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**“Local Hells’ and State Crimes:  
Place, Politics, and Deviance in David Peace’s Red Riding Quartet”**  
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**‘Local Hells’ and State Crimes:  
Place, Politics, and Deviance in David Peace’s Red Riding Quartet**

David Peace is a contemporary British author who uses crime fiction set in regional locations to reveal conflicts in the social order and explore the ways in which the state attempts to reinstate that order. The ‘Red Riding Quartet’ comprises four novels – *1974*, *1977*, *1980*, and *1983* (1999-2002) – that document an alternative factional history of the UK during this period. Operating at the interface of fact and fiction, the Quartet breaks the surface of received histories to offer a dense, noir-driven analysis of the contemporary world. Charting the crimes, politics, and social tensions of their times, Peace’s novels acknowledge that, across the 1970s and 80s in the UK, contextual developments in policing practices and the growing inter-penetration of the realms of politics and policing, crime and business, mark a broader privileging of neoliberal economics.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Sutcliffe was convicted of murdering thirteen women, and attempting to murder seven others, from 1975-1980 across the Yorkshire region. Dubbed by the press the ‘Yorkshire Ripper’ in reference to nineteenth century London serial killer Jack the Ripper, Sutcliffe evaded police for five years, despite being brought in for questioning on nine occasions. His crimes and the failure of the police to apprehend him came to define both Yorkshire and the UK during this period.

David Harvey defines neoliberalism as ‘a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade’ (2). The rise of neoliberalism during the latter half of the twentieth century resulted in a series of social changes that fundamentally changed the nature of crime and the purpose of law enforcement. David Peace’s *Red Riding Quartet* presents these contextual changes to political, economic, and social conditions during the 1970s and 80s as key to understanding new crimes and patterns of crime control.

Representing contentious decades, Peace considers the manifold methods through which neoliberalism indirectly impacts the policing of cities by changing the material conditions that produce crime. Highlighting increased socioeconomic inequality, his crime fictions explore the policing of physical space for economic profit and the changes this produces in the spatial and socioeconomic characteristics of both Yorkshire and the wider United Kingdom. Critiquing the power and practices of law enforcement and the disciplining of neoliberal subjects, his novels critically examine the role of the state and its commitment to policing policies that serve to protect corporate and elite interests.

The four novels of his *Red Riding Quartet* consequently interrogate the many tensions that arise when the executive of the state is bypassed in favour of the privatization and deregulation of public interests. Critiquing state corruption and the surrender of public bodies to the private sector, the erasure of the economic state through deregulation and deindustrialization is aligned with the withdrawal of the social state and the strengthening of the penal state, as part of a wider examination of the roots of economic neoliberalism, the rise of the framework of the Right, and the decay of social cohesion. From claustrophobic, paranoid profiles of police-business collusion, to the manifestation of crimes as a product of place, this chapter explores how and why Peace employs local landscapes and highly

politicized settings to challenge our understanding of the relationship between crime, policing, state power and economic neoliberalism.

### **Bloody Yorkshire**

A dynamic social and political site that creates the conditions necessary for deviance, landscape in the Red Riding Quartet functions to highlight the relationship between crimes and their times. The Quartet situates the ultimate ‘scene of the crime’ (1980: 179) as

Yorkshire, bloody Yorkshire –  
 Primitive Yorkshire, Medieval Yorkshire, Industrial Yorkshire –  
 Three Ages, three Dark Ages –  
 Local Dark Ages –  
 Local decay, industrial decay –  
 Local murder, industrial murder –  
 Local hell, industrial hell –  
 Dead hells, dead ages –  
 Dead moors, dead mills –  
 Dead cities – (1980: 305-6).

As the biggest county in the United Kingdom, Yorkshire is divided into a series of ‘Ridings’ – North, East and West – that are subject to periodic reform and amalgamation. Throughout the Quartet, regionality is shown to fracture the topography of the UK, encouraging the contesting of spaces that are themselves subject to shifting national realignments and redefinitions.

Yorkshire is offered as an increasingly multicultural site of conflict, the 1975 Chapeltown race riots acting as a backdrop to a wider transformation of the region into

Paki Town, the only colour left.  
 Black bricks and saris, brown boys playing cricket in the cold.  
 The Mosque and the Mill, make it Yorkshire 1974:  
 The Curry and the Cap (1974: 179).

Although the two teams of Mosque and Mill are temporarily united by a shared love of cricket, the dominant image is nevertheless one of discord and division as present and past are set in combative exchange in a new Yorkshire contending with perceived threats from both

within and without. Whether racial, religious, regional or gendered, battles to control the space of the county are a constant feature of the Quartet. Yorkshire is variously described as ‘*Jack Whitehead Country*’ (1974: 102) or ‘*His*’ (1980: 19), an acknowledgement that the Ripper is challenging the control of the county by the state. Positioned as a product of the county by his press moniker, ‘*Yorkshire’s own Jack-the-Ripper*’ (1977: 206) enjoys a new reign over a frightened and ‘*Bloody Yorkshire*’ (1980: 47). As his killings continue, the West Yorkshire Police become increasingly concerned that their investigation will be subject to a national spotlight, and the risk of being taken over by their colleagues from the London Metropolitan force. The Ripper poses an affront to the authority and control of the state and consequently the mission to catch this killer becomes as much about regaining authority and respect as it does about solving specific crimes.

Across the Quartet, de-industrialization is presented as a very specific form of crime—an ‘industrial murder’—that explicitly reveals the North as both crime scene and victim. Reflecting on the industrial demise of the North, Eric Hobsbawm argues that ‘centres of industry [were transformed] into rust-belts, or, in some ways, even more spectrally, into urban landscapes like face-lifts from which all trace of former industry had been removed [...] turning [such places] into living and dying museums of a vanished past’ (413). David Thomson reflects on the 1970s in the region as memorable for being a ‘time of abandoned factories, dole lines, and the withering of Yorkshire’s confidence’ (108). Considering the impact of this ‘shattered terrain’ (108) on the people of this place, Peace’s narratives overlap physical and human geographies to interrogate a new aesthetic of deindustrialization. Peace represents local landscapes to reflect this demise

in the very architecture and landscape of the place. This is at the ass end of industrialization. There was massive recession. It was a very bleak, ailing place. And then you had the contrast, as you went further North, and got out of the city, and then it got very, very bleak. That’s the scene of the moors murders. Everything seemed to be charged with some element of threat or danger (Peace quoted in Gregorits: 80).

Mapping economic damage on the land as well as its people, his novels chart the disintegration of the region as both a physical and ideological phenomenon, one implicitly connected to the wider perceived defeat of socialism and the growth of Right wing, neoliberal 'progress' that slowly transforms familiar vistas into newly uncanny scenes.

Representing regional landscapes as metaphors for the 'pain and ugly anguish' (1980: 246) of a hidden past, Peace focuses on Yorkshire as a place of fantasies and spectral encounters. His characters move across the '*the Valleys of Death, the Moors of Hell, lonely hells, endlessly*' (1977: 340) searching for victims and perpetrators of crimes. Protagonists Assistant Chief Constable Peter Hunter and Detective Chief Superintendent Maurice Jobson recall previous experiences on the Moors digging in search of the hidden victims of the Moors Murders.<sup>2</sup> Hunter intimately associates the Moors with death, describing it as an 'evil place' (1980: 304), its 'weather stark and grey, the landscape empty but for telegraph poles' (1980: 3). In this 'abysmal valley that collects the thunderings of endless cries so dark and deep and nebulous it is that try as you might you cannot see the shade of anything' (1980: 304), police 'walk on across this marsh of shades beaten down by the heavy rain our feet pressing on their emptiness that looks like human form' (1980: 268). There is no beauty in this natural world—instead the Moors operate as an extension of the barren and hostile nature of the humans that cross it. Devoid of aesthetic Romanticism, the natural world is enabling only as a site of burial or concealment of crimes. Offering counter narratives of underground truths, the Yorkshire of Peace's fictions is a site of 'rape and rhubarb' (1983: 220), production and consumption, darkness and pain.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The 'Moors Murders' were committed by Ian Brady and Myra Hindley between July 1963 and October 1965. The pair killed five children, some of whom were sexually assaulted, and disposed of some of their bodies on Saddleworth Moor, north of Manchester in the South Pennines. During the investigation police found photographs of Hindley posing on the Moors. Police hunting for the bodies of the missing children used these photographs as visual clues to the whereabouts of their victims' graves.

<sup>3</sup> Yorkshire is famous as a site for the production of rhubarb. Force-grown in artificial darkness within heated cultivation sheds, the growing of rhubarb became such a big business that for a time part of the county was referred to as the 'Rhubarb Triangle'.

The post-industrial decline of the region is primarily represented through marginalized people and degenerating spaces, while an accompanying moral decline is articulated through the built environment. David James comments that ‘fiction is able to represent those sites/spaces of the everyday which escape the purview of social control. Like the alleyways, backstreets, nooks and crannies and the “heterotopias” of the city, so fiction has within itself similar investigations and spaces’ noting that ‘movement through everyday spaces can trigger-off phases of uncanny retrospection’ (97). In Peace’s Yorkshire, there are now ‘back slag heaps where fields have been’ (1977: 330), while broken buildings survey ‘the landscape, empty’ (1980: 9). These liminal spaces are occupied by the socially and economically marginalized. Victims are found dead in ‘alien landscapes of wastelands and buildings’ (1980: 79) including ditches, ‘local tips and old slag heaps’ (1983: 400). Killers operate across ‘Alleys, terrace backs, wasteland, rubbish tips, garages, playing fields’ (1977: 64) and emerge ‘out of the shadows of the darkness’ (1980: 14) in derelict spaces created by the aftermath of the deindustrialization process.

Peace has complained that in most contemporary crime fiction ‘there doesn’t seem to be much debate about where we’re going as a society’ (Peace quoted in Shaw 2010: 25). This is a claim that could never be levelled at his Quartet, which is concerned not only with crime but also with the impact of crimes on the relationship between the state and the regions. The series openly ‘wrestles with a very fundamental question about crime and society’ (Peace quoted in Hart: 561), namely ‘to what extent are/were the people of Yorkshire, and the North in general, culpable in these crimes? What role, for example, did the language or landscape of Yorkshire in the 1970s play in these crimes, similarly the political and economic policies of the time? Anything, in short, that could answer the question “Why the Yorkshire Ripper and not, say, the Cornish Ripper?”’ (Peace quoted in Hart: 561).

Employing Yorkshire as ‘a crucible for the whole country’ (Peace quoted in Myerscough: 6), the Quartet suggests that ‘Yorkshire was just the country, and beyond, in microcosm’ during the 1970s and 1980s (Peace quoted in Myerscough: 6). As a county built on criminality, Yorkshire functions in Peace’s novels as an ‘English Sicily or Deep South: the most primal, brutal, prejudiced and [...] politically honest place in the country, the place where the battles that matter are played out’ (Beckett: 25). Drawing on the influence of Raymond Chandler and James Ellroy in his use of deindustrialized natural landscapes and evocations of city space, Peace creates a fictional Yorkshire that represents the core of a wider cancer eating away at the state. An oppositional space, defiant of both its physical geographical connections to and ideological control by the state, Peace has described the county as ‘as much a state of mind as a place,’ a space ‘in England but never quite of it’ (Peace 2009b). His Quartet sets historical oppositional resistance to state control at a regional level against the rise of a neo-liberal agenda and tightening affiliations with government, business, and organized crime across the United Kingdom during the 1970s and 80s. This tension between conscious marginality and welcoming accommodation positions the rogue republic of Yorkshire as subject to a radical (re)visioning that ultimately offers an alternative narrative on ‘God’s Own Country.’

### **Local Hells**

Writing about the fate of crime fiction in a period of global capitalism, philosopher Slavoj Žižek suggests that the ‘main effect of globalisation on detective fiction is discernible in its dialectical counterpart: the specific locale, a particular provincial environment as the story’s setting’ (Žižek 2014). Literary critics echo this claim, suggesting that ‘place matters more than ever in a globalised world. The conventional wisdom on globalisation is that it produces a flat world in which everybody consumes the same bland products in the same bland



settings’ but that ‘the more interconnected the world is, the more people crave a sense of place—the more distinctive and unusual the better’ (Schumpeter 2012). While these formations effectively align the local and global, they fail to offer a pronounced focus on the role of the state as effectively positioned somewhere between the local and the global. The role of the state and its complicated relationship with place, space, and regional culture is crucially important to Peace’s novels, which are concerned both with the physical and cultural environment, and the socio-economic characteristics of location. The factional topographies of Peace’s crime fiction reveal as much about the period and the society as they do about the physical world. Painted in shades of black, the landscape of dynamic hostility that comes to define the Red Riding Quartet establishes Yorkshire’s cartography and micro-climate as metaphors for a country experiencing a national sense of doubt, fear, and fragmentation.

For classical philosophers like Plato, the city constituted the highest ideal of humanity. Yet by the 1970s, scholars such as Murray Bookchin proposed that society was ‘slowly losing the humanist conception of the very meaning of the word “city”’ (vii). ‘As the once clearly demarcated cities inherited from the past are devoured by the expanding metropolis,’ Bookchin argued, ‘the city begins to lose its definition and specificity, as well as its function as an authentic arena for community and solidarity’ (vii). As a politicized site on which broader battles between the tensions of, resistance to, and accommodation of state control can be staged, in crime fiction ‘the city is a problem that needs to be solved’ (Schmid: 245). However, in the radical epistemologies of the city offered by the Red Riding Quartet, the possibility of an ‘urban knowledge’ proves impossible. Policeman Bob Fraser is left disoriented and paralyzed by the city-space of Leeds, finally confessing ‘I don’t know where to go’ (1977: 21), while Ripper-detective Helen Marshall calls Leeds a ‘horrible place’ (1980: 202). The sense of paralysis, loss, and disorientation experienced by individuals in the city centers on a Dickensian vision of the evolution of Leeds, positioning the city as caught

between the spectral sites of regency castles and kings, and the atrophy and suffering of a post-industrial period in which everything seems to be decaying or dying. Forced to spend increasing amounts of time in Leeds as part of the Ripper investigation, Peter Hunter becomes increasingly haunted by

Leeds, fucking Leeds:  
 Medieval Leeds, Victorian Leeds, Concrete Leeds –  
 Concrete decay, concrete murder, concrete hell –  
 A concrete city –  
 Dead city:  
 Just the crows, the rain,  
 The Leeds Ripper –  
 King Ripper (1980: 322).

Complicating traditional notions of sovereignty and the legal expression of the authority of the state, Peace moves beyond a reaffirmation of the principles of sovereign power to suggest a new kind of neoliberal formulation. As the new ‘King of Leeds’, the Ripper operates with a new form of sovereign power that, like the state, can be difficult to detect and trace and can disrupt public life at any given moment. A trans-historical ‘concrete medieval’ Leeds is brought under the malign influence of this new ‘King’ Ripper, who governs the city from a ‘bloody castle rising out of the bleeding rain, a tear in the landscape’ (1980: 26). In Peace’s *Quartet*, the physical decay of the city functions as a symbol of moral and political decline in the state, and the death of the city is made visible on city walls that are ‘sprayed’ with ‘*UK DK*’ (1983: 28).<sup>4</sup> Foregrounding the possibilities for crime created by the city and its many networks, the novels present the city as both a significant site for the emerging neoliberal order and a claustrophobic space in which inhabitants are made to feel perpetually unsafe.

As a place of absolutism, Peace’s Yorkshire is characterized by hard, fast intolerance.

As one caller to *The John Shark Show* on Radio Leeds reminds the host, ‘It was a Yorkshireman who invented the guillotine, John, Everyone knows that’ (1977: 282). These

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<sup>4</sup> ‘UK Decay’ is a reference to a UK post-punk band active between 1978-1983, but also functions as a critical metaphor for the state of the nation at this time.

revolutionary tendencies and primal systems of governance are celebrated as a source of logic and pride. Chief Constable Angus boasts to Peter Hunter that ‘Yorkshire is always the last bastion of common sense. Like the bloody resistance, we are’ (1980: 29). Conflicts within Leeds and the region of Yorkshire echo larger, national conflicts and soon ‘everyone’ is ‘talking Northern bloody Ireland’ (1983: 177). The external presence of a concerted movement for independence in the form of the IRA is mirrored within the confines of Peace’s Yorkshire by the YRA (Yorkshire Republican Army) (1983: 49) and the sustained demonization of regional rivals Lancashire. Divisions between the white rose county of Yorkshire and the red rose county of Lancashire are accentuated by local police – ‘Frankie hanging around, talking up the Lancs/Yorks rivalry’ (1977: 52) – and press – ‘Police on both sides of the Pennines’ (1977: 143) – until Lancashire becomes ‘the wrong side of the hills’ [1977, 150], a place remote in terms of culture, if not in geography.

Peace rakes over the said but also the necessarily ‘unsaid’ horror of these regional divisions to offer a culturally determined psychology of the United Kingdom as a battleground between local and centralized state power. Old leaders and fresh elites clash to produce a new psycho-geographical atlas of the country, charting ongoing battles for hierarchies and control. Yorkshire is itself presented as a space in which power is unevenly distributed and subject to constant redistribution. Throughout the Quartet, a territorial battle rages between competing social, political, and economic groups seeking control of the county. These conflicting forces form the basis of a new ‘English Civil War’ (1980: 47); by the time the third novel *1980* opens, there is ‘Nothing Short Of A Total War’ (1980: Part Two).

As an explicit indictment of a society at a particular place and time, Peace draws his readers to Leeds as the heart of the darkness that characterizes the UK during this period. The unsolved crimes that haunt the Quartet are reflected in the landscape of Leeds, a city that not only refuses to evolve, but is also represented as degenerating and receding backwards to the

former ancient city *Leodis*. As a home to both criminals and police, Leeds is offered as a site of extreme violence and fragmentation that foregrounds the anonymity of city living and the informing influence of neoliberalism on crime and deviance. Populated by individuals who transgress the norms of the state, in Peace's hands, the city is not a rational space but an expression of a shifting state, an unknowable geography that is as much psychological, as it is physical.

### **Peace Man**

The authority and power of the state are challenged by crime. Crime can make the state look vulnerable, but crime can also be used by the state to generate fear in and control over society. Yet the power and authority of the state are also enhanced by crime – especially the crimes committed by those who wield power. In the *Red Riding Quartet*, social, political, and economic changes drive up crime and disorder, and the regional police forces of Yorkshire produce, benefit from, and are also destabilized by, crime and disorder. As the visible representatives of the state in city space, the police should function as ‘a dominant symbol of Western control’ (Winston and Mellerski: 2), giving the impression that crime can be contained within a society, and that the state and its controls are there to protect the public. In crime fiction, the narrative function of the police is to bring closure, solve the case, and draw conclusions. In the *Red Riding Quartet*, the police contribute to the maintenance of social order in a primarily symbolic sense since, despite their increasing presence, the killings not only continue, but in some cases the police also function as active participants in killings. The problematic nature and function of the police illuminates tensions in normative models of policing and sovereignty, enabling the *Quartet* to presenting an emergent vision of policing and governance as a schema of accommodation and resistance, compliance and complaint.

The never-ending war to control city space in the Quartet exists because criminality persists within both the society subject to police control and amongst the police force itself. Like many post-Chandler crime writers, Peace demonstrates that the order imposed by the state is not so easily separable from the disorder against which it is apparently arrayed. Mobilizing the mafia-like influence of authority, Peace represents a police force motivated by money, an investigation founded on rumor, and a public gripped by terror. These tensions mark a wider shift in modes of governance from sovereignty to neoliberalism during this period of British history. In Peace's novels, the police turn the politics of fear to their political advantage, manipulating emotion to intensify pressure on the public psyche, imposing the politics of insecurity and new threats on collective efforts to reinforce authority over public space.<sup>5</sup>

The four novels of the Red Riding Quartet are concerned with the ways in which neoliberal policies function to create new social conditions, which in turn affect patterns of crime, reshape communities, and lead to the implementation of new governance regimes that give corporate elites unprecedented influence on policing. The symbolic assertion of state coercion and violence enacted by his fictional West Yorkshire Police is a spectacle employed to demonstrate state power and service to private capital. Crony capitalism is rampant across the Quartet, and Peace draws upon contextual developments including the privatization of state enterprises and the deregulation of the markets to critique an increase in corporate power that positions security as one of the basic principle of state activity.

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<sup>5</sup> Asked whether he thinks the new West Yorkshire police force were actually like this, Peace replied, 'Yes, or I wouldn't have written the books in the way that I have. The cases of Stefan Kiszko, Judith Ward and Anthony Steel – all of which involved detectives from the Ripper Squad – offer nothing to contradict my fictions and even a cursory examination of the Ripper investigation itself reveals a monumental degree of failure on the part of senior detectives. Recent revelations (for money) in regard to killing kits only further prove that we do not know the whole story. The survivors and families of the victims, and the communities that were terrorised, still do not know the whole truth and that in itself is corrupt' (Peace 2009a).

Peace's novels openly reference and respond to this context of national police corruption as it emerged in media reports and snatched news broadcasts as the narratives develop. The pervading presence of 'West Yorkshire coppers and their bent mates' (1983: 400) is notable across the texts—Part Two of *1977* is even entitled 'Police and Thieves'—and by the end of the Quartet it is increasingly difficult to make a judgement call between the two groups. Motivated by money rather than justice or legality, the West Yorkshire Police come to bear a clear criminal relation to the criminals they hunt down. As the precariously thin and confusing line separating criminality and law enforcement becomes apparent, the Quartet demonstrates that the order imposed by the state is not so easily separable from the disorder against which it is apparently arrayed. The police are as delinquent in these novels and share many characteristics with the monsters they track. This uncanny resemblance becomes an important facet in ongoing tensions between police resistance to, and accommodation of, the power and influence of the state across the four novels. The Quartet evidences tensions, negotiations, and conflicts between regional and state power to suggest the emergence of a mode of governance not necessarily tied to institutional structures and jurisdictional limits, but one that nevertheless in practice operates as a logical extension of centralized, and privatized, state control.

The voices of the UK media become increasingly aware and critical of a wider push towards the effective 'privatization' of policing as the Quartet develops. The unregulated nature of policing and police actions forms a central concern of discourse as members of the public turn to the new interface of the radio phone-in to protest against internal corruption and an apparent absence of justice. In the Quartet's second novel *1977*, transcripts of callers to the 'John Shark Show' on Radio Leeds reveal police corruption as a burgeoning source of public anxiety. One caller argues that the public should 'blame the police for the increase in violence. Fear and bloody indecision? That's their doing' (1977: 196). These broadcasts

suggest that the police are trying but failing to contain criminality in the region, and that public perception of the force is broadly negative.

Crime fiction critic Heather Worthington argues that ‘the criminal is the main threat in modern crime fiction’ (xxii), but in the *Red Riding Quartet* this relationship is transformed as the presence of the police generates fear rather than a sense of safety. Engaging with the power of fear caused by violent crime and the reporting of that crime, the *Quartet* evokes the power of the police to produce a climate of terror and control. Poor relations between the police and the communities they control leads to fear, distrust, and anger as citizens come to recognize the police as deeply prejudiced and part of the problems blighting the society in which they live. Professionally and morally undermined by the innocent image of the ‘Peace Man’ (1977: 198) imagined by his young son, policeman Bob Fraser comes to regard his colleagues as little more than the state’s ‘own sponsored fucking monsters let loose on the wind’ (1977: 15).

Prone to physical violence and illegal activities, the police also employ covert law enforcement tactics including ‘roadblocks’, ‘unmarked cars’ (1983: 39), and restrictions on public movement in an attempt to remove the Ripper and regain state authority over the region. Operating a strategy of ‘Cowboys and fucking Indians, 1974’ (1974: 45), the Police indiscriminately attack suspects—including using a rat in a cage to interrogate witnesses (1983: 121)—assault innocent individuals and destroy public property. The primal nature of their power is underlined by an attack on a travellers’ camp at Hunslet Carr that is described as ‘Zulu Yorkshire style’ (1974: 46). Unannounced police raids function as symbolic gestures of control, access, and domination. The militarization of urban space created by these repressive instances of social control contribute to a wider sense of urban (in)security for characters who enjoy neither privacy or the presumption of innocence.

As part of a wider privatization of policing across the Quartet, growing links between policing, business, and crime function to blur neutrality, objectivity, and the policing mandate towards the furthering of particular interests. Offering fictive truths that span the space between popular and official narratives of history and justice, the Quartet identifies the decade between 1970-1980 as a moment of acute transformation in the relationship between the individual and the state using crime fiction as a genre in which to represent resistance to neoliberal practices. Peace's Quartet engages with many of the topics highlighted by Žižek's analysis of crime fiction in a globalized age, including the 'rise to the New Right populism: the flow of illegal immigrants, soaring crime and violence, growing unemployment and social insecurity, the disintegration of social solidarity' (Žižek 2014). Chronicling the causes and consequences of grim crimes and times as a product of the discourses of the period, Peace uses the politics of place to segue into broader challenges to state control. His (dis)United Kingdom is defined by discontent and deviance, as changes in government and growing union power during the 1970s lead to rumors about the establishment of Right-wing militia groups, while the ongoing conflicts and challenges to state control and territorial disputes at home in Northern Ireland and abroad in the Falkland Islands haunt the narrative.

Across the Quartet, silence becomes an extension of state control as an operative form of power, as an absence of words is gradually connected to the dark forces of police cover-ups and business censorship. George Oldman demands that Eddie breathe 'Not a bloody word' (1974, 26), limiting communication under the tight, unspoken regulations of the West Yorkshire Police, while imposed silences extend across the media in the form of sanctioned 'Reporting restrictions' (1974, 176). The social engineering of 'urban regeneration' programs that seek to replace old industries is arguably the real crime at the heart of the Quartet, as underhand coppers and developers adopt the coy euphemisms of 'business opportunities' and 'agreements' to justify their underground operations.



Like many organizations in the Red Riding Quartet, the construction industry is shown to be highly localized and extremely corrupt. Its logical development is represented in conspiratorial plans to finance and erect a new Ridings Shopping Centre using the dual resources of building know-how and police vice funds. ‘The Swan Centre’ (1983, 228) at the Hunslet and Beeston exit of the M1, the artery to the rest of the UK, is set to be ‘the biggest of its kind in England, or in Europe’ (1983, 228). Evidencing a desire for status and power within the nation state, this temple to capitalism and consumption is founded upon corruption. By means of social critique, Peace provides glimpses of the effects the new centre will have on the established space of the local community, granting the reader an additional dimension of decline. We are asked to note that: ‘Across the road was another empty shop, just a name and a big weather beaten sign declaring that the property was to be redeveloped by Foster’s Construction, builders of the new Ridings Shopping Centre, Wakefield: Shopping centres –’ [1983, 38]. Even solicitor John Piggott comments that ‘you wonder what the fuck will happen to this place when they finish the Ridings’ (1983, 45). The state, in consort with capital, thereby strengthens its grip on power, avoiding explicit acts of direct confrontation with specific local interest groups in favour of operating via a policing network of political machinations and illicit actions.

Focusing on Britain at a time of discontent, Peace turns the narrative spotlight on changes in government, right-wing militia groups, growing union powers, and social unrest. He presents readers with a futureless past of unrest and decay, greed and conservatism, business and spite by chronicling a move from government to governance, and a state increasingly at the service of economic elites. In the Red Riding Quartet the hegemonic social and cultural project of neoliberalism is evidenced in the insulation of business from justice and its enablement by association with law enforcement. Set against the rise of big business, corrupt housing developments, and a society undergoing a transformation from sovereign

control to new modes of governance, the Red Riding Quartet uses the genre of crime fiction as a way of showing the changing nature and function of the state, mobilizing localism to explore transgressions, tensions, and developments in the wider nation.

The policing of crime in Peace's fictions has nothing to do with law enforcement, and everything to do with profit. In his novels, the West Yorkshire Police are not committed to fighting crime but are instead engaged in a pattern of discipline and regulation directed at those targeted by neoliberal policies. They do not work to protect or secure communities, but instead play a key role in destabilizing and reshaping communities for the benefit of financial entrepreneurs. Determined to bring vice, gambling, and any money-making 'off the streets and into our pockets' (1983: 227), the leaders of the police see the 'whole of the North of England, from Liverpool to Hull, Nottingham up to Newcastle' as 'ours for the taking: the girls, the shops, the mags – the whole bloody lot' (1983: 227). Chief Inspector Bill Molloy's toast to these corrupt coppers - 'To us all and to the North – where we do what we want!' (1983: 228) – indicates that in the Quartet crime is political, and politics is profoundly criminal. In Peace's novels, the representatives of the state are the real villains – police, politicians, councillors, and even a clergyman conspire to create and perpetuate a system of lies and protect one another. The never-ending war to control city space in the Quartet exists because criminality persists within both the society subject to police control and amongst the police force itself. Representing the intersection of private business and state control as '*evil connecting with evil*' (1977: 340), the Quartet charts the consequences of a society in which there appears to be '*No law*' (1980: 10). As symbols of the corruption of the state, the West Yorkshire Police take advantage of state authority in regions of the North already made vulnerable as a result of deindustrialization, aggressive urban renewal, and the resultant corruption between councillors, contractors, and architects. Set against a region suffering from social unrest and post-industrial economic decline, a polished image of the re-branded

force is betrayed by self-interest and financial motivation. Cops and robbers unite to pursue the opportunities afforded by a desire to rebuild and regenerate the region.

Peace's depiction of Yorkshire both resists its assimilation into larger, state-bound power structures and at the same time acknowledges the emergence of power not necessarily tied to the state or state institutions. The Quartet is notable for its evocation and use of locality and region, yet the West Yorkshire police represent functionaries of the nation state, rather than a particular region in that state. Protective of powerful interests and motivated by profit, the authoritarian tendencies of the West Yorkshire force are more flexible in the face of corporate crime. Masking the crimes of the state, as well as those of private business, the crimes of capital go unpunished in a highly selective enforcement of law and order. The 'ecosystem of brutality' (Beckett: 25) created by the state, means that crime becomes integral to the very workings of 1970s and early 1980s 'society.' Ironically deemed a 'Peace Man' by one police officer's baby son, the reality of the West Yorkshire Police and their national colleagues is that they are the antithesis of the peace keeping force associated with their uniforms.

Implicating the West Yorkshire police in a history of cover-ups, concealments, and corruption, the Red Riding Quartet presents them as professionally and morally bankrupt representatives of the state during the 1970s and 1980s. Maurice Jobson's final statement to solicitor John Piggott – 'Not guilty?' 'We all are' (1983, 390) – provides an effective summation of this precariously thin line separating criminal and law enforcer. Marked by misogyny and Masonic connections, the lawless antiheroes of the West Yorkshire Police stand as the ultimate examples of the corruption operating at the heart of the state during this period. The final claim that 'No-one even looked' (1983: 398) functions as a critical statement about the many crimes of the Quartet, as well as internal deviance in law enforcement and the

growing impact of the state on the privatization of both policing and the wider society in the late twentieth century.

### **Politics of Location**

The novels recognize not only tensions in spatial order, but also the capacity of the local as a powerful site for wider negotiations of space, power, and influence. Recovering the agency and purpose of regional locations, the Red Riding Quartet problematizes and challenges the relationship between the county and the country in twenty-first century crime fiction.

Presenting the crimes that come to define local spaces as the products of tensions between the state and the evolution of contemporary capitalism, the Quartet challenges the dominance of the city-state during the 1970s and 80s. Across the Quartet, the crimes of the state and of corporations are shown to increase the profits of business and the social and economic vulnerability of the public. The coercive powers used to maintain the authority of the ruling elite, and the numerous demonstrations that the machinery of the law works in favor of the economically or socially powerful, are both central to state corruption. In the Red Riding Quartet, the state apparatus breeds widespread cultural criminality and deviance as part of a wider system of double crossing and deceit. Contextualized in a society rife with criminality throughout both law enforcement and the middle and ruling classes, the ethics of the state are quickly undermined as criminal elements are exposed as part of the power-sharing elite.

As a symbolic representation of state power, policing is represented as a vital tool to control society, protect flows of capital, and enhance private investment and interests. In Peace's fictions, the neoliberal state polices public space but selectively ignores corporate space, where the real explosion in crime is shown to occur. In the neoliberal city, governance instead becomes focused on policies and practices that make this space attractive to corporations, industries, and developers. Populated by a host of 'Yorkshire Gangsters and

Yorkshire Coppers' (1977: 34) that merge and conspire as the Quartet develops, Peace's novels become defined by their 'cruel cities and faithless priests [...] barren women and unjust laws' (1977: 65). Characters liken the UK during the period to 'Nazi Germany' (1983: 319), defined by a condition of fear and hatred, with seemingly 'No hope for Britain' (1983: 404). As an oppositional figure of resistance to state control and anti-monarchic sentiment during a Jubilee period, the Yorkshire Ripper is 'a product of, and a threat' to an 'alienated and urbanised society' (Worthington: xxii).

The state is not a normative center in these texts, as crimes function to expose the structures of power in society that offer an illusion of security and safety. Compounded by the rise of the security state, with rumours of death squads trained in Northern Ireland and deployed on British streets, the reach of state power is not demonstrated in the mechanisms of law enforcement, but through covert machinations of underground groups and allegiances. Offering not just a 'whodunit' but a 'why-dunit', Peace mobilizes the alienated urban setting and fast paced language of noir and explodes recent events into a diffuse and dialogic web that readers must negotiate, trusting no one and circling around the same events in different times.

While crime fiction has historically been used with the conservative intention of upholding and maintaining the social order, in the hands of Peace the genre is mobilized as a critical weapon against the status quo, a dynamic and controversial segue into more challenging and radical approaches to society and history. Peace argues that

I still believe that the crime genre has the greatest potential of any genre; actual crimes happen to actual people, in actual places, in actual times and the potential then is there for the crime novel to understand why these crimes happen to these people, in these places, at these times, with – however idealistic or naïve it may sound – the hope and intention of stopping them happening, again and again, over and over (Peace quoted in Shaw 2012).

By delineating ideological tensions and mounting challenges to established orders, Peace examines the birth of contemporary cultures of individualism, mapping a conflict between the community and the local, the state and the neoliberal.

Throughout these novels, local landscapes operate as an articulating vestige of economics, politics, and social order, a metaphor for the legacy of deindustrialization and the rise of neoliberalism in late twentieth century Britain. Reframing the significance of place in a world increasingly defined by fluid geographical borders, the novels foreground the function of cartographically specific locations in chronicling historical change and political battles. The fractured and defeated topographies of the Red Riding are used to critique state corruption and the surrender of public bodies to private interests, lobbies, and organized deviance. Offering crime fiction as an appropriate genre through which to trace the roots of a new neoliberal consensus, the Quartet mobilizes regional locations as microcosms of the wider country, using local crime scenes to speak beyond immediate borders and address wider anxieties about state authority and neoliberal developments. Interrogating relationships between the state and the individual, the country and the city, the regions and the nation, the Red Riding Quartet suggests that place matters more than ever not just in a globalized world, but also in contemporary crime fiction.

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