



AKDENİZ UNIVERSITY
THE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES



Merve PEKÖZ

EXPLORING THE LIMINAL MIND STYLE IN GEORGE ORWELL'S *COMING UP FOR AIR* AND *THE ROAD TO WIGAN PIER*

Department of English Language and Literature
Master's Thesis

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Supervisor

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SUMMARY

Twentieth-century people experienced rapid historical events, leading them to attempt to understand the dynamics of a newly shaping world. This process of Britain in the modern world between world wars is displayed in Orwell's *Coming Up for Air* (1939) and *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937), which present auto-diegetic middle-class narrators whose minds revolve between socialist and capitalist ideals, modernist and traditional lifestyles. In *Coming Up for Air*, the middle-class narrator who lives between world wars presents his ideas about the modern world and class issues. In *The Road to Wigan Pier*, the middle-class narrator travels to Northern England to explain the working class's challenging conditions. The loss of status and the feeling of dislocation in the lives of middle-class narrators cause confusion and uncertainty concerning their future and place in society. Throughout both books, the narrators remain in liminal space, as they are neither completely part of the working class nor genuinely belong to the middle class. This study explores the liminal mind style of George Orwell's middle-class narrators who encounter conflicting ideologies, clashing between socialist and capitalist ideas, and traditional and modernist lifestyles. The study is conducted within the framework of stylistics, emphasizing the narrators' mind styles through modality, epithets, and relevant stylistic devices to show the liminal space they experienced in the 1930s. The findings reveal that the narrator's liminality concludes with his integration into society in *Coming Up for Air*, while the quasi-fictional narrator experiences permanent liminality in *The Road to Wigan Pier*.

Keywords: Stylistics, Liminality, Mind Style, Modality, Working-class

ÖZET

GEORGE ORWELL'İN *COMING UP FOR AIR* VE *THE ROAD TO WIGAN PIER* KİTAPLARINDA EŞİKTEKİ ZİHİNSEL ÜSLUBUN İNCELENMESİ

Yirminci yüzyıl insanları onları yeni şekillenen dünyanın dinamiklerini anlamaya yönelten hızlı değişen tarihsel olaylar yaşadı. Britanya'nın modern dünyada dünya savaşları arasındaki bu süreci, zihinleri sosyalist ve kapitalist fikirler, modernist ve geleneksel yaşam tarzları arasında dönen ve modern dünyada ait olduğu yeri bulamayan oto-diegetik orta sınıf anlatıcıları sunan Orwell'in *Coming Up for Air* (1939) ve *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937) adlı eserlerinde sergilenmektedir. *Coming Up for Air*'de, dünya savaşları arasında yaşayan orta sınıf anlatıcı, modern dünya ve sınıf meselelerine ilişkin fikirlerini sunuyor. *The Road to Wigan Pier*'de, anlatıcı, işçi sınıfının zorlu koşullarını gözlemlemek için Kuzey İngiltere'ye seyahat eder. Orta sınıf anlatıcılarının yaşamları güvenli bir konumdan istikrarsızlığa doğru kayar ve kimlik kaybı yaşarlar. Statü kaybı ve yerinden edilmişlik duygusu, gelecekleri ve toplumdaki yerleri konusunda kafa karışıklığına ve belirsizliğe neden olur. Her iki kitapta da anlatıcılar ne tamamen işçi sınıfının bir parçası oldukları ne de gerçek anlamda orta sınıfa ait oldukları için eşikte kalıyorlar. Bu çalışma, George Orwell'in sosyalist fikirler ile capitalist fikirler ve geleneksel ile modern yaşam tarzları arasında sıkışıp kalan orta sınıf anlatıcılarının eşik zihniyetini seçilmiş romanlarda analiz eder. Çalışma, 1930'larda deneyimledikleri eşik alanını göstermek için anlatıcıların zihinsel üsluplarının kiplik, lakaplar ve diğer üslupsal unsurlar aracılığıyla vurgulayan üslupbilim çerçevesinde yürütülmektedir. Bulgular, *Coming Up for Air*'de anlatıcının eşikliğinin topluma entegrasyonu ile sonuçlandığını, *The Road to Wigan Pier*'de ise yarı kurgusal anlatıcının kalıcı bir eşiklik yaşadığını ortaya koyuyor.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Deyişbilim, Eşiklik, Zihinsel üslup, Kiplik, İşçi sınıf

INTRODUCTION

In the twentieth century, people encountered “earth-shattering events; events in which the surrounding world order, formerly taken for granted, collapses, falling to pieces” (Szokolczai, 2003: 59-60). It led thinkers to reflect on the consequences of the events and to provide ways out of the crisis by also attempting to seek ways to resist the process of decay and dissolution. The rapid historical changes, including wars and totalitarian regimes in the twentieth century, considering individuals’ uncertain future, including inequalities, political problems, and rising unemployment rates, encapsulate persistent instability and flux (Charles, 2009: 395). As traditional social structures are questioned and reconstructed, the uncertainty people develop caused a sense of alienation from oneself and others. The introductory chapter aims to explain this issue through the term liminality coined by the anthropologist Arnold van Gennep in *Les rites de passage* (Eng. *The Rites of Passage*), first published in 1909. The state of threshold, described as the transitional phase where individuals or groups are betwixt and between their previous status and a new one in primitive societies, develops as a concept that can be applied to modern society. The study utilises a stylistic point of view to foreground the liminal mind style while examining the narrators in George Orwell’s *Coming Up for Air* and *The Road to Wigan Pier*.

In stylistics, mind style appears as a concept that involves various linguistic and narrative devices to nourish insights into a character’s or narrator’s unique way of perceiving and interpreting the world, including thoughts and feelings. Derived from Michael Halliday’s functional theory of language, the concept of mind style is extended by Roger Fowler to analyse texts revealing a character’s or narrator’s cognitive processes and thought patterns (Fowler, 1977). The stylistic elements regarding lexical choices, syntactic structure, and metaphorical expressions offer diverse interpretations to reveal the mental state of a character or a narrator.

Scholars who experienced rapid historical events in the twentieth century pursued to conceptualize their own experiences, understand the dynamics shaping their world, resist decay and abolition, and find solutions to the crisis (Szokolczai, 2003: 59-60). Affected by Freud and Jung’s theories of the mind, rather than indirectly conveying a character’s thoughts and feelings, writers including Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, and D. H. Lawrence embraced the concept of revealing characters’ psychology directly (Fowler, 1995: 138). The character’s reactions to and interactions with the political, social, and material world enhanced the concept of mind style in the twentieth century.

Parallel to the prevailing aspect of the early twentieth century, Orwell follows a dual structure and integrated realism and psychological aspects. He delves into the inner thoughts of his characters while maintaining a sense of realism through material objects and settings (Fowler, 1995: 185). Turner tries to understand human reactions to in-between experiences, how they shape the personality, and how thought and experience are sometimes intertwined (Thomassen, 2009). Based on van Gennep's concept of liminality, Turner underlines the transformative nature of liminality and its role in various cultures. He discusses that during the liminal phase, individuals or groups encounter a sense of ambiguity and suspension from their usual social roles, norms, and structures.

To Turner (1967), the transient condition of being betwixt and between leads to a chance for personal growth, cultural creativity, and social transformation. He highlights that liminality is not a mere transitional period but a distinct social and psychological condition with its attributes. Thus, the psychological state of individuals at the threshold begins to be emphasized. He depicts liminal individuals as "liminal personae" or "threshold people" (Turner, 1964). These people experience an ambiguous position outside the conventional social classifications and norms. They question established hierarchies, roles, and values within their own perspectives. Turner (1969) clarifies the significance of liminality in comprehending social change, cultural dynamics, and the human experience of transition and transformation.

Examining Orwell's background, which encloses his upbringing in a middle-class colonial family settled down in India and his transformation into a writer while encountering deprivation as part of the lower class upon returning to Europe, contributes to the construction of narrators who experienced similar backgrounds. Relevantly, the auto-diegetic narrators in *Coming Up for Air* and *The Road to Wigan Pier* exhibit transitional or liminal space elements in their utterances. While claiming that Orwell has a liminal mind style is a further study topic, this study focuses on his narrators' mind styles.

Stylistics is valuable in understanding narrators' mental states. By examining linguistic choices and structures, this interdisciplinary concept strives to understand how mind style contributes to the overall meaning and impact of a text (Semino, 2007). Orwell's narrators employ techniques such as ellipsis, flashbacks, and incomplete sentences, characteristics commonly encountered in twentieth-century psychological novels. Likewise, his idiosyncratic adjectivization, clauses, and narrative style offer insights into his mind style, which may reflect a place somewhere in between the binary oppositions of his contemporary era, such as

capitalism or socialism, modernism or conservatism, and community or individualism. Regarding the thesis studies, the concept of liminality in the twentieth century in terms of stylistics remains vastly unintegrated within the study of literary texts. Esayan (2008) explores the complex dynamics of identity within the colonial and gender frameworks, employing the theoretical frameworks of Homi Bhabha, Judith Butler, and Luce Irigaray. Özkan (2019) examines Bernard Shaw's comedies *Heartbreak House*, *Major Barbara*, and *John Bull's Other Island* as his turning point in analysing the continuities and discontinuities between nineteenth-century theatre and modern drama traditions through the anthropological theory of liminality in the context of rites of passage. Yağlıdere (2020) explores the process of immigrants' identity formation through Brah's border theory and Bhabha's theory of liminality concerning the other key terms, third space and ambivalence in the works of Monica Ali, Kiran Desai, and Tsitsi Dangarembga (Yağlıdere, 2020). Vural-Özbey (2021) mentions the liminality concept in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, *Hamlet*, *Troilus*, and *Cressida*, underscoring in-betweenness, liminal space, and transformation. Despite her focus on feminist theory, Özkaya (2023) explores how feminine revolt against societal norms leads to women's position in the liminal space of society through the myth of Antigone.

While previous studies have primarily focused on themes such as immigrant identity and feminist theories in the liminality framework, there appears to be a notable gap in the literature regarding the ambivalent mind style of characters through the lens of liminality. However, the concept of liminality offers a valuable approach to character analysis regarding psychological state when conducting text analysis. Within the field of stylistics, the increasingly prevalent use of modality in text analysis presents the epistemic modality category as a tool for foregrounding a character's ambiguous mind style. While focusing on the narrators' ambiguous psychological state and mind style, this study introduces the term "liminal mind style" to encompass these two terms. This term refers to a mental state of being stuck between contradictory views and ideologies, having an identity crisis, and being disconnected from society.

While the study examines liminal mind style from a stylistic perspective, it presents the state of liminality by focusing on modality in functional grammar. The analysis of texts in English literature through modality is not frequently encountered, and such studies remain notably scarce in English literary text analysis. In Turkey, several thesis studies have examined modality in educational and linguistic contexts (Terziyan, 2013; Benzer, 2008; Kılıç, 2004) and

within Turkish literature (Karaca, 2021; Kamacı-Gencer, 2018). A gap exists concerning the text analysis of English literature in terms of employing modality to analyse literary texts. Thus, this study aims to conduct the narrator's mindstyles by integrating the concepts of modality and liminality. Notably, liminality and modality concepts have not been explored in studies of George Orwell's early novels, *Coming Up for Air* and *The Road to Wigan Pier*, which were overshadowed by his later works. Regarding the thesis studies on the selected novels, Göncü (1988) displays that Orwell utilises ordinary common people in *Burmese Days*, *Coming Up for Air*, and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* to handle the restraining forces of modern civilization. Çiftçibaş (2012) highlights the significance of ecological awareness despite the socio-economic transformations among the scientific and technological conveniences. Çiftçibaş (2012) highlights the significance of ecological awareness despite the socio-economic transformations in scientific and technological advancement while analysing *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck, *Coming Up for Air* by George Orwell, *The Pomegranate on The Knoll* by Yaşar Kemal, and *The Tortoises* by Fakir Baykurt in terms of ecocriticism. Ermetin (1988) examines the development of Orwell's social consciousness in the 1930s following his personal experiences among the lower classes and explains the impossibility of escaping from middle-class values in his *Down and Out in Paris and London* and *The Road to Wigan Pier*, *A Clergyman's Daughter* and *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*.

In the second part of *The Road to Wigan Pier*, the narrator also acknowledges that he has been raised as a product of the middle class with its bias, while explaining how he felt guilty about his snobbishness, working in Burma for the imperialism of England (Shaker, 1987: 65). While previous studies have focused on the challenges of abandoning middle-class values, this study delves into the complexities of middle-class identity by examining Orwell's narrators who represented various classes and ended up being middle-class throughout twentieth century. Navigating the interwar period marked by economic hardships and political upheavals and having experienced both the upper and lower layers of society at different times, these narrators find themselves caught in a state of liminality. They no longer entirely belong to either the pre-war or post-war era, neither the lower nor upper classes nor entirely to the middle class itself.

Böğür (2019) analyses George Orwell's approach to literary journalism by examining three of his works: *Down and Out in Paris and London*, *The Road to Wigan Pier*, and *Homage to Catalonia*. Böğür's qualitative content analysis demonstrates Orwell's choice for first-person narration while partially employing narration from a third-person perspective as well, limited

dialogue, non-linear narrative structure, and prioritization of spatial descriptions over character descriptions while employing literary elements, including symbols, similes, and anthropomorphizing, to impart a literary feel to his works.

This study analyses how narrators' usage of language displays their cognitive processing. Employing a stylistic approach to the two selected novels, this thesis focuses on linguistic features, including modality, narrational structure, and stylistic devices, to analyse how Orwell's usage of epithets, clauses, and narration pattern shows the liminal mental state of narrators in the two selected books. The first chapter introduces the concept of liminality and the evolution of the term over the years, starting from van Gennep to Szakolczai.

The second chapter, presenting Fowler's concept of mind style, exemplifies the different stances of the term chronologically and introduces how the term is utilised to examine characters' mind styles with the help of diverse components, including narrational structure, lexicalization, modality, and epithets. The following chapter presents a literature review of Orwell's writing style along with *Coming Up for Air* and *The Road to Wigan Pier* in relation to narration, liminality, and mind style. The fourth and fifth chapters examine the narrators' liminal mind styles through specific stylistic elements, including modalities, epithets, metaphors, and narration patterns in the selected books. The last chapter concludes that the liminal mind styles of the narrators, distinguished by shifting degrees of certainty and doubt, are deployed through diverse stylistic elements, mainly the epistemic modality. The narrators are teetering between certainty and doubt regarding the class divisions, such as the upper, middle, and working class, political ideas, such as socialism, capitalism, and fascism, and societal situations, such as traditional lifestyle and modernism. Further, this study demonstrates that even though in *Coming Up for Air*, the narrator, Bowling, settles down his role and identity, in *The Road to Wigan Pier*, the narrator remains in the liminal space, which sets an example of what Szakolczai explains as permanent liminality for modern people.

CHAPTER I

LIMINALITY AND PERMANENT LIMINALITY

Liminality, rooted in the Latin word *limen*, which refers to the word threshold, signifies the experience of ambiguity (Kaya, 2021). French ethnographer Arnold van Gennep (1909/1979) demonstrates liminality through ‘rites de passage’ in primitive communities. To him, the process of passing from one age to another or from one occupation to another causes the experience of liminality. The rituals of birth, social puberty, marriage, and conversion into a religious belief carry the process of reintegration into society. Van Gennep divides this process into three phases: rites of separation, rites of the margin, and rites of incorporation. The liminal space in which the individual is neither in the new role nor no longer in the previous position follows the reintegration into society (van Gennep, 1909/1979).

Significant periods that contain transition were attempted to conceptualise by sociologists with the help of two distinct perspectives: seeking teleological methods and taking responsibility for solving the crisis (Poggi, 1972). Eric Voegelin used metaxy to refer to the in-between realm of human existence. While Voegelin did not directly engage with the concept of liminality, his works contain valuable insights into the nature of human experience, the tension between order and disorder, and the quest for existential meaning, which can indirectly relate to liminal experiences or transitions (Hoppen, 2021: 99). Voegelin’s ideas led to the conceptualization of the concept of liminality.

Eric Voegelin has displayed that societal structures in the twentieth century were collapsing, considering the dynamics of mass movements and ideologies in the twentieth century. Scholars who experienced rapid historical events in the twentieth century pursued to conceptualize their own experiences, understand the dynamics shaping their world, resist decay and abolition, and find solutions to the crisis. Voegelin used metaxy to clarify these experiences (Szakolczai, 2003: 59-60). Voegelin argued that many influential figures in political thought had undergone challenging circumstances such as wars, civil wars, or invasions (Hoppen, 2021: 99). Similarly, Reinhart Koselleck introduced the term “*Sattelzeit*” (Eng. “saddle time”) to refer to transformative transitional periods. Koselleck’s analysis delves into the concepts of critique and crisis, linking significant shifts in the history of thought to these transitional periods. He used terms like “space of experience” and “horizon of expectation” to explain these connections (Koselleck, 1988). Foucault introduced the term “problematization” to examine the relationship

between experiencing crises and innovative thought (Horvath et al., 2015: 15). Arnold van Gennep's categorization of the transitional stages of local tribes led to the advancement of the concept of liminality.

Turner (1969) expands the concept of liminality in his *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. Besides focusing on the conceptualization of liminality, Turner also tries to understand human reactions to in-between experiences, how they shape the personality, and how thought and experience are sometimes intertwined (Thomassen, 2009). He delves into the connection where thoughts and experiences integrate, striving to unravel the complexities that emerge when these aspects entangle.

Turner underlines the transformative nature of liminality and its role in various cultures. He discusses that during the liminal phase, individuals or groups encounter a sense of ambiguity and suspension from their usual social roles, norms, and structures. This transient condition of being betwixt and between leads to a chance for personal growth, cultural creativity, and social transformation (Turner, 1967). One of Turner's contributions is his concept of the 'liminal phase' within the broader framework of the rites of passage. He determines three steps of the rites of passage that he borrows from van Gennep: separation, liminality, and incorporation (Turner, 1969). The liminal phase, which occurs between separation and incorporation, is distinguished as a state of ambiguity.

Turner highlights that liminality is not a mere transitional period but a distinct social and psychological condition with its own attributes. He depicts liminal individuals as "liminal personae" (Turner, 1964). These people experience an ambiguous position outside the conventional social classifications and norms. They question established hierarchies, roles, and values within their perspectives. Turner clarifies the significance of liminality in comprehending social change, cultural dynamics, and the human experience of transition and transformation (Turner, 1969). Furthermore, Turner claims that the condition of liminality does not continue eternally without some form of stability. Stability is acquired either by reintegrating individuals into the existing social structure or by reconfiguring social establishments within liminal communities, which Turner calls "normative communitas" (Homans, 1979: 207). The British anthropologist Mary Douglas also explores the theoretical implications of van Gennep's concept regarding the nature of the transitional stage. Douglas (1966/2001) examines how societies frequently view particular individuals or groups as "dangerous" or "polluting" because they deviate from social norms or are associated with taboo

behaviours or characteristics. In many societies, outcasts, such as lepers, people with disabilities, or individuals who engage in socially stigmatized practices, are regarded as sources of pollution or impurity. Their presence is considered to threaten the social order. As a result, they may be marginalized and segregated from the rest of society. She clarifies that those people should adhere to the social group they are part of and not be on the margins (Horvath et al., 2015: 14). She underlines that transitional states are hazardous because individuals do not belong to the prior role or the following one under this circumstance.

Conversely, the sociologist Arpad Szakolczai develops the notion of liminality exceeding temporary transitional states and asserts that some individuals or groups can experience a prolonged or persistent state of liminality, which he terms permanent liminality (Szakolczai, 2017). Szakolczai's permanent liminality refers to individuals or social groups who exist on the margins of society, constantly occupying a state of ambiguity and disconnection from established social structures with a sense of not belonging. In contrast to temporary liminality and its connection with distinguishing rites of passage and transitional stages, permanent liminality suggests a stable state in which individuals constantly negotiate their position in society and experience ongoing uncertainty and ambivalence since they are unable to fit into constructed roles and identities (Szakolczai, 2009). Permanent liminality can emerge in varied contexts, including minority groups, immigrants, homeless people, or individuals who do not accept social conventions. Szakolczai indicates that these individuals or groups often develop their subcultures and challenge established structures. By highlighting the existence of permanent liminality, Szakolczai ascribes the intricate dynamics of social exclusion, identity formation, and resistance to prevalent social institutions.

In his *Permanent Liminality and Modernity*, the constantly changing order of the twentieth century is explained by the concept of hypermodernity considering “devastating wars and totalitarian regimes ever inflicted on mankind” (Szakolczai, 2017: 1). Hypermodernity, often associated with anxiety considering individuals' uncertain future, including inequalities, political problems, and rising unemployment rates, encapsulates persistent instability and flux (Charles, 2009: 395). As traditional social structures are questioned and reconstructed, the uncertainty they develop may cause a sense of alienation from oneself and others, resulting in permanent liminality. Szakolczai (2017) maintains his assumption by providing examples of different writers with common points as he mentions unfinished hyper-modern novels such as *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge* by Rilke and *The Verdict* by Franz Kafka. According

to him, those novels are “a clear sign of a move towards the paradoxical condition of permanent liminality or the taking shape of hypermodernity” (57). To illustrate, Szakolczai utilises Kafka’s background to assume his permanent liminality among different cultures, including the Habsburg Empire and Jewish culture that affects Kafka’s writings as well (2017: 63). Szakolczai demonstrates “not only the novels seem to be to ‘lost,’ in the sense of not being finished, but the same applies to their heroes” (Szakolczai, 2017: 57). He continues that these unfinished novels with fragmented narrators abolish themselves out of existence since the narrative tail off into nothingness.

This study claims that Szakolczai’s concept of permanent liminality occurs in Orwell’s novels through his autodiegetic narrators in *Coming Up for Air* and *The Road to Wigan Pier*. Voegelin, as cited in Szakolczai’s *The Genesis of Modernity* asserts that twentieth-century intellectuals experienced a period of liminality during the passage from puberty to adulthood during the years of World Wars (cited in Szakolczai, 2003: 59-60). Upon conducting an analysis of George Orwell’s *Coming Up for Air* and *The Road to Wigan Pier*, George Orwell’s narrators seem to convey what Szakolczai has conceptualized as liminality in his selected novels. The linguistic elements which foreground liminality through narration will be explored in the following chapter.

Diverse studies (Esayan, 2008; Özkan, 2019; Yağlıdere, 2020; Vural-Özbey, 2021; Özkaya, 2023) have been conducted concerning the liminal space. Esayan (2008) explores the complex dynamics of power, identity, and resistance in Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* and Marina Warner’s *Indigo*, a modernized version of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, within the colonial and gender frameworks, employing the theoretical frameworks of Homi Bhabha, Judith Butler, and Luce Irigaray. For instance, the analysis of *The Tempest* concerns the ambivalent relationship between Prospero and Caliban at the heart of colonial encounters. Prospero’s desire to turn Caliban into a civilized man and keep him as a repressed other exhibits the complex power dynamics of colonization. In *Indigo*, the union of Prospero’s daughter Miranda and Caliban replaces the threat of rape in the play *Tempest*. Therefore, the novel shows a reconciliation between the half-colonizer and the colonized subject.

Özkan (2019) examines Bernard Shaw’s comedies of *Heartbreak House*, *Major Barbara*, and John Bull’s *Other Island* as his turning point in analysing the continuities and discontinuities between nineteenth-century theatre and modern drama traditions. The study applies the anthropological theory of liminality in the context of rites of passage as a means for

literary criticism to argue Shaw's aesthetic concrescence of the comic and the sublime with a demonstration of the socialization and individuation processes of the liminal characters in his three major critical comedies which cope with the adaptations derived from modernity. Yağlıdere (2020) examines the process of immigrants' identity formation through Brah's border theory and Bhabha's theory of liminality concerning the other key terms third space and ambivalence. The works of Monica Ali, Kiran Desai, and Tsitsi Dangarembga are interpreted in relation to self-positioning within the liminal spaces of multiple cultures, homes, and nations. It explores the unstable nature of the identity derived from the in-betweenness after migrancy. Vural-Özbey (2021) mentions the liminality concept in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, *Hamlet*, *Troilus*, and *Cressida*. In *As You Like it*, the Forest of Arden represents a liminal space, displaying in-betweenness, obscurity, opposing potentials, and transformational and transitional power. Likewise, in *Hamlet*, the castle walls, purgatory, and the sea are depicted as liminal spaces, underscoring in-betweenness and transformation. In *Troilus and Cressida*, the port and Achilles's tent are emphasized as liminal places, portraying transgression and in-between states. These examples exemplify how the concept of liminality is attached to the plays' settings. Özkaya (2023) explores how the myth of Antigone portrays feminine revolt against societal norms and authority, particularly in feminist theory as interpreted by scholars like Irigaray. Her act of withstanding the state's prohibition against burying her brother places her in a liminal space, showcasing her challenge to the social order and underlining her navigation through instability and transition. While all these studies present the concept of liminality, this study analyses the liminality of the narrators through mindstyle. The following chapter explores the mindstyle, which contributes to revealing the characters' psychological state.

CHAPTER II

MIND STYLE

Mind style is a term employed within the field of stylistics to elucidate the underlying semantic nuances in the text. Stylistics is a field that combines linguistics and literature, embracing the trends in the study of language (Burke 2014; Gibbons and Whiteley 2018), including epithets, transitivity, and modality. Stylistics aimed to comprehend why and how authors employ specific linguistic expressions. It strives to demonstrate the connection between language and its artistic function, questioning why authors prefer certain expressions and repetition patterns (Leech & Short, 2007:11). The stylisticians study the underlying structures of language, identify components that might have stylistic meaning, and recognize the social variations related to linguistic qualities (Crystal & Davy, 1969/2013: 13). By exploring the elements of language, stylistics unveils how language use reflects social contexts.

While analysing a text, the contextual aspects, including political, cultural, and historical factors, play a significant role (Semino & Culpeper, 2002: 67). Within the context, the style of a text urges forging an estimation during the narration or the linguistic representation of characters. Considering the narrators or fictional characters, the way of describing a setting, other characters, and their interactions within the cultural context reveal their way of understanding and perspectives, which encourages the reader to “empathise, sympathise or antipathise with those characters, and what they literally, metaphorically or metonymically represent” (Burke, 2014: 118). Thus, the narrators’ language use reveals their prejudices and thoughts constructed by their historical and cultural background.

After the rise of psychological novels of the twentieth century, cognitive stylistics, which emerged in the 1970s, concentrated on the connection between language and mind to analyse the speaker’s mental state sufficiently (Gibbons & Whiteley, 2018). Roger Fowler coined the term mind style as “any distinctive linguistic representation of an individual mental self” to display how the constant linguistic patterns within a text can represent distinctive manners and specific perspectives (Fowler, 1977:103). Opposing Fowler’s attitude that regards mind style and point of view as the same, Semino (2002:97) distinguishes these terms by asserting the point of view has an ideological aspect that is constructed by social, cultural, religious, and political factors, including transferred values, beliefs, and judgements among similar groups. In contrast, mind style consists of idiosyncratic and unique personal

worldviews. Leech and Short (2007) depict mind style as how the fictional world “is apprehended, or conceptualised,” and describe it as “conceptual variation” (150) and they include mind styles range on a scale from “normality” to “deviance,” the idea is most practical where narratives entangle the foregrounding of linguistic patterns that offer some continually cognitive habit or problem. In this case, mind style analysis is not only for speakers with mental disorders but also for the ones who use their unique and idiosyncratic repetitive patterns.

To illustrate the cognitive state of characters, scholars such as Halliday, Fowler, Leech, and Short utilise characters from twentieth-century literature. Halliday (1971) examines William Golding’s *The Inheritors*, particularly analysing the language of the Neanderthal man Lok. He infers the repetitive syntactic patterns within the text offer insights into the characters’ perception of the world. Fowler (1977) extends Halliday’s explanation of how Lok’s cognitive constraints are expressed through language. Lok, lacking an understanding of cause and effect, cannot differentiate between living and non-living entities. He asserts that this limitation is conveyed by employing a steady constraint on the syntactic patterns while highlighting the absence of transitive clauses (Subject + Verb + Object). Thus, rather than considering ‘His enemy rustled the bushes,’ “In Lok’s universe, ‘The bushes twitched again’- an inanimate object appears to move of its own accord when it has actually been shifted by a person” (Fowler, 1977: 106). The study by Leech and Short, regarding a passage seen through the eyes of mentally retarded Benjy in Faulkner’s *The Sound and the Fury* presents various consistent linguistic features. Through lexico-grammatical patterns, the studies reveal that these characters do not have sufficient vocabulary and cognitive ability to fully understand the connection between cause and effect (Leech and Short, 2007: 196). Correspondingly, Pillière (2013) criticizes the diverse analysis of the mind style of abnormal narrators while asserting that one does not need to be a linguist to see deviance in those texts and encouraging scholars to enhance the diversity. She states, “The concept of deviance is no longer limited to abnormal minds but can also be conceived as deviance in relation to a sociocultural context and/or the expectations of the reader” (Pillière, 2013: 78). Relatedly, Boase-Beier (2003:263-264) demonstrates, “If style is the result of choice, and choice is the result of cognitive state, then it could be argued that all style is in a sense mind style. However, what is peculiar to the notion of mind style is a consistent stylistic pattern in the text as evidence of a particular cognitive state.” The repetitions of linguistic usages may indicate a particular mind style.

In the 1970s, M. A. K. Halliday offered Systemic Functional Grammar, which pursues the connection between sentence structure and its function, consisting of how it conveys and affects meaning about an event, a person, or an object. Derived from his work, Systemic-Functional Grammar is a practical alternative to analysing a text or speech. Halliday considers language “(i) as text and as system, (ii) as sound, as writing and as wording, (iii) as structure — configurations of parts and (iv) as resource — choices among alternatives” (Halliday, 1971/2004: 19). To Halliday and Matthiessen (2006), grammar from a functional perspective qualifies to reveal how language generates and conveys meaning that serves as a valuable model in the context of stylistics. Within the framework of Functional Grammar, language serves three preliminary functions sought to transmit meaning. It functions as a medium to convey a message, facilitates transactions between speakers and listeners, and serves as a vehicle for depicting human experiences. Halliday further categorizes three primary language functions to convey meaning: it transfers a message, consists of a transaction between listener and speaker, and serves as representations of human experiences. He displays three metafunctions which serve to examine guises in a text. He depicts the Ideational function, providing representations of ideas and experiences), the interpersonal function of language, mediating social relationships (clause as the exchange), and the Textual function, which provides the formal properties of language (clause as message) (Burke, 2014: 46-47). The intersection of these three metafunctions flourishes text analysis through a more comprehensive examination.

Apart from clauses, nominal groups can facilitate the reveal of meaning. Termly, “attributes” or “epithets” appear in different shapes. They work as modifiers, providing details pertaining to the size or colour while nourishing the unique quality or characteristic of the noun. Epithets are divided into three groups; qualitative epithets (e.g., interesting, strong), colours (e.g., red), and classifying epithets (e.g., wooden) (Simpson, 2004: 162). They contribute to a text’s overall imagery and atmosphere through the distinctive tone. In accordance with the type of representation realized by nominal groups, two different attributes appear. In entity attributes, “Thing” is the head, to exemplify “architect in “an architect,” while in quality attributes “Epithet” serves as the head, for instance, “very generous.” In the second type, the general assumption for the Thing would be “one,” revealed from the context, which shows the norm of the quality represented by the Epithet depends on the context, and this is explicit when the substitute one performs as Head (Halliday, 1971/2004:220). Specifying the Attributes of quality, which reveals idiosyncratic style, is represented through nominal groups with an Epithet functioning as the head. This Epithet is enclosed by an adjective (or a participial verb form),

often modified by adverbs of degree like *very* and *greatly*, including comparative adverbs such as *more* or *less* (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 221). The usage of epithets contributes to acknowledging the narrator's mind style.

The epithets function more than just descriptive adjectives. They enclose the speaker's subjective attitude and include layers of interpretation in the text (Romanyshyn, 2022). The epithet in modern literary criticism retains the status of an artistically expressive figurative means that performs an aesthetic function and expresses the author's subjective attitude to the object. In linguistics, the epithet refers to the attributive unit with unique semantic characteristics (Baldick, 2015). An epithet usually functions as an attribute, adverbial modifier, or address (Romanyshyn, 2022). To Galperin (1971), an epithet always offers a subjective meaning, attributing to the illustrated phenomenon in the form of attributive words or phrases that describe the phenomenon from an idiosyncratic perspective. In other words, it complements the analysis of characters' mind styles in a text.

Another key component in conveying attitudes through language is modality, which primarily addresses the speakers' perspectives and positions regarding the statements they convey (Demir & Sarac-Durgun, 2022). Halliday's modal framework pertaining to functional principles, namely ideational function, interpersonal function, and textual function, is helpful to analyse literary works and to understand how meaning is constructed through language (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). The interpersonal function encloses the orientation and construction of utterances as discourse. It facilitates attaching expressions of beliefs and attitudes to utterances and texts. "Modality is, therefore, the grammar of explicit comment, and it includes signals of the varying degrees of certainty we have about the propositions we express, and of the sorts of commitment or obligation that we attach to our utterances" (Simpson, 2004: 123). By examining the explicit language use, modality unveils the hidden layers in narration, reflecting the level of confidence.

In examining the narrator's subjective attitude and perspective, Palmer (2001) presents three modes: epistemic, deontic, and dynamic. The epistemic modality encloses the speaker's estimation of the proposition's status, while deontic and dynamic modalities are directives that strive to make the subject of the sentence act. Epistemic modality presents a speaker's communicating concepts of knowledge, belief, and cognition (Gibbons & Whiteley, 2018). On the other hand, deontic contains circumstances external to the subject, while dynamic includes internal circumstances controlled by the subject, deriving from the subject's own ability

(Palmer, 2001). In other words, epistemic modality and evidential modality are related to “the speaker’s attitude to the truth-value or factual status of the proposition (Prepositional modality). By contrast, deontic and dynamic modality refers to events that are not actualized, events that have not taken place but are merely potential (Event modality)” (Palmer 2001: 8). Simpson (2004) also presents modality as a means to unveil the attitude of a persona or narrator. He divides modality into positive, negative, and neutral. Deontic and boulomaic modalities are positive, while preponderant use of epistemic and perception modalities falls under negative shading that denotes alienation and uncertainty. Neutral shading represents the lack of modality or modal judgment that displays an undetermined and detached connotation (Iwamoto, 2007: 181) in discourse. Epistemic and perception modalities are rich in “words of estrangement” (Fowler, 1996), foregrounding the narrator’s uncertainty about what happens around him. Further, depictions rely on the narrator’s perspective (Simpson, 2004: 125). In other words, the narrator’s perspective conveys a subjective point of view while also reflecting the background of the speaker, the narrator, or the author.

The speaker’s perspective on what is or should be, known as modality, is known for its fluidity and continuous modifications across different languages. Kiefer (1987:67) states, “modality is generally accepted as a category related to the speaker’s knowledge and comment in language studies.” In English, this concept is distinctly embodied within the intersection of several grammatical systems. These systems enclose diverse titles: type, encompassing probability/usuality, obligation/readiness, inclination/ability; value: varying from median to high/low; orientation: negotiation between objective and subjective; immediacy: categorized as immediate (neutral) or remote (oblique); polarity including options of positive or negative. These aspects are recognized in various forms, one of which concerns the usage of modal finite operators such as can, could, may, might, will, would, should, must, and ought to (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 558). In recent years, the modality has come to be accepted as a grammatical category that can be considered the subject of a typological study. It is closely related to tense and aspect in that all three categories are categories of the clause and are typically, but not always, seen in the verbal complex (Palmer, 2001). Grammatical categories commenced playing a crucial role in stylistics in analysing a literary text.

A comprehensive stylistic analysis should present additional descriptive elements that explain various features, whereas a limited amount of analysis has been conducted so far (Crystal & Davy, 1969/2013: 78). Thus, different dimensions are not commonly seen in stylistic

studies. To specify, Formal stylistic markers enable the exploration of innate tensions, polysemy, indecisiveness, and instability in a text (Mishra, 2011: 49). Since the narrator's identity has been a significant concern, diverse approaches have concentrated on the bond between the narrator and text (Pekoz et al., 2023: 135). The intimation between the narrator and the narratee can be provided through different techniques.

Auto-diegetic narration in fiction has a significant role since it contributes to acknowledging the narrator's mind style. Walsh (1997) underscores the distinction between the hierarchical structures of heterodiegetic and homodiegetic narrators as set by Genette. He further renders a difference between first and third-person narrators, categorising them in accordance with the speakers' "involvement and noninvolvement in the story" (Walsh, 1997: 2). If the homodiegetic narrator is also the protagonist, they are called an autodiegetic narrator. The autodiegetic narrators utilise "the wellspring of memory" and present everything from their point of view (Maltz, 1990: 305-206). In *Coming Up for Air* and *The Road to Wigan Pier*, the narrators present an autodiegetic narration pattern involved in the story. It fosters the opportunity to understand the narrators' perspectives and thoughts since the audience is directly exposed to the narrator's mental state. The selected books also show that the narrators reminisce about their childhood days. The autodiegetic narration reinforces the exploration of the mind style of a speaker. George Orwell utilises this narration pattern in his diverse writings. The following chapter discusses how his unique style contributes to revealing the mind style of his speakers and how it was shaped through his social and political ideas during his life.

CHAPTER III

GEORGE ORWELL AND HIS STYLE

George Orwell, as a member of the Generation of the Thirties, focused on historical change, wars, and totalitarian systems (Ferrari, 2020: 173). He clarified his writing focus as opposing totalitarianism and advocating for democratic socialism (Orwell, 1946). He presented his political ideas and viewpoints in his writings. In *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937/2014), he stated that “everyone who uses his brain knows that socialism, as a world-system and wholeheartedly applied, is a way out” (Orwell, 2014: 158). His narrators, including his fiction books, are constructed to spread his political ideas (Becnel & Bloom, 2011: 51). By writing, he sought to change people’s perceptions of what society should be like and replaced their views in a particular direction (Orwell, 1946). He aimed to shape people’s ideas through his writings.

Orwell’s life experience significantly impacted the process of constructing his ideology and his style. His choice of political writing stemmed from the socio-political atmosphere he grew up between world wars. He was born in 1903 in India when his father was working as an agent in the Indian Civil Service (Rodden & Rossi, 2012: 5). After that, he served as an Imperial Indian Police from 1922 to 1927, which inspired him to write “A Hanging,” (1931) on his criticism of the death penalty, “Shooting an Elephant,” (1936) on British colonial power and *Burmese Days* (1934), on criticism of English officials and corrupt Burmese (Meyers, 2010). In his short essay “Shooting an Elephant” (1936), the narrator criticized imperialism and its bullying of natives while obligating to sustain the role of a sahib (Yeasmin et al., 2013: 27). In 1928, after three generations of his family’s service in India, he decided to go to Europe and become a writer.

Due to his disapproval of his family’s expectations and financial support, he worked even as a dishwasher with a low income (Orwell & Angus, 1968). His low-paid jobs in Paris and London allowed him to see the lifestyle of lower-class people up close, which helped him in his *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933) while writing about the lives of poor people.

He rendered the poor quarter of Paris, a hotel and bar with their surroundings, as well as “eccentrics” who came to the hotel and the bistro (Fowler, 1995: 70).

George Orwell reflected on his life experiences in his writings directly or by changing them (Crick, 2019). Between 1937 and 1938, he shared his war experiences in *Homage to Catalonia* after his return to England. A short time after the Spanish Civil War erupted by Nationalists under General Franco’s leadership in 1936 against the Republicans; it evolved into an ideological conflict between fascism and socialism that enhanced Orwell’s attention to people from the lower classes and socialism (Hammond, 1982:130-132). Meyers (2010) claims that Orwell’s expectation of comradeship, solidarity, and Orwell’s sympathy for the oppressed sent him to Spain and Wigan Pier, and he wrote *Homage to Catalonia* and *The Road to Wigan Pier*. He turned his attention to class division in subsequent novels, including *Coming Up for Air* and *The Road to Wigan Pier*.

Starting with *The Road to Wigan Pier*, Orwell displayed a more proficient knowledge of literary form, skilfully manipulating it to strengthen the impact of his themes. While formal tensions persist, such as the clash between documentary and fictionality in *The Road to Wigan Pier*, Orwell deliberately used these tensions by juxtaposing different narrative devices, which is particularly noticeable in *Animal Farm* (1945) and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), where he simultaneously incorporates elements of fable, morality tale, allegory, fantasy, utopian fiction, and realism (Murray, 1997: 9). While providing diverse narrational patterns and descriptions of characters, he also focused on the psychological aspects of his subjects.

Mind style is an outcome of individuals’ perceptions and thoughts, like their speech, presented through language, and the unique stylistic techniques related to internal perspective, including stream of consciousness, nourish the materials for creating distinguishing mind styles (Fowler, 1995: 140). After the rise of psychological novels of the twentieth century, cognitive stylistics, which emerged in the 1970s, concentrated on the connection between language and mind to analyse the speaker’s mental state sufficiently (Gibbons & Whiteley, 2018). Except for the fable *Animal Farm*, Orwell’s novels are instances of a distinct type of psychological fiction.

Each of these works revolves around the internal experiences of a single character, who is centralised, while the other characters acquire comparatively lesser concentration. His

characters' ideas and feelings are presented through their "reactions to and interactions with the political, social and material world conveyed by the novel" (Fowler, 1995: 138).

In *Keep the Aspidistra Flying* (1936), George Orwell also utilises modern linguistic techniques affected by *Ulysses* to illustrate the intricate psychological profile of the protagonist, Gordon Comstock. Considered an anti-hero, Gordon rejects pursuing wealth and abandoning his talent as an advertising copywriter by becoming a so-called poet (Fowler, 1995: 141). "*Coming up for Air* is not, as West implies, the statement of a man who wants to see the world smashed up; it is the vision of a man who fears that the destruction of his world could easily come" (Klitzke, 1977: 92). In *Coming Up for Air* (1939), the narrator who is a middle-aged, overweight middle-class salesman with a monotonous job and, middling income living with his family in a suburban neighbourhood expresses his thoughts regarding his contemporary time (Fowler, 1995). Bowling directly addresses the reader in the first person narrative and establishes a close intimacy with the reader while providing private details such as his false teeth, overweight body and the source of his secret gambling winnings - seventeen pounds that he will spend on "the idea," which is foregrounded in the first sentence of the novel (Stavick, 2000: 22). Even from the very first page, the narrator presents his idiosyncratic usage of language which also refers to his mind style. To exemplify, the narrator says, "The idea really came to me the day I got my new false teeth (3)". Thus, the language the narrator employs includes colloquial and obscene words and idioms such as false teeth, shut the kids out, beastly, kids, thank God, pudgy, in dock, poky, some poor bastard, bloody fool, ugly little devil, wetting our bags (Fowler, 1995: 153) foregrounds his mind style.

As he explains in the second part of *The Road to Wigan Pier*, the narrator acknowledges that he has been raised as a product of the middle class, including its bias. He had felt guilty about his snobbishness, working in Burma for the imperialism of England (Shaker, 1987: 65). *The Road to Wigan Pier* presents a disturbing account of class relationships (Nadel & Buitenhuis, 1988: 6). Further, the narrator declares that he was "haunted by a sense of guilt" (127), which arises from his background as a colonial oppressor including his childhood as a son of a sub-deputy agent. Meyers (2010) displays it as George Orwell writes to channel his feelings of responsibility and guilt into social and political thought and action for others in misery. In *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937), the narrator aims to present a disturbing account of class relationships (Nadel & Buitenhuis, 1988: 6). Therefore, his narrators provide sufficient

materials to analyse texts in terms of stylistics. Digging into the constant repetitions of instant linguistic patterns, which reveals a character's mind style, contributes to the analysis of a text. In both Orwell's *Coming Up for Air* and *The Road to Wigan Pier*, the narrators reveal their mind styles through the language they use. The following chapters examine how their utterances signify their liminal mind styles.



CHAPTER IV

LIMINAL MIND STYLE IN *COMING UP FOR AIR*

The difficult times, filled with economic and political crises, fuel societal changes and spark nostalgia and dissatisfaction with the present. The concept of liminality contributes to explaining social changes triggered by longing for the past and dissatisfaction with the present (Kocabıyık & Bozdoğan, 2021). *Coming Up for Air* revolves around the protagonist, George Bowling, a middle-aged insurance salesman who becomes disillusioned with his ordinary life and desires the simplicity of his childhood. During his narration, he expresses his life story, class divisions between the middle and working classes, his concerns about socialism and capitalism, and his ambivalent perspective regarding traditional lifestyle and modernism. Fearing the upcoming outbreak of World War II, Bowling embarks on a journey to his hometown, Lower Binfield. As he revisits his past, he faces the changes that emerged in the world and within himself. The novel focuses on themes of nostalgia, the impact of progress on society, and the struggle to preserve one's identity in a rapidly changing world. Since it reflects on the anxieties and uncertainties of the time, capturing the tensions leading up to the outbreak of war and the desire for a lost sense of belonging and reliability, the style of the novel, through the autodiegetic narrator, enables the analysis of Bowling's utterances in the context of liminal mind style.

The narratives can be seen in the first, second, or third person in accordance with the position of the speaker. Narrator types are also divided into two parts regarding the speaker's position in the story. Heterodiegetic narration refers to the narrator's non-involvement in the story. On the contrary, homodiegetic narration refers to the narrator's involvement in the story (Simpson, 2005: 29). While examining a text, the concept of point of view regarding the focaliser and speaker contributes to revealing the speaker's mindset. In *Coming Up for Air*, the first-person homodiegetic narration provides idiosyncratic usage while complementing the narrator's liminal mind style. The narrator, Bowling, frequently uses similar patterns, including modalities that highlight his ambiguous mind style.

As Arpad Szakolczai (2003) demonstrates, twentieth-century people experienced rapid historical events that led them to try to understand the dynamics of a new, shaping world. In *Coming Up for Air*, as the narrator crosses the diverse phases of life from childhood to adulthood, the dynamic interplay of social classes evolves around him. Between the backdrop

of a rapidly changing modern world, the impending war, and the ongoing judgments of class distinctions, he finds himself involved in a web of confusion. Struggling to determine his place in society, he grapples with the dilemma of belonging between different thoughts, ideologies, and classes during his narration. He desires to return to his hometown because of the persistently unstable atmosphere he experiences in the modern world, caused by wars, the capitalist system, class divisions, inequalities, political problems, and rising unemployment rates. His utterances highlight his liminal mind style, wedged between past and present. In the twentieth century, individuals constantly negotiate their position in society and experience ongoing uncertainty and ambivalence since they are unable to fit into constructed roles and identities (Szakolczai, 2009). The usage of modalities foregrounds the uncertainty about what happens around the speaker (Simpson, 2004: 125). It is often seen in *Coming Up for Air* during the narration.

The narrator, Bowling, experiences life from different social classes, each leaving its mark on his identity. As a child, he is the son of a shopkeeper, immersed in lower-class culture. After his education, he ascends to the upper class as a soldier serving in the military during wartime, attaining a higher standard of living through his military salary. Post-war, he settles into middle-class life as an insurance agent.

The novel explores the profound effect of these transitions on the narrator's mind, delving into his evolving class consciousness. His constant state of flux between classes engenders a complex web of positive and negative emotions toward each social class. This constant movement creates a sense of liminality, where the narrator feels neither fully accepted by his previous class nor fully integrated into his new one. This slippery atmosphere highlights the dynamic nature of the class structure, and the novel portrays the cultural nuances of each social class, from the working-class values of thrift and hard work to the middle-class emphasis on respectability and comfort.

The class division is constantly pointed out that the sons of small shopkeepers sent their children to the Grammar School to show that they were not prole. The small shopkeepers did not want to be considered proletariat, although the school "was chiefly a place that you wanted to get away from" for them (74). Further, when the narrator becomes an adult, being known as the shopkeeper's son is something he does not demand. Therefore, he gets married to the daughter of a middle-class. After his military service ended following World War I, he "suddenly changed from gentlemen holding His Majesty's commission into miserable out-of-works whom nobody wanted" (Orwell, 1939/2020: 142). He was born as a shopkeeper's son in

a class that was almost considered the working class in society, considering their conditions. After his education, he becomes a part of the lower-middle class. When the war breaks out, he becomes a part of the upper class and is considered a highbrow in society while serving in the army. However, when the war ends, he experiences a short period where he does not belong anywhere until he finds a job in the insurance business, which can be categorized as middle class in the social hierarchy. The ongoing changes confuse the narrator's mind while trying to integrate into society.

The narrator has been unable to adapt to the class jump and continues his life as a middle-class person, unhappy with his situation between the lower and upper classes. Although he does not seem satisfied with his life, he says, "It may seem queer, but my father would probably be rather proud of me if he could see me now. He'd think it a wonderful thing that a son of his should own a motor-car and live in a house with a bathroom" (37). The usage of "It may seem" represents a subjective judgment about the probability of the statement since he assumes that a shopkeeper would be proud if his son achieved becoming middle-class with a car and house. He acknowledges a disconnect between his current lifestyle, including owning a car and living in a house with a bathroom, and his father's expectations. It implies a tension between personal aspirations for material comfort and a possible awareness of different priorities held by his upbringing. Even though he is not pleased with his status in the middle class, this is, frankly, the life that was expected from him because of his success in school and that he longed for as a child. Nevertheless, he does not feel he belongs to the middle class, is disappointed with his situation, and is stuck between the lower and upper classes. He exists in a space where his accomplishments may not truly bridge the gap between his present and his past, being caught between two contrasting worlds.

While mentioning his profession and his skills for high commission sales, the usage of 'can' ensues 'can't' regarding the borderlines of his work. His phrase leaves room for unforeseen challenges. Even though the statement "I'm the type that can sell things on commission" seems to express his ability, in the following statement, it is seen that "can" also refers to the limits he can and cannot exceed in the working world. He maintains, "But I never came anywhere near making a decent living. You can't, in jobs like that—and, of course, you aren't meant to" (Orwell, 1939/2020:143). The narrator displays his capability to sell things on commission, based on his constructed role as a middle-class insurance man, while also implying how the system works. The narrator's estimation of the system through "can't," "of course,"

and “you aren’t meant to” involves a high degree of certainty while contributing to epistemic modality. Despite having certain living standards, he assumes that middle-class people cannot achieve a decent life since the system does not want him to become wealthy. He recognizes societal norms or expectations concerning the hardship of acquiring financial success in commission-based sales jobs while presenting an obligation to societal expectations. He shows the harsh reality of unfulfilled potential despite confirmed ability. His constructed role portrays a dissonance between what the speaker can do and what the system permits him to achieve. He implies feeling trapped between his ambition and the system’s predetermined roles. The contradictory sentences advance his in-betweenness, such that even though he has potential, he faces systemic barriers to achieving his goals. He acknowledges the restrictions but is not entirely suppressed by them. It underscores the obscurity of evident ways for upward mobility in the modern world.

His statements reveal the sharp lines of class divisions through the eyes of the narrator. For example, people in the middle class who work on a commission basis and own a house and a car they bought with a credit system think they are living a good life in an illusion. However, it is impossible for them to ascend and live decent lives in the role that society has drawn for them as the middle class. He stresses his thoughts by using “of course,” which shows the certain borderlines of the imposed roles in modern society towards people from different classes. He mentions the spirit of time encouraging people to rise through working ambitiously, which also indicates his in-between position in modern society since he was “neither a go-getter nor a down-and-out,” and he is “by nature incapable of being either” (149). Thus, he neither entirely aligns with the commission-driven nature of the modern system nor wants to work an unambitious and uncompetitive life that requires merely physical power like the working class.

The narrator is neither an ambitious man nor a hopeless case; he is neither a gentleman nor a proletariat. He demonstrates that he “never, then or at any other time, succeeded in looking like a gentleman;” however, one “probably wouldn’t have taken [him] for the son of a small shopkeeper in a country town” (150). His statement navigates his social liminality, displaying a sense of not fully belonging to any specific social group. He maintains, “I could keep my end up in the rather mixed society of a place like Ealing, where the office-employee class overlaps with the middling-professional class” (150). He navigates a social space of ambiguity between the office-employee and middling-professional classes. The overlap between classes in Ealing underscores the fluidity and uncertainty of social categories. The utterance “I could keep my

end up” (150) offers his determination to thrive in a world where class lines are blurred. While highlighting his position within this dynamic and shifting social landscape, Ealing serves as a geographical metaphor for his liminal position.

He defines the suit typical to his class as the “uniform of the tribe,” (11), indicating his position in the social hierarchy. He says, “A chap like me is incapable of looking like a gentleman” (10). He feels classified based on his clothes, underscoring the limitations and challenges inherent in endeavouring to exceed class boundaries through appearance. He adds, “At my best moments, when I’ve got a new suit or when I’m smoking a cigar, I might pass for a bookie or a publican, and when things are very bad, I might be touting vacuum cleaners, but at ordinary times you’d place me correctly” (11). His usage of “might” presents constant fluctuation regarding the social roles. The portrait of his social position continuously shifts depending on external aspects, including his “new suit” and indulgences like “smoking a cigar.” He oscillates between being a “bookie,” “publican,” or “touting vacuum cleaners.” This instability refers to the uncertainty of his social position. The statements “might pass” and “you’d place me correctly” express his ambiguous views about categorizing himself into a social group. The epistemic modality “might” may indicate his desire to be seen as someone of a higher social class, including a bookie or publican, since he frequently expresses his dissatisfaction with his social class.

He does not entirely embody a distinct social role. On the other hand, the presentation of external perception in defining his social position reinforces the rigidity of class boundaries and his inability to escape them. He summarizes his place by others’ interpretation of him: “‘Five to ten quid a week,’ you’d say as soon as you saw me” (11). Referring to middle-class life standards, this epithet of ‘Five to ten quid a week’ indicates his place in the social hierarchy, leaving him trapped in a predetermined economic and social margin. It reflects a recognition of societal judgments based on economic and social status. When he indicates exceeding his societal position, external factors such as predetermined roles constantly remind him of his place in society. He finds himself at a crossroads when he is caught between internal expectations and external factors dictating predetermined societal roles. Thus, despite his effort to be well-dressed, he is imprisoned to remain on the borderlines of being an insurance man.

The novel displays the cultural nuances of each social class, which the narrator shares firsthand through his diverse class experiences. The narrator presents his memories of how he served his country as a soldier when the war broke out before becoming an insurer. In this

process, he experiences a class leap. He transforms from the shopkeeper's son into an educated soldier who serves his country, which suddenly categorizes him as being in the high class in the eyes of society. While serving his country as a soldier during the war, he focuses on his rank, giving him prestige in society's eyes and creating the illusion of class. The narrator expresses that even though he had enough money after serving as a soldier in the war to fulfil his dream of starting a shop, the idea never occurred to him. He says, "That was what the Army did to you. It turned you into an imitation gentleman and gave you a fixed idea that there'd always be a bit of money coming from somewhere" (141). The passage emphasizes his altered perspective after the military experience. He aims to mention that gentlemen are born to wealth and privilege. He suggests they do not have to work for their possessions, which is a significant societal advantage. However, his diction of "an imitation gentleman" (141) may also indicate that he has the outward appearance of a higher class due to his military salary and uniform but lacks actual cultural and social customs. His military experience lifts him out of the working class but does not fully integrate him into the upper class.

The statement implies that the narrator's experience in the military becomes a kind of liminal trap. He's no longer fully working class but can't indeed access the upper class, which creates a sense of alienation and a struggle to find his place in society. It involves characteristics of epistemic modality in his reflection on his own thought processes and the changing nature of his aspirations over time. He discloses his in-betweenness; until the war ended, he was a respected soldier considered highbrow in society, and later, he turned into a needy person trying to find a job. Although his utterance directly expresses his degree of certainty concerning the Army's impact, it shows how his changing social ranks confuses his mind regarding his position in society.

The narrator's ambiguous thoughts about his past rank as a soldier appear in another statement, "What should I be now if it hadn't been for the war? I don't know, but something different from what I am" (139). He confesses that the war initiated a shift in his thoughts and his societal position. The modal verb "should" also introduces a sense of a speculative situation. The narrator deliberates what might have been if certain events had not unfolded, including war. The modality reflects his hesitation about an alternate reality and the transformative impact of the war on his perspective. Further, his remark highlights the unknowability of what life brings. His feeling of in-betweenness constantly appears that he is neither here nor there. As he

experiences different classes, a mix of emotions sticks around, and every class jump comes with another worldview.

He continues, “If the war didn’t happen to kill you it was bound to start you thinking. After that unspeakable idiotic mess, you couldn’t go on regarding society as something eternal and unquestionable, like a pyramid. You knew it was just a balls-up” (139). He presents how war can devastate pre-existing beliefs and force a fundamental revaluation of societal structures. It offers a substantial shift from unquestioning acceptance to critical awareness and disillusionment. Even though he is educated and spent his military service as an intellectual, his vulgar diction, including “balls-up,” overlaps the words of the lower class of the population. The vulgar and informal language he employs reveals his lower-class background and shows how he does not completely belong to the upper class, although he was considered a highbrow while serving. Due to his military experience, he occupies a liminal space. He might have adopted some aspects of upper-class attitudes while serving, but his lower-class background still impacts his language use, and he uses code-switching as he moves among social circles.

A constant change in perspective occurs during the process of maturity in the narrator’s life. After the war, he says, “I don’t think I read a single book, barring detective stories, all the time I was on the road. I wasn’t a highbrow any longer. I was down among the realities of modern life” (144). The shift in the narrator’s perspective and lifestyle appears through epistemic modality. The phrase “I don’t think” presents an element of uncertainty about his reading habits. The use of “wasn’t” indicates a shift from a previous state of being a “highbrow,” emphasizing a withdrawal from intellectual pursuits and an immersion in the “realities of modern life” after the war.

He attributes his abandoning of reading after the war to the fact that reading is a habit of the upper class and that he is no longer part of the intellectual class. Nevertheless, he also explains how he enjoys visiting his friend Porteus and having intellectual conversations, talking about poetry and philosophical thoughts. He says,

He’s very hospitable in the right kind of way, always ready to have you in and talk at all hours, and always got drinks handy. When you live in a house like ours, more or less infested by women and kids, it does you good to get out of it sometimes into a bachelor atmosphere, a kind of bookpipe-fire atmosphere. And the classy Oxford feeling of nothing mattering except books and poetry and Greek statues, and nothing worth mentioning having happened since the Goths sacked Rome – sometimes that’s a comfort too (177).

He cannot fully recapture his past aspirations and finds a substitute in his friend's company. The "bookpipe-fire atmosphere" symbolizes a life he cannot fully have. Therefore, intellectual activities make him feel comfortable and offer a space of liminality. His friend's house takes on a liminal meaning as an escape from family life and middle-class values, facing the challenges of real life. He finds comfort in escaping a world focused on "books and poetry and Greek statues." It could be a way to escape the realities of his current life temporarily. His disillusionment with the realities of modern life leads to a desire for escapism.

In his descriptions of different social classes, the narrator Bowling occasionally reflects on his impressions. It is seen in the statement, "My attitude towards the Vincents, and theirs towards me, is an interesting illustration of what fools people can be when they get outside their own line" (152). He mentions the assumptions of different classes towards one another. He compares the colonial middle-class, namely Vincents, with salespeople business. However, "is an interesting illustration" (152) reflects Bowling's interpretation of the situation, suggesting that the observed dynamics serve as an intriguing instance of human manners when individuals step outside their accustomed roles or areas of expertise. The remark concerns the narrator's interpretation and evaluation of the attitudes between the Vincents and him while also introducing an element of uncertainty or subjectivity. It illuminates the mutual misconceptions each social class holds about the other. Bowling perceives his middle-class in-laws with elevated expectations, while they believe his circumstances in the insurance business surpass theirs. Despite this, both parties find themselves in equivalent situations, far from prosperity. The narrator's understanding of the perspectives of himself and the Vincents reflects a liminal state in which boundaries between social classes blur and perceptions become muddled. The narrator's evaluation of the Vincents and himself proposes a liminal space where they are neither fully integrated nor entirely different from each other's social spheres. This liminality is emphasized by the mutual misconceptions each class holds about the other and the uncertainty and subjectivity in the narrator's perception.

The narrator also explains his perspective on the working class. He says, "There's a lot of rot talked about the sufferings of the working class. I'm not so sorry for the proles myself" (11). He reveals a sense of dissociation from the circumstances the working-class experiences. His dismissive stance shows his lack of sympathy for the working class. He uses an insulting depiction of "proles" to address the working-class, which reveals his biases and limitations of his viewpoint. Then, he compares the conditions of the working-class and the middle-class. He

states, “The prole suffers physically, but he’s a free man when he isn’t working. But in every one of those little stucco boxes there’s some poor bastard who’s never free except when he’s fast asleep and dreaming that he’s got the boss down the bottom of a well and is bunging lumps of coal at him” (11). The phrase “I’m not so sorry for the proles myself” shows his opinion, presenting a degree of subjectivity regarding their sympathy for the working class. The use of “myself” emphasizes that this is the narrator’s viewpoint. The statement “There’s a lot of rot talked about the sufferings of the working class” introduces a level of disagreement with prevailing opinions while suggesting that the sufferings of the working class are exaggerated and misguided.

Considering his experiences through different class identities, he also mocks his social class, the middle-class people, who are in the illusion of having their own houses because of mortgage payments. Referring to the middle class, he says, “We’re all respectable householders” (14). However, his following statement shatters the initial image of respectability when he states, “the fact that actually we aren’t householders” (14). It expresses the uncertainty of the future that summarizes the middle-class lifestyle in the modern world. Here, the narrator highlights the financial vulnerability of the middle-class, challenging the initial portrayal of them as “respectable householders.” This controversy occupies a space between seemingly owning a home and the constant insecurity of mortgages and possible financial downfall. It presents his liminal feelings in the modern world that people are neither fully secure nor fully vulnerable, living in a state of flux and uncertainty. While paying for their houses for years, they are “eaten up with the ghastly fear that something might happen” (14) before the last payment. The dependence on self-financed control showcases how he is trapped in a cycle of aspiring for a symbol of stability that simultaneously binds him to financial vulnerabilities. It strengthens his liminal position between pursuing an image and encountering the precarious reality. The emphasis use of “ghastly fear” emphasizes the anxiety associated with potential disruptions before completing mortgage payments. This humorous usage softens the tension between the deception and acknowledging the underlying anxieties. It shows that the narrator attempts to manage his feelings through humour. The narrator maintains, “Daren’t kill the goose that lays the gilded eggs!” (14). This phrase criticizes the unwillingness of the middle-class to question the status quo, utilising the metaphor of a goose laying gilded eggs to represent a source of wealth or privilege that should not be endangered for the durability of the system.

A further glimpse into his mind style can be gleaned from his adjectivization. He depicts the floor-manager in a store as “an ugly little devil, under-sized, with very square shoulders and

a spiky grey moustache” (14). He further details the floor manager, “He was one of those people who turn away and then suddenly dart back at you, like a dragon-fly” (15). He employs diverse descriptive elements, revealing his negative stance. Focusing on physical appearance as “under-sized” may indicate inadequacy and weakness, while “very square shoulders” may indicate inflexibility or aggression. These negative connotations reveal the narrator’s perspective on the white collars. He maintains his criticism of the service industry. He also mentions the reaction of the shopgirl, “The girl flinched like a dog that sees the whip. But she was looking at me out of the corner of her eye” (16). His depictions regarding the neighbourhood of middle-class people also contribute to acknowledging his perspective towards middle-class people. He displays, “But as I drove into West Bletchley and the Hesperides Estate closed round me like a kind of red-brick prison, which is what it is, the ordinary habits of thought came back” (262). His usage of “red brick prison” in the neighbourhood shows how he feels suffocated. The enclosed nature further contributes to this feeling of constriction. His descriptions of a middle-class lifestyle broaden his negative connotations of the uniformity of buildings. His utterances signify isolation and detachment from the society.

He criticizes housing ownership and building societies. He mentions the Cheerful Credit Building Society as the real owner of their houses through the credit system. He expresses his frustration regarding the deception in the system. By his tentative generalization, “Of course, the basic trouble with people like us...” (12), he identifies himself with the middle-class in a dissatisfied and critical way, indicating their misconception. He considers this system the “cleverest racket,” exaggerating the trickery of building society. He compares it with his job and explains how the insurance business and building society are examples of swindles. He, then, adds, “But the beauty of the building society swindles is that your victims think you’re doing them a kindness. You wallop them, and they lick your hand” (12). Although he was willing to have one of these houses years ago, he commences questioning his middle-class lifestyle and social status. The narrator experiences a revelation or negative emotion towards each social class division. Bowling neither feels like the lower class nor can he become the upper class. He also seems dissatisfied with the middle-class lifestyle. He feels trapped between the social roles given to him. Despite all its negativity, he wants to return to his childhood, when he lived a more stable life as a shopkeeper’s son. His old life is presented as an alternative to the ever-changing class differences in the modern world. Therefore, this attitude creates another liminal space between the past and the present. It also results in a disillusionment effect on him after the visit.

The narrator, Bowling, enables his narrator to portray his hometown. He utters, “Where was the town I used to know? It might have been anywhere. All I knew was that it was buried somewhere in the middle of that sea of bricks. Of the five or six factory chimneys that I could see, I couldn’t even make a guess at which belonged to the brewery” (205). The narrator’s hometown is unrecognizable, buried under “a sea of bricks,” symbolizing industrialization. It signifies the loss of a stable and secure past and the harsh realities of a changing world. The narrator can’t identify the “brewery,” a potentially cherished landmark. This suggests that previously held values or ideals about the town are no longer relevant. The town’s transformation represents a broken connection to the past and its ideals.

The phrase “It might have been anywhere” reflects a sense of disappointment. The narrator feels like a stranger instead of feeling a sense of belonging as he expects because of the changes when he returns to his hometown. He implies a sense of monotony or a lack of distinctive features in the landscape, saying, “I looked over to the right. It was all houses, houses, houses. One might as well have been in the outer suburbs” (246). The use of “might as well” conveys his evaluation of how the scene resembles the outer suburbs because of the influence of modernism. He depicts the surroundings, noting that the view consists entirely of houses, implying his perspective regarding modernism. He emphasizes a feeling of sameness or lack of interest within his subjective perception that the setting resembles the outer suburbs in terms of dull features. The devastated expectations and broken connection to the past contribute to disappointment and disillusionment regarding his hometown and his past.

Bowling feels like a stranger when he realizes he is unknown to the people in his hometown and observes how much this place has changed. He says, “I thought, if I’m a ghost, I’ll be a ghost! I’ll walk. I’ll haunt the old places. And maybe I can work a bit of black magic on some of these bastards who’ve stolen my home town from me” (227). He mentions taking action about this situation even though he cannot do it. After acknowledging that he no longer fits middle-class ideals, he is desperate and cannot attain his past identity as a shopkeeper’s son in a small town.

The in-betweenness appears in his description of the Thames, where past and present, certainty and doubt, nature and urbanization entangle. When Bowling observes the changes in his town during his visit, he says:

I doubted whether there were any fish to catch. Are there still fish in the Thames? I suppose there must be. And yet I’ll swear the Thames water isn’t the same as it used to be. Its colour is quite different. Of

course, you think that's merely my imagination, but I can tell you it isn't so. I know the water has changed. I remember the Thames water as it used to be, a kind of luminous green that you could see deep into, and the shoals of dace cruising round the reeds (233).

He is wedged between doubt and certainty about the Thames's existence. The Thames River draws a parallel line with the modern world between the past and the present and between urbanization and natural lifestyle. His "luminous green" past image contradicts potentially polluted reality. It reflects the general shift in the contemporary time he lives. He criticizes the consequences of the modern world in which nothing is what it seems anymore. While questioning whether the river still has any fish, it draws a parallel line to the evolving nature of contemporary society if it still allows one to feel lively.

Whenever the narrator mentions fishing, he employs uncertain utterances. "I thought I'd just have a look at the river, and tomorrow, if the weather was right, maybe I'd take my new fishing-rod and put on the old coat and grey flannel bags I had in my suitcase, and have a good day's fishing. Three or four days, if I felt like it" (231). "I thought" suggests his mental process and presents an element of uncertainty, indicating epistemic modality. He's no longer fully anchored in his past. Thus, his passion for fishing coming from his childhood merely appears in his thoughts. Nevertheless, he retains his reminiscences and ponders the possibility of fishing.

When he visits his hometown, he realizes the local accent people use. He says, "How bad her accent had got! Or maybe I was just imagining that, because my own standards had changed? But no, she used to be so 'superior,' all the girls at Lilywhite's were so 'superior,' and she'd been a member of the vicar's Reading Circle" (239). The use of words including "maybe" and "But no" presents an element of hedging, indicating Bowling's degree of uncertainty in his statements. Phrases like "How bad her accent had got!" and "maybe I was just imagining that" introduce a sense of uncertainty about his implication, suggesting epistemic modality. He expresses his observation and acknowledges the possibility of personal interpretation or imagination. In fact, it is seen how much Bowling has changed and how much he has become involved in middle-class modern life after leaving his hometown. His lack of belonging appears when he says, "Here was I and here was she, our bodies might be a yard apart, and we were just as much strangers as though we'd never met" (240). This describes the estrangement the narrator felt. The phrase "just as much strangers as though we'd never met" underscores his belief in the emotional separation despite their past acquaintance. It shows his general attitude towards the past days after visiting his hometown.

After seeing the change in his hometown, he mentions his concerns about whether the pool at Binfield House, which he used to go fishing in, still exists. He presents the consequences of modern life and its effect on his hometown, “And yet it might, there was no knowing. The town was smothered under red brick, our house was full of Wendy and her junk, the Thames was poisoned with motor-oil and paper bags” (244). After focusing on the impact of industrialization on the river, it is seen how his hope remains, “But maybe the pool was still there, with the great black fish still cruising round it. Maybe, even, it was still hidden in the woods and no one had discovered it existed from that day. It was quite possible” (244). The use of words like “maybe” and “quite possible” introduces a level of uncertainty, showing his hope to encounter something from the past. Yet, he also reflects on how his thoughts are unlikely to happen. His statement indicates the imbalance between hope and despair left by the modern world that comes with industrialization destroying the old world from his point of view.

He also explains his perspective on the general situation in the modern world: “I wondered why it is that we’re all such bloody fools. Why don’t people, instead of the idiocies they do spend their time on, just walk round looking at things?” (188). He expresses a contemplative moment, wondering why people are not taking the time to appreciate the natural world. It entangles a sense of epistemic modality as he deliberates on a perceived lack of appreciation for the wonders around us. He maintains defining the richness of life in a pool, emphasizing various creatures beneath the water. Then, he employs boulomaic modality presenting his desire, “But I do want it...And don’t mistake what I’m saying... I know perfectly well that we’ve got to work. It’s only because chaps are coughing their lungs out in mines and girls are hammering at typewriters that anyone ever has time to pick a flower” (189). His statement, “It’s only because,” offers his certain perspective that admiring and enjoying the moment is a luxurious attitude, which becomes possible thanks to the people who work. It suggests a critique of class structures and conditions of labours.

Regarding his responsibilities towards his family as a husband and a father, Bowling says, “Taking it by and large, I suppose Hilda and I don’t get on worse than about half the couples in Ellesmere Road. There’ve been times when I’ve thought of separation or divorce, but in our walk of life you don’t do those things. You can’t afford to” (157). While mentioning his relationship with his wife, he reveals his perspective regarding middle-class families. His phrase “I suppose” shows his implication about the other couples in his neighbourhood. Hilda may not get along worse than about half the couples in Ellesmere Road, suggesting that

difficulties in marital relationships are common in their community. The speaker admits to contemplating separation or divorce but notes the societal expectations that discourage such actions, especially in their social context. The phrase “You can’t afford to” implies a recognition of the social constraints that influence decisions in their socioeconomic milieu. The deontic modality “can’t” suggests that separation is not financially feasible for them, including a layer of obligation to stay together. It also presents the narrator’s perspective on his social class. Yet he adds, “there were the kids. Kids are a ‘link’, as they say. Or a ‘tie.’ Not to say a ball and fetter” (157). Although he states that he sees his children as a bond rather than hindering his freedom, no bond is portrayed between him and his children. Even on the first pages, he says he “was beginning to get fed up with” (6) being a good husband and father. Further, he depicts his children’s noises “like a herd of buffaloes” (6). He experiences a sense of release when he decides to go to Lower Binfield, disconnected from his family.

However, Bowling’s attitude toward his family becomes more ambiguous in the novel, especially when he mentions how he feels about being a father. After detailing how unbearable raising children is, he adds his complex feelings about them, which become most apparent when he watches his children sleeping. He explains: “At such times I feel that I’m just a kind of dried-up seed-pod that doesn’t matter two pence and that my sole importance has been to bring these creatures into the world and feed them while they’re growing” (8). It reveals his different kind of connection with his children, underscoring the internal conflicts he handles regarding family and bonds.

Questioning his whole life, he also asks himself, “once again, looking at it across fifteen years, why did I marry Hilda?” (150). It involves a form of epistemic modality, expressing the uncertainty about the reasons behind his decision. The subsequent explanation, “Partly, of course, because she was young and, in a way, very pretty” (150), provides one element of Bowling’s motivation, suggesting a more concrete reason. Nevertheless, he uses contradicting phrases in terms of certainty, including “partly” and “of course.” In the following statement, he says, “Beyond that I can only say that because she came of totally different origins from myself it was very difficult for me to get any grasp of what she was really like,” (150) raises a level of uncertainty. The use of “I can only say” reflects the speaker’s limited ability to understand the motivations at the time completely. His liminal space appears in his marriage as well. He and his wife, Hilda, were raised in different kinds of families in terms of class. The barrier to understanding between Bowling and Hilda causes feeling out of place.

Even though the narrator questions his marriage, his complaints pursuits his devotion to his wife. He displays, “Are you fond of your own face? Probably not, but you can’t imagine yourself without it. It’s part of you. Well, that’s how I felt about Hilda. When things are going well, I can’t stick the sight of her, but the thought that she might be dead or even in pain sent the shivers through me” (263). He might not express strong emotions openly, but his reactions uncover a deeper connection. He acknowledges that he may not feel a strong affection in the conventional sense towards his wife, but he also recognizes her significance in his life. Bowling’s acknowledgment that he cannot stand the sight of Hilda when things are going well offers dissatisfaction in their relationship. Regardless, his presumption is juxtaposed with his fear and concern at the thought of her suffering or dying. This contrast emphasizes his ambivalent feelings in love and relationships, where devotion and annoyance coexist.

His frequent use of contradictory modalities, including “I’ll swear,” “I think,” “I suppose,” and “I know,” also indicates his liminal mindstyle. While he sometimes seems quite confident about what he explains, he sometimes remains insecure and unsure. The narrator displays a potential distinction between his internal self and how others might perceive him based on external traits like age, weight, and physical appearance while offering a possible awareness of societal judgments. He feels caught between his self-image and how he believes others categorize him within a specific social class. He states, “I suppose by this time you’ve got a kind of picture of me in your mind—a fat middle-aged bloke with false teeth and a red face” (37). The expression “I suppose” appears as an example of epistemic modal indicator suggesting a degree of assumption on the narrator’s part. He indicates the narratee draws his picture based on their thoughts and observations. By presenting his assumptions about the implied narratee, he also shows the general attempt to categorize people into different classes in accordance with their appearance since the class one belongs to refers to his identity and lifestyle. Despite his dissatisfaction with his appearance, he also demonstrates, “I wasn’t such a bad figure of a man. A bit on the fat side, admittedly, but nothing offensive, only what the tailors call a ‘full figure,’ and some women like a man to have a red face” (27). He cannot negotiate with his body image and social expectations. The speaker seeks validation and reclaims agency over his self-image by underlining specific preferences. The awareness of societal expectations concerning men’s bodies indicates a potential tension between the speaker’s self-image and external determinations. It creates a tension to fit particular aesthetic norms to be entirely accepted in society, presenting a space of internal conflict and negotiation.

The narrator's intimacy with the narratee by addressing "you" is significant since it presents his assumptions, beliefs, and thoughts. He addresses the narratee by 'you' and constantly presents the implied narratee's assumptions. It fosters the examination of the narrator's mindstyle. As Pillière (2013) demonstrates, the presence of 'you' "will necessarily influence the choice of structures and thought patterns. Just as a character's mind style may be created through dialogue or narration, it is also revealed in the way s/he addresses the fictional addressee" (75). In *Coming Up for Air*, it causes some repetitive patterns, including "You know the type" (169), "You know the kind of day" (185), "You know the feeling" (91), "You know the kind of houses" (204), "You know those very cheap small houses" (206) or in interrogative form "Do you know the look of these new towns" (209), "Do you know that type of middle-aged woman" (205). It can be interpreted that he may be trying to find someone who agrees with and approves his thoughts. These utterances also reveal his need for affiliation, understanding, and belonging with others in *Coming Up for Air*. Hence, the narrational pattern complements revealing the narrator's liminal mind style since it contributes to constructing a susceptible stance.

When mentioning his childhood memories, he focuses on poverty, dirt, and ignorance in the town where he lived. Because of the poverty and challenging conditions, he says, "It would never have occurred to me that someday I might want to go back to it" (140). Yet, he desires to return to his town after the things he has experienced in the modern world. His utterance highlights his liminal mind style, wedged between past and present. Mentioning his hometown, Lower Binfield, excites him while vigorously uttering his attempt to recall the old days. "I remember—Gosh, how I remember!" (205) evokes nostalgia and revisiting past. His act of looking settles a liminal space between past and present, reflecting on change and transformation. He continues, "and in this case I don't think my memory is far out—what Lower Binfield used to look like from the top of Chamford Hill. I suppose the High Street was about a quarter of a mile long, and except for a few outlying houses the town was roughly the shape of a cross" (205). The phrases like "I remember," and "I don't think my memory is far out" suggest his confidence in his memory's accuracy includes an epistemic dimension to the narrative. Remembering Lower Binfield creates a liminal space between his current life and childhood in the town. He occupies both spaces simultaneously, yearning for the past while acknowledging the present.

His feelings of insecurity and anxiety in his contemporary time oppose his longing for his past days, which are foregrounded with vivid images. In general, the experiential modals appear through the descriptions of nature that create more vivid images when mentioning past days, including “I can feel,” “I can see,” and “I can smell.” As Maltz (1990) demonstrates the usage of “the wellspring of memory” (305-206) of autodiegetic narrators while narrating from their point of view, Bowling frequently employs his memories, which complements his liminal position in society. He appears to be between his childhood memories and the present time. He remarks, “I can feel the feeling of it now. A winter day, just warm enough to lie still. I’m lying on my belly with Chums open in front of me” (101). In this passage, he depicts a sensory and emotional experience from the past. The phrase “I can feel the feeling of it now” highlights his ability to recall the sensations by applying a form of experiential modality. Further, he defines the scene in the present tense, employing phrases like “I’m lying on my belly” and “watches me with his little eyes.” This choice of tense contributes to a sense of immediacy and augments the experiential aspect of the narrative. Since he is not satisfied with the society he lives in, rather than living in his current time, he recalls his past days as he experiences them again through vivid images in his mind.

He portrays his stance on modernism as one of disappointment and disillusionment through his biting into a frankfurter. He says, “It gave me the feeling that I’d bitten into the modern world and discovered what it was really made of. That’s the way we’re going nowadays. Everything slick and streamlined, everything made out of something else. Celluloid, rubber, chromium-steel everywhere...” (26). Its taste, “rotten fish in a rubber skin,” signifies artificial and unpleasant aspects of modernism. The list of materials, including “Celluloid, rubber, chromium-steel,” underscores the artificiality of the modern world. It contrasts a more natural and authentic past that the narrator might value. The “frankfurter,” a symbol of deception, shows how modernity hides its true nature behind a polished surface. The sense of everything being “made out of something else,” suggests a loss of authenticity. Bowling might long for a time when things were what they seemed, not mass-produced and artificial.

He expresses his tension in the modern world, “That feeling that you’ve got to be everlastingly fighting and hustling, that you’ll never get anything unless you grab it from somebody else, that there’s always somebody after your job” (145). He constantly uses “that” to connect the clauses. He struggles to explain his insecure and precarious feelings about the modern world. At the end of his statement, his attitude becomes more confident through the

usage of “will.” He says, “the next month or the month after they’ll be reducing staff and it’s you that’ll get the bird — that, I swear, didn’t exist in the old life before the war” (145). By comparing the past lifestyle with the current one, he mentions how life felt safer in the past, but now everything is slippery. Although he is unsure how to name his feelings, he knows the consequences of working life in the 1930s. The modality is represented through “will” and “I swear,” highlighting the degree of certainty concerning the consequences of modern society. It conveys the idea that constant competition appears as a requirement for success in the modern world. He seems to criticize the system, feeling the demanding nature of this competitive environment excessively exhausting.

The sentence, “it’s you that’ll get the bird” (145) with the modal verb “will” increases anticipation and inevitability of negative consequences in work life. Bowling contrasts his current perspective with his past, mentioning the shift from being a “highbrow” who reads novels to someone engaged in the “realities of modern life.” The phrase “And what are the realities of modern life? Well, the chief one is an everlasting, frantic struggle to sell things” (144) introduces a form of epistemic modality, expressing his perspective on the primary focus of contemporary existence. He describes his profession as an everlasting struggle and says he likes selling things. He also complains about the atmosphere of competition in the modern world. He maintains his criticism through his unique descriptions regarding the working system of the modern world while saying, “They keep you on a string by hinting that perhaps there’ll be a salaried job going in three months’ time, and when you get fed up there’s always some other poor devil ready to take over” (143). The epistemic modality in this sentence presents his uncertainty about the promised salaried job and the probability of someone else taking over when the current person becomes discontented, creating a slippery atmosphere. Thus, he seems to be complaining about the middle class in the modern world, showing his dissatisfaction with his lifestyle without feeling a sense of belonging.

His questioning about the system of the service industry maintains that “The thing you can see in his face is mortal dread that you might report him for impertinence and get him sacked. Besides, how’s he to know you aren’t one of the narks the company sends round? Fear! We swim in it. It’s our element” (16). The use of the modal verb “might” in the phrase “mortal dread that you might report him” presents an element of epistemic modality. The term “might” suggests a possibility or potentiality from the narrator’s perspective, implying that the person at the chain-store grocery fears any customer might report them for impertinence. It reveals the

criticism of his contemporary time, indicating how nothing is certain and there is no feeling of security regarding the future.

The narrator constantly employs “God knows,” which idiomatically conveys uncertainty, highlighting how he is unsure of what is about to happen, and it makes him anxious. The idiomatic expression “God knows” facilitates invoking a higher power as a symbol of ultimate knowledge or uncertainty. He says, “God knows there are worse smells and sounds. Which would you sooner listen to, a bluebottle or a bombing plane” (60). Bowling explains his concerns about the changing times by going back and forth in his memories. He delivers a rhetorical question comparing two sensory experiences: the aggravating sound of a bluebottle, a type of fly, and the potentially frightening sound of a bombing plane. The use of “God knows” in the context of “there are worse smells and sounds” suggests that the speaker is expressing a subjective opinion about the uncertain future, which pushes him to be nervous.

His insecurities and lack of self-esteem are also revealed in the usage of “God Knows.” He states, “God knows why they picked me out, but at any rate they did so. I’ve since thought that they probably mixed my name up with somebody else’s” (131). He feels incompetent to be chosen and expresses uncertainty or lack of understanding about why he was selected for a particular role. The usage of “God knows” and “probably” involves epistemic modality, indicating his acknowledgement of his lack of insight into the reasoning behind their selection. He states, “God knows I don’t set up to be a highbrow even now, but if you’d asked me then for the name of a ‘good’ book I’d have answered *The Woman Thou Gavest Me*, or (in memory of the vicar) *Sesame and Lilies*” (135). Bowling reflects on his literary taste. It demonstrates his recognition of his reading preferences and his inability to consider himself as a highbrow with satisfactory preferences. The statement, “The only books I’d ever voluntarily read were detective stories and once in a way a smutty sex book” (135), expands details concerning the narrator’s past reading habits. It also shows where he stands in society as an ordinary salesman without elegant habits, although he was considered a highbrow while serving in the military during the war. In his childhood years, he was the son of a shopkeeper and lived within the conditions of a highbrow during the war. Later, he was a salesman, making him wedged between the borderlines of different lifestyles.

He explains his concerns about the modern world and criticizes people for not enjoying life. He says,

...this feeling that I get inside me —not often, I admit, but now and again. I know it's a good feeling to have... It's just round the corner all the time, and we all know it's there. Stop firing that machine-gun! Stop chasing whatever you're chasing! Calm down, get your breath back, let a bit of peace seep into your bones. No use. We don't do it. Just keep on with the same bloody fooleries (189).

The narrator complains that the functioning of the system in the modern world is based on working, achieving, and fighting, and explains his ideas based on enjoying the moment. His remarks combine epistemic modality, as he questions human behaviour, with a sense of experiential modality, as he depicts the potential joy and wonder that can be found in observing nature. He acknowledges the necessity of work and daily life but emphasizes the value of appreciating the beauty around us. Bowling seems stuck between his desire for a peaceful life and the complex modern world order.

The narrator expresses a strong sense of anticipation and foresight concerning future events. He utters his anxiety, "I can feel it happening. I can see the war that's coming and I can see the after-war, the food-queues and the secret police and the loudspeakers telling you what to think" (181). The repetition of "I can feel it happening" and "I can see" involves epistemic modality, as he claims his certainty about the future. He maintains the aftermath, including "the food-queues," "the secret police," and "the loudspeakers telling you what to think." This image renders a dystopian picture of the post-war world and presents his opinion regarding the inevitability of such developments. The use of "I can see" further highlights his conviction about his predictions.

Bowling conveys a sense of uncertainty about the future while expressing a firm conviction that something negative is imminent. "We don't even know what it'll be, and yet we know it's coming. Perhaps a war, perhaps a slump — no knowing, except that it'll be something bad. And you can't face that kind of thing unless you've got the right feeling inside you" (193). The use of phrases like "We don't even know what it'll be" and "no knowing, except that it'll be something bad" involves a degree of epistemic modality, highlighting the lack of specific knowledge about the nature of the impending event. Despite this uncertainty, his usage of "will" contributes to a sense of strong epistemic modality, as he conveys a high level of certainty in his belief regarding the ongoing nature of the future. He says, "It was exactly to escape the thought of war that I'd come here. But how can you, anyway? It's in the air you breathe" (224). Bowling describes the futility of attempting to escape the thought of war, emphasizing its pervasive nature. His utterance indicates his initial intention to find respite from thoughts about war while introducing a sense of impossibility or difficulty in achieving the goal of escaping

thoughts about war. The narrator maintains his anticipation about the future during his narration. He says:

But it isn't the war that matters, it's the after-war. The world we're going down into, the kind of hate-world, slogan-world. The coloured shirts, the barbed wire, the rubber truncheons. The secret cells where the electric light burns night and day, and the detectives watching you while you sleep. And the processions and the posters with enormous faces, and the crowds of a million people all cheering for the Leader till they deafen themselves into thinking that they really worship him, and all the time, underneath, they hate him so that they want to puke. It's all going to happen. Or isn't it? Some days I know it's impossible, other days I know it's inevitable. That night, at any rate, I knew it was going to happen (172).

He mentions the inevitability related to future events. Epistemic modality appears when the narrator expresses his uncertain yet probable predictions about future. In the passage, phrases like "Some days I know it's impossible, other days I know it's inevitable" (172) reflect his concerns about the described future events. Using "know" in this context infers his inconsistent feeling of certainty at different times. The narrator does not use definitive statements about the future but rather expresses his changing perceptions and beliefs concerning the inevitability of the described events.

The insecurity of modernism contradicts the feeling of security in traditional society. He states, "A feeling of security, even when they weren't secure. More exactly, it was a feeling of continuity. All of them knew they'd got to die, and I suppose a few of them knew they were going to go bankrupt, but what they didn't know was that the order of things could change" (120). He emphasizes the sense of continuity in which people know their place in society, and the social order is perceived as unchanging. This predictability provides a sense of security. Then, he continues, "Whatever might happen to themselves, things would go on as they'd known them" (120). This statement assumes that the larger social structure was believed to remain constant even if individuals might face personal challenges. Therefore, he decides to visit his hometown to recapture the security he felt in the old days. Yet, he sees that his hometown, Lower Binfield, no longer differs from other modern neighborhoods due to modernization's effects.

When Bowling goes to the club with his wife, his descriptions of the environment and the political ideas discussed there contribute to revealing his mind style. Concerning one of the speakers, he says, "If you cut him open all you'd find inside would be Democracy-Fascism-Democracy. Interesting to know a chap like that in private life. But does he have a private life? Or does he only go round from platform to platform, working up hatred? Perhaps even his

dreams are slogans” (168). Bowling speculates about the inner qualities of the speaker, stressing the uncertainty of knowing someone’s true nature. He criticizes people’s excessive passion, which is meaningless in changing the consequences of an upcoming war.

Ultimately, he experiences an epiphany about the modern world he lives in. He says: “It struck me that perhaps a lot of the people you see walking about are dead...Perhaps a man really dies when his brain stops, when he loses the power to take in a new idea. Old Porteous is like that. Wonderfully learned, wonderfully good taste — but he’s not capable of change” (183). It expresses epistemic modality, particularly with words and phrases like “perhaps,” “it struck me,” and these linguistic elements obtain a sense of speculation that contemplates the concept of death. He criticizes intellectuals like Porteous, who are educated but unable to contribute to society.

After his visit, he commences accepting the realities of his world. He says, “We don’t even know what it’ll be, and yet we know it’s coming. Perhaps a war, perhaps a slump — no knowing, except that it’ll be something bad” (193). It includes instances of epistemic modality, underlining his lack of definite knowledge about the future and his feelings about this situation. Phrases like “We don’t even know,” “it’ll be,” and “perhaps” reinforces a sense of speculation and ambiguity. The inclusion of “Perhaps a war, perhaps a slump” raises possibilities with the word “perhaps,” implying that he assumes potential scenarios but does not have certainty about which one will unfold.

At the end of the book, he realizes that he cannot turn back his old days without industrialism, modernism, and a capitalist way of living. He employs “I think” and explains his feelings that it is of no use “trying to revisit the scenes of your boyhood. They don’t exist. Coming up for air! But there isn’t any air” (251) by addressing the consequences of modernism. He finally achieves a place in society. He says, “All kinds of things that I’d been doubtful about I felt certain about now” (259). He became more aware and ready to integrate into society. He realizes that “The old life’s finished” and uses a metaphor to strengthen his utterance, “you can’t put Jonah back into the whale.” Also, “there’ll be no more fishing this side of the grave” (259) since it is just a “dream” in his current life.

Through the end of the novel, his utterance, “I’ll tell you what my stay in Lower Binfield had taught me, and it was this. It’s all going to happen” (260), conveys a potent form of epistemic modality. It displays a firm conviction on the part of the narrator. The use of italics and the declarative statement create a tone of certainty, indicating that the narrator is

highlighting the inevitability of the events depicted. He is more confident in his utterances. Through the end, rather than modal auxiliaries, the usage of “will” increases. He maintains:

It’s all going to happen. I know it — at any rate, I knew it then. There’s no escape. Fight against it if you like, or look the other way and pretend not to notice, or grab your spanner and rush out to do a bit of face-smashing along with the others. But there’s no way out. It’s just something that’s got to happen (260).

The expressions including “I know it—at any rate, I knew it then,” “there’s no escape,” and “It’s just something that’s got to happen” convey a strong sense of certainty and inevitability from his perspective. The statement “It’s all going to happen. I know it” indicates a sense of being trapped in a preordained future. It creates a tension between the speaker’s present and an unavoidable, looming event. He is suspended in anticipation, unable to escape the feeling of approaching destruction.

He questions his visit to his hometown. He says, “The whole thing seemed to be fading out of my mind. Why had I gone to Lower Binfield? Had I gone there? In this atmosphere, it just seemed meaningless. Nothing’s real in Ellesmere Road except gas bills, school-fees, boiled cabbage, and the office on Monday” (269). It contains elements of epistemic modality, expressing uncertainty and a sense of questioning. The use of phrases like “seemed to be” and “Had I gone there?” presents an element of doubt and subjectivity to the narrative. His statement, “The whole thing seemed to be fading out of my mind,” signifies that the narrator is uncertain or experiencing a fading memory. The use of “seemed to be” stresses the subjective nature of this perception, suggesting that he is not entirely sure about the fading process. The question, “Why had I gone to Lower Binfield? Had I gone there?” introduces uncertainty regarding his actions and purpose. The repetition of the word “seemed” and the use of questions construct an overall tone of ambiguity, alluding that the reality or significance of his visit to Lower Binfield is in question. The phrase, “Nothing’s real in Ellesmere Road except gas bills, school-fees, boiled cabbage, and the office on Monday,” reinforces his sense of disillusionment and detachment, emphasizing the mundane and seemingly meaningless aspects of his recent environment. His statements exhibit epistemic modality, especially through phrases such as “I could hardly remember them now” and “it was fading out.” These expressions transfer a sense of uncertainty and a subjective perspective on the narrator’s part, contributing to the epistemic modality. Using “could hardly” indicates a hardship in recalling specific motives, emphasizing the uncertainty surrounding his past motivations. He augments his questioning while saying:

The smell of old mackintoshes was very strong. Why had I run away like that? Why had I bothered about the future and the past, seeing that the future and the past don't matter? Whatever motives I might have had, I could hardly remember them now. The old life in Lower Binfield, the war and the after-war, Hitler, Stalin, bombs, machine-guns, food-queues, rubber truncheons—it was fading out, all fading out. Nothing remained except a vulgar low-down row in a smell of old mackintoshes (269).

During his narration, he recalls his childhood days with different smells. Yet, in the end, he returns to his modern time with the scent of mackintoshes, a cloth waterproofed with rubber. It displays how he starts to accept his place in his current life. He reflects on his actions and thoughts, particularly about running away. He questions his actions, asking, “Why had I run away like that?” (269) and pondering the significance of the future and the past. The rhetorical question, “Why had I bothered about the future and the past, seeing that the future and the past don't matter?” (269) reflects a sense of existential reflection and possibly a realization that the concerns about time are ultimately insignificant. Bowling struggles to recall his motives, which implies a detachment from the past. The list of historical events, including the war, Hitler, Stalin, and others, is described as fading out, emphasizing diminishing importance or relevance. He becomes aware of his position in society as a middle-class person between the wars and political contradictions, and there is no escape from this world except accepting it.

In *Coming Up for Air*, Orwellian themes are seen pertaining to the criticism of commercialism and developments with the sentiments of nostalgia, loathing the current situations, and anxiety about the future. The narrator, George Bowling, represents a middle-aged, overweight middle-class salesman with a monotonous job and middling income living with his family in a suburban neighbourhood (Fowler, 1995). This societal position causes his struggle with the modern world and the crisis within himself. In connection with the title *Coming Up for Air*, the narrator contemplates his feelings concerning instants of crisis and the enduring struggle to find a sense of calmness in his life, “which is the fight for life itself” (Fiderer, 1967: 127). He is dissatisfied with the middle-class ideals and unstable atmosphere. The narrator frequently conveys his feelings through his statements.

This first-person I-narration, typical of Orwell's style, is seen in *Coming Up for Air*. Orwell commences his narration by establishing a lively and unique narrative style that continues throughout the book. This type of narration facilitates observing diverse forms of descriptive language that cooperate with George Bowling's mindset. George, an intricate character, fosters the apprehending of the integration of this stylistic variety with the mind style

of a psychologically plausible character (Fowler, 1995: 149). During his narration, he directly transmits his opinions, thoughts, and feelings through I-narration.

In *Coming Up for Air*, Bowling is the story's narrator and the narrative's subject. He utters what he has in his mind, reflecting his complex mental state and using ambiguous linguistic elements that evoke ambivalence. He also establishes an intimacy with his narratee, pretending they already know some details about his life. Regarding the opening sentence, "The idea really came to me the day..." (3), Stavich (2000) states the use of article "the" to modify "idea" confuses the reader since he or she "is assumed to know anaphoric reference of "the idea." Ironically, George name-drops "the idea" at the novel's opening, but he does not mention it again until over half-way through the novel" (228). Along with his auto-diegetic type of narration with anaphoric references, he utilises daily language through contractions of auxiliary verbs such as "I'd," "There's," and "haven't." A stream of ellipses is also striking in *Coming up for Air*, including "Only difference ...," "Fatty Bowling," and "Only petty disasters, of course" (Fowler, 1995: 151). Orwell's narrative style recalls the aspect of psychological novels in the twentieth century. Dispirited by the loss of his physical attraction, the slippery atmosphere of the modern world, and the continuous reminders from Hilda that they are facing ongoing financial problems, Bowling attempts to feel alive, which is also indicated in the epigraph "He's dead, but he won't lie down." He merely endeavours to find his path and role in the modern world. His path presents the boundaries between the past and present, the known and the unknown. Subsequently, George unveils "his secret winnings from the race track, the seventeen pounds that will enable middle-aged, overweight, henpecked George Bowling to escape his present-day anxieties and search for the utopian world of his youth in Lower Binfield" (Stavick, 2000: 232). However, while attempting to break free from his current concerns through his visit to his hometown, he realizes his place in society and obtains the consequences of modern society.

4.1. Discussion

In Fowler's (1995) analysis, the character of George Bowling, a middle-aged, overweight, middle-class salesman with a mundane job and average income who lives with his family in a suburban neighbourhood between world wars, takes center stage. As Fowler demonstrates Orwell's monotonous lifestyle, he decides to break free from his circle and revisit his past. However, rather than limiting his psychological state as a bored man who is fed up with his current life, it is better to mention the impact of the interwar period. In the twentieth

century, people encountered “earth-shattering events; events in which the surrounding world order, formerly taken for granted, collapses, falling to pieces” (Szakolczai, 2003: 59-60). The narrator, George Bowling, is born as a shopkeeper’s son in a class almost considered the working class in society, considering their conditions. After his military service ends following World War I, he changes “from gentlemen holding His Majesty’s commission into miserable out-of-works whom nobody wanted” (Orwell, 1939/2020: 142). Then, he becomes middle-class and gets married to the daughter of a middle-class. The novel not only presents a bored man with his life but also delves into the constantly changing dynamics, the influence of economic and political crises, and disillusionment in the twentieth century.

Charles (2009) mentions the dissatisfaction and anxiety individuals experience due to the uncertain future and problems, including inequalities, political issues, and rising unemployment rates, in the twentieth century. The narrator is dissatisfied with the middle-class lifestyle, the modern world, and the unstable atmosphere between world wars. Referring to Charles’s notion, the dissatisfaction regarding the middle-class lifestyle is revealed when the narrator says:

Because, after all, what is a road like Ellesmere Road? Just a prison with the cells all in a row” A line of semidetached torture-chambers where the poor little five-to-tenpound-a-weekers quake and shiver, every one of them with the boss twisting his tail and his wife riding him like the nightmare and the kids sucking his blood like leeches (11).

The narrator views his neighbourhood, a typical suburban street inhabited by middle-class families, as a place of confinement and suffering rather than comfort and security. He also criticizes housing ownership and building societies while expressing his frustration regarding the deception in the system. He adds, “But the beauty of the building society swindles is that your victims think you’re doing them a kindness. You wallop them, and they lick your hand” (12). Although he was willing to have one of these houses years ago, he commences questioning his middle-class lifestyle and social status. He portrays his stance on modernism as one of disappointment and disillusionment through his biting into a frankfurter. He says, “It gave me the feeling that I’d bitten into the modern world and discovered what it was really made of. That’s the way we’re going nowadays. Everything slick and streamlined, everything made out of something else. Celluloid, rubber, chromium-steel everywhere...” (26). Bowling might long for a time when things were what they seemed, not mass-produced and artificial.

The narrator is also disappointed with the modern business world. Fiderer (1967) emphasizes the narrator's feelings concerning the instants of crisis and the enduring struggle. Examining the narrator's depiction of the modern world, the tension is explained as the constant pressure to struggle and compete. He utters, "That feeling that you've got to be everlastingly fighting and hustling, that you'll never get anything unless you grab it from somebody else, that there's always somebody after your job" (145). He says, "...that, I swear, didn't exist in the old life before the war" (145). Thus, as Fiderer suggests, the comparison between the past and present shows his concerns and his longing for past days, which were safer and stable.

The narrator feels a deep sense of anxiety and fear about the potential consequences of war in the modern world. Klitzke (1977) also asserts that *Coming Up for Air* presents a man concerned about the possibility of his world's collapse. Parallel to Klitzke's assertion, the narrator's concern and fear regarding the future are seen as follows:

But it isn't the war that matters, it's the after-war. The world we're going down into, the kind of hate-world, slogan-world. The coloured shirts, the barbed wire, the rubber truncheons. The secret cells where the electric light burns night and day, and the detectives watching you while you sleep. And the processions and the posters with enormous faces, and the crowds of a million people all cheering for the Leader till they deafen themselves into thinking that they really worship him, and all the time, underneath, they hate him so that they want to puke. It's all going to happen. Or isn't it? Some days I know it's impossible, other days I know it's inevitable. That night, at any rate, I knew it was going to happen (172).

The narrator reflects on the conflicting feelings of hope and despair that many individuals may experience during times of instability. He oscillates between the impossibility and the inevitability of his assumptions regarding the future.

Social changes resulting in dissatisfaction about the present and concerns about the future cause a misplaced sense of belonging and reliability. Van Gennep (1909) and Turner (1967) call it the liminal phase in which individuals or groups encounter a sense of ambiguity and suspension from their usual social roles, norms, and structures. The narrator's statements show this transient condition of being betwixt and between. The liminal phase, which occurs between separation and incorporation, is distinguished as a state of ambiguity. Relatedly, the narrator frequently questions his roles as father, husband, and middle class in society.

Regarding the concept of liminality, during his visit to the Left Book Club meeting with his wife Hilda, he questions, "When I go to one myself, there's always a moment during the

evening when I find myself thinking the same thought: Why the hell are we doing this? (166). He lacks the feeling of belonging to this group, which consists mostly of middle-class socialists and where politics is discussed. Another point appears when he asks, “once again, looking at it across fifteen years, why did I marry Hilda?” (150). Thus, the liminal state is revealed in the narrator’s utterances. Such inquiries reinforce the theme of nostalgia. His search for a more peaceful environment leads him to visit his hometown.

Fiderer also discusses that the narrator desires to find a sense of calmness in his life (Fiderer, 1967: 127). Regarding the narrator, it is provided through a visit to his childhood memories and his hometown. As elucidated by Kocabıyık & Bozdoğan (2021), the liminal phase is often pursued by a longing for the past and a discontent with the present. Relatedly, the narrator’s visit to his past makes him realize the changes in the world and within himself. George Bowling’s visit to his hometown, Lower Binfield, highlights the contrast between his past and present.

When mentioning his childhood memories, he focuses on poverty, dirt, and ignorance in the town where he lived. Because of the poverty and challenging conditions, he says, “It would never have occurred to me that someday I might want to go back to it” (140). Yet, he desires to return to his town after what he has experienced in the modern world. His utterance highlights his liminal mind style, wedged between past and present. Mentioning his hometown, Lower Binfield, excites him while vigorously uttering his attempt to recall the old days. “I remember—Gosh, how I remember!” (205) evokes nostalgia and revisiting the past.

Van Gennep (1909/1979) and Turner claim that the liminality process is divided into three phases: rites of separation, rites of the margin, and rites of incorporation. The liminal space in which the individual is neither in the new role nor no longer in the previous position follows the reintegration into society. This situation might be seen as follows: Why had I run away like that?” (269). He reflects on their actions and thoughts, particularly about running away. He questions his actions, asking, “Why had I run away like that?... Why had I bothered about the future and the past, seeing that the future and the past don’t matter? Whatever motives I might have had, I could hardly remember them now” (269). Bowling struggles to recall his motives, which implies a detachment from the past. He starts to be aware of his position in society as a middle-class person between the wars and political contradictions, and there is no

escape from this world except accepting it. As van Gennep (1909/1979) and Turner (1964) suggest, his liminality results in his integration into society.

The liminality can be emphasized by examining linguistic elements since the mind style consists of idiosyncratic and repetitive language use. The epithets can facilitate a means to reveal a liminal mind style. Galperin (1971) argues that an epithet always offers a subjective meaning, attributing to the illustrated phenomenon in the form of attributive words or phrases that describe the phenomenon from an idiosyncratic perspective. To Romanyshyn (2022), the epithets enclose the speaker's subjective attitude and include layers of interpretation in the text. Thus, using epithets contributes to acknowledging the narrator's mind style. Referring to middle-class life standards, his epithet of 'Five to ten quid a week' indicates his place in the social hierarchy, leaving him trapped in a predetermined economic and social margin. His adjectivization of floor-manager in a store as "an ugly little devil, under-sized, with very square shoulders and a spiky grey moustache" (14) reveals his negative stance toward managerial jobs and white collars. The current situation of middle class is summarised as "miserable out-of-works whom nobody wanted." In general, a middle-aged man focused on economic conditions, fed up class divisions while maintaining his role takes place in *Coming Up for Air*.

Another key component in conveying attitudes through language is modality. The epistemic modality encloses the speaker's estimation of the proposition's status. Gibbons and Whiteley (2018) assert that epistemic modality presents a speaker's communicating concepts of knowledge, belief, and cognition. The epistemic modality foregrounds the narrator's uncertainty about what happens around him are often seen during the narration. As he commences depicting his life and opinions throughout his narration, it is seen that he frequently uses modalities including "but," "I suppose," "I think," "may," "might," and "probably," indicating his ambiguous mental state.

To summarize, *Coming Up for Air* is analysed through epithets and epistemic modality, and the findings are discussed via the concept of liminality. It is asserted that in the interwar period, the narrator experiences the liminal phase, yet his integration is completed in the end. He faces the reality that he cannot escape the political, social, and economic problems and his social position as a married middle-class man with two children. Thus, he acknowledges that embracing life and its positive components is the most suitable alternative. As a result,

individuals constantly negotiate their societal position and experience ongoing uncertainty when they cannot fit into constructed roles and identities in the twentieth century.



CHAPTER V

LIMINAL MIND STYLE IN *THE ROAD TO WIGAN PIER*

Orwell's life experience significantly impacts the process of constructing his ideology and his writing style. His choice of political writing stems from the socio-political atmosphere he grew up between world wars. In other words, the horror of totalitarian regimes, his experience in the Spanish Civil War, and the economic despair of the Great Depression feed into Orwell's writing. These circumstances fuel his scepticism of political power, his sympathy for the working class, and his concerns about the hazards of uncontrolled nationalism.

Orwell further delves into class divisions in his books. His low-paid jobs in Paris and London allow him to see the lifestyle of lower-class people up close. While becoming a working-class man, he renders the poor quarter of Paris, a hotel and bar with their surroundings, and "eccentrics" who come to the hotel and the bistro (Fowler, 1995: 70). Being raised in a middle-class family and experiencing working-class life contribute to his creation of characters from different classes. He both criticizes and sympathizes with socialism, and the working-class. This ambiguous writing style provides "an updated understanding of Orwell that reinvigorates his relevance to the twenty-first century" (Stewart, 2003: 2). Relatedly, in *The Road to Wigan Pier*, the quasi-fictional narrator presents uncertain attitudes indicating the feeling of dislocation.

The Road to Wigan Pier offers a narrator who observes the events with a documentarist attitude and utters to the reader. The narrator's expressions of the events in his own words enable the audience to understand the structure of his mind. Orwell utilises the classification of "reportage" while also embracing a pseudonym and self-reflexive analysis of its implications, which boosts the complex interplay between fictional and nonfictional features of work (Burton, 2003: 86). *The Road to Wigan Pier* exceeds traditional genre categorizations by blurring the boundaries between factual reportage and fictional narrative while presenting a quasi-fictional narrator. It occupies a middle ground between documentary and fiction, containing elements from both genres.

The narrator identifies himself as middle-class while also being impressed by socialism, which may lead to solving problems, including class divisions and inequalities in the twentieth

century. He embraces his class's attributions: its superior position in society and snobbery. On the other hand, he criticizes England's class division, disconnection of the middle class from the working class, and the capitalist colonial system. He also discusses the improbability of applying socialism. In this in-betweenness, the narrator faces questions of identity and belonging. He does not fully identify with the middle or working class, feeling like an outsider in both. It causes a sense of isolation and a constant search for where he truly fits in. This exploration of liminality in terms of identity reflects the societal shifts of the time, with queries about class structure, social mobility, and individual agency becoming increasingly noticeable. Concerning his remarks, the narrator employs stylistic devices that reveal his ambiguous and uncertain mind style concerning the contradictory social and political ideas in the twentieth century, such as industrialism and traditionalism, socialism and capitalism. It prevents him from replacing society in his contemporary world. Modality usage, narrational structure, and epithets are analysed to support the argument. The ambiguous utterances are concerned by associating it with the concept of liminality.

In *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937), the narrator explores the severe living conditions of the working class in Northern England during the 1930s. It is divided into two parts. The first part displays the difficulties and deprivation encountered by the working class. It details coal miners' lives in Wigan and surrounding areas. The narrator commences by conveying his experiences in a boarding-house run by the Brooker family, a displeasing situation he displays to be expected for the region. He then assesses the conditions most coal miners experience in Wigan and other coal centres. His explanations enclose coal mining techniques and the economics of coal production. He further mentions the social situation of miners, including his remarks on personal hygiene, physical degeneration, malnourishment, and finances. He focuses on describing typical housing throughout much of Northern England. He comments on the general aesthetic ugliness of industrialism and the consequences of modernism perpetuating social divisions and economic exploitation.

In the second part, the narrator, Orwell, shifts to a more political and theoretical analysis. He demonstrates his political evolution and rising disillusionment with certain aspects of socialism. He criticizes both the middle-class socialists and the working class for what he perceives as their shortcomings and misinterpretations of each other. In *The Road to Wigan Pier*, the quasi-fictional narrator Orwell also behaves according to his social status and cannot separate himself from his bias from birth. The sociocultural context allows an understanding of

the narrator's mind style through language (Pillière, 2013). In *The Road to Wigan Pier*, his descriptions, sentence structures, and narration reveal his liminal mind style towards socialism and the working class.

The narrator seems to defend the blurring lines in class distinctions; he criticizes so-called socialists and aims to allow the bourgeois to realize the challenging conditions of the working class. However, it is also presented that he is an intellectual who never bridged the gap between himself and the working class despite his conscious attempt to imitate working-class manners, such as drinking his tea from a saucer, and he instinctively feared any transformation or modernization of the working class (Zehr, 1983: 30). The narrator is on the threshold between being a snobby capitalist middle-class; and a socialist who is against imperialism while also admiring the working class.

A reflection of his mind appears on the first page, when Orwell begins describing the place to the narratee. This realistic Charles Dickensian style of opening explains a neighbourhood of working-class people. The descriptive scenes, including the Brookers' lodging house, foreground class division and the narrator's perspective regarding the working class's difficult conditions (Chaabane, 2014). He commences his descriptions with Brookers. When he mentions the meals there, he says, "For tea there was more bread-and-butter and frayed-looking sweet cakes which were probably bought as "stales" from the baker" (12). The narrator's depiction implies a sense of deprivation and poverty among the working-class individuals he encountered. This characterization strengthens his perception of the working class as struggling, contributing to his critical stance on social inequality and class disparities. Although the narrator empathizes with the struggles of the working class and underscores their difficulties, his attitude also occasionally displays traces of condescension or paternalism towards them.

The narrator criticizes how a working man is given a passive role; "He does not act; he is acted upon. He feels himself the slave of mysterious authority and has a firm conviction that 'they' will never allow him to do this, that and the other" (44). However, he is the one who passivates the workers. In "machine-civilization" (203), referring to his contemporary time, including the progression of industrialization, the working class, as a part of the machinery system, does not speak but is spoken about how they work. The working class is not the speaker nor narrator of their own story, and we cannot hear their feelings or thoughts. Rather than engaging in direct discourse, the narrator often observes and depicts lower-class characters,

maintaining a narrative distance. This narrative technique may indicate power dynamics in the hierarchal class structure, where the voices and experiences of the marginalized working class are filtered through the perspectives of the middle and upper class in society. While he criticizes the pacification of workers, the fact that he does this himself exposes his liminal thoughts. Even though he defends with his words that the working class should be more active, he exhibits contradictory manners with his narrative style. The narrator is neither a snobbish middle class who does not fully comprehend the struggles of the working class nor a socialist who attempts to enhance the conditions of the working class.

Further, although the narrator does not usually employ direct discourse, he makes the working-class talk when he aims to foreground their ignorance. For instance, when he presents the Brookers, he says they “had large numbers of sons and daughters, most of whom had long since fled from home. Some were in Canada— “at Canada,” as Mrs. Brooker used to put it” (9). Orwell uses direct speech only to show the lack of education of those who cannot choose the right proposition. The narrator underscores the grammatical mistakes, regional differences in accent and social backgrounds between the North and South of England.

To foreground his observations, he employs hyperbolic and metaphorical language. “In a Lancashire cotton-town you could probably go for months on end without once hearing an “educated” accent, whereas there can hardly be a town in the South of England where you could throw a brick without hitting the niece of a bishop” (105). The reference to the South offers a prevalence of individuals with an educated accent, possibly due to socio-economic or cultural differences. The metaphor “throw a brick without hitting the niece of a bishop” foregrounds the idea that in towns of Southern England, people have educated or higher-class backgrounds. By creating contrast and exaggeration, he underestimates the Northern part of the country in which the working-class lives. Rather than embracing the diversity of accents, the narrator labels the difference as educated and non-educated. However, the use of quotation marks to emphasize the word educated may imply how he teases higher-class people and standardized accents, which creates a division in society.

To the narrator, the educated accent “stamps you rather as a foreigner than as a chunk of the petty gentry; and this is an immense advantage, for it makes it much easier to get into contact with the working class” (105). He asserts how the collapsing accents of the South and the increasing usage of the educated accents of Southern people turn into an advantage to getting into contact with the working class easier. Thus, the standard accent evolves into a

facilitator to flourish communication between the middle and working classes. To the narrator, the standard accent becomes a communication tool, acting as a third space that can boost communication between these two classes and two regions.

Amundsen (2016) mentions the narrator's social anthropologist attitude, that is, collecting data through observation. He indicates that the unemployed people and coal miners are involved in the exotic other in his fieldwork. It is seen through his image of the working class in his childhood:

You watched a great sweaty navvy walking down the road with his pick over his shoulder; you looked at his discoloured shirt and his corduroy trousers stiff with the dirt of a decade; you thought of those nests and layers of greasy rags below, and, under all, the unwashed body, brown all over (that was how I used to imagine it), with its strong, bacon-like reek. You watched a tramp taking off his boots in a ditch—ugh! It did not seriously occur to you that the tramp might not enjoy having black feet. And even “lower-class” people whom you knew to be quite clean—servants, for instance—were faintly unappetizing. The smell of their sweat, the very texture of their skins, were mysteriously different from yours (Orwell, 1937/2014:120).

His focus on brown-coloured, mysteriously different working-class bodies in his childhood imagination evolves into his emphasis on the blackness of places constantly and people as “Christy-Minstrel faces” (32) and “negroes” (33). These epithets reveal his perception of the analogy between workers and colonial subjects, which was not expected since he explains his aim in writing this book to reveal the difficult conditions of the working class. According to Crick (2019), Orwell's *The Road to Wigan Pier* is on the borderlines between reality and fiction, commonly seen in the 1930s documentary understanding. This issue becomes problematic, considering his duty to observe the working class directly and allow other middle-class people to know about lower classes and their conditions. Sometimes, the narrator employs this feature to exaggerate and to exoticize lower classes. The narrator's offensive language conveys his biased but limited perspective on lower-class individuals. He presents assertive, direct statements, such as “You looked,” “You watched,” and “You thought” indicating a high level of certainty since it focuses on the constructed middle-class bias. However, while saying, “it did not seriously occur to you,” he weakens the assertion and indicates a need for more real consideration of the tramp's perspective. He acknowledges that considering the possibility of a lower-class person not appreciating unsanitary conditions is incomprehensible. He increases the degree of uncertainty using a hedged phrase, “faintly unappetizing.” While the narrator finds lower-class people physically repulsive, he recognizes the lack of justification. It could be an indication of his internal conflict. Although he mentions his past experiences in past tense form,

his descriptions are filled with sensory details, presenting vivid representations of working-class people while reinforcing the disdain and highlighting the difference he perceives between his class and the working class. Even though he mentions his lack of understanding regarding the conditions of lower classes as a middle-class child, his statements are so strong and sharp that they indicate what he has beneath his developing empathy.

Although the narrator sometimes underestimates the working class, his admiration for the working class is also observed in his statements. He compares the productivity of a miner to that of anyone else. He claims:

If I live to be sixty, I shall probably have produced thirty novels, or enough to fill two medium-sized library shelves. In the same period, the average miner produces 8400 tons of coal; enough coal to pave Trafalgar Square nearly two feet deep or to supply seven large families with fuel for over a hundred years (39).

He uses “I shall probably,” which introduces uncertainty regarding his future productivity, yet while mentioning workers’ productivity, his statements are more direct without any modal auxiliary or modal adverb. He also mentions how valuable their work is. He states his primary purpose is to observe and show the harsh conditions of the working class. To serve this purpose, he also visits working-class houses. Regarding a tenant’s complaint, he says, “The tenant complained that the house was cold, damp, and so forth. Perhaps the house was jerry-built, but equally probably he was exaggerating” (64). The indication of “equally probably” shows that he does not sympathize with the people; rather, he thinks they exaggerate the problems, unveiling his liminal attitude toward the working class.

After the narrator’s journey through Northern England, when the train leaves the town, the narrator’s description of the contrasting images of a slum girl in poverty who pokes at a blocked waste pipe and the two rooks copulating reveals his lack of understanding. According to Crick (2019), the part in which the narrator’ departs through the train presents a passive observer from another class who has completed his contract and leaves remorselessly and mechanically to report what can be done. Yet, this scenery also creates an ambiguous attitude towards the region, proving that even in the industrial spectacle, the ugliest birds can procreate, and nature can save ugliness. Concerning his liminal attitude, his statements pursue the emphasis on the blackness and dirtiness of Northern England and the whiteness of nature in the early days of spring as he utters, “it seemed a very long way from the Brokers back kitchen to the empty slopes of snow, the bright sunshine and the big gleaming birds” (16). The departure from the region is conveyed with depictions signifying the length of the route from the Brookers

living in filth and blackness to the whiteness of nature, indicating the relief brought by the end of duty.

The narrator's past experiences, such as constructing his identity as a snob middle class, humiliation at school, comparing himself to the upper classes, his sharp attitude towards oppression, the capitalist system, and class division, are released through narrative structure. The deviation in chronological order of events is given through retroversion, including flashbacks and analepsis. Apart from his othering diction in the descriptions of the working-class, the retrospection in the narrative part strengthens his argument about being against social injustices.

While mentioning class divisions in England, the narrator also focuses on his past days. He mentions how his school experience with scholarships and wealthy friends was challenging for him. He says, "This is the common experience of boys of the lower-upper-middle class, the sons of clergymen, Anglo-Indian officials, etc., and the effects it had on me were probably the usual ones" (128). Throughout his narration, the narrator presumes that his experiences are similar to those of middle-class people. He explains how he felt about this issue:

On the one hand, it made me cling tighter than ever to my gentility; on the other hand, it filled me with resentment against the boys whose parents were richer than mine and who took care to let me know it. I despised anyone who was not describable as a "gentleman," but also, I hated the hoggishly rich, especially those who had grown rich too recently. The correct and elegant thing, I felt, was to be of gentle birth but to have no money. This is part of the credo of the lower-upper-middle class. It has a romantic, Jacobite-in-exile feeling about it which is very comforting (128).

The complex web of modalities conveys his experiences and beliefs about class and identity. He shows his ambiguous stance in his life. The phrase "I felt" stresses the narrator's subjective interpretation of his emotions while revealing his perspective is not representative of everyone in his social class. The following sentence, "The correct and elegant thing," presents his normative expectation about the lower-upper-middle class being "gentle" without wealth, implying a sense of obligation to attach to this social code. His evaluative expressions contribute to the expression of epistemic modality. His statement "despised anyone who was not describable as a 'gentleman'" reveals his belief in the value of gentility as an attribute of social worth. This statement indicates a contradictory perspective of individuals based on their perceived alignment with this categorization. His utterance "Jacobite-in-exile-feeling" coincides with his nostalgic sentimentality for indicating his concept of gentility might not show current realities.

The narrator expresses his experience of India, “I was in the Indian Police five years, and by the end of that time I hated the imperialism I was serving with a bitterness which I probably cannot make clear. In the free air of England that kind of thing is not fully intelligible” (134). It gives an interplay of modalities that conveys his in-betweenness in different ways. When he says, “I probably cannot make it clear,” it reveals his uncertainty, which encircles his ability to express the bitterness of his experience. He continues, “But it is not possible to be a part of such a system without recognizing it as an unjustifiable tyranny” (134). Although he defines imperialism as a type of tyranny, he also says, “Seen from the outside the British rule in India appears—indeed, it is—benevolent and even necessary; and so no doubt are the French rule in Morocco and the Dutch rule in Borneo, for people usually govern foreigners better than they govern themselves” (134). His usage of “no doubt” and “indeed” contradicts the uncertainty about colonialism offering benevolence and necessity of colonial rule. While he mentions the adverse consequences of colonialism, he also expresses its necessity, displaying his indecisive stance.

The narrator further explains how he once thought “that the oppressed are always right and the oppressors are always wrong” (138) and justifies this notion by saying everyone who would work for imperialism thought so. His justification decreases the level of certainty while assuming every colonist would agree with him. He adds, “I suppose that sounds exaggerated; but if you do for five years a job that you thoroughly disapprove of, you will probably feel the same” (138). His thoughts regarding the relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed, which belonged to his past, shift to a less certain level of utterances with “I suppose” and “probably.” It captures his complex view on the ethics of power and oppression, presenting his statements through his personal experiences. He conveys a paradoxical approach to power dynamics. His initial moral stance pursues subjective justifications. It initiates a room for critical reflection on the effect of individual experiences and prejudices on constructing ethical judgments. The passage shows the complexity of oppression and the possible prejudices involved in judging such situations. The modalities play a crucial role in fostering this engagement by presenting multiple perspectives and avoiding simplistic pronouncements.

Through retroversion, the narrator also explains a stereotype from his childhood that “the lower classes smell” (119), which is hard to overcome. Regarding his class prejudices, he says he got rid of them, “or part of it” (134), indicating an ambiguous attitude with his probable ongoing bias. He demonstrates, “It may not greatly matter if the average middle-class person is

brought up to believe that the working classes are ignorant, lazy, drunken, boorish, and dishonest; it is when he is brought up to believe that they are dirty that the harm is done” (119). Orwell claims that negative stereotypes about intelligence, work ethic, or morals might not be as adverse as considering the working class is dirty. To him, the common stereotypes about the personality of working-class people are not as effective as the smell issue. Dirt is often associated with disgust, initiating a barrier between social classes. This association fosters a sense of superiority in the middle class, restraining empathy and understanding for the working class. Nevertheless, Orwell admits his sympathy for the middle class, who were raised with this intrinsic bias since it is hard to exceed what you were taught during childhood, including your prejudices. Orwell takes a complex stance on the middle class. He criticizes their unrealistic and prejudiced view of the working class, highlighting the disconnect with the working class. Regardless, he acknowledges a degree of sympathy for their situation. Their intrinsic sense of the working class as inferior is attributed to their upbringing, indicating they are, in a way, victims of a deficient social system that perpetuates prejudice. It causes a double-edged sword since he criticizes the predisposition but realizes its roots lie in a system that constructs their views.

Parallel to this prejudice regarding the dirtiness of the working-class, he mentions his “hope that in 100 years, they will be almost as clean as the Japanese” (121). Then, he shares a story in which he had to share a quart of beer with a few lower-class people, and he felt the will to vomit. During his narration, he also mentions working class bathing facilities and conveys the challenges miners face in maintaining personal hygiene, the probable conditions they endure, and a dismissal of certain stereotypes about their cleanliness habits. He criticizes, “Middle-class people are fond of saying that the miners would not wash themselves properly even if they could, but this is nonsense, as is shown by the fact that where pithead baths exist practically all the men use them” (33). However, he also states, “Probably a large majority of miners are completely black from the waist down for at least six days a week” (33). Starting his statement with “probably,” he agrees with the opinions of the middle class towards working class although he criticizes them. Although he does not know the exact numbers as he indicates he uses statements including “cannot get hold of exact figures” and “it seems likely” which shows his lack of information. Still, it does not prevent him from conveying the image constructed by the middle-class environment during his childhood.

Apart from issues such as hygiene and cleanliness, the narrator also focuses on the economic dimension of class division. Throughout his narration, the narrator points out the unemployment problem in England. He states,

We may as well face the fact that several million men in England will—unless another war breaks out—never have a real job this side the grave. One thing that probably could be done and certainly ought to be done as a matter of course, is to give every unemployed man a patch of ground and free tools if he chose to apply for them (78).

While “probably” implies an element of likelihood, “certainly ought to be done” conveys a strong sense of necessity. Using both of these epistemic modal devices in the same passage might indicate his ambiguous perspective. Further, he continues, “It is disgraceful that men who are expected to keep alive on the PAC should not even have the chance to grow vegetables for their families” (78). Regarding the moral obligation he suggests, the use “It is disgraceful” conveys a negative criticism concerning the situation, pertaining an ethical dimension to the author’s argument that he acknowledges the conditions of the working class to some extent and sympathizes with them. On the other hand, he uses indirect speech to show the adjectivization of the middle class and their consideration of unemployed people. He utters, “The middle classes were still talking about “lazy idle loafers on the dole” (79) and saying that “these men could all find work if they wanted to” (79). The usage, “lazy idle loafers on the dole” exhibits his criticism of the middle-class carelessness and ignorance of ongoing unemployment. Also, admitting might mean “it would probably continue.” Thus, he criticizes the negligence of the unemployed by the higher classes.

While expressing how people finally realized the unemployment issue, the narrator underestimates the class he belongs to. He says that even the “Bridge dubs” (80) by categorizing this type of middle class with an inferior epithet. Although the narrator criticizes the middle class’s disconnect from working-class realities and asserts socialism as a potential alternative to ongoing problems in England, including inequalities and class division, he also indicates that one cannot escape from this reality of class divisions “it is not so much like a stone wall as the plate glass pane of an aquarium; it is so easy to pretend that it isn’t there, and so impossible to get through it” (145). He is neither entirely middle-class nor fully understanding the working class. He expects change but recognizes the nature of the class system. It creates a sense of being stuck in a liminal state.

Another adjectivization about the middle class appears when he explains that he is considered to belong to the lower-upper-middle class by society, “which had its heyday in the eighties and nineties, with Kipling as its poet laureate, was a sort of mound of wreckage left behind when the tide of Victorian prosperity receded” (113). He continues, “Or perhaps it would be better to change the metaphor and describe it not as a mound but as a layer—the layer of society lying between £2,000 and £300 a year: my own family was not far from the bottom” (113). His explanation of his class conveys a materialistic perspective that measures class categorization in accordance with financial prosperity. It contradicts his effort to diminish the hierarchal categorization in society. His explanation of his class conveys a materialistic perspective that measures class categorization following financial prosperity. Focusing on this issue contradicts his effort to diminish the hierarchal categorization in society and socialist ideals, conveying an ambiguous perspective.

The narrator asks if it is “ever possible to be really intimate with the working class? I shall have to discuss that later; I will only say here that I do not think it is possible” (106). The narrator’s use of modality shows his intricate perspective regarding the possibility of intimacy with the working class. His statement, “I do not think it is possible” expresses his belief that true intimacy with the working class is not feasible. Instead of saying, “It is impossible,” which indicates a high level of certainty, he prefers an ambiguous attitude that diminishes the certainty level. He also says, “I shall have to discuss that later” (106). His suggestion to discuss this issue later through the usage of “shall” reveals his tentative stance and the complexity of the issue since he explains the need for further exploration of his statement. After explaining his opinion on this issue, he also says, “The essential point is that your middle-class ideals and prejudices are tested by contact with others which are not necessarily better but are certainly different” (106). It suggests a moral adherence to other social classes, even if it conflicts with his preconceived stereotypes. He implies the possibility of personal transformation through such encounters. He avoids absolute judgments about the superiority of one class over another by saying, “not necessarily better but are certainly different.” Thus, he creates a dynamic standpoint on establishing intimacy with the working class while he portrays his concerns.

He illustrates a doubtful stance about the potential results of a classless society through the eyes of a former “ardent Socialist at twenty-five” and “sniffish Conservative at thirty-five.” He says,

Perhaps a classless society doesn't mean a beatific state of affairs in which we shall all go on behaving exactly as before except that there will be no class-hatred and no snobbishness; perhaps it means a bleak world in which all our ideals, our codes, our tastes—our “ideology,” in fact—will have no meaning. Perhaps this class-breaking business isn't so simple as it looked! On the contrary, it is a wild ride into the darkness, and it may be that at the end of it the smile will be on the face of the tiger. With loving though slightly patronizing smiles we set out to greet our proletarian brothers, and behold! our proletarian brothers—in so far as we understand them—are not asking for our greetings, they are asking us to commit suicide. When the bourgeois sees it in that form he takes to flight, and if his flight is rapid enough it may carry him to fascism (156).

He employs a complex perspective on the probable results of reaching a classless society. His repetition of “perhaps” underscores the uncertain attitude concerning a classless society while avoiding absolute statements. Also, his utterance of “it may be” reinforces his tentative attitude on this issue. The phrase “we shall all go on behaving exactly as before” offers a hypothetical future in which individuals' attitudes might remain unaffected despite societal change, contradicting his notion of socialism and a classless society. Uttering “our proletarian brothers” also opposes his socialist ideas since it continues as they asked the middle class to commit suicide while exaggerating his perspective of the working class's demands. The metaphorical statement “the smile will be on the face of the tiger” indicates a treacherous and unforeseen future where power dynamics might shift in diverse ways. He launches doubt regarding the idea of acquiring universal happiness through societal change.

The narrator complains about how socialism falls within the narrow scope of the middle-class snobs and cannot reach “the average thinking person” (159). His characterization reveals his prejudices towards socialists, including “a youthful snob-Bolshevik who in five years' time will quite probably have made a wealthy marriage and been converted to Roman Catholicism; or, still more typically, a prim little man with a white-collar job, usually a secret teetotaler and often with vegetarian leanings” (161). His subjective descriptions portray his belief of the typical socialist in his mind. He also has stereotypical thoughts towards the middle-class, revealed by his depictions and epithets of this social group. He claims the necessity to change external factors of socialism. Then, he maintains, “But that, I am afraid, is not going to happen” (207). He employs a common phrase of British English, namely “I am afraid” to show his concern regarding the future of socialism.

The narrator assigns a duty to society's thinkers regarding not rejecting socialism but working towards humanizing it. He adds, “Once Socialism is in a way to being established, those who can see through the swindle of “progress” will probably find themselves resisting.

In fact, it is their special function to do so. In the machine-world they have got to be a sort of permanent opposition, which is not the same thing as being an obstructionist or a traitor” (204). The use “probably” implies a probable course of action based on his viewpoint. His narrative style contradicts his purpose of directing people towards socialism. Although he considers socialism the most proper ideology compared to the coming danger of fascism, he seems to have an ambiguous attitude towards socialism.

The narrator explains his perspective about the potential interaction with different classes. He says, “If you belong to the bourgeoisie, don’t be too eager to bound forward and embrace your proletarian brothers; they may not like it, and if they show that they don’t like it you will probably find that your class prejudices are not so dead as you imagined” (214-15). It involves elements of epistemic modality while expressing his ambiguous viewpoint, including “they may not like it” and “you will probably find.” He demonstrates his estimation and reflects on his perspective regarding the potentially uncomfortable reactions in the interaction between proletarians and middle-class people.

The narrator presents his perspective regarding the possible rise of fascism in the near future of England. He assumes if England will not have an effective socialist party,

...then Fascism is coming; probably a slimy Anglicized form of Fascism, with cultured policemen instead of Nazi gorillas and the lion and the unicorn instead of the swastika. But if we do get it, there will be a struggle, conceivably a physical one, for our plutocracy will not sit quietly under a genuinely revolutionary government. And when the widely separate classes who, necessarily, would form any real Socialist party have fought side by side, they may feel differently about one another (215).

His usage of epistemic modality elements conveys a sense of uncertainty about the future supported by his images of possible outcomes. He both employs a low degree of uncertainty including “probably,” “conceivably,” “may feel” and a high level of certainty “will.” It confronts the reader with solid beliefs and weak predictions on the same idea, indicating his anxiety about the future. Because of his specific ideological perspective, he employs specific imagery and ambiguous language about the future of England. Between world wars, he creates speculative scenarios for the future because the unreliable atmosphere of not knowing what the future will bring makes him uneasy. His concerns also affect his narration. Additionally, he also says, “I believe that when the pinch comes there is a terrible danger that the main movement of the intelligentsia will be towards fascism. Just how soon the pinch will come it is difficult to say; it depends, probably, upon events in Europe; but it may be that within two years or even a year we shall have reached the decisive moment” (196-97). He maintains his ambiguous attitude

while talking about future by the help of epistemic modal elements, indicating his unreliable feelings towards the future of England, such as “probably,” “I believe,” “it depends,” and “it may be.” He is afraid of what is about to come, and it is revealed through the linguistic elements he employs.

The narrator further shares his perspective regarding the establishment of a probable socialist party in England as a result of interaction between the working class and the middle class. He adds, “Probably when we get there it will not be so dreadful as we feared, for, after all, we have nothing to lose but our aitches” (215). Additionally, he says, “And then perhaps this misery of class prejudice will fade away” (215). The narrator displays a hopeful stance towards the disappearance of class divisions, whereas he still shares his ideas with a low level of certainty. He avoids using a high level of certainty, which indicates his confidence in his future and in society. Additionally, his derogatory adjectivization of the middle class “— the private schoolmaster, the half-starved freelance journalist, the colonel’s spinster daughter with £75 a year, the jobless Cambridge graduate, the ship’s officer without a ship, the clerks, the civil servants, the commercial travellers, and the thrice-bankrupt drapers in the country towns—” (215) enlarges the category to explain working class and middle-class people embracing one another about fighting against insufficient incomes and lifestyle. Thus, rather than having concerns about joining the working class, he addresses the “sinking middle class” to warn them about facing their conditions.

The narrator criticizes the current state of socialism as having lost its fundamental ideals, including justice and liberty, and urges socialists to reclaim these ideals. He says, “It is almost completely forgotten. It has been buried beneath layer after layer of doctrinaire priggishness, party squabbles, and half-baked “progressivism”” and it needs a reformation. Regarding the progressivism, he presents his perspective. In recent years, he says apart from socialism, humanity has “a picture of aeroplanes, tractors, and huge glittering factories of glass and concrete;” (201). He maintains, “on the other, a picture of vegetarians with wilting beards, of Bolshevik commissars (half gangster, half gramophone), of earnest ladies in sandals, shock-headed Marxists chewing polysyllables, escaped Quakers, birth control fanatics, and Labour Party backstairs-crawlers” (201). It summarizes his perspective to his contemporary time. When he mentions the future of machine civilisation and its endurance, he says, “And almost certainly the machine-civilization will continue to triumph” (203). His usage of “almost”, “certainly”,

and “will” contradict one another. His linguistic usages and adjectivization present his lack of a sense of belonging to his contemporary time.

The narrator challenges his class identity and tries to define and align with the working class, using modalities that convey his ambiguity. He says, “It is probable that I personally, in any important issue, would side with the working class” (210). He avoids certain utterances, including “certainly” or “definitely.” Rather, he employs “probable,” revealing his ambiguous attitude toward his political ideals. However, it does not prevent him to label and criticize others. He mentions people who belong to neither the working class nor the upper class, “whose traditions are less definitely middle class but who would certainly not thank you if you called them proletarians?” (210). He avoids definitive statements while emphasizing their potential disagreement with being classified as either middle-class or proletarian. The sentence leaves room for interpretation and invites the reader to consider the group’s understanding of their position within the social structure. Regarding class categorization, he says, “Economically I belong to the working class, but it is almost impossible for me to think of myself as anything but a member of the bourgeoisie” (209). His statement stresses his internal struggle to reconcile his economic class with his inner sense of belonging to a group. Regarding the liminal space, it opens up questions about social fluidity, the influence of culture and upbringing, and how individuals navigate and negotiate their social identities.

Throughout his narration, the narrator mentions class division in England using “I think.” He explains why middle-class workers might not adopt revolutionary ideas, utilising modalities to emphasise limitations and prejudices within the socialist perspective. He says, “The very last person in whom you can hope to find revolutionary opinions is a clerk or a commercial traveller. Why? Very largely, I think, because of the “proletarian” can’t with which Socialist propaganda is mixed up” (210). He continues with perceived images of these two classes.

He confesses how his perspective is constructed in accordance with his neighbourhood while being raised. He says, “I want to get rid of class distinctions, but nearly everything I think and do is a result of class distinctions. All my notions —notions of good and evil, of pleasant and unpleasant, of funny and serious, of ugly and beautiful—are essentially middle-class notions” (149). It increases the level of his ambiguous stance. He is indecisive about finding out which class he belongs to. The juxtaposition of the modalities creates an internal struggle. The narrator employs modalities including “nearly everything” and “I think,” indicating lower

certainty. On the other hand, he uses “want,” which shows how decisive he is about eliminating the class distinctions. This tension constructs his liminal identity that he neither belongs to the working class nor the middle class.

He is also aware that although class division is not proper, it still achieves to remain. He says, “The principal fact that will have emerged, I think, is that though the English class-system has outlived its usefulness, it has outlived it and shows no signs of dying” (208). This statement causes ambiguity since he “devoted three chapters to discussing the class-difficulty” (208). It implies that he does not try to diminish class divisions but merely aims to convince the inevitability of it. The final phrase, “I think,” reiterates the tentative nature of the statement. It leaves room for alternative interpretations and suggests that the future of the class system remains uncertain. Thus, modality presents an intricate picture of the English class system. The narrator believes it is outdated but admits its enduring presence and the lack of clear signs of its imminent end. In another passage, similar to his usage of “I think,” he uses “I believe” to mention class differences. He states, “Yet I believe there is some hope that when Socialism is a living issue, a thing that large numbers of Englishmen genuinely care about, the class difficulty may solve itself more rapidly than now seems thinkable” (215), foregrounding the effect of the ambiguous mind. “I think” softens the assertion, acknowledging the inherent uncertainty in predicting future social transformations. In this statement, he offers an optimistic attitude while suggesting that widespread engagement with socialism could create the critical mass needed for faster resolution of class conflicts. However, he avoids certain statements by using “may,” “seem,” and “I think” and creates an ambivalent atmosphere.

He asserts that Socialists’ primary motivation is their need for order rather than their love for the working class. He criticizes socialists by utilising modalities to convey his ambiguous perspective. He says, “It is often difficult to believe that it is a love of anybody, especially of the working class, from whom he is of all people the furthest removed” (166). He introduces his stance by saying, “It is often difficult to believe,” which suggests his uncertainty regarding the sincerity of socialists. He continues, “The underlying motive of many Socialists, I believe, is simply a hypertrophied sense of order” (166). He maintains uttering his individual opinions by using “I believe” and claims that “what they desire, basically, is to reduce the world to something resembling a chessboard” (166).

The narrator is aware that socialism is not the best alternative, but the narrative is full of ambiguities because he is concerned about the remaining option, fascism. He employs “I

believe” as an epistemic modality marker expressing his certainty about social and political issues in his contemporary time. He says, “I believe that when the pinch comes there is a terrible danger that the main movement of the intelligentsia will be towards fascism. Just how soon the pinch will come it is difficult to say; it depends, probably, upon events in Europe; but it may be that within two years or even a year we shall have reached the decisive moment” (196-97). The epistemic modality markers including “probably,” “may be” and “it depends” contribute to the concerns and uncertainties. He reveals his uncertainties and concerns, “That will also be the moment when every person with any brains or any decency will know in his bones that he ought to be on the Socialist side. But he will not necessarily come there of his own accord; there are too many ancient prejudices standing in the way” (197). He utilises epistemic modality to present a strong belief and recognize potential obstacles. His usage of repetitive “will” expresses absolute certainty about his assumption. The narrator claims socialism is the most reasonable political idea in an assertive tone. However, regarding his concerns, the degree of certainty decreases through his language use “will not necessarily.” It introduces uncertainty into the previous claim and acknowledges that people might not join the “Socialist side” even when they recognize its rightness. The potential hesitation is attributed to “ancient prejudices standing in the way.” implying that internalized biases and pre-existing beliefs might prevent people from acting on their new understanding. It challenges the initial certainty about widespread adherence to the “Socialist side.” Thus, while expressing his assertive belief in the inherent rightness of the “Socialist side” and the forthcoming realization of this truth, he also confesses the potential for individual resistance due to the persistence of intrinsic biases. The tension highlights the challenges of social change and the importance of addressing entrenched biases.

Even though he presents socialism as an alternative to fascism, he does not belittle it entirely in his narrative but instead mentions its positive aspects. He says, “And that, of course, is the slave state, or rather the slave world; it would probably be a stable form of society, and the chances are, considering the enormous wealth of the world if scientifically exploited, that the slaves would be well-fed and contented” (200). His indecisive attitude appears with the usage of “would probably” while also explaining the probable aspects of a fascist state with a stable form and well-fed enslaved people, which opposes the current unemployment and chaotic atmosphere in England. He presents his belief regarding the potential outcomes of fascism. The epistemic modality markers “probably” and “the chances are” display uncertainty concerning the stability of the society envisioned under fascism. He presents a tentative assumption that

some positive elements might occur within fascism. Further, he says, “In order to combat Fascism it is necessary to understand it, which involves admitting that it contains some good as well as much evil” (198) increasing this in-betweenness about choosing fascism and socialism.

In his contemporary society, the narrator also mentions the machine-civilization and technological advancement England confronted. He focuses on technology by using several modalities to convey his complex ideas. He demonstrates how humanity is dependent upon the machine. He maintains, “You may hate the machine-civilization, probably you are right to hate it, but for the present there can be no question of accepting or rejecting it” (203). His usage of “probably” offers uncertainty concerning the validity of hating machine-civilization. Thus, it is both something that arouses hate and something necessary. The modality reinforces a paradox since humans are both enslaved and empowered by technology, depicting it as a trap that one may dislike but cannot escape. He also highlights how people navigate economic hardships and how they behave during the period of economic depression. “The two things that have probably made the greatest difference of all are the movies and the mass production of cheap smart clothes since the war” (81). Rather than reducing their living standards by eliminating luxuries, people attempt to prioritize luxury over necessities, which signifies consumerism. The narrator criticizes the rise of consumption and blames lower classes and modernism for fostering the demand for luxury.

The narrator maintains his thoughts on the pros and cons of the issues brought about by modernity. He demonstrates his critical view of the aesthetics of industrialization, using modalities to convey his argument. He generally uses “I think” or “I believe” to express his opinions, yet negative usage is also seen. He says, “I do not believe that there is anything inherently and unavoidably ugly about industrialism” (99-100). He conveys his disagreement about the inherent ugliness of industrialism. Then, he seems to convince his narratee to be on the same page. When he says, “there is anything inherently and unavoidably ugly,” it reflects his thought that a displeasing appearance is not intrinsic to industrial buildings. It indicates the lack of inherent necessity for industrial structures to be ugly.

The narrator’s degree of belief concerning the reasons for physical deprivation is also associated with the modern world. He says, “If the English physique has declined, this is no doubt partly due to the fact that the Great War carefully selected the million best men in England and slaughtered them” (91). The phrase “no doubt” reveals his confidence regarding the Great War as a factor in England’s physical decline. He maintains, “But the process must have begun

earlier than that, and it must be due ultimately to unhealthy ways of living, i.e. to industrialism” (91). Using “must” strengthens his confidence in blaming industrialism and modernism. However, his following statement, “probably the town is healthier than the country, in many ways,” raises a contrast. It challenges the conventional notion that rural living is inherently healthier while embracing modernity. After highlighting the availability of inexpensive alternatives in diverse aspects of modern life, including food, he comes with another statement that confronts modernity: “We may find in the long run that tinned food is a deadlier weapon than the machine gun” (91). It focuses on the potential dangers of certain aspects of modern living, significantly the consumption of tinned food.

The narrator’s language use and depictions of the working class, middle-class ideals, and modernism disclose his liminal stance on the contradictory perspectives. He does not embrace the working-class lifestyle and middle-class ideals. He is concerned about the developments concerning industrialisation and modernism even though he is aware of their necessity for growth. He cannot find a place for himself in the society. He is dissatisfied with the current situation, underscoring exploitation, inequality, and social fragmentation. He suggests socialism as an alternative, although the path toward a more promising future through this ideology remains unclear. He provides glimpses of socialist ideals but also recognises the challenges and constraints of existing socialist tendencies. The narrator presents a complex portrayal of society with diverse social and political ideas. The liminality experienced by the narrator reflects the contradictions and uncertainties inherent in the capitalist-socialist divide, urging the narrator to look for alternative opportunities for a more unbiased and just society.

5.1. Discussion

Critics (Hopkinson, 1953; Cleo McNelly, 1977; Chaabane, 2014) condemn Orwell’s constrained understanding of the personalities of industrial northern people Hopkinson (1953), labelling *The Road to Wigan Pier* as Orwell’s weakest book, discusses that Orwell could not achieve a real connection with the working class, which was the pursuit of his journey. His narrator in *The Road to Wigan Pier*, as a representation of the middle-class, rather than understanding the feelings of low-class people and sympathising with them, observes and describes them like a journalist working in the fields. Cleo McNelly (1977) asserts that Orwell depicts the working class in Wigan as mute and inarticulate, criticizing *The Road to Wigan Pier*

for violating a fundamental rule of social exploration that fails to let the subjects tell their own stories. Orwell's detachment from his subjects is evident throughout the text; the lack of personal connections and the lack of personal names are absent except in the opening chapter's description of Brooker's lodging home, which is seen in *The Road to Wigan Pier*. Orwell's emphasis on establishing identifications between his subjects and readers is minimal, so the subjects in *The Road to Wigan Pier* are nearly invisible. A reflection of his mind appears on the first page, when Orwell begins describing the place to the narratee.

The narrator has a liminal attitude toward the working-class. Although he sometimes underestimates them, his admiration for the working class is also observed in his statements. He is aware of how important the working class is for the progress of civilization. He compares the productivity of a miner to that of anyone else. He claims, "If I live to be sixty I shall probably have produced thirty novels, or enough to fill two medium-sized library shelves. In the same period, the average miner produces 8400 tons of coal; enough coal to pave Trafalgar Square nearly two feet deep or to supply seven large families with fuel for over a hundred years" (39). Using "I shall probably" decreases the value of the work he would do. However, while mentioning workers' productivity, his statements are more direct without any modal auxiliary or modal adverb. Rather than employing "an average miner probably would," he uses present tense which underscores their productivity. He also mentions how valuable the work they do empathizing with them. On the other hand, he states that his primary purpose is to observe and show the harsh conditions of the working class. To serve this purpose, he also visits working-class houses. Regarding a tenant's complaint, he says, "The tenant complained that the house was cold, damp, and so forth. Perhaps the house was jerry-built, but equally probably he was exaggerating" (64). The indication of "equally probably" shows that he does not sympathize with the people, rather he thinks they exaggerate the problems. Using "probably" and "equally probably" indicates Orwell's internal conflict in objectively assessing the situation. He tries to negotiate between the desire to fully believe the tenant's affirmations while confessing the possibility of subjectivity and potential biases. This internal conflict further underlines his liminality since he stands between the experiences of the working class and his privileged background, struggling to intervene in different stances and find a neutral ground for understanding.

The narrator criticizes how a working man is given a passive role; "He does not act, he is acted upon. He feels himself the slave of mysterious authority and has a firm conviction that

‘they’ will never allow him to do this, that and the other” (44). On the other hand, he is the one who passivates the workers. In “machine civilisation” (203), the working class, as a part of the machinery system, does not speak but is spoken about how they work. The working class is not the speaker nor narrator of their own story, and we cannot hear their feelings or thoughts.

Although socialism in *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937) is presented as the best alternative to choose, various contradictory passages appear. While socialism is supported on one page, on the next page, he indicates that socialism “would at least ensure our getting enough to eat even if it deprived us of everything else” (Orwell, 1937/2014: 158-159). According to Showers (2010), it conveys a derogatory attitude while stressing the fundamental needs to the detriment of other significant aspects, which resembles what happens in Huxley’s *Brave New World*. He adds, “Orwell likely comprehends that Mustapha Mond’s world, while amusing and providing the greatest happiness to the greatest number, is far from being an Elysian Fields” (124). The narrator’s complex thoughts regarding socialism reveal his liminal stance.

The contradictory expressions regarding modernism, class division, and consumerism are maintained during the narration of *Coming Up for Air* and *The Road to Wigan Pier*. Yet, Rae (2008) asserts that the narrator’s depictions of miners and descriptions of North England have a Conradian attitude that emphasizes miners’ blackness. Further, his journey to North England by train is like Conrad’s journey to so-called darkness, Africa in *Heart of Darkness*. Unlike Rae’s opinion, the narrator Orwell, rather than adopting an utterly derogatory attitude through his narrator, dwells on the threshold and employs a diction in which we can infer while underestimating the working-class, he also somehow admires them. His emphasis on the different locations, particularly the differences between Northern and Southern England also reveals his liminal space in terms of geography.

Nadel and Buitenhuis (1988: 6) demonstrate that *The Road to Wigan Pier* presents a disturbing account of class relationships. However, the narrator asks if it is “ever possible to be really intimate with the working class? I shall have to discuss that later; I will only say here that I do not think it is possible” (106). The narrator’s use of modality shows his intricate perspective regarding the possibility of intimacy with the working class. His statement, “I do not think it is possible” expresses his belief that true intimacy with the working class is not feasible. Instead of saying, On the other hand, rather than employing a direct statement like “It is impossible” which indicates a high level of certainty, he prefers an ambiguous attitude by diminishing the certainty level. After explaining his opinion on this issue, he also says, “The essential point is

that your middle-class ideals and prejudices are tested by contact with others which are not necessarily better but are certainly different” (106). It suggests a moral adherence to other social classes, even if it conflicts with his preconceived stereotypes. He implies the possibility of personal transformation through such encounters. He avoids absolute judgments about the superiority of one class over another by saying, “not necessarily better but are certainly different.” Thus, his use of modality creates a dynamic standpoint on establishing intimacy with the working class. While he portrays his concerns, he additionally encourages critical self-reflection and engagement with diverse experiences.

Regarding the narrator’s socialist stance, he employs a complex perspective on the probable results of reaching a classless society. He claims,

Perhaps a classless society doesn’t mean a beatific state of affairs in which we shall all go on behaving exactly as before except that there will be no class-hatred and no snobbishness; perhaps it means a bleak world in which all our ideals, our codes, our tastes—our “ideology,” in fact—will have no meaning. Perhaps this class-breaking business isn’t so simple as it looked! On the contrary, it is a wild ride into the darkness, and it may be that at the end of it the smile will be on the face of the tiger. With loving though slightly patronizing smiles we set out to greet our proletarian brothers, and behold! our proletarian brothers—in so far as we understand them—are not asking for our greetings, they are asking us to commit suicide (156).

He expresses an ambiguous perspective on the probable results of reaching a classless society. His repetition of “perhaps” softens the probable positive consequences of a classless society while avoiding absolute statements. Also, his utterance of “it may be” reinforces his tentative attitude on this issue. The phrase “we shall all go on behaving exactly as before” offers a hypothetical future in which individuals’ attitudes might remain unaffected despite societal change, contradicting his notion of socialism and a classless society. The metaphorical statement “the smile will be on the face of the tiger” demonstrates a treacherous and unforeseen future where power dynamics might shift in diverse ways. He launches doubt regarding the idea of acquiring universal happiness through societal change. Regarding his class prejudices, he says he got rid of them “or part of it.” Ironically, he also indicates that one cannot escape from this reality of class divisions “it is not so much like a stone wall as the plate glass pane of an aquarium; it is so easy to pretend that it isn’t there, and so impossible to get through it” (145). Although he aims to blur the borderlines of class divisions, he indicates it is impossible to collapse this system entirely.

Even though he presents socialism as an alternative to fascism, he does not belittle fascism entirely in his narrative. He says, “And that, of course, is the slave state, or rather the slave world; it would probably be a stable form of society, and the chances are, considering the enormous wealth of the world if scientifically exploited, that the slaves would be well-fed and contented” (200). He refers to some positive aspects of fascism. His indecisive attitude appears with the usage of “would probably” while also explaining the probable aspects of a fascist state with a stable form and well-fed slaves, which opposes the current unemployment and chaotic atmosphere in England. He presents his belief regarding the potential outcomes of fascism. The epistemic modality markers “probably” and “the chances are” display uncertainty concerning the stability of the society envisioned under fascism. He presents a tentative assumption that some positive elements might occur within fascism. Further, he says, “In order to combat Fascism it is necessary to understand it, which involves admitting that it contains some good as well as much evil” increasing this in-betweenness about choosing fascism and socialism.

In *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937), the quasi-fictional narrator criticizes the middle class, the Socialist middle class, and the working class for what he perceives as their shortcomings and misinterpretations of each other. However, he also behaves in accordance with his social status. He cannot separate himself from his bias coming from birth while presenting the conditions of the working class through his narration. His prejudices and his admiration for labour contradict one another via his use of language. He employs ambiguous elements such as “but,” “probably,” and “perhaps.” His descriptions, sentence structure, and narration reveal his liminal mindset towards socialism and the working class, indicating his in-betweenness in society and that he cannot take a particular side confidently nor become completely a part of them. The narrator explains that although he desires to eliminate class distinctions, he is bound to middle-class values when he says, “my notions —notions of good and evil, of pleasant and unpleasant, of funny and serious, of ugly and beautiful—are essentially middle-class notions” (149). It increases the level of his ambiguous stance while creating an internal struggle.

He asserts that socialists’ primary motivation is their need for order rather than their love for the working class. He criticizes Socialists by utilising modalities to convey his ambiguous perspective. He says, “It is often difficult to believe that it is a love of anybody, especially of the working class, from whom he is of all people the furthest removed”(166). He introduces his stance by saying, “It is often difficult to believe” which indicates his uncertainty

regarding the sincerity of Socialists. He continues, “The underlying motive of many Socialists, I believe, is simply a hypertrophied sense of order” (166). He maintains uttering his individual opinions by using “I believe” and claims that “what they desire, basically, is to reduce the world to something resembling a chessboard” (166). He carries uncertainties concerning socialism, marked by lingering question marks in his mind.

The narrator’s mind style is examined through epithets, modality, narrational structure, and other stylistic elements complementing foreground liminality. The narrator employs stylistic elements that unveil his unstable attitudes and ambiguous mind style concerning the twentieth century’s contradictory social and political ideas, such as industrialism and traditionalism, socialism, and capitalism. It prevents him from replacing society in his contemporary world.

As he narrates, while mentioning the significance of labour, he also focuses on the system degrading the working class to a part of the machine. However, he also turns them into objects by not giving them a voice. Rather than allowing them to explain their conditions, he prefers to present their conditions through his narration. He reveals a complex mix of admiration for the working class’s resilience and a sense of humiliation at their hardships. He also shares the stereotypical assumptions of the middle class about the working class, including their smell.

Rogers (1996) asserts that while the narrator teases the concerns and biases of the middle class regarding the working class, he also discloses that he shares many of these beliefs (Rogers, 1996). His focus on brown-coloured, mysteriously different working-class bodies in his childhood imagination evolves into his emphasis on the blackness of places constantly and people as “Christy-Minstrel faces” (32) and “negroes” (33). These epithets reveal his perception of the analogy between workers and colonial subjects, which was not expected since he explains his aim in writing this book to reveal the conditions of the working class. Sometimes, the narrator employs this feature to exaggerate and to exoticize lower classes. Furthermore, although he claims that socialism is the best alternative in his contemporary time, he also mentions its corruption. All his ambivalent thoughts contradict one another and prevent him from belonging to one of them and taking a side completely.

While expressing how people started to realize the unemployment issue, the narrator also underestimates the class he belongs to. He says that even the “Bridge dubs” (80) in the country towns faced reality by categorizing this type of middle class as having an inferior

epithet. It shows he agrees with the middle class's opinions towards the working class. Another adjectivization about the middle class appears when he signifies the lower-upper-middle class as "perhaps it would be better to change the metaphor and describe it not as a mound but as a layer—the layer of society lying between £2,000 and £300" (113). His explanation of his class conveys a materialistic perspective that measures class categorization in accordance with financial prosperity. It contradicts his effort to diminish the hierarchal categorization in society concerning socialism. His explanation of his class conveys a materialistic perspective that measures class categorization following financial prosperity. Focusing on this issue contradicts his effort to diminish the hierarchal categorization in society and Socialist ideals, conveying an ambiguous perspective.

As he mentions the effect of modernism on society, it is seen that he has an ambiguous mind style regarding its consequences. The narrator's ideas about modernism and industrialism are multifaceted. He criticizes the exploitation and dehumanization of the industrial system regarding the harsh conditions since the system reduces the working class to cogs in a machine. He focuses on the erosion of traditional lifestyles caused by modernism due to its destructive aspect of the sense of belonging. After highlighting the availability of inexpensive alternatives in diverse aspects of modern life, including food, he comes with another statement that confronts modernity: "We may find in the long run that tinned food is a deadlier weapon than the machine gun" (91). It focuses on the potential dangers of certain aspects of modern living, significantly the consumption of tinned food. He also blames industrialism about England's physical decline. He asserts, "But the process must have begun earlier than that, and it must be due ultimately to unhealthy ways of living, i.e. to industrialism" (91). His usage of "must" strengthens his confidence in blaming industrialism and modernism. However, his following statement, "probably the town is healthier than the country, in many ways," raises a contrast. It challenges the conventional notion that rural living is inherently healthier while embracing modernity.

On the other hand, he also acknowledges the potential of industrialism to enhance the economic situation of England. He mentions the machine-civilization and technological advancement England confronted. The narrator also focuses on technology by using several modalities to convey his complex ideas. He demonstrates how humanity is dependent upon the machine. He maintains, "You may hate the machine-civilization, probably you are right to hate it, but for the present there can be no question of accepting or rejecting it" (203). Using

“probably” offers uncertainty concerning the validity of hating machine-civilization. Thus, it is both something that arouses hate and something necessary. The modality reinforces a paradox since humans are both enslaved and empowered by technology, depicting it as a trap that one may dislike but cannot escape.

In conclusion, *The Road to Wigan Pier* is analysed through epithets, metaphors, and narrational structure, but mainly modality. Epistemic modality, which reveals the narrator’s threshold mentality and uncertain attitude, is supported by other stylistic elements. The narrator’s usage of ambiguous linguistic indicators, including “I suppose,” “I think,” and “perhaps,” show his ambivalent attitude towards twentieth-century issues, such as solidly supporting a point of view. He does not belong to a group or an idea completely. His ambivalent attitude towards every idea he mentions shows that he can neither fully defend nor fully reject an idea. In the modern world with rapid changes, he does not carry the feeling of belonging foregrounded by using epistemic modalities. He remains in a liminal space between different social and political ideas.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the liminal mind style of George Orwell's middle-class narrators in *Coming Up for Air* and *The Road to Wigan Pier*. By exploring stylistic elements like modality, epithets, and narrative patterns, the analysis displayed how the narrators occupy a liminal space between socialist ideals, middle-class prejudices, and traditional and modernist lifestyles. This finding resounds with Turner's concept of liminality and Árpád Szakolczai's concept of permanent liminality, emphasizing the perplexity and wavering experienced by individuals navigating the unstable atmosphere. The analysis of Orwell's narrators sheds light on the concerns of the British middle class in the interwar period. It also offers the broader applicability of liminality in understanding experiences of social dislocation and ideological flux.

The liminal mind styles of the narrators are analysed in *Coming Up for Air* and *The Road to Wigan Pier* through modality to reveal how the narrators are betwixt and between after the changes they could not pursue in their society. Their thoughts sway between socialist and capitalist ideals, modernist and traditional lifestyles. To unveil the narrators' psychological state, Fowler's concept of mind style is utilised with the help of diverse components, including lexicalization, modality, narrative structure, and epithets. While the use of epithets and word usage exposes different social class viewpoints, the narrative structure also contributes to portraying the psychological state of narrators. For instance, flashbacks create a threshold between the past and present. The modalities examined foreground the narrators' liminal attitude, uncertainties, and instability. It is concluded that modalities foreground the in-betweenness and anxiety of these two twentieth-century middle-class narrators, including their struggle to adapt to the interwar period, their different class experiences, economic and political problems, their longing for the past, and their confrontation of the inevitability of modernity.

In both literary works, the autodiegetic narrators cannot find where they belong in the modern world. The focus of this study is that in both literary works, the narrators' utterances indicate their ambivalent feelings concerning the results of living in the modern world. They belong to the down-and-out middle class, which "was a sort of mound of wreckage left behind when the tide of Victorian prosperity receded" (1937/2014:113). Their lives shift from a secure position to unsteadiness, experiencing a loss of identity. The loss of status and the feeling of dislocation cause confusion and uncertainty concerning their future and place in society.

Throughout both books, the narrators remain in liminal space, as they are neither completely part of the working class nor genuinely belong to the middle class.

Regarding the related literature, the concept of liminality in the twentieth century in terms of stylistics remains vastly unintegrated within the study of literary texts. Esayan (2008) explores the complex dynamics of identity within the colonial and gender frameworks. Özkan (2019) examines Bernard Shaw's comedies as his turning point in analysing the continuities and discontinuities between nineteenth-century theatre and modern drama traditions through the anthropological theory of liminality in the context of rites of passage. Yağlıdere (2020) explores the process of immigrants' identity formation through Brah's border theory and Bhabha's theory of liminality concerning the other key terms, third space and ambivalence. Vural-Özbey (2021) mentions the liminality concept in Shakespeare's plays, underscoring in-betweenness, liminal space, and transformation. Despite her focus on feminist theory, Özkaya (2023) explores how feminine revolt against societal norms leads to women's position in the liminal space of society through the myth of Antigone. While previous studies have primarily focused on themes such as immigrant identity and feminist theories in the liminality framework, this study contributes to the character analysis regarding the ambivalent mind style through the lens of liminality.

Within the field of stylistics, the increasingly prevalent use of modality in text analysis presents the epistemic modality category as a tool for foregrounding a character's ambiguous mind style. While focusing on the narrators' ambiguous psychological state and mind style, this study introduces the term "liminal mind style" to encompass these two terms. This term refers to a mental state of being stuck between opposing views and ideologies, having an identity crisis, and being disconnected from society.

In addition to examining liminal mind style, this study also presents the state of liminality by focusing on modality in functional grammar. The analysis of texts in English literature through modality is not frequently encountered, and such studies remain notably scarce in English literary text analysis. In Turkey, several thesis studies have examined modality in educational and linguistic contexts (Terziyan, 2013; Benzer, 2008; Kılıç, 2004) and within Turkish literature (Karaca, 2021; Kamacı-Gencer, 2018). A gap exists concerning the text analysis of English literature in terms of employing modality to analyse literary texts. Thus, this study aims to conduct the narrator's mind styles by integrating the concepts of modality and liminality. Notably, liminality and modality concepts have not been explored in studies of

George Orwell's early novels, *Coming Up for Air* and *The Road to Wigan Pier*, which were overshadowed by his later works. Regarding the thesis studies on the selected novels, Göncü (1988) displays that Orwell utilises ordinary common people in *Burmese Days*, *Coming Up for Air*, and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* to handle the restraining forces of modern civilization. Çiftçi (2012) highlights the significance of ecological awareness despite the socio-economic transformations among the scientific and technological advancement while analysing *Coming Up for Air* by George Orwell. Ermetin (1988) examines the development of Orwell's social consciousness in the 1930s following his personal experiences among the lower classes and explains the impossibility of escaping from middle-class values in his *Down and Out in Paris and London* and *The Road to Wigan Pier*, *A Clergyman's Daughter* and *Keep the Aspidochelone Flying*.

While previous studies have focused on the challenges of abandoning middle-class values, this study delves into the complexities of middle-class identity by examining Orwell's narrators, who represented various classes and ended up being middle-class throughout the twentieth century. Navigating the rough interwar period marked by economic hardships and political upheavals and having experienced both the upper and lower layers of society at different times, these narrators find themselves caught in a state of liminality. They no longer fully belong to either the pre-war or post-war era, neither the lower nor upper classes nor entirely to the middle class itself.

Scholars, including van Gennep, Turner, and Szokolczai, sought to grasp human reactions to in-between experiences, how they shape personality, and how thought and experience are sometimes intertwined. They underscored that liminality is not only a transitional period but also a distinct social and psychological condition with its attributes. The individuals who experience an ambiguous position outside the conventional social classifications and norms question established hierarchies, roles, and values within their own perspectives. Unlike other scholars who studied liminality, the sociologist Arpad Szokolczai includes the dynamic aspect of the early twentieth century. Szokolczai (2017) asserts that some individuals or groups can experience a prolonged or persistent state of liminality, referring to individuals or social groups who exist on the margins of society, constantly occupying a state of ambiguity and disconnection from established social structures with a sense of not belonging.

In contrast to temporary liminality and its connection with distinguishing rites of passage and transitional stages, permanent liminality suggests a stable state in which individuals

constantly negotiate their position in society and experience ongoing uncertainty and ambivalence since they are unable to fit into constructed roles and identities (Szakolczai, 2009). Charles (2009) claims the uncertainty and instability regarding wars and totalitarian regimes and diverse political thoughts, including socialism and fascism in the twentieth century, cause anxiety considering individuals' uncertain future, including inequalities, political problems, and rising unemployment rates. Thus, while the traditional social structures are questioned and reconstructed, it causes a sense of alienation from oneself and others.

In *Coming Up for Air*, the narrator, Bowling, is an insurance salesman dissatisfied with his life and questioning it. He criticizes the middle-class because they are obsessed with social status and appearances. He longs for his childhood days in the countryside, which contradicts the ugliness and pollution of city life. His repetitive patterns of some linguistic phrases, including "I suppose," "I think," "God knows," and his usage of modalities, including "might" and "may" and other linguistic elements that foreground the instability are examined. However, unlike the narrator of *The Road to Wigan Pier*, he accepts the consequences of the modern world and achieves to integrate society. He becomes more confident about his place in society. He faces the realities of modern life. Bowling realizes he cannot fully escape the present by returning to his childhood memories, and he begins to care more about his family and job. Despite the insecure atmosphere, considering the upcoming war, class division, and economic problems, he accepts modern life's limitations and acknowledges its potential for happiness. Instead of constantly yearning for a lost past and being anxious about the future, he realizes beauty in the present in the everyday moments, like the primroses.

The *Road to Wigan Pier* displays dangerous working conditions and the persistent hunger miners face in Northern England's industrial towns. On the one hand, he tries to rely on so-called socialists and the middle class to which he belongs; on the other hand, he tries to establish intimacy with the working class, which raises his biases by birth. His position in society revolves around being a part of the middle class and being a part of the working class. As a result, in both books, the narrators struggle to find their place in modern society as individuals. They frequently use epistemic modalities, epithets, and metaphors, indicating their liminal societal position.

The liminal mind styles of the narrators, distinguished by shifting degrees of certainty and doubt, deployed through diverse stylistic elements, particularly the epistemic modality. The narrators are teetering between certainty and doubt regarding the class divisions, such as the

upper, middle, and working class, political ideas, such as socialism, capitalism, and fascism, and societal situations, such as traditional lifestyle and modernism. Further, it is seen that even though in *Coming Up for Air*, the narrator, Bowling, settled down his role and identity, in *The Road to Wigan Pier*, the narrator remains in the liminal space as an example of what Szakolczai explained as permanent liminality for modern people. This study highlights the narrators' speech to display how the rapid changes and unstable atmosphere in the twentieth century affected individuals in *Coming Up for Air* and *The Road to Wigan Pier*.

This study provides a starting point for further studies regarding the concept of liminality in Orwell's characters. Further studies analysing modality and the aforementioned stylistic elements, such as epithets, modality, and metaphors, may unveil the unstable mind styles of twentieth-century characters. Thus, besides presenting the term liminal mind style as an alternative to analysing literary texts, this study also contributes to studies concerning modality.

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