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BRITISH POST-WAR SOCIAL UNREST AND THE POLITICAL STATE IN JONATHAN COE'S *THE ROTTERS' CLUB*

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Résumé

crucial dans les troubles sociopolitiques. En effet, de nombreux Premiers ministres de l'après-Seconde Guerre mondiale ont mis en œuvre avec détermination des réformes économiques impopulaires qui ont suscité le mécontentement de l'opinion publique. En conséquence, les élites britanniques de l'après-Seconde Guerre mondiale et leurs politiques socio-économiques respectives ont fait l'objet de nombreuses protestations. L'objectif de cet article est donc d'explorer l'agitation sociale britannique de l'après-guerre en tant que révolution socioculturelle contre l'État politique dans *The Rotters' Club* de Jonathan Coe. S'appuyant sur le concept d'hégémonie de Gramsci, qui implique le leadership économique et politique de la classe dirigeante sur la classe subalterne, cet article cherche à démontrer la manière dont l'agitation sociale dans *The Rotters' Club* est façonnée par la révolte de la classe ouvrière contre la culture politique hégémonique et sa domination capitaliste. L'article conclut sur la quête de changement des intellectuels publics par le biais d'une lutte idéologique organique gramscienne.

Mots clés : *Britannique, changement, classe, hégémonie, intellectuels, après la Seconde Guerre mondiale.*

Abstract

Elites in post- Second World War British societies played a crucial role in socio-political unrest. In fact, many post- Second World War Prime Ministers adamantly implemented unpopular economic reforms which elicited public disgruntlement. As a result, there was a lot of protest against British post- Second World War elites and their respective socio-economic policies. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to explore British post-war social unrest as a socio-cultural revolution against the political state in Jonathan Coe's *The Rotters' Club*. Building on Gramsci's concept of hegemony that entails the leaders' class economic and political leadership over the subaltern class, this paper seeks to demonstrate the way in which social unrest in *The Rotters' Club* is shaped by the working class's revolt against the hegemonic political culture and its capitalist domination. The paper concludes with the public intellectuals' quest for change through a Gramscian organic ideological struggle.

Key words : *British, change, class, hegemony, intellectuals, post- Second World War.*

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Introduction

The central aim of this article is to offer a Gramscian critique of hegemony and social unrest in Jonathan Coe's *The Rotters' Club*, a British post-Second World War novel. Using Gramsci's concepts of hegemony and ideology, this article explores how the post-Second World War socio-political unrest is deployed in Coe's fiction to pinpoint the hegemonic class's erasure and the oppression of the dominated group. In other words, we argue that social unrest is also the expression of the working class and organic intellectual revolution against the post-Second World War elites or Prime Minister.

Actually, post-Second World War Britain witnessed considerable waves of crisis and protests which have been connected to the British governments' new policies. Arguing about protest over the Prime Minister, Edward Heath's new industrial policy, Alan Sked and Chris Cook write that "as 1972 progressed it became an increasingly unhappy year for the Heath government(...) the bitter confrontation with the unions over the Industrial Relations Act"(A. Sked & C. Cook, 1979,p.256). From this statement, it is noticeable that rioters or protesters forced the Conservative elite, Edward Heath's government to make a change in its industrial policy.

Indeed, these riots and violent protests came from the elites' socio-political reforms of the British welfare systems and the implementation of a neoliberal policies culture. People suffered from some of these economic reforms which made their living conditions difficult. Consequently, the working class staged riot and protest movements to voice their dissatisfaction with the high cost of living and the disappearance of welfare benefits as Peter Jenkins put it "the Establishment everywhere was a target for demonstration in 1968" (P. Jenkins, 1987,p.37). Here, we may note that British economic decline has triggered working people's protest movement against the elites or the ruling Prime Ministers. .

Some literary works have intensively discussed the impact of the hegemonic class's reform over the working population in the post- Second World War British society. In his *Evading Class in Contemporary British Literature*, Lawrence Driscoll argues that "from Thatcher to Blair a transformation has occurred in which an ideological shift has attempted to erase the category of class from public discourse" (L. Driscoll, 2000, p. 2). For Driscoll, the Prime Ministers, Thatcher and Blair, have introduced socio-political reforms which smashed down the interest of the lower classes. Likewise, JMA Hugh in *Revision Guide: Making of Modern Britain* highlights the devastating effect of James Callaghan's social reform on industrial workers and poor population. Hugh depicts waves of social protests conducted by lorry, train drivers, and garbage collectors. Hugh's book gives an insight into the British public discontent over James Callaghan's socio-economic policies.

Besides, Michael Lavalette and Gerry Mooney explore the collective struggles of British working and middle class population against post-Second World War Prime Ministers or elites' disarticulation of the welfare system. In their book, *Class Struggle and Social Welfare*, they relate a series of riot and protest actions as the anti- establishment movement from workers in the British mining sector and middle class intellectual groups.

Jonathan Coe's *The Rotters' Club* is a case in point. It describes the British post- Second World War social unrest as one of its central themes. The novel furnishes, with convincing

evidence, the ways in which trade union leader stages riot and violent movements against the crisis of Longbridge and Leyland, British factories. Alongside these Longbridge and Leyland riots, Benjamin and Doug Andertone, the protagonists of *The Rotters' Club*, empathetically support the miners in their strike against the post-Second World War political establishment or hegemony.

For Gramsci “hegemony entails economic leadership besides ethico-political leadership. In other word, it entails that the hegemonic class be a fundamental class in the relations of production” (A. Gramsci ,1967, p.204). This political dominant class cultural supremacy in the shaping of social relation will first help us demonstrate the way in which social unrest in *The Rotters' Club* is shaped by the working class’ revolt against the hegemonic class political culture and its capitalist cultural leadership or domination. Then we will also pinpoint the intellectual’s quest for change through a Gramscian organic ideological struggle.

1- Social Unrest and the Hegemonic Cultural Leadership

Following Gramsci, the hegemonic class does not always dominate through the exercise of violence or coercion; it often subtly wins the consent of the masses through its political culture and capitalist leadership or domination. But, as people are deceived by false choices and come to realise that they are not exercising their socio-economic autonomy, they resort to social unrest. Thus, in this section, we show how social unrest in *The Rotters' Club* reflects the British working and middle class’ socio-political protests or revolution against the post- Second World War ruling elites or hegemonic capitalist and cultural leadership.

Throughout *The Rotters' Club*, social unrest is expressed through strikes in different industries. The British trade unionists’ protest movement against the hegemonic class’ reform of a Leyland company. As a British enterprise, Leyland is facing bankruptcy owing to the political elite’s attempt of reducing investment grants of the industrial sector. This hegemonic reform is contested by the British Trade Union and the working class. Collin Trotter, a middle class worker, describes the unionist’s strike as follow:

This is a country where a union man and a junior manager—soon to be senior, Colin(...) What does that tell you about the class war? He clapped his pint of Brew and raised it solemnly. Equality of opportunity. Bill said nothing: as far as he was concerned, the class war was alive and well and being waged with some ferocity at British Leyland, even in Ted Heath’s egalitarian 1970s, but he couldn’t rouse himself to argue the point(J.Coe, 2002, p.16)

This passage encapsulates the workers and unionists ‘uprising against the then British Prime Minister, Edward Heath’s 1970s policy of dissolving the links between government, capital and labour. Unionists view Leyland company crisis as due to Heath’s government financial restrictions on British industries. The relationship between the upper and lower classes is established in Bill Andertone’s following statement: “Bill said nothing: as far as he was concerned, the class war was alive and well and being waged with some ferocity at British Leyland” (J. Coe,2002, p.16). A Gramscian hegemonic reading of the phrase: “class war was

alive” (J. Coe, 2002, p.16) may suggest that the exercise and maintenance of the hegemony over the oppressed groups is still a variation of class struggle. The union is coerced by Heath’s government financial restrictions on British industries. As a matter of fact, the workers or oppressed group decide to claim for an impartial share of revenue with the hegemony, the British Prime Minister Heath’s government.

Indeed, the industrial strike in *The Rotters’ Club* embodies the features of Gramscian postulation of hegemony, for the oppressed class’ revolt against Heath’s government political culture. Given that workers protested against the Prime Minister Heath’s government financial restriction in Leyland Company, this connotes a Gramscian hypothesis of the subaltern class’ revolt against the hegemonic class political culture and its capitalist cultural leadership or domination. On this account Bill, the unionist says: “the class war was alive and well and being waged with some ferocity at British Leyland, even in Ted Heath’s egalitarian 1970s”(J.Coe, 2002, p.16). Not only does Bill metaphorically evokes the British industrial workers’ riot, but he also translates industrial workforce’s animosity against the British post- Second World War elites and their international industrial project. This anger toward the British elites’ industrial policy is echoed through Collin Trotter’s relation with the manager or boss of the British Leyland Motor Company. As an employee, Collin shows his frustration when the manager describes the strike in the following terms:

Collin glanced at his boss nervously. He had a hatred of confrontation, an undoubted drawback for someone saddled with a job in industrial relations. It’s the strikes that are holding this company back, he said at last, talking into his plate, giving voice, reluctantly, to a firm conviction that nevertheless had to be dredged up from somewhere remote and unvisited, in his profoundest depths. I don’t know if this is the way to stop them, but they’ve got to be stopped somehow. It doesn’t happen in Germany or Italy or Japan. Only here (J. Coe, 2002, p.19)

Collin’s frustration over the managerial narrative about the strike is qualified as the workers’ hysteria against hegemonic industrial policy. And when the boss or manager compares the British industries turmoil to the industrial realities in the other European states, he strategically subsumes British workers’ condition under international capitalist project. The boss or manager is subsuming British workers in a global European Capitalist environment to legitimate worker’s mistreatment and repel the strike.

Much of the manager’s behaviour is driven by a deep pursuit of the hegemonic material interest as he puts it: “It’s the strikes that are holding this company back” (J. Coe, 2002, p. 19). The statement “It’s the strikes that are holding this company back”(J. Coe, 2002, p.19) is part of what Gramsci called the “coercive and persuasive power of capitalist hegemony”(A. Gramsci, 1971, p.13). And when the manager views the workers’ riot movement as the root cause of the company’s backwardness; he is indirectly associating strike with the workers’ financial productivity. This is meant to dissuade vulnerable workers into engaging in the strike as they will face harsh financial consequence. On this account, the boss appears as an enlightened post-war hegemonic leader with materialistic regressive views about the industrial laborer. He is also a class sceptic individual when it comes to the welfare of the lower class throughout strike. The irony is that the boss is wary of the lower class since he

resorts to capitalist discourse of loss of profit to stop the strike. The boss regards the strike as snares which rob workers of their economic freedom, and the novel itself fully supports this opinion.

Actually, the boss' statement "It's the strikes that are holding this company back" (J. Coe, 2002, p.19) emphasises Gramsci's (1971, p. 19) realisation "that hegemony must be ultimately anchored in economic strength - and ultimately physical power." And the boss's concluding word: "they've got to be stopped somehow" (J. Coe, 2002, p.19) also reminds us that while the post-Second World War elites use a combination of force and consent in order to maintain hegemony, we must not forget "that the exercise and maintenance of hegemony over subaltern groups is still a variation of class struggle" (Gramsci, 1971, p. 19). By showing the economic motives and coercion as a way to stop workers' strike, the boss cautions us not to forget the relationship of power to the educative aspects of hegemony. In this sense, in the boss' invitation of workers to stop the strike, there is a tendency to stress Gramsci's important development of hegemony, the role of persuasion and consent, the seemingly willing participation by subaltern groups in their own domination. Indeed, the boss is not naive about the relationship of power to the persuasive capitalist hegemony.

Another point is the articulation of the strike movement in a widespread anti-hegemonic practice or anti-elitism. The characteristics of consent and coercion that underwrite Gramsci's model of hegemonic domination are fundamentally dynamic categories. Because they are dynamic and not static relationships, they admit the possibility of re-articulation into alternative or anti-hegemonic practices. For instance, in *The Rotters' Club*, this re-articulation of the strike into anti-hegemonic practice or anti-elitism is expressed through the British miners and middle-class workers' demand for the resignation of the British Prime Minister, Edward Heath as the narrator, Sam Chase, a taxi driver, puts it:

Somehow they had progressed to politics, and were railing against the incompetence of Edward Heath's government. They shook their heads at the scandal of a nation held to ransom by obstreperous, strike-happy miners, the shame of a once great country reduced to measures more often associated with Eastern Europe or the Third World: power cuts, petrol rationing, three-day weeks. There was to be a general election soon, on February 28th, and Sam Chase and Mr Warren had already made up their minds: Heath would have to go. He had proved himself unfit to govern (J.Coe, 2002, p. 51)

Here, the hegemonic rule of Edward Heath's government is contended through statements such as: "strike- happy miners... Heath would have to go. He had proved himself unfit to govern" (J. Coe, 2002, p.51). This is an anti-hegemonic narration, in which the narrator, Sam Chase's own voice is woven into the strike miners' voice to express the tones of the working-class population. The novel's linguistic scope is boundless, for it goes beyond the consciousness of the strike miners and Sam Chase. By demanding the resignation of the post-war elite, Edward Heath, Sam Chase, strategically embarks the reader and all classes of individuals upon an anti-hegemonic struggle.

Indeed, Sam Chase is playing a working-class game with the reader, providing us with enough grounds to discredit the post-war elites' hegemonic account of society by dropping

sufficient sly hints to suggest that their policy is not to be trusted. The novel delivers an industrial tale tinged with strike, resentment, anxiety, and elites' self-interest. Some of Jonathan Coe's narrators draw our attention to the limited nature of the hegemonic powers to rule the post-war British society. The fictional elites may have only a fitful, confused sense of what is going on in the industrial strike stories they are telling to characters. This is probably what Sam Chase is alluding as he claims for the Prime Minister, Edward Heath's resignation in this language: "Heath would have to go. He had proved himself unfit to govern (J. Coe, 2002, p. 51)".

Furthermore, social unrest is also connected to the hegemonic elites' incompetency. When there is a shortage of the essential social facilities such as water, food and electricity, individuals most often blame the political leadership or governments. Since, the British post-war elites failed to provide electricity to population, characters decry dominant power leadership's failure in protest. Here is the narrator's account of characters' protest about the hegemonic capitalist leadership incompetency:

But Powell had by now publicly distanced himself from the party, in protest at Britain's entry into the EEC, and would not be standing in the election. (...) another power cut, he said, his voice quiet and bitter with incredulity. I don't believe it. Neither did Benjamin, who they found a few minutes later reading back issues of *Sounds* by candlelight in his bedroom, combing them for references to Henry Cow. The electricity had failed at 8.45, shortly after he had packed his brother off to bed, a quarter of an hour before his film was due to start (J. Coe, 2002, p.52)

In this above passage, Benjamin Trotter, a middle-class British boy in Enoch Powell's Britain is disturbed while reading a journal, known as the *Sounds*, because of the electricity cut. This power cut is pushing individual to conduct protest against the Prime Ministers, Edward Heath and Enoch Powell's government. If we tell the story of social unrest from the standpoint of Benjamin Trotter, a middle-class boy whose father Collin Trotter is among the leaders of Leyland Company, it may not be easy to step outside Gramsci's perspective of hegemonic practice. Following Gramsci, "not only are hegemonic relationships ethical, but they are also pedagogical"(J.Coe,1971, p.350)

On this Gramscian account of the hegemonic practice, Collin Trotter's belonging to the Leyland Company is read as a pedagogical relationship deployed by the Prime Minister Edward Heath to rally the subaltern class to the hegemonic order. In this sense, Collin Trotter's perspective stresses the importance of cultural, political and pedagogical aspects in the construction of hegemonic orders. However, Benjamin Trotter's middle class consciousness emphasises the hegemonic class' incompetency to deliver on the welfare of the subaltern class. As Benjamin is compelled to read the newspaper with a "candlelight in his bedroom"(J.Coe,2002, p.52)", hence there is a necessity to invite intellectuals into the debate of social protest against hegemonic bloc.

2- Public Intellectual and Ideological Struggle

The key issue of this section is to look at Jonathan Coe's *The Rotters' Club* as centered on the theme of public intellectual's ideological struggle for change in the British post-war elites'

social policies. This analysis is based on the intellectuals' ideological struggle for social transformation in the benefit of the mass. Gramsci views of the public mission of intellectuals as agents of a moral and intellectual reform developed from a class perspective. From this perspective, intellectuals could be acting against the powers of capitalist hegemony. In this sense, the intellectual is a kind of organic intellectual or political activist who helps the mass of population in its class struggle against the hegemonic leadership of the elites.

First, in *The Rotters' Club*, the intellectuals do not appear as the servants of the state. They fail to stand in the way of modern philosophical idealism describing intellectuals' role as in Hegel and Kant as helper of the state or hegemonic bloc. In other terms, the intellectuals decry the hegemonic monopoly of different groups in society. This discontentment with the post-Second World War elites' monopoly is echoed in Doug's attitude vis à vis the Closed Circle, the hegemonic political think tank. As a public intellectual and independent journalist, Doug expresses his hatred for the hegemonic political think tank in the following terms:

The Closed Circle was a debating society; composed of no more than sixteen members at any one time, drawn mostly from the upper sixth and very occasionally from the year below. Nobody outside the society knew how often it met, or where, or what exactly went on at the meetings. Everything about it was cloaked in impenetrable (and somehow infantile) society. The Closed Circle is a nasty, divisive bit of elitist bollocks, said Doug. It's like a bunch of schoolkids pretending to be fucking masons. It's high time somebody did a proper exposé of the whole thing and showed these guys up for the self-important wankers they are. (J.Coe,2002, p.145)

Along this passage Doug Andertone, a young journalist and intellectual overtly criticises the "Closed Circle" as an instrument of the hegemonic elites. Doug's qualification of the elites' newspaper as "a nasty, divisive bit of elitist bollocks"(J.Coe,2002, p.145) resonates in the sense of Gramsci's interpretation of the intellectual role as "intellectual and moral reformer"(A. Gramsci,1971, p. 30). Mobilized by an ideology which shuns any market interference in the economy, Doug stresses that the hegemonic journal, the Closed Circle' perspective is instrumental in perpetuating the post-war elites' capitalist hegemonic order.

Besides, Doug's concluding argument goes as follows: "It's high time somebody did a proper exposé of the whole thing and showed these guys up for the self-important wankers they are." (J.Coe,2002, p.145) It hinges on the assertion that the post-Second World War elites' laissez-faire and market capitalism have triumphed over public intellectual terrains of Marxist class struggle. In an attempt to overturn the elites' domination, Doug urges the intellectual to help transform the elites' capitalism in this sentence: "It's high time somebody did a proper exposé of the whole thing" (J. Coe, 2002, p. 145).

Another aspect to note pertaining to in the intellectual's ideological struggle is the constant adverse portrayal of post-war Britain's crisis and discontent. In *The Rotters' Club*, this crisis refers to the critical time during which a post war-diseased social, economic, and political body or system is broken. Owing to the endless crisis or chaos in industries, the intellectual's demand for transformation becomes unrelenting. The intellectual character, Bill Andertone not only exposes the post-Second World War British workers' social ills, but he also mobilises

consciousness for transformation of the hegemonic political body or economic system. As a result, the narrator says:

The bosses' Club? The Scoundrels' Club? The Liars' Club? Twelve and a half thousand redundancies. A painful but necessary process. He pitied their twinges of conscience, those long, distressing meetings, the salaried anguish of executive decision-making, and thought too about the weeks and months and maybe lifetime of hardship and hopelessness that so many thousands of his men were going to face in the bitter, market-driven era to come. Was there anything he could do about it, now that everyone had swallowed the pill like trusting children and voted themselves out of a livelihood? Oh, yes, there had been plenty of days, good days, and not so long ago, when he truly believed that the struggle could be won. (J. Coe, 2002, p.304)

Throughout this passage, Bill exposes the unreliability of the hegemonic class and the poor workers' dark living condition in time of crises known as period of "redundancies, bitter market-driven era" (J.Coe, 2002, p.34). As Bill provides the reader with an overview of the social crisis, he immediately mobilises consciousness through an intellectual's ideological struggle in this statement: "Oh, yes, there had been plenty of days, good days, and not so long ago, when he truly believed that the struggle could be won. (J. Coe, 2002, p.304). What is at stake here is the public intellectual's moral mobilisation of the consciousness into the belief that the hegemonic class cannot live on and have to be obliged to undergo transformations through struggle.

Actually the dialogue between Bill Andertone and the working population in the above passage is reminiscent of Gramsci's following statement: "There is no simple recipe, however, for cultural transformation; it is a complex historical process in which there needs to be an active dialogue between intellectuals and non-intellectuals, those who live the harsh realities of subordination" (A. Gramsci, 1971, p.32). From this Gramscian perspective, it may be noted that in Bill's invitation of the workers not to swallow up the hegemonic narrative of the crisis, there is an attempt to indulge in revolutionary ideas into individual's mind in order to achieve transformation. On this account, Bill is aware that those who live the harsh realities of "redundancies and the bitter market-driven era" (J.Coe, 2002, p.34), however capable they may be of everyday resistance, cannot, in Gramsci's view, come up with the coherent, effective counter-narratives necessary if the existing hegemony is to be overcome. But it is just as true that intellectuals cannot themselves devise these narratives unaided.

Moreover, in *The Rotters' Club* the intellectuals also advocate the traditional Marxists' theories of class, which considers class as the central axis of any hegemonic transformation. Given that the marketisation of the British post-Second World War society is understood in terms of an organising ideology for the elites' supremacy, it is becoming more and more evident to these intellectuals that market policies are no longer effective for the working class population. In this sense, the public intellectuals believe that the working class population has been sidelined in the post-Second World War industrial policies. They are abandoned and disregarded by all the politicians and the main neoliberal market economy. This is why the intellectual and trade unionist, Bill Andertone is calling the young students of King William's school to challenge

the ruling class and the market capitalist system at Longbridge , a fictional factory. In this regards Bill Andertone says:

The struggle between labour and capital. This struggle is as old as capitalism.(...) The history of ... prime ministers, the history of the ruling class, in other words. But the ruling class is only a tiny part of history and over the centuries it's been sustained and supported by the labour of the rest of the population, and those people have a history as well. So what I'm saying is that the kids at King William's ought to be interested in Longbridge because it provides a- a microcosm, if you will, of a society as a whole. The ruling class versus the laboring class. Management versus workers. That's is what history is all about and that's what society is all about and that's what life is all about, to be honest. (J.Coe,2002, p.239)

It appears that as an intellectual, Bill Andertone sees Britain as divided by class and inequality. As he calls upon the young students from the elites schools and the labour force to oppose the ruling elites, there is an attempt to abide by a Gramscian(1977, p. 291) effective political force or a 'historical bloc' capable of transforming the British post-Second World War society. In this regard, Bill Andertone says "the kids at King William's ought to be interested in Longbridge (...)The ruling class versus the laboring class (..)That's is what history is all about" (J.Coe, 2002, p. 239). He is aiming at an intellectual and moral reform of the masses directed to transform the complex superstructures producing a new equilibrium between material and intellectual labor in [the infrastructure of] the socialist formation.

The unity of "the kids at King William's"(J.Coe, 2002, p. 239) with the "the laboring class" (J.Coe, 2002, p. 239) emanates from what Gramscis (1977, p.291) termed as "the Philosophy of Praxis," that is, the contact between intellectual and the mass to build an intellectual and moral bloc as part of the historical process of the class struggle in Britain. Given that the children of King William's school represent the future scholars and middle class individual, their invitation to join the working class population's quest amounts to putting together the organic intellectuals and the proletarian revolution in response to the general reorganisation of the British post-Second World War capitalism.

Actually, through the microcosm of the "Kids at King Williams' (J.Coe, 2002, p.239), we may point out that the British education system does more to perpetuate ideological change in the hegemonic class structure and its market economic policy. The pupils represent a large part of the academic cream of their generation. By allowing school children to join the labour force in their class struggle, King William's school appears as an intellectual apparatus for the hegemonic transformation.

Definitely, Bill Andertone views the school institution as the microcosm of revolutionary change. Through the school microcosm, he explicitly emphasises the importance of the spirit to conduct the ideological struggle against the hegemony. He declares : "So what I'm saying is that the kids at King William's ought to be interested in Longbridge because it provides a- a microcosm, if you will, of a society as a whole" (J. Coe,2002, p.239)". In Bill Andertone's understanding the "King William's"(J. Coe, 2002, p.239) school has to stand as the shaping spirit or consciousness of the labour force. Gramsci underlines human consciousness as a defining attribute of hegemonic transformation. Consciousness was akin to spirit or will, which

was linked to the notion of history as a form of “ruling class versus the laboring class”(J. Coe, 2002, p.239). Organized spirit or will becomes the basis of Gramsci’s philosophy. So, when Bill Anderton sees the King William School as the microcosm of British society, he acknowledges the link between the intellectuals and production. The satisfaction of labour’s needs is the primary historical act, and must be satisfied by the intellectuals.

From Bill’s perspective, it can be noted that intellectuals themselves are always participants of the collective power struggles acting within the structures of real existing hegemonic formations. In this sense, it is important to consider that the Longbridge labour crisis and King William’s schoolchildren are likely to embody this new hegemonic regime. They will emerge as the hegemonic solution in a Gramscian sense.

Conclusion.

This paper has investigated the labour class’s social unrest vis à vis the British post- Second World War elites. Through the depiction of post-war industrial social unrest, *The Rotters’ Club* portrays a contradictory class discourse. It first presents the working class’s dissatisfaction with the British post- Second World War elites’ social policies. Then, it seeks to build solidarity between lower and upper classes as a way to achieve symbolic change in the hegemonic order. It is this conflicting class discourse that we explore in Coe’s texts, and so, by critically reading the post-war elites’ canon of the novel, it provides us with a foothold to shape a Gramscian hegemonic perspective. Ideally, we should read post-war class canon so as to become conscious of how the textuality of *The Rotters’ Club* is managing the discourse of social unrest germinated from the elites’ capitalist structures or policies.

In short, Gramscian hegemonic (1977,p.12) claim that the leaders’ class exercises economic and political leadership over the subaltern class enables the working class population to fight for equal right in Coe’s fiction. It comes out that Coe’s characterization and plot lines evoke miners’ commitment to the revolutionary transformation of the British post-Second World War society, a transformation that for miners necessarily involved radical cultural change in the hegemonic political and economic leadership. This is because the realities of power bring into being cultures of subordination.

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