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“Dead Cities, Crows, the rain and their Ripper, The Yorkshire Ripper”: The Red Riding Novels (1974, 1977, 1980, 1983) of David Peace as *Lieux d’horreur*

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Abstract

This article explores the role and importance of place in the *Red Riding* novels of David Peace. Drawing on Nora’s (1989) concept of *Lieux de mémoire* and Rejinders’ (2010) development of this work in relation to the imaginary world of the TV detective and engaging with a body of literature on the city, it examines the way in which the bleak Yorkshire countryside and the city of Leeds in the North of England, in particular, is central to the narrative of Peace’s work and the locations described are reflective of the violence, corruption and immorality at work in the storylines. While Nora (1984) and Rejinders (2010) describe places as sites of memory negotiated through the remorse of horrific events, the authors agree that Peace’s work can be read as describing *Lieux d’horreur*; a recalling of past events with the violence and horror left in.

Introduction

Pierre Nora’s (1989) concept of *Lieux de mémoire* examines the ways in which a “rapid slippage of the present into a historical past that is gone for good” (Nora, 1989:7) is compensated for by the focus of memory on particular physical spaces. Nora (1989) outlines 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. Nora (1989) sees memory and history as being in opposition with each other. He states: “History’s goal and ambition is not to exact but to annihilate what has in reality taken place” (Nora, 1989:9). As an example of the ways in which particular spaces become sites of the imagination he uses the battlefields of Verdun as one example, an illustration of the fact that sites where horrific and violent events have taken place have the horror removed as part of a process of becoming a space where people come to remember the past. Nora’s (1989) ideas about constructed memory, breaking with the neo-Durkheimian tradition of collective memory as organic systems, spawned a number of further studies in France and had been highly influential in Germany and the Netherlands (de Boer and Frijhott, 1993; Francois and Schulze, 2001).

Rejinders (2010) draws on this concept and uses it in a study examining the TV detective tour. In an ethnographic study of three popular TV detective tours : The Inspector Morse tour in Oxford, UK; the Baantjer Tour in Amsterdam, Netherlands and The Wallander Tour in Ystad, Sweden he develops the concept of *lieux d’imagination*; places which provide a physical point of reference to an imagined world. Rejinders (2010:1) states: “By visiting these locations and focusing on them, tourists are able to construct and subsequently cross a symbolic boundary between an ‘imagined’ and a ‘real’ world”.

The phenomena of the media pilgrimage to location of film and TV series is well documented (Caughey, 1984; Couldry, 2000; Beeton, 2005). Couldry (2000) in his study of the Coronation Street tour in Granada Studios, Manchester, UK, concluded that the significance of the media pilgrimage is

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the symbolic boundary between what is 'inside' and 'outside' the media. In drawing on this work Rejinders (2010) introduces the concept of *lieux d'imagination* in relation to detective fiction tours. As in the case of *lieux de memoire* (Nora, 1989) the locations are places where horrific acts have taken place, albeit in a fictional sense, and part of what happens on the TV detective tours, according to Rejinders (2010), is the sanitizing of this horror, for example, through re-enactment of scenes from particular episodes. Thus, these physical spaces become "a memorialisation of something that never took place" (Rejinders, 2010:8). Rejinders (2010) also cites Caughey's (1984) emphasis on place in the development of the imagination and Malpas (1999), who argues that imagination is connected to concrete, sensory experience of place. Rather than seeing the 'real' and 'imagined' world as competing concepts, Rejinders (2010:10) argues that *lieux d'imagination* can be interpreted "as locations where the symbolic differences between these two concepts is being (re)constructed by those involved. This implies a cultural process of appropriation : a practice whereby different social actors ascribe – shared or contested meanings to specific places".

David Peace's *Red Riding Quartet* operates around this very idea of cultural appropriation and contested meanings. In *Red Riding* the city of Leeds, UK, represents a cultural battleground, a site where warring factions battle for the upper hand a corrupt political system. It has some resonance with Mike Davis' (1998) work on LA in the 1990s and Rejinders' (2010) observation that author, producers, the municipality, city marketers and commercial interests may ascribe different meanings to physical spaces based on their own, often conflicting interests. This will be examined through a reading of *Red Riding*, with an emphasis on the way in which, in Peace's Leeds, the horror is left in, rather than removed.

Rejinders (2010), in discussing the three TV detectives tours undertaken as part of his study, observes that the plots may be fictional but the events could have occurred. Peace's work takes this notion one stage further. It has been conceptualised as *faction*, with plots based on real events and characters with fictional text interwoven. Much discussion around this idea took place in relation to his most high profile work, *The Damned United* (2006) filmed in 2009 (Austin, 2009). The novel is based on Brian Clough's 44 days spent as manager of Leeds United in 1974 and Peace's interweaving of fictional dialogue with fictional events caused controversy and upset to the Clough family (Brice, 2007). Bentley's (2005) edited collection *British Fictions of the 1990s* is devoted to exploring this issue of the relationship between fiction and historical context, identifying a trend in British fiction in the 1990s aiming to explore the legacies of historical events and ideas in a new postmodern/post-structuralist approach. Bentley (2005) sees place and historical legacy and the relationship between past and present as central to this work, with the blurring of boundaries between fiction and reality as a new form of popular postmodernism. He describes this as "A form of psycho geography, the mapping of the psychological effects produced on the individual by physical environments" (Bentley, 2005:11). This notion draws in the work of Nora (1989) and Rejinders (2010) and *Red Riding* can be seen as a prime example of the genre. Wolfreys (2005), for example, in examining Iain Sinclair's work on the city of London, sees the city as "the site through which wander the ghosts of its dead" a process through which the certainties of the present are undone. Peace's Leeds can be read similarly.

Red Riding also uses *faction* to draw together a number of 'real' events and characters from 1970s' and 1980s' West Yorkshire, UK, and re-present them in an "imagined form". Nora (1989:9) argues that "History's goal and ambition is not to exact but to annihilate what has, in reality, taken place". Peace's work of *faction* will be examined with reference to his quest to challenge this notion of history and his construction of the City of Leeds as *lieux d'imagination* with the horror re-inserted.

Methodology

The novels were read and analysed using the approach of *bricolage* as a research method. Wibberley (2012:6) sees *bricolage* as a little used method, stating that "bricolage brings together in some form, different sources of data" and that "the consideration of the process by which *bricolage* is built – however emergent- is an important aspect of the overall work". The *faction* at work in *Red Riding* can itself be seen as a form of *bricolage* in its drawing on real events and characters, woven together through fictional dialogue and mirroring the past in the present. Works by Levi-Strauss (1972) and Freeman (2007) talk of making sense of knowing, using a number of sources and this is similar to McKee's (2003) idea of using intertexts about texts as a part of their analysis. Mol (2002) sees a

blurring of disciplinary boundaries as an essential part of the bricolage approach.

Kincheloe (2005) argues that bricolage is grounded in cultural hermeneutics and this locates a research study within a cultural, social, political and his social framework. He states: "Focusing on webs of relationships instead of simply things-in-themselves, the bricoleur constructs the object of study in a more complex framework" (Kincheloe, 2005:323). Thus, the method, argues Kincheloe (2005), draws the researcher to go beyond the boundaries of particular disciplines in addressing the complexity of the real world, a mingling of material reality and human perception. This active construction of a method which interacts with the object of inquiry may, for example, include the focus (as in the case of this particular study) as a central text (i.e. a set of novels) but may also include what McKee (2003) refers to as intertexts about the texts (e.g. the author's own thoughts on his work) plus newspaper reports of the events used in the text and filmed versions of the texts themselves or the events described therein.

Kincheloe's (2005) notion of the object of study as culturally inscribed and historically situated is reflected in Nora's (1989) and Rejinders' (2010) work on place and interpretation. This approach is supported by Levi Strauss' (1972) ideas on the complexity and unpredictability of the cultural domain and Lincoln's (2001) notion of the bricoleur as anthropologist. The choice, then, of this post-structuralist method to analyse what Bentley (2005) has conceptualised as a post-structuralist approach to place in 1990s' British Fiction, was seen by the authors as highly relevant and appropriate.

The reflexive commentary (Wibberley, 2012) offered on *Red Riding*, then, draws on a number of texts and sources. The authors drew on contemporaneous news accounts of events in *Red Riding* as Peace himself did when writing the novels (Channel Four, 2003), an academic account of the case of the Yorkshire Ripper (Ward-Jouve, 1986), biographical accounts (Burn's [1984] *Somebody's Husband, Somebody Son*), interviews with David Peace in which he discusses his works (Channel Four, 2003; Peace, 2009), and filmed versions of the *Red Riding* texts. In reading the texts themselves, a textual analysis approach using a search for specific language and phrases was used, based on a framework suggested by McKee (2003) and van Dijk (1993). The idea of using core texts separated in time also forms part of an approach to bricolage (Wibberley, 2012) and resonates with Peace's argument that time and distance is necessary to contemplate events fully and that writing about "now" is not always the best way to explore the present (Channel Four, 2003). Lincoln (2001:693) sees bricolage as "the assembly of mythic elements, , motifs, allusions, characterizations and other stock materials to form stories. "In this sense then, Peace's work also represents the approach of the bricoleur.

The Red Riding Quartet

David Peace's *Red Riding* novels (1974; 1977; 1980; 1983) were published from 1999 onwards, initially in the UK and Japan, and filmed as *The Red Riding Trilogy* for Channel Four and Screen Yorkshire in the UK in 2009. Peace's views on the role of the crime writer are well documented. He states "Crime is brutal, harrowing and devastating for everyone involved and crime fiction should be every bit as brutal, harrowing and devastating" (Peace, 2009:1). He has argued strongly that there is no need for the crime writer to invent crime as real events throw up so many stories.

There are no heroes in these novels, only the morally corrupted. Characters such as detectives Hunter and Molloy (1980) in Peace's work reflect wider problems in terms of the construction of masculinity. They are forced to confront extreme misogyny and violence. They are overwhelmed by the brutality, misery and degradation in the places that surround them. However, they share many of the attitudes rooted in local places, that are at the root of the hideous crimes they must investigate, the attitudes being embedded in the institutions in which they operate, the impact of crime on individuals, communities and the popular imagination are considered. Peace's work suggests that such crimes scar the lives and landscapes of those all involved, not only the immediate family of those who lose their lives in such a brutal fashion. For Peace, a very important part of this work is to 'reclaim' these individuals from the media portrayal of them as victims. He wants the audience to recognise that these women are mothers, daughters and sisters who have been thrown into a media storm. Their lives are then seen through the prism of their brutal deaths or as a frozen image on a police poster (Peace, 2009).

As Manning (1977) has noted, any discussion of police culture needs to explore the attitudes that officers have about their own roles but also the wider society, the places that they live in and police. This is vital because these attitudes underpin officers' conduct. One feature of this set of attitudes that has been highlighted is the police officers' exaggerated sense of mission (Manning, 1977). Skolnick (1966) comments on, the fact that, as police officers are charged with the defence of "societal values" (assuming that we can agree there are such things), then it is inevitable that they see themselves as the living embodiment of these values. The knock-on effect of this is that those they arrest or come into contact with on a daily basis are seen as being "other" or cut –off from mainstream society. In the recent UK Channel 4 series (2012) *Coppers*, a fly on the wall documentary series about the daily working lives of officers in the Nottingham force, officers used the term "snafu" to refer to the residents of a local estate – when asked to explain the term one officer replied "subnormal and fucking useless". It would be generous in the extreme to see such comments as workplace banter or another example of the famously cynical police humour. They indicate that a tie has been severed between the police and the places and communities that they, after all, are employed to protect. Peace's novels are set in a period just after a Local Government re-organisation which brought together the Leeds and Bradford police forces into a new joint West Yorkshire Force in the North of England. The tensions of the bringing together of factions based on place form part of the narratives of the quartet. (Shaw, 2009).

1974 is based on the Stefan Kisko case in which a troubled, isolated man of Ukranian origin, suffering from hypogonadism was convicted of murdering and sexually assaulting a schoolgirl, Lesley Moleseed. His conviction was later overturned but after he had spent 16 years in prison. Whilst in prison Kisko was subjected to appalling treatment. He developed schizophrenia and died a year after his discharge. In *1974*, a young man with learning difficulties, Michael Myskin, is arrested after the disappearance and murder of a schoolgirl and a confession is beaten out of him. The novel then traces the efforts of a local journalist to uncover the truth about the links between several schoolgirl disappearances, leading to the uncovering of violence and corruption in the West Yorkshire Police Force. Peace's 1970s' Yorkshire is a bleak unforgiving place and the racism, corruption and misogyny at work there is a theme which runs throughout the quartet.

1977 is concerned with the investigation into the crimes of Peter Sutcliffe, the Yorkshire Ripper. Sutcliffe, a 34 year old married lorry driver from Bradford, UK, was convicted in 1981 of 13 murders and seven assaults, all taking place in the North and North West of England. Again, the uncovering of crime, corruption and links to vice amongst the investigating officers is a key theme, with an unrelenting emphasis on the violence of method and the importance of place. Suspects, or those who stumble upon the misdemeanours of the officers, are taken down to a specific place in the depths of Millgarth police station in Leeds – "the belly" ("a huge fucking hole of a cell right down in the gut" [Peace, 2000:17]) where rough justice is dispensed.

1980 concludes this section of the work whilst *1983* focuses on the efforts of a solicitor to overturn the verdict in the Myskin case. The need for Myskin's conviction becomes apparent as he uncovers links to a paedophile ring involving local property developers, their associates in the police force and local council officials.

Place

Peace's view of the monstrous nature of 1970s' Yorkshire, particularly Leeds, not only provides a backdrop to the acts of criminal violence, but is an essential part of the violent events that take place. In a series of TV and newspaper interviews, Peace has outlined his motivation for writing the *Red Riding* novels. Partly this is due to the fact that Peace was born and grew up in Ossett in West Yorkshire, UK. As he states in an interview: "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'" (Channel Four, 2003).

In this statement lies the genus of his work as an adult fiction writer, his crime fiction can be read as a continuation of this obsession. He is constantly striving for answers to a series of questions.

These involve not only questions about the investigation into these appalling acts of brutality but also why that they occurred “at that time in that place” (Channel Four, 2003). Peace’s works are, therefore, a form of psycho geography (Bentley, 2005). They do not look for the explanations of violent crime solely in the lives or psyches of perpetrators. They ask the reader to confront, in many ways a much more disturbing question what is it about 1970s’ Leeds and Bradford that produced Peter Sutcliffe. However, the sanitised world of much detective fiction, is for Peace, ultimately an insult to the victims. He sees crime writing as essentially a moral or political act. Crime gives us very profound messages about society – often messages we do not want to hear. “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” (Channel Four, 2003).

“We are defined and damned by the crimes of the times that we live in. The Moors Murders, the Yorkshire Ripper, and the Wests, Rachel Nickell, Jamie Bulger, and Stephen Lawrence: I strongly believe that these crimes and their victims, these investigations and trials (or lack thereof) did not just happen to anyone in anyplace at anytime: they happened to very specific people in a very specific place at a very specific time and this is what crime fiction should be documenting...” Channel Four (2003). This paper, then, explores the role of place, the relationship between the monstrous and the geographic, and the way in which the past-present relationship is explored in Peace’s work.

Turn Left/Turn Right

The association of Leeds with what Aspden (2008:11) calls “the darker, more primitive side of life” was synonymous with the decline of its traditional industries and subsequent rising unemployment rates in the UK as the 1970s became the 1980s, but also, in no small part, to its association with the Yorkshire Ripper. ‘*Ripperland*’ as Peace (2003) described it in a TV documentary. Leeds’ attempts to reinvent itself as the Barcelona of the North, starting in the 1990s, is in stark contrast. Aspden (2008:12) states: “Rough and Ready pubs make way for branded corporate bars and the new vision of a ‘twenty four hour’ cosmopolitan continental café culture”. The first Harvey Nichols store outside of London opened in Leeds in 1996 as part of the city centre redevelopment, complete with legal and financial service institutions and a nightlife aspiring to affluence. The early 1990s even saw a revival of the fortunes of “dirty” Leeds United, Peace’s Damned United of the ‘70s, including a return to championship winning ways (for a short time, anyway) influenced by the continental flair of Eric Cantona.

Bauman (2007:117) has claimed that modern society is based on “disengagement, discontinuity and forgetting” and it is these ideas that provide a backdrop to *The Red Riding Quartet*. Peace (2003) has argued that by turning left out of Leeds City Station you enter the reinvented continental-style Leeds of the 21st century. But turning right soon brings you to the bus station, the Scarborough pub and the Griffin Hotel, landmarks of the “dirty” unreconstructed Leeds of the 1970s, shorn of its industrial past, locations that feature prominently in the Yorkshire Noir that is *Red Riding*.

Gieryn (2000) has argued the case for a space for place in sociology, examining the way in which “places matter for social practices and historical change” (Gieryn, 2000:463). While place has a geographical location and a physicality it can also be seen as a social construction, invested with meaning and value, interpreted, narrated and imagined (Soja, 1996) “Place saturates social life” according to Gieryn (2000:467).

While not challenging Wacquant’s (2008) notion of the city as a location or structure in which populations are sorted and become desirable or undesirable, Peace’s work draws on ideas of the city as a place with its own narrative and meanings, the narratives of decay and darkness at work in *Red Riding* providing a stark contrast to the narrative of prosperity, upward-mobility, the very Barcelona of the North-ness of post 1990’s Leeds. The Chicago school were the first to develop a spatial theorization of the city (Soja, 2000) and a body of work has emerged since, examining the relationships between spatial and human relations (Simmel, 2007), the way in which the city establishes social order (Tonnie, 1955) and represents modernity and progress (Park, 1967).

Davis’ (1998) *City of Quartz* is a key text with regard to the examination of the city as a space which is not only segregated and sorted but whose vested interests battle it out, with fear as a key theme. In his study of L.A. in the 1990s, Davis (1998) sees the battle between the police, as keepers of social order and the protection of capitalist interests (see also Margaret Thatcher’s use of the police

in the 1980s' miners' strike in the UK [Wheen, 2009]) and the post-Fordist underclass as the city's ongoing narrative. The privatized public spaces, for those with disposable income, able to enjoy the new service culture, form the centre of the city from which the poor must be excluded. "Police battle the criminalised poor for valorized spaces" states Davis (1998:224). Spaces where consumption and recreation take place need to be protected. Davis (1998) refers to the LAPD as the "space police", with places on the city's design board, guarding the "Panoptican mall" (Davis, 1998:240) with security at its centre. In defending luxury lifestyles, particular spaces are no-go areas for those deemed undesirable.

Davis' (1998) work is a chronicle of the way in which the space of the city is divided and of the close relationship between the LAPD and those with business interests to protect those spaces. The subtitle of *City of Quartz* is "excavating the future". The LA model of development and regeneration is one that has been followed across late capitalist societies. The neo-liberal project inevitably leads to the creation of a more unequal society. As Nozick (1974) argues, society is not equal because abilities and skills are not distributed equally across society. New elites face the problem of how to construct and maintain order. It is argued that in this process, the state uses processes and technologies of risk management that were developed in responses to external threats such as terrorism to manage a range of different groups. In his later work, *Dead Cities* (Davis, 2002), he expands on this argument and examines the way in which the past is swept away to make way for new presents, a key theme of Peace's work. Donald (1992) argues that the city can be read on a text, an element of bricolage which helps to establish the relationship between past and present, while Tonkiss (2005:120) sees the city as being imbued with layers of meaning places which "cannot escape their past events". As Wacquant (2007) argues, the neoliberal attack on the fundamental basis of the welfare state served to criminalise poverty and confine the poor and the "mad" to a marginalised status.

Peace's novels are, then, an attempt to examine the present through the past, drawing parallels with the redevelopment of Leeds, the 1960s' motorway city (Sandbrook, 2006) and its 1990s' reinvention. Neo-liberal capitalists and those charged by the state with keeping law and order are the key players in the *Red Riding* quartet, a reflection of Wacquant's (2008) ideas on urban place and space, outward facing liberalism and "progress" with a repressive underbelly. It is no accident that the dark place away from public view, the place where confessions are made, is referred to as "the belly". This reflects Bauman's (2007) idea that the city, originally built to keep danger beyond its walls, has now, itself, become the source of danger. The modern city according to Wacquant (2008), provides a structure for sorting populations following the post-Fordist restructuring of the labour market and the drift to neo-liberalism, a feature of UK society in the late 20th century. Debates associated with the New Right in the UK in the late 1970s and early 1980s around citizenship, the deserving and undeserving poor, rights and responsibilities, the cost of welfare and law and order all re-emerged as part of what Stuart Hall (1998) conceptualises as The Blair Project, a continuation of the work begun by Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s by the New Labour Government in the UK in the 1990s.

Peace's novels begin in 1974, as the cohesion and consensus of the UK post war era begins to disintegrate after the first major miners strike. It is only towards the end of the 1960s that the UK Trade Unions had come into conflict with the Labour Government over attempts at wage restraint. With the election of a Tory Government in the early 1970s an escalation of strike activity occurred. Strike days per 1,000 employees for the period 1965-1969 stood at 156. For the period 1970-1974 the figure was 585 (Marwick, 1998; Sandbrook, 2006). The society based on the white heart of technology offered by Labour Prime Minister Harold Wilson in the 1960s (Sandbrook, 2006), with its accompanying classlessness thesis (Sampson, 1962) seemed a world away by the early 1970s with the onset of the three day week and newly elected Conservative Prime Minister Edward Heath's confrontation with the miners (Sandbrook, 2010; Wheen, 2009) bringing class politics back to the fore. This is the context in which *Red Riding* is located, drawing the reader back into the darkness of the 1970s' past as a reminder of a present in which Wacquant's (2008) ideas of the segregated city are all too apparent, with crime centre stage as a key social issue. Simon (2007) argues that the period of mass incarceration is a new form of statecraft. The main thrust of his argument is that new civil and political structures have developed. He terms this process "Governing through Crime" (Simon, 2007:22). This is fundamentally different to the process of managing criminal behaviour which all states have to undertake. In his work he outlines the ways in which the perceived danger of being a victim of crime has had an impact on a range of behaviour and choices that citizens make. For example, the increase in sales of SUVs in the US and the rise of the gated community are both directly

linked to the fear of crime. Throughout areas of daily life including schools and schooling a fear of violent crime lies at the root of a number of policy developments.

One of the key storylines in Peaces' 1974 (which also re-emerges in 1983) is the relationship between a property developer and senior members of the West Yorkshire Police Force and their investment in a proposed US style shopping mall on the outskirts of Leeds, an investment funded through their links to the vice industry. Corruption, then, is at the heart of city development. This particular storyline is a good illustration of Simmel's (2004:73) statement that "spatial relations are only the condition, on the one hand, and the symbol, on the other of human relations". In many ways this place (the shopping mall), which is only ever planned but never actually built, is key to the idea of *lieux d'imagination* (Rejinders, 2010) in *Red Riding*. Within the imagined world of the novels this is an imagined place which, while it never comes to fruition, becomes a focus for darkness, decay, death and horror, a symbol of Leeds' corrupt past. Another key storyline is the hunt for the Yorkshire Ripper, including an exploration of Ward-Jouve's (1986) notion of the Ripper as street cleaner (similar to ideas expressed in Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* [1976]).

The Hounding of David Oluwale

In 1977 Peace (2000:340) makes reference to Leeds as a place where "Nigerians fall down in the Calder" (a river which runs through Leeds). In the spirit of fiction in which the books were written this is a reference to an actual event. In May 1969 the body of David Oluwale, a homeless Nigerian immigrant with a history of mental health problems, was found in the River Aire near Leeds. Eighteen months later, two senior Leeds police officers were tried for assault after a campaign of harassment of Oluwale in Leeds city centre was uncovered. Oluwale's story predates the setting of *Red Riding* but it is set in the Leeds that Peace uncovers and outlines in the quartet and is a real-life example of the way in which the ideas advanced by Davis (1998) and Wacquant (2008) played out in that Leeds at that time. In the introduction to his book on Oluwale, Kester Aspden recounts attempts in 2005 to remember Oluwale with a plaque, all of which were met with negative response. As Aspden (2007:13) states: "... what happened to Oluwale isn't the sort of story a progressive city wants to tell about itself. In the new Leeds there is a high investment in the narrative of the prosperous city and with that an indifference to and intolerance of that which offends the glossy façade". Aspden (2007) draws parallels with this extreme act of street cleansing and the treatment of the homeless, beggars, skaters and goths in the contemporary Leeds, a place where the proud and shameful, another key theme of *Red Riding*, have always been juxtaposed. In his review of Aspden's book, Joe Sim sees the Leeds City Police Force as street cleaners and protectors of investment, a 1960s' version of Davis' (1978) LAPD. He argues that "this force stood at the apex of a local, parasitic power elite. It was a force that delivered swift and savage retribution to those, who, simply by their physical presence, challenged the moral sensibilities and political authority of a local white establishment that exercised virtually untrammelled power." (Sim, 2009:158) Oluwale's story, then, is one where the monstrous and the geographic, where *lieux de mémoire* and *lieux d'imagination* intertwine.

The Horror of Leeds

"Leeds – Wakefield deserted and barren, Leeds twice that hell and more. A collision of the wast of times, the wast of hells –

The Medieval, The Victorian and The Concrete,
the dark circles, black mists and broken windows
of industrial decay, industrial murder, industrial hell –
Dead city abandoned to the crows, the rain and the Ripper"

(Peace, 2001:26)

The Red Riding Quartet is interspersed with passages similar to the above, a constant return to the theme of place, the darkness of a Leeds where the bad things that happen to people happen in a place that is both mythical in its Gothic surroundings and real in its state of 1970s' industrial decay. In his

book on Rose and Fred West, Gordon Burn sees the anonymity of the city as the key to the doing of dark deeds: “The freedom conferred by masks. The freedom conferred by cities. In the city the forbidden – what is most feared and desired – becomes possible”. (Burn, 1998:115).

Place, then, is central to the narrative of all four *Red Riding* novels. Peace (2009:1) contextualises the whole stay by stating “I strongly believe that crimes happen at a particular time, in a particular place to a particular person for very very very particular reasons”. However, in a TV documentary made six years earlier, looking at Leeds as a city under siege, the place where the Yorkshire Ripper operated between 1975 and 1980, Peace (2003) goes on record as saying “Why in that place and time? I could not tell you”. In many ways the author’s contradictory stance, raising questions he cannot really answer, is key to the quartet. According to Jamie Nuttgens, co-producer of the *Red Riding Trilogy*, a three-part film version of the quartet, made for Channel Four in conjunction with Screen Yorkshire, the notion that “the sizzle is better than the bite” (Nuttgens, 2011) is central to *Red Riding*. He argues that in the end the books don’t necessarily add up and the trace of deceptions, intrigue and corruption all comes to very little. “All this over a fucking shopping centre” says John Dawson, in *The Red Riding Trilogy*, just before he is shot dead by journalist Eddie Dunford. The white-roll necked, Jensen Interceptor – driving John Dawson does not appear in the books but is a reinvention of the novels’ property developer Derek Box, made larger than life for the screen, über masculine and a social commentator on the state of the decline of the UK in the early 1970s. “The Country’s at war Mr Dunford”, he tells the journalist as he drives the Interceptor through a bleak South Yorkshire landscape. “The Government and the unions, the left and the right, the rich and the poor. Then you’ve got your enemies within, your paddies, your wogs, your niggers, your fuckin’ gippos, the puffs, the perverts, even the bloody women. They’re all out for what they can get. I tell you, there’ll be nowt left for us lot”.

The juxtaposition of the affluent Dawson and the decaying South Yorkshire town he is driving through while making the speech is important. Despite Nuttgens’ (2011) view on the shortcomings of the tying together of ends of plotlines, he asserts that what is important is the promise of the “the sizzle” and that the atmosphere created by the backdrop of Gothic Leeds, the dark arches and The Griffin Hotel or the bleak decaying industrial Yorkshire landscape, is instrumental in bringing about an ongoing sense of foreboding. This is equally true of the novels as it is of the TV adaptation. For Peace (2003), this local industrial decay reflects societal decay, the North of England in decline and heading towards Thatcherism. Dawson’s speech makes this explicit, an attack on emergent identity politics which have no place in this place – his North. In the *Red Riding* films, corrupt senior policemen, vice squad and property developers raise a toast to “The North – where we do what we want”.

Local Hells

In *1974* (1999) the plot revolves around the investigation by journalist Eddie Dunford into a series of child abductions and murders. Much is made at the beginning of the novel of the fact that Dunford has been working in “the South” and his 1970s’ youth fashion (sideburns, fitted shirts and flares) contrast with the traditionally masculine attire of the police officers and older journalists he meets (all of which becomes more apparent in the visual text *The Red Riding Trilogy* [2009]). Dunford’s treatment of women is hardly exemplary (he becomes involved with the mother of a missing child, an association which ends in her death) yet as a character he represents the upward mobility which characterises the British new wave, of the 1960s, working class boy made good in the world of journalism (Zarhy-Levo, 2010). Dunford is contrasted with the hard boiled, hard drinking Jack Whitehead, senior crime correspondent, who eventually falls into the abyss and succumbs to mental health problems.

The grey Northern landscapes of *1974*: the Gothic settings of Leeds and the bleak decay of Fitzwilliam, a small Northern village, where a young girl’s body is discovered with Swan’s wings sewn into her back, a rose penetrating her vagina and the words “4 luv” carved into her chest, are central to the unfolding narratives.

Peace’s work has been criticised for being gratuitously violent. Peace argues that he is simply reflecting the true nature of crime for all those involved. He acknowledges the fact that the descriptions of violence in detective fiction including his own can verge towards a form of pornography. As he says of the first novel in *Red Riding*, *1974*

‘In 1974, there was certainly a bit of a revelling in the noir-ness of the violence,’ he suggests. ‘That’s why I am a bit ambivalent about that book now. It is clearly the work, looking back, of quite a troubled and solitary man’. (Channel Four, 2003)

While Peace’s self-evaluation is, of course, his business it can be argued that the descriptions of the violence done to women in the bleak, dark Yorkshire of *1974* are a hint of the violence done to women by the Yorkshire Ripper, described and reflected in *1980* (2001) and *1983* (2002) but, obviously, based on the real-life acts of Peter Sutcliffe. *1974* can be read as Peace working backwards, hinting at further violence, the detail of which he was aware of when beginning the quartet. The abduction and murder of young children in *1984* also references The Moors Murders which took place around Manchester, UK in the mid 1960s, themselves well explored and documented in other texts (Williams (1967; Granada, 2006), texts which Peace draws on. Indeed, the Moors, as a place, is central to *Red Riding*, arguably another character, a reminder of the violences done in the North. “Fresh lilac moorland fields cannot hide the stolid stench of death” wrote Morrissey in The Smiths’ *Suffer little Children* (1984) and his “oh, Manchester, so much to answer for” refrain is another example of the association of place with death, darkness and decay, mirroring Peace’s representations of Leeds in *Red Riding*.

In *1980* (2001) Peter Hunter is sent from the Manchester Force to investigate the process of the Yorkshire Ripper enquiry (based on John Stalker’s similar role in reality). The Moors feature in the novel as a link between Hunter’s home life in Manchester and his displaced existence, resident in the gothic surroundings of The Griffin (“I walked down the corridor, down the threadbare carpet, the dirty walls, the smell” [Peace, 2000:337]) in Leeds, but also as a reminder of the evil of place

Over the moors –
The murder and the hell –
The cries and the whispers –
Of children.
Hear always their cries, always their whispers –
Always murder and always lies –
Always the moors –
Always night and always black (Peace, 2001:125)

1974 ends with Dunford following police harassment, violence and the death of Paula Garland, the mother of a missing child, committing suicide on the moors by driving into an oncoming car. The passage references Alma Cogan’s *The Little Drummer Boy*. The song features on a tape that Moors Murderers Ian Brady and Myra Hindley had made of the torture and murder of one of their victims Lesley Anne Downey. This tape was found in a left luggage office at a Manchester Station. It was then played in open court at the trial. In a scene that could come straight from Peace’s or Burn’s work, a transcript of the tape was published by the Daily Mail in 2002. On the tape, one can hear Christmas songs being played including Little Drummer Boy by Alma Cogan. This disturbing scene becomes the basis for the conclusion of Burn’s novel *Alma Cogan* (1999)

I sat there, singing along to The Little Drummer Boy, with those far-off days, those days of grace coming down. Waiting for the blue lights. Ninety miles an hour (Peace, 1999:295).

1977 revolves around the relationship between Bob Fraser, a policeman seen in *1974* as one of “the good guys”, now married to the daughter of Bill Molloy (a character based on George Oldfield, head of the Yorkshire Ripper enquiry) and an affair that he is having with a prostitute. The plot takes in the connection between the West Yorkshire police force and vice activity (the prostitute is being pimped by a senior police officer) and much is set in the red light districts of Leeds and Bradford in the North of England, on the streets where the Yorkshire Ripper had begun to operate in the period in which the novel is set. The “Ancient English shitty city” (Peace, 2000:23) of Leeds is central to the action and narrative which opens with the discovery of what appears to be another victim of the Yorkshire Ripper. Again, throughout the novel, description of violences to women are juxtaposed with descriptions of the place in which they occur, each given equal status, Peace constantly returning to his “why in that place at that time?” question. “Chapelton – my town for two years; leafy streets filled

with grand old houses carved into shabby little flats filled full of single women selling sex to fill their bastard kids” (Peace, 2000:4).

Each chapter of *1977* begins with a fictional exchange between John Shark, Radio Leeds’ shock-jock (based on James Whale’s shows of the same period) and a caller. The exchange at the beginning of chapter one ends with Shark’s observation “Women eh? Can’t live with them, can’t kill em. ‘Cept around Chapeltown” (Peace, 2000:2). This is followed two pages later with a description of the Ripper’s latest victim “I know what he’s hiding: there’ll be a raincoat over her, boots or shoes placed on her thighs, a pair of panties left on one leg, a bra pushed up, her stomach and breasts hollowed out with a screwdriver, her skull caved in with a hammer” (Peace, 2000:4).

1977 sees the beginnings of the claiming of the Ripper as the ‘Yorkshire’ Ripper. “Forensics will be back within the hour, but Farley’s already saying this is our man. Our Ripper, he says, spitting the last words out” (Peace, 2000:120). This plays out further in *1980* where Peter Hunter’s investigation sees the West Yorkshire force close ranks and makes it clear that they will catch *their* Ripper. In his interviews discussing the quartet Peace talks about how the Ripper seemed to be everywhere, “pervaded the place” (Peace, 2003), and sees the presence of posters, portakabins and phone-lines dedicated to the notorious “Ripper Tape” (now generally accepted to be a hoax, although Peace [2003] has reviewed evidence and the theory that the Ripper had an accomplice) as representing a siege of the city of Leeds. Both he and *Red Riding Trilogy* co-producer, Jamie Nuttgens, have described Leeds in this period as “Ripperland” and documented women’s attempts to “reclaim the night’ through night-time marches and vigils” (Nuttgens, 2011).

Both *1977* and *1980* explore the ideas presented in Nicole Ward-Jouve’s (1986) *The Street Cleaner* a term Sutcliffe, the Yorkshire Ripper, had given himself, claiming to be on God’s mission to cleanse the streets of prostitutes. The ideas in this work, exploring the wider social context of pathological violence towards women and raising questions about the similarities between the values of the Ripper and those who investigated his crimes are examined here by Peace. *1977* features a letter, assumed at the time to be from the Ripper to the Yorkshire Post in which he states: “my purpose is to rid streets of them sluts.... warn whores to keep off the streets...” (Peace, 2000:268). *1980* sees the removal of the assistant Chief Constable (a barely-veiled reference to George Oldfield, head of the real Ripper inquiry) from the case, following a press conference at which he makes the following statement

But I don’t regard him as evil. To me he’s like a bad angel on a mistaken journey and, which I could never condone his methods, I can sympathise with his feelings (Peace, 2001:6).

Following the death of a 19 year old bank clerk in *1980* Oldfield’s fictional counterpart states: “If this is connected with the previous killings, then he has made a terrible mistake the dead girl is perfectly respectable” (Peace, 2001:192). This respectable/not respectable and innocent/guilty motif examined in *Red Riding* is something which was certainly a discourse at work in the actual Ripper investigation, much criticised by the emergent radical feminist movement of the late 1970s (Ward-Jouve, 1986). It is interesting, then, that the outcome of the challenging of such discourses translated into ideas around reclaiming space and place, something which at least some of the investigating officers recognized the need for. In reviewing the progress of Hunter’s investigations into the Ripper enquiry in *1980* a senior officer articulates the need for progress: “something to give hope to the thousands of students fleeing the cities of the North tonight; something to give hope to the millions of women who aren’t lucky enough to be able to flee, something to say to these mothers and sisters, these wives and daughters.” (Peace, 2001:218).

Peace has described his own experiences of the siege of the North – the dark misogynistic unreconstituted North, descriptions of which are peppered within the narrative of *1980* (“The North after the bomb ... murder and lies ... ‘Bloody Yorkshire” (Peace, 2001:20]). He describes how he prayed that the Ripper would not kill his mother or his fears that his father may be the Ripper (Channel Four, 2003) and in *1980* he makes explicit his own “why in that place at that time?” question and the links between criminal actions, time and place: “He’s from round here because he hates it, hates it enough to kill it – so he has to have been around here long enough to hate it, to want to kill it”. (Peace, 2001:83).

In *1983* Peace returns to a number of different plots – the case of Michael Myskin, missing schoolgirls and paedophile ring and a shooting related to police vice and corruption, drawing together

a number of events, characters and places: “Circle of hell; local, local hells” (Peace, 2002:217). It is one place, the village of Fitzwilliam, in South Yorkshire, UK, which draws much of the closure of the quartet together, the location of a paedophile ring involving police officers, business associates and the father of the solicitor who leads Michael Myskin’s appeal against conviction of the child murders. Other dark places also appear; Pinderfields hospital where journalist Jack Whitehead is strapped to his bed, similarly Park Lane special hospital where Michael Myskin is strapped to his. Both of these places reflect the containment of “the belly”, the place where, across all four of the novels, suspects are beaten, tortured and, in some cases, murdered.

Conclusion

In a world where police officers have, seemingly, lost any meaningful sense of boundary, in places where they regularly assault and murder suspects, sleep with prostitutes in a moral vacuum, the only real rule seems to be “this is the North, where we do what we want”.

In the *Red Riding* novels, Peace gives a picture of the impact of a series of horrendous offences on the wider community. In so doing, he seeks to move away from the slasher movie approach that appears to dominate popular cultural approaches. Peace does not attempt to give the reader any insights into the supposed psychological profile of the killer. His work is, rather, more concerned with the ways in which crimes shape the future landscapes of the areas where they have been committed. This lays Peace open to the accusation that he is simply being gratuitously offensive in his graphic descriptions of the violent crimes that he writes about. Such descriptions would not be printed in the tabloid media. Are these graphic descriptions of sexual violence simply voyeurism which are tolerated in a work of art? Peace (2003) himself has recognised that this is an accusation that he has to face. His response is to question how he could faithfully tackle these issues without such violence, and the leaving in of the horror, particularly the horror of place in a past-present context (Bentley, 2005) is central to his work.

Peace has indicated after over ten years researching and writing these novels he is no nearer answers to the fundamental questions that he poses – why the ‘Yorkshire’ Ripper. In fact, he has suggested that he wants to write further in this area. In a similar vein, Gordon Burn, after immersing himself in the Fred West case to write *Happy Like Murderers* (1998), told *The Guardian* that he had no real idea as to why they had committed these murders. This approach is a stark contrast to those who seek to offer an ultimately comforting taxonomy of serial killers. The work of Peace (and Burn) is more disturbing for its refusal to even entertain such notions. Its strength lies not only in its authentic portrait of the society, in which, these crimes are committed but also it forces the reader to confront the troubling possibility that the structure of society as much as individual pathology has a very significant role to play in the production of sexual violence and murder. Place is, again, central to this idea. However, examining his work in the context of the literature on place (Nora, 1989; De Boer and Frijhoff, 1993; Rejinders, 2010) and the city in particular (Park, 1967; Davis, 1998; 2002; Gieryn, 2000; Wacquant, 2008) goes some way to answering Peace’s question. A bricoleur’s approach which brings together urban geography, sociology and post-structural analysis of fictional texts allows for a consideration of the relationship between space, place, the past and the present.

Peace’s work is a disturbing, unflinching portrait of the impact and aftermath of violent crime on individuals and wider society. For Peace, these impacts ripple through a community long after the actual events. He seeks to show the way that the victims’ families and others are stained by their sudden involvement in events of almost incomprehensible brutality, and the ways in which place is central to these crimes. Peace (2003) claims that he is still unable to answer his “why in that place at that time?” questions and yet the criminal acts documented in the *Red Riding* novels can be read as a metaphor for the industrial decay and shift to neo-liberalism at work in the 1970s’ and early 1980s’ Britain, the setting for the quartet. The dark decaying Leeds of the 1970s and the declining industrial North form a backdrop to, but are also central to, the narratives in *Red Riding*. The ideas of future Thatcherite ministers, emerging at the time of the setting of the novels, play out among the poor and disenfranchised. Keith Joseph’s (1978) cycle of deprivation or Rhodes Boyson’s assertion that the UK welfare state had brought an “economic and spiritual malaise” (Boyson, 1975:381) are brought to life in Peace’s work. The David Oluwale case, outlined earlier, may illustrate the extreme end of a continuum of those failed by the good intentions of the welfare state but *Red Riding* is also populated with prostitutes, rent boys and morally corrupt police officers struggling with an industrial economy in

decline and the failures of the promise of previous decades, as well as characters like Derek Box/John Dawson, happy to take advantage of the new entrepreneurial environment.

Finally, perhaps Peace's *Red Riding* represents the antithesis of the ideas addressed by Nora (1989) and Reijnders (2010). *Lieux de mémoire*, with its focus on space as a place for remembering specific locations with the horrors of the past removed in order to recall a stained history, and *Lieux d'imagination* with its emphasis on space as a physical point of reference for an imagined world both draw on Dyer's (1992) concept of utopian pleasures achieved via consumption of particular texts. In the work of Nora (1989) and Reijnders (2010) place is read as a pleasurable text. Peace's work, however, is more akin to Bolton's (2005) concept of the TV crime drama as a dystopian world. *Red Riding* is the Leeds of the past with the horror left in. We would, therefore, conclude by asking what a tour of Peace's Leeds might look like and advance the term *lieux d'horreur* as a description of the faction bricolage that is *Red Riding*.

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