"It's just boys being boys": Men, Masculinity and Class in the British 'Hoodie Horror' cycle

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract

The British hoodie horror cycle is an often overlooked component of the so-called 'British Horror Revival' of the 21st-century. This thesis considers the cycle in detail, focusing on the representation and exploration of three key concepts: men, masculinity and class. It asks and offers answers to three key questions: where can the hoodie horror be located within the wider frameworks of horror and British cinema? How are working-class men and working-class masculinity, specifically, represented within this cycle? And finally, what can these representations reveal to the viewer about the surrounding social, political and historical contexts that have facilitated the cycle's existence?

Chapter One will develop a chronology of cinematic context and history, in order to effectively locate the cycle amongst its predecessors and contemporaries. Chapter Two explores the utilisation of landscape and the representation of the male body within the cycle, suggesting a potential symbiotic relationship between the two and investigating the implication of 'classed' landscapes and bodies. Chapter Three deals with the representation, specifically, of black working-class masculinity, and posits suggestions as to how and why these narratives differ from those dedicated to a white working-classness. Finally, Chapter Four will interrogate the use of the supernatural in several hoodie horrors, questioning how far the inclusion of a supernatural element makes explicit contemporary understandings of class and masculinity.

Offering an in-depth study of the hoodie horror film in relation to its specific socio-historical context, this thesis utilises a self-aware 'reflectionist' approach in conjunction with a mixed methodological approach which incorporates sociological, historical and philosophical scholarship. In doing so, the thesis offers an understanding of hoodie horror as reflective and representative of contemporary perceptions of and attitudes towards class and masculinity in Britain.

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Introduction

"In recent history, especially in Britain, low class status functioned as an important tribal stigma, the sins of the parents, or at least their milieu, being visited on the child, should the child rise improperly far above his initial station."[1]

The hoodie horror film is a distinctly British phenomenon, belonging to a very particular moment in Britain's long history of class conflict. This thesis identifies the hoodie horror cycle as a series of British horror films, released between 2008 and 2012, which share (and potentially exploit) the concern of 'class' through their featuring of young, working-class male characters. The hoodie horror regularly places these characters in the role of antagonist, and in so doing poses some pressing questions about class in Britain; its boundaries, signifiers and connotations, and the conflict and contempt that arises from a reliance upon such rigid, inflexible class hierarchies. Within these films, Goffman's 'tribal stigma' of class is made explicit and horrific, and the stories of the individuals bearing this stigma become a vehicle for the exploration of 'Broken Britain' and its poorest citizens. The phrase 'Broken Britain' was popularised by the tabloid press, and was later picked up by the Conservative party, to express a cultural malaise and the apparent decline of social conditions throughout the country in the mid-2000s.[2] Of greatest interest to this study are the representations and characterisations of men and masculinity which dominate the

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[1] Erving Goffman. *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. (London: Penguin, 1990). p.15.

[2] David Cameron's 2008 speech, 'Fixing our Broken Society' (07/07/08), promised "to heal the wounds of poverty, crime, social disorder and deprivation that are steadily making this country a grim and joyless place to live for far too many people". Once elected, Cameron would continue to assert that British society was 'broken'.

entirety of the cycle. Without exception, hoodie horror is focused upon the struggles of and amongst men. Women, where present, are restricted to the peripheries of the narrative, whilst masculine conflict drives the narrative forwards and offers an unusually rich and varied discussion regarding the intersection of class and gender.

Whilst it is not particularly unusual within the horror narrative to identify commentaries on masculinity or class, hoodie horror stands apart in its preoccupation with the survival of men in particular, where, in horror more widely, the quintessential survivor would typically be a woman. In the case of *Eden Lake* (Watkins, 2008) and *Community* (Ford, 2012), women are placed in lead roles and set up as Final Girl[3] characters, only to succumb to male violence in the final moments of the film. The foregrounded battle for survival is rather between men. Even in *Eden Lake*, whose female character, Jenny, is an unusually dominant one, it is the conflict between her male partner and male teen delinquent Brett which is the catalyst for violence. Neither wants to lose face, and both want to assert their dominance, which leads to an extreme and brutal battle, first for supremacy, then for survival. This survival takes numerous forms: physical survival in the wake of attack, collective survival as part of a gang or group, and emotional survival in the face of social conflict. In each case, the survival of men is representative of the survival of the class and lifestyle they personify.

Through the close analysis of several hoodie horror texts, this thesis seeks to answer three key research questions. Primarily, it intends to articulate not only how, but why, class and masculinity are such central concerns to the hoodie horror narrative. By investigating the various representations of both concepts, the study will go on to consider how these representations can be situated within a real-world context of class discrimination and masculine crisis, precipitated by political agenda

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[3] Carol Clover. *Men, Women and Chain Saws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film*. (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1992).

and media bias. Therefore, this thesis endeavours to consider the political and social climate which has facilitated the cycle's proliferation, and demonstrate the reflexivity of hoodie horror, and the horror genre as a whole. Also important to this discussion is the cycle's potential for both exploitation and exploration. This study does not deny the inherently exploitative elements of the horror genre, nor does it wish to overlook the particular form of exploitation occurring in the hoodie horror. Rather, it argues for the importance of an analysis that considers not only the exploitative elements of the films, but also the exploration of class and gender that hoodie horror enables, often through its exploitation of particularly damaging stereotypes. But first, this thesis suggests how these films can be understood within a wider filmic context, and identifies where they sit within the horror canon.

This research situates itself in relation to existing works on British horror cinema and its history, exemplified by the seminal research of David Pirie, Jonathan Rigby and Peter Hutchings,[4] and shares its focus on contemporary British horror with the scholarship of Johnny Walker,[5] who has written extensively on the subject. However, this research differentiates itself from extant scholarship through its dedicated focus upon hoodie horror specifically; a cycle which provides a rich tapestry of allegory and representation regarding the British class system and which dedicates a huge majority of its time, even by generic standards, to the representation of male destruction, repression and crisis. The application of a mixed socio-historical and reflectionist approach to the films also offers an alternative viewpoint to those taken by the aforementioned scholars. With an awareness of the negative connotations associated with the term 'reflectionist', this thesis offers what Matt Hills defines as "a

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[4] See Peter Hutchings. *Hammer and Beyond: The British Horror Film*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), David Pirie, *A New Heritage of Horror: The English Gothic Cinema*. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2008), and Jonathan Rigby. *English Gothic: Classic Horror Cinema 1897-2015*. (Cambridge: Signum, 2015).

[5] Johnny Walker. *Contemporary British Horror Cinema: Industry, Genre and Society*. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015).

more liminal, nuanced approach to text/context 'reflectionism'",[6] which hopes to illuminate the hoodie horror's potential for commentary whilst also acknowledging the exploitative and sometimes fantastical nature of the cycle. As Hills continues, "the social and cultural contexts within which movies [find] mean[ing] will always be multiple",[7] and hoodie horror could certainly be read in a number of ways; as an allegory for the financial crisis, a microcosmic reflection of mounting fears surrounding so-called 'home-grown' terrorism, or as a reactionary statement against the disillusioned and disenfranchised millennial generation. This thesis, however, has chosen to view the cycle through a dual lens of class and gender, an approach which allows for an investigation of the cycle as a generic and specifically British trend, whilst also providing an opportunity to argue for horror's reflexive potential. Unlike Hills' reflectionist reading of the *Saw* franchise (2004-2017), the distance between the text and context is significantly narrower, with hoodie horror unashamedly replicating instances of real-world violence and delinquency and utilising social realist tropes to do so. This proximity to the climate the films are reflecting stands to prove that these films cannot be regarded as apolitical, or indeed as purely exploitative. By using a politically charged figure as its central antagonist, the hoodie horror invites a discussion of the problematic renegotiation of both working-classness and gender in 21st century Britain.

This study provides unprecedented consideration of the cycle and its place and relevance within the contemporary horror genre. In order to best demonstrate the commentary on class and masculinity that the hoodie horror provides, the study will focus primarily on narrative and characterisation, using both to illustrate the interconnectedness of the on-screen hoodie and the real-world class conflict it

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[6] Matt Hills. 'Cutting into Concepts of "Reflectionist" Cinema? The *Saw* Franchise and Puzzles of Post-9/11 Horror'. Aviva Briefel & Sam J. Miller (eds.). *Horror After 9/11: World of Fear, Cinema of Terror*. (Austin: Texas University Press, 2012). p.108.

[7] Hills. (2011). p.121.

represents. This focus does, necessarily, exclude the consideration of other filmic elements such as soundtrack, though such elements would be a valuable part of a larger study, and does not afford the space for the addressing of industrial questions. A comprehensive study of the industrial matters surrounding the British Horror Revival has been undertaken by Johnny Walker,[8] and this thesis does not aim to address or refocus questions of industry already rigorously answered in Walker's work. Similarly, with the distribution of hoodie horrors varying — some garnering theatrical release, some released straight-to-DVD — an audience studies approach would have required a dedicated quantitative approach, which would have detracted from the intended focus of the study and the answering of its research questions. Therefore, this thesis acknowledges only a generic spectator, and does not articulate a statistical demographic or viewership; this is a matter which requires a separate, dedicated study.

The thesis includes a chapter focusing on three films unique in their exploration of blackness and working class masculinity. These films are placed in a contemporary cinematic context which has seen genre films encouraging new dialogue around race and genre, exemplified by Jordan Peele's *Get Out* (2017), which explicitly addressed the visibility and disposability of, specifically, the black male body in horror.[9] Hoodie horror, much like the horror genre more generally, is dominated by white bodies, and therefore the majority of the discussion undertaken about working-class masculinity in the forthcoming chapters on landscape and the supernatural is informed by the representation of a specifically, and explicitly, white working-classness and its attendant portrayal in British media. Working-class whiteness as a racialised category is also discussed and criticised explicitly in conjunction with landscape, with hoodie horror's borrowing of tropes from backwoods horror — a

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[8] Walker. (2015).

[9] Angela H. 'New Flesh: How Get Out Inverts and Reimagines Body Horror'. *Overthinking Horror Films*. (23/03/17).

subgenre which exploits the racially charged 'white trash' stereotype. Indeed, the 'tribal stigma' attributed to the working-class and discussed at the opening of this chapter serves as a racially charged categorisation in and of itself. The deeply problematic conflation of working-classness and whiteness within class rhetoric is evident in the dominance of the white, working-class male in hoodie horror, but this is not the only representation available for analysis. With an awareness of the broader problem of how race is treated, or outright ignored, in horror criticism, a consideration of blackness in hoodie horror is an absolute necessity in this thesis' account of representation, particularly when analysed in conjunction with the racial undertones which bolstered 'Broken Britain' ideology and, later, supplied the vitriolic political and public response to the London Riots. The dynamics of the representation of class and masculinity are undoubtedly altered when intersected by questions of race, and so not only is it important to analyse what these films do differently, it is also integral to the research aims that the relationship between blackness and the central concerns of class and masculinity are engaged with fully, outside of the homogenising whiteness associated most readily with British working-classness.

The reflectionist aspects of this study's approach allow for a simultaneous analysis of the film texts and the social contexts that the research aims to demonstrate the connection between. Drawing inspiration from the successful studies of Linnie Blake, Kendall R. Phillips, Robin Wood and Carol Clover,[10] whose work blends reflection upon contextual influences with sociological and philosophical scholarship, the thesis hopes to lend a renewed sophistication and rigor to the defamed reflectionism through an extensive engagement with socio-political and philosophical scholarship. This prevents the research from becoming singularly reflectionist, and instead uses reflection collaboratively with an engagement with film

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[10] See Linnie Blake. *The Wounds of Nations*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press: 2008), Kendall R. Phillips. *Projected Fears*. (London: Praeger, 2005), Robin Wood. *Hollywood From Vietnam to Reagan… And Beyond*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003) and Carol Clover (1992).

history, sociological scholarship and a psychoanalytic understanding of the repressed other. This allows for both a situating of the cycle within the existing British and horror filmography and the comprehensive study of class, men and masculinity within the cycle. Indeed, to be able to provide a consideration of hoodie horror as a cycle which corresponds directly with wider social and political contexts, reflection upon the public perceptions of, and concerns about, the male working-class in particular is essential. Therefore, the reflectionist approach is employed in conjunction with sociological accounts of class conflict and scholarship concerning gender to develop a comprehensive argument to this effect.

David Bordwell, a staunch critic of reflectionist film theory, suggests that "the [reflectionist] argument easily becomes circular. *All popular films reflect society's attitudes*… We need independent and pretty broadly based evidence to show that these attitudes exist… and have been incorporated in films".[11] As previously acknowledged, this study does not dedicate itself to audience research, and therefore does not intend to assume the priorities or beliefs of all British cinemagoers, nor does it wish to homogenise them. Rather, the use of reflection and a generic spectator is intended to identify patterns and concerns within the films that mirror the discussions being conducted around class in the public sphere, thereby suggesting a correlative relationship between public, and sometimes popular, opinion on working-class men, and their representation in hoodie horror. Considering how box office successes are often explicated through a reflectionist approach, Bordwell continues: "[t]he anxieties of the 1% are not yours and mine, and I doubt that even you and I share a psyche",[12] acknowledging the difficulty in attributing universal meaning to financially successful films produced by a wealthy, filmmaking elite. This is a valid argument when considering the huge successes from Hollywood, for example, but is arguably less

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[11] David Bordwell. 'Zip, Zero, Zeitgeist'. *Observations on Film Art*. (24/08/14).

[12] Bordwell. (2014).

convincing where applied to the filmmaking autonomy facilitated by low-budget, independent cinema.

This thesis, therefore, is not using a reflectionist approach to explain or measure the success of the hoodie horror cycle, most of which was categorically unsuccessful if measured within the parameters that Bordwell employs. Neither does this study claim that the films are representative of a common attitude shared by 99% of British society. However, there is undoubtedly a dominant sentiment which runs through hoodie horror, a "collective nightmare"[13] to borrow Robin Wood's phrase, which reveals a cultural malaise and conflict between classes that is tangible in real-world dialogue. This thesis puts forth an argument for a re-evaluation of the reflectionist approach and its benefits, particularly in the study of traditionally maligned, non-mainstream genres such as horror, allowing the potential for meaning and reflexivity in these genres to be explored. The social context of the cycle, gleaned through reflection, reveals why hoodie horror, far from being an anomalous phenomena in a wider cinematic revival, gained momentum and sustained its own film cycle.

In referring to the films as a cycle, the thesis bears in mind Richard Nowell's definition of film cycles as "a series of chronologically distinct phases of activity"[14] which he utilises to construct a methodology for the consideration of changing industrial contexts. As previously stated, industrial concerns are not a focus of this study, but rather Nowell's definition of the cycle as 'chronologically distinct' allows this study to further its assertion that the socio-historical and political contexts of the production of hoodie horror are integral to its existence and formulation. The study will also occasionally employ psychoanalytic language, especially within its discussion of the working-class as 'other'. However, this is not a psychoanalytic study of the hoodie

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[13] Wood. (2003). p.70.

[14] Richard Nowell. *Blood Money:A History of the First Teen Slasher Film Cycle.* (London: Continuum, 2011). p.5.

horror film; rather, the language of the 'other', its associations and connotations as understood by Robin Wood, seemed the most appropriate expression of the peripheral, repressed existence of the hoodie. The hoodie represents otherness which "bourgeois ideology cannot recognize or accept but must deal with... either by rejecting and if possible annihilating it, or by rendering it safe and assimilating it, converting it as far as possible into a replica of itself".[15] Indeed, Wood's assertion that the traditional horror monster was "not merely a product of repression but a protest against it"[16] can be applied directly to the hoodie figure as he is recognised in this study. The socio-historical approach to the films places significant emphasis on the creation and perpetuation of monstrous working-class imagery. In addition, the approach assists in charting the recent historical precedents for the formulation of the working-class man as adversary to middle class values and security, defined as simultaneously childlike and horrifically violent. Therefore, the study invokes the psychoanalytic idea of the 'other' to connect the historically charged figure of the working-class man in British society with his monstrous filmic counterpart. Finally, the thesis concludes that the hoodie horror cycle is an example of a 'topical' cinema, as it is understood by Kyle Westphal: a film or cinema which aspires to "articulate a social vision in thoroughly contemporary terms".[17] Once again, this term is used in line with the research aims of the thesis, to support the assertion that there are clear and tangible connections between the social and political contexts of 21st century British society and the rise of the working-class monter in the British Horror Revival.

The horror film has long been a staple of British cinema. After a period of relative inactivity during the 1980s and 1990s, the genre has experienced a revival in the early 21st-century. The output from the genre has been steadily rising since the

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[15] Wood. (2003). p.65-6.

[16] Robin Wood. 'Returning the Look: Eyes of a Stranger.' Gregory A. Waller (ed.). *American Horrors; Essays on the Modern American Horror Film.* (Oxford: University of Illinois Press, 1987).p.80.

[17] Kyle Westphal. 'Saying Something New: In Defense of the Topical Film'. *Chicago Film Society.* (05/10/16).

beginning of the 21st-century, moving critic M.J Simpson to profess: "British horror cinema is strong and healthy. And as fascinating, powerful, entertaining, exciting, scary, provocative and intriguing as it ever was".[18] In his book *Urban Terrors: New British Horror Cinema 1997-2008*, Simpson illustrates the boom in British horror production. Covering 114 films, in a list which is not exhaustive, released within a ten year period he observes that it took 25 years previous to 1997 to produce the last 114 British horror films.[19] The pace of production has no doubt accelerated dramatically, and the last time the British contributions to the genre were so many was during the Hammer heydays of the mid-1950s to late 1960s. Hammer Films were the lynchpin of British horror for three decades, and their films are still heralded as canonical greats to this day, with recent academic works on the studio and its films,[20] rereleases of the films as remastered box sets, and a continuing presence at horror conventions across the country, demonstrating their enduring appeal. The studio's decline coincided with the diminishing success of its horror films and the studio released its last horror film of the 20th century in 1976. However, the revival of the 21st-century not only offered rich pickings for independent and first time horror filmmakers, but also a chance for Hammer to revive its horror output. The studio has presided over several successful horror releases in the last decade, and its influence and importance in relation to films discussed in this study will be expanded upon in later chapters.

Another prominent part of this revival, to return to the focus of this study, is the hoodie horror film. As previously noted, these films provide an overwhelmingly pessimistic view of Britain as a site of social and moral decay. Reflecting years of consecutive patriarchal and institutional failings, the men we see in hoodie horror are

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[18] M.J. Simpson. *Urban Terrors: New British Horror Cinema 1997-2008*. (Bristol: Hemlock Books, 2012). p. 294.

[19] Simpson. (2012). p.294.

[20] The continuing enthusiasm for Hammer is evident in the publication of various studies and handbooks, most recently exemplified by: Victoria G. Walden. *Studying Hammer Horror*. (Leighton Buzzard: Auteur, 2017) & Wheeler Winston Dixon. *The Films of Terence Fisher: Hammer Horror and Beyond*. (Leighton Buzzard: Auteur, 2017).

deeply flawed, violent and characterised as victims and/or products of the British class system. These characters are rich with meaning, providing a timely social commentary on the class inequalities rife within Britain, as well as providing interesting interpretations of what it means to be a British man in the 21st-century. As Anthony Clare observed: "At the beginning of the twenty-first century it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that men are in serious trouble. Throughout the world, developed and developing, antisocial behaviour is essentially male".[21] This thesis aims to investigate this claim through the interrogation of hoodie horror as a cycle that deals almost exclusively in male violence. Hoodie horror would not exist were it not for the creation of what Stanley Cohen would call a 'folk devil'[22] from disparate and unquestioned assumptions about juvenile delinquency, gender and class. This study will demonstrate that the hoodie horror cycle, and the representations of men and masculinity therein, are not an anomaly in British culture, but rather the latest in a long line of attempts within literature and film to represent the working-class male and British class structure. The anxieties concerning British masculinity and class expressed in hoodie horror are a revision of long-standing concerns that are visible in the Victorian slum narrative, the penny dreadful, and the social realism films of the British New Wave. The overwhelming anxiety surrounding the young, working-class male will be the primary focus of this study, demonstrating both the longevity of this character in class narratives, as well as the uniqueness of the contemporary representations of such a character. The representations of men and masculinity in the cycle provide a cornerstone to a wider discussion of class and class prejudice in contemporary Britain.

The earliest film to be defined as hoodie horror in the mainstream press was James Watkins' 2008 film *Eden Lake*, with *The Observer* using the term to categorise

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[21] Anthony Clare. *On Men: Masculinity in Crisis*. (London: Chatto and Windus, 2000). p. 3.

[22] Stanley Cohen. *Folk devils and moral panics: the creation of the Mods and Rockers*. 3rd edition. (Oxon: Routledge, 2011).

the film in October 2008.[23] However, in retrospect Thomas Clay's *The Great Ecstasy of Robert Carmichael* (2005), a tale of one young man's corruption at the hands of a hoodie gang, can be considered the prototype hoodie horror film. The bleak, deindustrialised landscapes, exploitative use of the monstrously violent hoodie figure and the explicit narrative of class conflict would all become commonplace within the hoodie horrors that followed. The phrase hoodie horror had been used in online blogs as far back as 2005 in order to highlight the developing fear of young men in hoods. In a post entitled *Hoodie Horror*, blogger Adam Tinworth responded to the banning of hoodies in Bluewater Shopping Centre: "I'm wearing my hoodie today. I'm expecting an ASBO [Anti-Social Behaviour Order] within the hour".[24] This comment touches upon two key ingredients of hoodie horror: firstly, the anxiety caused by a seemingly innocuous piece of clothing, and secondly, the politically charged precautions taken to isolate and punish those who do not comply with middle class social mores. British horror filmmakers quickly realised the potential of the hoodie as an image of fear to be both exploited and subverted, and the hoodie horror cycle began.

However, despite the potential for hoodie horror to offer a unique insight into contemporary British fears and anxieties, there has been very little academic engagement with the cycle. Acknowledgement of this group of films as a cohesive portfolio has been limited to a handful of British film critics and scholars. Johnny Walker[25] considered the importance of the hoodie horror in his work on contemporary British horror, and contributions from Mark Featherstone[26] and Linn Lönroth[27] look at

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[23] Vanessa Thorpe. 'Day of the Dead: Horror Films are back with a Vengeance'. *The Observer*. (19/10/08).

[24] Adam Tinworth. 'Hoodie Horror'. *One Man And His Blog*. (2005 – date unknown).

[25] Johnny Walker. *Contemporary British Horror Cinema: Industry, Genre and Society*. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015).

[26] Featherstone, M. '"Hoodie Horror": The Capitalist Other in Modern Society'. *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies*. Vol. 35, Issue 3. 2013. pp.178-196.

[27] Lönroth, L. 'Hoodie Horror: The New Monster in Contemporary British Horror Film'. *Journal of Media, Cognition and Communication*. Vol. 2, No. 1. 2014. pp. 4-20.

the genre from a politico-philosophical and sociological standpoint respectively. Beyond this, the academic engagement with hoodie horror is sparse. As with much low-budget horror, the films risk being discarded as gratuitous, and unworthy of serious study or consideration. Yet these films are a revealing cultural product of a specific moment of social crisis in Britain. The focus on class, as Walker notes, alludes to the intentional, isolating rhetoric of press and politicians: "in most cases, hoodie horror films were deliberately inflammatory, and would often evince a moralistic binary similar to that purported by politicians and the news media between feral hoodies and the well-to-do middle classes".[28] Hoodie horror, therefore, provides a platform either to satirize or to compound class structure and rhetoric. The visual nature of the medium allows the hoodie horror film to achieve a visceral, primal realisation of class conflict, confronting the audience with the binary nature of the classification of men based on class, race or background in contemporary Britain.

Although the term hoodie became integral to the categorisation of class-based horror, the 21st-century's class narrative has been dominated by several similarly classed terms such as 'chav', 'scrounger' and 'poverty porn'. Beginning with Tony Blair's introduction of the Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) in 1998,[29] juvenile delinquency was back on the political agenda and therefore back in the media's spotlight. The word 'chav' made an appearance around the same time, and is variously considered to be the acronym for 'Council-Housed and Violent', 'Council House and Violence', or 'Council House-Associated Vermin'. The term is used as shorthand to refer to low-income individuals, often young men, identified as, or assumed to be, delinquents. The term quickly proliferated, and was introduced into

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[28] Walker. (2015). p.86.

[29] The ASBO was intended to be a preventative measure, to stop delinquency evolving into more serious criminal activity. The orders could result in curfews and bans from certain locales. The stated intention of the order was: "to protect the public from behaviour that causes or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress". (Crown Prosecution Service. 'Anti-Social Behaviour Orders on Convictions'). Unfortunately, whether the connection was deliberate or not on behalf of the Labour Government, much of the behaviour the ASBO punished had already been irrevocably characterised as working-class or hoodie behaviour.

the Oxford Dictionary in 2005. Writing in 2011, Owen Jones explored the growth of the word 'chav' from a localised insult or identifier into a national, socially acceptable expression of "pure class contempt".[30] In the British vernacular, it was not long before 'chav' became synonymous with 'working-class', revealing a prejudice that was much more sinister and far-reaching than most would care to acknowledge. Speaking of the results of a 2011 study into the working-classes, Jones articulates: "The working-class label was no longer something people felt that they could wear with pride. Far from it: it had effectively become synonymous with 'chav'".[31]

The ideology embodied in the use of 'chav' is one of delinquency and moral bankruptcy, as expressed through sensational headlines like "Britain has produced unteachable 'uber-chavs'".[32] The article went on to state that "a significant number of young people who were brought up by single mothers in the 1980s are now doing nothing with their lives, have no work ethic, few social skills and cause higher crime rates".[33] Chavs are understood as working-class individuals who pose a physical threat to middle class individuals and for the working-class body at large who pose a figurative threat to middle class morals and social stability. This is where the hoodie horror film becomes particularly valuable. As Jones notes, many of the most infamous representations of the working-class in the media are female: "indeed, class hatred and misogyny often overlap".[34] In comedy, figures such as Vicky Pollard and Lauren Cooper dominated *Little Britain* (2003-2006) and *The Catherine Tate Show* (2004-2009) respectively, poking fun at the image of the female chav — a figure of limited intelligence with a bad attitude and knock-off designer clothes. It seems, however,

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[30] Owen Jones. *Chavs: The Demonization of the Working Class*. (London: Verso, 2011). p. 9.

[31] Jones. (2011). p.ix.

[32] Nick Britten. 'Britain has produced unteachable 'uber-chavs''. *The Telegraph*. (09/02/09).

[33] Britten. (2009).

[34] Jones. (2011). p. xiv.

that where the threat of the female working-class can be diffused through mockery, the threat of the male working-class cannot. The anxieties caused by the male working-class have been worked through in a very different way; this is a threat contained through the violence and fragmentation of the hoodie horror narrative. The hoodie horror can be seen as offering catharsis to the middle classes, containing the working-class male and his violence to the screen, thereby allowing an audience to work through the moral panic associated with this section of society in the safety of the cinema or home. Indeed, the films could be accused of inciting a moral panic themselves; making such prolific use of the mythology of working-class violence and nihilism risks legitimising the very fears that the films are exploiting. The horror genre itself regularly reflects instances of moral panic, and the link between the initial, social panic regarding the working-class and the frequent panic surrounding the content and influence of horror cinema serves to assess and destabilise the convictions of the moral panic, throwing the legitimacy of such phenomena into doubt.

Originally coined by Jock Young in his work on social reactions to drug-taking, Stanley Cohen adopted the term 'moral panic' in order to investigate the "fundamentally inappropriate"[35] way in which the media and public reacted to instances of unrest caused by the mods and rockers in the mid-1960s. These events were blown vastly out of proportion, being transformed from spates of vandalism and passive hostility into fully fledged rioting and youth violence. Headlines such as "Day of Terror by Scooter Groups"[36] and "Wild Ones Invade Seaside"[37] encouraged the public to believe that England's young people, especially its young men, were turning violent; presenting a threat to the communities they resided in. In their work on moral panic, Goode and Ben-Yehuda comment on the news' disregard of fact in favour of

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[35] Stanley Cohen in Erich Goode & Nachman Ben-Yehuda. *Moral Panics: The Social Construction of Deviance.* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994). p.23.

[36] *Daily Telegraph.* Goode & Ben-Yehuda. p.22.

[37] *Daily Mirror.* Goode and Ben-Yehuda. p.22.

propagating a myth: "[t]here was very little interest in what actually happened; what counted was how closely a news account conformed to the stereotype".[38] The way in which the media coverage of the mods and rockers captured imaginations is evident in Franc Roddam's film *Quadrophenia* (1979), which uses the colourful elaboration of the mods' exploits by the press to frame a story of troubled youth and problematic masculine identity. Although filmed several years after the mods and rockers heyday, the film explores the allure of belonging to such a gang, before finally debunking the myths on which the identity of protagonist, Jimmy, hangs. The film reflects the violence portrayed in the media, but its real purpose is to show how the disenfranchisement of a young man can lead to a desperate struggle for meaning and authority outside of societal norms. The identity Jimmy creates for himself as a mod gives him the freedom, control and authority that he lacks in his weekday life. Unfortunately, this identity is also extremely fragile, and the last third of the film details the collapse of Jimmy's mod identity and the myth of the mod, and questions what his life will be without them. As will be discussed in the forthcoming chapters, this precarious search for meaning, identity and belonging continues apace in the hoodie horror film, reliant upon very similar press rhetoric to characterise the working-class.

More than 40 years later, the media's mythologizing practice continues to inform public perception of certain demographics, and young people, predominantly male, are still the prime target. In 2011, several cities across England, including London, Manchester and Leeds, experienced several days of rioting, looting and vandalism. What incited these events altered depending on who was attempting a diagnosis. Conservative government officials propagated 'Broken Britain' as a cause,[39] whilst critics of Neoliberal culture saw an implicit revolt against the exclusive

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[38] Goode and Ben-Yehuda. p.25.

[39] See Prime Minister David Cameron's address (15/08/11) in his Oxfordshire constituency, four days after the riots came to an end. The language used here is exemplary of the Governmental response to the rioting. Cameron's references to "slow-motion moral collapse" and "communities without control" placed responsibility for the riots firmly with the communities and individuals involved. His discussion of "children without fathers, schools without

nature of consumerism.[40] Community activists believed that the death of Mark Duggan had antagonised communities who felt both abandoned and harassed by the state and, in particular, the police.[41] The riots and their subsequent reportage have been the subject of several substantial works on class identity in Neoliberal Britain.[42] Looking at the headlines that accompanied the coverage of the riots, the parallels are staggering. Whilst, admittedly, the 2011 riots caused immeasurably more damage than the seaside show-downs of the 1960s, the discourse used in the press on both occasions was one and the same. Many headlines exclaimed that the rioters had taken over ("Mobs rule as police surrender streets"),[43] whilst others were claiming that some of the rioters were only seven years of age: "Kids took on cops in £100m rampage".[44] The implications of such reporting included the identification of the rioters as mindless hordes, the equation of working-class children and young people with criminal activity and delinquency and the sense that the established order was under threat by those at the very bottom of the hierarchy. Once again, David Cameron declared the riots as evidence that British society was fundamentally 'broken',[45] an allegation which was now understood as a condemnation of the lower classes specifically.

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discipline… crime without punishment" draws upon the pre-existing working-class stereotype to suggest that an implicitly working-classed demographic is culpable.

[40] See Imogen Tyler's consideration of the riots in her chapter 'The Kids are Revolting' within *Revolting Subjects: Social Abjection and Resistance in Neoliberal Britain*. (London: Zed Books, 2013). pp.179-206.

[41] Journalist and youth worker Franklyn Addo has repeatedly emphasised the need for an understanding of the role that social prejudice, particularly against the young working-class and BAME demographics, had to play in the riots: see Franklyn Addo. 'How Not To Understand The Riots'. *The Guardian*. (07/03/18).

[42] See Tyler (2013), Jeremy Till. 'The Broken Middle: The Space of the London Riots'. *Cities*. Vol. 34. October 2013. pp. 71-74 and Daniel Briggs (ed.). *The English Riots of 2011: A Summer of Discontent*. (Hampshire: Waterside Press, 2012).

[43] *The Times*. 09/08/11. p.1.

[44] *The Sun*. 08/08/11. p.1.

[45] David Cameron. 'PM's speech on the fightback after the riots'. (Delivered 15/08/11).

The parallels between Jimmy's 'mod' identity in *Quadrophenia* and the identity of the hoodie are numerous. Hoodies, too, are reliant upon a projected image (quite literally) to construct identity. Much of the hoodie's identity in these films corroborates the 'chav' or delinquent image prolific in the press. The chav and the hoodie share similarly classed DNA, and both terms have been used similarly in public discourse to denote moral bankruptcy, poverty and a low social standing. However, the hoodie can be differentiated from the chav through the inherent malice, violence and antagonism connected to its image. For the purposes of this study, the hoodie of hoodie horror is considered as the embodiment of the darkest and most troubling images conjured up by contemporary class rhetoric. It is important, therefore, to acknowledge the role that the word 'chav' and its connotations have had in shaping this negative image of the working-class that hoodie horror draws from so extensively. As previously noted, the 'chav' figure has dominated common conceptions of class across screen media, and provides characters which are to be pitied and mocked. In many of these representations, fear is only implied through the audience's need to witness such disempowering characterisation. On the other hand, the hoodie figure, whilst using many of the same aesthetic identifiers as the 'chav', makes fear explicit, and the working-class monstrous. As Walker argues: "while 'chav' was used mostly to mock the working class, 'hoodie' was employed in the media to generate fear".[46] Whilst the 'chav' may threaten abstract societal values and offend a middle class sensibility, the hoodie poses a much more direct, corporeal threat.

The hoodie, as he is often represented in hoodie horror, self-consciously styles himself in line with a politically sponsored image, typified by the 'chav' and its variations, in correspondence with sociology's 'labelling theory'. A demographic, once labelled, begins to interact with and represent the label it has been given. This thereby reinforces traditional power structures, by effectively encouraging those who would

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[46] Walker. (2015). p.88.

threaten those structures to emulate the expectations forced upon them by their labelling.[47] A character like *Eden Lake*'s Brett is the personification of the construction of 'chav' masculinity, straight from the tabloid headlines. The stereotypical nature of this form of working-class identity seems to be embraced by the characters of many hoodie horror films, who aspire to live up to the mythology that surrounds them. The sensational photographs which accompany moral panic articles, once again exemplified by coverage of the riots, assign blame almost entirely to the young, male working-class. Almost every photograph used in the coverage of the 2011 riots showed the rioters as hood-clad men — not surprising considering that 79% of the rioters were believed to be male.[48] However, it was precisely because of the isolation and alienation they had been subjected to, courtesy of the contemporary working-class mythology, that this demographic was so involved in the riots. Out of *Reading the Riots* study's 270 participants, 85% acknowledged policing was either an "important" or "very important" factor in the cause of the riots, citing instances of profiling, the 'stop and search' policy, and a perceived lack of respect as common problems.[49] This particular allegation will be revisited in Chapter Three, where a discussion of black masculinity it the hoodie horror will underline and explore the prevalence of social injustice in the black male narrative, but for now it is important to note that there was evidently more to the rioting than people "behaving as if [their] choices have no consequences".[50] Similarly, there is a lot more to the hoodie horror film than the mindless indulgence of mankind's basest desires. The narratives and their characters are greatly varied, as are the apparent motivations for violence and

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[47] See Howard S. Becker. *Outsiders.* (New York: The Free Press, 1997) and Erving Goffman. (1990), for comprehensive studies of labelling deviance.

[48] Paul Lewis, Tim Newburn, Matthew Taylor et. al. 'Reading the Riots: Investigating England's summer of disorder'. *The Guardian & The London School of Economics and Political Science.* (01/12/11). p.14.

[49] Lewis et. al. (2011). p. 18.

[50] David Cameron in Allegra Stratton. 'David Cameron on riots: broken society is top of my political agenda'. *The Guardian.* (15/08/11).

delinquent behaviour. Each film presents a different context for the actions of the hoodie, and as a collective these films illustrate and allegorise the scope and reach of the daily antagonism that leads their young, working-class characters to criminality.

The hoodie horror cycle provides key filmic explorations of the tensions between the mythology of young working-class men and the reality of them. In their interrogation of masculinity, the hoodie horror narrative follows in the footsteps of the Gothic narrative; as Donna Heiland observes, Gothic novels "are all about patriarchies, about how they function, what threatens them, what keeps them going…patriarchy is not only the subject of gothic novels, but is itself a gothic structure".[51] Focusing as they do on the inequalities and conflicts within the contemporary class structure, each hoodie horror works upon the premise that these inequalities and conflicts are precipitated by an overarching patriarchal structure — one which in reality has been central to many economic and social failures during the years in which the cycle was most active (2008-2012). By association it could be argued that class structure, as a product of patriarchy, is also a Gothic concept — a concept which represses, stagnates and transforms society's most derided demographics. The threat to patriarchy [the state], in hoodie horror's case, is therefore commonly shown to be the men who have been subjugated by this state. The state itself commonly finds personification as a middle class man, or representation within the panoptic landscape. Heiland continues: "Patriarchy inevitably celebrates a male creative power that demands the suppression — and sometimes the outright sacrifice — of women".[52] With hoodie horror privileging the stories of men systematically dispossessed under the patriarchal structure, the films offer a visualisation of the suppression of certain men, whose "creative powers" are ignored, and the potentially horrific results of such oppression.

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[51] Donna Heiland. *Gothic and Gender: An Introduction.* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004). p. 10-11.

[52] Heiland. (2004). p. 11.

This man versus man narrative also reflects the wider, global preoccupation with apocalypse in the wake of the 9/11, 7/7, and countless other acts of organised violence, not to mention the lingering menace of both nuclear and biological warfare. Clare suggests: "Such has been the impact of technology that the spectre of global annihilation is no longer fantasy. Man can now destroy himself as a species".[53] It is precisely this fear of annihilation that becomes the gory set piece of the hoodie horror film — the destruction of one man at the hands of another. Throughout the hoodie horror narrative, the destruction of the male body and/or male mind is a consistent point of focus. Whilst borrowing heavily from the slasher film in terms of its narrative progression, the hoodie horror subverts conventional expectations of female versus male victimisation. Peter Hutchings argues that female victimisation in the slasher compensates "for feelings of inadequacy on the part of the male spectator".[54] Conversely, then, the extensive male victimisation in *Community, Attack the Block* (Cornish, 2011) or *Eden Lake*, rather than compensating for inadequacy, enforce a confrontation of it. Hutchings continues: "It could be argued that male submission to disempowerment, that is a willing subjection made by someone who already has power, is merely a way of confirming possession of that power… horror emphasises the 'normality' of masculinity, thereby reassuring a male spectator".[55] This may well be true in instances where the victims are middle class, as one can assume that a middle class male audience are able to accept victimisation on screen as a reaffirmation of their relative power off-screen.

Alternatively, in daring to focus so heavily on the destruction of men in a non-war setting (although there are elements of the 'war' narrative in these films too: brotherhood, the final battle, sacrifice), these films may be seen to do the exact

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[53] Clare. (2000). p. 39.

[54] Peter Hutchings. 'Masculinity and The Horror Film'. Pat Kirkham & Janet Thumim (eds.). *You Tarzan: Masculinity, Movies and Men*. (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1993). p. 84.

[55] Hutchings. (1993). p. 92.

opposite of what Hutchings suggests. Far from emphasising the power and normality of 'masculinity' as a single, homogenising demographic, hoodie horror displays a variety of alternative masculine types and finds them all equally wanting. In fact, in the majority of these films, the existence of a male monster in the form of the working-class youth completely destabilises the assumed power and security of being a British middle class male. As Creed suggests: "By his very existence, the male monster points to the fact that masculinity, as defined by the symbolic economy, is a fragile concept, one that is rarely, if ever, fulfilled".[56] The hoodie horror film is a catalogue of failures to fulfil the fragile concept of masculinity. Even in instances where it appears a certain brand of masculinity has been victorious, a reconsideration of the conditions for the survival of this masculinity reveals that the victory is a hollow one. Most victors end the narrative in the same place as they started; there is no forward progression, no social mobility, and many do not have anyone to witness their victory. It seems unlikely, therefore, that their concept of masculinity is any more able to sustain itself than the alternative concepts it defeated within the narrative. Rather, it proves that masculinity, whichever way it is understood or framed, is an arbitrary ideology, which guarantees the wielder nothing. The male monster, on the other hand, persists where concepts of masculinity flounder, and with the continuing motif of the hood as identifier, this monster will continue to exist, symbolically if not literally, in the continued parlance of class conflict articulated by the hood.

The hood itself is extremely divisive, and as a signifier it is laden with negative connotations from a mythology of human cruelty and fear. For centuries, it was commonplace for executioners to wear a black hood to protect their identity, whilst the hooded cape also became a Gothic staple of the antagonist in the likes of *The Monk* (Matthew Lewis, 1796) and *Frankenstein* (Mary Shelley, 1818). Perhaps even more notorious for their hooded apparel are the outfit known as the Ku Klux Klan, whose

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[56] Barbara Creed. *Phallic Panic: Film, Horror and the Primal Uncanny*. (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2005). p. xvi.

pointed white hoods became an infamous icon of violence and bigotry. Furthermore, artists' depictions of the 'grim reaper' or 'Death' commonly show a skeletal being in a hooded cape, and recent popular horror icons, including 'Jigsaw' of the *Saw* franchise (2004-2017) and the killers of the *Scream* franchise (1996-2011), also don hoods which mark them as antagonists. Similar to the horror masks used by the likes of Michael Myers (*Halloween* (Carpenter, 1978)) and Jason Voorhees (*Friday the 13th Part 2* (Miner, 1981)), the hood serves to anonymise the antagonist, and also removes all traces of emotion and humanity from the wearer, as the face is rendered invisible. Thomas M. Sipos suggests that, by obscuring the eyes of the attacker, it makes the character seem less "naturalistic… mortal… [and] vulnerable",[57] thereby dehumanising the antagonist and creating a persona for them apart from their human appearance. Catherine Spooner notes that in Western thought "clothing as artifice is opposed to the natural body, a false covering for the authentic self beneath".[58] However, as both Spooner and Sipos go on to note, clothing, and in this case the hood, the supposed superficiality of such covering can actually operate to reveal as much as it conceals. Sipos makes an explicit link between the mask and its wearer,[59] suggesting that the removal of the mask leads to the removal of identity and persona. This would suggest that the 'authentic self' of the veiled, hooded or masked antagonist is discovered in the supposed artifice of their aesthetic.

In recent years the hood has also become a characteristic of popular sports and utility wear, with its appeal spanning a wide and varied market, including athletes, students, tradesmen and high profile celebrities. The hood even found a place on the runway in 2014 with both Fendi and Dolce and Gabbana featuring hoods in their new autumn/winter collections, prompting *The Guardian*'s fashion correspondents to

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[57] Thomas M. Sipos. *Horror Film Aesthetics: Creating the Visual Language of Fear.* (London: McFarland, 2010). p.63.

[58] Catherine Spooner. *Fashioning Gothic Bodies.* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004). p. 2.

[59] Sipos. (2010). p.20.

profess: "Hoods and capes will be a thing next season…".[60] Mimi Thy Nguyen argues that the hoodie's meaning is dependent upon the other signifiers within the image; it can alter "depending on its closeness to other signs and their properties".[61] In other words, if you pair a hoodie with a young woman, wearing a 'fitbit' and jogging through a suburban neighbourhood, it is a non-threatening piece of clothing. If however, you pair the hoodie with a young man with a shaved head, wearing a gold chain and baseball cap whilst lingering in an underpass, the hoodie becomes a threat, or signifier of threat. Malcolm Barnard recognises that clothing is a form of "nonverbal communication", continuing: "even if the intention of the designer or the wearer does not reach the receiver, that receiver will always manage to construct some meaning for the garment or outfit".[62] The hooded top itself can, therefore, be constructed as dangerous and threatening, if not by the wearer, then certainly by the receiver of its image. In the case of the hoodie horror, the hoodie as a garment is constructed as dangerous by the filmmakers, who utilise the hood as filmic shorthand for 'threat' in *Harry Brown* (Barber, 2009), *Attack the Block* (Cornish, 2011)and *Citadel* (Foy, 2012). Within the worlds of the films, the same type of communication is seen between hoodies and their victims or middle class counterparts.

In *Attack the Block*, for example, when Sam spots the hooded boys moving to block her path, she reads their attire (the gang are uniformly dressed in hoods and hats) and her fearful expression reveals to us that she has received the meaning of this clothing — the boys are a gang, and the gang is a threat. Similar exchanges can be seen in *Harry Brown*, *Citadel* and *Heartless* (Ridley, 2009), in 'encounter' scenarios where little or no verbal communication occurs and yet through costume and behaviour, the threat is clearly imposed and/or experienced. Sportswear in a

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[60] Jess Cartner-Morley et.al.. 'It's Over! Highlights from the AW14 fashion weeks'. *The Guardian*. (06/03/14).

[61] Mimi Thy Nguyen. 'The Hoodie as Sign, Screen, Expectation and Force'. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*. Vol. 40. No. 4. Summer 2015. p.797.

[62] Malcolm Barnard. *Fashion as Communication*. 2nd edition . (London: Routledge, 2002). p.31.

working-class context becomes a "stigma symbol",[63] as Erving Goffman would classify it, of the "tribal stigma"[64] of lower class status. As discussed at the opening of this chapter, Goffman contends that "low class status function[s] as an important tribal stigma, the sins of the parents, or at least their milieu, being visited on the child, should the child rise improperly far above his initial station".[65] Despite a lack of economic power, the focus on young men in hoodie horror, not to mention their prominence in political and press rhetoric, would suggest that this group have still transcended their born inferiority to enough of an extent to prompt a re-emphasis of their otherness. In making the hoodie, trainers and tracksuits part of the delinquent stereotype, we see an attempt to disempower symbols of cohesion and uniformity within the young working-class.

This study will be broken into four sections, each considering a different aspect and approach to the hoodie horror film, with the intention of providing an extensive and exhaustive reading of the films in question. Demonstrating how the films converse with contemporary understandings and criticism of both class and masculinity in Britain, this study will place the cycle within a cinematic timeline and articulate the importance of hoodie horror as a barometer for social anxieties and a valuable artefact which records and passes comment on a time of great social, political and economic instability in Britain. Whilst it is important to consider Marxist epithets of class within a study so concerned with class's problematic realisation, this is not a Marxist reading of hoodie horror. Instead, a broad range of Gothic, filmic and socio-historical scholarship has been collated to form an approach not beholden to a Marxist framework. Rather, a key notion which provides the foundation of this study comes in the form of the neoliberal concept of the underclass. This notion, Imogen

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[63] Goffman. (1990). p.59.

[64] Goffman. p. 14.

[65] Goffman. p.15.

Tyler suggests, operates, or can be employed, in much the same way that Marx employed his notion of the 'lumpen', in that both serve "to distinguish the deserving from the undeserving, and 'hard-working families' from a parasitical 'feckless underclass'".[66] Indeed, Tyler is heavily critical of Marx's consideration of the lumpen, considering it to be stigmatising and dehumanising, and opening the way for a removal of meaning and purpose from the poorest in society. The contempt that Tyler recognises in Marx's characterisation of the lumpen has, she argues, been reappropriated by neoliberal Britain to legitimise the gradual reduction and withdrawal of state support. The notion of the underclass will underpin much of this study's discussion of the representation of men, masculinity and class in the hoodie horror cycle.

The study will consider the genesis of hoodie horror, the articulation of landscape and the male body, the representation of black British masculinity and the use of the supernatural. These four areas encapsulate the varied nature of the hoodie horror film, and each serves to focus the study on a different issue within the nuanced and ever-changing dialogue concerning class and gender in Britain. Throughout the first chapter, the study attempts to trace a genealogy of hoodie horror through an appraisal of British cinematic history, and a consideration of the genre as a whole. The horror genre has perhaps the broadest and most varied set of conventions of any genre, as its numerous subgenres and cycles, each with its own set of defining tropes, would attest. Hoodie horror as a specifically British cycle not only draws on horror for inspiration, but due to its narrative concern with class is also inflected with social realist tendencies. This chapter suggests a genealogy of the hoodie horror film, in order to provide a better understanding of the various social and cinematic trends that predate the cycle, the influence of which has created a collection of films which incisively address contemporary Britain and its anxieties surrounding class and

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[66] Imogen Tyler. (2013). p.186.

masculinity. It is also necessary to briefly explore the role of the censor in British horror filmmaking, particularly considering that it is this relationship between censor and filmmaker that is regularly credited with the demise of British horror in the late 1970s.

Beginning with the censor and the limited presence of British horror in the 1980s and 90s, the chapter considers the horror lineage of filmmakers now prolific in the British Horror Revival, who cite American and Italian filmmakers as some of their biggest influences. Filmmakers such as James Watkins, Ben Wheatley and Johannes Roberts are of the generation that experienced horror through the covert operations of the VHS black market, set up in response to the Video Recordings Act of 1984.. Through a consideration of Johnny Walker's assertion that video nasties play an integral role in the essence of British horror post-1984,[67] the chapter will consider the extent of censorship's influence on the hoodie horror, and how, specifically, such censorship links to moral panics regarding the working-class. A short case study of the James Bulger murder, and the almost immediate connection made between the crime and *Child's Play 3* (Bender, 1991) in the reactionary press, illustrates the tendency towards hysterical scapegoating, particularly in instances where an othered demographic is concerned. The chapter argues that there is a strong relationship between class and censorship — a paternalistic view is taken of working-class media consumption, thereby suggesting that the lower classes are unable to regulate their own sources of entertainment. From the penny dreadful to the video nasty, campaigners and censors seem to suggest that the working-class, above all others, is vulnerable to the adverse influences of popular literature and media.[68] To narrow down the demographic of most concern even further, Kate Egan notes that the *Daily*

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[67] Johnny Walker. 'Nasty Visions: Violent spectacle in contemporary British horror cinema'. *Horror Studies.* Vol. 2, No. 1. 2011. pp. 115-131.

[68] Julian Petley gives an exhaustive account of the connection between hysterical censorship and the vulnerable/dangerous working-class in 'Us and Them'. Barker & Petley (1997). pp. 87-101.

Mail's campaign against videos placed children at the centre of the controversy, detailing stories of "distraught parents who had 'stumbled' on their children watching particular videos in the home".[69] Egan goes on to extrapolate the values that the *Mail* identifies as under threat in such nightmarish anecdotes — namely the family, the home and British identity itself:

> "[t]he family home is therefore being constituted here as the key sphere in which the identity of each British citizen is determined, and the key component that makes up Britain as a nation… in this respect, the family space of the home is clearly being presented as a fundamentally public space, where all domestic acts have highly public and national consequences because it is a space which, fundamentally, connects all Britons and which all Britons occupy".[70]

The consideration of the home sphere as part of a national identity once more compounds the ties between censorship and class. The working-class have always been situated apart from the middle class public sphere — literally in terms of location, economically in terms of ownership and, as has been suggested in commentaries from Mayhew (1865) to Clarke (2011) the working-class can also be qualified as intellectually and morally deficient compared to the idealised middle class standard. Therefore, arguably, both the working-class and the videos they watch are equally maligned, considered antithetical to the spaces, values and identities that Egan notes as being so valuable to the video nasty campaign.

Moving on from the video nasty scandal, the chapter considers the history of the British horror film, tracing its development from the early Tod Slaughter films of the 1930s through to the British Horror Revival in the early 21st-century, paying

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[69] Kate Egan. *Trash or Treasure? Censorship and the changing meanings of the video nasties.* (Manchester: Machester University Press, 2007). p.83.

[70] Egan. (2007). p. 83-84.

particular attention to certain key texts which appear to exert a particular influence over the eventual development of the hoodie horror film. Parts of Ealing's portmanteau film *Dead of Night* (Cavalcanti et.al., 1945) are acknowledged as highly important due to their preoccupation with, and reliance upon, the male experience of horror, whilst *Peeping Tom* (Powell, 1960) is a seminal work of horror which successfully blends the exploitation of the early modern horror film with filmic techniques borrowed from the revered social realist mode. The purpose behind a chronological study of the British horror film is to demonstrate not only the highly referential DNA of the hoodie horror film, but to highlight what this study finds to be a particularly British fascination with class and the frailty of the masculine ideal, which has long been communicated through the drawing of horror characters in British cinema. The chapter identifies *Peeping Tom* as a watershed moment in British horror's trajectory, where the horror film began to move away from the comfort of its Gothic past and the sensationalism of Gothic-inflected horror. *Peeping Tom* found that the locus of horror lay in the urban, working-class spaces of London, in the tight bedsits and grimy streets that were more readily known as the preserve of documentarians and social realist filmmakers.

Once the discernible influences of social realism and Britain's Gothic tradition upon hoodie horror have been identified and outlined, the chapter will move on to consider the more recent influences and contemporaneous trends that are also perceptible in the advent of hoodie horror. The focus here is heavily on the American industry and its output in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks — in particular its preference for the remakes of canonical texts from the Vietnam War period and the popularity of the found footage film. Interestingly, Steffen Hantke notes that fans and scholars bemoaned a decline in the American horror film throughout the same period that Simpson was hailing the revival of Britain's horror industry. Hantke introduces the collection on the contemporary American horror with the proclamation: "Ask fans, however, and they will tell you that American horror film in the last decade — from

roughly the mid-1990s, through the turn of the century, and far into the first decade of the new millennium — has fallen into a slump".[71] Hantke builds a case against the remake culture of the 2000s, with the remakes of both domestic and international horror often panned in the press and the recipient of a lukewarm reception from fans. However, I argue that the narrative changes made to the original source material in remakes of this kind actually align with a realist inflected trend in Western cinemas, including the hoodie horror. Many of the original American films were responsible for the definitions of class and gender in horror in the modern era, and once again these aspects are adjusted and emphasised in their remakes to reflect new and developing generic understandings of masculinity and class. Many do this through a greater investigation into the backgrounds of the human adversaries, humanising them further than was practice in the antecedents, and creating commentaries which suggest that social injustice, poverty and violence all have a part to play in the creation of evil.

Using Cynthia Freeland's[72] definition of realist horror, the parallels between various horror subgenres and national cinematic preferences can be interrogated with a view to beginning the discussion proper of the hoodie horror film and its representations of masculinity and class. Through a thorough understanding of the evolution of the hoodie horror, and several key texts to which the cycle owes much of its thematic and aesthetic conventions, the subsequent close reading of the hoodie horror films and their social contexts can be placed within a national landscape defined by class, and a generic landscape that continues to struggle with the expectations of gender.

Chapter Two will move on to consider the use of classed landscapes and the representation of the male body in relation to its class, to demonstrate the symbiotic

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[71] Steffen Hantke (ed.). *American Horror Film: The Genre at the Turn of the Millennium*. (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2010). p. vii.

[72] See Cynthia Freeland and Thomas E. Wartenberg (eds.). *Philosophy and Film*. (London; Routledge, 1995).

relationship between place and body in the hoodie horror. The cycle has utilised several different landscapes, each of which demonstrates a fascinating relationship between the male characters of the narrative and their environment. In this chapter, it is argued that the landscape plays a vital role in exposing the various masculinities at odds within a hoodie horror film. Not only this, but in some instances, the landscape transcends its role of backdrop to become representative of masculinity itself, exemplified by the urban council estate in films such as *Attack the Block* and *Comedown* (Huda, 2012) and the rural landscapes in *Eden Lake* and *Community*. Moreover, the symbiotic relationships between men and their landscapes are enhanced to such a degree that the landscape is physically affecting and psychologically influential. Upon the intrusion of a middle class body into this space, both the land and the men on it exact brutal punishment against this body, and symbolically the middle class body politic at large, allowing for a reading of the landscape as accomplice or enabler to working-class male violence.

The council estate in hoodie horror is a particularly complex and contentious signifier of masculine power hierarchies and fulfils the modes of social control as explored by Foucault's work on Bentham's panopticon.[73] By engaging with Foucault's *Birth of the Prison*, the chapter demonstrates that the films set on estates, far from being simply poverty porn, which is understood in this context as media publishing and programming which indulges in the objectification of the poor and their circumstances for the entertainment of an audience, are a valuable critique of state sponsored subjugation of the working-classes. With most council housing being immediately identifiable, the identification and classification of the people who reside within is a swift, albeit deeply problematic, process. Hanley asserts that "From the mid-1960s onwards you could tell council estates from a mile off, giving you the chance to avoid them, to duck out and treat them with the suspicion that their

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[73] Michel Foucault. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison.* (London: Penguin, 1991).

reputations seemed to warrant".[74] Taking the place of the ruined castle or the locked room, the estate becomes a 'Gothicised' place which instinct tells one to avoid, but which simultaneously invites the kind of speculation and fascination that motivates foolhardy, curious individuals to enter and explore. These curious individuals are by and large male, and are typically middle class individuals straying into working-class territory, or, in the case of *Attack the Block* or *Comedown*, working-class individuals approaching the peripheries of their understanding and, by doing so, presenting a challenge to authority.

Gothic spaces facilitate the use of other Gothic tropes, such as the hoodie as 'Fatal man',[75] and the aforementioned fatal curiosity on the part of the protagonist. The fatalism of hoodie horror acknowledges the phenomenon of "English sadism"[76] that permeates the country's Gothic and horror output, irrevocably connecting the two. Pirie, in his consideration of English horror's Gothic roots, observes: "[t]he achievement of Maturin and Lewis [prominent authors of English Gothic] is there to remind us that Selwynism [English sadism] *can* be utilised to create a highly effective and perfectly legitimate work of art, just as much as it can deteriorate into sensationalism".[77] This tension between art and exploitation, and the possibility of achieving both within Gothic and horror parameters, will be returned to again and again in this study's consideration of hoodie horror.

The inclusion of the Fatal Man trope, and the categorising of fatal curiosity as overwhelmingly male, seems to further emphasise the intention of the films considered here to provide studies of the modern British man, whilst also firmly situating them within a Gothic lineage. Fatal curiosity is seen to represent male

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[74] Lynsey Hanley. *Estates: An Intimate History* (New Edition). (London: Granta Books, 2012). p. 5.

[75] David Pirie. *A New Heritage of Horror: The English Gothic Cinema.* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2008). p.4.

[76] Pirie. (2008). p.6.

[77] Pirie. p. 6-7.

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vulnerability and frailty specifically in *Frankenstein*, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Louis Stevenson, 1886) and William Godwin's *Caleb Williams* (1794). *Williams* is perhaps the most directly relevant to the discussion of class conflict, the narrative driven by a young servant's insistence upon investigating the life of his master, a quest which leads to his ruination. In its commentary on class politics and the abuses of power the novel can be considered as an antecedent to the hoodie horror film, which is today addressing many of the same issues. Situating itself within a community of tyrannical lords, farmers and paupers, the narrative also disposes of the popular trope of an isolated castle in a foreign land in favour of a much more immediate, local setting, an 'urbanisation' of the Gothic landscape. Importantly, having been persecuted and defamed by his master, Caleb is not only marked within his immediate habitat, but is made a pariah throughout the entire country; such is his master's influence. The landscape becomes paradoxical, in that it both imprisons and rejects Caleb, and the master's ownership of the land creates a manipulative and isolating landscape for those who live upon it. This question of power and ownership is revisited in the hoodie horror narrative, as both the land and the bodies upon it are battled over.

With the cycle's prolific use of the council estate, a space owned by the state but claimed and lived on by the working-class, the question of who is in control of such a landscape, and who has the most legitimate claim to it, is frequently addressed. Lastly, that the landscape itself can dictate the fate of the male body becomes a regular preoccupation — through a discussion of the survival of male bodies in working-class landscapes, the chapter will investigate whether the landscapes in question exert an influence far more powerful than one may expect.

As well as the Gothic mode providing inspiration for hoodie horror's use of landscape, the influence of Jack the Ripper can also be seen on the streets of hoodie horror's estates. Responsible for the murder of at least five women in the Whitechapel

area of London in 1888, the spectre-like Jack was never caught,[78] and his lingering presence in the press and the public imagination enforced the idea of slum London as the locus of the horrific. In her work on horror, Barbara Creed touched upon the significance of Jack the Ripper to crime culture, and British culture in general, at the turn of the twentieth century. She writes: "[t]he narrative of the Ripper is a dark rite of passage about the hidden horrors of the unheimlich city".[79] Substitute 'Ripper' for 'Hoodie' and this claim could have been made about events occurring over a century after the Ripper haunted Whitechapel. The chapter will investigate how hoodie horror exposes us to the 'unheimlich city' through the microcosm of the council estate, the contemporary incarnation of Whitechapel, of the slums, of the tenements that have for many years been troubling and unknowable to those without them. This also allows an opportunity for the discussion of how the working-class or poor body was considered within the Victorian era, and how the visual stigmas associated with the male working-class bodies have developed, or perhaps remained the same, over the last two centuries. The marking of the working-class body as visually different, the chapter argues, legitimises beliefs in the inferiority of the poor. Of course, the hood also works as identifier of class; Creed continues: "the name Jack the Ripper became synonymous with death and facelessness. The Ripper's identity is known only through what he did…".[80] Considering the 'faceless' images of the 2011 rioters, clad in hoods and balaclavas, that became so widely used in the press, this statement prefigures a similar characterisation of the hoodie, created in the image of the Ripper.

Looking to the rural setting of *Eden Lake* and *Community*, the filmmakers move away from the London-centric landscapes so popular within the cycle and head to isolated woodland landscapes more often recognised as the preserve of counties

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[78] William D. Rubinstein. 'The Hunt for Jack the Ripper'. *History Today*. Vol. 50, Issue 5. 2000. pp. 10-20.

[79] Creed. (2005). p.199.

[80] Creed. p.186.

further North (although the locales are fictional, and their geographical location never made explicit, filming locations were Buckinghamshire and Essex, respectively). Using Bernice M. Murphy's work on the rural poor in American horror, the chapter will examine the cross-over between 'backwoods horror' and films such as *Eden Lake*, exploring what it is about the rural hoodie horror that differentiates its representation of men and landscape from its American counterparts. As Kim Newman noted in 2013, the use of rural landscape in British horror has been, historically, somewhat predictable. Limited to the period sets of Hammer, or the "magical, savage pockets of rural lore"[81] in *The Wicker Man* (Hardy, 1973) or *Witchfinder General* (Reeves, 1968), Newman lamented how the specifically English landscape had been taken for granted and not explored to its full potential. *Eden Lake* in particular puts the rural landscape at the forefront of its narrative, transforming its wooded idyll into a theatre of brutality. Young middle class couple Steve and Jenny are predecessors to a trend in British cinema that Ben Walters identifies as 'British bathetic bucolic': "a semi-absurdist mode in which sublime natural landscapes form the backdrop for neurotic urban odd couples getting holidays wrong".[82] Whilst the humour inherent in this description is absent, the idea of the urban couple being ill-suited to the poetically beautiful rural landscape is overwhelmingly clear in Steve and Jenny's situation. In holidaying to a beauty spot in the country, soon to be developed into an expensive gated community, the couple have inadvertently walked into a nightmare that takes obvious inspiration from *Deliverance* (Boorman, 1972) and *An American Werewolf in London* (Landis, 1981). The beauty of the wild landscape soon transforms into a malevolent wilderness, which aids and abets the couples' entrapment and torture.

Antagonist Brett uses this landscape as a stage for his performance. More than this, Brett and his gang know this landscape intimately, an advantage which

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[81] Kim Newman. 'This Spectred Isle'. *Sight and Sound.* Vol.23, Issue 7. July 2013. p.49.

[82] Ben Walters. 'Psycho Geography'. *Sight and Sound.* Vol.22, Issue 11. Nov. 2012. p.31.

allows them to seem like an omnipotent presence. Their expert manipulation of the victims, driving them into specific areas of the wood, only adds to the impression that these boys have tamed the wild environs, or have perhaps become an integral part of the rural landscape themselves. A similar relationship between young masculinity and the rural can be seen in *Community*, where the self-contained working-class landscape operates initially as a 'habitat' for the working-class, into which the middle class intrude to observe as though visiting a zoo, thereby inferring the community are animalistic and inhuman. The proximity to the rural does indeed emphasise the 'feral' qualities of the working-class, but the characterisation of the estate as urban jungle provides equally savage pockets of unknown land.

Finally, this chapter will utilise the dominance of the landscape in the hoodie horror narrative to investigate how contemporary issues of class and gender are framed by wider hierarchies of power, ownership and expectation. The landscape is a powerful tool for understanding the characters' relationship with the state, their perception of class and their awareness of the wider rhetoric of which they are a part. The use of landscape in the hoodie horror provides a stage for the corporeality of class conflict, taking what is an ideological conflict (for the most part) and transforming it into a physical, visceral battle between male bodies. Lastly, the chapter articulates the ways in which the hoodie horror cycle uses location to situate itself within the wider canon, borrowing from both British and global cinematic traditions to create an approach to class and gender that both pays homage to and subverts conventional understandings of class and masculinity in horror.

Whilst the cycle is overwhelmingly dominated by white masculinities, there are several narratives which attempt to tackle black working-class masculinities. Chapter Three, therefore, is dedicated to exploring the representation of the black, working-class male lead in hoodie horror (interestingly, there is not a single instance in which the middle class is represented by a black male). Using Keith M. Harris' work on black

masculinity in the media and Nguyen's ideas on the racial coding of the hoodie itself, this chapter will consider the representations of black men in *Attack the Block*, *Cherry Tree Lane* (Williams, 2010) and *Comedown*: three films which conclude with a black man being punished either physically or institutionally by their white male counterparts and the state apparatus they represent. Moses, the young, black protagonist of *Attack the Block*, successfully communicates, as Harris calls it, "the specularity of 'race'"[83] — the notion that racial performativity is "reflective and expressive of received and perceived notions of race".[84] The masculinity that Moses performs is evidently influenced both by the gang culture he is immersed in (which in and of itself is reflective of a racialised mythology) and the viewer's perception of what working-class masculinity is. This masculine performativity, which is defined by petty criminality, violence and the use of street slang, has been learnt or inherited by Moses from his superior, Hi-Hatz, and is emulated by boys younger than Moses on the estate, echoing Harris' assertion of specularity. Within the narrative, the boys and men are performing their race as illustrated by the notions they *receive* from their elders and superiors, providing a kind of internal stereotyping. Meanwhile, the writing of these black characters for the film clearly demonstrates an engagement with *perceived* notions of race, with the screenplay relying heavily upon externally-created stereotypes to bring its characters to life. Each of the films discussed here illustrates a strained relationship between young, black, working-class men and the identities they are expected or perceived to represent. The films are particularly pessimistic in their rendering of the painful, and sometimes fatal, pursuit of authentic identity by the black male leads. That each character's trajectory ends in death or incarceration, regardless of their attempts to alter their narrative and to break free of the crushing expectations

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[83] Keith M. Harris. *Boys, Boyz, Bois: An Ethics of Black Masculinity in Film and Popular Media*. (London: Routledge, 2006). p. 27.

[84] Harris. (2006). p. 27.

imposed upon them, leads to deeply troubling assessments of Britain's relationship with both class and race, and the contempt attached to both.

Beginning with a further consideration of the London riots, incited by the killing of Mark Duggan and the subsequent allegations of police profiling and racism, this chapter will consider how three films which bracket the riots interact with contemporary understandings of black masculinity. In an infamous moment on nationally broadcast *Newsnight* in 2011, historian David Starkey declared that the cause of the unrest was "[that] the whites have become black", and attributed the violent, criminal behaviour demonstrated in the riots to a "particular sort of violent, destructive, nihilistic gangster culture".[85] Starkey considers this culture to have been adopted by young men and women, both black and white, and uses Olympic ambassador Chelsea Ives to exemplify this perceived cultural shift. However, towards the end of the interview Starkey identifies a specific "black *male* culture"[86] as the source of the perceived problem. The violence, language and behaviour of the rioters are thereby equated with blackness and maleness, and whilst Starkey's articulation of this was rightly remonstrated, this equation has been made often and unashamedly throughout the early 21st-century. In 2007, the then Prime Minister Tony Blair addressed rising knife crime at a public appearance in Cardiff with this statement: "The black community — the vast majority of whom in these communities are decent, law-abiding people horrified at what is happening — need to be mobilised in denunciation of this gang culture that is killing innocent young black kids. But we won't stop this by pretending it isn't young black kids doing it".[87] Violence and blackness are, for both Starkey and Blair, inextricable from one another, and in hoodie horror these damaging stereotypes are both exploited and exposed.

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[85] David Starkey. 'Newsnight'. *BBC.* (Broadcast 12/08/11).

[86] Starkey. (2011).

[87] Tony Blair in Rebecca Roberts. 'Racism and Criminal Justice'. *Criminal Justice Matters*. Issue 101. 2015.

To situate the black horror narrative within a wider cinematic context, this chapter will consider the role, or lack thereof, of black characters in horror cinema. Through an extensive engagement with the seminal work of R.R. Means Coleman and the insightful commentary of Jessica Baker Kee, the presence and absence of black narratives in horror will be interrogated and explored. Baker Kee argues: "the main cinematic barometer of cultural anxiety — the horror film — has for the most part avoided explicitly addressing imagery of historical violence against black men".[88] Whilst the connection between black men and violence is frequently made in the media more broadly, it is made within the context of the black male as perpetrator, not victim. Most importantly there is little or no recourse for the acceptance of blame for past or current violences committed against the black body by the white man — something which horror should, and could, excel at exploring. Baker Kee speaks of an almost total absence of visceral violence against the black body in the horror genre, and attributes it to a fear of filmic violence corresponding too closely to historical violence. There have been occasional exceptions to this rule, and the chapter will discuss the value and influence of *Night of the Living Dead* (Romero, 1968), *Candyman* (Rose, 1992) and most recently Jordan Peele's hugely successful *Get Out* (2017). However, these are exceptional works, and whilst *Candyman* was an Anglo-American joint venture, the huge majority of what Coleman would term 'blacks in horror' films[89] come from the American industry.

The dearth of diversity in the horror film generally is undeniable, but British horror in particular is almost exclusively an exercise in whiteness. This is where the hoodie horror is particularly valuable as a contemporary addition to both the British and global horror canon, as it offers several narratives which centre on black,

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[88] Jessica Baker Kee. 'Black Masculinities and Postmodern Horror: Race, Gender and Abjection'. *Visual Culture and Gender*. Vol. 10. 2015.

[89] R.R. Means Coleman. *Horror Noire: Blacks in American Horror Films from the 1890s to Present*. (London: Routledge, 2011). p.6.

working-class masculinity. These narratives each offer a black male lead whose characterisation offers a dedicated, if sometimes problematic, commentary on black working-class life and the weight of the identities ascribed upon the black male body by others. The chapter will consider each of the three films in turn, conducting an in-depth case study of each in order to ascertain trends in the black hoodie horror narrative, their relationship with violence, which is arguably very different to its other hoodie horror contemporaries, and their criticism of masculine performativity — exemplified in the exaggerated role of *Attack the Block*'s Hi-Hatz. The relationship between the black man and his clothing, specifically the hood, must also be considered here. The hood, as has already been noted, has become a politically charged icon when regarded in conjunction with lower class. However, the hood is most significant and politically charged when regarded in conjunction with race. Examining the iconography of the hood, and the part it has to play in cases of police brutality and racial profiling in both the U.S. and Britain, gives depth to the analysis of the troubled identity on display. In both *Attack* and *Comedown*, the black male lead relies upon the hood for protection and camouflage, and yet paradoxically the hood puts him in greater danger and makes him more visible. The removal of the hood in the final act is treated as an awakening; a rejection of the expectations of criminality and violence borne out by the wearing of the hood, in favour of heroism and the discovery of another, perhaps more truthful, black male identity.

Finally, Chapter Four will consider another dominant thematic within the varied hoodie horror cycle — the presence of the supernatural. Once again, the chapter will consider three films from the cycle which make extensive use of the supernatural as a narrative device, and discuss how the presence of the supernatural highlights the mythological qualities of the working-class folk devil. Moreover, in placing working-class men as the unlikely heroes of these narratives, their relationship with supernatural phenomena lends a unique approach to the representation of disempowered men and masculinity. The characterisation of the protagonists borrow

heavily from the unreliable narrators of Gothic literature, and the chapter will argue that in their unreliability as witnesses to and victims of trauma, the men of supernatural hoodie horrors are thereby feminised. The men are considered to be paranoid and hysterical by their peers, and in two of the three narratives, there are explicit concerns raised about the mental health of the protagonists, with one attending group therapy for sufferers of agoraphobia and another being kept under close supervision as an outpatient of a psychiatric ward. In each case, however, the protagonist's mental ill health is a direct result of the fear they experience as residents of council estates.

Fear is represented as a more intangible presence in the supernatural narrative, as it is not embodied by a mortal adversary. Paradoxically, despite its preoccupation with ghosts and demons, the supernatural narrative is better placed to comment on the legitimate threats facing the working-class, which are far less easy to identify than a delinquent wearing a hood. The supernatural allows for an exploration of the isolation, transience and abandonment of the working-class by the state, and puts an emphasis on emotional violence and trauma of class conflict, much like its social realist antecedent. The chapter also discusses how, by making the hoodie folk devil supernatural, these films directly expose the fraudulent and fantastical elements of the vitriolic campaign led against the young working-class man in particular by politicians and the press.[90] Goffman contends that a society tends to deem those carrying a stigma as "not quite human".[91] In the supernatural hoodie horror, those stigmatised by their class and hoodies are literally inhuman, the embodiment of Goffman's words. The language used in the stigmatisation of the young working-class

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[90] Walker makes several fascinating observations regarding the concomitant representation of hoodies in the cycle and in the press. He observes that: "in most cases, hoodie horror films were deliberately inflammatory, and would often evince a moralistic binary similar to that purported by politicians and the news media between feral hoodies and the well-to-do middle classes." (2015). p. 86. Walker goes on to argue that the supernatural hoodie's alignment "with ideas of a ubiquitous monstrosity" (p.93) corresponds with 'Broken Britain' ideology and its associated moral crises.

[91] Goffman. (1990). p.15.

is also taken literally, the hoodie *is* a monster, *is* feral, *is* demonic and unconscionably evil, and they pose a direct threat, not to the middle classes as is suggested elsewhere, but to the working-class, who have to live in fear amongst them. This arguably makes the supernatural contingent of the cycle the most sympathetic of any hoodie horror text.

However, the presence of the supernatural does not dampen the cycle's enjoyment of the more physically violent horror, with both *Heartless* and *Citadel* showcasing some particularly brutal scenes of physical mutilation. Jeremy Dyson believes the extreme imagery of 1973's *The Exorcist* (Friedkin) facilitated a shift in what audiences could expect from the supernatural horror film: "here we were presented with a supernatural force distorting and defiling a human body in a magical, yet incredibly believable way".[92] The visceral transformation of Reagan's possessed body heralded a new age, in which boundary breaking violence and profanity could be integrated with the insidious, psychologically troubling supernatural adversary to create an enhanced corporeal threat. The demons of *Heartless* and *Citadel* do not possess the body in the same way that Reagan suffers in *The Exorcist*, but they do indeed possess the minds of those who they target, namely the male protagonists, whose obsession with the supernatural intensifies throughout the narrative, eventually putting them at risk of physical harm. Whilst it is the supernatural that exacts corporeal harm upon the men, the hold the supernatural takes over the male psyche is what drives the protagonists to self-destructive ends.

The Disappeared (Kevorkian, 2008) is arguably more traditional in its approach to the supernatural — the atmosphere is one defined by absence, and there is little of the violence so prevalent in the rest of the cycle. However, in both *The Disappeared* and *Heartless*, the existence of the supernatural is open to doubt throughout the narrative, and the lines between the living and the dead are

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[92] Jeremy Dyson. *Bright Darkness: The Lost Art of the Supernatural Horror Film.* (London: Cassell, 1997). p.248.

obfuscated by this shifting paradigm of belief and disbelief, visibility and invisibility. The chapter looks at this particular characteristic of the supernatural class commentary, and how it emphasises Russ Castronovo's theory of 'social death',[93] through the placing of the poor and the dead in the same liminal space. This leaves *Citadel* to be considered as a film apart, as there is an implicit malevolence to the way that the narrative treats not only its monsters, but its protagonist, that is exceptional. The demonic 'children', who are born inherently monstrous, and have no human connection, are a terrifying foe. It seems appropriate, then, to consider *Heartless* and *The Disappeared* as valuable companion pieces, then move on to discuss *Citadel* as an outlier. The film communicates a vastly different perspective, and holds a much greater resemblance to the 'demon seed' narrative than any of its contemporaries.

Finally, the chapter will collect together the various political aims of the supernatural narrative — and the films are deeply, deeply political — and examine how these films are an appropriate final study for the thesis. Through the supernatural, themes of monstrosity, apocalypse and class violence are brought together to provide a final allegory for notions of class and masculinity, and one that will facilitate a bringing together of the various responses to contemporary British society that these films can offer. Through a comprehensive look at its genealogy, its use of landscape, bodies, and the supernatural, this thesis can provide an assessment of the values and pitfalls of exploitation, as it pertains to the horror film, and argue that the hoodie horror film is also equal parts exploration and exposure. There are several weighty and deeply problematic political constructs, including race and class hierarchies, which are illuminated by their representation in the horror narrative. Lastly, the study works to strengthen the perception of the British Horror Revival, and particularly hoodie horror, as an important barometer for social agendas

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93 Russ Castronovo. *Necro Citizenship: Death: Eroticism and the Public Sphere in the Nineteenth-Century United States.* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001). p.2.

and anxieties that particularly overburden the working-class male in the early years of
the new century.

The Creation of Hoodie Horror

"It's almost as if they can see your fear"

-Dr. Kelly, *Citadel* (Foy, 2012).

The troubled relationship between censors and horror in Britain has a legacy almost as long as that of cinema itself. Harsh, reactionary censorship is acknowledged by many scholars to be a major component in the decay of the British horror film industry in the wake of Hammer's collapse in the late 1970s. Censorial restrictions may also explain the comparatively small number of horror films produced domestically during the latter half of the 20th century,[1] in comparison with the output of dominant American and East Asian industries. The censors' persistent imposition of limitations upon British filmmakers saw heavy editing (as with Sidney Hayers' *Circus of Horrors* (1959)) whilst others were refused a certificate, thereby preventing their distribution. Whilst the censorship of literature and theatre eased towards the end of the 1960s, film censorship continued rigorously, and arguably became even more severe as time wore on.[2] Finally, the crusade against the 'video nasty' fostered an

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[1] Steve Chibnall and Julian Petley assert that "the stridently censorious campaigns against horror videos since the early 1980s… would have discouraged many producers." (*British Horror Cinema*. (London: Routledge, 2002). p. 7).

Ian Cooper also provides a compelling account of the Video Nasties Era in his book *Frightmares: A History of British Horror Cinema* (Leighton Buzzard: Auteur, 2016), which includes the observation that "distributors who sought to market their product through notoriety ended up with more than they bargained for, often being hoisted by their own (hyberbolic, blood-spattered) petard." (p.173).

[2] It is worth noting that, whilst cinematic horror was stripped of its budget in the 1980s and 90s, horror was alive and well in British television and literature, and continued to be popular with audiences. (eg. the cult TV movie *Ghostwatch*, (Manning, 1992), or the novels of James Herbert and Clive Barker).

environment averse to handling the exploitation and violence for which much of horror is known.

Interestingly, Sian Barber suggests that heavy handed censorship was actually motivated by Governmental panic, and that the censors were perhaps unwilling participants in initiatives such as 1977's Committee on Obscenity and Film Censorship, also known as the Williams Committee. She summarises:

> "The debate over the effects of screen violence on the vulnerable and impressionable and the growth in material deemed by some to be offensive, indecent and even obscene was vigorously and enthusiastically fought throughout the decade. The BBFC attempted to distance itself from the debate, but the launch of the Williams Committee made this impossible".[3]

Whilst political vitriol did damage and dampen the enthusiasm of some horror filmmakers and fans, such moralising oppression had also had the unintended effect of encouraging horror filmmakers to push the boundaries of censorship, with increasingly violent texts which even the most forgiving censor struggled to forgive.[4] As I.Q. Hunter suggests: "from the quota quickies of the 30s […] to 50s B movies and more than 400 independently made horror and sexploitation films, British cinema has had a long tradition of low-budget populism, critically disregarded and frequently offensive to guardians of morality and public taste".[5] The hostile relationship between the filmmakers and their censors and critics had culminated in a notable decline in horror production beginning in the 1970s. This decline effectively deprived a

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[3] Sian Barber. ''Blue is the Pervading Shade': Re-examining British Film Censorship in the 1970s'. *Journal of British Cinema and Television*. Vol. 6, Issue 2. 2009. p. 351.

[4] Thanks to the international success of Hammer, there was a brief moment between 1958 and 1960 where head censor John Trevelyan was willing to work with, and be lenient towards, horror filmmakers. However, the increasing liberties taken by the filmmakers ensured that this leniency was short lived.

[5] I.Q. Hunter. 'The Road to Excess'. *Sight and Sound*. Vol. 25, Issue 9. 2015. p. 32.

generation of aspiring horror filmmakers of a substantial body of home-grown horror for inspiration. Therefore, British horror filmmakers have looked towards various other national cinemas — from the U.S, France and Spain — inspiring filmmaking which utilises many aspects of horror's international legacy, rather than being limited to a domestic lineage. The resulting hybridity within Britain's horror genre is part of what makes it such a fascinating contribution to the horror canon globally, with filmmakers drawing on Britain's own social realist heritage and combining it with varied subgeneric horror influences, from folk horror to slasher, to provide keen social commentaries and unique horror texts.

Many of the filmmakers affiliated with the hoodie horror cycle cite American cinema as a strong influence on their work. Johannes Roberts, writer and director of *F* (2010), notes that he is particularly indebted to John Carpenter in his thematic and stylistic choices.[6] Indeed, *F*'s stalk and slash narrative and peripheral, faceless antagonists seem to draw directly from *Halloween*, whilst the idea of the school under siege speaks directly to *Assault on Precinct 13* (1976). The hoodie horror film more generally is strewn with references to American horror cinema of the late Vietnam war-era (1968-1974), mirroring the low-budget aesthetic of *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (Hooper, 1974) and graphic violence of *The Last House on the Left* (Craven, 1972). This habit of imitation and homage does not necessarily weaken or dilute the British identity of these films, but rather conjures nostalgia for specific styles of horror on a specific format — video. As Johnny Walker argues, "one could suggest that those especially violent contemporary British horror films are not simply referents of particular texts or filmic trends, but are also of a stigmatic era that is specifically bound to British cultural memory".[7]

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[6] Author Interview with Johannes Roberts, 30/03/16.

[7] Johnny Walker. (2011). p.118.

The 'stigmatic era' that Walker here refers to is the 'Video Nasty' era. The use of graphic violence in contemporary British horror, particularly the slasher-style violence of hoodie horror, directly alludes to the moral panics that their American predecessors provoked in 1980s Britain. The video nasty scandal, which gripped Britain during the 1980s, is perceived by many to have delivered the final blow to the ailing British horror film industry. Horror film became high risk, as both a financial and artistic venture: "only masochists would have wanted to lay themselves open to the tirade of abuse, not to mention possible censorship, which would undoubtedly have greeted anybody foolhardy enough to contemplate a British gore film in the wake of the first 'video nasty' panic".[8] Not only did the video nasty era stall national horror production, but it also brought heavy censorship down upon horror imports, which had been made widely accessible thanks to the introduction of the Videocassette Recorder to Britain in 1978. A video release was much more financially attainable for small distributors and independent horror filmmakers than a theatrical release, meaning that a substantial amount of low budget horror found its audience at the video rental store.

Until 1984, there was no legislation in place to restrict the content of such videos. Concerns over the content of said videos grew with the U.K. video release of films such as *Snuff* (Findlay & Fredriksson, 1975) and *Cannibal Holocaust* (Deodato, 1980) in 1982. Outrage over the realistic violence of these films — as well as their sordid preoccupation with taboo subjects such as cannibalism and incest — led to the Video Recordings Act, passed by Parliament in 1984. This act required that all video films be classified, and if necessary censored, by the British Board for Film Classification prior to release. The act stated that any persons designated as authority by the Secretary of State would determine 'whether or not video works are suitable for

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[8] Steve Chibnall and Julian Petley. 'The Return of the Repressed? British Horror's Heritage and Future'. Chibnall & Petley (eds.). (2002). p.7.

classification certificates to be issued in respect of them'.[9] This certification classified a video as either 'general viewing' or as 'suitable for viewing only by persons who have attained the age… specified in the certificate'.[10] Anyone who flouted the classification system by possessing an unclassified video, or by supplying videos to those who did not meet the age requirements specified by censors, risked heavy fines. This over-zealous legislation increased the demand for those extreme and explicit films which were strictly classified (the 18 and Restricted 18 certificates replaced X-rated classification) or banned, and a lucrative black market industry developed to cater for those whose interest was piqued by the allegations of exploitation.[11] This underground circulation of banned videos gave access to a wealth of transnational cinema, and encouraged a film fandom and culture that highly valued extreme filmmaking from all over the globe. Paradoxically, legislating against these films to prevent their viewing only heightened their value and gave audiences stronger impetus to seek them out.

The horror filmmakers now responsible for the British Horror Revival, which facilitated the creation of hoodie horror, were part of this underground film culture. Ben Wheatley, director of some of the most critically lauded BHR films, remembers his first viewing of *Cannibal Holocaust*: 'I saw it on a third gen VHS which only added to the 'reality'. I'd never seen anything like it'.[12] James Watkins cites the 'whole 70's cinema of queasiness'[13] as being influential in his writing and directing of hoodie horror *Eden Lake*. It is telling that films which provoked fascination and disgust in equal measure are now providing foundations for a horror cycle occupied with class conflict. The very

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[9] Anon. 'Video Recordings Act, 12 July 1984'. [date unknown].

[10] Anon, 'Video Recordings Act, 12 July 1984'.

[11] See Andrew Devos. 'The More You Rape Their Senses, The Happier They Are'. Robert G. Weiner & John Cline (eds.). *Cinema Inferno*. (Maryland: Scarecrow Press, Ltd., 2010). pp. 76-100.

[12] Ben Wheatley. 'Ben Wheatley's Top Ten Horrific Films'. *Film4*. [date unknown].

[13] James Watkins in Mark Salisbury. 'James Watkins/Eden Lake Q&A, Part One'. *Reel World Matters*. (12/09/08).

debate around censorship and violence is classed, and has been for many years. As this chapter will go on to discuss, it is young, working-class men in particular who are seen to be at risk of psychological or emotional influence by the media they consume. From the Victorian penny dreadful, feared for its ability to "corrupt the children of the lower classes"[14] to the forthcoming account of the Bulger murder, the influence of horror is understood as particularly threatening to the weak, suggestible, working-class mind.

Not only this, but by suggesting that horror is a cause of moral decline, targeting the susceptible poor, the genre is therefore imagined to appeal only to the criminal, the non-intellectual, and the perverse. The powers-that-be have deemed horror films unsuitable, and so those still watching are necessarily placed outside of public consensus and, as a result, are othered from and patronised by the moral guardians of film consumption. The working-classes' alleged disobedience of film classification in the 1990s is framed within the same rhetoric as the judgement received by 'stars' of poverty porn today, whose lifestyles do not resemble those of the middle classes, their choices (or more accurately, lack thereof) thereby scrutinised and shamed for not adhering to middle class expectations. As a country currently obsessed with poverty porn[15] television shows, exemplified by Channel 4's *Benefits Street* (Turner & Reid, 2014-2015), which encourage viewers to delineate between the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor.[16] It is perhaps not surprising that hoodie horror's

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[14] J.G. Hubbard in John Springhall. 'Victorian Video Nasties'. *History Today*. Vol. 40, Issue 2. 1990. p. 5.

[15] The debate over the morality of programming derogatorily categorised as 'poverty porn' became such a 'hot button' issue that it was central to a BBC 'Newsnight' debate, during which Owen Jones accused producers of a "relentless, almost obsessive, hunting down of the most extreme, dysfunctional, unrepresentative people on benefits". Writer for *The Spectator*, Fraser Nelson, countered that [regarding *Benefits Street*] "the villain of the piece isn't the people, the villain is the system." 'Newsnight'. *BBC*. (Broadcast 09/01/14).

[16] Abigail Scott Paul. ''Poverty Porn'? Who benefits from documentaries on Recession Britain?' *Joseph Rowntree Foundation*. (23/08/13).

Scott Paul returns to previous research on broadcast media from *JRF*, which found that "coverage tended to focus on extreme cases, highlighting the inherent 'failings' of undeserving people. John H. McKendrick et. al. 'The Media, Poverty, and Public Opinion in the UK. *Joseph Rowntree Foundation*. (10/09/08).

treatment of class conflict is mirroring some of horror's most exploitative and controversial texts.

The contemporary prejudices against the young, working-class male that are exploited and exposed in hoodie horror can be traced to a specific moment within the video nasty era — the murder of James Bulger. Bulger, who had been lured away from his mother at a Liverpool shopping centre, had been found brutally beaten and covered in paint on a railway line. Shortly after his disappearance, CCTV footage surfaced of Bulger walking hand in hand with the perpetrators, who were identified as two ten year old boys. Shortly afterwards, it was pedalled by the press that the boys had been influenced by violent videos to commit the murder. Stanley Cohen observes: "the Bulger story had become a potent symbol for everything that had gone wrong in Britain: a 'breed' of violent children, whether feral or immoral; absent fathers, feckless mothers and dysfunctional underclass families; the exploitation of children by TV violence and video nasties".[17] Some media outlets even identified a specific title, *Child's Play 3* as the inciting text, although it was later revealed by the police that there had been no evidence to suggest any video nasties had been viewed in the boys' homes prior to the murder.[18] *The Sun* implored the public: 'For the sake of ALL our kids, Burn Your Video Nasty',[19] and when some broadcasters and video stores decided to withdraw the film, *The Daily Mirror* took credit in a celebratory headline:

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[17] Cohen. (2011). p.ix.

[18] Cohen. p.x.

[19] *The Sun.* (11/11/93).

Figure 1: Daily Mirror headline celebrates banning of *Child's Play 3*, April 13, 1994.

Although there was no evidence that either child had seen the film at the time, and the police had publicly discounted the link being made between the crime and video nasties, the young boys and their viewing habits played into the discourse of the panic very well, as they fit the demographic that was of primary concern to the moral campaigners. As Ian Cooper suggests, the video nasty campaign was just one manifestation of a century-long panic about "the effects of violent imagery on *impressionable young men*".[20] As this study will demonstrate, in the wake of the Bulger case, the impressionable young man became a serious threat in the collective imagination of the British public.

It is important to remember, however, that whilst the video nasty era of censorship is particularly influential upon hoodie horror, the genre's problematic relationship with the censors stretched back much further than the 1980s. Ian Cooper describes the BBFC's "visceral dislike"[21] of the horror genre which stifled production as early as the 1930s, at the same time as Hollywood's Universal studio was fully

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[20] Ian Cooper. (2016). p.169. Emphasis mine.

[21] Cooper. p. 32.

capitalising on owning the rights for many of Britain's famous Gothic novels, with their adaptations of *Dracula* (Browning, 1931) and *Frankenstein* (Whale, 1931) establishing them at the forefront of horror production. The continued censorial prejudice against horror in Britain meant that horrific elements were covertly explored within thriller or comedy narratives. Not only this, but Steve Chibnall and Julian Petley have also suggested that the long shadow that Gothic casts over British cinema may, ironically, have had a hand in British horror's slow start and inability to keep up with contemporary generic developments. They add: "[t]his is a bitterly ironic state of affairs for films in one of the only genres Britain can claim as its own".[22] Indeed, early British horror's adherence to the tropes of the Gothic and melodrama are exemplified in the films of Tod Slaughter. Slaughter's early films (1935–1940), for example, were highly theatrical; unsurprising considering the actor had first found success on the stage. His films were often romantic melodramas, with Slaughter's villainous characters providing a touch of horror. His characters were members of the bourgeoisie or aristocracy, who used their social standing to disguise their penchant for committing grisly crimes.

The influences of the Gothic novel and the lingering Victorian fascination with true crime were implicit in these narratives, but well disguised enough to pass by the censor. Britain's Gothic tradition had seemingly transcended its own fraught relationship with moral guardians and censors to become a legitimate art form. Perhaps, as David Pirie suggests, this legitimacy was achieved when Andre Breton championed the Gothic for exemplifying his thesis of Surrealism, giving intellectual weight to the texts in the 1920s.[23] Horror film was, and perhaps still is, regarded as the poor relation of Britain's great Gothic tradition, and so the borrowing of Gothic's superior status allowed for a greater freedom for filmmakers. More directly, however,

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[22] Steve Chibnall and Julian Petley. (2002). p.6.

[23] Pirie. (2008). p.7.

the Gothic was the perfect Trojan horse for horror because of its exotic and period settings, which kept the films' content a degree separated from the here and now. The melodramatic flavour of the Gothic (and, for that matter, Slaughter's antagonists) allowed a 'fantastic quality', which Julian Petley argues, "makes all sorts of 'extreme' behaviour possible".[24] The surrealism of Gothic tropes helped early horror filmmakers to avoid the vilification Michael Powell would later suffer for *Peeping Tom*, because, unlike *Tom*, the Slaughter films and Gothic ghost stories of the 30s and 40s did not attempt to conflate horror with the beloved 'realism' of the contemporary and the domestic. For these 'horror' films, being frightening and horrific was paradoxically not the primary goal. Rather, as Ian Cooper acknowledges, the goal was to give the majority working-class audience salacious and sensational tales of the untouchable upper classes: "for the working-class audience these films were aimed at, they puncture notions of bourgeois respectability while also feeding into a suspicion which is still with us today — that our social betters, for all their piety and wealth and philanthropic boasts, are greedy, lecherous, murderous hypocrites".[25]

Early British horror was populated with these wealthy human monsters, and the class tension which bore out this monstrosity would persist in cinema thereafter. The 1947 film adaptation of Gothic novel *Uncle Silas* (Frank) once again proposes that the greed of men is the root of evil. The pursuit of wealth is seen as all-consuming and immoral, with the titular character conspiring with his son and a wayward governess to murder his niece, thereby claiming her inherited fortune. This provides a particularly important bridge between Britain's Gothic tradition, upon which the film relies heavily, and its burgeoning interest in the horror film. *Silas*' Gothic heritage lent legitimacy (hard fought and only recently won) to the risky pursuit of horror filmmaking, which had an untenable position within film culture both financially and

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[24] Julian Petley. 'The Lost Continent'. Charles Barr (ed.). *All Our Yesterdays: 90 Years of British Cinema*. (London: BFI, 1986). p.109.

[25] Cooper. (2016). p.31.

socially in the wake of the 'H' certificate ban (1942-1945) which had prevented the import of horror and discouraged domestic production for several years. *Silas*, however, provided a stylistic template for screen Gothic that persists to this day. The dissolve transitions and medium close up shots used in *Silas* are refined and used to greater effect fourteen years later in Clayton's *The Innocents* (1961), and the use of light and shadow throughout the film has been replicated time and again, from the BBC's *Whistle and I'll Come To You* (Miller, 1968) to the recent screen adaptation of *The Woman In Black* (Watkins, 2012).

Prior to Hammer's heyday, which blatantly and unapologetically mined Britain's Gothic literary heritage, *Uncle Silas* (aka *The Inheritance*) was one of very few domestically made films, along with Ealing's portmanteau *Dead of Night*, which acknowledged and benefitted from the strong link between the two mediums. *Dead of Night*, as Pirie notes, has gained a "reputation as the most important English supernatural thriller prior to the late 1950s".[26] In its commitment to exploring the nature of human fear, it was indeed ahead of its time. The film anchors its several short horror stories to a group of friends and acquaintances, sharing their supernatural experiences in a quintessentially British, middle class scene: they are sitting in a drawing room, around a roaring fire, enjoying a pot of tea. The gentile middle classness of the characters — alluded to in Foley's early comment that his large farmhouse is in need of "at least two more bedrooms" — further legitimises the narrative. As Hunter has observed, it is only when horror aims for "the least fashionable of audiences, working-class lads"[27] that it becomes a problem for, and a target of, censors and moral guardians. *Dead of Night* is a staunchly middle class exercise, and much of its horror comes from insinuation as opposed to visceral acts of violence — in other words, there is little here for a misguided mind to 'recreate'. Its

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26 Pirie. (2008). p. 16.

27 Hunter. (2015). p. 34.

mise-en-scène communicates closely with the melodramatic heritage cinema of its period (exemplified by Leslie Arliss' *The Wicked Lady* (1945)), a genre that, rightly or wrongly, is most often associated with female demographics, thereby further alleviating the concern that the 'working-class lad' may be adversely affected or encouraged by the film.

Intrigued by newcomer Craig's eerie sense of déjà vu, the guests are indulging in some ghost story-telling around the fire, acknowledging not only the Victorian tradition this resembles, but the framing device used to great effect in such Gothic texts as *The Turn of A Screw* (James, 1898). The fireside scene has become part of the DNA of Britain's Gothic and horror narratives, facilitating the act of storytelling, the warmth of the fire poetically offset by the chill of the guest's story. Many of the ghost stories within the film also make use of Gothic conventions — ghosts, haunted objects and disturbing premonitions — which at times sit uneasily beside psychiatrist Dr. Van Straaten's insistence upon debunking each tale as it is told. Cooper feels that the film resembles less a progressive step in Britain's horror history, and more the "last gasp of an earlier kind of horror"[28] prior to the revolutionary work of Hammer. The story of the ventriloquist possessed by his dummy, however, stands out as a particularly innovative entry which simultaneously recalls its expressionist forebears and provides a thematic predecessor to the feature length horror/thriller *Magic* (Attenborough, 1978).

It is interesting to note that all but one of the stories work as parables about the obsessive nature of man — men are imperilled by their obsessions with death, wealth, success and most absurdly, golf. Robert Hamer's contribution to the anthology, 'The Haunted Mirror', is of particular relevance to this study's focus on men and masculinity. Whilst narrated by his wife Joan, the story revolves around the narcissism and consumerism of Peter Cortland, who is gifted a mirror by Joan on his birthday.

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28 Cooper. (2016). p.38.

She has struggled to find the perfect gift, telling the listeners: "You know how difficult it is choosing presents for a man. They always seem to have everything they want." This statement provides a pointed criticism of her husband's consumerist tendencies and his entitlement to a seemingly limitless field of goods, services and experiences. Whilst Joan herself does not seem resentful of Peter's advantages, this statement certainly poses questions about the value of a system which privileges the middle class man above all others. As he opens his gift, Peter asks if Joan has had her portrait made for him, to which she responds "I thought you'd like to look at yourself". This line, whilst delivered in a light tone, is also suggestive of Peter's potential for vanity, a potential compounded by Peter's later words: "What shall we do tonight? Dress up? Spend a lot of money?" This reckless and obscene show of wealth is far departed from hoodie horror's grimy, bleak working-classness, but in alluding to the temptations of vacuous consumerism, 'The Haunted Mirror' firmly suggests that the need to consume is distinctly male. This uncontrollable consumption is something which hoodie horror deals with explicitly, and the limitless appetites of men for goods, power or control put men in direct peril time and again. *Dead of Night* is an early example of British filmmakers using the horrific space to dissect the nation's social and political flaws. As such, it is important to acknowledge the film and its possible, if not obvious, legacy of class-critical horror.

It was the rise of Hammer horror in the 1950s that would truly close the gap in notoriety between the British horror film and its Hollywood competition. Hammer had made a steady stream of films, dabbling in a variety of genres, since its founding in 1934, but it was the success of their adaptation of *The Quatermass Xperiment* (Guest, 1955) that catalysed the creation of the now canonical 'Hammer horror' film. David Pirie believes this film to be "the beginning of a quiet cinematic revolution" in Britain, which paved the way for Hammer to negotiate for the rights to the Frankenstein

character.[29] *Quatermass* was more akin to sci-fi than horror, but nonetheless proved that such lowly B-genres could match, if not improve upon, the success of the revered British filmmaking traditions of documentary and the war film. Interestingly, *Quatermass* was filmed in black and white, and James Rose notes that Val Guest's decision to use handheld cameras wherever possible "emphasised the realist qualities of the narrative".[30] This is an early example of science fiction succeeding where horror would continue to fail for many years to come — *Quatermass* blended the realist mode with fantastical, and sometimes horrific, elements but managed to avoid the sabotage later enacted upon Powell and *Tom*, instead garnering international success. It did, however, also warrant an 'X' certificate, which the studio and filmmakers wore as a badge of honour, even changing the title ('Xperiment') to emphasise its extreme classification.[31]

The 1957 release of *The Curse of Frankenstein* (Fisher) saw Hammer begin its long-standing relationship with Terence Fisher, Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing, thereby completing its transformation from a struggling British studio to an international horror icon. Demonstrating the vivid colours, sensational on-screen violence and arresting melodramatic performances that Hammer would become synonymous with, *Curse* broke box office records on release in both Britain and U.S., proving to the censors and the British studios that audiences were ready and ravenous for horror.[32] Unlike much of Britain's horror cinema up to this point, Gothic heritage and contemporary horror aesthetics were fully synthesised to create films that were unashamedly horrific in content.

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[29] Pirie. (2008). p.23.

[30] James Rose. *Beyond Hammer: British Horror Cinema Since 1970.* (Leighton Buzzard: Autuer, 2009). p.8.

[31] Pirie. (2008). p. 23.

[32] Pirie. p.33.

The cocktail of gory special effects and sensational narratives, which have been criticised for their reaffirmation of patriarchal authority,[33] proved a highly profitable formula, and neither could the censors deny that this brand of film was improving the economic standing of domestic film production considerably, and garnering the industry international attention and investment. In the wake of this awareness, censors were unusually forgiving with certain aspects of Hammer's submitted scripts and treatments, and as a result there was a window of opportunity for other horror filmmakers to also get their scripts approved — after all, the censors could not be seen to privilege particular studios. However, once again, Hammer employed foreign lands and past times to distance the horror on screen from the contemporary context in which it was being viewed, and this detachment from the here and now arguably made the viscera of the films slightly more palatable to critics. However, Hammer's perceived realism was still a stumbling block for many moral guardians, as Hutchings notes: "[m]ost of the complaints against Hammer accrue from the idea that its films are in some way too 'realistic', that it is too unpleasant to be laughed at".[34] There was, however, an emergent alternative to Hammer's dominant horror aesthetic which was to become far more problematic for censors in terms of its realism. As Hutchings asserts, "the evaluation of Hammer that emerged was subsequently used as a yardstick against which non-Hammer horrors were judged and valued".[35] Where Hammer offered barely tolerable, historically-set violence and debauchery, but succeeded in building a tentative relationship with censors, some of the studio's filmmaking contemporaries were keen to push the envelope even further, eventually causing censors to double down and reinstate their stranglehold over the horror film. These films were so provocative and antagonistic that Pirie holds them

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[33] See Marcus K. Harmes. 'The Seventeenth Century on Film: Patriarchy, Magistracy, and Witchcraft in British Horror Films, 1968-1971'. *Canadian Journal of Film Studies*. Vol.22, Issue 2. 2013. pp.64-81, for a brief outline of how Hammer's later narratives became more progressive as folk horror's moved towards the reactionary.

[34] Peter Hutchings. (1993). p. 9.

[35] Hutchings. (1993). p.6.

responsible for the newly subdued feel of the horror films that followed in the early 1960s, marvelling that "in some respects it is remarkable that the British horror film survived at all".[36] The short-lived 'open season' encouraged by Hammer's early successes resulted in a trilogy of horror films, comprising of *Horrors of the Black Museum* (Crabtree, 1958), *Circus of Horrors* and *Peeping Tom*, that are anomalous in Britain's horror film history, the final of which was so controversial that it resulted in a renewed uproar over the moral consequences of screening horror, leading to an even more stringent campaign for censorship against the horror film in Britain.[37] *Peeping Tom* casts a large shadow over British cinema, not least due to the sensational fall from grace that its director suffered after the film's release and its subsequent defamation in the press.

Peeping Tom is a cornerstone of modern British horror film, representing a departure from the traditions of both the Gothic and Hammer with its contemporary setting and realist *mise-en-scène*. Although most often classified as horror, Fuller argues that it is more accurately described as "a neo-gothic psychoanalytical thriller".[38] It follows a young man, Mark Lewis (Karl Boehm) whose preoccupations with film and fear lead him to experiment with murder. In order to capture real fear on film, he customises his camera's tripod to work as a weapon and simultaneously murders and films his victims. Mark's disturbed behaviour is a result of abuse he suffered as a child: his father, a scientist fascinated by the concept of fear, used his son as a test subject, leaving the child traumatised and unable to fully assimilate.

Throughout the narrative, Mark is almost childlike in his behaviour and interaction with other characters. He moves peripherally around the adult world, performing his own adulthood to the best of his ability. When forced to converse, he

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[36] Pirie. (2008). p.129.

[37] See Pirie (2008) for a detailed account of the relationship between censor and filmmaker at this time.

[38] Graham Fuller. 'Fear in the Mirror'. *Sight and Sound*. Vol. 20, Issue 12. 2010. p. 24.

does so quietly and with as few words as possible. He spends hours in his darkroom, 'playing' with his camera and escaping into its footage — he finds stimulation in the visual over any other sensory experience. Additionally, Mark seems to adhere to the simplistic moral code of a child, appearing to classify his victims as 'bad' and the virtuous Helen as 'good'. Seeing his macabre film as no more than a project that must be finished, he displays a limited comprehension of the impact or consequences of his actions. Elena del Rio notes that, even in his movements, Mark suggests that he has not matured: "Mark's bodily conduct insists on mirroring that of the object filmed… corroborating Mark's stagnation in a pre-linguistic stage of narcissistic identification [and showing] a child's reliance upon a corporeal schema as the ground for his/her self-image".[39] Mark can be seen 'mirroring' in several instances, one of the most disturbing being in the scene where Helen offers him a brief kiss on the cheek. After Helen leaves, Mark turns to his camera and gently caresses and kisses the lens as though practicing intimacy. Reaching for his camera is a comfort and a crutch for Mark, in much the same way a blanket or favourite toy would be for a child. This childlike characterisation of the antagonist resembles the childlike evil (as opposed to innocence) embodied by the antagonists of Wolf Rilla's imminent *The Village of the Damned* (1960), a theme further popularised by the 'demon seed' narratives of 1980s such as *The Exorcist* or *The Omen* (Donner, 1976). Much later, hoodie horror would take up the mantle of the childlike killer too. For *Peeping Tom*, Mark's characterisation contributes to the complicity of the audience in his actions, invoking a pity or sympathy for him. Having witnessed his crimes, this sympathy makes the viewing experience immensely uncomfortable, as the audience is forced to dwell within the 'grey area' between criminality and its external causes for the majority of the narrative.

Released in the same year as Hitchcock's *Psycho*, Powell's film worked within similar parameters, examining damaging familial relationships and punishing women

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[39] Elena del Rio. 'The Body of Voyeurism: Mapping a Discourse of the Senses in Michael Powell's Peeping Tom'. *Camera Obscura*. Vol. 15, No. 3. 2000. pp.118-119.

for their transgressions. However, *Peeping Tom* was met with inordinate critical hostility and public outrage compared to its American contemporary.[40] As Fuller summarises, "whereas Hitchcock was able to get away with bloody murder in *Psycho* three months after *Peeping Tom* […] Powell fell on the sword of his own daring — or, rather, was shoved on to it by that tidal wave of critical obloquy".[41] *Psycho*'s setting in the U.S. may have distanced the picture far enough from everyday British life to allow a more objective analysis by critics. The lack of distance between the screened events and the real world in *Tom* arguably precipitated its initial failure, with Pirie asserting: "[i]f he [Powell] had set his film in 1920s Berlin, he would have had no problem".[42] Julian Petley acknowledges Powell's status as the maker of fantastical melodramas, within which a lack of realism was already off-putting to contemporary critics prior to *Tom*.[43] However, Powell had received acclaim for his wartime collaborations with Emeric Pressburger, which were arguably located somewhere between revered realism and the seedy underbelly of horror and fantasy supposedly unearthed in *Peeping Tom*. Powell's foray into horror territory all but ruined his career, causing as it did a vicious backlash from arts critics. The offense taken by critics seemed to stem from their perception that Powell had squandered his talent and potential on such a sordid tale. The squandering of potential was, and has continued to be, an unforgivable sin in British culture. It is the crux of today's 'benefit scrounger' rhetoric, central to the resentment of working-class youths, whose supposed lack of morality or motivation is imagined as a threat to established social expectations.

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[40] In his chapter ' Under-the-Skin Horrors: Social Realism and classlessness in Peeping Tom and the British new Wave', Adam Lowenstein makes an interesting juxtaposition between *Room at the Top* (Clayton, 1959) and *Tom*, assessing the polarised difference of critic Isabel Quigley's reaction (reverence for the former, disgust for the latter). He argues that Quigley's dislike for Tom is a response to "an unnerving sense of inclusion, of collapsed boundaries between herself and an imagined audience of pathologised others". Justine Ashby & Andrew Higson. (eds.). *British Cinema: Past and Present*. (London: Routledge, 2000). p.222

[41] Fuller. (2010). p.26.

[42] Pirie. (2008). p.10.

[43] Petley. (1986). p.109.

In many ways, Powell's resistance to normative, middle class values, and the ensuing demonization of his work, parallels the responses of fear and anger that have been levelled at the young working-class for centuries. Deemed as trash cinema, *Tom* initially joined the ranks of the B-movie and sexploitation film which, as Hunter highlights, sat uneasily against British filmmaking's tradition "for exportable respectability".[44] The implicit concern with such films was their appeal to (and potential influence on) 'the masses', particularly the working-class population. Hunter's guardians would later be instrumental in the legislating of the Video Recordings Act, with its explicit motivation to stop certain materials reaching the impressionable working-class youth. There are similarly outraged guardians operating within the media today, the concern now moving towards the influence of the video game and internet pornography on vulnerable and easily corrupted minds.[45] The rejection of *Peeping Tom* is particularly important to the subject of this thesis, however, because it signified Powell's rebellion against the hold social realism had over national film production, a revered genre that has cast a long shadow over Britain's filmmaking right up to present day. Petley suggests: [t]he realist aesthetic is so deeply ingrained in British film culture that it not only renders 'deviant' movies either marginal or completely invisible… but also imposes a 'realist' framework of interpretation like a stifling blanket over the entire area of British cinema".[46] Powell's splicing of the nation's most revered cinema with its most reviled challenged the stifling environment

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[44] Hunter. (2015). p. 32.

[45] For examples, see Rich Stanton for *The Guardian*: 'Do video games make children violent? Nobody knows – and this is why' (09/03/16) and Jon von Radowitz for *The Independent*: 'Study finds that violent video games may be linked to aggressive behaviour' (17/08/15). In 2003, the videogame Grand Theft Auto was at the centre of a controversy surrounding the shooting to death of two police officers and a dispatcher by teenager Devin Moore. At the moment of his arrest, Moore was reported have said "Life is a videogame, you have to die sometime". Both Moore's defence and the victims' families alleged that GTA had influenced Moore's actions, and the games' makers and distributors were subsequently embroiled in a lawsuit with the victims' families. (Nick Farrell. 'Grand Theft Auto player gets death penalty'. *The Inquirer*. (12/08/05)).

[46] Petley. Barr. (1986). p. 100.

Petley identifies, and also problematises the simplistic binary thinking employed by critics to define 'good' cinema from 'bad', subverting the realist framework so that realism is viewed through the lens of horror. As Fuller suggests; "The vilification of *Peeping Tom* in May 1960 was a watershed moment in British cinema history, because it reinforced the idea that an imagination as fierce and Romantic as Powell's was, sooner or later, bound to transgress the national style of tasteful realism".[47] This transgression, whilst hugely damaging to Powell's career, demonstrated the potential for horror to utilise contemporary settings and borrow from more prestigious cinematic styles, even within the harsh, realist climate of British cinema. Years later, hoodie horror has committed a similar transgression, if less expertly realised than its predecessor, in employing recognisably social realist constructs within the realm of the horrific. In this way, hoodie horror can be seen as a continuation of the pattern that John Hill recognised in the "changing fortunes of the 'working-class hero'" throughout social realism's history, "revealing a slow but sure fall from grace".[48] Hoodies, therefore, can be understood as the working-class after the fall, and perhaps, in some way, *Tom* represents the beginning.

Since *Tom*'s initial reception, its transgression of social realist norms has become widely appreciated, and it is now studied and taught as a classic of British horror cinema. In its filming techniques, particularly the tight framing of scenes, and the use of 'found footage' (albeit created within the film), as well as its young, troubled male antagonist, the film has had an important aesthetic influence on the hoodie horror film, and contemporary horror more broadly. *Peeping Tom* bridged the gaps between the theatrical style of horror, which borrowed heavily from Britain's Gothic literary tradition, previously seen in Ealing studio's aforementioned anthology horror *Dead of Night* or *Uncle Silas,* Hammer's colourfully camp re-visioning of Britain's

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[47] Fuller. (2010). p. 25.

[48] John Hill. 'A Working-class Hero is Something to Be?'. Phil Powrie, Ann Davies and Bruce Babington (eds.). *The Trouble with Men: Masculinities in European and Hollywood Cinema*. (London: Wallflower Press, 2004). p.108.

Gothic heritage, and the burgeoning trend in social realism films at the time of *Peeping Tom*'s release.

Adam Lowenstein considers *Peeping Tom* a study of post-war Britain and its perception of class. He argues that the film challenges the problematic idea of Britain's "the people", deployed during wartime, in a post-war context. In order to boost morale and create successful propaganda campaigns during World War Two, British media included previously isolated social groups such as the working-class and women as part of the 'us' that was at war with 'them'. This national unity, however, was very much a wartime illusion. Lowenstein argues that *Peeping Tom* challenges the idea of national unity by critiquing the membership of "the people" in a post-war Britain, focusing as it does on Karl Boehm's awkwardly peripheral character, Mark.[49] Mark is simultaneously an insider (he lives and works within the same spaces as his victims, and possesses an 'insider' knowledge of filmmaking) and an outsider (Boehm was known to British audiences as an acclaimed German actor, and his character in the film is markedly 'othered' by his appearance and accent). Referencing "the people" has left a legacy of homogenising, normalising language. This language endures to this day in the stirring political rhetoric of leadership campaigns and party press conferences. (for example, David Cameron's 2010 'Big Society' speech, which referred to "the people" and "the community" as integral to his vision of a "liberal society".[50]) Yet this term is only employed to keep a population 'on side' in times of battle, whether political, social or financial, and so there must always be someone who does not warrant inclusion, and this is where *Peeping Tom* can be read as a class-based film. Mark, as Lowenstein notes, is in many ways similar to the 'Angry Young Man' of the British New Wave:[51] both characters are aware that post-war

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[49] Adam Lowenstein. *Shocking Representation: Historical Trauma, National Cinema, and The Modern Horror Film*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005). p. 60.

[50] Cabinet Office. 'PM's Speech on Big Society'. (Delivered 14/02/11).

[51] Lowenstein. (2005). p. 64.

society is not working for them, that they do not belong with "the people", and their actions throughout the course of the narrative are motivated by this exclusion and disenfranchisement. Mark's living arrangements illustrate his position both within society as a whole, and more specifically, the community he lives amongst. Though he takes a while to admit it, Mark owns the entirety of the house in which he lodges. He lives in a couple of cluttered rooms at the very top of this sprawling property, renting the rest of the house to boarders, none of whom know the identity of their landlord. Mark is therefore technically a homeowner, of a large home at that, and yet the space he claims as his own is comparative to the space his tenants rent. This is in part what makes *Peeping Tom* such an interesting companion piece to the hoodie horror film. For hoodie horror, the 'Angry Young Man' character has morphed into tabloid mythology. The hoodie, often the antagonist of the piece, is equally as disenfranchised by and excluded from the cosy, idealistic idea of the British "people". Their reaction to this exclusion is in most cases as extreme, if less melodramatic, than Mark's.

Marcia Landy also draws parallels between Powell's film and its social realist contemporaries, stating that horror shares many thematic concerns with the 'social problem film', "especially in its preoccupation with social and sexual deviance [and] criminality".[52] Again, deviance and criminality serve to exclude individuals from the unity offered by "the people" and their space — both Mark in *Peeping Tom* and the young antagonists and protagonists in hoodie horror are seen as alien, apart from society, their difference making them an attraction for the masses. The horror in *Peeping Tom* in particular is derived from the fact that as the outsider is observing "the people", the audience are observing him. The film questions viewing practices and the element of spectacle involved in the perception of certain people or societies. In fact, the film opens with a sequence which seems to level criticism directly at the

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[52] Marcia Landy. *British Genres: Cinema and Society, 1930-1960.* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1991). p.431.

British New wave and its tendency towards 'class tourism'. Through the lens of Mark's camera, the viewfinder of which closely resembles the crosshairs of a rifle viewfinder, we approach a young woman. She is confined not only by the constraints of the camera, but also by the narrow, dark spaces of the Soho street in which she stands. She peers through a shop window, the display made up of several disembodied female arms, legs and heads, foreshadowing not only her fate but also remarking on the commodification of the body — something which hoodie horror would revisit half a century later.

As the woman turns to speak to Mark, and the viewer she says "It'll be two quid" in a recognisable East End accent. Her assumed profession, accent and despondent attitude towards being approached and filmed code her as working-class, an assumption further compounded, again, by a glance at her living arrangements, a claustrophobic room, basic and dimly lit and made even smaller and darker by Powell's tight framing. After murdering her, and capturing the scene on camera, Mark goes home and watches the footage. In the same way that an audience may sit to watch and vicariously experience working-classness through social realism, Mark's footage captures for him the experience of fear and death.Although Mark is an extreme example, his obsession with watching and viewing confronts the audience with their own position — their objectification of the bodies on screen and their questionable right to claim the bodies and experiences on screen as authentically and legitimately theirs. In terms of viewing other classes, races or genders, those not included within the patriarchal middle class ideal, as the valueless 'other', the film strikes an accusatory tone. What makes a privileged audience think that the body of the 'other' is there purely to serve the impulse to watch, to objectify? As punishment for their entitlement, the audience are made complicit in Mark's crimes, as they have chosen to watch rather than look away. This complicity is cited as another cause of

Tom's initial failure, with William Johnson[53] noting that the most striking difference between *Tom* and *Psycho* being Tom's refusal to let audiences distance themselves from the behaviour on screen. Where *Psycho*'s concluding psychological evaluation of Norman detaches the audiences from the subject, no such detachment is allowed in Mark's last on screen moments. We are forced to watch Mark, as he simultaneously watches and records his suicide. The legacy of this device is evident in hoodie horror, with the presence of cameras and camera phones in *Eden Lake*, *Harry Brown* and *Community* achieving a similar level of audience complicity.

Hoodie horror, like *Peeping Tom*, draws attention to the distorted lenses through which working-class bodies and lives are seen in modern Britain, challenging the viewer's perceptions of working-class men by taking their characterisation to the violent extremes only the horror genre can accommodate. These representations parallel the violence of the language used to describe the working-class in popular discourse (eg. "feral","scrounger"). It can be argued, therefore, that the hoodie horror film cycle is a culmination of the recognised long-standing similarities between social realism and horror. John Hill argues for flexibility when considering the understanding of 'realism': "the conventions associated with realism do not remain fixed and are subject to historical variation and change".[54] He continues to identify two key kinds of 'representational shift': "first…content, or subject matter, and has a primarily social dimension… second… formal and stylistic features".[55] This thesis therefore argues for the subjective realism of hoodie horror, not only in its employment of formal and stylistic features which recall an earlier, social realist understanding of realism, but also because it features and catalogues a social shift, similar to that identified by Hill, in the identification and representation of a subject matter of interest: the working-

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[53] William Johnson. 'Peeping Tom: A Second Look'. *Film Quarterly*. Vol. 33, No. 3. 1980. p.6.

[54] John Hill. ' From New-Wave to Brit-Grit: Continuity and Difference in working-class realism'. Ashby & Higson. (2000). p.250.

[55] Hill. Ashby & Higson. p.250.

class. Moreover, the common concerns of horror and social realism, as outlined by Landy, demonstrate the longstanding fascination with class in and on film. In the post-war years, there was a perceived classlessness for the first time in modern British society. The development of the welfare state, led by a push to provide decent living standards for returning war heroes, the residual rationing and 'make do and mend' cultures of wartime, and low unemployment figures in the early 1950s improved the financial standing of the working-classes, reducing the gaps between the top of the class hierarchy and the bottom. The cinematic preference for social realism from the late 1950s has been criticised as a reactionary measure, in response to the illusion of classlessness; a way of reaffirming that the audience was 'us', and the film's subject, 'them' (an interesting parallel with wartime rhetoric). Andrew Higson identifies a particular gaze within social realism filmmaking, which he suggests is the "sympathetic gaze of the bourgeoisie".[56] This suggests that the audience is positioned as patronising, and perhaps naïve, but above all, they occupy a position of "class authority".[57]

Hoodie horror, in borrowing certain tropes from social realism, poses a challenge to the alleged tradition of spectatorial gazing at the lower classes. By creating a horror film cycle which draws on the British reverence for realism and the visceral horror of America's genre output, hoodie horror problematizes the patronising gaze of the bourgeoisie, typically levelled both at the working-class and the horror genre. In many cases by removing the observer from a privileged outside position, and placing them (or a middle class character, at least) at the centre of the film, hoodie horror serves to purge both the working-class and the horror genre from the margins and place both within the realm of realism. This splicing of realism and horror is quite a feat in a British cinematic context, as the success and reverence of realism

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[56] Andrew Higson. 'Space, Place, Spectacle: Landscape and Townscape in the 'Kitchen Sink' Film'. Andrew Higson (ed.). *Dissolving Views: Key Writings On British Cinema*. (London: Cassell, 1996). p.150.

[57] Higson. (1996). p. 151.

is arguably conditional upon the perception of horror as the dark, anti-realist opposition. As Petley once again notes: "the vaunting and valorising of certain British films on account of their 'realism' entails, as its corollary… the dismissal and denigration of those films deemed un- or non-realist".[58] In hoodie horror's case, the spectacle of the lower classes employed by social realism is outdone by the spectacle of violence. Again, this technique can be traced to Powell's film, which has "a tendency to violate comforting spectator boundaries".[59] Many of the visual cues of *Tom*'s opening scenes tease the audience with the familiar, comfortable social realist conventions, before destroying expectation by confronting the audience with a murder that they witness first hand, through the camera. This technique would later be heavily capitalised upon by the 'found footage' subgenre, the intention being to submerge the audience in point of view horror, breaking the fourth wall by having the viewer assume the position of filmmaker. Beyond *Tom* and its realist-inflected influence, 'realist' horror filmmaking has emerged elsewhere in British horror, and often for similar subversive purposes. Pete Walker's films, Towlson argues, are "remarkable in their condemnation of a reactionary older generation brutally supressing 'permissive' youth",[60] whilst Steve Chibnall notes that, in revisionist horror such as Walker's, "the established order is caricatured as a culture of death, a charnel house for the youthful ambitions of change".[61]

In the age of film, Britain in particular has prized its social realism filmmaking which, whilst not claiming to be real, endeavours to provide a realistic portrait of working-class life which accurately mimics the documentary mode. Social realism has

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[58] Petley (1986). p.98.

[59] Lowenstein. (2005). p. 66.

[60] Jon Towlson. *Subversive Horror Cinema: Countercultural Messages of Films from Frankenstein to the Present.* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 2014). p.81.

[61] Steve Chibnall. ' A Heritage of Evil: Pete Walker and the Politics of Gothic Revisionism' in Chibnall and Petley. (2002). p. 159.

long been canonised as honest and authentic, and the British preference for realism above all other forms has been noted and criticised within this chapter. Borrowing stylistically from the equally revered documentary filmmaking tradition, with its grainy black and white reels, panoramic landscape shots and the intention of representing individual experience, social realism is often referred to in such terms. Hammer, *Peeping Tom* and its Sadian contemporaries are, on face value, in direct opposition to the style and values of Britain's cherished genre. However, horror is seeking authenticity and realism too. In fact, it is precisely because of the level of realism achieved in the creeping violence of *Peeping Tom*, or the more visceral violence of *Circus of Horrors* that the films were so maligned. Much like *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre*, *Tom*'s violence is bloodless, whereas Hayers' film was strikingly liberal with its use of gore.

The realism of the video nasty reached a peak in terms of graphic, realistic violence in 1982, with the video release of such extreme titles as *Cannibal Holocaust* and *The Driller Killer* (Ferrara, 1979). It was feared that the extreme violence in these films could be replicated by suggestible and vulnerable demographics. The accusations levelled at *Child's Play 3* in the wake of Bulger's murder therefore seems to be a self-fulfilling prophecy — the subsequent campaign to ban the film and others like it showed a desperate attempt to explain and understand the action of the children responsible by comparing reality with a horror film, because the closeness between the two at this juncture was unprecedented. There is an interesting relationship at work between film realism and reality, which shows itself in the Bulger case, where the most spectacular or horrific events in the real world can only be explained in comparison to a film. Sometimes this confusion translates into the conflation of film with reality. Witnesses to the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001 described the scenes as 'like a movie'.[62] This implies a certain unreality or

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62 Miller & Briefel. (2012).

impossibility — the events cannot be reconciled with reality, only the imagined world of the screen, and yet they are real. Adversely, the public loses their appetite for the reality of film when they are faced with real life trauma, which can, and did in the Bulger case, result in blame being apportioned to film's realism. As Martin Barker explains, even once the connection between *Child's Play 3* and the Bulger murder had been refuted, the public held to the explanation tightly. Barker attributes this blind loyalty to untruths of the media coverage, at this point still a trusted source of news: "[s]o, even when refuted, such cases don't go away. They linger like ghosts, always half-alive to 'explain' the next 'inexplicable'".[63] Bulger's murder was one such inexplicable event, and so the public were arguably just happy to have a reason, even if that reason was inaccurateIn the pursuit of authenticity, the re-enactment of the 'true story' is seen regularly in horror, and is the cause of much debate in terms of historical accuracy and authenticity. The liberally used 'based on a true story' tagline is now treated with some cynicism by frequent cinemagoers, lessening its effect and in some cases working to distance viewers even further from their involvement with the narrative. However, horror film in particular offered an alternative technique for manufacturing authenticity — 'found footage'. The premise of this extremely successful subgenre relies on the editing together of 'real' footage from an event (haunting, murder spree, possession) to create a record not dissimilar to that created by *Frankenstein*'s epistolary mode.Commonly recognised as the first found footage film, Ruggero Deodato's *Cannibal Holocaust* is shot to appear as 'real' documentary footage. Its convincing realism led to Deodato being charged with making a snuff film,[64] as some audiences were convinced they had actually witnessed real murders on screen. In the case of *Cannibal Holocaust*, denying the audience distance from the events on screen was perhaps too successful in creating an authentically horrific

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[63] Martin Baker. 'The Newson Report: A Case Study in Common Sense'. Martin Barker & Julian Petley (eds.). *Ill Effects: The Media/Violence Debate*. (London: Routledge, 1997). p 14.

[64] For a comprehensive account of *Cannibal Holocaust* and its various legal troubles, see Julian Petley. 'Cannibal Holocaust and the Pornography of Death'. Geoff King. (ed.). *The Spectacle of the Real*. (Bristol: Intellect, 2005).

experience. However, as Cynthia A. Freeland suggests of *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer* (McNaughton, 1986) "we do not believe in watching the movie that this monster threatens us, and yet monsters like him do threaten us".[65] This would mean that the authenticity of a film, in most cases, is limited to the audience acknowledging the horrors of the film as possibilities. The viewer will never meet Henry, as he is fictional, but the figure of the serial killer is evidently real, and the character is loosely based upon the infamous convicted killer Henry Lee Lucas. In fact, throughout the 20th century, serial killers achieved their own kind of celebrity within Western society,[66] making the knowledge of their crimes all the more pervasive. There is a small chance that a serial killer poses a danger to the viewer and their community. That is the key to the existence of the slasher film, the found footage film and many hoodie horror films, amongst others. They derive their horror from believability and possibility rather than realism. The audience are aware, for the most part at least, that they are not witnessing real events. However, their involvement in the narrative and complicity with the characters stems from the belief that similar events to those on screen *are* possible in the real world — serial killers *do* exist and juvenile delinquents *do* exist, and they potentially pose a threat to every member of the audience. After Tom, a further two seminal films saw release in 1960. Both shot in black and white, a popular choice for thriller and horror narratives of the early 60s, and both reliant on an implicit fear of youth, *The Innocents* and *The Village of the Damned* further cemented a theme which would become integral to hoodie horror almost 50 years later. In both narratives, the children pose a particular, if somewhat ambiguous, threat to the older generation.*The Innocents*, as previously mentioned, was heavily influenced by its origin text (Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw* (1898)) and the Gothic style of its forerunners. It also had its own connections with the social realism behemoth. Director

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[65] Freeland . (1995). p. 130.

[66] For a detailed study of serial killers and the notion of celebrity, see Dave Schmid's enlightening *Natural Born Celebrities: Serial Killers in American Culture*. (London: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

Jack Clayton began work in the film industry at age fourteen, and his first feature film in 1959 — *Room at the Top* — kick-started the British New Wave and demonstrated many characteristics which would become integral to the much revered 'kitchen-sink' dramas.[67] His filmography demonstrates an enduring interest in psychology and the idea of 'haunting': *Pumpkin Eater*, in 1964, follows a psychologically troubled woman as she has a breakdown, whilst *Our Mother's House* (1967) featured two children who communicate with their dead mother. Haunting, or haunted, children loom large in these narratives, and the threat posed by the older, dying or dead generation onto the younger generation is a pervasive theme. Whilst *The Innocents* spends a good deal of its run-time ratcheting up the tension between two sinister children and their nervous Governess, Miss Giddens, it is ultimately the fate of the children to suffer at the hands of their elders. Clayton, at the helm of the film, was determined to make a film which contrasted with, and offered an alternative to, the 'horror' that Hammer was producing. Clayton praised *The Turn of the Screw* as "the most perfect example of real horror", "the opposite of over clear horror scenes".[68]

In both James' story and Clayton's adaptation, the source of evil remains ambiguous. In fact, the very concept of 'evil' is undermined by the suggested madness of the protagonist, who is an unreliable witness to the haunting of the children and seems a more tangible and harmful threat to the children than any supernatural entity could be. However, in the novella there is certainly more than a suggestion that the two cherubic, yet unusually mature, children have been tainted specifically by their relationship with the recently deceased, working-class figures of Quint and Jessel: "the threat of *The Turn of the Screw* is not just that of the children possessing knowledge of these particular ghosts but also the very idea of being

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[67] Neil Sinyard's comprehensive chapter on the film credits it with "symbolically [displacing] an Ealing tradition of gentility and restraint and [raising] the whole emotional temperature of British film". Neil Sinyard. *Jack Clayton*. (Manchester; Manchester University Press, 2000). p.37.

[68] Jack Clayton in Christopher Frayling. 'The Innocents'. *Sight and Sound*. Vol.24, Issue 1. 2014. p. 112.

"tainted" by superstition and the lower class — and by sexuality".[69] The monstrous mix of youth and working-classness exposes both the fear of a younger generation, whose values and interests are so different from the generation before, and anxiety regarding the breach of class boundaries. In translating the text to the screen, Clayton has retained the suggestion that Quint and Jessel have indulged in sordid behaviour, of which the children have been aware and have concealed from the other members of the household. However, the film seems far more interested in exploring the monstrosity of the children as a singular issue, separate to a large extent from class. *The Innocents*, as with the folk horror of *Witchfinder General* and its contemporaries, serves as what Steve Chibnall would term "generation gap horror",[70] with Bly and Miss Giddens representing a "demon of the establishment"[71] which punishes liberated youth in order to lend legitimacy to its own repression.

There is a strong sense of generational tension at the foundations of hoodie horror, too. Arguably, though, many hoodie horror narratives subvert the expectation that the Establishment will mete out the punishment. The lines between victim and antagonist are sufficiently blurred as to problematise identifying which generation holds power. Most commonly, hoodie horror films focus on adolescent male bodies, which are widely recognised as bodies in change, bodies in conflict. Unlike the American slasher film, where groups of adult actors are regularly passed off as high school age, hoodie horror casts actors who are of a similar age to their characters, and so the representations appear more authentic. The childlike appearance of characters in *Eden Lake, Summer Scars* (Richards, 2007) and *Community* in particular are reminiscent of the earlier fascination, in both the U.S and U.K., with the

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[69] Nicole Burkholder-Mosco and Wendy Carse. '"Wondrous Material to Play On": Children as sites of Gothic liminality in The Turn of the Screw, The Innocents and The Others'. *Studies in the Humanities*. Vol. 32, Issue. 2. 2005. p.202.

[70] Steve Chibnall. Chibnall and Petley. (2002). p. 159.

[71] Chibnall. (2002). p. 159.

'demon seed' child. There has long been a trend, in Gothic literature and subsequently the horror film, of the child as other. *The Innocents* is indeed a striking representation of children as manipulative, all-knowing, and possibly malevolent beings. Despite the presence of ghosts in the film, the children are by far the most unsettling characters to watch, perhaps because there is no debating their existence.

In later years, *Rosemary's Baby* (Polanski, 1968), *The Exorcist*, *The Omen* and the Spanish film *Island of The Damned* (a.k.a *Who can Kill a Child?*) (Serrador, 1976) showed that, despite their different backgrounds and budgets, the unsettling otherness of the child was a common source of narrative tension. More recently, Japanese horror has centred its supernatural horror on child ghosts (*Ringu* (Nakata, 1998), *Ju-On* (Shimizu, 2002)), and British horror-comedy *Prevenge* (Lowe, 2016) took the demon seed right back to its conception, with an unborn child being the supposed source of evil,[72] the weary mother characterised simply as a host body, controlled from within. Karen Lury, in her work on the child in film, has argued that the uneasiness that films often express over children and childhood is inspired by a kind of crisis of adult identity; "thinking about children has suggested what is strange about being human, about adult subjectivity".[73] Therefore, a working-class adolescent body is doubly challenging to a middle class audience, forcing them to confront not only unspoken class differences, but also forcing them to grapple with difficult questions about their very humanity. Using actors who more closely resemble their characters give these questions an air of authenticity, perhaps attempting social commentary through the horrific images on screen.

Working-class children and young adults are central to the hoodie horror film, often characterised as the locus of evil. Reflecting a tabloid culture which equates the working-class with the monstrous on a regular basis, this is an inevitable equation for

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[72] *Venus Drowning* (Parkinson, 2006) is another British horror preoccupied with the horrors of pregnancy.

[73] Karen Lury. *The Child in Film: Tears, Fears and Fairy Tales*. (London: I.B Tauris, 2010). p. 14.

hoodie horror to make. Casting the young working-class man as antagonist acts as a "warning or admonition".[74] Monsters, according to Donna Heiland, "function as uncanny doubles of our societies, reflecting back to us images of everything that we have cast out as undesirable or threatening to the status quo",[75] and the monsters enjoyed renewed dominance after the millennium. In Britain, the casting out of the young working-class through press-sponsored vilification, state funding cuts (detrimental to their education and home environment) and the Labour Party's aforementioned targeted legislation (the ASBO) is reflected back at us in the form of the hooded monster of our own making. Imogen Tyler describes the coverage of the 2011 riots: "Frightening, surreal and carnivalesque sequences of young people, often hooded, their faces covered by scarves and masks, flagrantly engaging in what several newspapers described as 'an orgy of looting'".[76] This was hoodie horror made real, and only strengthened the image of the 'ASBO teen' as Britain's bogeyman, the enemy within who could not be completely rejected or ejected from British society, and who posed a threat to the security of the middle classes — destroying their small businesses and stealing from them in the street.

The condemnation of the working-class is further compounded by the derogatory term often used against this demographic. 'Chav' derives from 'chavi', the Romany word for 'child',[77] which encourages the derision of a supposedly childlike working-class, incapable of looking after themselves and prone to irrational behaviour. We do see some highly irrational behaviour perpetrated by the working-class children of hoodie horror. However, beyond a simple, childlike unawareness of the consequences of their actions, what is demonstrated is a malicious rejection of this

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[74] Heiland. (2004). p. 100.

[75] Heiland. p.100.

[76] Tyler. (2013). p.180.

[77] Jones. (2011). p. 2.

awareness, a devaluing of human life and the following of an archaic moral code which requires wrongs to be righted through violence. Therefore, what is more disturbing about the child's characterisation in hoodie horror is that they are attributed an unbridled capacity for violence on account of their working-classness, Arguably, whilst the hoodie did pose a legitimate threat socially, the hoodie horror was using the figure as a proxy for all manner of 21st-century traumas. The hoodie is a terrorist, a symbol of austerity, the poster-boy of 'Broken Britain', and a manifestation of the yawning chasm between generations and classes. This myriad of fears is a result of years of intensifying paranoia, crushing anxiety and uncertainty. It was this excess of fear, as Britain and the world entered the 21st-century, that made hoodie horror, and the British Horror Revival more broadly, possible.

After a difficult period for the British horror film, the turn of the century brought about a renewed interest in horror, not just in Britain but internationally. In the wake of the 9/11 terror attacks in the U.S, an era of global economic and social instability began. As with the myriad of traumatic events experienced throughout the 20th century, national cinemas once again began to explore and absorb these new traumas through their horror output. The horror film thrived in Japan, Spain, France, the U.S and Britain. As previously noted, there was an evident concern regarding the younger generation, particularly in Japanese, Spanish and British horror, with child antagonists being a frequent trope. Meanwhile, in France, explorations of extreme violence rang in the era of 'The New French Extremity',[78] producing a wave of films that have been hailed as transgressive and derided as exploitative in equal measure by critics. In a climate of escalating global tension, these national horror cinemas have profited from a symbiotic relationship as they attempt to confront both national and global fears and anxieties. Steffen Hantke summarises the move towards 'global horror': "as film industries around the world undergo the processes of economic

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[78] Alexandra West. *Films of the New French Extremity: Visceral Horror and National Identity.* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 2016).

globalization, they are gradually becoming less national and more transnational in everything from the workers they hire to the audiences they cater to".[79] However, as this chapter demonstrates, the British horror genre has long been a mongrel mix of influences, and yet has succeeded throughout its history in reflecting resolutely British ideals and anxieties, particularly concerning age, class and the discrimination that results from a deeply entrenched social structure dictated by the wealthiest few.

The catalyst for British horror's 21st-century revival was the international success of Danny Boyle's *28 Days Later* in 2002, which returned $42 million at the U.S. box office.[80] Having achieved critical and financial success in both the British and American markets, the film proved that there was indeed an appetite for horror in contemporary Britain, as well as a potentially profitable international interest in British horror exports. There was life after (and aside from) Hammer for the genre and its fans in Britain. In fact, Hammer itself went through a modest revival, which saw it release its first horror film in over 30 years, *Wake Wood* (Keating, 2009). Abandoning the theatrical exuberance of Frankenstein, Dracula, et.al., once the pillars of their horror empire, Hammer pursued a handful of psychological thrillers and literary adaptations of Modern Gothic texts. These included a reworking of Susan Hill's novella *The Woman in Black* (1983) and a remake of the Swedish adaptation of *Let The Right One In* (Alfredson, 2008), titled *Let Me In* (Reeves, 2010).

In addition to feature film, television and film shorts seemed to gravitate towards horror narratives; *Being Human* (Whithouse, 2008-2013), *Dead Set* (Demange, 2008) and Channel 4's *A Moment of Horror* season (2015) all captured the zeitgeist of post-millennial Britain, and reflected the malaise and uncertainty the entire country was suffering with as the 2008 financial crash unfolded. The institutions that

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[79] Hantke. (2010). p.3.

[80] Benjamin Svetkey in Emma Dyson. 'Diaries of a Plague Year: Perspectives of Destruction in Contemporary Zombie Film'. Leon Hunt, Sharon Lockyer & Milly Williamson. (eds.). *Screening the Undead: Vampires and Zombies in Film and Television*. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014). p.138.

had been blindly trusted, and had run unchecked, for decades, had left the country in a desperately precarious situation. The failed and absentee parents of hoodie horror alone speak to this betrayal, but the horror boom more generally around this period can be considered as a varied canon of 'austerity horror'. Questioning variably our understanding of humanity, our over-exposure at the hands of developing technologies and a vociferous media, and our capability for horrendous violence, these texts present a rather bleak and mistrustful outlook of 21st-century Britain — a society haunted by its past, living in fear of the present, and becoming more uncaring and selfish by the day.

Many filmmakers revisited British horror's penchant for folk horror, with Hammer's *Wake Wood*, *Hollow* (Axelgaard, 2011) and *The Hallow* (Hardy, 2015), among many others, being set against a rural backdrop, the evil attributed to cults, witchcraft and ancient curses, in an attempt to recreate the much revered horror of *The Wicker Man* or *Blood on Satan's Claw* (Haggard, 1971). Comedy-horror has also had a powerful presence in the last fifteen years, its success no better exemplified than in the popularity of Edgar Wright's *Shaun of the Dead* (2004), *Hot Fuzz* (2007) and *The World's End* (2013). These films contribute comedy which seems weighted in the favour of a particularly 'male brand' of humour, as Walker observes: "a gory, juvenile humour… (that includes slapstick decapitations and recurring childish jokes) — a 'type' with a laddish appeal and sensibility".[81] The characterisation of the male protagonist in *Shaun of the Dead* is particularly reflective of a contemporary transformation of masculine ideals, identified by Claire Monk as 'New Laddism', a "regressive escape from the demands of maturity — and women".[82] Walker directly alludes to the New Lad in his summation of the film: "the film's plot about two adult men who reject adulthood (by, for instance, playing video games) and end up fighting

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[81] Walker. (2015). p.63.

[82] Claire Monk. 'From Underworld to Underclass: Crime and British Cinema in the 1990s'. Steve Chibnall & Robert Murphy. (eds.). *British Crime Cinema*. (London: Routledge, 1999). pp.162-3.

in a zombie apocalypse, echoes the aforementioned 'trivia of the 70s and 80s' obsessions of the New Lad".[83] Interestingly, these films, despite their very British 'Laddism', also heavily rely upon horror conventions more readily associated with American cinema than British horror lineage — the zombie, recalling Romero specifically, the dark humour in the style of Sam Raimi, and aliens, in homage to *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (Siegel, 1956). However, the way that characters respond to the threat of a zombie apocalypse (*Shaun of the Dead*, *Doghouse* (West, 2009), *Stalled* (James, 2013)), or a serial killer (*Severance* (Smith, 2006), *Hot Fuzz*), satirises the British attitude of 'Keep Calm and Carry On', the epitome of which is Shaun's determination to get to the local pub to wait out the zombie apocalypse in *Shaun of the Dead*. Moreover, the internationally exported stereotypes of British masculinity as foolish and bumbling, à la Hugh Grant,[84] or as sweary and boozy, as popularised by Guy Ritchie,[85] are dissected and exploited to produce self-aware caricatures of such representations. Linnie Blake identifies such characterisation as essential: "over the course of the last thirty years or so the social world of men's experience has so altered that traditional models of masculinity are in need of substantial reconceptualization".[86] These male-dominated narratives seem indicative of a continued preoccupation with what Claire Monk had identified in the 1990s as a tangible concern "with men and masculinity in crisis".[87] She continues: "the dominant mood colouring the British films of the decade was that men were already, non-

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[83] Walker. (2015). p 64.

[84] Robert Murphy characterises Grant's characters thus: "soft-eyed, gentle creatures, valued by the women for their endearing openness and geniality". 'Citylife: Urban Fairy-tales in Late 90s British Cinema'. Robert Murphy. (ed.). *The British Cinema Book*. 3rd edition. (London: BFI, 2009)..p. 360.

[85] Steve Chibnall observes that the men in Ritchie's films "are struggling to play the roles expected of them… It is the world of the boys' playground where play-acting and bullying are the typical modes of behaviour." 'Travels in Ladland: The British Gangster Film Cycle, 1998-2001'. Robert Murphy. (2009). pp. 377-8.

[86] Linnie Blake. (2008). p. 176.

[87] Claire Monk. 'Men in the 90s' Robert Murphy (ed.). *British Cinema of the 90s*. (London: BFI, 2000). p.156.

voluntarily, disempowered".[88] In the comedy horror narrative, the male is frequently found in disempowering, emasculating situations, where his actions are ineffective, cowardly and often cost him dearly. For example, the extent of Shaun's plan in *Shaun of the Dead* is to make it to the local pub to wait out the zombie apocalypse in safety — hardly the most heroic of plans, and one which costs several lives in its bungled realisation.

At a similar time, the U.S began to revisit one of its own 'golden eras', remaking its slasher films with abandon. Within a decade, there had been remakes of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (Nispel, 2003), *Halloween* (Zombie, 2007), *Prom Night* (McCormick, 2008), *Friday the 13th* (Nispel, 2009), *The Last House on the Left* (Iliadis, 2009) and *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (Bayer, 2010) to name but a few. It is easy to attribute the familiarity of 21st-century horror to a lack of originality on the part of both British and American filmmakers. However, there is much more to this nostalgic revisiting of films and styles of filmmaking from decades ago. In 2003, the U.S and British armed forces invaded Iraq, beginning a conflict which would last, by official dates, until 2011. The Iraq War was largely unpopular with the public in both countries, and became more so as time wore on and it became clear that the official reasons behind the invasion were built on untruths. It is, therefore, no coincidence that America and Britain were looking back to earlier horror cinema, which had reflected upon and responded to various national traumas. America was looking back to the horror cinema produced towards the end of the Vietnam War, when anti-war feeling was at its height, the parallels between that conflict and Iraq being numerous. Britain looked back to an era where Hammer, which had offered the definitive, quintessentially British style of horror, had begun its demise. In its place, the horror genre was offering tales, many in a period setting, of corrupt, abhorrent and outdated authority figures, as a deteriorating trust of governments at home and abroad led to

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[88] Monk. (2000). p. 159.

student protests across Britain, Europe and America. *Witchfinder General* was one such anti-establishment horror, with power-hungry Matthew Hopkins determined to find glory, regardless of the innocent lives he may have to destroy. This individualistic villainy of Hopkins "explore[d] the notion that violence breeds violence within the patriarchal society"[89] and would resonate with cinemagoers well into the Thatcherite rhetoric of the 1980s. The choice to reimagine the folk horror[90] cinema of this era with films such as *Wake Wood, Kill List* (Wheatley, 2011) and *The Tapes* (Alliston & Bates, 2011) in a contemporary setting, focusing on contemporary British men, brought the themes of generational conflict, exploitation of the powerless and the resentment of the powerful crashing into the present and the everyday.

Wheatley's *Kill List*, for example, spends two thirds of the film working within an action thriller template following two army veterans, Jay and Gal, struggling to adjust to civilian life and haunted by a particular mission they were assigned to during their time in Kiev. This narrative setup seems to borrow from an earlier post-war trauma narrative, Shane Meadow's *Dead Man's Shoes* (2004), in which lead character Richard returns from war to exact revenge upon a group of listless youths who drove his brother to his death. In both *Shoes* and *Kill List*, there is an explicit examination of the disaffected male psyche. War has trained these men to be killers, and they cannot shirk the instincts of a soldier in order to re-assimilate into society. In a faint echo of the moral panic around violent films and games, the films satirise the lack of concern regarding actual violence in the arena of war, whilst crusaders continue to fear-monger about the effects of staged violence on screen. In both narratives, the men have nothing left but violence, and their destruction lies in their

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[89] Towlson. (2014). p. 80.

[90] Adam Scovell refers to folk horror as "a prism of a term" and concludes "arguing for it to represent a single body of artistic work with strict parameters and definitions is conceivably impossible". *Folk Horror: Hours Dreadful and Things Strange.* (Leighton Buzzard: Auteur, 2017a). p.5. Here, I employ the term to refer to post-war British horror films that share an interest in the mystical, the occult, and demonstrate a relationship between these concepts and the rural British landscape.

isolation from, or abandonment by, support networks of friends and family. In this way, the mean parallel the mostly fatherless hoodies of hoodie horror, as their lives, too, are dictated by violence. When comparing the post-war narrative of *Shoes* and *Kill List* with hoodie horror, one realises that the hoodie horrors are very much war narratives themselves. The young working-class fight against the state enemy, they fight to stay alive, and some just fight because that is all they know. In their relationships with one another, there are distorted glimpses of the idealised brotherhood depicted in the war film. This same brotherhood is represented by Jay and Gal in *Kill List*, brought together by violence, and soon to be separated by it.

In *Kill List*, in order to make ends meet, the men earn money as contract killers, and as we meet them they take up a very profitable contract which could offer a solution to their financial woes. During this portion of the film, criticisms are made of the military, the lack of support for soldiers who leave it, and the 'witch hunt' journalism which has been prolific in an age of austerity and terrorism. The 'kill list' comprises of a priest, an archivist who keeps child pornography in a private collection, and a politician — all resemble figures and stories which have been sources of moral outrage in the mainstream press. However, in the final act of the film, the tone shifts to explicitly reference British horror's folk horror component. Out to make their final kill, the two men witness a conventionally framed and executed ritual sacrifice, and are pursued through woodland and a tunnel system by figures clothed in white tunics and masks. This sequence alone shows just how fluid and referential modern horror is — aside from the explicit reference to Britain's own folk horror, the film's use of a tunnel chase echoes a scene from French horror *Ils* (*Them*) (Moreau & Palud, 2006) as well as British films *Death Line* (Sherman, 1972), *Creep* (Smith, 2004) and *The Descent* (Marshall, 2005). The scene following the tunnel chase, in which Jay and his family hide in a rural cottage, has a hint of a Western shootout and borrows from the popular home invasion narratives of U.S and French cinema.

Freeland identifies a type of horror that incorporates many of the films of concern here, which she refers to as "realist horror". In response to Noel Carroll's phrase "art-horror",[91] Freeland's "realist horror" refers to those films where the monster is "naturalized",[92] thereby constituting a real threat in the way that 'art horror' monsters can only allegorise. In defining this brand of horror Freeland identifies the realist monster as explicitly male: "realist horror creates links between the dark side of male traits (violence, uncontrolled sexuality) and the heroic side (power, independence etc.)" and also argues for how this masculine monster can represent regressive ideals: "[t]he emphasis on pessimism and powerlessness in realist horror also obscures the truth about factors that produce a climate of violence… So instead of the horror prompting action and resistance, it works to produce passivity and legitimize current social arrangements".[93] This kind of horror, although seen in the likes of *M* (Lang, 1931), *Psycho* and of course *Peeping Tom*, calls to mind in particular the American slasher films of the 1970s and early 80s. First of all, the slasher film provides some of the most iconic manifestations of man's dark side (Leatherface, Jason Voorhees, Michael Myers) and is also credited with the development of the Final Girl, who in Carol Clover's account exhibits positive masculine traits (similar to the heroic qualities that Freeland identifies) in order to survive.[94] Arguably, these films could also be accused of obscuring the real causes of violence — until their 21st-century remakes, the antagonists of *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* and *Halloween* were given little to no back story, attributing the violence undertaken by both characters to individual depravity and leaving the wider context at the very edges of the narrative. The films make observations on the loss of jobs in the rural South

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[91] Carroll recognises 'art horror' as films in which the monster poses no direct threat for the audience, but rather works as an metaphor for real-world anxieties, Noel Carroll. *The Philosophy of Horror: or, Paradoxes of the Heart*. (New York: Routledge, 1990). p.12.

[92] Freeland. (1995). p. 127.

[93] Freeland. p. 138.

[94] Clover. (1992).

(implicit in the *Texas Chain Saw*) and the treatment of mental health patients (to be found in both *Texas Chain Saw* and *Halloween*), but these agendas are acknowledged briefly and neglected for the bulk of the narrative. *Texas Chain Saw*, however, can be convincingly read as an anti-war horror film, alongside Wes Craven's *Last House on the Left*, which Wood credits with "[analysing] the nature and conditions of violence and [seeing] them as inherent in the American situation",[95] thereby providing an implicit allegory for war, rather than explicitly paralleling Vietnam. Indeed, Craven directly cites the Vietnam War as an influence upon his film,[96] and certainly in this capacity it does challenge the status quo, but perhaps only in hindsight. Freeland's statement seems to suggest that realist horror prevents or discourages an audience from reading the monster as a metaphor, as they would with art horror, because the monster is too real, too plausible, to invite interpretation in the same way. However, these monsters, in their believability, isolate the films completely from the realm of fantasy and place them in a world which, while not providing reality itself, is recognisable enough as a reflection of a real society and its anxieties — and therein lies the films' potential to encourage a more direct discussion of the issues at hand.

The subtleties of the original films' social commentary are fully drawn out, if not overdone in some cases, in the subsequent remakes of these films. As a result Freeland's criticism of realist horror is challenged by the recent horror output from either Britain or the U.S. For American horror post- 9/11, there seems to have been a marked emphasis on the development of the back story and wider context, thereby blatantly encouraging an audience to trace the development of a character, Myers for example, and draw conclusions regarding how a young child grows up to be a murderous, voiceless monster. James Kendrick acknowledges this atypical horror

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[95] Wood. (2003). p.114.

[96] Craven in Wood. p.111.

trend: "[h]owever horrible the monsters of twenty-first-century horror may be, many of them are ultimately reducible to psychological explanation, which flies in the face of the genre's foundation in the unknowable".[97] Because of this need to make the human monster knowable, it is regularly the supernatural, 'art-horror' monster which is designated as pure evil, often something which has never been human at all (*Paranormal Activity* (Peli, 2007) *Drag Me to Hell* (Raimi, 2009)). This suggests that pure evil is equally as unlikely as the inhuman figure representing it (surely a thinly veiled criticism of President Bush Jr.'s pro-war stance on the lead up to the invasion of Iraq).[98] Where mortal adversaries are concerned, it is rare now to witness motiveless violence in realist horror films. This arguably works against Freeland's accusation that these films work in support of the status quo — these films challenge the audience to consider a wider context than the simple premise of individuals being 'born evil'. Add to this the regular deconstruction of male authority figures such as the police, teachers and doctors, and implicitly the institutions which employ them, through formulaic, self-referential plots and we see that the films are actually promoting an implicit lack of faith, if not complete mistrust of, current social arrangements.

This area of realist horror is also occupied by the hoodie horror film. Its mimicry of a social realist aesthetic and its occupation with the working-class firmly situate each film — even those who deal with the more fantastical or supernatural antagonists — within a universe which inescapably comments on British class antagonism. Whilst the hoodie horror does not go to the exhaustive lengths the U.S slasher remakes do to explain the behaviour of their characters, the implicit understanding of the current class climate in Britain enables the audience to

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[97] James Kendrick. 'The Terrible, Horrible Desire to Know: Post-9/11 Horror Remakes, Reboots, Sequels and Prequels'. Terence McSweeney. (ed.). *American Cinema in the Shadow of 9/11*. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017). p.254

[98] See Terence McSweeney. '"Daddy, I'm Scared. Can we go home?" Fear and Allegory in Frank Darabont's *The Mist*'. McSweeney. (2017). for a study of the supernatural forces of *The Mist* as allegory for the Bush administration.

contextualise what they see on screen. The real question posed, which this thesis endeavours to answer, is does this realist horror legitimise the class structures in Britain, in line with how Freeland sees realist horror operate, or does it aim to expose the inequalities perpetuated by such structures? Freeland's criticism is difficult to apply to hoodie horror. Some films with the cycle successfully criticise austerity Britain's social structures and seem to be appealing for change, whilst others fall short and could be accused of reinforcing the stereotypes integral to the maintenance of the current social structure. The response to *Eden Lake* certainly seems to suggest that any criticism of class resentment attempted by the film was missed by the press. Far from representing a challenge to the popular class rhetoric, the film was seen to reaffirm the conservative fears which had provided the grounding for the most recent waves of vitriol aimed at the working-class by press and politicians.

On the release of James Watkins' *Eden Lake*, *Daily Mail* journalist Chris Tookey declared: 'At last! Here's a first-rate British horror film that taps into our deepest fears and offers a thought-provoking insight into such topical subjects as knife crime and gang culture'.[99] Tookey goes on to compare the film, which provided the British film industry with its first hoodie horror film, to Jack Clayton's much-revered *The Innocents*, before finally praising it as 'truthful'[100] in its representation of youths and gang violence. Tookey's celebration of *Eden Lake*'s perceived truthfulness exemplifies an attitude towards Britain's young working-class that had been insidiously growing within the press and media since the late 1990s. Following publicised concerns about the escalation in knife crime throughout 2008,[101] as well as New Labour's legislated intolerance for 'anti-social' behaviour, the prevailing sentiment towards the young working-class was one of loathing and fear. In the early

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[99] Chris Tookey. 'Eden Lake: A great movie (if you can stomach it)'. *Mail Online*. (11/09/08).

[100] Tookey. (2008).

[101] Archie Bland. 'Whatever Happened to London's Knife-Crime Epidemic?'. *The Independent*. (11/04/14).

2000s, the tabloid press frequently revelled in tales of hooded figures terrorising corner shops, bus stops and underpasses, and juvenile delinquency was frequently addressed on political platforms.

The scale of the campaign advocated by press and Parliament normalised the prejudices harboured towards the young working-class, legitimating concerns about anti-social behaviour by making the image of a hooded male iconic of the ASBO legislation. However, the ASBO is just one of the more recent reactionary moves against the young working-class. The demographic had been a site of conflict and anxiety long before this legislation was put into place. The young working-class have cut an intimidating figure for generations, and have been perceived as 'other' to the non-violent, morally upstanding mainstream. The 1950s had seen the rise of the term 'teenager', and whilst the anxieties surrounding this newly created categorisation had been most fully explored in American cinema of the time, the popularity in Britain of films such as *The Wild One* (Benedek, 1953) and *Rebel Without a Cause* (Ray, 1955) proved that there were common interests and concerns served by such representations of youth.[102] The 1960s provided a more specifically British context to the panic, with clashes between mods and rockers along the British coast a widely reported occurrence.[103] The 1970s and 80s delivered punks, skinheads and football hooligans retrospectively as icons of delinquency and violence.

Each of these subcultures or subsections of British society have inspired representation on film. The aim in identifying these groups and the panic and fascination they inspired is to identify a pattern, throughout Britain's filmmaking, cinema-going history, between filmic trends and generational anxiety. The prevailing representation of these groups features, specifically, the working-class male. The

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[102] See Thomas Doherty. *Teenagers and Teenpics: The Juvenilization of American Movies in the 1950s.* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002).

[103] Cohen. (2011).

hoodie horror cycle is the cinematic culmination of almost a century of conflict and anxiety, as reflected in the press and the arts, surrounding the young, working-class male. In their work on moral panic, Goode and Ben-Yehuda comment on the news' disregard of fact in favour of propagating a myth; "There was very little interest in what actually happened; what counted was how closely a news account conformed to the stereotype".[104] The aforementioned narrative of *Quadrophenia* deals in some of the stereotypes so vociferously illustrated in the press, whilst also pursuing legitimacy and truth by showcasing the social realist DNA of British filmmaking. Jimmy's angst at his stultified existence recalls the plight of young men across social realism, from *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (Reisz, 1960) to *Kes* (Loach, 1969). Furthermore, the longevity of this 'angry young man' narrative is evident in contemporary British cinema, with *Billy Elliott* (Daldry, 2000), *Dog Soldiers* (Marshall, 2002), *Kidulthood* (Huda, 2006) and *Submarine* (Ayoade, 2010) all working from a similar, social realist-inflected understanding of masculinity. To revisit *Quadrophenia*, the identity Jimmy creates for himself as a mod gives him the freedom, control and authority that he lacks in his week day life, and provides the only way to mitigate against total disenfranchisement. Unfortunately, this identity is also extremely fragile, and the last third of the film details the collapse of Jimmy's mod identity and the myth of the mod, and questions what his life will be without them. The film's conclusion suggests that these mediated identities are an ineffectual shield for the damaged men hiding behind them. Yet, these identities continue to be recycled and reused, by both the media and the countercultural demographics who pose a threat to them.

The parallels between Jimmy's 'mod' narrative in *Quadrophenia* and the narrative of many hoodie characters are numerous. Hoodies, too, are reliant upon a projected image (quite literally) to construct identity. Much of the hoodie's identity in these films is self-consciously styled to corroborate with the 'delinquent image prolific

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[104] Goode and Ben-Yehuda. (1994). p.25.

in the press. A character like *Eden Lake*'s Brett is the personification of the construction of hoodie masculinity, straight from the tabloid headlines. The stereotypical nature of this form of working-class identity seems to be embraced by the characters of the films, who aspire to live up to the mythology that surrounds them. The sensational photographs which accompany moral panic articles assign blame almost entirely to the young, male working-class, and hoodie horror sees its characters acutely aware of the power they wield as a contemporary folk devil. Almost every photograph used in the coverage of the 2011 riots showed the rioters as hood-clad men — not surprising considering that 79% of the rioters were indeed estimated to be men.[105] However, it was precisely because of the isolation and alienation they had been subjected to, courtesy of the contemporary working-class mythology, that the demographic was so involved in the riots. Out of *Reading the Riots* study's 270 participants, 85% acknowledged policing was either an "important" or "very important" factor in the cause of the riots, citing instances of profiling, the 'stop and search' policy, and a perceived lack of respect as common problems.[106] The involvement of the middle class in the riots was also neglected until trials for those reprimanded began. *The Guardian* reported that 8.9% of the 1000 defendants on trial were employed or in full time study.[107] Whilst their involvement was eventually acknowledged by the press, the responses by politicians continued to run along class lines, with plans quickly announced to withdraw benefits and housing from those who were involved. Moreover, the most iconic and enduring images from the riots would be of men clad in hoods, looting shops and throwing improvised firebombs and bricks at riot police.

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[105] Lewis et. al (2011). p.14.

[106] Lewis et. al. p. 18.

[107] Lizzy Davies. 'England's rioters: did many 'pillars of the community' take part?'. *The Guardian*. (18/08/11).

The hoodie figure in question can be understood as the latest poster-child for delinquency, disenfranchisement and violence. The hoodie takes this character type into a much darker realm — where his potential for violence is increased, and the nihilism of his outlook is amplified. Does this then reflect a heightened level of anxiety within British society regarding this figure? On the surface, it certainly seems that the increasing pessimism of the British public post-millennium directly correlates with the rebirth or rejuvenation of Britain's horror film industry more generally. As for the advent of hoodie horror, it would appear that the contemporary awareness of the disenfranchisement of working-class youth, and more widely young people in general, in the age of increasing house prices, university fees, and costs of living, contributes significantly to its existence. The hoodie horror films are a product of an era where there is a clear juxtaposition in how youth is viewed. Broadly speaking, there are two possible outlooks. Adults are either increasingly aware that their children are being priced out of a future such as the one that was afforded to them at the same age, or are increasingly resentful of the differences in experience (in education, home and work life) between their generation and those who came after. It can be argued that this generational guilt or resentment is the driving influence behind the characterisation of the hoodie. This split in the perception of youth is exemplified within the hoodie horror, with some films representing hoodies as antagonists (resentment), and others as heroes (guilt). As previously mentioned, however, beyond hoodie horror's concern with youth, it is also firmly situated within the realm of the working-class, and it is within its treatment of this social class that the importance of hoodie horror can be fully articulated.

The hoodie, as an item of clothing, became synonymous with the loitering, disenchanted, working-class stereotype during the early 2000s; Turney suggests that the hoodie garment is feared purely by association: "when worn with an attitude of

disaffected youth… [it] becomes a sign of difference".[108] The hoodie, as sportswear, was an important aspect of the 'chav' or 'hoodie' image — both being derogatory terms used to stereotype working-class individuals, which were capitalised upon by the press and media. The term came to be shorthand for someone who was poorly educated, indulged in drugs and alcohol, and was a member of the working-class.[109] Sportswear, especially the hood, conveyed the image to the beholder of a working-class individual. Again, this assumption of class and behaviour did not originate within the British working-class of the 21st-century, but rather had been re-appropriated from American hip hop culture, where hoodies signified not only class, but also race.[110] Whilst class will be the main focus of this thesis, differences in the representation of class according to race will also be considered — there is a clear difference between white male working-classness and black male working-classness as it is reflected in hoodie horror.

In 2005, three years before *Eden Lake*'s release, the contempt for the hoodie figure was exemplified when the Bluewater Shopping Centre in Kent famously banned the wearing of hoodies on its premises[111] — many other businesses were to follow suit shortly afterwards. Around the same time, a device that could be installed outside homes and businesses, emitting a sound specifically tailored to irritate the ears of loiterers, was hotly contested as an infringement of human rights.[112] To this day, the image the manufacturers choose to use to advertise the device on their website is one of a young man in a hood. The very existence of such technology (and marketing

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[108] Joanne Turney. *The Culture of Knitting*. (Oxford: Berg, 2009).. (2009). p.124.

[109] Jones. (2011). gives an exhaustive account of the prejudices and ideologies behind the 'chav' stereotype.

[110] Denis Wilson. 'A Look Under the Hoodie'. *New York Times*. (23/12/06).

[111] David Derbyshire. 'Bluewater Profits from Hoodies Ban'. *The Independent*. (20/05/05) and Gareth McLean. 'In the Hood'. *The Guardian*. (13/05/05).

[112] 'The Mosquito' was developed as a solution to the 'threat' of groups of teenagers loitering near homes and businesses – some systems simply release a high pitched buzz, whilst others are able to play classical music to put off loiterers.

strategies) demonstrates the extent of the anxiety caused by the presence of the young, working-class. The Mosquito device, although designed for use on humans, closely mimics a pest-control device intended for vermin, propagating an outdated ideology which aligns the poorest in society with an unwanted animal. Compounding the effect of such an ideology is the accompanying image description: "You as an individual have a legal right to peaceful enjoyment of your property or business and The Mosquito Anti-Loitering Device is the most effective and benign way of getting rid of the problem".[113] That this 'problem' was one which required combatting through specifically tailored technologies shows the strength of the moral panic which enabled such a device to become a profitable business venture.

When the British horror film industry underwent a revival at the turn of the century, it made sense that a new kind of antagonist, based on the contemporary prejudices operating within British society, would become a popular motif. *The Great Ecstasy of Robert Carmichael*, whilst not a straightforwardly horror text, was in many ways the prototype for the hoodie horrors to come. Set in a dilapidated seaside town, where tourism is dead and gone and the industry is grinding to a halt, a group of young men indulge in drugs and petty crime to alleviate their boredom. One of the group is the titular Robert Carmichael — a good student, who diligently practices his cello playing after school, but is also repressing a fascination with the crime and violence. In this way, he less resembles the hoodie of hoodie horror than he does the public school students of Lindsay Anderson's *If* (1968). His developing friendship with the hoodies of the narrative allows him to escape the confines of his everyday routine — a monotony which matches the continuous bleakness of the film's *mise-en-scène*. The narrative resembles a reverse of the conventional coming-of-age tale. Unlike the positively framed transcendence of adolescent limitations and anxieties often seen in such a narrative, Robert begins a downward spiral which will culminate in the violent

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[113] Anon. 'Mosquito Anti-Loitering Device'. *Compound Security systems*. [date unknown].

rape and murder of an affluent woman and her husband in their luxury home. The limitations of space, age and class *are* challenged and moved beyond by Robert and his friends, but only through extreme violence and immorality.

The visceral violence and sadistic character of the hoodie that was introduced in *Robert Carmichael* was fully realised three years later in *Eden Lake*. As previously mentioned, this film was celebrated by some for capturing the essence of contemporary concerns about working-class youth. The phenomenon of 'happy slapping'[114] was sweeping the country. Attackers would choose a victim, often at random, and record the 'slapping' on their mobile phone. This footage, much of it available on the internet, encouraged yet more attacks of an increasingly violent nature to be carried out. In *Eden Lake*, this specific news story is mirrored in the stabbing of middle class character, Steve.After a desperate attempt to flee the young gang's escalating violence towards them, Jenny and Steve try to drive to safety through the middle of the woods at dusk and promptly crash into a fallen tree. At this stage, Steve is too injured from the crash to continue on foot and is subsequently captured by the gang while a terrified Jenny watches from a hidden spot nearby. They tie Steve to a tree stump in a clearing, using barbed wire which assures his escape is impossible. Brett, the hate-filled gang leader, then encourages each of the group to take turns at driving the knife into Steve whilst Paige, one of the few female hoodies within the cycle, films the attacks on a phone to ensure each person is implicated in Steve's imminent death. The scene is agonisingly slow in pace, with some of the gang's members trying to contest Brett's order before being beaten into submission. Some of the gang are barely into their teenage years, and yet here they are faced with horrific violence — they must either perform the violence, or risk that the violence may be visited upon them by Brett. It is in this particular scene that we realise the power of Brett's alpha male performance, and the extent of Steve's powerlessness. We, along

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[114] Stephanie Chan, Majeed Khader, Jansen Ang et. al. 'Understanding Happy Slapping'. *International Journal of Police Science and Management*. Vol. 14, No. 1. 2011. pp. 42-58.

with the gang and hidden Jenny, are forced to witness each act of violence committed on Steve's body and the immediate effect it has on Steve's dwindling hope for survival.

Including the camera phone in this scene not only speaks directly to the very raw fears of being 'happy slapped', but also hints, however briefly, at the distancing effects of both the film medium and new media technologies.[115] Viewing the violence through the phone, as one would in a happy slapping attack, separates the witness from the horrific acts going on in front of the camera — it is easier to imagine it as fiction when one is watching on a screen. Watching the filming of Steve's torture operates along a similar vein to the handheld footage of Mark's murders in *Peeping Tom*. It dehumanises both the beholder and the subject by having the camera as an intermediary between the two, thereby focusing its criticism on the voyeuristic nature of spectatorship and screen violence. However, whereas *Peeping Tom* challenges the audiences by placing them in the position of the camera holder, thereby implicating them in the violence, this scene in *Eden Lake* challenges the audience by placing them in a position without a mediating technological presence for themselves. They are positioned, by turns, close to the violence as though witnessing from the gang's perspective and are also forced to witness Steve's brutalisation from a helpless outsider's point of view, when the camera pulls back from the gang to show Jenny's view as she hides just out of sight.

Concerns triggered by the younger generation's proficient grasp of new technologies, and their use of them, were exemplified by the 2011 riots in cities across the U.K. The looting and destruction occurring in London was particularly emphasised

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[115] A contemporary media equivalent of the 'Verfremsdungeffekt' that theatre practitioner Bertolt Brecht coined to describe the holding of an audience at a distance, to prevent them from fully immersing in the narrative. One of the concepts used to achieve this distancing effect was 'Verwandlung', where Brecht "ensur[ed] that his own actors demonstrate behavior rather than identify with a character". (John White. *Bertolt Brecht's Dramatic Theory*. (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer,2004). p 86). This demonstration of behaviour is particularly interesting in this study's context, given the apparent performativity of many hoodie horror characters.

in press coverage, with images of cars and buildings aflame becoming iconic of the events. Panic continued to spread as the media reported that the rioters were co-ordinating themselves in large groups via Blackberry messenger and Twitter.[116] This idea of mass mobilisation within the working-classes was perpetuated throughout the riots and the subsequent media coverage of the trials for rioters, where the online rallying cries (as well as posted photos of participants with their looted goods) became evidence of involvement. Such devices enabled several otherwise disparate groups to co-ordinate in an online environment which was, and is, extremely difficult to police and subdue. Whilst words and pictures on the internet may once again provide a comforting distance for the observer, the spilling over of the promised violence from social media platform to tangible real-world destruction cast these technological advancements as enabling of violence. *Eden Lake* explicitly classes technology as a corollary to violence, and because of the viewer's placement outside of the technology but in proximity to the violence, it is not possible to isolate and distance oneself from the hoodie in these moments of violence and delinquency. In both riots coverage, and *Eden Lake*, the 'characters', moulded to be a 'type' rather than an individual, deny the viewer that isolating effect, as they as a 'type' could be anywhere at any time. Finally, the gesture shows Brett as cold and calculating — his intention in filming Steve's torture both memorialises the action, a trophy to his victory over an older, more affluent man, and also traps his friends into secrecy — he has the evidence of their involvement to use against them. The symbolic toppling of the patriarchal hierarchy that Steve represents thematically resembles a similar challenge to gendered, classed structures as that seen in Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* (1971) However, whereas in 'home invasion' scenes from *Orange*, it is the "rape of middle class women

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[116] See Iain Mackenzie. 'Is Technology to Blame for the London Riots?'. *BBC News.* (08/08/11), Josh Halliday. 'London riots: how BlackBerry Messenger played a key role'. *The Guardian.* (08/08/11).

[that] becomes a sort of class revenge",[117] in *Eden Lake* it is the symbolic rape and violation of Steve's body that signifies the vengeful overthrowing of the powerful at the hands of the power-less. The complete rejection and destruction of the privileges afforded to the middle class is a horror staple, but is particularly pronounced in the social realist-inflected hoodie horrors. In films such as *Eden Lake*, it becomes clear that class has transcended purely monetary qualifiers, and that the conflict depicted is one between cultures, and not simply the have and have-nots.

As the 21st-century progresses, class is no longer purely economic — it is also cultural. For example, in the hands of a middle class individual, an IPhone is a normalised, non-threatening device which allows you to stay in contact with other IPhone wielding friends and family members. In the hands of a working-class teenager, this same device becomes grounds for suspicion. Increasingly, with the mass production of technology, and the growing number of incentives offered by companies selling that technology, certain material goods are now equally accessible to the majority of people, regardless of their class designation. However, in the national psyche (read media), a working-class individual who has the latest television or games console must have acquired it by less than honest means. 'Poverty porn' programming, in particular, revels in provoking judgement and mistrust of the working-class and how they choose to spend their money. Common discourse encouraged by these programmes calls into question the legitimacy of a person's working-class identity and their claimed financial difficulties. This is undoubtedly a reactionary measure by those middle class individuals who resent the changing economic climate and the opportunities for ownership it offers the working-class.

This technology is expensive, and would conventionally connote affluence on the part of the owner. However, as the IPhone and similar models become a social

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[117] Feona Attwood, Vincent Campbell, I.Q. Hunter & Sharon Lockyer. ' Introduction:Media Controversy and the Crisis of the Image'. Feona Attwood et.al.(eds.). *Controversial Images: Media Representations on the Edge*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013). p.13.

standard across classes, connotations of affluence are challenged. If the working-class can access many of the same material goods as the middle classes, class definitions become less about economic qualifiers, including material goods ownership, and more about the cultural difference between classes. In hoodie horror, these cultural differences are amplified and Gothicised, leading to a morally devoid set of characters whose values are so dramatically departed from our own that they almost seem farcical. In hoodie horror, from the home invaders of *Cherry Tree Lane* searching the sky box for porn, to Brett filming Steve's mutilation in *Eden Lake*, everyday technology becomes, at least, a morally corrupting entity, at worst potential weapon, when it is allowed into the hands of the young working-class.

Eden Lake not only demonstrates that the hoodies are proficient users of the technology they possess, but that they are also aspiring to the ownership of more, and are willing to kill for it. Technology is the cornerstone for Gothic and horror, its presence tangible in texts from *Dracula* (Stoker, 1897) to *Unfriended* (Gabriadze, 2014). Even in narratives where technology takes a back seat, its failure is still what opens the way for the return of the primal and the monstrous. Technology and its invention resemble an over-reaching of mankind, the bestowing of unnatural, inhuman power upon individuals who can then opt to use that power in all manner of ways. Writing on Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Frank Botting observes: "the monster has come to represent the fears about the existence of both natural and artificial mechanisms that not only exceed the boundaries of a humanised world but also emerge, transgressively and destructively, from uncontrollable desires and imaginings of the individual mind".[118] When such transgressive and potentially destructive technologies are placed in the hands of the working-class, particularly if the same technologies fail their victims, this enables a potential power shift, a subversion of the established order.

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[118] Fred Botting. *Gothic*. 2nd edition. (London: Routledge, 2014). p.94.

The mobile phone with no signal, the broken down car or the failure of satellite navigation, all of these common technological mishaps sabotage the survival efforts of the human protagonists. The more technology a protagonist utilises or is exposed to, the more burdened they become, and this is exemplified by the overburdened Steve in *Eden Lake*. As in the American backwoods horror, or indeed Australia's 'Ozploitation' films, Steve's aspirational middle class values and possessions warrant punishment at the hands of his working-class attackers. Steve and Jenny's wholesome middle class lives are glimpsed briefly in the opening scenes, with Jenny's class of idealised middle class children, immaculately behaved, contrasted with the children she will later encounter at *Eden Lake*. Despite their comfortable lifestyle, it is suggested that Steve, in particular, aspires to an even higher material wealth. The car that Steve rents to drive to the lake is a pristine SUV, but he does not *own* it, assumedly because his circumstances do not yet allow him to. In later scenes, this car and its connotations of affluence invite the resentment of the gang — in one scene they claim the car as their own, showing their own aspiration to material wealth. In contrast, the vehicles we see associated with the gang's families are exclusively vans, suggesting their living comes from manual employment in the trades.

It seems that no one can escape the British class system, and in hoodie horror, the more frightening and problematic theme is that your class cannot protect you from those outside of it. Despite the top of the range car, the Ray-Ban sunglasses and the pricey engagement ring, when Jenny and Steve are attacked their wealth and culmination of material goods mean nothing. If anything, they further antagonise their aggressors. What is most striking about Watkins' film, and the earlier *Robert Carmichael*, is the sheer nihilism with which their narratives are carried out. The trajectory for both antagonist and victim seem inevitable — the way that the victims respond to their respective situations is not dissimilar to the way that an audience would act if out in the same position. Unlike some of the more sensational and theatrical subgenres of horror, where the actions of a victim in peril are unusual if not

nonsensical, Steve and Jenny's actions are not. Their response to their exceptional circumstances is written to appear realistic, to resemble how the viewer themselves would behave; so as to leave them questioning what (if anything) they could have done differently in order to survive.

In fact, survival is key to the hoodie horror cycle, both in a corporeal way for its victims, and in a metaphysical way for its working-class. Each film could convincingly be labelled as 'survival horror'; a lead character is placed in extreme physical and psychological torment, and must overcome a series of obstacles, usually in the form of monstrous human adversaries (*Deliverance*, *Halloween*) or abominations of nature (*Lake Placid* (Miner, 1999), *Anaconda* (Llosa, 1997)). Survival narratives in horror more broadly are the preserve of the suburban and rural landscapes, but much of hoodie horror occurs within the heart of the urban landscape. The notions of salvation and escape are necessarily linked with the landscape, which provides an arena in which to fight and from which to escape. Therefore, the exploration of landscape and its role in hoodie horror's dialogue and class will further be explored in the forthcoming chapter. For now, however, it is prudent to acknowledge an overarching theme in the genealogy of the British horror film. The prevailing theme of the genesis and conventions of hoodie horror is one of Frankensteinian monstrosity. Hoodie horror is a monstrous hybrid, drawing from countless subgeneric and national cinematic influences. Not only does hoodie horror focus on a man-made monster, returning to avenge the neglect they have been subjected to at the hands of their creators, but the cycle itself is a result of the suturing together of home invasion, survival horror, slasher, social realism and poverty porn, amongst many other influences.

The parallel between the classification of film and the classification of people is clear — just as the working-class are maligned for being categorised as such, the X-rated horror film is similarly vilified and defamed according to its classification. Yet, both of these concepts are man-made, and both have rebelled against the

expectations and values of their creators and are being, or have been, punished for their deviation from the rules. It seems that horror, then, is well placed to examine the alienation of the working-class in Britain, as within the British context it has undergone a similar alienation process. The troubled trajectory of both class relations and horror filmmaking in Britain have therefore been identified in this chapter to illustrate the importance of the cycle as a culmination of a century of censorship, class contempt and British cinematic prejudices. As the study moves on to consider the specifics of class and masculinity in the hoodie horror film, it is important to remember where the cycle has evolved from, and to speculate on what it could lead to.

Landscape and masculinity in the British Hoodie Horror cycle

There are several stock landscapes that have become iconic of the horror film at large. The haunted house, the forest wilderness, and claustrophobic suburbia are particularly recognisable as monstrous landscapes, and from *The Haunting* (Wise, 1963) to *Deliverance* and *The Blair Witch Project* (Myrick and Sanchez, 1999) to *It Follows* (Mitchell, 2014), these landscapes have become so integral to horror as to take on a life of their own within the narrative. The importance of the landscape is explicit in the categorisation of several horror subgenres, exemplified by *home* invasion, *wilderness* horror or haunted *house* narratives, all of which are defined by their setting, and whose setting dictates the conventions and narrative expectations of each film. Similarly, the hoodie horror is defined in part by its use of landscape; the spaces present in hoodie horror are both rural and urban, and draw inspiration from wilderness horror, survival horror and haunted house narratives in order to create a dominant presence which allows the landscape to become a character in its own right. Not only are these landscapes visually powerful, but they are also psychologically and physically affecting. The male bodies within these spaces have intense, symbiotic relationships with their environments, and this chapter will articulate not only how landscape is employed to evince commentaries on class, but how the relationship between men and space speaks to both the history of class conflict in Britain and the contemporary understanding of the male working and middle class bodies.

In her book on the history of Britain's council estates, Lynsey Hanley observes: "to anybody who doesn't live on one (and to some who do) the term 'council estate'

means *hell on earth*".[119] Having grown up on the Chelmsley Estate on the outskirts of Birmingham, Hanley's work is an enlightening account of the perceived stigma attached to estate living, felt keenly by both residents and outsiders. She continues: "the crushing inevitably [sic] of the saddest lives lived on council estates lends itself to a pejorative shorthand used by the rest of the population".[120] It is these 'saddest lives' that have captured the public imagination and the interest of the media, yet garnered little sympathy or empathy from either, leading to 'poverty porn' TV programming and a particularly poisonous class rhetoric which refers to the least fortunate in British society as a "feral underclass".[121] These representations paint the estate as the habitat which fosters said underclass; a dystopian landscape which has become prolific in British Horror Revival texts.

The council estate plays a prominent role in the modern British class narrative, integral to the defamation and fetishisation of the poor. Its use in film and television is reliant upon the audience's implicit understanding of the estate as a 'poor space' — a site of both financial and moral bankruptcy. The implicit understanding of the estate as an 'othered' space, apart from the gentrified spaces of the city or the bucolic rural backdrop of the English countryside, makes for an effective horrific landscape. The contemporary mythology attached to the estate presents a stark, uncomfortable space with a pre-existing narrative of crime, substance abuse and violence. This mythology, Imogen Tyler argues, is a recent development, compounded if not instigated by Tony Blair's government. She observes: "under New Labour…a powerful consensus emerged that council estates were abject border zones within the state which were not only *liminal* with regard to wider societal norms and values but were actively

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[119] Hanley. (2012).p.5. Emphasis mine.

[120] Hanley. p.8.

[121] Ken Clarke. 'Punish the feral rioters, but address our social deficit too'. *The Guardian.* (05/09/11).

antisocial spaces".[122] This "territorial stigma", as Tyler puts it, leads to a blanket condemnation of not only the estate landscape, but also the entirety of its population, encouraging a "revolting class discourse that was inscribed upon the bodies of those who lived in these abjectified zones".[123] Hoodie horror, therefore, understands contemporary working-class Britain as a world of devolution. The working-class are characterised by moral decay, which sometimes also manifests as physical decay, and the regression of this demographic is mirrored in the dilapidation of their surroundings. More often than not these landscapes resemble the dystopian worlds of apocalypse narratives, and are set up to emphasise the supposed degeneracy of the space and its residents. The inscription of working-class bodies, both figuratively and literally, is a major preoccupation of the hoodie horror film, as this chapter will demonstrate. However, despite this particular incarnation of classist discourse being a recent development, the classing, and subsequent devaluation, of a landscape and its inhabitants is nothing new. In order to locate this symbiotic relationship between the inscribed male body and its landscape in a specifically British context, one must first investigate past class narratives and realities from which the stereotypes of the working-class body and landscape emerged.

In 1865, Henry Mayhew published an early example of investigative journalism in a collection of three volumes entitled 'London Labour and the London Poor', within which he provided a platform for the poor of London to begin telling their own stories to a wider public. However, Mayhew's work is problematic in its insistence upon identifying the poor by their physical appearance. Within the first volume, 'London Street Folk', Mayhew qualifies the 'folk' of the title as such: "we must allow that in each of the classes above mentioned [beggars, prostitutes, street performers, street sellers etc.] there is a greater development of the animal than of the intellectual or

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[122] Tyler. (2013). p.160.

[123] Tyler. p. 162.

moral nature of man, and that they are all more or less distinguished for their high cheek bones and protruding jaws".[124] The implication of this belief is that the poor are inferior not only aesthetically, as suggested by the physical description Mayhew provides, but also intellectually. By likening the 'street folk' to the animal, Mayhew effectively removes signifiers of humanity from the poor — they become physically, psychologically and morally deficient. There is no scope here for considering the poor as intelligent, autonomous or morally sound, as such privileges are written off as impossibilities. Instead, the poor are distinguished by "their lax ideas of property — for their general improvidence — their repugnance to continuous labour — their disregard of female honour — their love of cruelty — their pugnacity — and their utter want of religion".[125] Whilst Mayhew does indeed speak of both men and women throughout his tome, his assertions and his case studies are often centred on the male population. His pointed criticisms of the poor's violence, pugnacity and lack of respect are certainly gendered as male issues. Furthermore, upon his visit to a cheap London lodging house, Mayhew observes that the tenants are all male, and that the majority are under 20 years old. He speaks of his concern regarding the idolisation of such penny dread characters as Jack Sheppard, the tales of whom are read on an evening for the men's entertainment. As has elsewhere been observed of the penny dreadful, and much later the video nasties scandal, once again the middle class moral guardian troubles himself with the leisure-time consumption habits of the poor, sure that this must be a partial cause of their delinquency.

Throughout his study, Mayhew employs the medical expertise of a Doctor Pritchard, who believes that one can physically identify the "three principal varieties" in mankind, and claims that men, specifically, can be categorised using certain facial features and/or skull shapes. He asserts: "The most civilized races… have a shape of

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[124] Henry Mayhew. *London Labour and the London Poor: The Condition and Earnings of Those That Will Work, Cannot Work, and Will not Work.* (London: Charles Griffin & Co. 1865). p. 4-5.

[125] Mayhew. (1865). p. 4-5.

the head which… may be termed oval or elliptical" whilst 'hunters' or 'savages' possess an "extension forward of the jaws". Lastly, he speaks of the 'wanderer', with his "broad lozenge-shaped" face.[126] Quoting from a medical professional such as Pritchard not only lends authority to these assertions, but effectively pathologises the poor as being genetically different, suggesting that poverty is almost predetermined by your genetic makeup. In 1876, Cesare Lombroso would use similar physical identifiers to pathologise the criminal, stating in his book C*riminal Man*: "[b]orn criminals, programmed to do harm, are atavistic reproductions of not only savage men but also the most ferocious carnivores and rodents… these beasts are members of not our species but the species of bloodthirsty beasts".[127] The conflation, therefore, of poor spaces and criminal spaces is a result of the qualification of the poor and the criminally disposed as a species apart. Following this route of thinking, the poor space becomes a habitat, a zone which must be quarantined to prevent a contagion of crime and poverty from spreading to the higher classes. The language used by Lombroso, Pritchard and Mayhew requires the use of such medicalised terms to articulate the necessity of enforced separation; just as would be necessary were there an outbreak of disease.

By marking the poor as physically different, the disparity in fortunes between richest and poorest is made reassuringly visible for the middle or upper class reader. We can see the same kind of codification applied to the working-class space, a space of darkness and decay juxtaposed with the light and progress of the upper class space. The symbiosis between body and space in class narratives works to distance both from the rest of society. Pritchard, as a medical professional, legitimises the need for solid differentiations between the classes, as Swafford articulates: "By putting the poor on display, late-Victorian slum narratives work to solidify and naturalize the

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126 Dr. Pritchard in Henry Mayhew. (1865). p.3.

127 Cesare Lombroso. *Criminal Man*. 5th edition. (London: Duke University Press, 2006). p.348.

boundaries of class".[128] In this way, the paternalism for which Mayhew has been commended is no less damaging than the condemned discourse used by the Blair government over a century later, encouraging the public to accept the inevitability of poverty and poor behaviour within certain British landscapes. Mayhew's London slums have made way for the modern 'sink estate', yet the perception of these spaces, and the rhetoric that surrounds them, remains markedly unchanged. All of the concerns communicated in Mayhew's work remain the subject of political debate to this day. He notes the poor quality of the education afforded to poor areas, the lack of opportunity, and fears that some 'vagrants' may be taking advantage of, and abusing, the Ward house system — a 'benefit' that was supposed to support men whilst they searched for work. Mayhew, for all his derogatory observations and beliefs, does recognise these failings to be, at least in part, the responsibility of the state and the higher classes.

Mayhew could therefore be considered as a social realist long before the cinematic movement came to be. His attempt to shed light on the world of London's poor is as tonally misguided and voyeuristic as the class tourism and spectacle Andrew Higson recognises within certain social realist films.[129] The hoodie horror film, taking its lead from the widely revered social realist tradition, exemplifies the long-standing British fascination with, and fear of, working-class spaces and stories. The hoodie horror is in many ways reminiscent of the Victorian slum narrative, both in its treatment of its subject, and in the context which seemingly inspired it. Both hoodie horror and the slum narrative found popularity during a time of economic insecurity and societal shift, both highlighting concerns around the urban poor. As Kevin Swafford observes of the slum narrative:

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[128] Kevin Swafford. *Class in Late-Victorian Britain: The Narrative Concern with Social Hierarchy and its Representation.* (New York: Cambria Press, 2007). p.20.

[129] Higson. (1996). pp. 143-50.

"we might speculate that as [Victorian] Britain faced the horizon and reality of economic decline… The narrative focus upon empire, the condition of the working-class, slum life, and, to some extent, full-scale class conflict served a variety of social and historical purposes, not the least of which was to provide imaginary and symbolic solutions to real social problems in ways that were palatable and reassuring to the status quo".[130]

This claim highlights the need to consider the hoodie horror film not just as coincidentally similar to the slum narrative, but as part of a cyclical historical phenomenon: the attempt to work through and respond to economic crises via an examination of contemporary social conflicts. As Britain lingered on the precipice of the 2008 financial crash, hoodie horror gained momentum (*Eden Lake* kick-started the cycle, fully realising themes present in the earlier *The Great Ecstasy of Robert Carmichael*, and was released just months after the crash was first reported in 2008). In light of Swafford's observation, the hoodie horror increasingly appears to be a contemporary equivalent to the slum narrative, affirming the necessity of class hierarchy whilst appearing to offer solutions in the form of incarceration or murder. The narrative then becomes a tool for misdirection, encouraging the audience to direct their vitriol towards the lower end of the class spectrum, and away from those culpable for the country's financial misfortune. It would be convenient to condemn the hoodie horror as politically sanctioned exploitation of the working-class, and investigate the cycle no further. However, this approach denies the hoodie horror its importance as artefact, and would continue down a path of reactionary criticism which devalues horror texts based purely upon their disreputability amongst cinephiles and high-brow intellectuals, preventing a rigorous interrogation of the films and of the world they reflect. Instead, this chapter seeks to situate the working-class landscape

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[130] Swafford. (2007). p.19-20.

and its inscribed bodies within a larger narrative of class conflict, of which the slum narrative is only a small part.

Alongside the slum narrative, the popular 'penny dreadfuls' of the nineteenth century continued to situate crime and horror in urban Britain, particularly the slums and poverty stricken streets of London. However, in contrast to the slum narrative, these tales were written *for* the working-class and as a result often made acts of deviancy and transgression by the characters heroic and exciting. The penny dreadful became known as such around 1840 and, as Patrick Dunae notes: "the penny dreadful was associated primarily with lower-class youths — youths who, it was believed, were most often responsible for juvenile crimes".[131] Tales such as *Jack Sheppard* (Ainsworth, 1839), a fictionalised account of the exploits of a real criminal, most notorious for escaping incarceration on several occasions in the early 18th century, championed criminality, drinking and gambling. Sheppard was just one of many 'Jacks' who simultaneously terrified and entertained in the Victorian slums (there was also a Gentleman Jack, Jack Harkaway, and the legend of Spring-Heeled Jack). Of course, the most infamous Jack would come later, in 1888, and was far from being fictional, but for the most part, these tales provided cheap escapism, particularly for the worrisome population of working-class boys.

Mayhew, on his visits to the East End, expressed his horror at witnessing such tales being read to young boys in the lodging houses, and was quick to vilify the narrative content. Of the story and its author, he writes: "None has ever done more to degrade literature to the level of the lowest licentiousness".[132] The moral panic surrounding juvenile delinquency and the penny dreadful will be discussed elsewhere, but if the penny publishers were indeed targeting the male lower-class demographic,

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[131] Patrick Dunae. 'Penny Dreadfuls: Late Nineteenth - Century Boys' Literature and Crime'. *Victorian Studies*. Vol. 22, Issue 2. 1979. p.135.

[132] Mayhew. (1865). p.380.

recognisable urban landscapes such as Fleet Street and the East End of London were an accessible point of entry into the world of the story (even for those who lived in slums elsewhere).

A well-known example of a penny dreadful tale is James Malcolm Rymer's *String of Pearls* (1850), which introduced the enduring figure of Sweeney Todd. Set in London's Fleet Street, the story contains some particularly vivid descriptions of working-class environments. At the opening of the tale, the narrator emphasises that Fleet Street, in these "primitive sort of times",[133] is not prosperous or fashionable. Whilst this admission grounds the exterior landscape of the narrative within working-class London, it is the descriptions of interior settings which invoke lasting images. Mrs. Lovett's cellar is a particularly striking location: "there were many doors in different directions and singular low-arched entrances to different vaults, which all appeared as black as midnight".[134] This description, beyond illustrating the depravity potentially hidden underneath the very streets of London, also borrows from the Gothic tradition. The mention of arched vaults and multiple potential exits is immediately reminiscent of Isabella's flight through the tunnels under Manfred's castle in *The Castle of Otranto* (Walpole, 1764) or Christine's descent into the Phantom's lair in *The Phantom of the Opera* (Leroux, 1909). Thinking of hoodie horror, Rymer's description of Lovett's cellar resembles the appearance of the labyrinthine corridors of a tower block, and the similarity between the two environments does not end there.

Lovett's cellar is not only the place where Sweeney Todd's victims are made into mincemeat, but also becomes a kind of prison for London 'unfortunates' who come to the pie shop looking for work. Lovett takes on one desperate, destitute man after another to work in the cellar, under the condition that they will receive payment in

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[133] James Malcolm Rymer. *String of Pearls AKA The Barber of Fleet Street: A Domestic Romance*. (London: E. Lloyd, 1850). p.2.

[134] Rymer. (1850). p. 58.

pies and will not leave the cellar for the duration of their employment. Once one employee has come to the end of his usefulness, he is disposed of and replaced. The cellar, therefore, becomes a place of abject misery and entrapment for poor men, and a site of death and mutilation for the wealthy. The idea of a location punishing both lower and higher classes is also of great importance to the characterisation of the estate in hoodie horror. Within *String of Pearls*, as with *Caleb Williams*, the landscape is the site of this dual punishment. Not only does the East End of London facilitate the entrapment and punishment of society's poorest, but in *String of Pearls*, Todd's barber shop also attracts and subsequently punishes those in more privileged, wealthy positions. Their murders are without question motivated by their superior positions and enabled by their trespassing and transgression into working-class space.

A lot of slum narratives also took place in London's East End, an area which often dominated the London press with its high crime rate. The language used by the Victorian press painted the East End slums as a dark, sordid place. In a report on 'Horrible London' for the London Daily News, George R. Sims writes: "Were I even, now that public attention has been thoroughly aroused to a great danger, to go into the details of ordinary life in a London slum, the story would be one which no journal enjoying a general circulation could possibly print".[135] The report on the trial of 17 year old Daniel O' Connor a decade later, entitled 'Lawlessness in the East-End', echoed this condemnation, remarking: "It was further stated that the gang in question so terrorised the district that the respectable inhabitants were afraid to come forward and give evidence".[136] In his work on the slum narrative, Kevin Swafford comments upon the characterisation of East End slums as "alien zones".[137]

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[135] George R. Sims. 'Horrible London'. *The London Daily News*. (14/11/1883).

[136] Anon. 'Lawlessness in the East-End'. *The London Daily News*. (18/09/1899).

[137] Swafford. (2007). p. 67.

The horrific fiction of the penny dreadful and the sensational media coverage of the sordid slum collided with the reign of Jack the Ripper during 1888. Responsible for the murder of at least five women in the Whitechapel area of London, the spectre-like Jack was never caught, and his lingering presence in the press and the public imagination enforced the idea of slum London as the locus of the horrific. In her work on horror, Barbara Creed touched upon the significance of Jack the Ripper to crime culture, and British culture in general, at the turn of the twentieth century. She writes: "The narrative of the Ripper is a dark rite of passage about the hidden horrors of the unheimlich city".[138] As demonstrated by the journalism of the era, the slums of the East End were a landscape that, whilst adjacent to the well-to-do boroughs of Victorian London, were so far removed from the realities of the Victorian middle classes as to seem completely detached from London society as a whole. Attempts to understand this space using Mayhew-esque poverty tourism that would later manifest as social realism, or even later as poverty porn, led to a fracturing of London space along class lines. Creed's statement suggests that this fracturing was so severe that the slums became an othered space to those not living there — the 'hidden horrors' were not so much hidden, but rather remained undiscovered or were wilfully ignored until the Ripper's atrocities exposed the space to state scrutiny.

Substitute Creed's reference to the 'Ripper' for 'Hoodie' and her claim could have been made about events occurring over a century after the Ripper stalked Whitechapel; the image that draws fear is no longer a tall, top hat-wearing figure shrouded in mist, but a young boy, his features hidden by a hood. Hoodie horror, in many cases, exposes us to the 'unheimlich city' through the microcosm of the council estate, the contemporary incarnation of Whitechapel, of the slums, of the tenements that have for many years been troubling and unknowable to those without them. Creed continues: "the name Jack the Ripper became synonymous with death and

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[138] Creed. (2005). p.199.

facelessness. The Ripper's identity is known only through what he did…".[139] The Ripper not only became synonymous with death, however, but also the working-class space as a site of decay, both physical and moral. The hooded antagonist of hoodie horror has similar synonymy with the council estate and the depravity within it, and is also only recognised in association with the criminal, violent behaviour that has countless times been the subject of tabloid headlines. The figures of the Ripper and the hoodie operate as similar narrative devices, but at different points in history. Each has been used as a gateway into the exploration of spaces largely unknown, and straddles a line somewhere between reality and myth. Lastly, each symbolises the perils and difficulties of surviving poor in British society (though many representations neglect this important allegorical feature).

Around the time of the Ripper, slum clearance had begun to appear on the political agenda for Britain, motivated by a growing emphasis on public health. Following in the footsteps of philanthropists such as Titus Salt, who, in the 1850s, had taken it upon himself to build a whole village with housing and amenities for his mill employees, local councils began to build affordable housing for the poor. In a glowing account of Salt's philanthropic work, Ian Campbell Bradley asserts: "He [Salt] realised the importance of environmental factors in determining people's behaviour…he realised that [antisocial behaviour] would not be eradicated unless housing, sanitation and working conditions in the town were radically improved".[140] Again, the lower class landscape is portrayed as the breeding ground of vice and undesirable behaviour, as though such landscape has a physical power over the bodies upon it. This ethos also throws up an interesting assumption made by Salt — that a space or landscape could be utilised to control its population. In Salt's case, space was being used to encourage virtuous, healthy living, and to curtail anti-social behaviour. Would it then be

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[139] Creed. p.186.

[140] Ian Campbell Bradley. 'Titus Salt: Enlightened Entrepreneur'. *History Today*. Vol. 37, Issue 5. 1987. p. 32.

appropriate to allege that space can be used to the opposite effect by the state and authorities — to keep a population in stasis or worse encourage its decline?

In the interim between the First and Second World Wars, providing a better standard of living for those in the slums was prioritised, and the need for housing became even greater when almost 4 million homes were lost to the bombs between 1939 and 1945.[141] Throughout the first half of the twentieth century the slums were gradually cleared. However, in the early twenty-first century, the attitude towards and representations of council housing are scarcely different to the nineteenth century portrayals of the slums; the working-class landscape today, however dissimilar in appearance it may be, still inspires the same fascination and horror as the Victorian slums. If the estate is to be the new Whitechapel in the urban horror/crime narrative, then the hoodie character has become the alternative to the Ripper (or Hyde?) figure. The hoodie figure certainly fulfils a similar function as a 'bogeyman', an unidentifiable figure that strikes fear into the hearts of the public and makes the streets unsafe. In addition, the punishment these characters are seen to violently exact is class driven, or at least poses questions about the dangers of class animosity within British society, and the level of damage it can cause. This narrative paradoxically seems to be more about the middle class than the working-class from whence the hoodie emerged. The hoodie narrative exposes both fear and guilt on behalf of the state and those further up the class ladder, whose wilful or accidental perpetuation of the class structure precedes a bloody downfall. In a subversion of the Ripper case, the hoodie figure's mythology oftentimes involves exacting punishment upon the middle classes. Moreover, as the myth is represented in hoodie horror films, victims are predominantly male which again subverts the prototype narrative provided by the Ripper. Creed refers to the Ripper as a 'stranger'.[142] The hoodie character has inherited this

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141 Hanley. (2012). p.51.

142 Creed. (2005). p.199.

faceless, transient characterisation and the estate, itself a strange place, enables the hoodie to remain strange. In his criticism of modernity, David B. Clarke states: "the stranger…was immediately proximate in *physical* space yet distant in *social* space… [this] gave rise to a new kind of virtual or spectral presence…characteristic of the stranger".[143] On the council estate, where the majority of the population is transient, the tenants can indeed seem spectral and elusive. There can be hundreds of tenants within a single tower block, but with little communal space and no local amenities, the landscape dictates an insular and isolated existence.

Nowhere is the essence of Clarke's statement captured as successfully as it is within Ciaran Foy's *Citadel*. Whilst our protagonist Tommy is not the only resident of his estate, the spaces he traverses are so empty, and his exchanges with others so devoid of connection or emotion, that one could be forgiven for thinking that the estate was a post-apocalyptic landscape. Any genuine, human connection Tommy experiences with another person is fleeting and often ends in death, an extreme allegory for the challenge of sustaining meaningful relationships within such an isolated and isolating landscape. Conditions being as they are, it is simpler and less traumatic to remain strangers to each other. To return to Salt's manipulation of landscape in order to control his workers, hoodie horrors such as *Citadel, Comedown* or *Community* allege that the state has exercised a similar control, using the estate space as a kind of quarantine zone for the necessary, but abject, lower classes. Tommy's estate, whilst largely unoccupied and left to rot, is denied demolition or rejuvenation. Instead, the state persists in housing vulnerable people, such as Tommy and his newborn child, in buildings that are not fit for the purpose. In *Community*, we see an entire estate's population supporting and perpetuating a drug ring, with the only interference coming from liberal filmmakers who are easily disposed of. State surveillance in this instance is conspicuously absent, as though the estate has

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[143] David B. Clarke. 'Introduction: Previewing the Cinematic City'. David B. Clarke (ed.). *The Cinematic City*. (London: Routledge, 1997). p.4.

become an island, governed by its own and abandoned by the institutional structures that originally created it. The estate has become a space which stunts social mobility and keeps the working-class firmly at the bottom of the ladder, and the powers that be advocate the preservation of this landscape precisely because it *encourages* crime and moral bankruptcy. The estate landscape allows the state to justify its vilification of the working-class, and prevents the bottom from falling out of Britain's entrenched class hierarchy.

Furthermore, whatever world there may be outside of the estate is completely unknown and unacknowledged. There is no discernible relationship between the estate and the outside world, as close as it may be, and this is a pattern which continues across many hoodie horror texts. The estate is the perfect tool to exemplify this paradox, being a space which is so often in immediate proximity to middle class communities, and yet always apart from them. The boundaries between these classed spaces are permeable, but — in hoodie horror at least — rarely crossed. In literal terms, the distance between the estate and what surrounds it can be a matter of metres, but within hoodie horror the estate functions in much the same way as the Nostromo in *Alien* (Scott, 1979) or Summerisle in *The Wicker Man*. Once the threshold is crossed, the protagonists become aware that they do not belong, finding themselves trapped within the confines of the estate.

In *Skin Shows*, Jack Halberstam argues that: "skin houses the body and it is figured in Gothic as the ultimate boundary... slowly but surely the outside becomes the inside and the hide no longer conceals or contains, it offers itself up as text, as body, as monster".[144] In the hoodie horror film, not only can this analysis be applied to literal, physical skin, but can be further put to use in analysing the estate. As a body of class significance itself, the perimeters of the estate can be imagined as the skin to which

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[144] Judith Halberstam. *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters*. (London: Duke University Press, 1995). p. 7.

Halberstam refers. As with the skin on the human body, the 'skin' of the estate is made up of several layers of meaning. For example, the estate in *Community* has multiple literal and figurative boundaries. A road runs parallel to the estate, separating it from the nearest town and the surrounding countryside, and inside of that, a band of woodland also forms a barrier. The estate has also gained a fearful reputation of mythological proportions which surrounds and isolates it from the larger landscape. Finally, the patchwork of fences and garages on the periphery of the estate adds yet another layer to the skin which isolates the estate as a cohesive body from the outside world.

This 'ultimate boundary' between two differently codified spaces is constantly penetrated by those who leave the estate, and those who enter it (usually uninvited). This constant movement and violation of the estate's skin weakens it, threatens to destroy it, making it redundant in containing or concealing what is within. The estate's perimeters, therefore, create the monster, which serves as a constant reminder of the fragility of a boundary as exposed and permeable as skin. It is the potential of the skin to fail in its duties that gives it its monstrous status. The estate's potential to allow the working-class beyond its boundaries, or failure to keep them within, creates a monstrous body. The idea of multiple boundaries can also allude to the idea of the landscape and its boundaries being sutured together. *Community* director Jason Ford noted himself that his intention for the film was to create "a Frankenstein picture about modern day Frankenstein monsters".[145] Suturing in the literal sense is a mainstay of horror, and the image of abstract pieces being brought together to form a monstrous whole has been reworked time and again, most notoriously for the antagonists of *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* and *The Silence of the Lambs* (Demme, 1991). In hoodie horror, the suturing does indeed happen to human bodies, as we will later explore, but the suturing of the estate is equally evident. Looking at *Community* or *Comedown* and

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[145] Jason Ford in M.J. Simpson. 'Interview: Jason Ford'. *M.J. Simpson: film reviews and interviews.* (14/03/13).

their estate landscapes, each is notable for its haphazard, chaotic appearance. The various buildings are distinctly council-built in style, and yet the sum of the parts is not aesthetically cohesive — different heights and age of buildings affords the impression of disparate parts being pulled or sutured together. This suturing also suggests that the isolation of the estate, and its incompatibility with the world around it, has developed over time, with greater, newer boundaries joining with the old. In the broader, more figurative idea of the cinematic suture, as explored by Kaja Silverman, the audience become the suture, effectively stitching themselves into a subject position within films where they, as subject, do not exist.[146] This encourages the audience to forget the camera's presence and suspends the artificiality of the cinematic experience. The meaning is made at the joining of the two disparate parts, each needs the other to exist in interpretation. Unpacking this idea with regard to the sutured landscape of the council estate, the intruder is therefore characterised as suture — inserting themselves into the signifying space and giving themselves meaning. As Silverman notes, however, this pursuit of meaning comes at the expense of being.[147] What it was to 'be' middle class outside of the signifying space ceases to matter, and the middle class suture invariably ceases to exist inside of the estate.

The idea of the working-class space as monstrous body is again visible in Victorian culture. Swafford observes that Victorian London was oftentimes imagined as a body, with areas that were considered to be in good health and areas which were considered to be rotten existing side by side. The slum narrative often characterised the East end slums as places rife with disease and physical and/or moral deformity. Swafford writes: "for many, the East End represented the putrid and diseased section of an otherwise healthy body",[148] representing an unapologetic conflation of working-

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[146] Kaja Silverman. *The Subject of Semiotics.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).

[147] Silverman. (1983).

[148] Swafford. (2007). p. 68.

classness and disease, and inferring the need for the removal of the diseased working-class portion to ensure the survival of the middle class body. The London cityscape in British horror is defined by the proximity of the classes, as Hutchings asserts, London is "a site both of danger and of extreme social division, with historically — and especially in the Victorian period — rich and poor areas positioned in very close proximity to each other".[149] The perceived danger of the working-class space was compounded by the Ripper murders in 1888, which continue to dominate the characterisation of London to this day. Charlotte Brunsdon suggests that media representations of the Ripper's London propagate the image of London as "a perpetually Victorian city where murder is committed in labyrinthine alleyways".[150] Not only is the Victorian image perpetual in the filming of London, but the social inequities that Victorian London facilitated, and the perceived danger that specifically working-class spaces posed, are by association perpetuated too. Recalling the proximity of these terrifying spaces to areas created for the wealthy within hoodie horror leads to a further patchworking or suturing of geographical spaces along the lines of class, locating the locus of the horrific working-class within the immediate environs of the middle and upper classes.

The council estate in hoodie horror certainly replicates this concern. Both the landscape of the estate, and the bodies on it, are marked by their difference to or transgression of healthy ideals — unclean spaces, under- or overweight bodies polluted with various substances, decline and decay of structures. The movement of bodies across this boundary, then, becomes abject. In hoodie horror, the contrast between the appearance of the working-class man and the middle class man serves to highlight difference rather than commonality. If we accept that the middle class

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[149] Peter Hutchings. 'Horror London'. *Journal of British Cinema and Television*. Vol. 6, Issue 2. 2009. p.192.

[150] Charlotte Brunsdon. *London in Cinema: The Cinematic City since 1945*. (London: BFI, 2007). p. 154.

body is the norm, the "I" to whom Julia Kristeva refers,[151] then the working-class body is the abject, that which is "opposed to I".[152]   Where substances such as refuse become abject on being expelled from the body, the working-class has been made abject through its expulsion from and abandonment by the state. In the hoodie horror film, the estate certainly becomes "the place where meaning collapses".[153] The middle class visitors to estates in *Harry Brown*, *Community* and *Attack the Block* find themselves in a place where their middle class identities, and the perceived privileges and wealth that come along with them, crumble or are punctured and dismantled, along with their bodies and other signifiers of their status. 'I' (the middle class protagonist) does not belong in the working-class landscape, and the structures and expectations that would protect 'I' elsewhere were abandoned at the threshold to this unheimlich space. As a result, 'I' is left vulnerable to becoming the ultimate abject object: a corpse. Life appears to lose its value — there is very little to attribute value to the working-class body here, and the middle class body, particularly to *Community*'s drug-adled antagonists, is merely a commodity. Often the value of the middle class male body is perceived as superficial and external to the body itself — denoted by a nice car, an expensive video camera, or designer sunglasses, all of which take on a kind of phallic resonance in the signification of power and maleness. The working-class man is seen to covet these possessions far more than the middle class body itself. We therefore witness a self-inflicted devaluing of middle class life and the middle class body in the pursuit of a consumer driven image of middle classness.

The estate has, of course, been visible in film and television for many years prior to the hoodie horror cycle — looking back to Basil Dearden's *Violent Playground* (1958), the issue of youth crime is foregrounded against the backdrop of a tenement

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[151] Julia Kristeva. *Powers of Horror: An Essay On Abjection*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982). p.1.

[152] Kristeva. (1982). p. 1.

[153] Kristeva. p. 2.

building. *A Clockwork Orange* was filmed on location in London's Thamesmead Estate, and several popular TV crime dramas, from *Cracker* (McGovern, 1993-1996) to *Luther* (2010-2015) have paid visits to council estates in search of perpetrators and/or witnesses. It is notable that in each of these examples the estate is utilised in a similar way — as a backdrop for crime and violence within the narrative. However, so rich is the council estate with implicit meaning, it has often, paradoxically, been neglected within the study of British cinema. Clarke noticed a similar problem within the academic approach to the city in film: "[s]o central is the city to film that, paradoxically, the widespread implicit acceptance of its importance has mitigated against an explicit consideration of its actual significance".[154] Therefore, the importance of the council estate in the hoodie horror film should not be merely assumed and accepted. Rather, the estate should be considered as both a gothic landscape for contemporary horror and as a character in its own right within the hoodie horror narrative.

The sudden and short-lived popularity of the high rise in council estate developments from the late 1960s through to the 1980s seems to have captured filmmakers' imaginations in particular. Blighted by horrific stories such as the explosion at Ronan Point in 1968,[155] which caused the death of four, and the notorious reputation of Trellick tower (nicknamed 'the Tower of Terror') in the 1970s[156] these buildings were tainted from their inception. Those that still stand today serve as widely despised relics of late 20th century Brutalism, peeling and crumbling slowly — an ironic metaphor for Britain's welfare state. As this study is written, an investigation is ongoing into a blaze which killed at least eighty people living in Grenfell Tower in London in 2017. Almost fifty years on from Ronan Point, politicians and social activists

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[154] Clarke. (1997). p.1.

[155] Hanley. (2012).p. 108.

[156] Hanley. p.113.

are still debating the efficacy of tower block housing and questioning the contempt with which the current Government seem to treat the welfare state and those who rely upon it. Once again, Hanley weighed in on the debate, articulating the particular stigma attached to social housing architecture, and how it puts residents in danger: "It's the perception of social housing, particularly high-rise, as being 'for poor people' that leads to the maltreatment of residents, *regardless of their class or income*".[157] This statement, when considered in conjunction with the estate's characterisation in hoodie horror, paints a picture of a landscape so tainted by public perception, that it poses a danger to all within that landscape, working-class or middle class, employed or unemployed, resident or non-resident.

The presence of the tower block in several hoodie horror narratives also echoes discourses of power, as examined by Michel Foucault, within the ideology of Jeremy Bentham's *Panopticon; or the Inspection-House* (1787). The title refers to a circular construction, divided into single cells or rooms, all of which can be observed from a central surveillance tower. Using architecture as a mechanism to encourage (or enforce) discipline, productivity and order was at the heart of Bentham's creation. The intention of the structure is to separate and isolate each inmate to prevent the spread of disease and to stifle communication between inmates, as this poses the risk of organised uprising. In his *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault begins his discussion of the Panopticon by comparing the plague-ridden towns of France in the seventeenth century and the measures that were taken to prevent the spread of disease, and the mechanisms put in place to deal with leprosy.[158] Foucault theorises: "the exile of the

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[157] Lynsey Hanley. 'Look at Grenfell Tower and see the terrible price of Britain's inequality'. *The Guardian*. (16/06/17). Emphasis mine.

[158] Foucault. (1991).

leper and the arrest of the plague do not bring with them the same political dream. The first is that of a pure community, the second that of a disciplined society".[159]

One could argue that the council estate of hoodie horror is the embodiment of a particularly confused 'political dream' which strives for both purity and discipline, due to the myriad of political agendas that have contributed to its existence and propagation, and achieves neither. On the one hand, the estate was intended to provide a *disciplined* alternative to the slums, where crime and depravity were rife. On the other hand, the estate has become an isolated space where the lowest income families can remain separate from middle class home owners, a class based segregation which allows for a 'pure community' of homeowners and a 'colony' of sorts for those relying on the welfare state. Ford's decision to call his film *Community* accentuates the failure of the estate space, and the lack of any of the positive iconography associated with the idea of community and social cohesion. Instead, where working-class people organise and congregate, it is for criminal means. The film's fictional Draymen estate exemplifies moral decay, its community centre has been converted into a marijuana farm, and the only time we see residents congregate is to either sample their product, or hunt down intruders — there is certainly no purity here. Any sense of community seems distorted beyond recognition, becoming a monstrous collective of addicts and murderers. The Draymen estate represents the absolute, abject failure of the welfare experiment, and is not alone in its condemnation — several other hoodie horrors actively criticise the estate landscape, requiring a further examination of one iconic landmark in particular: the tower block.

Foucault describes the Panopticon as "a privileged place for experiments on men".[160] The construction of the earliest tower blocks was equally experimental, based on cutting edge architectural ideas, but executed with strained financial

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[159] Foucault. p.198.

[160] Foucault. p. 204.

resources. The tenants of these new structures were the 'guinea pigs' for the tower as a solution to spatial and financial restrictions upon the push for more housing. However, there are aspects of Foucault's discussion which are far more problematic if the council estate is to be considered as some form of Panopticon. If the tower block does indeed act as the observatory within the panoptic estate, this would suggest that the residents of the estates we visit in hoodie horror (mostly men) are subject to "axial visibility" and "lateral invisibility".[161] Whilst the interior of the tower block consists of small identical units not dissimilar to the ones Bentham describes, once outside of the block there are no measures for separating the characters from one another so that they can be observed individually. In *Attack the Block*, *Comedown*, *Community* and *Harry Brown*, this outside space facilitates the majority of scenes where large groups of young men communicate, and in several instances commit brutal acts of violence.

Once within the building, the characters are seen individually or in smaller groups much more frequently, and are seen to be more vulnerable too. If we return to the suggestion that the state can manipulate behaviour using landscape, in the mode of Titus Salt, then it seems that the panoptic elements of the estate landscape are indeed designed to aid in the control of a population, but not quite in the way Bentham and Foucault envisioned. The estate perhaps works better when considered as an allegorical coliseum — a performance space of sorts, where male bodies are tested and mutilated at the behest of a baying crowd. More generally, the horror genre works within the coliseum model of landscape characterisation. Each setting provides an arena, which an audience willingly suture themselves into, where violence, sacrifice and depravity are displayed for entertainment purposes. Hoodie horror differentiates itself from horror's use of landscape more generally, however, by using the space almost exclusively for the examination and mutilation of *male* bodies. The tower block narratives are particularly unrelenting in their destruction of male bodies, and the

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[161] Foucault. p. 200.

landscape is specifically perilous for its residents. In these narratives, middle class bodies are peripheral at best, and the male working-class are the protagonists.

As a setting for hoodie horror, the tower block is a Gothic gift; floor upon floor of endless corridors and identical flats, mimicking the anxiety-inducing characteristics of the labyrinth. The unstable, unusual and disturbing behaviour of residents of the estate in hoodie horror support Hanley's concern that the estate "has insanity designed into it".[162] As Hanley notes, the standard design of council-owned housing works to instantly codify the building as 'council' and this design typically relies on row upon row of uniform houses encircling a brutalist tower block. The uniformity of such designs creates a landscape where, to the outsider at least, each street, house and corridor can look the same. Council estate architecture, therefore, is an ideal contemporary Gothic landscape, an urban labyrinth where tales of violence and entrapment reside. Like the trope of the haunted castle, the tower block is visually imposing, and its influence and mythology extend beyond its walls, achieving a notoriety that keeps most intruders at bay. Additionally, many of these buildings are in a state of disrepair, and many await an uncertain future as the effects of gentrification seep into city estates. In both *Comedown* and *Tower Block*, the shadow of gentrification is directly addressed, with each narrative making a centre point of a condemned tower block, bought up by developers and destined to become middle class space. These reclaimed spaces quite literally throw shadows over the estates below, a visual metaphor for the so-called regeneration of working-class space, which succeeds in driving out working-class residents, out-pricing them from the area, and moving in the middle classes. As once notorious estates, such as the Thamesmead, are bought up to become artist's housing, or apartments for young professionals, the obsolescence of the working-class space seems increasingly possible. Once again,

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[162] Hanley. (2012). p.44.

the estate and its residents are seen only as commodities, as potential business ventures, compounding the resonance of the brutalist label.

Brutalism in the form of the council high rise has, to an extent, been rejected by and alienated from middle class ideals of housing and aesthetics in the same way that the working-class has always been alienated from the rest of British society. The two are therefore inextricably linked, as Owen Hatherley suggests: "the remnants of brutalism are in the popular imagination precisely what the old slums always were — places of crime and intrigue, places where you could easily get lost, where strange people do strange things, *and from whence revolt and resistance might just emerge*".[163] In *Attack the Block*, *Comedown* and *Tower Block* (Nunn & Thompson, 2012), the brutalist monolith facilitates narratives of working-class resistance and revolt, as characters battle through the halls to save their homes and save themselves from a variety of threats stretching from the police force to alien invaders.

Tower Block uses this landscape to particularly claustrophobic effect. When the last remaining residents of a condemned block, due to be demolished to make way for a gentrified middle class space, are targeted by a lone sniper. It transpires that the sniper is the father of a teenage boy, murdered in the block a year previous. The residents did not act to help the boy, and as punishment find themselves trapped on the top floor, imprisoned in the space that is supposed to be their home. This entrapment is particularly lethal for the men of the block, who desperately try to salvage some of their tough, fearless exterior as the prospect of death edges ever closer. Kurtis, played by hoodie horror regular Jack O' Connell (*Eden Lake*, *Harry Brown*), is a particularly fascinating character in this regard. Initially performing the same thuggish, alpha male role as O'Connell had undertaken for Brett in *Eden Lake*, Kurtis' posturing does eventually erode to reveal a moral code and a vulnerability that has long been disguised under a veneer of hostility. This erosion of Kurtis' masculine

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[163] Owen Hatherley. *Militant Modernism*. (Winchester: Zero Books, 2008).p. 42. Emphasis mine.

performance happens in synchronisation with his physical mutilation and alongside the gradual destruction of the block itself. The destruction of the block is inextricably linked with the male characters' corporeal destruction. Kurtis' adaptation, or at the very least acceptance, of the changing balance of power, is reflective of R.W. Connell's assertion that "when the conditions for the defence of patriarchy change, the bases for the dominance of a particular masculinity are eroded".[164] Where Kurtis' previous persona was built upon a delicate patriarchal structure, internal to the block, which he upheld as alpha, his adaptation is required when an external patriarchal force destabilises the block's hierarchy. That the block was due for demolition by the external forces of state and big business suggests that even without the threat of the sniper, Kurtis' masculinity would have been eroded eventually as the parameters of his power were forcibly destroyed by external patriarchal structures. This allegorically speaks to a prior erosion of masculine roles, identified by Andrew Spicer in social realist texts of the late 20th century: "[the men's] male confidence is eroded because they lack the traditional strengths of working-class masculinity: a secure place as the principal breadwinner of the family, and comradeship with mates at work or in a union".[165] A generation on, Kurtis has replaced the security of breadwinning with the security of superior positioning within a criminal hierarchy, and replaced mates with henchmen, which in and of itself represents the dissolution of meaningful relationships in the working-class male sphere.

O' Connell's form for playing working-class, roguish characters across a wide range of British film and TV marks him as a pivotal character from the film's outset — his brand of working-class masculinity suggests a tenacity and pragmatism that makes him a likely candidate for survival. As the siege begins, Kurtis cuts a desperately unlikeable character. His swagger and notoriety as the block's drug

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[164] R.W. Connell. *Masculinities*. 2nd edition. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005). p.77.

[165] Andrew Spicer. *Typical Men: The Representation of Masculinity in Popular British Cinema*. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003). p.188.

dealer — the master of an ever-dwindling population — echoes the antagonistic behaviour of Hi–Hatz (*Attack the Block*), Brett (*Eden Lake*) or Rian (*Cherry Tree Lane*). He paces back and forth, like a predator in waiting, and is verbally and physically abusive to the other survivors of the sniper's initial attack. When he discovers that Mark and Gary, two of his associates, are responsible for the death of the sniper's son he exacts his own brand of vigilante justice. It is unclear whether this justice is meted out on the behalf of their victim, or Kurtis himself, who is angered that his henchmen have endangered him by acting without his authorisation. Kurtis challenges Mark, who is already suffering with a gunshot wound to the leg, to fight him — a cruel and deliberate move by Kurtis to make a fool of Mark and reassert his authority. The scene ends with Kurtis quite calmly throwing both Gary and Mark into the sniper's line of fire, apparently unaffected by the violence he is a party to. Many of the characters in estate based hoodie horrors seem to have a similar blasé attitude to violence, and it is represented as an inevitable consequence of an environment whose hierarchies and profits grow from gang activity and the drug industry. Not only this, but it suggests that a wider violence in the form of state negligence and police brutality hardens estate residents to what would otherwise be exceptional, violent circumstances. During the narrative, Kurtis effectively moves from one realm of violence to another, and it is his pragmatic attitude to the extremity of his existence that ultimately enables him to persevere when under attack. As he descends from the top of the block to reach salvation on the ground, his returning humanity and the revelation of his sensitivities become more pronounced. The correlation between Kurt's isolation from wider society and his antisocial behaviour is clearly drawn. Moreover, his descent represents a deflation of ego, and a realisation that he does not hold the power he had assumed prior to the attack. In a landscape that is not only brutalist in aesthetic but in practice, Kurtis has always been under attack in one way or another — the landscape has conditioned him to survive an existence defined by

violence. Perhaps it is only his displacement from the top of the hierarchy of violence that will provide an escape from it.

Explicit use of the council estate as a horrific landscape, with the exceptions of *A Clockwork Orange, Urban Ghost Story* (Jolliffe, 1998) and *Candyman*, is almost exclusively the preserve of the hoodie horror. Canonical films such as Michael Powell's *Peeping Tom* or *The Wicker Man*, showcase more traditional British cinematic landscapes — the former being set in 1960s London, the latter on a fictional island, just off the Scottish coast, named 'Summerisle'. In British cinema, landscapes are constantly, and noticeably, shaping and influencing characters and their bodies. Whilst this notion is applicable to both the men and women on screen, it is the male characters and their bodies which have the most noticeable symbiotic relationships with their environments. Throughout the run time of *The Wicker Man*, Lord Summerisle gradually transforms from the picture of aristocratic masculinity, smartly dressed and neatly coiffed, into the personification of his wild, isolated environment, with pagan dress and unkempt hair. *Peeping Tom*'s Mark Lewis, a cameraman obsessed with capturing real fear on film, is less obvious in his response to his environment. Whilst Mark's physical appearance does not alter much, his mental state is reflective of and reflected by the close quarters and small spaces of which his urban landscape comprises. His repression is further underlined by his choice to witness the deaths of his victims through the viewfinder on his camera, giving him — and therefore us — a limited field of vision. Influences from both the aforementioned films are evident in hoodie horror, its use of landscape manages to synthesise the two ends of the spectrum (rural and urban) and, as a result, we see in its male characters both the wildness of Lord Summerisle and the claustrophobia and repression of Mark Lewis. Without much elaboration, the council estate can work as effectively as London or Summerisle to reflect and compound the psychological status of the film's characters. For the horror filmmaker, these landscapes have become as iconically bleak as the moors at night or the abandoned house on the hill, and they do not

require construction on a soundstage, or a trip to the Scottish highlands to create, as they are part of the fabric of British society, and can be found in multiplicity in any town or city countrywide.

The filmmakers' fascination with the architecture of council estates is evident in that, even in the few hoodie horror films where the hoodies become the victims of greater threats (aliens, serial killers) the estate is the still prevailing setting for the murderous intentions of the antagonists. The estate's labyrinthine and disorienting nature, particularly potent for those who come into the estate from outside, physically represents the confused, perhaps unstable, psychology of the characters within it, borrowing from a trend which Andrew Higson recognised within 'kitchen sink' films (*Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, *A Taste of Honey* (Richardson, 1961) etc.): "place becomes a signifier of character, a metaphor for the state of mind of the protagonists, in the well-worn conventions of the naturalist tradition".[166] However, where Higson identified the gaze in social realism to be "the sympathetic gaze of the bourgeoisie",[167] the estate and its inhabitants in hoodie horror are only occasionally regarded with any sympathy, and only afforded it when the threat they pose has been superseded by a greater one. The gaze here shows not just patronisation but outright contempt towards the working-class which was not present in its 'kitchen sink' predecessor. Walker observes: "the hoodie horrors were often discussed by the press as lacking a sympathetic outlook for their protagonists",[168] a feature which stands in stark contrast to the perceived sympathetic nature of social realism. With the exceptions of *Eden Lake*, *F* and *Cherry Tree Lane*, all other hoodie horrors present the council estate as a concealed, identifiable environment, even when it is not central to the narrative (as we see in *Heartless*), towards which moral outrage and vitriol can

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[166] Higson. (1996). p.134.

[167] Higson. p. 150.

[168] Walker. (2015). p. 87.

be directed. Even in the suburban-set *Cherry Tree Lane*, the spectre of the estate is arguably ever-present; its existence insinuated in the protagonists' concerns about local drug dealing and is referenced on the news programme, blaring from the couple's television, in connection with anti-social behaviour. Neither assumption about the space is flattering, but reinforces the idea of the estate as the locus of the horrific. However, for many hoodies, the estate is also the site of their redemption, and so the estate remains ambiguous in its position in much the same way as the films do, moving backwards and forwards between transformative space and destructive power.

As with Kurtis in *Tower Block*, the landscape is often seen as an extension of, or contributor to, the hoodie's masculine power and identity. For example, within the perimeters of a social housing estate, there are accepted hierarchies of authority which would not hold sway in the world outside of this particular landscape. This link between a working-class man's power and his landscape is articulated most often by showing many working-class characters exclusively within the boundaries of their estate (*Community*, *Comedown*, *Attack The Block* and *Citadel*). In several of these films, if working-class men are seen in any other environment, they are transformed from a leader to a marginalised and mocked individual, making their perceived authority conditional upon their environment. Jason Ford's *Community* is particularly provocative in its representation of the hoodie and the estate; seemingly drawing inspiration from *Deliverance* and its hoodie horror predecessor *Eden Lake*, with its feral, backwoods dwelling antagonists, and *Psycho* with its cross-dressing character 'Auntie', as well as fitting neatly into the hoodie horror cycle. The residents of the Draymen estate are similar in characterisation to what Bernice M. Murphy calls "the bad backwoods family".[169] Predominantly male (there is a conspicuous absence of female children) and completely self-sustaining thanks to a successful marijuana

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[169] Bernice M. Murphy. *The Rural Gothic in American Popular Culture: Backwoods Horror and Terror in the Wilderness.* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). p.149.

industry, the community in question is an insular and hostile one. To quote Murphy once more, "[t]hey survive, but at the cost of their humanity".[170] The estate in this instance is characterised more as a habitat than housing: a place that the animalistic and inhuman community have made their home. The estate is the culmination of familiar, anxiety-inducing stereotypes which have been consistently propagated by the media since the turn of the century. It is therefore pertinent to discuss how the bleak characterisation of the Draymen estate influences the identity of its male inhabitants, as well as exploring the possibility of gendering the estate landscape as male itself.

Community opens with some amateur interview footage, within which members of the public speak about the estate with a sense of morbid fascination, echoing the American horror hit *The Blair Witch Project.* Their responses serve to mythologise life on the estate — none of the interviewees have visited Draymen, nor do they know the people who live there, their stories are based purely on speculation and rumour, and mimic the discourse surrounding class and its signifiers. The filmmakers ask their participants; "would you mind answering some questions about the Draymen Estate?" The replies vary in nature, from banal to dramatic, from bickering over the existence of the estate to tales of kidnap and murder.Again, the film borrows from outsiders' perceptions and misconceptions to create the estate itself. The buildings are in a state of disrepair, there are items of furniture abandoned in gardens, and several windows are boarded up. The houses are stained with damp and visibly decaying. Every view of them is obscured by fences, garages and wire mesh, providing one of several visually imposed barriers to the outside world. The initial shots of the estate communicate an oppressive, confining, claustrophobic space within. Throughout the film, the recurring motif of aliens, seen in graffiti and on children's clothing, again solidifies the impression that the estate and its residents are somehow unknowable and strange to outsiders. This practice of 'tagging' provides a

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170 Murphy. (2013). p.149-50.

nod to the earlier hoodies who used the garment to prevent identification whilst spray painting, and represents a similar reclamation of public space by the working-classes. It also gives the estate an irreverent, post-apocalyptic feel, recalling the graffiti that litters the dystopian spaces of *The Walking Dead* (Darabont, 2010- present) or *Stake Land* (Mickle, 2010). More directly linked to British trauma, the graffiti serves as a warning to outsiders not to approach, recalling the red cross on the doors of plague victims to prevent contagion. This echoes the pathologisation of the poor by Mayhew and Lombroso, and encourages the idea that this poor population have to be contained or quarantined, to prevent their supposedly inferior genetics from spreading beyond designated working-class space. However, to some degree, the residents of the estate actively encourage a continued isolation from the outside world. Whilst they may not have originally chosen to be placed in class quarantine, Draymen's men, in particular, have used their alienation to their advantage, creating a microcosm unfettered by social expectation or police interference.

The first young man we see, from a distance, has a scarred face, mirroring the damaged façade of the estate. The boy also becomes a recurring motif throughout the film with his bright red hood, which highlights his figure against the grey backdrop. The choice of a red hood recalls the well-known fairytale, Little Red Riding Hood[171] (again contributing to the mythic quality of this place and its residents) as well as acknowledging British horror lineage through invoking the red hood from *Don't Look Now* (Roeg, 1973). In both of these influential narratives, there is an implicit warning that things are not always as they seem. In each case, the protagonist does not perceive danger until it is too late, and it costs them dearly. Neither of the intrepid young filmmakers in *Community* heed the warning of the red hood, and so it is assumed that they may face a similar fate. Both of these texts also concern themselves with the loss of children and childhood innocence, which again directly

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[171] A popular European fairytale, which was first published by Charles Perrault in the late 17th Century.

bolsters Ford's deeply disturbing and dystopian notions of working-classness and the inheritance of crime in an estate setting.

The youngest boys on the estate are pre-pubescent — and with a period of physical development imminent, have begun to train themselves to go into the estate's main line of business, farming marijuana, and using the bodies of intruders as a fertiliser to give the product a unique potency. They are preparing to graduate to murder by torturing and killing smaller animals, establishing with glee their superiority over smaller creatures and their ability to destroy others' bodies. Unlike several other hoodie horrors, which make a playground the focal point of the estate (*Attack the Block*, *The Disappeared*), there is a conspicuous absence of any such childhood iconography here. Instead of adhering to common ideals of childhood and youth, the boys and young men on the estate develop along a similar curve to an alpha predator. While young, they are encouraged to hone their killing skills on small prey — as they grow, their prey gets bigger until, as young adults, their prey becomes other people. The young adult men are lean and muscular in order to hunt effectively, whilst the older men are slower, larger, on account of their backseat role in the 'hunting' process. The animalistic nature of these characters is compounded by the way that they communicate through guttural screams rather than using language. The 'urban jungle' environment of the estate bleeds into the surrounding woods, suggesting a crucial slippage from civilised space to wild space, from human to animal. Their primitive behaviour is contrasted with middle-class filmmaker Will, whose naivety and clean-cut appearance eventually makes him ideal prey. The children first appear as the filmmakers arrive at the estate — their approach is not seen or heard, suggesting a predatory pursuit, and alluding to the ability they possess to navigate the estate unseen. Despite a clear intellectual division between the adult visitors and the children, it becomes apparent that the children have control of the situation, and skilfully manipulate Will and Isabelle to keep them inside the parameters of the estate,

their knowledge of and relationship with the estate overwrites the apparent physical and social disadvantages.

Despite the all-encompassing, and overwhelmingly negative influence of the estate, it does privilege the men on it with the superior knowledge of its 'body' which they then utilise to hunt and/or survive. In some cases, the estate and the male bodies within it begin to resemble each other in discreet ways. Graffiti on the walls match images on the men's clothing and bodies (tattoos) and the physical uncleanliness, aging and deterioration of the men's bodies is mirrored in the dilapidation of their surroundings, suggesting that the men's relationship with the estate has transcended psychogeographical bounds and become physically affecting. The close relationship these representations suggest gives the impression that these landscapes belong more to the men on them than any overarching authority. Directly contrasting with this characterisation is Will. Dressed in a casual shirt and beanie hat, he has the stereotypical look of a college student, which again is a privilege we assume the estate's residents have not experienced (with the exception of Auntie, we never see any of the characters leave the estate, and doubt that they are ever given the opportunity to leave). He is, as Murphy suggests, a typical victim from a backwoods horror — white, middle class, suburban.[172]This appearance does not last long, however, as once the sun begins to set the young, feral men come out to hunt, and Will's body is beaten and brutalised. His status does little to protect him from his torture, in fact it only guarantees it, and throughout the latter half of the film, the residents of the estate take great pleasure in destroying Will's body, which is recognised as representative of the middle-class social body at large. In this way, *Community* subverts the use of the de-individualising logic ordinarily targeted at the working-class, refocusing the same irrational and poisonous disregard towards the middle classes.

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[172] Murphy. (2013). p.150.

Paradoxically, despite the ownership that the films' men exert over 'their' estate, the very premise of the social housing estate suggests lack of ownership on behalf of the tenants. Therefore, this sense of ownership is no more than a performance, and yet it is a performance that convincingly threatens middle class characters. The residents of the estate are aware of the lack of legitimate ownership, and in some ways their abuse of the estate's body, as a state-owned space, mirrors the destruction of Will's middle class body, a rejection of middle class values such as home ownership, and a rejection of what social housing has become. In this way, they exert ownership over their situation, but not the landscape itself, a characteristic often associated with survival horror, within which the landscape seems to conspire against the protagonist and take on a life of its own. Compounding the sense that the estate has its own sense of motive, the middle class body politic do not control the landscape either, bringing us back to the conclusion that this particular estate has transcended human ownership and has become a vast, unwieldy space that can no more be controlled than the ocean in *Jaws* (Spielberg, 1975) or the forests in *Long Weekend* (Eggleston, 1978). The films, therefore, and the characters within them, highlight and utilise this rejection to build an environment of fear — the antagonists draw their power from the fear-inducing prejudices projected onto their landscapes — the preconceived, middle-class idea of the council estate. In a sense, the estate is actually the authoritative component in this dynamic, keeping its inhabitants within, partly by slowly feeding them an illusion of authority, whilst with its existence isolating them from the possibility of actually achieving it. If this is the case, the estate in hoodie horror may well be considered as a criticism of social housing as it is now, and the poverty and inequality that the concept has come to stand for. Presenting it as a political tool that deprives its inhabitants of the privileges of social mobility, and instead subjects them to a cyclical life which begins and ends in the same place. This cyclical existence is expressed in many of the films through the use of framing devices

and repeated motifs, such as the tapes at the beginning and end of *Community* or the police car interior shot which opens and closes *Comedown*'s narrative.

Once again, it must be emphasised that these spaces are codified as male, and the aforementioned cyclical existence is for the most part a male experience. The hoodie horror cycle predominantly focuses on male characters, and in particular illustrates the tensions between working-class and middle class men. Their bodies are therefore inscribed accordingly with the appropriate meaning. Who, or what, is responsible for the inscription of these bodies is contentious. Whilst working-class characters actively, and literally, inscribe identities through their tattoos and choice of clothing, the connotations of class which are assumed as a result of this self-styling are arguably much more the result of an external inscription of meaning. The interpellation of the working-class to the subject position of 'other' encourages the audience, as an external force, to ascribe working-class identity to these characters. If this is the case, the working-class's attempt to actively create identity can be understood as no more than a reinforcement of an identity they have already, passively, taken on. In addition, where working- class men are often characterised by an under- or overweight frame and scarring, middle class men flaunt healthy, defined bodies, exemplified by comparing Michael Fassbender's middle class Steve in *Eden Lake*, and working-class drug lord Stretch in 2009's *Harry Brown*. Through this alternative physicality, films such as *Community*, *Harry Brown* and *Eden Lake* are encouraging the audience to recognise, as filmic shorthand, the working-class body as the monstrous body. The trail of brutalised middle class male bodies that these films leave behind undoubtedly suggest that it is the middle class male that is the most threatened by this monster of 21st-century British horror.

And yet in hoodie horror the working-class man is equally as likely to be under threat as the middle class man. Films such as *Comedown*, *The Disappeared* and *Attack the Block* treat the working-class body as brutally as the middle class body in

other hoodie horrors. *Attack the Block* is an anomaly here, given that its narrative is the only one to feature an external, as opposed to internal, threat to the estate and the working-class body. This changes the dynamic between the landscape and the working-class body considerably. With the estate under attack, it is no longer envisioned as a horrific landscape, but rather as a valued *home*, endangered by the presence of external forces. In this way, *Attack the Block* is a home invasion narrative on an unusually large scale, and it provides rare glimpses of the estate as a home, with all the accompanying connotations of comfort, family and security.

The block of the title can be understood as a patriarchal figure within the film, with a power and authority greater than the petty criminals we are introduced to at the film's opening. Several shots place the gang in the foreground, with the block towering behind them, illustrating the influence the block has upon them. In lieu of father figures, who are conspicuously absent throughout the film, the block represents shelter, familiarity and constancy. When the attack on the block threatens to destroy it and all it provides, the boys respond by taking on the outside force with improvised weapons and the type of heroism that would not be out of place in *The Goonies* (Donner, 1985) or *Home Alone* (Columbus, 1990) two films which also see children attempting to protect the familial home, in the absence of parental figures. Again, as with the aforementioned films, it is only the young men of the gang who can defeat the evil — police are shown to be ineffectual, and the presence of any other adult authority is scarce to non-existent. In the absence of any assistance from a wider community, the gang effectively shed the limitations and low expectations that are pushed upon them, both by other characters and the audience themselves. In their desire to protect the block, they discover a potential for intelligence and bravery that had not been evident in their previous behaviour associated with petty crime and drug culture.

Nevertheless, it is possible that the affection and loyalty the gang feel towards the block is misplaced. The tower stands as an emblem for the failed paternalism of the welfare system, and in this way contributes to the trend of failed father figures within hoodie horror. When analysed more closely, the relationship between the block and the gang takes on a darker tone. The isolation of the council estate is presided over by the tower block, a "panoptic mechanism [which]…make[s] it possible to see constantly and to recognize immediately… Visibility is a trap".[173] The aforementioned shots of the gang and their block reveal the real power dynamics within the estate, suggesting that the state-owned building possesses far more power and control than either the young gang or the estate's fearsome resident drug lord. To once again refer to Foucault's discussion of the Panopticon, the tower represents: "an omnipresent and omniscient power that subdivides itself in a regular, uninterrupted way even to the ultimate determination of the individual, of what characterizes him, of what belongs to him, *of what happens to him*".[174] It is this environment that seems to be encouraging the boys into a life of crime. It is also the environment which fosters a thriving drug culture, a culture that the boys are in danger of being engulfed by. The patriarchal influence of the block is damaging to the boys, and yet it also offers them a semblance of stability. Importantly, this characterisation of the block communicates the plight of those relying on the failed paternalism of the welfare system in Britain — the block offers both sanctuary and condemnation.

It is therefore possible to consider the film as an allegory of post — Thatcherite Britain, where working-class identities have been torn asunder, and individual success has taken precedent over mutual support and community. As Linnie Blake has articulated in her work on the new British horror, critiques and representations of Thatcherite culture are often seen in the horror narrative. She asserts that Thatcherite

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[173] Foucault. (1991). p. 200.

[174] Foucault. p. 197.

culture "valued hyper-masculine characteristics such as aggressively individualistic ambition over all others".[175] It is exactly this type of masculinity that has manifested itself within the all-male band of aliens, demonstrated in a scene where the aliens trample each other to reach their prey, seemingly oblivious to the fact that their success deprives another of their kind. Not only does the gendering of the aliens as male strengthen the criticism of hyper-masculine individualistic culture employed by the state, but the appearance of the aliens also raises the question of opportunity and quality of life on the estate.

In many ways, although the block is a harmful state figure, it (and the misfortune it may subject its residents to) appears benign in contrast with the external, purely evil, threat posed by the aliens. It appears, then, that two incarnations of the state are represented in the film. The tower represents the lingering vestiges of the well-intentioned yet ultimately failed paternalism of left wing welfare policies. The aliens, on the other hand, can be seen as contemporaneous, perhaps even prophetic, representation of the conservative state and the threat it poses to the British welfare system. In their attack, the aliens attempt to overthrow the power of the block, prompting a defensive response from the young men. The block, and therefore the gang's familial bonds and working-class identity, risk being reduced to rubble as the aliens crash and tear through the building and its residents. The aliens' arrival, as well as representing current socio-political trauma, also signals the return of the trauma the working-class identity has suffered during, and since, the de-industrialisation of Britain under Margaret Thatcher's government during the 1980s.

If we understand the aliens as representative of the current British state and state governance, we can read *Attack the Block* as an attempt to subvert dehumanising class rhetoric and vilify the poor treatment of the young working-class,

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[175] Linnie Blake. 'New Labour, New Horrors: Genetic Mutation, Generic Hybridity and Gender Crisis in British Horror of the New Millennium'. Patricia Allmer, Emily Brick,& David Huxley (eds.). *European Nightmares: Horror Cinema in Europe since 1945.* (London: Wallflower Press, 2012). p. 78.

not the working-class themselves. Young working-class men are regularly portrayed as monstrous or alien in film and news media; research commissioned by 'Women in Journalism' found that 85% of 13-19 year old boys interviewed felt that they were portrayed negatively in the press.[176] Furthermore, the research discovered that:

> "coverage was unrelentingly negative and focused disproportionately on crime. Teenagers were referred to variously (in descending order of frequency) as yobs, thugs, sick, *feral*, hoodie, louts, heartless, *evil*, frightening, scum, *monsters*, *inhuman* and threatening. There were very few positive stories involving teens to balance the bad ones".[177]

The uniform of the hoodie can further compound misconceptions of monstrosity, as Turney observes: "the [hoodie] conceals…to such an extent that it disembodies… The body becomes ambiguous: it is neither man nor beast, inside or outside".[178] This ambiguity of body not only serves to effectively conflate working-classness and monstrosity, but also provides an allegory for the ambiguity, or instability, of the male body in 21st century Britain.

The negative imagery and discourse we are used to seeing aimed at the young working-class shifts in *Attack the Block*, with the political class becoming the target. This film, therefore, can be interpreted as an attempt to encourage an alternative line of discourse concerning the working-class and the welfare state. In contrast to many hoodie horror films, it is the state's behaviour, not the hoodie's, which is condemned. It is the state's ongoing attack of the British welfare system which is allegorised through the aliens' descent into the estate. Further discussion of

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[176] Fiona Bawdon. 'Hoodies or Altar Boys: What is Media Stereotyping Doing to our British Boys' (Summit Report). *Women in Journalism* & *Echo*. (10/03/09).

[177] Bawdon. (2009). Emphasis mine.

[178] Turney. (2009). p.128. Emphasis mine,

Attack the Block follows in the next chapter, where a discussion of black masculinity will be conducted, and where the use of place will be considered directly in conjunction with the representation of the young black man. However, its exemplary use of the tower block as an antiheroic character within the narrative meant it was crucial to address the film in light of this chapter's focus.

Lastly, it is important to consider *Eden Lake* and its rural setting, which sets it apart from the films discussed thus far. Here, there is no estate, and whilst there are parallels to be drawn between the boys of *Community* and the gang in *Eden Lake*, in that both groups are at home in the woods and can behave with impunity out of sight of moral guardians and law enforcement, there is not the same clear cut hierarchy in *Eden Lake* as is facilitated by the estate in *Community*. As previously noted, the film and its use of landscape owe much to the American backwoods horror or the 'Ozploitation' tradition of Australian cinema, with the woodland setting reminiscent of *Deliverance*, *Wrong Turn* (Schmidt, 2003) or, alternatively, the survival horror *Long Weekend*. Like its backwoods ancestors, the film is concerned with using the rural landscape as the stage upon which class difference plays out; showcasing a sublime landscape which dominates the cinematography of the film and, according to Stella Hockenhull, "symbolize[s] control, and in horror films it is often the landscape that controls the protagonist. It is frequently the characters' lack of power that imprisons them within their environs".[179] The woods seem to actively conspire against the protagonists, who enter the landscape willingly but are then imprisoned by it and those who reside within it. Vast rural spaces, such as the woodland of *Eden Lake*, are acknowledged in horror both as places of sublime beauty and conversely as places of extreme danger. It is the intrusion of the protagonist into such a landscape that incites the transformation of Eden Lake from idyllic paradise, as the name suggests, to a hellish wilderness. Interestingly, it is represented this way for both the victims and the

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[179] Stella Hockenhull. 'Sublime Landscapes in Contemporary British Horror: *The Last Great Wilderness* and *Eden Lake*'. *Horror Studies*. Vol. 1, No. 2. 2010. p.211.

antagonists — both parties are trapped within this landscape, whether by the murderous advances of the adolescent residents or the suffocating working-class families portrayed. Hockenhull argues that it is the perceived sentience of trees in this landscape, in particular, which allow its transcendence from backdrop to authoritative force: "the trees in *Eden Lake* acquire a human presence. Towards the end of the film, they arch their heads over the spectator/[protagonist] to intimidate".[180] However, the trees' almost human presence is obfuscated by the consistent presence of the gang, having the effect of conflating the land and the gang into one monstrous adversary. Similar to the men of the *Community*, the working-class gang of *Eden Lake* enjoy an illusion of control, sustained through their superior knowledge of the landscape. That being said, as Hockenhull suggests, there is autonomy and control insinuated into the landscape itself which poses a potential threat to all human characters, and arguably has loyalty to none (both protagonists and antagonists lose their lives in this unforgiving space). During the course of the narrative, the rural draws out the lack of meaning attached to both the protagonists *and* the gang, with Eden Lake and its surrounding forest becoming a "landscape of a profound dispossession and vacancy".[181] The landscape here, similar to those featured in *Community* and *Citadel*, is one which the dispossessed gravitate towards, but one which also exerts some kind of masochistic appeal to those yet to be dispossessed, luring them into an arena in which they will vengefully be rendered meaningless and vacant themselves.As typically middle class couple Steve and Jenny arrive at the site, they pass a sign revealing that the woodland is destined to become a gated community, removing the woodland from public use and transforming it into an exclusive, middle class landscape. Despite its setting within a rural landscape, this is a particularly pointed criticism of the gentrification that poorer areas of cities across the country have

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[180] Hockenhull. (2010). p.222.

[181] Peter Hutchings. 'Uncanny Landscapes in British Film and Television'. *Visual Culture in Britain*. Vol. 5, No.2. 2004. p.29.

undergone under the watch of the Blairite and, subsequently, conservative governments. As the couple breeze by, graffiti on the back of the sign is visible, and reads: "Fuck off, you yuppie c***s". This will be the first of many red flags missed by Steve and Jenny, and their disregard of the notions of privacy and ownership suggested by the sign and its customisation epitomises the middle class entitlement that the film challenges to an extreme degree. That the idyll of the lake is not what it first seems is foreshadowed throughout the first act, with one particular image summarising the tone of the relationship between the rural and the working-class gang. Near the beach, a fallen bird's nest is laying on the ground, surrounded by cigarette butts and bottles that the gang have discarded. The bird's nest, a symbol of new life, of security, has been overwhelmed by the presence of man and his vices. Again, this image would not be out of place in wilderness or survival horror, where the abuse of nature at the hands of man is often punished by the landscape and the creatures inhabiting it.

The couple are camping on a small stretch of sand by the water, which momentarily seems to be a peaceful idyll for a romantic weekend away. However, the arrival of the gang of teenagers at the other end of the beach quickly shatters the illusion, and the beach becomes contested ground between two polarising world views. The occupants of either end of the beach are juxtaposed, the binaries of glamour and scruffiness, peace and raucousness, urban and rural, outsiders and insiders, illustrated by each group's position as far away from the other as is possible. The gang are also bullying a small boy, who has been playing alone in the woods. Whilst they are witness to this, Steve and Jenny do not intercede, with Steve reasoning: "It's just boys being boys. As long as they leave us alone." The individualism and inaction of the middle class couple in the face of the gang's violent behaviour is a cowardice and hubris echoed throughout hoodie horror and across its landscapes, from *Cherry Tree Lane* to *Tower Block* to *F*, and in each case, the landscape bears witness to this self-interest and later appears to mete out punishment

alongside the antagonists. When Jenny is bothered by the gang's dog, Steve is forced into action, striding over to the gang in his swim shorts, bare-chested and musclebound. Elsewhere in cinema, Steve would be understood as the masculine ideal, and his physical appearance would connote alpha male status. His physique and attire recalls Daniel Craig's turn as 007 in *Casino Royale* (Campbell, 2006), with both men rising from the water to become the subject of the camera's gaze. Interestingly, this iconic image of Bond directly references an earlier iconic image spawned by the franchise — that of Ursula Andress' Honey Ryder emerging from the ocean in 1962's *Dr. No* (Young). The shot therefore communicates with and subverts the expected and long disputed objectification of the female body, placing the male body in the feminised space, body exposed and scrutinised by the camera. These bodies are prone and vulnerable, negating the power implied by their physical health and inviting disempowering and dehumanising perspectives of their corporeality.

Figure 2: Steve exiting the water in *Eden Lake* (2008)

Figure 3: Bond leaving the water in *Casino Royale* (2006)

The gang appear unimpressed by Steve's physical prowess, and gang leader Brett does not even bother to stand. His derision of Steve and Jenny encourages similar behaviour from his peers, and Steve is laughed back to his side of the beach. When Steve confronts the gang over their behaviour, what ensues is a territorial stand-off. Steve spent holidays in this woodland as a child, and Brett has grown up in this environment, therefore the crux of the issue is that two men believe they are solely entitled to the ownership of this landscape. The tension is palpable between disaffected Brett and a bare-chested Steve (performing his masculinity in front of Jenny), each seeing the other as a challenge to their own masculine superiority. The types of masculinity on display here are very different from each other. Steve, in this first act of the film, achieves his hegemonic masculinity with his middle class status, financial wealth and physical prowess. However, R.W. Connell's assertion that hegemony is a "historically mobile relation", and is achieved through a "successful claim to authority"[182] allows for Brett's mode of masculinity to achieve hegemony in his

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[182] R.W. Connell. (2005). p. 77.

historical and social sphere. It is clear, both now and in later events that his peers bow to his superiority, and are effectively brainwashed into remaining loyal to Brett's vindictive yet charismatic nature. Frames are composed to place Brett in either the centre of the group, or at the lead, positioning him as the figure of authority. Many of his actions exemplify a brutal, primal masculinity, which seems to correspond with the Victorian understanding of the 'street folk', as studied by Mayhew, or the criminal man imagined by Lombroso. Steve's position of power dramatically deteriorates in the face of Brett's arrogance, this visually suggested by his increasingly low placement in the frame. Whilst he begins standing, looking down over the gang, he is quickly brought to his knees once events escalate, disadvantaged by his lack of connection with the landscape and his competitor's sheer malevolence.

Brett's superior knowledge of the environment, and his gang of loyal, albeit morally conflicted, followers enable him to destroy the signifiers of Steve's masculinity one by one, first his tent — which Steve struggles to build and stands in for his domestic space, then his car, and finally, Steve's body. The tension escalates to breaking point when Steve accidentally kills Brett's dog — which seems to be the one creature he has any real attachment to. Again, Brett's feral, animalistic brand of masculinity is compounded by this affinity with the dog, and his lack of empathy regarding any of his human peers. In a blind rage, Brett beats and attacks the car as Jenny and Steve try to flee. Finding the woods impossible to navigate, as middle class urbanites often do in the horror film, they soon write the car off and are left at the mercy of the gang, who have navigated the environment with ease and melt in and out of the forest almost as though they possess supernatural ability. As with *Community*, the boys (and lone girl) of the gang are privileged with a superior knowledge of the landscape, whilst the landscape itself appears to conspire against Jenny and Steve as representatives of the forthcoming gentrification. This is not to say that the gang do not represent problems for this rural space, but compared to the imminent building works (portakabins have already been moved in), the gang's

occasional disrespect for nature is a small threat. The landscape and the gang must therefore make allies of each other to expel middle class interference. It is worth noting, however, that several gang members, like Steve, do not leave the woods on this fateful day, as punishment is meted out on either side. The abuses of both classes are avenged, but the most problematic and threatening figure of all, Brett, survives, succeeding in his mission to punish Steve and Jenny. All trace of the couple's superior social and moral positioning have been dismantled and disposed of.

The one signifier Brett does not destroy is Steve's sunglasses; a symbol of Steve's masculinity and middle class status. Brett's interest in the sunglasses is particularly compelling, in that they have the potential to mask the wearer (similar to a hood). Not only this, but through wearing Steve's glasses Brett may also be attempting to symbolically shift his gaze, attain superior social standing, via eyewear that is synonymous with affluence. It is also suggested that Brett keeps these glasses as a trophy, his masculinity has prevailed, and so he keeps the spoils of his victory. *Eden Lake* is essentially a companion piece to the savagery and brutality of Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (1954). Raised in the wilderness, the gang have had to become self-sufficient and have constructed their own moral codes and chain of command. The landscape has facilitated this development, and, as with *Attack the Block*, has filled the void left by absent and uncaring parents. In this landscape, primal understandings of survival and power still prevail, and as such, Brett thrives as the masculine ideal for the primitive landscape. As with much rural-set horror, the negative depiction of the rural landscape bleeds into the characterisation of rural communities too. As Hutchings observes, country dwellers are "revealed as decidedly primitive and altogether too close to nature".[183] This suggests a paradigm of characterisation, wherein a proximity to nature infers animalism, and equally a proximity to working-classness infers a partiality to feral, delinquent behaviour, thereby aligning working-

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[183] Hutchings. (2004). p.35.

classness with a primal state, an atavistic regression back to nature and basest instincts. The repercussions of the assertion that Brett as a working-class man is somehow more bestial and feral brings the narrative back around to the contention at the heart of every hoodie horror film — is this simply exploitation of a demographic already struggling under the weight of prejudice and moral panic? Indeed, the animalism of Brett and his peers is an extreme illustration of the folk devil that, in 2008, was such a prolific presence in news media. However, the idea of survival, present in all of the case studies discussed here, is perhaps a more common concern for those who are trapped in a constant financial struggle. Landscapes which provide an arena for characters to flounder or survive allow for the exploration of a working-class existence defined by survival above all else. *Eden Lake*'s final shot sees Brett look directly down the lens, implicating you, as the viewer, in the displacement and the struggle of the working-class man. This final impression is uncomfortable, and seems to apportion at least some of the blame to the wider public, who are complicit in a system of oppression which fosters hostility within the working-classes.

Whilst hoodie horror employs a number of different landscapes to facilitate its narratives, each landscape performs a similar function in that it creates or supports masculine hierarchies of power. Moreover, the landscape shares a symbiotic relationship with working-class men, and this relationship proves toxic to middle class intruders, whose bodies are swallowed up by the landscapes. Will is used as fertiliser for the crop, and Steve is burned at the base of an old tree. In both instances, the earth claims the middle class body, and lets the working-class body wander uninhibited. The crumbling towers and vast woodlands serve as poignant visual metaphors for the existence of the working-class man — these landscapes are dark, difficult to navigate and under constant threat from the pervasive hands of gentrification. The characterisation and classification of the working-class body and its spaces have also been examined in relation to historical assumptions and understandings of class in Britain, and a prevailing theme identified. From Victorian

understandings of 'street folk' to the images of the hoodie seen today, the aesthetics of the body and its landscape are a definitive part of the identification and classification process, and are often understood as a cohesive entity, rather than two separate concerns.

This chapter has, for the most part, focused on the relationship between and characterisation of the white male body. In part, this is due to the prolific use of the white male body within these films. Dealing with the 'white working-class' male stereotype specifically betrays a prejudice which, for some reason, is an acceptable and legitimate rhetoric, in an age where similarly constructed prejudices against other races and genders have become, rightfully, unacceptable. The white working-class male is one of the few figures remaining whose derision is still commended and openly expressed within the mainstream media and political discourse. To go back to the numerous links hoodie horror has with its American counterpart, the backwoods horror, Bernice Murphy acknowledges that the poor whites in films such as *Deliverance* function as a kind of poverty shaming mechanism. In investigating the evolution of the 'white trash' stereotype in the U.S, Murphy compounds her criticism of the term by suggesting that 'white trash' is as much a racial slur as it is a classist one.[184] As Matt Wray and Annalee Newitz comment: "White trash is not just a classist slur — it's also a racial epithet that marks out certain whites as a dysgenic race unto themselves".[185] Considering this statement, the message to be taken from the characterisation of the white working-class in the hoodie horror is one of necessary division. The combination of being white, male and working-class makes for a community that demonstrate stunted development, ignorance and violence, and this community poses a threat to being white, male and middle class. It was therefore incredibly important to consider the representations of this classed and racialized

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[184] Murphy. (2013). p.142.

[185] Matt Wray and Annalee Newitz. *White Trash: Race and Class in America*. (Oxon: Routledge, 1997). p. 1-2.

demographic. The next chapter, however, will dedicate itself to exploring the cycle's few black male characters, and identifying how their representations differ from their white counterparts. The landscape continues to be integral to these characterisations, but functions within the narratives in subtly different ways. The black experience of working-classness and its designated spaces is markedly different, positioning the working-class black male in a far more sympathetic position than his white peers.

Black Masculinity in Hoodie Horror

'I reckon the feds sent 'em anyway. Government probably bred those creatures to kill

black boys. First, they sent drugs…, then they sent guns, now they sent monsters to

get us.'

- Moses, *Attack the Block* (Cornish, 2011)

This line from the 2011 film *Attack the Block* is an oddly prescient one. Released in May, the film's representation of young black men on a London council estate came just months before the tension between the Metropolitan police and London's working-class black communities boiled over. Moses' line, which accuses the state of sponsoring the oppression of black boys and men, along with the events that followed the film's release, would serve as an uncomfortable reminder that police brutality was not simply an American problem. Racial prejudice, and the violence it sometimes motivated, was alive and well in Britain, too. The shooting to death of a young black man, Mark Duggan, by police on 4 August 2011, which amplified the allegations of racial profiling within the Metropolitan police, was the catalyst for the London Riots of the same year. As discussed in the introduction to this study, the riots were a real-world manifestation of the anxieties and prejudices hoodie horror had been exploiting since 2008. However, in much of the news coverage and literature on the riots, the focus is conspicuously drawn away from Duggan's death and placed upon the carnage that followed. In the week that followed, sensational headlines declared "Yob Rule"[186] and "Anarchy in the U.K.".[187] Many newspaper stories went on

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[186] *Daily Mirror.* (09/08/11).

[187] *Daily Star.* (09/08/11).

to apportion blame to the peaceful protest that had begun in Tottenham in memory of Duggan, which had, until now, been largely ignored by the media. On the 7th August, BBC news reported: "Riots in Tottenham after Mark Duggan shooting protest"[188] whilst the *Telegraph* ran an article entitled "Tottenham riots: how a peaceful vigil led to devastating carnage".[189] However, in researching this period, I struggled to find a single headline dedicated to Duggan until his killing was ruled 'lawful' at a hearing in 2014. *Cherry Tree Lane*, *Attack the Block* and *Comedown* provide the backbone of this study on black masculinity within the cycle. The films effectively bracket the riots, with release dates in 2010, 2011 and 2012 respectively. Each offers its own representation of black, working-class masculinity, and each places emphasis on the fraught relationship between black men and the police. This attempt at gritty social commentary, framed by horror, once again points towards a widely ignored relationship between the social realist film and hoodie horror, with their shared concern for the reflection of social injustice. As previously noted, this gives the two films released before August 2011 a foreboding quality, as they focus in on the tension between the black working-class and the state. Both *Comedown* and *Attack the Block* articulate the persecution and prejudice suffered by their black protagonists at the hands of law enforcement. In both films, the police are so untrustworthy and ineffectual that the young black man takes justice and the defence of his family and home into his own hands. In *Comedown*, Lloyd fights to ensure the survival of his pregnant girlfriend and childhood friends, and in *Attack* a gang of young men take on the responsibility of defending their home from an alien horde, knowing that they cannot rely on the police to help them. The final film, *Cherry Tree Lane*, was released a year before the riots, and seems to reflect the perceived connection between black male culture and violence that was highlighted by David Starkey in his post-riot

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188 Anon. 'Riots in Tottenham after Mark Duggan shooting protest'. *BBC News*. (07/08/11).

189 Heidi Blake and Duncan Gradham. 'Tottenham riots: how a peaceful vigil led to devastating carnage'. *The Telegraph*. (08/08/11).

remarks. Antagonist Rian exacts horrific vengeance on a middle class couple, whose son he believes sent his cousin to prison. Once again, the justice system looms large in the narrative. Each film is a potential platform for further exploring the perceived violence of black, male, working-class life, retrospective of Duggan's death and the racial tension that it exposed.

Comedown is arguably the most pessimistic of the three narratives considered here, bordering on nihilism in its representation of black working-class life. Throughout the narrative several black male characters are hunted down by an individual determined to kill for revenge, regardless of the level of involvement each character had with the motivating crime (committed by the gang's only white male). Arguably, whilst all hoodie horrors either foreshadow the imagery and language utilised in the coverage of the riots or capitalise on it, Huda's work stands out as the one film that directly references the origins of the riots — a peaceful protest against racially motivated stop and search policies and police brutality, overwhelmed and forgotten in the light of the much more apocalyptic, sensationalist images that gripped the media. The film punishes black male bodies to a far greater and more visceral extent than its predecessors, and openly condemns the 'hands-off' approach of law enforcement within the landscape of the black working-class victim. The only police presence in the film comes at the conclusion of the film, where they are seen to arrest the last surviving black character as a murderer. These three films mark a rare effort within British horror cinema to represent black masculinity.

The lack of racial diversity within British horror is highlighted by the absence of discussions of race within the work of British horror academics. Substantial studies of British horror history by Peter Hutchings, David Pirie and Ian Cooper, to name but a few, have little or nothing to work with when it comes to addressing concepts and representations of race in the genre. This omission by the authors is enforced by the general paucity of black and minority ethnic characters across British cinema as a

whole, the absence of which is particularly conspicuous in horror. In Britain, according to Barbara Korte and Claudia Sternberg "the cultural mainstream is still frequently thought of as 'white' and 'commercial'".[190] Moreover, as Kehinde Andrews alleges, British cinema plays a vital role in maintaining the 'psychosis of Whiteness' within British culture: "Whiteness shapes mainstream cultural production producing celluloid fantasies, which work as hallucinations produced by and reinforcing the psychosis".[191] The films Kehinde makes specific reference to in this regard are British cinema's recent attempts to screen the country's slave-owning history; *Amazing Grace* (Apted, 2006) and *Belle* (Asante, 2013). He notes that these are the only two big budget British films to date which deal with the transatlantic slave trade, and both foreground the heroism and success of white men in the long road to abolition. Despite *Belle*'s warm critical reception, with the *Telegraph* calling the film "vital", and comparing it with McQueen's *12 Years a Slave* (2013),[192] Andrews sees it as part of a canon of work which represents the "myths of progress and enlightenment about the good that the West has wrought… so Whiteness becomes a psychosis that prevents society from engaging in the disturbing reality".[193]

British cinema continues to be criticised for its seeming unwillingness to encourage diversity both in front of and behind the screen. Leggott acknowledges a sense of 'alarm' at the overwhelming whiteness of British cinema at the turn of the century, with reactions to *Notting Hill* (Curtis, 1999) expressing particular concern over the 'whitening' of what is a famously diverse area of London.[194] The popular British

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[190] Barbara Korte & Claudia Sternberg. *Bidding for the Mainstream? Black and Asian British Film Since the 1990s.* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004). p. 8.

[191] Kehinde Andrews. 'The Psychosis of Whiteness: The Celluloid Hallucinations of Amazing Grace and Belle'. *Journal of Black Studies*. Vol. 47, Issue 5. 2016. p.442.

[192] Robbie Collin. 'Belle, review: 'a vital film''. *The Telegraph*. (12/06/14).

[193] Andrews. (2016). p. 451.

[194] James Leggott. *Contemporary British Cinema: From Heritage to Horror.* (London: Wallflower Press, 2008). p.105.

cinematic tradition of the heritage film also allows little space for the inclusion of non-white characters, favouring a focus upon British (white) aristocracy. Despite records proving that Britain has had a black population since the 12th century at least, and the British Empire being the figurehead for the slave trade until its abolition in 1807,[195] heritage cinema, with very few exceptions, has represented British history as white. Andrea Arnold's adaptation of *Wuthering Heights* (2012) is a recent exception to this, casting a black actor to play the eponymous Heathcliff. However, Arnold herself admits that this casting choice was not made to pass comment on the whitewashing of the heritage film, nor was tackling the injustices of racism on her agenda; "I felt that his difference was more important than his color [sic]; because Emily was writing about herself on some level. Heathcliff is Emily, and Emily's a woman, and she feels different because of that".[196] Unwittingly, Arnold seems her to sum up the prevailing attitude not only within filmmaking culture, but across British society and politics at large: black is shorthand for 'different'. Whilst films such as *Belle* may seem to redress the balance within heritage cinema, once again her 'difference' is used to facilitate a discussion of gender and class oppression[197] thereby minimising the discussion of race in favour of broader, sweeping statements about myriad other social injustices.

When a heritage film does allude to the white aristocracy's involvement with the slave trade, it is more likely to use *illustrations* of black men and women (as seen in Rozema's *Mansfield Park* (1999)) than it is to cast a black actor to play a flesh and blood character. This may be mitigated by claiming that this is an honest portrayal of the lack of perspective and involvement an aristocratic family would have with its

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[195] It is worth noting, as Andrews (2016) does, that by the time the push for abolition began in 1772, slavery was already becoming untenable as a means of production, due to mounting criticism from abolitionist groups, growing resistance from the slaves themselves and, after 1776, competition from America for French and Dutch trade. Abolition did not reach the colonies until 1833, but by this time, industrial Britain was prospering and its economic priorities had shifted away from the trade of slaves and sugar.

[196] Andrea Arnold in Graham Fuller. 'WUTHERING HEIGHTS : Andrea Arnold on how she used gritty realism to upend Heritage Cinema'. *Film Comment*. Vol.48, Issue 5. 2012. p.78.

[197] Andrews. (2016). p.449.

troubling source of wealth, but it also seems to provide evidence for how resistant British cinema is to narratives of slavery and abolition. It also leads to a characterisation of the enslaved black character as one without personality or nuance, reducing them to an image, a colour. Moreover, it is not historically accurate to claim that aristocrats were simply 'not aware' of the abject misery their trade inflicted upon black men, women and children. A recent collection of research on the histories of stately homes by English Heritage placed a renewed emphasis on the building of iconic pieces of English architecture and the role of the slave trade and its profits in their building. One of the key themes that editors Madge Dresser and Andrew Hann identified within the research seems to suggest that it was not a lack of awareness, but a concerted effort of denial, that prevented those made wealthy through the slave trade from having to confront their victims:

> "both the merchants and the members of Britain's landed elite who were involved in the proliferation of country houses from the late 17th century (the latter to consolidate their status and the former to gain entry into that elite) increasingly utilised notions of gentility, sensibility and cultural refinement in part to distance themselves from their actual connections to the Atlantic slave economy".[198]

Andrews' argument, then, that British heritage cinema is part of a cultural system used to sustain white mythology, becomes increasingly difficult to refute. There continues to be a conspicuous dearth of black bodies both behind and in front of the camera in British cinema and television, which thereby affords an extremely narrow selection of narrative possibilities for a black character.[199] As recently as the BBC's mini-series

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[198] Madge Dresser and Andrew Hann (eds.). *Slavery and the British Country House.* (Swindon: English Heritage, 2013). p.14.

[199] McQueen's *12 Years a Slave* was ground-breaking in this regard, telling the story of American slavery from source material written by a black slave, Solomon Northup (1853), under the direction of a black director, and with the black narrative consistently at the forefront of the film.

Taboo (2017-) representation of the British slave trade, which is used to thematically underpin the corrupt, morally devoid power structures of the narrative, is restricted to a few shadowy flashbacks and the accounts of white men and a single black character. The character arc most developed is that of James Delaney, a white man who has spent many years in Africa, and whose mythology is as vast and unknowable as the racial 'other' of the slave. As Manuel Barcia notes, "this is perhaps *Taboo*'s only weak link in taking on the transatlantic slave trade: the experiences of Africans, beyond some spellbinding graphic images, are not explored in anywhere near the same depth as those of Delaney".[200]

The assertions of Andrews, Korte and Sternberg regarding the whiteness of mainstream cultural production have greater resonance at a time of renewed criticism of the film industry as an exclusive and overwhelmingly white industry. The controversy over the complete lack of diversity in the 2015 and 2016 Oscar nominations, which culminated in the '#oscarssowhite' campaign, and the ongoing furore caused by rumours that Idris Elba was in talks to play James Bond[201] seem to support both Korte and Sternberg and Andrews position on the film industry as a tool for the propagation of white concerns. In 2016, Elba went on to address parliament regarding diversity, or lack thereof, in the British media: "My agent and I, we'd get scripts and we were always asked to read the "black male" character. Or 'the athletic type.' And that was just Crimewatch…But when a script called for a "black male", it wasn't describing a character. It was a describing a skin colour".[202]

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[200] Manuel Barcia. 'The Real Horrors of the Transatlantic Slave Trade behind Taboo and Roots'. *The Conversation*. (01/03/17).

[201] Rush Limbaugh, American radio host, said on-air that a black man should not play Bond, because "that's not who James Bond is" (Ben Child. 'Rush Limbaugh: Idris Elba can't be Bond because he's black'. *The Guardian*. (24/12/14)). Author Anthony Horowitz also came up against criticism for referring to Elba as "too street" for the Bond role (Eliza Berman. 'James Bond Author Apologises for Calling Idris Elba 'Too Street' to play 007'. *Time*. (02/09/15)).

[202] Idris Elba. 'Keynote speech to Parliament on Diversity in the Media'. *Channel 4 Press*. (18/01/16).

As a genre which has always lingered on the periphery of the 'cultural mainstream', British horror certainly exemplifies the whiteness of Korte and Sternberg's allegation, if not always the commerciality. Most of the cornerstone texts referenced throughout this study have been films with entirely white casts — *Witchfinder General*, *Peeping Tom*, *The Wicker Man* and *The Innocents* are just a handful of the exclusively white narratives in British horror's canon. In British cinema more widely, there are a handful of notable black British films which serve as little known responses to the absence of black Britain on film. *Welcome II the Terrordome* (Onwurah, 1995) is notable as the film closest in tone and content to a British horror film. The film has a majority black cast and was written and directed by British-Nigerian Ngozi Onwurah. At the time, Onwurah was the only black British woman to helm a feature film that received a U.K. theatrical release.[203] The film is a dark, visceral and confronting depiction of race relations, which seems to belong to an earlier, wider body of black British filmmaking which provides a response to the country's conservatism and subliminal racism. This was characterised by the stop and search policy and anti-immigration rhetoric which proliferated in Thatcherite Britian, the spectre of which would return with a vengeance in the mid-2000s.

In fact, the parallels between the riots in Brixton in 1981, Broadwater Farm in 1985 and the riots in London, Manchester and elsewhere in 2011 are striking. The Brixton riots are widely recognised as an inevitable response to the targeting of young black men by police. These same black men were also struggling to find work, and believed that the prejudice of employers was at least partly responsible for their poverty. Sheldon Thomas remembers: "[we had to] cope with a racist police force who had the power to stop and search us at will… [With] beatings, deaths in police custody… Most young black boys felt completely persecuted".[204] Four years later,

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203 Ashley Clark. '10 great black British films'. *BFI.* (02/05/17).

204 Sheldon Thomas in Tim Newburn, Paul Lewis and Josephine Metcalfe. 'A New Kind of Riot? From Brixton 1981 to Tottenham 2011'. *The Guardian.* (09/12/11).

similar rioting in Brixton began after the shooting of black woman, Dorothy Groce, by the Metropolitan police as they searched her home for her son. A week later, a police search of a property on the Broadwater Farm estate in Tottenham ended with the resident, a 49 year-old black woman, collapsing and dying after suffering a cardiac arrest. A peaceful demonstration in response to her death escalated throughout the following days, eventually resulting in scenes of extreme violence and vandalism, and the death of Metropolitan police officer Keith Blakelock. In 2011, it would once again be violence against a black citizen — this time Mark Duggan, who was also a Broadwater resident — that galvanised unrest. In each case, police hostility and a sense of social inequality were cited as key motivating factors, and it was the poor black community in particular that were under threat. However, a key difference that is of particular relevance to this study is that horror cinema, despite operating effectively as a barometer for social trauma and anxiety, did not have the platform to respond to these national traumas in the 1980s — the aforementioned video nasty campaign had stifled domestic horror film throughout the decade, and whilst horror found an alternative outlet in literature and television, the latter was heavily informed by earlier (and very white) Gothic-inflected horror, such as the anthology series *Hammer House of Horror* (Clegg et.al., 1980) or *The Woman in Black* (Wise, 1989). The closest that horror came to recording or reflecting the racialized violence and oppression of the era is perhaps in Clive Barker's *The Forbidden* (1985), which would later be adapted and relocated to America as the film *Candyman*, but was originally set on an estate in Liverpool.

Although Britain's horror industry ailed during the 1980s, with Hammer fading from view in the late 1970s and independent production's loss of momentum during the video nasties era, M.J. Simpson believes the alleged death of horror, mournfully discussed throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, referenced the disappearance of

British horror only from the big screen.[205] Simpson argues that there was an active, if little known, straight-to-video/DVD horror film culture throughout the 1990s which sustained the genre through the final years of the twentieth century. Once again, though, the casts of these films lack diversity, and offer little representation of black Britain. When the horror revival began in the early 2000s,[206] the accelerated production of features for both theatrical and straight-to-DVD release arguably allowed for a more varied and inclusive approach to horror than ever before (although this potential is yet to be fully realised) which has afforded a small scale response to the anxieties and traumas bound up in Black British masculinity through hoodie horror. The social and political context that eventually fostered the creation of *Cherry Tree Lane*, *Attack the Block* and *Comedown* bares some striking similarities to the earlier context which produced *Terrordome* and critically lauded black British films such as *Burning an Illusion* (Shabazz, 1981) and *Playing Away* (Ove, 1986), which, whilst not horror, are notable for their examination of a specifically black British identity and their use of the social realist mode to explicitly discuss racial tensions in Britain. The social realist mode is a cherished part of British cinema, which allows for a greater representation of marginalised classes and races through its pursuit of realism. It also provides an intellectually sanctioned, legitimate exploitation of marginalised groups — the working-class, the black British community and British Asian[207] communities among others. Hoodie horror, as social realism's extreme counterpart, also relies heavily on the exploitation of these demographics, as they utilise the folk devil status of maligned groups to incite terror. No doubt, such representation is problematic, and risks compounding public beliefs that these demographics in some way pose a threat.

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[205] M.J. Simpson. (2012). p.13.

[206] The 'British Horror Revival' is discussed extensively throughout Walker (2015) and is celebrated in Simpson (2012).

[207] Whilst British Asian cinema and the representation of British Asians on screen is beyond the purview of this study, those interested in the topic should seek out Cary Rajinder Sawhney's article, ''Another Kind of British': An Exploration of British Asian Film'. *Cineaste*. Vol. 26, Issue 4. 2001. pp. 58-61. Korte and Sternberg (2004) also provide a substantial study of British Asian film of the 1990s.

However, the exposure of the folk devil through the exploitation of stereotypes is arguably an act of subversion by hoodie horror filmmakers, and one that is perhaps clearer and more affecting than high-brow social realism could attain. Regardless, by virtue of belonging to the problematic genre of horror, more often vilified than revered in Britain, the exploitation in hoodie horror risks being dismissed as unsavoury and illegitimate. Yet, the films discussed within this chapter offer some of the most substantial characterisations of black British men ever committed to the British horror canon.

Throughout its history, the horror genre at large has had a problematic relationship with issues of race, from the overt racial undertones of *King Kong* (Cooper and Schoedsack, 1933) and *The Creature from the Black Lagoon* (Arnold, 1954), which served to vilify and dehumanise black masculinity, to the appropriation of black culture and mythology in *White Zombie* (Halperin, 1932), the horror genre has been guilty as any of dehumanising black people and erasing black narratives from the screen. Black characters, particularly protagonists, have been scarce across horror's many subgenres and cycles, with the black leads of *Night of the Living Dead* and *Candyman* proving to be exceptions to the rule. The death of the black character is often a necessity to reaffirm the strength of the monster, compounding the threat it poses. As Coleman comments of *Jurassic Park* (Spielberg, 1993): "filmmakers such as Steven Spielberg savvily toy around with audiences' expectations, to include figuring out that there is no better way to demonstrate someone's, or some*thing's*, extreme deadliness than for it to secure a bloodbath victory over a Black man with a big black gun".[208] Black characters are highly unlikely to survive the running time, their deaths often used as set pieces to advance a white protagonist's narrative. As a horror blogger going by the name of Angela H. observes:

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[208] Coleman. (2011). p.1.

"The absence of black bodies in body horror films is glaring. It implies that the white body is the only body with inherent value and innate purity. It is the only body that has the ability to be tainted. Conversely the black body, from its inception, is viewed as flawed, defective, diseased and lacking the value that white bodies carry. Its decay, destruction, mutilation, etc. is an impossibility, because it is assumed to never be or have been in a pure state".[209]

The disposable nature of bodies of colour has a troubling resonance within Western cultures, present and past. The climate in which hoodie horror thrived was also a period which saw the renewal of fierce debates regarding racial profiling in both Britain and the U.S., sparked by numerous widely reported instances of violence against black men at the hands of law enforcement. The shooting to death of Trayvon Martin, 17, Ezell Ford, 25 and Michael Brown, 18, by police between the years of 2012-2014 were highly publicised incidents which only represented a tiny percentage of the cases of police brutality that black Americans had been experiencing year on year. Research undertaken by the 'Mapping Police Violence' project shows that black people make up 25% of the 964 people killed by police so far this year (2017) in the U.S. despite only making up 13% of the U.S. population.[210] In Britain, whilst police brutality is not understood to have reached the epidemic proportions of the U.S., it is a persistent and underrepresented problem. The Inquest Charitable Trust reports that there have been a total of 170 deaths of Black and Minority Ethnic people after or whilst in the custody of police or other forces since 1990. 13 of the deaths are attributed to shooting, whilst 81 BME people have died whilst in the custody of the Metropolitan police.[211]

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[209] Angela H. (2017).

[210] Anon. 'Mapping Police Violence'. (01/11/17).

[211] Anon. 'INQUEST BAME deaths in Police Custody'. *Inquest.org.* [date unknown].

The symbiosis between the British and American film industries has been noted elsewhere, but is worth reiterating here, given the context of the shared concern regarding state sponsored racism and police brutality. As Walker notes, "the first British horror films that appeared in the twenty-first century were explicitly indebted to 'models' of filmmaking that were proving to be popular in overseas theatrical markets, and, as such, the horror films were cultivated with the broadest possible demographics in mind".[212] The hoodie horrors discussed in this chapter, despite arriving later than the international successes of *28 Days Later* or *Shaun of the Dead*, borrow heavily from American cinematic culture to harness some of its broader appeal, with *Attack the Block* in particular reaching for an international audience with its nods towards American action, sci-fi and adventure cinema of the 1980s. However, neither American nor British national cinema has an outstanding record in its portrayal of race. Certainly, considering the horror genre, the influences upon and predecessors to hoodie horror's black male leads are few and far between. To necessitate the discussion of hoodie horror and race, and to place it within a broader generic and cinematic context, this chapter will look towards America's behemoth of a horror industry and its representations of blackness. While scarce, these representations still hugely outnumber similar representations in British cinema, and seem a likely source of inspiration for the black characters of hoodie horror.

The well-documented history of violence against black men in the U.S and U.K. provides a wealth of horrific imagery that is often, perhaps deliberately, bypassed by the horror genre. However, ideas and images of racial difference have been identified throughout the early history of the Gothic; H.L. Malchow recognises: "a "racial Gothic" discourse that employed certain striking metaphoric images to filter and give meaning to a flood of experience and information from abroad, but that also

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[212] Walker. (2015). p. 15.

thereby recharged itself for an assault on domestic and physical 'pathology'".[213] This pathology is employed to the same effect as Mayhew and Pritchard's pathologisation of the London poor. It efficiently and absolutely 'others' the subject, and legitimates the superiority of the wealthy white male. The histories and legacies of slavery and empire seem to encapsulate so much of what horror professes to explore — monstrosity, human cruelty, extreme violence, oppression and subjugation — but in their proximity appear to have become a taboo even for the most extreme and boundary-pushing filmmakers of the genre. There are, of course, exceptions to this: both *The Skeleton Key* (Softley, 2005) and *The Haunting in Connecticut 2: Ghosts of Georgia* (Elkins, 2013) explicitly link supernatural threats with America's history of slavery and black servitude. Both narratives feature supernatural occurrences which ultimately lead to the uncovering of unknown abuses of black people at the hands of white Americans, hidden or forgotten for countless years. That they are forgotten once again betrays the denial and white bias present in these narratives — these abuses supposedly lost to time are not, in actual fact, unknown to Americans or Britons. However, in most horror films that do encounter racial prejudice, the spectre of racial violence itself is secondary to the impact its return has on the majority white cast. Both *Skeleton Key* and *Connecticut 2* follow a fairly predictable trajectory towards a monstrous return of the repressed — here, repressed acts of violence against the black body. Yet, the source of the repression could easily be substituted for countless other sources without the narrative being greatly changed, so little is the context of slavery and racial violence actually explored by either film.

At the conclusion of both films, it is with the white characters that the narrative sympathies and allegiances lie. In *Connecticut 2*, the family survive their ordeal and are responsible for freeing the trapped spirits of the black slaves who died on their land. As with *Amazing Grace* and *Belle*, slavery and oppression is only present when

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[213] Howard L. Malchow. *Gothic Images of Race in Nineteenth-Century Britain*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996). pp.2-3.

framed within the context of the 'white saviour'. In this narrative, even after death the black character relies upon the white hero to find peace. *The Skeleton Key* outright vilifies its black characters, who spend the majority of the run time as black souls in white bodies, effectively 'passing' as an elderly white couple. Their betrayal of their white employers a century ago led to their deaths, lynched by the townsfolk. Using hoodoo they have succeeded in transferring their souls or spirits from one body to another through the decades. At the conclusion of the film, the heroine's body is possessed by a black soul, whilst her soul is transferred and trapped within an elderly white body. The black characters, by supernatural means, achieve immortality and the advantages of whiteness, whilst the white heroes are deprived of their freedom and their identities. The film misses the opportunity to present this as a kind of macabre justice, instead choosing to frame the conclusion as a tragic and horrific example of white victimisation. Over a decade later, Jordan Peele's *Get Out* would subvert this narrative, with the elderly white body claiming the young black body, thereby placing the black body in peril and producing a narrative not only of black victimhood, but black heroism. However, as flawed as they are these films represent attempts to introduce America's history of racial violence into the horror canon. The U.K. horror industry has not made such attempts to address Britain's history of slavery, and in fact the most convincing and visceral representation of the horrors of slavery did not come from horror, but from Anglo-American collaboration *12 Years a Slave*. In his review of the film, Mark Kermode notes McQueen's interest in punishing bodies, evident throughout his filmography, which is undoubtedly a concept borrowed from horror. Kermode notes of *12 Years*: "bodies are variously starved, entangled and beaten in obliterating fashion";[214] this strong emphasis on the physical ordeal, and the abstraction of the body, brings horror tropes into the heart of the historical drama.

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[214] Mark Kermode. '12 Years a Slave – review'. *The Guardian*. (12/01/14).

Candyman provides more standard horror fayre, but once again the British claim is tenuous. Whilst directed by white British filmmaker Bernard Rose, and adapted from Clive Barker's short story, it focuses firmly upon racial violence in the U.S. The titular Candyman is one of horror's most iconic black characters, but is also a deeply problematic figure. This monstrous spirit's thirst for human blood is motivated by the injustices he suffered when he was alive. His love affair with a white woman led to his being lynched, and after death he returns to haunt the notorious Cabrini Green housing project. A particularly British, social realist aesthetic creeps into Rose's adaptation, in the form of the film's preoccupation with the lives of the project's residents and in its characterisation of the bleeding heart white academic, Helen. The use of Cabrini Green, above all else, makes *Candyman* a convincing Anglo-American predecessor to the hoodie horrors considered in this chapter. As discussed in Chapter Two, the working-class space is integral to the hoodie horror narrative, and nowhere does the geography of the council estate loom so large as it does in *Attack the Block* and *Comedown*. The project resembles an American counterpart to this space, holds the same associations with class and race and is characterised as a liminal space where life and death are divided by a particularly thin line.

A real and notorious area of Chicago, Cabrini Green was itself a racialized space, associated most readily with the large black community living there.[215] Indeed, within the film, the area is populated entirely by black people, with protagonist Helen representing the intrusion of middle class whiteness into the profoundly poor, black space. This focus on class and race divisions, as Lucy Fife Donaldson notes, was entirely Rose's creation, and Cabrini Green played a key role in emphasising this modification: "the choice of Cabrini Green as site of Ruthie Jean's death and therefore a key location in the film (some scenes were actually shot there) thus immediately situates the narrative in the context of racially polarised worlds — sheltered white

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[215] For a potted history of Cabrini Green and its perceived connections with racialised violence, see Lawrence Vale. 'Housing Chicago: Cabrini-Green to Parkside of Old Town'. *Places.* 2012.

middle-class academia set against the poverty and violence of the inner-city African-American experience — which is further dramatised by the (fictional) architectural doubling of Helen and Ruthie Jean's apartments".[216]

As with so much of hoodie horror, it is the deprived working-class space which is the site of horror and violence. The Candyman's folkloric presence within a landscape irrevocably linked with the African-American population draws a comparison between the physical violence exacted on Candyman whilst he was alive and the indirect physical and emotional violence still exacted upon the black community by the state. Yet whilst Candyman's victimisation in life is tragic and horrific, sympathy or empathy for the character is mitigated by his transformation into a woman and child-slaughtering monster. Throughout the narrative, Candyman is drawn in relation to his white female counterpart, with both his human life and his supernatural reign of terror being defined by his pursuit of a white woman. This is borrowed from a wider racialised narrative of the predatory black man, an image popularised in *The Birth of A Nation* (Griffiths, 1915) — this narrative, and Griffiths film, will be revisited shortly with regard to *Attack*. This predatory portrayal of Candyman is arguably a step in the wrong direction regarding horror's relationship with black masculinity, using violence against the black body as no more than a device to enhance the horror of the narrative, and its black character, as a whole. The message that violence begets violence runs throughout, but the Candyman's equal opportunities vengeance sees a black community threatened, and many more black bodies tortured and butchered. This prolific violence works to overshadow the lynching of the Candyman to such an extent that Candyman's past becomes a footnote within a wider Gothic tale of ghosts and female madness.

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[216] Lucy Fife Donaldson. ''The suffering black male body and the threatened white female body': ambiguous bodies in *Candyman'*. *The Irish Journal of Gothic and Horror Studies*. Vol. 9. 2011. p.33.

Whilst British influences are clear in *Candyman*, its engagement with race and class is restricted to an American context, thereby distancing Rose from the black British experience, enabling him to vilify racism and racial violence without having to acknowledge either as a British issue. Even outside of the horror genre, facing up to Britain's role in the slave trade, as well as the segregation and alienation of black people following its abolition seems a difficult sell. Critically lauded black British filmmaker Steve McQueen found his greatest success to date with his *12 Years a Slave*. However, as discussed, the film is set in America, and the black experience is placed in an American context. The success of the film reflects not only McQueen's talent, but also a perceptible difference between the attitudes to and reception of the black experience in the American context as opposed to the British one. This is not to say that Hollywood is leading the way in equality and diversity in film — far from it. As this study has explored, the American horror industry still, more often than not, relies on platitudes and stereotypes in its writing of a black character, but there is a willingness to explore the horrific past upon which America was built which seems entirely missing from the British canon.

Moreover, horror is yet to provide a substantial platform for the discussion of racially motivated violence against the black body. Baker Kee identifies this gap in American horror's map of trauma, and a similar absence can be seen in British horror: "the main cinematic barometer of cultural anxiety — the horror film — has for the most part avoided explicitly addressing imagery of historical violence against black men".[217] As a general rule, whilst a black victim's death may be graphic in a horror film, these deaths rarely resemble racially charged images of the lynching, shooting or burning of black bodies. To re-imagine this history of violence within the parameters of horror would potentially place the fictional horror narrative in too close a proximity to real world horror — becoming an historical account rather than fiction.

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[217] Baker Kee. (2015).

Robin R. Means Coleman identifies George A. Romero's series of *Living Dead* films (1968-2007), in particular *Night* and *Land of the Dead* (2005), as revolutionary in their treatment of race, with each film presenting the audience with a black male lead. In each film, this character is part of a diverse group of survivors who, typically, come to gruesome ends one by one (including the black lead's white male counterparts). Coleman asserts that the black lead's survival is made possible through his ability "to remain self-possessed while carrying on".[218] This control is juxtaposed with a complete lack of self-discipline expressed by the films' white male characters, which is doomed to fail from the very outset. Wood suggests: "Romero uses [Ben's blackness] to signify his difference from the other characters, to set him apart from their norms… it is the function of [the film's] posse to restore the social order that has been destroyed".[219] Ben is unattached (he has no partner or family, unlike his white counterparts), and perhaps because of this can think more quickly and objectively. That his stance against the treasured traditional ideals of family and marriage, as suggested by Wood, has to be annihilated for the restoration of social order arguably aligns him more with the dead than it does with the living, with the monstrous over the heroic. However, Wood's assertion risks reducing Ben's characterisation purely to a statement of difference, without engaging in the importance of his race, specifically, and its representation in horror cinema. The fate of Ben in *The Night of the Living Dead* is perhaps one of the few instances within the horror genre where the screen violence comes uncomfortably close to the fact of violence in Civil Rights era America. The film concludes with Ben being shot in the head by a mob member led by an over-zealous local sheriff, who appears to mistake Ben as one of the reanimated dead. Sheriff McClelland shouts "Good shot!... That's another one for the fire". The Sheriff's unfeeling response to Ben's death dehumanises the protagonist through celebrating the acts of violence exacted against him. The Sheriff, nor any of his white

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[218] Coleman. (2011). p. 114.

[219] Robin Wood. (2003). p.103.

contemporaries, express any remorse or doubt; they simply drag Ben's body from the house for disposal with the rest of the reanimated — and executed — dead. The final haunting image is of the slain Ben being slung unceremoniously onto a pile of bodies, ready to be burned, as a group of white men look on. The burning of the body recalls harrowing lynch-mob images taken throughout the 20th century. Romero later reminisced that, as he drove the film to L.A to locate a distributor, news of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. was broadcast on the radio.[220] The end credit sequence of Ben's body burning compounds and intensifies the association between the film and its real world context. That this film and its imagery could be produced and released in such close proximity to the fact of King's murder demonstrates the capacity for horror to conjure meaningful images from this site of trauma.

There have been some notable exceptions to horror's overall reluctance to deal with racialized violence, such as *Blacula* (Crain, 1972), and the sequel *Candyman: Farewell to the Flesh* (Condon, 1995) and most recently *Get Out*. The film shattered the conventional expectations of race representation in horror, by placing the emotional and physical violence of racism at the forefront of the narrative. The film has also shattered several box office records, with its $150m profit making it the highest grossing debut feature film based on an original screenplay in cinematic history. When it achieved £100m, Peele also became the first black writer-director to achieve the milestone with a debut feature.[221] The film takes an unflinching look at racial tensions in America, exploring the legacy of the 'Jim Crow' South and the continuing presence of racism in everyday American life. The protagonist, Chris, begins the film enduring the daily misunderstandings and small indignities of black life in America. As Lanre Bakare notes: "[t]he villains here aren't southern rednecks or

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[220] George Romero interview. *The American Nightmare.* (dir. Adam Simon, 2000).

[221] David Renshaw. 'Get Out Is Now The Highest Grossing Debut Film Based On An Original Screenplay In History'. *Fader.* (04/04/17).

neo-Nazi skinheads, or the so-called "alt-right". They're middle-class white liberals".[222] Chris is about to walk into an environment which epitomises white, liberal middle-classness, and, as the title suggests, is doomed to spend the narrative trying to survive this environment and 'get out'. On a trip to meet his girlfriend's parents, the couple's car hits a deer. The responding police officer asks to see Chris' licence, despite the fact that he was not driving. Girlfriend Rose challenges this request, but Chris is willing to show identification to diffuse the tension of this exchange — if the situation escalates, he is aware that he will be the one in danger. This brief but uncomfortable scene draws on the atmosphere of mistrust between black men and law enforcement, also encapsulated by Moses' monologue about the state conspiring against him in *Attack the Block*. The scene directly references the instances of police brutality discussed previously. Whilst the audience is used to the inept policeman trope within the horror genre, the policeman in *Get Out* potentially poses a far bigger obstacle to Chris' survival than the usual bumbling small town deputy. Through invoking the spectre of police brutality, Peele uses this otherwise uneventful scene to compound the suggestion that Chris is endangered by the very people and institutions he should be able to rely upon for his safety — at the film's conclusion this betrayal is revisited on Chris tenfold when he realises he has been led into entrapment by Rose herself (in a reversal of the 'black buck' figure posing a threat to the helpless white woman).

It transpires that Chris has been lured into a trap, and has unwittingly offered his body for auction to a group of elderly white men. As Steve Erickson incisively concludes: "whiteness is a source of terror in the film—not just to its black protagonist, Chris … but also to whites themselves. They associate whiteness with aging minds and weak, unhip bodies, and idealize blackness as a source of strength (based on

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222 Lanre Bakare. 'Get Out: the film that dares to reveal the horror of liberal racism in America'. *The Guardian*. (28/02/17).

stereotypes about sports stars and, frankly, penis size)".[223] Chris' perceived value as a body, not a person, holds a deeply disturbing equivalence to America's slave-owning history. Wealthy white men, their bodies failing, have been paying to have their brains transplanted into young, healthy black bodies (a doctoring of the hoodoo 'soul-swap' narrative used to demonise the black characters of *The Skeleton Key*). Their treatment of the black male body hovers between contempt and admiration — they don't want to 'be' black, but they aspire to black physicality. As far as they are concerned, their intellectual attributes enhance the physical attributes of their black victims.

By Coleman's definitions, *Get Out* represents an unprecedentedly successful 'Black Horror' film, which has "an added narrative focus that calls attention to racial identity, in this case Blackness".[224] Despite her admiration for the *Living Dead* films and their representations of black masculinity therein, Coleman acknowledges that the authenticity of the experience they represent is limited by its being, as Coleman calls it, a 'Blacks in Horror' film. Such a film, Coleman suggests, "present[s] Blacks and Blackness in the context of horror"[225] — meaning that the films derive horror from the presence of the walking dead and not from the black male experience within a predominantly white environment. 'Blacks in Horror' films are also typically made by non-Black filmmakers and are intended for mainstream (assumed predominantly white) consumption. Harry Benshoff contends that if a film about black culture is written or directed by a white man, the films "present a romanticized and somewhat paternalistic vision of black culture"[226] and this compromises the legitimacy of the representations on-screen. Of the three featured hoodie horror films in this chapter,

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[223] Steve Erickson. 'Get Out'. *Cineaste*. Vol. 2, Issue 3. 2017. p. 51.

[224] Coleman. (2011). p.6.

[225] Coleman. p. 6.

[226] Harry M. Benshoff & Sean Griffin. *America on film: representing race, class, gender, and sexuality at the movies*. 2nd edition. (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009). p.98.

two were written and directed by white men and would be considered, by Coleman's demarcations, as 'Blacks in Horror' films. There are certainly paternalistic and romantic tendencies in these narratives, but to reduce the narratives to Benshoff's description would do the films' fascinating political and social critiques a disservice — as the latter part of this study demonstrates. The remaining film, *Comedown* was directed by Menhaj Huda, the Bangladesh-born British filmmaker, who openly acknowledges the influence his experience as an ethnic minority and an immigrant in Britain has on his filmmaking.[227] His filmography shows an enduring interest in both the working-class and the ethnically diverse communities of Britain. His films, then, could perhaps be considered both social realist and as 'race films' — they do indeed call attention to racial identity — but for Huda these identities are characterised not by a solely a British Asian experience, or a black British experience, nor a solely white British experience. His films view the council estate in particular as a place where racial identities are no longer so specific, where parts of all cultures present are adapted and appropriated into a common currency. As a result, the cast of *Comedown* is diverse, but also demarcated by the 'otherness' of low class and non-white racial identities. The identities we see are constructed according to estate hierarchy, and according to the racially coded qualifiers of postcode and gang affiliation. Unlike both *Attack the Block* and *Cherry Tree Lane*, race is never explicitly mentioned, but is alluded to in the racialised perceptions of gang culture and knife violence.

Unlike their villainous white counterparts in hoodie horror, young, black male characters often become the unlikely and reluctant heroes of the narrative. These attempts to represent working-classness as a more racially diverse experience are potentially symptomatic of a recent diversification of British cinema on a wider scale. As James Leggott suggests, British cinema of the 2000s "has arguably been more

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[227] Menhaj Huda. 'Everywhere and Nowhere: in search of belonging'. *TEDxEastEnd*. (Broadcast 04/10/11).

receptive to the experience (and problems) of multicultural Britain"[228] than it had been prior to the millennium. The way that the experience of the young black man is articulated in hoodie horror seems to resemble the experience of women in horror. In many ways, these characters fulfil a similar role to that of the Final Girl of the traditional slasher film. They are characterised as 'other than' the dominant white male norm, yet throughout the narrative adopt and/or display many of the prized characteristics of the white male, wielding them far more successfully than the white male in order to survive the trauma inflicted upon them. The young black protagonists in hoodie horror are, just as Clover says of the Final Girl, "chased, cornered, wounded … [He] alone looks death in the face, but [he] alone also finds the strength either to stay the killer long enough to be rescued (ending A) or to kill him [himself] (ending B)".[229] However, aspiring to qualities traditionally understood as white and male is just as problematic for the black man as it was for the women about whom Clover originally wrote. By this rule, hoodie horrors certainly seem to be more comfortably identified as part of 'Blacks in horror' filmmaking. Whilst a film such as *Attack the Block* admirably attempts to represent the black, working-class experience in Britain, at times the film falls into problematic stereotypes, most glaring being the prolific drug culture on the estate, the propagation of which is credited to the black characters. Moreover, dealer Hi-Hatz's possession of a gun, and Moses' concealed blade, harken back to the images of black male violence discussed in regard to David Starkey and Tony Blair in the introduction of this study.

The film also references large swathes of American cinema which are dominated with white male characters including sci-fi, horror and the action film (Moses becomes a hero akin to the vest-wearing, white male hero played by Bruce Willis in *Die Hard* (McTiernan, 1988), a comparison it is hard not to make). The film's

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[228] Leggott. (2008). p. 105.

[229] Clover. (1992). p. 35.

referential nature thereby emphasises a particular framing of heroism and bravery that is associated specifically with white masculinity, despite these qualities not being an exclusively white male preserve. As Coleman asserts: "Blackness is depicted as most valuable when it harkens to the value system and ideologies of (a stereotypically monolithic) whiteness".[230] With Moses performing, in some cases shot for shot, John McClane's brand of heroism, the film effectively denies Moses himself the qualities of bravery and heroism, by having him mimic the 'monolithic whiteness' of the action hero. Therefore, whilst Moses may transcend the restrictions of his life as a petty criminal to become a hero in the eyes of the estate, he only achieves this because he chooses to mimic a valuable (read white) brand of masculinity.

Attack the Block and *Comedown* both feature young, working-class black men as their leads, who both transition from criminality to heroism throughout the course of the narrative. Interestingly, both of these films deviate from the narrative norms of other films in the cycle, which feature a white working-class lead. In contrast to *Harry Brown*, *Eden Lake*, *Citadel* and *Community*, *Attack* and *Comedown* cast the young working-class man as protagonist and the presence of middle class masculinity is far less prevalent. Instead, the adversaries of Moses and Lloyd are the trappings (quite literally) of stereotypical working-class blackness, which leaves them with an incredibly narrow range of possibilities, thereby confining them to the estate and its culture of crime. In all three narratives, blackness is equated with crime and with financial struggle, and in the vicious cycle of the estate, the pursuit of financial betterment leads to crime, and the pursuit of moral betterment leads to incarceration, which by proxy leads to more financial hardship. In *Attack the Block*, this systemic oppression is embodied not only by the alien invaders, but by the estate's resident drug lord, Hi-Hatz, who is exemplary of the violent black masculinity perpetuated in public discourse.

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[230] Coleman. (2011). p. 12.

Case Study: Hi-Hatz, *Attack the Block*.

Before considering the representation of the black male protagonist in hoodie horror, there is another character present in *Attack the Block*, who exemplifies a different, yet far more typical, characterisation of the young black man. The character Hi-Hatz, the estate's resident drug dealer who aspires to a music career, is demonstrative of the 'culturally totalized' idea of black masculinity which Keith M. Harris identifies within film. He asserts: "What is culturally familiar — hip-hop, rap music, commodified neo-nationalism and the cool-posed, 'endangered black man' — becomes representationally and culturally totalized as the Black Experience of the young, heterosexual urban black man, the only experience possible".[231] Whilst his statement pertains specifically to American cinema, the same repetition of a sanitised cultural figure is evident within attempts to represent black masculinity in the hoodie horror film. The actor who plays Hi-Hatz, Jumayn Hunter, has regularly appeared in hoodie horror — firstly playing Mark, the only black gang member in *Eden Lake*, and returning to the cycle in 2010 to take up the role of the particularly nasty Rian in home invasion *Cherry Tree Lane*. A year later, playing Hi Hatz, it becomes clear that he is performing several variations on the same culturally produced Black Experience — young black men experience their coming of age through an affiliation with gangs, violence and drugs. The 'cool pose' Harris mentions here refers to Majors and Mancini Billson's work on black manhood: "Cool pose is a ritualized form of masculinity… that deliver[s] a single, critical message: pride, strength and control".[232] The masculinity performed by Hi-Hatz, which is imitated by Moses and his gang in the opening

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[231] Harris. (2006). p. 84.

[232] Richard Majors and Janet Mancini Billson. *Cool Pose: The Dilemma of Black Manhood in America.* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992). p.4.

scenes, certainly demonstrates the aforementioned qualities of 'cool pose'. Hi-Hatz is arrogant, confident and has been running the estate's drug empire unchallenged.

Throughout the narrative, however, Cornish attempts to challenge the authenticity and efficacy of this brand of masculinity. Hi-Hatz's well-styled masculinity is quite literally torn to pieces in the ensuing alien attack. That the alien immediately goes for Hi-Hatz's face, giving the film an opportunity for a gruesome shot of his screaming, bloodied skull, suggests that his 'unmasking', literally in this sense, proves fatal and also removes his skin and its colour, thereby removing the racial stigma around which his entire identity had been meticulously constructed. Only in the removal of the skin itself is Hi-Hatz's brand of masculinity proved to be fraudulent and ineffectual. To survive the alien onslaught, hero Moses has to abandon the masculinity he has learnt and imitated from figures like Hi-Hatz. This includes shedding his hoodie, leaving him to battle in a *Die- Hard*-esque vest, although this vest is black, not white, and a baseball cap.[233] The vest's colour serves once again to emphasise Moses' blackness, even though he may be successfully replicating a 'monolithic whiteness'. He is not John McClane, and his heroism will not be rewarded, as his race marks him as other to whiteness, just as his vest does. The question to be asked is whether or not this representation itself is yet another culturally enforced expectation of the way working-class black masculinity should be. The parallels between Moses and John McClane are a testament to the influence and longevity of the white male hero figure.

Lloyd and Moses: The whiteness of heroism

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[233] The John McClane-esque characterisation of Moses' heroism continues; in the penultimate scene of *Attack the Block* Moses is thrown from a balcony in an explosion. He manages to survive by grasping a British flag hanging from a window. This is a clear homage to a similar scene towards the end of *Die Hard*, where McClane is thrown from the roof of the Nakatomi Plaza in an explosion, and is left clinging to a fire hose.

Despite both leads being members of a gang, the black hoodie's narrative is much less about a group struggle, as we see with *Community* or *Harry Brown*, but about an individual journey. It is no coincidence that both Moses' journey in *Attack* and Lloyd's in *Comedown* end in the same way; in the back of a police car. *Comedown's* narrative begins with the same scene it concludes with. Lloyd, a young black man, sits handcuffed in the back of a police car while police enter the tower block, now a crime scene. The repetition of this scene gives the whole narrative a cyclical structure, similar to the use of the interview footage that bookends *Community*. Placing the penultimate scenes of the film at both the opening and the conclusion of the film throws into question the finality of the narrative's end, as the arrest marks paradoxically both the beginning and end of the narrative. Throughout the film, Lloyd's incarceration is inescapable, as the audience have already witnessed it, yet it is also still to happen. In *Comedown*, the cycle powerfully suggests the spectre of incarceration that is perceived to haunt the working-class black man by making Lloyd's journey in and out of police custody inevitable from the outset.

Immediately after the police car sequence, the film cuts to a panning shot of an urban skyline — recognisable as London's financial district. The view is first dominated by the iconic 30 St Mary Axe building, nicknamed 'The Gherkin', and other high-rise office buildings admired as part of the regeneration of that area, providing a familiar cinematic perspective of the city that Brunsdon characterises as "a fashionably accented backdrop… which is characteristic of twenty-first-century landmark London montages".[234] These buildings are drawn in sharp contrast to the dilapidated tower block on which the panning shot comes to rest, that Brunsdon may characterise as "local London", but "is more commonly imagined as a dark place where 'the poor' live".[235] Each space is a different architectural formation of the high-

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[234] Brunsdon. (2007). p.23.

[235] Brunsdon. p. 150.

rise or tower block, one representing wealth and success, the other representing the opposite. As the camera tracks, the sprawl of gentrification is evident, the rejuvenated landscape stopping just short of the estate. It becomes clear in later scenes that gentrification is just about to begin on the estate itself, threatening to displace the community who live there — a prospect particularly threatening to the young men at the centre of the narrative: "[d]isplacement, including spatial dislocation, establishes particular risks for marginalized youth in particular, setting in motion multiple stressful transitions including the loss of play and leisure areas; families forced out of an area due to rent increases or evictions; diversion of resources due to increased housing costs that could otherwise be invested in children …; and the diversion of parental engagement".[236] Similar to *Attack*, the young men in *Comedown* seem to be suffering the effects of displacement — namely the absence of any parents or parental figures, the lack of communal space, and a general impoverishment of the residential area. As discussed in Chapter Two, both the Gherkin and the tower block preside watchfully over the buildings and people below, suggesting their potential as panoptic structures, enabling surveillance and control from the highest point of their respective areas. This surveillance gaze trained upon the central group of protagonists compounds the suspicion that the group, in one way or another, are under persecution. Of course, throughout this study, it is evident that the working-class is broadly understood as under persecution within the hoodie horror, however in *Comedown* the persecution is also racialized, with black bodies in particular being socially, physically and emotionally threatened. The urban setting of the council estate further strengthens this impression. As Coleman notes, urban settings in the horror genre "became political shorthand for discussing a myriad of social ills that disproportionately affected Blacks — such as poverty, crime, drug abuse, high unemployment, and welfare abuse".[237] In

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[236] Melissa Butcher and Luke Dickens. 'Spatial Dislocation and Affective Displacement: Youth Perspectives on Gentrification in London'. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. Vol. 40, Issue 4. 2016. pp.801-802.

[237] Coleman (2011). p.145.

Comedown's case, each of these social ills is represented within the single structure of the dilapidated tower block: it is the site of gang activity (equated with crime) which is represented as the only source of income, it is the place where Lloyd and his friends partake in drug use, and it also stands as the shell of the protagonist's childhood home, which he has been displaced from whilst the building awaits gentrification.

Following the scene of his arrest at the opening of the film, the narrative joins Lloyd earlier the same day — he has just been released after a three month stint in prison, for crimes never specified. As the opening has warned, Lloyd is destined to end the narrative facing a far greater sentence for murders he did not commit. Throughout the film, themes of injustice are woven into the *mise-en-scène*, dialogue and plotlines. Throughout *Comedown*, the claustrophobic tight framing of Lloyd's face and body, and the oppressive dilapidation of the film's *mise-en-scène* suggests that Lloyd is the subject of constant surveillance and scrutiny. Not only are the audience encouraged to watch him closely, but signs inform him and the viewer that CCTV is operational in his area, and the scrutiny of his peers is articulated through the use of point of view shots. Whether the surveillance comes from an individual, or from a larger state mechanism fluctuates throughout the narrative. It seems that Lloyd and his friends are constantly visible, and there are frequent reminders within the film that the characters are being watched, not least through the sporadic medium and long shots which suggest an unknown observer is keeping tabs on the group.

In an early scene where Lloyd stops to read the construction boards erected around the tower block, soon to be redeveloped as the luxury apartment building 'Mercy Point', one sign warns CCTV is operational in the area, whilst others warn 'Keep Out' and 'No Admittance'. Ironically, whilst the surveillance culture suggested in these opening scenes is entirely trained on the young black man in the hood, it will become apparent later that the surveillance is watching the wrong people — a cold-

blooded killer walks straight into the site unhindered, and goes about his killing with impunity. The low shot captures both Lloyd in the foreground and the dilapidated block towering further afield. The block is a figure of surveillance and control, gazing down at the estate's residents. Lloyd appears in the foreground of a low-angle shot, which incorporates the block as his backdrop; the looming presence of a surveillance state. The composition of this shot resembles shots in *Attack*, *Tower Block* and *Citadel*, but this image is used most prolifically in those films with black protagonists. The repeated use of lower angle shots against tall structures (buildings, fences, bridges) also functions to make these characters appear small compared to their surroundings, a visual belittlement which portrays each character as seemingly insignificant. Indeed, as the relentless pursuit of profit continues to eat away at their living spaces, it would seem that characters like Lloyd are at the bottom of the chain. It is implicit within *Comedown* that the young black men on the estate are to some extent more trapped, more oppressed and more overwhelmed by their surroundings and the British class structure than any other group in hoodie horror.

Where white antagonists in other films find or construct meaning or satisfaction within their confines, leaving the middle class intruder to struggle, everything about *Attack* and *Comedown* suggests that, for the black male, living on the estate is a constant fight for validation, and, more dramatically, for life itself. Once his home, Lloyd is now rejected from the block. He ceased to belong there when the area was reclaimed by big business and the aspirational middle classes (something we assume has happened whilst he's been in prison). As previously noted, the instability and unreliability of the council estate is exemplified by such an image. As a result of the gentrification happening at Mercy Point, the block is 'condemned' to decay and eventually destruction. Lloyd, too, is condemned — his chances of finding a home shrink with the housing stock, and his criminal record, hood, and skin colour combine to condemn him to prejudice and profiling. Oddly, Huda also chose to place promotional posters for the film itself on the boards, within the melange of graffiti,

flyers and official notices. The image on the poster shows an anonymous hoodie wearer facing the block, which again towers in the background and mimics Lloyd's current position, providing an ominous warning which he either misses or ignores. The poster also boasts that the film is from the director of *Kidulthood*, a well-known and acclaimed film whose content dealt with race and gender in the young working-class communities of East London. Far from being a simple plug for the film or director, the inclusion of the posters shows awareness on the part of Huda in terms of the catalogue he is contributing to, as well as confronting someone who, within the pretence of the film, is real, with a popular fictional representation of themselves. The poster, finally, alludes to the symbiotic relationship between block and body (both condemned) and between cultural representation and actual identity, which results in the self-styled, performative nature of black masculinity both on-screen and off.

Once again, as with *Attack*, and as discussed in the introduction, the hood plays an integral role in the drawing of the protagonist. The framing of Lloyd's face with a hood is again a particularly rich image when examining race in the hoodie horror film. Mimi Thy Nguyen's work on the hood as a racial signifier criticises the adoption of the hood as a mitigating factor in racially motivated attacks on American black men by law enforcement officers, several of which have received widespread media coverage both in the U.S and Britain in recent years. She argues that whilst law enforcement will claim that the hood shields the wearer from any form of prejudiced identification by an officer (as their appearance, including their race, is not visible), the hood actually serves to make race all the more visible and, most dangerously, is used to excuse and legitimise the killing of black men at the hands of the police. The hood has therefore become a rather divisive image when paired with the black body. As Nguyen observes, the hoodie's meaning is dependent upon the other signifiers within the image; it can alter "depending on its closeness to other signs and their properties".[238]

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[238] Nguyen. (2015). p. 797.

In *Comedown*, dressing Lloyd, a young black man, in a hood and placing him on a council estate brings together connotations of police discrimination, culturally and politically sponsored images of youth delinquency and the commodification of race and class (ie. by removing the reality and humanity from images of the hoodie, the idea of him can now be exploited to sell newspapers, films, security systems and political agendas). In this way, the poster that Huda chooses to feature capitalises on this demonised class image, only to subvert its meaning within the film. One would assume from the poster alone that the figure pictured would be the narrative's antagonist — a reasonable assumption given that over half of hoodie horror narratives use such characterisations. Lloyd's later characterisation as hero questions the audience's acceptance of such images and challenges the manipulation of images for the purpose of legitimising prejudiced behaviours.

Figure 4: 'A wanderer above the sea of fog'. Poster art for the film, seen on construction boards in early scenes

Interestingly, the film's actual antagonist, Ray, also wears a hood. His is markedly different from the hoods seen elsewhere in the film. Whilst Lloyd and his friends dress in colourful cotton sportswear, killer Ray wears a knee length leather coat with a hood. Simultaneously reminiscent of a butcher's apron and a Victorian cape, it is only by reverting to a more traditionally Gothic image of the hood that Huda is able to sustain the conflict between 'good' and 'bad' hoodie. One must invoke the spectre of Sweeney Todd or Jack the Ripper to challenge the antagonistic reputation of the hoodie. Ray's hood is made of a darker, tougher material, and the garment hides far more of his body, including his face. Furthermore, the use of leather has its own rich meaning within the horror genre, recalling the uses of human skin to make garments (see Leatherface or Buffalo Bill for examples) and the popularity of the material in clothing antagonists from the cenobites of *Hellraiser* (Barker, 1987) to the vampires of *Underworld* (Wiseman, 2003). Ray's leather jacket also echoes the moral panic brought on by the youth of his own generation — he is much older than his victims, and would have been around their age during the punk movement, where the prolific use of leather was used and vilified in much the same way that the hoodie is currently. Lastly, choosing to dress Ray in leather, a material derived from skin, strengthens the reading of the film as about race and racial conflict. In the end, it is not the clothing which presents either character with advantage or protection, but rather the skin beneath.

According to Malcolm Barnard, fashion and clothing constitute a form of non-verbal communication, and it is this communication that "'first' makes them into members of a cultural group".[239] Where the clothing worn by the boys communicates a similar cultural experience, therefore indicating their belonging to a group, Ray's leather hood marks him as singular and isolates him from the dominant social group

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[239] Barnard. (2002). p.31.

of the narrative. That both Lloyd and his adversary are clothed in hoods also transmits a non-verbal communication to us as an audience. In terms of their place in the social order, both Ray and Lloyd occupy a similar, lower class position, and the hood is a common signifier for this social position in contemporary British society. Lloyd arguably wields his hoodie as an "ideological weapon",[240] challenging the dominance of the white, middle class with a garment that is steeped in countercultural history. As previously noted, hooded sportswear has its roots in the American working-classes, and has been re-appropriated by skater culture, graffiti artists and, of particular relevance here, hip hop culture, which moved to challenge white dominance through its art, music and fashion. As Barnard notes, fashion and clothing can be understood "as a form of struggle, or even warfare, in which groups fight for domination and supremacy".[241] Lloyd's hood is therefore laden with political meaning, and this both liberates and restricts him — in adopting the hood as an ideological weapon, he challenges the system that persecutes him. However, the hood also makes him a target for the very same system. Later in the narrative, its removal paradoxically saves his life — he uses it to cover his face and prevent smoke inhalation — whilst also leaving him more vulnerable, both to Ray's violence and police prejudice.

This could be why Lloyd rarely removes his hood. Throughout his entire walk around the estate, including a confrontation with rival gang, the 554, and a reunion with his friends, his hood remains up. The first time we see him take it down is when he reunites with his pregnant girlfriend, Jemma, and from thereon out, we understand Lloyd's removal of the hood is a sign of vulnerability. In this case, he is willingly vulnerable, and the removal of the hood suggests a sense of safety and security which is lacking elsewhere. The scene in which he is reunited with his friends (hood up) is juxtaposed with scenes of a tender reunion with Jemma (hood down)— the

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[240] Barnard. p.44.

[241] Barnard. p.41.

former is desaturated, staged at the end of a dead end road, with the deeply unlikeable Jason causing a tense atmosphere — no wonder Lloyd's hood stays up. The latter scene with Jemma, in contrast, is brightly lit, staged inside a comfortable-looking home, with several medium close ups of the two smiling and holding each other. Jemma is hereby associated with peace and security, where Lloyd's friends represent the complete opposite.

The boys turn up following Lloyd's altercation with two gang members, one of whom pulls a knife on Lloyd. Yet again, this act of violence echoes Blair's vilification of a "gang culture that is killing innocent young black kids"[242] The knife is pulled from Lloyd's point of view, the audience placed in his precarious position, staring down not only the immediate threat of the knife, but the ongoing threat of being placed within a narrative of violence, dictated by perceptions of race. The point of view shot then swaps to the knife-wielder, placing the audience in the opposite position, as Lloyd looks straight down the camera and says; "So you got a knife. You gonna use it?". The camera facilitates this change of perspective, inviting the audience to experience this confrontation from both sides, a choice which appears to challenge binary ideas of 'good' and 'evil' by humanising both Lloyd and the boy with the knife, who does not use his weapon, and moreover seems apprehensive to do so. Upon the arrival of Jason, Gal and Col, Lloyd's friends, the two gang members are chased off, yet the atmosphere does not improve, its initial hostility and intensity upheld by the violent language and behaviour used by Gal and Jason. In opposition to their characterisation, this exchange paints Lloyd as an essentially non-violent character, who along with gentle giant Col demonstrates a considerate and respectful nature that is rare not only within the film's narrative, but is anomalous in comparison with the cycle's other offerings. The group is racially diverse, but it is worth observing that the two most sympathetic characters — Lloyd and Col — are both black, and both wear

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242 Blair in Roberts. (2015).

clothing which enables them to cover their heads. Lloyd has his hood, and Col wears a woolly black hat that he doesn't remove until, like Lloyd, his life depends on it.

Another narrative device which emphasises Lloyd's comparable virtue is his disinterest in the drug culture that his friends are embroiled in. When asked to place a receiver for the local pirate radio station at the top of Mercy Point, Lloyd wants cash, not drugs, as payment. Throughout the first third of the film, Lloyd declines Jason's offers of drugs, and sits awkwardly on the periphery of the drug fuelled party that ensues once the receiver is successfully placed. Both Lloyd and Col also show a respect for Jemma and Kel, the latter of whom is frequently called a "slag" by Gal and Jason, and this combined with the aforementioned virtues leads to the two becoming the moral centre of the film, despite Lloyd's criminal record. Jason's displays of hostility seem to be motivated by a jealousy of Lloyd, and a disappointment in his reformed behaviour on release from prison. It seems that Lloyd's time in prison has cultivated a maturity that we do not see in any of the other boys. Furthermore, imminent fatherhood has given Lloyd a heightened sense of responsibility. Whilst his contemporaries live an extremely insular life which seems to revolve around personal gratification and narcissistic posturing, Lloyd has an awareness of a bigger picture, one in which he must consider others above himself. It is this heightened awareness which leads him to notice something is amiss, whilst his friends' restricted perspectives fail to recognise the danger the group are in until it is too late.

The tension set up during Lloyd's initial reunion with his friends never dissipates, and reaches fever pitch when the group reach the top of the tower and Jemma goes missing. The tower, once their home, is now derelict. However, being there seems to bring back memories of simpler times (Lloyd and Jemma's names are still written inside a heart on the elevator wall). For Jason in particular, returning to the tower with Lloyd, who from his perspective is now trapped in a relationship with Jemma, seems to magnify his brand of hateful, destructive masculinity. Lloyd has

moved on from the block, Jason has not (and will not). The block operates along the lines of Clover's 'Terrible House',[243] which "may at first seem a safe haven, but the same walls that promise to keep the killer out quickly become, once the killer penetrates them, the walls that hold the victim in".[244] Whilst the block has historically provided security and stability, as it has been reclaimed by gentrification, it has become a threatening space, not just in terms of Lloyd's 'affective displacement', but also in terms of his corporeal existence. As the group indulge in recreational drugs, Lloyd's suspicion that something has happened to Jemma is treated as a paranoid delusion, and as the rooms spin and distort, the drug-fuelled perception of the block makes it seem all the more monstrous. This will not be the last time that Lloyd's attempt to uncover the truth will be hindered by the block, or by the prejudice or assumptions of others — he will encounter the same treatment as an unreliable (or untrustworthy) witness, later to be discussed in Chapter Four, resulting in an unquestioning dismissal of his story, by the police at the film's conclusion.

Lloyd finally convinces the group that they are not alone in the block. The radio receiver is destroyed, and the 554's tag is left on a door. The rival gang from earlier in the day are taking their revenge, and although Lloyd is not sure that they are responsible for Jemma's absence, Jason is ready to take on his rivals. The somewhat clichéd narrative of gang rivalry plays right into the brand of masculinity that Jason represents — angry, disenfranchised and powerless, he has been trained, through expectation and experience, to believe that violent confrontation is necessary to gain and retain a position of power within the fragile microcosm of the estate. However, despite buying into the gang warfare narrative wholeheartedly and encouraging the others to arm themselves, he forces Col out into the corridor ahead of him, using his black body as a shield. Despite Jason's violent threats and posturing, he is not willing

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[243] See Walker (2015) for further discussion of the 'Terrible House' in hoodie horror, specifically the role of the school in Johannes Roberts' *F*.

[244] Clover. (1992). p.31.

to lead the charge on his much hated adversaries, and this makes his talk seem disingenuous, and weakens his claim to the alpha male status he clearly craves. When Col challenges Jason, once again Jason's default response is to threaten violence. Over his shoulder, Lloyd gently shakes his head at Col, warning him, and with this gesture Col apologises and backs down. To Jason, it appears that his iron-fisted approach has successfully elicited Col's apology — however, Lloyd has Col's respect, and it is this respect that prevented the escalation of Jason's threats. When they find the 554, one of them is missing too, and the other is soon dispatched, taking a knife to the throat in front of Lloyd and his friends. Jason's first instinct is to run, pushing his way through his friends and leaving them behind, again exposing the fraudulent nature of his alpha male performance.

Jason's egotism prevents him from realising that his violent posturing is not protecting him until it is too late — he is the first of the group to fall victim to Ray. Leaving alone when Col refuses to take orders from him, Jason deliberately antagonises his unknown attacker: "these are my flats… What you sayin' then, fam". Tellingly, Jason's weapon is a hammer, a choice suggestive of his lack of restraint and subtlety, and which, as a tool, is limited in its usefulness and range. Ray, on the other hand, is armed with a nail gun which can be fired from his place in the shadows, far out of reach of the hammer. In a reversal of typical roles, nail beats hammer, and violent hypermasculinity falls at the hands of quiet, focused brutality. When Jason is attacked, he takes a nail to the eye. Only then, it seems, does Jason recognise the precarious situation his hubris has lead him into. Upon losing his sight, he finally sees the inefficacy of his masculinity just moments before his death. Meanwhile, Lloyd proves himself an effective leader, uniting his terrified friends in order to find Jemma and successfully escape the block. Where those who were performing violent masculine types at the narrative's outset (the member of the 554's and Jason) are the first to perish, Lloyd's level-headed, non-violent masculinity warrants the trust and respect of his peers — he is perceived as their best chance of survival. Lloyd and his

surviving friends head to the elevator — a space which has become a centrepiece in tower-set hoodie horrors — and as the doors roll back, Lloyd is at the front of the shot, ready to lead, and ready to encounter whatever may be waiting. This scene puts Lloyd's bravery and sacrifice in direct opposition with Jason's previous selfish and cowardly behaviour, and from hereon in, Lloyd is firmly placed in the role of 'hero', not dissimilar to Ben in *NOTLD*; he remains pragmatic, and often exposes the illogical behaviour of other, usually white, characters. Similarly, when people refuse to listen to Lloyd, or become separated from him, they meet their end. However, for Lloyd, the battle against Ray only truly begins in the final act of the film. Until he reaches Ray's hidden base at the top of the block, Lloyd's battle is with the block itself, its locked staircases and blocked elevators making escape impossible. The metaphorical equivalence between Lloyd's determination to free himself of his past life and his determination to get out of the block in which he spent his childhood is heavy-handed, but demonstrates an understanding of the entrapment the estate facilitates. In the final battle, the block catches fire, and Ray's lair burns as Lloyd and Col attempt to get Jemma out safely. Col, who throughout has represented kindness and generosity, sacrifices himself to allow Lloyd to escape with Jemma.

Unfortunately, as with Ben, Lloyd's narrative does not have a happy ending. According to slasher conventions, which the film predominantly adheres to, very few men *do* survive the run time, instead they provide the expendable bodies for showcasing myriad inventive death scenes, their bodies tortured, mutilated and pulled apart time and again. As Hutchings articulates, much of horror relies upon "a persistent terrorisation of the male",[245] and this terrorisation almost always ends in death. As previously discussed, Ben is exceptional in horror history not only as a black male hero, but as a male who survives the persistent terrorisation of the living dead hordes. However, and this is where the parallel between he and Lloyd is most

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[245] Hutchings. (1993). p.89.

apparent, his survival only leads to punishment at the hands of law enforcement — the very entity supposed to protect is the one which provides the final, insurmountable obstacle for both Ben and Lloyd. The death of Ben and the incarceration of Lloyd both facilitate an inversion of the supposed role of law enforcement, creating a moral juxtaposition between the black male hero and the policemen who punish that heroism. Lloyd's cycle of punishment is complete as he emerges from the block, carrying a badly injured Jemma, and is taken straight into police custody. With Jemma suffering memory loss and all other witnesses to Ray's murderous rampage dead, there is no one to assuage the police's suspicions that the armed black man is their prime suspect. Once more, we observe Lloyd, defeated, trapped in the back of the police car. Witnessing the ordeal that precedes his incarceration has changed the way we perceive this image — we have gone from a position of judgement and suspicion (aligning us with the police) to a position of sympathy, and perhaps even outrage that this should be the outcome.

The concluding scenes consist of shots of Mercy Point, a burnt out shell, overlaid with audio from news coverage of the killings and subsequent investigation. We learn that police have been unable to find Ray, and that despite a stunning lack of evidence, police have deemed Lloyd their prime suspect. Cue shot of Jemma giving birth, intercut with Lloyd struggling against prison guards and proclaiming his innocence. His life has gone on, without him in it. As the camera captures Jemma and the child through the glass pane of the hospital door, Ray moves into shot, recognisable by the fingers he is missing following his fight with Lloyd. With Lloyd out of reach in prison, the sins of the father are now apparently to be visited on his new-born child. The final shot of the film returns to Lloyd in medium close up, a strip of light and grey walls visible behind him. His grey tracksuit matches the walls, suggesting the all-consuming weight of his incarceration. The anonymity that may have once been necessary on the estate is now forced upon him permanently. His individuality and his future have been stripped of him — this is his reward for survival. In the final seconds

of the shot, Lloyd raises his eyes to look directly down the camera, leaving the audience with an uncomfortable sense of culpability. By challenging the narrative of violence and territorialism which now-deceased characters had fully invested in, Lloyd has detached himself from prescribed ideas of class and race. Yet, whilst the others may never leave the block again, Lloyd is arguably punished to a far greater extent for making it out — forced to live in stasis, deprived of his future with Jemma and their child. We see him punished for aspiring to more than drugs and violence, for trying to reform after his previous jail time and learn from his mistakes. Lloyd's narrative exemplifies a British cinematic trend regarding the representation of the underclass, identified by Thomas Halper, in which "[w]e know the characters, and see how an environment they did not create has conspired against them to brutalize their view of humanity and rob them of conventional, law abiding life choices".[246] Whilst Lloyd's choices have not always been exemplary, his plight is seen as the result of a far broader, systemic oppression. His last glance to the camera suggests that he understands this — his face fits, making him an easy conviction for a messy crime which is above the limited abilities of the police force.

Attack the Block is set on a London council estate and concerns a group of working-class teenagers trying to stave off an alien attack. The tag line's use of the term 'inner city' is itself loaded with meaning — the urban landscape of 'inner city' estates is racially coded as a predominantly black, working-class space. In horror alone, *Predator 2* (Hopkins, 1990), *Candyman* and *The People Under the Stairs* (Craven, 1991) represent estates, 'hoods and ghettos as the locus of black criminality. *Attack the Block*'s beginning does little to challenge this precedent. The film opens with a young white woman (Sam) leaving a tube station on Bonfire Night. As she walks, she passes a neat line of market stalls, populated almost entirely by white people, followed by a row of well-maintained terrace houses. Young white children run

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[246] Thomas Halper. 'Trainspotters and bullet boys: Race and class in British underclass movies, 1980- the present'. *City, Culture and Society*. Vol. 5, Issue 4. 2014. p.16.

past, playing with sparklers as their parents watch from a short distance away. This idyllic space is the sort we have come to expect from the gentrified suburban London of Richard Curtis' beloved rom-coms, and it is entirely without a black population. As previously noted, the horror genre is equally guilty of coding the suburban as white; neither the suburbia represented by Haddonfield (*Halloween*) nor by Elm Street (*A Nightmare on Elm Street*) are notable for their diversity. As Sam crosses into the peripheries of the estate, however, the atmosphere abruptly changes. The well-lit pavements and sounds of children's laughter are supplanted by roads cloaked in shadow, walls covered in graffiti and the faint sound of a gang calling to each other. The gang appear as shadows, thrown against the wall upon which they've spray-painted their tags. The identities of these shadows is inextricably linked to the gang culture and delinquency which tagging is so often a signifier of. The use of shadow to signal the approaching threat is reminiscent of canonical horror texts, *Nosferatu* (Murnau, 1922) being a particularly iconic example of equating shadow with the monstrous and with blackness. As Toni Morrison notes: "black or colored people and symbolic figurations of blackness [eg. the shadow] are markers for the benevolent and the wicked",[247] and in horror, above all else, blackness is equated with the wicked. The darkness and shadow in *Attack* gradually escalate the perceived threat, moving from a space of relative safety to one which, whilst obviously familiar to Sam, is recognisably more dangerous to her. Moments later, clad in several layers of sportswear, the gang surround Sam. With only their eyes and foreheads visible, it is difficult to ascertain the age of the boys, or much about their appearances generally, other than the colour of their skin.

Initially the scene is suggestive of an imminent sexual assault, offering the opportunity to expose and exploit hidden prejudices within the audience and also within the film medium, which has repeatedly cast the black man as sexual predator

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[247] Toni Morrison. *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination.* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992). p. ix.

since the release of *The Birth of A Nation* in 1915. Character Gus is an early example of the 'Black Buck' stereotype — "a brutal, animalistic, and hyper-masculine African American man who threatened the white establishment because of his alleged sexual prowess".[248] The stereotype was used to such great effect that the Klan used the film to recruit new members, and is credited with (or accused of) galvanising the re-founding of the Klan in the 20th century.[249] Whilst these initial fears are not realised, the gang do violently force their victim to hand over her possessions. All but one of the gang members are black, and their ringleader, Moses, is brandishing a knife, not a sparkler. Forcing Sam to the ground when she struggles to take off her ring, Moses growls: "You'll get mirked, innit", slang language which is both classed and racialized, and places the boys within black, working-class culture. These boys stand in direct opposition to their white middle class contemporaries playing just beyond the edge of the estate. Here, there are no parents watching on, and the childlike joy of a sparkler has been replaced by the adrenaline rush of petty crime. Sam ends up on the floor, looking up at her attackers. A low, point of view angle shows the boys towering above her, and another angle from behind the gang shows Sam looking up at them, frightened and trapped. There is a notable shift in the camera's position as the aliens arrive mid-robbery, the boys becoming the subject of high angle shots as the dynamic of power shifts.

The robbery takes up a minute proportion of the film's screen time, and yet the scene is crucial to the film's attempted dismantling of the black, working-class stereotype. By initially offering an audience the characterisation they expect, it gives each character the scope to defy the rhetoric they are regularly victims of. This kind of attack could well be, in another narrative, the culmination of the sense of rising threat we felt upon entering the estate. However, with *Attack the Block*, the threat escalates

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[248] Benshoff & Griffin. (2009). p. 93.

[249] Hannah McGill. 'Boys in the Hoods'. *Sight and Sound*. Vol. 23, Issue 7. 2013. p.8.

further still as an object races past the scene of the robbery and collides with a nearby car, giving Sam a chance to escape and diverting the gang's attention. When Moses' friends express concern at Sam's escape, Moses, his face revealed for the first time in close-up, responds: "allow it". This shot cements his position as the alpha figure of the group, but also leaves his face exposed and vulnerable to both the audience's potential judgement and to violence. Upon investigating the ruined car, Moses is attacked by the unknown entity that fell from the sky, leaving him with three deep scratches on the side of his face. Using his knife in defence saves his life against the white creature, which flees wounded into the estate's playground. His use of the weapon in this instance is unsure and desperate; unlike the calm, measured way he used it to threaten Sam just moments earlier. Following the creature to the playground, the boys are out for blood. Setting this pivotal scene in a playground reiterates the youth of the gang, now fully visible, and proposes that the culture of violence starts young on the estate. This is where children play, and it is also the site where the boys will make their kill. The confusion between play and violence continues as a theme throughout the narrative, but is underscored here by the presence of a wooden fort, used for children to play at war. This is the site where the boys make the kill — using firecrackers to disorient the creature before Moses charges in to deal the final blow. He carries the alien out mounted on a makeshift spear as the boys cheer and call. This image, paired with the fort, alludes to a medieval, barbaric understanding of territory, power and hierarchy which is still in place within the gang culture on the estate.

What comes next poses an inordinately bigger problem for the estate than the gang's criminal activity does. As Sam flees, she encounters an elderly resident of the estate, who offers to take care of her until police arrive. During their conversation, the gang are referred to as 'fucking monsters'; first by the elderly woman, with Sam echoing the sentiment shortly after, marking an equivalence between the boys and monstrosity within the first ten minutes of the film. Not only does this tap into the kind

of rhetoric used by the press to refer to the young working-class, but it also recalls the troubling tradition within horror of the monster serving as allegory for violent, monstrous black masculinity. Coleman cites *Creature from the Black Lagoon* and *Predator 2* amongst others, as key examples of this trope. When the aliens land, what is truly monstrous may be redefined, but the racial undertones of monstrosity are still present in the gang's description of the alien's appearance. The aliens are described as "too black to see" and as being "the blackest black ever." The links between the gang and their alien enemies are further emphasised in mirroring images throughout the film. The boys are, on several occasions, viewed through peepholes, restricting the space they occupy to a minimum. Later, the aliens are seen in a comparable peephole shot as they chase the gang through the block. The resemblances between the gang and the monsters are reminiscent of the comparison Coleman makes between the Predator and the Jamaican gang in *Predator 2*, describing them as "mirror images of each other".[250] The troubling implicit message within the mirroring of the black male in the monster goes back to Coleman's concern with 'Blacks in horror' films and their "proximity to interpretations of what of what is horrifying and where it is embodied".[251]

The framing of shots often restricts the characters, fragmenting their bodies, and requiring them to occupy spaces too small for them to fit comfortably. These scenes offer a visual representation of the restricting power of labelling something as 'other' — many doors are literally and figuratively shut in the boys' faces, and the tight framing encourages a scrutiny of the boys and the aliens which neither can move away from. Fragmenting the boys' bodies, so that often only their heads and shoulders are visible provides an uncomfortable comment on the devaluing of the body based on race and class — the camera often focuses on the area of the body

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[250] Coleman. (2011) p.187.

[251] Coleman. p. 6.

that is most exposed to stigmatisation: the face. The framing also places the boys and the aliens in small spaces where their movements are restricted, suggesting a limited opportunity for growth or development. The lack of viable options regarding education and employment are made clear in Moses' unquestioning involvement with the estate's only industry — drugs — and in the way that two children, who have nicknamed themselves 'Probs' and 'Mayhem' in a bid to impress, idolise Moses and his gang and beg to be involved in their petty criminality. These limitations are directly equated with the landscape of the estate, which seems littered with restrictive spaces — stairwells, elevators, doorways and narrow walkways. In a symbolic scene, gang member Biggz leaps from one walkway to another to escape the aliens, a stunt he attempted, but pulled out of, earlier in the film. A small transcendence of the enforced pathways, literal and figurative, that the landscape dictates, but one which seems to articulate the realised potential of the boys as a result of the invasion. On the contrary, in the alien's case, the bizarre landscape of the estate becomes an increasingly oppressive, and eventually fatal, one. The pressure of the small space forces them to become individualistic (a temptation which the boys resist) — to leave the space they must fight against their peers, push their way out, perhaps at the expense of others (see below). Moreover, their pursuit of the gang driven by instinct seems to render them totally oblivious to the danger the surroundings pose. Both the boys and the aliens are programmed to exist in certain ways, and to an extent are driven by the need to achieve the primal masculine ideals of their prospective value systems. However, the boys eventually triumph due to their capacity for change, something that the aliens do not possess. Through sheer determination to survive and protect their home, the boys harness their strengths to defeat the invaders, and in the process they also change the course of their predetermined narratives, in which they were characterised as monster.

As previously mentioned, at the opening of the film, the gang are perceived as a monstrous, faceless mass (akin to their compatriots in both *F* and *Heartless*). Once

the aliens land and are perceived in a similar way, as a hoard devoid of individual appearance or personality, the boys seize the opportunity to defy their initial characterisation. Only when superseded by a greater, more inhuman threat, can the boys of the gang transcend their initial performance as young, black delinquents and become characters that the audience can root for and sympathise with. The monsters are violent and relentless, their skin or fur absorbs light, creating the illusion that they are absence rather than being. The monsters are incredibly well designed to reflect the themes of absence and isolation which characterise the young hoodies, and in particular Moses. Whilst deeply respected by his friends, Moses leads an incredibly lonely existence, the extent of which is not realised until the final scenes of the film. Small clues throughout suggest that Moses is a self-made man and his capacity for leadership is suggested in the biblical context of his name. Dick Hebdige, in articulating the religious response to slavery by slaves, notes the resonance of the story of Moses, in particular within the Jamaican community: "The story of Moses leading the suffering Israelites out of captivity was immediately applicable and won a permanent place in the mythology of the Jamaican black".[252] This is reflected, albeit weakly, in Moses characterisation; as with his namesake, he has a clear view of the oppression he and his friends are subject to (hence his speech, featured at the beginning of the chapter) and he is the one who has the vision to deliver his friends and neighbours from danger. He has little in the way of parental guidance, and with only the poorest of male role models in the form of his employer, narcissist Hi-Hatz, and so Moses' heroism is perceived as completely of his own making, or perhaps, depending on how far one takes the biblical reference, is the sign of divine intervention.

In the scene where the gang are arming themselves to confront the aliens, we see a little of every boy's home life as they dash in and out of their flats, dodging

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[252] Dick Hebdige. 'Reggae, Rastas and Rudies'. Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson (eds.). *Resistance Through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain*. (London: Routledge, 2006). p.115.

parents' questions. We see Biggz evade his mother's requests to stay in, as she busies herself in the kitchen, and Pest has a brief conversation with his Nana about his 'limp', which is actually a charade to disguise the baseball bat he has hidden down his trouser leg. Jerome has a brief argument with his sister, and Dennis is instructed to take the dog out by the off-screen voice of his father. All of the flats have warmth, colour and life, which the corridors and outside spaces completely lack, and whilst this is the only occasion that the boys' parental figures are present, it provides an audience with relatable family dynamics which humanise the boys. However, when we reach Moses' flat the camera does not follow him in, instead lingering in the corridor as the door swings shut. This shot suggests that Moses' home life does not resemble his friends', and where the other homes have been open to us (suggesting openness on the part of the residents), Moses remains shut off, and apart from the conventional relationships we see elsewhere. Once again, the narrative trajectory of the young working-class black man ends in incarceration. As Moses is walked from the block, his home, he is dwarfed by the towering structure behind him and the crowds of residents cheering his name. This simultaneously makes both Moses and his heroism seem inferior to the state structures represented by the police, as the inevitability of his arrest cannot be derailed; not by his frugal support network, nor by public support. Moses exemplifies Frantz Fanon's struggle against the pre-existing meaning of blackness, which dictates opportunity and external understanding: "[a]nd so it is not I who make a meaning for myself, but it is the meaning that was already there, pre-existing, waiting for me".[253]

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[253] Frantz Fanon. *Black Skin, White Masks*. (London: Pluto Press, 2008). p.102.

Rian and Asad: Home Invaders

The final black narrative to be explored in this chapter foregrounds a character equally trapped by pre-existing identity, but in a very different way to his counterparts. Unlike *Attack the Block* and *Comedown*, *Cherry Tree Lane*'s narrative revolves around resoundingly antagonistic and far more problematic representations of young, black men. Rian is a character who, far from attempting to change or transcend the prevailing narrative of poverty and crime that oppresses him, embraces and exemplifies Starkey's moral panic regarding the black male culture of violence. As discussed in the introduction, Starkey blamed the 2011 riots on a working-class white culture that had "become black",[254] thereby suggesting that the theft, violence and general disrespect on display during the riots was a black characteristic. Rian is the young black male that Starkey's deeply problematic assertion conjures; he is violent, full of rage, and has a code of honour which it is imperative to uphold, but shows little understanding of the concepts of morality or humanity. In effect, Rian subverts the 'us versus them' rhetoric that Starkey proposed, by regarding his white victims, regardless of their identity or involvement in events preceding his attack, as integral to the problems he experiences, by virtue of them being white and middle class.

The film stands apart from the aforementioned council estate-set hoodie horror of *Comedown* and *Attack*, and thereby forgoes the current 'shorthand' iconography of that landscape. It also stands separate from the other urban and rural spaces utilised in hoodie horror, by finding the suburban middle class home the site of horror. As a home invasion narrative, its entire running time is set within a suburban home, owned by a white, middle class couple. The film opens in a kitchen; a pot of vegetables has

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254 Starkey. (2011).

been left unattended and is close to boiling over on the hob.[255] This image is just the beginning of a prolonged, and not subtle, criticism of the oblivious and uncaring couple who occupy the house, Mike and Christine, and their self-involved, hands-off approach to parenting, the results of which will be far more punishing than they could ever imagine. The home is full of artificial light, and decorated with a sterile white and light blue colour palette; there is a distinct lack of personality or presence to the décor, as Walker notes: "[t]hat middle-class existence is symbolised mostly by the couple's material possessions in turn — and expectedly — exemplifies what they truly lack: namely, solid familial bonds".[256] The coolness of the décor mirrors the relationship of Mike and Christine, sitting for dinner at a small table, with the television chattering in the background. Their conversation is strained, and is punctuated by pauses in which we hear news coverage of a memorial event to mark the 7/7 London bombings. Mike and Christine continue to bicker over the sound of the television — their petty jealousies brought into sharp contrast with the news coverage.

When the doorbell rings, Christine moves to answer it, whilst the camera stays with Mike. Having been asked to switch the news off, he immediately switches it back on when Christine leaves, revealing a childlike insistence on having his own way. We can hear the conversation at the door — a friend of their son. The conversation turns to their son, Sebastian, and Mike makes reference to his "druggy mates", angering Christine who becomes very defensive of her son before the conversation briskly returns to the tension surrounding Christine's suspected infidelity. The whole scene is engineered to create thoroughly unlikeable, self-centred characters, but characters who the filmmaker seems to assume the audience are more likely to root for than the young black men who are about to impose themselves upon this overwhelmingly

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[255] Walker. (2015). Regards the décor and image of the pan as metaphor in his work: "The metaphor is clear: the threat of broken Britain is bubbling beneath the surface of normalcy, … to be fully realised when the hoodies eventually arrive, and middle-class complacency shatters". p. 103.

[256] Walker. p.103.

white, middle class space. Once again, an explicit connection is made between Rian, his gang and the drug market, compounding the problematic assumptions made in all three narratives regarding the prevalence of drugs in the young, black working-class space. However, the representation here is particularly pernicious, as it is represented as a family affair which has transcended the boundaries of the usual urban signifying space. Rian is there in place of his cousin, a dealer who has been incarcerated following a statement from Sebastian, and throughout the narrative he makes allusion to both drug dealing and use within his immediate family.

Rian's arrival represents a reckoning for the couple. They will be forced to acknowledge the world outside of their marital turmoil, and face their failure as parents. Christine answers the door to him and his friends whilst the camera stays on Mike, watching the television over his dinner. The news has now moved onto coverage of a murder trial — yet another red flag which Mike misses. This time we cannot hear the conversation at the door clearly, only a crash and a whimper moments before three young men charge into the living room and knock Mike to the floor. That Rian represents a particularly violent brand of masculinity is immediately recognised, and his presence is synonymous with the arrival of violence and destruction. There is no situation in which the audience is allowed to perceive Rian without the spectre of violence looming over him. On the television, the news is now talking about a clampdown on drug production in Hampstead. The stories have steadily moved closer and closer to home for the couple, providing several missed warnings, and now they are to become the news story. The sanctity of their privately owned, meticulously decorated home is defiled by the presence of the gang — represented by Mike bleeding profusely onto the white rug. The literal bleeding of a darker colour into something so white operates as a visual metaphor for the intrusion

of Rian and his violence into a white, middle class home where only emotional warfare is the norm.[257]

The gang comprises of three young, working-class 'hoodies', two black men and one white, and yet they are not defined by the hoodie garment as elsewhere. Walker observes: "Rather than relying simply on connotative iconography… *Cherry Tree Lane* instead home[s] in on the personalities of said 'feral youth' and more overtly consider the social backgrounds that shaped them".[258] Rian is swiftly established as the alpha male of the group. Sebastian has reported Rian's cousin to the police for dealing drugs, and he is looking to avenge his cousin's incarceration. The suggestion that Sebastian's involvement with drugs is the responsibility of a black dealer reflects fears "that indigenous white British youth had become 'infected' with the corrupting alien values of black migrants, an imported 'black culture' which was antithetical to Britishness"[259] which Imogen Tyler identifies a year after the film's release, amplified with the response to the 2011 riots. This attitude, this film suggests, was clearly bubbling away prior to the outburst of violence in August 2011. Just as the pot boiling over allegorised Mike and Christine's loss of control, the film's overall interaction with race, class and privilege seems to allegorise, or rather foreshadow, the rude awakening of politicians and press in the wake of the riots. As with Hi-Hatz, Moses and Lloyd, Rian, as a black working-class man, is narratively synonymous with the supply and consumption of drugs. His violence and malevolence once inside the home could be attributed to a search for control and meaning, referred to as 'edgework'.[260] Richard Bourne suggests that the marginalisation of men such as Rian

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[257] Walker observes a similar cultural disconnect or tension between working-class and middle class in his study of *Cherry Tree Lane*. (2015). p.102-4.

[258] Walker. (2015). p.94.

[259] Tyler. (2013). p.188.

[260] Richard Bourne. 'Vertigo in the City : Urban Crime, Consumerism and the Theopolitical Act'. *International Journal of Public Theology*. Vol 10. 2016. pp. 169.

can be a forerunner to the indulgence in extreme and criminal acts in order to create opportunities for control: "[t]he prevalence of anomie, frustration, exclusion and alienation generates both expressive crime and erotic acts of transgression. This erotics includes, for example, an exaggerated performance of masculinity which itself seals the offender into low-paid and insecure employment".[261] Although presented in a less literal fashion than *Comedown*, Rian struggles within the exact same cycle of oppression, violence and incarceration as Lloyd. Despite his removal from the estate, his paradoxical disempowerment through his search for power plays out in sharp relief to his surroundings, and perhaps makes his plight all the more visible.

Incarceration is also a prevalent concern for Rian, and unlike many of his white hoodie horror counterparts, whose consideration of consequences often comes after the fact if at all, Rian is well aware of the stakes before he carries out his violence. However, the threat of incarceration, and its impact on the families left behind, does not inspire heroism in Rian as with Lloyd or Moses, but encourages the opposite. Rather, Rian reacts to the spectre of incarceration with extreme violence, and this violence is all the more despicable, it is suggested, for it being visited upon a white, middle class family. Whilst Asad and Teddy, his two henchmen, roam the house and help themselves to the food, toiletries and technology available, Rian stays in one place. Sat on the sofa, looking down upon Mike, with a possessive arm around Christine, his position suggests power, authority and control. Rian's behaviour suggests a primal understanding of power — he positions himself higher than his challenger, and claims Christine for his own.

Asad operates in juxtaposition to Rian. As the only other black member of the cast, his brand of masculinity offers an alternative to the hate-filled, violent masculinity Rian offers. Asad is a far more sympathetic character, his behaviour more typically adolescent — at one point we see him phone his mother to ask if she could record a

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[261] Bourne. p.168.

TV show for him. At several moments throughout the film, Asad's value system is clearly and directly tied to the idea of family. As he scours the DVD collection, he turns the family photos around so they cannot bear witness to his actions. This gesture suggests that the images offer Asad an uncomfortable reminder about the gravity of his actions. The images of family clearly unsettle him, perhaps revealing common ground between him and his victims (the value of family) or perhaps reminding him of his own family, who may or may not match up to the idyllic images represented in these photographs. Later on, when Asad realises Rian is about to rape Christine, his guilt and regret manifest in a show of compassion towards Mike. Asad speaks to Mike anecdotally, and we realise yet again that he is motivated by his love of family, and his experiences of their betrayal; "Listen, don't think of me like what he's doing to her in that room, yeah? I ain't like that… I've got a girlfriend. I don't cheat. My dad done that to my mum" [sic].

The relationship with mothers or mother figures is in particular of great importance to the characterisation of both Rian and Asad. Asad, as a more well-adjusted individual, seems to have a strong relationship with his mother, and moreover seems to care about the impression Christine has of him too. After being teased by Teddy about his inability to read, Asad seems keen to make sure that Christine, specifically, knows that he can read. Rian, on the other hand, only mentions his mother once, comparing her with Christine: "My mum's younger than you. Thirty five. But she looks older." When Asad retorts "yeah, cos she's a crackhead", Rian abruptly stops and does not refer to her again, clearly embarrassed. In lieu of a maternal role model, we assume that the cousin he is so keen to avenge has been a major influence during his formative years, and yet may also have provided Rian's mother with her greatest vice, once again alluding to a self-perpetuating cycle of entrapment.[262]

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[262] Once again, this demonstrates the cultural yearning and conflict identified by Walker. (2015). p. 104.

In many ways, this revelation reveals that both Rian and Sebastian have been on similar narrative trajectories — both embroiled in drugs as a result of troubled parental relationships. However, where Sebastian's indiscretions have resulted in few consequences (until now), Rian's class and race dictate that the stakes are much higher, with drugs permeating his entire world. Perhaps, then, his behaviour towards Mike and Christine is less a punishment for Sebastian's betrayal, but rather a response to the huge inequality of experience between him and Sebastian. That the parents are punished in Sebastian's absence seems to demonstrate a determination to damage and dismantle the family unit. Furthermore, Rian's treatment of Christine in particular shows a vicious resentment of the maternal figure, and exhibits a complete lack of respect. His gaze throughout is intensely objectifying. In this way, Rian revisits the image of the rapacious black male, the 'black buck', with his behaviour escalating to an off-screen rape in the final act. Perhaps the most troubling moment of the film, Christine's rape, serves to make Rian and his brand of masculinity irredeemable in the eyes of the audience, and also cements the film as a fundamentally exploitative exercise in racial conflict and class resentment. The scene throws every destructive, malicious stereotype of black, working-class behaviour into a narrative in which violence begets violence, and Rian's eventual beating to death feels at once to be a victory and a mercy. Of all three of the films discussed in this chapter, it is undoubtedly *Cherry Tree Lane* which is most malicious in its drawing of black masculinity, and the one which most closely foreshadows and corresponds to Starkey's post-riot racial rhetoric, not in order to challenge it, but in order to compound it.

In its close analysis of black narratives within the hoodie horror cycle, this chapter has situated *Attack the Block*, *Comedown* and *Cherry Tree Lane* within the context of growing social unrest and the mounting pressure of alleged police and state prejudice towards the black working-class. It has also located these films, and highlighted their importance, within the growing, but still scarce, canon of horror films

which deal directly or indirectly with the black narrative, and made some suggestions as to how these films may be read as progressive or reactionary texts. Finally, these films, like their contemporary hoodie horrors, excel at making the usually socially invisible visible. Not only this, but in *Attack* and *Comedown*, they give power, however fleeting, to the powerless. However, in the removal of autonomy, freedom and in Rian's case life, at the films' conclusions, these films are ultimately deeply pessimistic and arguably reactionary in their treatment of black masculinity. Be they hero or villain, the predestined conclusion of each man's narrative is more or less the same. Any move towards transcendence or betterment is quashed, any attempt to find meaning ends in nonexistence, "for not only must the black man be black; he must be black in relation to the white man".[263] Herein lies the problem for Lloyd, Moses and Rian — in each case, their battle for individuality, freedom and security has been fought in relation to an adversary who in accordance with white, patriarchal hierarchy remains, even in a battered, bloody and defeated state, the recipient of more power, control and longevity than they could possibly acquire. As the discussion moves on to consider the supernatural, and how it functions within the cycle, it is important to note that, in some ways, the white masculinity within these films has itself a kind of supernatural resilience and omnipotence in relation to black masculinity, and perhaps this is the most subversive these films manage to get — through the articulation of white male privilege the films manage, willingly or not, to condemn the unquestioned superiority of whiteness over blackness.

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[263] Fanon. (2008). p.83

Hoodies and the Supernatural

"I tell you man, that world out there? Hell."

-Shopkeeper, *Heartless* (Ridley, 2009)

Whilst the majority of hoodie horror films stay firmly within the realm of the natural, there are a handful of films that use the supernatural as a device to address class and masculinity in a more allegorical and metaphysical way. Given the extensive discussion of *Attack the Block* elsewhere, this chapter will focus upon three other, lesser-known supernatural hoodie horrors: *Heartless*, *The Disappeared* and *Citadel*. Clive Bloom understands the supernatural as:

> "[a] term… [which] embraces all those areas above or beyond the material realm and is the usual designation for the hierarchic planes, fantastic creatures and demonic forces which exist in cosmic and parallel dimensions and which rule and direct our physical existence… whose amorphous nature is a bridge between the spiritual and material universes".[264]

Within the hoodie horror, the supernatural is used as a counterpoint to common characterisations of the working-class (as has been demonstrated in *Attack the Block*), encouraging reconsiderations of commonly used language that defines

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[264] Clive Bloom. 'The Supernatural'. Marie Mulvey-Roberts (ed.). *The Handbook to Gothic Literature*. (New York: New York University Press, 1998). p. 232.

working-class men as inhuman or simply evil. The supernatural allows for a subtle yet powerful exploration of the male psyche, which elsewhere in horror is severely underdeveloped in the orchestration of the working-class protagonist or antagonist. The supernatural monstrosity of the films' antagonists serves to align the audience firmly with a young, working-class male protagonist. These protagonists provide unreliable narrators for their stories, making it difficult to assess what is real and what is imagined. Each protagonist is atypical in comparison with the common representations of the working-class the cycle provides at large. These men are frightened, paranoid and obsessive, and their encounters with the supernatural only expose and emphasise these flaws. The men are arguably feminised by this characterisation, which possesses many of the qualities often associated with the Gothic heroine, and makes them prone to hysteria, which Showalter recognises as a "humiliatingly female affliction".[265] Like their female counterparts, they are victims of circumstance, trapped within a location or situation that they are unable to transcend. In later incarnations of the Gothic, exemplified by Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1892), or Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* (1847), the trope of madness was employed to highlight and condemn the subjection and oppression of the women suffering with mental ill-health. For the hoodies, their entrapment is facilitated by their class as opposed to their gender, but they are nonetheless restricted, and this takes its toll on their mental wellbeing.

Helen Small, in defining the portrayal of madness in the Gothic, observes that there are often clearly gendered forms of insanity within the Gothic novel: "the mad heroines… pathetically lose their wits, the male villains… are driven to insanity by vaulting ambition and uncontrollable lust".[266] This statement explicitly defines male insanity to be villainous, whilst female insanity is indicative of weakness. Within this

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[265] Elaine Showalter. 'Dr. Jekyll's Closet'. Ken Gelder (ed). *The Horror Reader.* (London: Routledge, 2000). p.190.

[266] Helen Small. 'Madness'. Mulvey-Roberts (ed). (1998).p. 153.

Gothic paradigm, hoodie horror antagonists, such as *Eden Lake*'s Brett or *Cherry Tree Lane*'s Rian exemplify a particularly male madness, as their insanity explicates their villainy. The protagonists of supernatural hoodie horror, however, are not evil or villainous in their madness, but are crippled by their anxiety and paranoia. These characters are therefore suffering through the pathetic brand of madness associated with women, their apparent instability triggered by the trauma of loss in all three cases. Alongside this trauma comes a profound fear of death, which seems to stalk the unfortunate protagonists, and unlike some of the more abrasive, confident characters of hoodie horror, these men are keenly aware of their own mortality and particularly prone to experiences of the supernatural.

Regarding class, the inclusion of madness within the narratives of working-class men once again emphasises the exploitative nature of voyeuristic, class-based exercises, by drawing parallels between the class tourism of 'poverty porn' and social realism and the insanity tourism exemplified by the asylum tourism that was popular up until the Victorian era.[267] In each case, the demographic under scrutiny is commodified and dehumanised by their treatment as an exhibit or subject. The men are certain that there are forces targeting or conspiring against them, and whether or not their supernatural experiences are authentic, they are vindicated by the voyeurism and judgement inseparable from media representations of class. Moreover, as has previously been discussed, mental instability or deficiency is implied in much of the rhetoric and observation regarding the working-class. From Lombroso and Mayhew propagating biological difference (inferiority) to the concern that working-class individuals are the most vulnerable to adverse influences, be they present in literature, film or video games, presents a characterisation of the working-class as psychologically weaker than those belonging to another class. Hoodie horror itself is

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[267] Mary Chapman. 'Asylum Tourism: The House of Horrors?'. *Constructing Scientific Communities*. (29/02/16).

guilty of portraying its working-class characters in this way — many of the alpha males demonstrate characteristics and priorities which suggest psychopathy, and their followers are easy to manipulate and pressure into violence. Regarding the protagonists of supernatural hoodie horror, their unreliability is compounded by their status as working-class, as they not only have to contend with non-believers regarding their supernatural experience, but also a wider system which does not trust them.

Supernatural hoodie horror is most comfortably identified as what Andrew Tudor would call 'paranoid horror',[268] that is, horror which "questions all the assumptions of a secure paradigm. Rather than clarifying the boundaries between moral opposites, 'paranoid' narratives obscure them, clouding the distinctions between conscious and unconscious mind".[269] This statement captures the essence of supernatural hoodie horror, which threatens to corrupt the good, morally sound protagonist and confuse binary understandings of reality and fantasy, through the employment of an unreliable protagonist. The existence of the supernatural is only clearly verified in *Citadel*; the supernatural is debunked in *Heartless*, and in *The Disappeared*, the reality of the ghosts remains unresolved. The presence of the supernatural not only challenges the belief or disbelief of the characters regarding the supernatural, but also challenges their belief in what is right. The protagonists teeter precariously between heroism and villainy, with some skirting perilously close to the monstrous whilst still being the character that possesses the audience's emotional investment.

The antagonists in supernatural hoodie horror are often marked by their inhumanity, yet from a distance they resemble the human monsters of other hoodie horrors. These monsters don hoods and trainers and indulge in graffiti and vandalism,

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[268] Andrew Tudor. *Monsters and Mad Scientists: A Cultural History of the Horror Movie.* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989).

[269] Steve Chibnall in Chibnall & Petley. (2002). p.163.

the embodiment of the folk devil image prevalent in such headlines as this from the *Daily Mail*: "Feral youths: How a generation of violent, illiterate young men are living outside the boundaries of civilised society".[270] This particular rhetoric, with its talk of life 'outside the boundaries', finds the young working-class liminal and unknowable. Walker recognises this dehumanising parallel between press and cinema in his study of hoodie horror,[271] and utilises this to provide an account of the film as a 'visual shorthand' for ideas of Broken Britain. This study hopes to take this parallel further, to demonstrate the extent of the cycle's reflexivity as outlined in the research aims. Through a dedicated study of working-class as haunting/haunted specifically, this chapter hopes to sketch a situation for hoodie horror within Gothic and horror supernatural tradition, and offer some explanation regarding how the supernatural hoodie characterises and represents class conflict in a way that is exceptional to the rest of the cycle. The suggestion of their 'feral' behaviour suggests inhumanity and foreshadows Ken Clarke's infamous response to the London riots two years later. The supernatural narrative has utilised this repeated use of derogatory language to construct its mythology. The young working-class are understood as 'feral' because their values and behaviours are perceived to be antithetical to traditional British ideals of ownership, community and family. Paradoxically, however, the working-class are moulded and oppressed by these ideals — their pursuit of these ideals is hindered by the constructed isolation of the working-class space, the impossibility of home ownership and the perpetual classification of the youngest generations as parentless, 'feral' creatures, as opposed to children who belong to families and homes. This belief is at the very core of the supernatural monster of hoodie horror.

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[270] Harriet Sergeant. 'Feral youths: How a generation of violent, illiterate young men are living outside the boundaries of civilised society'. *MailOnline*. (19/09/09).

[271] Walker. (2015). p. 89.

In his work on Gothic horror Jack Halberstam refers to the monster "as the antithesis of 'Englishness'",[272] where Englishness is understood as a respected, honourable and typically middle class ideal, bound up in all of the values previously mentioned. However, in the supernatural hoodie horror, the representation of Englishness falls to the quiet, fearful men who take on the responsibility of battling the monster within their working-class landscape, thereby preventing its spread beyond estate or district confines. These men, therefore, are the last vanguard against the merging of working-class monstrosity and middle class space. The struggle and sacrifice of the protagonist ensures the supernatural trauma is self-contained within the working-class space. The protagonists do not follow the typical hero aesthetic, however. These men do not resemble the archetypal British heroes exemplified by James Bond or Sherlock Holmes. Furthermore, their bodies are markedly weaker than the muscular, lean bodies on display in *Eden Lake* or *Community*, their Dickensian sickly countenance both exhibiting the toll of their mental strain and making them appear ghostly themselves, emphasising their position between life and death. In battling the supernatural, however, physical prowess is meaningless and the 'survival of the fittest' ethos that has prevailed in other films cannot be applied to a narrative where the adversary possesses superhuman abilities. These narratives, perhaps more than any other within the cycle, challenge the common conceptions of male heroism and class through the introduction of an entity that transcends class and gender. Their heroism exempts these characters from the vilification seen elsewhere in hoodie horror, although why such men should be responsible for the defeat of horrific forces is in itself a veiled criticism of the lack of state management or involvement with poor spaces.

The monster, which is either working-class or feigning working-classness, has adopted the signifiers of a young working-class man, which would suggest, by

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[272] Halberstam. (1995). p.14.

Halberstam's assertion, that the demographic is antithetical to English values. This would reconcile the supernatural hoodie with the vitriolic, fear mongering language used to refer to the behaviour of young working-class men in particular. Adhering to Halberstam's thesis would mean that the dubious victories of the protagonists are to be seen as victories against 'typical' behaviours of the working-class man, as he is stereotyped, and are restorative of normative power structures which work to quickly quash dissent without ever resolving the inciting issue. A balance is restored at the conclusion of each narrative, but its foundations are weak and vulnerable to a return of what the protagonist has managed to conquer or repress. The likelihood of these films reasserting dominant power structures at their conclusion is further strengthened by their obvious ties to Britain's folk horror tradition, within which the "final confrontation with evil and thus the narrative climax of each merely reinforces male authority".[273] This authority does not belong to the male protagonists, however, they are merely the means by which the evil is beaten. They reap small rewards for their sacrifices, but the ultimate authority remains in the possession of those who have put them in harm's way to begin with, through the systematic repression and quarantine of working-class men. As with the folk horror film, the hierarchy of masculine power is explicitly addressed here. As the working-class body was once employed and exploited to build and propagate Britain's industrial agenda, it is now engaged, within these narratives, in a battle against the evils that have taken hold in the wake of de-industrialisation, and become ever more potent in the age of austerity.

Their sacrifice, in an austerity context, seems to reflect harshly upon the dramatic cuts to public sector services and benefits implemented after the 2008 financial crash, which many have criticised for punishing most heavily those at the lower end of the class hierarchy. Lisa McKenzie observes: "In the 'age of austerity', the nation's books were to be balanced on the backs of working, disabled and

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[273] Marcus K. Harmes. (2013). p.71.

unemployed people… between 2009 and 2014… working people suffered the longest fall in living standards in well over a century".[274] Despite being more fantastical than contemporaneous hoodie horrors, the supernatural hoodie horror benefits from working-class horror narratives that are not constricted by their realism and therefore offer a more allegorical representation of working-classness. The protagonists of each narrative, whose purpose has rested almost solely on the defeat or exposure of monstrosity, undergo the erasure of their purpose and identity in the concluding moments of the film. This uncomfortable crisis of purpose and identity is tied closely to both de-industrialisation and more recently, the dramatic sector cuts, which have both taken a profoundly damaging toll on perceptions of working-class identity, as demonstrated by Owen Jones[275] and Imogen Tyler.[276] Despite the huge loss experienced by the protagonists, there is little or no recompense for their sacrifice. After all, whilst the monster may be conquered or exposed, the wider horrors of isolation, crime and loss that the narrative weaves into the fabric of working-class life prevails unchallenged. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the conclusion of *Citadel*; however, before a consideration of Foy's film, a discussion of *Heartless* and *The Disappeared* is appropriate, as the films make excellent companion pieces to one another, where *Citadel* is a strikingly different film which merits a separate discussion.

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[274] Lisa McKenzie. *Getting By: Estates, Class and Culture in Austerity Britain*. (Bristol: Policy Press, 2015). p.209.

[275] As detailed in Owen Jones' book , many no longer wish to be classified with the working class label as they perceive it to be associated with negative stereotypes. (Jones, (2011) p.ix.).

[276] Tyler (2013) condemns the understanding of disadvantage and poverty as a "hereditary condition, a disease". p.188.

Heartless

The film opens with several street level shots of the underpasses, graffiti-strewn walls and vacant shops of London's East End. As previously discussed, this particular area and its signifying tunnels and dimly lit streets are inextricably linked to a series of brutal murders, purportedly carried out by Jack the Ripper, in 1888. The Ripper figure has passed into modern mythology by way of films, graphic novels and television series, and still seems to exert a spectral hold over the East End within the British collective imagination. Ridley seems particularly taken with the area's violent associations, and *Heartless*' narrative explicitly acknowledges the importance of the Ripper as an agent of chaos, whose violent legacy continues to resonate throughout the East End. The geographical connection with the Ripper suggests a geographical connection with evil.

As the morality and humanity of its residents seems to decay, so too does the physical space—Ridley's East End is characterised by dereliction and destruction, and is illuminated by the glow of fires and the flickering of fluorescent lights. Set under the high rises of London's affluent centre, and with a railway running above it, the area also gives the impression of being subterranean, the characters and their lives playing out underneath London's lively bustle. As Johnny Walker notes, "[t]he London that we come to know in *Heartless* is a city that lies in the shadows of commonplace touristic signifiers".[277] This is not the London popularised by Richard Curtis, an idealised middle class space, nor is it the London of Danny Boyle's *28 Days Later*, which is made uncanny through exceptional circumstances. This is a London which appears to have already been hit by an apocalypse, unbeknownst to the wealthy Londoners in the distance, and its residents are simply living through the decline as best they can. The landscape is characterised as a hell on earth, which recalls earlier discussions of

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[277] Walker. (2015). p.99.

Hanley's examination of the 'hell on earth' council estate.[278] Ridley has taken this expression quite literally in his reimagining of the working-class space, and has populated this hellish landscape with demons and ghosts. Unlike many hoodie horrors and their exploration of violence, *Heartless* chooses to explore working-classness through the lens of the supernatural. The film's narrative plays as a dark fairy-tale, whose fantastical monsters offer supernatural, mythical counterparts to the human figures of violence seen both in *Heartless* and more prolifically in other hoodie horrors.

Soon to be caught up in the violence that plagues his community, photographer Jamie walks through this landscape with his hood up, cutting a familiar silhouette. At once, however, it becomes clear that Jamie is not the character that the hood would suggest. He is a far cry from the cruel antagonists of *Eden Lake*, *Cherry Tree Lane* or *Citadel*, neither does he resemble the street-hardened protagonists of *Attack the Block* or *Comedown*. Where his contemporaries are introduced to audiences as petty criminals or juvenile delinquents, Jamie is drawn as artistic, sensitive and sympathetic. His stance as observer (apart from the criminality and moral decline evident in the area) makes him unique as a young man in the realm of hoodie horror, but also puts him in danger of looking too far, and seeing too much. Whilst photographing a particularly dilapidated area near the railway, Jamie carefully rearranges detritus to capture the perfect image, his face obscured both by the hood and by his camera. As he turns to photograph a ruined house, something catches his attention and he lowers the camera to look. At this point, we notice that Jamie has a prominent birthmark over his left eye, and that both the hood and the camera act as filters between him and a world that is unforgiving of his imperfection. Given the previous discussion of the hood as stigma, due to its popular associations with criminality, anti-social behaviour, and violence, it is interesting that Jamie chooses to

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278 Hanley. (2012). p.5.

hide the physical stigma of his birthmark with a piece of clothing that is, in and of itself, stigmatising.

Yet, in Jamie's neighbourhood, the hood actually works as camouflage, despite it signalling a stigma to the audience. The hood hides his face, not for fear of being identified as a criminal but for fear of judgement for being different. By dressing in the uniform of the working-class space, Jamie attempts to blend in, to mitigate or disguise his difference. In his work on stigma, Goffman suggests that "we believe the person with a stigma is *not quite human*".[279] Given this chapter's focus on the supernatural, this particular assertion warrants some investigation. Time and again, this study has explored the ways in which hoodie-clad young men have been dehumanised and devalued by their choice of clothing, their class, their postcode. In *Heartless*, *The Disappeared* and *Citadel*, the inhumanity understood from these stigmas is translated in a literal sense, with hooded characters becoming demons, mutants and ghosts. In *Heartless*' case, Jamie, burdened by both his hood and his birthmark, serves to be humanised and de-stigmatised only with the introduction of inhuman, supernatural monsters motivated by chaos and destruction. The reptilian demons of the narrative, in their contempt for human life and lack of morality, provide a prescient allegory of the aforementioned "feral underclass",[280] which was central to the poisonous and increasingly popular narratives concerning the working-class. Importantly, the demons defy certain classification until the very last scenes of the film—throughout, the meaning and reality of the demons is questioned and obscured by Jamie's unreliable point of view. They could be tangible supernatural beings; they could be a metaphor for Jamie's personal 'demons';[281] or they could be more widely

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[279] Goffman. (1990). p.15. Emphasis mine.

[280] Clarke. (2011).

[281] Walker. (2015). offers an interesting summation of Jamie's suggestibility and how this plays a role in the manifestation of the demon hoodies. p. 93.

representative of the demons haunting the working-class. Moving beyond the role that media plays in the confusion between human and inhuman, the study of the hoodie as perceived by Jamie also offers considerable insight regarding the intersection of masculinity and class in the supernatural film. In *Heartless*, each explanation for the demon hoodies varies in its plausibility as the narrative fluctuates between the reality of gang violence and crime in the East End and the surrealist presence of the devil and his demonic minions; regardless, it is Jamie as working-class male that guides the viewer through the constantly morphing male working-class identity of the hoodies, simultaneously betraying the struggle with his own identity.

Jamie's understanding of, and later obsession with, monstrosity clearly stems from the painful awareness of his own disfigurement. His desire to keep out of sight, so as not to encourage unwanted scrutiny of his marked face, is emphasised by his preference for dark spaces. He very rarely ventures out in daylight, preferring to spend this time locked in his dark room developing photos. In some ways, Jamie echoes *Peeping Tom*'s Mark, using a camera to make sense of a world he feels detached from, using what he captures to form his own narrative from the limited and selective view the lens allows him. The tragedy is that whilst Jamie redeems and elevates his abandoned subjects through exposure, and recognises their beauty in doing so, he cannot do the same for himself, choosing instead to remain behind the camera, under the hood. Jamie remains a fearful, insecure individual, and it is this that leaves him vulnerable to the monstrosity of his surroundings.

Jamie's first encounter with true monstrosity occurs in the darkroom, a red exit light flashing in the background. Examining the photos from the sunrise shoot, both he and the audience can now inspect what made Jamie lower his camera. In an upstairs window of the ruined house a hooded figure is visible, staring down the lens of the camera. Its face appears inhuman, and razor sharp teeth are visible. Standing in a window opposite Jamie, the figure could almost be a reflection of Jamie himself — his

own perceived monstrosity reflected back at him from the damaged façade of the old house. As the first act of the film progresses, the hooded figure moves gradually closer to Jamie, and each time, the parallel placement makes it apparent that Jamie is facing down his own 'demons' when he looks into the face of these supernatural figures. Jamie's desire to capture the unwanted and the maligned in his photographs also motivates his pursuit of the monster. His affinity with the abandoned, the unwanted and unsightly corners of the East End demonstrates his lack of connection with, or perceived banishment from, mainstream society, as though he himself was the monster. Ridley's East End encourages a reading of the space as monstrous in and of itself, an epicentre for violence and evil. Rather than explicitly linking the area's rising crime and murder rates with poverty, mistreatment or community dysfunction, as so many hoodie horrors do, Ridley bypasses such tangible causes in favour of spectral interference.

On several occasions the derelict areas under the railway, where Jamie goes to hunt monsters, are contrasted with the slick, brightly lit London skyline which lingers in the background. The foreground is a place of dimly lit pathways, blackened walls and ugly, worn structures. Jamie returns here at night to retrace his steps and find the figure his photograph captured. He finds the monster, who is taking pleasure in the pointless destruction of glass bottles. Seemingly pointless and indiscriminate destruction is this monster's *raison d'être*, and this scene acts as a forewarning which Jamie does not notice — before long, he will be in the place of the glass bottle. Though the framing places this figure at a distance, as it turns it becomes evident that the thing inside the hood is not human — it has no visible nose, small eyes, and a reptilian mouth that stretches the entire width of the face. Jamie follows the hoodie, who after making to approach, turns and retreats to a boarded up area at the side of the railway. From within, the flicker of flames and streams of smoke are visible. Strange, animalistic calls and screams can be heard, and once again, the blackened brick and the shadows thrown from the fire instantly create a hellish *mise-en-scène*.

As he peers through a gap in the boards, a point of view shot shows three hoodies, circling the fire and squawking excitedly. The middle figure throws a bottle of spirits onto the fire and as the flames rise, he raises his arms and calls out as though in worship.

This allusion to the occult recalls many iconic scenes in British folk horror, from *The Wicker Man* to *Kill List*. The fire as ritual is suggestive in particular of the sacrificial and cleansing qualities attributed to fire within folk horror texts, and in its employment of the occult bestows upon the narrative an emphasis on place and power. Adam Scovell, in his attempts to articulate the elusive definition of folk horror, regards the "sense of place and landscape"[282] to be one constant and distinct theme. He goes on to discuss the re-mythologisation of the landscape in folk horror, which requires that "the characters must in some way believe that what they do to the land, for the land or what comes from the land is beyond and above them in some way".[283] As has been articulated in the extensive discussion of landscape elsewhere in this study, the land in hoodie horror does indeed appear to hold power in the movement and manipulation of its residents' bodies and lives. The landscape as representative of 'beyond' the human experience is particularly appropriate to this chapter's discussion, as the working-class landscapes do provide a space in which the conventional belief systems of the characters are challenged by the presence of something beyond their understanding.

In *Heartless,* the fire represents Jamie's realisation of this world beyond his own, and it is with the light that the fire provides that Jamie finally witnesses the nocturnal underworld of the East End, the fire literally lighting up previously unseen and unknown entities. The centrality of the fire ritual in this scene also directly acknowledges the resurgence of paganism in 21st-century Britain, which would lead

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[282] Adam Scovell. 'What Can Folk Horror Tell Us About Our Landscape?'. *The Clearing*. (14/07/17b).

[283] Scovell. (2017b).

to it being reported as the fastest growing religion in Britain in 2013.[284] According to pagan religion, fire is used ceremoniously to mark the change in season, and these 'fire festivals' grew in popularity during the early 2000s. Indeed, the fire worship in *Heartless* also marks a change, as it is at this moment that Jamie makes himself truly vulnerable to the darkness and violence of the nocturnal East End, and the meeting of Jamie's world and the underworld in this scene is a turning point for the narrative as a whole. Furthermore, this scene, which foreshadows the corruption of Jamie at the hands of evil, seems to make direct reference to Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Young Goodman Brown* (1835), whose titular character struggles, and fails, to retain his goodness and purity when subjected to a satanic fire ritual. Fire, as a symbolic element, represents both destruction and creation, and for both Young Goodman and Jamie, the fire represents the destruction of purity and certainty, and the creation of doubt and paranoia.

To return to the cinematic influences discernible in this scene, the focus upon fire most closely recalls seminal folk horror *The Wicker Man*, within which the destruction of 'weak' and outdated forms of masculinity are sacrificed in order to strengthen and sustain favoured power structures. In *The Wicker Man*, these power structures hearken back to a heavily Pagan belief system, and the oppressed, conservative masculinity of Sergeant Howie is an ideal sacrifice. As James Rose summarises, "the traditional constructs of law and order have been rejected in favour of personal freedom and an explicitly strong sense of community whilst religion has regressed back to the pre-Christian era of Pagan worship".[285] In *Heartless*, Jamie's binary understanding of good and evil, learned through his family's devotion to Christianity, is equally as challenged by the unfamiliar rituals of the demons as

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[284] Neil Hudson. 'It's a moot point, but Paganism may be the fastest growing religion in Britain'. *The Yorkshire Post.* (31/10/13). Liz Williams. 'Paganism Part 1: What is Modern Paganism?'. *The Guardian.* (15/07/13).

[285] Rose, (2009). p. 35-36.

Howie's faith is challenged by Summerisle. Moreover, the rejection of law and order speaks not only to the demons in *Heartless*, but reflects the drawing of the working-class across hoodie horror as a lawless demographic that only adheres to its own alien values and beliefs. The pleasure taken in the sacrifice of Sergeant Howie in *The Wicker Man* is coupled with the necessity of sacrifice to retain the equilibrium of Summerisle. Destruction is thereby seen as an organic process, and an inevitable one in order to maintain the status quo. A similar justification of the destruction exacted by the demons will later be articulated by their master, 'Papa B', when he claims: "Mankind *needs* atrocity like this." Unfortunately, just as Howie's purity and repression made him vulnerable to corruption and, eventually, violence, Jamie becomes embroiled in the sacrifices and brutality that supposedly uphold the world order, and will pay the ultimate price for his knowledge of what is beyond.

In his attempt to capture the odd fire ritual on camera, Jamie makes a noise which alerts the alpha hoodie to his presence. Importantly, it is his camera, and his selective vision, that puts him in danger. His reluctance to view the world without a lens says something about his perception of reality, as it is always mediated by the camera. The worshipper turns to approach, and as light falls on his features, Jamie once again finds himself face to face with monstrosity, this time closer than ever before, and now there is no room for the mediating presence of the camera. Again, a mirror image is possible, with each character looking directly at the other from either side of the barrier, representing the binaries of human/inhuman, natural/supernatural, good/evil, and peace/chaos. Panicked by this encounter, Jamie runs, hiding in a doorway on which the words 'Danger of Death' are written. The heavy-handed placement of this sign sends a clear warning about Jamie's increasing proximity to the monstrous, which in his view manifests itself as a hideous demon, but from an external perspective, clearly provides an allegory of the temptations of violence and crime when suffering neglect and isolation. Jamie is clearly horrified by the demons, but cannot resist being drawn back to them. They offer a life without his current

burdens (they later lead him to Papa B, a Satanic villain who brokers a Faustian bargain with Jamie to rid him of his birthmark), and they represent a group, a brotherhood, where Jamie becomes an increasingly solitary and lonely figure.

The demons are representative of the worst and most extreme perceptions and characterisations of the young working-class, popularised by various politicians, social commentators and media outlets[286] throughout the early 21st-century. Those responsible for such overblown and hysterical reactions to the young working-class are effectively parodied within the film. Shortly after Jamie's encounter with his demons, a man and his son are killed when attacked with Molotov cocktails. The news report cuts between images of distraught friends laying flowers and a witness interview. The witness recounts that the attackers "sounded like wild animals" and were "wearing…demon masks"— Jamie instantly believes the demons were responsible. A later attack, which directly involves Jamie and claims the life of his mother, prompts a further news report, this time with a Professor weighing in on the events: "Terror is the new fashion accessory… Violence is their mother." The use of the term 'fashion accessory' is particularly relevant to this study's previous discussion regarding the hood as 'fashion', and its value as a signifier and a means of communication and affiliation through style. In a literalisation of the equation of clothing with folk devil, this Professor's speech skips the arbitrary consignment of fear to the object of the hood and makes terror itself the commodity.

It is this extreme, alarmist rhetoric which strengthens Jamie's conviction that something supernatural has taken hold of the East End, and throws further doubt on the existence of the demons, with Johnny Walker suggesting that the film "explores media generalisations by presenting the demonic hoodies of the narrative as literal

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[286] As has been noted in previous chapters, public figures such as Ken Clarke (2011), David Starkey (2011) and Simon Heffer (2007) have all made defamatory statements which evoke images of a young working class that is uncontrollable, inhuman, and depraved. The blatant class contempt within such remarks has been discussed at length by Owen Jones (2011) and Imogen Tyler (2013).

psychological constructions of Jamie… who throughout the film, is repeatedly influenced by news reportage of gang crime".[287] The rhetoric takes on a mythical quality, with everyone from the local shopkeeper to Jamie's neighbour providing messages of foreboding: "I tell you man, that world out there? Hell" and "I've seen the future, Jamie, and it's a kingdom of horror". Both statements suggest the power of language to encourage a pessimistic and fearful perspective of the East End, with ideas of "hell" and "horror" haunting the wary Jamie, who then constructs his perceptions of evil around them. The film in this case speaks to the Derridean definition of the spectre: "[t]he spectre is also… what one imagines, what one thinks one sees and which one projects — on an imaginary screen where there is nothing to see".[288] Jamie is guilty of such projection, as is filmmaker Ridley, using the faceless hoodie, who is not afforded a response to his characterisation in the press and media, as the screen. The reliance on the hood as a signifier for evil in a class-based narrative does work to undermine the implicit criticism of neoliberal fear-mongering, and obfuscates the tone and perspective of the film.

Eventually, Jamie is corrupted by the supernatural when he strikes a deal with the devil, here named 'Papa B', to rid himself of his birth mark. The gradual approach of monstrosity culminates in Jamie becoming the monster, sacrificing a male prostitute in order to uphold his side of the bargain. Prior to this, Jamie's paranoia has become so acute that he has purchased a gun for protection, and spends his nights searching for the demons that killed his mother. This paranoia exacerbates his belief in the supernatural, and as a result his involvement with these otherworldly beings quickly escalates. Jamie's precarity and insecurity has made him vulnerable to suggestion

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[287] Johnny Walker. 'A Wilderness of Horrors? British Horror Cinema in the New Millenium'. *Journal of British Cinema and Television*. Vol.9, Issue 3. 2012. p.450.

[288] Jacques Derrida. *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International.* (London: Routledge, 1994). pp. 100-101.

and manipulation from the outset, and this final manipulation by Papa B ensures his downfall.

In the chaotic climactic scenes, Jamie's brief flirtation with the utopian existence he had always dreamed of (no birthmark, girl of his dreams, building a home together) comes crashing down. His girlfriend Tia is exposed as a seductress in league with Jamie's nephew and in trouble with the local gang. She is shot dead in a scuffle, and his nephew is badly wounded. To escape the wrath of the wronged gang leader Jamie flees to the spot where he first sighted a demon. It is important to note that as Jamie's belief system crumbles, the similarities between Papa B and gang leader 'She' are clarified. Both hold a position of power and the latter had earlier been linked to the murder of Jamie's neighbour whilst Jamie suspected the demons. Both flourish in an environment of fear and chaos, and aesthetically, both have a claw-like hand. That Jamie only meets Papa B after he has seen She's image on the news further compounds his unreliability as a witness to the supernatural—allowing for the possibility that he has simply created Papa in the image of She.

Returning to the railway bridge where the film began, Jamie's reflection iin a piece of scrap shows that he has been bearing his birth mark all along. Its disappearance was imagined by Jamie, who had convinced himself that the supernatural was at work and that his demons were real. This epiphany removes the fear that has made Jamie vulnerable, and he is finally able to confront his own demons and redeem himself from the monstrosity that has characterised his narrative. In the penultimate sequence, Jamie does battle with the demons, in what is now unquestionably an allegorical rather than physical struggle. Jamie realises his part in the creation of horror; his blind reliance upon and belief in the dominant rhetoric encountered throughout the film. Finally, Jamie faces Papa B without fear, to which Papa B responds: "Don't work unless you're scared, old son" and retreats, leaving Jamie alone. Papa B's last words could just as easily be applied to the creation and

perpetuation of class contempt —it only works whilst people fear. Without fear this rhetoric is exposed as fraudulent, a pretence, and thereby loses its power. However, the film then seems to contradict this progressive message in the final scenes. Jamie recognises that the demons he so feared are just teenagers in masks, and these masks now litter the floor around the house where he first encountered their monstrosity. As the last masked hoodie comes towards Jamie, he unmasks himself, unafraid and unashamed, to watch as one of his friends launches a Molotov cocktail at Jamie, who drops to his knees in the flames. Jamie's imagined demons helped him to retain his faith in humanity. He was unable to believe that a human could be capable of the attacks he had witnessed, and now that he can see the attackers for what they are, his death at their hands comes as a relief. Considering Stoneman and Packer's work on the supernatural and philosophical pessimism, Jamie has effectively been 'un-anchored'— his reasons to suffer have been removed. His beliefs in family, love and human decency have anchored his suffering throughout the narrative, "giving it purpose and thus making it more bearable and comprehensible",[289] and one by one these anchors have been forcibly removed.

The supernatural in *Heartless* works to undermine the power of fear and mythology, by obscuring the lines between the real and the unreal. The audience perceives the world of the East End through Jamie's eyes, and so the demons appear real until they become unreal, and the supernatural façade makes way to reveal the monstrous capabilities of the natural, the human. The film's confusion between a progressive delegitimising of dominant institutional rhetoric and a reactionary representation of young working-class men, as the evil human equivalent of demons from hell, somewhat damages its condemnation of the rhetoric of fear. It seems that Ridley has bought into at least some of the same alarmist language that the narrative criticises. Arguably, the film's climactic reveal nullifies *Heartless*' categorisation as a

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[289] Ethan Stoneman & Joseph Packer. 'No, everything is not all right: Supernatural horror as pessimistic argument'. *Horror Studies*. Vol. 8, No. 1. 2017. p.32.

supernatural horror film. However, the film's use of the supernatural is integral to its emphasis on the evil of the natural.

The Disappeared

Once again, this film utilises its supernatural elements to cast doubt upon the psychological stability of the main protagonist, Matthew, who begins the narrative as an outpatient of the local psychiatric unit. Unable to cope with the disappearance of his younger brother, Tom, Matthew is a sickly and morose looking young man. Like Jamie of *Heartless*, his characterisation does not reconcile with the expected behaviour of a hoodie-clad young man in the hoodie horror. He is markedly different from the gang of youths whose typically antagonistic behaviour lurks at the peripheries of the narrative. Most of the film's action is viewed from Matthew's perspective — he spends the majority of his screen time alone, and so there are no living witnesses to corroborate his belief that Tom is haunting him, nor to take part in his conversations with various other deceased council estate residents. For the audience, who see Matthew's world from his point of view, the reality of the haunting is questionable and open to interpretation. *The Disappeared* tackles the appearance of the ghosts in the style of Jack Clayton's *The Innocents*; the ghosts are indeed tangible beings to Matthew's eyes, and so when viewed from his perspective they are also visible and audible to the audience. Yet, with his history of mental illness and his ongoing struggle with grief, Matthew's experience of the supernatural is subject to the derision and doubt of both the audience and the film's other characters.

Matthew is the epitome of the unreliable narrator, and in line with his contemporaries Matthew's encounters with the supernatural emphasise his obsessive behaviour, amplifying his suspicion of those around him and legitimising his desperate and dangerous pursuit of truth. The feminisation of such a character, as argued

earlier, comes from the type of unreliability each gender is typically related to in Gothic and horror practice. Whilst it is undeniable that masculinity is indeed made unreliable in both Gothic and horror, it is also typical to see male characters act unreliably with impunity. Their unreliability is characterised as a flaw associated with their wealth, privilege and the immunity from consequences on account of their power. Their unreliable narration is often driven by hubris, as exemplified by Frankenstein's account of the creation and subsequent loss of control of his monster. Their unreliability is perhaps nonetheless vilified in the narrative, but there are still qualities of power and status that are not stripped of the men, despite their weaknesses. An exemplar of this enduring status and power would be the now clichéd failure of a policeman to avert the horrific acts of a slasher narrative. Whilst a criticism of law and order is implicit, and this one policeman has proved himself unreliable, the patriarchal institution of justice still commands respect and fear. The feminisation of the unreliable narrator comes to pass when the narrator does not possess the power or status to mitigate their potentially unsound mind and unlike masculine unreliability it is not given the benefit of the doubt, but rather is scrutinised and rejected if the story is not entirely watertight. Matthew is indeed under scrutiny as the protagonist of *The Disappeared*, his encounters with the supernatural immediately explained as mental ill-health. His father, friends and doctors all discount his belief that his dead brother is communicating with him.

On his return to his home on a typically brutalist council estate, Matthew struggles with his memories of the night his brother went missing. A flashback reveals that Matthew had thrown a party that night, and had carelessly dismissed his brother, allowing him to go to the playground unsupervised. The now deserted playground is the last known whereabouts of the boy, and as such takes on a supernatural and emotional resonance within the film. Similar to the playground in *Attack the Block*, which is defined by an absence of childhood play (replaced with violence), *The Disappeared*'s playground is haunted by absence (into which acts of violence

insinuate themselves). The landscape of the estate is desaturated to grey and blue hues, with the prominence of hard angles and concrete structures making the space oppressive and inhospitable. The comforting imagery often associated with a homecoming is missing here — Matthew is instead greeted by a space which is run down and devoid of life. The entire estate appears haunted by the past, even before the ghosts appear to confirm the space as a realm of the dead.

The playground is placed at the centre of this brutalist landscape, indicating its importance as an emotional anchor whilst also drawing attention to the conspicuous emptiness of the space. The reinforced concrete which dominates the space is stylistically indicative of council built housing, and is understood, Hatherley notes, as "a general synonym for all that was inhuman and obnoxious in urbanism".[290] Once again, *inhumanity* is used as a qualifier for the working-class and their space, the very absence of humanity is, in this film's case, a political statement, in that it subverts understandings of class in order to paint the alienation of the estate as inhuman, not the residents upon it (although many, being ghosts, *are* inhuman). In the wake of the Grenfell tower fire, Hanley asserts "social housing is at once integral… and yet invisible".[291] The spectrality of the community and the children of the estate, emphasised by the empty playground, is a reflection of the invisibility of the working-class in wider society. The playground is in full view of the residents' homes, which tower above it yet gives the impression of being completely isolated, an island of lost innocence in a sea of brutal concrete. A walkway separates it from the surrounding buildings, and its sunken floor sees it lowered to beneath the estate's ground level, once again suggesting a world 'beneath' the established order, invoking concealment (or invisibility), inferiority and, as with *Heartless*, the underworld or underbelly of the London landscape.

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[290] Hatherley. (2008). p.29.

[291] Hanley. (2017).

These visual separations are important in emphasising not only a generational disconnect (exemplified by the relationship between Matthew and his father) but also the breach between innocence and evil, set in motion when a place of play is transformed into a site of trauma. That the playground is traditionally a place of play also contributes to a developing theme: the inheritance of evil from generation to generation of working-class characters, which allegorises the inheritance of class structures and the subsequent difficulties and disadvantages visited upon those designated working-class at birth. Not only do the children using the playground in *The Disappeared* inherit evil, but Papa B, the architect of Jamie's downfall, resides within the childhood home of Jamie's father in *Heartless*. When Kim Newman writes about the J-horror surge around the turn of the 21st-century, he notes that "punishment is inevitable"[292] in this era and style of supernatural horror. Hoodie horror has adopted this inevitability, and it goes hand in hand with the inheritance and inevitability of class restrictions. In *The Disappeared*, in particular, there is also a damning assessment of the value, or lack of, attributed to the working-class. The child is only valued in its absence, not in its presence — that the children are not there provides a commentary on social justice far more affecting than if the children were present, because it also suggests an absence of all the virtues associated with childhood: play, innocence, new life and possibilities.

The playground's ties with the traumatic are strengthened throughout the film; not only is this the place from which Tom disappeared, but it will later be the setting for Matthew to receive upsetting news about the allegations of murder printed about his father. Later still, Matthew will be brutally beaten here when he returns to attempt communication with Tom. The swings move slightly in the breeze, but there is not a child to be seen. The absence of children on the estate recalls the terrifying motif of stolen childhoods in both supernatural horror and fantasy, used to great effect in *IT*

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[292] Kim Newman. *Nightmare Movies: Horror on Screen Since the 1960s.* (London: Bloomsbury, 2011). p.420.

(Wallace, 1990, Muschietti, 2017), or in the childless village of Vulgaria in *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* (Hughes, 1968)*.* Furthermore, the folkloric theme of stolen childhood is found within the well-worn tales of the *Pied Piper*, *Hansel and Gretel* and *Red Riding Hood*. Of course, in most versions of these stories, the children pay a high price for the poor behaviour, or simple ineptitude, of the adults responsible for them. By punishing working-class children in *The Disappeared*, this narrative once again applies Goffman's 'tribal stigma'[293] to the youngest generation, thereby meting out punishment to the children for the sins of parents — even if their only sin is belonging to the working-class. Child abandonment and child death are common themes throughout these dark narratives, and although the tales are often understood as parables for the child listeners, the vulnerability and value of the childhoods represented here also condemns the society or individual who does not protect, or else deliberately endangers, the child and its innocence.

Similar themes have penetrated the horror film, with Wes Craven's expansive filmography often concerned with the abuse of youthfulness at the hands of older generations, presided over by ineffectual parents (*The Last House on the Left*, *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, 1984 and *Scream*, 1996) and hoodie horror itself often representing images of both the literal and figurative death of childhood. Unlike its contemporaries, children in *The Disappeared* are not implicated as perpetrators, but are seen simply as victims. Susan Hancock writes of the representation of children in fairytale and fantasy literature:

> "[t]he socially and culturally defined category of 'childhood' is
> the broadest category of 'other' which is known to the adult world,
> and the treatment by any society, past or present, of its smallest and

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[293] Goffman. (1990). p.15.

most vulnerable members is truly revealing of the values it really

holds".[294]

The representation of the spectral child in *The Disappeared*, then, provides a damning critique of British social values and concerns, through insinuating that children are not only being neglected by their immediate familial and social circle, but more broadly by representatives of state, such as the police, the health service and the church.

Left alone for the first time since his release, Matthew looks through his father's tapes, on which he has recorded TV spots, news coverage and press releases concerning Tom's disappearance. Whilst watching scenes of his father, pleading with the public for information about Tom's whereabouts, both Matthew and the audience hear a child's voice softly call "Matthew", so quietly that it is almost unnoticeable. However, the second time the voice calls, it comes through loud and clear and is impossible to ignore. Matthew is visibly unsettled, replaying the tape to confirm what he has heard. Later, Matthew tries to show his father the tape on which he believes he can hear Tom's voice, only to hear nothing unusual. Once more, Matthew's unreliability is compounded — his guilt and desperation are driving him to imagine his brother's voice, and his obsession with the tapes suggests an insistence upon reliving the past and a desire to turn back time. However, it is difficult for Matthew to focus upon living in the present — Tom's absence is everywhere, and affects a ghost-like existence upon his surviving brother, who is trapped at the moment of Tom's death, doomed to relive the last fateful moments they spent together. There are still two beds in the room he shared with Tom, his toys are still piled up in the cupboard and there are still three chairs at the kitchen table. His domestic surroundings have remained in stasis since Tom's disappearance, as though at any moment Tom will be back and needing his bed, his toys and chair.

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[294] Susan Hancock. *The Child That Haunts Us: Symbols and Images in Fairytale and Miniature Literature*. (London: Taylor & Francis, 2008). p.9.

Indeed, Tom's return is imminent, but it will not be as Matthew hopes or imagines; rather, Tom returns as a ghost to encourage Matthew to live where Tom himself cannot, and to progress where many have failed to. The eerie stasis of the home demonstrates most immediately the way that time appears to stop or warp during times of grief, but on a more literal level speaks to the dated nature of the home itself (much of the décor and architecture reflects 1970s design), and the ideals that the estate was built to accommodate. The welfare state itself has stultified, and the legions of council housing which once resembled new hope for working-class people have become a living museum, untouched by changing trends and priorities.

However, unlike many residences in hoodie horror, this domestic space is not un-homely because of its deterioration, although deterioration is visible. Rather, it is a recognisable family home, with all the familiar signifiers: toys, videos, boxed Christmas decorations, magnets on the fridge. This space is completely recognisable as a home, but is made strange by the absence of the family it clearly once catered for; Matthew is therefore living in a present that is defined by absence, and longing for a past which is defined by presence. Tom's disappearance has caused Matthew and his father to exist in a liminal space between past and present. Working-class identity at large arguably inhabits a similar space, sitting awkwardly in between an industrial past and a consumerist present, the identity that no one wishes to claim is partly problematic because it is an identity in limbo, one which cannot be clearly situated within any given hierarchy or social construct. This emphasis on the past, and his willingness to dwell in it, makes Matthew susceptible to the visitations he experiences, be them real or imagined. The unresolved nature of his brother's disappearance prevents progress or change — ghosts or no, Matthew is haunted by the not knowing, and his forthcoming supernatural encounters personify this.

The next day, whilst walking through the empty streets of the estate, Matthew stops to watch a television in a shop window. It is displaying a number of 'Missing'

posters for children who have disappeared from the estate. When Tom's poster appears, a small, hooded figure is visible in the window's reflection, over Matthew's shoulder, which disappears as he turns to look. This scene provides a visualisation for the position Matthew currently occupies, trapped between the past and the present. Karen Renner writes extensively on the 'ghost child', and observes how they can represent a cycle of violence that can be physically affecting for the haunted party. When the haunted is another child, the violence is a burden for both children: "[s]tories about ghost children who haunt living kids perform similar ideological work, with the stages of violence divided up between two characters. The living child displays many of the characteristics of children currently suffering abuse, and the ghost child acts as a dark reminder of what the abused child may become if the abused is not recognized and redressed".[295] Whilst much older, Matthew demonstrates the tired pallor and silent presence of a ghost, and does struggle under the emotional abuse and neglect of his grief-stricken father. He is, arguably, as desperate for help and recognition as his tormented brother's ghost. The absence of his brother, and the guilt Matthew feels, is all consuming and so whether looking backwards or forwards Tom dominates his thoughts. Once again, the brevity of Tom's presence is such that it is left open to interpretation; it could be a real spectral presence or it could be Matthew's imagination, and he himself is left questioning what he has seen. Not only that, but once again Tom's appearance coincides with Matthew's discovery of an artefact linked to his disappearance, provoking an emotional response. First, Tom's voice appears as Matthew watches his father's tapes, and secondly he appears as the 'Missing' poster is screened.

It is not only Tom's appearances that are open to doubt, but so too is Matthew's relationship with his neighbour Amy. Similar to Tom, she seems to appear at convenient moments, when Matthew is alone and in need of emotional support.

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[295] Karen Renner. *Evil Children in the Popular Imagination*. (New York: Springer Nature, 2016). p.70.

She is a redemptive figure, who believes Matthew is being visited by his brother and supports him in his pursuit of answers. Theirs is a symbiotic relationship, as in return Matthew offers her an opportunity to escape her abusive home life. At the conclusion of the narrative, we learn from a newspaper clipping that Amy has been deceased the whole time, a victim of suicide. The transient movement of people in and out of Matthew's life is not exclusive to the ghosts, however, and Tom is not the only person absent from his life. Their mother is never spoken of, but is conspicuously absent, and his father moves in and out of the house at all times of the day and night, seemingly unable to stand sustained periods in the house with his remaining son. His social worker, Bannon, is also only sporadically present. Ironically, the most reliable characters within the narrative are those who are already dead. In fact, the entire estate seems populated, in the majority, by the dead. Visible living residents number in the single figures, giving the impression that the estate is a liminal space, both socially, as with the estates considered earlier, but also existentially, straddling the boundary between life and death. This creates a vivid allegory of the positionality of the working-class in Britain, which requires some exploration and application of Russ Castronovo's concept of "social death": "[a]t this point where natural biological event [death] serves as political metaphor, death opens up into social death and the corpse's final estrangement from the living marks the effects of citizenship on the subjects it recognizes".[296] The finality of death, and its absolute displacement from the living is here seen as a process that can be replicated on the living to estrange demographics who may wish to unsettle, or else choose not to partake in political and social unity, or alternatively a demographic which fails, or is not allowed, to meet the standards or expectations of a state community. The working-class are therefore integral to Britain's social structure, as a workforce, but are not recognised subjects, and in their alienation are deemed socially dead. This offers several potential commentaries or criticisms of the welfare system and the condemnation of the

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[296] Castronovo. (2001). p.2.

working-class to death. Firstly, it is striking that the quality of life on the estate is such that the living exist alongside the dead, with no perceptible difference between the two. The ghosts are indistinguishable from the living, and their spectrality is only suggested by their transience, a quality which residents of the estate often encounter and embody on a daily basis anyway. Matthew's relationships with the dead are also more meaningful than those he has with the living — the ghosts are seen to trust, to care and to help Matthew to a far greater extent than his living family and friends. Secondly, the emptiness of the estate, as well as the apparent invisibility of those who are present, creates an allegory for the disappearance of working-class people within the welfare and class systems currently at work in Britain. Lastly, the prevalence of ghosts within this space speaks to the peripheral existence of the working-class as estate residents, relegated to the edges and outskirts of major cities, as noted by time again by Hanley, who alleges that "class is built into the physical landscape of the country",[297] a statement which arguably strengthens the working-class' claim to social death, as they have been housed in locations designed to isolate from the collective whole.

Just as with *Heartless*, the supernatural approaches Matthew gradually, only instead of signalling the approach of monstrosity, they signify Matthew's increasing proximity to the truth. Matthew's sightings of Tom are always obscured in some way — firstly he appears only as a reflection, several feet away from Matthew, then later is seen through a kitchen window, only tall enough for his head to be visible, and finally he stands very close to Matthew in the laundry room, but the two are separated by a mesh fence. This gradual approach of the hooded child figure recalls Nicholas Roeg's *Don't Look Now*, a supernatural narrative in which the obsessive grief of a father leads him to his own demise. In *The Disappeared*, Tom threatens to lead his brother into similar dangers, but where the red hood in *Don't Look Now* contains malevolence, the

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[297] Hanley. (2012). p 28.

black hood represents hope — hope of discovery and hope of peace. Individuals are not held accountable and punished, as they are in *Don't Look Now*, but rather, the individual represents Tom's only chance of being found and laid to rest, as the state at large has failed him. The visual separation between the brothers suggests that they exist on different planes, despite being in the same places at the same times. At Amy's suggestion, Matthew pays a visit to a psychic for guidance on how to help Tom. A nervous woman with a young daughter, the psychic attempts to explain exactly what Matthew is dealing with: "Ghosts are about the unresolved… it's a cursed area." Her statement seems to suggest that the estate is particularly prone to hauntings and to unresolved traumas, which further strengthens the reading of the film as a condemnation of such spaces. It later transpires that the psychic and her daughter have been dead for several years, and that Matthew's conversation with her was therefore either imagined or supernatural. Interestingly, Matthew's unreliability begins to be questioned at this juncture. He possesses a tangible piece of evidence which demonstrates that his conversation with the psychic actually happened. The drawing her daughter gave to him before he left is a physical artefact, real to others, unlike the recordings of Tom's voice. Yet, when Matthew returns home, a child's hand reaches out from under Tom's bed. The hand is visible from his point of view, but when the camera cuts away to an outside perspective, the hand is not visible. Only Matthew's struggle against its grasp is apparent, a physical manifestation of his struggle with grief. The ambiguity of the ghosts' existence, similar to the nature of their presence, remains unresolved.

The ghosts do, however, lead Matthew to redemption and salvation. Each apparition offers the support, shelter or motivation he needs to solve the mysterious disappearance of his brother and begin to heal the familial fractures his loss has caused. In his final visit to the psychic, he does indeed find the whole building burnt out and derelict. Hiding to avoid readmission to the psychiatric unit, he experiences a flashback which reveals that the psychic and her daughter were deliberately attacked

and killed. Ultimately, it is tangible, physical evidence that leads Matthew to the truth — the name 'Bannon' (Matthew's social worker) is carved onto the floor in the spot where the psychic and her daughter died in a deliberately lit fire. That, paired with the discovery of the rotated crucifixes carved into the tunnel entrance leads Matthew straight to Bannon and the crypt where he has been taking the estate's children, supposedly to sacrifice and prolong his own existence — literally feeding on the poor and disadvantaged in order to benefit the powerful. The question of the reality of the ghosts is left unanswered — Mathew remains the only person to see or hear them, and yet it seems unlikely that he would have been able to solve the mystery of the missing children without the assistance of the ghosts. The ghosts have given him purpose and support, everything Matthew has been missing from his living friends and relatives, and in opposition with *Heartless*, the supernatural here is an overwhelmingly positive force, delivering the closure Matthew desperately needs to move into the present. Bannon's status (supernatural or unnatural) is never explicitly explained, but the photograph and his survival of Matthew's brutal attack suggest immortality. The story, as one may expect given the pessimistic tone of the narrative thus far, goes unresolved, with Bannon escaped and Matthew's friends, living and dead, gone. However, at a service for Tom, who the family can finally lay to rest, Matthew and his father seem to connect for the first time, looking to each other for support. After his experiences in the realm of the supernatural, Matthew becomes emotionally connected to the living once more.

Within the narratives of *Heartless* and *The Disappeared*, the working-class space is qualified by its proximity to ideas and images of hell and the afterlife. Through the analysis of these two films as companion pieces to one another, it is suggested that their shared agenda — to condemn not the working-class but the mythology that surrounds them — can be exposed and explored. The narratives serve to confuse the reality not only of the supernatural entity, but the young, working-class culture that the entity appears to represent. Where other hoodie horrors utilise

common beliefs held about the working-class to establish unquestionably real, human, corporeal threats, the supernatural exposes the fear of the unknown that such beliefs suggest. According to Bruce Kawin, "[t]he supernatural itself can be unnerving because it presents us with a metaphysical realm in which knowns are replaced with unknowns, and because it can open the way for mysterious, powerful forces and beings to get at us".[298] This unknowability, in a 21st century context, represents the anxiety attached to the inability to explain violent, perhaps unprecedented, behaviour, as Kendrick suggests: "[i]n an era marked by terrorism, random violence, and war all around the globe, not knowing may be the one thing that we are truly terrified to endure".[299] In this way, the supernatural hoodie transcends its national context and moves to represent a more international concern with acts of mass violence and destruction, whilst still being irrevocably attached to the very intimate ideals of 'home'. The demons and ghosts of *Heartless* and *The Disappeared* do indeed make the working-class and their spaces unknowable through the introduction of supernatural forces, but this in turn exposes the eminently knowable working-class values of family, security and respect that have been forcibly removed from their characterisation in politics and the press. This is not to say that these narratives are not problematic in their notions of class. Even in their efforts to articulate the liminality and invisibility of the poor, the films, with their use of the supernatural, arguably risk a dilution of their message. After all, what could the more literally minded middle class audience possibly have done to prevent a supernatural force? It is perhaps harder to apportion blame, when the monsters themselves defy knowability and the natural laws under which humanity operates. The supernatural paradoxically obfuscates the role of the middle classes and the state in class oppression, whilst simultaneously attempting to illuminate class struggle. However, it is the final film of this chapter, *Citadel*, which truly problematises notions of class through its introduction of a supernatural

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[298] Bruce F. Kawin. *Horror and the Horror Film*. (London, Anthem Press, 2012). p.91.

[299] Kendrick. McSweeney. (2017). pp.266-7.

adversary. Where the previous films have characterised the male protagonists as deeply flawed individuals, *Citadel*'s Tommy is arguably the least sympathetic (despite Jamie being the only protagonist directly responsible for another's death) and his narrative is left completely unresolved. There is an implicit judgement of Tommy's character which portrays him in a far less heroic light than Matthew, and a failure to act which even fearful Jamie overcomes.

Citadel

It is not only protagonist Tommy who presents an anomaly within the supernatural hoodie horror canon. The monster of this narrative is also profoundly problematic in terms of defining it as 'natural' or 'supernatural'. The antagonists once again appear to be human, hood-wearing adolescents from a distance, and are spoken of as such until the latter part of the film. These figures are not just bored and isolated adolescents, however, but the product of something much more sinister which thrives within the walls of a dilapidated tower block on the estate. As with *Attack the Block* and *Comedown*, the film opens with a low angle shot of this tower block against a leaden sky. The structure looks unliveable, but as we fade to a shot of an apartment doorway, the number askew, and the plaster around it crumbling, an attractive, well dressed couple appear. The happy couple are moving out, presumably to find more appropriate accommodation for a young family. The woman, Jo, is heavily pregnant, and the block is clearly not an ideal environment for a young child. She carries a potted plant in her arms, a further signifier of life and a new start. Leaving her in the corridor to mind the last of their possessions, her husband, Tommy, takes a heavy box down to the taxi. As he holds the car door open, the silhouettes of several small, hooded figures are faintly visible in the reflective paint. They shuffle by

unnoticed, and the man heads back to the elevator seeming relaxed and unconcerned.

Reaching the floor where his wife stands waiting, Tommy waves to her through the small window in the elevator door. The door is temperamental and will not open, leaving Tommy to watch as the hoodies seen earlier exit the stairwell and approach his wife. As previously discussed, hoodie horror has fostered unusually symbiotic relationships between spaces and characters. In *Citadel*, however, the symbiosis between the building and its monstrous residents is heavily emphasised from the outset. The entrapment of Tommy in the elevator seems to be deliberate interference on the part of the building, as though it is working *for* the hoodies. As they attack, the elevator begins a descent to the ground floor, leaving Tommy trapped and impotent, unable to defend his wife and unborn child. By the time he reaches her, she is badly beaten and has been stabbed with a syringe, which is grotesquely protruding from her pregnant stomach. Tommy's cries for help go unanswered — they seem to be the only remaining residents in the block. It is clear that Jo represented life, family and future for the heartbroken protagonist, and when the attack leaves her unresponsive, these values too seem to diminish. The child is saved, and Tommy is left as a single parent. As he stands in the hospital corridor alone and in shock, the life and the colour present at the film's opening has noticeably drained from the shot. No family or friends appear in support of Tommy and Jo, compounding the complete physical and emotional isolation of this man and his child.

Unable to leave comatose Jo, Tommy is forced to stay on the crumbling estate that he came so close to escaping. His new home is a small, run-down terrace in the shadow of the old tower block, the interior of which is sparsely furnished and drained of colour. In the aftermath of the attack, Tommy has developed agoraphobia and struggles to leave the house, further shackling him to the estate he loathes. His brand of masculine stands in direct opposition to the violent, alpha male behaviour of estate

residents elsewhere in the cycle. Tommy exemplifies the men that Linnie Blake characterises as "trapped within a stultifying present that prevents them from developing beyond their teenage years".[300] In his unwillingness to leave the house or explore new options, Tommy mirrors the behaviour of a reclusive teenager quite effectively. He also displays a refusal to take responsibility for his current situation, his life and the life of his child, until they are once again in grave danger; the narrative encourages judgement of Tommy for his failure to leave the estate (although the alternative is never specified or envisioned). The narrative goes as far as to suggest that Tommy himself is responsible for the terrorisation of his small family. His therapist warns: "everything about you says 'victim'", once again suggesting a weakened, feminised masculinity which, she argues, makes him all the more vulnerable to a repeat attack. The rhetoric of victim blaming corresponds with the pernicious belief, charted throughout this study, that the poor are the architects of misfortune, as Imogen Tyler suggests, class struggle has been "expunged and inequality [has been] reconceived as a matter of will".[301] Tommy's therapist refers to the attackers as "predators" and believes that such creatures can "see your fear". The language used by this medical professional serves to remove human agency from the hoodies and once again pathologises them. She also bestows almost mythical powers unto the figures that Tommy so fears, suggesting a sixth sense and an animalistic drive to pursue and attack. Neither suggestion disempowers the monstrous image Tommy holds in his mind; in fact, small details throughout the narrative collaborate to endow these hoodies with a truly monstrous, supernatural presence. They are able to appear, seemingly from nowhere, and possess an unnatural strength for their size. They move without restriction and seem determined to claim Tommy's child, Elsa, for their own.

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[300] Blake. (2012). p. 82.

[301] Tyler. (2013). p. 187.

Once again, the supernatural element is driven by the children, or absence thereof, on the estate. A "children playing" sign that Tommy's bus passes has been vandalised, devil horns drawn on the figure of the child, whilst the eerie absence of any other living soul is compounded by the mysterious disappearance of several children, whose images still remain on 'Missing' posters littered around the estate. The hoodies themselves are often referred to as 'kids', yet there is little about their behaviour that suggests typical childlike values such as play or innocence. The embodied juxtaposition of childhood and monstrosity is epitomised by the television images that Tommy flicks through one night. Images of rioting, violence, and predators feeding on prey contrast with images of a father and child playing, and footage of a circus performance. The image of the father and child, awash with warm colours and characterised by joy and playfulness, also presents a stark contrast to Tommy and Elsa, who seem to have little bond. Tommy's fearfulness adversely impacts Elsa, and she cries frequently as a result. He never engages in play with her, and although he holds her when necessary he rarely looks at her, his grief and fear hampering a parental connection. In some ways, then, the hoodies' return to Tommy's doorstep is redemptive, forcing him to acknowledge his fear and finally engage with fatherly duties.

The hoodies pay two visits to Tommy's home. On the first night, their arrival is heralded by a power outage and the sounds of their primal calling. A figure stands in the doorway of the home, just the outline of the hood visible through the frosted glass. This is the first of several instances where the hoodie will be sighted from a distance, or obscured by the *mise-en-scène*, in order to maintain their facelessness until the final act of the film. The hoodies are seen in reflections, as exemplified in the film's opening, through windows and net curtains, and only once night has fallen. Each time their identities and the true nature of their being is withheld by the invisibility of the face. Their first visit to the house is relatively uneventful. The figure taps quietly on the door, in an act of subtle intimidation, and then quietly leaves. Just like *The*

Disappeared and *Heartless*, Tommy's sanity comes under scrutiny as a result of supernatural interference. His appearance slowly becomes more sickly and bedraggled as his psychological state deteriorates, and this goes hand in hand with the escalating violence he experiences with the hoodies.

The next day, Jo's life support is turned off, her death certificate citing an 'unidentified infection'. The funeral paradoxically represents both death and the potential for new life, as now Tommy is liberated from his obligation to stay nearby. Very few attend the funeral, one being a nurse from Jo's hospice, who provides the narrative with rare moments of humanity and kindness in her support of Tommy. The graveyard, as with so many of the film's locations, is overshadowed by the tower block, rising from the landscape to haunt the entire area, and Tommy in particular. His desperation to leave is made all the more acute when the priest, playing the role of harbinger, warns: "They're going to come looking for her, you know that." The priest delivers this warning with an unexpected anger and with liberal use of profanity, which makes him atypical as a man of the church, but also suggests that Tommy's paranoia regarding the residents of the estate is not entirely unjustified. The priest is not the only allusion to religion within the film. In fact, religious signifiers are regularly seen throughout the film — the estate is ironically called 'Edenstown', Tommy wears a crucifix at all times and is seen to pray before venturing across the estate, and the nurse who represents salvation for Tommy is called 'Marie', a variant of Mary. Whilst the presence of these biblical references suggests awareness and practising of religion, they also accentuate a lack of faith. The priest openly confesses that he no longer has belief in God, and Tommy's reliance on Christianity to comfort him seems cynical, practiced out of fear rather than faith. Edenstown itself could not be further from the paradise of Eden, but the name is appropriate in that this is the place where Tommy discovers the knowledge of true evil, and where he must take responsibility for his life and mistakes if he is to find redemption.

Delayed signing his house back to the council at the housing office, Tommy misses the only bus of the day and is stranded in Edenstown for another night after the funeral. Without shelter, he is forced to break in to the house he has just vacated, leaving him with only a door chain to secure the building. This scene alone is an effective articulation of the precarity of lives lived in council owned residences — the resources afforded the estate are so meagre that Tommy ends up returning to the house despite his desperation to leave, and is forced into breaking and entering to provide shelter for his family. The odds are weighed heavily against Tommy's escape, and it is not long before the hoodies return to take advantage of Tommy's vulnerability. Once again, a power outage precedes their arrival, as does the appearance of a syringe on the floor of the living room. The syringe is not only an important indicator that the hoodies are 'inside the house', but also links this incident explicitly with Jo's attack, and with drug culture. The hoodies, after all, serve as a manifestation of the mythology surrounding drug culture and addiction. Their supernatural presence allegorises the spectre of addiction in underprivileged working-class areas, and this allegory is only strengthened when the origin of the creatures is revealed.

By the time Tommy is under attack, the phone line has already been cut to the property, presumably because he no longer 'exists' as a resident of the estate. In this way, Tommy's own existence is somewhat spectral — a character that has been left behind whilst progress and time has moved his fellow residents on to other places and other lives. He is held to a particular location by unresolved trauma, and is limited in his travel around the estate. Missing his bus off the estate draws some parallels with the ghosts who 'miss the light' in Peter Jackson's *The Frighteners* (1996) therefore bound to earth until the next opportunity comes to transcend earthly space. Just as in the opening scenes, Tommy has no one to turn to for help, and resorts to barricading himself in his bathroom. This is where Marie finds him the next morning, rescuing him from the wreckage of his house and from his plight of complete isolation. As Tommy

tentatively opens the door to Marie, weak daylight creates a ring of light around her, suggestive of an angelic presence.

Marie's goodness is not enough to protect her from the evil on the estate, though. After taking Tommy and Elsa in for the night, Marie tries to reassure Tommy about the 'kids' he is so afraid of, condemning the priest's earlier assertion that the hoodies are "scum" and "not human". Her monologue reflects her idealistic and kindly nature, and her conclusion is not so far from the conclusion reached at several points throughout this thesis: "It's so easy to demonise these kids. What they need is our sympathy". Marie's sympathy and non-judgemental outlook is commendable, and for one evening, she completes Tommy's family unit, and offers hope of love, happiness and security. The colours inside her apartment are warm and bright, a complete contrast with every other location in the film, and when Tommy looks fearfully out of the window to the tower block which represents his traumatic past, Marie draws the curtain and forces him to look away. However, this hopeful scenario does not last long, as Marie is attacked and killed while walking Tommy to the bus stop the next evening. Sadly, her determination to prove to Tommy that the hoodies are 'just kids' leads to her demise, and just moments later, Elsa is snatched from Tommy too, resulting in a complete dismantling of the family unit.

It is during this attack that Tommy finally catches a glimpse of a hoodie's face. Having made it to the bus, Tommy tries to hide himself and Elsa when the hoodies bring the bus to a halt. Elsa's cries alert the hoodie to their presence and as he turns, his face is reflected in the bus window — the audience and the protagonist view the bruised, scarred and twisted face of the monster simultaneously. It is now solely Tommy's responsibility to save his child and eradicate the threat of the hoodies, and he can no longer hide behind his fear. Seeking out the priest, it becomes clear that the hoodies have been able to find Tommy because they can sense the fear he constantly feels. His fear has made him vulnerable and put his child in jeopardy. The priest

advises that they must return to the block where the narrative began, and destroy it: "Don't think of them as human, or that they can be saved… they're a cancer, cutting it out is the most merciful thing to do." He goes on to explain that the block itself is 'infected' and that the hoodies, the result of inbreeding and drug use, are addicted to fear and the toxic mould that lines the block's walls. It is therefore explicitly argued that the landscape is as much the cause of monstrosity as the people who first left drug addled children in the basement of the block. On rescuing Elsa, and after the priest has perished at the hands of the children he so despised, Tommy must walk out towards the light, past the returning hordes of mutant hoodies, with Elsa and the priest's adopted child, Danny. Having rescued Elsa alone, and battled his way out of the block, Tommy no longer feels fear, and is therefore able to transcend what once defined him, leading both children to safety, and blowing the block up, the hoodies inside. The film ends with Danny asking Tommy: "Are they gone?" to which Tommy replies: "They're gone". This statement not only refers to the departure of the evil, but also the disappearance of Tommy's fear, which he has been forced to confront and in so doing has found redemption. The film ends here, and Tommy and Elsa are not shown to leave the estate. The audience are, once again, deprived of a tidy resolution to the trauma that has unfolded — perhaps these unforgiving conclusions serve to emphasise the lack of resolution regarding the alienation and repression of the working-class that all hoodie horrors to some extent exploit and expose.

Hoodie horror's supernatural narratives have a lot in common, but the outstanding theme is an obsession with the past — the eulogising of a life much changed by trauma and decay. Jamie and Matthew both find that the source of their happiness does not exist in the present, whilst Tommy is precariously tethered to the present by his infant child, who seems to be the sole reason for his continued existence. These young men have to look backwards for the comfort and stability that their present does not provide, and that their futures do not seem likely to return to. These narratives allegorise Owen Jones' observation that the existence of a hard-

working, respected and proud working-class has been extinguished by post-millennium classist rhetoric. The noble tradition of working-classness has been replaced by the images of juvenile delinquency, laziness and gang activity that prevail as the contemporary understanding of the working-class.[302] As a result, in a 2011 study[303] many tried to distance themselves from the now deeply unflattering working-class label. It is no wonder, then, that our protagonists do not relish the future, with their identities in tatters and the structures that gave them meaning (family, religion, work) crumbling around them.

The concept of haunting is particularly poignant when discussing the positionality of the working-class, and although only one of the three protagonists discussed here actually encounters ghosts, each is the victim of a specifically targeted 'haunting' or stalking by entities which fit within the realm of the supernatural. Elsewhere, this thesis has discussed the stigmas and stereotypes which face the young working-class man in contemporary Britain. The inclusion of the supernatural in *Heartless*, *The Disappeared* and *Citadel* provides a poignant representation of the extent to which working-class signifiers can haunt an individual. The films present a literalisation of the haunting implicit in every hoodie horror narrative, with the supernatural effectively providing a tangible, identifiable manifestation of the myriad contributors to the 'tribal stigma' of class. These contributors have, by turns, been articulated as injurious, and sometimes even fatal, to members of the working-class throughout the cycle as a whole, but are made completely and unavoidably visible when embodied by a ghost or demon. The stigma of class is monstrous, relentless and difficult, if not impossible, to overcome, and the supernatural figure provides a vivid shorthand for the impact it has on working-class lives. As demonstrated by testimonies recalling instances where a job application has been rejected because of

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[302] Jones. (2011). p.ix.

[303] Study led by thinktank 'BritainThinks' in Jones. p.ix.

a postcode,[304] or a young man has been a victim of profiling because of his clothing, being working-class in austerity Britain is limiting and frustrating. In each narrative, the supernatural simultaneously encourages the audience to align with the protagonist and characterises monstrosity as the preserve of working-class spaces rather than working-class people. These supernatural narratives are a reflection of the mythology of class, not a reflection of the reality, and yet in utilising the fantastical constructs of the paranormal, contemporary class mythologies are exposed to be equally fantastical as the ghost or demon. As Walker contests: "such texts utilise…stereotypes in a way which exaggerates such fears and creates a dialogue which conflates 'the truth' of the media with the formal properties of genres which are predicated on excess".[305] The realist elements of the supernatural horror film, such as the estate landscapes, confined living quarters and the pervasive sense of ongoing financial and moral struggle, are enhanced by the mythological status of the antagonist, whose existence draws into sharp relief that which is realist and recognisable. It is therefore quite possible that, whilst their use of supernatural monsters distances this set of films further from social realism than its contemporaries, the supernatural hoodie horror film actually posits the most effective allegory of working-class existence through a defiance of typical and traditional cinematic representations.

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[304] Victor Olisa, a police officer who frequently patrolled the Broadwater Farm estate post-riots, notes: "Whether it's a job or a summer job, or to be part of a club, when [people find] out the address of where they live it seems to be a disadvantage to them." (Louise Ridley. 'Broadwater Farm estate's Youth are Battling to Escape the 'Folklore' of Mark Duggan's Death and 1985 Riot'. *Huffpost U.K.* (05/08/2016)).

[305] Walker. (2012). p.450.

The End?

According to Thomas M. Sipos, "[h]orror does not inherently support any particular ideology. Part of horror's enduring strength is that it's elastic enough to express all views".[306] The variety in the hoodie horror cycle alone is testament to the flexibility and changeability of this particularly far-reaching genre. However, in the body of this thesis it has been demonstrated that in spite of the genre's fluid nature, particular themes prevail and specific issues are addressed time and again. The hoodie horror cycle began at a time of severe economic difficulty, which aggravated class prejudices that were already at work under Tony Blair's government (despite his claims of a 'classless' society),[307] and the cycle thrived as these tensions appeared to worsen, with hoodie horror reaching its zenith around the time of the 2011 riots. The themes of masculinity and class that are the backbone of hoodie horror provide a cohesive and at times powerful response to contemporary events and anxieties. Hoodie horror is a keen example of a topical cinema; one which demonstrates the power of the horror genre to alter its conventions, as Sipos asserts, to respond contemporaneously to the concerns of the day. However, contrary to Sipos' statement, there are common themes and understandings throughout the history of British horror cinema which suggest that the genre does continuously support, or respond to, certain ideologies and ideological constructs, with class as an overriding concern. In the introduction to this study, Imogen Tyler's comparison between Marx's lumpen-proletariat and the contemporary neoliberal notion of the underclass was utilised to explore how both ideologies can be used effectively to invalidate class, and

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[306] Sipos. (2010). p.256.

[307] Tony Blair. 'Labour Party Conference Speech, 1999'. *BBC News.* (28/09/99).

nullify class conflict, in order to legitimate a contempt of the poor.[308] This understanding of Tyler's comparison and the contemporary use of classist rhetoric provided a foundation for the critical appraisal of the hoodie horror film and its context. The mythologizing and dehumanising processes that are exploited and exposed within the cycle suggest that the notion of the underclass has been particularly effective in removing respect and autonomy from the working-class image in Britain.

The hoodie horror cycle proper began in 2008 with *Eden Lake*, as Britain stood on the precipice of critical economic and political change. The financial crash was well underway by the time of the film's release that September, and New Labour's promises of financial stability and social equality were in tatters. Terms such as 'chav' and 'hoodie' were by this time mainstays of the class lexicon, and with the new challenges of post-crash Britain, the young working-class were now also struggling against the pernicious allegations of 'benefit scrounging' as press and politicians theorised over where savings could be made. Soon-to-be Prime Minister David Cameron led the charge against those 'undeserving' claimants, backing a Tory plan which penalised those on jobseekers allowance, should they turn down a 'reasonable' job offer. In his disavowal of Labour's management of the incapacity benefit, Cameron took aim at young claimants in particular: "I don't believe there are nearly half a million young people in Britain with a disability which prevents them from doing any work at all".[309] Not only was there a lack of sympathy implicit in Cameron's hard line approach, but the language used legitimised and popularised a vilification of those relying on the welfare system, encouraging different media portrayals beyond the purview of this study, which exploited public contempt of the 'scrounger' or hoodie figure. As was briefly discussed in Chapter One, the stereotype of moral degradation and

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[308] Tyler. (2013). p.186.

[309] David Cameron in Macer Hall. 'Cameron: We'll put a stop to workshy benefit scroungers'. *The Express*. (07/01/08).

slovenliness has haunted depictions of the working-class in the media throughout the 21st-century, and with Cameron's politically sanctioned condemnation, these portrayals gained even further resonance. Lazy, aggressive, profanity-laden working-class characters were used to comedic effect in the sketch shows *Little Britain* and *The Catherine Tate Show*, as well as providing the backbone of Channel 4's incredibly popular *Shameless* (2004-2013), whose drunken and abusive Frank Gallagher became a cult antihero. These characters and their catchphrases became cultural touchstones in the discussion of class in Britain; in their emphasis of the very worst habits and behaviours associated with the working-class, they effectively turned the entire demographic into a punchline, devaluing class experiences and encouraging scorn and derision.

From 2010, with Cameron now Prime Minister, and austerity measures beginning to take huge bites out of social spending, the benefit scrounger figure was expounded by a rash of reality shows which aimed to expose the depraved and spectacular lives of Britain's poor; the aforementioned 'poverty porn' phenomena. The furore around benefit claimants reached a peak in 2013,[310] with Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osbourne, delivering a speech that April which highlighted fears that some were cheating the system: "[f]or too long, we've had a system where people who did the right thing — who get up in the morning and work hard — felt penalised for it, while people who did the wrong thing got rewarded for it".[311] The Conservative policy paper on welfare reform stated that the overhaul of the benefits system between 2010 and 2015 was based partly on the belief that "there are insufficient incentives to encourage people on benefits to start paid work or increase their

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[310] Ian Mulheirn's ('The Myth of the Welfare Scrounger' (15/03/13)) article for *The Statesman* makes use of research which suggests that there has been a huge, and resoundingly negative, shift in the perception of welfare recipients between 1993 and 2013. He also references research from the Department of Work and Pensions which suggests that the notion of 'benefit dependency' is without grounds – "almost four out of five claimants had spent at least three quarters of the past four years off the dole".

[311] George Osbourne. 'Chancellor's speech on changes to the tax and benefit system'. *GOV.UK.* (Delivered 02/04/13).

hours".[312] As the fear and resentment around the scrounger and the hoodie grew, so did their representation in reality television shows. *Skint* (2013-2014) and *Benefits Street*, both backed by Channel 4, were particularly unforgiving in their emphasis on drug use, alcohol use and the manipulation of the benefits system, though they framed themselves as socially conscious documentaries. Elsewhere, council estate-set television dramas also made use of the renewed fascination with class, but employed slightly less reductive and slightly more sympathetic approaches. Shows such as *Misfits* (2009-2013), *Top Boy* (2011-present) and *Run* (2013) all responded in various ways to the implication that the working-class was in some way 'other' than the rest of British society, prey to their own lack of direction or ambition and predisposition for illegal activities. These programmes were perhaps equally reliant on working-class stereotypes, but each went some way to attribute the characters' failings to greater, systematic oppression, creating tragic narratives which aimed to invoke pity rather than laughter.

Pity, arguably, is just as problematic as derision, but its presence in these examples from recent television programming at least tend towards a social consciousness that is missing from many comedy and 'reality' programmes. In summary, issues of class, or at least their presence in the media, seemed to accelerate dramatically in the years following the financial crash. The purpose of this short acknowledgement of how class was perceived elsewhere in media industries, outside of the hoodie horror, illustrates the scope and reach of the class concern in contemporary Britain, and to suggest some potential further avenues of investigation which would benefit from a similar approach to the one taken here to address the hoodie horror. Whilst hoodie horror itself has lost momentum in the past five years, television has inherited, and continues to address, the concerns which the cycle exposed.

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[312] Department for Work and Pensions. 'Policy Paper: 2010 to 2015 government policy: welfare reform'. *GOV.UK*. (Updated 08/05/15).

Given its extreme topicality, hoodie horror was perhaps not destined to enjoy longevity as a cycle. From 2012 onwards, hoodie horror has quietened, its popularity waning as the political and public gaze shifted from domestic concerns to the international landscape. Almost a decade after *Eden Lake*'s release, there has been a gradual political shift in public sympathies from New Labour to Conservative and, in some cases, the far right. There has been a gradual proliferation in acts of domestic terrorism, and the U.K.'s security threat level has risen correspondingly. Meanwhile, partly through a leveraging of domestic panic regarding the country's influx of refugees fleeing Islamic State, Britons voted to leave the European Union. The fear-mongering which accompanied the campaigning is exemplified by Nigel Farage's much reviled campaign poster, which depicted a long line of refugees walking towards the photographer, with the caption "Breaking Point". For many, the poster confirmed that U.K. Independence Party's Brexit campaign was not anti-E.U., so much as anti-migrant, with Unison's Dave Prentis alleging it was "a blatant attempt to incite racial hatred",[313] whilst others identified similarities between Farage's poster and anti-Semitic Nazi propaganda.

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[313] Dave Prentis in Heather Stewart and Rowena Mason. 'Nigel Farage's anti-migrant poster reported to police'. *The Guardian.* (16/06/16).

Figure 5: Farage stands proudly underneath his divisive Brexit campaign poster

All of these concerns lead to a refocusing of political and press agendas away from the working-class folk devil; the Brexit campaign, at its most extreme, positioned majority non-white refugees as far more threatening than the domestic working-class, and at its most benign, positioned the European Union as oppressive overlords who were stifling the potential of the U.K. and its people. The irony of this characterisation, given the discussions that have taken place regarding class oppression throughout this study, is particularly blatant.The anxieties surrounding Brexit have, one way or another, eclipsed public concern regarding the working-class, and continue to do so. A year after the referendum, a YouGov poll from June 2017 suggests that whilst 70% of Britons think Brexit must be honoured in the wake of the vote, 36% are expecting to get a poor deal out of Brexit negotiations following the 2017 general election results, and only 22% had confidence in the Government's approach to negotiations.[314] With eyes firmly fixed on national borders instead of class divisions, the hoodie horror cycle

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[314] Anthony Wells. 'Majority favour pushing on with Brexit – but many are tempted by a softer path'. *YouGov U.K.* (15/06/17).

has stalled; it's most active period in the past. The hoodie's moment as the folk devil has passed, and this has arguably disempowered the hoodie horror. The fear and resentment has been redirected, and the interest in morally and financially decrepit young men has waned, at least for the time being. More recent council-estate set horror, such as *Devil's Tower* (Tooth, 2014) and *Containment* (Mcenery-West, 2015) reflects the shift from national to global folk devils, with the themes of delinquency and male working-class cultures, conventional to the hoodie horror, upstaged by notions of apocalypse and invasion.

The momentum and subsequent heightened visibility gained by xenophobic nationalist parties such as the U.K. Independence Party and the British National Party, has moved the emphasis away from domestic prejudices of class and towards contempt for international communities of migrants and refugees (despite both parties failing to hold up under this pressure — arguably both parties found themselves in disarray after the snap election in 2017). A rhetoric of intolerance that has eclipsed the class contempt that provided the material for hoodie horror in its far-reaching ignorance and hatred of the 'non-British' (literally, not figuratively as discussed in the previous chapter). Looking more cynically at the decline of the hoodie folk devil, it could be argued that the populist message behind not only U.K.I.P's political ascension during the 2015 election, but the successful push for a 'leave' vote in the E.U. referendum a year later, required a political pandering towards the same working-class demographic that politicians and press alike had spent the previous fifteen years vilifying and chastising. As Lisa Mckenzie observes: "Over the past 30 years there has been a sustained attack on working-class people, their identities, their work and their culture by Westminster politics and the media bubble around it. Consequently they have stopped listening to politicians and to Westminster and they are doing what every politician fears: they are using their own experiences in judging

what is working for and against them".[315] This drive to take matters into their own hands created the perception that the politically fatigued working-class vote could be the difference between leave and remain. The narrative of moral panic was forcibly shifted, therefore, away from this newly valuable demographic, towards the immigrant and refugee populations. The move towards far right rhetoric has since been witnessed across Europe and North America, and has resulted in an international horror boom,[316] as the future of society as a whole feels increasingly uncertain and precarious.

The focus of the revival has therefore moved away from the specifically British challenges of class towards a depiction of more universal monsters, which could pose both a national and global threat — apocalypse narratives (*The Rezort* (Barker, 2015), *Plan Z* (Brennan, 2016) and *The Girl with all the Gifts* (McCarthy, 2016)), occultism (*The Hallow*, *The Ritual* (Bruckner, 2017)) and the traditional (or not so traditional) ghost story (*The Quiet Ones* (Pogue, 2014), *Nina Forever* (Blaine Bros. 2015)) continue to hold sway in British horror filmmaking. This suggests, therefore, that the hoodie horror film is above all else a response to and critique of, neoliberal values and policies as they pertain to the working-class, introduced by the Blairite government and perpetuated by David Cameron's. From the legislation of the ASBO to Cameron's idealistic 'hug-a-hoodie'[317] campaign, the sentiments of which were quickly redrawn in the wake of the 2011 riots, the young working-class have consistently been viewed

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[315] Lisa Mckenzie. 'Brexit is the only way the working class can change anything'. *The Guardian*. (15/06/16).

[316] In 2017, horror has reportedly dominated the box office, with *Get Out* and the *IT* remake both breaking box office records, with the genre taking over $900 million between January and October in the U.S. alone. (Rob Cain. '2017 Is The Biggest Year For Horror In Decades'. *Forbes*. (16/10/17)). The success of socially aware horror prompted *The Guardian*'s Steve Rose to coin the term 'post-horror' ('How post-horror movies are taking over cinema'. *The Guardian*. 06/07/17). This clumsy re-categorisation of certain 'high-brow', critically legitimised horror offerings by intellectuals and journalists suggests a continuing contempt for the horror genre as a whole, despite its recent success. Rose paints a picture of the horror audience as one that cannot grasp the subtleties of such socially aware works, and speaks of such films as though they are a rarity and a new phenomenon.

[317] David Cameron. 'Speech to the Centre for Social Justice'. *BBC News*. (Delivered 10/07/06).

through a lens of fear, disdain and condescending paternalism. The hoodie horror cycle is unique in that it was almost instantaneously politicised within this environment of fear; unlike many of its horror predecessors, that were politicised retrospectively, hoodie horror captures the zeitgeist by dealing with contemporaneous political tensions head-on. Whilst the deeper allegorical values have been discussed at length in the previous chapters, there is no doubt about what has inspired the hoodie horror film, as class tensions and the folk devil of the 'hoodie' are explicitly unpacked within the narratives.

Hoodie horror also marks the beginning of a renewed assault on the mobilisation of fear as a weapon, a theme that has only become more prescient in the years since its inception, with fear used to great rhetorical and political effect in the recent political campaigns for the U.S presidency and the E.U. referendum. This itself has been reflected in recent horror output, with the most recent season of *American Horror Story* (Falchuk & Murphy, 2017), the remake of *IT* (whilst a remake, the timing of this venture is conspicuous and suggests a wider resurgent trend) and *The Ritual* all dealing with monsters which feed on or propagate through the consumption of fear.[318] However, prior to these releases, hoodie horror was already focused upon an antagonist created and sustained by a classist language of fear. Moreover, many of the most irredeemable characters in hoodie horror are empowered by the fear they inspire in others, with the hoodies of *Citadel* and *Heartless* having a particularly explicit symbiotic relationship with fear. Fear is such a huge component in the classification of the poorest in society, and responses to the working-class from Mayhew (1865) to Tookey (2008) reveal an enduring fear of a class which does not, through necessity, subscribe to the same moral codes and priorities as the middle and upper classes. This thesis has suggested on several occasions that the real terror of

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[318] *American Horror Story: Cult* follows Kai, a young man inspired by the Trump presidential campaign to use fear to substantiate a murderous cult following . His proficient manipulation of widespread fears sees him elected a city councilman. The antagonist of IT literally sustains itself on the consumption of fear, whilst the monstrous God of The Ritual hold s a woodland community in terror, in order to ensure they continue to provide sacrifices.

the hoodie horror film comes not from the hoodies themselves, but from what the hoodie suggests about the system that brings such figures into existence; both literally in terms of the invention of the hoodie mythology and figuratively in terms of the state propagated financial struggle and social displacement of the working-class. The films, despite their sometimes problematic or outright exploitative qualities, incisively demonstrate the power an image can have, once the state and the press have sanctioned it as something to fear. The supernatural narratives in particular, but all the films to an extent, draw focus to the creation of the object of fear, and the fantasy of its popular characterisation.

The hoodie figure is representative of a 'real-life' adversary, one that could be encountered in the supermarket or at the bus stop, and one that could be transferred directly to the screen without obfuscation, suggesting that class contempt is one of the last acceptable vestiges of prejudice and discrimination. The hoodie, though, despite providing 'realist horror' in its plausibility as threat is only part of hoodie horror's dark universe. There is no question that these monsters have been created by a system in which all British citizens have invested, and perhaps unwittingly perpetuated. The working-class is not, as Mayhew or Lombroso[319] would suggest, a genetic phenomenon but is a vociferously upheld, manmade social construct. As such the existence of a struggling, poverty and crime-ridden working-class is not unavoidable, and its decline and its struggle is not genetically predetermined but created. Therefore, in the turning of the working-class body against the middle class body the hoodie horror exhibits a Frankensteinian twist, in which a man-made creation turns against its creator. The anguish, displacement and abandonment of Frankenstein's monster provides an allegory for class relations which casts a long shadow over the hoodie horror framework. As suggested in Chapter One, the parallels with the Gothic behemoth do not end there; in its suturing together of so many different cinematic

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[319] Mayhew. (1865), Lombroso. (2006).

components, from slasher to social realism to the Gothic, the hoodie horror itself becomes a Frankensteinian body, a patchwork of different 'bodies' of work. These parallels seem all the more pertinent when considered in relation to the variety of British conceptions of class — physical difference, lack of intellectual ability, a predisposition to crime and violence, childlike and feral — that rendered the hoodie figure a monster so dominant it sustained its own filmic cycle. The hoodie is itself a monster created from the myriad ways that class resentment is expressed, and cohesively represents anxieties surrounding financial instability, social decline and the displacement of traditional modes of masculinity.

This study has demonstrated the importance of considering horror as a social artefact, which is at its best during times of great social upheaval. The genre as a whole is too easily dismissed, as 'trash', 'porn' or 'exploitation', and yet horror's potential for recording and reflecting upon social trauma is undeniable. As I.Q. Hunter notes, "trash and British cinema make uneasy bedfellows", as horror and exploitation cinema fly in the face of the "exportable respectability"[320] achieved by the war film and social realism. Yet, horror is just as much a part of the cinematic DNA of Britain as any other genre, and it is precisely because of its tendency towards excess and exploitation, and its marginalised position, that it is so well placed to confront issues of gender, race and class. Hoodie horror has provided some deeply exploitative moments, and it is concerning that the working-class stereotypes visible within the cycle have gained such momentum and traction in public perception. However, it is only through affording these texts exploration and analysis that we can work to understand and challenge their problematic representations and perpetuate and encourage progressive horror filmmaking in years to come. British horror has continued to thrive post-hoodie horror in a wide variety of subgenres and cycles, reflecting the perceived atmosphere of global instability. As already noted, folk horror

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320 Hunter. (2015). p.32.

and a preoccupation with apocalypse in particular retains its popularity. Whilst bringing this study to its end, it seems appropriate to discuss how the hoodie horror itself relates to endings, and namely the final end which has so captured imaginations post-millennium: the apocalypse. The working-class, as represented by the hoodie figure, arguably stand to represent an unfolding class apocalypse. One where traditional class identities crumble into meaningless and where restrictive parameters of space, language and media representation are overcome by the hoodie horde, albeit through microcosmic transgressive behaviours, rather than the global apocalypse that is so often depicted elsewhere in genre cinema.

Arguably, there is plenty of the apocalypse narrative present in hoodie horror itself. The working-class, regardless of their narrative role, are perceived as a demographic who struggle and for whom survival is a daily concern. The communities and individuals of the horrific working-class share a number of traits with a resurgent apocalypse horror staple — the zombie. The working-class reside in a space somewhere between living and dead, and the demographic suffers an estrangement from the middle and upper classes, subjected to "social death"[321] as well as being surrounded and defined by literal, corporeal death. In this way, the working-class exist, but do not live, performing their working-classness much like a sentient zombie, defined by endless consumption (of products, of drugs and of bodies). As Will Dodson remarks of 'yuppie horror', "zombies are the exploited masses who buy into (and then devour) the very consumerist culture that relegates them to the bottom",[322] and the hoodie provides this same threat to consumerist culture in a specifically British context. Further aligning the working-class body with the undead body, as discussed in Chapter Two, the representation of the working-class body visually others them and marks them, often, as inhuman or subhuman. Xavier Aldana Reyes posits that Gothic

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[321] Castronovo. (2001). p.2.

[322] Will Dodson. 'Dead Hands: Vampires, Zombies and Yuppies from Reagan to Obama (and Trump)'. *Film International*. Vol. 14, Issue 3-4. 2016. p.56.

bodies "produce fear through their interstitiality: they are scary because they either refuse absolute human taxonomies or destabilise received notions of what constitutes a 'normal' or socially intelligible body".[323] The hoodie is socially unintelligible due to his low class and 'tribal stigma'. Sometimes his interstitiality manifests itself as an inhuman, alien body, and sometimes in his un-belonging his human body is marked as abnormal through class inferiority. Moreover, the working-class body's existence in a liminal or interstitial plane returns to the idea of apocalypse, characterised by an existence led in between pre and post-apocalypse worlds, an existence characterised by uncertainty and lack of belonging, and an outmoded demographic struggling to adjust.

Furthermore, the working-class is portrayed within the hoodie horror as existing in closer proximity to apocalypse, due to the precarity of their social position and occupation of a dystopian space which represents both moral regression and social decay or even complete obliteration. Within the working-class space, there also occurs a loss or reconfiguration of meaning; not only are middle class mores and values deconstructed and stripped of their power, but working-class identity is constantly under threat of destruction and is actively renegotiated throughout each narrative as the working-class space comes under attack in myriad different ways. The unresolved conclusions, cyclical narratives and complete entrapment of the working-class character in hoodie horror foster an atmosphere of debilitating stasis, the kind of "not-ending" that Evan Calder Williams forecasts in his Marxist-inflected commentary on the apocalypse: "the character of the years to come will likely be that of the not-ending, the outmoded but going nowhere"[324] — this is an accurate appraisal of the world of the hoodie and the world of the working-class in the public imagination.

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[323] Xavier Aldana Reyes. *Body Gothic: Corporeal Transgression in Contemporary Literature and Horror Film*. (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2014). p.5.

[324] Evan Calder Williams. *Combined and Uneven Apocalypse: Luciferian Marxism*. (Ropley, Hampshire: Zero Books, 2010). p. 5.

Moreover, Williams' definition of the apocalypse runs very closely to the hoodie horror narrative, with "a destruction of *totalizing* structures, of those universal notions that do not just describe 'how things are' but serve to prescribe and insist that 'this is how things must be'".[325] The destruction of the middle class body, and the destruction of estate signifiers such as the tower block, represent these totalising structures, the demise of which Williams sees as integral to the contemporary understanding of the apocalypse event. The imminence of the apocalypse, in this sense, is wholly present within the hoodie horror narrative, and of course the hoodie's power as an object of fear comes from their reluctance or refusal to adhere to what these totalising structures dictate.

From an alternative perspective, however, the hoodie horror also envisions a world that seems post-apocalyptic in nature, one which is full of territorial behaviour and unmediated violence, one in which capitalism has been re-crafted to suit the few who were, prior to 'the end' untouched by its benefits. Ana Moya and Gemma Lopez suggest that, in North American apocalypse cinema, "the whole planet has become a borderland and survivors become border subjects".[326] To once again reiterate the working-class' proximity to the apocalypse, the landscapes of the working-class are represented as akin to the landscape post-apocalypse. The working-class are border subjects, those who have survived the apocalypse events of de-industrialisation and austerity have become hardened and well-versed in the mistrust of outsiders, as well as the necessity of territorial and violent behaviour. However, with the apocalypse here being the preserve of only the working-class, bar the handful of middle class victims, the apocalypse has not represented the transition that Maya and Lopez go on to argue creates "the possibility of alternative social modes and structures".[327] With

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[325] Williams. (2010). p. 5.

[326] Ana Moya and Gemma Lopez. 'Looking back: Versions of the Post-Apocalyptic in Contemporary North-American Cinema'. *Film Criticism*. Vol 41, Issue 1. 2017. p.1-2.

[327] Moya & Lopez. (2017). p.15.

the current social modes and structures, if anything, strengthened by the working-class apocalypse — de-industrialisation reinforced the importance of and reliance upon consumerism, whilst austerity measures reinforced a belief in the undeserving poor — the hoodie horror is nihilistic in its characterisation of the futility of working-class survival within its narratives. Survival and redemption are possible within hoodie horror, as they are in apocalypse narratives, but they do not provide an equaliser which expunges class definitions and inhibitions. Rather, the hoodie horror corresponds more closely with David Christopher's definition of the dystopian narrative, in its depiction of the "full realization"[328] of capitalist culture. There is no fall of capitalist culture in these films, rather there is a reinforcement of it; in the incarceration of Lloyd and Moses, the deaths of Rian, Jamie and countless other working-class men and in the vilification that each and every working-class character is subjected to at some point within their narrative. The working-class may seem to win the odd battle, but they can never hope to win the war.

In order to address and discuss the importance of the hoodie horror film as social artefact, this study has taken a socio-political approach to the canon, employing the definitive scholarship of Marx, Connell and Goffman in conjunction with the recent social commentaries of Hanley, Tyler and Jones. Moreover, in order to situate the cycle within a cinematic timeline, the reading of the films has been informed by the cornerstone academic works of Clover, Wood and Pirie and the contemporary studies of Walker and Cooper, among others. Through the drawing together of filmic and sociological approaches, this study has demonstrated the importance and individuality of hoodie horror as topical cinema. These films capture and record a specific moment in British social and cinematic history, and explicitly exploit and expose the problematic neoliberal rhetoric and policymaking that, in the early 21st-century, encouraged a resurgence in British horror and social realist filmmaking. Whilst the

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[328] David Christopher. 'The Capitalist and Cultural Work of Apocalypse and Dystopia Films'. *Cineaction*. Issue 95. 2015. p.57.

films could easily be qualified as exploitation cinema, by approaching them from both a cinematic and social perspective it becomes clear that beyond the exploitation evident in hoodie horror, there is also a pertinent exploration of Britain's entrenched class system and, in some instances, outright condemnation of the prevalent attitudes surrounding class, masculinity and race within contemporary British society.

Whilst published work on these particular films is scarce, the conclusions drawn by some critics and academics seem to condemn the cycle for its vilification of young characters;[329] an understandable conclusion considering the films' content, and the exploitative values inherent in horror filmmaking on the whole. However, given the films' disreputability, it is surprising how little critics have considered the explicitly classed nature of the films when drawing their conclusions. Paul Elliott suggests: "[f]ilms like *Eden Lake* and *Harry Brown* do more than reflect contemporary fears about the young; they produce them, creating modern nightmares that leave very little space for ethical negotiation or resistance and that turn society's children into monsters and demons".[330] However, neither *Eden Lake* nor *Harry Brown* reflect fears about 'the young' as an indiscriminate and homogenous demographic. It is not society's children as a whole that are endangered by the representations present in these films, but working-class children (and young people, as most of the hoodies are in their teenage years) — the majority of whom are boys and young men. Elliott struggles to find any redemptive qualities to the representations such films offer, but, as this study has argued, when viewing a film such as *Eden Lake* through the lens of class, it is possible to derive meaningful commentary from the text. Johnny Walker, in his extensive work on contemporary British horror cinema, has offered a different approach to hoodie horror, claiming that films such as *Eden Lake* and *Cherry Tree*

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[329] Paul Elliott. *Studying the British Crime Film*. (Leighton Buzzard: Auteur, 2014). Rigby. (2015).

[330] Elliott. (2014). p.161.

Lane actually work "to expose the futility-and fantasy-of such generalisations"[331] regarding reactionary stereotypes of class, age and gender. Walker finds that these films actually provide a commentary and criticism of the rhetoric of excess, employed by politicians and media outlets against the working-class. As discussed in relation to supernatural hoodie horror, the fantasy Walker identifies within the generalisations exploited in hoodie horror are given shape in monstrous, inhuman antagonists. Even in the most unrelenting, realism-inflected hoodie horrors there is an absurdist, fantastical element to the characterisation of the hoodie, with his jarring, animalistic behaviour, unnerving ability to appear and disappear at will and macabre fascination with dissection and torture. True to form, this type of horror is polarising, with responses predominantly falling into one of two camps: those who agree with Elliott's assertion that the films are fundamentally damaging and exploitative (this sentiment was also echoed by Owen Jones in the preface to his *CHAVS*) and those who recognise underlying traces of social commentary within hoodie horror, as exemplified by Walker.

This thesis locates the cycle in a liminal space somewhere between exploitation and exploration, between social condemnation and social commentary, which seems appropriate given the extensive discussion of boundaries, borders and liminality throughout the previous chapters. Hoodie horror is in good company — many of the films considered as influential texts throughout the thesis also reside somewhere on this fragile boundary between art and excess. *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre*, *The Wicker Man*, *Peeping Tom* and many of their contemporaries presented extreme, exploitative imagery which has, at various times, overshadowed the insidious and incisive commentaries which underpin their narratives. Whilst hoodie horror does not perhaps match the iconic, canonical nature of these films, they do stand as important artefacts of a country struggling with austerity and a confused

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[331] Walker. (2015). p. 97.

political identity in the early years of the new millennium. Hoodie horror has captured a very specific moment, not only within British society but within filmmaking history. The British Horror Revival is undoubtedly a real, and hopefully lasting, phenomenon which has captured millennial anxieties and catalogued the turbulent first years of the 21st-century. Hoodie horror is a key component of this revival, and arguably one of the most resolutely British outputs of the BHR era, situating itself firmly within the narrative of British class conflict. With emphasis on Britain's lower classes, struggling against their characterisation as pariahs and monsters whilst also bearing the bulk of the burden created by austerity measures, there is a pervasive sense of isolation and hopelessness, and its characters are indeed burdened by their classification; for many it even proves to be lethal. Even the cycle's most abhorrent characters are pitiable — *Eden Lake*'s Brett is left in an abusive household to inherit the violence which resides there, and Aunty, leader of the *Community*, can only find meaning and authority within the confines of the estate, remaining a joke to the outside world. The "not-ending" of working-class oppression continues, beyond the cycle's lifespan.

I began this conclusion by questioning 'The End?'. Whilst there is a tangible, though informal, end to the production of hoodie horrors as they are discussed in this thesis, the events they responded to and the injustices they represent are ongoing. It is an expectation of the horror film that the monster is bound to return; just as British horror itself returned from the grave, so too will the monsters it represents. As Brett looks down the camera and into the viewer's eyes in the final moments of *Eden Lake*, he challenges the viewer to believe the violence is over. It is not over for him, his abusive father can be heard downstairs, and it is not over for Jenny, whose screams are a haunting soundtrack to the film's conclusion. Whilst it was the first offering of the cycle, *Eden Lake*'s final scene, with its implication of the repetition and propagation of class violence, is a perfect allegory for the hoodie horror's leave of absence. We may not see the violence, and it may not be screened, but it is not over simply because it has passed beyond the line of sight. Even as new folk devils appear to give hoodies a

rest from the limelight, film critics and scholars can comfortably predict, having looked back across centuries of class conflict and its cinematic representation, that it will not be so long before the working-class has reinvented itself and reappeared, like any good monster, within the realm of the British horror film, to terrorise the comfortable middle classes once more.

Appendix I

Chronology of Hoodie Horror

The Great Ecstasy of Robert Carmichael. (Clay, 2005).

The Disappeared. (Kevorkian, 2008).

Eden Lake. (Watkins, 2008).

Harry Brown. (Barber, 2009).

Heartless. (Ridley, 2009).*F* (a.k.a. *The Expelled*). (Roberts, 2010).

Cherry Tree Lane. (Williams, 2010).

Attack the Block. (Cornish, 2011).

Community. (Ford, 2012).

Comedown. (Huda, 2012).

Citadel. (Foy, 2012).

Tower Block. (Nunn & Thompson, 2012).

Appendix II

Hoodie Horror Secondary Filmography (in chronological order).

If. (Anderson, 1968).

A Clockwork Orange. (Kubrick, 1971).

Wilderness. (Bassett, 2006).

Ils (a.k.a. *Them*). Moreau & Palud, 2006).

Summer Scars. (Richards, 2007).

La Horde. (Dahan & Rocher, 2009).

Hoodie Holocaust. (Williams, 2011).

Devil's Tower. (Tooth, 2014).

Containment. (Mcenery-West, 2015).

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Amazing Grace (Bristol Bay Productions, dir.Michael Apted, 2006)

American Horror Story: Cult (20th Century Fox, Creators: Brad Falchuk & Ryan Murphy, 2017)

The American Nightmare (Minerva Pictures, dir. Adam Simon, 2000)

Anaconda (Cinema Line Film Corp., dir. Luis Llosa, 1997)

An American Werewolf in London (Polygram, dir. John Landis, 1981)

Assault on Precinct 13 (CKK Corporation, dir. John Carpenter, 1976)

Attack the Block (StudioCanal, dir. Joe Cornish, 2011)

Being Human (Touchpaper Television, Creator: Toby Whithouse, 2008-2013).

Belle (DJ Films, dir. Amma Asante, 2013)

Benefits Street (Channel 4 Television, dir. Phil Turner & Ben Reid, 2014-2015)

Billy Elliott (StudioCanal, dir. Stephen Daldry, 2000)

The Birth of A Nation (David. W. Griffith Corp., dir. David.W. Griffith, 1915)

Blacula (American International Pictures, dir. William Crain, 1972)

The Blair Witch Project (Haxan Films, dir. Eduardo Sanchez and Daniel Myrick, 1999)

Blood on Satan's Claw (Tigon British Film Productions, dir. Piers Haggard, 1971)

Burning an Illusion (British Film Institute, dir. Menelik Shabazz, 1981)

Candyman (Polygram, dir. Bernard Rose, 1992)

Candyman: Farewell to the Flesh (Polygram Filmed Entertainment, dir. Bill Condon, 1995)

Cannibal Holocaust (F.D. Cinematographica, dir. Ruggero Deodato, 1980).

Casino Royale (Columbia Pictures, dir. Martin Campbell, 2006)

The Catherine Tate Show (Tiger Aspect Productions, Creator: Catherine Tate, 2004 - 2009)

Cherry Tree Lane (Limelight, dir. Paul Andrew Williams, 2010)

Child's Play 3 (Universal Pictures, dir. Jack Bender, 1991)

Chitty Chitty Bang Bang (Dramatic Features, dir. Ken Hughes, 1968)

Circus of Horrors (Lynx Films Ltd., dir. Sidney Hayers, 1960)

Citadel (Blinder Films, dir. Ciaran Foy, 2012)

A Clockwork Orange (Warner Bros. dir. Stanley Kubrick, 1971)

Comedown (Serotonin Films, dir. Menhaj Huda, 2012)

Community (New Town Films Ltd., dir. Jason Ford, 2012)

Containment (Bright Cold Day Films, dir. Neil Mcenery-West, 2015)

Cracker (Granada Television, Creator: Jimmy McGovern, 1993-1996)

Creature from the Black Lagoon (Universal International Pictures, dir. Jack Arnold, 1954)

Creep (U.K Film Council, dir. Christopher Smith, 2004)

The Curse of Frankenstein (Hammer Films, dir. Terence Fisher, 1957).

Dawn of the Dead (Dawn Associates, dir. George A. Romero, 1978)

Day of the Dead (United Film Distribution Company, dir. George A. Romero, 1985)

Dead Man's Shoes (Warp Films, dir. Shane Meadows, 2004)

Dead of Night (Ealing Studios, dir. Alberto Cavalcanti et. al. 1945)

Dead Set [miniseries] (Zeppotron, dir. Yann Demange, 2008)

Death Line (Harbor Ventures, dir. Gary Sherman, 1972)

Deliverance (Warner Bros., dir. John Boorman, 1972)

The Descent (Celador Films, dir. Neil Marshall, 2005)

Devil's Tower (Toothpix, dir. Owen Tooth, 2014)

Die Hard (Twentieth Century Fox Film Corp. dir. John McTiernan, 1988)

Doghouse (Carnaby International, dir. Jake West, 2009)

Dog Soldiers (Kismet Entertainment Group, dir. Neil Marshall, 2002)

Don't Look Now (Casey Productions, dir. Nicholas Roeg, 1973)

The Disappeared (Lost Tribe Productions, dir. Johnny Kevorkian, 2008)

Dr. No (Eon Productions, dir. Terence Young, 1962)

Dracula (Universal Pictures, dir. Tod Browning, 1931).

Drag Me to Hell (Universal Pictures, dir. Sam Raimi, 2009)

Driller Killer (Navaron Films, dir. Abel Ferrara, 1979)

Eden Lake (Rollercoaster Films, dir. James Watkins, 2008)

The Exorcist (Warner Bros., dir. William Friedkin, 1973).

F (AKA *The Expelled*) (Black Robe, dir. Johannes Roberts, 2010)

Frankenstein (Universal Pictures, dir. James Whale, 1931)

Friday the 13th (New Line Cinema, dir.Marcus Nispel, 2009)

Friday the 13th Part 2 (Georgetown Productions, Inc., dir. Steve Miner, 1981)

The Frighteners (Universal Pictures, dir. Peter Jackson, 1996)

Get Out (Blumhouse Production, dir. Jordan Peele, 2017)

Ghostwatch (BBC, dir. Lesley Manning, 1992)

The Girl with all the Gifts (Poison Chef, dir. Colm McCarthy, 2016)

The Goonies (Warner Bros. dir. Richard Donner, 1985)

The Great Ecstasy of Robert Carmichael (Boudu Films, dir. Thomas Clay, 2005)

The Hallow (Occupant Entertainment, dir.Corin Hardy, 2015).

Halloween (Compass International Pictures, dir. John Carpenter, 1978)

Halloween (Dimension Films, dir. Rob Zombie, 2007).

Hammer House of Horror (Hammer Films, dir. Peter Sasdy, Tom Clegg, Alan Gibson et. al., 1980)

Harry Brown (UK Film Council, dir. Daniel Barber, 2009)

The Haunting (Argyle Enterprises, dir. Robert Wise, 1963)

The Haunting in Connecticut 2: Ghosts of Georgia (Gold Circle Films, dir. Tom Elkins, 2013)

Heartless (May 13 Films, dir. Philip Ridley, 2009)

Hellraiser (Cinemarque Entertainment, dir. Clive Barker, 1987)

Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer (Maljack Productions, dir.John McNaughton, 1986)

Hollow (Hollow Pictures, dir. Michael Axelgaard, 2011)*Home Alone* (Hughes Entertainment, dir. Christopher Columbus, 1990)

Hoodie Holocaust (short) (Dead Reckless, dir. Adam M. Williams, 2011)

La Horde (Capture [the Flag] Films, dir. Yannick Dahan & Benjamin Rocher, 2009)

Horrors of the Black Museum (Anglo-Amalgamated, dir. Arthur Crabtree, 1958)

Hot Fuzz (Universal Pictures, dir. Edgar Wright, 2007)

If (Memorial Enterprises, dir. Lindsay Anderson, 1968)

Ils (*Them*) (Eskwad, dir. David Moreau & Xavier Palud, 2006)

The Innocents (Achilles, dir. Jack Clayton, 1961)

Invasion of the Body Snatchers (Walter Wanger Productions, dir. Don Siegel, 1956)

Island of The Damned (a.k.a *Who can Kill a Child?*) (Penta Films, dir. Narciso Ibanez Serrador, 1976)

IT (Green/Epstein Productions, dir. Tommy Lee Wallace, 1990)

IT (New Line Cinema, dir. Andy Muschietti, 2017)

It Follows (Northern Lights Films, dir. David Robert Mitchell, 2014)

Jaws (Zanuck/ Brown Productions, dir. Steven Spielberg, 1975)

Ju-On: The Grudge (Pioneer LDC, dir. Takashi Shimizu, 2002)

Jurassic Park (Universal Pictures, dir. Steven Spielberg, 1993)

Kes (Kestrel Films, dir. Ken Loach, 1969)

Kidulthood (Stealth Films, dir. Menhaj Huda, 2006)

Kill List (Warp X, dir. Ben Wheatley, 2011)

King Kong (RKO Radio Pictures, dir. Merian C. Cooper & Ernest B. Schoedsack, 1933)

Lake Placid (Fox 2000 Pictures, dir. Steve Miner, 1999)

Land of the Dead (Universal Pictures, dir. George A. Romero, 2005)

The Last House on the Left (Lobster Enterprises dir. Wes Craven, 1972)

The Last House on the Left (Rogue Pictures, dir. Dennis Iliadis, 2009)

Let Me In (Overture Films, dir. Matt Reeves, 2010)

Let The Right One In (EFTI, dir. Tomas Alfredson, 2008)

Little Britain (BBC, Creators: Andy Riley, Kevin Cecil, Matt Lucas & David Walliams, 2003 - 2006)

Long Weekend (Australian Film Commission, dir. Colin Egglestone, 1978)

Luther (BBC, Creator: Neil Cross, 2010-2015)

M (Nero-Film AG, dir. Fritz Lang, 1931)

Magic (Joseph E. Levine Productions, dir Richard Attenborough, 1978)

Mansfield Park (BBC, dir. Patricia Rozema, 1999)

Maria Marten, or The Murder in the Red Barn (George King Productions, dir. Milton Rosmer, 1935)

Mary Poppins (Walt Disney Productions, dir. Robert Stevenson, 1964)

Misfits (Clerkenwell Films, Creator: Howard Overman, 2009-2013)

A Moment of Horror (Film4, dir. Misc, 2015).

The Night of the Living Dead (Image Ten, dir. George A. Romero, 1968)

A Nightmare on Elm Street (New Line Cinema, dir.Samuel Bayer, 2010)

Nina Forever (Jeva Films, dir. Ben Blaine & Chris Blaine, 2015)

Nosferatu (Jofa-Atelier Berlin-Johannisthal, dir. F.W. Murnau, 1922)

Notting Hill (Polygram, dir. Richard Curtis, 1999)

The Omen (Twentieth Century Fox Film Corp., dir. Richard Donner, 1976)

Our Mother's House (Filmways, dir. Jack Clayton, 1967)

Paranormal Activity (Solana Films, dir. Oren Peli, 2007)

Peeping Tom (Michael Powell (Theatre), dir. Michael Powell, 1960)

The People Under the Stairs (Universal Pictures, dir. Wes Craven, 1991)

Plan Z (Imaginarium Tower, dir. Stuart Brennan, 2016)

Playing Away (Insight Productions, dir. Horace Ove, 1987)

Predator 2 (Davis Entertainment, dir. Stephen Hopkins, 1990)

Prevenge (dir. Alice Lowe, 2016)

Prom Night (Alliance, dir. Nelson McCormick, 2008).

Psycho (Shamley Productions, dir. Alfred Hitchcock, 1960)

Pumpkin Eater (Romulus Films, dir. Jack Clayton, 1964)

Quadrophenia (The Who Films, dir. Franc Roddam, 1979)

The Quatermass Xperiment (Hammer Films, dir. Val Guest, 1955)

The Quiet Ones (Hammer Films, dir. John Pogue, 2014)

Rebel Without a Cause (Warner Bros., dir. Nicholas Ray, 1955)

The Rezort (LWH Entertainment, dir. Steve Barker, 2015)

Ringu (Basara Pictures, dir. Hideo Nakata, 1998)

The Ritual (Entertainment One, dir. David Bruckner, 2017)

Room at the Top (Romulus Films, dir. Jack Clayton, 1959)

Rosemary's Baby (William Castle Productions, dir. Roman Polanski, 1968)

Run (Acme Films, dir. Charles Martin & Jonathan Pearson, 2013)

Saturday Night and Sunday Morning (Woodfall Film Productions, dir. Karel Reisz, 1960)

Saw (Evolution Entertainment, dir. James Wan, 2004)

Scream (Dimension Films, dir. Wes Craven, 1996)

Severance (Qwerty Films, dir. Christopher Smith, 2006)

Shameless (Company Pictures, Paul Abbott, 2004-2013)

Shaun of the Dead (Universal Pictures, dir. Edgar Wright, 2004).

The Silence of the Lambs (Strong Heart/Demme Productions, dir. Jonathan Demme, 1991)

The Skeleton Key (Universal Pictures, dir. Iain Softley, 2005)

Skint (KEO Films, Creator Unknown, 2013-2014)

Snuff (August Films, dir. Michael Findlay & Horacio Fredriksson, 1975)

Stake Land (Glass Eye Pix, dir. Jim Mickle, 2010)

Stalled (Cubicle Hero, dir. Christian James, 2013)

Submarine (The Weinstein Company, dir. Richard Ayoade, 2010)

Summer Scars (Prolific Films, dir. Julian Richards, 2007)

Taboo (Hardy, Son & Baker, Creators: Chips Hardy, Tom Hardy, Steven Knight, 2017-)

The Tapes (Darkside Pictures, dir. Lee Alliston & Scott Bates, 2011)

A Taste of Honey (Woodfall Film Productions, dir. Tony Richardson, 1961)

The Texas Chain Saw Massacre (Vortex, dir. Tobe Hooper, 1974)

The Texas Chainsaw Massacre (New Line Cinema, dir. Marcus Nispel, 2003)

Top Boy (Cowboy Films, Creator: Ronan Bennett, 2011-present)

Tower Block (Tea Shop and Film Company, dir. James Nunn & Ronnie Thompson, 2012)

Uncle Silas (AKA *The Inheritance*) (Two Cities Films, dir. Charles Frank, 1947)

Underworld (Lakeshore Entertainment, dir. Len Wiseman, 2003)

Unfriended (Blumhouse Productions, dir. Leo Gabriadze, 2014)

Urban Ghost Story (Living Spirit Pictures, dir. Genevieve Jolliffe, 1998)

Venus Drowning (Long Pig Industries, dir. Andrew Parkinson, 2006)

The Village of the Damned (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer British Studios, dir. Wolf Rilla, 1960)

Violent Playground (Rank Organisation, dir. Basil Dearden, 1958)

Wake Wood (Hammer Films, dir. David Keating, 2009)

The Walking Dead (AMC, Creator: Frank Darabont, 2010-present)

Welcome II The Terrordome (Channel Four Films, dir. Ngozi Onwurah, 1995)

Whistle and I'll Come To You (BBC, dir. Jonathan Miller, 1968)

White Zombie (V&E Halperin Productions, dir. Victor Halperin, 1932)

The Wicked Lady (Gainsborough Pictures, dir. Leslie Arliss, 1945)

The Wicker Man (British Lion Film Corporation, dir. Robin Hardy, 1973)

The Wild One (Stanley Kramer Productions, dir. Laslo Benedek, 1953)

Wilderness (Momentum Pictures, dir. Michael J. Bassett, 2006)

Witchfinder General (Tigon British Film Productions, dir, Michael Reeves, 1968)

The Woman in Black (Central Films, dir. Herbert Wise, 1989)

The Woman In Black (Hammer Films, dir. James Watkins, 2012)

The World's End (Universal Pictures, dir. Edgar Wright, 2013)

Wrong Turn (Summit Entertainment, dir. Rob Schmidt, 2003)

Wuthering Heights (Film 4, dir. Andrea Arnold, 2011)

12 Years a Slave (Regency Enterprises, dir. Steve McQueen, 2013)

28 Days Later (DNA Films, dir. Danny Boyle, 2002).