency, male camaraderie/mateship and work" (302). On the other hand, traits and values such as "relationships, verbal ability, domestic life, tenderness, [and] communication" have been excluded from the range of hegemonic masculinity (Barker 302). These devalued characteristics are traditionally associated with femininity which is positioned as the polar

opposite of masculinity. Although hegemonic masculinity grants men the advantageous dominant position over women, it may cause problems for them. Barker suggests that men may suffer from "the incompatibility between ascendant notions of masculinity and that which is required to live contentedly in the contemporary social world" (303).

Although changeable and renewable, hegemonic masculinity is inadequate in covering all types of masculinities. As suggested earlier, hegemonic masculinity may benefit as well as exclude people. Connell distinguishes three types of masculinity relations that are not located on a level with hegemonic masculinity: subordinate, complicit, and marginalised (*Masculinities* 78-81). Firstly, similarly as femininity, the subordinate type of masculinity is defined in terms of what hegemonic masculinity is not – that is, homosexuality and feminine traits (Connell, *Masculinities* 78-9). At least in Western societies, Connell suggests that "[g]ay men are subordinated to straight men by an array of quite material practices" (*Masculinities* 78). These practices refer to homophobia and include direct and indirect violence as well as exclusion on some level from the fields of politics and culture (Connell, *Masculinities* 78).

Secondly, Connell discusses the concept of complicity as a masculinity relation (*Masculinities* 79). Although those who actually fit and strive for the hegemonic variety may be few, "the majority of men gain from [the] hegemony, since they benefit from the patriarchal dividend, the advantage men in general gain from the overall subordination of women" (Connell, *Masculinities* 79). This is what the notion of complicity denotes: according to Connell, "[m]asculinities constructed in ways that realize the patriarchal dividend, without the tensions or risks of being the frontline troops of patriarchy, are complicit" (*Masculinities* 79).

Thirdly, with regard to hegemonic masculinity, marginalisation involves the

intersection of gender/masculinity with other structures such as class and 'race', while the other masculinity "relations [are] internal to the gender order" (Connell, *Masculinities* 80). In *Masculinities*, Connell exemplifies the intersection of 'race' and masculinities:

> In a white-supremacist context, black masculinities play symbolic roles for white gender construction. For instance, black sporting stars become exemplars of masculine toughness, while the fantasy figure of the black rapist plays an important role in sexual politics among whites […]. (80)

Indeed, non-White athletes may be regarded as representatives of hegemonic masculinity, but this requires the authorisation of the dominant group (Connell, *Masculinities* 81).

Connell's theory of masculinities has been criticised, contested, and elaborated by numerous researchers. Connell's views clash with those of Judith Butler, the renowned theorist of the performativity of gender, who published her revolutionary work *Gender Trouble* in 1990. In *Gender Trouble*, Butler discusses the problems of theorising sex, gender and sexuality, and she finds the sex/gender division problematic. She reproaches the sex/gender division for leaving the biological variety 'sex' intact, without analysis (10). Butler asks: "what is 'sex' anyway? Is it natural, anatomical, chromosomal, or hormonal […?] Does sex have history?" (10). She reaches the conclusion that if we cannot explicate sex as unchanging, it must be culturally constructed, precisely as gender; thus "the distinction between sex and gender turns out to be no distinction at all" (10-11). As Butler enunciates this,

> gender is not to culture as sex is to nature; gender is also the discursive/cultural means by which 'sexed nature' or 'a natural sex' is produced and established as 'prediscursive', prior to culture, a politically neutral surface *on which* culture acts. (11; emphasis original)

Furthermore, Butler criticises the view of gender as a construction, because it resonates the determinist idea that "bodies are understood as passive recipients of an inexorable cultural law" (11-12). If the constructed gender is merely a product of social determinism, it "is as determined and fixed as it was under the biology-is-destiny formulation" (Butler 12). In conclusion, Butler's theory indicates that the sex/gender division is not as unambiguous as it appears in some earlier theories of gender.

Butler's theory of performativity is introduced in *Gender Trouble* where she argues that "acts and gestures, articulated and enacted desires create the illusion of an interior and organizing gender core" (173). According to Butler, the constant repetition of certain acts, styles and expressions constitute what we call 'femininity' and 'masculinity', or 'woman' and 'man' (178-9). In Western cultures, masculinity is exemplified by such features as short hair, a moustache and beard, swearing, and heavy drinking. According to Butler's theory, instead of these being somehow 'manly' by nature, 'man' is *performed* by getting/wearing a short haircut/moustache/beard, swearing, and drinking heavily. Furthermore, Butler suggests that "drag fully subverts the distinction between inner and outer psychic space and effectively mocks both the expressive model of gender and the notion of a true gender identity" (174). According to Butler, "gender parody reveals that the original identity after which gender fashions itself is an imitation without an origin" (175). She arrives at the conclusion that

> [g]ender is […] a construction that regularly conceals its genesis; the tacit collective agreement to perform, produce, and sustain discrete and polar genders as cultural fictions is obscured by the credibility of those productions – and the punishments that attend not agreeing to believe in them; the construction 'compels' our belief in its necessity and naturalness. (178)

To conclude, Butler asserts that "performativity is not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual, which achieves its effects through its naturalization in the context of a body, understood, in part, as a culturally sustained temporal duration" (xv).

In *The Men and the Boys*, Connell criticises Butler:

> Butler (1990), the main proponent of a 'performative' account of gender, is strikingly unable to account for work, child care, institutional life, violence, resistance (except as individual choice), and material inequality. These are not trivial aspects of gender. (20)

In a manner resembling Butler's view of the performativity of gender, Connell thinks that masculinities are a result of an active construction. They both stress the importance of power relations that are bound to the concepts of gender and masculinities. However, while Butler stresses the discursive nature of gender dynamics, Connell argues that masculinities are produced and maintained by social structures that vary with time and cultural setting.

Another researcher who has criticised Connell's theory is Stephen Whitehead. He criticises the concept of hegemony for being unable "to bridge the structure and agency dichotomy" as well as being devoid of a precise definition (92). Thus, the concept of hegemony is open for interpretation; in fact, it has been described in terms of circulatory as well as hierarchical power (Whitehead 92). Furthermore, Whitehead sees a problematic connection between hegemonic masculinity and patriarchy: they both set "an intentionality behind heterosexual men's practices […] while suggesting that women and gay men are somehow excluded from this otherwise innate desire to dominate and oppress" (92). As Whitehead asserts, "to assume that such conditions are the product of ideological and structural dynamics is to marginalize or make invisible the subject" (93). For neo-Marxists, hegemony escapes totality "and is always subject to the power of individual and collective

struggle" (Whitehead 94). Whitehead argues that "while [hegemonic masculinity] attempts to recognise difference and resistance, its primary underpinning is the notion of a fixed (male) structure" (93-4). As the behaviour and expressions of rather few men respond to the requirements of hegemonic masculinity, it is left unclear what it really is and who are its true representatives (Whitehead 93). If hegemonic masculinity can be any form of male being and doing regardless of time and space, it is – despite its shifting and changing meaning – immutable and unbeatable (Whitehead 94). Whitehead concludes that despite these inconsistencies, "hegemonic masculinity is a useful shorthand descriptor of dominant masculinities" (94).

Connell comments on the criticism regarding hegemonic masculinity in *The Men and the Boys*. Hegemonic masculinity has been criticised for being a fixed character type that encompasses the multiplicity of violent or otherwise questionable conduct and "the more extreme this image becomes, the less it has to be owned by the majority of men" (Connell, *Men* 23). Connell responds to the criticism and asserts that the concept of hegemonic masculinity was originally intended to be used "to deal with relational issues – most importantly, the connections between the differences and hierarchies among men, and the relations between men and women" (*Men* 23).

As violence is a significant practice in hegemonic masculinity and a crucial theme in *Human Punk*, this will be discussed next in a separate section.

2.3. Violence and Masculinities

Violence is a practice that is used to maintain social order. According to Raewyn Connell, the dominant group utilises violence to preserve the dominant position (*Masculinities* 83).

In the case of masculinities, the dominant group of men uses violence against women as well as subordinated and marginalised groups of men in order to maintain the authoritative power (Connell, *Masculinities* 83). As a means of intimidation, the threat or use of violence indicates that the authorisation of the dominant group is not unswerving (Connell, *Masculinities* 84). As Connell argues,

> [v]iolence often arises in the *construction* of masculinities, as part of the practice by which particular men or groups of men claim respect, intimidate rivals, or try to gain material advantages. Violence is not a 'privilege', but it is very often a means of claiming or defending privilege, asserting superiority or taking an advantage. (Connell, "On Hegemonic Masculinity and Violence" 95; emphasis original)

In a similar vein, Stephen M. Whitehead argues that masculinities "are directly implicated in those practices of men that are oppressive, destructive and violent" (35).

When discussing men's violence, it is important to remember that violence has many shapes: it exceeds the binary of the private and the public, and it may be inconspicuous by nature (e.g. violence at home) (Whitehead 35-6). As Whitehead argues,

> men's association with violence […] [comes] to characterize the organization and control of weapons and means of violence […]; the control of state-sponsored violence […]; violence by corporations; and violence undertaken by organized criminal gangs […]. (35-36)

Furthermore, Whitehead adds to the list the random violence by men directed at women, children and other men that takes place within the public sphere (36). Such violence is especially harmful because the fear it causes is in itself "a form of violation of human dignity" (Whitehead 36). According to Whitehead, "the perceived ability and opportunity

to (re)act violently towards others" is tightly intertwined with masculinities (37). As Whitehead states, "the root of men's violences is anchored as much in social and cultural values as in individual pathology" (37). Violent practices in organisations which involve disciplinary actions by their employees (e.g. soldiers, prison warders, carers, and police officers) are an example of masculine culture merging with individual violence, and these practices "frequently [expose] the deeper culture of violence at the heart of the organizational setting" (Whitehead 37).

Although Jeff Hearn's extensive study *The Violences of Men* is mainly concerned with men's violence towards women they know, it contains useful definitions of violence, men, and masculinities. Hearn prefers the term 'men's violences' to 'male violence' for four reasons: the former is more accurate; it does not refer to biology in the making of violence; it does not imply that male violence is possibly one of the many types of violence of men; and this "acknowledges the plurality of men's violences" (4). Hearn defines men's violences as "done by men or […] attributed to men" (16). Furthermore, he suggests that "violence is a reference point for the production of boys and men" (7).

Hearn stresses that the definitions of violence are subject to change according to time and place, and on an individual level, violence is understood in different ways (14-15). As violence is discursive and material by nature, it is difficult to pinpoint an all-encompassing definition of violence (Hearn 15). As Hearn argues, "[v]iolence, what is meant by violence, and whether there is a notion of violence at all, are historically, socially and culturally constructed" (15). One of Hearn's multiapplicable points is that violence is not a phenomenon "separated off from the rest of life;" indeed, "violence can be mixed up with all sorts of everyday experiences – work and housework, sex and sexuality, marriage, leisure" (15). For Hearn, these four elements that are "themselves historically and

culturally specific" are relevant when discussing violence:

> [1.] that which is or involves the use of force, physical or otherwise, by a violator or violators;
>
> [2.] that which is intended to cause harm;
>
> [3.] that which is experienced, by the violated, as damaging and/or violation;
>
> [4.] the recognition of certain acts, activities or events as 'violent' by a third party, for example, a legal authority. (Hearn 16; numbering mine)

Further, the varied forms and processes of violence involve "physical, sexual, verbal, psychological, emotional, linguistic, cognitive, social, spatial, financial, representational and visual violences" (Hearn 16-17).

In his discussion of violence and gender difference, Hearn argues that men who are violent to women as well as other men may define the violence to other men as 'real violence' due to the use of greater physical force than in the violence to women (82, 119). One of Hearn's informants revealed that he was "able to control his violence to women and […] that was very different to violence to or between men, when there was far less control and predictability in the situation" (Hearn 140). When discussing sexual infidelity, Hearn suggests that "[t]he violence to the man is in the context of *excluding* him from a social relation or of punishing him" (150; emphasis original). Also, Hearn states that describing violence to men is "often more concerned with the outcome" (150).

In "Masculinities and Interpersonal Violence," Walter S. DeKeseredy and Martin D. Schwartz discuss prevailing sociological research on masculinities and interpersonal violence through three illustrations: violence to women in intimate relationships, homicide, and youth gang violence. They claim that biology is not meaningful in the making of a violent personality, nor is the evolutionary theorists' conclusion that men are violent

because of reproductive reasons (354, 362). As DeKeseredy and Schwartz quote J. Katz and W. J. Chambliss's article "Biology and Crime," "[v]iolence, sexism and racism are biological only in the sense that they are within the range of possible human attitudes and behaviors. But non-violence, equality and justice are also biologically possible" (qtd. in DeKeseredy and Schwartz 354). Referring to their own and other masculinities studies by Sinclair, Messerschmidt, and West and Zimmerman, DeKeseredy and Schwartz suggest that violence is only one way of performing hegemonic masculinity, and enforcing and maintaining a masculine identity through violence "is affected by class and race relations that structure the [available] resources" (356).

DeKeseredy and Schwartz also discuss the contribution of male peers to violent behaviour and state that male-to-male interpersonal violence leading to homicide may be affected by peers directly or indirectly (359). In other words, peers may directly encourage or support the violence of their friend, or peers may confer a certain status on their friend as an indirect result of violence (DeKeseredy and Schwartz 359-360). DeKeseredy and Schwartz conclude that "for many men, violence is, under certain situations, the only perceived available technique of expressing and validating masculinity, and male peer support strongly encourages and legitimates such aggression" (362).

Paul Willis discusses the violent behaviour of schoolboys in his renowned study *Learning to Labour*. According to Willis, fighting and physically rough measures are a significant part of their lives and also related to having a 'laff' which refers to a culturally specific way of having fun, joking and playing pranks (Willis 29-30; 32-34). As Willis states, "[i]n violence there is the fullest if unspecified commitment to a blind or distorted form of revolt" (34). Also, violence is regarded as a stimulant in the boring everyday life, and "once experienced, the fear of the fight and the ensuing high as the self safely resumes

its journey are addictive" (Willis 34). There are limits to violence: having destructive potential, it "must not be allowed to get out of hand between peers" (Willis 35).

Willis's findings on working-class masculinity will be discussed in more detail later. Next, I will discuss three configurations of masculinities: nationality, class, and subculture.

2.4. Configurations of Masculinities

In this section, I will consider three kinds of configurations of masculinities: nationality, class, and subculture. These will be divided into two sections: firstly, I will consider nationality and class, and secondly, I will contemplate on subcultural theory. As *Human Punk* is mainly concerned with Englishness, working class, and punk subculture, these will be given an emphasis in the discussion.

2.4.1. Nationality and Class

Nation and nationality have numerous definitions. In *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice,* Chris Barker stresses that "[n]ations are not simply political formations but systems of cultural representation by which national identity is continually reproduced through discursive action" (252). Also, nation on a symbolic level is affected by temporal changes (Barker 252). As Barker summarises, "[t]he symbolic and discursive dimensions of national identity narrate and create the idea of origins, continuity and tradition" (252). A sense of unity and communion is significant in the formation of culture; as Barker states, "[n]ational identity is a form of identification with representations of shared experiences and history. These are told through stories, literature, popular culture and the media" (253).

Jopi Nyman discusses national identity and Englishness in his dissertation *Imagining Englishness: Essays on the Representation of National Identity in Modern British Culture*. Nyman states that there are three main findings in his study: firstly, "the identity of Englishness is based on the notions of national and racial Others"; secondly, "the national identity produced is based on memory in two ways: it relies on memories of Empire and on memories of an imagined national past"; and thirdly, "such a construction has become highly problematic and is now under erasure" (57). In addition, Nyman discusses the narratives of nation and argues that "the stories construct a sense of national identity that is not permanent but changing, not shared by all but one that suits the needs of certain groups, and exclusive rather than inclusive" (27). He also asserts that "the nation is constantly and culturally reimagined and reinvented, and images of the nation are accessible to us through narratives of the nation, as symbols and stories, through which the nation seeks self-definition" (28).

Nationalism is connected with nationality. Nyman discusses Homi Bhabha's theory of the two functions of nationalism: the pedagogic and the performative (33). As Nyman rephrases Bhabha's view, "[n]ationalism is pedagogic because it provides people with a story of their past: in so doing it calls (or interpellates) them into accepting a story of their historical origin that connects them to the future of the nation" (33). In addition, nationalism is performative: "[t]he scraps, patches and rags of daily life must be repeatedly turned into the signs of a coherent national culture, while the very act of the narrative performance interpellates a growing circle of national subjects" (Bhabha qtd. in Nyman 33). Nationalism is thus performed through active reconstruction and repetition similarly as gender in Butler's theory of the performativity.

The form of nationality and national identity that is significant in this study is

Englishness. The roots of Englishness as a cultural ideal are in the late nineteenth century "when idealized ways of being English were needed to counter the threats of urban degeneration, economic crises, and various external and internal [O]thers in Britain, Europe and the Empire" (Nyman 39). These Others included "suffragettes, homosexuals, Germans and colonial peoples" (Nyman 39). The same view has been presented by Philip Dodd: "[t]he dominant English cultural ideal of the late nineteenth century was then sited in certain institutions which underwent transformation, served 'national' not local needs, gained authority to define themselves and others, and inculcated appropriate (male) behaviour defining its function in and to the national culture" (Dodd qtd. in Nyman 41). As Nyman rephrases Dodd, the process of the formation of Englishness "was a hegemonic process demanding consent" (Nyman 41). In this process, Othering plays a key role: "the working class has a place in the national culture, yet it has separate needs and features and is thus excluded" (Nyman 41).

Englishness is defined against Others as well as through symbolism. Antony Easthope provides a list of binary oppositions of Englishness and Otherness in English empiricist tradition in his study *Englishness and National Culture*. According to Easthope, these dichotomies include English/French; home/foreign; objective/subjective; practice/theory; common sense/dogma; hard/soft; right/wrong; virility/effeminacy; masculine/feminine (90). Thus, education and rules appear foreign and feminine, while practical hard work and using common sense are related to masculinity and Englishness. Furthermore, Nyman states that "twentieth-century representations of national identity in Britain reconstruct stereotypes of national Others, reproduce ideas of Englishness based on national symbols" (52). One of the powerful symbols of Englishness is the imagery of picturesque countryside of the southern parts of England (Nyman 42).

M. Spiering discusses Englishness using an imagologist approach in *Englishness: Foreigners and Images of National Identity in Postwar Literature*. Spiering contemplates on Englishness as contrasted with American, European, Arab and Russian images in postwar literature. According to Spiering, "a sense of identity is invariably derived negatively" (171); as he argues, "imagology asserts that in order to be meaningful, national identity requires a mirror," or a counter image (18). Furthermore, Spiering suggests that gender and class may affect the choice of the type of counter image (20).

In academic discourse, class has been given various definitions. In *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice*, Chris Barker discusses some definitions of class. Barker quotes Edward Thompson's famous study *The Making of the English Working Class* where class is defined as a reality constituted by people who "as a result of common experiences (inherited or shared), feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against" people with dissimilar or opposing interests (Thompson qtd. in Barker 44). Later, Barker discusses Marxist theory that sees class "as an essential unified identity between a signifier and a specific group of people who share socio-economic conditions" (95). Critics of Marxism view class as "not simply an objective economic fact but a discursively formed, collective subject position" affected by gender, 'race' and age (Barker 95). Due to intersectionality, subjects are fragmented and they "take up plural subject positions" (Barker 95).

In the essay "Class and Masculinity," David Morgan provides two interesting points onto class and masculinity. Firstly, Morgan states that working-class masculinities may, at least on the surface, be described as "collective, physical and embodied, and oppositional" (170). However, he mentions that "there are working class *individualities* represented in popular social types such as 'Jack the lad,' 'the cheeky chappie,' and 'the hard man'" (171;

my emphasis). Secondly, Morgan discusses models of class and states that class classifications do not always coincide with class experience; as he asserts, "[c]lass […] comes to be seen as something that is played out in different sites that do not necessarily have much to do with each other" and by these sites, he refers to work, home, and leisure (171). Furthermore, Morgan suggests that "[c]lass as experience needs to be filtered through particular agencies, such as housing, residential area, educational experience" (171).

Haywood and Mac an Ghaill discuss work and masculinities and they argue that "we need to understand 'men' and 'work' as a gendered interrelationship, through which diverse meanings of manhood are established and sustained" (21). They argue that "for many western societies work has traditionally been understood as an important moment in the passage from childhood to adulthood" (Haywood and Mac an Ghaill 22). This is also "illustrated through the separations of the private sphere of family life from the public sphere, from values of dependence to independence" and "to become a man is to become a worker" (22).

Social scientist Paul Willis's *Learning to Labour: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs* involves interesting insights into working class and masculinity. Although it was published in 1977, it is still frequently referred to in contemporary research. In the study, Willis describes the culture of the schoolboys or the 'lads' in terms of opposition to authority; that is, the values assumed by the authority such as diligence, deference and respect are abandoned and rejected by the lads (Willis 11-12). The lads of Willis's study define themselves as the opposite and superior to the school conformists or the 'ear'oles' (Willis 13-14). In addition to opposing the authority and treating the 'ear'oles' as inferior, the lads are defined through a particular hairstyle and clothes as well

as through their attitude to ethnic minorities, women, sexuality, and intoxicants (Willis 17; 43-49). Regarding work and education, Willis argues that "physical labouring comes to stand for and express, most importantly, a kind of masculinity and also an opposition to authority – at least as it is learned in school" (104). Willis describes how "[t]he ability to take the initiative, to make others laugh, to do unexpected or amusing things […] are all profoundly masculine attributes of the culture, and permanent goals for individuals in it" (146). Masculinity is exposed as a complex set of dimensions: it can mean violent and aggressive machismo as well as progression in the form of the unity of the manual labour power (Willis 151-152). The lads of Willis's study learn to participate in the reproduction of working class in school – in the words of Dolby and Dimitriadis, "[t]he culture of resistance generated in school is entirely continuous with work culture [… which] is a cruel irony" (4). However, there is potential for "what Willis refers to as […] 'partial penetration' [… when] the lads understand that they are positioned as abstract labor" (Dolby and Dimitriadis 4).

Madeleine Arnot discusses Willis's *Learning to Labour* and its criticism in her article "Male Working-Class Identities and Social Justice: A Reconsideration of Paul Willis's *Learning to Labor* in Light of Contemporary Research". According to Arnot, Willis's "research showed that boys were adopting, adapting, reworking, and fashioning gender dualism rather than being socialized into one or other category" (Arnot 25). In other words, Willis arrives at the Butlerian view that gender binary is performed and maintained through repetition, a result of active production and reproduction. As Arnot summarises, "[t]hey thus confirm their respect for their masculine identity, derived from their families and peer group, and see its fulfillment in hard, physically demanding manual jobs" (Arnot 26).

A shift from the binary opposition of 'lads' and 'ear'oles' to intersectionalism or

more complex relations between boys and masculinities has occurred in studies after Willis's *Learning to Labour*; as Arnot asserts, "[b]oys were shown to be actively shaping gender relations as much as social class relations and to be constructing their masculinity within the fluid relations of gender, ethnicity, class, age, and sexuality" (24). Willis has been criticised for dismissing girls and their experiences of the working class (Dolby and Dimitriadis 7). Furthermore, as Arnot writes, "[b]y dignifying these racist, sexist and homophobic 'lads' in their degradation, [Angela] McRobbie and later [Beverley] Skeggs (1992) argued that Willis's project failed to understand the articulation of male power and domination" (Arnot 28). Arnot argues that Willis's finding that humour or 'having a laff' is a way of gaining power for the working-class boys is obsolete; as Arnot quotes Nayak and Kehily, "[h]aving a laugh today is 'every bit as dedicated to counter culture of humour as 'lads' in Willis's study, but it is less about gaining power and more about feeling entitled to it" (Nayak and Kehily qtd. in Arnot 31). Arnot compares Willis and Nayak and Kehily: "[w]here Willis observed the *class significance* of such humour, Nayak & Kehily saw cussing, blowing matches, ritualized insults, and funny/spicy stories as the undercurrents at work behind English *heterosexual masculinity*" (31, emphasis original).

To conclude, Englishness and working class are constructed through repetitive performances. In addition, Englishness and working class are defined in contrast with other nationalities/ethnicities and middle class/education. These binary oppositions often regard Englishness/working class as superior and masculine, while their opposites are described as inferior and effeminate. Next, I will discuss subculture, and a special emphasis will be given on punk subculture.

2.4.2. Subculture

Subcultures are often associated with youth. As *Human Punk* mostly deals with punk subculture, studies and examples of punk will be given an emphasis in this section. Since the relation of subculture and masculinities has not been studied extensively, this section concentrates on subculture per se. However, the connection between masculinities and subculture in *Human Punk* will be addressed in the analysis.

Youth culture and subcultures have been discussed by the researchers of the well-known Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in the classic study *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain*. The subcultural research of the CCCS has been criticised for taking into account mainly white male working-class subcultures (Barker 417). Furthermore, in *Inside Subculture: The Postmodern Meaning of Style*, the sociologist David Muggleton criticises Hebdige and other CCCS researchers for concentrating on theory instead of practice and stresses the potential of ethnographic research in today's subcultural studies (2-4). Muggleton reproaches CCCS for appropriating the subject-matter of their studies and argues that postmodern subcultures escape the class distinctions (2-4, 161). Although *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain* was already published in 1975, some of the definitions related to subcultural theory remain useful today.

In the article "Subcultures, Cultures and Class: A Theoretical Overview," John Clarke et al. comprehend 'culture' as "that level at which social groups develop distinct patterns of life, and give *expressive form* to their social and material existence" (10; emphasis original). As Clarke et al. summarise the definition, "[c]ulture is the way the social relations of a group are structured and shaped: but it is also the way those shapes are

experienced, understood and interpreted" (11). Subcultures may be described as "smaller, more localised and differentiated structures, within one or other of the larger cultural networks" that need to be considered in relation to the 'parent culture' from which the subculture stems and the dominant culture that "tries to define and contain all other cultures within its inclusive range" (Clarke et al. 12-13). As Barker states, "[y]outh is constituted through a 'double articulation' to parent working-class culture and to the dominant culture" (414). Clarke et al. also stress that "[s]ub-cultures must exhibit a distinctive enough shape and structure [– that is, distinctive "activities, values, certain uses of material artefacts, territorial spaces" –] to make them identifiably different from their 'parent' culture" (13).

Subcultures have plenty to offer to young participants. As Michael Brake argues in *Comparative Youth Culture: The Sociology of Youth Culture and Youth Subcultures in America, Britain and Canada*, "subcultures arise as attempts to resolve collectively experienced problems resulting from contradictions in the social structure, and […] they generate a form of collective identity from which an individual identity can be achieved outside that ascribed by class, education and occupation" (ix). Furthermore, the concept of magical solutions refers to subcultures solving for their participants "the structural problems of class" (Barker 411). As Barker summarises this, "[s]ubcultures offer maps of meaning which make the world intelligible to its members" (489). In addition to magical solutions, Clarke et al. argue that working-class subcultures "*win space* for the young: cultural space in the neighbourhood and institutions, real time for leisure and recreation, actual room on the street or street-corner" (45; emphasis original). Clarke et al. compare middle-class and working-class subcultures, stating that the latter "are clearly articulated, collective structures" that "reproduce a clear dichotomy between those aspects of group

life still fully under the constraint of dominant or 'parent' institutions (family, home, school, work), and those focussed on non-work hours – leisure, peer-group association" (60). As they argue, "working-class youth appropriate the existing environment, they construct distinct leisure-time activities around the given working-class environment – street, neighbourhood, football ground, […] pub" (60).

Style and visibility are located at the core of subcultures. Clarke et al. state that of particular significance in the formation of style is "the active organisation of objects with activities and outlooks, which produce an organised group-identity in the form and shape of a coherent and distinctive way of 'being-in-the-world'" (54). Barker discusses Dick Hebdige's views of subculture and style and states that "[f]or Hebdige, style is a signifying practice that, in the case of spectacular subcultures, is an obviously fabricated display of codes of meaning. This is said to act as a form of semiotic resistance to the dominant order" (415). Punk subculture is a case in point. As Brake describes, "[l]urex, old school uniforms, plastic garbage bags, safety pins, bondage and sexual fetishism were developed into a self-mocking, shocking image" (77). Dick Hebdige has argued that in punk subculture, "[t]here was a homological relation between the trashy cut-up clothes and spiky hair, the pogo and amphetamines, the spitting, the vomiting, the format of the fanzines, the insurrectionary poses and the 'soulless', frantically driven music" (114). Originally employed by Paul Willis, homology refers to "[s]ynchronic relationship by which social structures, social values and cultural symbols are said to 'fit' together; that is, the way in which the structure and meanings of symbols and artifacts parallel and reflect the concerns of a social group" (Barker 412; 481). However, Barker has argued that homology may be interpreted as reductionist: homology regards style as class-related or even a result of class (415).

Authenticity is a central concept in subcultures. According to Barker, authenticity involves claims "that a category is genuine, natural, true and pure" (474). Brake distinguishes between punks from two different backgrounds: the working-class punks and the middle-class art-school punks (77). The former appear to represent the 'real', authentic view of punk, and the latter are thought to be superficial 'fake' punks whose interest lies merely in the punk style. As Brake describes,

> [a]t one end the art school students, with their Mohican haircuts, indicated their separation from non-bohemian careers, aligning themselves with cultural rebels and the new outré consumerism, whilst working-class punks underlined their refusal to conform, to follow ill-paid, dead-end jobs by making sure they would not be employed. (77)

In addition, Brake criticises the view of the punk movement as politically disappointing (78). He asserts that "[p]unk offered a parody, a taunting portrayal of popular culture, an attack on uncritical consumption of mass-produced artefacts and style. It was healthily cynical about social democracy and its benefits during a recession" (79). Furthermore, Hebdige has argued that in the case of punk subculture, "every performance […] offered palpable evidence that things could change" (110).

Subculture, music and masculinity are considered by Ian Biddle and Freya Jarman-Ivens in the introduction to the essay collection *Oh Boy!: Masculinities and Popular Music*. As it becomes clear in the introductory essay, music and musical genres do not escape gender binary. According to Biddle and Jarman-Ivens, "that which is perceived and produced as 'masculine' enjoys widespread hegemony over that which is described and produced as 'feminine'" (3). Subgenres of rock "are culturally privileged as 'authentic' and 'meaningful', in contrast to so-called feminine genres such as 'teen-pop', which is widely

perceived as being devoid of significant meaning" (Biddle and Jarman-Ivens 3).

Sarah F. Williams glances at punk rock and masculinity in her article "'A Walking Open Wound': Emo Rock and the 'Crisis' of Masculinity in America." According to Williams, the hard sound, opinionated lyrics, and scandalous live performances of the English punk bands of the late 1970s were adopted by the US hardcore punk scene that later gave birth to emo rock (150). As Williams argues, "[hardcore] is a movement that strives to retain the musical signifiers of aggressive masculinity while redirecting the focus of the lyrics to more personal and private topics that had heretofore gone unexplored in punk idioms" (150). The fact that the English punk movement of the 1970s, like many other subgenres of rock, excluded the sphere of the personal from its topics could be interpreted as a connection between punk and hegemonic masculinity. As feelings are associated with femininity, lyrics related to them might have been viewed as feminine and thus inferior and inauthentic by the audience affected by the male norm in the society.

This section on subculture will be concluded with a list of Michael Brake's "five functions that subcultures may play for their participants," summarised by Chris Barker:

> 1 providing magical solutions to socio-economic structural problems;
>
> 2 offering a form of collective identity different from that of school and work;
>
> 3 winning space for alternative experiences and scripts of social reality;
>
> 4 supplying sets of meaningful leisure activities in contrast to school and work;
>
> 5 furnishing solutions to the existential dilemmas of identity.
>
> (Barker 411; numbering original)

Next, I will briefly review and contemplate on recent literary studies related to masculinities, and this will form the final section of the theoretical background.

2.5. A Review of Recent Literary Studies on Masculinities and British Culture

Masculinities have become an appealing topic for study in the field of literary research. Intersectional approaches involving masculinities and structures such as class and nationality have been particularly topical. In this section, I will review trends in recent literary studies on masculinities. Of particular interest here is the theme of changes in the concepts of Englishness, working class, and masculinities in British fiction – the same theme that will be discussed with regard to *Human Punk* in the analysis of this study.

The literary researcher Nick Bentley discusses recent trends in British novels in the introduction to the article collection *British Fiction of the 1990s*. According to Bentley, social and cultural changes in the UK affected the fiction of the decade (1). For example, the evolving concept of masculinity was considered by writers such as Nick Hornby, and Irvine Welsh was one of the authors who explored the connection between subculture and nationality (Bentley 1, 9-10). British fiction of the 1990s was remarkably concerned with articulations and representations of identity, which is reflected by an "abundant use of self-reflexive narratives [… that attempt] to question the relationship between fiction, reality and the construction (or writing) of identity" (Bentley 10-11). As Bentley continues, "[t]he role of narrative and storytelling thereby becomes crucial in how identities are communicated to us and to others" (11). Due to changes in the internal affairs of the UK, national identity and Englishness were increasingly examined by writers of the late 1990s (Bentley 9-10). Bentley argues that the emerging interest in English national identity was "fuelled by nostalgic reconstructions of the myths of Englishness […] in the continuing influence on the English psyche of devolution, post-colonialism, the end of empire and the emergence of multiculturalism and difference as an alternative model of the nation" (10).

In addition, identity in relation to age (namely youth and adolescence) was topical in the fiction of the 1990s; as Bentley writes, "adolescence as a lifestyle seemed to expand to include twenty- and even thirty-somethings, as seen in the popularity of the extended *Bildungsroman* of the type produced by Helen Fielding and Nick Hornby" (11; original emphasis). Bentley draws the conclusion that the abundance of identity-related fiction denotes the significance of identity politics in Britain in the 1990s (11).

Englishness as a changing concept has been discussed in the article "The McReal Thing: Personal/National Identity in Julian Barnes's *England, England*" by the literary researcher Sarah Henstra. Henstra contemplates briefly on Barnes's character Sir Jack Pitman who "amounts to everything that has gone wrong with the idea of being English" (95). Sir Jack is in a prominent position in the theme park called England, England, and he is rumoured to have Eastern European roots or a working-class background that he has tried to conceal (95-96). Based on Henstra's reading, it appears that such identities are not compatible with hegemonic Englishness. Interestingly, Henstra refers to Butler's theory of performativity by suggesting that "memory is discovered in *England, England* to be one performative operation amongst many in the service of the ongoing re-iteration of selfhood" (97). This appears to mean that identity is produced in part through memories that are formed and maintained through repetitive narration and retrospection.

The intersection of masculinity, Englishness, and working class is considered in Emma Parker's article "No Man's Land: Masculinity and Englishness in Graham Swift's *Last Orders*." Parker views Swift's novel as discarding the traditional forms of masculinity, nationality, and class that seem problematic, or rather dysfunctional and obsolete (89). According to Parker, Swift "debunks the very category 'man' by privileging inbetweenness [...] over the binary oppositions that structure traditional thinking about identity" (89).

Instead of clear-cut traditional models, the protagonists find solace in "no man's land" (Parker 89). This shift from a traditional English working-class masculinity to the state of inbetweenness is especially indicated by language and discourse (Parker 93). This appears to be in accordance with the Butlerian idea of the performativity of gender. According to Parker, *Last Orders* presents traditional masculinity as destructive and restrictive (92). In *Last Orders*, characteristics such as "authoritarianism, chauvinism, inarticulacy, a sense of duty, emotional repression, aggression, heavy drinking and hard work" comprise the problematic traditional working-class masculinity that deems femininity and non-whiteness as its inferior counterparts (Parker 91-92). Parker views "[t]he world that Swift's characters occupy [as] structured by binary oppositions" (95). 'Man' and 'woman' are portrayed as opposite categories defined by what the opposite is not (Parker 95). However, the binary oppositions are contested and questioned in the course of the novel (Parker 95-99). This is marked by the protagonists' changing views of the women in their life as well as by symbolism such as male characters changing their drinking habits from pints to half-pints (Parker 95-98).

In her article, Parker discusses the relationship between masculinity and national identity. Throughout history, national identity discourses have been largely male-dominated areas (Parker 100). As Parker summarizes John McLeod's view, "history reaffirms national identity by creating a common past that engenders a sense of collectivity and belonging" (Parker 100). According to Parker, the myth of united nationhood is undermined in *Last Orders* by highlighting male-dominant, elitist and imperialist discourses (100). Similarly, national and racial superiority are questioned in the novel through an Arab character whose business provides employment for one of the protagonists who feels threatened by this change in historical power relations (Parker 101). In addition,

discourses of nationhood are affected by class; as Parker writes, "the fact that many public monuments and public houses celebrate England's social elite […] suggests that Swift's working-class characters by no means have a straightforward relationship to national culture" (100). Interestingly, the novel includes sentimental descriptions of English landscape, and although today's England is an urban society where most people reside in cities and towns, "the image of England as pastoral idyll persists" (Parker 101-102). In summary, the novel presents an alternative way of looking at England, one that questions the authority of wealth and privilege in the representation of England and English culture (Parker 102-103).

The relevance of masculinity in working-class fiction is discussed by Susan Brook in her article "Engendering Rebellion: The Angry Young Man, Class and Masculinity". The term 'Angry Young Man' refers to the British working-class or lower-middle class novelists and playwrights, who emerged in the 1950s, as well as to the male protagonists of their works (Brook 19). The 'angry' texts have been celebrated by some critics "as documents of 'instinctive leftishness,'" as works of genuine social and political commentary and meaningful leftist experience; however, the 'angry' writers produced texts that portrayed rebellion and authenticity exclusively as masculine (Brook 22-23). Brook argues that "[t]he ruggedly heterosexual and rebellious masculinity found in these texts was read as the authentic experience of the working class or lower-middle class, and as a form of class resistance" (23). Marianne Roivas has also pondered upon the genre of 'Angry Young Men' and suggested that the protagonist of John King's novel *The Football Factory*, who is described as utterly frustrated, aggressive, and unreasonable, can be interpreted as following the tradition of 'Angry Young Men' (131).

Brook uses John Osborne's drama *Look Back in Anger* as an example of the ways in

which the reading of ‘angry’ texts as authentic working-class experience was heavily influenced by masculinity (23-29). Brook’s article provides various ways of dissecting and interpreting the anger of Osborne’s protagonist Jimmy Porter. According to Brook, Jimmy associates his wife Alison and women in general with the sphere of home and the private, “with domesticity, with the Establishment, and thus with everything that restricts his freedom” (28). In the context of Englishness, Jimmy’s anger may also be viewed as a comment on the fall of the imperialist Commonwealth and the hegemonic imperial masculinity (Brook 28). Finally, Brook stresses that the ‘angry’ masculinity is an alternative to the class system: “it is clear that the scorn which the Angry Young Men hurled at ‘the Establishment’ was a class resentment, but one devoid of any collective class-consciousness” (Segal qtd. in Brook 28). Further, ‘angry’ masculinity and maleness may be viewed as markers of class-transcending independence and authenticity, while anything related to femaleness and femininity is contrived and restrictive, associated with the upper classes and the class system, and essentially, the binary opposition of the masculine (Brook 29). Traditionally, working-class men have been romanticised and considered by the left to be the authentic experiencers of class-consciousness (Brook 31-32). In conclusion, Brook shows that gender is relevant in the discussion of class and the state (33). It appears that placing a further emphasis on genderedness in works of left fiction would contribute to fresh interpretations of these works.

This section has been a brief contemplation of recent literary studies regarding masculinities, class, and nationality. Further, I have reviewed how these studies have discussed changes in Englishness, working class, and masculinities in contemporary British fiction – similarly, these changes will be considered in the analysis of this study. Next, I will proceed to the analysis which will focus on masculinities and their relation to

violence, Englishness, working class, and punk subculture.

3. MASCULINITIES IN *HUMAN PUNK*

John King's *Human Punk*, the primary source of this study, is written by a male author about men. King employs some stylistic features that may be described as masculine. For example, he uses the stream of consciousness technique which, along with the language, creates a sense of speed and intensity:

> my best mate Sunny Smiles leaning back against the wall loving every second of our Friday night, happy to be alive, the speed and power of the music blocking out bad thoughts, and now it's Debbie Harry's turn to fill the speakers, fucking beautiful, but I need a piss and give Smiles my empty can to look after because it's handy having something to hold when you're skint, so you don't look like a wanker standing there with your hands empty, and I worm my way along the edge of the dancefloor to the bog […]. (King 26)

King's version of stream of consciousness involves a seemingly endless number of short, striking clauses and sentences separated by commas, creating a quality of action which can be interpreted as masculine. In addition, the overall language in *Human Punk* appears bold and charged with toughness, a feature also linked with masculinity. The choice to study masculinities and how they function in *Human Punk* seems well-grounded.

In *Jalkapalloa kirjoittamassa: Jalkapallon merkityksiä uudessa englantilaisessa jalkapallokirjoituksessa*, Marianne Roivas states that King's *The Football Factory Trilogy* involves varied layers of viewpoints and socio-cultural discourses (40). This applies to *Human Punk* as well. In this analysis, I will discuss how masculinities are constructed, maintained, and ruptured in *Human Punk*. A special emphasis will be placed on hegemonic masculinity as well as violence as its practice, and Connell's concepts of subordinate and

marginalised masculinities will be applied to *Human Punk*. In addition, I will discuss how masculinities intersect with nationality, class, and subculture, or more specifically, Englishness, working class, and punk subculture.

The analysis will begin with a discussion of hegemonic masculinity in *Human Punk* that presents sexism and homophobia as significant Othering practices. In addition, section 3.1. will include a contemplation of masculine coping mechanisms in *Human Punk*. In section 3.2., I will discuss violence, its normality and limits, as well as its connection to masculinities – particularly hegemonic masculinity – in the novel. I will then move on to section 3.3. where the novel's representations of Englishness, working class, and masculinities are examined. With English working-class masculinity as the norm, *Human Punk* encompasses evocative discourses of nationalism, racism, and xenophobia – these will also be topics of contemplation. Finally, in section 3.4., I will take a look at how punk subculture is related to masculinities and how hegemonic masculinity is supported or breached by punk subculture in *Human Punk*. It should be noted that the analysis will have an emphasis on the first part of the novel: as it locates the main characters in a time when they are learning how to behave and act in accordance with the masculine ideal, the performances of hegemonic masculinity appear increasingly extravagant and transparent. As Joe is the main protagonist and the first-person narrator of the novel, it is his viewpoint and mind-set that moulds the events.

3.1. Hegemonic Masculinity

> We're punk rockers, brick chuckers, finger fuckers – fifteen-year-old boot boys with little chance of a bunk-up even though we know we look the business

> […], standing on the edge of this disco darkness sucking at crumpled cans of lager pretending we love the horrible taste of alcohol, […] eyes drifting from one pair of bouncing tits to the next […] we line the wall by the bar shifting our attention to the girls on the far side of the dancefloor […]. (King 23)

The above example is from the first party scene in "Satellite," the first part of *Human Punk*. It is young Joe's description of himself and his friends as teenage boys on the verge of manhood. Bold, boisterous words such as "finger fuckers" and "boot boys" denote toughness that seems to be at the core of Joe's self-definition. Furthermore, Joe is honest: he admits that the young boys are not likely to experience sexual encounters and that they dislike the taste of alcohol. Yet they are acting tough to impress the girls and pretending to like beer, and there appears to be a mutual understanding that this is the way that they must act. They know what sort of behaviour is correct, and they perform their masculine ideal – their version of hegemonic masculinity.

The example involves some rules that constitute the version of hegemonic masculinity that the boys endorse. Toughness is a definite marker of ideal masculine behaviour: the self-definition of "punk rockers, brick chuckers, finger fuckers" is an unabashed manifestation of toughness. They celebrate resistance and break the rules and the law: they are underaged, but they drink beer. In addition, the boys "look the business": their appearance is "cool" – in other words, their version of hegemonic masculinity is fully embodied by their looks and clothes. Interestingly, there is a division of space into masculine and feminine spaces: the boys stay near the bar instead of joining the girls on the dancefloor. As Ian Biddle and Freya Jarman-Ivens have argued:

> To use Franco Fabbri's terminology, the semiotic, social, and ideological rules

> of musical genres in particular are sites for gendered identities to be (per)formed: semiotic rules include lyric content and 'gestural-mimic' codes; social and ideological rules include (crucially) conventions about the participants of a given musical event. (9)

Girls are described as a separate group and as sexual objects. In addition, they are reduced from human beings to a singular body part, their breasts. This indicates that sexism contributes to the boys' view of girls and women in the novel.

Sexism is a significant Othering practice in the construction of hegemonic masculinity in *Human Punk*. Women are mostly perceived in terms of the madonna/whore binary; as mothers or as sexual objects. Joe and his friends already use sexist, even misogynist language when they are teenagers. Amongst the group of Joe and his friends, it is Dave and Chris who often use sexist and misogynist language and brag about their sexual experiences. In contrast, Joe and Smiles appear less inclined to use such language and occasionally even doubt and question sexist views:

> – These girls were tasty then, were they? Dave asks.
>
> I've told him already. They were alright. One of them whistled and asked me for a kiss. Don't know which one though.
>
> – More like a fuck. Those sort are always begging for a bunk-up.
>
> Dave's talking out of his arse, as usual.
>
> – Come on, you wanker. If a girl shouts at a bloke in the street, or comes over and starts chatting him up in a disco, then you know she's asking for it, crying out for a fuck, a right old slag.
>
> – It's true, says Chris. (King 57)

In the example, girls are considered as sexual objects and they are grouped under a

powerful stereotype that involves dehumanisation and the oversimplification of them as creatures at the mercy of their 'nature'. This view is enhanced by the fact that the boys do not have girls as friends. Instead, girls remain distant to Joe and his friends. Occasionally, sexism functions as a means for male bonding between strangers:

> I talk to the man next to me, and he's alright […].
>
> –Nice arse on that, the old boy says.
>
> I follow his eyes and he's right. Very nice. The spirit lives on.
>
> –I could fuck that all day long. If I was young, like you. (King 319)

Here, hegemonic masculinity is shared and enforced by Joe and the man through the sexist commentary and the Othering of the woman.

Sexism is related to the madonna/whore dichotomy, or in other words, the division of women into motherly women and sexy women. In "Satellite" and "Asylum," the depiction of the female characters follows the dichotomy. For example, when Joe is travelling by the Trans-Siberian Express in "Asylum," he is acquainted with "the Russian matron" Rika who kisses him one night: "She's a beauty and I can't believe I've been calling her Matron" (King 175-176). Joe's view of Rika changes in an instant from a motherly matron to a beautiful, sexual being, but she cannot be considered as both at the same time.

Joe engages in sexist comments and contemplations. These are sometimes reinforced by stereotypical representations in popular culture: "the James Bond film *Goldfinger*, when 007 gets knocked out and comes round to find the girl he's been shagging is dead, painted from head to toe so she suffocates. A real waste of decent fanny" (King 9). Here, the attractive female character in the film is reduced to her genitals. Furthermore, the way in which Joe refers to his girlfriend Debbie in this example carries deeply sexist meanings:

> – He used to go out with Debbie, didn't he?

> That's right, but I don't say much. He was the one who broke her in. It was a couple of years ago. (King 59)

This example is particularly interesting because of the idiom "break in" that carries two meanings: firstly, "to train sb/sth in sth new that they must do," and secondly, "to wear sth, especially new shoes, until they become comfortable" (*Oxford* 180). In addition, the idiom "break in" refers to training young, inexperienced horses. Joe's choice of word indicates that he views his girlfriend as a used second-hand property, as well as subhuman, a view that follows the tradition of associating women with nature. Debbie's past may be interpreted as a threat to Joe's hegemonic masculinity: he feels insecure because his girlfriend is sexually experienced and, more importantly, possibly more sexually experienced than he is. Although Debbie's previous relationship dates back years, the fact that Joe is not Debbie's first sexual partner appears to bother him.

Joe partakes in sexist discourses, but he also questions them occasionally. In "Satellite," the whore category is represented by the character of Tracy Mercer, one of the popular girls who has got a promiscuous reputation:

> poor old Tracy, the girl everyone calls Iron Gob for the blowjobs she's famous for as much as the dental work, and Chris says he knows some kid who knows this other kid I've never heard of, a friend of a friend, and this boy says she's a right goer who'll suck off anything in a pair of trousers, a fucking slag, but from where I'm standing it doesn't seem fair she gets this gossip going on behind her back, […] she always smiles and says hello if she knows your face, a friendly girl who deserves better […]. (King 24)

Joe's thoughts about Tracy are conflicting. He questions the gossip and contemplates on the reality of Tracy's reputation: "seems like the stroppy ones get the respect, […] maybe

that's what it's all about, so Tracy gets a load of stick for smiling in public, but none of us have got off with her so who knows the truth" (King 24). As an adolescent, Joe is affected by the gendered western culture as well as the overall male norm, which explains why his views about girls and women are inconsistent.

In "Satellite," Joe's girlfriend's mother is a character who is neither of the dichotomy: "the smell of Bev's perfume banging into me again as her hand runs down my arm. […] My head is spinning and I feel stupid" (King 63). Joe is confused by his feelings of attraction and struggles to conceive of Bev as both a mother and a sexually attractive woman. Indeed, the highlighted madonna/whore binary might be explained by the first-person narrator's voice: Joe is affected by the gendered western culture. However, the binary is breached in "Dayglo" by Sarah whom Joe meets at a bar and who becomes his girlfriend: "Seeing Sarah with her boy is strange, but it only adds to her. Makes her stronger" (King 307). Here, Joe begins to consider Sarah as a mother as well as an attractive woman, which denotes a decline in the madonna/whore binary. Further, Sarah is the first woman to whom Joe opens up and talks about his feelings; he becomes close with his girlfriend, which breaches the view of women as distant, unfamiliar Others that can be categorised either as mothers or as sexual beings.

In *Human Punk*, another significant Othering practice is homophobia – in other words, anti-homosexual attitudes, language, and behaviour. Homophobia as an Othering practice may be regarded as equivalent to Connell's concept of a subordinate masculinity. In the novel, homophobic slurs such as "benny," "poof," and "queer" are used to restore, preserve and enhance hegemonic masculinity; often, this occurs in a situation where one of the boys talks about feelings or topics regarded as unmasculine:

> I tell the others to have a look at the sky, how it looks as if it goes on for ever.

> Time doesn't matter. It's good to be alive.
>
> They all look at me. Dave laughs.
>
> – You fucking bum boy. (King 7-8)

The homophobic attitudes of the boys are heightened by the fact that they do not know anyone homosexual. As there are no homosexual characters, homosexuality remains distant, and mostly, the views of the main characters rely on stereotypical imagery. Homosexuality is affiliated with femininity; in "Satellite," although the boys do not fully understand homosexuality, they are familiar with the connection between homosexuality and femininity. Further, homosexuality is occasionally aggregated with paedophilia. This is exemplified in "Satellite" by an event of "queer-rolling," an assault on two men who appear to be paedophiles into teenage boys. Yet instead of paedophilia, their attackers describe and regard them as homosexuals. The violence in the "queer-rolling" event will be discussed in detail in section 3.2.

Hegemonic masculinity is significant in the group dynamics of Joe and his friends. As Stephen M. Whitehead has argued, "men's friendships with other men can be seen to be crucially important in sustaining masculine subjectivities and men's sense of identity as men" (158-159). Indeed, there is no access for women to the group of Joe and his friends. Furthermore, the group of four can be divided into two pairs: Dave and Chris appear different from Joe and Smiles. Dave is a loudmouthed show man who, along with Chris, banters among his friends and tries to dictate the rules of appropriate male behaviour. Dave seeks the leader position of the group, while Chris prefers to stay in the background. When a possible threat to hegemonic masculinity occurs, Dave and Chris remind the group of expected appropriate behaviour and use sexist or homophobic slurs to restore the balance. When Joe and Smiles are alone, they often feel able to talk about the more sensitive issues

for which Dave and Chris might mock them. Further, Dave or Chris may talk about things that are not considered masculine when the other one is not around:

> I tell Dave I got the last one, and Chris bought the first.
>
> – Must be mine then, he says, going up to the bar.
>
> – What did you think of those pictures? Chris asks.
>
> I tell him the truth, don't pretend it's a laugh.
>
> – That's what I thought as well. (King 61)

The pictures that Chris refers to are those from a zoophile porn magazine that Dave had previously stolen. The photos cause puzzled reactions in the boys, but Chris, fearing for his hegemonic masculinity, asks Joe about the pictures and expresses his serious opinion on them only when Dave is not present.

Throughout the novel, there is a tension between Joe and Dave, the two rivals of the leading position of the group, who are frequently provoked by each other. They engage in friendly banter on each other: At the end of "Asylum," they end up in a fist fight. Joe regards Dave's obsession with designer clothes as unmasculine. In the third part of the novel, "Dayglo," Dave and Joe are in a pub and Dave is trying to embarrass Joe in front of women, but Joe knows that Dave is wearing fake designer clothes: "I lean forward and slip a finger inside the logo of his Stone Island top […] I give the label a tug and he wobbles […] Dave's face is frozen. He knows I'll give the label a good pull, and even though it's buttoned on I could do a lot of damage" (King 232). Values of hegemonic masculinity deem fashion effeminate and thus, an unsuited interest for a man. Fashion will be discussed in further detail in section 3.4. with regard to authenticity and punk subculture.

Central in *Human Punk* are the themes of crises, tragic events, and trauma, as well as masculine ways of coping with these. Significantly, hegemonic masculinity regulates how

male characters ought to act at a time of crisis and what kind of coping mechanisms they may employ. As solving problems by discussing them is regarded as feminine, this is not an encouraged solution for men and it is indeed not often employed by the men of *Human Punk*. They are more likely to resort to different types of escapist strategies: hard work, intoxicants, or violence. In addition, characters perform their hegemonic masculinity by exhibiting the qualities of strength and resilience in the face of adversity. Mental breakdowns, or other expressions of potential vulnerability, are excluded from the sphere of hegemonic masculinity. As I will show next, different coping mechanisms are exemplified by three male characters: Smiles's father, Smiles, and Joe.

Firstly, Smiles's father utilises escapist strategies to repress the trauma of his wife's suicide. He utilises alcohol and violence as forms of escape: he drinks and batters his two sons. Furthermore, hard work is another escapist strategy that he employs. He has gained the nickname 'Stalin' from Smiles's friends for his erratic behaviour; when Joe and Smiles are assaulted and Smiles slips into a coma, his father talks to Joe in the hospital: "Stalin sits me down and says the best way to get through the bad times is to keep busy, that's what he's found in life. He's been doing it for years, grabbing as much overtime as he can […] he wants to knacker himself out" (King 101). While dealing with the suicide of his wife is too painful for him, Smiles's father strains himself physically. This can be construed in terms of guilt that becomes expressed through a form of corporeal punishment. A breakdown is not an option for Smiles's father; instead, he regards enduring the pain as the only way to survive.

Secondly, Smiles arrives at a different kind of coping mechanism than his father. Smiles is overwhelmed by the difficulties that life throws at him: his mother commits suicide and Smiles is the one who finds her; after this, his father becomes distant and

violent towards him. When Wells's gang assaults Smiles, he nearly dies. The trauma of the event affects Smiles's personality: "he didn't have that fixed smile any more. [… A] while after that […] we stopped calling him Smiles. The name didn't fit now" (King 143). Smiles has witnessed his father's escapist strategies, but he cannot escape his own traumas. Having absorbed the values of the hegemonic masculinity of the working class, Smiles cannot resort to talking about his feelings. Furthermore, he is not offered professional help until he tries to harm himself. Prior to this, he develops a psychosis and invents conspiracy theories, one of which is Smiles's view of the monstrous heads of state Hitler and Stalin as alive and well, hiding in England and leading a sadomasochistic lifestyle together. When he cannot make sense of his tragic experiences, losing his mind becomes the only way to survive. Significantly, madness is the only way for him to claim power and become a survivor: "Smiles said he was a free spirit and superior to the people around him, that he'd sunk to the lowest depths and reached the highest highs" (King 210). Smiles's madness is his way of asserting hegemonic masculinity, and his suicide may be interpreted as the final way of coping with his troubles in a masculine way. However, to the others, his mental troubles are a difficult matter; although Joe and his friends view Smiles's mental troubles as a result of his traumatic life, they feel unable to deal with Smiles's breakdown because this type of coping mechanism is not favourable according to the customs of hegemonic masculinity.

Thirdly, Joe utilises escapist strategies but throughout his life he has learned to confront his issues instead of escaping them. After Smiles slips into coma, Joe takes the advice of Smiles's father and works hard every day except Sunday. In "Asylum," it is revealed that Joe moved to Hong Kong after Smiles became mentally troubled. One reason for his relocation was the difficult employment situation in the UK. However, perhaps

more importantly, he leaves England because he feels unable to deal with Smiles's psychosis: "Smiles on another planet, going on about conspiracy theories and all sorts. I was working part-time in a pub, going nowhere, did what I had to do" (King 142). On his way from China to Slough after Smiles's death, Joe finally begins to confront the past: "It's a journey I've got to make, untangle the different threads, find some sort of peace" (King 171). The loss of Smiles becomes the end of Joe's escape and actuates the process of dealing with the tragic past. Joe attacking Wells at the end of the novel is problematic: while it can be regarded as a fresh solution, a way of dealing with the past instead of escaping, it also denotes a reproduction of the cycle of violence.

In conclusion, hegemonic masculinity is manifested in sexist/racist/homophobic terms in *Human Punk*. Hegemonic masculinity affects the group dynamics of Joe and his friends as well as the coping mechanisms employed by the characters. What is striking in the novel is the connection between hegemonic masculinity and violence. Next, I will discuss violence and how it functions as a practice of hegemonic masculinity in *Human Punk*.

3.2. The Normality and Limits of Men's Violence(s)

Violence plays a key role in *Human Punk*. The novel presents violence as a distinctive feature in the everyday life of men. Violence towards women is hardly mentioned; in *Human Punk*, men are the doers of violence and they are also its targets. As Joe contemplates on violence and the assault on him and Smiles: "You sort of accept that getting a kicking late at night is part of life, and it was only that bloke asking why we got done that made me think about it, and all I could really come up with is that's the way

things are" (King 103). Indeed, violence is so commonplace that after an assault that nearly results in the death of his best friend, Joe only considers the reasons for the attack after someone asks him why they 'got done' which is itself a rather passive expression that reflects the normality of violence. Earlier, violence was discussed as a coping mechanism of hegemonic masculinity. In this section, I will contemplate on violence in a wider context: as a practice of hegemonic masculinity.

In *Human Punk*, violent deeds fall into two categories: 'everyday' violence, and extreme violence that exceeds the limits of 'everyday' violence. The distinction is not always clear: violence that is regarded as everyday and thus acceptable by some characters may exceed the limits of others. However, as it will be demonstrated next, this particular division is useful in the analysis of violence in this context.

Firstly, everyday violence may be described as kicking and punching that results in relatively minor injuries. Everyday violence is regarded as a normal part of life, as something that can be expected to happen occasionally. It may be manifested as violence towards humans, animals, or property. Furthermore, the definitions of everyday violence are culturally specific. When Joe is in China, he visits an animal market and witnesses a violent pastime: "Two men in suits were laughing as they took turns kicking a pregnant pig in the belly" (King 129). When Joe interferes, the locals gather around him and scold him. Although Joe views this incident as extreme, the locals appear to have a mutual understanding that such animal abuse is normal. As the example shows, violence can also function a source of entertainment.

Human Punk includes numerous incidents of everyday violence: "Some kid walks up and punches him in the mouth, runs off into the night" (King 255). As in the example, incidents of everyday violence are often communicated in the form of anecdotes, which

enforces the view of violence as natural. Further, everyday violence functions as a practice of hegemonic masculinity that can be used to reinforce friendships and create a sense of community and belonging. Here, Joe and his friends participate in a group fight with other schoolboys and adolescent men: "your everyday garden boot boys out on the prowl wondering if the Langley boys are going to turn up, us younger kids bouncing along feeling like nothing can touch us, […] even though we don't say it we know we're safe at the back, acting hard, lots of mouth and not much muscle" (King 12). This group fight against the Langley boys enforces the sense of brotherhood and belonging between Joe, his friends, and the older boys on the same side with them. As Claus-Ulrich Viol comments on this scene in *Human Punk*: "[t]he feeling of community is especially strong in moments of imminent violence, or 'aggro'" (Viol 210). Joe and his friends attend the fight, but they are bystanders creating a sense of safety in numbers. In addition, they watch the older boys and men fighting and so learn how to fight; they are reared to reproduce the culture of violence. Curiously, Joe's self-descriptions are often belittling and modest which appear to be virtues in the setting of the hegemonic masculinity of the working class.

Secondly, the novel features extreme violence that exceeds the limits of everyday violence. This type of violence is cruel and shocking and often causes a disruption in the lives of people involved. Also, details are meaningful in this type of violence: "a loud cracking sound against the skull. And the bang makes me feel sick, when I look at Smiles I know he's thinking the same thing as Khan grins and goes to kick the boy again" (King 13). The severity of the kicking shocks Joe and Smiles, and so does Khan's indifference of the potentially severe damage that he may have caused for the victim. Also, the question of intention – whether or not violence was done intentionally – is significant. In the novel, if violence is planned beforehand, it is often more serious than violence that is done on the

spur of the moment. Examples of this include the "queer-rolling" assault in "Satellite" that also exemplifies how violence is connected to Othering and the murder of Gary Wells in "Dayglo". However, as the main violent event, the assault on Joe and Smiles, shows, sudden violence may also get carried away. The assault on Joe and Smiles and the murder of Wells will be discussed in detail later, while the "queer-rolling" example will be analysed next.

The "queer-rolling" incident was briefly discussed earlier in section 3.1. After a night out, Joe and Dave end up in the company of two older boys, Billy and Leon. They persuade the boys to engage in their plan to make some money by spending time with two older men whom they come across at an amusement arcade: "these two blokes come over. They act poofy and talk funny […]. The men give me the creeps" (King 79). Joe and Dave sense that something is wrong, but Billy and Leon assure them that they will be paid substantial amount of money by keeping the men company and having a few drinks. The true nature of Billy and Leon's plan is revealed to Joe and Smiles later: "I'm almost up to the bloke when I see he's got his knob out […] he stands up, grabs me and pulls me forward. […] The man has me by the arms. He grabs at my bollocks. I try and get away, but he's strong. […] I draw my head back and nut him right in the middle of his nose" (King 81). When the man has made a pass at Joe, Billy and Leon begin the assault that they have planned all along:

> [Billy] kicks the queer hard as he can in the nuts. […] Billy picks his spot and kicks the man in the face, planting his steel toecaps into the nose I've already splattered. I can see the mark, a cut right into the bone. I feel sick, but more from being touched than seeing the queer get a kicking.
>
> […] I look at the other man and Leon is doing a number on him. He's down on

> the carpet and Leon is putting the boot in, kicking him in the head and body. The poof in front of me is busy pissing blood and trying to protect himself, but Billy doesn't give him a chance. He punches the face and smashes the skull into a concrete column. [...] When Billy finally lets him fall, he really gets stuck in, kicking the head around till he's worn out and can't kick any more. When he's finished, he unzips his flies and takes his knob out, pisses on the silent poof, blowing the blood off the side of his face.
>
> – Fucking scum. They deserve everything they get, trying to fuck little boys up the dirt box. They think they own the fucking world, can do anything they want because they've got the money.
>
> […]
>
> – This is called queer-rolling, Billy says, from a bedroom. Turning the dirty bastards over in their own homes. The poor fuckers you do for fun, in a bog, but it's better coming up here because you don't only have a laugh, you can make a few bob as well.
>
> […]
>
> – Some blokes hang around the Gents and they get bashed in there, Billy continues. That's queer-bashing as well. Then there's Paki-bashing, but that's a mug's game. Pakis hate queers as much as us, and they've got no money. [...] We teach the nonces a lesson. We're doing nothing wrong, just upholding the law. […] They can't go to the old bill or they'll get done for molesting children. The other prisoners will kick their teeth in and then the screws will have a go as well. (King 81-83)

In this example, the older men represent paedophiles rather than homosexuals; thus, using

the binary 'homosexuality/paedophilia' is useful for this particular example. The extract presents three kinds of violence: sexual abuse in the form of paedophilia, defensive violence, and hate-crime violence. The extract also features institutional violence, when Billy describes how homosexuals/paedophiles are potential victims of assault in the prison. The older men search for young boys at the arcade and offer them money in exchange for sex.

Billy and Leon's reasons for engaging in "queer-rolling" are complex: they find this type of violence entertaining, and it benefits them in the form of money (and possibly, getting rid of "aggro"), and the fact that they specifically target homosexuals/paedophiles implies hate crime. Furthermore, the way in which Billy describes the paedophiles as rich and powerful resonates traditional narratives of class conflict. It reflects working-class resentment towards their superiors and the anger resulting from an unequal distribution of wealth. Billy and Leon consider themselves as working-class heroes redistributing wealth, and also as vigilantes dispensing justice. "Queer-rolling" is justified by the damage caused by paedophilia; however, "queer-rolling" is also a form of entertainment – a type of game. Interestingly, Billy and Leon compare "queer-rolling" to "Paki-bashing"; the latter is considered "a mug's game," futile, because it is not profitable. What is more, they grant the often Othered Pakistani an equal position with the hegemonic group because of a shared view of homosexuality.

Joe and Dave are shocked by the incident. As Joe describes in the example, he is more devastated by the older man touching him than witnessing the assault. However, the extremity of Billy and Leon's violence shocks them as well. After leaving the house of the older men, Dave is in charge: "We'll keep away if we ever see them out, Dave says. Least Billy and Leon don't live near us. […] We won't tell anyone what happened […]. Not that

we did anything wrong, but people will only take the piss" (King 84-85). Joe and Dave are mortified when they realise that Billy and Leon used them as a bait to get to the older men's house. Further, they are dissatisfied with the distribution of the profits: "We made thirty quid each, and that's good money, but they got a lot more. They took the piss out on us" (King 84). Yet Joe reckons that "[e]ven if we'd earned a hundred quid, it wasn't worth all that" (King 84). In addition, Dave's leader ambitions are measured at a time of crisis. He reckons that they will be ridiculed if they talk about the incident, and so he dictates that they will avoid Billy and Leon and continue with their lives without mentioning the incident to anyone.

Crucially, *Human Punk* demonstrates that violence has consequences. Violence changes people's lives temporarily as well as permanently; it may easily cause a cycle of revenge. The consequences of violence are exemplified by the main violent event in the novel: the assault of Wells's gang on Joe and Smiles. When Joe and Smiles are walking back home after a night out, they come across Wells and his gang on the bridge over the canal. They assault Joe and Smiles and cast them in the canal. While Joe manages to swim himself to the side of the canal, unconscious Smiles is dragged to the ground by a minor character called the Major. Smiles is in a coma for two weeks, and when he regains consciousness, life goes back to normal – temporarily. In the upcoming years, Smiles develops a psychosis and eventually kills himself.

The Major, like Smiles, represents innocence and good will in the novel. He is described as an adult male who is unemployed and spends his time patrolling on the streets. In court, he is humiliated and his testimony is invalidated: "one night [he] had approached Mr Wells in the street. The Major pointed out that the accused had been drinking and had used the Lord's name in vain. A lot of people laughed" (King 191). The

Major is not regarded as a reliable witness, and eventually, Wells and his friends receive a verdict of not guilty. The underlying message in *Human Punk* seems to be that the legal system cannot be trusted to dispense justice, and because of this, vigilantes emerge in order to enact it themselves. Furthermore, the novel portrays the good and innocent who end up victims and the evil who have no mercy or regrets and never bear the consequences of their deeds.

In *Jalkapalloa kirjoittamassa: Jalkapallon merkityksiä uudessa englantilaisessa jalkapallokirjoituksessa*, Marianne Roivas discusses violence in King's novel *The Football Factory.* The protagonist Tom Johnson is assaulted at a football match, which has a far-reaching influence on him, not least because no one intervenes (Roivas 81). Roivas suggests that the violent attack can be understood as contributing to his becoming a violent hooligan (81). This is a similarity with *Human Punk*: Joe has to fight his violent urges throughout the novel, and although he tries to stick to his ethical principle of "I'm a lover not a fighter," he is frequently involved in incidents of violence. Significantly, the cycle of violence is creates by Wells's gang assaulting Joe and Smiles, and this leads to Joe's assault on Wells at the end of the novel.

In *Human Punk*, violence functions as a form of revenge or definitive solution. The male characters of *Human Punk* grow up and live in a culture of violence that is questioned but also reiterated. At the end of the novel, Joe and Dave resort to violence – despite the fact that throughout the novel, Joe has fought against his urge to use violence: "I want to smack him in the mouth, but pull back. This bloke gets right up my nose. […] I'm a lover not a fighter. That's what I tell myself. Repeat it a couple of times, just to make sure" (King 174). After facing what violence did to him and Smiles, Joe has obtained a critical view of violence. However, living in a culture of violence and witnessing violent incidents at

regular intervals, Joe cannot avoid being affected. When Wells batters Luke, Joe is able to justify the revenge on Wells. In a way, Joe lets loose his suppressed feelings and solves the case of Smiles. As the ending of the novel resonates with the notion of restored harmony, it can be argued that *Human Punk* presents violence as dichotomic: on the one hand, as a problematic cultural structure, and on the other, as a meaningful, workable solution.

Joe can be described as a character who has a code of conduct, a set of rules according to which he acts and a set of ideals for which he strives. From the beginning, it is clear that Joe has a strong sense of justice – or more accurately, his version of justice. He wants to believe in the good in people; in the case of Wells, Joe believes for a long time that Wells was genuinely sorry about the assault on Joe and Smiles and that the incident left him in a state of humility and regret. When Joe finds out that Wells's attitude to the assault is not like he had assumed, he is blinded by a need for revenge: "what really gets me, worse than this [attacking Luke], is that he doesn't even know Smiles's name. He almost killed the bloke, almost killed me, and there was me thinking it was an accident, […] I did my best to think how [… Wells] was thinking, but the thing is, I was putting my thoughts in his head" (King 330). Curiously enough, Wells does not remember the name of his namesake; he "just labels him 'some fucking punk'" (King 330). With Luke, Joe gets a second chance to make things right – an opportunity that he does not forgo. Wells's attitude infuriates Joe and works as a justification for violent revenge:

> Hold up the 'God Save The Queen' badge he ripped off Smiles, and which I've kept all these years. […] I punch him again, and this time it's textbook but packed with anger, and I know I've done some damage. He hits the floor and rolls over. Then he's still. […] I take the badge out of my pocket and open it up. Pull the pin out so it's straight and push it into his cheek, just like he did to

> Smiles all those years ago. The skin resists, then pops. I push harder so it goes right in. Same badge, same action. (King 331)

'Same badge, same action' is King's version of 'eye for an eye'. The badge is a straightforward symbol of the cycle of violence. In *Human Punk*, no man can escape the vicious cycle of violence; the culture of violence is produced and reproduced in the repetitive processes of violent behaviour. However, as the revenge shows, violence is described in a realistic manner: as grotesque, revolting, and damaging. This resonates a critical view of violence rather than its admiration.

Although it is portrayed as a justified solution, violence is also questioned in the novel. In "Satellite," the boys start to question the normality of violence:

> – Why is it, that wherever you look there's always a nutter, Dave finishes. Think about it. There's Fisher over there, Gary Wells who mugged Ali and goes around tooled-up, Alfonso the giant jungle bunny who nuts Wells and glasses people, the Jeffersons who put bouncers through glass doors, the bouncers themselves, the Shannons who I've never seen do anything but look hard enough, and the likes of Mick Todd who uses a hammer, his brothers, Charlie May with a fucking police dog on the end of a chain, and even Khan, a headcase Paki who doesn't mind kicking some knocked-out kid's brain in. Those are the ones we know about. Let's face it, lads, we're surrounded by nutters. What's it all about?
>
> Don't have a clue.
>
> – It's because they're older than us, Chris says. That's the reason. If we were nineteen or twenty, or thirty, or forty, then we wouldn't worry about them. It's just they're older and bigger, and have more experience. (King 59)

Dave's list of violent people is exhaustive, and it becomes very clear that the boys live in a culture of violence. The class background of the boys affects the likelihood of violence; supposedly, all the men that Dave mentions are from the same neighbourhood and a similar working-class background as the boys. In the novel, men of various backgrounds and ethnicities are partial to committing violent acts; Dave's examples include the Englishmen Fisher and Wells, the Shannons who are Irish, Ali and Khan who are from the Middle East, and Alfonso who appears to be from the Caribbean region. The explanation provided by Chris implies that worrying over violence ends when one becomes an adult – a stronger, bolder man who has learned how everyday violence functions. As Raewyn Connell rephrases the view of J. W. Messerschmidt:

> Violence often arises in the *construction* of masculinities, as part of the practice by which particular men or groups of men claim respect, intimidate rivals, or try to gain material advantages. Violence is not a 'privilege', but it is very often a means of claiming or defending privilege, asserting superiority or taking an advantage. ("On Hegemonic" 95; emphasis original)

Indeed, in *Human Punk*, violence is used to assert and reinforce hegemony, often via Othering practices. Violence is also a site of competition for the hegemonic power. Violence and its threat is constantly present, which creates an atmosphere of normalised violence in the novel.

To sum up, *Human Punk* presents violence as a gauge of power as well as part of successful performance of hegemonic masculinity. In the novel, violence is used as an Othering practice in homophobic and racist contexts, and it may also involve the aspect of entertainment. Next, I will discuss Englishness, working class, and masculinities in *Human Punk*.

3.3. Englishness, Working Class, and Masculinities

The version of hegemonic masculinity portrayed in *Human Punk* is affected by Englishness and working class. I will begin this section with a discussion of Englishness and masculinities and after this, I will address the relationship between working class and masculinities.

Human Punk portrays changes in the notion of Englishness. This is exemplified by changes in the food culture depicted in the novel. In "Satellite," Joe and his friends frequent a hot-dog van after nights out: "me, Smiles, Dave and Chris step forward and order four cups of tea. Wouldn't mind some food, but as usual we're skint" (King 30). Here, they buy tea that is typically English; when they have money, they eat fish and chips or hot dogs. However, when the boys are in London, Chris tries the Turkish cuisine: "Chris is biting into the kebab, […] the first kebab any of us has ever had, never seen one before to be honest, and he says it's tasty" (King 73). This example portrays England becoming multicultural and internationalised. From the viewpoint of hegemonic masculinity, the description of this event is interesting:

> Chef's Brother […] asks Chris if he wants chilli sauce, and Chris loves his food, dining out in style, exotic new dishes in exotic new places, pleased with his driving, Slough to Camden in thirty-five minutes, says why not, asks for more, another helping on top of that, and Chef's Brother looks at him funny, says the chilli is hot, very spicy my friend, and Chris says no problem, and he's feeling good, doing his hard man routine […]. (King 73)

In the extract, Chris is enjoying his success in performing hegemonic masculinity by breaking the law: driving a car recklessly, underage. Joe describes Chris "doing his hard

man routine"; Joe recognises the performance that Chris manifests to appear tough and thus, to assert his claim as leader of the group. In addition, eating a spicy kebab may be associated with hegemonic masculinity: the spiciness of the portion causes pain, and enduring pain is performing hegemonic masculinity. Furthermore, Chris is considered bold by the others when he enters a new territory with the new dish that no one in the group has tried before.

In *Human Punk*, the countryside is one of the traditional symbols of Englishness. Its symbolic qualities – freedom, independence and a sense of untamed 'wildness' – resonate with those of hegemonic masculinity. A similar finding was reviewed earlier in section 2.5., discussed by Emma Parker with regard to Graham Swift's *Last Orders*. The significance of the countryside as a symbol becomes apparent when Joe, who is working at the orchard farm, contemplates on the meaning of nature and rural areas: "It's good to be working back here. It's not proper countryside, but it's good enough. You only need a small strip of green to feel different" (King 40-41). Joe associates freedom and independence, values that are endorsed in the version of hegemonic masculinity portrayed in *Human Punk*, with the countryside. Later in the novel, Joe appears wistful about the good old days which implies that over the years, he has become somewhat conservative. In "Dayglo," the decay of countryside is described by Joe: "the green fields of England soaked in insecticide" (King 258). Joe's view of the deteriorating England applies to the countryside as well as the city. Also, although the countryside of England is described as ideal, *Human Punk* does not enforce the idea of the city and the countryside as binary opposites corresponding to 'good' and 'evil'. While the peace and calm of the countryside apply to him, Joe also loves the action in the city: "in Soho and Camden Town, there's bands galore, all sorts of things happening, a bigger mixture of people, […]. The kids in London get the

works, training pitches with floodlights and flashy youth clubs, places to go and things to do" (King 68). The wide selection of activities and pastimes in the city appeals to Joe and represents a type of freedom and independence for him. Thus, Joe finds the masculine ideal of freedom and independence in both the city and the countryside.

In *Human Punk*, the mainstream view is that Englishness is the norm and other ethnicities are regarded as inferior. These Others are represented by Pakistanis, Greeks, Turks, characters originating from the Caribbean, and travellers. Slanders such as "Paki" or "dirty Arab" are not uncommon in the speech of Joe and his friends. The racism of the English boys and men is made possible by Othering which is enforced by the fact that different ethnicities remain distant to each other. In "Satellite," different ethnicities form distinct groups that often clash and fight groups of other ethnicities. Frequently, these clashes occur between the Irish and the English: "Soldier Barry marches down the street with two other blokes, […]. He goes up to this Irishman and nuts him in the face. [… A] Cortina […] mounts the curb and scatters the small crowd that's quickly gathered. Tommy Shannon's dad jumps out [...], punches Fisher in the head" (King 61).

Nationalism and the conflict between the UK and Ireland are represented in *Human Punk*. In "Satellite," the main characters try to make sense of the conflict; here, Joe and his friends are strolling down the streets of London when they pass an Irish pub:

> –This is where you get the IRA pubs, Dave says. Here and in Kilburn. The Paddies come round collecting for the bombers and you have to put money in or you get your head kicked in.
>
> –Fuck that, Chris says, gobbing on the pavement right outside the front door. You'd think someone would go and smash the place up. It's our fucking country. Scum going round bombing people. (King 69)

Here, the senseless violence of the bombings contributes to emphatic reactions from Joe and his friends. Although the boys do not make overt remarks on religion, they construct the binary opposition of the English protestants as 'us' and the Irish catholics as 'them'. While nationalist discourses appeal to the boys, they do not perceive British soldiers as heroes. In "Satellite," Tracy Mercer, who is simultaneously admired and disdained by the boys, dates Barry Fisher, a soldier on assignment in Belfast during the Northern Ireland conflict. Joe feels jealous of Fisher: "Soldier Barry in his neat clothes and squaddie crop, regimental wages burning a hole in a brand-new pair of jeans as he runs his hand over Tracy's bum" (King 24). Competing against other boys or men for the attention of girls is significant in hegemonic masculinity, and here, Joe's jealousy overrides the potential respect the heroic, masculine soldier. Furthermore, Joe's views are affected by punk subculture: "I think of that wanker of a careers officer who told me to join the army, not just me either, told everyone to sign up, the Clash's 'Career Opportunities' running through my head, the lines about hating the army and the RAF, about not wanting to fight in the tropical heat" (King 24). Here, Joe adopts a political view which has been influenced by the lyrics from a punk song. Indeed, based on this example, punk musicians appear to have a more significant influence on Joe than nationalists. The discussion of punk subculture in the novel continues in section 3.4.

In addition to the previous examples of the English and the Irish, *Human Punk* includes interesting representations of men originating from outside the British Isles. An example is Chef, a Greek cook working in a hot-dog-selling van that the boys frequent after nights out in "Satellite". Chef treats Joe and his friends with kindness, but he has a notorious reputation: "a month back this drunk told him he was big, fat Turkish cunt when he ran out of crisps, ten seconds later the bloke picking his front teeth up out of the gutter"

(King 29). Furthermore, Chef's past is a target of rumours: "There's stories going along the brick wall where everyone sits eating […] that Chef killed three Turks during the war in Cyprus, hacked them to pieces with a sword, cut their arms and legs off, chopped their bollocks off and stuffed them in the dead men's mouths" (King 29-30). The hearsay about him is stereotypical: he is described as an Other who is belligerent, erratic and violent. The violent stories are a form of entertainment for the English at the expense of the Other. Although the boys find Chef friendly, they appear confused and scared by the rumours that contribute to and help to maintain the Othering discourses.

In *Human Punk*, the main characters are from a working class background and this has a significant effect on their version of hegemonic masculinity. Joe and his friends live in the industrial town Slough, a working-class suburb of London. Joe and his friends despise higher education and their peers who come from better-off families. For them, education and being rich are associated with effeminacy and inauthenticity, while hegemonic masculinity and authenticity are represented by the working class. In a similar vein, Paul Willis as well as Michael Brake have discussed the anti-education ethos of working-class youth. In *Human Punk*, the hegemonic masculinity of the working class is passed down from father to son, but it is not inherited unchanged. An example of this is the change in gendered drinking habits portrayed in the novel: "Dad says lager's a girl's drink, but a lot of the younger lads prefer it to bitter these days, specially during the summer when it's hot and a cold drink is refreshing" (King 58). Traditionally, beer has been regarded as the drink of the working classes. Joe's father reckons that drinking lager beer is unmasculine, while Joe finds his father's view outdated and approaches the lager question from a seemingly practical point of view. Furthermore, the advertising of lager was targeted at young consumers in the late 1970s, which contributed to the view of lager as

modern.

Human Punk explores the years from 1977 to 2000 and portrays changes in the working class and working life from the viewpoint of men. In the course of the novel, Joe evolves from manual labour, which is typical of traditional working class, to work that could be described in terms of subcultural labour and experiences times on unemployment along the way. In "Satellite," work in general appears to be found easily. Joe spends his summer holidays working at the orchard farm. A year earlier, he has worked at a shop stacking shelves, but he prefers working at the orchard to the shelf-stacking. At fifteen, Joe has already absorbed the working-class attitude of despising the management: "stacking shelves for 48p an hour for that wanker shop manager Keith Willis. I hate him like nothing else, with his whining voice and favourite workers, the neat suit and royal manners" (King 36). Joe regards his former manager as posh and effeminate, characteristics that are positioned as the polar opposite of and inferior to the hegemonic masculinity of the working class. Similar findings have been gathered in the study *Learning to Labour* by Paul Willis whose informants admire hard work and despise education. Joe likes the manual labour at the orchard: "It's quiet in the orchard, and I pick the stem off another cherry and split the skin with my teeth. This is the life, being left alone, doing your own thing" (King 117). Joe enjoys the independence offered by the job where he has time to contemplate on life. He is satisfied with himself after the first day at the orchard: "I've done alright, and walking back up the lane I'm feeling pleased with myself, even though my arms and legs ache" (King 42). Manual labour is hard work for a fifteen-year-old, but Joe enjoys this and feels proud of himself. Hard, physical labour is yet another marker of hegemonic masculinity that Joe performs successfully.

In "Asylum," Joe is leaving Asia after working in Hong Kong for three years.

Originally, his reasons for leaving England included Smiles's psychosis as well as the poor employment situation in the UK. As Joe contemplates on the time before he left for Hong Kong: "The country was in recession, unemployment high, so I went on the piss. There was doom and gloom everywhere" (King 149). Joe is uncomfortable with his unemployment, so he drowns his sorrows in alcohol for a while. However, as he goes on: "I spent a few months on the dole, […] but soon I was looking for work, found it in a pub. It was alright. I never really made enough to live properly, but ended up staying till I left for Hong Kong" (King 150). Unemployment does not wreck Joe's life; instead, he moves abroad to escape the situation with Smiles, but also to be better able to support himself financially. Being brave and exploring new territories is yet another feature that may be associated with hegemonic masculinity.

The working life of the 2000s is depicted in "Dayglo." Joe earns his living by working multiple jobs: he plays DJ gigs, buys and sells used records, and deals marijuana and black-market entrance tickets. He enjoys the freedom and independence of his jobs, all of which are outside the system, so he pays no taxes. Partly, his work could be described as precarious, the definition of which involves the aspect of insecurity: "work uncertainty, income insufficiency, [...] an unknown length of employment and where there is uncertainty about future employment" (McKay et al. 8-9). However, Joe does not consider his sources of income as insecure; instead, he recognises instability in traditional working-class lines of work. Notably, his work is criminal, and as crime can be considered as anti-establishment, Joe's work is in accordance with the ideals of punk subculture. Furthermore, Joe's criminal line of work may be regarded as a way of reclaiming hegemony. As James W. Messerschmidt has argued, class is one factor affecting an individual's access to hegemonic masculinity, and crime may function as a resource in the pursuit of this

hegemony (198). When Joe is made redundant despite his hard work, he considers the dismissal as an injustice. His solution is to break into the facilities and wreck the premises. The damaging of the facilities of the large corporation that made underprivileged employees unemployed is regarded by Joe as a way to restore a sense of moral equilibrium. As Joe tries to convince himself: "It wasn't about revenge, more a question of justice" (King 260). However, Joe is also motivated by revenge: "It was a calculated decision. Once I'd been on the rampage around Manors I never thought about the company or what they'd done again. It was sorted out once and for all" (King 261). The revenge is his way of asserting hegemonic masculinity.

In *Human Punk*, a sense of community and belonging appears to be formed and constructed by a common background. Discussed by researchers such as Raewyn Connell, male bonding is a phenomenon that is about an exclusively male space where hegemonic masculinity is established. In *Human Punk,* the sense of belonging is constructed as masculine and through practices of hegemonic masculinity: "there's about twenty of us, […] hands in pockets, gobbing on the ground, screwing us, checking the faces, nobody smiling. It's not a bad little crew now, and everyone turns and the fence gets a heavy-duty kicking […]. This is the sort of aggro we like" (King 10). Here, everyone knows how to act, and violence as a practice of hegemonic masculinity unites the boys. In "Asylum," when Joe is in Asia, he feels no sense of community. When he arrives at Slough, there is a fleeting moment of a sense of community and belonging between Joe, Dave and Chris, but soon they find out that the distance has caused them to drift apart. When they cannot agree on what happened to Smiles, Joe and Dave end up in a fist fight. At the end of "Asylum," Joe falls out with Dave and Chris because they feel the need to avenge the assault on Smiles, whereas Joe prefers to leave the problems of the past behind:

> Fuck all these cunts who can't move on. That's the end of us three as far as I'm concerned. They're people I used to know, and now they are in the past. I'm a grown man with no job and no money, but what I do have is a fresh start. I don't need those two. We've got nothing in common these days. Nothing at all. (King 224)

After the years in Asia, Joe's escapism continues and he is ready for a fresh start. However, "Dayglo" presents Joe in close relations with Dave and Chris. After attacking Wells, Joe is desperate to feel a sense of unity and belonging. Frightened of the possibility of going to prison, Joe panics; he sees no future and dives into the canal to relive the night of the assault on him and Smiles. Underwater, Joe catches a glimpse of Smiles's madness: "the voices loud now there's no getting away from them" (King 337). He nearly drowns but swims back to the bank of the canal, and the near-death experience clarifies his thoughts. He comes across Dave who tells him how he followed Joe to Wells's house and killed Wells after Joe had left the premises. This is followed by a sense of brotherhood and belonging:

> – We're brothers, you and me, just like brothers.
>
> He reaches over and puts a badge in my hand. I look at the cut-out tabloid letters spelling GOD SAVE THE QUEEN [...]. […] Dave's killed a man. Cut him to ribbons for me. […]
>
> I couldn't handle prison again, […] every last bit of freedom stolen. […] Dave's saved my life. (King 340)

At the end of the novel, the brotherhood of Joe and Dave is revived and reformed after years of volatile relations between them. The closing scene of the novel adopts a stylistic convention also found in the ending of many western films:

> Dave puts his foot down and we race down the slope, […] and we have a laugh trying to match the ragga vocals of the song, the boom of the bass blowing everything into the past. We beat the red and slow down, circle the roundabout, the lights in our favour, moving faster now, the road ahead straight and empty. It's good to be alive, […]. (King 340-341)

An event of male bonding, Joe and Dave "ride into the sunset" with a recovered sense of belonging. The theme of belonging in the context of subculture will be discussed in the next section about subculture.

In conclusion, the concepts of Englishness and working class undergo changes in *Human Punk*. In the novel, England becomes multicultural, but rather than equals, the immigrants are placed in the position of Others. Nationalist discourses affect the thinking of the main characters. The countryside remains a symbol of Englishness, but as the novel avoids the division of the city and the countryside into opposites, both function as equally potent symbols of Englishness and, also, of masculine freedom and independence. Changes in working class are represented by changes in the drinking habits of working-class men as well as by the protagonist's switch from factory/pub work to multiple small-scale jobs with unstable income. The novel places an emphasis on freedom and independence as values of the hegemonic masculinity of the working class. However, this is contrasted by the significance of a sense of community and belonging that are constructed as masculine through male bonding in the novel. Next, I will discuss subculture and masculinities in *Human Punk*.

3.4. Punk Subculture and Masculinities

In this section, I will discuss punk subculture and its connection to masculinities in *Human Punk*. The relation between hegemonic masculinity and punk subculture is of particular interest. This intersection has been studied in the context of "race" by Katherine E. Wadkins who has argued that the socio-political situation in Detroit contributed to the emerging of punk subculture (241). In a similar vein, *Human Punk* presents the working-class suburb of Slough as a fruitful breeding ground for working-class subcultures such as punk subculture. Curiously enough, punk subculture may be regarded as having a connection to everyday violence, a prevalent feature in performance of hegemonic masculinity. Everyday violence towards property in the context of punk is described by Joe in "Asylum": "in the middle of 'Go Mental' a punch-up started and the whole downstairs got smashed up, windows kicked in and the doors ripped off their hinges" (King 136). In *Human Punk*, listening to the aggressive punk music and going to punk gigs are regarded as good ways of getting rid of one's "aggro". Similarly, Matthew Bannister contemplates on punk subculture in his study *White Boys, White Noise: Masculinities and 1980s Indie Guitar Rock* and states that "the body's presence could only be affirmed by acts of violence – self-mutilation […] or the use of excessive volume as bodily assault […] and by lyrics that increasingly replaced sex with violence" (49). Notably, the physicality of punk responds to the ideal of toughness in hegemonic masculinity. Next, I will discuss style in punk subculture and how this is connected to hegemonic masculinity.

In *Human Punk*, the style of punk subculture is described in terms of authenticity and hegemonic masculinity. There is an attempt to make a distinction between a real, authentic punk-subcultural style that may be regarded as masculine and a punk-based style without

such meanings that is labelled as fashion. For example, some brands appear more 'authentic' than others. Doc Martens boots are the default shoes: "Khan […] with the stacked shoes he's wearing, one of only two or three boys not wearing Martens" (King 13). As exemplified here, the brand of Doc Martens functions as a symbol of togetherness for the boys. Furthermore, Doc Martens shoes are work men's shoes, so they function as a symbol for the hegemonic masculinity of the working class. In "Asylum," Joe reminisces about Smiles and himself as young punks and contradicts himself within the same sentence: "we hated labels and designer clothes, lived in the same old gear, DMs and Harringtons" (King 161). "Harringtons" refer to the type of jackets that became popular amongst the British subcultural youth in the 1960s. Although Harrington is not a brand per se, it may be compared with brands such as Doc Martens because of its perceived authenticity and popularity amongst youth subcultures.

However, Joe contradicts himself: he despises "fashion punks" and large retail companies with fashion labels, but at the same time, he favours labels such as Doc Martens. Furthermore, although Joe disdains punk fashion, he adores the punk style on women: "I like punk girls. Nothing looks better than a peroxide blonde in a PVC miniskirt, high heels and fishnet stockings, thick black mascara over flashing eyes" (King 152). He even makes a comparison between the mainstream ideal of beauty and his ideal of beauty: "long-haired dolly birds in thongs and perfect tans, the cocaine sniffers of Miami versus the snakebite drinkers of Britain. […] Appearance over content" (King 152). Here, Joe regards the mainstream ideal of beauty as superficial, but at the same time, he constructs another ideal of beauty that is equally based on appearances, and therefore equally as superficial as the mainstream. Also, the ideal is described in terms of what it is not which forms the binary opposite of the ideal. The concept of authentic style appears even more

conflicting with the examples of ideal femininity: the ideal woman is described in terms of fashion punk. The view of authenticity that Joe constructs in the novel turns out to be gendered as well as arbitrary.

In *Human Punk*, style seems crucial in the process of self-definition as well as constructing and maintaining a sense of community and belonging. Through the stylistic choices of the main characters, notions of Englishness are expressed, as are those of hegemonic masculinity, working class, and punk subculture. As Joe describes himself and his friends: "we know we look the business with our chopped hair and straight-legs, sleeper earrings and cap-sleeve T-shirts" (King 23). In addition, in another example, a shared style amongst peers is a strong marker of belonging: "gangs of kids our age over by the dodgems, […] DMs primed, shoulder-length boot boy cuts and shorter crops where the sides have been chopped off" (King 48). Here, the sense of community and belonging seems to be constructed by the same age, the same class background, and the same national culture. However, there is a stronger sense of belonging amongst the participants of the same subculture, in this case punk subculture. As Joe reminisces in "Asylum": "our friendship was rooted in music, a shared interest, […] there's me and Smiles down the front of the crowd pressed against the stage [...], […] heart pounding and blood pumping, alive and angry and happy, knowing every single word off by heart, singing along" (King 133). Notably, although subcultures create a sense of belonging for their members, clashes occur between subcultures. This is exemplified in *Human Punk* by the assault on Joe and Smiles. In "Asylum," Joe has a recollection of a discussion with Smiles's father: "Wells […] saying he read all about the Sex Pistols calling the Queen a moron in the paper so they lobbed us in the canal to cool down" (King 171). Indeed, Wells's gang of rockabillies/soulboys attacks Joe and Smiles because of the Sex Pistols badge that Smiles

carries.

Early on in the novel, it is revealed that Joe has become a punk rather recently. Roy, a traveller man who works at the orchard with Joe in "Satellite," notices the change and Joe accounts for this: "I tell Roy we're listening to punk rock now, that all the other music is shit" (King 40). A year has passed since their previous meeting, and in the course of the year, Joe has undergone a change from a David Bowie fan to a punk. Joe contemplates on the change in his musical preferences, and it is the toughness and reality of punk that matters to him the most: "it's the music that's changed, become tougher and more to do with everyday life" (King 40). Also, Joe's definition of being punk requires a binary opposition: "at least they don't spend their time singing about love non stop. I hate that long-hair hippy music and emptyhead disco. […] Load of bollocks, dressing up in psychedelic clothes and playing hours of feedback, getting excited over Genesis and Yes" (King 40). In "Asylum," Joe's view of hippies has changed, and when he meets a cocky young man that he calls Mao, he defines the 'real hippie': "proper hippies had beliefs they lived by. Mao's just a fashion victim, arrogant despite his peasant pose" (King 174-175). Joe regards subcultures as authentic when they are concerned with ideology and sticking up for what one believes in, values that can be considered as masculine. Fashion as ideology is perceived as inauthentic and feminine, the binary opposite of authentic subcultures. In general, while Joe uses masculine language when he refers to punk subculture, he describes hippies, hippie rock and disco as shallow, stupid, void of meaning – characteristics that are associated with femininity, the polar opposite of masculinity.

Joe views punk subculture as more than a style: as a lifestyle and a way of thinking. The values and ideal ways of life associated with punk subculture are connected to hegemonic masculinity in the novel. An example of this is the traveller Roy whom Joe

describes as “a bit of a loner, his own boss, does what he wants when he wants, has this freedom I wouldn’t mind having one day” (King 39). Roy’s lifestyle affects Joe who contemplates the following: “If you’re moving, working day to day, cash in hand and outside the system, making the rules up as you go along, the government gets worried, can’t keep tabs on you” (King 118). What unites Roy and Joe is the experience of marginality; also, the traveller Roy and the punk Joe share an attitude of contempt for the state. Further, Roy’s lifestyle is described in terms of freedom and independence, values in hegemonic masculinity, as well as in the ideal of “DIY,” “do it yourself” of punk subculture. Joe admires Roy, but he feels that he too young to make plans similar to Roy’s; instead, Joe embraces the return to normal after Smiles recovers from being in a coma: “I tell Roy that I won’t ever go anywhere for more than a couple of weeks on holiday […] I want to be my own person, do what I want, but I can do it right here” (King 118-119). In young Joe’s view, Slough and London provide him with everything he needs, but in “Asylum,” it is revealed that Joe has lived three years in Hong Kong. Further, in “Dayglo,” Joe appears to follow Roy’s example by working “outside the system”. He proclaims that “if you can crack it yourself, you’ve taken control and hold on to profits that would otherwise be milked by middlemen. It’s all about keeping some control in your life, deciding how you spend your time” (King 244). The freedom and independence provided by his work signify hegemonic masculinity.

In *Human Punk*, punk subculture and its political stance appeal to Joe whose empathetic character is not always corresponding with hegemonic masculinity. Throughout the novel, Joe is presented as a humane boy/man who often contemplates moral questions and different types of injustice in the world. His empathy arises frequently from injustices; for example, he feels sorry for a non-white stripper Belinda whom Dave describes as

follows: “That Belinda is a right old dog. She did a show down here a couple of years ago and had two blokes up there onstage, both ends at the same time. She’s a smackhead, and takes it like a trouper” (King 254). Joe does not understand Dave’s cold view; he reckons that the woman whom Dave describes is “[s]omeone’s daughter, sister, mum. Doing their best to get by. […] I don’t say anything to Dave who’s off his nut again” (King 254). Instead of ignoring the disturbing thoughts, Joe acts as follows: “I […] phone the Beautiful Belinda and get a man’s voice, tell him that due to unforeseen circumstances tonight has been cancelled. He tenses up and says there’s no refund if we cancel, and I tell him no problem. Belinda’s off the hook” (King 255). In addition, he frequently repeats the phrase “I’m a lover not a fighter” (e.g. King 152) when he tries to resist acting on his aggression. For over two decades, Joe feels able to forgive Wells for the assault. Here, while revenge would be a more suited solution according to hegemonic masculinity, Joe chooses to forgive and leave the past behind. However, as I will demonstrate shortly, this is not Joe’s final solution.

On the surface, punk subculture appears to contribute to an alternative ideal masculinity represented by Joe. This may be exemplified by Joe’s change from manual working-class labour to liberating subcultural work that was discussed in the previous section. In addition, Joe is affected by punk lyrics and adopts views from them. For example, he cares about animal and human rights: “Intensive farmers and their corporate pay masters are the scum of the earth. […] Tonight the Kentucky’s going to get its windows bricked, a good way to ease the tension and put something back into the community” (King 257). He damages the premises of fast-food restaurant chains. Joe perceives his criminal activity as noble and righteous, but his motives for seemingly heroic deeds are not always unselfish. In the third part of the novel, “Dayglo,” Joe reminisces

about the time when he needed money for a deposit for a flat: "I was never a thief, but there was a job nicking off a big firm, a major pharmaceutical company who'd been done for cruelty to animals. This made them fair game as far as I was concerned" (King 247). As he justifies his deed further: "It was a simple robbery, no violence, and it was a one-off" (King 247). Although Joe violates large companies that have abused human/animal rights, his noble justifications do not withstand critical examination: his justifications may as well be regarded as an excuse for entertainment in the form of violence against property – a marker of hegemonic masculinity in the novel.

Indeed, while Joe's alternative punk masculinity clashes with hegemonic masculinity, Englishness, and working class, it – perhaps more emphatically – also complies with them. This is demonstrated by three examples. Firstly, Joe's relation to racism is problematic. In *Human Punk*, racist speech may be considered as part of performing the hegemonic masculinity of the English working class. As Michael Brake has argued, punk subculture involves antiracist discourses (77). In "Asylum," Joe claims that "none of us was like that" (King 216). However, throughout the novel, Joe's friends use racist slurs, and while Joe considers himself antiracist, he never interferes in racist commentary. In this example, Joe, Dave, and Chris are in a pub and talk about a Pakistani woman:

> – I'd give that a good service, I can tell you. Pump a couple of gallons of bunty up it any day of the week.
>
> – What, a Paki? You're fucking joking, aren't you.
>
> – Don't care if it's a fucking Scot. I'd do it no problem. (King 236)

In addition to the sexism of the comments, they are also racist and nationalist in the sense that Pakistani/Scottish women are positioned as inferior Others.

Secondly, as discussed earlier in subsection 3.1., Joe and his friends frequently

engage in sexist discourses. Joe contemplates on this in "Asylum": "I agree with the equality view, of course I do, but I like punk girls. Nothing looks better than a peroxide blonde [...]" (King 152). Although Joe regards himself as an egalitarian, his view of women is permeated by Othering. Joe comments on women by their looks and sexuality which indicates that although he likes to think otherwise, in reality, he does not consider women and men in equal terms. Finally, the ending of the novel resonates the victory of hegemonic masculinity over punk subculture. Despite his "lover not a fighter" philosophy that he associates with punk subculture, Joe cannot escape the effect of the culture of violence and hegemonic masculinity. He resorts to violence as a final solution, and this involves the masculine aspects of pride, honour, and, most importantly, revenge.

In this section, I have discussed subculture and masculinities in *Human Punk*. Joe views punk subculture in terms of authenticity that is exposed in the analysis as arbitrary as well as gendered. In the novel, the sense of community and belonging is constructed through punk subculture. In addition, Joe engages in crime against large companies with assumed human/animal rights offences, and although Joe himself regards this as a noble practice, its contradictory nature is elicited in the analysis. On the surface, Joe appears to represent an alternative type of masculinity related to punk subculture; however, through an analysis of his relation to racism, sexism, and masculine violence, Joe's alternative masculinity is exposed as a failed attempt to resist hegemonic masculinity.

4. CONCLUSION

In this study, I have discussed masculinities and their connection to violence, class, nationality, and subculture in John King's novel *Human Punk*. In the theoretical background of this study, I discussed Raewyn Connell's theory of masculinities with an emphasis on hegemonic masculinity. I compared Connell's work to Judith Butler's theory of performativity and examined other relevant studies on masculinities. After this, I discussed theories on violence and masculinities and concentrated on violence as a significant practice in hegemonic masculinity. Following this, I reviewed theories of nationality, class, and subculture and contemplated how they are related to masculinities. The theoretical section was concluded with a review of recent literary studies connected to masculinities and the changing concepts of Englishness and working class.

I began the analysis of this study with a discussion of hegemonic masculinity in *Human Punk*. Afterwards, I continued to a discussion of violence as a crucial practice in hegemonic masculinity in the novel. Next, I examined representations of Englishness, working class, and masculinities in the novel. The analysis was concluded with an examination of punk subculture and masculinities in the novel.

The analysis revealed that in *Human Punk*, the main characters engage in various types of performances of hegemonic masculinity. Joe and his friends construct and maintain hegemonic masculinity through repetitive performances and Othering practices such as sexism, racism, and homophobia. In the novel, women are perceived in terms of the traditional madonna/whore dichotomy. Hegemonic masculinity is constructed and performed by the use of sexist, racist, and homophobic slurs especially in situations in which hegemonic masculinity is considered to be threatened. The coping mechanisms of

Joe, Smiles, and Smiles's father reveal that escapist strategies such as alcohol, violence, and hard work are favoured as masculine solutions to problems, while discussing problems is discouraged. Further, the main characters are unable to deal with their friend who suffers from a psychosis that can be considered as another coping mechanism.

In the analysis, I discovered that violence may be divided into two types: everyday violence and extreme violence. The former is accepted as a normalised part of everyday life. The latter may be described as the kind of violence that exceeds the limits of everyday violence and often damages the lives of the people involved. Extreme violence is often planned beforehand, but also sudden violence may turn into extreme violence, as exemplified by the assault on Joe and Smiles. In addition, violence is connected to Othering; this is exemplified in the novel by an assault that the attackers label as "queer-rolling". Furthermore, violence is connected to revenge in *Human Punk*. Despite its normality, violence is also questioned by the main characters, but they cannot avoid being affected by the culture of violence.

Another main finding in the analysis was that the hegemonic masculinity portrayed in the novel is affected by Englishness and working class that undergo changes in the course of the novel. England becomes multicultural and international, and the work life undergoes a transformation from traditional factory work into insecure precarious work that is portrayed as liberating in the novel. I also discovered that the sense of community and belonging relies on a common background as well as gender and its performances – more specifically, on English working-class background, the male bonding phenomenon, as well as performances of hegemonic masculinity. The novel portrays a gendered group of friends who construct an exclusively male space through male bonding.

The analysis of punk subculture and its relation to hegemonic masculinity provided

striking results. On the surface, it appears that punk subculture contributes to an alternative type of masculinity. However, a close analysis reveals that the main protagonist is unable to discard the version of hegemonic masculinity that he has absorbed from the English working-class culture. This is represented by violence: at the end of the novel, the main protagonist engages in a violent revenge with his friend, and this generates a renewed sense of masculine belonging between the two. In addition to these findings, subcultural style proved to be affected by the hegemonic masculinity of the working class, and the authenticity of punk subculture was exposed as arbitrary and gendered.

The analysis also raised fruitful topics for future research. *Human Punk* involves three interesting themes that were not addressed in this study. Firstly, the novel involves stylistic features that may be associated with postmodernist fiction. An example is the stream of consciousness technique that was briefly considered at the beginning of the analysis because of its connection with hegemonic masculinity. Studying *Human Punk* as a postmodern novel appears compelling. Secondly, although violence has been discussed as a practice of hegemonic masculinity in this study, *Human Punk* offers plentiful material for a more comprehensive study on violence and how it functions in the context of hegemonic masculinity. Indeed, violence is a crucial theme in all three parts of *Human Punk*, and its significance for the plot cannot be disparaged. Thirdly, *Human Punk* may be considered as a Bildungsroman, and studying the novel as such, especially in the context of masculinities, appears an absorbing option.

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FINNISH SUMMARY

Pro gradu -tutkielmani aihe on maskuliinisuudet John Kingin romaanissa *Human Punk*. Romaani on julkaistu alun perin vuonna 2000, ja se on suomennettu vuonna 2003 nimellä *Human Punk: Vapaus on suuri vankila*. Romaani on jaettu kolmeen osaan: "Satellite," "Asylum" ja "Dayglo" (suom. "Satelliitti," "Kaukana poissa" sekä "Ei koskaan myöhäistä"), jotka sijoittuvat vuosiin 1977, 1988 ja 2000. Romaani sijoittuu kirjailija Kingin kotiseudulle, Lontoon esikaupunkialueelle Slough'hun. Romaanin päähenkilö ja kertoja on Joe Martin, tarinan alussa 15-vuotias punkkari, joka viettää vapaa-aikansa ystäviensä Daven, Chrisin ja Smilesin kanssa. Nelikko ei innostu koulunkäynnistä, vaan heidän mielenkiintonsa kohdistuu punk-alakulttuuriin ja hauskanpitoon, johon kuuluvat päihteet, punk-keikat, disko- ja pubikulttuuri sekä autovarkauksien kaltainen pikkurikollisuus. Heidän elämänsä mullistuu, kun Joe ja Smiles pahoinpidellään erään baari-illan päätteeksi. Joe selviää verraten vähillä ruhjeilla, mutta Smiles ei toivu tapahtuneesta vaan menettää mielenterveytensä ja lopulta tappaa itsensä. Smilesin itsemurha pakottaa Joen ja tämän ystävät koston ja anteeksiannon tematiikan äärelle. *Human Punk* kuvaa väkivallan kulttuuria ja koston kierrettä, ja siinä nousevat esiin maskuliinisuuksien, englantilaisuuden, työväenluokan ja alakulttuurin teemat.

Teoriaosassa pääpaino on maskuliinisuuksiin keskittyvällä tutkimuskirjallisuudella. Tutkimukseni taustakirjallisuuden teoreetikkoihin kuuluvat muun muassa Raewyn (ent. R. W.) Connell sekä Judith Butler. Sukupuoli- ja maskuliinisuusteorioiden pohjalta sukupuoli näyttäytyy sex/gender-kahtiajaon kautta yhtäältä biologisena ja toisaalta sosiaalisissa suhteissa rakentuvana. Tuon teoriaosassa esille myös sex/gender-kahtiajaon kritiikin. Erityisen oleellinen tutkimukseni kannalta on sukupuolentutkija Raewyn Connellin

hegemonisen maskuliinisuuden käsite, joka on alun perin lainattu teoreetikko Antonio Gramscilta. Gramscin hegemoniassa on kyse vallasta, jota dominoiva ryhmä käyttää, ja tämä mahdollistuu alisteiseksi asettuvan ryhmän suostumuksen myötä. Hegemonia on kuitenkin vallanjaon kilpailun kenttä. Connellin hegemoninen maskuliinisuus ilmenee Gramscin käsitteen mukaisesti miesten ja maskuliinisuuden valta-asemana, jonka binääriseksi vastapariksi asettuvat naiset ja feminiinisyys. Hegemoninen maskuliinisuus kattaa ideaaleina pidetyt miehenä olemisen ja toimimisen tavat ja muodot. Hegemonisen maskuliinisuuden lisäksi Connell erottaa kolme eri suhdetta maskuliinisuuksien välillä; näitä vastaavat myötämielisten, alisteisten ja marginaalisten maskuliinisuuksien käsitteet.

Teoriassa nostan esiin myös Judith Butlerin performatiivisuuden käsitteen, joka kuvaa sukupuolen tuottamista sukupuolittuneita ominaisuuksia tekemällä ja toistamalla. Butlerin mukaan sukupuolen tekeminen toistamisen kautta luo illuusion sukupuolesta biologiaan nojaavana ja muuttumattomana olemuksena. Butler kuvaa myös kuinka maskuliinisuus ja feminiinisyys määrittyvät toistensa kautta ja asettuvat toistensa vastakohdiksi. Läpi tutkimukseni palaan Butlerin performatiivisuuteen, joka on hyödyllinen käsite kuvaamaan myös muiden rakenteiden, esimerkiksi kansallisuuden ja luokan tuottamista.

Teoriaosassa käsittelen myös väkivaltaa, jonka käsite muotoutuu useiden määritelmien kautta. Väkivaltateorian tutkimusta edustavat tutkielmassani esimerkiksi tutkijat Stephen M. Whitehead ja Jeff Hearn, jotka kuvaavat väkivaltaa monimuotoisena vallankäytön välineenä. Väkivalta rakentuu sosiaalisesti ja kulttuurisesti, ja se ilmenee diskursiivisena ja materiaalisena käytäntönä. Hearn painottaa, että väkivalta ei ole irrallaan elämästä vaan se voi olla läsnä hyvin eri muodoissa arkielämän tilanteissa.

Maskuliinisuusteorioiden ja väkivallan lisäksi tarkastelen tutkielmani teoriaosassa

kansallisuutta ja luokkaa koskevaa tutkimusta. Näiden osalta käsittelen esimerkiksi Jopi Nymanin, David Morganin sekä Paul Willisin tutkimuksia. Kansallisuus ja luokka rakentuvat erimuotoisissa diskursseissa. Kansallisuus on muuttuva muistojen ja symbolismin rakennelma, joka tuotetaan narratiivisuuden kautta esimerkiksi mediassa ja populaarikulttuurissa. Kansallisuus määrittyy usein Toiseuden kautta; esimerkiksi postkolonialistisessa kontekstissa kolonisoidut etnisyydet asettuvat hegemonisen englantilaisuuden Toiseksi ja vastapooliksi. Englantilaisuuden määritelmä nojaa maskuliinisiin määreisiin, ja feminiinisyyteen kytkeytyvät ominaisuudet kuvataan englantilaisuudelle epäominaisina eli vastakohtaisina. Luokan käsite on perinteisesti esimerkiksi marxilaisuudessa määrittynyt sosioekonomisen aseman kautta, mutta tutkielmani teoriataustassa luokan vallallaolevassa määritelmässä oleelliseksi muodostuu luokan diskursiivisuus, ja luokan käsitteessä huomioidaan intersektionaalisuuden merkitys. Työväenluokkaa käsittelevä tutkimus painottaa kovan työnteon symbolista merkitystä työväenluokkaisuudelle. David Morganin mukaan työväenluokkainen maskuliinisuus kuvautuu kollektiivisena, ruumiillisena ja vastarinnallisena. Paul Willisin tutkimuksen koulupojat pitävät koulunkäyntiä turhana ja hakeutuvat jo nuorina ruumiilliseen palkkatyöhön, mikä kertoo työväenluokkaisen koulutuksenvastaisen asenteen periytymisestä.

Alakulttuurin osalta teoriaosassa käsittelen muun muassa Birminghamin CCCS-koulukunnan sekä Michael Braken tutkimuksia. Alakulttuurit kuvataan tutkimuksissa paikallisina ja eriytyneinä rakenteina, joiden arvomaailmaan vaikuttaa niiden emokulttuuri. Esimerkiksi (etenkin *Human Punkin* kuvaaman) punk-alakulttuurin emokulttuurina voidaan pitää työväenluokkaa. Avaan myös alakulttuuriteorian määritelmiä muun muassa tyyliin, autenttisuuteen ja yhteisyyden kokemukseen liittyen.

Tutkielmani teoriaosuuden päättää maskuliinisuuksia tarkastelevan kirjallisuudentutkimuksen trendejä esittelevä luku, jonka painopiste on englantilaisuuden ja työväenluokan muutoksia käsittelevää kirjallisuutta käsittelevissä artikkeleissa.

Tutkielmani analyysissä tarkastelen maskuliinisuuksia ja näiden yhteyttä väkivaltaan, englantilaisuuteen, työväenluokkaan sekä punk-alakulttuuriin romaanissa *Human Punk*. Analyysi alkaa romaanin hegemonisen maskuliinisuuden ilmenemismuotojen esittelyllä. Hegemoninen maskuliinisuus ilmenee romaanissa Toiseuttamisen ja selviytymismekanismien kautta. Toiseuttamiseen liittyvät seksistiset, homofobiset ja rasistiset puheet ja asenteet, joiden kautta romaanin päähenkilöt rakentavat maskuliinista yhteenkuuluvuutta. Selviytymisen keinoina romaanin keskeiset henkilöt käyttävät eskapistisia ratkaisuja esimerkiksi alkoholin, väkivallan ja kovan työn muodoissa. Mieltä painavista asioista avautuminen koetaan romaanissa feminiinisenä ja siten epäsuotuisana ratkaisuna, ja romaanin miehet ovat kykenemättömiä käsittelemään Smilesin psykoottisuutta.

Human Punk -romaanissa väkivallan tekijät ja uhrit ovat miehiä, ja väkivaltarepresentaatiot voidaan jakaa kahteen kategoriaan: arkipäiväiseen ja äärimmäiseen väkivaltaan. Arkipäiväistä väkivaltaa leimaavat lievät vahingot, monimuotoisuus sekä kulttuurisidonnaisuus; se voi kohdistua ihmisiin, eläimiin tai omaisuuteen, ja se voi edustaa tekijälleen ajanvietettä ja viihdettä. Äärimmäinen väkivalta on usein ennaltasuunniteltua ja tarkoituksellista, julmaa ja järkyttävää, osallisten elämää ravistelevaa väkivaltaa. Lisäksi Toiseuden ja väkivallan yhteyttä, koston tematiikkaa sekä väkivallan seurauksia avataan analyysissä.

Englantilaisuus ja työväenluokkaisuus vaikuttavat hegemonisen maskuliinisuuden taustalla romaanissa. Analyysissä tarkastelen englantilaisuuden ja työväenluokkaisuuden

muutoksia romaanissa. Englantilaisuus rakentuu pitkälti Toiseuttamisen kautta, ja romaanissa Toisen asemaan asetetaan Irlannin katolilaiset, sekä lisäksi muslimimaiden ja Karibianmeren etnisyydet, joihin liittyy stereotyyppisiä, väkivaltaan kytkeytyviä diskursseja. Työväenluokkaisuus vaikuttaa päähenkilöiden taustalla läpi romaanin; päähenkilö Joe painottaa työnteon merkitystä ja romaani kuvaa, kuinka Joe siirtyy perinteisestä ruumiillisesta työstä usean tulonlähteen työhön, josta osa on rikollista. Työssä on prekaarisia piirteitä, mutta Joe kuitenkin kokee tämäntapaisen työn vapauttavana. Tämä voidaan tulkita myös perinteisestä työväenluokkaisesta työstä alakulttuuriseen työhön siirtymisenä. Romaanin representaatioihin työväenluokkaisuudesta liittyvät läheisesti yhteenkuuluvuus ja yhteisöllisyys, jotka muodostavat yksinomaan miehisen ja maskuliinisen tilan.

Analyysin päättää osio, joka käsittelee punk-alakulttuuria ja maskuliinisuuksia. Osiossa tarkastelen erityisesti hegemonisen maskuliinisuuden ja punk-alakulttuurin monimutkaista suhdetta. Punk-alakulttuurin tyyli näyttäytyy romaanissa vahvasti sukupuolittuneena, ja punkin autenttisuus osoittautuu sattumanvaraisesti muotoutuneeksi. Päähenkilö Joe toteuttaa hegemonista maskuliinisuutta ja punk-alakulttuuria ristiriitaisesti. Pintapuolisen tarkastelun pohjalta punk-alakulttuuri vaikuttaa luovan tilaa vaihtoehtoiselle maskuliinisuudelle. Kuitenkin analyysissä paljastuu, että vaikka romaanin päähenkilö Joe uskottelee itselleen edustavansa uudenlaista, ei-perinteistä maskuliinisuutta, hän toimii hegemonisen maskuliinisuuden säännöstön mukaisesti. Romaanin loppuratkaisu sisältää väkivaltaisen koston, jonka yhteys hegemoniseen maskuliinisuuteen käy selväksi analyysissä.

Tutkielmani päätelmäosassa teen yhteenvedon tutkimustuloksistani ja pohdin romaanista esiin nousseita teemoja, jotka ovat tulevan tutkimuksen kannalta erityisen

kiinnostavia. *Human Punkissa* on postmodernin kirjallisuuden piirteitä, joten sen tutkiminen postmodernina teoksena vaikuttaa kiinnostavalta. Lisäksi väkivalta on niin määrittävä teema romaanissa, että sen ja maskuliinisuuksien suhteesta romaanissa voisi tehdä jatkotutkimusta. *Human Punkia* voisi myös tutkia Bildungsroman-genren teoksena päähenkilö Joen kautta.