Representations of the Media and their effects in David Peace's *Red Riding Quartet*

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Abstract

This study concerns the novels of the *Red Riding Quartet* (1999-2002), the first published works of David Peace, a British author born in West Yorkshire in 1967 and the author's use of an essentially conservative genre – crime fiction – to present an alternative account of a pivotal decade, between the mid-1970s and the mid-1980s, for the UK and, more specifically, for the English North. Under investigation is the significance that Peace affords to the operations and concerns of the news media, whose influence is apparent in both the subject matter - the centrality of journalist characters and their activities – and the form - in the narrative drive that news stories provide and in the repetitive and insistent news headlines which punctuate the texts. I will consider the ways in which Peace's earliest novels both utilise and challenge conventions of genre and their relationship to a tradition of crime writing, in fiction, in the reporting of crime as news and in the nebulous territory of 'True Crime'. I will pay attention to the very particular historical period which Peace has chosen to set his novels, as a post-second world war 'settlement' gave way to the vicissitudes of the free-market, and at the developments in the UK's media industry which accompanied this considerable societal shift. Also significant and visited here is the *Quartet*'s geographical siting and the author's interrogation of the way that the North has come to be conceived in the public imagination as distinct, sometimes 'other'. Finally, the thesis will investigate some of the moral issues raised by the novels; at the political direction the reader sees emerging, at the author's presentation of crimes and at the media's role in articulating a public morality. The thesis is written with theories of the media and culture that were developed by pioneering critical theorists and UK based cultural materialists in mind.

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Introduction

This thesis is a study of the representations of the media in David Peace's *Red Riding Quartet* (1999-2002) and addresses the following questions: how effectively, in the context of genre writing, does Peace manage to interrogate the tensions which surround and emanate from a rapidly evolving news media, and to what extent do the representations of the media reflect and provide commentary upon emergent British history?

The 'news' is a significant feature in each of the novels, foregrounded in the first two texts of the sequence where journalist characters play central roles, an insistent diegetic presence in the latter pair, their gloomy portent amplifying the anxiety-rich atmosphere. The language of the popular press evidences a permeating quality as it bleeds into the interior monologues of the characters, part of a pattern of repetitions that features across the series, while the business of newsgathering and the retrieval and rereading of old news reports is an integral part of the plots and is central to their unfolding. It is my intention to offer a reading of the novels through these media appearances, demonstrating that they constitute an important aspect of Peace's socio-political critique of Britain, highlighting historical developments and signalling the nascent digital age and all that it implies. In original and imaginative ways, the tetralogy holds the news media, through its commercially driven investigations, in the role it plays in the reporting of crimes, and in the promotion of the vested interests of its proprietors and their consorts, in part responsible for the morally decaying society that it describes. The *Quartet* also illuminates how the pressures which surround news production (the compulsion to sensationalise in particular) obscure and inhibit its worthier ambitions. It seems appropriate when media presence has become such a feature of everyday life and when the business of 'the news' has itself so regularly become newsworthy, to consider how this characteristic feature of the modern world has been transmitted into fiction.

Three timeframes are relevant to this study, each of which involves consequential development of the media environment. The period of the novels' setting is defined by significant economic upheaval when the established post-war arrangement was disrupted by the arrival of a new and persuasive orthodoxy and its encouragement by a largely cheerleading national press. Significantly, in Peace's *Quartet*, it is the uncertainty provided by the maelstromic nature of news stories, particularly stories about crime, that heralds the arrival of the Thatcher government and all that it carried in its wake. The second important period, that of the novels' writing, describes a moment when, despite a change in governing political party, the new dispensation appeared to have become secure and when new and transformative communication technology was becoming a feature of everyday experience. The final timeframe becomes pertinent towards the end of this study when Peace's anticipations of the present are considered.

The initial impetus for this study came from the memory of the recognition, on publication, of the peculiarly disturbing properties of David Peace's *Red Riding Quartet* (1999 – 2002) which distinguished these texts from other crime fictions. Particularly arresting, I felt, was the distinctive quality of repetitious insistence which is such a significant presence in the novels, and which appears to echo a world heavily saturated by the persistent noise of an ever more enveloping media industry. It is my intention in this study to examine the tetralogy with especial reference to the relationships that emerge between the creation of fiction and these media presences, as Peace constructs his counterview of this most contentious period of British history. Journalistic research, involving deep exploration of the British newspaper archives in Tokyo's National Library, forms a considerable part of Peace's methodology. This is apparent in the wealth of detail included in his *Quartet,* and elsewhere in his work, attention to which is paid with such 'slavish devotion' (D. Davies 2013) that the environments he describes become heavily imbued with, and coloured by, ingredients discovered through the author's rigorous writing regime. I have chosen to focus

on Peace's earliest novels, where the pursuit, reporting, transmission and interpretation of news stories provides both background and structure for the narratives which focus on a period increasingly seen as pivotal in recent British history (A. Turner; Beckett, *Lights*; McSmith; Sandbrook, *Seasons*) when the post-war political 'settlement', however fragile, was confronted and then overwhelmed by the ideology of the free-market. I intend to explore how the technological and commercial developments affecting the media business that we see emerging in the texts, impact the political future that is the moment of the novels' publication.

Two personal reasons encouraged the pursuit of this investigation. The first is a preoccupation, stemming in part from time spent when younger as a printer, with both the craft aspect of the occupation, and with the various effects of the printed message. I joined the trade shortly after the *News International* dispute (1986-7) and worked alongside colleagues who had marched in protest along Farringdon Road and who had picketed the gates at 'Fortress Wapping' – sometimes having fought running battles with police officers around the streets of London's docklands - and the site of Eddie Shah's *Today* newspaper operation in Warrington; witnesses to the final days of printing as a mass industry before technology and anti-union legislation put paid to long-established Fleet Street practices. These early experiences in the workplace helped to shape my political outlook, which remains predicated on the principles of collective solidarity which underpin trade unionism. This political shaping has fed into my reading of Peace's *Quartet* and has informed the choices of critical perspective that I have chosen to bring to bear on the subject.

The second reason was a long-time interest in crime fiction, largely as a reader for pleasure, but also as a student of the genre, both as an undergraduate and later when reading for a master's degree. Their formulaic nature and predictability of plot, though,

had led to a decline in interest. An article written in *The Guardian* (1 April 2015) by the novelist Val McDermid about the likely political persuasion of crime writers played a part in reinvigorating my interest. In the piece, McDermid stated a belief, shared by fellow crime writer Ian Rankin, that crime fiction was, or had become, a site for criticism of the status quo. Its writers, both authors felt, were inclined to lean leftward, often giving 'a voice to characters who are not comfortably established in the world – immigrants, sex workers, the poor, the old, the dispossessed and the people who don't vote.' (McDermid)

Thrillers, on the other hand, McDermid continued, were more commonly in her opinion the preserve of the conservative minded author. This interpretation – contested though it was subsequently, in print and online (Freedland; Niemann) – seemed a surprising one. From early incarnations in the nineteenth century, through Golden Age and gumshoe, crime fiction – particularly that which figures a detective as its protagonist, of the kind that both McDermid and Rankin write - has maintained structural reestablishment as a presiding preoccupation; 'to restore order after its disruption by crime' (Scaggs 47) a vital part of its continuing appeal. It should be acknowledged, however, that there is a tradition of significant left-leaning contributors to the genre – Dashiell Hammett, David Goodis, and Jean-Patrick Manchette among these - and that the genre has been employed as a vehicle with which to highlight issues that apply particularly to women, to minority ethnic populations in western contexts, and to gay people. It is possible, too, to detect socio-critical elements even in the 'classical' texts of detective fictions of the golden age (Rowland 120; Knight, *Golden* 82). This accommodating quality notwithstanding, the general tendency of the genre works against the revolutionary impulse; its traditional structure leading toward reassuring resolution.

McDermid's article encouraged the reading of a series of her novels, as well as some of Rankin's *Rebus* books, and while it was possible to find some evidence of a leftward bent in

the political views of characters, in historical events revisited and in the social issues raised, the denouements of those novels remained conventional. Peace's *Quartet,* however, belonged, it seemed clear, to a select collection of titles which are unmistakably located on the left. Like much of his subsequent work, these texts, often in the most unsettling terms, mourn a lost communitarianism and regret the abiding political ideology that has emerged in its place. It is the combination, then, of curiosity about the political potential of crime fictions and an interest in the developments in the UK's media environment, including the impacts of a reenergised commerciality and the whole-hearted harnessing of new technologies, that has encouraged this study.

The *Quartet* is permeated with appeals for an examination of the past and warnings against submission to an imprisoning politics. Characters negotiate a narrow and treacherous pathway through a complex environment that is compounded by information and communication systems of increasing sophistication and reach, and which are seen to impact society's functional processes in a variety of ways. The developments that we are witness to – the arrival of interactive media and the widening of platforms for participation, the growing significance of digital technology – articulate a tension that has long attached to the media between its valuable role in the pursuit of democracy and as a harbinger of impending dystopia; a tension that continues to develop as the *Quartet* proceeds.

Late twentieth century events exposed deficiencies, biases, and sometimes duplicities in the way that news businesses operate. For example, and in a north of England context, reporting from the climactic scenes of the confrontation at Orgreave during the miners' strike in 1984 when BBC television news reports were found to have been broadcast with misleading chronology, implying that picketing miners had instigated the violence against the police, rather than vice versa (*Big Issue North*). In a further instance, *The Sun*'s

coverage from the Hillsborough Stadium disaster in 1989 sought, in line with the wishes of the senior police officers who were culpable, to blame Liverpool Football Club's supporters for the tragedy (T. Evans). These occurrences have, as is apparent in the texts, strongly influenced Peace's attitude to authority: 'Those events defined my relationship with the police; incident after incident on a personal level. The miners' strike and then, of course, Hillsborough. How do you grow up having any kind of respect or faith in the police after all that?' (D. Davies). As well as encouraging mistrust in the police, the credibility of media organisations was also undermined by these behaviours in parts of the UK and risked confirming the news media's function, in some conceptions, as suspect mouthpiece of a remote authority; the widespread and ongoing boycott of *The Sun* on Merseyside a manifestation of this attitude (Kay). While corruptions in policing come under scrutiny in the *Quartet*, the circumstances in which the news is mediated also becomes a focus.

The unhealthily competitive nature that characterised certain elements of British journalism, made most apparent by the behaviour of press photographers who pursued targets with such vigour and who became such a familiar part of the media landscape, illustrated a *modus operandi* governed by loose ethical standards. That this discomforting culture had become 'savagely competitive' (Lonsdale 170) and almost entirely unrestrained was first hinted at as revelations about phone-hacking and other means of illegal press intrusion emerged in the mid-2000s (N. Davies; Watson and Hickman) and was more fully exposed by the Leveson Enquiry (2011-12) which followed, and which published its report in November 2012 (Leveson). Issues of mistrust have continued to attach, then, with some reason, to the production of news. It is instructive, however, that it was through the perseverance of investigative journalism that revelations about misbehaviour were initially made and that contrasting aspects of news reporting are captured in this saga - a dynamic

that operates in Peace's representation of journalists in his *Quartet* and elsewhere in his fiction.

As this project has developed, contentious issues concerning the media have surfaced regularly. Behaviours in traditional and new media around the Brexit campaign and its aftermath (Brändle et al.; Marshall and Drieschova), alleged Russian interference via social media platforms in the persuasion of voters in the election of Donald Trump in the US (Abrams; Mueller), access to personal data acquired by Facebook and others (Singer), are a few of the best publicised examples of this. These stories, amongst others, contribute to an uncertain political environment in which the concepts of 'post-truth' and 'fake news' have flourished. The proliferation of narratives describing compromised and corrupt media institutions overshadow those idealised versions of a media system which prioritise providing information for the public, the protection of that public's interests, or where necessary, the encouraging of its resistance. The social and political function of the media - enlightening and informing its audience, democratically important if imperfect, with an agenda setting capacity and the capacity to cause or encourage other effects – becomes ever harder to assess as new means of communication emerge.

It is the machinery involved in the manufacture and dissemination of news that comes under examination in Peace's texts. The compromises made according to the motivations, political or commercial, of owners and editors, are shown to affect the final product in detrimental ways and journalistic integrity can appear a fragile, sometimes absent commodity for Peace's hacks. Simultaneously, though, the journalistic endeavour to provide a vital check on the powerful is apparent in the novels; those reporters who are prepared to confront corruption where it occurs (Barry Gannon and Eddie Dunford in *1974*, Jack Whitehead in *1977*), however, are likely to meet fates as do some of their counterparts in the real world.

Threats to and murders of journalists are worryingly persistent; the well-publicised killings of Daphne Caruana Galizia in Malta as she continued to investigate links between organised crime and government officials (*Daphne Caruana Galizia Foundation*), and of the dissident Jamal Khashoggi by Saudi Arabian agents in Istanbul (*Amnesty International*; *The Dissident*), are just two of hundreds that have occurred globally in the last decade[1]. The instrumentality of investigative journalism in ensuring citizens' human rights is considerable, its curtailing a herald of ominous times. Recent research reveals that human rights diminish in countries following the murder of a journalist in that jurisdiction. The killings operate as an indicator of approaching repression – the 'canary in a coalmine' (Gohdes and Carey).

Murders of journalists are mercifully rare in the UK (the killing of Lyra McKee in Derry in 2019 an awful exception) but it is not unusual for their work to be impeded by other means. Recently as the conduct of Russian oligarchs came under the spotlight following the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, it was revealed that they were able to maintain their impregnability by issuing legal threats (often via London based law firms[2]) to journalists investigating financial crime and corruption. Regular clampdowns on reporting in Russia, China and other authoritarian states are indicative of a world where revealing inconvenient truths remains a dangerous business. Elsewhere, in countries with democratic systems of varying substance - in the US, Brazil and Hungary for example - the undermining or outright suppression of independent media, as well as other institutions, has become a key feature of populist projects (Manucci; Krämer). The manipulation of news sources, which can prove

[1] *Rapporteurs Sans Frontières* has recorded the murders of 57 journalists worldwide in 2022, up 4% on the previous year, with a further 49 missing, 65 being held hostage and 533 in jail. https://rsf.org/en/new-record-number-journalists-jailed-worldwide

[2] Strategic Lawsuits against Public Participation (SLAPPS) have been regularly employed to prevent investigations into the financial and other interests of the super wealthy, effectively intimidating journalists, and others, with the threat of enormous legal costs should enquiries be pursued (Strategic Lawsuits against Public Participation: Government Response to Call for Evidence, Gov.UK).

so vital to political success, only adds to the extant tensions under which media organisations operate, enhancing the ambiguity which surrounds the industry and making Peace's dissections of the media's operation all the more relevant to the present.

Generic boundaries and the *Red Riding Quartet*

Peace's decision to use versions of the crime fiction genre, incorporating and moving between sub generic elements from police procedural to crime thriller, and from true crime to horror, allows a relationship to develop between generic form and his desire to dissect the period of the series' setting. The various perspectives offered (those of journalists, coppers, bent or straight, and criminals, petty or serious) constitute a determined effort to disrupt versions of history which are commonly held in the public imagination, and, for this purpose, crime fiction serves as a useful tool, its investigative nature lending itself valuably to the raising of questions and the pursuit of answers.

The first novel in the *Quartet*, *1974* (1999), appears to conform to many of the conventions of the classic detective novel; an investigating agent, presented with a mystery, overcomes various obstacles in pursuit of its solution. The reader accompanies the protagonist in what appears to be a 'clue-puzzle' novel of the type 'perfected' by Agatha Christie (Knight, *Ideology* 107) and following in the traditional pattern established in the nineteenth century by Poe and Doyle. In this classical form writers 'placed their faith in the detective, who dominates the plot, organizes the reader's perceptions . . . and solves the mystery' (Rowland 118). However, in this first novel, and in the subsequent texts of the *Quartet,* Peace manipulates the expectations of this conservative structure, experimenting with its boundaries and operating, at times, against its rational basis. Categorising precisely where the novels fit, genre-wise, is difficult as Peace utilises different aspects of crime fiction at different times and for different purposes. What is of particular interest for this study, is the way that Peace intertwines aspects of the journalistic with his crime fiction variants.

Narrow generic definitions of crime or detective fiction, it is widely accepted, are problematic. As Charles Rzepka (2010) says, if definitions of crime fiction are 'a bit vague', then those of detective fiction are 'downright slippery' (2). In an attempt at clarification, Rzepka draws on John G Cawelti's division of popular fiction into three categories (adventure, mystery and romance) though even here, admits that absolute distinction is elusive. In this analysis, crime fiction is associated with adventure and detective fiction with mystery – the defining feature of mystery being the disentangling of puzzling elements by reaching back into the past: 'As we read forward we imagine backward, analeptically.'(3) It is this retrospective, puzzle solving aspect of classic detective fiction (Knight, *Golden* 78) that is so useful for Peace's interrogation of history; the return to the events which took place in the Yorkshire of his boyhood in order to help understand the situation at the point when the novels were written and to examine some of the clues which might explain why the future developed as it did. The nature of the genre – which, in many of its guises, operates to interrogate past events - proves suitable for the ambitions of Peace's project.

The 'double rhythm', as described by Paul Skenazy, which characterises the structure of this kind of fiction whereby the narrative 'mov[es] inexorably forward in time while creeping slowly backward to resolve the disruptions and violence evident in the present' (qtd. in Scaggs 16), allows the author to conduct an examination of the processes of history. Significantly, it permits the exposure of the gaps, absences, and incongruities which undermine the concept of history as a narrative whole – covering similar territory, then, as some of those fictions which have been described as postmodern or neo-historicist. Skenazy's description echoes the assessment of Tzetvan Todorov, who, in an essay which emphasises the significance of generic conformity in popular fiction - the conformity being the very thing which ensures popularity – writes about the 'duality' (Todorov 44) at the base of every classic whodunit: 'This novel contains not one but two stories: the story of the crime and the story of the investigation' (44). The purpose of the

second story (the narrativisation of the plot) is to fulfil the absence at the heart of the first (the murder or other mystery). Peace applies a similar process to his novels, reaching back into history in a search, it appears, for something missing or lost; the investigations which describe the narratives of the individual novels reflecting the project's overall intention to discover missing pieces of history. Peace, however, does not comply with the strictures of the form, and even the novel in the *Quartet* which most strongly bears the hallmarks of 'classic' detective fiction, *1974,* defies convention, particularly in the way that it concludes. Because of the nature of his project there is for Peace, particularly as the *Quartet* proceeds, an attraction in the less strictly organised, more porous examples of 'crime' fiction where certainties are undermined or rendered ambiguous, 'subverting the reassurances of the detective novel' (Hilfer 7). The disintegration of the investigating characters as they conduct their searches for truth, which is a common feature of Peace's novels, mirroring the elusive nature of conclusive historical certainty.

In elucidating distinguishing features within types of fiction, Todorov identifies differences between the classic detective story/whodunit and what he calls the 'crime thriller'. He includes in this second category the novels of Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler (51) in which aspects of mystery are retained, but where the process of ratiocination is relegated, where problems are often solved through use of violence or of its threat, and greater access to the psychology of the protagonist is granted by their first-person telling. In these texts, the first story of Todorov's equation - if it exists at all – is subordinate to the second; a readjustment in weighting which suggests a different intention on the part of the writer and a reluctance to abide by the 'constraint' of the genre, 'the detective loses his immunity, gets beaten up, badly hurt, constantly risks his life, in short, is integrated into the universe of the other characters, instead of being an independent observer as the reader is' (51). Not only do these novels of *suspense* fail to offer the reassurance of the carefully delineated and concluded traditional detective novel with its satisfying

restoration of order, but they also constitute an attempt to question the construction of the social and moral universe in which the crime takes place. In this brand of crime novel the context in which the narration of the case takes place supersedes the bare facts of whodunit.

There is some dispute about which type of fiction gives rise to the other. Brigid Brophy, like Todorov, identifies the emergence of the crime genre, as a 'distinct sub-compartment' (Brophy 149) of the detective story, at the point when the amateur private detective in the Sherlock Holmes mould develops into the professional private eye, and when the puzzle solving element of the story diminishes (or disappears) in favour of a more stylised telling of the tale. Singling out the writers Patricia Highsmith and George Simenon for their ability to 'transcend the limits of the genre while staying inside the rules', Brophy claims that they 'have taken the crucial step from playing games to creating art' (150). Signs for Brophy that opportunities exist, while ostensibly adhering to generic convention, to challenge the way that traditional crime fiction ideologically legitimates the prevailing order.

Agreement with this assessment of more complex fictions developing out of an orthodox model is found elsewhere; the subtitle of Julian Symons' seminal reference book *Bloody Murder* (1972), 'From the Detective Story to the Crime Novel', suggests a similar chronology, and Tony Hilfer describes detective fiction as the 'better-known parental genre' (Hilfer xi) of the crime novel. Sally Munt, meanwhile, in the introduction to her study of the feminist crime novel, traces a diverging route from prescribed, classic whodunit to the hard-boiled American story and then a fragmentation into numerous types – spy novels, police procedurals and psychological thrillers among them (Munt 3-4). It might be argued that Peace follows a formal trajectory which mirrors this historical interpretation; as his project grows more ambitious in terms of its socio-critical scope, so elemental features from beyond the classic detective story, which he uses as his basis, are

increasingly introduced. In the final novel of the series, *1983*, for example, the linear timeframe as experienced by a single character which is typical of detective fiction - and to which *1974* largely adheres – has been replaced by a trio of competing chronologies.

There are also, though, critics and theorists who look back further in time for the origins of the crime story, as far back as the first written classical and biblical narratives in some cases, and at least as far as medieval times for others. John Scaggs, Charles Rzepka, Martin Priestman, Ernest Mandel and Stephen Knight (*Form*) can be counted among those who emphasise the significance of the fictional detective's emergence at a specific historical moment (into a world already containing other kinds of crime stories), that they are emblematic responses to rapidly industrialising societies who perform a specific ideological function; incarnations serving as the (imaginary but reassuring) protective agents of an emerging bourgeoise class. Saliently, Peace's deindustrialised setting demands a different kind of investigator, the ambivalent journalist, ostracised police officer or flailing solicitor a more suitable operative in such uncertain circumstances.

For the purposes of this study, and by my own reckoning, 'detective fiction' implies narrower coverage than the more comprehensive 'crime fiction'. The latter term can contain many sub-generic deviations and outliers, of which varieties of detective fiction are just some; its perspectives are broad. Peace, like other successful proponents, is of special interest because of the way he experiments with the parameters of form to defy expectation and to successfully unsettle his reader. Though the model with which the series begins appears to adhere to many of the conventions of classic detective fiction, these are confines against which he allows himself to push.

Peace's utilisation of varieties of crime fiction as means to investigate the transitional tensions of his chosen period (principally, the movement from a form of social democracy to neoliberalism) invites consideration of issues which surround the potential values of

popular fiction. By exploiting the capacity of his chosen form (despite his reservations about it (Peace, *Crimetime*)) to question the veracity of accepted versions of history and through experimenting with the parameters of what it is possible to achieve socio-critically, Peace follows the example of writers with comparable ambition, whose influence he has acknowledged (Peace, *Inspiration*; Hart, *Interview* 2006) and to whose work Peace's most closely corresponds. Perhaps the most significant of these are James Ellroy and Eoin McNamee, both of whom concentrate their fictions around recorded events, often, as Peace does too, criminal ones, as a means of exposing wider historical movements and affairs. Ellroy's *LA Quartet* (1987-1992) comprises a series of interrelated and noirish crime stories, interweaved with a historical account of a much mythologised (and mythologising) city as it flourished and developed in the 1940s and 50s. Ellroy is keen to expose the unsavoury, often criminal, underbelly that lies beneath the deceptively glamorous façade upon which Los Angeles relies for its success, often introducing actual characters and events to his fictions. Peace's Yorkshire of the 1970s is resurrected with similar attention to detail and, while lacking the glamour and sunshine of Ellroy's California, is equally shaped in the imagination by a pervasive mythology.

Closer to home, both physically and temporally, McNamee's *Resurrection Man* (1994) details, in a thinly disguised way, the notorious crimes of Belfast's Shankill Butchers and their psychopathic leader, Lenny Murphy (Victor Kelly in the novel). An emphasis in McNamee's book is on how extraordinary historical and cultural contexts – here, the sectarianism in the north of Ireland of the mid-70s – impact on the thought processes of the characters. McNamee adds emotional weight to the bare facts, populating the gap between recorded history and reality by imagining the effects on people and delivering these in grimly poetic form. In these instances, the response to the horrors experienced is to seek some solace in repetitive or ritualistic behaviours. Peace, too, occupies the site where an uncomfortable coming to terms with a surrounding culture of terrifying,

disruptive violence in the consciousnesses of his characters, who are condemned to incessantly replay their behaviour (Dunford's self-punishing consumption of booze and fags examples here); the struggle to control or contain their perturbation a cause of their eventual undoing.

Like Peace, McNamee introduces other texts and voices into his novel, creating a layered, collage effect as the reader moves from one perspective to another. Again, similarly to Peace, significant among the characters of *Resurrection Man* are a pair of newspaper journalists struggling to interpret the violence which they are commanded to report upon. Eventually, attempts to report with accuracy are stymied altogether, their words reading 'as if they had been stripped down to an unimaginable necessity. They had the dry, powdery feel of bones dried in the sun.' (McNamee 77) The way that the media and its operatives construct and transmit narratives, how influenced and pressured they are, and the consequences that this has for the recording of history is, it appears, as significant for McNamee as it is for Peace.

The limitations of the news industry as detailed by Peace necessitate an operative approach which extends into the *demimonde* of the independent investigator; a renegade questing which borrows more from the archetypes that emerged from the alienating and corrupt urban America of the 1920s (Symons 154; Pepper 140) than from more restrained British traditions. There is considerable overlap of procedure between private eye and hack and the distance of travel between occupations is slim. Eddie Dunford, protagonist of the series' first instalment, we understand, lies 'by trade' (Peace, *1974* 157), which is a 'privilege of the profession' (145) and is prepared to go to dishonest lengths in search of his copy. When disengaged from the control of his employer Dunford's enterprises (as they do for the other investigators, be they reporters, policemen or lawyers) become solitary ones. The aspect is that of the 'non-organisation man's eye, like the frontier scout's or the

cowboy's; an eye that trusts no other' (Porter 95). While the specific 'social, economic and political conditions in the United States from the 1920s onwards' (Pepper 140) which birthed the 'hard-boiled' American mode has some equivalence in late twentieth century Yorkshire - the corruption that is gradually uncovered a common invigoration - Dunford has little of the *sangfroid* associated with Hammett's Sam Spade or Chandler's Marlowe. He retains the desperate edge of the newshound and completing the story continues to be his incentive until late in the novel. As the beatings and humiliations mount however, he recognises that he is no longer a journalist, 'Not any more' (Peace, *1974* 236*),* the provisions of his writerly trade have been exhausted.

Peace shares some of the perceptions of crime fiction and the possible pitfalls which attend to its pursuit. Particularly, Peace has expressed disquiet at the dangers of, 'exploiting for personal financial gain and entertainment the deaths of other people' and at aspects of *1974* which he feels 'simply wallows in the viciousness of the crimes it describes' (Hart, *Interview* 559). The author, however, even in this first novel, deploys literary experiment - often typified by repetition - in a pop cultural context evidencing an ambition to elevate the text beyond the conventional and to transcend the limitations of the form. Simultaneous with the inventive probing, though, this novel, like the others in the *Quartet* is placed in a specific historical moment when bad things really happened to real people and the search for 'truths and answers' (Peace, *Crimetime*) is of primary concern.

Alongside the experimentation some of the most apparently formulaic aspects of the crime novel are in evidence in the *Quartet* – the introduction of crimes at their scenes or at press conferences, the slow revelation of clues, the imperilling of investigators, and the piecing together of a solution, for example. In this way, Peace recognises the idea of imitation, showing an awareness of the charges of standardisation which have been levelled at genre fiction, and at times seems to be deliberately drawing attention to this inclination. The

repetition, which is such a conspicuous feature of the series, occurs in various ways, from the interior incantations of the characters and their patterns of behaviour to the recurring scenes, dreams and lines of dialogue. This reverberating quality emphasises the idea that nothing is any longer truly unique in the modern world and in this way alludes to the condition of stasis as diagnosed by Theodor Adorno and his colleagues in the 1930s. There is also in this trope a sense of a future becoming impossible to imagine, and which encouraged critics writing at the end of the twentieth century. The offer of escape is curtailed by the looping patterns of history forever replayed; Peace's characters trapped in an echoing cycle of constriction.

Critical Approaches to David Peace

Critical interest in Peace's writing followed the completion of *The Red Riding Quartet* and he was named one of *Granta*'s Best Young British Novelists in their 2003 list. The publication of *GB84* (2004), an account of the miners' strike of 1984-85, aroused further notice and a series of lengthy interviews and several critical essays followed. This work was interested in the ways in which Peace attempted to recreate, the Yorkshire of the recent past, and to his adoption of the 'crime' genre as the means with which to do so. In 2007 Peace published *The Damned United* which widened his readership as, in telling the story of the football manager Brian Clough's short tumultuous spell in charge of Leeds United in 1974, he appealed to an audience of sport enthusiasts. This foray into the interior of a sporting maverick was followed by *Red or Dead* (2014) an imagined autobiography of a similar figure, Liverpool's Bill Shankly. In 2009 Peace gained further recognition, and some notoriety, when the film version of *The Damned United* and the television adaptation of *Red Riding* – a trilogy rather than a quartet of films (*1977* was not completed due to production problems) - were both released. In the meantime Peace had begun a proposed trilogy of novels about Tokyo, the city of his residence. *Tokyo Year Zero* (2008) is set in the rubble and dust of Japan's capital as it faces reconstruction following defeat in the Second

World War and, like the *Red Riding Quartet* uses actual criminal events as a framework around which an exploration of a very particular time and place is built. Further novels set in Japan followed, *Occupied City* (2009), and *Tokyo Redux* (2021), and a fictional account of passages in the life of the Japanese author Ryunosuke Akutagawa *(Patient X*, 2018).

As the author and his work became better known following screen adaptations, so more thoroughly engaged critical responses began to emerge. The emphasis in much of the criticism that concentrates on the *Red Riding Quartet* is on how the texts operate as signals – or records – of systemic political and social decline in which the atmosphere and texture of the novels is related to historical fracture and geographical deterioration. Unsurprisingly given the prominence of journalists and their practice in the texts, aspects of the media are visited by several of the critics reviewed here. However, Peace's critique of the specificities of the British media environment, which emerges in the texts in both obvious and more oblique ways, remains, in my opinion, underexplored.

In 2006, after the publication of *GB84* and shortly before the release of *The Damned United,* Matthew Hart conducted a long interview with Peace via email. Though a significant part of the conversation relates to Peace's interpretation of the miners' strike, the author discusses many of the themes relevant to the *Quartet* and around which further critical assessments have been made – particularly the revisiting of the Yorkshire of his childhood and youth and the articulation of an 'occult history' of that time and place (Hart *Interview* 549). As well as his inspirations and inclinations, the author also explains his writing processes – surrounding 'himself with the news and media of that time and place, almost to the exclusion of the here and now' (550) – a cultural materialist approach (Shaw 4) which proves so consequential for the conditioning of the texts, and which has pertinence for this thesis.

In 2010 Katy Shaw, an academic with interests in working class writing and twenty first century literature, published a collection of her essays on Peace in a single volume, *David Peace: Texts and Contexts.* The following year Shaw edited a selection of essays about Peace's work, *Analysing David Peace* (2011) and these two volumes represent a significant part of the critical analysis of Peace's earliest fictions as recognition of the writer's importance widened. Collectively the essays identify the author's exploration of the tensions wrought by changes from an industrial to post-industrial economy and from a version of social democracy to neoliberalism. The 'decaying industrial landscape and embittered social relationships' (Maguire 15) provide the insecure backdrop, against which 'the political consolidation of neoliberalism' (Keyes 20) takes effect.

A common discovery of these early critics is of a historical account which reveals numerous fractures and fissures, that takes place in a geography 'struggling to cope with the unwanted effects of change' (Shaw 13) and populated by restless ghosts; the preponderance of absences in the texts an often remarked upon condition. In her own collection, Shaw examines how Peace presents the North in the wake of a series of traumatising events. In this reading, Peace employs 'landscape to make connections between socio-economic and geo-political conditions' (Shaw 12), inverting the notion of Yorkshire as 'God's own county' to become instead an isolated, insecure place 'characterised by parochialism and defiance' (13) where the crimes described express the darkness and despair which attach regionally.

Aspects of the changing physical environment that Peace describes - its concealing, subterranean spaces and the 'anti-romantic' (Shaw 17) description of Yorkshire's Moors - undermine foundations, actual and metaphorical, 'upon which Yorkshire and the UK were built' (16). The relating of an altering environment to political shift is also part of Paddy Maguire's essay in which he outlines a historical context for the *Quartet* and uses the

appearances of building development which we see in Peace's texts, and which accompanied a moment 'of aggressive urban renewal and regeneration' (Maguire 16), to illustrate how Peace links systems of power and control to corruption and crime.

Yorkshire's altering terrain is also investigated by Jarred Keyes in his essay, "No Redemption: Death of the City in the novels of David Peace" in which representations of the changing city are examined. The city is presented as a site of crisis, typified as Keyes notes by images of death and decay (19), and succumbing to the incursions of entrepreneurialism. Peace's disappointment at the demise of a civic community in which 'a workforce is singularly absent' (Keyes 23) becomes particularly apparent in Peace's figuring of the deteriorating City Heights tower block. Here, the 'degeneration' of the block 'reiterates the conflict between government and community which is central to Peace's works' and also represents 'a more general theoretical significance' (Keyes 25), a reflection of the socioeconomic shift that has occurred between the block's first appearance in *1974* and John Piggott's return there in *1983*.

Outside of the city it is in Peace's description of Yorkshire's desolate moors where Keyes detects the trope of 'spectrality', identifying spaces which are haunted by the physical traces of former times. This theme also occupies Ian King and Martin Cummins in their essay "Dead Cities, Crows, the rain and their Ripper": The Red Riding Novels of David Peace as *Lieux d'horreur*". The authors draw here on Pierre Nora's concept of *Lieux de Memoire* in their discussion of Peace, aware of the significance of place and the 'psychogeographical' (44) aspect of the novels. Like Keyes, they emphasise Peace's depiction of a politically impacted cityscape, a segregated space where the underclass is marginalised for the benefit of vested interests. Drawing on various theorists of the urban, including Loïc Wacquant and Zygmunt Bauman, King and Cummins propose the idea that the city of Leeds that Peace describes was 'originally built to keep danger beyond its walls' but has

'become the source of danger' (48). The reorganised urban space now 'provides a structure for sorting populations following the post-Fordist restructuring of the labour market and the drift to neo-liberalism' (48), with the poor and disenfranchised isolated both economically and physically.

As the geography Peace offers is rendered fragile and porous, so too is any sense of historical security also undermined. The notion of a present inhabited by ghosts of the past is explored by Shaw in her chapter, "Towards a Hauntology of the North" where she draws on Derrida's theory of hauntology as elucidated in *Spectres of Marx* (1993). Here, the conception of a present is incomplete without admitting its occupation by the past, and also its habitation by the spirit of unfulfilled or lost futures. Haunting transmissions of many kinds enter Peace's texts – snatches of pop-songs, police reports and, pertinently, the news in its various forms. In the voices of the victims that sound in the prefaces to chapters in *1980,* particularly, Peace is attempting to counter, Shaw asserts, 'the violent exclusion of marginal voices within the central narratives of historical testimony' (58). These interruptions become an increasingly important aspect of the texts as the series progresses, both amplifying the sense of loss and the anxieties of the novels' characters and their readers.

Dean Lockwood (2011) also introduces the notion of hauntology while focussing on Peace's *1980*. Lockwood, like Shaw, references a variety of intrusions – the diegetic media messages, the lyrics of post-punk – and their function as 'hauntological triggers' (borrowing Mark Fisher's term), disrupting settled notions of time and intimating a 'temporal synthesis which opens up past, present and future' (44). Drawing on the fiction of JG Ballard in his analysis, Lockwood invokes the destabilising concept of 'fugue' and the theme of characters 'driven by obsessions along trajectories of 'escape' into suicide or madness' (45). Even as they try to maintain a grip on solid, grounding forces - the protagonist of the

novel Assistant Chief Inspector Peter Hunter's search for assurance in new technologies an example here – Lockwood identifies the novel's characters' retreat 'into a violently obscene world' (47). Desperately seeking coherence in the reconstructions and reappraisals of crimes in his 'attempt to open up the possibility of a future' (42), Hunter's 'exegesis' instead leaves him exposed to 'bare life' (Lockwood borrowing Giorgio Agamben's term) unprotected and alone. Significantly for this thesis, Hunter's final confrontation takes place in the umbra of his own research's 'evil mirror' (50) upstairs at the Strafford Arms. The tensions detected by Lockwood, between the possibility of achieving a redemptive solution, the experience of crisis in the present, and of serial aborted futures attaches to the whole of the *Quartet*. This situation is exacerbated by the demands of a news media which exerts pressures but remains impossible to satisfy.

The same writer returns to Peace's work in an essay about *1977,* "When Two Sevens Clash" (2013) which explores Peace's occult historical approach, and the author's attempt to uncover hidden aspects of the past. Lockwood draws here on the work of the social theorist Franco Berardi who identifies a fusion of media and capital at the end of the 1970s (Lockwood, *When* 51) and the emergence of an age of 'semiocapitalism' which is typified by, variously, democratic deficit, increasing psychological alienation, and the dwindling of empathy caused by the growing pressures on time, especially evident in new 'flexible' workplaces. The 'fractalised' selves demanded by new working environments, Berardi posits, are no longer able to achieve 'the solidarity required for the emergence of a collective body of workers' (52). Lockwood applies this idea of 'mediatised mutation' to Peace's second novel, identifying 'an evocation of a paralysis of history, a loss of ability to integrate and organise experience, a psychopathological intensity of fear' (57), as features captured in the novel's many absences.

This take on the crime genre, where solutions are missing or denied and any structural base is unsure, makes Peace's history 'nightmarish and phantasmagoric' according to Alec Charles (61). The accumulation of characters' viewpoints and the fragmentary intrusions of news reports and snatches of pop-songs invoking, for Charles, 'post-modernist perspectives on contemporary concerns' (62). Charles identifies in the *Quartet* some correspondence with Marshall McLuhan's openly interpretable *cool* media, but even more with Roland Barthes' writerly or *scriptible* text (63) where meaning must be sought by the reader in a text's inherent 'polysemy'. In this reading the *Quartet* is proposed as a site of ambiguation where the multiple voices 'never enter into dialogue', and 'never truly meet' (66). The 'plurality of unreliable and conflicting narratorial voices' involve the reader as 'an interpretively active agent' (67) in a process of repeated reassessment, through which, according to Charles, Peace can show history recurring in an endless inescapable matrix as 'something that we are fundamentally condemned to repeat' (71).

The motif of repetition that Peace employs is variously interpreted, though the confining quality recognised by Charles is often remarked upon. In the returns to the same 'spaces and scenes, images and tropes' (256), Mark Simpson finds the accumulation punishing – literally so in the sequences of torture at Millgarth's 'Belly' - the effect 'bleakly inescapable' (257). Shaw, meanwhile, locates in the reiteration of phrases the illumination of connections 'between otherwise incongruent events' (Shaw 40), and in the interior incantations of characters, the search for coherence, the structuring of language having an equivalence in the theme (or ritual) of return and revisiting that attaches to characters and signals an 'all or nothing' conclusion (46). Peace himself recognises repetition as a feature of the music which adds texture to his writing (Peace, *Crimetime*), but also as a mundane condition of everyday life. This quality is pertinent to the mechanical aspect of industrialised working life and the routines and rhythms of factory, mill, or mine but continues to map out existence even as these workplaces disappear. There is a similar

routine predictability in the crimes committed in the texts and in the language and style with which these are reported, the overall effect a further confinement.

The focus of these early critical readings of Peace on historical flux, and geographical transformation, intersect thematically with, and are drawn upon, at points with my own thesis; the essays of Maguire, Shaw, Keyes and Lockwood have been of great value, particularly in the first two chapters of the thesis as I assess Peace's construction of time and place. However, the operations of the media industry which figure so prominently in the texts remain, I believe, under visited. The press's increasingly rightward leaning constitution (Curran and Seaton 84; K. Williams 205) and accelerating commerciality, which accompanied the period of the novels' setting are important considerations when assessing their political intention. So too is the concurrent diminishing of investigative journalism in the popular press that would change the balance of their content and infect the media environment more widely (McNair 68; Conboy 212; Rooney 101). These circumstances contributed to a process of 'tabloidisation', held to be the 'defining detrimental trend' (Conboy 207) of the late twentieth century media industry. The operations of the news businesses and of their employees that we become witnesses to in Peace's texts, the compromises, and obfuscations that they make, remind the reader of a further index of absences that punctuate the historical record.

The recurrent appearances of news headlines from picket-lines and from the north of Ireland, glimpsed on the pages of newspapers or sounding from radios as part of a soundscape which serves to emphasise a political situation of turmoil and unrest, and to locate the reader historically. The disembodied and decontextualised nature of these appearances, on the other hand, serve to encourage confusion rather than understanding. The uncertainty which these appearances amplify affirms the assessment that within the texts, 'history is presented as a highly significant, if deeply elusive, informing presence'

(Shaw et al. 6). The reader is located in time by the events that are reported but is never able to truly apprehend it, aware that these mediated voices – among the many competing articulations - do not constitute a complete story.

The media's presences in the texts are not overlooked in the criticism already mentioned and are acknowledged and discussed with some attention in places. In the chapter exploring the hauntological aspects of the novels Shaw alludes to the discovery of Hitler's (bogus) diaries that make the news in the texts (Shaw 59). This incident Illustrates, for Shaw, Peace's presentation of a history that is incomplete and 'without conclusion' (59). However, it is possible to further interrogate the appearances of the news media in the *Quartet* in the context of its development as a significant cultural phenomenon at a specific historical moment. The implication that the media are engaged in the process of developing histories that are perforated with absences recurs regularly in the texts. In *1974* the journalist protagonist Eddie Dunford is confronted with a printed story carrying his byline but which he fails to recognise as his own (225) while in *1977,* Jack Whitehead deplores a situation in which, subject to various pressures, he is sent veering into the realms of mythology (71) and sensationalism (190). Meanwhile, the technological developments that we witness appearing in the texts 'that might secure memory and a connection to the world' (Lockwood, *Great* 46) do not, in fact, have the capacity to achieve this, but instead signify a further distancing.

In discussions of Peace's use of language (when, again, lack or absence is identified as a salient feature) a situation is described in the texts where 'power is implicitly aligned to a mastery of language' (Shaw 26) with considerable implications for the journalist characters, whose capacity to express themselves in words diminishes alongside their more general disintegration (Shaw 29). Their fading agency has damaging societal consequences as 'an absence of words is slowly connected to the dark forces of police cover-ups' (29). A close

'corpus informed analysis' of Peace's use of language in *1974* conducted by the linguist Dan McIntyre reveals how professional pressures are shown to resonate in Dunford's interior monologue. In a passage that sees Dunford contemplating a story that is escaping his grasp, McIntyre focuses on the occurrence of keywords and at what these indicate about how Peace frames the young hack's state of mind; how it 'convey[s] the emotions of irritation, self-loathing and anger that Eddie feels' (McIntyre 140), concluding that he is characterised as 'extremely tense, angered by . . . both serious and minor issues' (140). The figure of a journalist struggling for control in a highly pressured environment and the relationships that are drawn between threats to independent investigation and the resultant corruption, and which Peace equates with a developing political situation, will be expanded upon in this thesis in the context of a specific period of British Media history.

A more recent vein of critical analysis has engaged with Peace's *Quartet* (and other of his fictions too) in the context of 'post-political' and 'end of history' narratives in which absence remains a qualifying theme. The capture of political discourse by a neoliberalism which brooks no alternative is an important aspect of these interpretations and is a condition that informs my own reading of the texts. Significant among these critics is Mark Fisher who explores ideas of 'Lost Futures' (*Ghosts*) in some detail and relates this theme to Peace's work particularly (pp 80-87). The notion that the future has been made unimaginable because of an apparently 'irreversible' (Hall *Neo-Lib* 718) hegemonic neoliberal project - what Fisher has described elsewhere as 'Capitalist Realism' (*Realism*) - impacts the cultural field in the sense that the resurrection of recognisable forms has come to replace innovative cultural practice - a view that echoes the diagnoses of theorists of the Frankfurt School and its associates which form part of the methodology which informs this study.

Fisher attributes the condition to the 'complete transformation in the way that work and leisure are organised' which has followed neoliberalism's post-Fordist programme, and to the impact of new technology and telecommunication which has altered 'everyday life beyond all recognition' (*Realism* 9). The effect has been 'an increasing sense that culture has lost the ability to grasp and articulate the present' (9). Fisher describes the effects of the condition on popular forms - particularly music, television, and film - since the late 70s. He acknowledges here the influence of Franco Berardi's notion that the mythology of 'ever progressing development' (qtd. in Fisher, *Ghosts* 7) was, at the same time, both difficult to shed and no longer valid. Fisher also draws on Fredric Jameson's diagnosis of a postmodern tendency toward 'retrospection and pastiche' to the extent that the twenty-first century is witness to 'a crisis of cultural temporality' (Fisher, *Ghosts* 14).

Fisher ponders possible reasons for this impulse to cultural conservatism which conditions the neoliberal moment; an issue of consumption where 'destruction of solidarity and security' brings about a 'compensatory hungering for the well-established and the familiar' (14); or of production - the shrinking of time and space within which to experiment and the consequent manufacture of cultural artefacts which are most likely to resemble what had proved successful before. In the context of the translation of Peace's *Quartet* into film Fisher senses the author's inclinations to revisit the past but appreciates that he does so without indulging a nostalgia that affects the production of other retrospective dramas. Peace's motivations, Fisher concludes are different, 'Peace's novels are driven by the unexpiated suffering of Yorkshire at the end of the 70s' and his writing is 'hauntological in its intuition that particular places are stained by particular occurrences (and vice versa)' (Fisher, *Ghosts* 82). There is not, for Fisher, an attempt to justify past behaviours in the *Quartet*, rather he senses Peace probing Yorkshire's hidden history in search of the roots of corruption.

The consequences of an unchallenged economic doctrine are interrogated by Mark Simpson (2017) who prefaces his essay on 'Feral Cosmopolitics' in the *Quartet* with a quote from Berardi which emphasises the binding relationship between violence and capitalism, one that is 'absolutely structural' and where 'there can be no financial economy without violence' (qtd. in Simpson 243). Developing this theme, Simpson utilises the metaphor of the 'World of the Wound' to describe a global situation in which the shibboleths of neoliberal capitalism and its incorporation of violence as 'adhesive principle and material texture' (244) have become crucial to any imagining of a cosmopolitical future. Despite their resolutely West Yorkshire setting Simpson identifies in the novels resonances with accounts of a cosmopolitical horizon typified by a neoliberal orthodoxy. Acknowledging the arrival of Thatcherism as a moment with UK specificity and key to the politics of the *Quartet* as a whole – the onset of 'social catastrophe' (244) - and recognising that the violence in the texts occurs amidst very localised landscapes, Simpson nonetheless relates themes in the series with worldwide tendencies toward a shared political outlook.

In an essay which also offers discomforting views of the future, Richard Brown locates in the *Quartet* evidence of millennial anxieties in the way Peace has created 'an atmosphere of apocalyptic social and moral crisis' (R. Brown 82). Brown identifies in Peace's use of temporal markers – as the titles of his books for instance - an 'extreme vision of the end of the century, the end of a moral epoch' (83). That a time of judgement nears, Brown believes, is enhanced by the scenes set against the religious background of Leeds' Catholic Cathedral which are accompanied by fateful verses from the bible, and by the many references to the portentous Rastafarian motif of clashing 7s that recur in *1977*. Equivalences are seen to be drawn between the rhetoric of religion and the secular oratory of news media through the juxtaposition and scrambling together of these and other discourses,

> The reader has an uneasy sense of crossing borderlines between the voices inside the characters' heads and those of the community outside, suggesting a world as it must seem to a mind thoroughly disturbed by the traumatic exaggerations and disaster rhetoric of mass-media journalism, let alone the events that it attempts to report. (R. Brown 89)

The principal concerns of these appraisals centre on the obligations of the cultural response in circumstances when the sense of futurity is curtailed (or in Brown's essay, when the future is catastrophically overshadowed) and at Peace's attempt to meet these obligations. In these assessments the moral role of the writer is raised (Simpson 261; Fisher, *Ghosts* 81), a subject that is returned to in the final chapter of this thesis and which the author accepts as part of his responsibility: 'I believe the crime writer, by his [sic] choice of genre, is obliged to document his times with his crimes.' (qtd. in Baretta 100).

Again, the appearance of the media is paid some attention in these readings. In Simpson's framing, the crimes of Peter Sutcliffe and Margaret Thatcher as described by Peace reflect global impulses and signify 'the wholesale passage, in the last decades of the twentieth century, into the world of the wound' (245). Simpson explores how the media in the novels is specifically implicated as a partner in this trajectory - as are those who consume accounts of violent crime:

> The commerciality of violence . . . presses in from the outset – and thereby indicates, tacitly, the material role of readers in licensing and motivating the production and circulation of such news, the impossibility of this commercial system without the riveted attention of the audience it assembles. (Simpson 251)

Allied to the overall focus of his essay, the commercialisation of crime and violence is central to his argument. The presence of alternative and illicit media - the excerpts from talk-radio programmes and *transmissions* from CB radio which precede chapters in *1977* and *1980* respectively are considered in the same light: 'Peace treats the violating powers of mediation not just as an element of the plot but also as a kind of conceptual syntax with

which to punctuate novelistic structure' (252). Simpson's commentary on the way the press responds to, and its integral position within the global political arrangement raises useful issues for this thesis. The specifics of the British media environment and its more local impact, though, are not much visited in this piece and these aspects will be considered in the chapters ahead.

Despite the relentless exploration of the pall cast over the future by neoliberal dogma, Simpson manages to find some signs of hope in Peace's *Quartet,* its 'abiding imperative . . . to speculate against contemporary capitalism's speculative grain' (261). This is true, too, in other of the critiques discussed above; for example, Lockwood identifies in characters' modes of 'flight' a 'gesture towards an altered politics' (Lockwood, *Great* 57), while Brown finds alongside the 'disorientation and disaster' much with positive resonance (95) in the millennial tropes he has identified. This important qualification will require further investigation as this study proceeds.

There is a recognition in some of the analyses of Peace, of the accretion of historical detail from which his fictions are constructed (Hart, *Interview* 576; King and Cummins, *Dead* 44) a resurrection of the forgotten a central aspect of his work. Simultaneous is the trope of the missing and incomplete, a crucial feature Peace's of chosen genre. This juxtaposition points toward a tension between what has been recorded and remembered as knowledge and the realm of the unknowable which fundamentally informs the *Quartet*. A similar tension applies to a media environment in which the rapidly expanding accumulation and dissemination of information adds to rather than alleviates the anxieties of existence.

Methodological Background

This reading of Peace's *Quartet* analyses the representations of the news media that are found in the texts and the effects of these representations. My interest is in the way that the media operates, how it affects behaviours, inculcates beliefs and attitudes, and how

these processes are illustrated in Peace's texts. The tensions that are especially significant in this series of early novels are those made apparent between the responsibilities of the press as guardian of democracy, the concurrent concessions made to commerciality, and the growing presence and impacts of new technologies. These tensions are most obviously represented in Peace's central journalist figures as they occupy conflicting roles. On the one hand they operate as hopelessly compromised purveyors of sensational copy. Early in the first novel, Dunford is invigorated by the headline potential of linking the disappearances of schoolgirls 'thinking, ninety miles an hour' (Peace, *1974* 9) and crossing wishful fingers (16) that the story stacks up. On the other hand there is a requirement to speak truth to power, as when the same reporter appeals to his editor (to no avail) for the time and space to link powerful locals to the same disappearances (217).

Peace's characters are operating, the reader is reminded, in an historical environment (local, national, and global) of great socio-political upheaval and at a point when the UK's economic structures are about to experience a substantial shift in emphasis. They negotiate a pressurised atmosphere in their attempt to provide resolutions of some kind 'to finish it', as Eddie Dunford has it (*1974* 276). The resurrection and reinterpretation of history which becomes the principal endeavour of Peace's protagonists – journalists, police officers and, finally, a lawyer – reflects Peace's own ambition to explore the past and to determine the extent to which society can be 'defined and damned by the crimes of the times' (Peace *Crimetime*). The investigatory intent of Peace's *Quartet* and the manner of its pursuit in the form of novels which have themes of investigation at their core, speaks of a recognition of certain responsibilities and obligations on the author's part. This aspect of Peace's project provokes a reading in the light of the work of the progenitors of critical theory in 1920s and 30s Germany who are referenced by Peace as principal articulators of such charges (Hart, *Interview* 559-560).

Inhabited, like Peace, by a sense of political disappointment, Theodor Adorno and Walter Benjamin sought an explanation for the expected socialist revolution's failure to materialise (in Germany and elsewhere) by making the political nature of culture their focus. The concerns of these writers are pertinent to this study as they address the potentiality of culture (including its most 'everyday' presences – popular music, the cinema, and the news media), regarding its disempowering and propagandist qualities, but also in revolutionary or emancipatory terms. These debates can be seen to persist in the opinions aroused by the assertions of Rankin and McDermid about the political inclinations of crime writers and the capacity of popular fiction to offer genuine societal critique. Recent technological developments have revived interest in the work of these early theorists and at its application in an age of digital reproduction and the internet (Kurylo; R. Moore; A. Ross). Building further on theories relating to the relationship between socio-political and economic conditions, and culture (particularly in a UK context) is the work of the pioneers of cultural studies in this country; these critics are of value for this study because of their important interactions with, and participation in, the development of media theories which apply to the period of the novels' setting and subsequently.

The instinctive doubts about industrialised cultural product revealing, often, class-based prejudices concerning the suitability of reading material for the 'masses' (Haut 3; Springhall 2), was supplemented from the early twentieth century by the vigorous interrogation of theorists associated with Frankfurt's Institute for Social Research - the 'Frankfurt School'. The diagnoses of these theorists about the implications for cultural production in a rapidly technologizing and consumer-oriented world would influence the study of 'mass media' as its enterprises became an increasingly obvious feature of modernity and continue to occupy in the media-saturated present. Their determined consideration of the political aspects of culture, particularly the enunciation of culture's obligations to respond effectively to wider social conditions bequeaths a legacy that features thematically in the

Quartet and elsewhere in Peace's work and is a matter, as noted, that occupies the author. The theses of Theodor Adorno were written at the point when the classical Marxist evolutionary schema for historical development appeared to have collapsed, and when the dominating tendencies of capital looked to have achieved mastery in the liberal democracies of the western world. Adorno's intention was to investigate how power was achieved and maintained and, too, the role culture played in this process (Held 35; Mills and Barlow 87). A reconsideration of the strict models of economic determinism to which orthodox Marxists adhered and the foregrounding of social phenomena, once considered mere reflections of capitalism's economic base, was a vital part of the project; to explore 'a new relationship between culture and politics, where the former served as a lackey of capitalism and yet had the potential, mostly unrealised, to be its gravedigger' (Jeffries, *Grand* 10).

The political and commercial ideologies which accompanied capitalist domination, Adorno sensed, had infected all forms of expression, including those popular cultural forms which were by the time he was writing being produced on an industrial scale. These had been, in Adorno's assessment, impressed with 'the same stamp', made all 'uniform' in an 'industry like any other' (qtd. in Bernstein 9) and through their ready commodification, not only served to reinforce the position of the capitalist oppressor, but was its progenitor: 'Mass culture was the seedbed of political totalitarianism' (qtd. in Jay, *Dialectical* 218). In a series of expositions, Adorno sets out a critique of what he terms the 'culture industry'. The standardisation and increasingly imitative tendencies that he detects in modern commercially produced cultural artefacts, Adorno believes, encourage (or even dictate) standard responses from their audience, diminishing individual experience and determining conformity:

> The power of the culture industry's ideology is such that conformity has replaced consciousness. The order that springs from it is never confronted with what it claims to be or with the real interests of human beings. (Adorno, *Reconsidered* 104)

Adorno's pessimistic assessment of an apparent cultural degradation forms part of an exchange of ideas developed with his erstwhile friend, Walter Benjamin. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" published in 1935, is Benjamin's prognosis on the implications of technological advance and contains glimmers of hope for a future likely to be dominated by machines. In a view which Adorno problematises[3], Benjamin outlines the potential for the politicisation of the masses, as well as opportunities for resistance to the oppressions of capitalism, via access to technologically produced art and other cultural forms. Film, for example, opens 'an immense and unexpected field of action' freeing the audience from the 'prison-world' (Benjamin, *Illuminations* 229) of capitalism's commonplace.

In his essay Benjamin explores his conception of an *aura* which surrounds a work of art, and which is achieved through its association with ritual or with a specific historical context (and thus available only to a restricted audience); innovations mean that 'for the first time in world history, mechanical reproduction emancipates the work of art from its parasitical dependence on ritual' (Benjamin, *Illuminations* 218). The privileged and authoritative position enjoyed by works of art would diminish, and, Benjamin proposed, accessibility to cultural artefacts would widen through their mechanical reproduction. In consequence, the social hierarchies which works of 'art' helped to maintain would fracture. An expression of

[3] While appreciating Benjamin's illustration of the 'dialectical construction of the relationship between myth and history' (qtd. in Brecht et al. 120), Adorno argues that attempting to confront this relationship through a 'disenchantment of art' (Benjamin's exposure of its aural value) (120), neglects an important component; art's potential in the pursuit of freedom: 'the centre of the autonomous work of art does not itself belong on the side of myth . . . but is inherently dialectical within itself it juxtaposes the magical and the mark of freedom' (121). Furthermore, Adorno warns of the aura's persistence in new cultural forms such as film 'which possesses it to an extreme and highly suspect degree' (123) and 'conserves the decaying aura as a foggy mist' (Adorno, *Reconsidered* 102) in a way likely to produce less rather than more critical citizens.

hope, then, that the easing of access to culture, its values, and benefits, would lead to engagement with an audience beyond the cultural elite. The 'emancipation' (218) of art from ritual or cultic value apparent in photography and film especially, has the potential to elicit a 'progressive' reaction (227) from its mass audience.

Benjamin does not allow himself to be completely seduced by such advances, noting how new media played a part in advancing the celebration of 'personalities' and recognising, not unrelatedly, that technology could also serve regressive programmes (Benjamin attributes some responsibility for the rise of fascism to the way politics had been aestheticized by technological means (Benjamin, *Illuminations* 234)). As elsewhere, the essay is indicative of an ambivalence in Benjamin's writing, a wariness of dogma and a willingness to consider many eventualities. While his focus here is on the relatively modern mediums of photography and film, Benjamin also recognises historical developments and, perhaps, progressive, emancipatory possibilities in the context of the written word, and print:

> For centuries a small number of writers were confronted by many thousands of readers . . . With the increasing extension of the press, which kept placing new political, religious, scientific, professional, and local organs before the readers, an increasing number of readers became writers . . . today there is hardly a gainfully employed European who could not, in principle, find an opportunity to publish somewhere or other comments on his (sic) work, grievances, documentary reports or that sort of thing. (Benjamin, *Illuminations* 225)

The implication that 'the reader gains access to authorship' (225) through their entry into public discourse in the pages of a newspaper offers the hope of a transition to a more democratic situation. For Adorno, Benjamin's appraisal of the potentially democratising effect of mass-produced culture, is not alert enough to the dangers of its appropriation as a tool of propaganda and nor does it appreciate the completeness of capital's dominance. In "The Schema of Mass Culture" Adorno holds that technology, when operating in the

service of capital, renders cultural production a powerful arm of the dominant system. Where once cultural products – be they works of art, popular fictions, or newspapers - might stand in opposition to the presiding hierarchy, in the industrial age they have acquired an unfortunate 'parasitic' character (Adorno, *Schema* 65), feeding off and decorating the social system from which they emerged. In Adorno's analysis, cultural products developed in the industrial era fail to achieve uniqueness but are instead merely adaptations of what has gone before: 'all mass culture is fundamentally adaptation' (Adorno, *Schema* 67).

This lack of originality, Adorno insists, combined with a positioning within the marketplace, drains art and culture of its power to challenge authority, with worrying implications for the consumer, who is advertised to on the basis that the appeal of products is their similarity to other, previously consumed products:

> The pre-digested quality of the product prevails, justifies itself and establishes itself all the more firmly in so far as it constantly refers to those who cannot digest anything not already digested. It is baby food. (67)

Even those works of art – including novels – which are held to have some socio-critical intent, are, when entered into the mechanism of the marketplace, no longer identifiable as denunciations of society but are actually mere trifles, 'consumed but not experienced' (81). The capacity of art and culture to respond to the movement of history is weakened by this adaptation, Adorno contends. Great works of art are able to - or at least can give the appearance of being able to - arrest the passage of time, to offer true reflections of life and thus to express transcendence,

> The empty passage of time, the meaningless transience of life was to be seized upon through form and brought into participation with the 'idea' by virtue of the totality of this form. It was precisely this thematization of time which allowed its heteronomy to be excluded from the aesthetic domain and which permitted the

> artist to inject into the work of art at least the appearance of a timelessness. (Adorno, *Schema* 73)

The necessary element of conflict – of a dialectical kind – that is found in great art is absent in mass culture. Obsessed as it is with repetition and similarity, 'mass culture falls victim to its pre-ordained fate since it adopts its law and simultaneously obscures it. Mass culture treats conflicts but in fact proceeds without conflict' (71) This is a view which foreshadows the cultural stasis identified by those theorists of the postmodern cited by Fisher - Fredric Jameson particularly.

The debate which absorbed Adorno and Benjamin articulates the tensions which surround the political potentiality of culture, tensions with which we can sense Peace engaging, aware of the dangers of succumbing to the exploitative and sensational tendencies of genre fiction, at its basest 'nothing more than an entertainment industry' (Peace 2001) but, meanwhile, keen to provide his audience with points of political accessibility in the mysteries he writes:

> the crime novel has the opportunity to ask why such crimes happen to those certain people at certain places in certain time . . . not only does crime fiction have the opportunity, it also has the obligation. Because if you refuse the obligation to examine the causes and consequences of crime-whatever they may be-you are simply exploiting for personal financial gain and entertainment the deaths of other people (qtd. in Hart, *Interview* 559)

In his *Quartet* Peace confronts some of the issues which surround popular culture as these were outlined by Adorno. His crime fictions knowingly adopt conventions, and his characters are apparently conscious that they are participating in the kind of set-piece arrangements familiar from film and TV, and which describe the reporting and investigation of crimes in the collective imagination. The conforming to stereotypical representation and the employment of devices – the anonymous tip offs, the scenes set in

police stations' briefing and interview rooms, the door-to-door enquiries - so strongly associated with the genre, continues beyond the *Quartet* and into the crime fictions which Peace sets in the defeated geography of Japan's post-war occupation. Peace accepts, in these novels as in the *Quartet*, the limitations imposed by the industrialised cultural artefact that is his vehicle but is nonetheless able to press it into service as a means of critiquing the shortcomings of society's systems and organisations. Peace exploits the possibilities of apparently formulaic generic fiction, pushing at its boundaries to make allegorical links between the crimes described and the state of the environment in which they occur.

Peace's fictions can be seen to probe the debate which invigorated Benjamin and Adorno, remaining alive to the diagnoses of each. It is certainly possible to find some correspondence between Peace's work and the interests and endeavours of Benjamin, an avid reader of crime fictions, and the frustrated would-be author of one (Salzani 166). Benjamin pursues in his writing some of the methodology of the detective, 'developing an acute sense for detail' (Frisby 92) and uncovering 'nodal points in the course of history that had lain hidden on the other side of things' (93). Benjamin can be seen to construct, in the figure of his investigator and interpreter of the modern city, a prototype for a certain kind of detective - the 'unknown man who arranges his walk . . . in such a way that he always remains in the middle of the crowd. This unknown man is the flaneur' (Marcus 246). An inveterate collector of traces, of fragments, Benjamin hoped to construct a re-examination of history through this technique, what Markus describes as 'an idiosyncratic method of 'literary montage', of the archaeology, the debris.' (Markus 13) Through a combination of literary modes (the poetry of Baudelaire for example) and the material remnants of social history Benjamin pursued a revelatory project, which sought to discover the 'concrete thing' in the 'world of appearances in which significance . . . and appearance, word and thing, idea and experience would coincide.' (Arendt, *Introduction* 17); an endeavour which

would 'expose the 'historicist fantasy' which erased those aspects of the past which did not fit the progressive narrative' (Jeffries, *Grand* 19).

Peace, like Benjamin, demonstrates his discontent at the way that history has been represented; his work mounting a challenge to its widely accepted versions. He also illuminates some of the same fears that Adorno expressed about the operations of the culture industry. The deleterious effects of the cultural within a capitalist system become especially apparent in the way that the news media is represented in Peace's novels. The headlines tend toward the unsettling ('*Man Killed as Three Bombs Explode, Petrol Up to 74p.*' (Peace, *1974* 136), *Eighty-four arrested outside the Grunwick Processing Laboratories . . . Metropolitan Police accused of unnecessary brutality'* (Peace, *1977* 224)), reflecting a news environment which prioritises the 'shock-like seduction' (Adorno qtd. in Brecht et al. 123) that looms over the texts.

The Dialectic of Enlightenment, written with his colleague Max Horkheimer in 1947, continues Adorno's interrogation of the role of culture in the maintenance of a capitalist order. The book's essays offer a critique of the Enlightenment project and seek to explain how new mythologies of the rational impose new oppressions. The authors recognise the cultural tendency 'toward complicity with the prevailing intellectual trends' (*Dialectic* xv). These trends become established as 'truths' and are subsumed into a categorical apparatus of 'false clarity' (xvii), a version of myth. The Enlightenment in the authors' view, with its emphasis on rationality and order, inevitably contained fears of the irrational and the disorderly, and because of this carried the seeds of its own self-destruction as an engine of liberation. In the chapter "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception", the authors forcefully interrogate the ways in which a technologically and industrially manufactured culture acts to distract populations. While disguised as a means of fulfilling the needs and desires of the consumer, and thus readily accepted, the culture industry's

output in fact constituted in the authors' view 'a cycle of manipulation and retroactive need' which unifies 'the system ever more tightly' (*Deception* 95). This sombre prognosis is not unaffected by confrontation, during the writers' exile, with the cultural marketplace *nonpareil* of the United States, the primary site of the industrial manufacture of false consciousness; their interpretations those of 'the sensitive European . . . shocked and bewildered by the commercialism, vulgarity and theoretical backwardness of his temporary home.' (Jay, *America* 158) Detectable in this alien environment is the capacity of an all-powerful industry to target consumers with a 'category of mass product manufactured for their type' (*Deception* 97); the regurgitative impulse to re-satisfy apparent in 1940s America prefiguring the assessment of those critics who find a diminished sense of cultural future in the late twentieth century.

That the pre-ordained and repetitious will create a climate which offers satisfactions in familiar ways, reinforcing extant conditions and diminishing opportunities to challenge, is central to Horkheimer and Adorno's essay, suggesting impasse over progress. The most malignant and all-enveloping aspects of the media which so exercised the theorists of the Frankfurt School have proved to be persistent and the body of work for which these theorists were responsible continues to inform the study of the 'media' (Eldridge et al. 126; Kellner 29-31). Many of the systemic arrangements that these critics identified, and the role that the media plays in the sustaining of those arrangements, would intensify in the period Peace describes. The technological advances made in the late twentieth century and since, meanwhile, have brought forth an immersive media environment of ever-expanding reach.

In Peace's *Quartet* there is no escape from the media's noise. The disempowering quality of a mass market media – anticipatory of a fast-developing digital media environment – which can overwhelm with distraction, has come to form part of an everyday cultural

condition which elicits concerns about its potential harms. Peace's willingness to utilise and exploit a popular fictive form, and to introduce further elements from the cultural morass, lend value to a reading of the novels with the theories of both Adorno and Benjamin in mind. While Peace's fictions are sited in a very specific socio-economic context, different from that experienced by the German émigrés of the 1930s, the ideas of these writers apply usefully to a reading of the *Quartet* in which historical events transform the cultural circumstances of West Yorkshire.

Closer geographically and temporally to the world of Peace's novels are the pioneers of the British cultural studies tradition who continued, as their predecessors in the Frankfurt School had done, to explore how culture might affect, and what it might reveal about social conditions. Theorists began a course of investigation which led to the emergence of Cultural Materialism as a theoretical project and whose interactions with and influence upon the developing field of media study raise concerns applicable to the environment described by Peace in his *Quartet*. Richard Hoggart' *Uses of Literacy* (1957) is a foundational text for the investigation of the UK's post-war socio-cultural situation. Its recognition of the binding (and exclusionary) traditions, experiences, and neighbourhood norms of the working-class community introduced a non-elite focus to the study of British 'culture'. The text is mournful about some of the 'regrettable aspects of change' (136) that are associated with the arrival of (often American) mass culture, symbolised most effectively by the television set and the 'passivity' (154) its programming encourages. In a section relevant to this study, Hoggart decries the state of the British popular press, characterised by its 'personalisation' (the tendency to address readers in familiar, chummy terms) and its 'fragmentation' (161) (the bitty, unfocused structure), by the restrictions imposed by the delineations of popularity, and the requirement to aid rapid consumption.

This configuration, Hoggart insists, promotes conservatism and conformity, acts to subject its readership, and is, along with film, TV, and popular fiction, an element of cultural development 'as dangerous in [its] own way as those we are shocked with in totalitarian states.' (287) *Uses of Literacy* is recognised for the originality of its celebration of working-class lives, and for what it reveals about them:

> the network of shared cultural meanings which sustains relationships between different facets of the culture, more complex in its structure than could ever be recognized by any sociologist attempting to penetrate the thickets of working-class life. (Critcher 19)

It also constitutes a warning about the society which Hoggart saw evolving; one seduced by the easy attractions of mass cultural product and in danger of forgetting its own organic cultural past. In its concentration on the home rather than the workplace, Hoggart's work has been viewed as neglectful of sites of working-class resistance to the political and cultural incursions of consumer capitalism (Critcher 20; Sinfield 290). However, in foregrounding the 'ordinary' culture of a distinctly northern, urban, working-class population, under 'assault' from a rapidly evolving media industry, Hoggart anticipated a 'New Wave' of British cultural production. Often centring on similar northern topography as Hoggart's study had, the writers, dramatists, and filmmakers of this loosely aligned movement articulated a regional sensibility, the echoes of which become apparent in Peace's fiction.

Hoggart's contemporary, Raymond Williams, similarly sought to assess the whole of cultural experience, connecting literary analysis with societal investigation, and beginning to articulate a methodology upon which cultural studies would be established as an area of academic pursuit. Williams' sustained cultural investigations intersect with thematic aspects of this study – his interest in the relationship between culture and the specific historical conditions from which it emanated; his expositions on the subordinating effects

of regionality and class in the production and reception of literature; an enduring engagement with cultural forms of all kinds (including 'popular' forms such as crime fiction in which he made his own foray[4]) as both site and means of expanding democracy; and, particularly significant for this thesis, an exploration of media culture as it had developed to the point that we meet it in Peace's 1970s' universe (as well as considerations on unrealised media systems of the future).

Particularly useful to this thesis is Williams' gradually realised concept of 'structures of feeling'. Though definitively elusive (Simpson 51), the formulation remained an 'anchoring concept' (Prendergast 4) of Williams' work, informing an approach to evidence gathering as an interpretive strategy and is the focus upon which Cultural Materialism would develop. First proposed as a 'cultural hypothesis' (R. Williams, *Marxism* 132) in early film criticism the idea continued to inhabit Williams' work as a suggestive and invigorating rather than fully conceived theory. Identification of 'structures of feeling' requires the appreciation of patterns of cultural change (or revolution) through the analysis of historical and contemporary cultural frameworks and the recognition of the multiplicity of connections within those frameworks. The revelatory potential of the idea lies in the investigation of society's 'general organisation in a particular example' (R. Williams, *Revolution* 61), not by separating the example – the artwork, the novel – but by examination of the other activities, economic and social, which are reflected in it. The theory prioritises a recognition that the processes of cultural development are always 'in solution' (63) and never settled, and that the relationship between structure and feeling is a dialectical one; the productive interaction of the meanings and values inherited from extant institutions, and those which are actually experienced. However, Williams' appreciates that apprehending and articulating the disjunctions that take place (or that

[4] *The Volunteers* (1978), perhaps more political thriller than crime fiction, features a journalist (a 'consultant analyst' in the near future that Williams imagines), as its investigating protagonist.

have taken place) as these apparently contradictory conceptions intersect, presents significant complications: 'the most difficult thing to get hold of, in studying any past period, is this felt sense of the quality of life at a particular place and time: a sense of the ways in which the particular activities combined into a way of thinking and living.' (63). Williams pursues the idea that the realisation of a period involves arresting, as far as they are discernible, the shifting 'mood' that affect it, allowing that 'this is a kind of feeling and feeling which is both social and material, but each in an embryonic phase before it can become fully articulate and defined exchange.' (R. Williams, *Marxism* 131) Despite the complexities that Williams' himself identifies, its 'unsolved ambiguities' (Simpson 36), 'structures of feeling' as employed as an organising formulation in much of his writing[5].

Useful for the purpose of this study is the sense of 'unease' (R. Williams, *Marxism* 130) which attaches to the concept, arising from the difficult to grasp, and never settled quality that it suggests. The challenge to 'the obviousness of contemporary meanings or associations' (Schiach 58) which the idea proposes, and which Williams employs to assess cultural change across his work, can be seen to be activated in Peace's texts as disruptive historical and social movements are reassessed. Williams attempt to define 'a particular quality of social experience and relationship, historically distinct from other particular qualities which give the sense of a generation or a period' (R. Williams, *Marxism* 131), is a negotiation inhabited with tensions. Confronting the past, as Williams recommends, not as a 'finished' and 'already manifest social formation', but as a generative 'structure of particular linkages, particular emphases and suppressions' (134) is an approach similar to

[5] The idea is an informative presence in Williams' conceptualisation of dominant, emergent and residual cultural elements with which Williams explained the production of ideologies, and which is explained in Marxism and Literature (pp 121-127). There is also a relationship with Pierre Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* (Filmer 206) in the way that both ideas apply to the establishment of social conditions. It is also possible to find parallels with Henri Lefebvre's dialectical materialist theories about the production of space.

that which Peace undertakes. The tensions which surround his investigations compound the novels' other variegating features – the crime and the violence particularly - which confront the reader in such disturbing ways.

Williams' concerted investigation into cultural development begins in *Culture and Society* (1958), where 'responses in thought and feeling to the changes in English society since the late eighteenth century' (11) are translated into 'a special kind of map by means of which the nature of the changes can be explored.' (16) The evolving historical process is assessed in relation to the thoughts and words of a range of thinkers across his timeframe; the intention of the study to retrieve meaning from their expressed experience. Through such consideration, Williams proposes a 'new interpretation' of the idea of culture:

> The recognition of a separate body of moral and intellectual activities, and the offering of a court of human appeal, which comprise the early meanings of the word [culture], are joined, and in themselves changed, by the growing assertion of a whole way of life, not only as a scale of integrity, but as a mode of interpreting all our common experience, and in this new interpretation, changing it. (R. Williams, *Society* 17-18)

Williams interrogates writers from late eighteenth-century political theorists through Romantic poets, 'industrial novelists', the 'interregnum' of the *fin de siècle,* and modernists of the twentieth century. At times critical of their assessments – of Burke's blind spots (31) or Arnold's confused authoritarianism in the face of working-class agitation (133) - at others celebratory. Always, though, the emphasis is on the cultural response as central to the evolving societal situation. As Prendergast puts it, for Williams, culture is,

> not passive, a mere superstructural reflection, but is itself an active force in the social construction of reality (or more accurately, it is to be grasped as at once producing and produced within the complex and mobile totality of social process). (Prendergast 10)

Increasingly evident in Williams' cultural prognosis is the presence and influence of a 'mass' media and its attendant commerciality. Appropriately in the section on George Gissing's *New Grub Street* (1891), Williams appreciates the author's 'analysis of literature as a trade' (R. Williams, *Society* 175) in the light of expansive industrialisation's depreciative effects on a writer's life. In his conclusion, he notes with some despair that, 'the whole theory of mass-communication depends, essentially on a minority in some way exploiting a majority' (302) and laments the ill effects on democracy.

Recognition of the press's 'major importance in any account of our general cultural expansion', and its 'obviously significant element for analysis' (Williams, *Revolution* 195), informs an approach which is to study aspects of the media alongside the social structures and power relationships from which they emerged. Rejecting simple linear interpretations of development (196), Williams instead begins to interrogate how the interplay between industrialisation, the struggle for democracy and the finance provided in a reorganised socio-economic reality by advertising, created the conditions which would produce the UK's popular press. The narrowing of scope which Williams detects as a feature of the new publications of the early twentieth century - the effects 'on the serious news . . . certainly deplorable' (225) - is the inevitable consequence of an impetus for maximum sales and advertising revenue, as well as the development of a new formula:

> This formula is that of the 'mass', or 'masses', a particular kind of impersonal grouping, corresponding to aspects of the social and industrial organisation of our kind of capitalist and industrialised society The essential novelty of the twentieth-century popular press is its discovery and successful exploitation of this formula. (Williams, *Revolution* 200-201)

Such exploitative arrangements would continue to affect editorial policy as the century progressed, Williams recognised, becoming ever more secure in the post second world war period and into the timeframe of Peace's *Quartet*. The diminishing of a political element in

the press is borne out by research – public affairs content as a percentage of editorial space halving across a representative sample of popular papers between 1946 and 1976 (Curran and Seaton 88). The publications that remain after this hollowing out are, Williams believes, unedifying reading matter for the working-classes, and unlikely to awaken a revolutionary (or even a democratic) consciousness in their readership. The situation in his opinion, 'does not even begin to look like the developing press of an educated democracy' but rather one that has the 'masses formula as the dominant social principle, and with the varied function of the press increasingly limited to finding a selling point.' (R. Williams, *Revolution* 235) Increasingly relevant to Williams' assessment and a dictum which occupies his hopes for a democratic media future is Marx's warning: 'It is startling to find freedom of the press subsumed under freedom of doing business . . . The first freedom of the press consists in its not being a business' (qtd. in R. Williams, *What* 198)

By the 1960s 'commerciality' had, according to Williams, become the overwhelmingly dominant system governing media institutions. In *Communications* (1962), Williams describes 'Commercial' supersession over 'Authoritarian' or 'Paternal' systems of media control; a structural development that involves a complete departure from its precursors and where the products provided by such a system 'openly for sale and openly bought' (R. Williams, *Essential* 88), allowing consumers a level of choice not previously available and assuring, supposedly, the freedom of communication. However, in a commercial system, Williams warns, the production of content is inhibited by the constraints of the marketplace, in which considerable control of the means of communication will be held by those,

> whose qualification will be that they possess or can raise the necessary capital. Such groups, by the fact of this qualification, will often be quite unrepresentative of the society as a whole; they will be, in fact, a minority within it. Thus the control claimed as a matter of power by authoritarians, and as a matter of principle by paternalists, is often achieved as a matter of practice in the operation of the commercial system. (88)

Williams' fourth incarnation of media system – the 'democratic' – is hoped for, but not yet realised. In this hypothetical embodiment the principle of free exchange, central to the commercial system, would still apply but so too would an awareness of the possible 'tyranny' (89) of the marketplace. Foremost would be an approach which incorporated the ideals of a democratic society in that these are dependent on 'the active participation and the free contribution of all its members' (89). The realisation of such a system is reliant, Williams proposes, on the establishment of overseeing institutions which, he acknowledges, introduces the possibility of democratic threat (91).

Importantly, and through a development of ideas which involved the incorporation of European Marxism and structuralism[6], Williams came to view the media (as well as other branches of a wider system of 'Communication'), as a productive force, rather than just a reflection or product of society's economic base, contesting the orthodox Marxist idea that culture was merely a 'superstructural' feature built on the 'substructural' foundations of the means of production. This aspect of Williams' prognosis coincides with the context of the *Quartet's* timeline, circulating at a moment when elements within the UK media take on characteristics which anticipate, and campaign for, changes to the economic situation before governments or the wider electorate move in that direction (Hall, *Moving* 17; Eldridge et al. 33-34; Beckett 283-4; Sandbrook 732). The spearheading of a movement by elements of a right-wing press that would correspond with its own commercial ambition would, during the 1970s, 'redefine the contemporary tabloid in Britain' (Conboy 8), leading to fears of an 'erosion of the values of popular journalism' (K Williams 212) and would have

[6] Williams' reanalysis of the traditional Marxist base/superstructure model is explained most fully in the essay "Base and Superstructure in Marx's Cultural Theory" (1973).

an enduring impact on institutions of the media of the kind that we see represented in Peace's texts.

The political and constitutive aspects of the cultural, which Williams proposed, inform the work of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham University, particularly during the directorship of Stuart Hall in the 1970s. Hall argues, as had Williams, that the study of culture should not consist only of what the educated élites prioritise, but rather should be born out of lived experience and recognise the relationship to structures of power – 'combining the study of symbolic forms and meanings with the study of power' (Hall, *Power* 24). The Centre's synthesising of cultural studies and structural Marxism characterised its investigations into how the relationships between popular culture and ideology worked to produce meanings. Pertinently, the operations of the news media became a matter for concerted interrogation by Hall and his colleagues as they applied the disciplines of cultural studies to sociological issues. Particularly interested in television's role, Hall identified in the context of policing and crime, how the media act through means of representation and in accord with dominating discourses to construct and to reproduce structures of political power.

Significant for this thesis are issues explored by Hall and his colleagues in *Policing the Crisis* (Hall et al. 1978) - again, coinciding with Peace's timeframe - which examines the manufacture of public consent for the operations of a State increasingly defined by notions of 'law and order'. This examination of crime, reactions to crime and the structuring of the public consciousness toward crime and its control – in this instance through the creation of moral panic or 'folk devil' (Cohen 1972) around the racialised figure of the 'mugger' – emphasises the convergence of societal, historical and political contexts. This contextualisation is not 'the invocation of an inert "background'' but instead treats the contexts as processes which constitute 'a real movement in time' (Hall et al. xiv) leading to

moments – or periods – of 'conjuncture'. This designation, developed by both Gramsci and Althusser, describes a point at which 'the antagonisms and contradictions, which are always at work in society, begin to ''*fuse*' *into a ruptural unity*'' (Hall et al. xv quoting Althusser). Such a conjuncture is identified by Hall and his colleagues in the period of the post war settlement in Britain when the competing impulses of 'corporate profits and the public good, privatised 'affluence' and collective social provision' (xv) pulled in contradictory directions. Further conjunctures are discerned in the fracturing of the UK's social formations which began in the 1960s and whose impacts were fully felt in the following decade, and, too, in the circumstances which heralded the arrival of Thatcherism's New Right politics at the end of the 1970s.

Through analysis of the socially anxious discourse, generated largely by the news media, which grew around young black men in the 1970s, Hall and his colleagues detect a 'crisis of hegemony' (Hall et al. 215) affecting the UK and a new 'coercive' political response. It was a crisis which led to the public acceptance of aggressive policing in certain neighbourhoods of British inner cities and the development of a politics in which the maintenance of law-and-order became an increasingly salient feature. The intention of this long study to 'restore Crime to its social and political conditions of existence' (xi) involves an inquiry into the role that the media plays in constructing dramatic narratives which 'fuel and legitimate' (15) concern about crime as well as punitive responses to it.

The complex process of social production in the manufacture of news that Hall and colleagues describe involves the categorisation of news stories by media organisations, and the choice of story - informed by '*professional ideology*' (56) - from within those categories that will determine *news values;* the extraordinary and dramatic serving to elevate a story's newsworthiness. Further in this analysis, the construction of news takes place within a context that assumes certain characteristics of its audience. This requires the

'mapping' of a news story for it to be made 'meaningful' and to allow its interpretation, 'an event only 'makes sense' if it can be located within a range of known social and cultural identifications' (57). This system relies on the belief in (and promotion of) a commonly shared cultural knowledge against which the dissemination of news takes place, and from this belief comes the construction of a dominating perspective:

> Because we occupy the same society and belong to roughly the same 'culture', it is assumed that there is, basically, only one perspective on events: that provided by what is sometimes called the culture, or (by some social scientists) the 'central value system'. This view denies any major structural discrepancies between different groups, or between the very different maps of meaning in a society. (57)

The structural development of such a viewpoint is 'most widely and consistently predicated upon the assumption of a 'national consensus'' (58). This should not be read, Hall stresses, as evidence of a conspiracy, but is rather the result of a social and historical process that orients public opinion toward certain positions of understanding within the cultural field: a process that is supplemented by the prominence of *primary definers* (60), the voice, often, of accredited sources (the politician, the business leader, or the expert) as privileged articulators of news narratives. The media's role in a process that has been constructed by an underlying dominant ideology is summarised elsewhere by Hall:

> Now consider the media – the means of representation. To be impartial and independent in their daily operations, they cannot be seen to take directives from the powerful, or consciously to be bending their accounts of the world to square with dominant definitions. But they must be sensitive to, and can only survive legitimately by operating within, the general boundaries or framework of "what everyone agrees" to: the consensus. (Hall, *Ideology* 87).

In the specific context of crime news the evocation of threat is an important part of their worth for news providers but so too is the role stories of this kind play in the affirmation of society's 'consensual morality' (69). Reporting of even the most routine of crime establishes commonly agreed boundaries 'the normative outlines of our society' (Erikson

qtd. in Hall et al. 69) as well as attitudes to their transgression and the consequential actions of the state. Accounts of violent crime, which achieve the ultimate in negative news value and which represent a 'fundamental rupture of the social order' (70) generating the required conditions for the state to forcefully assert its authority.

Hall's contributions as a critic of and commentator on the structures and processes of news manufacture is apposite to the context of this study. Considerable, too, is his engagement with the dispensations of Thatcherism and the struggle for responses to it from the political left. In all his writing is an abiding concern expressed in the question, 'what does this have to do with everything else?' (Gilbert) Hall's, like Peace's, are projects of wide enquiry and there is an equivalence in the materialism of their methodology – Hall 'wading through mounds of newspapers' 'reading masses of secondary material in the form of books, articles and commentaries' (xi -xii) and Peace surrounding himself with the news and media of his chosen period, an immersion that becomes apparent on the page. The relevance is also keen because important aspects of Hall's work coincide with the period of the novels' setting, where Peace presents a period of conjunctural crisis in which multiple determining factors converge and a future of unresolved tension is anticipated.

The diagnoses of these British Cultural theorists and their exploration of the relationships between 'culture' – including the media and other popular forms – and the 'everything else' - invigorate discussions around specifically UK situations which correspond with the timeframe of Peace's *Quartet* and will provide reference for this study as it proceeds. The emphasis on non-elite cultural forms which characterises aspects of their work and the role they played in blurring the distinctions between high art and mass culture both encouraged and coincided with vigorous investigations taking place into genre fiction and, importantly in this context, the concerted study of detective and crime fictions, Symons' *Bloody Murder* (1972) and Stephen Knight's *Form and Ideology in Crime Fiction* (1980) among these. While

contemporary criticism allows that crime fiction will reveal much about the historical moment from which it came, and the ideological positions that it represents, Peace's *Quartet* makes use of the form itself as a tool of socio-political critique to examine both the past and his writing present.

Thesis Structure

In Chapter 1 I will offer some historical, political and social contextualisation to the period of the *Quartet*'s setting and an examination of how journalism and other media both contributed and responded to a period of rapid deindustrialisation and the demise of the post-war dispensation, and how these matters are represented in Peace's work. This chapter considers *1974* (1999) and *1977* (2000) in particular, where crimes both imagined and actual become emblematic of a society on the brink of transformation and where a sense of ranks beginning to assemble in opposition to each other is articulated. Apparent too in these first novels of the Quartet is evidence of an increasingly technologized and encroaching media environment which generates feelings of claustrophobia that accompany the signs of a reconfiguration of the British economy and of the wider neoliberal project which was about to be undertaken. I intend to show how Peace uses the tensions which surround the operations of individual journalists, of the press industry and the growing significance of other media to illustrate his re-interpretation of the past.

In Chapter 2 I will explore the significance of place in Peace's fiction and how mythologised constructions of 'the North' (and of Yorkshire specifically) and the restrictive associations made with class that are part of these constructions. In part developed in the media and through fictions ideas of 'northernness' are utilised and challenged in the author's novels and apparently secure footings are rendered fragile in the face of economic crisis and cultural isolation. In the two central novels of the *Quartet 1977* and *1980* (2001) Peace employs descriptions of physical surroundings to conceptualise a Yorkshire mindset of defensive insularity within which many of his characters appear to be imprisoned. I intend

to show how Peace's conceptions of geographical situation intersect with historical and social processes to exert an influence on the novels' atmospheres and on the intricacies of the relationships between characters and the spaces they inhabit.

In the third chapter I will focus on Peace's appropriation of, and experiments with, stylistic and generic elements of journalism, literary realism and crime writing in the service of his reinterpretation of history. It will include an exploration of the ways that the author privileges the news media with a prominent position in the narrative process, affording the machinations of news journalism powerful force over the course of the whole series. Included, too, is an examination of how the figure of the journalist, moulded by a variety of developments over time, and struggling to accommodate the competing principles of commerciality and of holding power to account, is, because of this peculiarly conflicted constitution, ideally suited to investigate this contentious historical period. This will involve an appreciation of the intertwining relationship between fiction (especially, in this context, crime and detective fiction) and journalism, acknowledging the ways that crime has been, and continues to be, utilised, and commodified in both novels and in the media.

In the final chapter I intend to explore what Peace's *Quartet* reveals about his attitude to the role that the media plays in articulating codes of morality in a public space which it has increasingly come to dominate. I will consider the *Quartet* in relation to studies which interrogate the ethical parameters of media content, provision and reception. In this generic context, I will focus on the ways that crime is mediated across various platforms, including the fictional and those offering 'true crime', and on the consequences of this mediation on the public's imagination and its understanding of historical events. I am interested in exploring how the news and other media, as presented by Peace, can be seen to assume the operative practice of religions which speaks of a desire for the communal, but also contributes to conceptions of 'endarkenment' and an end of progress. This will

involve some engagement with, and incorporation of, theories which address the condition of postmodernity that apply to the period of the *Quartet's* setting and acknowledge the correspondences and differences between Peace's work and the concerns of other novelists. There will also be some consideration of how Peace's fictions themselves navigate difficult moral territory. While all four novels will be considered in this last chapter, there will be particular focus on the final volume in the sequence, *1983* (2002), which itself constitutes a re-examination of the narratives that have preceded in the series.

Chapter 1 – History, Contexts and Representation

The focus in this chapter will be on Peace's engagement with the historical contexts that relate to the *Quartet*'s setting and at developments with the news media, its interaction with and impact upon those contexts in the contentious period that the author describes. This involves an exploration of the UK's media evolution to the point that the reader meets it in the novels, with a focus on a promotion of individualism which anticipates the divergence from the established post war dispensation. This aspect of media behaviour is visible in the press offices and news conferences that appear in the texts but especially in the tensions which surround the operations of Peace's journalist protagonists. As these characters detach from the auspices of their institutions, they pursue solitary investigations and adopt at times the cynical methods of the 'hard-boiled' private eye. In the first two novels of the series, *1974* and *1977*, the media environment that Peace portrays is indicted, despite some evidence of its worthier intentions, as an important, sometimes insidious, partner in the approaching social and economic rupture with the established post-war arrangement. Peace's decision to reach back to the pre-Thatcher years allows him to locate the roots of the transformative forces which brought about the emerging New Right orthodoxy which continues to describe the modern UK. To this dispiriting terrain, Peace introduces recorded events, from strife riven workplaces, 'Provincial Journalists set to strike' (Peace, *1974* 13), from the economy, '£534 Million Trade Deficit' (113), and from the 'Troubles' in the north of Ireland, *'five charged in Captain Nairac murder*' (Peace, *1977* 41); '*Three policemen shot dead in Ulster*' (113). The sense created is of an accumulation of converging factors signalling impending societal fracture.

As the *Quartet* proceeds, Peace's incorporation, and manipulation of the conventions of detective fiction, and of other less rule-bound crime fictions, allows him to develop a powerful vehicle for exploring the cultural, generational, and political movements of the

past. The positions of the protagonists change as they transgress the limits of legality, and notions of law, justice and criminality become increasingly uncertain. What remains constant, as characters pursue their various quests, is the delving backwards in time, and the examination of tensions between past and present. A parallel is drawn between the investigative form of the novels and the challenge to accepted versions of history which they seek to mount; the crimes and criminals presented as a 'familiar and logical manifestation of the hate, prejudice and greed underpinning the period.' (Shaw 76)

Significant too, and apparent in the texts, is how, as established sources of solidarity – the site of mass employment, the church - diminish, the media participates in the construction of a 'community of national readership' (Conboy 70) about which, however inaccurately, assumptions of a shared 'stock of cultural knowledge' and access to the same 'maps of meaning' are made (Hall et al. 58). The harnessing of the rhetoric of law and order - a signal characteristic of the emerging political ideology – in response to a deteriorating social situation, and the bolstering of its potency by the amplification of threat in the media, has possible ill effects hinted at in the texts. The growing prominence of representations of crime in reportage and drama which attaches to Peace's chosen period serves to both unsettle audiences and to endorse responses of an authoritarian kind. In Peace's texts the judicial and policing response is not merely an inadequate replacement for the dwindling communal ethos but is systemically corrupt.

That Peace's temporal siting is deliberate and significant is apparent in the choice of the *Quartet'*s titles, and his concern with the way that history operates in the epigraph by Harry S Truman chosen to preface the first novel in the sequence: 'The only thing new in this world is the history you don't know'. Peace's allusions to and intersections with historical events, coupled with his own interweaving narratives, represent an intention to offer a counter-history of a particularly fractious period. Part of the purpose of Peace's

retrospective approach is to question how the past has been recorded and remembered, how the media participates in this process, and at how this continues to affect the present.

The 1970s

The conception of the period as one of significant social and economic realignment is commonly held in the public imagination. Sections of the media have helped to overemphasise the importance of certain events and characters to the extent that the election of Margaret Thatcher as prime minister in 1979 has come to symbolise, depending on one's persuasion, the arrival of a saviour or a demon. While this event is not directly referenced in Peace's *Quartet,* its anticipation and consequences are central to the political mood of the texts. Although it is likely that the momentousness of that singular event is exaggerated, both historically and imaginatively (Jackson and Saunders 15; Edgerton 445; Gamble 5), the reorganisation which it has come to represent has had profound material effects on the north of England which continue to reverberate. It is these effects and the way these have been interpreted and remembered which the novels seek to explore; a confrontation 'with decades that have been subject to a sustained "correction" in the popular historical consciousness' (Shaw 4).

After her election, significant sections of the press would help to maintain Thatcher's grasp on power and in return for this assistance, Conservative governments of the 1980s would prove friendly to the ambition of news organisations (McNair 88; Lonsdale 146). In a media environment of rapidly expanding business possibility certain media controllers would, by the time the novels were written at the turn of the twentieth century, wield power and influence at as great a level as had the press barons of one hundred years before. The role of the news media in the redrawing of the political and cultural landscape during the period covered by the *Quartet* which so heavily informs the texts, is of special interest for this study.

By the time that he writes, Peace is aware of the robust consolidation of the socio-political movement whose starting point he locates in the 1970s. The long years of Conservative government in the 1980s and 90s and the hope, followed by the disappointment, of the New Labour regimes which followed, and the collapse of socialist governments in eastern Europe had led to an age of 'capitalist realism' (Fisher 2009). Implied in this conception is the end of imagined futures which do not conform to the domination of the free market. The entrenchment of this fatalistic acceptance has led to the declaration that it is 'easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism' (attributed to both Fredric Jameson and Slavoj *Žižek (Fisher 2*)) and is a telling contribution to the pessimistic tone of the *Quartet* as Peace views the period of its setting and what was incubated then through the prism of hindsight.

There is the sense that a societal malaise has descended, that something lost is being mourned, but also that the past is being misremembered. Signally, the first book in the series, *1974*, begins with the detailing of news about a young girl's disappearance (the start of a narrative thread that runs through the novel). This intimation of a loss of innocence – greeted, revealingly, by a journalist with the throwaway, 'A quid says she's dead' (Peace *1974* 3) - helps to set the novel's mournful tone. So too does the death of the protagonist Eddie Dunford's father, eulogised by a stand in, 'Super Sub' vicar whose 'journalistic licence' (9) irritates Dunford, and which points to a theme of history betrayed that will continue to inform the text.

The eponymous year of the first novel's title was a year of two general elections in the UK. These led, eventually, to the uncomfortable, downbeat coda of Harold Wilson's prime-ministerial career and signalled the end of Edward Heath's reign as leader of the Conservative Party. The problems – inflation and wage demand, for example - which had so troubled Heath's administration of 1970-74 continued to cause discomfort for Wilson's and

he found his government unable to deliver on its promise to implement the policies in the Labour election manifesto which had brought a narrow victory in the autumn of 1974 (Coates 17). Repercussions from events internationally, the oil crisis of 1973 most substantially, as well as the loss of customers for British manufacture, once, but no longer, provided in huge number by the population of an overseas empire, had adverse effects on the economy (Hearne et al. 342; Skidelsky 40; Beckett 16). So did the parlous condition of heavy industry which had sustained employment in the north and midlands of England, south Wales, and the west of Scotland for several generations (Comfort 2013). Trade Union efforts to preserve a seat at the governing table, granted in the aftermath of a largely cooperative war effort, added to governmental discomfort leading to accusations of overplaying hands, and the incurring of much public opprobrium, encouraged by elements of the press (Bingham & Conboy 85; Sandbrook, *Seasons* 792) and other popular cultural forms (A. Turner 78-79).

Particularly rankling for those on the political right were the outcomes of the miners' strikes of 1972 and 1974, eventually settled on terms largely as demanded by the National Union of Mineworkers (H. Young 367; J. Phillips 202). The security once offered by the state seemed less certain and a narrative of decline, readily articulated in these historical circumstances, finds its way into Peace's texts. The first time that news from beyond Yorkshire intrudes into *1974* from a kitchen radio, the bulletin is resolutely inauspicious: 'Eighteen dead in an old people's home in Nottingham, the second such fire in as many days. The Cambridge Rapist had claimed his fifth victim' (Peace, *1974* 52-3). Even the updates from the Test Match in Australia lends an air of gloom: 'England were trailing by 171 runs' (53). It is in the context of this fragile, divided, and diminished situation that the sequence begins. And, although the action of Peace's novels is largely confined within the borders of Yorkshire's West Riding, with only the odd foray across the Pennines into

Lancashire, there is an awareness raised by the appearance of radio headlines of a world beyond the English north which is just as unsettled.

The wider period has been imbued with an atmosphere of singular contentiousness; the recognition – or 'myth monstering' (Fisher, *Ghosts* 25) - of it as a time of significant societal shift happening both with immediacy (Chrisopher Brooker's celebration of the demise of communitarian politics, *The Seventies*, was published in 1980), and with the benefit of hindsight (Beckett *Lights*; Turner; Sandbrook *State* and *Seasons*). Compounding the decade's turbulent reputation is familiar newsreel footage of conflicts around the world, from the situation in the Middle East and from wars of independence often taking place in the shadow of the Cold War[7]. Closer to home, images of striking workers gathered around picket line braziers, bulldozers razing swathes of city streets, uncollected rubbish in vast piles, and bomb damage in Irish towns and cities have helped to create a powerful impression of the 1970s in the public imagination. It is a time the British population continue to be warned against and whose horrors are usefully revisited by Conservative politicians and their allies in the media. See, for example, the front pages of the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Daily Mail* in May 2017 immediately prior to the general election of that year when, in front-page arrangements known in the newspaper trade as the 'crucifixion', Jeremy Corbyn was presented as the man who would 'take Britain back to the 70s'. The decade has come to represent the failure of a so called 'post-war consensus'. The reality that the term 'consensus' implies is disputed. There was always opposition to arrangements that post-war governments largely adhered to, both within and without Westminster. Less ambiguous (K. Morgan, *People's* 5) and more accurate perhaps is the word 'settlement' which acknowledges, better, degrees of agreement (Toye). David

[7] A branch of the criminal organisation that features in *1974* have transported a ruthlessness learned while suppressing the Mau Mau uprising in 1950s Kenya back to the West Riding (Peace, *1974* 211). Peace drawing an equivalence between criminal domestic and overseas empires.

Edgerton is reluctant to use either term, preferring to describe the post-war relationship between Conservative and Labour Parties as an 'armistice' (Edgerton 361). Similarly, Peregrine Worsthorne has described the class relationships of the period as a 'stalemate' (qtd. in J. Phillips 202), which is suggestive of a pervading tension. These latter assessments support Hall's identification of the time as one of 'conjuncture', which preceded the 'crisis of the seventies' (Hall and Massey 57) which has such historical significance for the novels. The package of policies of Clement Atlee's 1945-51 Labour Governments – designed as an ethical as well as a social and economic project (Thomas-Symonds 91; Bew 401) – included large scale nationalisation, significant reform of education and welfare services, and the foundation of the National Health Service. The emphasis was on 'creating a virtuous circle of a more contented workforce, improved labour relations and rising productivity . . . making it harder for the despised rentier class to prosper through unearned income' (Kynaston, *Austerity* 140). For those great portions of the population who had experienced long years of difficult economic conditions in the 1930s, followed by further hardship and often trauma during the war, the appearance was of progress being made: 'full employment and the welfare state created for a while, the sense of a society moving towards fairness, in which remaining 'pockets of poverty' would soon be eliminated' (Sinfield 2).

However, in its great ambition and reliance on state intervention it was inevitably unpopular among those with little enthusiasm for anything tainted by socialist ideology[8]. Economic results were mixed, implementation of some aspects of the project proved difficult and the essential guiding ethos was the attempt to introduce what was essentially a brand of 'welfare capitalism' rather than anything more radical (Crafts and Woodward;

[8] Elements of the press were defined by consistent criticism of the Labour Government. *The Daily Mail* and *The Daily Express* in particular remained strongly in favour of the free market and low taxation and regularly 'attacked the growth of state control' (Bingham and Conboy 81).

Cairncross; Greasley). Nonetheless, its broadest economic and ideological policies would survive largely intact until the end of the 70s. Increasingly though, and substantially following Heath's defeat in 1974, a burgeoning New Right faction in the Conservative Party influenced by the appeals to free-marketism of Enoch Powell and Keith Joseph (H. Young 61; J. Campbell 94), signalled an approaching change in economic and political thinking.

While, in its death throes, the Labour Government of the late 1970s has come to represent a period of national decline, the achievements that were made, such as the progress toward equality are less commonly remembered. According to the *Royal Commission on the Distribution of Income and Wealth* (1975-79) the gap between the incomes of the richest and poorest in the UK was at its narrowest in 1976 and according to a *New Economics Foundation Report* from 2004, quality of life is reckoned to have reached a peak in the mid-seventies (though some doubt has been cast on the indices employed to make this calculation (Sandbrook, *Seasons* xix)). Positive statistics of any kind tend, however, to be overshadowed by the drama of the history created in the popular imagination. The role of the media as a participating agent in the shaping of this period in British history is considerable and features with thematic importance in Peace's project. By helping to contrive a crisis at the end of the 1970s ('the winter of discontent'), the press played a useful role in Margaret Thatcher's election, so assisting in the undoing of some of the progressive advances of post-war administrations. The 1970s' Governments of Wilson and Callaghan are regularly resurrected by right-wing historians (Holmes; Skidelsky), as administrations of substantial inadequacy. However, alternative views have also emerged (Artis and Cobham; Morgan; Tiratsoo; Jefferys; Seldon and Hickson), which, while acknowledging failings, also point to the distorting effect of the few early weeks of 1979 on what was otherwise a broadly positive record.

Aspects of the period less readily remembered are the advances made by civil rights movements, for women, for minority ethnic populations and for gay people, which took place, sometimes in the face of vicious opposition, more often, the casual acceptance of a racist, sexist and homophobic status quo. Peace does not attempt to paint the period as a golden age – he has described life in Yorkshire in the 1970s as being 'fucking shit' (qtd. in D. Davies) - and has acknowledged the difficulty in escaping, in his fiction, the tendencies toward the pervasive and gloomy historical narrative. The world he describes is heavily dominated by what King and Cummins describe as a 'hegemonic masculinity' (King and Cummins, *Violence* 2) that is also resolutely white, reminding the reader that some social change has occurred in the years since the novels' setting. Signs of progressive movement are alluded to in the texts; in *1974* for example, amidst the bristling machismo of the *Post*'s offices, a female journalist, Kathryn Taylor (later Kathryn Williams), attempts to assert her autonomy by protesting, 'I'm not your bloody secretary. I'm a fucking journalist too' (43). This objection may reflect the slow seepage into public consciousness of egalitarian ideas, but significant societal change in the context of gender relations has yet to be effected; the relative positions of male and female characters are rigidly fixed, and these arrangements are heavily implicated in the crimes detailed in the novels. The attacks on young girls in *1974* and on women in *1977* are, it seems, borne out of some idealised but perverse notion of the female, which, in the eye of the attacker, is either realised or challenged in their victims. However, even as he highlights this archaic ordering, Peace does not suggest that it will be alleviated by the changes that are approaching.

The timeline that Peace has adopted for the *Quartet,* as it reaches backward beyond the supposed watershed of 1979, allows the author to reveal telling signs of the approaching ideological turn. This is apparent in the way that the criminal characters pursue their interests by carving out slices - of place, of the economy, of other people. A war footing is being established and battle lines drawn between those appealing for forms of social

justice and those determined to grab what they can. One character makes this point explicitly, 'This country's at war, Mr Dunford. The government and the unions, the Left and the Right, the rich and the poor. Then you got your Paddys, your wogs, the puffs and the perverts, even the bloody women; they're all out for what they can get.' (Peace, *1974* 186) It's every man for himself – and Peace's villains are uniformly men - the notion of the 'greater good' a diminishing concern. The same character, Derek Box, also spells out to Dunford where power really exists in the UK, implying that the presiding Labour Government is just a short-lived aberration and explaining why Heath had succeeded so surprisingly in 1970: 'Because likes of Cecil King, Norman Collins, Lord Renwick, Shawcross, Paul Chambers at ICI, Lockwood at EMI and McFadden at Shell, and others like them, they sat down and said enough was bloody enough', and then, equating himself, a career criminal, with these captains of industry, he explains the merits of this brokerage, 'Power's like glue. It sticks men like us together, keeps everything in place.' (212) The insinuation made is that undemocratic forces are at work in the UK and that these will oversee moments of increasing division in the years to come, before ultimately prevailing.

The plot of *1974* concerns the investigation into the disappearance – and, subsequently, into the murder - of a schoolgirl, Clare Kemplay. Through the enquiries of the narrator and demi-hero, young crime correspondent for the *Yorkshire Evening Post* Edward 'Eddie' Dunford, we discover systemic links between local politicians, land developers, organised criminals, and an apparently wholly corrupted police force. A deliberate condensing of times and crimes takes place, borrowing events from elsewhere and centring them on West Yorkshire and it is amongst this claustrophobic pile-up of history that the various interlinking plot strands proceed towards the novel's bloody denouement.

In his attempts to confirm links to previous disappearances, Dunford regularly engages with the traces of history, searching through microfilm records, revisiting the victims and scenes

of past crimes, and imagining the re-narrativisation of old wrongdoings. His activities take place against the background noise of the repetitious pounding of news headlines, a spectral commentary on proceedings which feature throughout the *Quartet.* As Matthew Hart suggests, these brief interjections, spat out from electronic devices and newspaper pages describe a universe of questionable integrity:

> The implication of this paratactic and allusive catalogue, taking in everything from the Beatles to late imperial violence, is that the murder of Jeanette Garland is just the latest "news" in a litany of crimes committed, covered up, and enabled by hard men with secret agendas.' (Hart, *Interview* 548)

Important, and like the disembodied headlines which inform the novel's atmosphere, is the shadow of the terrible crimes of the Moors murderers. These are referenced early on by attenders at Dunford's father's funeral, 'Thems in Manchester were the first,' (12) as a sign of fast encroaching societal demise, which still hangs over characters as they traverse the Pennines in *1980* and *1983.* The awfulness of these killings operates as a grisly template for the crimes that follow and serves as a seminal signifier of disruption. The North's history, Peace emphasises, has an inescapable, mythologised quality, which is amplified by a news media compelled to resurrect its most sensational stories for their enduring appeal. Narratives inhabited by unresolved matters – with bodies still undiscovered or a serial killer at large for example – have the valuably revivable news values of a violent story unfinished. They also serve ideologically to reiterate warnings about the violence of society, eliciting alarm and providing justification for authoritarian responses (Greer 4; Hall et al. 214).

The operations of the news media are foregrounded in this first novel as Dunford's pursuit of the story drives the narrative; his journalistic endeavours initially seeming to fulfil many of the expectations of the investigating agent in a novel that conforms to a considerable degree to the conventions of the detective fiction format. Dunford, we understand, has returned to Yorkshire after a sojourn down south working for a national paper. The lure of

the prestige offered as the *Post*'s 'North of England Crime Correspondent' presumably enough to have encouraged him home. It is possible, though, to detect some resentment at his provincial situation when journalists from the London publications begin to appear at the press conferences which attend the ongoing investigation: 'New Face again. National not Local. Lucky bastard. My nerves kicking in, the story going national, my story.' (27)

The return has coincided, we learn, with the terminal illness and death of his father, a happy serendipity as far as his Aunty Margaret is concerned (10), but also a significant moment of generational shift. The demise of Dunford's father, respectably working class, a craftsman and a 'fine tailor' (137), represents the passing of an old order which was characterised by solidity and reliability. His son, though, is exercised by a world reacting to a different set of values; where transience will replace permanence and the search for escape, the sense of belonging. While the relationship between the two epitomises generational difference, Dunford senior – or the memory of him - does manage to exert some influence over his son; Dunford wears his father's watch and consults it periodically, the timepiece offering some certainty in an otherwise unstable environment. On other occasions, too, Dunford makes a connection with his father and, through him, with a past which is disappearing. Midway through *1974,* Dunford visits a local naturalist, Arnold Fowler, who has some information about attacks on swans in the park where he works – incidents that Dunford can link to the Kemplay case. Fowler, it transpires, knew Dunford's father: "'Small world,'" Dunford remarks on hearing this, "'Aye. Though not like it used to be,'" Fowler replies (137). Fowler, like Dunford senior, represents a link to the past, albeit a fragile one. He was a visitor to Dunford's school when the journalist was a pupil there and knows Mrs Dunford too, a "'Yorkshire lass through and through,'" (137) he comments approvingly. He is, though, witnessing a threat to the continuity he embodies from a world, apparently, on the verge of disintegration. The attacks on animals are getting more serious:

"'These ones this year they were just plain barbaric,'" (139) reflecting "'a world where crucifying a swan is seen as a prank not a crime.'" (140)

Swans are a recurring motif in the novel (and reappear with some significance in *1983*, the final book of the *Quartet*) and, like Dunford's relationship with his father and his memories of it, serve to explore the boundaries between what is enduring and what transitory. At times the bird is symbolic of life-long devotion and everlasting love, at others – as when the wings of a swan are stitched to the back of a child – as an awful perversion of this. On a visit to the home of the architect John Dawson (who will subsequently be embroiled in the murder investigation), which he has built for his wife and named *Shangrila,* Dunford searches his memory for the disparaging review of the building that his father had written. As he leaves and looks back at the house from a distance, he remembers his father's words, '*Shangrila looked like a sleeping swan*.' (84) The authority of his father's written opinion contrasts with the artifice of the building.

Elsewhere, too, Dunford's dad retains the capacity to cast a comforting shadow. As his personal disintegration takes serious effect, and he sits in his car, battered, and humiliated, Dunford seeks refuge in the memory of a favourite football match attended with his father (247), an attempt to find something solid to grasp on to in a world become hugely insecure. However, we are also aware, at other times, that Dunford wants to slip the reins of his father's influence and to succeed on his own terms, impatient with the strictures of tradition. Even during his father's funeral at the start of the book, the early event which helps to establish the sense of regret that inhabits the novel, much of Dunford's focus is on the news story that is developing beyond the confines of the church. Dunford does express some fleeting regret that his father has missed his first big story by-line on their local paper (11), but in the main he abjures sentimentality, and the business of news is his paramount concern for most of the text. The communitarianism which Dunford senior's generation

represent is forced to contend with the striving for individual success that Dunford pursues in the ephemeral news environment; a tension which it is not possible to peaceably resolve. The problematic generational relationship visited in these episodes reflects an aspect of the societal transition from the stability of an older order to the uncertain contingencies of one beginning to emerge.

The Media Context

Dunford's striving for personal reward and recognition, an important component in this first novel, and a salient feature of a wider and fast developing individualism, also relates to the ethos of a competitive media environment which had grown in intensity since developments in the late 1960s (Bingham and Conboy 17; Hartley 50). In *1974,* as the various interlinking stories proceed, the description of the press conferences, likened to the gladiatorial boxing arena and dripping with intensity and desperation, help to create an atmosphere of heightened contest:

> The whole bloody pack sat waiting for the main attraction, pens poised and tapes; hot TV lights and cigarette smoke lighting up the windowless room like a town hall boxing ring on a Late Night Fight Night; the paper boys taking it out on the TV set, the radios static and playing it deaf. (3)

There is a predatory hunger implied in the familiar allusions to the press 'pack' and analogies with battles are made; the need to stay ahead, to gain the approval of the editor and an advantage over competitors from other titles is vital. Sympathy for the family of the missing child is very much secondary to the achievement of journalistic advantage. The competitive imperative perhaps reaches its height within Dunford's own newspaper where he conducts a rivalrous battle with his colleague, 'Jack bloody Whitehead' (3). That the environment of the newspaper trade remained one where the security of employment was tenuous is made clear in the news of job losses at provincial papers heard on the car radio early in the novel's proceedings ('sixty-seven dismissed from the *Kentish Times* and the

Slough Evening Mail' (13)). The precarity so evident in the broadcast amplifies the realities of an industry ever subject to cost saving pressures.

The evolution of the UK's popular press into the entity that Peace presents in his texts is reflective of the country's more general economic and industrial development since the nineteenth century. The demise of the radical press in the mid-1800s, which followed the repeal of duties on newspaper publishing – the 'Taxes on Knowledge' – led to a rightward shift in the perspective of the UK's newspapers and periodicals, and toward conformity with the viewpoints of a largely middle-class readership (Curran & Seaton 27; Eldridge et al. 12). Revenue from advertising, a significant feature of publications since the eighteenth century (Williams K. 50; Boyce et al. 92) and the lack of which had helped to marginalise reformist (and even revolutionary) editions, became an ever more vital constituent, cementing commerciality as newspaper publishing's most crucial aspect. This ingredient of the trade was further enhanced with the entry of industrialised capitalist enterprise at the end of the nineteenth century, exemplified by the arrival of Alfred Harmsworth's *Daily Mail* in 1896. The new popular model encouraged participation in a culture of consumerism, used language in a deliberately accessible way and was concerned less with the politics and business news which had typified the 'respectable' press which preceded it. More important was the gossip, scandal, trivia, and crime which had been the preserve of the popular broadsheets, weekly periodicals and Sunday newspapers since early in the century. The arrival of the *Mail* was followed by a flurry of imitators; *The Daily Express* 'the crusading newspaper' (1900), Harmsworth's own *Daily Mirror* (1904), and the *Daily Sketch* (1908). One competitor, the *Daily Herald* (founded by print-workers in 1911), ploughed an alternative furrow, more akin to the radical press of a century previous and maintaining the perspective of the industrial working class as a counterpoint to those promoted by the capitalist press. This burgeoning and increasingly efficient and mechanised industry, by the early twentieth century producing a range of daily editions, necessitated the provision of a

vast amount of copy and encouraged the use of questionable tactics to find it (Chalaby 29; Bingham and Conboy 98); aspects of press reportage which led to the increasing possibility that the publication of news took place with inadequate scrutiny or consideration. Despite this and other fears about the value of their content (K. Williams 49; Eldridge et al. 13), circulation of popular dailies continued to rise throughout the first half of twentieth century, reaching a peak in the mid-1950s.

While the competition to be published has been an intrinsic journalistic concern for at least as long as the popular press has existed, developments in the industry at the end of the 1960s ramped up this aspect of news reporting. Some of these changes can be attributed to the considerable reinvigorating jolt received from the arrival in 1969 of Rupert Murdoch at *The Sun,* a descendant incarnation of the *Daily Herald.* Drawing on the experiences of his early ventures at *The News* (Adelaide) and *The Daily Mirror* (Sydney) in his native Australia, and borrowing sales tactics from the US, Murdoch's *Sun* would come to be typified by its brash approach and unapologetic focus on commerciality. This attitude, where distractive qualities take precedence over more worthy news values, would come to be labelled 'circus journalism' (Tom Winship qtd. in Coleridge 496); the spectacle often outweighing the substance. Particularly important to Murdoch and his first editor at the paper, Larry Lamb, was recognising the value of a cross-fertilisation with television; harnessing the appeal of the new medium rather than trying to compete with it (Chippindale and Horrie 12). The interest in television would develop further over time and the cultivation of stay-at-home consumer culture would eventually pay dividends as Murdoch's satellite TV enterprise rolled out in the 1980s.

The Australian's takeover at the *Sun* signals a moment in the history of the popular press when the appeals to a mainly working-class readership on the basis of its modes of consumption begin to outweigh those made upon its role in production and its presumed

political affiliation (Holland 101; Conboy 162). For Lamb, rather than attempting to make the paper more serious, the calculation was that 'it made commercial sense to move downmarket. This did not just mean more sex and entertainment; it also meant an intensification of the tabloid political style, with even more emphasis on personalities, conflict and crusading,' (Bingham and Conboy 85). Murdoch has been credited with - or damned for - the invention of the modern tabloid ("Last of the Moguls") the eye-catching red-toppism in which the fleetingly sensational consigned the substantial to other parts of the media and where commercial imperative became ever more the defining factor in news production. The formula would prove successful, helping the paper first to match, and, by 1978, to surpass the sales figures of its rival the *Daily Mirror* (*National Readership Survey* in Rooney 94). Politically, the paper would undertake a journey involving a considerable move rightward.

When Murdoch arrived, *The Sun* was still Labour supporting in the tradition of its predecessor. Gradually though, as its ethos was increasingly geared towards encouraging the individual aspirations of its readership, an overtly political position became a less important part of its character. However, the paper's focus on personalities would prove significant and would continue to be so as Margaret Thatcher rose to ascendancy, first as leader of her party, and then of the country; her peculiar charisma and enthusiasm for a deregulated economy guaranteeing Murdoch's favour, and that of his papers. Larry Lamb coming to consider her as 'his 'tool' for bringing about a *Sun*-led political sea-change in the country' (Chippindale and Horrie 56). The concentration on commerciality and the diminishing vigour of its political reporting, where policy differences were effectively repackaged as a series of personality contests (Sandbrook 731-2; Bingham and Conboy 65), which shaped the emerging disposition of *The Sun* was a process which was to infect the editorial decisions of other news organisations both local and national (K. Williams 210; Curran and Seaton 87).

Such a shift in emphasis heralds a media environment where the memorable soundbite or eye-catching headline outweighs the rigorous examination of policymaking and is an approach which can be 'characterised as populist' (Conboy 152) which has implications for the democratic process. This inclination is detectable in the offices of the *Post* in Peace's novel, where the preoccupations of the editor and staff do not much extend to politics; crime, sport and gossip taking precedence. A story that combines the classic tabloid ingredients is the on and off field career of Johnny Kelly, 'The Georgie Best of Rugby League' (Peace *1974* 58), a Yorkshire celebrity whose love-life and minor criminal involvement will play a revelatory role in the novel's narrative. The whereabouts of the player adds a layer of mystery to the sport/ gossip nexus and excites journalists (27) in a way that Barry Gannon's investigations into corruption do not. Peace's depiction of the *Post* is not necessarily an accurate picture of the paper's preoccupations which were according to Stephen Caunce (1993) generally more serious than Peace implies. The tabloid ethic that we see infecting the newspaper that Peace depicts, though, is suggestive of a trend in newspaper publishing across the 1970s.

Elsewhere in the British press, the proprietorship of the *Daily Mail,* struggling to compete for sales in the mid-market, passed, in 1971, into the hands of Vere Harmsworth, third Viscount Rothermere (1925–1998). Exhibiting some of the publishing zeal of his great-uncle, the paper's founder, Alfred (later Lord Northcliffe), Harmsworth took the decision to appoint David English as the *Mail*'s editor. 'Brash and bouncy, full of vim and mischief, but . . . also underneath, a slightly Puritanical man who believed absolutely in the family' (Addison 151), Nicholas Coleridge describes English as the ideal *Daily Mail* reader; 'aspirational, enterprising, family minded and conservative' (Coleridge 1994 286). This would be reflected in the pages of the *Mail* for the decades to come as his editorial tenure, which ended in 1992, was taken up by Paul Dacre. Harmsworth and English also took the decision to go tabloid – though the *Mail* continues to prefer the term 'compact' - and

began a determined battle to overtake the sales figures of its chief competitor the *Daily Express* in the circulation stakes - a contest it would eventually win (Addison 227). The achievement of this peculiar commerciality, based in part on outraging the conservative instincts of its readership with scandalous tales, reported in sanctimonious terms, made the paper another valuable ally of Thatcher's new brand of Conservatism as it emerged in the middle of the decade.

The acceleration of journalistic competition that occurred in the sixties and seventies aroused some governmental concern. The Third *Royal Commission on the Press 1974-77* evidences the awakening of periodical concerns about press ownership and behaviour. Recommendations to reform the overseeing Press Council, that it should take a code of practice for journalists and take a more forceful line on inaccuracy and bias (215), would go unmet and competition would continue to intensify, especially in the tabloids.

The 'Commercial' capture of media systems described by Raymond Williams, whereby 'anything can be said as long as you can afford to say it and that you can say it profitably' (R. Williams *Communications* 133), is perhaps best encapsulated by the baying mob of pressmen which had been made familiar by Hollywood movies since at least the 1930s. The type of imagery in *The Front Page* (1931) or *The Sweet Smell of Success* (1957) takes on a more sinister aspect in the context of crime, as in the clamour which follows the capture of Myshkin in *1974* when 'only the gentlemen of the press' (173) pack the courtroom, and of Peter Williams in *1980,* 'The car park already full -/ Journalists, TV crews, the word spread' (363).

The crime journalists in the *Quartet* display a willingness to go to questionable lengths, exploiting misery or trauma as they go, in order to achieve their scoops. The accusation that the news media is contaminated by the demands of consumerism echoes the prognosis of Adorno and his colleagues, and is also levelled at the industrialised cultural

sphere more generally and at fiction, even that with some determined critical intent, specifically,

> In the case of the socio-critical novels which are fed through the best-seller mechanism, we can no longer distinguish how far the horrors narrated in them serve the denunciation of society as opposed to the amusement of those who do not yet have the Roman circuses they are really waiting for. (Adorno, *Schema* 68)

The difficulty that Adorno recognises in articulating a balance which allows the vicarious pleasures associated with popular fiction while also transmitting signals of political intent applies to the novels of the *Quartet* and to its first part particularly. However, the text's lack of absolute conclusion which mirrors the unresolved crime news stories which are part of its narrative structure encourages both author and reader to revisit, allowing the opportunity to add further layers, and to build the substance and depth of the novels' histories. In this way Peace successfully realises the potential of popular fiction to carry socio-critical content. In the same way that his journalists seek to wring the sensation out of a story, though, so the author, in *1974*, and by his own concession, veers dangerously into exploitative territory and is a book of which he is not particularly proud (Phelan). Certainly, the pathologist's post-mortem on Clare Kemplay (50) makes ugly reading, and the scenes of Dunford's prolonged interrogation by the West Yorkshire force are viciously violent: 'he leant forward and grabbed my right wrist with one hand, grinding the cigarette into the back of my hand with the other.' (253)

In a socio-critical context more likely to be appreciated by Adorno, Peace interrogates the role that the media plays in the maintenance of structures of power. The alliance of the controllers of the press with other power brokers, and the capacity of this combination to manipulate, is illustrated at the end of *1974*, when West Yorkshire's big shots (including the editor of the *Post*) gather at the Christmas Party of the shady property developer Don

Foster (243). This passage suggests the revival of the feudal banquet and of a society organised along medieval lines. On the road outside the party Dunford navigates the fancy cars – one of the few material items that Peace uses as a signifier of period, but also of status – harnessed like so many noble steeds: 'The lane was strung with parked cars. I picked my way through the Jags and the Rovers, the Mercs and the BMWs.' Dunford then enters the party, uninvited, and takes in the latter-day barons, 'men in tuxedos stood around with tumblers of Scotch and fat cigars.' (242) These suspect cabals re-emerge in the later novels in the series. In *1980* the protagonist, Peter Hunter, will be compromised by his association with the businessmen of Manchester and their dubious interests. Early in the novel while being driven toward the Christmas Ball and its privileged attendees, Hunter is aware that the trappings of an antiquated feudalism are at play:

> Through the black city streets, the broken lights and the Christmas ones, down Palatine, Wilmslow and Oxford Roads, the official black car and driver taking us in towards the red and the gold, the money and the honey, the home of the loot . . . towards a thousand hale and hearty Manchester folk, drunk in the seclusion of the Midland Hotel, the castle of loot, an abbey to the anointed and self-appointed City Fathers, with their city mothers, wives and daughters, their secret lovers, whores and sons. (Peace *1980* 48)

Later in the novel as Hunter is asked to explain to his superiors his alleged association with local criminals, he is able to show that photographs which are intended to incriminate him, in fact reveal the closeness of links between crooks and other senior officers. In *1983* (2002) as questions about the nature and scale of organised corruption are answered, it becomes clear that a power-grab, arranged in the manner of a warped roundtable, is in the offing. In a meeting taking place in a sequestered room above the wedding reception of a senior police officer's daughter, the (very) errant knights are assembled:

> An upstairs room, down the red and gold corridor past the toilets –
> The curtains drawn, the cigars out –
> The sound of music coming up through the carpet –
> The beautiful carpet, all gold flowers on deep crimsons and red –

> Like the whiskeys on our faces.
> Sat in a circle in the big chairs, a couple of empty ones –
> The gang's all here: (Peace *1983* 225)

There is an intention in these passages to incorporate a sense of the mythological into the historical account, illuminating the hidden ('occult') power structures and further undermining the veracity of accepted versions of the past's truths. By placing mythological allusions – metaphorical castles and abbeys, the reds and golds of royal heraldry, of blood and money - alongside historical references, Peace emphasises the contagious nature of the relationship between the two narratives. In subsequent paragraphs we discover the extent of plans to monetise crime for the benefit of officers and their business partners, a hint toward the developing spirit of free-market capitalism. That part of the business model offered here is based upon the production and distribution of pornography is an acknowledgement that the industrial manufacture of cultural product will extend to the seamiest of corners and is an idea that reaches back to the beginning of the *Quartet*. There is from the very start of *1974* the sense that nothing, including crime, is spared from the clutches of the 'culture industry'; the regurgitative aspect of the industrialised cultural production that was recognised by Adorno and his colleagues, a preoccupation for Peace too.

Seriality and Capture

The repetitive patterning which attaches to the Quartet is a feature which also affects the news cycle, Peace shows, and is marked by the act of structuring stories in the same recognisable way, with the same narrative elements, which appeal to the same instincts in its audience and satisfy expectations in a familiar fashion. The codes and conventions of news reporting in the popular press which developed with the advent of mass circulation papers, becoming apparent in American editions of the nineteenth century, informed British incarnations as they began to appear at the start of the twentieth (Bingham and

Conboy 6). While some uniquely British characteristics were cultivated in the highly divergent and politically charged atmosphere of the 1930s, as well as during and after the second world war (Conboy 7), the basic tenets of early established maxims extend to the into the present. Principally, the codes and conventions that apply to the media industry are concerned with how the language used within, and the structure of, news stories act to convey 'preferred' meanings/readings – a method of semantic and semiotic organisation which serves a chosen ideological position (Hartley 63-74; Hall, *Media* 341). The extent that it is possible to influence effectively is much contested[9], nonetheless an audience familiar with the signs and systems of 'news' is likely to use the representations of the world that appear in print, over the airwaves, or on screen to negotiate an understanding of the world. This is true even if, as Hall proposes possible, the interpretation of what is transmitted is met by resistance. Oppositional views might arise from 'differences of outlook, disagreement, argument' (Hall et al. 59), but also from a 'lack of equivalence between the two sides in the communication exchange' - the source (coder) and receiver (decoder) (Hall, *Encoding* 128*)*.

The language rules which apply to the 'news' are determined both by social and historical context and as 'the pre-existing discourse of an impersonal social institution which is also an industry' (Hartley 5). Within the wider discourse of the 'news' - crime reporting, in a tabloid context, develops its own particularities, to which Dunford makes explicit reference: 'I'm Edward Dunford, North of England Crime Correspondent and it says so on every fucking *Evening Post*.' (Peace, *1974* 14) This subscription to a distinctly tabloid sphere, encourages a relationship of apparent familiarity between producer and consumer.

[9] 'Media Effects' theories continue to be contested. While the 'direct influence' theory illustrated by the 'hypodermic needle' or 'magic bullet' analogy, popularised by early American theorists, has been discredited (Mills and Barlow 103), versions of a 'propaganda' model are still current (Herman and Chomsky, *Consent*) if controversial. However, that the media has the capacity to 'set' or at least 'highlight' agendas (as proposed by McCombs and Shaw) is subscribed to by Hall et al. (65) among others and also informs the endeavours of advertisers and lobbyists.

Described as a 'sympathetic intimacy' by Bingham and Conboy (5), the 'chummy' nature of which Richard Hoggart recognised as a feature of the press in the 1950s, employs language in a deliberately inclusionary fashion and uses,

> a range of distinctive and identifiable dialects . . . enabling] the reader to use the newspaper as a textual bridge between their own experience of the culture in which they live, and their own attitudes and beliefs within a range of language which is a close approximation of what they imagine themselves to be using (Conboy 11).

This type of linguistic representation forwards a defence of those interpretations of media history which hold that, in a commercial environment, provision is made according to audience requirement and demand. A conception of the media as an institution which benevolently serves the best interests of its audience incorporates the notion that the 'freedom to publish in the free market' is a constitutive factor of the media's neutrality, ensuring 'that the press reflects a wide range of opinions and interests' (Curran and Seaton 326). Neglected in this assessment are assertions that the way the news is presented works in a socially reproductive way to engender and reinforce dominant interpretive structures. Apparent in the theories of Adorno and his colleagues at the Frankfurt School, early theorists of mass communication and of French structuralists is a belief that 'the audience obtain from journalism information that will tend to support an ideologically loaded view of the world; one that will contribute to the reproduction of an unequal and fundamentally antagonistic social system' (McNair 25) Peace's journalists recognise that they are participating in a process likely to be informed by a dominating perspective (in the context of a crime story a police officer or spokesperson of the Home Office or Law Court will be the most likely primary definers in the absence of an available alternative (criminal) perspective (Hall et al. 71)). This recognition brings the awareness that their role as mediators, involves them in the construction of the sociopolitical environment in which they exist.

Jack Whitehead, cynical old hand, has mastered the storytelling formula that his employer expects, and churns out his copy to the infuriation of Dunford who believes he should be writing it. Structured in a particular way, to quickly draw attention (the 'inverted pyramid'), with eye grabbing headline - 'MURDERED' (Peace, *1974* 42), 'CATCH THIS FIEND' (98) - followed by a story top-loaded with the latest and most scintillating detail, and with any contextual matters – historical or social - consigned to its lower depths. Inevitably such a construction comprises only a partial telling with potentially important features of the narrative relegated to a subordinate position below the sensational. A practice which is predisposed to convey inaccurately will, Peace's texts show, feed the versions of reality which are held distortedly in the public imagination. Whitehead's conformative journalistic approach continues into *1977* and to the task of reporting the crimes of the Yorkshire Ripper. By this point, though, as he drags stories out of himself – 'POLICE HUNT FOR SADISTIC KILLER OF WOMEN' (Peace, *1977* 32) - his adherence to the same technical methodology amplifies the sense that he is complicit in processes of misrepresentation. Alone with his thoughts and tortured by his past ('Again the dream./ Again the dead woman./ Again the verdict and the sentence come./ Again, it was happening all over again.' (24)), he concludes that he cannot continue to operate in the same formulaic way. The codified and clichéd language that he uses as his stock in trade is inadequate for the task of reporting the horror of the crimes committed. The repetitive routine of newspaper work proving insufficient as provider of solutions.

Most apparent in the context of this study is that the press conferences which open the first chapters of the first and fourth novels are near identical; history is repeating itself. The point made is that unexamined historical issues will resonate in the future. As the real crimes of the Ripper become an increasingly tangible feature of the background texture in the second novel of the series, the repetition which characterises his attacks has a terrorising aspect. The serial, and at this point apparently unending, nature of the crimes is

seen to do great damage, beyond that inflicted on the most immediate victims, to the novel's characters and to the communities in which they live. The sense that, overshadowed by terrible violence a point of stasis has been reached, adds to an intensification of the inescapability in which Peace's novels are so steeped. And, while a traditional crime novel can be expected to play out in an accepted fashion, proceeding steadily toward resolution, Peace upsets this formulation by refusing to provide satisfactory conclusions; the reader is granted no easy escape.

The inescapability of the past, and characters' responses to time in Peace's novels are the subject of Dean Lockwood's essay "The Great Yorkshire Fugue" in which the novels of JG Ballard, often characterised by themes of flight, are used to explore Peace's own circumscribed worlds. Lockwood finds in the work of both authors that 'protagonists are torn between a desire to exit from the world and a desire to reconnect with it' (Lockwood, *Great* 47), but where Ballard allows 'golden flight' or 'angelic transfiguration' (47) as options, for Peace's characters the avenues of escape are extremely limited. This bleak outlook for his protagonists, of a future abbreviated by a lack of hope, corresponds dispiritingly with Peace's assessment of the neoliberal provision. As Alec Charles recognises in his essay about what he calls the 'dystopian realism' of Peace's *Quartet*, this sense of entrapment is one that Peace's claustrophobic world is built around (Charles 66), and though all of Peace's leading figures are seeking escape in some form, as befits the pessimistic tone of the *Quartet*, successful transcendence is denied them; escape is available only in death (or near death in Jack Whitehead's case), an alternative life is not possible; the fate of Peace's protagonists symptomatic of the catastrophic or apocalyptic future sensed as an informing anxiety of the novels (Simpson; R. Brown).

This constrictive atmosphere is accentuated by the regular appearance of news bulletins, particularly as these sound from car radios, articulating an enveloping world of grief, which

amplify the claustrophobia, and are ominous signs of an ever-expanding media environment. An integral feature of car production since the 1930s, the car radio became an ever more important selling point for auto dealers as car ownership became increasingly widespread in the post-war period: In 1950 approximately 15% of UK households owned a car, by the early 1970s this figure had grown to 50% (BBC News). These commercial and technological developments ensured that the driving population's exposure to media voices would continue to grow. The ease of access to radio accompaniment while in transit was further enhanced by the deregulation of the broadcasting industry. Partly as a response to unlicensed ('pirate') radio stations, the BBC first created Radio 1 (1967) to appeal to a youth audience, and then, gradually, local radio stations. Edward Heath's (1970-74) government introduced a bill allowing the expansion of the broadcasting industry as well as the introduction of commercial radio (Sound Broadcasting Act 1972). These evolutionary advances provide both cause and effect for the arrival of a twenty-four-hour news cycle sometimes blamed for a decline in journalistic standards (Cushion and Lewis; Allan197-198), at its worst 'a kind of journalistic stream of consciousness, where stories are uncorroborated, and facts unchecked' (Lewis et al. 462). The appearance of broadcasted headlines which so regularly interrupt the texts adds to a sense that the world is being mediated to its audience in an unregulated manner, and in ways which are increasingly difficult to avoid.

News from car radios is a regular feature as the reader accompanies police officers on their travels through the West Riding in the second novel of Peace's series. Reports of international and national events appear alongside the more immediate news, much of which concerns the crimes and the pursuit of the Yorkshire Ripper. The action of *1977* takes place over the few weeks around Queen Elizabeth II's Silver Jubilee celebrations in the summer of that year; Peace juxtaposing the apparent stability of the institution that the Queen heads with the terrible assaults of the Ripper and the societal disintegration

that they represent. Other historical developments – the angry emergence of punk music, the policies of an increasingly pressurised Labour government struggling to contain wage demands as inflation continues to spiral, the exposure of extraordinary levels of corruption in parts of the Metropolitan Police Force, and allegations of incompetence and prejudice hampering the investigation into the Yorkshire murders – are referred to in the excerpts from the radio phone-in show which preface each of the novel's twenty-five chapters. The conversation before Chapter 7, for example, concerns the illicit behaviour of vice-squad officers in London and concludes with the caller complaining, '*Bloody coppers. Make you sick*' (112) before the chapter itself details the rape of a prostitute by a group of police detectives (116).

The radio-phone-in, like the car-radio and the expansion of the broadcasting network, represents a significant development in broadcast history, Alwyn Turner describing the arrival of the phone-in show as a crucial moment in British media history as the first 'interactive media format' (xi), and a direct precursor of 'social' media. Andrew Crisell argues that the dominant function of the phone-in is 'to create the illusion of a two-way medium and to verify both that they have an audience, and that the audience is capable of responding to the codes they transmit.' (Crisell 61) However, often 'professional polemicists and controversialists' (Karpf) with a collection of confirmed beliefs, effective show-hosts have an ability to push the bounds of acceptability and play devil's advocate, both probing and provoking callers and disarming those with opinions at variance to their own. An extremity of views can be elicited in an unusual interface between public and private spheres for which the broadcaster can absolve itself of responsibility. In a 'format structured to encourage confrontation' (Hutchby 6) division is believed to pay dividends; the audience commonly engaged through disagreement and competing versions of reality. The democratising potential of the phone-in's interactive nature, where considered

deliberation and debate is possible, is often outweighed by the inclination to allow callers an angry venting of opinion likely to degrade public discourse.

In Peace's novel, early figurations of what might become the citizen journalist make anguished *cris de Coeur* about the state of the nation. The late-night version of the format that is presented is a variant of the prime-time show and the callers appear to have different inclinations from those who seek confrontation or other expressive opportunities during daylight. The hours of darkness may enhance 'the mixture of invisibility and companionship which radio provides' (Crisell 194), where the desire to be heard but not seen is a motivating invigoration; the confessional aspect of public admission providing deceptively intimate therapy for the lonely and disenchanted. John Shark's most regular caller, Bob, as he bemoans the decaying public realm is also prepared to reveal his own psychological distress (298). As elsewhere in the series there are circumstances when words are shown to be inadequate. In the preface to the ultimate chapter, prior to the moment when Jack Whitehead reaches the point of his fated submission, the novel's final phone-in contribution appropriately dwindles to silence. The caller's capacity to express themself, as also for Whitehead, is no longer operational.

Whitehead's narrating partner in *1977* is the brutalised copper, Bob Fraser. Suffering similar torments to Whitehead – the married Fraser has fallen for a prostitute and is driven to distraction by fears for her safety in light of the Ripper's attacks – he too is locked into a cycle of unending repetition. On the reader's first meeting with him, the apparent inevitability of the killings' serial nature occupies his thoughts:

> Leeds.
> Sunday 29 May 1977.
> It's happening again:
> *When the two sevens clash . . .*
> Burning unmarked rubber through another hot dawn to another ancient park with her secret dead, from Potter's Field to Soldier's Field, parks giving up their ghosts, it's

> happening all over again.
> (Peace, *1977* 3)

The sense of impending and unending tragedy is compounded here by Peace's allusion to the symbolism of the year's numbering. *Two Sevens Clash* is an album and single by the roots-reggae band, *Culture*, released in 1977, which references a prediction made by Marcus Garvey for a day of judgement on the 7th of July 1977. The idea that the apocalypse is close is revisited as, obsessed by its portent, one of the characters repeatedly daubs his door and walls with the number. The clash of sevens does indeed appear to signal a warning for the novel's black characters, Stephen Barton, Joe Rose and Kenny D, who all suffer horribly; judgement visited upon them by the West Yorkshire police force rather than by God. A reminder that the police are often the arbiters of justice in this corrupted universe is given in a reference to the 'Birmingham bombers' in an overheard news bulletin (42). No doubt about the guilt of these men is suggested, rather, we are reminded that, in tandem with a friendly news network, a police force can conduct a successful prosecution with little evidence. Condemnation in the press is difficult to protest, as Peace has already shown in the case of Michael Myshkin and others in *1974 and* exposes those indicted to the possibility of the state institutions' most draconian measures.

Pressure to prosecute serious crime, exerted in part by the press's generation of public outcry (Sandbrook 168; Beckett 123), led the 1970s to witness to a series of high-profile miscarriages of justice. The men convicted of the bombings in central Birmingham in 1974, 'The Birmingham Six', were just some of the Irish victims of wrongful conviction, ensnared by a police and judicial machine which was determined to reassure the British public in the face of an intensifying IRA bombing campaign. The Guildford Four and the Maguire Seven also spent long spells in prison before their convictions, based largely on confessions made while under duress, were found to be unsafe. Also imprisoned after an investigation by the

same police unit – The West Midlands Serious Crime Squad – who had framed the Birmingham Six, were four men accused of murdering the paperboy Carl Bridgewater in 1978. Long campaigns for retrials proved successful eventually in all of these cases, but the erroneous judgements made, often achieved with the encouragement of the news media, have tarnished further the reputation of the justice system during that period.

The way that Peace describes the treatment of suspects held in the interview rooms and cells of Yorkshire's police stations and in the 'Belly' underneath Leeds' Millgarth police station most regularly may be stage-managed with certain stylistic flourishes – the introduction of a caged rat to intensify proceedings for example - but the violence of the interrogation is not, it seems, without some accuracy; the mock executions enacted at Millgarth (Peace, *1974* 255; *1983* 60 and 387) occurring in the extraction of confessions from some of the Birmingham Six (Siggins). Although the Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) Act of 1984 was introduced to make police procedure more secure, wrongful convictions continued and media influence over cases remained considerable. Particularly in instances where race, as in that of those charged with the murder of PC Keith Blakelock during the Broadwater Farm Uprising of 1985, or lifestyle, as in the prosecution of Colin Stagg, occult hobbyist and chief suspect in the murder of Rachel Nickell in 1992, or neural atypicality, as in the case of Barry George, accused of the murder of TV presenter Jill Dando in 1999, are concerned, the press are inclined to condemn the innocent without fear of any seriously impactful censure.

Culture, Community and Consensus

Once central to Yorkshire's 'smokestack' industries, the disappearance of workplaces of mass employment would prove disruptive to valued ideas of commonality and would weaken resistance to the advances of the New Right when they came. Rising union membership throughout the seventies (due largely to an increase of non-manual, public

sector and women (Edgerton 498)) could not compensate for the fragility of an economic situation driven at least to some extent by wage demands which did little to support troubled sectors. At moments during the tour of Peace's generally bleak purlieu, it is possible to detect, in occasional scenes of warmth and familiarity, the remnants of kinder social formations. These episodes are tinged with nostalgia and often take place in pubs, which provide a social space in which quick humour and the comfort of shared understanding is evident. In *1974,* after an initial meeting which has ended angrily, Dunford again meets Paula Garland, the mother of a missing daughter. On this occasion they meet in The Swan in Castleford, a pub once used regularly by Paula and her family, and this time proceedings are more convivial:

> I was at the bar, ordering a pint and a scotch.
> The place was Christmas busy with a works do, everybody chanting along to the jukebox.
> A hand at my elbow.
> 'Is one of them for me?'
> 'Which one do you want?'
> Mrs Paula Garland picked up the whisky and made her way through the crowd to the cigarette machine. She put her handbag and glass on top of the machine.
> 'Do you come here often, Mr Dunford?' she smiled.
> 'Edward, please.' I put my pint down on top of the machine. 'No, not often enough.'
> She laughed and offered me a cigarette. 'First time?'
> 'Second,' I said, thinking of the last time.
> 'You come here often then?'
> 'Are you trying to pick me up, Mr Dunford?' She was laughing.
> I blew smoke above her head and smiled.
> (Peace, *1974* 131-2)

Even in Jack Whitehead's company there are moments when the pressure is alleviated, and a shared sense of geniality is abroad. In the press club, and in easy company, he can find some temporary solace:

> Behind the bar, Bet gave me a look that was too, too knowing. 'Been a while, Jack.'
> 'Yeah.'
> 'How are you, love?'
> 'OK. Yourself?'
> 'My legs aren't getting any younger.'

> ‘You don’t need them,’ laughed George. ‘Just get legless with us, eh Jack?’
> And we all laughed and I remembered Bet and her legs and a couple of times back when I thought I could live forever, back when I wanted to, back before I knew what a curse it really was.
> Bet said, ‘Scotch?’
> ‘And keep them coming,’ I smiled.
> ‘I always try.’
> And we all laughed again. (Peace, *1977* 32)

These moments are rare, however. They offer a promise that may have already been consigned to a vanished past; neighbourhoods of working-class England rendered fragile and susceptible to the kind of rupture that Richard Hoggart had detected in the 1950s exacerbated by the economic crises of the 1970s. The inevitability of Whitehead’s descent into stupor is not challenged. For him, as for Dunford and Paula at the Swan, the loss of control is nearby, the proximity to danger clear. The deceptions offered by alcohol reflect a fatalistic attitude common to many of Peace’s characters who drink in the face of destruction, finding only temporary escape in insobriety.

The workplace, a potential site for building the structures of mutual interest (allowing that this interest was also commonly exclusionary) can, like the pub, provide momentary opportunities for companionable interaction, and even some levity, where it is seen in the novels. In the newsroom and at press conferences the badinage between journalists, when it comes, tends to be of a muscular, blokey variety; the focus is on sport, and predicting the fortunes of Leeds United (Peace, *1974* 214) and betting on sweepstakes (Peace, *1977* 66) for example. There is camaraderie here founded on shared experience and common purpose, but this is as close as we get to a location of working-class organisation. The only other workplace to which sustained access is granted is the police station. Here, though, the relationships are poisonous, the humour cruel and the attitudes often barbaric, the consequences seen in the way that women, Black people, and other marginalised groups are treated. As police officers become more central to the plot in *1977,* and the reader

witnesses them barrelling around town with screeching sirens, arresting suspects, and forcing confessions, the symbolic importance of the police officer and of his/her counterpart in fiction and drama is brought under scrutiny. The role played by these imagined characters in the shaping of public attitudes toward policing and the justice system has aroused substantial, though disparate critical analysis. Loader and Mulcahy suggest that television portrayals of policing (fictional and documentary) can help the viewing public to realise desired standards of policing, but also that confrontation with 'a mediated environment that is much more attuned to organisational, scandal and poor performance' (Loader and Mulcahy 18) has played a part in the 'desacralizing' of the police. Elsewhere, and accommodating postmodernist inclinations, Sean O'Sullivan is of the view that representations of the police are so abundant that it has become impossible for audiences 'to relate these representations back to reality in any meaningful way' (O'Sullivan 506) with uncertain consequences for police/public relations (522). In other interpretations, though, there is an agreement that portrayals of police officers in the post-war period have 'a constant underlying legitimating theme' (Reiner, *Dixon* 309) which tends to reinforce the dominating ideology in ways similar to those identified by Hall and his colleagues (Hall et al.) in the coverage of crime news and by Stephen Knight (*Form*) in crime fiction. Reiner et al. allow that the order being reinforced has grown 'more complex and brittle' but concludes that 'the majority of narratives continue to work to justify ultimately the criminal justice viewpoint, although this has to be achieved by demonstrating particular harm to identifiable individual victims.' (Reiner et al., *Casino* 194)

Peace's plain clothes coppers have, it seems, inherited the swagger of the officers of British television drama *The Sweeney* (1975-78), who were themselves influenced by a breed of American TV and film officer who had emerged since the 1960s as part of a 'search for authenticity' (O'Sullivan 511). Borrowing some of the unorthodox methodology of the private eye, these rough diamonds, in the mould of *Kojak* (1973-7) or Officers Stone and

Keller from the *Streets of San Francisco* (1972-77), and the 'rogue cops' of Don Siegel movies (Lamb 42) showed a willingness to bend the rules to get the job done, but, importantly, were shown to be in possession of an abiding decency. This new brand of fictional cop emerged at a point in time when the tactics employed by *Dixon of Dock Green* (1955-1976), or, in the US, by *Dragnet*'s Joe Friday, no longer appeared viable in response to more violent and cynical times. Despite the movement toward more realistic portrayal of law enforcement, and despite the human flaws of this new kind of lawman (and police stations, on TV or elsewhere remained almost exclusively the domain of men during the 1970s), dramatic representations served to further enhance the 'mystification' of policing (Reiner *Romantic*); these characters are shown to be tough, even uncompromising, and sometimes capable of legal discrepancy, but they are ultimately fair. These affirmative rather than critical portrayals of police practice bolster the view that the existing police model and its priorities are 'with moral uncertainty roaming' both justified and necessary, 'rule-breaking . . . an essential part of thief-taking.' (Leishman and Mason 3)

Peace disrupts this positive mythology. Few of his officers have any redeeming features, they are corrupt and cruel and even the most heroic among them are 'wronguns' some of the time. While the issues facing *The Sweeney'*s Regan and Carter validated the law-and-order priorities of political parties of the 1970s (Lamb 50), Peace's depiction of policing undermines the wisdom of placing faith in organisations so prone to malfeasance. In Peace's novels, television crime drama appears to provide some comfort as well as temporary escape from the rigours of police work. Bob Fraser likes that '*XYY Man* thing' his wife tells us in *1977* (201). However, the respite is short, and Fraser is shortly thereafter confronted with the likelihood of his colleagues' corruption (210); Peace's force providing none of the redoubt available on the small screen.

When TV programming is mentioned in the next novel in the series, *1980*, the type of show has moved, suitably, in the direction of 'true crime'. Peter Hunter returns home to find his wife watching *Inside the Mind of the Ripper* (9). The journalistic movement towards 'infotainment' which this scene suggests, represents a further concession to commercial demand. The potential for engaging audiences with the visual enticements of documentary footage and photography, and the appeals of witness testimony has made this kind of programming an increasingly prevalent feature of the TV schedules (and a considerable presence on the internet). Inevitably sensationalism takes precedence over mundane procedure, and this affects the structuring of programmes and of editorial decisions taken. While it is can be argued, as Loader and Mulcahy do, that the repeated exposure to and familiarity with police practices makes it easier for audiences to be critical of the service, generally (allowing for their morally uncertain entertainment aspect), the orientation of this type of programme is sympathetic to the dedication of officers operating in difficult circumstances and maintain a conservative ideology (Jermyn 14).

This kind of symbiotic relationship between journalists and the police, a typical feature of true crime programming, is what we witness occurring in Peace's text where Jack Whitehead's access to senior officers has been earned through a shared and mutually beneficial understanding. Gradually, though, the cosy arrangement is questioned, and it is the bedraggled figure of Whitehead, hard-worn survivor from *1974,* who becomes the unlikely bearer of the sword of truth. No longer is he the confident, quick witted, 'crime correspondent of the year' that we met in the first novel of the series. He is haunted by a career spent in life's dark recesses, by the ghosts of personal incident, and by his erstwhile colleague, 'Eddie, Eddie, Eddie' (24), and lurches from bedroom to bar, only occasionally able to function journalistically.

In his squalid flat he is surrounded by a library of 'true crime' the contents of which occasionally sounds in his mind, his mental stability increasingly tenuous. Despite the growing hatred for the work he does, Whitehead is still compelled to reread the stories – the tales of Crippen and Buck Ruxton and most significantly of Jack the Ripper – that exemplify his trade. Sometimes the tales seep into his dreams, reignited by the crimes of the present and difficult to distinguish from them,

> *The pericardium is open below.*
> *In the abdominal cavity is some partly digested food and fish and potatoes and similar food was found in the remains of the stomach attached to the intestines.*
> *Spitalfields, 1888.*
> *The heart is absent and the door locked from the inside.*
> I woke to find them still perched across the sofa. (Peace, *1977* 69-70)

These nightmarish episodes represent Jack's difficulty in accommodating the horrors of his life – the 'them' in the passage above are self-generated and malevolent ghosts – and are an acknowledgement of the peculiar lingering and disturbing space that tales of transgression occupy in the imagination. The capacity to elicit the frissons of excitement, familiar to those who read crime stories, also encourage what Ernest Mandel describes as 'the combination of distraction and deep anxiety' (Mandel 9). For Whitehead, the books from which the tales come now form part of the prison which confines him. Among those volumes listed in his library, the only piece of fiction mentioned, is, symbolically, Charles Dickens' *Edwin Drood* (Peace, *1977* 24), an appropriately unfinished gothic mystery – like Whitehead condemned to a future without answers. The ineludible nature of his own history which appears to condemn Whitehead to his tragic destiny, is a condition common to many of the *Quartet*'s characters; the errors of the past reach into the present and exact their retribution. One solution is to try and blot the discomfort out, as Whitehead does, by boozing prodigiously, a journalistic stereotyping of the grubbier kind. However, this is a failing anaesthetic, his terror only intensified in his hungover morning-afters.

The recognition that his position has been corrupted by his close association with West Yorkshire's police force and that his journalistic practices may have served dubious interests is the point at which a public service orientation is realised. Whitehead's altering perspective represents an awakening of journalism's worthier character; Peace acknowledging the potential of the media to serve society's wider interests. Recalled is the integrity of those correspondents who have figured in the background of the novels, those charged with reporting from conflicts worldwide or, closer to home, the journalists at the *Sunday People,* who first uncovered the misconduct of Ken Drury and the Flying Squad in London. It is the duality of the presentation of reporters which offers such scope for Peace; their appearances providing a useful means for the interrogation of the tensions at the boundaries between the frivolous and distracting, and the serious and worthwhile. During one of the phone-in conversations, which presage the chapters in *1977* a caller draws attention to the ambiguous position that these figures occupy,

> *Caller: . . . [Sir Robert Mark] also said that none of corruption would have come to light if it hadn't been for the bleeding press. Not very bloody reassuring that, is it? Relying on you lot.*
>
> *John Shark: I believe Sir Robert said the whole country owes us a debt.*
>
> *Caller: Not from me you don't. Not from me.* (142)

The pronounced incorporation of real crime into *1977*, of the terror caused by and hunt for the Ripper, signals Peace's ambition to engage more fully and accurately with history. While there is an inexact correspondence between events as they occur in Peace's novels and those officially recorded (there are changes of victims' names, and of the dates when crimes were committed for example), the mechanics of the murders and of their investigation are based closely on real incidents.

Conclusion

The period covered by the novels represents a moment of sizeable shift in the UK's political and economic direction when the compass was set decisively toward a destination that would be characterised by a new and enduring dispensation. No sense is given in the *Quartet* that prior to the ruptures of the 1970s and 1980s Britain was distinguished by an ideal form of governance – the tensions and difficulties that beset the Labour administrations of the late 1970s are apparent in the texts - but the novels do suggest that a narrowing of perspective occurred then; that the ambitions which accompanied post-war reconstruction and which encouraged the participation in governance of an organised working class were sacrificed on the altar of the free-market. In Peace's novels the past becomes, in Dean Lockwood's phrase, 'the 'dark workshop' within which the present was forged' (Lockwood *When* 50).

In affording the press and other media such a prominent presence in the texts, Peace reiterates some of the debates raised by theorists who have expressed concerns about the configuration of the press and the media in modern society. Peace's novels explore the extent to which news organisations and their operatives can reasonably be expected to accurately mediate a complex world with immediacy and veracity, and to what extent they provide mere distractions, or, with more troubling implication, become the echoing chambers of the dominant order. The author uses the appearances of newspaper and broadcast headlines to help create the atmosphere of a deeply unstable historical context, demonstrating to the reader that the benefit of the messages they carry is at least questionable, if not wholly unreliable. The growing momentum of political processes that we witness underway in the novels can be traced to developments that occurred in the 1970s and has continued to evolve ever since. A destabilising quality which encourages retreat and uncertainty is maintained by an ever-expanding media environment.

Peace's characters find themselves in a situation which mirrors the realities of history, in which the possibility of neat endings is rare. The lack of resolution in the *Quartet*'s initial novel invites a revisiting and the continuation of the sequence, beginning a tension that will persist as the series continues. His protagonists seek escape, but their routes out demand the delving back into a past which becomes a further constraint in their capture. Peace, himself, is also compelled to revisit, continuing to probe the confines of his histories in an attempt to address those aspects of the past which continue to trouble him. By his own admission, what starts to happen as the *Quartet* continues is an attempt to redress some of the aspects of the first novel with which he was dissatisfied. This corrective impulse marks an important evolutionary moment in the writing of the *Quartet,* and, in the second novel, a process begins that becomes more concerted as the series continues, where the history of the texts is itself resurrected and picked over, re-viewed and reported from different perspectives. What also develop as the series proceeds are more concerted examinations of the place and times of the novels' settings, an increasingly experimental style, and the impression that a more ambitious project is being undertaken. This practice is maintained until the final multi-narrative novel which describes a gradual drawing together of the *Quartet*'s various strands.

The first two novels in the sequence reveal a societal precarity, signified by awful crimes and their wider effects, amplified by a media machine that thrives on the dissemination of sensation and that would benefit significantly from the redrawing of economic and industrial circumstances. It becomes clear at the end of *1977* that dissenting individuals diminish in the face of the emerging ideology and, ultimately, that the options of Bob Fraser and Jack Whitehead are limited to an extraordinary and painful extent. The sense that Peace's characters are operating in a narrowly defined universe - delineated by geographical as well as temporal parameters - will be explored further in the next chapter where the focus will be on the topographical space that Peace presents; a 'North' and a

Yorkshire that have been developed in the imagination over centuries. Peace draws upon well-established representations in the media and in fiction to help him develop an aspect to his landscape which amplifies the uncertainties that historical events visit upon the region and its inhabitants.

Chapter 2 – Neoliberalism and the 'North'

If historical specificity is vital to Peace's project, then essential too is its geographical location. The peculiar regionality of the north of England, and the West Yorkshire of Peace's childhood particularly, form a resonant background to the novels, as its inhabitants experience the isolating consequences which follow deindustrialisation and the approaching neoliberal dispensation. This chapter considers Peace's exploration of this insecure terrain and continues to assess how the introduction of emerging media platforms and new forms of communication technology impact upon an altering geography. In the two central novels of the series, over which the real crimes of the Yorkshire Ripper cast their shadow, Peace articulates how the imaginative space constructed by journalists, documentarists, novelists, and playwrights comes increasingly under pressure; the working-class nature of its constituency, however validly established, particularly affected. The much mythologised – and parodied – English North is shown to be rendered fragile in the face of economic crisis and cultural isolation; the solidity secured in the public imagination also containing the roots of its vulnerability.

The communication and technological innovations that begin to appear in these novels signal, on the one hand, the democratising potential and expanding public sphere suggestive of the kind of media system proposed by Raymond Williams, beyond the strictures of the authoritarian and the influence of the paternal but avoiding the 'tyranny' of the commercial (Williams, *Communications* 120). On the other, though, their presence in the novels suggest a co-option by the angry and despairing and a prefiguring of the polarising animosities that has come to characterise much online debate. The amplification of law-and-order issues and apparent failures that is such a feature of the media discourse in the novels heightens an atmosphere of insecurity and encourage an authoritarian response. Peace demonstrates how fears raised by crime coupled with the atomising

effects of the new economic arrangements exert a deleterious impact on conceptions of space as its public incarnation is threatened and dwindles and the suburban dream of secure privacy is shown to contain a nightmarish aspect.

Peace conceptualises a Yorkshire mindset of defensive insularity, typified by psychological retreat and epitomised by a police force of an especially fascistic kind. Through this contentious environment, inhabited by the relics and ramifications of human intervention, Peace's investigators are forced to navigate unstable pathways. In *1977* the journalist Jack Whitehead, guilty of augmenting the distressing influence that crime exerts over his region, faces the challenge of countering pervasive power structures. Peter Hunter in *1980* meanwhile attempts to utilise new strategies – including those made available by the developing digital age - to both solve crimes and to confront the hostile geography in which he is compelled to operate.

Constructions and projections of the North

The excerpts from conversations between telephone callers and the host of *The John Shark Show* on Radio Leeds, discussed in chapter one, are the most obvious appearances of the media in *1977*. In these prefaces to the chapters incidents from the callers' lives or from news stories are briefly discussed, casting atmospheric light or shade on the events of the chapters which follow. Symbolising the media's 24-hour wraparound nature the British version of the American shock-jock that Peace presents is a harbinger of the petri-dish environment which so successfully incubates the political extremism that thrives in the internet chatroom. Particularly significant geographically, and a component shared with the angrier edge of American shows, is the articulation in these calls of a sense of a powerless provincialism. The first call sets the tone. After a caller, a taxi-driver, relays a tale of accepting sexual favours from a female passenger in lieu of a fare, Shark comments: 'Women eh? Can't live with them. Can't kill 'em. 'Cept round Chapeltown' (Peace, *1977* 2).

The persistence of a casual sexism is apparent here, but so too in the throwaway allusion to the Ripper is a curious and disturbing attitude to the serial killer and his victims, incorporating a willingness to accept the murders, and even, perhaps, a warped pride in their execution. As the novel proceeds, Peace utilises this discordant Greek Chorus to reveal a helplessly disenchanted region; each call is dated to match the timeframe of the chapter which follows, and each decries the condition of the state and its institutions as May becomes June and the Ripper's attacks continue.

Particularly insistent in the radio excerpts are the complaints made about the state of the legal system and about those responsible for the implementation of the law. Anguished appeals about the failure to prosecute crimes, the widespread exposure of an apparently wholly bent constabulary, and the misapplication of justice help Peace amplify a sense of diminishing trust in and a growing uncertainty about the validity of governing and legislative bodies. However, even as revelations about West Yorkshire's corrupted police force continue to weave through the *Quartet,* there is little sense that their local control is diminishing. As is the case historically, reform of a police force may require certain 'precipitants' or 'triggers' before it takes place (Brain 7). Public concerns about crime which are amplified in the news media (and in fiction drama) become part of the rhetoric of the constabulary and judiciary and part of their appeal for increased policing and sentencing powers (Hall et al. 78). The 'retributive attitudes' (124) that emerge from this process are generally encouraged by the public.

Significantly, Peace's callers form part of a northern constituency which feels abandoned by an unspecified but authoritative 'they'/'them'. While comparing the respective fates before the law of the property developer John Poulson and the bank robber George Davis, Shark and his guest consider the iniquities of the law:

John Shark: See John Poulson got himself an early parole?
Caller: And on the same day George Davis ends up back inside.
John Shark: One law for them, one law for us, eh Bob?
Caller: No, John. There's no bloody law for them, that's trouble.
(Peace *1977* 250)

The 'them and us' allusion suggests a difference of class, however, although Davis was a Londoner, his social status aligns him, in the caller's reasoning, with a northern constituency away from which the balance of power continues to tilt, and so also articulates a north south division. The significance of the geographical divide has been alluded to already in the first book in the sequence, *1974*, and the rueful reminiscences of Dunford about a different world down south, 'of Southern girls called Anna and Sophie' (Peace, *1974* 10), about the implied middle-class milieu that they represent and occupy, and that was not his own. In this and more forthright expressions of a northern mindset that appear in the novels is the implicit acknowledgement of the perceived disparity between the North and South.

The powerful and deep-rooted position that the schism holds in the national imagination is traceable, according to the historian Helen Jewell, to a period prior to the Roman Occupation and was originally founded on a geological basis. The country north of lines drawn roughly either between the Exe in the south-west and the Tees in the north-east or between south Wales and York being subject to the wet weather from Atlantic fronts and with underlying bedrock close to the surface, being more suitable for grazing livestock and nomadic patterns of occupation than the culture of settled arable agriculture that took hold to the south. The division has been regularly reinforced by subsequent invaders - Anglo-Saxon, Viking and Norman – as well as by Popes and other clerics. Jewell charts cultural and political distinctions made throughout medieval and early modern ages – peaking variously during the Wars of the Roses, when Richard III's association with the north lent the region a barbarous reputation even though the monarch was neither from

the north nor even popular there (Jewell 51) and following the 'Glorious Revolution' at the end of the seventeenth century when concerns about a rebellious Scotland consigned northern counties to buttress status. However, while recognising the existence of deep-rooted divisions, it is the constructions of the North developed during and following the industrial revolution that have become most firmly entrenched and that have proved most durable in conceptualising 'Northernness'.

Rural migration to towns and cities in the early nineteenth century created a mass urban proletariat, leading to an evacuation of the bourgeoise to town-edge suburbs (R. Andrews 15-19) and an intensifying of class contestation as a feature of the urban space. These disruptions to northern topology brought radical and lasting change to regional economics and culture. Stereotypes of northerners began to emerge at this point as the inhabitants of these new, expanding metropolises came to be viewed as distinct, inflected with the characteristics of immigrant stock (including, significantly, those of the Irish (Rawnsley 7)), which contributed to an image as both independent and unruly. Skills and occupations relating to specific areas further added to defining characterisations as did the expression of cultural forms, songs, for example, sung in dialects very different from the 'Standard' English which began to spread from the southeast of the country at the end of nineteenth century. The infrastructure that developed around political administration and travel further cemented the position of regions as places apart, with the North becoming increasingly identified as a potent site of labour. In the development of broadcast media too, came the amplification of difference between London and elsewhere. The BBC, conceived in 1922 as a unifying service, was so London-centric in concern and aspect that it in fact served to reinforce notions of inferiority and insignificance for those outside the capital (Rawnsley 13; Russell 269). The impact of these representations, which constituted the sustained and continuing reemphasising of difference in a variety of systemic ways and of inferiority to southern norms, where the South's positional superiority was so often

accentuated at the expense of the regions, was an inevitable sense that the powerful were able to marginalise on grounds stemming largely from geography.

The stereotypes of the North which emerged in the nineteenth century would relate closely to the working environment experienced there and to an identification of the 'Northerner' with working-class life. This association contributes to an 'othering' of northernness which has become a constituent characteristic, articulating a removal from the centre of power, which has been perpetuated over time, culturally and politically, and which Peace considers in his novels. Particularly, the author utilises a sense of geographical separation – emphasised in the constant reminders of location – to demarcate a region existing in parallel to England's political centre in the south, a place where different rules of authority apply. Peace's attempt to capture a sense of dislocation and to incorporate a class aspect in the national division acknowledges a seam of sociological enquiry into the formation of class and its relationship to place.

A group of British sociologists who began publishing research in the 1950s and 1960s were united by a special interest in 'the ambivalent position of the working class within British society' which was 'at one moment being a central figure in bringing about the first industrial society in the world, but at another moment remaining outside the 'gentlemanly', cosy world of the British establishment' (Savage, *Social* 60). The studies undertaken by this group focussed on both the reasons for, and the consequences of, positioning the working class as outsiders. Among these studies, books such as *Coal is Our Life: Analysis of a Yorkshire Mining Community* (1956), by Norman Dennis et al. secured some of the powerful associations between heavy industry, the north, and a distinctive working-class culture. Because of this concentration, there is an extent to which these sociologists, some of whom had avowed political interest in the prospects of social change, in fact further secured connections between the north and the working-class, a charge that

also applies to Richard Hoggart's *Uses of Literacy* and to the social historian EP Thompson whose account *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963) was written in Yorkshire and which, he admits, 'is coloured at times by West Riding sources' (Thompson 13).

More recent interest in class analysis has drawn on arguments made about social stratification by Pierre Bourdieu. These are premised on causal connections between divisions of class and *habitus* - a system of 'internalised structures, schemes of perception, conception, and action common to all members of the same group or class.' (Bourdieu, *Outline* 86) *Habitus* instils attitudes and leads to practices, which operate to establish symbolic boundaries around status groups and to reproduce social and cultural conditions. Bourdieu acknowledges that this is a contentious and shifting figuration and, also, that numerous such status groups are present in any modern society (Weininger 125-129). This allows an elaboration of the classical, binary Marxist divisions between owners and workers into multiple and more complex arrangements. Nevertheless, the distribution of power remains unequal and inevitably favours those who possess access to greatest stores of 'capital' (of which several kinds exist, Bourdieu calculates, the most significant being economic and cultural (Bourdieu, *Distinction* 114-120)). In this hierarchical arrangement, social ranking takes place in relation to a 'legitimate culture' made up of accepted universal practices. These change over time as patterns of behaviour once deemed the exclusive preserve or occupations of the powerful become more widely accepted and are then replaced by new practices approved by cultural intermediaries 'taste-makers' (Bourdieu, *Distinction* 101). To ensure separation along class lines Bourdieu proposes that 'symbolic partitions' are erected, and 'symbolic violence' is employed to maintain these boundaries. This maintenance relies on agreements between groups which reinforce and naturalise differences between them, be they along class, gender, or other lines. The result of this arrangement for those with least access to the various types of 'capital' is an internalisation of inferiority, a sense of cultural unworthiness, an inability to participate in

spheres of political and social influence and restricted access to social space. Participation in these acts of separation takes place at a regional level too where 'agreeing' on and perpetuating differences becomes an entrenched part of identity: 'Importantly, in this view, northern identities are not merely imposed from outside, but actively reinforced by northerners themselves through simulacra: images, myths, and narratives that enable the construction and reproduction of northernness.' (Reeve and McTominey 66)

In analysing some of the basic features of Bourdieu's perspective on class formation, and in identifying some of its strengths, as well as possible weaknesses, Niall Cunningham and Mike Savage explore how the concept of class formation can be broadened to include this spatial dimension. Significantly, in a UK context, they explain how the construction of England's South ensures its operative cultural and social dominance:

> Fundamentally, we concur with a great many others in seeing London and the south-east as a vortex for economic accumulation but it is also much more than that; it is a space where the coming together of intense economic, social and cultural resources enables the crystallisation of particular and nuanced forms of elite social class formations, formations in which place is not incidental but integral to their very existence. (Cunningham and Savage 321)

The authors explain how the privileging of the southeast, and London's 'vortex' effect (323) exercises a diminishing effect on the rest of the country and how as part of this arrangement the North becomes a repository for working class characterisations (324). Echoing this spatial conceptualisation, Stuart Rawnsley considers how the 'North's construction has intensified as the material conditions of modernity suffused the region from the early nineteenth century onwards. As in other discussions of the region, Rawnsley acknowledges the difficulty of defining what it occupies geographically, the nebulous quality of its boundaries and what can be encompassed within them (Wales perhaps, or the North of Ireland or Scotland?). The sense is keen, Rawnsley concludes, that the North is in many instances a space of the imagination, the physical borders imposed upon it

arbitrarily drawn by authorities from elsewhere. As Reeve and McTominey have it, it is: 'a mainly imagined, culturally constructed packet of representations' (Reeve & McTominey 65), both marginal and postmodern, and, borrowing the term of Rob Shields, a 'place-myth'[10]. The idea that the North exists as a state of mind for many, perpetual and inescapable, is acknowledged by Peace. Writing from abroad and removed geographically and temporally he is compelled to return and investigate the Yorkshire of his childhood. Answering the suggestion that cultural dislocation plays a part in the stirring of the imagination, 'licensing an existing disaffection from one's native spot' (Hart 550), Peace emphasises his lack of nostalgia or especial fondness for many aspects of the place of his upbringing, but allows that distance has provided the 'perspective and also the desire' (Hart, *Interview* 553) to travel imaginatively, both in time and space to the Yorkshire of the 70s and 80s to try to understand and come to terms with the place it was.

The absorption by northerners of a mythologised conception of environment and self which has both been constructed by non-northerners, especially those from the South, and been self-generated, becomes problematic in terms of forging individual identity and proves difficult to overcome. The pride taken in an image which would have them as straight-talking, 'no-nonsense' (Morley 19), down-to-earth folk (Kirk xi), imbued with the qualities of independence (Samuel 163), with an implicit understanding of the dignity of labour, and of the importance of solidarity at work and in local communities (Rawnsley 8), is undercut by the knowledge that these characterisations can also confine and diminish. The fragility of this portrayal is compounded when one of the structural features of the construction – the mass employment provided by heavy industry – is threatened or removed entirely. The resultant scramble for what remains in a reorganising economy has

[10] Rob Shields' *Places on the Margin: alternative geographies of modernity* (1992) explores how regions sited beyond centres of power both conform to and challenge their conceptualisations by others.

the potential both to demoralise and to induce anger in the population affected (McIvor; Kampanellou et al.; Scheiring and King).

It is possible to detect these sentiments in the language of resentment and of uncertainty in the voices of John Shark's callers. As the trajectories of *1977*'s chief protagonists head in parlous directions, so the calls to the radio show become increasingly pessimistic. Towards its end, as the novel gains frantic pace and the length of chapters shortens, the prefaces appear with greater frequency. After drawing a caller's attention to a news story about a hijacking in America, and hearing a despondent reply, Shark enquires: 'Not been having those dreams again, have you Bob?', to which Bob replies: 'It's not the dreams, John. It's when you get up and pull back them bloody curtains. That's when it hits you.' (298). Shortly afterwards the same caller gives a summary of the news: 'Baby battering claims six lives a week, injures thousands. Next page, every child in North waves at Queen. Then, seventy-four coppers quit every month and unemployment's up one hundred thousand. Rapes, murders, Ripper . . .' (328). This precis is, it seems, proof enough of endemic decay. The penultimate call consists of a man reading a verse from the book of Revelation, (9:20), which illustrates humanity's intransigent foolishness and wickedness as it continues to worship false idols and fails to repent of its sins. Following this, finally, comes the silent call. These responses of the powerless and the isolated which veer toward religious superstition and then absence, articulating societal decline.

The North which Peace draws, and from which these voices emerge is, as the twentieth century ends, a deeply unsettled place. What power may once have existed there – encapsulated in the communal structures that had grown around the workplace and living space, the union, the band, the sports club - appears to be slipping into the grasp of its police officers. What emerges are signs of a bitter, resentful mentality, hardened by the distance from the centre of political power in the south; what Katy Shaw describes as an

'obstinate marginality' (11) and 'a place of perpetually underlying anarchy, anxiety and sadism' (63). 'The constitutive violence of the media' that Mark Simpson detects underwriting the *Quartet* (Simpson 252), its concentration on the 'wound world' of murder, and its subsequent description, serving to further emphasise 'the obsolescence and remaindering of Yorkshire' (259).

Place, memory and imagination

It is not the language used by characters in Peace's texts that primarily locates the reader in Yorkshire, the author tending to avoid overly obvious linguistic signifiers of place. Only occasionally do moments in speech or language denote his geography – the opening of a sentence with an 'Oh aye', the odd 'owt' or 'nowt' or the use of the adjectival 'bloody' mid-sentence, rare nods to northern cadence. It is the place names which serve to anchor the reader unmistakably in the area. Chapters in *1977*, often begin with a specific location, 'Leeds' (3, 171), 'The Murder Room, Millgarth' (39), 'I sat in the Redbeck car park' (283), focusing attention on this topography and intensify claustrophobia. Elsewhere, the car journeys taken by policemen seem to be described by a circularity, making repetitious returns to familiar places, the passing points listed in incantatory fashion: 'Straight out of Bradford, the A650 Wakefield Road into Tong Street, Bradford Road, King Street, under the M62, under the M1 and into Wakefield, out on the Doncaster Road, out to the one place left, the last place left' (Peace, *1977* 147).

Peace's realisation of the West Yorkshire of his youth involves an invigoration of the complex relationship between memory, imagination and lived experience. The geography is promoted not as a static container but as an affective agent, socially produced and carrying the legacies of multiple human interventions. Particularly as characters traverse Leeds, they confront aspects of the urban which provoke emotional and psychological

responses. The peregrinations of Jack Whitehead, native creature of the city, in *1977*, evoke theories of space as a social product, and the triadic model of urban interpretation proposed by Henri Lefebvre in *The Production of Space* (1973). Here, spatial practices, representations of space and spaces of representation interact to produce totalised understandings of space. The first part of this dynamic, multifaceted theory of space - the 'spatial practice' - relates to the way that space is perceived and the processes that lead to social production and reproduction:

> The spatial practice of a society secretes that space; it propounds and presupposes it, in a dialectical interaction; it produces it slowly and surely as it masters and appropriates it. From the analytic standpoint, the spatial practice of a society is revealed through the deciphering of its space. (Lefebvre 38)

This aspect of space that is most visible to an individual, bears the signs and stimuli that allow the interpretation of the social reality from which they – the individual - emerge. Lefebvre goes on to distinguish the remaining parts of his model, identifying 'representations of space' as the way a systematized set of abstract and dominant codes operate to conceive space; it is the space of 'scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers, as of a certain type of artist with a scientific bent' (38), it is both measurable and representable in, for example, maps and plans. The third aspect of the triad are the 'spaces of representation', those that are experienced, moved through and adapted, spaces which 'the imagination seeks to change and appropriate' (39), offering the possibility of resistance to dominating conceptions. Space according to Lefebvre's model is not a static physical entity, nor does it exist only as we perceive or use it but is a product of the perpetual combination of all three of these elements. Whitehead appears to be experiencing a cognitive imbalance and an inability to reconcile the components that comprise the world around him. As he navigates Leeds' physical spaces, he recognises in its streets and architecture a dereliction that matches his own. Sitting in a gutter in Kirkgate

Market 'with all the other dumb angels' he realises that 'the crotch of the trousers of my suit stank and there was dandruff all over my collar' (26). At this point in the novel, though, there is little suggestion that he can muster any resistance to the forces dominating his milieu, criminal or juridical. The evidence instead is that his employment continues to be reliant on crime, his relationship with local coppers still convivial and that he is very much tied to place.

In their examination of the role of geographical locations in the *Red Riding Quartet*, Martin King and Ian Cummins (2013) utilise Pierre Nora's concept of *lieux de memoire*, in which Nora emphasises the significance of place as site of memory, outlining 'an idea of a modern world obsessed with the past and in search of roots and identity that are fast disappearing, a loss of collectively remembered values replaced by a socially constructed version of history as a representation of the past.' (King and Cummins, *Dead* 43) In Nora's conception, history competes with memory; the presentation of the former, replete with the accoutrements of published and filmed material, often overpowering the latter. The 'bricolage' approach that King and Cummins see in Peace's construction of narrative, in which the borrowing of data and textual matter from multiple sources and perspectives, imitates the construction of history, while simultaneously questioning its veracity. Nora's *lieux de memoire* is a place where the horror and violence that may have taken place there has been edited out. Peace's West Riding is very much a place where the brutality remains; it is the *lieux d'horreur* proposed *by* King and Cummins. It is vital, Peace texts insist, that as a landscape changes, its hidden pasts are acknowledged, that the influences of history - be these medieval, Victorian or of the twentieth century - are recognised for the effects that they continue to generate on places. The Ripper's crimes which feature so strongly speak of the way that the idea of the murderer seeped into the consciousness of the nation, and into that of its northern population most viscerally, heavily infecting newspaper coverage and television programming, on the appeals of billboard and bus-stop posters; his presence

as diabolical simulacrum felt everywhere. However, despite this process of mythologising he is, Peace reminds us, an all too human product of his environment.

If Peace's portrait of the city is a bleak one, then the moors and open spaces of his northern countryside offer no respite. There is little sense that the moors can offer anything but a continuing trepidation, amplified by the knowledge of the bodies which are buried there. A trip across the Pennines reminds Detective Inspector Rudkin of a previous journey: '"Got caught in a fucking blizzard. Couldn't see owt but two foot in front. Fucking frightening it was. I swear you could hear them. We were shitting bloody bricks."' (Peace *1977* 41) The power of old stories of old crimes, to generate ghostly presences, affects even car passengers. For Bob Fraser, in *1977*, crossing the same hills to investigate a crime with similarities to those attributed to the Ripper, the moors have the atmosphere of the murder scene he finds in a Preston Garage: 'the air of the sea bed, the weight of an evil ocean hanging over our heads' (Peace *1977* 49). Jack Whitehead's dreams meanwhile are increasingly sited on the moors:

> I'm on the Moors, walking across the Moors, and I come to a chair, a high-backed leather chair, and there's a woman in white kneeling before the chair, hands in angel prayer, hair across her face.
>
> I lean down to scoop the hair away and it's Carol, then Ka Su Peng. She stands up and points to the middle of the long white dress and a word in bloody fingerprints there writ:
>
> livE. (Peace *1977* 257)

This recurring vision – Jack has the same dream later (299) – casts the moors as a site of purgatorial reckoning; the ghostly nightmare-scape where the horrors of his life must be confronted.

In *1980,* Peter Hunter traverses the moors between his home in Manchester and Yorkshire accompanied by the endless radio news of a degenerating world. The largely featureless

landscape which backdrops the M62 corridor, where only the spectral machinery of telegraph poles (3), broadcasting masts and the telephone wires (21 and 47) of the high ground interrupt the view of blasted heath, provides a suitable zone of acclimatisation for the policeman as he braces himself for the unholy encounters at his twin destinations. At one end is Yorkshire, a place dominated by memories of truncated investigations, and a place he associates with the phone-calls that precede dashes back across the Pennines to be with his wife following miscarriage, impetus for the deal he has struck with God. At the other end is his home in Manchester, no longer a guarantee of stable refuge. He too is gradually subsumed by the invisible, swirling communication networks that criss-cross the moors, as he himself becomes part of the news, a victim of false accusations and undermined by his fellow officers; unable to apprehend the messages that pass through the air around him, contaminating the truth that he seeks.

Further articulations of this obscuring and miasmic territory are the 'transmissions' which preface the chapters in *1980* – unpunctuated, unclear, and overlapping, but containing some of the terrible essentiality of the Ripper's crimes. The contested ethereal public space of CB radio, from which the transmissions come, becomes an arena dominated by the competition between The Ripper's monologue and police officialese. The subordinating of the victims' voices in the transmissions is echoed in the way that other public spaces are threatened by crime – parks, for example, often featuring as crime scenes rather than community possessions – or by those seeking to control crime – the patrolling and surveillance of city streets a preoccupation of Peace's police officers. The appropriation of public space becomes a significant transformative feature as the new political reality asserts itself.

In the two central novels of the *Quartet* where the overarching atmosphere is provided by the crimes of and hunt for the Ripper – what was once 'Jack Whitehead Country' (Peace,

1974 101) has become 'Ripper Country' (Peace, 1980 192) - the mounting tension is exacerbated by the confines of the urban. Peace's depiction of the northern metropolis is marked by its decline, even its decay. The architectural glories of an esteemed past, now soot-stained and shabby, cast withering shadows over towns struggling to maintain status and identity in a changing world. In his essay on representations of the city in Peace's novels, Keyes notes how often the author alludes to the city not merely as decaying but as actually dead. As he seeks to determine in cities the differentiating features in their conflicting operations as either 'governmental' or 'ethical' (22), Keyes identifies in Peace's 'model of spatial development' a mapping of 'the link between his critique of politics and his representations of the city' (23). Particularly sought in this assessment is evidence of how the city imagined by Plato as humanity's ideal circumstance – the 'ethical' city – is strangled, in Peace's vision, by the rampant expansion of its boundaries and bureaucratic functionality – the 'governmental'. As the city's shared, communal ethos - the source of its pride and participatory sensibility – diminishes, so its structure is rendered vulnerable, the humanism, once a central tenet in its construction, a dwindling resource. Drawing on the work of Murray Bookchin[11] in his analysis, Keyes points to a conflict between an ideal, but unrealised, organic, community-led city and the arbitrary cruelties of rational governance, being played out in Peace's series and in the interests of the moneyed. The damage done by the contracting out or privatising of public space and services is central to Peace's vision. The pressure on space, the claims upon it by the privileged that begin to be heard early in the *Quartet* are gradually realised as the series continues. In this incarnation the idea of the citizen disappears and only subjects remain, the city is eviscerated of spirit and as Keyes recognises in both temporal and spatial terms Peace's cities (as well as his wider Yorkshire) are conditioned by descriptions of their death (22).

[11] Bookchin's *The Limits of the City* (1974) outlines the possible dangers of urbanization as it takes place within the deracinating processes of late capitalism.

The sense of mourning for a lost world becomes ever more apparent in Peace's descriptions of place. A disused factory, for example, is given the ghostly characteristics of the fallen: 'looming buildings dark and towering with their dead eyes, their empty rooms – Pitch-black and deathlike, silent but for the screams of passing freight' (Peace, *1980* 139) and in the tone deployed in his descriptions – 'through the dark towns and villages, the snow then sleet then rain, down the deserted streets and roads, the empty hills and fields . . . everyone dead, everything dead and I'm wondering how long it's been like this' (252). As he articulates a sense of diminishment, he expresses an awareness that the northern towns and cities which emerged during the industrial revolution were never fully reconciled spaces. The imposing civic architecture which soared upward at the height of the region's industrial and economic ascendancy in the middle of the nineteenth century - the dominating presences of St George's Hall in Bradford, the enormous neo-classical Leeds Town Hall or Manchester's Free Trade Hall - were built to reflect a pride in place as well as a change in regional status. In Peace's late twentieth century setting once grand edifices are part of the 'bone dry hell' (Peace, *1977* 31) at Leeds' heart, intimations of a dark past. In Lefebvre's discussion of the representations of space, he proposes a study of 'not only the history of space, but also the history of representations, along with that of their relationships with each other, with practice, and with ideology' and of all their 'interconnections, distortions, displacements, mutual interactions' (Lefebvre 42). This proposal brings him to the role of architecture:

> Representations of space must therefore have a substantial role and a specific influence in the production of space. Their intervention occurs by way of construction - in other words, by way of architecture, conceived of not as the building of a particular structure, palace or monument, but rather as a project embedded in a spatial context and a texture. (42)

The spatial contexts and textures - the projection of power and wealth - that encouraged the great Victorian building projects in northern cities, are transformed by post-industrial distress. The degradations of human labour which lay behind the buildings' facades are reawakened by Peace as affective legacies of the city's dissonant history. 'All great buildings,' Eddie Dunford recalls his colleague Barry Gannon informing him, 'resemble crimes.' (Peace, *1974* 82)

Concurrent with and related to the boom in public building projects were developments in and expansion of the regional newspaper industry and the opportunities this offered for self-promotion. Relevant in this context, is the change of name at the *Leeds Intelligencer*, when, under the new ownership of the *Yorkshire Conservative Newspaper Company*, it became the *Yorkshire Post* in 1866*,* and which transmitted national news coverage from the perspective of northern business interest. The *Post* would retain a conservative, business-oriented flavour into and throughout the twentieth century. Together these developments formed part of a northern boosterism, reflecting a regional confidence which was challenging to and competitive with the sensibilities of London and the south, and which unashamedly emphasised the difference and distance between the two entities.

The projections of confidence which emerged from the north in the nineteenth century were, though, accompanied by the more nuanced accounts of contemporaneous writers. Authors, both northern and southern, found fertile ground for the exploration of the extremes of the human condition in the contrasting imagery provided by proud northern industrialist and downtrodden wage-slave, by the wild and beautiful landscape and the grimy factory town or hard-bitten pit village. A sense pervaded that an authenticity of experience was to be found away from the centre of political power and within the engine room of industry and the nineteenth century movement toward *social realism* is particularly associated with the northern novels of Elizabeth Gaskell, particularly *Mary*

Barton (1848) and *North and South* (1855). For Charles Dickens too, the North provided the necessary background for him to question the human price paid in the name of industrial advance (the humbuggery of Coketown's mill-owner, Bounderby, in *Hard Times* (1854) echoing something of the falsity behind the grand facades of industrialisation). The factories of the north would also prove a motivating factor in the development of the philosophies of revolutionary socialism. Friedrich Engels drew largely on his experiences in industrial Manchester to produce *The Condition of the English Working Class* in 1845, co-writing *The Communist Manifesto* a couple of years later. The conditions that these writers, among others, found and described in the mid-nineteenth century served to cement imagery in the public imagination which would prove so difficult to shift, doing more 'to define the North as 'other' – as harsh, bleak, industrial and 'the land of the working class' – than any other single cultural form.' (Russell 87)

This partial figuration damages the North and infects its legacy: the complexities of its history overwhelmed by the myths told about it and that it tells about itself. In a scene which captures this shaping, Jack Whitehead awakes to find his flat in ruins, the relics and records of his writing life strewn about the place. We can presume the damage is self-inflicted, enacted when under the influence of his phantom wife. Still consumed by terror and surrounded by ghosts, Jack continues to destroy his possessions in a desperate search for a genuine article among the detritus:

> I pulled the room apart, the six of them whirling and wailing in murderous cacophony, books in the air, tapes on the floor, cuttings to the wind, fingers in my ears, their hands across my eyes, their lies, my books, his lies, my tapes, her lies, my cuttings, her fucking diary (137).

The search for something that is concealed beneath a sea of other stories, amidst the swirling, discombobulating presence of wailing banshees, replicates the hunt for a semblance of truth in a northern geography disguised by its mythology which informs the

whole *Quartet.* Peace paints a picture of the North that is awaiting its sentencing; like Jack, preparing for its own sacrifice, but without fully acknowledging its past. This difficulty of realisation arises, in part from the ambiguities of imagery and of conception which cling to the North – tough and independent but also compassionate and communitarian. It is the inability to reconcile these constitutional aspects which make it particularly susceptible to the approaching rupture. Peace describes a place that will struggle to withstand the assault of the coming times; the inability to deal with the Ripper a further warning about the The arresting spectacle of grand civic architecture which had done so much to encapsulate the brief period of northern ascendancy in the nineteenth century, accompanied by the image of the heroic working man – the 'rather awesome figure' (Crookston 3) of the miner particularly - symbolised a region of substantial valiance. In the early twentieth, though, this association began to be replaced by a visuality of decline, becoming particularly stark with the arrival of inter-war depression and in the photographs of stony-faced Jarrow Marchers. In other forms of journalism too – for example, the travelogue of JB Priestley, a native son of the north who nonetheless appears dismissive about its merits, and George Orwell's documentary assessment (1937) - a bleak and limited picture is painted of the North's vulnerability.

north. The pre-war fiction of DH Lawrence and Walter Greenwood, speaking of harsh existences and difficult choices, further established conceptions of the North in the national consciousness, which would become more deeply entrenched during the second world war. The process of 'othering' which had been undertaken in the Victorian age would, with negative connotation, be regularly reinforced as the twentieth century proceeded.

Significant challenges to these deeply instilled perceptions and attempts to investigate the complex intricacies behind the stereotypes which were so readily called to mind, came

from writers of fiction in the period after the war. Novels of the 'kitchen sink' or 'Literary New Wave' from the 1950s and 60s provide immediate inspiration for Peace. The figure of Dunford in *1974* is apparently a composite of the leading characters of some of these, combining the ambition of Joe Lambton (in John Braine's *Room at the Top* 1957) or Arthur Machin (in David Storey's *This Sporting Life* 1960), the romantic inclinations of Victor Brown (in Stan Barstow's *A Kind of Loving,* 1960), the cynicism of Arthur Seaton (from Alan Silitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning,* 1958) and the whimsy of *Billy Liar* (Waterhouse 1959). These elemental features can also be detected, to an extent in the figures of Bob Fraser in *1977* and Peter Hunter in *1980.* What is shared between Peace's protagonists and the characters of the earlier novels is a yearning for escape, discussed in the first chapter and a preoccupation of northern novelists since the 1800s (Russell 95).

> The representations of northern life in Peace's novels, its landscapes, its culture, its relationships, owe much to the novels – and the subsequent films – of the 1950s and 1960s new wave, and it is an inheritance he acknowledges (Hart 553; McKinty). Together, these works voice a northern personality, acknowledging and celebrating distinctive regional quirks, but also making claims for inclusion in the wider story of post-war Britain. A changing political landscape means that the imagery associated with the industrial north: those smoking chimney stacks and slow-spinning colliery winding gear that often operate as framing devices in cinematic versions of the region once equated to the values of hard work now smack of irresponsible damage to the environment and of outdated practice (Samuel 153), a further diminishing of the region's national contribution.
>
> The perpetuation and easy resurrection of the North as other, its formation, unavoidably (to the irritation of northerners) referencing the South, is enduring. A presumption is calibrated that supposes inhabitants are forced to make an awkward choice between whether to escape, or to stay and embrace the North and its sometimes stifling and

claustrophobic atmosphere. In Peace's novels thoughts of departure sometimes energise characters, but these ambitions prove stubbornly unrealisable. Bob Fraser in *1977*, encounters obstacles - his colleagues, his dying father-in-law, his family - which hold him in check and deny him the opportunity to transform his circumstances. 'I don't know what to do. I don't know where to go' (Peace, *1977* 21) he despairs early in the book. Assistant Chief Constable Hunter in *1980*, meanwhile, is consistently impeded, denied access to a room to work in, hampered by his Yorkshire colleagues, and eventually suspended from his work, his destiny finally a violent dead-end. Neither opting to stay put nor seeking flight have particularly happy consequences in Peace's universe. The urge to escape, though, also reminds us of those nomadic impulses which so affected the ancient northern shepherds described by Helen Jewell, and that the sturdy bedrock of northern topology which appears to offer such solidity, in fact may only encourage departure.

Insularities and Exclusions

The historical and economic processes of the nineteenth century served to provincialise those regions of Britain which, for all that they were, were not London and the south-east. The continual use of stereotypical representations amounted to a deliberate removal of agency and stories told by and about the regions carried the danger of partiality, celebrating certain aspects of the life there without acknowledging its entirety. This selective valorisation of the provincial presents a version of British life which will inevitably lack vital elements and the idea, and consequences of 'provincialism' would cast a long shadow. The term 'provincialism' itself would gain, according to Ruth Livesey, 'a fresh host of depreciative associations. From indicating an accent or style associated with one of the other three nations of the Union or settler cultures, it became increasingly associated with an inward-looking, complacent, mediocre state of Englishness' (Livesey).

We see evidence of these ideas and attitudes being utilised - and sometimes challenged - by Peace. There is an abiding darkness and lack of joy in the *Quartet* which stems from a

feeling that the region has finally succumbed to the years of prejudicial treatment. The constant reinforcing of the idea that a place is operating on the margins, that what happens there is less important than what goes on in the cultural and political centre, will eventually prove detrimental. For Raymond Williams to emphasise the 'regionality' or 'provinciality of a place', was to operate in the same way as ascribing values of class to a piece of literature: 'There are, evidently, uses of this description [the working-class novel] which are strictly comparable with uses of the 'regional' description: assigning certain novels to a deliberately limited area; indicating their limited status by this kind of narrowness' (Williams, *Region* 233). The description of a novel as 'regional' is, Williams argues, 'plainly ideological' and judges that the 'life and people of certain favoured regions are seen as essentially general, even perhaps normal, while the life and people of certain other regions, however interestingly and affectionately presented, are, well, regional' (230). The subordinating effect of such demarcations presents challenges to the author attempting to realise in fiction the social relationships of a particular place and Williams views the temptation to retrospection and the theme of escape as symptoms of these challenges (236). The nature of the writing evolves as an issue for novelists, for whom the project is fiction and not political treatise, a 'a problem of social and historical consciousness' recognised by Williams as not fully reconciled in the work of Robert Tressell (Williams, *Ragged* 244).

The strongly drawn associations in literature, film and art - see LS Lowry for an example here - between working-class lives and the North act to enhance notions of regional identifiability and help to secure assumed knowledge in the public imagination; an effect which invigorates an insularity in the North's population. In this vein, and recognising how representations of the North have evolved, Raphael Samuel remarks on how qualities that were once celebrated in the films of the new wave and elsewhere, became, following the 'shock of deindustrialisation', 'talismans of narrowness' (Samuel 165-166). The

exclusionary aspect that results from this situation is exacerbated by a southern backlash that was first prompted by the ceding of power to the industrial north in the nineteenth century, and the attempts to impose imagery on and assumptions about on the region is a response which has never truly relented; an amplification of negativity, inferiority and lack of sophistication means that the process of 'othering' continues into the early twenty-first century. The site of perhaps the most stubbornly fixed northern association in the public imagination is Yorkshire. Its intense exceptionalism, reckoned as 'God's own County' or 'England's Greatest County', has helped to establish it as *echt* North. It is also, however, the county most readily parodied – the Four Yorkshiremen from *At Last the 1948 Show* (1967), telling competitive tales of childhood hardship, or the role reversal in Monty Python's *Working Class Playwright* (1969) – pointing to a hubris, a fundamental flaw in its self-perception, perhaps, that Peace's fictions explore. The 'especially intense county pride' (Russell 38) that was traditionally reflected culturally, particularly in sport, is a point emphasised by Dennis et al. in their analysis of Featherstone (1956). Here, the local rugby league team's fortunes intertwine closely with the lives of the town's coal-mining community to the extent that when the team is defeated, 'two thousand teas are thrown at t' back o' t' fire' and 'The men are said to be too distressed to eat' (157). The close association of Yorkshire's sporting well-being with the state of its industry is a connection investigated by Anthony Clavane (2016). The county's decline as a sporting powerhouse, in his view a result of the changes to the working practices of its people: 'the long term failure of their communities' sporting teams . . . consigned to the margins, cut off from the centre of power' (Clavane 263) directly relating to the assault on collectivism of the 1980s

Always, though, alongside the self-assertiveness and pride which typified, for example, Don Revie's successful Leeds United side of the 1960s and 70s, was a darker element. Revie's team were popularly known as 'Dirty Leeds', an appellation which is still used today, because of the cynicism they were unafraid to employ. Likewise, the tough culture that

surrounds Rugby League is, as the quote from Dennis attests, very male in nature, while the nativism of Yorkshire County Cricket Club, which had strict rules about playing only 'true born' Yorkshiremen until as late as 1992, suggests a narrow-minded exclusivity. The uglier aspects of this parochialism are evident in the exclusion of south Asian migrant communities, especially, from versions of Yorkshire and Yorkshireness. This segregatory inclination is investigated by Thomas Fletcher and Spencer Swain (2016) through the prism of the county's cricket club who find that, 'In spite of the existence of migrant communities, historically, illustrations of northern England depict the region as a White monolith; concealing the region's ethnic diversity.' (87)

In Peace's novels race and colour are a defining characteristic, ensuring that black and Asian characters are separated from the white orthodoxy that commands Yorkshire's societal hierarchy. Bob Fraser's black girlfriend appears more aware of this situation than he is when she asks, sardonically, if he'll leave his wife for her (Peace, *1977* 90). There is no sense that black figures are accommodated as equals – or even considered at all – at the workplaces the reader is privy to, rather they are firmly confined to outsider status. This denial of new formulations of Yorkshire identity and the fear and insecurity that this implies, is something that Peace's angry graffiti regularly references. The impact of deindustrialisation and the consequent arrival of a neoliberalism that relies on insecurity, generates an angry insularity that is scrawled on Yorkshire's walls. These paranoid and hostile organs of the unvoiced proclaiming 'Pakis Out' and 'Leeds Whites' betray the uneasy accommodations and angry rejections of globalisation and immigration; the graffiti an inarticulate and disenchanted alt-media.

The effects of the processes of marginalisation appear in Peace's novels as a pervasive fatalism; a resigned acceptance of the North as benighted wasteland is made manifest in suspicion, defensiveness, and resentment. The evidence of societal breakdown apparent

in the news headlines - '*Two hundred dead in a Kentucky Nightclub fire, five charged in the Captain Nairac murder, twenty-one coloured youths arrested in connection with a spate of robberies in South-East London'* (Peace, *1977* 41) – and in the warnings daubed on its walls, encourages a strand of violent resistance. Disguised as a force responding legitimately to growing concerns about crime, the characteristics which embody the hard, unsentimental extreme of northern masculinity become increasingly apparent in Peace's policemen. Access to the West Yorkshire Police is widened in *1977* as the reader accompanies the novel's co-narrator Detective Sergeant Bob Fraser. In Peace's realisation the force is preoccupied with the maintenance of a bastion of northern patriarchy which persecutes and penalises those who fail to conform to the rules of a system from which they are already ostracised.

In certain circumstances and locations, the degree to which rules can be bent becomes particularly apparent. The way that Peace describes the implementation of policing in Chapeltown speaks of the process of ghettoization and the reduction of places, particularly those places that have become home to sizeable immigrant populations, to synonyms for trouble and vice[12]. Reputations gained as sites of 'ethno-spatial segregation' (Jaffe 675), are perpetuated by the media, which leads to public conceptions of areas that allows the police to act within them with impunity, the care of its inhabitants not the priority it might be elsewhere. Chapeltown, a Victorian suburb of Leeds characterised in the post-war period by the subdivision of its larger properties, witnessed sporadic outbreaks of protest from its inhabitants, especially from those subject to the significantly racially profiled stop and search ('sus' law) policing tactic, and considerable disturbances in 1975 and 1981. Like Toxteth in

[12] Nicole Ward Jouve dispels some of the mythology perpetrated by the news media which surrounded Chapeltown, quoting Roger Cross's description of the area as a multi-racial suburb of considerable (if faded) elegance' (in Ward Jouve 170-171).

Liverpool, Moss Side in Manchester, or Handsworth in Birmingham, Chapeltown had developed by the mid-seventies a particular susceptibility to negative imaginings and was prey to a doubled socio-spatial marginalisation; both part of a provinciality defined by its northernness, and subject to more local stigmatisation.

Peace describes the police's attitudes and operations in Chapeltown as like those of an occupying army; the engagement with the population limited to angry and violent exchanges. After a late-night arrest, a senior officer broadcasts the odds to those behind the quieted windows and closed doors of Marigold Street in the heart of Chapeltown: 'and then there's Noble, Detective Chief Superintendent Peter Noble standing there bold as the fucking brass he is, standing in the middle of the street like he owns the place, hands on his hips like he don't give a fuck who sees' (Peace, 1977, 76). With the prisoner at his feet, Noble berates the inhabitants for their lack of cooperation:

> "What is it with you fucking people? A woman gets to wear her guts for earrings and you don't lift a finger. Didn't we ask you nicely to tell us where this piece of shit was? Yeah? Did we come and turn all your shitty little houses upside down? Did we have you all down the Nick? No we fucking didn't. But all the time you're hiding him under the bed, right under our bloody noses." (77)

The police's attitude toward Chapeltown residents, as described by Peace, matches Max Farrar's account ("*Rioting or Protesting? Losing It or Finding It?*") of the 1975 'Chapeltown Riots' and of the deterioration of relations between the police and the local black population. The discriminatory behaviour of Peace's coppers extends to the city's women of whatever ethnicity. This is true especially of female sex workers who were in the 1970s, like the immigrant population of Leeds, overrepresented in the Chapeltown area. The consideration of sex-workers as unworthy of protection contributed significantly to the lack of cohesion that typified the early investigations into the Ripper's murders. The first two of killings were not definitively linked by

investigating officers, though they were in press both local and national (Bilton 17). It wasn't until the third killing, of Irene Richardson in 1977, that the police identified a common culprit, by which time the mythology of the nineteenth century Whitechapel murderer was already circulating (Burn 155). The attitude of the police into the initial attacks fed the way they were categorised and reported in the local press (Ward Jouve 169). The murder of Jayne MacDonald, a sixteen-year-old shop assistant (Rachel Louise Johnson in Peace's telling (Peace, *1977* 174)) in June 1977 changed police, media and public perception of the Ripper's crimes and his victims began to develop. Significantly, MacDonald was described in police and press reports as an 'innocent' victim (Burn 169). This demarcation is also made in the novel in an open letter written to the Ripper by Jack Whitehead with the approval of a senior investigating officer (Peace, *1977* 213) and the same officer uses the phrase in *1980* (192). The unsubtle implication is that Wilma McCann, Emily Jackson, Patricia Atkinson, and Irene Richardson, all known to be active sex-workers, were in some way responsible for their own deaths. Peace's coppers share this lack of respect – treating sex-workers as less than human and habitually using language which subjects women to 'semantic derogations' (Shaw 30). Even Bob Fraser, who bears the closest resemblance to a hero in the novel, and who has fallen heavily for one of the prostitutes on his patch, behaves abominably towards others. Peace, again, draws an equivalence between the conduct of those who control this isolated bailiwick, and those emerging as the dominant power nationwide; equating the brutality with which citizens, especially those in the most precarious economic situations, are treated, with the cold attitudes and business practices of modern capitalists.

The articulation of a belligerent, defiant independence that we first hear broadcast by anonymous, corrupt police officers in *1974:* 'THIS IS THE NORTH. WE DO WHAT WE WANT' (Peace, *1974* 265), is, we learn at the end of the *Quartet,* the guiding ethos of those

involved in a North-wide conspiracy, keen to seize opportunities in a spirit of perverse entrepreneurialism: 'The whole of the north of England, from Liverpool to Hull, Nottingham up to Newcastle – it's ours for the taking: the girls, the shops, the mags – the whole bloody lot' (Peace, *1983* 227) a senior officer informs his troops, before exhorting them: "To us all and to the North – where we do what we want!"' (228). This is an expression of freedom, unbound by responsibility to a wider society, and with an intensity of loyalty to the powerful mythologies of place.

In *1977* Peace's coppers are further revealed to have succumbed to deviancy themselves, their participation in crime considerable. Involvement in the manufacture of a variety of graphic pornography which figures at an extreme end of media production is representative of the way that the powerful seek to assert dominance. Sometimes presented as a freedom of expression issue (Frederick; van Rooyen), the publication of pornography is, like the control of prostitution also a business concern of Peace's policemen, symptomatic of the commercialisation of female sexuality and of the subjugation of women. This illicit brand of capitalism, based on the real-life behaviour of police officers in other parts of the country, is pursued with the ambitious spirit of neoliberal economics. There is an exertion of power here over an already oppressed, marginalised, and sometimes silenced section of the population.

Many of the men of Peace's North are conditioned to behave with mercenary abandon, the consequent casualties merely collateral damage. While all suffer, the women murdered by the Ripper are the most obvious victims of a society that is short on respect for women in general. Peace does attempt to afford these victims some agency, resurrecting their lost voices in the 'transmissions' which precede chapters in *1980.* Stripped of the sensationalism which characterises crime reporting, these testimonies are instead prosaic and have a dignity which is denied to their speakers when represented in the press; a

counter-narrative to the two-dimensionality of the black and white photograph and brief biography which would amount to their remembrance in the public imagination. The resurrection of the voices of the victims shows similar intent to those works (*Blow Your House Down*, Pat Barker, 1984; *The Streetcleaner*, Nicole Ward-Jouve, 1986) whose writers insisted upon the primacy of the victims and decried their absence in most tellings of the Ripper story (Ward Jouve 29). The *Quartet* incorporates a recognition that the North's story has often been constructed in terms of a national spatial hierarchy which neglects the perspectives and experiences of sections of its population. The crimes and the manner of their interpretation that are visited in the series are emblematic of the inequalities that persist during a period of distinctly located social disintegration.

The Neoliberal Impact

The effects of deindustrialisation and the politics and dispensations of neoliberalism, signs of which were becoming apparent in *1974* and *1977*, begin to take more obvious shape in the third novel of the series, *1980*. The presence of the news media remains a feature, but, while the journalist Jack Whitehead appears briefly, he is reduced to a shell, the knowledge he once carried is all but inaccessible. Instead, news reporting figures most prominently in the headlines from radio and television, and, as the hunt for the Ripper nears its conclusion, in press conferences, interpreted now from the perspective of an investigating police officer. Privatisation, a hallmark policy direction of the Thatcher years, especially of space and property, becomes more apparent in the texts as an influential societal determinant. As the various plots and subplots develop, Peace implicates the intent to monetise assets, and the emphasis on the primacy of the individual in the demise of community and the fracturing of accepted modes of existence. Peace gives the impression that society's diminishing cohesion is felt hardest and most cruelly in the North; the conditions of post-modernity sitting most uneasily here. The cultural response, as seen in the novels, to the changing socio-political environment, is apparent in the lyrics of post-

punk and more contemplative new wave punctuate this later text offer a more incisive commentary on proceedings than the pop allusions that appear with apparent irony in *1974.* Peace has spoken of using songs as an entry point to the past (Gregoritis; Finbow) and lyrics feature as chapter titles and in the consciousnesses of characters across the series. Katy Shaw, in her discussion of hauntological presences, describes how music figures as a 'strong index of meaning and power' (55) across the series. Further intrusions are apparent in the graffiti which confronts the characters - ugly, blunt and often racist in the previous books - comment more abstrusely here. Over all of the proceedings hangs the threat of nuclear war, a metaphor perhaps for a different kind of cataclysm that faces the North, and an abiding shadow for Peter Hunter from his first appearance, '*The North after the bomb, machines the only survivors*' (Peace, *1980* 3) until late in the novel.

The ethos of the period is described by David Harvey as embodying 'the proposal that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong property rights, free-markets and free trade' (Harvey, *Neoliberalism* 2). The implementation in Britain was gradual rather than sudden, much of Thatcher's most radical legislation waiting until her second term, but the identification of the advent of Britain's first female prime minister as the point at which old systems and assumptions were swept away is commonly made. There are factors in Peace's *Quartet* that suggest a subscription to this chronology; at the start of *1980* we see the failures of old systems of investigation being addressed and the outmoded detective, Assistant Chief Constable George Oldman, being removed from his duties replaced by the arrival of a think-tank which typifies the age (Harvey, *Neoliberalism* 40). In an early scene, as the reverberations of this reshuffle play out, Hunter's colleague, Detective Chief Superintendent Murphy asks, echoing the words attributed to the soon to be departing Labour prime minister, Jim Callaghan, by the Sun newspaper, 'Crisis, what crisis?' (22).

Much of *1980* approximates more closely the form of the police procedural than the classical detective novel – sizeable parts of the text are given over to interviews and to forensic examination of statements and evidence - a formal shift which represents the arrival of an approach appropriate to the advent of Thatcherism, where top-down, business-like attitudes replace the methods of the organically arranged enterprise, or the bottom-up efforts of the lone investigator. That this emerging approach eventually proves unsuccessful questions the salving benefits of the new dispensation. The reader follows the progress of Hunter, a member of the 'brains' trust' or 'Super Squad' charged with examining the investigations into the still unsolved Ripper killings. The interrogation of history remains a central premise, as Hunter and his team revisit the circumstances of each of the murders in turn, revealing as they do the weaknesses and inconsistencies in the processes of the original investigations. Deeper truths are always, though, tantalisingly obscured.

The timeframe of the novel consists of a few weeks in the December of the title year, covering what would prove to be the final stages of the investigation. By 1980 the Ripper had killed 13 women and attacked at least eight others and an atmosphere of well-founded fear permeated the north of England, intensified by the arrival of taunting letters and audiotapes (later found to be hoaxes) on the desks of newspapers and investigating officers. The press found itself in a curious position; sensing the obligation to fulfil a public service, local and national papers assisted the police in its 'Flush out the Ripper' campaign and publicised new developments when requested to do so. There was an awareness, though, on the press's part that each new chapter in the murderous sequence drove up sales, the latest instalment in a sordid serial entertainment. The more indecorous part of this dichotomy was revealed in the extraordinary clamour for stories from the family of the culprit when the Ripper was finally arrested (D. Campbell 185; Burn 278; Bilton 503-4). The Ripper was still able to drive sales at his own death in 2020, when almost 40 years after his

incarceration, many tabloids printed souvenir editions, the *Daily Mirror*'s with a special pull-out and keep section.

Though he denies it to those who appoint him, Hunter, the novel's narrator, is already consumed by the Ripper case. Before his special appointment is announced we follow him in a car journey where he is accompanied by radio news – his radio, we learn, is 'always on'; headlines, as well as television programming – 'the *Mind of the Ripper'* (9) – are aimed at him incessantly. In his own private space, a shed at the bottom of the garden, he has established a 'War Room' where he can chart the development of the case. The capture of the Ripper is a personal quest; Hunter has invested in a campaign of war and made a deal with God – stopping the murders will mean a child for him and his wife. Despite this apparent concession to the superstitious, he is, we understand, the consummate professional policeman, super-rational, incorruptible, and thorough. The attempt to balance individual and communal interests is a tension that will occupy him as the narrative proceeds. Hunter, like Dunford and Whitehead before him, is inclined to act alone, but as instructed by the Inspectors of Constabulary and government officials who appoint him, he co-opts a small team of his juniors to aid the investigation. Despite this he carries much of the burden alone and is careful about who he trusts. Significantly, then, although many features of the police procedural are employed, the attempt to solve crimes and to resolve the past (as so with John Piggott in *1983*) is mounted by an individual rather than by a group. That these lone crusaders each ultimately fail in their quest reflects Peace's doubts about the worth of this kind of endeavour and warns of a future political settlement premised on the aspirations of individualism.

In Peace's vision, the political project becomes one of deracination and disorientation, laying waste to the traditions which had grown up around working lives - imperfect and sometimes brutal though these were - and their inherent structures of support and

interdependence. Uncertainty is a presiding feature in Peace's novels, serving to feed their desperate atmospheres. The signs of suspect private enterprise, typified by collaboration between police officers and criminals, that we saw emerging in *1977* – the post-office robberies, the pornography racket and the coercion and control of women involved in prostitution - take on a different hue in *1980.* The alliance of local Conservative Party officials, business leaders and policemen on display at the Masked Christmas Ball 'the security and the secure, the fat and the fat' (49), represents an intersection of the structures of power responsible for the unequal distribution of spoils. Hunter takes his place at a table with his commanding officer: 'I sit down next to him, shaking hands with an MP, a councillor, a millionaire and all their present wives, local Masons and Rotarians the table of them –' (49). Hunter struggles to remain composed when quizzed by his dining companions about his appearance in the *Manchester Evening News*, and we know that he is plagued by an anxiety, his dreams haunted*,* unable to escape the Ripper's orbit. Nevertheless, even in this rarefied atmosphere, he demonstrates a faith in the rules, and is reluctant to assist a friend who reveals that he is being investigated by the police. The reader is not able to share his confidence in the propriety of the powerful; the masks worn by the attendees concealing more than their faces we suspect. As the novel proceeds ever more revelations are made about the interests of dodgy coppers, about the security-business which serves to protect illicit funds and about the pimping activities of vice officers. Some of the enterprising officers (and ex-officers) involved in these schemes are ultimately undone, paying the price for contravening rules that Hunter is yet to understand, and which will prove to be the cause of his own downfall too. Despite embodying many of the characteristics of the age, the Thatcherite mythology of self-reliance, of the social-climbing meritocrat, the reader can see that he is operating in an uncertain territory pressurised by the 'political consolidation of neoliberalism' (Keyes 20).

Already shrinking for some time[13], the 1980s marked a steep fall-off in manufacturing and coal industry jobs which was particularly hard felt in the north. The developing conditions of postmodernity that Lyotard identified, within which sites of mass employment disappear and permanent contracts are replaced by casual, temporary arrangements (Lyotard 66); that involves an ongoing reorganisation of the urban wherein new developments replace terraces and suburban promises are amplified - predict a population of increasing atomisation. The effects of the rearranging of physical resources as an expression of growing individualism becomes evident in the texts. Already seen in *1974* in the clearing of the inconvenient gypsy encampment to make way for a shopping-centre development (completed, and in partial use by the time of the final novel in the *Quartet*), the acquisition of space becomes a feature in domestic contexts too. In *1980* a point of especial sensitivity and focus of anxiety is the privately owned home – prime symbol of individuality and key Thatcherite policy shaper – and the quiet suburbs that are its ideal location. That decisions about how the 'Brains Trust' charged with the Ripper's capture are made in a private home rather than a public office is indicative of the direction of travel. Peace uses the ownership of a large house in the suburbs as a signifier of success as determined in capitalism's terms, whether the success has been earned by means fair or foul. They also, though, become a point of weakness; markers of solitude and of the idea that individual aspiration will leave one all alone. The home of Richard Dawson (the friend on whose behalf Hunter would not intervene) is humiliatingly raided by police, a harbinger of his own demise, while Hunter's 'affluent detached house and two-car garage' (48) is destroyed by fire. They are also sites of some of the most gratuitous/ violent scenes in the series – the bloody set to between Bob Fraser and John Rudkin in *1977* (324), the brutal murder of Eric Hall as recounted by

[13] British industry experienced considerable shrinkage during the 1970s and 1980s. In 1966, 8.9 million worked in manufacturing and a further 500,000 in the coal industry. This compares with just 2.9 million employed in manufacturing in 2016 and only a few working miners at a handful of opencast sites and tiny drift mines (Beatty 163).

his tortured wife in *1980* (118), and the final, vengeful appearance of BJ in *1983* (399). The assaults within the confines of the private home exposing suburbia's 'dark underside' (Shaw 15) and pointing to the false security of the private space.

The deregulatory ethos that is captured in the privatising drive toward a 'home-owning democracy' is echoed in associations made between an unfettered free-market and the freedom of the press (as proposed by right-wing libertarian think tanks, the *Heritage Foundation* (Kim and Farrell) in the US for example). Such associations were exploited by Rupert Murdoch who established a close and mutually advantageous relationship with Thatcher during her premiership (Campbell, 334; Young, 349). For conservative-minded newspapers in the north of England, the *Yorkshire Post* and *Evening Post* among these, the reorganisation of the economy that occurred in the 1980s introduced some difficulties. The *Post* had for much of its history an association with the Becketts, a prominent Yorkshire banking family who numbered several Tory MPs among them (one member of the family or another served as the Chairman of Yorkshire Conservative Newspaper Company Limited – the *Post*'s managing company – between 1865 and 1950 (Caunce 29)). As late as 1993 support for the Conservative Party was written into the newspaper's articles of constitution. The *Post's* maintenance of its political convictions was such that it was described by AJ Cummings of the *News Chronicle* as 'the leading Conservative organ of the provinces' (qtd. in Caunce 28).

The *Evening Post* was founded in 1895 to appeal to a slightly different market (both mass- and down-), and while a stablemate of its older sibling had more liberal inclination. Both papers had relocated amidst some fanfare from the cramped, maze-like premises on Albion St in Leeds city centre to a huge new purpose-built building in Wellington Street in 1970. Peace lends a sense of ambiguity to the timing of this move, some impressions given in the earlier novels are of operations taking place in the intimate spaces of the former

rather than the vast open plan halls of the brutalist latter. The move, when it comes, perhaps symbolising better in Peace's timeline the shift from organic local concern to impersonal corporate behemoth. In *1974,* Dunford's newsroom smacks of close contact and is generally described as an 'office' (though Dunford does describe himself looking up at 'yellow lights on ten floors' (165)), colleagues and management seem near at hand, the size almost familial, atmospheric conditions which survive and that continue to describe Jack Whitehead's working environment in *1977.* By now, though, there are clues to relocation and the 'building' is a taxi ride from Kirkgate in the city centre. By the time John Piggott visits the *Post's* headquarters to ask Kathryn Williams (once Kathryn Taylor) – a girlfriend and colleague of Dunford's from the first novel – about the whereabouts of Jack Whitehead in *1983,* she is apparently working in a very different space to that she shared with Dunford. It has glass walls for its reception area and revolving doors, out through which Piggott is encouraged (Peace, *1983* 129), the impersonal way he is treated matching the sterility of the setting.

The change of location is captured in a self-produced, promotional film, *Third Century* (1970)*,* which begins with a cameraman boarding a small plane, followed by take-off and then sweeping aerial shots of Yorkshire's land- and cityscapes. If the emphasis on the relationship with location is clearly made, then so too is the organisation's traditionally conservative configuration. Early on, we see and hear the uber-establishment former Conservative MP, Aidan Crawley, speaking to a Literary Luncheon organised by the newspaper, his audience glaringly conventional in dress and demeanour. Workplaces at both old and new buildings are strictly demarcated – the journalists shown are all male, the copy-messengers and classified-ad sales telephonists all female – and, at this point, there is no sign that this is likely to change. The voiceover describes the *Post*'s capacity, with its offices in London and across the north, to cover both national and local issues, against a backdrop of a journalist interviewing a prosperous looking businessman, and boasts, 'Our

man is always on the spot.' The ethos transmitted in the film, and which presumably guided the paper at this time appears anachronistic amidst the considerable changes that the country was experiencing. In an article considering what the *Post*'s new building represented in terms of the relationship with its host city, the architectural critic, Moritz Föllmer outlines certain of the issues facing both daily and evening newspapers in the 1970s,

> The newspapers' rootedness in tradition, however, limited their ability to come to terms with the changing face of Leeds as a whole. Their endorsement of new buildings and roads went hand in hand with a grim outlook on urban society. Residents appeared to be hampered by strikes and threatened by violent criminals, even before the Yorkshire Ripper rose to sinister prominence. It was barely acknowledged that not all of them were white, notwithstanding the sizeable Asian and Caribbean communities. Far from seeing diversity as an asset, the city was increasingly perceived as fractured, and the spectre of urban decline came to the fore. (Föllmer)

Out-of-step with the progressive movements of the 70s, the arrival of the Conservative government in 1979 offered reassurance to adherents of the paper's abiding philosophy, even as it threatened Yorkshire's working-class populations. Generally, across its history, adaptability has been central to the *Post*'s endurance: merging with and acquiring other newspapers at opportune moments, establishing linked enterprises, and maintaining close association with financiers, have secured its enduring local significance. Throughout its history the newspaper and its management have tactically adopted a conservative rather than a Conservative position, allowing a capacity for subtle transformation as the times dictate, its outlook traditional rather than radical. The control of regional newspapers by local business interests, a situation increasingly likely following the demise of the radical press, was an issue raised by each of the twentieth century's Royal Commissions (Curran and Seaton 327). The faith implicit in liberal press theory that the market would provide a diverse and representative press is questioned by the authors of the 1977 report who raise concern about the decreasing press diversity, believing 'there are grounds for inhibiting

further growth of concentration.' (Royal Commission on the Press (1977) 134) and petitioning for the Press Council to have powers to censure the conduct of editors and journalists in breach of a new code of conduct (236). Neither a widening of ownership nor a more robust Council were to follow, however.

In the novels, it is the figure of Bill Hadden, the *Post*'s editor in Peace's history, carefully patrician, who seems to best represent the paper's conservative aspect. Hadden attempts a balancing act, fearful of causing upset to local coppers and business interests, but keen to be across stories, particularly that of the Ripper. This tendency to toe the line and maintain the status quo has consequences for his journalists. Dunford's career is sacrificed to this inclination in *1974* when it becomes clear that his refusal to accept that the Clare Kemplay case has been satisfactorily resolved is arousing the ire of local power brokers. The suspicion that Hadden's motives might be conflicted is raised toward the end of *1977* when from his editor's desk at the *Post* – a position from which he is, it would seem, almost permanently ensconced - he questions Jack Whitehead about the progress of his story:

> Still sat behind the desk, his back still to Leeds.
> I sat down.
> 'Jack,' he said.
> 'Bill,' I smiled.
> 'Well?'
> 'Fraser's done a runner.'
> 'You know where he is?'
> 'Maybe,'
> 'Maybe?'
> 'I have to check.'
> He sniffed up and tidied up some pens on his desk.
> I asked, 'You got anything new?'
> 'Jack,' he said, not looking up. 'You said something about Paula Garland, the last time you were in.'
> 'Yeah,'
> He looked up, 'Well?'
> 'Well what?'
> 'You said something about a connection, a link?'
> 'Yeah?'
> 'Bloody hell Jack what have you found out?' (Peace, *1977* 310-1)

Like the reader, Whitehead is reluctant to trust Hadden entirely, withholding some information in the awareness that Hadden's associates have the capacity, if in possession of the requisite information, to bring an end to his investigations. After further quizzing and the exchange of some details - Whitehead reveals that a murder victim had given a witness statement, under a different name, about a separate killing, and Hadden, that he has received by post a pornographic magazine in which the same witness appears as a model – Jack prepares to leave. At the same moment Hadden is preparing to make a phone call, but to whom we are not told.

The matter of which forces can exert editorial control arises again in *1980* when, in a curious incident, a couple of journalists purportedly from *The Sunday Times*, interview Assistant Chief Constable Hunter. Apparently better briefed than the police officer, the journalists are able to wrong-foot and discombobulate him. Later it is discovered, to Hunter's fury, that the interviewers do not work for *The Sunday Times*, their provenance a mystery, but we suspect that they are operating at the behest of those who consider the officer a treacherous enemy. Shortly afterwards, his home by now burnt to the ground, and under investigation for alleged though undetailed misdemeanours by the Chief Constable of the same force that he had himself been investigating, Hunter and the news of his suspension appear on the front page of the *Manchester Evening News* (Peace, *1980* 285).

That powerful hands control the dissemination of information in Peace's novels reflects the national situation in the early 1980s UK. The symbiotic relationship which developed between the Thatcher government and sections of the press would strengthen following the conflict in the Falkland Islands in 1982, and as the persecution of trade unionism began in earnest a couple of years later. The promotion of individuality and anti-communitarianism in the right-wing press (which heavily outweighed centrist or left-wing publications in the UK (Curran and Seaton 69)) matched the primacy afforded to individual

freedoms which continued to shape Tory policy. Vital to the project was the co-option of the freedom campaigns of the 1960s (without necessarily also carrying forward the social-justice part of their formations) as was the capture of the ideals of individual freedom and attempts to turn readers against interventionist and regulatory practices of the state. Under these ideological conditions, capitalist class interests could hope to restore and protect their position (Harvey, *Neoliberalism* 42).

It is a recognition of the interweaving concerns of the powerful and their damaging effects that arouses the worthier inclinations of Jack Whitehead in *1977*. In Peace's history it is Jack who writes the headline naming the *Yorkshire Ripper* (Peace, *1977* 71), and Jack who makes the links between some of the murders being investigated as part of the Ripper enquiry and the business operations of miscreant police officers, the tendrils of which are spreading across the North. The commercial nature of the 'news' increasingly becomes a factor in his deterioration. The long articles - 'No Woman Safe' (190), 'Victims of a Burning Hate' (206) – that he wrenches out of himself cost him emotionally. As with other characters, he exists against a background of unhappy radio headlines and compounds this persecutory noise by playing (and remembering) tape cassettes, which detail the crimes he has investigated, and which come to describe his cursed geography.

In *1980* the investigating duties fall to Peter Hunter, apparently more at ease with the emerging orthodoxy than is Whitehead. He is a northerner, but a Lancastrian not a Yorkshireman, and this outsider status immediately disadvantages him as he begins his work in Leeds. He is known to the West Yorkshire force from previous investigations, recognised as a straight man, a new breed, careful, clean cut, and nicknamed 'Saint Cunt' (92) by Yorkshire officers. The threat he poses to old procedures as he shuttles in across the moors to tackle incompetence, triggers the erection of barriers. The reporting that surrounds his appointment to the 'Super Squad' means that he has moved from the private

into the public sphere and, once appropriated by the press, he becomes the face of the enquiry. Driven by personal and professional goals, and affected by the tensions between them, he continues to be haunted in his dreams and by the headlines that he hears.

The confusions which Hunter and his team discover, and which are believed to have fatally hampered the Ripper investigation are attributed to a lack of technological support. The inability to cross-check interviews conducted and the inefficient ways in which records were kept, have been blamed for allowing the Ripper to evade arrest despite being questioned on multiple occasions (Bilton 529-533). In *1980* we see the case being buried under the sheer weight of paperwork and files routinely disappearing, problems which computerisation might have solved. This exposure points to a lack of imagination on the part of the West Yorkshire force, content to pursue the case in time honoured fashion, and to tensions more generally, between old and new technologies.

In *1980* the emergent technologies that we see appear to offer some hopeful possibilities, but these are never realised. The protagonist and narrator, Assistant Chief Constable Hunter, uses, in an alternative and private investigation room, a portmanteau computer – the ominously christened *Anabasis* - and seems mesmerised at times by a new digital watch. These gadgets function not to emancipate but as extra components of control. They represent the changing environment that Peace's crime novels describe in which the fragilities of the post-war 'settlement' are exposed by the growing appetite for consumer goods, and all that they offer, and by the arrival of a market-based neoliberalism - aided here by a reinvigorated popular press - which would do so much to shape the north of England of the future. The march of progress, symbolised here by these items of digital culture, is heading in a deceptive direction Peace suggests, not towards greater freedoms but rather toward ever more complete submission to the neoliberal dispensation and the continuing atomisation of community. Ultimately, Hunter is undone. The North – or at least

Yorkshire – conspires against him; it is unnavigable, a cursed country governed by systems against which his principles prove ineffective. For Peace the visitation of free-market ideology on the North represents a form of criminal enterprise. The sense is given that the region has suffered a cruel betrayal, that the tough, uncompromising conception that had been created about it had been exposed as flawed by the vicissitudes of economic history. Its prospective saviours, hack or super-cop, are subsumed by the resultant atmosphere of angry reaction where attitudes of rapid exploitation have overwhelmed those of long-term common purpose.

Conclusion

Peace offers pessimistic prospects for the North as it experiences the costs of deindustrialisation. The physical effects on the built and natural environments are replicated in the socio-political distress and hopelessness of its population. The impact of a reorganising economy and the impact of crime generates a different vision of the North from those given in roughly contemporaneous films. In *Brassed Off* (1996), *The Full Monty* (1997), and *Billy Elliott* (2000) for example, the poignancy and despondency which accompany the rigours of societal change, are off set against promises of success offered by the acceptance of conformity or entrepreneurialism or individualism. The characters who inhabit Peace's North are also navigating difficult times, but any sense of control that they seek appears unachievable. The warmth associated with community organisations, friendship groups, and families which alleviates the post-industrial landscapes in these films is only occasionally glimpsed in Peace's novels. Instead the reader is presented with a North that is 'not only one of physical decay and urban blight, but one of moral decay and social and cultural dislocation.' (Maguire 11)

The brief period of dynamism and 'fashionable cultural status' (Russell 179) that attached to the North in the late 1950s and early 1960s, when it, 'offered itself as an idiom for the degentrification of British public life', and promised 'a new vitality, sweeping the dead

wood from the boardrooms, and replacing hidebound administrators with ambitious go-getters' (Samuel 165) is a fading memory in Peace's series. Positive, lyrical portrayals on screen and in literature, associated with the 'New Wave', however reductive these were, give way to imagery marked by motifs of decline. The sense is reinforced in descriptions of place that old certainties have disappeared, that the disintegration of the physical infrastructure which once supported communities has implications for the regional psyche.

While Peace's focus is on the changing socio-economic conditions of the 70s and 80s, the *Quartet* was written following a recession in 1998, when, again, the impact on the North was significant, invigorating resentment toward what was, by then, a Labour government. The ideological conversion in its 'New' incarnation was appreciable in Tony Blair's close relationship with Rupert Murdoch and the party's economic policies which manifested in a reluctance to interfere in the market or to provide security for industries and workforces under threat. The new media platforms and the evidence of an approaching digital age that we see appearing in the central texts of the *Quartet* hold, as previous technological developments have done, the promise of an enlarged democracy, and this aspect has been welcomed (Pool ; Castells *Rise*). However, other analysis reveals a growing imbalance in a globalised context involving a securing of dominant positions by the powerful, the homogenising effects of cultural imperialism, which represent 'a threat to national cultural identity' (Briggs and Burke 230) with even greater implications for local cultures. In the next chapter the impact of new technologies and their role in the dissemination of news will be considered as an important combinatory feature in the development of crime writing of various kinds across time, and as a key ingredient of Peace's crime fictions.

Chapter 3 – Genre and the Media

Peace's intention to uncover and explore some of the historical and geographical specificities of the West Riding of his boyhood and to challenge some of the assumptions held in the public consciousness about that time and place is realised, as I have argued, in part by foregrounding the role that the media, in its various guises and contexts, has played in creating these assumptions. It is also possible, significantly, to find throughout the *Quartet* an interrogation of the processes - the press conferences, the construction of news stories and their headlines, the trawls through microfilm – of the news industry itself. This chapter will explore how an increasingly pressurised late twentieth century media environment is presented by Peace, in which traditional print journalism is experiencing an existential crisis (McNair 93; Eldridge et al. 37). Newspaper circulations, with the exception of *The Sun*, were continuing to fall and the distinctive position once held by the press was becoming increasingly uncertain; while the broadcasted news that sounds in the texts stresses the competition from other media. The direction taken by the popular press during this period – 'steady' and 'downhill' according to Sarah Lonsdale (212) - is reflected in the morally dubious, sometimes desperate media practices to which the *Quartet*'s reader is witness.

Important in this context is an appraisal of the figure of the journalist in fiction, particularly as this has developed in novels of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, leading to an analysis of how Peace employs this transgressive, much mythologised and ambiguous type as an investigating agent in his own search for a sense of reality in the times and places that his fictions are set. The tensions surrounding the occupation are particularly apparent in the first two novels of the series where journalists are central figures. These characters are at once aware of their obligations to hold power to account and to fulfil their roles as history's first recorders, but they must also satisfy the demands of a

committedly commercialised news industry and are hidebound by the compromises that they must make. This peculiar dichotomy requires a division of character, 'upstanding and respectable or else unctuous and venal' (Ehrlich and Saltzman 151) and Peace's distressed terrain is shown to exact a particularly high price from those operating within its boundaries. Also examined here is the relationship between journalism and fiction as this has developed historically. Particularly pertinent are the overlapping and cross-fertilisation of crime news, 'true crime', and crime fiction and the ways in which Peace incorporates and manipulates of elements of these forms. The introduction of actual events links the *Quartet* to a tradition in which authors (whose influences are apparent in Peace's texts) have sought to utilise versions of crime-writing to construct socio-political criticism.

Competition, commerciality, and compromise

From the outset of *1974* the enterprise of news gathering is framed in competitive terms, using the language of contest, and reflecting the not necessarily compatible driving impulses: to present audience grabbing sensation on the one hand and to expose and relay the truth on the other. The opening scene, on Friday the thirteenth of December in the eponymous year, is a Press conference at Millgarth Street Police Station, Leeds, 'a Late Night Fight Night' (3), and the boxing metaphor continues as, 'Seconds Out' (3) greets the arrival of the conference givers, 'In the blue corner' the police officers, 'In the red corner' the parents of the missing child, and 'Round One' (4) the opening statements. The scene is framed as a battle to mediate instantly and most effectively, and as a challenge to Dunford's ability to operate in this febrile and macho arena. Obviously energised by the charged if morally dubious world of crime reporting, his competitive instinct is alive. Dunford also seeks, though, to maintain his professional objectivity and some emotional distance from the tragedy of the unfolding events, figuring the odds of the parents' involvement, running the tape of his Phillips Pocket Memo (the device offering some mechanised separation from the all too human tragedy unfolding before him) and averting

his eyes as the missing child's mother appeals to the public. At our first encounter, then, Dunford follows the approved stance of detached observer able to meet these expectations even in extreme circumstances. However, the reader also senses that the construction of this persona will entail a certain level of compromise.

This struggle to maintain objectivity and professional detachment in the face of disturbing and distressing occurrences confronts Dunford throughout the novel and, as his own insecurities become apparent, intensified by the pressures of his working environment, will prove to be his eventual downfall, both professionally and personally. At this early stage, the determination to take some control of the story is paramount and his professional persona asserts itself. His assessment of the circumstances is made with little sentimentality and this projection of hard-heartedness is compounded for the reader by the knowledge that this is also the day of his father's funeral. While he pays cursory respect to family duty his priority is clear: 'funeral or no funeral, no way I'm letting Jack fucking Whitehead back in on this one' (3). The implication here is that the first pressure Dunford faces is from within his own paper. Whitehead has a hard-earned understanding of his role, with 'twenty years' experience' (39), and as 'Crime Reporter of the Year 1968 and 1971' (98) he is cynically aware of the compromises that must be made, and the constraints adhered to, in order to operate effectively in this rarefied milieu. Particularly, Whitehead is prepared to accept the codes and conventions of the symbiotic relationship between press and police. He has, we are told approvingly by his editor, 'an excellent working relationship with a certain Detective Chief Superintendent' (39) and Dunford is told explicitly that his field of operation is very much that of his rival (101). Whitehead is generally disparaging of the efforts of his crusading colleagues, particularly those of Dunford who has had the temerity to try his luck down south on the nationals. The two reporters act out a duel of sorts, seeking to gain advantage and vying for the all-important lead-story by-line which confers a temporary level of prestige. The significance of this

printed acknowledgement is clear from the opening page, Dunford only sorry that his father has missed his moment when it arrives, 'two days too fucking late' (3). Already established, Whitehead's achievement of these accolades interests him only as far as it serves to remind Dunford of his insecure status. The older reporter is contemptuous of Dunford's earnest approach, nicknaming the young pretender 'Scoop' and finding any opportunity to mock and undermine the ingenue and his efforts. The obsession with by-lines comes back to taunt Dunford when his name appears attached to a story which he did not write, terminating his relationship with his lover, Paula Garland, the mother of another disappeared child, who is furiously upset at the story's content (225).

Peace's emphasis on the competitive nature of the news business encourages readers to root for Dunford, even when they are aware that his success will be dependent on a willingness to bend the rules of journalism's ethical codes, thus implicating the reader in a suspect moral universe. Dunford exists in a state of uncertainty, lurching from moments of despair and self-doubt, when he calls into question his own worth, to motivated, single-minded pursuer of leads. At a point when his control of the story appears to be slipping out of his grasp and into Whitehead's, Dunford sits in his underpants on the bed of his childhood bedroom cursing his inadequacies, 'too scared shitless to face Jack fucking Whitehead. Too scared shitless to fight for my own story. Too scared shitless to even try. Fucking chicken' (43). Half an hour later, alerted by an anonymous phone-call, he finds himself motoring down the M1 to witness the gypsy encampment being mercilessly cleared by a battalion of police officers. Dunford's vacillation between needy retro-adolescent and determined, story-seeker reflects an inability to successfully compartmentalise aspects of his life. This, though, impacts perilously on his psyche, jeopardising his personal relationships and exacerbating his isolation and lack of attachment. He is guilty of at first demeaning his girlfriend and fellow journalist, Kathryn, cajoling favours and treating her like a 'bloody secretary' (43), before making half-hearted

attempts to make peace with her after she undergoes an abortion. His mother, too, is not immune from his selfish behaviour suffering at the brutal hands of the West Yorkshire Metropolitan Constabulary as they raid her house in a search for Dunford. The casually callous disregard for the welfare of others – the mistreatment of the women with whom he interacts is a recurrent feature – is at odds with the apparently virtuous journalistic goals he pursues, of associating and solving the disappearances of young girls, and illustrates the inherent contradictions of his trade. Dunford's inability to contain the competing impulses is signalled in the amount of time he spends in a state of physical dishevelment and in the act of physically vomiting. Encouraged by the bouts of heavy boozing that he and his colleagues indulge in as part of the macho newsroom culture and 'symptomatic of a wider social sickness' (Shaw 28), the vomit also appears as a by-product of (or metaphor for) the sensational news content that he is compelled to produce: 'It hurt and it burned as it all came up, but I didn't want it to ever stop.' (Peace, *1974* 21) The affliction will affect other characters in the *Quartet*, especially the solicitor John Piggott in *1983*, when there seems to be some bulimic aspect to the reaction. The self-disgust that we are privy to as we access Piggott's tormented inner self is in Dunford's case often engendered by the rigours and demands of his occupation.

In the *Post* of Peace's imagination profit is the bottom line, the satisfaction of the readership is paramount and the implications for the generation of content very apparent. The concern with sales is typified by an 'if it bleeds it leads' mentality (42), spelt out in the clamour for angles on the murder story which the child's disappearance soon becomes. More prosaically, the first time that the *Post*'s editor, Bill Hadden, is introduced to the reader he is poring over a photograph about to be used in a 'spot the ball', competition, the reason, Hadden believes, that 'thirty-nine per cent of working-class males buy this paper' (17). Dunford disputes the worth of the statistic, but the implication is clear; what the readers want the readers get. There is obviously a danger here, as selection of content

which relies on the attempt to anticipate and react to the whims of the public will lead inevitably to errors of judgement. These might include, at the most serious extent, the participation in the prosecution of crimes without adequate evidence and in subsequent wrongful convictions. The reader has a sense that this process is underway midway through *1974* when, following the arrest for murder of the unfortunate Michael Myshkin, a crowd gathers outside the Wakefield courthouse,

> Two thousand housewives and their unemployed sons.
> Gilman, Tom, and me, in the thick of the thick.
> Two thousand hoarse raw throats and their sons.
> A suedehead with his Mam, a *Daily Mirror*, and a home-made noose.
> Proof enough. (173)

The pre-trial condemnation by the press gives their readership – described here disparagingly by Dunford, 'housewives', 'unemployed' – the licence to vent some grievance against a conveniently created enemy. We realise, though, that the pressure on newspapers to take a position on issues, often by second-guessing public opinion, leads to ill-considered, even irrational, decision making which, in turn, reinforces the beliefs of the readership. At the other end of the social spectrum, further commercial pressure is exerted over editorial decision-making at the *Post* by the interests of powerful local business when the paper's investigations into the enterprising activities of the local architect John Dawson and property developer Don Foster ('*Dawsongate*') are curtailed by Hadden (Peace, *1974* 37). We are to learn later that Hadden's relationship with the West Yorkshire establishment is a cosy, convivial one, when Dunford notices his former editor at the party thrown by Foster (243) and where other guests include the county's top-ranking police officers. This glad ragged and champagne quaffing cabal of the powerful reveals to Dunford - and to the reader - that his masters are multiple and not necessarily those he is aware of.

The relationship the paper has with the police, characterised by an unwillingness, particularly on the paper's part, to damage relations, also points to a potentially

compromising symbiosis. While it is true that the police will use the press, the TV and radio to publicise appeals for witnesses or to help flush out wrongdoers, as they do in the *Quartet* – for example in the way that reporters and editors cooperate in the reconstructions of crimes (Peace, *1977* 42) - it is the newspapers who stand to benefit most from this close association. This sometimes begrudgingly arrived at arrangement was, according to crime correspondents of the period[14] a carefully developed one with accepted, if unwritten, codes of practice; print nothing which might hamper the investigation, ensure that the police perspective is primarily defined. While, in *1974*, Whitehead appears to understand the bilateral agreement, Dunford seems less cognisant of its hidden rules, failing to glean any information from a desk sergeant even after handing over a bribe (14) and angering Detective Chief Superintendent George Oldman on their first meeting (24).

Additional pressures are apparent which are affecting the print industry as a whole. Newspaper sales had been in decline since a mid-fifties peak (K Williams 204-205), and wide ownership of radios, and later televisions, continued to impact upon the health of both national and regional press. In *1974,* as Dunford drives around West Yorkshire, it is the news headlines on the car radio from local and national stations - appearances which prefigure the constant editing of the news website, a feature at the time of the book's writing at the very end of the twentieth century, rather than of its setting – as opposed to those from the papers, which seem to persecute Dunford in their insistence. The multiple demands of and pressures upon Dunford's working environment reflect a pressurised

[14] Duncan Campbell (2016) describes the often-close working relationship between crime writers and the police in a chapter on the 'Golden Age' of British crime reporting which followed World War 2 (pp 91-109). While the reporters Duncan Webb, Stanley Firmin and Arthur Tietjen each include accounts of working arrangements with the forces of the law in their respective memoirs covering the same period.

media industry ever more susceptible to the inclinations of the popular press (Biressi and Nunn 8).

Suspicions had been aroused about the conduct, content, and intent of the mass circulation dailies for as long as they had been in circulation from the beginning of the twentieth century (Conboy 63; Seymour-Ure 23). These early instances of commercialised mass culture, despite claims made for their independence by the newspapers and their proprietors, encouraged debate about the value of the 'news' that they contained, raising issues which would occupy social commentators and theorists as the twentieth century progressed. Pierre Bourdieu, as part of a broader attempt to identify where the power of journalism resides, locates the emergence of a 'field of journalism' (Bourdieu, *Television* 39) structured around the opposition between popular and serious media forms; 'between the so-called heteronomous pole representing forces external to the field' – largely economic and to do with sales and advertising revenue, and the 'autonomous' pole which represents capital unique to that field, cultural or artistic in a journalistic context (Benson and Neveu 4). The alternate models that these different manifestations represent are, Bourdieu observes, nonetheless, both 'permanently subject to trial by market' (Bourdieu, *Television* 71), reliant on the circulation /advertising revenue correlation for their survival. While the concern here is primarily the effect of television and the way that that medium encourages the cursory coverage of issues and negates the importance of concentrated thought, the formation of the field on commercial terms applies across media forms and, Bourdieu continues, leads to several inclinations on the part of news producers.

First, is the adoption of a simplified and abridged presentational style '"keep it simple," "keep it short"' (Bourdieu, *Television* 71). Second is an endless pursuit of the 'newest news' (71) – an adventure that leads to a rapidity of turnover which precludes comprehensive digestion and a 'pace [that] favours a sort of permanent amnesia' (72) and hence to the

press's alarming inconsistencies. Third, through an obsession with the productions of competitors, to avoid making the mistakes that they do which 'tends to favour uniformity' (73). According to this assessment, even those papers which privilege analytical discourse in longer, more contemplative articles will be prone to assume some of the characteristics of the popular press and are consequently devalued, and evidence a tabloid pathology which pervades the whole of news media output. However, for others, the advent of 'mass media' represents the welcome arrival of the wide access to and dispersal of information, an essential ingredient for the democratic project. John Fiske, for example, defends the role of the popular press, even at its most extraordinary, claiming that the sensational shows 'the inability of 'the normal' (and therefore the ideology that produced it) to explain or cope with specific instances of everyday life' (qtd. in Gripsrud 286).

There are issues with both of these assessments. Bourdieu seems to demand a brand of journalism which lacks the immediate attractions of the dramatic or sensational, proposing instead a thoroughly considered approach which offers nuance and analysis, but which would be deficient in the appeal which the commercial marketplace demands, and which would be reliant on a readership privileged with the time (and with the requisite commitment), necessary to comprehensively digest such involved treatises. Defence of the popular or 'tabloid' press on the grounds that it represents an arm of democracy, meanwhile, leads to the possibility of supporting a sensationalist approach to a story that might be racist, sexist or otherwise offensive, because to do otherwise would be to deny the freedom of the press and, further, does not appreciate the extent to which a certain political perspective might come to dominate the news media. However constituted then, media output will be prone to imperfection and the deficiencies that attend news reporting, detectable from the moment of the popular press's nascence, will be likely to act upon the journalists who operate in that sphere. The compromised, divided, journalist personalities who emerged in conjunction with the modern popular press have proved,

when fictionalised by writers of novels and dramas, ideal characters with whom to investigate the vicissitudes of modernity. They are useful for Peace – as they are for other novelists - precisely because there is an acknowledgement of the unreliability inherent in their profession which extends into their narration and which, valuably for writers of crime stories, compounds the growing sense of instability.

Journalists, Journalism and Fiction

In her book *The Journalist in British Fiction and Film*, (2015), Sarah Lonsdale examines the ways in which the figure of the journalist has come to be perceived in the public imagination through their representation in novels and on film and television in Britain in the twentieth and twenty first centuries. Beginning with the Edwardian period, Lonsdale charts the development of the fictional hack through wars hot and cold, to the post-Leveson period of the present. Often written or devised by newspaper operatives and, as often, dismissed as middle or even low-brow fare, such stories provide contemporary commentary on the state of journalism and news reporting, and on societal attitudes toward the news industry over time. Lonsdale charts a range of recurring types, who tend to become less favourably realised as they progress from the largely positive portrayals of intrepid questers after truth which coincided with the early flowering of the popular press at the turn of the nineteenth century. At this point there seems to have been a relationship between the worthy reporter as represented in popular fiction and the democratic hope which the mass media initially promised. By the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, though, a selfish, reptilian incarnation had become much more common.

In *1974* the journalist characters – who broadly correspond to positions across the gamut identified by Lonsdale - inhabit a complicated, pressurised world. They are shaped by historical developments such as the intensifying commercialisation of the press, as well as those wider social and political changes explored previously, which appear to have

encouraged an overarching cynicism, and must navigate uncertain byways toward their respective dooms. Dunford, though young and driven, is all too aware of the demands of his work, acknowledging, however uncomfortably, that he is in the business of finding and telling stories that will benefit his publication, no matter the cost to others involved. On being asked by a relative for a prognosis on the disappeared child at the start of *1974*, 'Doesn't look so good, though does it?' (8), Dunford replies in the negative, but is not being entirely truthful. For him, the story's potential supersedes the welfare of the child. Eventually, the effort to steer a path which will lead to the full revelation of the stories behind the various crimes in the novel proves ruinous. The hope to satisfy ambitions, both personal and those of his newspaper, consumes Dunford, and the truths, when he discovers them are fatally costly, setting off a chain of events that leads to a pile-up of slayings. In Peace's formulation, the journalistic impulse will only carry his characters so far, the 'truth' always tantalisingly out of reach. Wherever they operate on the spectrum of journalistic approach, the *Post*'s reporters are condemned to meet grisly ends.

At one end of this spectrum is Barry Gannon, dedicated and (mostly) virtuous fourth-estater, determined to hold power to account, and maintaining the qualities of the Edwardian forebears that Lonsdale describes, wielding 'his pen like a sword' (Lonsdale 18). At the book's beginning he is in the midst of investigating the questionable relationships between local politicians and businessmen. It is the kind of unfashionable, long-trawl, journalism (of the type championed by Bourdieu), that is often overlooked in favour of the dramatic and sensational, 'bloody *Dawsongate*, crap that no-one but Barry gave a fuck about or wanted to read '(38), as Dunford deems it. When getting too close to uncomfortable truths, Gannon is warned that his life is in danger. Dunford considers the warning and Gannon's talk of 'death squads' merely symptoms of his colleague's paranoia. This consideration is confounded when Barry meets his demise in brutal circumstances a few pages later.

At the opposite end of the spectrum is the heavy-drinking Whitehead who is aware and accepting of the limiting conventions of his role, and who conforms in many ways to the stereotypical, hard-boiled hack, the roguish counterpart to the brave individual, determined only for the truth; 'scruffy, cynical, shambolic, bad mannered and fond of expletives' (Lonsdale 179). This figure, presented so often in fiction and film, occupies a significant place in the public imagination, which helps to inform perceptions of the news industry as a whole, often overshadowing its more virtuous aspects. Whitehead's behaviour is typified by his wise-cracking and confidence, and he is apparently revelling in the atmosphere of a developing murder story. However, there is a sense that he projects a character that has been shaped by his profession, and occasionally glimpses of decency appear from beneath this veneer, as when he sympathises with Dunford following what they both suspect is a wrongful arrest,

> Jack said, 'It feels wrong doesn't it, Scoop?'
> 'No,' I whispered.
> 'You don't want it to be him, I know.'
> 'No.'
> Jack leant forward in his chair. 'I was the same. All that hard work, all those hunches, and it just doesn't sit right.' (168)

Shortly after this conversation there are reports of Whitehead breaking down in the Press Club, 'totally fucking lost it, crying . . .' (194) according to Gaz of the sports pages, early signs that a life in crime is coming back to haunt him. Later still, and with what appears to be genuine concern, Whitehead tries, unsuccessfully, to warn Dunford off the story (218). Whitehead, we learn, is not wholly cut-throat, he displays in these scenes glimpses of an ambiguity that will prove useful for Peace when he reappears in the second novel of the *Quartet.* At this early point in the series Whitehead's show of humanity foretells a future for Dunford, a warning that the pursuit of truth in the business of journalism, whatever one's approach, is likely to lead to encounters with forces beyond one's control.

Dunford occupies a moral space somewhere between his colleagues; imagining himself operating at a level above the depths which Jack Whitehead is prepared to plumb, but lacking the fibre, courage and persistence of Barry Gannon. Instead he continues to vacillate in the uncertain ground between them, an apprentice to two masters. The dichotomous space which Dunford occupies, and which separates the popularly presented images of the journalist – scurrilous rogue or paragon of truth - is explored in a comprehensive study of the journalist figure in fiction, film, and other popular media forms by Matthew Ehrlich and Joe Saltzman, *Heroes and Scoundrels* (2015). Cited there, among many others, are the comic but devious newspaper editor, Walter Burns, played by Cary Grant in *His Girl Friday* (1940), and the dastardly JJ Hunsecker played by Burt Lancaster in *Sweet Smell of Success* (1957), as powerfully emblematic representations which have helped fix negative conceptions of the news business in the public consciousness. These roguish types, though, as Ehrlich and Saltzman explain, are countered by depictions such as those of the heroic, nation-savers Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein in the film version of *All the President's Men* (1976) and the doggedly righteous figure of Cal McCaffrey in Paul Abbott's TV series *State of Play* (2003), later adapted as a Hollywood feature (2009): 'Such images – at once repellent and romantic, villainous and heroic – hint at a complex, contradictory relationship between the press and the public' (Ehrlich and Saltzman 2). The ambiguous incarnations which have so effectively informed public ideas about news reporters are utilised by Peace in two useful ways. Firstly, through them, and particularly as they exhibit behaviour often associated with the seamier aspects of tabloid press reporting, Peace is able to explore the ways that the press operates on the public, articulating a relationship which relies on an understanding of certain codes and conventions, and which leads to a questionable mythologizing of events. Secondly, and more virtuously, they perform the crucial investigative role; piecing together elements of

the plot and, in their compulsion to narrativise, to order and make sense of what they discover, thus driving the story forward.

Crime and Narratives

The way that crimes are mediated, often in an emotionally heightened atmosphere, and the alchemical process of turning events into copy is a key aspect of Peace's interrogation of the news media. Early in the proceedings of *1974*, Dunford is directed away from the child-abduction story. His editor asks for a follow-up feature on an old story – *The Ratcatcher Killer* – upon which the reporter's reputation had been secured. Visiting the home of the ratcatcher and scene of his crime – he is believed to have murdered his sister before committing suicide – Dunford begins to think in the language of the crime report,

> '*Alone at last in the lair of the ratcatcher.'* (64)

We are immediately aware, as is Dunford, and uncomfortably so, that his behaviour conforms to the clichéd modus operandi of the crime reporter and that his obligation is to fulfil the expectations of his readership. When he returns to the scene with a photographer, Dunford moots the idea of writing a book, 'Maybe a quick paperback,' (65) with cynical understanding of the conventions of the narrativisation process and imagining the inclusion of 'a few photographs' (65), to enhance its commercial appeal. He also finds himself arranging the details of the rooms, augmenting the narrative atmosphere to better suit his audience, at one point dangling a stocking (the killer's murder weapon) over the edge of a drawer for the photographer's shot, and hating himself for doing so. We also learn here that alternative lines of enquiry were never properly pursued by police or the press, suggesting that the story written – and accepted – about a killer with a headline friendly profession and which factored intimations of incestuous relations factored lent itself more attractively to publication than other less neatly or sensationally organised explanations. The notion that the truth is less important than a story which accords with

readers' assumptions, is clearly apparent. Apparent too is the participation in the prosecution of crimes by the media, prefiguring the wrongful conviction at the novel's end. Peace appears to be questioning the journalistic will to narrativise, to tell a plausible version of events quickly and in a particular style which readers will interpret in a preordained way and from which a sense of order can be established, or re-established, the veracity of the story told only a secondary consideration. There is an interrogation, then, of the concept of the news media as, primarily, a provider of information. Instead, Peace suggests, newspaper stories perform a different function for their readers which determines a mythology in their telling and reception. The processing of news in this way becomes even more pronounced a theme as the real crimes of Peter Sutcliffe are introduced to the *Quartet* in *1977* and *1980*. If story 'types' are elements in the mythic structure of the news, then the language used within that type of story also contributes to its powerfully mythic construction. Apparent in the *Ratcatcher* sequences, and elsewhere, is that the language of newspapers has become part of the thinking patterns of the characters, drenched as they have become in the condensed, spare, tabloidese of the popular press.

The function of this language which prohibits nuance and excludes individual circumstance is analogous to that of religious or mythological texts of former times. In his discussion of tabloid crime journalism Ulrich Lehrmann, building on the work of Jostein Gripsrud (whose essay on tabloid newspapers is discussed in the last chapter of this thesis), identifies in news cycles, particularly as they occur in the tabloid press, a ritualization of storytelling taking place which replicates or replaces the familiar rhetoric of pulpit and fireside which had traditionally served to create a moral framework within which societies made sense of the world. This folkloric aspect in the language of the popular press is attributed by Martin Conboy to the producers of politically radical publications in the early nineteenth century (Conboy 12). Here, Conboy attests, the vernacular of the working class was deliberately

employed to appeal to the political sensibilities of a systemically oppressed audience. As the commercial press began to establish its primacy after the demise of the bulk of radical publications in the mid nineteenth century, the language that had once been used to inspire reform and even revolution, was co-opted by the 'respectable' press, which catered to a narrow middle-class audience and was employed as a servant of conservatism (K. Williams 44). In Peace's novels, the construction of news stories according to accepted patterns, and the style of language used, circumscribe the activity of the journalist characters, and, because they articulate only within these limiting paradigms, they are also implicated in the concealing and obscuring of truths from their readership; their unreliability as narrators compounded by the way that they are professionally disposed to use language. At one point in *1974,* Dunford appears to have made links between different parts of his investigation, but on presenting his findings to his editor is told that he is 'trying too bloody hard' and that 'You can't just write things and then assume it's the bloody truth because you think it is' (Peace, *1974* 128). Pertinently, the editor's final pieces of advice to Dunford on this occasion are figurative, 'It's like you're shooting at the whole bloody bush just on the off-chance there might be something worth killing,' and, 'There's more than one way to skin a cat, you know,' (128) as if the editor is emphasising, in the context of the newsroom, the need to cloak language in disguise.

While grubbier elements of newspaper reporting – the callous pursuit of stories, the tendency to sensationalise – are clearly apparent in the first two novels of the *Quartet* (becoming more oblique in the final two), the worthier facets of journalistic potential are also visible. In fact, it is when the *Post*'s reporters begin to display their higher virtues and principles, typically following a confrontation with discomforting realisation, that the business of investigation begins, and the novels' narratives move forward. The reader witnesses the leading characters, Dunford and Whitehead, wrestle to assert the virtuous side of their professional selves, and to free themselves of the constrictions imposed by the

commercial concerns of their newspaper. It is at these moments when the overlap between journalist and detective is most complete; Dunford and Whitehead effectively go freelance, displaying behaviours more readily associated with the hard-boiled private eye than with the reporter. Dunford uses force to extract information from witnesses and Whitehead bribes others for the same purpose. The parallels between the two occupations, as previously noted, are easily drawn. However, it is the journalist's ability to transgress boundaries which lends the character a plausibility. The curiosity associated with the profession and the involvement in the business of telling stories, make the journalist character eminently suitable for the role of investigating agent, or of their useful assistant. Because of this, journalists make regular appearances in detective and crime novels. Peace's reporters have a further investigatory aspect, however. They operate both to reveal the answers that lie behind the novels' crimes, and also to interrogate the industry of which they are a part.

Close to contemporary with Peace, and also employing a journalist investigator as his protagonist, is Swedish author Stieg Larrson whose *Millennium Trilogy* (2005-7) follows the editor of the campaigning magazine *Millennium,* Mikael Blomkvist. In the first novel of the sequence, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (2005), Blomkvist is on sabbatical from his publication following a conviction for libel (the theme of press freedom is a recurring one in the series) and is drawn into the orbit of the wealthy Vagar family, ostensibly to write a biography of their paterfamilias. As dark secrets begin to emerge, Blomkvist recruits the aid of the inscrutable computer hacker and 'Girl' of the novels' titles, Lisbeth Salander. Larsson was himself a journalist and so able to draw on experience to recreate his reporter's world, where a combination of curiosity, plausible access and twenty-first century research techniques allow an opportunity to expose in fictional terms the hypocrisies which lie beneath Sweden's apparent social stability. Like Peace (their work has been compared

(Toynton; R. Brown)) Larsson uses his characters' enquiring impulses to reveal secrets, and their writing instincts to answer political questions about the society he describes.

In Peace's *1974*, Dunford's drive to complete the story and to overcome the bureaucratic and physical obstacles which present themselves is primary. Even when his life begins to disintegrate and he becomes a dishevelled and physically damaged wreck, his behaviour at times repellent, while his quest is incomplete, Dunford is still drawn forward. Bedraggled and covered in mud, a hand heavily bandaged, aware he has become involved in a revenge murder plot and despite being suspended from his job he is still after the story and its conclusion. This obsessive compulsion to organise events into a comprehensible order is illustrated when, during the investigation, it becomes clear that outside interests are impacting on Dunford's progress. He establishes an alternative press room at the Redbeck Motel. Here he constructs a storyboard of characters, maps and events, linking these with the bloody scribbles, crosses and arrows of 'a big red felt-tip pen' (110). Confronting himself with the details of the various interweaving cases, Dunford desperately attempts to fill in the blank spaces. The incident board with its pictures of victims and suspects, its timelines and linking arrows is a staple image of the television detective drama, especially of police procedurals such as *Prime Suspect* and *Unforgotten,* so that its inclusion in Peace's novel emphasises the identification of Dunford as detective. The motif is repeated in *1980* at the home of the similarly obsessed Assistant Chief Constable Hunter, where his portentously named portmanteau computer, *Anabasis*, and his own personal 'War Room', are devoted to his quest to make sense of a chaotic investigation into the crimes of the Yorkshire Ripper. Hunter is surrounded by the paraphernalia of organisation, 'Under the desk, across the floor, wires and cables, plugs and adapters, boxes of paper, stacks of magazines and newspapers, tins and jars and pots of pens and pencils and paperclips' (10). There are echoes here of Peace's own attempts to construct a version of truth, of history, and to achieve some form of coherence. In the final novel of the series *1983* (2002), the

solicitor John Piggott, who is conducting an enquiry into the entangled histories and crimes which constitute the bones of the *Quartet*'s plots, returns to the Redbeck and disinters Dunford's abandoned incident room. These closeted sites of investigation chime with Peace's descriptions of his own novel-writing methodology, and his own investigations into 'why these crimes happened in this place at this time to these people' (Hart, *Interview* 561). Dunford's frenzied physical construction of his *carte heuristique* demonstrates a need to impose some schema on events; his writing instinct is impossible to ignore and directs his actions. As Whitehead remarks with what sounds like some admiration, Dunford would make a great novelist (Peace, *1974* 92).

In the second novel of the sequence, *1977*, Peace, by own admission, seeks to rectify some of the aspects in its predecessor with which he felt unhappy, questioning his own culpability regarding some of the accusations levelled at crime fiction in general – a propensity for gore and voyeurism particularly – and that seemed problematic for the author, 'representing some of the things I don't like about crime writing, violent, voyeuristic, overdone' (qtd. in Shaw 64). In *1977* Peace moves away from imagining crimes and relocating other emblematic crimes of the period to West Yorkshire and instead utilises the real and awful crimes of Peter Sutcliffe, and the febrile climate that these engendered across the north of England for presiding atmospheric effect. Elements of the 'true crime' oeuvre become apparent as many of the descriptions of violence are no longer imagined but gleaned from police and newspaper reports, Peace emphasising the point that crime writing should disturb and that real crime is a nasty business.

While Peace's approach and emphasis might have shifted between the first and second volumes of the series, the centrality of the journalist-protagonist remains. Tormented, heavily self-medicating and haunted by various ghosts, Whitehead narrates alternate chapters in the novel, the others belonging to the voice of brutalised copper, Bob Fraser, as

the protracted hunt for the 'Ripper' continues. That both men are conducting investigations means that, despite their different professions, their roles are presented as effectively analogous, and their paths eventually collide at the disintegrating incident room which Dunford had established at the Redbeck Motel. Whitehead is mired in a vortex of crime and the reporting of crime; guilt-ridden and struggling to function, the very words he uses, and the tools of his trade, begin to exact a kind of torture on him as he types up the developing Ripper story, 'a pile of rusty little words, all linked up to make a chain of horror' (Peace, *1977* 33). He is aware that he is participating in a sordid exchange, that the stories he writes will generate sales, and he is beginning to hate himself for that; straining to endure the painful penance he is obliged to pay for misdemeanours past, 'You'd think I'd have missed it, the hustle/bustle/tussle etc of the office, the sounds and the smells, but I hated it, dreaded it' (25). An obsession with Sutcliffe's nineteenth century forerunner and other notable criminals, about whom he reads repeatedly (35), and the details of whose crimes seep into his dreams (61), suggest that he inhabits a universe bounded by crime stories and their mythologised protagonists; a universe that he has helped to create. In Peace's telling it is Whitehead who resurrects the loaded moniker of the brutal Victorian murderer: 'I held the words in my hand and felt my belly bleeding: Yorkshire 1977. . . staring at the words I'd written: Yesterday's news, tomorrow's headline: *The Yorkshire Ripper*' (70-71). Whitehead's part in the creation of myths is made abundantly apparent when, having filed a report on a police press conference following the murder of a young woman, '*No Woman Safe with Ripper Free, Say Police'* (190), he visits the Press Club to drink and hears versions of the tale beginning to circulate,

> The Press Club.
> Dead, but for George, Bet, and me.
> 'Some of the things they say he does,' Bet was saying.
> George, nodding along, 'Slices their tits off, right?'
> 'Takes out their wombs, this copper was saying.'
> 'Eats bits and all.'
> 'Another?'

'And keep them coming,' I said, sick. (192)

Whitehead has enjoyed a fruitful relationship with the Yorkshire constabulary and has served as a friendly conduit for the police perspective on various occasions. 'Finest journalist I ever met, that man' (30) the Assistant Chief Constable remarks, reflecting, accurately, it appears, a commonly close relationship between police and journalists. However, as events unfold, Whitehead begins to investigate with conviction, beyond previously accepted parameters and to expose the inadequacies, and illegalities of the force, aware that he has played a part in perpetuating their corrupt practice. Whitehead's conversion from the blithe, wise-cracking, archetypal hack we meet at the start of *1974,* to the persistent, if tortured, investigator of *1977* is a consequence of his confrontation with some stark realisations about how power operates in his city, and his part in that arrangement. During a meal with a senior police officer, Whitehead finds himself empathising with his companion's travails, but then 'remembered all we'd done, the cuts we'd taken, the lives stolen and lost, and knew I was right when I said it could only get worse' (65); his privileging as leading protagonist depends on his acknowledgement of the mythologising process that the press is capable of enacting upon the news, and upon crime news specifically. At the end of the novel Whitehead seeks a final redemption; succumbing to torment, the beer and whisky no longer able to vanquish the pain that his work has generated. He is finally, and literally, hollowed out, meeting a fate similar to that of Dunford and Gannon. Like his erstwhile colleagues before him, Whitehead's demise marks an erasure of history, the burial of stories untold. Capturing the whole truth is impossible within the frame of reference that journalism provides, and the elusive nature of reality is, it seems, what Peace wishes to emphasise. The completion of stories represents a means of escape for Peace's journalists – and later in the series for the police officer, Peter Hunter and the solicitor, John Piggott – but this is never attainable. The capricious nature of

journalism, the compromises involved, the impossibilities inherent in trying to apprehend slippery truths in the immediate moment are valuable complexities which Peace utilises in painting his version of an uncertain, antagonised world.

Despite the deficiencies in the field of journalism that Peace illustrates, he does also find value in the willingness of journalists to mount investigations, to try to hold power to account. At their worthy best they are presented as cogent figures of a properly functioning democracy, the persistent Gannon an example here. While such characterising may be contentious, experiences gained and insights achieved in the profession, often coupled with a certain insurrectionary inclination, have often served to furnish the authenticity of the novel, and actual recorded events have provided the framework around which novelists – and playwrights, poets and film and TV programme makers - have sought to build their own versions of the truth. The tensions and pressures that have shaped the form of the news media as we know it, particularly concerning commerce, competition and influence, have invited scrutiny from both official and artistic quarters. In his series of novels Peace demonstrates a recognition that the process of turning reality into news does not equate with veracity but has instead the obscuring effect of 'words falling upon the facts like soft snow' in the words of George Orwell (*Politics* 166). However, in utilising the news of the period alongside his fictional conceits Peace manages to heighten a sense of the actual and to amplify the pessimism in the version of history that he offers.

Journalism, Fiction and Mythologising Crime

Historically, fiction has incorporated news events, developing a narrative relationship which Peace continues to exploit. What distinguished novels as they emerged in the eighteenth century was the appearance of reality which they achieved. In 1722 Daniel Defoe, pioneering experimentalist in a writing environment in which the distinctions between forms were less than clear, published *Journal of a Plague Year*. While Defoe's

previous novels – *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and *Captain Singleton* (1720) - had drawn to an extent on real events, the effort made to retrieve the past in this imagined journal is considerable. Presented as a first-hand account of 'a great visitation' of bubonic plague upon Britain in the years 1664 and 1665, The text describes the horror and trauma of the disease's catastrophic effects on London, 'a desperate city on the verge of madness' (Ackroyd 207). Defoe combines a collection of 'observations or memorials' with orders of the Lord Mayor, parish records of deaths and burials and other official documents, his ambition, it seems, to produce 'work purporting to be documentary' (Lodge 203). Also, by employing recorded detail to build a convincing version of events, Defoe is attempting to recapture a moment of great significance and an attendant emotional atmosphere which presumably featured only indistinctly in his memory – he would have been just five or six years old during the years he describes. There is some obvious correspondence, then, with the methodology of David Peace, similarly 'writing at the interface of fact and fiction' (Shaw 63) and whose intention in his *Quartet* is to recreate the troubling atmosphere of the West Yorkshire of his childhood and to discover, 'what role . . . did the language or the landscape of Yorkshire in the 1970s play' (Peace in Hart, *Interview* 561) in the crimes he describes. For, while not a journalist, Peace's incorporation of actual events, particularly as these have been mediated through the newspapers and magazines of the time, mirrors Defoe's effort to present a 'truthful' account of historical events. Illuminated by Defoe's writing life are questions, also explored by Peace in his fictions, about the extent to which journalism has a responsibility to history and how this responsibility might conflict with the ambitions of the individual writer, and with the interests of the media business.

In his 2008 study, *Journalism and the Novel*, Doug Underwood traces the links and overlaps between the fields of journalism and literary fiction in the UK and US from the eighteenth to the twenty-first century. Underwood's text gives those writers who operated in both arenas 'due attention for their role in the development in the literary canon' (30) and to

connect the experience of those writers with the journalistic milieu of the present. What Underwood makes clear is that, like Defoe, many of the writers of the earliest novels in the eighteenth century were also operating in the world of journalism and negotiating dual ambitions to find 'truth' through reportage and to represent realities in fiction. The publishing environment of the day, when writers moved easily between projects journalistic, biographical and fictional – and when generic division between different types of writing was not clearly defined (33) - established a writing methodology which became an attractive template for many subsequent novelists whereby journalistic methods of research and expression interweave with imaginative flourish and invention. Similarly, the stylistic techniques and the storytelling compulsion to tell captivating tales - the provinces of the writer of fiction - also bled into the journalism of the day where they were to remain. This attempt to balance authenticity and readability, within both the novel and journalism is, then, a feature since the two forms began to show signs of distinctiveness and invigorates a tension around which kind of writing is best placed to reveal the world's truths. It is the inadequacies that are possible to find in both kinds of writing which invite the multiperspectivity and the layering of narratives with which Peace experiments in the *Quartet*. Here the news sets the tone; the combination of journalist figures, the construction of news stories and the voices from radio sets establishes an atmosphere of grim fatalism. There is an indictment of the creature that the press has become: pressurised into less than savoury behaviour, always inclined toward the dark, the bad and the unseemly and struggling to evince its noble characteristics. Peace questions the ability of this enveloping and constantly changing presence to act with honesty and in the interests of its readers and listeners as he proposes his counter-narrative of the 1970s and 1980s.

If the news generally has been a significant and inspiring force for novelists and playwrights, then crime news and crime reporting occupy particularly fecund terrain and

offer satisfactions of a peculiar kind for readers. Reports of crime have developed over time into fictions where a similarly satisfying function is performed – being led down a carefully structured route with clues to ponder along the way, to a reassuring conclusion, perhaps chief among them. The strong relationship between crime-reporting and crime-fiction is exploited by Peace as the *Quartet* continues; his choice and use of the crime genre allows the author to identify certain recorded events and the emotional resonances that accompany them with a wider societal malaise. In Peace's *Quartet* the ideological formations of crime stories are interrogated as Peace appears to ask whether it is morally right that crime stories offer reassurance when they should more properly disturb.

Navigating a pathway that provides appealing, if alarming, thrills but which also satisfies with a reestablishment of an existing order has been an ambition of purveyors of crime stories since the advent of moveable type-setting technology in the fifteenth century. The potential for spreading information quickly and to a wide public, soon gave rise to new versions of the crime story. These events are identified as constituting a starting point in the history of 'true crime' and 'sensationalist literature' by Joy Wiltenberg (2005), who recognises a function in their profile, beyond the merely reassuring. She begins her essay by illustrating the peculiarly 'emotional' impact that crime reporting has on contemporary audiences – the reporting acting 'semi-independently' of crime itself, accentuating the bloodier aspects of events and appealing to the crudest instincts of readers and so distorting perceptions of the occurrence of crime by making it appear more likely (Wiltenberg 1377). This aspect of media activity, where representations and discourses of crime, rather than crime itself, impact most forcefully, is particularly pertinent in discussions of David Peace in whose novels the atmosphere of paranoia and insecurity is pervasive – the threats from violent coppers and villains occupying Dunford in *1974*, while the Ripper casts an awful shadow, especially over women in *1977* and *1980*. The press's tendency toward the dramatic and sensational in its reporting creates a fear of crime

disproportionate to its likely occurrence (Barry Glassner's *The Culture of Fear* (1999) explores this phenomenon at length) and serves 'as a focus of social anxiety' (Hall et al. 157). It is just such an enveloping atmosphere, which so powerfully flavoured his formative years, that influences Peace's writing. As he himself puts it,

> But to be honest, I think the single biggest influence upon me was growing up when and where I did. I was ten years old and five miles away when Jayne McDonald was murdered in Leeds on 26 June 1977; from that day until the capture of the Yorkshire Ripper on Friday 2 January 1981, I was obsessed with trying to solve the case. I genuinely feared that my father could be the Ripper - the notion that he had to be 'somebody's husband, somebody's son', and perhaps somebody's father. I felt a tremendous relief when the so-called Ripper Tape was released and seemed to prove otherwise. But then came the seemingly never-ending and very real fear that my mother could be the next victim, that next black and white photo on the front of the *Sunday Mirror*. (Peace *Crimetime*, 2001)

Wiltenberg contends that crime reporting, especially that which involves murder, and the sensationalist literature that derives from it, is often derided both for its blatant commercial aim and for its appeal to the baser appetites of its audience. However, Wiltenberg proposes that 'sensationalism' has significant cultural potential and power, and its history is not merely that of non-rational hyperbole, but valuable territory for investigation precisely because it can arouse the kind of visceral emotions which Peace describes in such personally affecting terms above. Wiltenberg cites the recent expansion of historical investigation into crime and its effects and resonances following Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (1975) and is especially interested in Foucault's ideas about the role crime plays in the creation of the modern state and the early modern citizen. The public and private selves of this emerging figure were both shaped by the emergence of judicial procedures: inhibiting individual licence while paradoxically encouraging self-examination 'with increasing probes after motive and intent.' (Wiltenberg 1380) If crime, and the way that it is managed and framed (the aspects Foucault is interested in), plays a role in the shaping of societies, then the sensationalist reporting of crime reinforces,

Wiltenberg suggests, the establishment of dominant ideologies, because it is experienced by so many more. In Peace's *1977*, newspapers and broadcast media bear some responsibility, owing to the way the Ripper's crimes are reported, for a growing sense of unease and powerlessness among the local population and especially its women. Further evidence of a presiding patriarchal ideology which tends to characterise women in reductive terms and, mirroring actual events, is the change in investigative attitude brought about by the murder of a sixteen-year-old shop assistant (Rachel Johnson in Peace's novel, Jayne Macdonald the real-life victim). Both the police and the media become enlivened in a way which had not, it seems, been warranted by the killings of four prostitutes which had preceded. In Peace's version of events, Whitehead pens the article 'No Woman Safe With Ripper Free, Say Police' (190-1), and the idea that women (potential victims) rather than men (potential perpetrators) should increasingly circumscribe their behaviours begins to circulate.

The early examples of story that Wiltenberg includes (not coincidentally from fifteenth century Germany where Gutenberg's press began operating in 1439 and where the ground for crime journalism was laid), are typified by moral, often avowedly religious content, in so far as, 'Virtually all crime accounts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries connected their stories with an edifying Christian message. . . the basic religious framework of sin and punishment underlay all crime narratives' (1384-85). While she detects in later versions of the sensationalist tale – the 'hanging ballad' of seventeenth century England for example – a shift in emphasis from victim to criminal, an emotional response is still sought, and the Christian order reasserts itself. That this theme persists is recognised by Stephen Knight: in his seminal critical appraisal of the crime genre, *Form and Ideology in Crime Fiction* (1980), the author seeks to establish the social ideologies underlying several series of popular crime stories and, consequently, of the whole genre. Knight begins his survey by searching for the roots of crime fiction in the morally framed stories of the type later collected in *The*

Newgate Calendar[15]*.* Implied in these tales is the ability of the community, sinned against, to gather its forces and, without the need of outside specialists, to restore order as part of an organic process. This pre-detective solution, emphasised in the *Calendar,* which relies on a community with enough coherence to withstand crime can be contrasted with Peace's characterisation of late twentieth century Yorkshire where the fractured communities prove unable to resist the terrible crimes that occur there.

As Knight asserts, though, the stories in *The Newgate Calendar,* and the more cheaply produced and widespread pamphlets and broadsheets which appeared contemporaneously, represent an attempt by authority, religious and governmental, to reclaim control over crime which was fast growing as industrialisation and urbanisation became increasingly significant features of eighteenth-century Britain. Knight thus describes *The Newgate Calendar* as a 'strain ideology . . . an optimistic account selecting and ordering material to provide a consoling fable in the face of disturbing reality' (13). Also apparent, however, are contradictions which illustrate the 'interest ideology' of the dominant, propertied class who would also be the primary readers of the *Calendar*. Particularly relevant in this regard is the unequal application of the law to those who appear in the pages of the Calendar (presumably reflecting real life), which allows the rich or ennobled to literally get away with murder while the poor are punished without mercy (15).

The Christian credo which so heavily informs medieval and early modern crime stories is revisited and subverted in Peace's *Quartet* where the assumed moral authority of the church, most obviously represented in the black clad figure of the mysterious and ironically named Reverend Laws, 'a giant too big for this world or the next' (Peace, *1977* 103) and a

[15] Confessions of felons in the main and mediated through the agency of the titular prison's chaplain, 'the Ordinary' which are similar in form to present day 'true crime' stories, and to which are attributed an important role in the development of crime fiction (Knight 1980 9; Scaggs 13; Worthington 13).

brooding presence throughout the series, is questioned. In Peace's Yorkshire, a reversal of the perceived progress of the enlightenment appears to be underway and the reader is led on a descent into a superstitious medievalism, where crimes – many of them terrible – occur, but where the common interest in their resolution seems to have now diminished. Also pertinent, in the context of this study, is that among those narratives which have been proposed as fulfilling the cultural needs formerly served by religious discourse are the crime story and those provided by the news media. In Peace's conception the pacifications associated with the classic crime narrative and the authority of the news media are no more secure than the sanctuary once provided by the church. It is the traditional deployment of the crime story in hegemonic service which constitutes part of what Peace is challenging in his Q*uartet*: here the coalescing of the forces which manage (and organise) crime on the one hand, and report upon it on the other, share some of the responsibility for the harm it does. The contention that the perpetrators of many of society's crimes are themselves figures of authority is demonstrated in the way that Peace's police officers – in cahoots with newspapers and other interested parties – seek, in an approximation of a feudal cabal, to contain and organise crime within an area over which they have effectively imposed self-rule, to frame and prosecute convenient scapegoats and to apply the law without regard to due process.

As well as the coming of the 'novel', the eighteenth century also witnessed – in part due to the increasing prevalence of 'news' in pamphlet and broadside form – the emergence of the celebrity criminal (D. Campbell 9). This strand of crime reporting had some precedence in tales of 'noble bandits' of the Robin Hood variety whose provenance and significance, internationally and enthusiastically celebrated as they were, is explored by Eric Hobsbawm (*Bandits*) and whose anti-authoritarian social function is noted by Mandel (3). The public's fascination with these figures is reflected in the enormous attention paid to their appearances in court and, often, in the great crowds who followed their processions to the

scaffold. For Michel Foucault this is the kind of 'spectacle of punishment' that is indicative of a society's power relations (Foucault 36). The replacement of public displays of torture and execution by the encouragement of a focus on the details of trials and sentencing maintains structures of power but represents the arrival of an extensive 'disciplinary society' of 'generalised surveillance' (205) within which the prison (among other institutions of discipline – the school, the factory) plays a key role.

The macabre attraction of the notorious felon, however, persists into contemporary times. While very few would have celebrated the murderous career of the Yorkshire Ripper - himself the bearer of an appellation belonging to a mythologised criminal of former times - such was the aura that had developed around him, his appearances in court drew considerable crowds (Bilton 497; R. Jones 579). That the details of his life and crimes were marketable was demonstrated in the press's clamour for the exclusive rights to the stories of his wife, his family and friends: 'sending flowers and boxes of chocolates with business cards attached, as well as toys for the kids and offers of more money than . . . his family had ever seen (Burn, *Somebody's* 289).

The media's part in the mythologising of criminals, a popular process since medieval times, accelerated in the eighteenth century as the dissemination of stories in literature and song occurred with greater reach and rapidity as print and communication technology advanced. The lives and activities of the most famous – and infamous - of criminal figures were eagerly publicised; the safe-breaker and serial escapee Jack Sheppard and the highwayman Dick Turpin, among others, proving enormously popular. Approaches of writers to the criminal figures and their exploits in this period is particularly illustrative of the differences between the immediacy of journalism and other more time-considered literatures. While quick sales of pamphlets and tracts could be readily generated by emphasising and embellishing the most sensational aspects of villainous careers, the

potential to make a wider political case from the same base material was a more involved process. Literary responses to the capture and trial of the duplicitous 'thief-taker General', Jonathan Wild – from the multiple rapidly produced accounts to the hindsight tempered life story written by Henry Fielding (1743) a telling example here. Fielding used his text to draw a satirical parallel between Wild and the long-serving prime-minister Robert Walpole (Nokes in Fielding 13). In a similar way that Fielding satirises the media environment which glamorised crimes and the lives of criminals (Wild's 'greatness' is emphasised throughout Fielding's account - the word 'great' or 'greatness' appears in 20 of the 56 chapter headings - even as he goes about his dastardly business), and which helped to create a sense of lawlessness in the early eighteenth century where villainy could flourish, so Peace also holds the media to account. The late twentieth century media environment, Peace suggests, in which an obsession with personalities outweighs serious news, serves to distract the public, allowing the real criminals (including those charged with upholding the law) to operate without sanction. In *1977* Peace echoes Fielding's ambition, achieving the sense of a disintegrating society by prefacing chapters with excerpts from John Shark's radio phone-in show.

The inspiration for much of the crime fiction of the nineteenth century continued to come from stories of 'true crime', but the tendency now was for a considerable inflection of policing. *Memoires* (1828), for example, written by Eugene Francois Vidocq, poacher turned gamekeeper and first chief of the Parisian *Sureté,* were based on his own experiences. These tales provided something of a template for stories of detection by Edgar Allan Poe, who in turn would influence the various sleuths, amateur and professional, created by authors later in the century and into the next (Symons 41; Scaggs 19; M. Lee 370). Also emerging in Britain at this time were 'Newgate' novels, often incorporating elements of real crimes, which Heather Worthington (2010) identifies as a significant staging post in the development of British crime fiction. Elsewhere, too, true

crimes found their way into the literature of some of Europe's most significant writers, Balzac, Hugo, Dostoyevsky, RL Stevenson, among others, would plunder newspapers for their inspiration. Later in the century 'sensationalist' novels, often first published in serial form and with some degree of mystery at their core became enormously popular. Perhaps the most famous proponent of the form, Wilkie Collins, relied on real life crimes to help form his plots (Collins' *The Woman in White* (1860) was based on a real-life case and implicitly critiques the legal treatment of and lack of agency available to married women). Popular too, at this time, especially among readers and those with limited expendable income, were 'penny-dreadfuls'. These deliberately salacious, big-selling crime tales sold in single sheet form, and usually with gory illustration, told tales of the murkiest kind and were held to have a corrupting influence on the young and the working-class (Pittard 105-107). The outbreaks of public concern which have greeted innovations in cultural production, at the arrival of the first comic books or of moving pictures for example, are informed by a censorious, paternalism reflecting preoccupations with class structure and childrearing (Symons 52; Routledge 326). This, in the context of crime stories, means that mythology grows not only around crimes, but also around the containers in which the stories of those crimes circulate; a connection is made between the materiality of the texts 'from the Victorian "yellowbacks" to the twentieth century "pulps"' (Pittard 106) and the degraded nature of their content.

Sensationalist nineteenth century crime reporting reached its apotheosis with the Whitechapel murders of 1888 and the arrival into the public consciousness of *Jack the Ripper*. With unapologetic hypocrisy the Victorian Press, adopting many of the basic ingredients of fiction, wrung as much violence and sex out of the murders, while also using them as vehicles from which to deplore the perceived decline of societal morality. The Ripper case became its own fiction industry - by the time of publication in 2001, the author of the comprehensive *Jack the Ripper and the London Press,* L. Perry Curtis, could count

over 100 books, 20 films and several operas based on the case - its unsolved aspect as well as its barbarous nature making it ripe for fictional conjecture and imbuing the story with a 'stubborn vitality' (Lindemann 148).

The reporting of the 'Mysterious Monster of the East End', as the murderer was described by the *Illustrated Police News* (20 Oct 1888) replete with drawings of policemen and bloodhounds searching for clues alongside images of the unfortunate victims, speaks of a sensationalism shamelessly seeking a circulation boost. The revival of the sobriquet after the serial murders of women in Yorkshire and the north of England in the mid-1970s which attach to parts of Peace's *Quartet,* evidences the continuance of a vested interest in the amplification of certain stories. The morality of the inclination to invent similarities between the crimes committed in Victorian London and those in Yorkshire – like the equivalence drawn between the areas of the East End and of Chapeltown – where the consequences of crimes are less important than the potential of the 'mystery', is suspect. The news industry of the 1970s, as it did in the nineteenth century, reflects and provides for a readership more likely to be excited by the details of horrific murders than to deplore the societal conditions in which they occurred. The extended, serial nature of the murders would elevate them from what were, at first, stories which occupied a couple of paragraphs on the inside pages of the local papers (Nicole Ward Jouve notes the use of the term 'fish and chip shop jobs' (7) by the police) to the front pages of the nationals. It is this morally ambiguous atmosphere, in which certain crimes take on some of the aspects of entertainment, that inform Peace's novels. By utilising the stories as he does, however, the author inevitably adds a further layer of mythology to the events.

Almost simultaneous with the Whitechapel murders was the emergence of Sherlock Holmes (*A Study in Scarlet* first appeared in Beeton's Christmas Annual in 1887). The arrival of Holmes helped to establish the format of a classical detective story which persisted into

the ‘golden age’ of the 1920s and 30s and which persuaded some writers of the need to formulate lists of rules which proscribed certain behaviours and practices in writers and their sleuths. The emphasis on stringent formulaic principles meant that the work of Agatha Christie, Dorothy L Sayers and others was read as puzzling entertainment rather than as ‘literature’, and meant that, at the time of its heyday, the ‘cosy’ British detective novel was deemed unworthy of serious consideration. The typical novels in this genre certainly offered something like a removal from real-life (a valuable commodity at a time of considerable international tension) and entry into a carefully confined fantasy universe. The neat structures which lead toward the inevitable restoration of order make them ideally suitable for radio, film and television adaptation. The legacy of these writers and their creations is visible in the eccentric or maverick police detectives who would follow; for example, the idiosyncratic literary and artistic preoccupations of Colin Dexter’s opera-loving Inspector Morse, or PD James’ poet-policeman Detective Chief Inspector Adam Dalgliesh. Even when the topographical context becomes grittier, as in William McIlvanney’s Glasgow set Laidlaw series or the Edinburgh of Ian Rankin’s Rebus, the leading character retains some eccentric hinterland. The criminals tend toward the mythic and the solvers of crimes are afforded special intuitive powers. Peace’s crime novels represent a conscious departure from this many-leaved branch of crime fiction both in terms of characterisation and neat conclusions and his reengagement with news/current affairs are evidence of this. Stylistically, it is easier to find his antecedents among the British noir writers, Derek Raymond, Gerald Kersh and Ted Lewis, and in the creators of the tough-guy detective fiction that had first emerged in the United States.

The ‘hard-boiled’ fiction that flourished in the US of the 1920s and 30s drew on the precepts of a decidedly American realism which had developed in the nineteenth century. Many of the leading writers in this tradition, including James M. Cain and David Goodis, had served apprenticeships in the newspaper industry or trained as journalists and brought

to their writing a cynicism about ideas of American progress. Shelley Fisher-Fishkin, in an exploration of the 'continuities and discontinuities' between journalism and fiction (1985), identifies a particularly American pathway for poets and authors. She detects in these writers a common 'urge to immersion' (5) in the experiential world of journalism, as symptomatic of the individuality so acclaimed in the US, and a common passage across a vital training ground prior to forays into the imaginative expanses of poetry and fiction. The societal and economic conditions that they witnessed – and sometimes experienced – especially in America's rapidly expanding cities, encouraged writers to describe in uncompromising detail the darkest undersides of human existence. The novels of the realists of the early twentieth century - Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* (1904) or Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy* (1925) for example - often constitute investigations into the systemic inequities and corrupt practices of corporate and bureaucratic America and would invigorate the writers of detective and mystery fiction for the popular pulp magazines. Sometimes claimed as a radical departure from the classical British influenced crime stories which had preceded them, the fictions of Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler and Erle Stanley Gardner, among others, in fact remain largely conservative ideologically. Ernest Mandel views the development less as radical break and more as a sign of generic maturity (83), as the scope of the detective novel widens beyond the mere fact of a crime committed and its subsequent investigation, to include the social and political context within which the events occur. However, in terms of narrative style and of perspectives offered the short stories and novels of these writers certainly signal 'an abrupt shift from the artificial gentility of the classic detective story to the creation of a fictional world of social corruption and 'real' crime' (Scaggs 57). Whether the literary aspirations to achieve realism, as Chandler put it, to give 'murder back to the kind of people who do it for a reason, not just to provide a corpse,' (Chandler, *Papers* 42), and objectivity, encapsulated in the cool, detached figure of its shamus protagonists, are satisfied in these fictions, is also

debatable. The solitary, independent detective who incorporates elements of the crusading knight and the cowboy hero of the western frontier, however, has undeniable appeal and is a character type also recognisable in the figure of the investigative reporter. While the claims of hard-boiled fiction to realism are contentious, these fictions do provide the template for a widely adopted stylistic approach where the vernacular language of the streets with all the racism, homophobia and misogyny which is found there, is a presiding feature.

The departure from the logical and methodical which typifies the approach of Christie's Poirot for example, into the morally ambiguous, anti-heroic and sometimes violent behaviours allows greater scope for operations beyond the closed setting of the country-house and into the anarchy of the urban. In *1974* Peace's Dunford displays many of the characteristics we associate with the hard-boiled detective, his single-mindedness, and his casual attitude to the feelings of women in particular. Whitehead in *1977* – when free from his fever dreams – also follows in these footsteps. During a scene in which Whitehead has crossed the Pennines to confirm a link between murdered women and their appearances in a pornographic magazine, he persuades an employee of MJM publishing to furnish him with a list of models. His approach, combining a little charming patter and a little bribery is very similar to the methods employed by Chandler's Marlowe, who exacts information from women with the same lack of compunction.

A latter-day exponent of the hard-boiled style is James Ellroy whose revisiting of the southern California of the 1940s and 50s in his LA Quartet, is a particular influence on Peace, who has been fulsome in his praise for the American, '*White Jazz* is possibly the best crime novel ever written, that is the book I'm trying to beat, I want to write a better book than *White Jazz*, with that book he changed crime fiction forever . . . I wanted to take that and to go on further – in *1974* it's quite obvious he was a big influence on me' (qtd. in

Shaw 66). *White Jazz* (1992) is the final novel in Ellroy's series and the tropes he employs there, and in the previous novels - bent cops operating in the service of crooks and political interests amid a rapidly changing geographical landscape - are echoed in Peace's *Quartet*. Perhaps, what differentiates the respective projects is the trajectories of the geographies about which they write, for while Los Angeles is in Ellroy's novels part of a region gaining in wealth and significance to a point where it can rival the political centres of America's east coast, Peace's Yorkshire appears to be in danger of becoming ever more marginal. The ambition to articulate an alternative version of history is shared by the authors and those decisions which were made by those in authority, and the people affected by those decisions, are excavated by both for re-examination. Ellroy centres his action on America's myth-making capital as the country establishes itself as the world's pre-eminent superpower and moral authority, in the face of ideological challenges from without as well as from its own inherent contradictions. The search here is for, in Ellroy's terms, a 'symbolic truth' (Walker 192) and in the *LA Quartet* and the *American History Trilogy* (1995 - 2009) which followed, he builds fictions around actual events and people, questioning the way that the narrativization of history has come to legitimise the authority of the state.

Ellroy's fascination with the city of his birth and his upbringing inform the recreation of his hometown using actual events such as the anti-Mexican 'Zoot Suit' riots of 1943 and the geographical upheaval which accompanied the construction of the Dodgers' Stadium in the late 1950s - both events characterised by a presiding racism - as the context for his crime/detective stories. Fittingly for LA, disguise and disfigurement are presiding themes. Ellroy, disdainful of much hard-boiled fiction and of Chandler in particular, is not interested in the fantasy white knight, however flawed, who will bring salvation, but rather in the 'bad white guys who do bad things in the name of authority' (Helmore). As is the case for Peace, journalists and other appearances of the media make significant contributions to Ellroy's novels; gossip magazines, their lurid headlines and the barely concealed insinuations about

the predilections of celebrities figure large, as too do unscrupulous hacks – Bevo Means in *The Black Dahlia* and Sid Hudgens in *LA Confidential* - and headlines and articles provide expository detail and background atmosphere throughout the series. The creation of history takes place, we understand, in a corrupted atmosphere where contaminated sources affect the transmission of events and narratives are determined by the powerful. The noir styling which Ellroy employs emphasises how light and shadow reveal and conceal truths and secrets, and this technique proves suitable for Peace too, as does the long historical survey which a Quartet allows. For both authors, the juxtaposition of real events and people, with the murky carryings-on of imagined authority figures, serves to undermine our notions of conclusive truth. Towards the end of *1977* there is a moment when it seems that Whitehead (in possession of incriminating material) might potentially explode the activities of the West Yorkshire Force. Instead, in an act which signals a surrender to the 'bad men who do bad things', he hands his evidence over to Detective Inspector Bob Craven, an officer who we know is up to his neck in illicit affairs,

> He stepped forward, out of the shadow of the stall, and he put a hand on my shoulder.
> 'You did the right thing, Jack. Bringing this to me.'
> 'I thought so.'
> 'You going to print anything?'
> 'Not if you don't want me to.'
> 'I don't want you to.' (Peace, *1977* 317)

While ideologically configured private-eye characters reflected political sensibilities of both the left and right, and their adventures continued to be written, two further developments in the US have had significant influence on Peace's *Quartet*: the police procedural and the true crime novel. The procedural which became increasingly popular in the second half of the twentieth century was pioneered in the US by Ed McBain (pseudonym of Evan Hunter) and his 87th Precinct novels in which the focus is solely on the characters who populate a police station and their attempts to deal with a crime (or crimes). McBain researched heavily and drew on time spent among New York cops to create the apparent veracity in

his fictional work. Elements of the procedural are introduced into Peace's novels (though in Peace's conception, the police force is largely corrupted, the station becoming a site of deceit and terror rather than one of sanctuary), in *1977,* and particularly in *1980* as the hunt for the Ripper goes on. The orderly movement towards a solution is notably absent in Peace's versions and like the journalist investigators before them, the efforts of Peace's policemen are confounded by unseen forces.

Almost contemporaneous with the arrival of the police procedural as pre-eminent crime story came Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood* (1966) which straddled the divide between fiction and journalism; employing many of the traditional techniques of fiction writing in an attempt to create the authentic representation of a horrific crime. A popular best-seller, *In Cold Blood* drew praise for its implicit questioning of some of the shibboleths of post-war American society, notions of justice and decency, the rule of law, and the validity of the American Dream. While there is evidence of embellishment as well as the use of conveniently introduced narrative devices – fictional characters introduced to provide expository detail for example – it remains a signal work for both 'New Journalism' and 'True Crime'. It is possible within *In Cold Blood* to detect echoes of crime writing of previous centuries – the second half of the book concerns the motivations and back-stories of the guilty parties and is akin in this way to the tales of the *Newgate Calendar* – but its novelties and ambition to explore the nexus of art and truth encouraged others with ambition to write beyond the merely sensational. While many failures followed, artistically if not necessarily in terms of sales, occasionally examples of some merit also appeared – Vincent Bugliosi and Curt Gentry's *Helter Skelter* (1974), Norman Mailer's *The Executioner's Song* (1979) and John Berendt's *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* (1994) among these.

In the UK, the influence of American writers – Capote and Mailer particularly - was strongly felt by Gordon Burn (Lea 95; Addley). Burn's first book *Somebody's Husband, Somebody's Son* tells the story of Peter Sutcliffe (the man identified as the 'Yorkshire Ripper') and adopts many of the techniques employed by his American predecessors, offering no judgement on his subject 'just the events, the family life, anecdotes that may or may not be pertinent, the pubs and their atmosphere' (Highsmith 20). The forensic detail of his work – the testimony of victims, the minutiae of attacks – find their way into David Peace's *Quartet*, and into *1980* where parts of the 'transmissions' which precede chapters are lifted directly from the testimonies provided by Burn. This reflects both Peace's admiration for Burn's writing (Peace *Hero*; Collings) and a determination to bring to his texts a flavour of the actual, the same essence sought by Capote and Mailer.

Conclusion

Some of the criticism that is aimed at Burn, at Capote and Mailer, and at the brand of new journalism that they practised, is that the detached, unemotional accounts of crimes they offer excuses the necessity to take a moral position and to apportion responsibility. The defence is made that after the presentation of the story, it is up to the reader to make judgements. While some of the approach taken by the new journalists is incorporated in the *Quartet* – the detailing of crimes and of their investigations in particular – Peace's intention is less specific. The research into the backgrounds of Sutcliffe and Gilmore, of Hickock and Smith, to find possible explanations for the damaged psychologies that developed there, is not broad enough in Peace's purview. The implication in the *Quartet* is that sources of culpability are widespread, as Maurice Jobson tells John Piggott in the closing stages of the series, 'We're all guilty, John' (Peace, *1983* 390). Uncomfortably, this includes the readers of the *Quartet* who are both disturbed by events and made complicit by the invocation of 'the dynamics and problematics of mass mediation' (Simpson 251). Peace's infusion of his novels with a sense of how the news operates - the activities of

journalists which drive the narratives in the first two novels, the doom-laden media noise we hear as the series continues – signals an indictment of the media business for the ways in which news of crime is framed: its production and its consumption both scrutinised. Through the development of a symbiotic intimacy, feeding and feeding off the anxieties of readers, listeners, and viewers, the media industry encourages a retreat into positions where comfort in the familiar is reached. The patterns of language apparent in the texts, in the headline writing and mythmaking, serve to confirm pre-existing views rather than to challenge orthodoxy.

The news media may claim the responsibilities of the fourth estate and of holding power to account, but as represented in the *Quartet* it will often resort to the sensational appeal to its audience's basest instincts, becoming 'increasingly obsessed with crime' (Shaw 73) and liable to 'traumatic exaggeration and disaster rhetoric' (Brown 89). The industry's commercial concerns are shown to trump its wider responsibilities as Peace's West Riding heads for the societal ruptures on the horizon. Saliently, the journalist characters in Peace's novels – stereotypically amoral for much of their respective depictions - find the bounds of their employment inconducive to the fullest investigatory pursuit. If the news producers' faults are exposed, then so too does the audience become answerable to for encouraging the production of mediated crime as a form of entertainment. The implication, Peace's fictions suggest, as news becomes increasingly difficult to escape, portals to its content ever more in our company, is a society characterised by growing anxiety and paranoia, but also ever more enthralled by stories of crime. The part played in this development by those who write about crime – for the newspapers, as fictions or otherwise – and the responsibilities that they can reasonably be charged with, is a matter that will occupy some of the next chapter.

Chapter 4 - Morality and the Media in the *Quartet*

As well as interrogating historical and geographical contexts, Peace's *Quartet* can also be understood to constitute a moral critique of the consequences of the UK's late twentieth century turn to the political right; the author using the crime and corruption that plays out in the novels to echo what he perceives to be a damaging societal shift which witnessed the ethos of collective responsibility replaced by the promotion of individualism and the primacy of the market. This chapter considers the author's dismay at the turn away from the cooperative imperative, at the imperilling of communal institutions and the perceived moral implications of these trends is considered. The whole project is, according to Gene Gregorits, 'intensely moralistic', while for Jarred Keyes Peace's crime writing is 'a deeply ethical practice' (21) and becomes more so as the political movement intensifies. In the final novel in the series, *1983*, the apparent achievement of neoliberal hegemony is obliquely charted, centring in Peace's imagination on Margaret Thatcher's re-election in the June of the title year. This event has come to be seen by the author 'as one of the great turning points in post-war British history' (Brown). The media clamour and election campaign rhetoric that Peace presents, its suitably disconcerting accompaniment.

The fracture and division that Peace associates with the developing political situation is apparent in the structure of the text which emphasises the alienating effects of the evolving New Right project. A trio of troubled narrators relay events within competing timeframes and, as elsewhere in the *Quartet,* intrusions of many kinds disturb the novel's narrative, constructing a bricolage effect that reflects the author's attitude to events:

> I wanted to show the fragmentary, broken sense of that time and place; that the narratives that had held the people together - through communities created by shared work, trade unions, and church, for example - were being broken down by industrial decline, recession, and the crimes of the Yorkshire Ripper and Margaret Thatcher and her kind. Therefore, the language of the texts and their narratives would be "smashed," broken and fragmentary. (Peace qtd. in M. Brown)

Peace's 'smashed' linguistic and formal arrangements – short, punched sentences, repeated single word interjections, overlapping perspectives and timelines of the narrators, inconclusive endings – parallel the upheavals of the time and suggest engagement with the kind of experimentation associated with postmodernism. The extent to which these techniques comprise a valid strategy for mounting societal critique and to adequately reflect the author's sense of 'the moral crisis of the contemporary world' (R. Brown 84) is considered here.

The anger that becomes apparent in the final novel of the *Quartet* contrasts with more politically muted fictions written at the time or, subsequently, about it, and raises moral issues with greater urgency. Peace's choice of a version of the crime narrative - inherently critical and investigatory but also replete with violence - as a vehicle for his ambitions raises questions about the responsibilities and obligations of writers in all fields. Peace's attempts to both examine and to respond to these duties, return us to matters which occupied the theorists and critics who appeared in the introduction to this thesis.

Amidst the socio-political upheaval he describes, a media landscape is presented where sections of the press and of broadcasting organisations are seen to operate with questionable moral intention. The matter of whether the ethical principles designed to guide media bodies retain viability and can promote the communication of 'truths' in a politically partial and increasingly commercial context, is a key concern. Associated with the positioning of broad sections of the media in the early years of Thatcherism, is Peace's juxtaposition of media and religious presences in the text. Operating in the shadow of a political ideology articulated partly on moral grounds, in which Christianity was a central pillar in its promotion of 'old-fashioned' values, the sense is that society's moral conduct is

territory over which both church and the media, however erroneously, stake competing claims.

Literary Morality in *1983*

In *1983* Peace disinters for examination much of what has preceded in the *Quartet*, and some of the unresolved issues, especially those from the series' first novel, are brought to conclusion. In fact, the author reaches back into the prehistory of the *Quartet* to reveal the roots of the criminal events which have provided the series' narrative threads. Peace's confrontation with the emerging political dispensation is apparent in the detachment of his chosen narrators, their operations conducted outside of orthodox structures, the fragmentary nature of their testimonies a response to the disintegrative aspect of postmodernity.

The three narrators inhabit three separate though occasionally intersecting timelines as they attempt to reconcile themselves with the iniquities of the past. In turns the reader accompanies the protagonists, each of whom has varying associations with the crimes and characters that have populated the series thus far. First is Maurice Jobson, a long-serving detective in the Yorkshire police forces' various incarnations, who looks back on a career heavily infected by corruption. With growing remorse, Jobson recognises that the failure to pursue criminals and the decisions taken to protect vested interests in the past, has come to extract telling punishments on the innocent; most obvious among these is the missing schoolgirl Hazel Atkins, the news of whose disappearance begins the novel. Haunted by awful crimes, some of which he has himself perpetrated, Jobson seeks a pathway out of the torment that is his companion. Readers have met the officer previously and while his corrupt practice is hinted at in *1977,* where his interventions obstruct the investigations of Bob Fraser (Peace, *1977* 227), the full extent of his villainous past is only revealed in *1983*. The moral conversion that Jobson undergoes following the awakening of some sense of

probity, follows the pattern established by Eddie Dunford in *1974* and Jack Whitehead in *1977*. The second narrator is John Piggott, a solicitor leading a somewhat chaotic life who becomes, when persuaded into action after being presented with evidence of judicial wrongdoing and becoming enraged by national political proceedings, a committed investigator. He too reaches back in time in a search for truths concealed. In the process he uncovers the uncomfortable proximity of his own personal history to the crimes he unearths and is transported back to a painful past by triggers seemingly innocuous. Ultimately the harrowing memories prove uncontainable. He is pursued to the end by news of Thatcher's approaching victory, signal of a parallel demise, the societal wrong turn mirroring Piggott's personal collapse. Finally we accompany BJ, erstwhile rent boy, thief, and key witness to events, who, perhaps above anyone, understands the relationships which connect the *Quartet*'s various narrative strands. He will be compelled, eventually, to exorcise his childhood horrors through murderous revenge.

This conflicted triumvirate represent the moral centres of the novel – each in versions of the model represented by the traditional detective, amateur or hard-boiled – seeking to redeem or absolve sins of the past and the restoration of 'society to a state of innocence' (Black 82). It is apparent, though, that morality here is dependent on context. None of the three are living lives unblemished, yet each undertakes to make amends. Access to the interiority and nagging thoughts of these protagonists, as they take turns to narrate the novel's chapters, highlights the intensification of pressures placed upon the individual in an increasingly complex society. They conduct solitary struggles, removed from wider support networks, and are symbolic in this sense of the reorientation of political direction towards individualism. This is apparent in the way that the characters' points of view are presented. Jobson maintains the authoritative first person even as his reliability is undermined by the out of control behaviours he exhibits; Piggott is removed by a second person perspective, as if watching rather than truly participating, a passivity noticed by Jarred Keyes and which,

'highlights a diminished sense of individual agency' (Keyes 25), signifying a lack of power which will be borne out by events; BJ tells his story by describing himself almost entirely in the third person, a reflection of a detachment or 'dissociation' from the self, not uncommon among survivors of abuse (Vonderlin et al.; Quiñones). It is only after his trepanning at the hands of the Reverend Laws (345), which appears to bring him some sort of clarity, that he begins to describe himself in the first-person. Initially this seems to be a positive development as BJ is seized by an energy not apparent until this point. However, his awakening does not represent a reengagement, but leads instead to the kind of last-ditch shoot-out associated with extreme alienation.

The picture that Peace paints of a society experiencing a growing fragmentation is reflected in the disintegration of his characters, subject as they are to breakdowns, drunkenness, and hallucinations. The deterioration of the journalist Jack Whitehead which began in *1977* is the most obvious example, but there are other examples. In *1983* the leading characters are each on pathways of descent, their parlous states of mind evidenced in the repetitive rhythms which echo in their interiors. Jobson, recent witness to various horrors, finds himself in the dark flat of his dead girlfriend:

> I wake in the dark, beneath her shadows –
> '*We have her in the tree* –'
> Tapping against the pane.
> She's lying on her side, naked –
> Branches tapping against the pane.
> I'm lying on my back in my underpants and socks –
> The branches tapping against the pane.
> Lying on my back in my underpants and socks, terrible laments and their dreadful elegies inside my head –
> Listening to the branches tapping against the pane.
> I'm lying on my back in my underpants and socks, terrible laments and their dreadful elegies inside my head, listening to the branches tapping against the pane. (331-2)

As John Piggott lives his final moments, he is accompanied by the words of Francis of Assisi being quoted by Thatcher. He too is subjected to a repetitive pattern, that springs from his mind and his machines,

You switch on the radio. The TV too –
The Hate:
'Where there is discord may we bring harmony –
The Hate:
Where there is error, may we bring truth –
The Hate:
Where there is doubt, may we bring faith –
The Hate:
Where there is despair, may we bring hope.' (404)

BJ, whose world we learn from the novel's prologue has been one characterised by trauma and abuse from an early age, cannot escape the wretchedness of his existence. Hiding in a shed from pursuing coppers the repetition of his thoughts stresses his bleak situation:

> BJ wait –
> Wait for it to get dark –
> But it's always dark.
> BJ sit and wait in dark, endless dark, and BJ cry –
> Cry –
> Cry for cuts on hands and cuts on legs, cuts on face and cuts in hair –
> For mud on trousers and mud on shoes, on jacket and on shirt -
> For mess –
> For fucking mess BJ in – (147)

The fragmentary style which characterises the thought processes of the narrators has been described as a 'pulp-modernist' variant (Lockwood, *When* 50)[16], a literature which turns to the past to illuminate the 'dark workshop' within which the present was forged. The novel, though, also incorporates a response to the unfixed arrangements which neoliberalism encourages and is appropriate to the novel's period setting: it is consistent with what David

[16] Phil Redpath uses the term 'neo-modernist' (35) to describe Peace's approach as he discusses the author's formal experimentation. Both Lockwood and Redpath suggest Peace's fiction leans more toward realism than postmodernism.

Harvey identifies as a signature 'flexibility' (Harvey, *Neoliberalism* 23), and its domination 'by fiction, fantasy, the immaterial . . . fictitious capital, images, ephemerality, chance' (Harvey, *Postmodern* 339). The incorporation of experiment allows Peace to interrogate various themes in which it is possible to detect the concerns of postmodernism – the intensification of the mediatisation of politics, the mythologising of the personality (the figure of Thatcher, for example, appearing as a looming presence) among these. There is also, though, the sense that the author is unwilling to adopt a wholly postmodern approach as suitable for his project. The blurring to indistinction of any notion of concrete reality or definitive truth that some interpretations of postmodernism imply, serves to absolve the powerful of responsibility for the society that they oversee - absolution which Peace will not grant.

The notion of truth as an organising principle of morality proposed by philosophers of the Enlightenment as part of the rationalising endeavour of that movement shifts the locus of morality away from religious ministration and toward an individual's self-realisation and reasoning. The centrality of truth to ideas of the rational is encapsulated in Immanuel Kant*'s* many invocations against lying and his absolute certainty in the importance of truth-telling (Carson; Varden). There is significant correspondence in these stances with the theory which underlies his theses on morality - the 'categorical imperative' (Kant 28). This being to 'act according to maxims that can at the same time have as their object themselves as universal laws of nature', which is the 'formula of absolutely good will.' (49). Kant's formulation places the responsibility for morality on the autonomy of the individual and the exercising of their free will in the best interests of others; the principle that one should 'act in such a way as to treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of anyone else, always as an end and never merely as a means.' (41)

The focus on the rationalising potential of the individual (and the capacity of rational approaches more generally) that was encouraged by the Enlightenment, and which evolved in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, is also apparent in the simultaneous arrival of the fictional detective. Stephen Knight explains how these developments are linked, analysing the movement in the way that crimes were framed before and after the industrial and intellectual shifts of the period. Transgressions of the premodern age as discussed in Chapter 3 were considered departures from the 'common morality' and were made by criminals offending against an 'organic model of society' (Knight, *Form* 11). These ideologically presented misdeeds tended to be addressed from within the community in which they occurred; the justice reportedly delivered was 'based on ideologies . . . beliefs that we are all Christian at heart and that our society is integral and at root a single healthy body' (13). Following the early upheavals of the industrial revolution, though, as the business of government became more bureaucratic, populations more likely to be concentrated in urban centres, and with rates of crime and its reporting on the rise, solutions to crimes were delivered more often by outside agents operating on behalf of a broader polity. The task of these agents – the police officer or detective - was the restoration of an order constructed along rational lines. The reassuring belief promoted through these endeavours was that 'the application of the power of reason would lead to truth, and this search for truth was integral to the improvement of human life' (Scaggs 18).

The practice of these emerging officers of the law - the pursuit of the systematic explanation of events – would make its way into the ratiocinative adventures of the fictional detective; the logic underpinning the traditional detective story making it for some critics the rational genre without parallel, 'the essential metaphor for order' (Holquist 141), the 'narrative of narratives' (Brooks 25), its conventional structure determining a conclusion shaped by the achievement of knowledge. These closure-oriented fictions have

their equivalence both in the Enlightenment inclination to formalise morality absolutely and, relatedly, to the quest for solutions in narratives of all kinds.

In Peace's novel what comes to be recorded as truth will be decided by those with the greatest resources, and that outcome, by implication, will apply elsewhere also. The effects of this development form part of Jean Francois Lyotard's response to the cultural and political insecurities of the late twentieth century (1979). Writing largely in the context of scientific discovery and technological transformation, the treatise considers the condition of knowledge, its status as 'the principal force of production over the last few decades' and the 'noticeable effect on the composition of the work force' in the most developed countries (5). Lyotard argues that trusted knowledge comes not, as it traditionally had, from lengthy, sustained discussion, university discovery and peer review which would lead toward human emancipation through its dissemination, or out of which a narrative of 'legitimation' could be constructed. In the new post-industrial era pragmatic and commercially useful knowledge is prioritised and accorded the greatest value, meaning that powerful, wealthy actors can control what is publicly understood. The result is what Fredric Jameson describes as a 'private monopoly of information' (Jameson in Lyotard xx), where the commodification of knowledge changes its structure, and interested parties influence – or even decide upon – what becomes established as true. Media platforms (with their own advantages at stake) will serve as key partners in the generation of consent. The jeopardising of the truth that is perpetrated through this process has a disaggregating and undemocratic effect that is felt most severely by the least powerful.

The contingent nature of truth and its figuring as a determinant of power is a feature of Peace's novel. At the site where Don Foster is building John Dawson's new swan-shaped home, Jobson is presented with some alternative facts which provide an alibi for a suspected child-murderer at that moment being held in custody. Jobson is forced to accept

the statement as accurate because of the power of the supplier of information despite knowing it to be 'bollocks' (Peace, *1983* 135). Elsewhere, in a moment which follows the demise in custody of one of his clients, Piggott finds himself in conversation with Jobson and questions the validity and value of the 'internal police inquiry' (207) which will investigate the death. The manipulation of history and the convenient incompleteness of official narratives apparent to Piggott, echoes those who have questioned that which survives as history – Walter Benjamin among these.

The manipulation of the truth is not new of course but is achieved via increasingly sophisticated means. The management of information, particularly as the computerisation of society begins to take effect, alarms Lyotard who foresees a situation where technology ('a game pertaining not to the true, the just, or the beautiful . . . but to efficiency (Lyotard 44)) falls under the control of the market system and the corporate entities which dominate it. Access to knowledge in these circumstances becoming a matter of commercial exchange:

> The relationship of the suppliers and users of knowledge to the knowledge they supply and use is now tending, and will increasingly tend, to assume the form already taken by the relationship of commodity producers and consumers. (Lyotard 5)

More hopefully, he can also envision widespread communications technology acting as a benevolent disseminator of information and knowledge via 'free access to the memory and data banks' which would encourage 'a politics that would respect both the desire for justice and the desire for the unknown.' (Lyotard 67) This dual anticipation reiterates the debate between Adorno and Benjamin about mass-produced cultural product which took place in the 1930s. The democratic possibilities of the new age can be realised, Lyotard believes, if rules of the institution (government, the church, the school) which limit the contributions permitted, can be replaced by those of the conversational where, 'the

interlocutors use any available ammunition . . . questions, requests, assertions, and narratives are launched pell-mell into battle. The war is not without rules, but the rules allow and encourage the greatest possible flexibility of utterance.' (17) The shift that Lyotard foresees, toward small, localised narratives – *petit récits* - has democratic potential because of the challenge presented to the totalising ambition of the grand narratives of reason and science which were likely to have been shaped by social, cultural, and political hierarchies.

The commodification of truth and knowledge and co-option by suspect forces that is identified as a possibility in Lyotard's appraisal, is realised in Peace's *Quartet*. In *1983,* Piggott is frustrated by the way that the construction of narrative has impacted on the marginalised. As the circumstances that led to the conviction of Michael Myshkin are gradually revealed to the solicitor, he confronts Myshkin's erstwhile legal representative, Clive McGuinness. McGuiness insists that he followed procedure and was willing to accept that Myshkin's confession was genuine. Piggott is unimpressed:

'Except Michael tells me that he didn't do it. That his confession was gained under duress. That he told you this. But Michael says you advised him to stick to the confession. That you would help him. That he would only stay in prison for a short time.' (258)

'The lies, the greed and the guilt' (259) that Piggott discovers, and that have been transformed into convenient truths, bears out Lyotard's gloomier predictions. The heralded demise of great narratives seems to invite the arrival of competing stories, but these emerge onto an unlevel playing field, advantageous to those with the most powerful voices.

The adequacy of postmodernist literature to mount a socio-political critique, as Peace attempts across the *Quartet*, has been gauged with varying degrees of enthusiasm. Fredric Jameson's comprehensive appraisal of the cultural turn (1992) details the considerable

societal surrender to the forces of commercialism. While there is acceptance (and even celebration in places) of the fruits of the new aesthetic, there is also concern at the diminishing of culture's capacity to adequately represent 'the world space of multinational capital' which is 'neutralised by our spatial as well as our social confusion' (54). Evidence of the confused disposition is apparent in the incorporation of degraded forms into the cultural realm of the seriously considered. Jameson finds his proof in many places, in television, film and advertising but in literature too:

> The postmodernisms (sic) have in fact been fascinated precisely by this whole 'degraded' landscape of schlock and kitsch . . . of so-called paraliterature, with its airport paperback categories of the gothic and the romance, the popular biography, the murder mystery, the science fiction or fantasy novel: materials they no longer merely 'quote' as a Joyce or a Mahler might have done, but incorporate into their substance. (Jameson *Postmodernism* 2-3)

In this analysis there is little distance between the socio-historic period of post-modernity and the cultural response to that moment - post-modernism; the latter serving for Jameson, not as a separate entity, but as a reinforcing factor of the former, the appropriation and deployment of cultural artefacts of the past, a powerful reflection of a politically limited present; 'the logic of the simulacrum' which transforms relationships with the past through 'visual images, stereotypes, or texts, effectively abolishes any practical sense of the future' (46). Among the cultural artefacts of the new period, Jameson finds the novel the least admirable: 'the weakest of the newer cultural areas' (298) and compares it unfavourably to film and video of the age. Postmodern fiction is assessed as suffering from a lack of substance – too concerned with style, with theatrics – that confers a 'depthlessness' (9). It is this aspect which Jameson considers an unfortunate feature of many postmodern novels, a feature which denies the space for the deeply measured and, weakened by a 'whole new culture of the image or the simulacrum', for any engagement with historicity (6).

Linda Hutcheon challenges some of the ways in which postmodernism had been conceived by Jameson among others (Hutcheon, *1986* 180) and how they have assessed its 'depthless, trivial kitsch', its inability to confront the political present, and its absorption by capitalism as just another market activity. She refutes particularly the conflation of the historical description with the cultural response which Jameson proffers. Hutcheon believes, for example, that postmodern fiction can successfully question assumptions about what constitutes historical knowledge through the installation and then subversion of apparently seamless conventional realist narrative structures in parodic fashion:

> Postmodern fiction does not . . . disconnect itself from history or the world. It foregrounds and thus contests the conventionality and unacknowledged ideology of that assumption of seamlessness and asks its readers to question the processes by which we represent ourselves and our world to ourselves and to become aware of the means we *make* sense of and *construct* order out of experience in our particular culture. (Hutcheon, *1989* 53-54)

This is a process which allows for an interrogation of history and a critique of societal norms, matters that align with Peace's ambitions. There is, according to Hutcheon, within postmodern art and its artefacts, an acknowledgement that they are, inevitably, a part of the capitalist production process, yet that they also have the capacity to be critical of that process: 'critique is as important as complicity in the response of cultural postmodernism to the philosophical and socio-economic realities of postmodernity' (Hutcheon, *1989* 26)**.** The capacity to criticise, she continues, is a valuable (intrinsic) aspect of postmodernist art, noting elsewhere that 'the uniformization and commodification of mass culture are among the totalizing forces which postmodern art tries to confront from within.' (Hutcheon, *1986* 183)

Given the historical themes that Peace's work explores – the dislocations of the post-industrial socioscape particularly - the stylistic and formal elements associated with postmodernism are an appropriate (even inevitable) response to the events described.

Some of these elements are particularly evident in *1983* where mass culture intrusion remains a salient feature of the text. Radio headlines appear at the start of chapters, locating the action in the past of 1969, '*Ann Jones, Biafra, the Rivers of Blood,'* (79) or from the present of 1983 '*the death of a prisoner at Rotherhithe Police Station'* (26). Peace's version of the collage effect (the primary form of postmodernist discourse according to Derrida (qtd in Harvey, *Condition* 51)), is achieved, in the manner of McNamee and Ellroy, through the layering of disparate perspectives. In the accumulation of these presences, there is an apparent confounding of the notion of depthlessness which Jameson detected: a layering of these media appearances, alongside contested and re-contested versions of the past, with overlapping timelines, confiscations from other texts and the multi-perspectivity of competing voices - which Shaw describes as a 'heteroglossic exchange' (Shaw 26) - that grants depth to Peace's narratives.

Peace's interest in retrospection is particularly evident in the retrieval of history and the self-reinvestigation of the *Quartet* which are significant parts of his project. Despite doubts about some of the moral values of postmodernism (certainly as these relate to notions of truth), Peace is prepared to appropriate features characteristic of postmodernist fiction; the questioning of narrative certainties, the incorporation of the perspectives of the overlooked (the *petit récits in* Lyotard's term) and the movement between time periods, to enhance his reinterpretation of the past. The unknowability and lack of certainty that postmodernism gestures towards is ultimately unsatisfactory for Peace; the texts of the *Quartet* allow that perspectives are multiple and work against the totalisation of interpretation proposed by thinkers of the Enlightenment. For Peace, though, notions of truth are still worth seeking out.

The stylistic feature of repetition which has been so apparent in the preceding texts remains significant in the behaviours of the characters. As elsewhere in the *Quartet*, these

repetitious patterns serve to enhance the effect of entrapment and inescapability, they also compel both characters and readers to question what was previously conceived. For Jobson particularly, as new crimes revive memories of old ones, the security of his historical knowledge disintegrates. He is compelled to return to sites and re-examine long-stored statements and reports, to the extent that his colleague tells him he is like, 'A broken fucking record' (296). Piggott, too, finds himself, literally, driving round in circles (257) and appears to become stuck in the minutiae of his search, trawling back and forth through the spools of microfilmed news stories at the Balne Lane Library, 'AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN –' (283). Like BJ who exists in an ever more circumscribed world, Jobson and Piggott are trapped by their circumstance and inclined to repeat behaviours with only marginal differences, as if ensnared. As the characters revisit and look again at past events, only partially captured in two dimensional images, doubts about knowledge are repeatedly agitated. As Hutcheon recognises, 'raising (and making problematic) the issue of photographic representation . . . points metaphorically to the related issue of narrative representation – its powers and its limitations' (Hutcheon, 1989 47). After his pub and club crawl, which takes him through the apparently well-trodden motions of taxi-rides, take-away curries and perfunctory sex, Piggott is confronted again by the face of Hazel Atkins on the cover of a newspaper he has pinched. The boozy night has brought some temporary reprieve, but sobriety brings the return of his guilt: 'you stare at her photo on the front of their paper and wish you were not you – For there is no retreat, no escape – Not now.' (51) The drink and drugs may bring an illusory sense of egress but there is no avoiding the stare of the missing child, and all it represents, a media image startling Piggott back to his everyday discomfort.

It is an encounter with the photographs of children that creates the sense of capture which also affects Chief Superintendent Jobson. Looking for evidence at the site of Michael Myshkin's employer, Ted Jenkins Photo Studio, the policeman finds himself standing in a

room carpeted in the school photographs of young girls, a great collage of physiognomies, 'Thousands of eyes and hundreds of smiles shining up in our faces.' (309) Jobson knows by this time that as well as taking school photos, Jenkins is involved in the production of pornography, a trade in which Jobson himself is embroiled, and as he looks through the photographer's address book, finding familiar names there, he is assailed by the unblinking eyes of the photographed, 'They're all going to die in this hell . . . We all are,' (310) his conscience tells him. It seems that the proximity of the innocent, momentarily captured, made ready to take their place on the mantelpiece (or in altogether less quotidian circumstances, on the front of a newspaper) to the indelicacy of the porn, has conspired to overwhelm Jobson with intrusive imagery. Trapped by the accusatory gazes of schoolchildren, Jobson is left with little option but to destroy any evidence, to try to conceal the past. He gives the order to torch the whole place.

In harnessing aspects of postmodernism, Peace's novels find some confluence with the work of those writers of detective or crime fictions most closely identified as postmodernists, Paul Auster and Umberto Eco. Some of the elemental forms that these writers employ - the pursuer so often becoming the pursued, the introduction of passages and themes from external texts, the combination of fact and fiction, for example - are apparent in Peace's work. What is also held in common by Peace and certain postmodernist writers is the promotion of the sense that knowledge is elusive, deliberately concealed (in some instances, as in the burning of the clue-holding library in Eco's novel, or the torching of Jenkins' studio in Peace's, hidden forever). The sense of literary playfulness that is part of Eco's and Auster's approach is absent in Peace's novels which are playful only in the darkest, least comfortable sense. Peace's texts have concerns that extend beyond the period of their setting, and though many conditions of postmodernity still apply at the end of the twentieth century, as Fisher writes, 'some of the processes which Jameson described and analyzed have now become so aggravated and chronic that they

have gone through a change in kind.' (Fisher, *Capitalist* 7) Thatcher's 'no alternative' dictum and strategy and all it represented, the dilution of modernism's confrontational potential and capitalism's 'colonisation' (8) of all imaginative space means that Peace is confronting a different reality than were Eco or Auster.

Morality and Crime Narratives

The kind of crime writing that Peace has chosen demands a movement beyond the postmodern in which the prompts and reminders of the actual locate his novels in territory so entirely corrupted that notions of moral certainty become moot. Peace's characters inhabit a noirish, 'thematic landscape of corruption, violence, pathological sexuality and psychological character study' (P. Simpson 190) of the kind established by Hammett and others in early twentieth century America. This is a universe of great ambivalence, 'almost completely amoral' (Bradbury) in which the distinctions between investigator and criminal continue to blur. Typically for noir, in *1983* the 'moral safety net of detection' (Priestman 177) disappears, and the driving force becomes vengeance and retribution. Other putative safeguards are also absent or fall under suspicion as iniquitous societal institutions conspire to generate an atmosphere in which paranoia is the presiding tone. Nonetheless, even as it becomes increasingly clear that there is little operating to keep us safe, Peace's quest continues and it is the disappearance of cohesive structures that comes under investigation, a version of noir the agent.

The French writer Jean-Patrick Manchette believed that 'noir has the potential to be the great moral literature of our time. Indeed . . . it is the most suitable form to expose and condemn the evil at the heart of our capitalist system' (quoted in A. Harvey 31). The British writer Derek Raymond meanwhile contends that while noir writing may be obscene in its depictions of violence and in the depravity of humankind that it details, it is valid because it reveals the truth (qtd in Duncan 88). Venturing into this sub-genre of crime fiction allows

Peace to make a scathing analogous commentary on a historical period and the corrupt structures he locates there while remaining aware of the sensationalistic direction in which it can lead.

In the final instalment of the *Quartet*, some of the dissatisfactions that the author has expressed about the sequence's original novel, *1974,* are addressed. Peace acknowledges that he may have succumbed to excess in that first instalment: 'This is one reason why I am ashamed of Nineteen Seventy-Four, which I think simply wallows in the viciousness of the crimes it describes' (Hart, *Interview* 559). There is an opportunity, then, in parallel with his characters, for some moral redress on the author's part as the structure of *1983* allows a search back through the history of the *Quartet* to correct some of these regrettable aspects. However, while the ritualised killing of a child that took place in *1974* – the victim had the severed wings of a swan sewn onto her back – has no equivalent moment in *1983,* the violence is still considerable. The detailing of the torture of suspects in the 'Belly' of Millgarth Police Station is especially harrowing, the victims there suffering considerable humiliations – 'Ellis handcuffed his hands behind his back. Ellis pushed his face down into the floor. Into his own piss.' (Peace, *1983* 61) The nature of its subject allows crime writing to explore and expose society's seamiest aspects. It also, though, animates a tendency for the gratuitous, an inclination Peace does not necessarily escape.

Particularly because of the descriptions of violence against women that pervade the genre, it is possible that all crime fiction is corrupt in the sense that it reinforces unjustifiable sexist (or racist, or homophobic) shibboleths and in this way indulges, damagingly, existing power structures. The issue of the common appearance of the female victim in crime writing has been investigated by, among others, Glen S Close (2018), Sarah Dunant (1997), Sabine Binder (2020) and pertinently in relation to Peace's *Quartet*, by Nicole Ward-Jouve (1986), who each explore the ways in which the representation of female victims in crime

writing, whether fictional or reportage, is revealing and reinforcing of deeply ingrained power imbalances in gender politics; in the specific instance of Peter Sutcliffe's murders 'a web of misrepresentations and untruths' (Ward Jouve 38).

Women rarely feature as major characters in any of the novels of the *Quartet,* the focus of Peace's critique being upon a determinedly male-dominated world. Instead female figures are utilised by Peace as haunting consciences – the ghost of Jack's wife in *1977*, the voices of the Ripper's victims in *1980* and the mothers of the wronged in *1983* - but these characters remain side-lined and even these sympathetic portrayals describe circumscribed roles of limited agency. Peace does, though, employ a method by which the voices of victims interrupt the narrative, bringing the reader closer to the violence. The perspective of Clare Morrison/Strachan appears suddenly in the chapters devoted to BJ's story. She is, like BJ, a witness to significant events - an awkward survivor in the eyes of those with crimes to hide. On the run, and living desperately, Clare recounts her final movements before she is horribly dispatched by one of her pursuers:

> It's Christmas and I'm coming up hill, swaying, bags in my hand. Plastic bags, carrier bags, Tesco bags. A train passes and I bark, stand in the middle of the road and bark at train. I am a complete wreck of a human being (266)

She descends from here into a graphic description of her last moments; a grisly end, similar to that of other female characters. The scene is based on a real murder, that of Joan Harrison, the details of whose life, including her chronic alcoholism, the clothes she was wearing on the night she died, and the manner of her killing are the same as they are for Peace's Clare Morrison/Strachan. These intricacies, that speak of the reality of the crime and its consequences, are evidently considered important enough by the author to convey to his readership. The appropriation of detail, though, raises questions about whether distinct moral problems exist when fictionalising a real murder, the danger of straying into voyeuristic territory especially. Despite Peace supplying the fictional Morrison/Strachan

with an imagined backstory that includes her children and involvement with the pornography racket of his police officers, the manner of her death has been borrowed from an actual person. The real victim is not granted her own name but is easily recognisable from the circumstances of her demise which are deployed in the fiction. The fact that such a crime took place, Peace might argue, should not be forgotten but, it might be countered, lingering upon the sensationalist aspect of the crime is not a reasonable way to enhance his narrative.

Peace argues that relaying unsettling aspects is necessary in crime writing of all kinds:

> Crime is brutal, harrowing and devastating for everyone involved, and crime fiction should be every bit as brutal, harrowing and devastating as the violence of the reality it seeks to document. Anything less at best sanitises crime and its effects, at worst trivialises it.' (Peace*, Crimetime*)

The point that Peace wishes to emphasise is that it is society that has made this victim (and others in his fiction) disposable, that it is the diminishing community that is being indicted, and that confrontation with this aspect of the modern world is important. Echoing Peace during an analysis of his work Martin King and Ian Cummins stress the importance of recognising 'the impact and aftermath of violent crime on individuals and wider society' and that this will have effects that 'ripple through a community long after the actual events' (King and Cummins, *Dead* 53). It is necessary and valuable, in Peace's view, to bring these effects to a literary readership, to disturb and bring it into contact with a world usually at some remove. Taking the reader into uncomfortable areas implicates them in the processes of crime and emphasises the point that no-one is truly innocent. Perhaps, too, the poetics of fiction (or of reportage which incorporates elements of the fictive), grants access to fields which more prosaic journalism does not. The danger remains, though, that in placing emphasis on crime's most disturbing aspects, the kind of fiction Peace writes

employs some of the same tactics as the sensationalist press (and its digital equivalents). For both journalists and writers of fiction the veracity of actual events best serves the prosecution of the society from which they emerge, but they have varying ambitions, the accusations mounted often aimed at different targets.

According to Ernest Mandel the crime story in its most rudimentary form contains a simple Manichaean division, between the innocent and the perpetrators of crime: 'Personal security is good by definition: an attack against it is evil by nature.' (Mandel 42) Its development, though, into the age of bourgeois ascendancy, Mandel continues, is accompanied by an evolution in moral purpose and the detective story becomes a means of defending the historical progress achieved by the bourgeoise class from which they come. Crime stories – particularly in their classic, detective led incarnation – are, as Stephen Knight has explained not merely 'cosies' but are fulfilling an ideological function and working for the maintenance of order and conservatism, and importantly 'to assuage the anxieties of a respectable . . . middle-class audience.' (Knight, *Form* 67)

In his discussion of the moral impetus that underpins the Sherlock Holmes stories, Knight describes how the crimes in Doyle's tales upset an order based on money and status, the 'twin pillars of augmenting and protecting income and property' (90). The threats here come from within, the criminals are departers from the moral codes that underpin respectable life, a formulation which continues into the Golden Age. As the crime story becomes more complicated (in the hard-boiled version or in the police procedural), however, where an effort is made to introduce further elements of the realistic, the moral issues raised become more nuanced and are subject to the vicissitudes of more extensive power relationships. The injection of the real has the capacity to make the socio-political aspect of a novel more obvious, but the conservative ideological purpose does not necessarily diminish.

Elsewhere, Ian Rankin appeals for 'a sense of the incomplete, of life's messy complexity' in crime fiction (12), which though it may anticipate dissatisfying conclusions and undermine the careful plotting which has preceded them, better reflects a world which is not easily apprehended. However, Rankin himself is constrained by the success of his Inspector Rebus novels (as of June 2022 he has written 23 of these), and while he is prepared to delve into the murky areas and to examine the social conditions that appertain to his chosen geography, the form of the texts is resolutely straightforward. Remnants of the ideological bent that Knight and Mandel find in nineteenth century detective fiction are still apparent and difficult to avoid; preserving the social order and satisfying the armchair detective endure as primary motivations.

Sandrine Berges suggests that the ethical potential of Rankin's fiction lies in the need for the restoration of order at the heart of his texts. Berges commends Rankin for the form of moral training, involving the accessing of emotional and intuitive experience, that he delivers to his readers:

> These novels familiarise us with the idea that it is often more productive to address moral problems on a case-by-case basis, taking in particular features of a situation, rather than by applying rules in a blind, impartial and impersonal way. (Berges 2003)

Despite his own pronouncements and the incursions that he makes into the more disreputable reaches of Edinburgh, Rankin largely conforms to the same middle-class morality which Doyle and other pioneering crime writers emphasised, his lead character increasingly cliched in his idiosyncrasies. The traditional detective fiction of the type that Rankin writes invites a secular response to individual moral issues which can be negotiated in an imaginative space away from rule-bound religious instruction, the provision of familiar satisfactions its signature appeal. Peace's ambitions are different – it is the whole social order which followed in the wake of the New Right's advent that is immoral in Peace's view and is that which needs examination. The noirish 'ambivalence' (Hansen 6)

that attaches to his investigating characters - each corrupted to some extent – adds to their usefulness for Peace as he navigates West Yorkshire's unsavoury corners. What is revealed there are not merely isolated incidents of deviance but structural systems rotten in their entirety.

While sharing some of the pessimism which characterises many of the social novels written in the UK in the late twentieth century, Peace's wrathful response differs from the general approach of those who were writing as Thatcherism took hold in the 1980s and as its governing ethos seemed to have become entrenched by the 1990s. Colin Hutchinson (2008) identifies an ambiguous sensibility that informs many of the social novels of the 1980s:

> an amorphous sense of left-liberal discontentment that may have lacked direction, unity and purpose, but which offered to the left at least the potential for an alternative both to its own despair and to the strident triumphalism of its adversaries. (Hutchinson 2)

A preoccupation of the writers of these novels is a concern with a response to the socio-political moment without appearing unattractively dogmatic (3). A further politically inhibiting factor is proposed by Hutchinson; the expanding field of cultural theory and the deconstructionist inclinations that affected it in the 1970s and 80s led to 'an abdication of effective political engagement' (Hutchinson 28). Patricia Waugh makes a similar point: 'there are few novelists from the seventies onward whose work does not reveal . . . a self-conscious anxiety about the authority and ontological status of the authorial voice of the novelist.' (Waugh 67) The refusal to rigorously engage on a political level and instead, addressing the moment cynically or through parody, suggests a level of political impotence (Hutchinson 191). An attitude is apparent among (mainly) white male left-liberal writers that is 'marked by an awareness of the decay of the public realm and of collective sensibilities' (Hutchinson 40) but does little to effect any actual change, and in fact

apathetically entrenches a damaging status quo. The individualistic perspective which tends to characterise the British social novel encourages an apolitical stance, and can be interpreted, Hutchinson suggests, as consistent with a Thatcherite distrust in interventionist politics:

> In effect, social novelists appear to be taking a Blairite trajectory in the sense that their attempts to reconcile their conflicting impulses propel them in the direction of a conservatism that neutralises the sting of their engagement. (35)

Peace's crime fictions, on the other hand, are fed by discontent with the political settlements of their setting as much as with those of their writing. He has allowed himself some temporal distance from the period he addresses, a necessary factor for his fiction, allaying his suspicions of 'fiction about the recent past. You need distance and time to be able to contemplate an event fully' (qtd. in Geoghegan). In *1983*, the author's anger is most palpable, and while the writing retains some of the cynicism which defined the atmosphere of the previous novels, the abiding mood is one of concentrated ire. The text most obviously betrays signs of a personal bitterness about the demise of social democracy in the face of an essentially selfish political conceit. Each of the narrating characters is anticipating an approaching tragedy, their thoughts occupied by feelings of fear, despair and, as the novel proceeds, increasingly of hate. In John Piggott's chronology – the few weeks leading up to the June ballot - the news headlines carry intensifying political rhetoric as divisions are stoked ahead of the election, of the landslide victory, and the apparent endorsement of the political direction that will materialise on 'D-day':

> Monday 23 May 1983 -
> D – 17:
> *'If you put your money in a sock, Labour will nationalise socks, Mrs Thatcher tells Cardiff; Britain will have the most right-wing government in the Western World if the Conservatives are returned to power, says Mr Roy Jenkins . . .'* (66)

A few days later – D-14 - similar exchanges are reported, '*Healey accuses Thatcher of lying over the jobless; Jenkins brands Thatcher an extremist and the cause of division within the nation'* (84). These radio voices are not reassuring but rather offer forewarning that the departure from the compromises of post-war politics is about to become complete.

In the more extended timelines of both Jobson and BJ the reader becomes witness to the gathering forces of revenge that will lead, eventually, to devastating culminations for both characters. The trawl through the significant events of Jobson's long career is accompanied by news from a frightening world - war in Biafra and Enoch Powell's rivers of blood (79), strikes at the GPO and British troop movements in Derry (98). The implication here is that the attempts to keep order, as Jobson and his colleagues attempt in their own dubious way and by whatever means necessary, is a hopeless battle. Jobson is, like Piggott, also keeping track of time, counting out the hunt for Hazel Atkins in the days since her disappearance. There is an uncomfortable aspect of desperation here; the longer that the child is missing, the more likely it is that the denouement will be an unhappy one. In BJ's limited, localised, criminal underworld only the debased medium of porn impacts his life, and this is not the airbrushed 'glamour' of expensively produced magazines where models might appear alongside adverts for luxury cars or watches, but a version which represents the desperate exchanges made by desperate people. The world outside BJ's narrowly defined milieu is barely a feature; the one represented in the pages of the *Spunk* magazines is spare and callous (these pages also hold clues to the nature of the criminality being perpetrated by those charged with upholding order – moral and otherwise). However, despite his desperate, often parlous existence, BJ galvanises the determination to mete out a justice of his own design. The moral imperative typical of the crime/detective story to bring the bad guys to account, remains embodied in Piggott and BJ, and also, despite his less than savoury inclinations, by Jobson. While, though, the imperative may be present there, the

inability to resolve issues, or to rescue the innocent, appear as symptoms of a disintegrating social order, to which Peace's characters respond with varying fury.

The morally motivated anger displayed by this trio reflects the author's attitude to the developing political situation in the UK. By the time that this fourth novel was being written the New Labour administration had become securely established. However, it was becoming clear that in many fundamental ways little was about to change: the new government had largely accepted the underlying neoliberalism of its predecessor. The achievement and maintenance of power may have been couched in moral terms, made easy by the behaviour of the Tory predecessors in their decline, but the slick, marketable party machine under Blair and his modernisers was deliberately distanced from the ideas of solidarity and collectivism which had characterised 'old Labour' and constituted its moral purpose. Gordon Brown's application of only 'light touch' regulation to the City of London, despite promises to end the cycle of 'boom and bust' which had characterised the Tories' years in power over the preceding seventeen years, effectively meant that the health of the economy would continue to be over-reliant on the decision making of those in charge of the City's financial institutions. The warning signs that spoke of an increasingly undemocratic future were clearly on display, but such was the ossification of capitalism's social practices as prescribed by neoliberal ideology, that it had become difficult, as recognised by Jameson and Žižek, to imagine a world that could be organised differently.

Importantly, neoliberalism's apparently unassailable resilience continued to be bolstered by free-market enthusiasts in the press – Rupert Murdoch's support for Blair's business-friendly politics, for example, remained key to New Labour's further electoral successes in 2001 and 2005. That the structures of capitalism had become so firmly cemented by the early twenty first century explains this final novel's angry tone. Peace's own diagnosis, different from the resignation detectable in novels Hutchinson has identified, is very

apparent in the novels of the sequence as well as in *GB84* and the football novels which followed.

Symbolic of the reinforcement of existing power relations is the capture of RD Newsagents as a de facto headquarters for the cabal of corrupt police officers' pornographic enterprise. This process is already underway in *1977* where the reader can see the premises being used by coppers for their suspect activity (286) and whose true nature is revealed after the flat above the shop is searched and comes under surveillance by Peter Hunter and his team in *1980* (205). That this site is also a place where certain stories are permanently extinguished is laid bare in *1983* when, in the presence of BJ, Joe Rose is murdered there (246). Peace portrays a discrete management of crime taking place where the gruesome details are hidden from the law-abiding middle classes, drawing parallels between the hidden forces that secretly benefit from crime and the architects of the New Right who deliver power to the forces of capital through the persecution of the working class: 'the move toward a rawer model of capitalism ensured that the share of national output accruing to wage earners continued to fall' (Lansley 127). And this is achieved in a way that is made to seem entirely natural.

The choice that Peace presents between either the pessimistic acceptance of the situation or the refusal to yield, is reflected in John Piggott's journey in *1983.* His existence is typified by overconsumption which is detailed in his long night of drink, food, and drugs (Peace, *1983* 44-51) that proves ultimately unrewarding. His lifestyle, from which he feels there is no escape, often renders him hungover, apathetic, and ineffective - self-disgust and vomiting the most common reaction to his behaviours. There is little sense that he is a man preoccupied by a strong moral code. Initially he is reluctant to be involved in what appears to be the hopeless situation of Michael Myshkin (serving a long prison sentence for the murder of the schoolgirl, Clare Kemplay – the crime which started the first book of the

series). Despite the requests from Michael's mother, Piggott, bereft of confidence, is compelled to tell her, 'You need to find someone better qualified and a lot more experienced than I am' (29). Listening to the radio news appears to compound his depressed state and he considers the factors that describe the miserable world he inhabits: 'the television and the government, Sue Lawley and Maggie Thatcher, the Argies and the Falklands, the UDA and LUFC sprayed on your mother's walls' (66). Shortly afterwards news reaches him that a suspect, Jimmy Ashworth, is about to be charged in connection with the disappearance of Hazel Atkins. Meeting Ashworth's mother, who is convinced of her son's innocence, persuades Piggott to take his case. Before he can provide counsel, though, Ashworth is found hanged in his cell, apparently by his own hand.

As Piggott drives towards Ashworth's funeral he becomes incensed by what he hears on the radio. He is listening to Jimmy Young conducting a fawning interview with Margaret Thatcher before members of the public phone-in their contributions. In response, we can suppose to a comment about Labour leader Michael Foot, Young offers a mild rebuke, '"*Wurzel Gummidge?"* repeats Jimmy with a snigger. "*That's not very nice, is it*?" Piggott responds furiously, '"No Jimmy, it's not," you shout alone in your car. "And neither are you, you thick and greedy old cunt. But we'll not forget you and your cruel ways, not when we're round your house to do the Mussolini."' (86) This outburst, provoked by what amounts to the casual endorsement of the divisive prime minister on a popular show aired by the state broadcaster, heralds a change of heart in the solicitor. Piggott is transformed, deciding to take on Myshkin's case and becoming, in time, a committed campaigner on behalf of his marginalised client.

The underdogs in the new political arrangement will need protection and defence, Peace makes clear, however difficult this proves. The arduous search for truth conducted by Piggott, trawling, like his predecessors in investigation Eddie Dunford and Jack Whitehead,

through the microfilm files of old newspapers, and seeking out reluctant witnesses, is testament to history's resistance to interpretation. The systemic barriers that must be overcome if leave to appeal Myshkin's conviction is to be achieved become apparent at the same time as the scale of corrupt practice in the legal and judicial spheres is revealed. The uncovering of secrets - the central objective of the detective novel - is a goal that will prove elusive for Piggott and continues to draw attention to the slippery nature of truth.

Moral Responsibility of the Culture Industry

The compulsion to examine the moral significance of the socio-political situation that was delivered in the early 1980s and its consequences, stems from a sense of responsibility and obligation that Peace feels as a writer:

> I would argue that not only does crime fiction have the opportunity, it also has the obligation. Because if you refuse the obligation to examine the causes and consequences of crime-whatever they may be-you are simply exploiting for personal financial gain and entertainment the deaths of other people (Hart, *Interview* 559).

Peace's articulation of a morally critical narrative is an important personal response, the seeking of truths in the past a significant moral issue. *1983* represents a departure from the concentration on the true (though disguised) crimes that populated the two preceding novels in the sequence, nonetheless there are repeated reminders of historical context as news from the radio and television fixes the reader in time as they back and forth through Jobson's memories. Jobson's career, as designed by Peace, has led him into contact with crimes both real and imagined and this navigation of a pathway between historical accuracy and invention remains Peace's principal strategy for revealing truths.

Notions of moral certainty increasingly come under pressure from a commercialism which is unbound, and which demands our participation. Under these arrangements, crime, like everything else, becomes a commodity (Tunnel; Menis) and is packaged for delectation and

entertainment in ever more elaborate ways; judgements about the rights and wrongs represented, secondary to saleable value. This distancing places consumers ever further from the realities of crime, allowing a disavowal on the consumer's part of any liability. Peace's work holds to account a situation in which the shrinking of a shared responsibility and the disaggregation of community - consequences of the focus on the individual - diminishes the capacity to prevent crimes or to deal with their after-effects. The organic, community-based solutions to crime that Knight describes in the medieval and early modern period move ever further away as responsibility for crime management becomes increasingly remote. Crimes in Peace's novels are presented as evidence that ideas of communal well-being, of the common good, are disappearing.

Utilising this strategy, though, is potentially problematic. Research suggests that while crime fiction in its traditional forms continues to offer, in its satisfying conclusions, some solace, other forms of crime-writing will contribute to a sense that crime is widespread (and possibly occurring nearby), encouraging fear and suspicion, and doing little to engender community solidarity. The relationship between crime fiction on TV and the fear of crime is explored by the Belgian researcher Jan Van Den Bulck who examines three possible explanatory hypotheses – cultivation (watching engenders fear), mood management (frightened people deal with fear through viewing) and withdrawal (those already afraid stay at home, watch crime fiction and become more afraid). Van Den Bulck's research indicates that 'only the cultivation model shows a significant path along the lines of the hypothesis' (Van Den Bulck 247).[17]

In indicting the iniquities of a capitalist system through writing about crime, there arises the danger that the author may in fact be reinforcing some of its consequences –

[17] Similar conclusions are drawn by Romer et al. (2003) about the cultivation of fear by crime news on television: 'Media regions with chronically high television news coverage of crime exhibited higher rates of fear in both the cities and suburbs' (Romer et al. 100)

individualism, alienation – that he views as detrimental. In Peace's view, neoliberalism's central 'ethical' drive is the pursuit of profit. In actuality, the author suggests, a moral purpose in this political movement is largely absent; Western populations have been persuaded to take the spoils of the dispensation while notions of shared responsibility suffer neglect. The transfer of moral obligation from government to atomised units – the family, the individual – necessarily involves the undermining of cooperative endeavour.

Access to the disconcerting thoughts of the increasingly isolated key characters, is accompanied by the interjections of the news media which continues to provide an overarching background motif for this final novel of the series. Other media appearances – graffiti, pop music, pornography – supplying alternative commentaries, further *petit récits*. The action of the novel is framed by historical events, reported over radio and television airwaves or on the covers of newspapers, which serve to remind the reader of an inescapable modern-day situation in which bad news proliferates. For media bodies, significant partners in the dissemination of political (and moral) ideologies, the implementation of ethical regulations to govern journalistic behaviours is common in news organisations and in journalists' trade unions. They are generally based around five key principles: truth and accuracy, independence, fairness and impartiality, humanity, and accountability and upon these tenets, codes of ethics, for example those of the NUJ (first written in 1936) are designed. The provisions of such codes are designed to protect journalists from threats and inducements, and to encourage an honest and objective approach to stories.

However, in practice, the strictures of these regulations are often pushed against or bypassed entirely, often at the behest of editors and sometimes in the interests of political positioning. The ideal of objectivity proves particularly elusive to achieve. As Charlotte Wien recognises, 'it is one thing to operate with objectivity as a beacon, and something

else to operationalise objectivity in the everyday task of journalism' (Wien 3). The determined pursuit of stories by journalists will often lead to the overriding of ethical concerns in the knowledge that press watchdogs are ill-equipped to police their transgressions. The expansion of new media platforms, the growing number of citizen journalists, and the enormous quantity of information produced makes the oversight of journalistic output increasingly complex.

In a domain in which it pays to publish bad news because of the stronger reactions that this draws and the greater sales it generates (Cohen and Young; Arango Kure et al.; Soroka and McAdams), the accumulation of such stories is presented as evidence of moral collapse. The reporting of crime is particularly potent in this respect as the generation of moral outrage will be followed by clamour for 'something to be done', and in the wake of media generated 'folk devils' comes the prospect of an authoritarian response; 'the iron times' which follow 'a tilt in the operation of the state away from consent towards the pole of coercion.' (Hall et al. 214)

This issue has substantial pertinence when considering the fervid political atmosphere of the UK in the early 1980s, when concerns about law and order were often at the fore. The processes being negotiated in the opening pages of *1983* when details of the first crime are announced exposes the dichotomous expectations that are placed on the police – to be both sensitive and to project a reassuring dynamism. Also raised are some of the moral implications in the way that the reporting of crime is mediated. The press conference which opens *1983,* so like the one that began *1974,* has, as now seen from a copper's point of view, apparently gained in intensity. Chief Inspector Jobson, senior officer at the event, looks out on the gathered reporters:

> 'These hundred hungry hounds sweating under their TV lights and deadlines, under the cigarette smoke and last night's ale, their muscles taut and arses clean, tongues out and mouths watering, wanting bones' (3)

At this early stage of the novel, the similarities in the cases of the missing schoolgirl, Hazel Atkins, and that of Clare Kemplay nine years previously – they are the same age and have attended the same Morley school – are, like the correspondences between the press conferences in the two novels, indications that Peace is returning to old ground. The moral emphasis has changed, however: where Dunford in *1974* saw opportunities in the crisis which affected the Kemplays, Jobson recognises that his errors have been compounded in the most tragic of ways. After the details of the disappearance are relayed, the parents of the child leave the scene and Jobson takes questions from the 'dogs' of the press pack:

> Hungry for bones –
> Mine
> Alone with Evans at the front, I said: 'Gentlemen?'
> The stark forest of hands, from their whispers a two-word scream:
> 'Clare Kemplay . . .'
> *More bones* –
> 'Coincidence,' I was saying, seeing –
> *Old bones.* (5)

A problem is posed for Jobson who must conduct an exercise in appeasement. The cravings of the press for information and the value that can be made from establishing links to previous crimes overrides the welfare of the victim and her family. The squaring of reporting crime as part of a commercial enterprise, with the responsibility to be accurate presents a challenge. Readers' and viewers' expectations must be satisfied by appropriate and familiar framing and formatting techniques, and the use of language in this context is significant; a coding system is employed which is widely understood so that the police message is easily translated into journalist's copy:

> This translation of official viewpoints into a public idiom not only makes the former more 'available' to the uninitiated; it invests them with popular force and resonance, naturalising them within the horizon of understandings of the various publics. (Hall et al. 64)

As the first reports make the papers' evening editions, it becomes clear that links to the previous case will continue to be emphasised, and Detective Superintendent Dick Alderman reports to Jobson:

> 'Evening Post mentioned it,' he mumbled.
> 'Kathryn Williams?'
> He nodded.
> 'What did she say?'
> 'Nine years ago, same school,' he shrugged. 'Bit about Myshkin.'
> 'What about him?'
> 'The usual bollocks.'
> I picked up my glasses. I put them back on, the thick lenses and the black frames. I sat and stared up into his eyes, thinking –
> I am the Owl:
> I am the Owl and I see from behind these lenses thick and frames black, see through everything –
> Unblinking –
> The usual bollocks –
> Everything. (7)

That the press story is described as the 'usual bollocks' points to a predictability about the formulaic way that the reporting of crime unfolds. The fulfilling of a certain obligation to readers and the construction of 'law and order news', is achieved through a well-established relationship between police and reporters. Also, though, it suggests that there is something amiss in the configuration of the police investigation; the dismissal of the apparent link with other murders is an attempt to bury anxieties. Jobson is becoming aware that the police role as 'gatekeepers to information' (Mawbey 1062) has broken down and he is unable to follow his commanding officer's instruction to '"keep it out of the bloody papers"' (Peace, 1983 20). The implied wisdom that Jobson's moniker ('The Owl') bestows, indicates an understanding of how the relationship with the press must work, that certain steps are necessary to satisfy public expectation – the organisation of crime reconstructions, the issuing of updates – but he believes that a strategy of his own design will prove more productive. So begins his investigation and the re-treading of old ground**.** The reason for his nickname, significantly, is his short-sightedness and the thickness of the

lenses that he wears. Jobson removes and polishes his spectacles in meditative moments, a routine which reminds the reader that his sight is less than perfect, his view is partial. As the novel proceeds it becomes clear quite how immersed in corruption Jobson is, and that it is he who has taken over responsibility for the organisation of his colleagues' nefarious activities from his former commanding officer, Bill Molloy (228). The struggle to keep control, to maintain oversight, will ultimately prove destructive. Like the journalists from whom he takes questions during the conference, his purview is limited, not wide enough to provide security.

The central strand of the final novel, which follows John Piggott's day by day existence, takes place against the backdrop of the run up to 1983's general election. Moral matters played an important part in the campaigns of both major parties and the idea that morality exists as a universally agreed set of principles was serially undermined by interpretations over which they clashed. In the context of the febrile electioneering that is overheard playing out in the novel's background, the reader learns of a Conservative Party emphasising a return to traditional values in response to what were framed as the unfortunate consequences of a corrupting period of permissiveness and immorality. The values espoused were premised on an idea of a bygone and mourned for Britain which, however imaginary, fed neatly into a political campaign heavily based around nationalist (sometimes racist) themes. As is reported in the text, for Thatcher, national security is a salient campaigning point and for her, 'Defence will be the priority' (13). Elsewhere, in excerpts from radio news programmes, Thatcher is accused by political opponents of 'glorying in slaughter over the Falklands' (184), and however cynical this strategy was it provided useful opportunities to label opponents who veered away from the discourse as unpatriotic; a positioning that was regularly echoed in the right-wing press.

By 1983 the Labour Party's long-established core working-class voting bloc was continuing to ebb away (M. Franklin; Horne; Weakliem). Both the party and the wider labour movement came under sustained attack from sections of the right-wing press who were determined to undermine any opposition to the growing orthodoxy of Thatcherism. Trade Union leaders were regularly attacked for their alleged posturing and in Labour controlled seats of local government, strawmen were erected through whom 'Loony Left' councils could be discredited (Curran et al. 2005; Davis and McWilliam). The notion of 'evil' was regularly employed to denounce efforts to implement policies concerned with equality and inclusion, the indoctrination of children being a fertile and repeated angle of attack (Curran et al. 158-162). In the text we hear from one of Margaret Thatcher's primary allies, Norman Tebbit, as he '*pledges to curb unions and abolish the GLC and metropolitan district councils*' (124). Dissent from opposition politicians is also heard in the text - '*Healey accuses Thatcher of lying over the jobless; Jenkins brands Thatcher an extremist and the cause of division within the nation*' (85) – but these voices have the dispiriting sound of hopeless appeals in the face of an inevitable conclusion.

As the inability of the political opposition to challenge becomes apparent a growing mythologising takes place around Thatcher as she dominates the news agenda. Her name, even as she bears accusations of dishonesty and divisiveness (85), gains power, coming to reverberate around Piggott's consciousness '*Thatcher, Thatcher, Thatcher*' (86). Elsewhere, we hear her being promoted as a 'warrior' in a battle against Labour extremists (124). The implication that the country is involved in a battle which is promoted by her party and echoed through the media also fosters the notion that her victory, should it come, will be a moral one. Whether celebrated or denigrated, we witness a process through which Thatcher becomes a mythic figure with extra-human qualities and intent on a moral crusade.

That the moral landscape, however dangerously, is destined to be designed by the powerful is a notion which provides a starting point for Roger Silverstone (2007) in his assessment of the media industry and its role in the construction of a wholly interconnected civic space – the 'mediapolis' or 'space of appearance' (22). Silverstone investigates the idea of the media as an orienting system: the prism through which we can make sense of the world. However, importantly, Silverstone makes clear that in its current incarnation the media has a culturally imperialistic and ethnocentric perspective which preserves the dominance of a western worldview, one 'filtered through the prejudice of ages' (2), in which the truth becomes a heavily culture bound entity, constructed by the cultural context from which it is proposed. Silverstone remains optimistic even as he identifies the shortcomings of an economically globalised world characterised by a postmodern sense of hyper-connectivity. However while the media's reach has extended its ability to promote understanding has not necessarily kept pace: 'The media have provided the resources for an enlarged mentality, but have they facilitated representative thinking and judgement?' (47). He draws here on Hannah Arendt's interrogation of the human condition and her appeals for a communicative system defined by a plurality that is founded on the acceptance of both shared and distinguishing individual characteristics and beliefs:

> Men in the plural, that is, men in so far as they can live and move and act in this world, can experience meaningfulness only because they can talk with and make sense to each other and themselves. (Arendt qtd in Silverstone 35).

This is possible, though, according to Arendt, by working to overcome issues in the public, mediated space, which, as presently constructed, deny the presences and appearances of some and thus the opportunity to recognise, and find commonality in the very diversity that is absent. Appearances and their mediation rely upon a necessary commitment to communication not readily apparent in a world rife with division where:

> the battles between good and evil, between radical fundamentalisms of one kind or another as they appear unchallenged or reinforced on page and screen, the polarization of reporting on the one hand, and the rampant individualism, celebritization and marginalization of the weak and minor, on the other, express much that Arendt herself recognised as both components of a totalitarian state . . . and those of the more long term . . . erosion of the possibility of a genuine public, political space. (Silverstone 38-39)

In part of his assessment of the contemporary media environment, Silverstone explores the problematics which surround the invocation of evil as a political tool, 'singularly important . . . for an understanding of the contemporary moral order and the media's place within and indeed responsibility for, that order.' (56) The erection of enemies and the consistent sowing of discord, paranoia and insecurity come to supplant society's practical morality. The author focuses on the way that the terms good and evil, legitimated in religious terms, have been used historically by politicians in the US, and at how the attack of September 2001 'fitted into a well-established messianic and apocalyptic narrative' (65). In this moment the projection of evil onto the stranger, the 'other', was usefully deployed to 'speak to, and to an extent, determine, practices of inclusion and exclusion, and as such define the boundary of what it is to be human.' (57) A reinforcement develops of the belief that certain values are worth protecting, to the extent that some of these (Silverstone gives the example of a media-enhanced and religiously constituted American exceptionalism 64-75) become so sacrosanct that dissent to their premise becomes close to impossible.

In Peace's text it is apparent that media organisations will collude with those in authority to determine where blame will be apportioned and how transgression will be presented. At the offices of the *Post*, the news operation that the reader of the *Quartet* has most access to, we witness both the prosecution of the innocent, though presumed guilty, and the creation of monsters, and can appreciate how this serves the institutions of authority. Those of Peace's journalists who appear to embody the ideal kind of journalism that

conforms to the ethical guidance of news organisations, have to step outside of the systems which actually govern their employers, and evade the inclinations of owners and editors in an effort to report truthfully.

Alongside the construction of enemies and the imposition of controls on reporting, friendly parts of the media were happy to promote ideas of a delineated societal morality that Thatcher, a prime-minister uninterested, as she made clear during a speech to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1988, in the notion that social conditions might be a cause of crime:

> We are all responsible for our own actions. We can't blame society if we disobey the law. We simply can't delegate the exercise of mercy and generosity to others. The politicians and other secular powers should strive by their measures to bring out the good in people and to fight down the bad: but they can't create the one or abolish the other. They can only see that the laws encourage the best instincts and convictions of the people, instincts and convictions which I'm convinced are far more deeply rooted than is often supposed. (Thatcher, *Sermon*)

Thatcher also famously promoted 'individual men and women' and the family which she called the 'very nursery of civic virtue' above an idea of society (Thatcher, *No Such Thing*). This was part of her championing a 'return to the eternal values of the Victorian era' that Piggott has seen quoted in the *Yorkshire Post* (49). The prioritised units of the New Right project do not appear to prosper in Peace's universe, though, where the outcomes for families are unremittingly bleak. There is little solace for Jobson when in the company of his wife and children, who he suspects, with some justification, hate him. Nor is it possible to celebrate the wedding of Fraser and his wife (a ceremony that we know will lead to a marriage of great unhappiness), while in a room above them the real division of power takes place (225). The abusive and blighted family backgrounds of both BJ and John Piggott offer no reassurance either. The political promotion of the self-contained nuclear family, so

prevalent in advertising and elsewhere, is contradicted, Peace suggests, by the reality of what goes on behind closed doors.

If the atomising values of self-reliance espoused by Thatcher do not afford great encouragement, then neither, in Peace's view, does the redoubt of Christianity. Thatcher has been described as advertising her Christianity 'More publicly than any other recent Prime Minister before Tony Blair . . . steeped in the language and practice of Christianity,' (J. Campbell 326) and as having constructed a 'theo-political' identity (G. Smith 233) that she presented publicly. The 'neo-spirituality of the social order, continually reinforced in daily media' that Silverstone identifies in Reagan's US (Silverstone 69), has its equivalent in the rhetoric of Thatcherism that finds its way into the press; an overlap of press and pulpit that has been long remarked upon. Hegel described the nature of the relationship between media and consumer in religious terms, 'reading the morning newspaper is the realist's morning prayer. One orients one's attitude toward the world either by God or by what the world is' (Hegel 247). As Peace's characters flick on their TVs and radios we witness the institution of a process through which a moral code formed by the media industry comes to circumscribe their world. The notion of media as key shaper of society's moral organisation is explored by John Hartley (1982). Interpreting Gramscian concepts about the transmission and acceptance of 'common-sense' for a media saturated age, Hartley emphasises the '*bardic function'* which news discourses perform, whereby they have not merely 'supplanted the priest, the patriarch, the little old woman and the minor intellectual' but they have also, 'in both fictional and factual output, taken them over, and have *used* them in a mediating role to construct cohesion out of the fragmented 'facts' of life'' (Hartley 104). The authority which is so readily afforded to this kind of storytelling creates an environment in which the expectations of its audience, the recognisable narrative arcs which reassure them and perpetuate their beliefs, can easily be met. Similar quasi-religious aspects of the media are detected by the media scholar, Jostein Gripsrud.

In an essay on the relationship between popular newspapers and democracy, he acknowledges traditional interpretations of the role of 'proper' journalism as a distributor of information, and media communication, generally, as society's means of making sense of itself and of developing a shared sense of community and identity and considers how this 'ritual' perspective (294) has been applied to tabloid/popular journalism and with what implications. Concentration on this perspective in many studies of popular journalism has led to a structural reductionism which does not necessarily support the idea that the supply of information is its primary function. Rather, Gripsrud asserts: 'Crime news is about the daily reconstruction of moral sensibilities on a personal even private plane.' (296) Instead, and drawing on studies of crime news (Katz) and 'other' news (Langer), Gripsrud explains how the repetitious daily reading of certain story 'types' results in the development of a 'mythic' structure of interpretation which serves to provide the audience with strategies for coping with the uncertainties which are characteristic of modern life 'for the 'processing' of sociopsychological and existential concerns' (Gripsrud 297). In this analysis, Gripsrud sees the value of the popular press in terms of what they provide for the readership as human beings – orienting for them a moral compass with which to navigate their worlds. For both writers, then, the media operations of the late twentieth century had become established as sources of moral force, positions which would previously have been occupied by proponents of religion.

Gripsrud's is a largely positive account, Hartley's more ambivalent; for Peace, however, the way that news – and crime news specifically – is commodified, packaged, and presented becomes a more sinister development. While it may imitate or even replace the power of religious rhetoric, with which it is occasionally juxtaposed across the *Quartet*, and in *1983* particularly, any role that news providers may assume as guiding moral light, Peace emphasises, should be viewed with circumspection. At times media and religious discourses conflux in *1983*; the relentless bad news from radio broadcasts is matched, as

Richard Brown notes by 'a series of prophetic and apocalyptic biblical references' (R. Brown 85), combining to foretell calamitous endings.

The religious symbolism becomes increasingly prevalent as *1983* nears its end, marking a return, it seems, to a world governed by superstition; an endarkenment or re-enchantment that invites reflection on a postmodern world in which certainty seems to have been banished and where a desire for some moral guidance or security is sought. Jobson in his final scene seeks solace in St Anne's Church (Leeds' Catholic Cathedral), beneath the Pieta, having been recently condemned to hell by the mother of the innocent, but now dead, Jimmy Ashworth. Here he encounters Jack Whitehead (or his ghost) who counsels faith in the things unseen, and also Claire Kemplay (or her ghost) who appears to offer the broken copper salvation through love (403). John Piggott is accompanied to the end by news from his radio and the words of St Francis, and their promises of harmony, truth and hope. Piggott, though, as he prepares for his own sacrifice, hears only 'The Hate' (404). Finally there is BJ, a figure of some omniscience who has been a part of the narrative all along, acting as the true recorder of events and with perhaps the most reliable of voices, who makes it his mission to take violent retribution on the pseudo-priest who has been his tormentor. His final action is unknown, though his shotgun is raised, and we can suspect a bloody demise in keeping with the violent ends of the *Quartet*'s other major characters.

Conclusion

While the retrospective aspect of the *Quartet's* final novel offers some resolutions it is an ending which, like the other novels in the series, speaks of curtailed futures. The symbolic securing of a form of capitalism which will subsume all alternatives in the decades ahead and that the reader sees approaching in Piggott's anguished interior, reveals most clearly Peace's political leanings. As historical events and their implications are interrogated, the author acknowledges the moral obligations that were espoused by Orwell, Benjamin and

Adorno (and that have been referenced by Peace). Through exposure to the moral decision-making processes of the narrators in their overlapping timelines, the reader is confronted with the awful damaging effects of crime and its consequences. Jobson's misapplication of authority the reader learns has afforded protection to the wealthy and powerful with terrible repercussions for others, while in the character of BJ, the victim of awful degradations, vengeance is seen to manifest and grow. Both men ultimately take the law into their own hands leaving the reader to consider to what extent vigilantism can operate as an appropriate response to crime.

Peace's appropriation of crime fiction's noirish variant and the incorporation of literary experiment, undermines the rational inclinations of conventional detective fiction and enhances the sense of unease that attaches to the place and times that he describes. The resurrectionary project, though, also seeks to address the problems of the later twentieth century and for this purpose the 'ludic and relativistic approach to historiography' (Adiseshiah and Hildyard 4) that characterise postmodernist approaches are inadequate. However, the self-reflexivity that is associated with postmodernism is a feature of the last novel and extends beyond the ruminations of its protagonists to include its generic structure and form as the morality of crime writing, both journalistic and fictive, comes under scrutiny. It is possible in the texts to sense Peace's 'strong feelings about the whole mystery/crime genre be it book, TV or film as a commodity and an entertainment industry based on the sudden and violent deaths of innocent individual people.' (Peace, *Crimetime*) The mediation of crime (and murder particularly) for consumption is, as Wendy Lesser has noted, uncomfortable territory in which the audience becomes complicit in its ethical implications (Lesser 3). While curiosity about real crime sometimes denotes a measure of depravity, an interest in the fictional, which often have the mood of a 'game' (Lesser 15) about them, is deemed acceptable. The differences in attitude which apply to narratives with such apparent elemental similarity is a moral discrepancy that Peace confronts. The

murders of children in the *Quartet* may be imagined but Peace does not allow the reader to forget they are living in a world in which such things do actually happen.

The regular reference to real-world events that occurs alongside the central action of the novels strengthens the equivalence that Peace draws between the violence of the texts and that committed by the national government and others in more local authority. The important role that the media plays in all of the novels, in the processes which accompany historical development, concealing, obscuring, or promoting particular causes, even as notions of truth are purportedly adhered to, is a significant textual feature and also shown to be a moral matter. The doom-casting tendency which Peace emphasises points toward a social environment of increasing alienation and despair; a media-sphere inhabited by democratic principle and tempered with consideration is not in sight. In Peace's vision, instead of a media system that responsibly monitors, ambiguous religious presences offer, on the one hand the reassuring hope of redemption or, on the other a retreat into the realms of superstition.

Endpeace: 2024

In the *Red Riding Quartet* Peace persuasively realises a period in history and a specific geography, West Yorkshire in the 1970s and 1980s. The reconstruction that Peace achieves through extensive research and memory locates a 'structure of feeling' of the kind proposed by Raymond Williams in a turbulent decade in British history characterised by disintegration of community and growing despair. Also, through this atmospheric recreation of a period and region suffering the effects of transformational crisis, Peace elucidates the anxieties that attach to his end of twentieth century writing present and disparages a political situation that had apparently become established as permanent; an abiding dispensation with a moral purpose that is difficult to discern. The *Quartet* can be read as a rejection of the capitalist orthodoxy that emerged out of that particular conjuncture and as anticipatory of a future of increasing and destabilising uncertainty. Peace's adoption of a genre that accommodates an increasingly evident political intent revives debates and discussions about the potential of cultural intervention; the possibility of encouraging, through the shocks and disturbances of the texts, an emancipatory, change-effecting impulse, and the countering of this possibility by institutional and material structures, and the dictates of commercialism which consign all cultural interjection to serve as forces in the reproduction of existing systems. The incorporation of multiple media appearances describes a developing environment of information saturation, which encourages retreat into worlds of isolation and anger.

Peace's realisation of historical contexts that was the focus of the first chapter of this thesis constitutes a redrawing of a period and the countering of some of the pervading interpretations attached to it. Peace's challenge to the way that the history he visits has been narrativised – a narrativisation process conducted to some degree by a press and other news outlets, and presently by new forms of media, is informed by disappointment.

That a short period when an organised working-class achieved some agency in national decision making processes, has come to be denigrated as the actualisation of trade union tyranny provokes Peace's instincts and confirms Benjamin's contention that those best resourced to interpret and transmit history will empathise, inevitably, 'with the victor' (Benjamin 248).

In his historical retrieval Peace identifies themes as have the social historians of the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries, who seek to incorporate into their accounts 'the activities and the aspirations of the marginal, the despised and rejected, the overlooked who have been regarded as beneath the notice of traditional historiography . . . taken notice of only as anonymous masses.' (W. Thompson 28) This resurrectionary impulse finds concurrence in Peace's own ambition to resurrect hidden ('occult') or forgotten perspectives and to reassess and interrogate historical mythologies. In the multiperspectivity that is most apparent in the transmissions which preface chapters in *1980* and in the competing narratives of *1983*, Peace can be seen to questions any notions of certainty which attach to interpretations of the past.

Peace identifies in the period to which he returns an encouragement of individualism that was suggested by social movements of the 1960s and incubated by political ideologies of both the left and right (Robinson et al.; Davies, Jackson and Sutcliffe-Braithwaite et al.). This animating principle became a developing feature of the 1970s and appears to motivate the attitudes and practices of Eddie Dunford in *1974*. The recognition of this aspirational phenomenon by media organisations - evident in the valorisation of the 'personality' that the reader sees developing in Peace's texts - precipitates an incorporation into the political mainstream which will have, as part of a new political ideology, Peace suggests, worrying implication. The concentration on the individual, both in the fascination with pop, sports and television star and in the invigoration of the reader's

personal aspirations, which became an ever-more defining characteristic of the popular press, aligned with a swing to the political right of much of the UK's media. It is the partnership that developed out of this confluence with a Conservative Party preparing to implement the ideological policies of a neoliberal informed New Right that is indicted with such pessimism by the author and is a factor in the texts' atmosphere of impending calamity.

The mediation of news that takes place in the texts is shown to be a compromised process affected by a series of constraints; the uneven symbiosis with authority that is apparent in Dunford's subordinacy and Jack Whitehead's complicity as they interact with police officers; the discretion made necessary in the face of commercial demands; and the intensification of competition within the industry, amplified by emerging technologies. Peace anticipates in this representation of a tempered process, an environment in which the behaviour of journalists becomes characterised by desperation and misdemeanour. The cross-contamination of the relationship between the operations of reporters and police officers (and at times those of the private eye) revealed in the investigations of the Leveson Inquiry a sordid but unsurprising effect of a news gathering machinery subject to great tension. The concentration on the sensational and attention grabbing characterises a tabloidisation of the media and subordinates matters of more substantive political and cultural importance in the public consciousness; as Mark Simpson points out, in Peace's texts, the subjective violence of crime (the brutal murders) consistently eclipses the objective violence (the systemic corruptions) (M. Simpson 252). Peace emphasises the particularly disconcerting and distractive qualities of matters criminal and their reporting; these diversions, and the implications they represent, finding their equivalence in the promises made in the name of a new future that are beginning to formulate on the political horizon.

The elegy to the disappearing communal solidarity embodied (if never fully achieved) in the doctrines of the trade union movement is contrasted with the 'traditional values' being promoted by the Conservative Party under Margaret Thatcher and that are represented with greatest ambiguity by the revanchist inclinations of Peace's corrupt West Yorkshire police force. As discussed in Chapter 2, Peace presents the northern dominion over which this wayward body presides as a region experiencing upheaval on a grand scale; the legacy of history is shown to weigh heavily on the traditional industrial heartlands, on the city- and landscapes described in the texts. The unsettled physical environment heightens the sense of doubt which inhabits Peace's characters with such debilitating effect. The deliberate employment of uncertainty - a consequence of the central role afforded to the market and the competition which this naturalises - that David Harvey recognises as a requirement of neoliberalism (Harvey, *Neoliberalism* 76), exposes and compounds inequalities. As the tenets of free-market capitalism, exemplified in a 'politically mandated exploitation' (W. Davies *Interview*), begins to exert its influence in the texts, its effects are felt in the sense of helplessness that inhabits many of their characters. In the context of Peace's fiction, the outcome for those who have failed to harness the benefits of the market amidst a dismantling of unprofitable industry, is the bequest of a hard-scrabble world that is echoed in the decaying physical surroundings. The positive constructions of northernness that were formed over centuries, stereotypical though they might have been, are rendered precarious as the geography that once offered semblances of security, is transformed into an imprisoning place, haunted by its past.

Peace's journalist characters, charged with reporting the region's crimes, are shown to absorb this climate of decline most particularly. In *1977* the shabby flaneur Jack Whitehead's first thoughts on half-waking from a night of drunken dreams is of Leeds: '*Ancient English shitty city? How can this ancient English shitty city be here?*' (23), its history and age part of the reason for its distress and deterioration. It is 'a city marred by

destruction atrophy and decay' (Shaw 20), its declining nature apparent, in Peace's absenting of any evidence of the textile and engineering industries, once responsible for its wealth and projections of pride made material in the grand civic architecture. The dying (or dead) incarnation of the city realised by Peace, and critically explored by Keyes, King and Cummins, and Shaw articulates the author's own emotionally uncomfortable experience of the 1970s city: 'very dark and very depressing' a place in which he 'never felt at ease' (Peace, *Bookmunch* 2009). The security sought by Whitehead, inhabited by unsettling feelings similar to those that Peace describes, in the city's older corners – its medieval quarters, the Catholic Cathedral - speaks of an endarkening movement backwards. The sense Peace creates is of a place in danger of being forgotten or ignored, subject to different rules of governance, and with emptiness and absence as its most salient signifying features.

The changes to social and employment structure which affect the city extend into the domestic arena, as evidenced in the dwindling of communal activity visible in the texts, the arrival of interactive media in the form of the radio phone-in, suggestive of a participatory media environment but also through the invisibility of its contributors, a withdrawal from traditional social interaction and retreat into anonymous engagement. The development of a new domestic culture enhanced by the sort of technological advances like the video-recorder and the personal computer, which make appearances in the novels, signals a home-entertainment revolution of growing consumption and promoted using the language of choice.

Confinement to the home is as often, in the texts, a reflection of an altering economy as much as of developing inhibitions. As unemployment continues to disproportionately affect the north in the *Quartet*'s timeline, a lack of purpose operates destructively; the batterers of John Piggott and the sprayers of graffiti in the ex-pit village of Fitzwilliam speaking of

ennui and disengagement. The demonisation of a workless underclass fomented by the government and its allies in the right-wing press (Jones 2011; Hanley 2017) and best captured in Norman Tebbit's 'get on your bike' admonition, are shown to take little account of the dwindling opportunities for secure, long-term employment which apply in Peace's chosen timeframe especially to once industrialised parts of the country.

In place of the conception of this northern space as secure provider of work and power are foundations rendered insecure in Peace's descriptions. The Lefebvrian idea that '(Social) space is a (social) product' (Lefebvre 26) and that 'every society - and hence every mode of production with its subvariants . . . produces a space, its own space' (31) constructed around a framework of perception, conception and experience, becomes uncomfortable as the lived space of the characters is impacted by conceptions once ambitious but now exhausted, both unforgiving and unwelcoming. The incursions of developers, transformative events in the novels, serve as Keyes (interpreting Lefebvre) recognises, to 'generate qualitatively new forms of space' (Keyes 25); sites of entrepreneurial ambition which deprive non-investors of their stake in local geography. The privatisation of space (emblematised in the UK of the 1980s by the sale of publicly owned housing stock and playing fields, and in the novels by the claiming land once available to the marginal) symbolises the examination of neoliberalism's political impacts that Peace undertakes. It is a physical reorganisation, 'reminiscent of the capture of the commons' in the eighteenth century (Low and Smith 4) which leads to new variations of socio-spatial segregation.

In the new digital and virtual spaces that are beginning to flourish in Peace's universe space is socially produced. In their application of Lefebvre's theories to an expanding cyberspace and to its effects on engagement with local politics, Bilge Serin and Daghan Irak explore how digital space crosscuts the conceived and the lived, appreciating the galvanising capacity of the social network and the benefits it can bring in a local context.

However, they also recognise how extant power structures are perpetuated in the new fields of communication; 'even though the digital space transcends geographical boundaries, locality still plays a role in the digital reflection of everyday life, and the political negotiations within the local physical space are reproduced in the digital space' (Serin and Irak). As in the emerging digital sphere to which Peace's novels allude those best resourced will have the most significant presences.

In Peace's novels the contamination of space is near complete; nowhere is free from the unceasing exposure to information. Media noise is generated almost incessantly and received in characters' homes and cars to an extent that a quality of inescapability pervades. The fragmentary nature of the interjections consisting of decontextualised headlines amplifies an ungraspability that brings disconcertion and confusion. Narratives of crime – represented most impactfully in the texts by the serial murders of the Ripper - and their mediation feeds the paranoia that Hall and his colleagues describe (also encouraged, in their diagnosis, by fears raised of 'the stealthy advance of socialist collectivism' (Hall et al. 307)) and elicits authoritarian responses. The consequences for the North, as methods of policing focussed on control and were employed in the social, political and industrial disputes of the 1980s, are returned to with some vigour by Peace in *GB84*. Already apparent in Peace's *Quartet*, is a North emitting a response to the privations wrought by the neoliberal doctrine that is angry, even vengeful, and which is suggestive of an approaching political realignment. The once industrialised North's movement away from close attachment to political leftism was part of a national trend apparent by the time of the 1997 election (Sobolewska and Ford 136-137) that brought New Labour to the power they held when the texts were written. This is a direction discernible as an emergent feeling as Peace's series proceeds. The dissolution of solidarity which attached with some validity to the North, is leading Peace predicts, to a future increasingly defined by fragmentation.

In their representation of the pressurised commercial atmosphere that surrounds the reporting of crime news, Peace's novels articulate the fecund cross-fertilisation between the media and crime narrative that was explored in Chapter 3. The media's distractive, circus-like qualities that are particularly apparent in the first two novels of the series, in the sensationalism that attends the crime reporting of Dunford and Whitehead and in the way that the callers to John Shark's radio show interpret and are influenced by the news that they hear reflects the long interrelated history. This fecund cross-fertilisation from which stylistic overlaps have emerged continues to find expression and audiences in traditional novels as well as in new forms and on new platforms; the sensations of crime-based infotainment, the true crime podcast and on-demand television crime serial evidence an adaptability that has persisted in the long interrelated history between history and the media.

Peace's novels are part of a long tradition of crime writing, aligning most closely perhaps with the type of fictions written by James Ellroy and Eoin McNamee in which the careful construction of a history, becomes a powerful informing presence, interjections from the media an important feature of the historical realisation for each of these authors. Also, as Peace's novels become increasingly experimental both 'embracing and problematising their cultural heritage' (Charles 72) they move away 'from the uneasy combination of fanciful genre trappings, period signifiers, Angry Young Man homage and brutality' (Fisher *Sad*) of the first novel and toward a less confining fictional territory. The *Quartet* as a series tests classification, incorporating aspects of classical detective fiction, police procedural, noirish thriller, and horror. The dissatisfaction with *1974* engenders a more ambitious project from the author, in which the responsibility for crimes and for their solutions is complicated by shifts in perspective and the revisitations of the Quartet's history.

Peace's *Quartet* addresses the tensions that surround the responsibilities of journalism, the competing inclinations to on the one hand, find and relay truths for democratic benefit - to exercise 'socially sanctioned power on behalf of the public' (Ehrlich and Saltzman 97) or as Barry Gannon describes it 'to deliver us all from evil' (Peace *1974* 60), and on the other to achieve a success which is defined by the capture of bylines and headlines. Peace's journalists are confronted by obstacles of all kinds which demand that the reader considers the conditions in which the production of news takes place. As part of a commercial enterprise which makes quantitative rather than qualitative evaluations of success, the role of the news reporter is inevitably compromised; both the matter of what is reported, and the style and structure of how that reporting takes place is dictated by the requirement to conform to the expectations of a readership.

The considerations which apply to the contingencies which surround the production of news similarly affect the production of crime fiction and these considerations are recognised by Peace. In many of its incarnations crime fiction offers an escape into a 'controlled hygienic environment' (Knight 127), safely removed from the experiences of its readers or audience. The familiar fulfilment of expectation and the restoration of order are significant in their appeal; the ideological significance of these texts disguised by their distractive qualities. Peace is aware of the genre's exploitative pitfalls and consciously wishes, in particular, to avoid the presentation of murder as entertainment. He also, though, recognises its potential. As he has stated: 'Crime fiction has both the opportunity and the obligation to be the most political of any writing or any media, crime itself being the most manifest example of the politics of the time.' (Peace *Crimetime)* The use of a popular cultural form as a means of addressing wider socio-political concerns and to explore, if not to fully answer, the questions that pertain to the time and place of his childhood, a profitable utilisation of the genre's investigatory character. The concerted

interaction with real events, expatiated by the prominence of the news-gathering milieu that Peace incorporates is crucial to the author's realisation of period and locale.

Peace's project, as it progresses, is increasingly occupied by moral concerns and its exploratory aspect by political intent. The need to discover where responsibility lies for the damage that has been inflicted regionally is a motivating factor; answering the question 'to what extent are/were the people of Yorkshire, and the North in general, culpable in these crimes?' (Hart, *Interview*) acquires a wider investigatory intent as the crimes serve as an allegory of the developing political situation. Peace's protagonists do not occupy the authoritative moral position which traditionally belongs to the investigative figure. The *Quartet*'s investigators are inhabited by ambivalence and weakness; everyman figures only remotely related to the restorative detective character imagined by Raymond Chandler: 'guardian of individual moral authority and the embodiment of ideals in a corrupt environment' (Lee 2). Eventually invigorated by a personal, if deeply concealed, morality that involves detachment from the guidance and protection of their respective organisation, the realisation of a maverick disposition is necessitated. Acting alone, though, they are unable to achieve results in conventional terms and resort to the behaviour of the vigilante. The organisations to which they have belonged, though regulated to some extent by ethical standards and overseeing bodies, are shown to be compromised, often through the influence of commercial interests. For Peace, it is the morality of the structures of the prevailing order that comes under investigation.

The material means of communication which underlie the media developments seen in the texts foretell an approaching and disorienting future. The appearances of Citizens Band radio and its 'transmissions', a crucial evolutionary stage in the advent of the cellular network (Briggs and Peter Burke 241-243), herald an age of enormous connectivity, but also one inhabited increasingly by confusion and unease. New media systems, in common

with other media developments across time, as in the Displacement Theories which met the arrival of the radio and the television for example, have been welcomed with varying levels of enthusiasm. The convergence – or 'collision' (Jenkins 468) - of old and new media, of the encounter between traditional techniques of storytelling and technologies of distribution comprised of a multiplicity of networks, offers promises of enhanced engagement in democratic processes and of greater access to information. However, the contingencies which have affected existing modes of mediation often translate into those still evolving as they adapt to the familiar human impulses to communicate. The fragmentation of the audience in the face of a media presenting sometimes wildly diverging perspectives and informed by disparate motivations – commercial, political, or theological – predisposes an environment of unpredictability that is defined by a lack of control, as the conception of shared knowledge splinters exponentially.

The optimistic potential of new forms of citizen-oriented, participatory journalism revitalises the ideals of an informed community 'engaged in public dialogue' (Allan 3). The rise of digital platforms and of user-generated content brings the hope that users will be better able to self-inform and also to operate in a 'monitorial' capacity to expose and highlight issues that might otherwise remain undiscovered; the energised blogger making newsworthy that which was once hidden (Shirky 63) an example here. The democratic possibilities of new technologies anticipated by Walter Benjamin, the plurality and acceptance of differences proposed by Hannah Arendt, or the welcoming of consideration and debate hoped for by Roger Silverstone are visible in brighter corners of the internet and in the ethos of 'Open Source' journalism. However, a rapidly expanding and unregulated cyberspace, a **'**maelstrom of ephemerality' (Harvey, *Condition* 292), suggests an approaching environment in which the latest and loudest transmissions gain traction, no matter how secure their grounding in reality, and with the potential to impact dangerously. The prospects for journalism as an effective stay on the appetites of a

capitalised mediasphere are not favourable. The demise of Peace's reporting characters signify both the undermining of confidence in any kind of historical narrative and an absenting of democratic oversight.

The novels of the *Quartet* have been grouped with Peace's more obviously political text, *GB84* (2004), about the miners' strike of 1984-5 (Shaw; Maguire), as part of the author's critique of the painful implementation of neoliberalism. In an interrogation of the apparent inevitability of neoliberalism, the freedoms that the ideology purports to embody, and the disappearing of historical imaginations of the future that it has widely effected Christopher Vardy (2018) uses *GB84* as an interpretive text. The signification of the strike, as narrativised by Peace, which is Vardy's focus is identified as representing the moment when the 'freedoms' associated with a free economy became fully incorporated into the formulation of Thatcherism. The presentation of striking miners as 'enemies' of freedom and attackers of the common sense 'economic laws that must be policed as ruthlessly as those on the statute book' (Vardy 6) is amplified by their media portrayals in the text.

Early in the novel a striking miner describes a rally at Mansfield attended by pitmen and their families from across the country. From his perspective it is a day of proud solidarity that moves both him and his wife to tears (Peace, *GB84* 82). When the event is reported on the television news the following day, though, the images are of 'lads throwing bricks and bottles. Lads fighting with police. Police bleeding. Police on stretchers' (90). The manipulation of events that Peace describes here, and which would be actualised most saliently following the events at Orgreave, are examples of how the conduct of the media, alongside and sometimes in collaboration with other institutions of authority, provide the novel with its most suspect aspects. The final 'victory' over the miners is presented by Peace, as it was in sections of the press, with a 'Fascistic militarism' as 'triumphant political spectacle' (Vardy 11). This resurrects Benjamin's warning about the 'aestheticisation' of

politics, as a portent of war and is a sign 'that technology has not been sufficiently developed to cope with the elemental forces of society.' (Benjamin 235) More positively, it is possible to find in the interrogative nature of the fiction that Peace employs, despite the dark themes, some semblance of a route toward a future that is better equipped to moderate with responsibility. Hinted at in the more worthy inclinations of his characters – journalists among them - is the potential for a positive cultural and media response. Hope, though, must be galvanised in the face of the economic arrangements and the imaginative dead-end that is capitalist realism – symbolised most starkly by the coincidence of John Piggott's suicide with the confirmation of Thatcher's election victory, heard over his radio at the end of *1983,* the consuming despair a response to the nation's adoption of a callous socio-economic reality.

The relationships that are lost in the aftermath of the emerging socio-political dispensation described by Peace are compounded by the feelings of unease which surrounds new technology. The fear that advances in the media will have harmful effects on the individual, apparent in the concerns raised about the isolating and alienating effects of prolonged mobile phone use for example, exacerbates the difficulty in imagining a future with any confidence. The market forces and commercial pressures that are a feature of the media representations in Peace's texts, and that continue to supersede other considerations as the competition to supply ever more substantial flows of information proceeds, are unpropitious governing principles. The novels of the *Quartet* are inhabited by a mournfulness that is often bleak. They also, though, propose an awakening, as do his later novels, which involves a reassessment of history, and of what it delivers to the present. '*The Great British Public get the kind of truth they deserve*' an aphorism of Barry Gannon warns in *1974*. Peace's texts remind the reader that worthwhile truths will remain hidden unless sought out. (*79,988 words*)

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