

Saturday night and sunday morning critical analysis

[Literature](#), [Books](#)



Director Karel Reisz's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, the classic story of an angry young man, heralded a new kind of cinema for British audiences. *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* is a classic social realist film of the British New Wave. Made in 1960, it was groundbreaking in both its portrayal of the industrial nightmare of working class factory life, and its unrepentant, cocky anti-hero Arthur Seaton. The British New Wave and La Nouvelle Vague *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1960) was Karel Reisz's first feature film, made in the light of a number of outstanding documentaries from the Free Cinema movement.

Interestingly, this film emerged at the same time as Jean-Luc Godard's debut feature *A Bout De Souffle* (*Breathless*). Reisz and Godard, the enfant terrible of the French New Wave, shared certain traits. Both were critics turned filmmakers whose debut films were the first commercial hits of their respective new waves, and both films were anti-establishment pieces from directors with political agendas. The *Angry Young Man Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* was a film to which many people could relate.

Alan Sillitoe, who adapted his book for the screen, was the creator of one of the original angry young men of cinema history, Arthur Seaton. Arthur is a working class anti-hero whose boredom of factory life is assuaged only by his reckless attitude to life. Trapped in a dead end job, Arthur represents the individual against the system. He makes the most of his leisure time in an attempt to escape the mediocrity of his life. Arthur is blunt and cocky, out for a good time with women, booze and a well cut suit. But he is angry about the restrictions placed on him by his working class life.

The cause of this aggression - factory life - united a public who recognized his anger. Cinema attendances reflected the fact that this was one of the first times audiences felt their own lives were represented on screen. Fatally Flawed At the beginning of the film Arthur is having an affair with Brenda, a married woman, who he gets pregnant. He tries to help her when she says she wants an abortion, although ultimately this is unsuccessful. It is a testament to the film-makers that this storyline does not alienate audiences.

In fact, for all his gruff, rabble rousing, Arthur remains a likable, if flawed, character. He is seen to get a sort of comeuppance when Brenda's brother in law beats him up at the Nottingham Goose Fair, but audience sympathy is still with Arthur. This is also due in no small part to Albert Finney's amazing portrayal of Arthur as a working class lad coming to bitter terms with the responsibilities of manhood. The Midlands - A Backdrop For Social Realism Setting the film in Nottingham adds a further dimension of imprisonment, through iconography which has since been integrated into British cinema.

The imposing chimney stacks and factories serve to increase the feelings of claustrophobia and provincial entrapment. Karel Reisz had already shown in his documentaries *Everyday Except Christmas* and *We Are The Lambeth Boys* that ordinary people could provide stories and entertainment, but his directors vision also demonstrates a poeticism of social problems. The views Reisz portrays through his lens have become embedded in British films, and typify a landscape still seen today in any British film within the social realist cannon.