

Thatcherite Politics in Malcolm Bradbury's *Cuts*: A Marxist Approach

Abdelhakim Fetnaci¹ and Samira al-Khawaldeh²

¹University of Jordan, Email: hakimfet@outlook.fr

²University of Jordan, Email: s.khawaldeh@ju.edu.jo

Corresponding Author:

Abdelhakim Fetnaci

El Jubaiha, Amman, 11941, Jordan

Email: hakimfet@outlook.fr

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Abstract

This paper tightens the bridge between literature and society as it examines the 1980s Thatcherite politics represented in Malcolm Bradbury's *Cuts* (1987) from a Marxist viewpoint. It aims at excavating the novel's critique of the Eighties, and the monetarist tenets that dominated it, arguing that it reveals neoliberalism as an entrenched politico-economic discourse utilised to legitimise Margaret Thatcher's hegemonic policies. From a pragmatic Marxist perspective, based on Harvey's theorisation, the study proposes that *Cuts* demonstrates an ideological purpose vis-à-vis the question of life in the British neoliberal society, seeking to problematise the author's response to Thatcher's regime. Bradbury's delineation of certain aspects of neoliberalism as strategies to empower the Nuevo Rich, and to pacify people into a state of false consciousness, as well as his exposition of its pitfalls and influence on the disenfranchised are highlighted. Neoliberalism emerges as an atrocious course of action against the individual and the collective for its economic and social impact.

Keywords: *Cuts*, hegemony, Malcolm Bradbury, Marxism, neoliberalism, Thatcherism.

Introduction

Bradbury occupies a significant position in the literary academia where his works contribute to the understanding of the social, cultural, economic, and political atmosphere. Still, his novel, *Cuts*, in particular, is met with a dearth of criticism. Of the few who have ventured an analysis of the novel is Christian Gutleben in “Serious Play” (2015), where he tackles the subject of the representation of the Thatcher years in a postmodern deconstructionist approach. He provides a metatextual analysis that involves the theories of Barthes and Derrida to portray a sort of deconstructionist Victorian novel based on bridging the gap between the Victorian past and the Thatcherite present. Still, it is worth noting that this novel contextualises the dark mood of the 1980s Britain which, in Malcolm Bradbury’s words, is designated as “a time of many reappraisals and restructuring, and of rising doubts, dark prophecies and apocalyptic feelings among a good many of the artists and intellectuals” (as cited in Wittlinger, 2002, p. 30). As a matter of fact, *Cuts* is overwhelmed by the side effects of the Thatcherite neoliberal policy where the characters roam in a world of capital accumulation and individuality to mark the collapse of Keynesianism in this new epoch.

What is liberal in neoliberalism?

Neoliberalism strives for “embracing market fundamentalism”, i.e. an economic policy that, according to Margaret Sommers and Fred Block, stands for a “religious-like certitude of those who believe in the moral superiority of organizing all dimensions of social life according to market principles” (as cited in Prechel, 2007, p. 4). It redefines liberalism in the sense that, in reference to David Harvey (2005), it inclines towards an extreme right-wing stance. It surpasses the liberal values and policies rather than firmly building upon them; it signifies a policy that pursues a total liberty of institutional frameworks characterised by “strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade” (p. 2). Thus, it is viewed as an idiosyncratic economic theory that has substituted a long lived Keynesian approach that propagated the idea that the proliferation of ‘discontent’ through much of the advanced capitalist countries is due to the socialist strategy that “restrained the economic power of the upper classes” (Harvey, 2007, p. 28).

Neoliberalism is characterised as “a ‘plural’ set of ideas” and tenets to explain the alteration in capitalism after the 1970s crisis of accumulation (Plehwe et al., 2006, p. 2). In other words, it encroaches on the mainstream politics as a new ideology that prevails in present-day policy programmes and transforms societies towards a life based on economics (Filho and Johnston, 2005, p. 172). It is an ideology that strives to review why the preceding institutional arrangements failed. In this respect, Harland Prechel (2007) claims that “neoliberalism is best understood as an ideology that emerged to legitimate the historically specific policy initiatives to support the capital accumulation agendas of the dominant power blocs” (p. 3). This requires unshackling capital from all the sorts of constraints and essentially from the interventionist and regulatory practices of the state to secure and restore the position of the capitalist class interests (Harvey, 2005, p.42). It pursues the ultimate reformation that seeks to free the market from political control which is deemed a threat to the intended freedom; thus the government intervention in markets for neoliberals, according to Prechel (2007), is the basis of a lethargic economic performance (p. 3-5).

It is a policy model that hauls the credence that maximising the frequency of the market transactions together with bringing all human actions into the domain of market will in return foster the maximisation of the social well-being (Harvey, 2005, p. 3). The financialisation of everything deepens “the hold of finance over all other areas of the economy, as well as state apparatus and daily life” for the reason that the “financial institutions and the integrity of the financial system became the central concern of the collectivity of neoliberal states” (p. 33). In this manner, the social practices and discourses of the neoliberal thoughts supports the efficiency of the individual and corporate initiative in order to hearten the acceleration of privatisation in every field (p. 60). Thus, interestingly, neoliberalism shapes the individuals’ aspirations and

attitudes to competition which is perceived as an endorsed discourse that complies with their ideal political programmes that loathe, for example, taxation and approaches that depend on co-operative egalitarian norms (Toke, 2000, p. 84). These governmental strategies have to be condensed to a feasible extent to pave the way for the “private sector to supply more goods through increased competition and also to give consumers greater freedom to spend their own money” (p. 187).

Notwithstanding its pretexts, neoliberalism initially stands for “a project to achieve the restoration of class power” and dominance, a strategy that has been dominant among all the other objectives such as capital accumulation (Harvey, 2005, p. 16). In this respect, this massive wave of privatisation, corporatisation, and commodification of the public assets demonstrates a cardinal physiognomy of the neoliberal project; i.e. it relocates everything into the realms of the private and class-privileged domains. Yet, to seize these public and popular properties, as Harvey (2007) asserts, “and sell them as stock to private companies is a process of barbaric dispossession on a scale that has no parallel in history”; it subjects the masses to the process of capital accumulation that is perfectly smoothed by the market (p. 36). Therefore, neoliberal policy has been false-consciously legitimised by its utopianism that is only one-sided; that is, in favour of a particular fraction of society, but has adeptly disguised the “sophisticated class struggle on the part of the upper strata to restore or...construct class dominance” (p. 41).

It is true that neoliberalism frowns at any sort of interventionist government, yet modern neoliberal countries introduce a strategy that helps to offer legitimacy to the neoliberal discourse. In this conjuncture, the 1980s in Britain identifies the tarnished structural adjustment policies wherein shifting the paradigms in economics has bred a right-wing philosophy of neoliberalism with a new façade. Politics turned from being social democratic to a more liberal regime in which the state becomes a significant shield for the neoliberals. Specifically, the election of the Conservative government under Margret Thatcher in May 1979 is regarded as a major alteration in economic policy and British politics on a large scale, for it inaugurated a new phase of market dominance (p. 23). Her ascendance in the ministry marks the curbing of “trade union power and put an end to the miserable inflationary stagnation that had enveloped the country for the preceding decade” (Harvey, 2005, p. 1). In this light, on one hand, she thoroughly exemplifies the intended purpose of the state, as a Trojan horse, in safeguarding the superiority of a particular division of commercial individuals by introducing neoliberalism as the fulcrum of economic thought (p. 2). On the other hand, she strategically cultivated consent in the minds of the middle classes through offering possibilities of home ownership, private property and individualism; which, false-consciously, contributed to her ideologically envisioned three electoral victories as well as legitimacy for power (p. 61-62).

Author, text and context

One of the literary writers who meticulously reflects this world of encroaching neoliberalism is the British author Malcolm Stanley Bradbury (1932- 2000). Bradbury is a distinguished British professor, novelist, and critic who is famous for writing *The History of Man* (1975), a satire on academic life. Having helped in the foundation of creative writing courses, he became noted for encouraging new talent; among such talents are Ian McEwan and Kazuo Ishiguro. He was appointed a Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 1991 as well as a Knight Bachelor in the New Year Honours of 2000 for his remarkable services to literature, having written several books, essays of criticism, television plays, with emphasis the world of academics. It is a common theme in his literary works to criticise British academia and culture, and a number of his novels are laden with a harsh, humorous, and ironic tone, the favoured tools for this satire. Among his literary texts are *Eating People is Wrong* (1959), *Stepping Westward* (1965), *Why Come to Slaka?* (1986), *Cuts* (1987), and *Doctor Criminale* (1992).

Cuts (1987), the subject of this essay, reflects the world of Thatcher's neoliberal Britain. The novel centres on the great glass tower of Eldorado TV in which everyone strives to produce a series that will make huge profits surpassing "Brideshead" and "The Jewel in the Crown" (Bradbury, 2015, p. 14). In this respect, and desperate to save the project, Eldorado brings the university teacher and writer, Henry Babbacombe, into the fold to write thirteen episodes of ambitious television. Yet, eventually the production is plagued and Babbacombe ends up with a keen realisation of the tainted nature of the economic Thatcherite Britain. Set in the summer of 1986, the novel thoroughly addresses the heart of the Thatcherite economic policies whereby "everywhere there were cuts," and portrays how the dawn of monetarism incises heavy industries and radically changes the country upside down (p. 3). It marks the shift from a social-democratic government and a political authority into a new form of society that celebrates individuality, economic freedom and enhanced private property. Hence, *Cuts* represents a world that is characterised by "market forces, consumer capitalism, heavy trading, mergers and takeovers" (p. 5).

Published in 1987, Bradbury's novel historicises the year 1986 as the boiling moment of "reducing public expenditure, bringing down interest rates, eliminating over-production and unnecessary [government] jobs" (p. 3). The Conservative government scissors every public utility such as schools, universities and even the health services in order to effectively weaken the traditional Keynesian norms that were indoctrinated in the economic system. It is basically an ideological war declared on government intervention, regulations, and heavy spending in the public services; all seen as the pivot of economic stagnation. In this respect, to achieve this goal and restore prosperity, the monetarists "were whittling away at waste, slashing out at excising rampant excess... cutting the country in two- the North from the South, the rich from the poor" (p. 4). For them this is a spirited purgatory of the financial waste to push the country forwards in which it "would be better, much better, than it had been before" (Ibid). 'Before' here signifies the post-war period when the Keynesian approach dominated the circulation of capital and regulated the levels of its accumulation; it restricted the market and asphyxiated the individuals. Therefore, the neoliberal thinking comes to unshackle the market from the suffocating static governmental regulations and encourage it to thrive into 'better' conditions in which fantasies and dreams are decorated and realised only by money.

In the contemporary circumstances, things grow differently and the world changes very fast under the influence of the neoliberal practices; it is a time "for getting rid of the old illusions, and replacing them by the new hard illusions" (Bradbury, 2015, p. 5). It demonstrates the fierce raid of the neoliberal thought that inspired the political and economic values to exhibit the dogmatic supremacy of the 1980s over the past; this is attributable to the fact that the modern capitalist world is quite dominated by an implanted sense of self-interest, ownership and entrepreneurialism which are viewed as the mere components for the better advancement of human welfare. It is utterly the new form of conducting the strings of economy which can best identify the 1980s as

[a] time for enterprise, for commercial adventure, for communal capitalism, for opportunity, and more people were buying shares than ever before. And everyone was growing leaner and cleaner, keener and meaner, for after all in a time of cuts it is better to be tough than tender much more hardware than software. The people who used to talk art now talked only money (Ibid).

Hence, *Cuts* does really evoke Thatcherism through the depictions of attitudes, and an atmosphere that indicates the circumstances in the 1980s. It describes a frenzied account of greed and degeneracy and a hectic time of capital accumulation in which the value of money becomes the only measure of prosperous life.

The new liberal

It is worth noting that if Thatcher, along with Ronald Reagan, is the politician archetype of neoliberalism, Lord Mellow, in *Cuts*, represents the thriving model and character that strives to benefit from this neoliberal policy with an iron fist. He is an eccentric and “an intemperate man” with “volatile moods” who rages and shouts at his employees all through the day (p. 10-60). He is utterly unpredictable and his attitude might change overnight without a convincing reason simply because he is the boss at his new glass building, Eldorado Company, in which he resolves to undertake a new television project; a man with charisma that grants him the silence of his employees even when they abhor the ideas he comes up with. They “can’t tell him” about the banality or even the difficulty of his decisions for the reason that what brings all of them together is a money relationship that facilitates the discourse of dominance (p. 26).

He is entitled as Lord to canonise his position and mark his social action that, to echo Georg Lukacs’s proposition (1971), “takes the form of object which rules the producers instead of being ruled by them”; hence power stands for another form that the market can be converted to (p. 49). His staffs find it best to comply with his commanding and controlling orders with an overindulgence of fear of any misdeed, as his hegemonic character operates exploitatively and oppressively at the realm of a capitalist economy. By the same token, he is an individualist who always uses a discourse of autonomy and authoritarianism in his speeches; valorising the significance of his production he asserts: “I want it epic, I want it dramatic, I want it functional, and I want it in the morning” (Bradbury, 2015, p. 139). In this light, in a stance that resonates Williams Davies’s idea (2014), he does not address his crew as a leader but as a boss and a figure of authority who is to be obeyed due to the asymmetries in the power of capital and because the nucleus of private property within the economic scope initiates domination (p. 3). That is to say, the relationship becomes hegemonic and dominant whereby, based on Harvey’s supposition (2006), Lord Mellow forces a structure and a system that dances to his tune (p. 27).

The market is truly an arena for an endless competition for money and power. Although Lord Mellow’s moneyed world is heartily a prestigious setting that stamps the comfort of neoliberalism, it is “at risk of being poached by some other company rather bigger than Eldorado itself” (Bradbury, 2015, p. 10). Compared to other private programme companies, it is a smaller and a remote one, therefore it is always in a competitive process with the others. Competition is deemed to be the primary virtue for Eldorado in order to see itself climbing the ladder of fame from the muddy bottom as this course requires a strong mentality and hardwork. It is quite obvious that the 1980s illustrates how the more privileged neoliberals “priced quality right off the market... [and how] it is destroying the small companies like Eldorado” wherein Lord Mellow and his staffs “have to cut [their] coats according to [their] cloths” (p. 14). It is a monetary clash between the big as well as the small companies that have something in common as they have been freed from the government interference. They believe that production and accumulation are encouraged by competition which in itself embodies “the hallmark of individual behavior, and thereby stamps itself as the distinguishing characteristic of all members in the class of capitalists” (Harvey, 2006, p. 29). Thus, Lord Mellow realises that this competition that is triggered by a voracious greed is a typical principle for winning and success.

Competitiveness represents a quintessential trait for the capitalist to “promote the conditions for progressive accumulation” (p. 19). In this manner, Lord Mellow, who occupies the throne of power in Eldorado, is a climbing wolf who is always hungry for more to thrive on with his company. Ambition and greed drive his instincts “to be up there on stage, running away with every award in the business for this prestigious project” in which he has spent half a million to get it developed (Bradbury, 2015, p. 55). He builds great expectations, believing that it will be worth it in the end to fit into this world; he looks forwards to the feast of success and to rise to the highest level of capital. Echoing the Thatcherite playfulness of capital which was floating “begging to invest in the right-quality artistic package,” he claims that he has

“never seen so much money on the street,” so that he longs to take risk and be part of those stakes (p. 30-31). This is an accurate representation of the prototype capitalist agent who invests his “money and use[s] values into circulation in order to make more money”; therefore, it is significantly a process in which the material manifestation takes place as a renovation of capital into a commodity and then back into capital with weighty profits or, what Marx calls, the production of surplus value (Harvey, 2006, p. 20-21).

The individual interests along with those of the owners determine the movement of capital and its social force (Lukacs, 1971, p. 63). Lord Mellow puts it quite eloquently from the very start of the project that he wants a convergence between quality and cheapness as he knows that “the streets are choking with money if you know how to get it” (Bradbury, 2015, p. 15). The world takes a new track and he is ready to embrace it in his own way; though he favours quality, he longs to undertake this investment with little money and gain a surplus value from it. This is attributable to the fact that, to borrow the words of Alfredo Saad-Filho and Deborah Johnston (2005), “the capitalist who can produce more cheaply than his competitors can earn a higher rate of profit and drive his competitors from the market, so every capitalist has to run ahead in order to stand still” (p. 54). Lord Mellow, thus, knows very well that if he wants to make more profits he must not waste his money in vain; his production’s costs have to be lowbrow to position himself as a true competitor in the market.

In actual fact, what gives him a push forwards in this venture is that his “franchise comes up for renewal quite soon”; thus he is fed by the vessel of the state which plays the pivotal role of providing chances for self-interested minority to enjoy a thriving fortune and treat (Bradbury, 2015, p. 16). This makes the neoliberal state’s contribution fairly transparent, for it portrays the jump from the liberal restriction of the government interventions into a more supportive level in which the state authorises the flexibility of neoliberalism to ease matters for the individuals and their self-interests. In light of this, Lord Mellow is eager to take advantage from this opportunity to carry out his commercial activity by hiring a bankable star in his television drama in order to “get worldwide co-production money” and push his commodity into the global marketplace (Ibid). He, shrewdly, undertakes a deal with a Japanese corporation and then with a Swiss for if they “shoot the whole thing with Swiss Bankers on a continental location [they] don’t have to pay British tax” (p. 147). This shows the Thatcherite efforts to shutter the socialist resistance as well as its determination for a worldwide economy. Therefore, as a capitalist who runs after his materialistic ends, he wants to contribute in the international market’s foreshadowing of Thatcher’s neoliberal policy that principally aims at making capital as an emphatic force that brings people together from all different corners of the world.

Despite the fact that Thatcher pounced on the aristocratic traditions that dominated the finance and many segments of industry, she ardently supported “the brash entrepreneurs and nouveaux riches” (Harvey, 2005, p. 30). Hence, it is worth mentioning that because of the aspiring nature of Lord Mellow, as a capitalist, he likes to fly high above in the world of money through, metaphorically, shortcuts. In other words, for the accomplishment of his task, he wants his production “shot in the autumn and shown in the spring”, and, more importantly, he wants it “cheap” (Bradbury, 2015, p. 32). He signifies a new dominant and a hasty nouveau riche who urges his workers to quickly and enthusiastically finalise a major prize-winning project; as if implementing Harvey’s insight that those “who accumulate more quickly tend to drive out of business those who accumulate at a slower rate” (Harvey, 2006, p. 29). This hastiness, in reference to Harvey’s hypothesis, unearths the capitalist’s competitive instincts that hunt high and low for stratagems that might help him increase the intended surplus value by any means even if it is at the expense of his staffs’ uneasiness, so that, literally, Lord Mellow adopts this profit-seeking impulse quite perfectly as part of his subjective being (p. 28).

Neoliberals, to quote Paul Treanor, argue that “every human being is an entrepreneur managing their own life, and should act as such” (as cited in Prechel, 2007, p. 65). It functions in favour of the rule of a minority that deceives “the other classes and to ensure that their class consciousness remains amorphous” within the neoliberal regime (Lukacs, 1971, p. 66). Simply put, Lord Mellow represents a model of the new subjective figure and actor in an economic activity; as a hierarchical boss he says to Henry, who is “subject to contract”, “so now you have come into my employ!” in order to breed an atmosphere that is essentially based on superiority and inferiority at the outset (Bradbury, 2015, p. 51-52). He has got the power to hire Henry on short-term contract that is dependent “on the existence of a dominant discourse that generates and is associated with a body of knowledge that confers legitimacy on such practices” (Toke, 2000, p. 11). It is the system of money-relationship that characterises employment in the Thatcherite context; a relationship between the capitalist, Lord Mellow, and the labourer, Henry, which mirrors the profound antagonism within the gap that separates them. In this respect, the implementation of a contractual mechanism, in reference to Harvey’s ideas (2006), guarantees an economic condition that is very much suitable for Lord Mellow as a private individual to carry on his project (p. 19).

Lord Mellow exemplifies a dogmatic character that gets whatever he wants by any means it takes. In other words, to secure a golden handshake with Henry for his own materialistic ends, he “took Henry’s elbow again and propelled him toward the window” of the fortieth floor and “what Henry saw was a vertiginous drop, for the Eldorado tower dwarfed the great city, rising not only above the roofs but above the birds themselves” (Bradbury, 2015, p. 53); a symbolic image of the capitalist’s dominant presence over his surroundings. He tempts him with the mesmeric sight from the top of the moneyed-building from which he can vaguely see the dwarfish people walking desperately in the labyrinthine city. He allures Henry to join a system that is structured by his mono authority through a strategic persuasion “to maintain,” as theorised by Harvey, “the climate of consent necessary to perpetuate” his power (2005, p. 40). Undoubtedly, the materialistic ends are the steering wheel of Lord Mellow’s nature because hiring Henry as a writer for his television drama will solely help him increase his capital accumulation. He is always looking above himself and has a rapacious appetite for a great number of episodes for the reason that “anyone who doesn’t think big isn’t big enough for Eldorado” (Bradbury, 2015, p. 53). Longer episodes of television grant his venture elongated hours of a consumption that would upsurge his surplus value. Thus, significantly, Henry’s television scripts always have very wide margins so that his editors can pen down extra ingredients that might fill out the story for “they look for what people like, and they give it to them” (p. 106). Ironically for Henry, that is the Eldorado’s way to have its people’s time and consumption at its best.

What is the intellectual’s worth?

Bradbury’s *Cuts*, by the same token, draws on a verisimilitude of the limits of the human beings in the neoliberal context which echoes what Harvey (2006) postulates as “all history is the history of class struggle, and that the labour theory of value must hold because it is the expression of the class relations of capitalism” (p. 3). An extended gap separates people and builds an antagonistic social relationship for “the poor didn’t like the rich, or the rich the poor, and life seemed harsher but cleaner, harder but firmer” (Bradbury, 2015, p. 8). It characterises the miseries of the disenfranchised who “slept in cardboard boxes in the subways” in a scissored world struggling for rights that symbolise the base of the hierarchy of needs such as a shelter and food while another specific fraction with suits and big cars enjoyed a good life in expensive hotels and homes (p. 7). The novel elucidates the manners in which neoliberalism functions as a project to restore class power system wherein the rich get richer and the poor get poorer; it incorporates Harvey’s proposition (2005) that sees this policy as a “‘creative destruction’ not only of prior institutional frameworks and powers... but also of division of labour” (p. 3). Thus, in this monetarist world, the surplus

value is not being equally distributed; for only some people take the advantage of a prosperous life while others have to work hard and gain very little, which is not particularly a natural constraints but a social one that leads to massive inequalities.

In total contrast to Lord Mellow's position and ideology, Henry is the model of the sheared, in this case, intellectual proletariat who has his being in a tiny depressing hill-village. In an isolated agricultural sphere he feels himself alienated and cut off in a claustrophobic shed where the field mice always come to shelter. It is indeed a degraded condition for a university lecturer in the Department of Extra-Mural Studies to live in such animalistic atmosphere completely estranged from the outside world. In addition, as a long-ignored writer, he has always yearned for a plunge into a world that might grant him opportunities to better his living standards which he truly finds in the existentially different grand city that has witnessed an utter change; therein he would become an employee at Eldorado. In this sense, the neoliberal institutions control the economic relations between all humans through lodging an ideology that is hauled by false consciousness at its best; i.e. when the conscious mastery of economic phenomena appears to be at its greatest, the highest degree of unconsciousness or false consciousness manifests itself (Lukacs, 1971, p. 64). In total irony, he the intellectual is, as noted above, both persuaded and obliged to nod in agreement to be at the services of the dominant Lord Mellow because of his hunger for recognition; yet, for capitalists, he is "a mere factor of production" that is hired on a contract (Harvey, 2005, p. 167).

Significantly, Lord Mellow opens Henry's eyes wide open, when he is driven towards the window of the fortieth floor, to comprehend that people in the 1980s live in two different separate worlds and to realise that "the world was worse than he thought" (Bradbury, 2015, p. 43). This might be attributable to the fact that the neoliberal policies demonstrate an increase in social imbalance and an undoubtable vivid inequality, especially during the Thatcherite government that turned the economic agenda and "the UK into a country of relatively low wages and a largely compliant labour force (relative to the rest of Europe) within ten years" (Harvey, 2005, p. 59). Therefore, Henry realises that the overwhelmed materialism in the city breaks his spirit for he could see how production is organised, who has power and capital and who has not; in other words, he now sees the hegemonic power of capital over the superstructure, including politics and culture, which results in social imbalance and inequality.

Thatcher, Filho and Johnston (2005) claim, "has left the United Kingdom as one of the most unequal countries in the OECD area" (p. 206). As a matter of fact, the discourse that brings Lord Mellow and Henry together, which is grounded in the infrastructure of neoliberalism, is utterly hegemonic and at the same time is based on hierarchy. At the great glass tower of Eldorado, Henry understands that it is all so different "in this new world of media, and not at all like teaching evening classes" (Bradbury, 2015, p. 47). He is seen as an intruder who comes from a completely dissimilar, lower even, as well as unbridgeable background that is imbalanced in terms of material status in comparison with Lord Mellow for the reason that capital accumulation benefits a small fraction yet is detrimental to the lives of many. His teaching vocation in the village is deemed to be futile and this is quite exemplified when Lord Mellow asks Henry "what ridiculous sum do they pay you?" and Henry's reaction is engulfed by embarrassment as he blushing murmurs "the nature of his salary, and Lord Mellow laughed" (p. 54-55). This quote elucidates the manners in which Lord Mellow mocks Henry's little salary arguing that two scripts will earn him that if he accepts to, according to Harvey's suggestions (2006), sell his "labour power as a commodity in return for wages" (p. 22). Power is shown to be, not in the hands of government, which pays Henry's salary, but is transferred to the hands of the few, the type of Lord Mellow, who now ridicule its helplessness. Thus, income inequality illustrates the foremost variances in life experiences between the two characters in which "the market ensures that factors of production are paid what they are worth" (Filho and Johnston, 2005, p. 23). In this manner, as one of the

primary effects of neoliberalism, income distribution stands for a major hurdle for Henry who, as a lecturer, is merely paid what he is worth because of the cuts in the public services such as the universities.

In his book, *The History of the University of East Anglia*, Sanderson (2002) states that “after ten years of Thatcherism teaching was by far the least respected job” (p. 377). Hence, regardless the fact that the university salary “was designed only to support a single man in celibate circumstances”, one who cannot afford to marry or to buy a better car than the ancient Morris Traveller, Bradbury echoes the conditions of the public universities in particular, which have been thrown into a considerable chaos in the 1980s (Bradbury, 2015, p. 61). In a literary style, he portrays the cuts in the small provincial university’s budget done by the newly knighted Vice- Chancellor who epitomises the enthusiasm of privatisation which has been the great ‘buzz-word’ in the epoch. He, interestingly, strives to “disestablish ancient departments like Classics and English altogether, and replace them by more modern ones” in a sense that foreshadows the Thatcherite monetarist policies that were set up on the academic curriculum and freedom (p. 58-59).

In this conjuncture, Finniston, the Chancellor of the university where Henry worked, claims that the provincial university is witnessing a serious crisis and many losses that force him to cut his budget along with the retirement of many professors because of the reductions in public expenditures. He believes that the Conservative government with its new doctrines “chose to give ratings to the various departments and universities in the country... they gave the best departments stars... Alas, Babbacombe, I fear we here did not do well out of it” because their reputation is at rock bottom (p. 64-65). For them, the only certain thing in this uncertain world is that they do not have money to better the conditions of their campus “like the vulgar new universities” which are boasting of their standing (p. 65). Their university is in the epicentre of cuts since it is deemed as “a loss-making [Keynesian] traditional institution” that should be dismantled rather than benefiting from any franchise (p. 59).

Thatcher’s neoliberal agenda commodifies higher education and, plainly, delineates what Michael Dibdin in *Dirty Tricks* (1991) characterises as philistinism and a narrow mindedness that devalues intellectuality. Bradbury points at the issue of public versus private universities which were false-consciously legitimised by the quasi-intention of bettering productivity and quality. In this regard, in academic capitalism the university staffs “are increasingly driven into entrepreneurial competition” which subordinates education to commercialism and marketisation (Filho and Johnston, 2005, p. 156). This new order comes to dominate at the expense of intellectuality which turns to be at risk because of the competitive ideology that hunts for a reformative agenda of higher education slanted towards, in reference to Bruce Johnstone et al, the “market capitalism and the principles of neoliberal economics” (as cited in, p. 157). In other words, Bradbury’s ‘new vulgar universities’ identify the newly privatised ones that fit into the Thatcherite programme; embodying Filho’s and Johnston’s assumption of an atmosphere based on money relation-ship between business and university administrators and, more importantly, between teachers and students who would become customers and clients (Ibid). This demonstrates how the Thatcherite government longs to structure the field of academia according to the market models in form and content even if it sacrifices the valorisation of the humanitarian aspect (Bradbury, 2015, p. 59).

The financial stagnation at the provincial university drives Henry to work for Lord Mellow’s Thatcherite enterprise to save himself from alienation. However, he does not get the recognition he has been yearning for from his boss who makes a deal with him without the need to know his name as he says “I greatly look forward to working with you in a mutual way, Mr. Whoever you are” (p. 56). Henry is dispossessed of his own name, or any name even; that quintessential core of one’s identity; reinforcing in this hegemonic sphere his sense of inferiority. He is unnamed more than once in the novel and coldly addressed as a writer who has got no primary role in Lord Mellow’s production with work constantly subject to editing; he is a controlled performer recruited to write, for instance, about the death of Sir Luke and to

follow the orders like “locating [the story] in Japan [though] he doesn’t know anything about it” (p. 94). He is deprived of his creative freedom and alienated from his own product which becomes out of his league because, as Marx believes, “the more the worker produces, the less he has to consume”, [his] needs, no matter how desperate, do not give him a license to lay hands on what these same hands have produced, for all his products are the property of another” (Ollman, 1976, p. 143). Hence, He becomes conscious that no matter what he writes he would always have his script modified for the ultimate materialistic ends of Lord Mellow.

The situation in such and establishment does not allow for any form of social solidarity; any attempt of this kind is destructed (Harvey, 2005, p. 80-81). So, in the case of Henry, we find that he is not truly met with the welcoming hearts of the staffs. He is basically otherised in the moneyed tower where he is supplied with “a tiny desk in a dark corner,” (Bradbury, 2015, p. 113), and wherein people look at him up and down while in some occasions he is not even given eye-contact like when Cynthia says “this is Henry the author” in an effort to introduce him to Brad who kept himself occupied and said nothing (p. 90). Furthermore, though he tries his best to assimilate into what characterises this new world by accepting all the rules, taking a shower to wash off the smell after he bumped into a sheep, and buying a new tie to attend the party, he is still regarded as a parasite. At the party of Eldorado, for instance, unlike the well-suited middle-aged man “who was being treated with considerable respect and being told lots of stories” people “all look up coldly at Henry”; he is underestimated and only gets attention when they find nothing left to talk about, which makes him feel a sense of worthiness (p. 98). Therefore, Henry finds himself eventually lost in a materialistic wilderness; he is neither allowed to fully assimilate into this particular fraction of society because of their pride and prejudice nor is he able to go back to his roots for “he had become a stranger in the village” too (p. 112).

Conclusion

In conclusion, Bradbury’s *Cuts* exposes the corruption as well as the ‘Serious Damage’, what the television programme is significantly called in the novel, of neoliberalism on the disenfranchised in the 1980s. It demonstrates a vicious world wherein money is the apple of Lord Mellow’s eyes, who only cares about the finalisation of the production he has been working on for long even if it is accomplished through vicious Machiavellian means. He is a nouveau riche that embodies the Thatcherite policy in the sense that he was free to choose to undertake his malicious venture and is thus the only one responsible for the damage he has caused; still, his blindness leads him to lose everything in the end. Moreover, *Cuts* also portrays how the notion of the human comes into a state of crisis through the representation of the vulnerable Henry; he is bounded by the constraints of neoliberalism which epitomises hegemony as well as an exclusion of the marginalised majority. As a matter of fact, Bradbury’s *Cuts* may well be a Marxist critique of the Thatcherite neoliberal policy that results in social destruction and incoherence.

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