

## Alan Sillitoe's Out of the Whirlpool – Through the Milky Way

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Alan Sillitoe is one of the most sophisticated fiction writers of the post war period and a name to conjure with, in the contemporary English literary scene. He is one of the most copious of the British writers with an edifice of literary output with wide ramifications that spans a period of five long decades.

Alan Sillitoe is a great story teller and has developed his art in more ways than one. His art has branched out in many forms and his reputation as a novelist, poet, short story writer and a playwright has increased in stature. He has penned travelogues and essays for children, besides selected autobiographical essays and a selected Reader. He has also written screenplay for his novels and stories adapted for films, ie, **Saturday Night and Sunday Morning, The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner, Counter Point, CheGuvera and The Ragman's Daughter**, which has proved him as a multi-faceted artist.

Without hesitation, one may say that his novels and short stories make a compelling reading both for a common reader and a serious scholar of literature. Though he was serious at his calling as a writer, he strongly believed that reading should be entertaining, and 'it is through enjoyment that one learns more<sup>1</sup>'.

Born on 4<sup>th</sup> March, 1928 in Nottingham in a family gripped by poverty and eternal conflict, young Sillitoe was a witness to 'the dumb god- damned suffering' (Alan Sillitoe, Long Piece –Mountains and Caverns (1975) of his parents. The mutual antagonism of his parents, their incompetence, tangible anguish and the misfortune of the family, more often than not made life a terrible mess for Sillitoe.

Born in a working class family in Nottingham, life was a challenge to young Sillitoe. He got a shot in the arm with the publication of his first novel Saturday Night and Sunday Morning (1958). Sillitoe jumped school after the mandatory school leaving age of 14 and indulged in all that was common for a working class boy in Nottingham. He was a 'serial' lover of the local girls and his sexual errands become explicit in his autobiography and semi-autobiographical works. He served the RAF during the Second World War and his life in Malaya as a wireless operator, made him a victim of TB. 16 months of retreat in the military hospital gave him the opportunity to discover himself and his art. His story "The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner", positioned him as a writer of acclaim with the Hawthornden

<sup>1</sup> Alan Sillitoe, **Life Without Armour** (London, Harper Collins, 1995), p.150

Prize conferred on him in 1959. His autobiography **Life Without Armour** (1995) was a feather in the cap of his literary career and earned him the praise of the critics.

It is interesting to note that Sillitoe's art has accommodated shifts and turns from time to time, caused by the changing concerns and the pressing demands on his art through the treatment of working class life. It seems probable that after the publication of **Saturday Night and Sunday Morning** and "The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner", Sillitoe might have felt that he had made a comprehensive statement about the working class conditions and aspirations and the repeated accusations on inequality and injustice in the society will serve no purpose. He turns his focus on the suffering undergone by the "victims of communal forces and pressures" (Stanley S Atherton, 1979) and the human predicament caught up in the world of ambition, prejudice and sexual obsessions. His focus seems to further change after the publication of **The Flame of Life**. In novels like **The Widower's Son, the Story Teller, Her Victory, The Last Flying Boat and Life Goes On**, he deals with multiple themes and experiments with different styles. Though there is a stamp of Sillitoe as far as the presence of his social philosophy running as a powerful undercurrent in all the novels, he deals with human emotions, love, marriage and sex as multiple themes besides the maladies that haunt human life.

It is also worth noting that a lot of criticism is presented in favour or against the early novels of Sillitoe and much of the novels that were published during 1976 and 1985. A host of critics have spilled much ink in the analysis of the novels that were varied and various. Major critics like Mary Land, Alan Penner and Atherton have dealt with a majority of the early novels and one may tend to observe that, their works mostly revolve round the major theme of Sillitoe, ie, working class life in his early works. Atherton appears to limit the discussion to the working class themes and the milieu of Sillitoe that seem to influence his work. It is interesting to note that he viewed Sillitoe as a major writer who would establish himself as a writer producing works that will defy any brand or classification. In the novels published beyond 1985 and upto 1995, Sillitoe appears much philosophic and varied. He becomes more mellifluous and tolerant. The novel **Snowstop** is a novel which emphasises this view point.

In his published works after 1985, Sillitoe talks about realisation, reformation, redemption, retribution and salvation as against frustration, anger, animosity and condemnation in the earlier novels. Sillitoe seems to celebrate work, womanhood and the life that is dedicated to love and sacrifice in the novels published beyond the year 1985. It is interesting to note that the novel **Snowstop**, especially comes as a comprehensive statement on the philosophy of Sillitoe that deals with the issues of life, spirit and death. He tends to talk to 'the treasure island' of the 'self' and the 'quintessential self' in man that should be attained in a sublime moment that holds the key to the immortality, sacrifice and love. Sillitoe writes with a strong conviction that:

The occupation of a novelist is a lonely one: labouring like the coal miner far underground, and away from all populist influences, or intellectual preconceptions, he has only the light from his helmet to illuminate the unique ore that he has discovered, at which he must work undisturbed.<sup>2</sup>

The publication of his autobiography **Life Without Armour** (1995) came as a surprise for the readers as Sillitoe writes with more gusto and zeal. It records a brief account of his long distant journey of life and career. His novel **Snowstop** published in the year 1993 shows that Sillitoe is truly a long distance runner and a master story teller as he shows no signs of flagging. His anger seems no less fiery and concern no less sharp even at this age, when compared to his early life at a time when **Saturday Night and Sunday Morning** was published.

The novella **Out of the Whirlpool** came after a gap of two years after the publication **Life Goes on** in 1985. It is a complex story of an adolescent boy who attempts to escape the suffering of insufficiency to find a berth in the elite. Sillitoe's twist adds much complexity to the otherwise usual working class life that is portrayed in the novella. **The Open Door** published in the year 1989 takes up the story of the life of Brain Seaton exactly where **Key to the Door** had left him. As Sillitoe wanted to bring back Brain Seaton stranded somewhere in the Malayan jungles back home, he takes up **The Open Door** exactly after a gap of twenty eight years. It is well composed and stylish when compared to its predecessor **Key to the Door**. The themes of self-identification, and the portrayal of narrative instinct as a defence against the otherwise dreaded life, are treated excellently by Sillitoe in a sophisticated manner.

The novel **Last Loves** published in the year 1990 and the **Leonard's War** published in the year 1991 are both profoundly philosophic. The former deals with the lives of two sexagenarians who indulge in a retrieval of the past for self-realisation. The latter deals with the life of Leonard Frankland, a life long shunter on the railways, seeking the affection of Sophie. Leonard seems to become a martyr not just through his contribution for his country in the war, but also through his death for the love of Sophie. The novel **Snowstop** (1993) appears to be the most profound work of art that mirrors the artistry and vision of Sillitoe.

Sillitoe's Novella **Out of the Whirlpool** (1987) is a profound and remarkable working class novel with a difference. It shows the versatility and vivacity in the art of Sillitoe. One may find Sillitoe tending to be soft in his approach and treatment of various issues, themes and social evils. His protagonists tend to be less violent and appear soft in their criticism of the upper class. Though the concern and the purpose of his art have not dwindled in any way, Sillitoe seems to talk about spirit, salvation, eternity and individual reformation in the society in his novels published beyond 1985.

<sup>2</sup>Alan Sillitoe- **Life Without Armour** (London: Harper Collins, 1995)

Though Sillitoe has dealt with the working class life, and the aspirations of the young to achieve affluence in a many novels, it is interesting to note such aspirations of the young becomes the major theme of the novel. Brain Seaton, the protagonist in **The Key to Door** as a young boy puts his wish in very simple terms, fed up with poverty, hunger, fights at home for fags and bread. He tells his cousin Bert in the simplest words, which however catch the true anxiety in them: "I wish we was rich"<sup>3</sup> and Sillitoe treats such a hope as a major theme. The aspiration of a young working class boy and his attempts to metamorphose himself in the elite structure is the major theme of the novella *Out of the Whirlpool*. One may note that much of the vigour and vitality of *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1958), and the short story "The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner" (1958) are missing in the latter novels of Alan Sillitoe. He deals with diverse colours of life, the pitiable human predicament, and life as a jungle among all the classes of the society and of course his favourite theme of working class life with precision and care in them.

**Out of the Whirlpool**, published in the year 1987 is an excellent novella dealing with working class life. The protagonist Peter Granby, is no violent and antagonistic bloke as Arthur in **Saturday Night and Sunday Morning**, and neither as assertive and avenging as the Borstal boy-Smith in "The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner". Sillitoe looks into Peter Granby's vulnerability to the temptations of money and its luxuries. The Protagonist of the novella young Peter attempts to force his way into the elite and is humiliated by the vagaries of the mammon and the capricious switching of affinity of the woman that he supposedly loves. His own ambition besides his moving out of the way of understanding adds much to the tragedy of Peter. It is due to the misunderstanding on the part of Peter Grandby, who is carried by his acquaintance with a rich widow and the comforts and the luxuries that her money offers.

A reading of the novel, no doubt gives the experience of travelling through the familiar Sillitoe terrain. Nottingham's diverse, and multitudinous life style, colours and sights and peculiar experiences as found in a variety of early novels and short stories seem to make the reader comfortable and guessing. One can also feel at home while going through the novel as for with the theme. The primary theme of the novel is a recurrent and the favourite theme of Sillitoe. As it deals with the working class condition, and the stressing of an urgent need for social reform and to root out the concept of 'us' and 'them'. The antipathy of the poor towards a large spectrum of establishment, the rich and any representative of the class, who belongs to 'them' and who assigns jobs and asks 'others' to do one thing or the other. It is the class that commands the working community and orders them to do work. In an article published on working class life in a special Nottingham issue of **Anarchy**, in April, 1964. Sillitoe opines that :

<sup>3</sup>Alan Sillitoe, **Key to the Door** (London: W.H. Allen, 1978). P.111

The poor know of only two classes in society. Their sociology is much simplified. There are 'them' and 'us'. They are those who tell you what to do... use a different accent ...pay your wages, collect rent...hand you the dole or national assistance money... live on your backs... tread you down (sic)<sup>4</sup>.

The social, economic and cultural milieu of Nottingham is aptly captured in the novella **Out of the Whirlpool**. It delineates the life of Peter Granby, a young fourteen year old lad who is utterly disgusted at the poverty, and the conditions of life in Nottingham. It portrays his hatred for the class that offered him nothing more than a weekly wage packet, fags, a few pints of ale at the end of the week, eternal poverty, gloom, agony and sexual promiscuity. The agony of the class makes him indulge in a futile attempt to transcend the class barriers "to find a new life"<sup>5</sup>, and to attain status, money and recognition.

Peter Granby, unable to manage with the domestic instability, drab daily monotony and helplessness in the choked, sooty and poverty stricken locality of Nottingham intends to escape the whirlpool of poverty and grim lack lustre life. His father had forsaken his mother Joyce Winnfred Granby to her fate and he lived with somebody. Peter is brought up with the national assistance and all the help that his mother could get from the social organisations. Peter looks at the agony of his mother as she suffered pain due to the bad back and repeated surgeries. Her one breast was chopped off and she was on the verge of death. Her repeated tantrums and emotional outburst at the selfishness of her husband seem to cause vexation in Peter and makes him shy away from home. Except for dinner he does not intend to go home but is attracted towards the grand demolition sight in a street. The back to back houses sandwiched by smoking factories and the houses with black fire place and a chimney column going through the houses reminded him of the poverty, helplessness and the destruction of those houses gave him inexplicable joy. But unfortunately the very next moment, Peter is reminded of the turn of his house, which too will go down in a cloud of orange dust. Such ironic references seem to heighten the irony and throw a lot of light on the psychology of the lad who becomes a witness to the demolition sight and the suffocating streets, which were "a smoking ruin" (p.15).

It can be observed that in almost all the novels of Sillitoe, hunger, poverty and inequalities in the society seem to make his protagonists raise a voice of dissent and protest. One comes to know that Peter has 'hardly has got a bit of rage to his arse' and his poverty makes him wonder at his inability to set things right. He aspires for suit and it is ironical that his dream comes true only at the time of his mother's funeral. With the death of his mother, he comes to live with his grandmother Alice Grandby and her fancy Leonard Beasley. Len,

<sup>4</sup>Alan Sillitoe, "Poor People" *Anarchy* 38 (1964) : 124-8

<sup>5</sup>Alan Sillitoe, *Out of the Whirlpool*. P. 68

once a factory worker had left the excruciating job in a factory for washing plates in a canteen. Len a duffer at school is full of hatred for the educated, and the studies. It is interesting to note that a majority of the characters in the novels of Sillitoe express their aversion towards studies and education.

Nottingham seems to play much of the role during the formative years of Peter. Sillitoe who has made his readers quite acquainted with the topography of Nottingham in many of the earlier novels, captures the true colours and fragrance that is unique to Nottingham. Radford Woodhouse in Nottingham forms much of the background for the character of Peter.

Radford Woodhouse is defined by Len as 'den of thieves', and it is a haunt for the people like Jack Cope and the whole of his family who 'nicked' things for their livelihood. Later in the novel it can be seen that the police arrests the whole family of Jack. Poverty drove many to adopt thievery as a profession in Nottingham. The town centre with pubs and beer-off was place full of people who "were upto no good" (p.33). It was full of drunkards and those who went for stakes in the secret hut behind the garden, pimps and prostitutes. Mr. Skirbeck, Peter's employer is shocked when Peter mentions Woodhouse as his dwelling as he opines that it was a 'rough area'.

In many novels of Sillitoe, one can find the protagonist jumping school at a very young age to join factories. The official school leaving age being fourteen, they jump school to join factories to make a living. Even Sillitoe left school at fourteen to join Raleigh Bicycle factory, to avoid poverty and attain independence. He felt proud to have a 'Key to the door' at 15 in his pocket. In Nottingham it was common among the young lads, to jump school and join factories to become wage earners and avoid the clutches of poverty at home. Peter jumps school to join the Jacquard factory at fourteen to escape the boredom of life and to avoid the drudgery and poverty of monotonous and routine life. Arthur of **Saturday Night and Sunday Morning**, too joins a factory to earn his pay packet as a means to attain financial independence, asserts his individuality and to realise his life's ambition to lead a comfortable life.

Peter is made conscious of poverty at home and the need to work to attain freedom and realisation. His grandmother repeatedly warns Peter that he will be looked at as an idiot until he brought home a wage packet. Like any other young boy in Nottingham, Peter intends to take up a job, which will facilitate him to help his grandmother, and to question the authority of his grandfather. He dreams to assert his individuality and to get a job and go away appears to be a brilliant idea.

The job in the Jacquard factory opens a new world of liberation and independence for Peter. Like a typical urban cowboyhe sports long hair and earns the nick name 'Samson' for himself. He enjoys fags, beer, and occasional flirtations. He spends money earned in the

factory for some jeans and a fancy shirt. He appears utterly reckless of the future and confessed his love for every girl he met on the pavement and aspired to reach 'the continent of white clouds and craved to climb into them to a new country' (p.68). The poverty that he has suffered makes him careless about the future and the wage packet that he got- was used to realise his pent up ambitions and desires. He believed in nothing except strength, ability and job. Peter gets acquainted with a rich window due to a chance meeting with a windowed benefactress when he saves an old lady who collapses in front of his factory. Peter rushes to the rescue of the lady who succumbs later in the hospital. Her daughter Miss. Eileen Farnsfield is all praise for Peter for the kindness that he showed towards her mother.

The taste of the extra money becomes clear for Peter for the first time, when Eileen offers an envelope containing a five pound note as a 'token of gratitude' (p.27). Peter cynically laughs at the idea of getting any help from Eileen, when she offers to help him at any time for the kindness shown towards her mother. He even intends to return the five pound note, but overcomes the temptation. The 'fiver' seemed "special because it was something he hadn't earned" (p.27) and it was a big addition to what he had already saved. He is reminded of his poverty and the long ages that he had to wait to purchase anything in the long list of things that he most wanted- a watch, a transistor, a suit, a pair of overalls, a record player and a motorbike. The first thing that he does with a 'fiver' is to purchase a transistor from Jack Cope who is notorious for the things that he 'nicked'. Peter who once avoids Jack for the fear of cops, overcomes fear with the surplus money in his pocket. Len violently opposes the transistor as he suspects that it was stolen.

It was common for 'young blokes' in Nottingham, to steal things like gas meters and transistors and as a result they got involved in all sorts of problems with the cops. It is interesting to note that, terrible poverty being the most dreaded disease in the world, Sillitoe's protagonists take it for granted that stealing for bread was nothing wrong as they suffer from poverty. One may come to know that the whole of the family of the aunt Ada in **Key to Door**, lives on thievery. Many of aunt Ada's children were on 'night work', and Doddoe-Ada's husband was "absolutely convinced that it was right to go poaching in order to get food"<sup>6</sup> for he was unable to get work but had a family to feed. In "The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner", Smith refers to many of his friends as being in remand homes and Borstal schools for stealing gas meters. In the "The Ragman's Daughter", Tony the protagonist starts his career as a thief at five, but gets sent down to Borstal for stealing out of necessity. One comes to realise that out of poverty and unemployment a majority of people in Nottingham were on 'night work', as Sillitoe himself makes a mention in his autobiography- **Life without Armour**.

One may also get to know about the attitude of the police and the treatment that was meted out to the sorts of Peter in Nottingham. When his house is ransacked and turned into a

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<sup>6</sup>Key to the Door, 169

terrible mess, Peter finds Len, terribly upset and infuriated as the cops have played havoc with the house during their search for the radio. It is later reported that the Jack Cope and his family got into the trap of the police with a large cache of things that were nicked by them. One is indirectly made abreast of the behaviour of the cops and their language that has turned Len into a mad rage, though Peter was acquainted with the ways of the cops. Sillitoe captures the continued antipathy of the poor towards the establishment in his novels. The young lads who stole gas meters and nicked a few pound notes were hounded by the police and sent to the Borstal for the probation. Smith in “The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner”, intends an open war with the cops for sending him to the Borstal:

...its war between me and them...now they have shown me the knife, whether I ever pinch another thing in my life again or not, I know who my enemies are.<sup>7</sup>

One can find innumerable flashes of derogatory remarks on cops that are thrown here and there in the novels of Sillitoe. But in **Out of the Whirlpool**, Peter adopts a soft approach towards the police. It is interesting to note that Peter finds an objection to the unnecessary poking of their noses in all the affairs, but does not criticise them vehemently. Though he complains of the invasion of privacy by the cops, he soon justifies their actions when they look at him suspiciously, that it is part of the copper’s job to doubt ‘everybody, as he would have done if he’d be one’. It is a unique quality that separates him from the other protagonists of Sillitoe’s novels. Arthur in **Saturday Night and Sunday Morning**, Smith in “The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner”, Tony in “The Ragman’s Daughter”, and Brain Seaton in the **Key to the Door**, appear very bitter of the police and can never dream of identifying themselves with a cop as Peter does. It appears to be one of the major attributes that separates Peter from all the working class protagonists of Sillitoe as he prefers to play soft on the attitude of the Police.

Peter and Len come in conflict with each other and the resultant exchange of hot words and blows, Len is injured and Peter leaves home. In his search for his home and belongings, Peter goes in search of lodging for the night. For the first time in his life, young Peter faces the problem of homelessness and belongingness. He becomes bitter of the society that tries to estimate him by his looks and his attire. Peter makes it clear that the society recognised only those who had money and status. Sillitoeextraordinarily portrays the bitterness of the poor for the rich in his earlier novels too.

A study of the novels of Sillitoe reveals a strong sense of hatred that his protagonists nurture against the people who belong to ‘them’- the people who exploit the poor and the workingclass to live in luxury and comfort. Arthur in **Saturday Night and Sunday Morning**

<sup>7</sup> Alan Sillitoe, “The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner” **Collected Stories**, (London: Flamingo, 1995). 7-8



appears very critical of the capabilities of people who move in huge cars with least hesitation to grind “your face in muck<sup>8</sup>”. He enjoys a cynical pleasure when he builds a vision of “...the wonderful sight of gaffers and the machines and shining bikes going sky high one wonderful moonlit night”. Smith in “The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner” calls the rich and the people in the positions of power as “them bastards faced in laws<sup>9</sup>”. Garry in **Snowstop**, another excellent novel by Sillitoe, with all contempt spits fire on the rich middle class members who ride on the backs of the poor for their comforts. When his friend Lance expressed his desire to ride a BMW, Garry in his most venomous tone says:

‘BM-fucking-W’S’....I have shit ‘em. Only posh fuckpigs are around on BMWs – bleeding middle-class Wankers’<sup>10</sup>

Peter appears somewhere between Arthur and Smith for his hatred for the rich. He is unlike Smith in “The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner”, who dares the Borstal bosses by deliberately losing the race to slap at the selfishness and the meaningless of the system and his bosses. Peter appears to be a tough nut as he takes the decision pretty well being aware of the consequences and the treatment that will meted out to him in the prison after the defeat. Peter adopts a soft and milder approach towards the rich as he nurtures a secret desire to get a place in a particular class.

One may be unhesitant to say that Peter adopts a soft approach towards the rich very much consciously, though at times he gives vent to his contempt. One may see how he limits his contempt for the rich middle class to a safe degree when Eileen presents him with an envelope containing a ‘fiver’. Peter screws the envelop and the letter under the seat but not the five pound note. The letter carried a word of appreciation and gratitude besides embossed letters of her dwelling at the posh area of Mapperly and his telephone number. Peter gives vent to his pent up hatred by screwing the letter but not the five pound note. One may also come to know that even at the factory, Peter shuns those areas of the factory building where his posh middle class employers had their office. When he is called in for a chance meeting with Eileen at the factory main office, he hesitantly enters “that part of the factory smelling of furniture polish instead of paste from the jacquard section which stank of shit” (p.25).

In a bizarre incident some miscreants on the road side critically wound Peter, while he finds himself busy searching for a comfortable stay. Peter in his attempt to rescue a girl at the pub, incurs the wrath of a pimp who in turns hires goons to settle scores with Peter. He is wounded in the fight and is left to die in a gutter with a bleeding head. Unable to do anything and hesitant to reach his grandmother after Len, Peter calls Ms. Eileen for help. The Novella is divided into two parts, though as part of the schematic technique, but it speaks of Sillitoe’s technique, which he adopts to make explicit the ‘split’ that takes place in the life of Peter. The

<sup>8</sup>Saturday Night and Sunday Morning, 196

<sup>9</sup>“The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner”. 4.

<sup>10</sup>Alan Sillitoe, **Snowstop** (London: Harper Collins, 1993) 67

split in the head of Peter caused by the wound also seems to allow a split in the personality of Peter from 'us' to 'them'. It is also used to emphasise the split that distances him from his home, his loving grandmother at Radford Woodhouse, and his humble friends.

Once Peter enters the world Eileen, he is perplexed and fascinated by the world of Eileen that: "...there were other things in his mind" (p.47). The factory had gone. His grandmother and Len were wiped out. His split head was healed. It is further interesting to note that Peter comes to make all out efforts to adopt himself to the 'Mapperly' sort of life. His long hair, which had become part of his identity and a matter of pride for him, is cut as the first sign of his acceptance 'to fit in the class'. At this stage, one may look at the conscious efforts of Peter to metamorphose himself as he starts to mimic the class in which he aspires a berth. It is ironical that Peter already sets in himself in the process of civilisation that Eileen intends to be.

One cannot fail to note the attempts of Peter to imitate and play his own father, in his attempts to escape from the whirlpool of poverty. His father, it is said, 'left a good job in a warehouse to fly off "with his fancy woman who was all red hat and no drawers"'. He too got a status, a car and a good living by kicking off poverty, cramped life of eternal agony and the wife who suffered incessant bouts of illness. Like his father who wants to fly off into a different class – a class where his father tried to belong. It is interesting to note that Peter is not alone in his efforts to fly off to the other class, but his boss at the Jacquard factory too was one such case study. Mr. Skirbeck, Peter's employer, the owner of the Jacquard factory comes from a poor background but has comfortably settled down in the elite class because of his marriage with a rich wife.

Peter, no doubt gets what he aspires for in his life through Eileen, but a recompense, he is lost in the search for wealth and status, he loses his soul, his self and himself. Peter tries for transmutation into Eileen's class. However, Eileen looks at him as a handyman, as a guard and as an object which relieves her from boredom. Like Dr. Faustus who pledges his precious soul to Mephistopheles for a worldly pleasure of 24 years in Marlow's **Dr. Faustus**. The scholar pledges his soul to Beelzebub for recognition, power and pomp, till he realises his mistake at the end. But it is too late to escape the whirlpool of sin into which he deliberately entered once. Peter similarly pledges his freedom, ego, and the pride that is part of his working class. He seems to sacrifice his grandparents, his job in the factory, his girlfriends and everything to live with Eileen and to be part of the class to which she belongs and comfortably settles down as an 'odd job man and errand boy'- all these to escape the whirlpool of poverty.

Alan Sillitoe successfully attempts to show that any attempt to transmute the rigid class barrier will be utterly defeated in the novella **Out of the Whirlpool**. Any person who forces his way into the class of 'them' will be thrown out. Any such person will be an unwelcome entity.

Sillitoe artistically lays bare the distinction between the world of 'us' and 'them' through Peter's eyes. Peter indulges in an uninteresting comparison between his life at Radford Woodhouse and at Mapperly. Peter's predicament comes as a blow to any young man who nurtures a plan to cross the class barriers and Sillitoe vehemently criticises the vacuity and meaninglessness of the class structure. Sillitoe once again hints at the need to reform the society and individual reformation. It is love, sharing and caring that needs to be adopted into life than a bogus search for belongingness, status and material comfort that may lead one to an inevitable cul-de-sac. Sillitoe even seems to emphasise the role of fate in the life of a man, as choices have to be paid for always. One may be reminded of Sillitoe's words as he talks of his own life and predicament in his autobiography, **Life without Armour**: "Choices have to be paid for, and those half hidden ones that you allow to be made for you, are which fate makes cost even more"<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup>Alan Sillitoe, **Life Without Armour** (London, Harper, 1995) 274.

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