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Screening the Seventies: Representations of the 1970s in British Film and Television

By

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<u>Acknowledgements</u>

<u>Declaration</u>

I first explored films about the 1970s in an MA dissertation for Film and Television Studies at the University of Warwick in 2012.

In that thesis the case studies were *Control and Velvet Goldmine*, *Ratcatcher* and *Neds*, and *Anita & Me* and *East & East.* Case studies in this PhD have been selected to avoid duplication with earlier work and have been used to develop a substantially different approach to the 1970s on screen.

I hereby declare that this thesis represents my own work and has not previously been submitted for examination at another institution.

<u>Abstract</u>

This thesis maps how the 1970s has been constructed in twenty-first century British culture. It analyses representations of the decade in British film and television made between the years 2002 and 2014. The thesis suggests that the repeated audio-visual return to the 1970s in contemporary Britain entails a recognition of the decade as a transitional period that saw the arrival of the changes that define our world today. It demonstrates how the manner in which the 1970s is remembered and understood is of considerable significance to how we understand the present. It also argues that the complexities and nuances of these representations have been largely unexplored.

The thesis has four chapters. Chapter One situates the detailed textual analysis that follows within the broader concerns of the thesis and existing scholarly literature. This first chapter develops the contours of the thesis' argument and outlines the originality of the project. It argues that the nuance and complexity of the relationship between past and present in audio-visual histories is underexplored and subsumed in dichotomies that argue for their 'progressive' or 'reactionary' potential. This argument is developed through the proposition that insufficient attention has been paid to the formal, stylistic and narrational strategies used to construct the past on screen. The chapter proposes an approach which brings questions of tone, style, and point of view to the forefront of analysis.

Chapter Two groups generic engagements with the 1970s, the spy thriller *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* (Tomas Alfredson, 2011), the conspiracy thriller *Red Riding* (Channel 4, 2009), and the retro police procedural *Life on Mars* (BBC, 2006-8). The chapter considers how these texts interweave the historic with the generic. It also affirms the importance of tone in considering how the past is shaped in the present, as the case studies are viewed in conjunction with writing on melancholia and mourning. Chapter Three challenges the usual definitions of British cinema by including texts that are set in Northern Ireland. It explores difficult and traumatic associations of the 1970s in representations of the 'Troubles' on screen in *Five Minutes of Heaven* (Oliver Hirschbiegel, 2009), *Shadow Dancer* (James Marsh, 2012) and *'71* (Yann Demange, 2014). Chapter Four considers questions of identity and consumerism by looking at two films that engage with music and youth culture in locations far from the metropolitan core, *Anita & Me* (Metin Hüseyin, 2002) and *Good Vibrations* (Lisa Barros D'Sa, Glenn Leyburn, 2012). Both films are marked as autobiographical or semi-autobiographical in nature and the chapter focuses on point of view and questions of retro and nostalgia. It explores how the texts facilitate a different relationship between past, present and future than previous case studies.

The thesis thus brings together a range of films and television programmes set in the 1970s, and through detailed textual analysis pays attention to questions of tone and the articulation of temporality in history. It demonstrates that the 1970s are being made and remade with considerable sophistication and nuance in twenty-first century texts. Attention to the tone and point of view of these texts gives insight into the struggles over the history of the present.

<u>Introduction</u>

In the third part of the 2012 BBC documentary series *The 70s*, the historian Dominic Sandbrook recalls the 1977 Silver Jubilee. Standing by the River Thames, down which Elizabeth II had sailed some thirty-five years earlier, Sandbrook, for the only time, explicitly inserts his personal experience of the decade. Holding a family photograph taken on the day, he describes how he 'vividly remember[s]' the enthusiasm with which his parents 'got involved in the village celebrations'. The Jubilee celebrations of 1977 are rebuilt in a montage of archival footage from the period. The footage is tied together by voice-over narration and personal recollections, and anchored firmly to present-day Britain, with cuts between the fireworks of the Silver Jubilee and Sandbrook looking out over a similarly spectacular display on the Thames in 2012, nearly forty years later. The fragment of image that he holds in his hands, taken at the unnamed village, constructs an implied web that expands from the centre of the capital and the monarch to millions of ordinary families in ordinary living rooms, united in front of their television screens in that instant. As 'Jerusalem' plays over both sets of images, Sandbrook describes how the song was struck up at the earlier celebration by the huge crowd as, for a brief moment, 'life in Britain really didn't seem quite that bad'. 'Seventies Britain', he concludes, 'remained a country of contradictions, a place of discord and discontent, and yet still somehow, beneath it all, a land of hope and glory.'[1]

Sandbrook's documentary series explicitly addresses the negative connotations of the 1970s in popular consciousness. It is a decade repeatedly defined

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[1] *The 70s,* UK, BBC, tx. April 2012, 3. 55.30-58.20

by economic unrest and conflict. Narratives of the 1970s tend to embody a pervasive sense of decline as they describe the disintegration of the post-war consensus in a Britain struggling to adjust to its place in a new global landscape. As Andy Beckett has noted: 'I have been hearing what was wrong with Britain and British politics in the seventies all my adult life. No other political theme has been as unrelenting. The seventies were grim. The seventies were the hangover from the sixties. The seventies were violent. The seventies were a dead end. Above all, we don't want to go back to the seventies.'[2]

I have chosen to introduce the thesis with *The 70s* as Sandbrook has become a somewhat self-appointed voice of the decade, with his work extending from popular history books to the written press and televisual documentaries. How the seventies are shaped in this series is as interesting as the key narratives and themes that Sandbrook identifies. The privileging of television, the use of narration – cinematic and aural – to shape the relationship between past and present, and the attempt to clearly define the nation of the ordinary Briton', embody key questions that I will address throughout the thesis. Furthermore, Sandbrook's ubiquitous vision of the seventies is worth briefly outlining. His thesis, despite positioning itself as revisionist, is ultimately congruent with the decade's reputation in broader popular consciousness. It thus provides an appropriate topography of the decade, against which my core texts may be considered.

While Sandbrook does not dispute the turbulent and conflict-driven nature of the 1970s, he is keen to focus on its importance. He argues that to write the seventies

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[2] Andy Beckett, *When the Lights Went Out: What Really Happened to Britain in the Seventies* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd, 2009), p. 2.

off as a cultural wasteland between the liberal 1960s and materialistic 1980s is to ignore its crucial position as the decade that 'gave birth' to modern Britain, and the moment in which the 'twenty-first century was taking shape'. For Sandbrook, the 1970s was a watershed moment; the moment when everything changed, when the post-war consensus was irrefutably shattered and modern Britain was born. The decade emerges as the transition point between a collective post-war culture and the birth of our contemporary twenty first-century individualistic and capitalist society. It is positioned as the time when Britain had to readjust to its new place in the world in the face of economic and global decline, when the dominant post-war consensus was shattered, and when traditional ideologies came into conflict with an emergent neoliberalism. Much of Sandbrook's argument is based on the assertion that the qualities frequently associated with the decades that bookend the 1970s – whether that be the freedoms associated with the sixties, or the consumer-driven ambition associated with the eighties – are in fact defining parts of the seventies landscape. Thus, while popular discourse frequently locates a shatterpoint in British society in the changes Margaret Thatcher and her government made in the 1980s, Sandbrook argues that she was not a cause but an effect: a logical outcome and necessary result of the shifting landscape and failure of the post-war consensus during the seventies itself.

While stressing the turbulent and conflict-driven nature of the 1970s, Sandbrook ultimately offers a populist, stabilising, and conservative vision of the decade. He self-consciously positions himself as the 'Princess Di historian', concerned with telling British social history through focusing on popular and 'ordinary' experience. He depicts the world of a moderate British centre ground that is ultimately the same now as then, and a unified country on a modest but linear

journey that retains its national character despite the technological and societal changes of the past forty years. The programme ultimately offers an uncontested singular vision of the era, which paints a clear inheritance between Britain now and Britain then, firmly erasing the possibility of any other course that might have been taken during or after the decade.

This thesis takes as its starting point Sandbrook's assertion that the 1970s is not only of great significance as the decade that saw the arrival of the changes that define our world today, but one whose complexities and nuances have been largely unexplored. If Sandbrook posits a direct line between the oil crisis of 1973, the Thatcher election of 1979, and the landscape of twenty first-century Britain, then I will aim to interrogate this sense of inevitability. I show how the decade is represented across a range of texts with surprising nuance and complexity that throws up as much contradiction as cohesion, and renders the relationship between past and present less certain.

I aim to map how the decade has been constructed in the cultural imaginary since the turn of the millennium by looking at representations of the 1970s in British film and television made between the years 2002 and 2014. I look at how the 1970s are represented on screen and how these representations interact with, challenge, or shape one another and the seventies' as a broader cultural construct. I also consider how these representations have changed over the past fifteen years as I explore how the seventies has become a privileged site through which to understand the present.

In the referendum of June 2016, the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union. If the decision taken by Edward Heath's government in 1974 to join the Common Market defines the changes to British society that began in the 1970s, then the referendum of 2016 to reverse Heath's decision arguably bookends the liberal order that had shaped Europe throughout the intervening forty years. It also signals a contemporary landscape in flux, wherein the certainties of progress and the rebranding and rebuilding of modern Britain's self-image enter a period of instability that mirrors the collapse of the post-war consensus during the 1970s themselves. In 2018, that question of complexity becomes even more pertinent as the decade of modern Britain's birth is revisited and reassessed. 'We don't want to go back to the seventies' remains a common political soundbite, but the decade is returned to with ever greater frequency and significance. As the world that rose out of the collapse of the post-war consensus disintegrates, representations of the decade of modern Britain's birth offer a unique and important space. The seventies becomes a site where the anxieties and hopes surrounding the past forty years and the direction the country has taken since then, can be played out. Representations of the decade thus offer a rich ground to understand how Britain sees itself now as the twenty-first century progresses and a new global landscape emerges. Despite the playful humour and chippy confidence of Sandbrook's rhetoric, the series embodies a struggle to contextualise a national past - to tie time, space and image together, and use the tone of their intersection to shape the relationship between past and present. Throughout my thesis I will aim to address how a range of film and television texts deal with these issues by considering who is being represented, for whom, and in what manner. I will look at how the nation is constructed on screen and how the

difficulties and complexities of sustaining a cohesive national self-image are articulated in the texts themselves.

The question of 'we' raises another reason why I have chosen to introduce the thesis by looking at the work of Dominic Sandbrook. Sandbrook is not alone in positioning the 1970s as the decade that gave birth to modern Britain, nor is his argument that Thatcherism was built during the decade unique. But what is interesting in his project to retell the decade is his construction of himself as the 'People's Historian' and his use of television to achieve this end. Even in his written works, television becomes the central means by which he appeals to the reader and provides them with a means to access the past. The segment on the Silver Jubilee with which I started combines personal recollections and family memories with the broader scope of a national event. Disparate televisual images are joined by aural and visual narration to try to create not only a link between past and present-day Britain, but also a sense of linearity and progress. Post-modernist discourse frequently embodies a sense of anxiety in its consideration of the fragmented images of the past in the mediated legacies of a historical period. Conversely, in *The 70s* the televisual archive is shaped by the cinematic narration to build a coherent and clearly defined nation moving through space and time. Sandbrook utilises fragments of the past not to present multiple histories that are irretrievably shattered, but to try to stitch together a grand narrative of a national whole and clearly define the link between the past and the present. I am interested in understanding how each of my case studies positions the past in relation to the present and constructs a historical timeline as it does so. Considering how the texts engage with image is crucial in understanding the different ways in which they do this. I will thus look at what different forms of mediated culture come to signify within the case studies, how the mediated legacy of

the 1970s itself is utilised, and how the texts engage with previous representations of the decade.

Whether or not this is a self-conscious project of the texts, it is a central assertion of this thesis that the case studies must be understood in relation to one another and in relation to the "seventies" in the wider collective consciousness. Doing so will allow the full complexity and nuance of this time period, and its incarnation on screen, to be understood. I will look at the intersection of questions of history with media and the image and how the study texts address, manage, or embody, anxieties surrounding the relationship between the two. 'The seventies' itself resists any simplistic definition that can comfortably account for it as either a declinist failure of the post-war consensus or a lost social democratic utopia. Looking at how the films and programmes work in conjunction with one another is essential in understanding how this complexity operates both within individual texts and across the wider cultural imaginary.

The thesis has four chapters, each of which is organised differently. Both the selection of core texts and the chapter groupings allow for the range in representations of the decade to be accounted for, but also for a consideration of the different ways in which the texts might be situated in relation to one another. A notable characteristic of the 1970s on screen is the manner in which clusters of texts emerge that are united in some way, whether by genre, subject, theme or style. These various modes of comparison are all considered and will be reflected on and developed across the body of the thesis.

Chapter One surveys the critical field, outlines the key debates, and aims to situate the textual analysis that follows within the broader concerns of the thesis and existing scholarly literature. In this context, I develop the contours of my own argument and examine why the 1970s might be seen as such a resonant decade to revisit in the contemporary climate. I outline the originality of my project and how I will approach the texts, bringing questions of tone, style, and point of view to the forefront of my analysis. While some of the corpus texts have been critically overlooked, others such as *Life on Mars* (BBC, 2006-7) and *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* (UK, Tomas Alfredson, 2011) have been written about specifically in relation to questions of retro, nostalgia, and memory. However, these texts have not been brought together as part of a wider body of representations of the seventies across British film and television. Furthermore, insufficient attention has been paid to the formal, stylistic, and narrational strategies used to construct the past on screen. The nuance of the relationship between past and present remains unexplored and subsumed in dichotomies that argue for their 'progressive' or 'reactionary' potential. Over the course of the thesis, the concerns and anxieties of much of the critical discourse will be shown to be embodied in the texts themselves. They too will be shown to reflect and interrogate contemporary Britain's heterogenous sense of self and complex relationship to its own past. An analysis built on close textual readings thus allows for an understanding of the multifaceted and ever-evolving collage of contrasting (and at times conflicting) constructions of the decade that make up the seventies both on our screens and in the wider collective consciousness.

Chapter Two groups together three explicitly generic engagements with the 1970s: the spy thriller *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*, the conspiracy thriller *Red Riding* (Channel 4, 2009), and the retro police procedural *Life on Mars*. While each has

slightly different generic affiliations, they share thematic similarities as they all consider the role of the state and explore the relationship between past and present through a consideration of genre itself. These three texts utilise genres that flourished in the 1970s and self-consciously engage with generic versions of the decade. In considering these strategies the chapter develops questions about the role of media in remembering the 1970s.

The texts in this chapter have received substantial critical attention. I offer an original approach by proposing that it is the overlooked question of tone and point of view in audio-visual narration that is the defining feature of how the past is experienced on screen. I identify what I argue is a fundamental tension in each of the texts between the narrative of the source material and the tone of the adaptations. I consider how one ultimately shapes the other. I also begin to develop an understanding of what specifically the 1970s can offer as a historical site to revisit. I develop questions about the relationship between the past and present as I consider writing on melancholia and mourning, and how linearity and teleology are affected by tone.

Chapter Three challenges the usual definitions of British cinema by including texts that are set in Northern Ireland. It explores difficult and traumatic associations of the 1970s as it considers representations of the 'Troubles' on screen in *Five Minutes of Heaven* (Oliver Hirschbiegel, 2009), *Shadow Dancer* (James Marsh, 2012) and *'71* (Yann Demange, 2014). The chapter takes into consideration critical discourses on the representation of Northern Ireland in British and Irish cinema. It combines them with a consideration of how the different genres, styles and tones of these films intersect in surprising ways. The chapter looks at how the texts engage with the heavily mediated legacy of the region and its image in national cinemas,

especially in relation to the 1970s. This approach allows the chapter to bring to the fore another central question of the project, which is to consider a differentiated representation of Britain on screen and to ask whether or not different parts of the nation must be considered on different timelines. The chapter thus raises the question of whether or not the 1970s and its relationship to the present operates differently in different places. It also explicitly addresses a hypothesis of the thesis, which is that representations of the decade as a site of violence and trauma have changed as the twenty-first century has progressed. I argue that they have developed in a specific and arguably contrasting way in relation to Northern Ireland than in relation to the mainland United Kingdom.

After a consideration of genre, the state, and a particular region in 1970s-set cinema, Chapter Four shifts focus to consider questions of identity and consumerism. This chapter analyses two films that engage with music and youth culture in the construction of identity. Both films are set far from the Metropolitan core and are marked as autobiographical or semi-autobiographical in nature. I look at the West Midlands-set *Anita & Me* (Metin Hüseyin, 2002) and the Belfast-set *Good Vibrations* (Lisa Barros D'Sa, Glenn Leyburn, 2012). The questions of national image and identity that run throughout the thesis are brought to the fore in this chapter, aligning them with a central theme of the seventies itself: that the decade was the moment when conceptions of identity, individual and collective, changed. It is also in this chapter that point of view in cinematic narration, a foundation of textual analysis throughout, is positioned as the key means by which the past is experienced on screen and, by extension, how identity is constructed on screen.

The question of location is crucial, as the chapter considers individual and national identity in relation to regional and local experience. The texts' differing

relationships to both a specific location, and media representations of it, are a central point of analysis in the chapter. Questions of retro and nostalgia are especially relevant to these texts. An exploration of cinematic narration and point of view will allow the chapter to consider questions of teleology and momentum in relation to the texts' engagement with mediated pasts. I consider whether the texts' self-reflexive engagement with the past results in the sense of stasis identified in contemporary culture by critics such as Simon Reynolds and Mark Fisher, [3] or whether it facilitates a different sort of relationship between past, present, and future.

Other groupings of texts might have been chosen, and notably absent are representations of other regions in the United Kingdom, particularly Scotland.[4] However, the number of seventies-set texts requires a coherent critical selection and structure. The organisation of the chapters thus allows for the interrelationships between different representations of the 1970s on screen to become a central focus of the thesis. The structure enables the multiple areas of consideration between the texts, whether genre, style, theme, narrative or date of production, to be addressed. In this way the decade as it exists on screen is mapped and interrogated with rigour and nuance.

Writings on postmodernism repeatedly heralded the collapse of grand narratives in a society that had lost the ability to narrate a coherent vision of itself. This argument would seemingly be confirmed by a contemporary landscape

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[3] Mark Fisher, *Ghosts of My Life: Writings on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures* (Winchester: Zero Books, 2014), Simon Reynolds, *Retromania: Pop Culture's Addiction to Its Own Past* (New York: Faber and Faber, Inc., 2011).
[4] Relevant examples include Lynne Ramsey's *Ratcatcher* (UK, 1999) and Peter Mullen's *Neds* (UK, 2010).

fragmented by the dominance of the de-territorialized space of the internet, where concepts like 'post-truth' and 'echo-chamber' have exploded around political discourse. However, as evidenced in Sandbrook's documentary, the desire for society to narrate our past, present and future, and work out who 'we' are, remains ever-present. This desire arguably drives many of the anxieties and uncertainties that dominate today's world. If we live in a cultural landscape that is littered with the debris of representations of representations, iHistory on iPhones, and obsolete shadows of Plato's cave, then it is only by weaving them together in a multifaceted and heterogeneous collage that we can understand the national past.

Whether or not the picture of the seventies that emerges is definitively radical or retrograde, representative or mythological, is not a concern of this thesis. Rather, I would assert that the "seventies" itself is a rich cultural intertext where these anxieties, debates, and narratives about society are played out. The 1970s is a historical era that exists in living memory and one where individual memory and experience intersects with collective national pasts. It is also a privileged site for understanding contemporary Britain. As the country goes through what is arguably its most intense period of introspection and self-analysis post-war, how we understand the decade that gave birth to modern Britain is crucial in understanding how society sees itself now. The decade's memorialisation in the present illuminates how the direction Britain has taken in the past forty years, the changes, losses and gains that have been made, are understood. It also reveals the difficulties and possibilities surrounding the articulation of 'we' in a relentlessly individualistic and globalised era. My aim, in what follows, is to pursue and demonstrate these ideas about the 1970s. By bringing together a range of films and television programmes set in the 1970s, I seek to challenge the inevitability of Sandbrook's idea of

subsequent history. Through detailed textual analysis of the selected texts, and by foregrounding questions of tone and the articulation of temporality in history, I aim to demonstrate that the 1970s are being made and remade with considerable sophistication and nuance in twenty-first century texts.

Chapter One: Surveying the Critical Field

Introduction

This chapter situates the film analysis which follows within the broader concerns of the thesis and the existing scholarly literature. My topic, the analysis of representations of the 1970s in British Film and Television of the twenty-first century, requires me to address a number of critical debates. Firstly, there is the vast area of film and television set in the past and their relationship to written historiography. In regard to British cinema and television, written discourse on heritage and the national past is particularly important. There are also adjacent and pertinent debates concerning the place of history in the second half of the twentieth century. Key questions addressed in these debates include those of postmodernism, nostalgia, the end of history and the shift from analogue to digital cultures.

Each of these areas has a substantial literature and it would be impossible to survey all these debates here. Instead, I will select key texts and ideas and use them to shape my own approach, bringing together scholarly debates with the specific skills of textual analysis of film and television texts. I want to consider why the 1970s has become such a resonant decade for retrospect in our own troubled times, and how the seventies are intimately linked with the nation's sense of self. This means considering some broad questions about how we remember the past raised by scholars such as Frederic Jameson and Svetlana Boym, but also addressing and interrogating questions surrounding the nation's representation. I will be mindful of

how 'Britain' is constructed both on screen and in critical engagement with 'British' cinema. I will include representations of Northern Ireland as that region is of huge importance when considering how the 1970s is remembered. The dynamic between Northern Ireland and mainland United Kingdom in these texts will be shown to be illuminating as well as complex. A key focus for me will be questions of tone, image and the presence of the past in popular culture. In this respect, I have found the work of two music critics, Simon Reynolds and Mark Fisher, particularly useful. As close textual analysis will be a key means by which I approach my texts, I will draw on the nuanced work of film scholars such as George Wilson to provide appropriate models.

The chapter is divided into five sections:

1.) Film and History

2.) Heritage and The Nation

3.) Nostalgia

4.) Point of View and Narration

5.) 'Retro' and The Image.

Part One: Film and History

In *Writing History in Film*, William Guynn argues that it is an often held 'suspicion that the intellectual foundations and ultimate mission of [History and Film studies] are fundamentally at odds'.[1] For Guynn, Film Studies is a field in which 'poststructuralism still casts a long shadow',[2] and the notion that representations of the past on film can meaningfully engage with the historical past represented is uniformly rejected. Guynn thus asks the question;

> 'How can historians, whose object of inquiry is precisely the referential world – what really happened in the past – relate to Jacques Derrida's dictum that nothing exists outside of the text, that textual references lead only to other texts and never to demonstrable realities? How can they reconcile themselves to postmodern theory that disputes the very possibility of reconstructing a causality of events in an irredeemably fragmented way?'[3]

Scholarship on postmodern theory and history is vast and outside the scope of this thesis. Instead, I will situate my work in relation to writing on historical representation in British cinema, which can be broadly defined as either focusing on questions of heritage and the nation, or on nostalgia and memory. Before engaging with these areas, however, I will briefly address a key theme in writing on the postmodern and history, as it is crucial when considering representations of the 1970s on screen. This is what Marcia Landy has described as the 'beleaguered'[4]

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[1] William Guynn, *Writing History In Film* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 14.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Marcia Landy, 'Introduction', in Marcia Landy (ed.) *The Historical Film: History and Memory in Media* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2000), p. 21.

position held by history in the second half of the twentieth century as nineteenth-century ideals of empiricism and truth were undermined, and 'history' was repositioned as a series of conventions written and shaped by those who produce it. My project is not concerned with interrogating the theoretical validity of this argument. Rather, I seek to understand my texts as operating in a cultural and social context shaped by the postmodernist challenge to history, a challenge which called into question its metanarratives and claims to truth. Looking at twenty-first century texts, I ask how they deal with the legacy of this challenge in the post-postmodern landscape of the twenty-first century. A landscape increasingly defined by globalised and hypermediated forces such as 9/11 and its international impact, the global economic crisis of 2008, environmentalism and eco-concerns, or the rise of the internet and digital culture. The project thus affirms film's ability to provide meaningful contributions to historiographic discourses, an ability that scholarship in the fields of both History and Film Studies has worked to assert over early dismissals of cinema as mere entertainment.

Marc Ferro in *Cinema and History* and film scholar Pierre Sorlin in *The Film in History: Restaging the Past* were early voices to argue that films were not without historical value. For Ferro and Sorlin, however, this value was limited to illuminating the period of the films' construction and nothing more. This limitation of cinema's historiographic value runs throughout film theory, as noted by Jennifer Smyth who cites the *Cahiers du Cinema's* influential reading of John Ford's *Young Mr. Lincoln* (USA, 1939) as being emblematic in its approach. Smyth argues that, in the *Cahiers'* reading, the past on screen is useful only in so far as it reflects the present in which it was created. Thus, the figure of Lincoln can only function as 'an expression of a long-term uncontested cultural investment rather than a historical

figure'.[5] In such a view, the film cannot provide a meaningful engagement with the historical period it portrays.[6]

While I argue that the 1970s are particularly useful in understanding Britain in the twenty-first century, I also consider the texts themselves as valid pieces of historiography that contribute to an historical understanding of the 1970s itself as well as its legacy in the present. In this view, the influential work of Hayden White and Robert Rosenstone is important. White and Rosenstone both assert the historiographical potential of film, and also argue that film as a form of historiography, or 'historiophoty', has unique capabilities distinct from those of the written word.

At the crux of White's thesis is the idea that all history, written or visual, has narrative at its heart. Furthermore, White argues that not only is history primarily constructed and shaped through narrative form, but that it is through the act of the narration that past events can be understood, and through which they take on meaning, sense and purpose.[7] There are layers of complexity to this seemingly simple argument that White himself signals, not least a tension between extracting and 'imposing' a narrative out of historical events. [8] White balances an acknowledgement of the artificial nature of the desire to impose order on events with

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[5] J.E. Smyth, Reconstructing American History Cinema: From Cimarron to Citizen Kane (Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2006), p. 16.

[6] This trend has continued to dominate readings of history on film, whereby scholarly engagements with historical cinema sees it as predominantly fruitful in illuminating the political and cultural climates of the film's production rather than period they portray. Relevant examples include the work of Robert Burygoyne and Leger Grindon who both write on post-classical American Cinema with the aim of understanding national identity at the time of its production.

[7] Hayden White, 'The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality', *Critical Inquiry* 7:1 (Autumn 1980), pp. 5-27., Hayden White, *The content of the form: narrative discourse and historical representation* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1987), Hayden White, 'Historiography and Historiophoty', *The American Historical Review* 93:5 (December 1988), pp. 1193-1199.

[8] White, 'The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality', p. 23.

an understanding of what he argues is a universal human need to narrate in order to make sense of the past. As he argues, 'to raise the question of the nature of narrative is to invite reflection on the very nature of culture, and possibly, even on the nature of humanity itself'.[9] These nuances will be explored throughout the thesis, as I will consider who constructs what history, for whom, and for what purpose. Furthermore, if history is to be understood as the craft of shaping the fragments of the past into a whole, I will explore issues related to this action by looking at questions of cause and effect, teleology and momentum.

Thus conceptually, thematically, and textually, narrative sits at the core of this thesis. I argue that stories about the 1970s are useful in understanding the seventies as an historical period, as well as in understanding how society currently conceptualises itself and its recent past. Narratives set in the 1970s reveal how we understand ourselves, our culture, and our history. Furthermore, unpicking and interrogating some of the key components – who exactly is 'we', what is involved in organising the past and positioning it in relation to the present, how is time shaped and organised – will also allow this project to touch on some of the more universal questions of history. I will thus explore how the past exists in the present and to what purpose. Finally, textually, I will demonstrate that cinematic narration is the primary means by which the filmic past is shaped. When situating my case studies in relation to the concerns of the scholarly fields engaged with (for example nostalgia, memory or heritage), I will aim to understand how they shape the past in the present through close textual analysis that highlights the dominant role of narrative and narration.

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[9] Ibid., p. 5.

Robert Rosenstone's validation of cinema's historiographical potential is useful, as he argues that visual history has unique capabilities and strengths over the written.[10] Rosenstone argues that cinema's inherently self reflexive quality gives it a particular potential to expose and comment on the constructed nature of historiography in a postmodern climate, while simultaneously enriching our understanding of historical periods portrayed. Filmic techniques required to narrate the past on screen - 'omission and condensation, alteration, invention and anachronism'[11] - have been traditionally criticised as being unhistorical in their artificial nature. But, for Rosenstone, they hold a unique potential to offer a self-reflexive and revisionist history that can challenge the metanarratives under assault in postmodernist discourse, and provide radical and oppositional pasts.

A crucial point that emerges here is a dichotomy between what is essentially conservative and radical history. This division is present in every significant area of criticism with which I engage, whether that be 'heritage' versus 'alternative heritage' or 'restorative' versus 'reflective' modes of nostalgia. In all areas the revisionist mode is generally privileged over the former as being more historically 'valuable'. The central opposition between conservative and revisionary retellings of the past is a universal concern running throughout scholarship. The potential for films to challenge or reinforce dominant histories, and give voice to, or further silence, liminal and marginalised histories, becomes central; whether through postmodern self-reflexive narrative techniques (Rosenstone), the reworking of generic conventions and appeals to previous forms of cinematic representation (Smyth,

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[10] Robert A. Rosenstone, *Visions Of The Past: The Challenge Of Film To Our Idea of History*, (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1995), Robert A Rosenstone, *History On Film/Film On History*, (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2006).
[11] Rosenstone, *Visions Of The Past*, p. 144.

Courtney, Dika), the deconstruction of national myths embedded in cinematic tradition (Burygoyne) or the ability to provide sites of resistance through pleasure and desire (Harper).

My primary aim is not to assess my case studies against a conservative/radical binary, as it is my contention that these dichotomies need to be replaced by a broader approach. All representations of the 1970s must be engaged with in order to understand how the decade is conceived of in the present. Furthermore, the variation within individual texts is generally much broader than such readings allow. I shall understand my texts as existing as part of a media and cultural output shaped in part by these conceptual frameworks, and in some cases self-consciously contributing towards them. But the focus will be on understanding how conservative or radical qualities are constructed and utilised by my case studies to shape the relationship between the past and present in different ways.

Another key argument made by Rosenstone is his assertion that film has a superior potential to open the past to be experienced through emotion and affect. Rosenstone does not provide sufficient analysis of what exactly this might mean, and White himself is critical of the vagueness with which Rosenstone presents this argument. As White notes, Rosenstone fails to outline exactly what is meant by 'affect' or how the visual constructs it.[12] Nevertheless, his work is suggestive and through foregrounding close textual analysis, I will build on the question of emotion and affect, particularly when considering cinematic narration and tone. This thesis will fully engage with the complexity and nuance with which the visual is opened up

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[12] White, 'Historiography and Historiophoty', pp. 1193-1199.

as a space for unique representations of the past, and the importance of cinematic narration in so doing.

I will therefore avoid a limitation in Rosenstone's work, as identified by critics such as Jennifer Smyth and Marnie Hughes Warrington. They argue that Rosenstone reinforces a central feature that unites scholarship from the fields of both film and history, 'the judgement that some films are more 'historical' than others'.[13] Rosenstone is keen to eschew value judgements that position films 'by how [they] measure up to written history'.[14] He is critical of historians such as Natalie Zemon Davis, whose examination of the representation of slaves in historical films, *Slaves on Screen,* rests on value judgements that assess the films' accuracy in relation to traditional historic discourse. However, Rosenstone's own readings of historical films results in similar judgements as he assesses the validity of the films' 'metaphoric or symbolic historical truths' against an external historical reality.[15] He divides historical films that get the past 'wrong' and utilize 'false invention', from those that get the past 'right' and utilize 'true invention'.[16] Thus a film like *Mississippi Burning* (Alan Parker, USA, 1989) is judged as being bereft of historical value, as it ignores the thematic readings of its subject offered by wider historical discourse. Conversely, a film like *Glory* (Edward Zwick, USA, 1989), is deemed as successful as 'for all its inventions' it offers a thematically and metaphorically accurate reading of the past that 'does not violate the discourses of history'.[17] As Jennifer Smyth has argued, Rosenstone may affirm the potential of films to enter

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[13] Marnie Hughes-Warrington, *History Goes To The Movies: Studying History On Film* (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 26.
[14] Rosenstone, *Visions Of The Past*, p. 144.
[15] Ibid., p. 145.
[16] Ibid., p. 75.
[17] Ibid.

into historiographical discourse and to comment upon its conventions, but he replaces one criteria with another. His work ultimately perpetuates what Smyth argues is as 'a separate but equal formulation of cinematic history and traditional historiography'.[18]

This thesis departs from an approach that limits films' historiographical potential to solely reflecting their period of production, or reductively imposes value judgements concerning which films 'do' history better than others. I will not assert a film's value based on its ability to self-consciously comment on historiographical processes. Instead, historical value will be located in the telling of these histories, in the manner in which they both recount the past and reflect the way it exists in the present, and how they create meaning between past and present as they are able to engage with both. How the 1970s are represented on screen reflects how they exist in our cultural consciousness, but this existence is not cut adrift from the historical period itself. Understanding how the seventies exist on our screens today becomes central to understanding the period itself, and to what purposes it is used in the present.

Decades and 'decaditis'

It is nevertheless necessary to recognise the artificiality of dividing history into neat ten-year segments, and to define what exactly is meant by 'the 1970s'. In a review of Peter Hennessy's book on the 1950s, the historian Ferdinand Mount coined the term 'decaditis'. Mount defines 'decaditis' as a highly artificial view of

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[18] J.E. Smyth, 'Introduction', in J.E. Smyth (ed.), *Hollywood And The American Historical Film* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. xvii.

history born of the compulsion to segment arbitrary eras from one another. [19]

Mount's criticism of the practice also identifies what he argues is a 'nervous insecurity' in this view of history, as the desire to insist on the distinctive character of each decade results in artificially segmented eras, that are manipulated by a determination to distinguish them from what came before or after.[20]

Mount's hesitancy to organise history by highly selective periodization is echoed by John Hill. Hill acknowledges the 'appeal' of sorting the past into decades, but simultaneously recognises that it 'is rare that social and political developments […] conform to neat ten-year patterns'.[21] I will be mindful of these concerns. However, rather than seeing them as a challenge to the value of studying representations of a particular decade on screen, I will engage with them and utilise them to enrich my project. I will interrogate how the 1970s gets delineated and distinguished, or indeed collapsed into, surrounding time periods. Accounting for complexity and nuance will be key to doing this successfully. Rather than trying to fit all representations into a clearly demarcated framework of what the 1970s is, I will look at how each individual representation deals with the question of its own definition. I will consider against what the study texts define themselves, and how this offers rich grounds for analysis. The consistencies and contradictions between various versions of the 1970s are thus of interest to me, as much as the similarities or recurrent tropes and themes.

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[19] Ferdinand Mount, 'The Doctrine of Unripe Time', *London Review of Books* 28:22 (November 2006), pp. 28-30.
[20] Ibid.
[21] John Hill, *British Cinema in the 1980s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 1.

Furthermore, I am interested in the, to echo Mount, 'compulsive'[22] element

to decadisation, or the 'appeal'[23] in Hill's terms. What do we get out of organising

history into ten-year time frames, and naming them as such? How does this help us

understand the past? And how does it help us relate it to the present? As a historian

who has self-consciously organised his work around the construct of 'the decade',

Dominic Sandbrook nevertheless echoes Mount in acknowledging the 'arbitrary' and

'bizarre' practice of dividing 'the recent past into neat, 10-year chunks, each with a

distinctive flavour and personality in the cultural imagination'.[24] Despite briefly

interrogating Sandbrook's version of the 1970s in the introduction, I want to propose

that his attitude to the decade as a historiographical tool is useful. As well as

acknowledging the decade's constructed nature, Sandbrook simultaneously

recognises, and gives weight to, the apparent irresistibility of organising history in

this way in contemporary culture, especially contemporary popular culture.

Sandbrook defends the decade as a legitimate route to understanding the recent past,

a stance that can be aligned with his self-conscious project to tell modern British

history through 'ordinary' lived experience. The decade might be a construct, but

there is no doubt that the concept of "the 1970s" exists in everyday consciousness

and conversation. It plays a significant part in how we conceive of a period of

modern history, and how we understand its relationship to us now. As Sandbrook

argues 'even someone totally ignorant of recent history will know immediately what

you mean by "the 30s" (Depression, dole queues, fascism) or "the 60s" (pop music,

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[22] Mount, 'The Doctrine of Unripe Time', pp. 28-30.
[23] Hill, *British Cinema in the 1980s*, p. 1.
[24] Dominic Sandbrook, 'Why we love history in ten-year chapters' *The Observer* (19th April 2009) < https://www.theguardian.com/books/2009/apr/19/decaditis-cultural-history>, accessed 12th August, 2018.

mini-skirts, sexual liberation) without knowing anything about Stanley Baldwin or Harold Wilson'.[25]

The fifties and "The fifties": Time periodization on screen

It will now be useful to recognise a distinction between two different meanings that might be attached to the "1970s". One is the historical period itself – however you might define its boundaries, whether that be 1970-1980, or the Oil Crisis of 1973 to Thatcher's election in May 1979. The other is the 1970s as it exists in image, both in terms of the cultural output of the decade itself, and the representations of it made since. Then there is the more nebulous means by which the "seventies" exists and holds meaning in the cultural consciousness, which, I would argue, is built out of all of these incarnations of the "1970s".

The work of Fredric Jameson is a necessary starting point, particularly his writing on representations of the 1950s in 1970s American cinema as he looks at films like George Lucas' *American Graffiti* (USA, 1973). Jameson reinforces Jacques Derrida's charge that, in the hypermediated conditions of postmodernity, a text 'can no longer look directly out of its eyes at the real world but must […] trace its mental images of the world on its confining walls'.[26] For Jameson, the reliance on previous forms of representation and image in cinematic history is hugely problematic, and the inherently reflexive quality of cinema leaves texts unable to escape the 'Plato's cave' that historical remembering has become in postmodern

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[25] Ibid.

[26] Fredric Jameson, 'Postmodernism and Consumer Society' in EA Kaplan (ed.), *Postmodernism and Its Discontents* (London: Verso, 1988), p. 20.

society.[27] Central to Jameson's argument is his attack on pastiche, which, he argues, results in the imitation of 'dead styles', leaving cultural production 'to speak through the masks and with the voices of the styles in the imaginary museum'.[28] A text may only engage with the past through referencing other texts or the cultural debris of the period it recreates, leaving us 'condemned to seek the historical past through our own pop images and stereotypes about the past, which itself remains forever out of reach'.[29] What results, Jameson argues, is a 'shift from the realities of the 1950s to the representation of that rather different thing, the "fifties",' an emaciated reflection of a reflection, cut adrift in a world of hypermediation, and bearing no relationship to the real period it alleges to portray.[30]

I would like to focus on two points in regards to Jameson's work. One is his profound distrust of the image; the other is what might be described as the tone of his work. If Mount identifies an 'insecurity' in decaditis, then there is terror in Jameson's account of an artificially segmented and imagined vision of time. I will address the question of 'image' at the end of this chapter, but, for the moment, it is worth asserting the validity of the seventies, or "seventies", that is the subject matter of this thesis. I am not contesting Jameson's argument that representations of the past draw on previous forms of mediation, or that the decade that exists upon our screens might be termed the "seventies" and separated as a distinct, and constructed, entity from the historical period it portrays. But I argue that the "seventies" on screen, built as it is with reference to other representation, pastiched, drawn from pop

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27 Ibid.

[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid., p. 18.
[29] Ibid., p. 20.
[30] Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism: or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1991), p. 281.

culture and sometimes stereotype, is nevertheless historically valuable. Furthermore I dispute the argument that reconstructions of the past are restricted to commenting solely on the contemporary culture that produced them. The "seventies" itself provides a valuable means by which we can understand how the decade exists in our contemporary consciousness. As an object of study, it enables us to consider how the decade is constructed and sold, whether with enjoyment or antipathy, and how it is utilised as a concept in the new millennium. In turn, we might then link this existence back to the historical period itself in order to better understand what happened during the 1970s themselves.

Iris Kleinecke-Bates' book *Victorians on Screen: The Nineteenth Century on British Television, 1994-2005* provides a useful model for how I am framing my understanding of the seventies/"seventies", and its value as an object of study. Kleinecke-Bates looks at representations of the Victorians and nineteenth-century Britain in British television, produced between 1994 and 2005. Organising the texts by subject matter and genre, she maps 'the historiography of the Victorian Age in a retrospect and revisionist fashion'.[31] Kleinecke-Bates notes how the texts often offer a 'self-reflexive and metaphorical engagement with the process of accessing history' and as such, ask 'questions concerning the fictionalisation of the past and its situatedness vis-à-vis the present'.[32] She focuses on what the Victorians mean to us in the present, why the nineteenth-century is revisited so frequently, and how representations of the period have changed over time. Nevertheless, she also

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[31] Iris Kleinecke-Bates, *Victorians on Screen: The Nineteenth Century on British Television,* 1994-2005 (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p.1.
[32] Ibid., p.1.

recognises the unique and specific qualities of the historical era itself, and uses her analysis of its visual and represented legacy to understand it as a period in time, a model that I hope to follow in my thesis.

The work of both John Hill and Marcia Landy on *Dance with a Stranger* (Mike Newell, UK, 1985) also offers useful models.[33] *Dance with a Stranger* dramatizes the true story of Ruth Ellis (Miranda Richardson) the last woman to be hanged in Britain after being found guilty of murdering her partner, David Blakely (Rupert Everett). The controversial nature of the case and the intensive media scrutiny of Ellis mean that the film engages with a history that is highly mediated. The question of image and representation is further complicated by the rich visual style of the film and the manner in which it draws upon multiple genres. History, image, and representation are intricately interwoven as the film appeals to the historical figure of Ruth Ellis whilst also drawing on popular media images of the 1950s, and the generic conventions of the film noir, the biopic, and the woman's film.

For Hill and Landy, however, engagement with image does not negate the film's potential to shed historiographical light on either the 1980s context of its production, or the 1950s it portrays. Both scholars explore how a self-aware engagement with mediated representation allows *Stranger* to critique both the fifties' position in popular memory, and the 1950s as an historical era in and of itself. Hill combines an understanding of the historical context of production and the historical period portrayed, with conceptual frameworks of nostalgia, memory, and history on

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[33] Hill, *British Cinema in the 1980s*, Marcia Landy, '"You Do Remember Diana Dors, Don't You?" History, Femininity, and the Law in the 1950s and 1980s British Cinema' in Landy (ed.), *The Historical Film*.

film, all used in support of close textual analysis. Thus, his engagement with the question of 'image' is predominantly shaped by an attempt to pin down how the film uses it to construct a specific atmosphere, as he looks at *Stranger*'s noirish qualities and stylisation. Both readings explore the relationship between the fifties and the "fifties", and utilise that focus to expand on the 1980s context of production, and questions of image and nation. Both Hill and Landy also ground their analyses in close textual readings of the film that account for complexity and contradiction within a singular text, and as such are useful models for me.

Part Two: Heritage and the Nation

John Hill takes care to draw a distinction between *Dance with a Stranger* and heritage cinema. Hill argues that *Stranger*'s relatively modern 1950s setting and 'ordinary' environs create a fundamental difference between the film and the pre-war settings of the heritage canon in both 'formal approach and social attitud[e]'.[34] However, the comparison demonstrates the necessity of heritage as a point of orientation when considering the past on screen in British cinema. This is not only because heritage is the key means by which British historical cinema is contextualised in critical discourse, but also because the pervasiveness of heritage film in British culture means that it has played a large role in how the nation has been shaped on screen and in the popular consciousness more broadly. I further propose that my corpus benefits from being addressed in relation to heritage discourse, as the critical field draws on useful questions of 'the nation' and defining the national on screen. Furthermore, I will address reductive assumptions in these discourses concerning cinematic narration and point of view, the challenge of which will form a central part of my argument throughout the thesis.

The nation on screen and the 'heritage gaze': Andrew Higson

Andrew Higson is perhaps the key figure to consider in relation to heritage on screen, having written prolifically on the subject.[35] Higson is careful to note that

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[34] John Hill, *British Cinema in the 1980s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. xii-xiii.
[35] Andrew Higson, *English Heritage, English Cinema: Costume Drama Since 1980* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), Andrew Higson, 'Re-Presenting the National Past: Nostalgia and Pastiche in the Heritage Film' in Lester D. Friedman (ed.) *Fires Were Started: British Cinema and Thatcherism*

the term 'heritage' is a label imposed by critical discourse on a body of films, but his

work nevertheless identifies a series of stylistic and thematic similarities in British

period dramas of the 1980s. Considering the films in light of their context of

production, Higson argues that they reflect the conservative project of the Thatcher

administration, as discord in the present is shut down by a celebration of a past that

shapes a particular version of national identity. Films such as *Chariots of Fire* (Hugh

Hudson, UK, 1981) or *A Passage to India* (David Lean, UK/USA, 1984) thus help to

establish 'a version of the national heritage that contributes to a core English

identity'[36] as they represent the nation to both itself and a global audience. I will

focus on two key points in relation to Higson's work. One is how heritage is bound

up in questions of national identity. The other is how he locates an inherent

conservatism in the films' visual style that, he argues, shuts down any radical or

oppositional aspects of their narratives.

I will not reinforce a dichotomy of conservative versus radical histories in my

thesis. A central part of how I will be engaging with Higson's argument is by

unpicking a key point of his analysis, namely how he locates the films' conservatism

in visual style. Higson argues that the narratives of the films, frequently drawn from

literary sources, may critique the societies in which they are set, but that such

criticisms are undermined by the visual splendour of historical reconstruction on

screen. This splendour ultimately affirms the grandeur and stability of the nation's

history whereby the 'pleasures of pictorialism […] block the radical intentions of the

narrative'.[37] Higson shapes his argument around what he describes as the emblematic

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(London: Wallflower Press, 2006), Andrew Higson, *Film England: Culturally English Filmmaking since the 1990s* (London: I.B. Tauris ltd., 2011).

[36] Higson, *English Heritage, English Cinema*, p. 6.

[37] Higson, 'Re-Presenting the National Past: Nostalgia and Pastiche in the Heritage Film', p. 101.

shot of heritage cinema: a long shot of a country house, divorced from character subjectivity or even the film's narrative. It is an image the viewer is asked to consider on its own terms, where any radical intentions of the narrative or source material are shut down by the stability and pleasures of the image and what we might call the 'heritage gaze'.

Echoing John Hill, Higson draws a distinction between the pre-War settings of 'heritage cinema' and those that take place in post-war Britain such as *Billy Elliot* (Stephen Daldry, UK/France, 2000) and *Control* (Anton Corbijn, UK, 2007). Higson argues that films set in second half of the twentieth century fundamentally differ from the heritage canon, primarily through their focus on 'ordinary protagonists'[38] who are frequently 'from working-class backgrounds',[39] rather than the elite characters and settings that define films like *Chariots of Fire*. Higson argues that the films' 'focus on ordinary Englishness' and 'highly localised' settings ultimately sees them have more in common with films with a contemporary setting such as *Trainspotting* (Danny Boyle, UK, 1996) than with heritage cinema. [40] Furthermore, in their focus on the ordinary, and with their stories taking place 'away from the centres of power', Higson argues that the post-war films, unlike their earlier counterparts, are able to map a national identity that is 'shifting and heterogenous',[41] complex and, as such, able to 'refuse' the 'mythologizing tendencies' of heritage cinema. [42]

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[38] Andrew Higson, *Film England: Culturally English Filmmaking since the 1990s* (London: I.B. Tauris ltd., 2011), p. 243.

[39] Higson, *English Heritage, English Cinema*, p. 34.

[40] Higson, *Film England*, p. 243.

[41] Higson, *English Heritage, English Cinema*, p. 69.

[42] Higson, *Film England*, p. 244.

Several of the assumptions made by Higson will be worked into and challenged across the body of the thesis. I agree that 'the ordinary' is an important concept in relation to the histories told by my texts. However, 'ordinary' will be considered a complex and highly (and at times self-consciously) constructed concept, which is alternately reinforced, challenged or undermined in the films, sometimes simultaneously. I will also challenge Higson's assumption that the films automatically lead to a demystification of the national and national identity through expanding the vision of Britain beyond the elite milieu of the home counties. Thus, while he argues that post-war films 'depen[d] much less on established myths of nationhood and national identity',[43] I will explore how all my texts in one way or another engage with, or position themselves alongside, myths of nationhood. While my core texts in many cases do seek to self-consciously challenge myths of nationhood and imagined Britain, I will argue that they cannot be separated so simplistically. Thus, Higson's argument that post-war films 'resis[t] incorporation into the process of mythologizing nationalism'[44] will be worked into. I will explore the potential and the limits of the films to 'demythologise'[45] national heritage, alongside the ways in which they arguably re-mythologise it in different ways and with different results.

'The British Question': Defining a nation on screen

Higson's use of the word 'English' is important as it points to a set of issues surrounding heritage cinema. The films have received criticism for preserving a

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[43] Ibid., p.244-5.
[44] Ibid., p. 253.
[45] Ibid., p.244.

particular vision of Britain 'bound to the upper and upper middle classes' and 'soft pastoral landscape of southern England', which 'dwell on the privileged lifestyle and visible evidence of wealth of the leisured classes'.[46] A prevalent criticism of Higson's work is that his corpus selection itself reinforces this limited image of Britain by engaging with a restricted canon that pushes alternative versions of the past to the periphery of critical discourse. Higson himself recognises some of these issues in his later work. He notes how his separation of films with a post-war setting into a category of 'alternative heritage' implies that the 'memories and representations of ordinary people, and the display of artefacts that yield insights into their lives, are somehow not part of national heritage'.[47] To bracket them as 'alternative' thus 'suggests the elite heritage of the privileged classes is the *core* national heritage'.[48] Furthermore, as Belen Vidal has argued, ultimately Higson's 'selective vision of the British past' privileges a desire to explore cohesion between texts that results in a 'denial of the actual state of fragmentation of the social body, and of alternative versions of a plural national culture'.[49]

I aim to avoid offering such a reductive vision of the 1970s on screen. Instead, I will account for, and actively engage with, fragmentation, discord and contradiction; both between different incarnations of the British past on screen, and within the individual texts themselves. Corpus selection is a key means by which I will achieve this, as I do not want to repeat Higson's reduction of Britain to a

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[46] Higson, *English Heritage, English Cinema*, p. 27.
[47] Ibid., p. 35.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Belen Vidal, *Heritage film: nation, genre and representation* (London: Wallflower, 2012), p. 10.

specific part of England, which, as Sarah Neely has noted, 'avoids any confrontations with the British question'.[50]

Neely's phrasing references John Hill's writing on Northern Ireland in relation to British cinema and his argument that 'most standard histories of British cinema ignore Northern Ireland altogether'.[51] Hill has noted that this blinkered focus presents a reductive view of the nation that ignores the complexity of the term 'British', and leaves the United Kingdom's complicated makeup and history, and the dynamic between Scotland, England, Northern Ireland and Wales, unaddressed. Chapter Three will address these concerns most explicitly as I look at representations of the 'Troubles' on screen. Hill argues that the concept of heritage is problematised in the case of Ireland by the continuing legacy of the Troubles. For Hill, this legacy prevents any 'separation from the past'[52] or retreat into a 'more settled and stable [period] than that of the present' that heritage characteristically relies upon.[53] I will explore similar questions about how the 1970s is remembered, and ask if the seventies have to be considered as existing on a different timeline in relation to Northern Ireland, where the decade is frequently associated with the height of the Troubles. The introduction to Chapter Three will fully contextualise Hill's argument within discourses of Northern Ireland on screen, paying particular attention to the work of Martin McLoone, Brian McIlroy, Lance Pettitt and Ruth Barton. All these scholars explore the complexity of 'the national' in the past on screen and its legacy

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[50] Sarah Neely, 'The conquering heritage of British Cinema Studies and the 'Celtic Frings'' in Hill, John, and Rockett, Kevin (eds.), *Film History and National Cinema: Studies in Irish Film 2* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), P. 47.

[51] John Hill, *Cinema and Northern Ireland: Film, Culture and Politics* (London: BFI, 2006), p. 2.

[52] John Hill, '"The Past Is Always There in the Present": *Fools of Fortune* and the Heritage Film', in James MacKillop (ed.), *Contemporary Irish Cinema: From the Quiet Man to Dancing at Lughnasa* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1999), p. 31.

[53] Ibid., p. 30.

in the present, particularly the dynamic between Northern Ireland and Southern England.

I will be mindful of these concerns throughout the thesis. Every chapter accounts for the complexities of the national in a manner that avoids separating the texts into 'standard' and 'peripheral' versions of the British past. Chapter Two focuses on representation of the state itself, with case studies from genres that concern law and order. I understand these texts in light of a particular set of anxieties identified by Paul Gilroy in his writing on 'post-colonial melancholia'.[54] For Gilroy, a post-war, post-empire Britain is struggling to articulate and imagine a coherent, stable sense of identity in relation to its new position both domestically and on the global stage. Gilroy argues, that Britain is struggling to contextualise and leave behind its history. Instead the country is clinging onto imagined pasts in a present that is defined by its 'inability to face, nevermind actually mourn, the profound change in circumstances and moods that followed the end of empire and consequent loss of imperial prestige'.[55] Chapter Two's case studies engage with what might be termed the 'core' of the national, as they focus on the state itself. However, the case studies in this chapter will not be offered as reductive images of cohesion or stability, against which 'peripheral' texts might be defined. Instead, the chapter will fully address the complexities of the pasts that are presented in the texts.

Finally, Chapter Four looks at questions of individual and regional identity, and how both intersect with national identity. I draw on the writing of John Curzon, David Haslam, David Russell and Simon Reynolds, who all look at representations of the North of England on screen, and its position in the national imaginary and

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[54] Paul Gilroy, *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture?* (Oxon: Routledge, 2004).
[55] Ibid., p. 98.

popular cultural consciousness. Again, rather than arguing that the texts offer a straightforward demystification of the nation, I consider how they engage with both histories and locations that are heavily mediated, and explore the full complexity and nuance of 'mythologization'.

I want to conclude this section by drawing attention to an anxiety in writing on heritage surrounding 'the national' in the global, where the discourse itself echoes the tone of melancholia and uncertainty identified by Gilroy. Writing on heritage frequently identifies a tension between the national and the global, asking for whom these histories are produced, regionally, nationally, or even internationally. Belen Vidal notes that the global imperatives of the heritage market result in the favouring of 'character-driven genre films with a strong investment in cultural recognition and emotion, rather than in the specificity of national experience'.[56] This position is echoed by Higson, who argues that regional and national specificity, which might be incomprehensible to outside audiences, is subsumed in a tendency to present 'the least complex and most familiar, the most stereotypical national representations'.[57] There is an anxiety in the writing of Jameson relating to the loss of historicity in a disconnect between the historical past and its image. This anxiety is echoed in heritage discourse, which identifies a similar disconnect between place and its represented image on screen. Heritage is thus positioned both as a response to globalization and as, to quote Higson, an 'attempt to resist the sense of national dissolution by turning to past glories'.[58] 'National heritage' is thus paradoxically

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[56] Vidal, *Heritage Film*, p. 63.
[57] Higson, *Film England*, p. 71.
[58] Higson, *English Heritage, English Cinema*, p. 51.

positioned as a product of 'the aggressive global marketing of commodities, traditions and identities',[59] where the national in its most simplistic terms is packaged for a global market.

It is my contention that the 1970 provide a particularly fertile moment in which the films can embody, but also explore and address, these concerns. The decade has existed as a flashpoint in collective consciousness in terms of both its domestic instability and international standing. As I will explore throughout the thesis, identity itself, whether individual, regional, or national, is frequently a thematic concern of representations of the seventies. This, in part, is due to the decade's position as a transitional moment between the collectivism of post-war society and the individualism of the latter part of the twentieth century and beginning of the twenty-first. As such, the case studies reflect but also engage with the tension identified in discourse on heritage cinema between the various incarnations and uses of the national, and the legacy of the nation's past in the present.

'Alternative Heritage' and Point of View

Arguments concerning the national will be developed across the body of the thesis and I will now conclude this section on heritage discourse by considering the significance of point of view and narration; something drawn upon by the majority of critics writing on heritage, but never developed or explicated sufficiently with close textual readings. By focusing on narration and point of view, and by exploring the subtleties of how they operate and shape the relationship between past and present on screen, I will move this project beyond merely looking at questions of

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[59] Ibid.

representation. Through so doing, I will address not only the 1970s as a unique space in which to explore a particular past in this particular present, but also touch upon broader questions of history, narrative and narration.

Hill argues that, in an Irish context, the past cannot be so easily separated from the present.[60] I would like to draw attention to an idea inherent in both this remark and in the work of Andrew Higson more broadly; that distance from the past is what facilitates enjoyment of a stable history, whereas immersion in the past, or an inability to leave it behind, results in an encounter with history that is unsettling and challenging. Although Higson never explicitly labels cinematic narration as the defining means by which the past is shaped in the present, it sits at the heart of his analysis through his focus on point of view. Writing on heritage films, Higson notes that several of the texts focus on characters who experience psychological discomfort and struggle to fit into society despite their privileged position in the social order. However, he argues that any resultant discomfort is ameliorated by a cinematic narration that is 'divorced from character point of view'.[61] Cinematography in heritage cinema is argued to perform a role extraneous to narrative development as it is 'dictated less by a desire to follow the movement of characters than by a desire to offer the spectator a more aesthetic angle on the period setting and the objects which fill it'.[62] For Higson, the resultant effect is the transformation of 'historical narrative […] into spectacle' where 'heritage becomes excess, not functional *mise-en-scène*, not something to be used narratively, but something to be admired'.[63]

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[60] Hill, '"The Past Is Always There in the Present"'.
[61] Higson, 'Re-Presenting the National Past', p. 99.
[62] Higson, *English Heritage, English Cinema*, p. 38.
[63] Ibid., p. 39.

Implicit in Higson's argument is the idea that it is by divorcing cinematic narration from character point of view that the past can be configured as a stable site of pleasure. This distanced gaze is seen as the defining factor that shapes a conservative and stable vision of national heritage that erases any complexity or discomfort. What results, Higson argues, is an 'aesthetics of display',[64] whereby a distanced cinematic narration can survey the past while remaining separated from it, allowing for a pleasurable viewing of its sites and settings. I would develop this argument further to add that, in this view, the distanced cinematic narration might be termed as present tense in both its separation from the past and relative omniscience in comparison to the perspectives of the characters who are trapped within the flows of the narrative. The interplay between past and present in cinematic narration will be considered throughout the thesis, and I will use this focus to challenge assumptions concerning cinematic narration in critical discourse.

Critical discourse that aims to challenge and broaden Higson's account of British heritage frequently repeats his reductive approach to the complexities of cinematic narration and point of view. Sarah Neely's work is one such point of comparison as she situates her writing in opposition to Higson's, and explicitly accounts for alternative versions of the British past on screen. Neely refers to Phil Powrie who, she argues, identifies an ''alternative heritage' or 'rite of passage film'' that 'illustrates working-class experience through the eyes of the child'.[65] Using Powrie's work as a basis to offer 'a more wide-ranging definition of heritage',[66] Neely focuses on films set away from centres of power, and tied to the experiences

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[64] Ibid., p. 37.

[65] Sarah Neely, 'The conquering heritage of British Cinema Studies and the 'Celtic Frings'' in Hill, John, and Rockett, Kevin (eds.), *Film History and National Cinema: Studies in Irish Film 2* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005). P. 49.

[66] Ibid.

of children. Neely argues that the young protagonists exist on the edge of the adult world, and as such allow the films 'to destabilize these earlier narratives of national identity' by aligning cinematic narration with the liminal positions of their central characters.[67] In this manner the films bring instability and complexity to their representations of the past in opposition to the 'suppression of contradictions'[68] that Neely argues Higson identifies in heritage cinema.

As with the work of Higson, point of view holds a central, but implicit, position in Neely's discussion. For Neely, the type of past offered by the films is predominantly shaped by cinematic narration. She explores the way in which narration aligns the viewer with the perspective of characters who have neither the distance from, nor the mastery over, the sites of the history necessary to enjoy the past as spectacle. Neely offers Lynn Ramsey's *Ratcatcher* (UK, 1999), as a paradigmatic example as the film is set in Glasgow in 1973 and documents a childhood spent in poverty during industrial disputes. Neely explores how films like *Ratcatcher* immerse the viewer in the uncomprehending perspective of their youthful central characters, and destabilise their vision of the past as they do so. It is not just the films' peripheral settings or liminal characters that mount the challenge to dominant conceptions of the nation, but the destabilised cinematic narration that immerses the viewer in the past and undermines any stable sense of 'the nation' surveying and celebrating its imagined history.

Neely explicitly positions the relationship between the past and present as the defining factor in whether or not the past on display is pleasurable or discomforting. She argues that, as opposed to Higson's corpus, the films she looks at eschew

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[67] Ibid., p. 52.
[68] Ibid.

pleasurable nostalgia. Instead, they show 'an inability to break with the past' whereby 'neither the past or the present offers a place of refuge, nor is the division between the two clear'.[69] If heritage cinema is defined by a distanced cinematic gaze that reinforces a stable sense of 'the nation' surveying and celebrating its imagined history, then Neely's account of alternative heritage sees a counter-history, reliant on a subjective immersion in the sites of memory, told through the point of view of a child, and denying the viewer a comfortable present from which to survey the past. Throughout my project I will challenge this stark division between one type of heritage built on a distanced present-day gaze and another oppositional heritage built around subjective immersion in a liminal past. Instead, I will explore the full complexity of cinematic narration. I will show how individual films account for and interweave a greater multiplicity of perspectives than is generally allowed for in critical discourse. I will also use this focus to unpick the complex relationship between past and present in my case studies, and explore how the dynamic between the two is used to shape the encounter with the 1970s offered by the texts.

[69] Ibid., p. 54.

Part Three: Nostalgia

The Pleasures of the Past on Screen

The question of spectacle and the pleasures offered by the reconstruction of a historical period is a central theme of heritage discourse. It is almost always related to the ability of the texts to display elite pasts from a comfortable distance, an assumption I will challenge in my analysis. In my case studies, I will look at what sort of (ordinary) objects, sounds and settings are on display, and how the texts utilise the pleasure of the mundane. I will look at the question of 'quality' that is frequently associated with heritage, and how my texts signal their own value, whether that be in terms of authenticity, realism, or high production values. I will consider how the case studies utilise pleasure and the question of quality to signal the type of history that they are offering, whether that be the pleasures of high production values and lavish settings, or a more self-consciously prosaic enjoyment of the objects, clothing, and places of the past.

There is a complex relationship between pleasure and history, and the question of nostalgia is important. Discourse on nostalgia is too extensive to cover here in detail. I will instead select key critical questions which are applicable, or which expose assumptions and simplifications I wish to challenge. One such question is whether nostalgia can offer anything more than a superficial engagement with the past, as signalled by Jameson. Another aspect of the critical field that I will challenge is its intensive focus on what conventional or oppositional qualities nostalgia possesses. As with heritage discourse, critics frequently assess whether nostalgia can be used for progressive purposes to challenge previous versions of the

past, or if the pleasurable enjoyment of the sites of history offered by nostalgia limits its ability to critically assess the past.

Svetlana Boym's writing on nostalgia is important. The distinction she draws between conservative and progressive modes of nostalgia underpins much critical debate in the field. Boym understands nostalgia as either 'restorative' in nature, driven by the reactionary and destructive desire to rebuild a lost homeland, or as 'reflective', a more self-aware and critical construction of the past that interrogates the vision that it offers.[70] Boym herself is careful to note that these forms of nostalgia are not mutually exclusive within singular texts. However much of the critical debate that draws on her work falls into the dichotomy that I outline above, and privileges an assessment of nostalgia's progressive or conservative qualities. As with heritage discourse, I wish to avoid any simplistic division between restorative and reflective modes. I will instead explore their interrelationship within case-studies and subtle commonalities between the two that illuminate the complexities of moving through history and how the past is held in the present.

For Boym, one such commonality and a key characteristic of nostalgia is its intimate association with nation and homeland. Boym argues that nostalgia extends beyond, and arguably intertwines, individual biography with the 'biography of groups and nations'.[71] For Boym this association has both progressive and destructive potential. She argues that restorative nostalgia can be easily co-opted into a 'national memory that is based on a single version of national identity',[72] while reflective nostalgia offers a nuanced engagement with collective forms of

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[70] Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001).
[71] Svetlana Boym, "Nostalgia and its Discontents," *Hedgehog Review* (2007), < www.iasc-culture.org/eNews/2007_10/9.2CBoym.pdf> accessed 1st June, 2016.
[72] Ibid., p. 14.)

remembering. Rather than concentrate on this oft-cited division and how the case studies might be termed one or the other, I draw attention to the question of tone in relation to each version of nostalgia that shapes their respective characteristics. I focus not solely on the reactionary qualities of restorative nostalgia, but also on the way in which Boym describes it as shaping the past with bullish confidence and certainty, whereby it 'does not think of itself as nostalgia, but rather as truth and tradition'.[73] In comparison, reflective nostalgia is described in terms of ambivalent insecurity, where solidity is replaced by a fluid version of history. It accounts for the complexities of 'human longing and belonging', but simultaneously 'does not shy away from the contradictions of modernity'.[74] As Boym argues, 'Reflective nostalgia does not pretend to rebuild the mythical place called home; it is "enamoured of distance, not of the referent itself"'.[75] These nostalgic narratives are 'ironic, inconclusive, and fragmentary'.[76] They are 'aware of the gap between identity and resemblance; the home is in ruins or, on the contrary, has just been renovated and gentrified beyond recognition'.[77]

There is clearly a question of value in Boym's distinction which is reflected in critical discourse. Reflective nostalgia is frequently privileged as a progressive response to the postmodern challenge to grand narratives, while restorative nostalgia is seen as a retrograde attempt to reinforce them. Ironically, in this view, reflective nostalgia has the kind of positive vitality that enables history to be solidly grasped in the present, while restorative is defined by the fear of accepting that the past has gone. I would argue that, in all forms of nostalgia, these complications of tone result

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[73] Ibid., p. 13.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Ibid., p. 15-16.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid.

in a complex interplay between the destruction of teleology and the historical

timeline (restorative nostalgia fundamentally privileges the past over the present,

while reflective nostalgia questions 'progress' in a more circumspect manner), with a

recognition of a universal human need for grand narratives, identity and place. Thus,

even though reflective nostalgia might be able to be 'ironic and humorous', revealing

'that longing and critical thinking are not opposed to one another',[78] that 'longing' is

still an important part of its character. I will unpick the temperature of that longing

and the tone through which it is articulated in my case studies. I will also consider

the subsequent implications for the twentieth-century challenge to grand narratives,

and how history is conceived in the twenty-first century.

The personal and the public: prosthetic memory

For Boym, nostalgia, whether reflective or restorative, exists in the

intersection of 'personal and collective memory'. My focus on cinematic narration

will permit me to explore how my case studies encompass both perspectives. I will

consider how the personal is used in relation to the public, and how their interplay

shapes the tone of the nostalgia constructed. The dynamic between the personal and

the public will be considered throughout the thesis. Critical discourse identifies two

different properties of cinematic language in relation to remembering. One might be

termed personal as for example Pam Cook and Annette Kuhn's work on cinema's

potential to replicate the formal properties of memory as experienced by an

individual consciousness. The other might be argued to be inherently collective in

the shared memory of media, not only as a means of remembering historical events,

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[78] Ibid., p. 15.

but as the focus of memory in and of itself. As Philip Drake argues, 'not only […]
have memories become increasingly mediated with the rise of mass media, but they
are also more often the memory of a mediated experience in the first place'.[79]

This points to an automatic alignment of mediated memory with collective
memory. Alison Landsberg's influential work on 'prosthetic memory' is important
as she responded to accusations that in the hypermediated cultural landscape of high
capitalism, collective identity and histories are lost.[80] Landsberg argues that mass
cultural technology such as film and television 'are not exclusively privatizing'.[81]
Their broad reach allows them to circulate what Landsberg terms 'prosthetic
memories', whereby individuals can experience the memories of cultural groups that
previously would have been unavailable to them. Landsberg is careful to note that
these memories are neither inherently progressive nor inherently conservative. She
nevertheless she highlights their potential to de-localise and broaden the sphere of
remembered experience available to an individual, and to 'open up the possibility for
collective horizons of experience'.[82] Other critics have been more sceptical of
prosthetic memory's progressive capabilities. Robert Burgoyne, for example, argues
in his analysis of *Forrest Gump* that the film uses prosthetic memory to refunction
social memory 'in a way that allows it to be integrated into the traditional narrative
of nation', ultimately shutting down contesting voices and trauma to produce 'an
image of social consensus built around memory'.[83] Burgoyne argues that prosthetic

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[79] Philip Drake, ''Mortgaged to music': new retro movies in 1990s Hollywood cinema' in Paul Grainge (ed.), *Memory and popular film* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 185.
[80] Alison Landsberg, 'Prosthetic memory: the ethics and politics of memory in an age of mass culture' in Paul Grainge (ed.), *Memory and popular film* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003).
[81] Ibid., p. 146.
[82] Ibid., p. 149.
[83] Robert Burgoyne, *Film Nation: Hollywood Looks at U.S History*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 108.

memory is here used to present a highly constructed and controlled vision of the national as a tool of hegemony – where the imagined nation is made through the promotion of timeless and universal values deemed both natural and national in character.

I will touch on the possibilities and limitations of prosthetic memory to solidify or challenge conceptions of collective experience and identity. I will also avoid simplistic dichotomy whereby I understand my texts as either regressive or progressive visions of the past. Instead, I will explore how prosthetic memory is used to allow the personal to meet the public and the complexities of this interaction. The case studies frequently complicate any neat alignment of mediated experience with collective experience, and I will look at the complex dynamic between differing forms of memory and identity. Rather than having prosthetic memory as my focus and understanding it as either progressive or conservative, I will engage with it as another means by which point of view and narration position the personal in relation to the collective, and shape the dynamic between the past and present on screen.

The nation as viewing family: Television and the ordinary

In order to understand this intersection of the personal and public it is necessary to address the media and how the case studies engage with its role in history and its legacy in the present. Higson argues that a defining quality of post-war set films is the manner in which they use media as a central strategy to orientate the viewer in the past.[84] I would agree with this assertion in relation to my texts and argue that media plays a central role therein, whether that be magazines and press,

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[84] Higson, *English Heritage, English Cinema*, p. 34.

music or earlier films. Television, however, will be my focus as it occupies what is arguably a privileged position due to its unique ability to both orientate the viewer in the past, and align or disjoin the personal with the public.

I will engage with discourses on television and history throughout my project and aim to situate my work in the field of television as well as film studies. In filmic as well as televisual case studies, television is an important cultural object and becomes a key strategy through which my texts signal what type of past they are creating. The thesis will not just consider televisual reconstructions of the past, but also look at how all the case studies engage with it as an artefact of the past. I will look at how both film and televisual drama engage with and reference the televisual output of the era represented, and also position television as an object of remembering in and of itself. I will explore how television becomes a means through which to 'do' history and also explore the importance of what I argue television comes to signify – the ordinary.

Amy Holdsworth's work on nostalgia and television is useful as she positions TV as the centre point around which the personal, familial and national meet. Her analysis of *Who Do You Think You Are?* (2004-), a BBC documentary where celebrities trace their familial lineage, allows her to demonstrate how television is able to interlink the personal and the public, and to oscillate between past and present in a reflective manner. Thus, despite the popular appeal of *Who Do You Think You Are*, Holdsworth argues that the manner in which the programme 'places the personal at the centre of the understanding of public and social histories',[85]

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[85] Amy Holdsworth, '*Who Do You Think You Are?*: Family History and Memory on British Television' in Erin Bell and Ann Gray (eds.), *Televising History: Mediating the Past in Postwar Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 235.

allows it to open up a space in which to explore change and continuity between past and present. Holdsworth argues that *Who Do You Think You Are* demonstrates a desire to 'recall not to recover'[86] which results in a vision of the past that is 'nation building rather than nation binding'.[87] Nevertheless, Holdsworth is careful to offer nuanced analysis noting how the programme 'simultaneously opens up a vision' of a broader multicultural British heritage 'whilst closing down and 'taming' our relationship to difficult and contested areas of history and identity'.[88]

While Holdsworth provides a useful example of how an individual text can sustain narrational complexity, I would like to focus on the centrality of television in her work. For Holdsworth, television is not just the means by which the past is accessed but becomes a focus in and of itself: a nation recalling its historical self by remembering what we watched, and how we watched, television. What is also notable in Holdsworth's writing is the stress on emotion attached to televisual viewing. This is particularly evident in her own account of watching TV growing up, as she uses televisual viewing to interweave the personal and the familial (the television in the heart of the 'ordinary' family living room), with the national (one living room amongst many). It is this alignment that drives the potency of the emotional affect in her revisitation of the past.

Television emerges here as a site where the personal and collective can be interwoven in an emotionally resonant fashion. It is also a site where the national is experienced in the everyday domestic. Paul Gilroy identifies and celebrates the messy conviviality of day-to-day existence that is frequently at odds with the more

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[86] Amy Holdsworth, *Television, Memory and Nostalgia* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 102.

[87] Holdsworth, '*Who Do You Think You Are?*', p. 244.

[88] Ibid., p. 235.

apocalyptic visions of cultural fragmentation and unrest in discourse, whether that be political, mediated, academic or artistic. The thesis will identify and understand this need for 'the ordinary', if and how my case studies reflect it, and also the manner in which television can be used to construct or undermine it.

Joe Moran's *Armchair nation: an intimate history of Britain in front of the TV* considers the significance of television to national self-image. Moran conceptualises Britain through both its televisual output, and through the nation's practices of televisual viewing, using TV as the centre-point around which a nation can be imagined.[89] Moran acknowledges the constructed nature of this national image, arguing that TV 'performed a mostly benign confidence trick' in 'convincing us that we believed the same things and were part of the same armchair nation'.[90] He also notes how much of the imagined televisual nation is centred around past modes of televisual viewing, in what 'is partly a lament for the seemingly lost capacity of multichannel television to create shared moments of empathy and understanding'.[91] This is a complex point about media, image and medium specificity in the digital era that I will revisit shortly, but it is also part of an older and more universal sense of a nation always gone. A 'once possessed common culture that has now fragmented' that, Moran argues, is a 'persistent idea in British cultural history running all the way from Piers Plowman to T.S. Eliot […] If there is one thing certain about "the organic community" […] it is that it has always gone'.[92] I would align this idea with the longing identified in nostalgia by Boym, which I will be exploring as I look at tone throughout the thesis.

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[89] Joe Moran, *Armchair nation: an intimate history of Britain in front of the TV* (London: Profile Books, 2013).
[90] Ibid., p. 4.
[91] Ibid., p. 4-5.
[92] Ibid.

I will develop the question of tone as I move on to consider cinematic narration and point of view in more detail. Before I do so, however, I want to conclude the section on nostalgia with this quotation by Moran. Although lengthy, it is worth including in full, as it demonstrates the manner in which much critical discourse interweaves an awareness of the highly constructed nature of the nation, and the dangers inherent in that, with a real need and longing for a broader sense of collective identity, or, in Moran's words, 'synchronicity', if nothing else;

> Yet I have also found that there is another kind of armchair nation – not perhaps the united, countrywide family that primetime television assumes it is addressing, but a more improvised community of viewers, formed wordlessly and unconsciously through collective habits and behaviours. Aerials and satellite dishes spring up silently on roofs, living-room curtains close, streets and roads empty of people and cars, the tills in public houses are stilled and the boiling of kettles synchronise across the nation – all because people are watching television. Precisely because it is so fragile and intangible and demands so little of those who belong to it, the armchair nation can create a sense of commonality among people who may have little else in common. And perhaps this collective habit of watching TV, which has taken up so much of our waking lives, can tell us something about who we are and what matters to us.[93]

I will consider how my case studies engage with this idea of the nation as a 'viewing family', and the role television plays in constructing collective memory and identity. I will consider the significance of a history coalesced around the recurrent

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[93] Ibid., p. 11.

image of the television at the heart of the family living room. I will unpick the 'ordinary' and understand how television becomes an object and space through and in which personal and collective pasts can become intertwined. I will understand how these issues and ideas are engaged with by the texts themselves, and how they are utilised to signal what sort of history is on display. I will also look at how these choices shape the tone of the case studies, whether they offer an encounter with the past that is comforting, anxious, fearful, or humorous. I will look at how this in turn allows the texts to engage with the various moods of the critical discourse itself.

Moran's paragraph itself is an image built of fragments; a kaleidoscope of a country made of aerials and satellite dishes, streets, curtains, and cars. I will look at how my texts similarly interweave critical reflection on constructing the past on screen with emotion, tone, and affect. I will explore how each of these elements impacts upon the other. I will consider subsequent questions concerning the shape of the historical timeline and how the past is situated in relation to the present, whether that be issues of teleology, momentum, or the status of 'image' itself. I will thus move beyond questions of representation as I bring tone, style and point of view to the forefront of analysis to understand how and why the past lingers in the present

Part Four: Point of View and Narration

Point of view and cinematic narration, I argue, are the defining factors that govern the relationship between the past and present on screen, and ultimately shape the character and qualities of heritage and nostalgia. This focus will be my main point of originality, as the importance of cinematic narration has been largely overlooked in critical debates concerning history and film. Questions of point of view and subjectivity have been predominantly addressed by scholarship on memory and film, which focuses on its most overt incarnations in cinematic narration such as the flashback or point of view shots. I would argue that as a result the textual nuance of cinematic narration, and how it shapes historical representation, is underexplored.

Caitlin Shaw's thesis 'Remediating the Eighties: Nostalgia and Retro in British Screen Fiction', criticises scholarship on British historical cinema with a post-war setting for failing to consider individual texts in a wider body of representation (i.e. the 1980s on screen). Instead, Shaw argues, scholarship has isolated individual films such as *Distant Voices Still Lives* (Terence Davies, UK, 1988) or *This Is England* (Shane Meadows, UK, 2007), with a focus on close textual analysis that singles them out on individual artistic merit.[94] I agree that there has been a failure to consider texts with a post-war setting as part of a broader context of representation, but I intend to keep close textual readings at the core of my analysis. While Shaw is keen to identify aesthetic and thematic similarities in order to outline an 'eighties cycle', my approach will not shape textual readings around similarities

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[94] Caitlin Shaw, *Remediating the Eighties: Nostalgia and Retro in British Screen Fiction 2005 to 2011* < https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/42144707.pdf> , accessed 15th August 2018.

or differences between texts. Rather, the case studies will be linked by a methodological focus on cinematic narration. Thus, while building a picture of how the 1970s exists in our collective consciousness, I will be able to account for the individual complexities of the texts, rather than offering a reductive formula for the decade's existence on screen.

The complexities of visual narration

George Wilson's book on cinematic narration, *Narration in Light: Studies in Cinematic Point of View* is particularly useful. Wilson's work offers detailed textual analysis that demonstrates how an understanding of narration and point of view, similar to that utilised in relation to literature, might be applied to cinema.[95] Wilson's approach offers an excellent model for marrying form with meaning, as he explores the intersection of cinematography, editing, *mise-en-scène* and sound within cinematic narration. For the purposes of this thesis there are two key observations in his analysis. One is his assertion that filmic narration can accommodate a multiplicity of perspectives simultaneously through the complex dynamic between camera, character and viewer. His careful textual analysis of *Letter From An Unknown Woman* (Max Ophüls, USA, 1950) is of particular use, as it moves beyond discussing the more overt incarnations of cinematic point of view such as flashback and point of view shots. Instead of this limited focus, Wilson demonstrates how *Letter* sustains multiple points of view simultaneously, and explores the manner in which the dynamic between them is used to shape meaning.

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[95] George M. Wilson, *Narration in Light: Studies in Cinematic Point of View* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1992).

Despite *Letter* being a film that is built in large part around the subjectivity of its central character Lisa (Joan Fontaine), Wilson shows how it also accommodates a perspective beyond those of the characters within the diegesis. As Wilson argues, 'through its construction and its style' *Letter* 'continuously affirms the possibility of a wider and more accurate perception of the human affairs that it portrays. Again and again, the film establishes a wider viewpoint which its characters do not attain […] there are qualities of Lisa's subjectivity which the film rather systematically reflects. Nevertheless […] there is also a quite striking effort to make it clear that the perspective that the film offers upon this history is not to be identified with Lisa's. The narration simultaneously establishes a certain distance from Lisa's outlook, even while it mirrors some properties of her subjectivity'.[96]

Wilson demonstrates how filmic narration can encompass an immersion in character subjectivity alongside a more distanced perspective. Meaning is created not just through encompassing multiple perspectives, but in the interplay between them. I will use this model to explore the complexity with which narration operates in my case studies, and to approach areas of critical discourse relevant to the thesis. Many of the qualities identified in prosthetic memory by Landsberg, or in the heritage gaze by Higson, are explored by Wilson in this account of the third person perspective; its access to elements of the story and *mise-en-scène* that sit outside the scope of the characters, its surveyal of the environs of the past and the people who inhabit it, the apparent distance to events that this implies. Finally, there is the second key idea in Wilson's work that I want to address which is the question of attitude: a certain implied attitude to the story bound in this more omniscient viewpoint. Wilson also

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[96] Ibid., p. 106.

interweaves these debates with a nuanced understanding of how the text accounts for a multiplicity of perspectives and creates meaning in the dynamic between them.

Higson and Neely in their writing on heritage, and Landsberg in her discussion of prosthetic memory, tend to streamline and separate qualities of narration into different filmic types. Taking Wilson as my model, I look at how the various elements of cinematic narration intersect to sustain multiple perspectives within one text, and use this analysis to explore the implications of this interplay. One area of interest involves the question of tone and how narration and point of view can foster multiple forms of engagement with the past in a singular text (pleasure and discomfort or control and inertia for example). Another is how multiple narrational viewpoints can allow a film to align various time frames (past and present), making cinematic narration the means through which concerns of history and historiography are articulated. I will look at how the alignment of the past and present shapes the historical timeline and consider relevant questions of cause and effect, teleology, and momentum.

I will also address how aural elements of the texts contribute towards shaping cinematic narration. Writing on nostalgia and retro in cinema has frequently foregrounded the importance of music, particularly pop music. I will not only consider music as a cultural artefact encompassed in the texts, but as a contributor to narrational point of view. This will be a thread of analysis throughout the thesis, but explicitly addressed in Chapter Four where I look at identity and consumerism with a particular focus on youth and music culture. I engage with the writing of critics such as Andy Bennett and Simon Frith who assess music's cultural significance, the role

it plays in the construction of identity, and its status as an historical artefact in the twenty-first century.[97] I also focus on the work of Ian Garwood whose writing on the pop song in cinema analyses the relationship between character, cinematic narration, and music, by looking at how the pop song intersects with and shapes these elements.[98] In this way I will be mindful of how the aural interacts with the visual, and the key role it plays in cinematic narration.

The past and the present: Attitude and Tone.

Before addressing questions of retro and the image, I will conclude this section by drawing out an implication in Wilson's analysis concerning films with a historical setting. The relationship between the past and the present sits at the core of *Letter From An Unknown Woman*, not only through its historical setting and use of flashback, but through its thematic preoccupation with the legacy of the past. Wilson does not develop the link between the temporal framework of the text and cinematic narration as much as he might, but it is my intention to show how cinematic narration and point of view is the dominant factor governing the relationship between the past and present in my case studies.

In so doing I challenge a pervasive assertion in filmic discourse that constricts filmic narration to speaking in the present tense. Marnie Hughes Warrington identifies the significance of Roland Barthes' claim that the ''*being-there*' of film […] stands in distinction to the '*having-been-there*' of photography.'[99]

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[97] Andy Bennett, *Popular Music and Youth Culture: Music, Identity and Place* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press LTD., 2000), Simon Frith, 'Music and Identity' in Hall, Stuart and Du Gay, Paul, (eds.), *Questions of Cultural Identity* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2011).
[98] Ian Garwood, 'The Pop Song In Film' in *Close-up 01* (London: Wallflower Press, 2006).
[99] Hughes-Warrington, *History Goes To The Movies*, p. 58.

This position, she argues, is echoed by Jameson in his condemnation of cinema for being trapped in the depthless 'eternal-present' of postmodernism.[100] Even Rosenstone, who seeks to affirm film's historiographical possibilities, confines it to speaking in the 'present-tense'.[101] Conversely, I will demonstrate how rigorous analysis of narration allows for the appreciation of what Hughes Warrington argues is the 'temporal heterogeneity of films'.[102]

William Guynn has argued that films can speak in the past tense, but his analysis is based around the more overt forms of temporal signature in cinematic narration.[103] He draws on Christian Metz's argument that the voice of a text asserts itself 'by means of a deviation from […] the normative complex of cinematic codes'.[104] As such, when describing the emergence of a historical voice in films he confines his analysis to identifying strategies that tend towards the self-reflexive. Examples include the presence of an on-screen narrator, or secondary screens visible within the *mise-en-scène*.[105] I will show that the 'voice of the text' can be asserted in a perspective separate to that of the characters, but that the means by which it is articulated extend beyond moments of self-reflexivity. I identify its presence in the narrational framework of my texts more broadly, something only touched upon by Guynn as he describes shots not attributable to character which make clear the 'discursive intervention of an enunciator'.[106] Close readings of my texts will permit me to explicate what is meant by this over the course of the thesis. I will demonstrate the different ways in which visual narration can address and shape the past from the

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[100] Ibid.
[101] Rosenstone, *History On Film/Film On History*, p. 16.
[102] Hughes-Warrington, *History Goes To The Movies*, p. 58.
[103] Guynn, *Writing History In Film*, p. 79.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid.

present, and how my case studies can utilise the ability to speak in multiple tenses to comment on the relationship between the two.

As my focus is the representation of a particular period of time, understanding how the 1970s is positioned in relation to the present in my case studies is crucial. I argue that the dynamic between past and present is the primary means by which the earlier decade is evaluated in the texts. This brings me to the nebulous question of attitude. Wilson describes the perspective constructed in cinematic narration in *Letter* as 'intelligent and sometimes ironic […] sceptical but sympathetic'.[107] Here filmic narration is shown to construct a certain attitude, not just towards the characters within the narration, but towards the perspective that those characters hold. As Wilson observes, when viewing *Letter* 'it is impossible to escape the impression of an intelligent and sometimes ironic observer, the implied film maker as it were, who is continuously observing with special insight into the wider patterns that Lisa ostensibly describes'.[108]

I will show not only how filmic narration is able to shape an 'attitude' towards characters and their points of view, but how through such an expression the narrational perspective itself is made tangible: the present articulated through how it assesses and judges the past. I will thus argue that not only is narration the means through which the present tense and past tense are constructed, but that it is through this construction that the tone of the past is shaped and its legacy framed: Is it something that can be comfortably revisited? Is its echo mourned as an unrecoverable loss? Are we able to leave it behind and contain it in the present? Not

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[107] Wilson, *Narration in Light*, p. 124.
[108] Ibid., p. 123.

only will these questions enable me to explore how my case studies understand the legacy of the 1970s today, they will also enable me to explore how the texts understand more universal questions of history and time. Is comfort created in separation from the past or holding on to it in the present? In what way? Has a teleological understanding of progress collapsed entirely? How are the more nebulous questions of the what ifs and might-have-beens accounted for in retelling the past? What is the purpose of revisiting it in the present?

Part Five: Image and Retro

Plato's Cave and the significance of Image.

I will conclude this chapter with a brief consideration of the role of image both in critical discourse and the case studies themselves. To do so it is necessary to return to Jameson's evocation of Plato's Cave - a world lost in image and shadow where representation is separated from referent - which hangs over not only subsequent academic discourse but also over the study texts themselves.[109] From the vastness of postmodernist discourse I want to isolate two points of interest concerning Jameson's analogy that will be threads of discussion throughout this thesis. One might be described as conceptual, the other tonal, and it is through the second that I will engage with the first.

The conceptual point I want to focus on is the oft-discussed schism between image and its referent. Jameson's work is part of a wider postmodern movement that attacked Enlightenment values of empiricism and progress. The deconstruction of image and its artifice played a crucial part in this shift. A significant contributor to the theoretical field is Jacques Derrida who sought to decode the constructed nature of language. Another key figure is Jean Baudrillard who conceptualised the 'hyperreal' whereby in the period of high capitalism at the end of the twentieth century images and imitations of reality had at first echoed, then exceeded, then superseded, reality itself, leaving us lost in a world of simulacra and simulation.[110] There have been critical attempts to mollify Jameson's concerns by talking about the

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[109] Jameson, 'Postmodernism and Consumer Society', p. 20.
[110] Jean Baudrillard, 'Simulacra and Simulation', trans. S.F. Glaser (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994).

value or political potential of the image.[111] However, I would argue that this tension between image and referent in academic discourse reflects a broader cultural struggle to comfortably absorb mediated forms of representation over the course of the twentieth century. This struggle has arguably intensified in the twenty-first, with the development of social media, the Internet, and the smartphone, resulting in a society in which the local has been replaced by the global, and material institutions and places replaced by the indeterminate spaces of the airport lounge and Internet.

The veracity of this slightly apocalyptic vision of technology in the twenty-first century is debatable and not something that I will be aiming to assert or deny in this thesis. Rather I raise this debate to highlight the tension between image, representation and the referent. I would argue it is embodied in, and at times explicitly engaged with, by the study texts themselves. In the introduction I briefly touched on the significant mobilisation of image in Sandbrook's documentary series, as the 1970s is constructed out of a plethora of archival footage, stitched together to shape a broader national whole. In what follows, each chapter addresses a group of case studies that consciously engage with the mediated legacy of the decade; whether that be their utilisation of 1970s media, their thematic concerns, or an aesthetic and stylistic play on codes of previous forms of representation.

Chapter Two looks at films and television programmes that are adaptations and considers how the texts utilise generic representation to recreate an historical period. Chapter Three addresses histories that have a problematic relationship with their existence in media and image, as the case studies are of representations of Northern Ireland and The Troubles. Chapter Four explicitly addresses questions of

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[111] Linda Hutcheon, *The politics of postmodernism* (London: Routledge, 2002), Roslin Galt, *Pretty: film and the decorative image* (New York: Columbia Press, 2011).

retro as it looks at popular culture's relationship to location and the construction of identity. This final chapter will conclude with a discussion of the use of archive and the fragment, the consideration of which is illuminating in understanding how contemporary Britain regards itself in relation to the decade that is seen as its birth.

Writing in 1989, Francis Fukuyama argued that the approaching fall of the Soviet Union heralded the end of History.[112] For Fukuyama, the inevitable domination of liberal globalisation would effectively see History, being understood as the change from one ideology to another, reach its conclusion, as no serious challenge to the liberal democratic model could materialise. But, in the second decade of the twenty-first century, which has yet to be christened, and when the 2000s have only recently become the 'Noughties', the sense that the Western World has fallen back into History dominates contemporary discourse. The grand narratives that Fukuyama argued were ending, have started up again as the liberal order established in the 1970s is shown to be less secure than previously thought. It is a core argument of postmodernism that grand narratives have broken, a change embodied in an image that has become irretrievably severed from its referent. I will address whether this argument must be reconsidered when looking at texts made in our post-post modern era. The twenty-first century is both increasingly hyper-real and simulated by the rapidity of technological development, and increasingly historical as a series of world events post-ceding the 2008 economic crash tangibly reshape a sense of a stable global order. This mix, I argue, requires a more complex engagement with images of the past than merely relegating them to shadows on the wall of Plato's Cave.

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[112] Francis Fukuyama, 'The End of History?', *The National Interest,* (Summer, 1989).

'Retro' and Hauntology

This thesis explores the different ways in which the image is used by the case studies: whether that be to assert or undermine the authenticity of the histories on display; to articulate a sense of collective identity; or to highlight the role of media in history and how it is remembered in the present. Textual analysis will also address the broader question of how image and its legacy are used to shape tone and emotion. Jameson's own writing is saturated with a sense of anxiety and melancholia, deeply intertwined with the role of image and the fragmented legacy of the past it embodies in the present. This sensibility is further explored in more recent critical writings on 'retro' in popular culture, particularly the work of Simon Reynolds and Mark Fisher.[113] Both critics focus on music, but their work on the prevalence of recycling past forms of popular culture in contemporary society is helpful when considering how the 1970s is shaped on screen.

Retro as a concept is frequently positioned as a comfortable means of utilising the past in descriptions akin to those of nostalgia and heritage that argue they are 'soft' ways of encountering history, based on pleasure rather than cognition, and consumption rather than reflection. There are a clear set of questions attached to the idea of retro concerning consumer culture and identity that will be explored in Chapter Four. For now, I will focus on the manner in which Reynolds and Fisher both describe contemporary culture as being filled with visual and sonic fragments of the past. A point of interest in their description is the mix of accessibility and distance. Reynolds describes retro as being 'spawned' in the 'intersection between

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[113] Mark Fisher, *Ghosts of My Life: Writings on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures* (Winchester: Zero Books, 2014), Simon Reynolds, *Retromania: Pop Culture's Addiction to Its Own Past* (New York: Faber and Faber, Inc., 2011).

mass culture and personal memory', and as being concerned with the 'immediate past'.[114] Its artefacts and objects are thus those that are popular and accessible, which is useful in considering representations of a decade in living memory. However, this sense of the accessible is inflected by a sense of distance: retro is familiar but also irretrievably gone. Fisher has termed this uncanny mix 'hauntology' – a concept that might be described as the tonal consequences of living in a world littered with the cultural debris of the past, or, in his words, 'the persistence of the *no longer'*.[115]

There is a reliance on mood in the work of Fisher and Reynolds which they use not only to articulate their visions of contemporary culture, but to shape the historical timeline. Discourses on nostalgia and heritage in many ways draw a distinction between past and present. Retro, by contrast, is defined in critical discourse by an interchangeability between the two. Philip Drake describes it as possessing a sense of 'timelessness' that creates a 'fusion of past and present'.[116] This definition is echoed in the work of both Reynolds, and Fisher who argues that in the twenty-first century, 'cultural time has folded back on itself, and the impression of linear development has given way to a strange simultaneity'.[117]

Here we have a vision of history with a collapsed timeline; if Jameson argued that history has become lost in its image, then Reynolds and Fisher develop that argument to state that the present and future have become lost amongst the constant recycling of the past. Fisher in particular argues that contemporary culture and society are defined by a sense of stasis. He describes a 'scavenger's space',[118] a

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[114] Reynolds, *Retromania*, p. xxx.
[115] Fisher, *Ghosts of My Life*, p. 43.
[116] Philip Drake, ''Mortgaged to music': new retro movies in 1990s Hollywood cinema' in Grainge, Paul (ed.), *Memory and popular film* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 189.
[117] Fisher, *Ghosts of My Life*, p. 9.
[118] Ibid., 144.

'culture that has lost the ability to grasp and articulate the present',[119] where twentieth-century dreams of the future have disappeared. This argument will be considered as I look at how the historical timeline is constructed in my case studies: whether or not past and present are distinct from one another; and whether a sense of momentum is created, or the stasis identified in Fisher's analysis is replicated.

Fragments and the role of Archive

If the image sits at the heart of Jameson's argument, then the fragment (whether sonic or visual) sits at the heart of Fisher's and Reynolds'. Both critics describe a present and future lost in the breaking of teleological grand narratives, a change that is almost literally embodied in the move from material culture such as vinyl, into the dematerialised and endlessly-reprocessed digital present. Reynolds pinpoints the music sample as the identifying aural marker of hauntology, and Fisher the crackle. These sonic markers, as signifiers of both presence and absence, are seen as emblematic of the shift in the cultural landscape. Fisher argues that with the arrival of digital technology and the internet, 'the texture of everyday experience' became altered 'beyond recognition'.[120] The sheer number of images and sounds, dislocated from any real-world referent, results in the 'loss of loss itself', and create the sense that 'there is no present to grasp and articulate anymore'.[121] The changing media culture is thus inextricably linked with a changing historical timeline. Reynolds argues that the move from analogue to digital compromises space as well

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[119] Ibid., p. 9.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Ibid.

as time as the proliferation of dematerialised images and sounds fractures the 'integrity of 'here' […] just as much as the integrity of 'now''.[122]

I would align elements of this discussion with Moran's writing on the 'armchair nation', as his work focuses on lost modes of viewing as much as what sorts of programmes the nation used to watch. Here we have a pattern of discourse shaped around nostalgia for past forms of media consumption and ephemera, as much as for the media itself. *Retromania* echoes Moran's eulogy for synchronised televisual viewing. Reynolds mourns the loss of collective media consumption as he compares the privacy of the personalised iPod playlist to the collective flow of broadcast radio.[123] I will explore how my core texts present these analogue dreams in the digital era; how they construct and utilise the material forms of our cultural past, as well as lost modes of viewing. I will look at how these strategies can become the means by which lost ways of existing in time and space can be articulated. Fisher argues that Jameson himself demonstrates not just a longing 'for a historical period', but also a 'yearning for a form',[124] and rather than separate the two I will look at how my case studies use one to explore the other. I will also consider the impact on teleology and momentum. Reynolds and Fisher offer a peculiar mix of inertia and stasis as they describe a culture unstoppably moving towards entropy, where the future is lost as the world forgets the ability to forget, and the present is eroded in the ephemera of the past.

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[122] Reynolds, *Retromania*, p. 72.
[123] Ibid., p. 122.
[124] Fisher, *Ghosts of My Life*, p. 13.

This discourse contains two slightly contradictory anxieties. One is very much grounded in space and time. It is about a contemporary Britain shaped by the irretrievable losses caused by the changes to British society over the past 40 years. These losses include not just the real-world institutions that shaped social and cultural life after the war, but also the collapse of the ideals of social democracy and the post-war settlement. Fisher thus describes the disappearance of a 'tendency, a virtual trajectory', that might be termed 'popular modernism'.[125] In this view, what has disappeared is a sense of momentum, linearity and movement. Here we have hauntology as the loss of the big ideas and dreams of the twentieth century and the arrival of a global society haunted 'by the spectre of communism',[126] and a British society 'pining for social democracy and its institutions'.[127] Hauntological discourse interweaves this sense of a specific change between two different moments in history with the slightly antithetical sense of a present that can no longer be separated from the past or future: a sort of cultural 'heat death' where the arc of history has collapsed into a series of 1s and 0s.

This second anxiety, I would argue, draws upon universal and longstanding concerns around history and the relationship between past and present, albeit concerns that have perhaps intensified in the digital and globalised era of the twenty-first century. I will address both these aspects of hauntological discourse. The analysis of my case studies will also consider the particular ways the 1970s as a historical setting allows these anxieties to be addressed. I consider the unique qualities of the reconstructed seventies both as a representation of a particular moment in twentieth-century history, and as a site where more general concerns

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[125] Ibid., p. 22.
[126] Ibid., p. 19.
[127] Ibid., p. 25.

about time and place and the schism between the imaginary eternal and its incarnation in the material world can be explored, concerns that are identifiable even in Plato's *Republic* itself.

Aesthetics and Attitude: A Different Approach

Drawing upon these discourses will permit me to consider my case studies and the reconstruction of mediated histories from a fresh angle. Existing scholarship tends to frame this debate by focussing on aesthetics and subsequent questions of whether the recreation of past styles in visual texts mythologizes or demystifies the past. Caitlin Shaw's 2014 thesis 'Remediating the Eighties: Nostalgia and Retro in British Screen Fiction 2005 to 2011' is a useful example. Shaw looks at reconstructions of the 1980s in British film and television. She aims to outline what she terms an 'Eighties Cycle' by grouping representations of the decade made between 2005 and 2011 and identifying recurrent aesthetic and stylistic tropes. Shaw thus aims to outline how the decade is 'coded' visually, and how that coding is used to create meaning for the audience. She links this 'Cycle' in film and television to a wider re-emergence of the eighties in the 2000s in other cultural forms such as music and fashion.

Shaw considers the different ways in which the decade as a setting is used, organising her chapters by considering the 'eighties' first as 'aesthetic', then 'image', and then finally 'history'. Her focus is on establishing the commonalities of how the eighties exists as these respective things (as an aesthetic, as a series of images that can be drawn upon, or as a collection of historical events and themes that can be engaged with). She also considers how her selected films intersect with previous versions of the decade. As such the discussion never develops broader

questions of representing the past on screen. Shaw considers how post-millennial representations of the 1980s signify the changing position of post-war histories in the landscape of new media and globalisation. But the thesis does not outline why the 1980s is particularly useful to this discussion, or what is achieved by revisiting it in the present.

I agree with Shaw that there is a gap in existing scholarship with no attempt to link post-war histories by setting as opposed to isolating individual productions in terms of artistic merit. Shaw offers the intensive critical focus on films like *Control* as indicative of an approach that selects specific texts as worthy of analysis, but that ignores their relationship to a wider body of representations of the post-war past. My approach will differ from Shaw's analysis of the 1980s on screen. Rather than looking at how different productions utilise the 1970s as style, media image, or history, I will unpick how the 1970s is constructed in individual texts in detail, and how these texts contribute to the more diffuse existence of the seventies in cultural consciousness.

I will not try to pinpoint or assume the existence of what might be described as a seventies aesthetic or style. I will instead presuppose that there are multiple aesthetics and styles through which the seventies can be reconstructed. The aesthetics of individual productions will be considered alongside their use of cinematic narration and point of view as a means through which tone is constructed and the past shaped on screen. I will explore points of comparison and contradiction between my texts, but my primary point of interest in the seventies on screen is as a diffuse web of complex and at times contradictory images, tones and narratives. Furthermore, I will explore why the 1970s as a period is significant, and how it can offer a unique space in British social history for understanding the country today. I

will also use these discussions to engage with broader and more universal questions

of history and the role of the past in the present.

To outline this different approach, it is useful to consider Shaw's discussion

of *Control*, a biopic of Joy Division singer Ian Curtis who committed suicide in

1979. *Control* has drawn intensive critical focus as a film that self-consciously

engages with questions of mythologizing history, both through the cult status of Joy

Division and Curtis himself, and through the film's stark aesthetic that replicates the

band's stylized image. This has been intensified by the director Anton Corbijn's

prior association with Joy Division. Corbijn took a series of black and white

photographs of the band during the 1970s that became, to quote Jonathan Romney,

the 'defining image of Joy Division' in the public consciousness. [128] Noel

McLaughlin has similarly described Corbijn as a 'key mythmaker' in the Joy

Division legacy meaning that 'nearly three decades later' *Control* would be made by

a man who 'was in the unusual position of re-mythologizing a band he had greatly

contributed to mythologizing previously'.[129]

Shaw's thesis is aligned with the critical focus on the mythologizing

tendencies of *Control* and the film's engagement with the band's mediated image.

She outlines the 'stylistic codes'[130] the film draws upon and explores how *Control*'s

self-reflexive engagement with Joy Division's mediated legacy allows it to 'lay bare

the increasing extent to which media images have become primary markers of

historical truth', whilst simultaneously affirming its own credentials by creating

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[128] Jonathan Romney, 'Control', *Sight & Sound*, 17:11 (November 2007), p. 51.
[129] Noel McLaughlin, 'Rattling out of control: a comparison of U2 and Joy Division on film', *Film, Fashion & Consumption* 1:1 (2002), p. 105.
[130] Shaw, *Remediating the Eighties*, p. 66.

'consistency with the band's contemporaneous media representations'.[131] *Control* thus uses image to stress its own authenticity by appealing to an audience familiar with both Joy Division's mediated legacy and codes of remembering the 1980s on film.

I would not refute any of Shaw's findings on the intersection of the mediated and the historical within *Control.* I would argue, however, that an intensive focus on *Control*'s mythologization fails to unpick the complex relationship between image and a location in space and time. Furthermore, this focus also ignores the subtleties with which cinematic narration operates in the film, and manner in which the relationship between the past and the present is shaped. Therefore, any resultant effect on tone, or use of these elements to explore wider questions of history, remain unaddressed.

Contrastingly, Mark Fisher's analysis of *Control*, although reductive in his dismissal of its narrational depth, moves beyond the question of whether the film mythologizes or demystifies its subject matter. Fisher's analysis considers how *Control*'s engagement with image shapes its tone, and its ability to link space and time. Fisher is critical of *Control*, arguing that it fails to 'connect' to its subject matter, taking the audience 'through the story' but never 'draw[ing us] into the maelstrom'.[132] As a point of comparison Fisher references Grant Gee's 2007 documentary of the band, *Joy Division*, arguing that Gee's film is 'organised around a vivid sense of loss'.[133] *Joy Division* might engage with image in its use of archive and the band's aesthetic legacy, whether aural or visual, but Gee's documentary

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[131] Ibid.
[132] Fisher, *Ghosts Of My Life*, p. 51.
[133] Ibid.

ultimately utilises them to create 'a study of a time and a place, both of which are now gone'.[134] Fisher's argument might superficially be considered to reinforce a standard division of the reflective versus the restorative, whereby *Joy Division* engages with image in a self-aware manner, while *Control* offers a depthless appeal to the cool chic of the band. I would argue that that dichotomy is not where the interesting terms of the debate lie. Instead, for me, what is of value is how Fisher engages with the aesthetics of the films to articulate their respective tones, and then links them to broader questions concerning history and a discussion of what the 1970s uniquely signifies.

Furthermore, for me *Control*'s glossy sheen – which Fisher sees as being at odds with the lived experience of the decade – is not without interest, but rather constructs a tone that is worth unpicking. The film shapes the past through a sort of unknowable cool, an approach I will discuss further in Chapter Two when I look at the 2011 adaptation of *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* (Tomas Alfredson, UK), a film that Fisher has laid similar charges against. Similarly, I would argue that his description of the 'grain' of imagery and atmosphere in *Joy Division* is worth investigating. His evocative description points to the importance of understanding how and why a particular longing for the 1970s is frequently associated with 'fragments' and the attempt to stitch them together into a lost whole.

Finally, there is the question of specificity. I want to understand why and how the 1970s can offer a particular type of space in which particular questions of history, and the relationship between past and present, can be explored. Shaw never

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[134] Ibid.

identifies what the 1980s can offer as a specific space for revisiting the past. Contrastingly, a core aim of my thesis will be to consider what the 1970s – with its transitional nature – can enable in terms of addressing the past in the present. Shaw collapses her analysis of the 1979 story of *Control* into her account of the 1980s, predominantly on the grounds that Joy Division are associated with the Thatcherite landscape of post-industrial decline. I would argue, however, that Britain in 1979, on the cusp of Thatcherite-transformation, is fundamentally different to Britain in 1984 once that transformation has arrived. Appreciating that difference is crucial in understanding not only how the seventies is shaped, but how contemporary society is itself viewed in comparison.

Iris Kleinecke-Bates in her study of Victorians on screen argues that certain times are revisited at certain moments in history for specific reasons,[135] a position that is echoed in scholarship on heritage that considers its resurgence during the 1980s. Similarly, John Hill considers the resonance of the 1950s in Thatcher's Britain of the 1980s as he writes about *Dance with a Stranger*, while Frederic Jameson addresses why 1950s America was reconstructed in a certain manner during the 1970s. I will not try to pin down representations of the 1970s to a concrete and unified timeline. I will instead aim to account for variations in terms of how the decade exists both in relation to representations of different regions of the UK, and how its position in popular consciousness has arguably shifted over the last ten years.

I will also be mindful of the fact that several of the historical narratives and themes associated with the 1970s – de-industrialisation, economic uncertainty,

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[135] Kleinecke-Bates, *Victorians on Screen*.

changing notions of masculinity to name a few – might be applied to other eras of post-war Britain. My aim is not to consider them as unique properties of the seventies, or to argue that as a setting it is a genre or cycle with specific aesthetics and narratives. Rather the seventies will be considered as a particular point in history that is associated with some specific issues.

I will argue that the seventies' singularity lies in how it exists to our society now, as that enables for broader issues to be considered. Part of that specificity might be defined as socio-historical; it is my contention that the 1970s was an era of material social change, bookended by two significant events in British social history in the oil crisis of 1973 and the election of the Thatcher government of 1979. However, part of that singularity is a bit more diffuse and universal in its reach. All previous accounts of the resurgence of certain periods in historical films stress the desire to return to more stable times at moments of discontent or flux. Examples include the desire to revisit an uncorrupted American ideal of the 1950s in a post-Vietnam decade marked by the Watergate scandal, or the desire to celebrate the height of Empire during the disruption and division of the Thatcher years. In comparison, the 1970s is widely regarded as a decade of flux, trauma and loss. Returning to it during the uncertainties of a post-millennial and globalised Britain, (a Britain it is regarded as the birthplace of) offers a unique space for understanding the world today and the direction taken by society over the last forty years.

Fisher ties Joy Division to the liminal space of 1979 and the twilight of the 1970s, a period associated with disintegration as much as decline, and with loss as much as change. These concerns are arguably self-consciously addressed by the band themselves in their musical output and persona of the time: as Fisher says, Joy

Division 'set up an Antarctic camp'[136] in failed post-war dreams. As such Joy Division's image, both as it lingers today and as it is utilised in Gee's documentary, links fragments, space, and time, to become in Fisher's words 'a requiem for doomed culture'.[137] This reading of the band is echoed by one of its founding members, Bernard Summer, who himself describes how,

> By the age of twenty-two I'd had quite a lot of loss in my life. The place where I used to live, where I had my happiest memories, all that had gone. All that was left was a chemical factory. I realised then that I could never go back to this happiness. So there's this void. For me, Joy Division was about the death of my community and my childhood.[138]

I will look at what can be explored by going back to that void, to the empty chemical factory of the 1970s in contemporary Britain, and how a decade associated with trauma and change is shaped in the present and why.

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[136] Fisher, *Ghosts Of My Life*, p. 58.
[137] Ibid., p. 57.
[138] Dave Haslam, *Manchester, England: The Story of the Pop Cult City* (London: Fourth Estate, 2000), p. xxiv.

Chapter Two: Remembering the State: Tone, melancholy and genre

Introduction

In 'Memory Banks Failing!', Andy Willis criticises *Life on Mars* (BBC, 2006-7) for constructing a 1970s that is generic rather than historical in nature, echoing Fredric Jameson's attack on the cinematic "fifties". [1] Willis criticises *Life on Mars*'s engagement with the televisual 1970s of the police procedural. He argues that the programmes' generic construction of the decade prevents it from engaging with British society during the 1970s themselves with any complexity or nuance. Furthermore, Willis argues, *Life on Mars* utilises generic convention to construct a reactionary account of Britain in the twenty-first century, as the programme uses the genre's preoccupation with policing, law enforcement, and the relationship between the state and the citizen for conservative and limited ends. Throughout this chapter, these issues will be considered as each text discussed draws upon a different genre that itself has a direct relationship to the British state in the 1970s; whether the spy thriller in *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* (UK, Tomas Alfredson, 2011), the conspiracy thriller in *Red Riding* (Channel 4, 2009) or *Life on Mars* and its self-conscious meditation on the police procedural. All these texts self-consciously engage with their own constructed and fictional nature. They all draw on mediated versions of the 1970s both in their use of a genre that is particularly associated with the decade, and

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[1] Andy Willis, 'Memory Banks Failing!: *Life on Mars* and the politics of Re-imagining the Police and the Seventies', in Stephen Lacey and Ruth McElroy (eds.) *Life on Mars: From Manchester to New York* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2012).

by adapting or drawing upon earlier fictional representations. The chapter will thus explore how generic and historical representation intersect with and impact upon one another.

Kamilla Elliott's work on adaptation is a useful starting point. Elliot notes how André Bazin, in writing on adaptation, 'favoured a mode in which the novel itself rather than the subject matter of the novel is the subject of the film'.[2] For Elliott, however, such a distinction is untenable, and she argues that adaptations instead offer a complex negotiation of both, in which the one is used to comment on the other. Following on from Elliott's argument, this chapter will analyse how these texts utilise the interaction between the generic and the historic to represent a national past on screen. A notable part of this is how they engage with a thematic concern of the genres drawn upon, namely the identity, landscape and role of the state. Arjun Appadurai has argued that a fundamental crisis of globalization in the late twentieth century is the severing of the state from the nation. Appadurai argues that the two now sit at odds, and even in conflict with one another.[3] In these case studies, the 1970s is positioned as a key transitional moment when the dynamic between the individual, the community and the state itself changes. All the case studies, in different ways, utilise thematic preoccupations within the genres and source texts they adapt, in order to explore this.

As high-profile adaptations drawing on high profile predecessors, all these texts have been subject to substantial critical attention, particularly in relation to questions of memory and nostalgia. As indicated by Willis, most of the criticism

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[2] Kamilla Elliot, *Rethinking the Novel/Film Debate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 131.

[3] Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at large: cultural dimensions of globalisation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

falls into reinforcing the dichotomy between progressive and conservative histories that I discussed in Chapter One. This critical focus also reinforces the implication in Boym's work on nostalgia that it is the self-awareness and self-reflexivity of the reflective mode, that allows for the past to be reassessed with the complexity and nuance needed to explore questions and narratives around our collective identity in the past, present and future.

Some of these issues will be touched on as the chapter focuses on the trajectories between past and present constructed by the texts themselves. I will not revisit the well-covered debates that contextualise the texts solely through nostalgia and memory, nor will I understand the texts as either reflective or reactionary modes of constructing the past. The chapter will instead argue that complexity and nuance in the relationship between past and present as constructed by the texts, is not located primarily in a cognitive or self-reflexive engagement with nostalgia, genre or memory. Instead, drawing on the work of Douglas Pye, this complexity will be located in the elusive question of tone.[4] It is through tone, I argue, that the relationship between the past and present on screen is primarily governed. While the texts themselves have been extensively written about, this crucial facet of them has been overlooked. The chapter will address this deficit by considering in detail how tone, narration and point of view intersect to shape the relationship between the past and present on screen.

Writing in 2014, Mark Fisher groups these texts together and considers them in the light of a Millennial Britain that, he argues, has lost the ability to clearly articulate its own present or future. In regards to *Life on Mars*, Fisher is critical of

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[4] Douglas Pye, 'Movies and Tone' in *Close-Up 02* (London: Wallflower Press, 2007).

what he identifies as the series' glossy 'corporate video' construction of the past. Fisher argues, as does Willis, that the series fundamentally offers a construction of the past that is reactionary and limited in nature.[5] Fisher situates the case studies of this chapter and the era they represent within his concept of 'hauntology'. For Fisher, they are emblematic of a culture and society haunted by visions of its own past, unable to imagine or articulate its present or future, and collapsing into a self-reflexive loop. In Boym's writing, it is the self-reflexive strand of nostalgia that enables revisioning the past to become a progressive activity and to offer a forward-orientated momentum. Contrastingly, for both Fisher and Simon Reynolds, self-reflexivity is aligned with stasis.[6] This division will be considered as the chapter will address questions of teleology, momentum and stasis, and unpick how these qualities are bound up in questions of self-reflexivity.

In 'Mourning and Melancholia', Sigmund Freud explores responses to grief and loss, and draws a distinction between 'melancholia' and 'mourning'.[7] For Freud, the healthier activity of the two is that of 'mourning', whereby the subject is able to understand their loss and externalise it onto the world in which they live. In this incarnation, grief and loss are dealt with in active terms; Freud describes the 'work' of mourning, through which the subject can not only externalise their loss, but in so doing, accept their new reality and move forward through time in a linear fashion.[8] Melancholia is defined in opposition to mourning by Freud whereby 'In mourning,

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[5] Mark Fisher, *Ghosts of My Life: Writings on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures* (Winchester: Zero Books (2014), p. 76.
[6] Simon Reynolds, *Retromania: Pop Culture's Addiction to Its Own Past* (New York: Faber and Faber, Inc., 2011).
[7] Sigmund Freud, *On Murder, Melancholia and Mourning* (London: Penguin Books, 2005).
[8] Ibid., p. 204.

the world has become poor and empty, in melancholia it is the ego that has become so'.[9] In this second incarnation, the subject them self becomes defined by their loss. Rather than the lost object being externalised and relinquished, Freud describes how 'the shadow of the object fell upon the ego, which could now be condemned by a particular agency as an object, as an abandoned object'.[10] In this incarnation, the subject is shaped and defined by their loss, leaving them unable to move forward through time. The self is understood only in relation to its loss, and the subject is unable to shape a new future as they re-enact their past loss over and over.

This distinction raises compelling questions when considering how nations and societies remember their own pasts, and how they remember groupings of events, peoples and places that cannot be externalised so easily as a single object. Freud himself discusses the prospect of loss in terms of something concrete such as a 'beloved person', but also in terms of an 'abstraction taking the place of the person, such as a fatherland, freedom' or 'an ideal'.[11] Interestingly, for Freud, the ambivalence of an abstracted loss forms a crucial component of melancholia. The resultant complexity of the relationship between the subject, and an object with an ambivalent form and boundaries, not only creates difficulties in comprehending and 'consciously grasp[ing]' exactly what it is that has been lost,[12] but results in a contradictory relationship with it that oscillates through 'love and hate'.[13] It is my contention that one of the primary means through which the 1970s is understood is through the prism of loss. How the texts conceive of, frame, and struggle to shape

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[9] Ibid., p.206.
[10] Ibid., p. 209.
[11] Ibid., p. 203.
[12] Ibid., p. 205.
[13] Ibid., p. 211.

just what it is that has been lost, is usefully contextualised in relation to these models of loss and grief offered by Freud.

Paul Gilroy's work on 'postcolonial melancholia' articulates a vision of the United Kingdom whereby the nation is unable to either comprehend the historical reality of its position as Empire, or accept its loss. [14] In this post-Imperial landscape, the country is unable to move forward or fully look back, remaining stuck in a melancholic half-life between the imagined glories and lost certainties of Empire, and a present-day reality in which those visions are challenged and/or gone. Gilroy proposes a course of action whereby mourning is substituted for melancholia, and the past and its image are understood and let go of in order for society to move forward. Contrastingly, Fisher's work complicates such a proposal. Fisher questions whether the echo and imprint of the past, be it sonic or visual, can be discarded in a contemporary landscape and digital ether saturated by its debris. The question of how to cope with and absorb the image of the past looms large and is not easily answered. Furthermore, for Fisher, time conceived of as a circle or loop has value. While the linear journey through history is mourned, he raises the possibility of understanding our past and present selves through the image and echo of the past, and its felt loss in the present. Freud's writing itself presents this complication as he describes the shadow of the lost object, not the object itself, falling back onto the ego. The concept of hauntology raises the question of how to externalise and let go of an image or concept that could only ever exist in the form of the imprint of a lost object in the first place.

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[14] Paul Gilroy, *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture?* (Oxon: Routledge, 2004).

This proposition will be developed more concretely across the body of the thesis as a whole. In relation to this chapter what is particularly notable about both Freud's writing on melancholia and Fisher's work, is the manner in which both accounts rely on tone and an affective representation of the emotional landscape of grief and loss in order to articulate it. Freud himself balances a psychoanalytic understanding of melancholia with an articulation of it that itself relies on a poetic reflection of affective emotional experience. Describing melancholia, Freud argues that its complex web of losses and griefs 'cannot be transferred to a system other than the unconscious' whereby it exists in 'the realm of memory traces of things' rather than as 'verbal investments'.[15] For Freud then, melancholia has three primary constituent parts, 'the loss of the object, ambivalence and the regression of the libido into the ego',[16] the intersection of which is primarily felt as, and can only be conceived through, affective and emotional means. This is a position reflected in Fisher's work, as he both echoes and aims to understand the nuances and possibilities of hauntology.

Darkness at Noon: **Tone, emotion, and the possibilities of Melancholia**

Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* (1940) interweaves personal with collective and national conceptions of lost futures, past griefs, and a present fallen out of time as it is suspended in between the two. The book draws on the historical reality of the Moscow Show Trials and the USSR under Stalin, but takes place in an unnamed country, ruled by an unnamed totalitarian government under the unnamed 'No. 1.'. It places the reader in the mind of its protagonist Rubashov, a former

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[15] Freud, *On Murder, Melancholia and Mourning*, p. 216.
[16] Ibid., p. 217.

architect of the government and regime who is himself now arrested under allegations of treason. Ostensibly shaped around three interrogations, and concluding with Rubashov's capitulation, trial and execution, the book collapses time as Rubashov spends periods in between the interrogations in the non-space of the empty prison cell and reflects on the failed communist project. As the novel progresses, more personal and affective memories begin to intrude upon his reflections. It is notable that, for a book of which the primary pleasure is sitting in the mind of an intellectual as he deconstructs a failed national and political project, the powerful conclusion that it offers is reliant purely on emotion and tone. While this may seem tangential, for the purposes of this chapter and thesis I want to extricate two images from the concluding part of *Darkness at Noon.* They are crucial to the point I am building as they not only demonstrate the pivotal role tone and emotion play in conceptualising and presenting grief and loss, but offer two contrasting images of melancholia that reflect both its destructive and hopeless stasis condemned by Gilroy, and its potential promise as raised by Fisher.

The first occurs after Rubashov agrees to admit guilt at the show trial after his final interrogation. For the first time the novel cuts away from him and to the character of Vasily, a porter introduced briefly at the start of the novel, who was an admirer of Rubashov and present at his arrest. Vasily lies in silence on his bed as his daughter reads out the newspaper report on the trial, Rubashov's 'confession', and subsequent sentence:

> The porter Vasily was lying on the bed with his face turned to the wall. Vera Vasilyovna never quite knew whether the old man listened to her reading or slept. Sometimes he mumbled to himself […] The porter Vasily did not move. Above the bed, directly over his head, hung the portrait of No. 1. Next

to it a rusty nail stuck out of the wall: until a short time ago the photograph of Rubsahov as Partisan-commander had hung there. Vasily's hand felt automatically for the hole in his mattress in which he used to hide his greasy Bible from the daughter; but shortly after Rubsahov's arrest the daughter had found it and thrown it away, for educational reasons.[17]

This image offers a moment of melancholia as conceived of in Gilroy and as ostensibly presented in Freud. While the scene has a narrative function (it is the means by which we hear the result of the trial), it is plucked out of narrative time both by cutting away from the protagonist and from Vasily's own separation to the story. It is refracted not only through the newspaper, but through the daughter as she reads it, and her motivation for doing so is revealed to be a desire to provoke a reaction from her father for which she can get him arrested and secure the room for herself and her husband. Vasily himself lies facing the empty space of the wall with his hand in the gap in his blanket that his Bible used to occupy. It is an image of failed pasts and lost futures: a Christian promise of paradise after death and a world experienced as a vale of tears was swapped for twentieth-century dreams of utopianism in this life, but all that is left is an empty space where the Bible used to be and an empty space where the intellectual and moral dream of Communism as represented by Rubashov used to hang, with only the realities of Stalin left behind. Vasily momentarily offers a quick defence of Rubashov, but has no answer to his daughter and can only repeat passages from his absent Bible that intermingle with memories of the now absent Rubashov. Once the grand narratives of the past have broken, and the dangers that those narratives lead to revealed and lived, all that is left

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[17] Arthur Koestler, *Darkness at Noon* (New York: Scribner, 1968), p. 248.

is an image of melancholia wherein an indeterminate present is plucked from time and shaped entirely by loss.

The second image occurs after the novel returns to Rubashov who, standing in his cell waiting to be executed by midnight, considers the promise and limitations of The Party and ideology to which he had dedicated his whole life. Withdrawing from the reality about him, and becoming deaf to questions from either interrogator or the other occupants of the cells, he falls out of time and into a state of self-reflecting stasis,

> And yet there were ways of approaching him. Sometimes he would respond unexpectedly to a tune, or even the memory of a tune, or of the folded hands of the *Pietà*, or of certain scenes of his childhood. As if a tuning-fork had been struck, there would be answering vibrations, and once this had started a state would be produced which the mystics called 'ecstasy' and saints 'contemplation'; the greatest and soberest of modern psychologists had recognized this state as a fact and called it the 'oceanic sense'. And, indeed, one's personality dissolved as a grain of salt in the sea; but at the same time the infinite sea seemed to be contained in the grain of salt. The grain could no longer be localized in time and space. It was a state in which thought lost its direction and started to circle, like the compass needle at the magnetic pole; until finally it cut loose from its axis and travelled freely in space, like a bunch of light in the night; and until it seemed that all thoughts and all sensations, even pain and joy itself, were only the spectrum lines of the same ray of light, disintegrating in the prism of consciousness[18]

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[18] Ibid., p.260-1

Rubashov then crosses his cell and looks out the window, leaning,

his forehead head against the pane. Over the machine-gun tower one could

see a patch of blue. It was pale, and reminded him of a particular blue which

he had seen overhead when as a boy he lay on the grass in his father's park,

watching the poplar branches slowly moving against the sky. Apparently

even a patch of blue sky was enough to cause the 'oceanic state'. He had read

that, according to the latest discoveries of astrophysics, the volume of the

world was finite – though space had no boundaries, it was self-contained, like

the surface of a sphere[19]

It is this second image of melancholia, Rubashov with his forehead against

the glass, collapsing memories of past and present and taken out of narrative flow,

that I would align with Fisher's conception of the possibilities and even need for

hauntology and melancholia in both individual and collective consciousness. History

is similarly circular in this moment; the oceanic sense is defined as an infinite loop

and one which is only conceptualizable through tone. It is an emotional state that

could only ever be melancholic; it is not about the blue of the sky in childhood, but

about the memory of that blue, and its absent presence being layered on top of the

sky when viewed at the end of a life. It is notable that in a book that begins as an

intellectual thesis on the promises and failures of political movements and nations,

the conclusion is articulated in tone and emotion and as such has resonance with

Fisher's work. I will return to *Darkness at Noon* at the conclusion of this chapter to

further explain how the oceanic sense, despite being infinite and circular, is used to

express future possibility of both the self and the collective in a manner that is

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[19] Ibid.

resonant when considering the 1970s on screen. For now, however, I will focus on its most direct use in relation to this chapter, which is the reliance on tone and its dominance in shaping how the past is revisited in the present.

All three texts discussed here, I will argue, not only orientate the viewer in the world of the past through tone, but use that tone to shape or curb momentum and the trajectory between past, present and future. In understanding how tone is constructed in cinema, the work of Douglas Pye on its elusive and unstable qualities becomes key to this argument. For Pye, a film's tone is central in orientating the audience in the world of the text, both modulating the meaning generated by the film's narrative, and, importantly, revealing attitudes 'to events, characters, and action'.[20] Paying particular attention to questions of filmic narration and point of view, the chapter will unpick the intricate quality of tone. If, as Pye suggests, 'tone and interpretation are inseparable', it is the thesis of this chapter that the interpretive attitude to the past bound in the texts' tone sits in tension with that presented in the narrative and, frequently, in their previous incarnations, whether the books they are adapted from (*Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* and *Red Riding*), or the televisual output that they draw upon (*Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* and *Life on Mars*). In this manner the chapter will be able to revisit well-discussed texts in a new way, and also begin to unpick how questions of loss, grief and the past are articulated and remembered in collective mediated consciousness.

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[20] Pye, 'Movies and Tone', p. 37.

Part One: *Life on Mars*

     Life on Mars (BBC, 2006-8) is about police detective Sam Tyler (John Simm) who awakes in Manchester 1973, following an accident in his contemporary 2006. Sam must negotiate the world of policing in the 1970s and adapt to his new team, led by the belligerent Gene Hunt (Philip Glenister), while pursuing the question 'Am I mad, in a coma, or back in time?' *Life on Mars*' self-conscious engagement with televisual representation, nostalgia, and memory has resulted in significant critical attention. This, as signalled by Willis' work, has predominantly focused on whether or not its nostalgic preoccupation with the televisual output of the 1970s limits the historical representation it can offer, and whether or not the series provides a reactionary or reflexive account of the past. Most readings of the programme identify a reactionary stance, whereby Sam's entry into the world of the televisual 1970s and *The Sweeney* (ITV 1975-8) sees him initially disorientated by its sexism, racism, and lax attitude to institutionalised violence, but ultimately eulogises that past and affirms its value over an alienating present.

     The focus of this chapter is not to understand *Life on Mars* as either a self-reflexive preoccupation with a mediated past at the expense of historical nuance, or as a straightforwardly reactionary account. Framing the programme in those terms has been comprehensively covered in other analysis and convincingly supported by readings of the programme itself. Instead, I will concentrate on the significance of tone. The anxiety-saturated atmosphere of *Life on Mars*, whether reactionary or not, offers a rich site for unpicking the relationship between past and present, and warrants detailed analysis. The trajectory of history presented by *Life on Mars*, a

trajectory in part created through its tone, is of interest and the question of self-reflexivity will be considered in direct relation to the question of momentum. The programme utilises a future-orientated genre (sci-fi) to look back at the genres of the past in order to consider where we are now. Questions of momentum and linearity will be addressed as the chapter explores how *Life on Mars* situates the past in relation to the present and future, and the effect that that has on how the 1970s are conceived.

Before considering these issues in detail, it is worth outlining how historical and generic representation intersect in *Life on Mars,* and how this intersection is used to engage with recurrent themes and narratives of the 1970s in contemporary consciousness. While *Life on Mars* is not an adaption of any one text, it draws on the televisual output of the 1970s itself, most prominently *The Sweeney*. Generic and historical reference points are thus interwoven to draw a trajectory from the 1970s and its televisual output, to the Britain in which we live today. Writing on the police procedural of the late 1980s and early 1990s, Charlotte Brunsdon argued that programmes like *Inspector Morse* (ITV, 1987-2000) invite a comparison with police procedurals of the past. For Brunsdon, this comparison 'forcibly reminds [us] that in the 1970s we watched a different kind of police series'.[21] *Life on Mars* overtly engages with the genre's development from the 1970s to the early 2000s as its reference points encompass both *The Sweeney* and subsequent programmes such as *Prime Suspect* (ITV 1991-2006). This allows *Life on Mars* to place its generic forebears as its subject and create meaning through comparing them, as the

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[21] Charlotte Brunsdon, 'The Structure of Anxiety: Recent British Television Crime Fiction' in Buscombe, Edward (ed.) *British Television: A Reader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 202.

programme accounts for the Endeavour Morses and Jane Tennisons who have occupied British television screens in between Jack Reagan and Sam Tyler. Furthermore, if Sam travels back to the kind of police procedural 'we' used to watch, the programme equally situates it in the kind of world in which we used to live. Self-reflexive engagement with genre and previous texts thus allow the programme to recognise how certain texts and types of text are time-specific, and to outline a trajectory between the socio-historical contexts which produced them, and contemporary Britain.

Richard Sparks and Jonathan Nichols-Pethick have argued that there is a conservatism inherent in the police procedural predicated on what they identify as the fundamentally reassuring nature of the genre, which alleviates anxiety as individual officers maintain and protect the status quo.[22] Narratively, *Life on Mars* offers those stabilities and reassurances both through Sam and Gene's combined efforts to uphold communal justice, and Sam's ultimate affirmation of the past over the present. However, I argue that *Life on Mars* stands in contrast to the confident attitude of the genre identified by Sparks and Nichols-Pethick. The programme's tone is saturated with a deep anxiety which shifts the series away from a reassuring enjoyment of the 1970s into a deeply ambivalent encounter with the past. Douglas Pye argues that 'tone and interpretation are inseparable' in film as tone is the primary means through which the 'attitude' of a text is shaped.[23] Pye concretely

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[22] Richard Sparks, *Television and the Drama of Crime: Moral tales and the place of crime in public life* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1997), Jonathan Nichols-Pethick, *TV Cops: The Contemporary American Television Police-Drama*, (London: Routledge, 2012).

[23] Pye, 'Movies and Tone', p. 30. Pye explicitly writes about filmic narration but it is my contention that the arguments he makes can be applied more broadly to other forms of visual narration including televisual.

conceptualizes 'four prospective axes' of attitude within a film including 'attitudes implied to the film's subject matter; attitudes implied to the film's audience; attitudes implied to the conventions the film employs or invokes; attitudes implied to the film as a film'.[24] For Pye, a film's tone is thus central in orientating the audience in the world of the text. Tone both modulates the meaning generated by the film's narrative, and, importantly, reveals attitudes 'to events, characters, and action'.[25] The conflicting attitudes to lost pasts identified in melancholia by Freud saturate *Life on Mars*, and are shaped by its intricate tone. The series modulates a self-reflexive and slightly tongue-in-cheek attitude to its subject matter, with an immersive, disorienting, and genuinely emotive meditation on childhood and a once-shared now-lost national past. This results in an attitude towards the 1970s which is unquestionably affectionate and deeply anxious in equal measure, providing a vision of the past that is both enjoyable and slightly neurotic in nature.

Key to *Life on Mars*' unique tone is the nostalgic glee with which it revels in the icons of the 1970s, as Sam moves through a world of rag-and-bone carts, George Best posters and long sideburns, and enjoys the straight-talking bravado of Gene Hunt. However, this is mixed with an unstable and ethereal immersion in the past, as Sam confronts not only the darker aspects of the decade, but spaces of memory that are marked as both psychological and emotionally impactful. The juxtaposition of these two different modes of encountering the past are notable in Episode 1.4, when Sam returns to his family home for the first time. The episode explicitly offers the nostalgic recreation of the 1970s as a central pleasure. This is particularly evident in the *mise-en-scène* of the nightclub the episode is centred around, which displays

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[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid., p. 37.

ostentatious "seventies" décor, fashion and music. The other key location of the

episode, the Tyler household, is presented in a strikingly contrasting fashion as a

space of loss and memory. Sam's house is presented in a fragmentary way. It is

constructed from a series of remembered details, built from the repeated motif of an

extreme low-angle shot from a child's perspective of electrical wires above the

street, and the family cat sitting on the doorstep. Other details of the otherwise-

empty street such as the blue door leap out, and Sam's affectionate murmuring of the

name 'Alfie' as the rag-and-bone man walks past, emphasises the sense that he is

recalling these fragments as he moves through the remembered space. Sam pauses

on the threshold of his house, framed for a moment against the terraced row in a

longshot that is almost surreal in its crisp lines and bold distinction between the

reddish brown of the buildings, and brilliant blue of the sky above. Sam's moment of

entry to the house is emphasised as he pauses on the doorstep and walks into the

living room alone after his mother instructs him to 'go through'. Individual

ornaments leap from the dark greys and browns of the *mise-en-scène* as Sam walks

around the room, taking them in one at a time. He picks up a GI Joe Doll which itself

functions both as an iconic and nostalgic shared generational marker of the past, and

an intensely personal item to Sam sitting in an intensely personal space of memory.

The series' sense of uncertainty and ambivalence is evident in the

representation of Gene Hunt. Hunt's popularity has caused unease in critical

commentary, as *Life on Mars* overtly revels in the model of retrosexual masculinity

the character provides.[26] However, the figure of Gene also exemplifies the

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[26] Stephen Lacey and Ruth McElroy, 'Introduction' in Stephen Lacey and Ruth McElroy (eds.) *Life on Mars: From Manchester to New York* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2012), p. 5.

programme's ambivalent tone. This complexity of tone complicates the bullishly reactionary qualities of Gene, and prevents *Life on Mars* from stabilising the sites of the past with the self-assuredness and confidence which those reactionary qualities might provide. In all three texts discussed in this chapter, violence, masculinity and the pleasures of the image are intimately connected. In *Life on Mars* this intersection is bound with questions of loss. Pam Cook's writing on *Raging Bull* (Martin Scorsese, USA, 1980) is useful in this regard. For Cook, Scorcese's film demonstrates the complexity of past modes of masculinity that have an inherent tragic component as they seek to fruitlessly resist the course of history and change.[27] This discussion is echoed in Ruth McElroy's writing on *Life on Mars* and its engagement with 'retrosexuality' which as a concept, she argues, is 'melancholically aware of its own distance to the past'.[28]

Actor Philip Glenister has stated that Gene's lack of self-awareness and straightforward nature are a key part of his appeal. The programme revels in his visceral and outmoded language, frank approach, and disregard for the sensitivities and politically aware views of 'New Man' Sam. I would argue, however, that self-awareness is key to Gene's presentation. His most ostentatious displays of masculinity, particularly those centred on his car, are presented in self-consciously fictionalised terms with obvious generic forebears in Jack Reagan or even Colombo with Gene's oft-mentioned but never-seen wife. This self-consciousness is accessible to the character himself. Gene alludes to westerns, admires Gary Cooper, and retorts 'I prefer Z Cars' when Sam critiques his aggressive approach to policing. The self-

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[27] Pam Cook 'Masculinity In Crisis? Tragedy and Identification in *Raging Bull*' *Screen* 23 (3-4) (Sep/Oct 1982) pp. 39-46.
[28] Ruth McElroy 'Consuming Retrosexualities: The Past Live On Screen, Online Now' in Stephen Lacey and Ruth McElroy (eds.) *Life on Mars: From Manchester to New York* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2012), p. 122.

reflexive representation of Gene does not result in a character who is solely enjoyed on ironic terms, and in fact contributes to a genuine earnestness and vulnerability in his presentation. The series recognises his overtly fictionalised status, an awareness that Gene himself shares, as for example when Sam enters Gene's office at the end of S1.E2 to see him staring at a poster of *The Good the Bad and the Ugly*. Gene verbally draws a link between the fictionalised characters of the poster and himself, before concluding he is all three. Gene is presented as a man who is steadily becoming out of time. The programme is divided into characters who will survive the change into modern Britain like Sam, and those who won't like Gene. Hunt himself combines a fruitless attempt to cling onto the past, wilfully ignoring mounting evidence that his former DCI Harry Wolf is corrupt, with an astute awareness that the world is changing around him. Both the series and Gene himself acknowledge that his days on our streets and television screens are numbered. The genuine affection for the character displayed by the programme and, eventually, by Sam, saturate that fact with an anxiety-ridden melancholy.

Throughout *Life on Mars*, then, any nostalgic or generic pleasures are underscored not by the solidity of reactionary comfort, but by a pervasive sense of loss that extends outwards from individual to collective representation. The police procedural is a fertile ground for exploring changes to modern Britain. As Brunsdon notes, the genre has functioned as a 'privileged site for the staging of the trauma of the break-up of the post-war settlement'.[29] *The Sweeney* itself has a particular relationship to the 1970s and to these issues, as it presents a society in flux as

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[29] Brunsdon, 'The Structure of Anxiety', p. 196.

traditional institutions of authority, masculinity and community come under attack in a changing nation. *Life on Mars* reworks these issues, situating the world of the 1970s police procedural in direct relation to Sam's 2000s. This juxtaposition of past and present allows the programme to focus not only on the issues of the breakup of the post-war settlement, but the changes that arose from them, the direction taken, and the gains and losses of the subsequent forty years.

Once again, the seventies emerge as a crucial decade of transition; the moment when the nation changed. John Curzon has explored how *Life on Mars* outlines a shift from what he identifies as the 'Old North', built on collective working-class male identity and rooted in the local community, to the 'New North', a more transitory and isolating space driven by individualistic consumer identity.[30] More generalised discourses of the decade, or generic representations of it, are thus interwoven with a history that is both regional and specific. As Curzon's argues, broader changes to the nation are embodied in Manchester's transformation from 'a space of manufacturing production' to a 'space of consumption'.[31] *Life on Mars* shows a proliferation of lost spaces that are under siege in 1973 and completely eradicated in 2006. One example is the textile factory seen in Episode 1.3. The renovated space of the factory operates as Sam's stylish apartment in 2006, but it is revisited in 1973 as a working building at the centre of a community on the brink of collapse. Curzon covers these debates comprehensively but I raise them here in order to address how change, as a theme of the programme, shapes the tone of *Life on Mars*, as it is intertwined with loss, ambivalence and uncertainty.

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[30] John Curzon, 'Sam Tyler and the 'New North'' in Stephen Lacey and Ruth McElroy (eds.) *Life on Mars: From Manchester to New York* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2012).
[31] Ibid., p. 72.

Frequently spaces are layered upon one another as elements of the 1973 landscape are juxtaposed with their 2006 incarnation, the latter being defined by loss not just of place but of purpose and identity. The overly standardized space of the 2006 police station could be that of any workplace as it is filled with nondescript work clothing, office cubicles and watercoolers. It sits in direct contrast with the 1970s station which, drawing on the iconography of the genre, could only ever be the workplace of the police as missing posters and case files fill the *mise-en-scène*. This contrast ties into a wider depiction of 1970s Manchester as a city composed of functional spaces. Scenes take place in abattoirs, factories, pubs, post offices and canteens. This trope is overtly acknowledged by Annie (Liz White) who remarks to Sam, 'Factories should be factories, houses should be houses, I mean things should be built for a purpose'. The space of the street itself is filled with milk-men, builders, delivery drivers and rag-and-bone carts. It is a place where everyone is shown to perform a specific working role in the community. It's not just the spaces themselves that are presented as lost, but the certainties of identity and function embodied in them. It's also a loss that cannot be ameliorated by Sam's return to 1973. Episode 1.3 starts by affirming the living and breathing solidity of the working factory as Sam places his hand on the chimney outside. However, as Sam walks through the building's interior, cuts to its 2006-incarnation flash up, overlying its transformed space in the millennium onto its functioning 1973 self. Thus 2006 Manchester, and the loss it represents, saturates the past of the 1970s throughout the series.

Tonally, this emotive and potent representation of the sites of memory is complicated throughout the series by the overt pleasures taken in the nostalgic representation of popular culture on screen. In *Action TV*, Bill Osgerby and Anna Gough-Yates argue that the 1960s saw crime and action programmes selling a

consumer lifestyle to male viewers. In contrast, they note that the programmes of the 1970s faded the enthusiastic promotion of a male identity built on consumption into a gritty realism that exhibited a disdain for its popular-culture centred predecessors.[32] *Life on Mars* presents a curious amalgam of these two modes. Post-war deprivation and male working-class culture in the 1970s, seen by Osgerby and Yates as the antithesis of pop culture consumerism, are iconised and displayed alongside fashion and media outputs of the decade. There is little distinction between football stickers, Old Spice aftershave and vignettes of decaying factories or the lived-in heavy smoking and hard-drinking body of Gene. Both modes thus come to signify the 1970s in the same way. The two distinct colour schemes of the two time periods emphasise the consumption of the tactile ruggedness that *Life on Mars* ascribes to the seventies. The cool blues and smooth clothing of 2006 are replaced by the browns and yellows of a tobacco-stained 1973, in which characters with weathered faces wear textured wools, tweed, velvet and cotton clothing. If the 1970s itself straddled the tail-end of post-war Britain and the consumer culture that came to dominate in the 1980s, then *Life on Mars* both mourns the passing of the former but rather ambiguously packages that world in a consumerist aesthetic that aligns it with the haircuts, cars, clothes and food brands of the past.

This sense of ambiguity extends to the representation of television in *Life on Mars*. Television itself is centralised as a key form of remembering and accessing a shared national history, both through the series' conscious engagement with a televisual canon and generic history, and within the diegesis of the programme itself. From the multiple screens of the opening credits, to the end of the final episode when

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[32] Bill Osgerby and Anna Gough-Yates, 'Introduction: Getting into gear with the action TV series' in Bill Osgerby and Anna Gough-Yates, *Action TV: Tough Guys, Smooth Operators and Foxy Chicks* (London: Routledge, 2001).

the girl from the test card 'switches off' the screen, television has an ubiquitous presence in *Life on Mars*. It plays in Sam's flat, the police station, and, at Sam's behest, in *The Railway Arms*. The key pleasure of the series is marked as a contemporary viewer encountering the police procedurals of the past through Sam's arrival into Gene's 1973. This is then extended to other televisual forms as Sam dreams of *Camberwick Green* (BBC, UK, 1966) and watches public service announcements, science programmes, and soap operas of the past. With the exception of a few verbal references to political figures of the decade, it is largely not news events that mark or orientate the viewer in the specific past, but pop songs and television programmes.

Television also operates in *Life on Mars* as a marker of hauntology. It isolates and fragments Sam's experience, and plays a fundamental role in the collapsing of a linear timeline. The programme positions television as a pleasurable vehicle for the collective remembering of a shared national past. However, as Matt Hills argues, the series also utilises 'complex depictions of media technology', and Sam's interactions with television are frequently marked as moments of alienation and horror. [33] Television functions as a portal between both the viewer and the past and Sam and the present, as family members and hospital staff speak to him through programmes playing on television screens, blurring the boundaries between 1973 and 2006. However, such encounters are riddled with claustrophobia and alienation. The television can only offer Sam a one-sided dialogue in which the characters who stand around his immobile body in the present ask him questions but are unable to hear his replies. Rather than being relished for collective nostalgic pleasure,

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[33] Matt Hills, 'The Medium is the Monster… or the World?: Discourses of Uncanny 'Old Media' and Immersive 'New Media' in *Life on Mars*' in Stephen Lacey and Ruth McElroy (eds.) *Life on Mars: From Manchester to New York* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2012), p. 105.

television frequently sits at the centre of scenes about psychological isolation and pain as Sam desperately tries to communicate through it. This is exemplified in the visual trope of Sam, isolated against the glare of the TV screen in a dark *mise-en-scène*, with his hand physically touching the television in desperation. Rather than confidently being used to articulate a collective vision of the past, television functions throughout *Life on Mars* as a limited source of interaction, propagating the sense of anxiety that walks hand in hand with affection.

In writing on adaptation, both Kamilla Elliot and Christine Geraghty have identified a sense of 'doubleness'.[34] This doubleness pervades *Life on Mars*, both in the intersection of the generic and historical, and in the affection and anxiety with which the programme engages with them. If, as Pye argues, a programme's tone reveals its attitude towards its material, then that attitude becomes a focus of *Life on Mars* itself. The result is a meditation on the past that is saturated by the fear of its loss, and an anxiety towards the present from which we are revisiting it. For Pye, tone is 'intimately linked' to point of view. *Life on Mars*' attachment to the character of Sam and his perspective creates a curious relationship between movement and stasis that fundamentally comes to shape the tone of the series. Sam's perspective dominates the programme. He is the avatar of the contemporary audience and it is with him who they are epistemically aligned. Furthermore, the 1970s the programme recreates is explicitly marked as a vision of the decade that is intensely personal to Sam as his memory and psychology sculpt the landscape of the past. Despite his central position, Sam himself emerges as a curiously passive character. He neither

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[34] Elliot, *Rethinking the Novel/Film Debate*, Christine Geraghty*, Now A Major Motion Picture: Film Adaptations of Literature and Drama* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2008).

drives the narrative nor shapes the world around him. Instead, Sam's role as a viewer becomes the emphasis of the programme, as he must learn to read his surroundings in order to 'get home'. Certain episodes link the past with Sam's present in hospital, as for example the hostage crisis in 1973 that is linked to his life support machine imminently being switched off in 2006. But ultimately there is an overwhelming feeling of helplessness and passivity as Sam lies trapped inside his own mind, unable to wake. At its core, I would argue that *Life on Mars* is neither about Sam nor Gene, but about how Sam watches Gene and grows to understand him over the course of the series.

John Ellis' writes on the feeling of 'witness' in which a sense of 'separation and powerlessness' are bound up in the experience of watching audio-visual media as its events 'unfold elsewhere […] and in another time as well'.[35] This sense pervades *Life on Mars* as the 1970s emerges as a contained and separate world from our present. It is constructed as a perfectly looping snow globe that Sam can leave, or return to, but can never change. *Life on Mars* is a programme of four walls. It is saturated by extreme high angle shots or extreme low angle shots that box Sam in amongst the labyrinthine streets or underneath brilliant blue skies. Low ceilings border the *mise-en-scène* as do diegetic light sources. The programme explicitly stresses the boundaries of the spaces it depicts, as for example when Sam bangs walls in attempts to escape, or looks to the ceiling or sky above him while trying to shout to people who he can hear but who cannot hear him. The self-reflexive alignment of Sam with the viewer, rather than confidently separating the past from

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[35] John Ellis, *Seeing Things: Television in the Age of Uncertainty* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002), p. 11.

the present in a linear fashion, thus collapses time into a loop wherein Sam escapes from the present to a past layered with its own inevitable loss.

In all of this the 1970s emerges in the programme as a key moment. It is presented as the final point at which present day Britain might have been changed, whether by stopping Sam's Dad from leaving the family, fighting police corruption to preserve the public's faith in the Force, or stemming football hooliganism. Sam repeatedly asks the question 'why does it have to be now?' While the year 1973 has personal significance for Sam being the year his father left, it is also notable as the year of the Oil Crisis and the moment, by common consensus, that the '1970s' really started and the post-war consensus began its final collapse. The vaguely dystopian atmosphere of 2006, and the melancholy and anxiety of 1973, saturate the programme with a diffuse sense that something went wrong in the 1970s – something should have been done differently. But Sam's failure to change the course of the future results in an uneasy sense that it is too late to address any of those missed opportunities now.

A key facet of the change mourned in *Life on Mars* is the relationship between the individual, state and community as the programme engages with the thematic trope of justice and law in the police procedural. Utilising this theme of the genre, *Life on Mars* considers the dynamic between individual, community and state and positions the 1970s as the moment where the relationship between these three things shifted. In stark comparison to Millennial Britain, the 1970s police department is firmly rooted in the local community where individuals are connected to one another in a familial and social environment. The generic trope of the fractious but

deeply steadfast central pairing in Gene and Sam sits at the heart of what the programme constructs as a tightly-knit workplace community. The programme thus reflects what John Sumser argues are the core values at the heart of most television: 'justice and family'.[36] The incompatibility of a professional with a personal life is presented as having destroyed Sam's relationship with Maya in 2006 in a room in which Sam asks 'what use are feelings in here?' This isolating environment is juxtaposed with the workplace family of 1973 as Sam's colleagues drink, fight, eat, and socialise together.

As Sumser's comment indicates, 'justice' as presented here is located in the interaction between individuals and their community rather than as a function of the state. Laws are shown to change with Sam frequently misquoting the right to remain silent, but justice exists outside the terrain of bureaucracy and the legal system itself. It is instead presented as a natural facet of the local community. Throughout *Life on Mars* Gene's instinctive but feckless approach to policing is offset by Sam's considered responses, allowing the programme to overtly mark out its position on the decade as one that is 'balanced'. This balance is reinforced by the manner in which *Life on Mars* juxtaposes the pleasures of genre with what John R. Cook and Mary Irwin describe as the 'sobering' realities of the decade itself.[37] It takes Gene's innate knowledge of the community and traditional gut instinct and Sam's modern forensic approach to secure convictions. The programme thus implies that both Gene and Sam each have as much to learn from the other. One of the key pleasures of the series is their relationship and the counterpoint they form to one another, evident in

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[36] John Sumser, *Morality and Social Order in Television Crime Drama*, (North Carlolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., 1996), p. 27.

[37] John R. Cook and Mary Irwin ''Moonage Daydreams': Nostalgia and Cultural Memory Contexts of *Life on Mars* and *Ashes to Ashes*, in Stephen Lacey and Ruth McElroy (eds.) *Life on Mars: From Manchester to New York* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2012), p. 82.

the recurrent image of the two of them framed in one shot, walking in slow motion through the station, frequently with an arrested criminal in the middle. The individual, the community and the local police force thus operate as a contained self-regulatory circle that lacks the slick professionalism of the force of 2006 but successfully oversees the city and its inhabitants.

When the state intervenes, it is thus presented as an intrusive and threatening presence. The programme addresses the police corruption and brutality associated with the 1970s and acknowledges the price of its legacy in the public's mistrust of the police in 2006. However, *Life on Mars* also draws distinctions between brutality in the form of police violence, and police corruption, with the show being unambiguously critical of officers taking bribes or being agents of the criminal underworld, while being much more ambivalent towards the use of violence on suspects. As Willis notes, there is a marked distinction between Gene and the way he manipulates the law and someone like DCI Litton. Litton's position as head of the 'Regional Crime Squad' alludes to corruption in units like the West Midlands Serious Crime Squad during the 1970s themselves. Interestingly, Litton's concern with his own media image also aligns him with the more politically conscious avatars of modern policing in characters like DI Morgan, who prioritize their own inscrutable structures of power and image over their duty to the community and their fellow officers. The programme thus separates Gene and his team as agents of the state from the state itself.

This alignment is reflective of the way that ultimately, it is not the corruption of the 1970s that threatens the relationship between the community, individual and the local police in *Life on Mars*. Rather, it is a 2006 state whose architects are faceless bureaucrats and in which personal interaction and connection are lost. This

attack on a 2006 state shaped by excessive bureaucracy and an image-conscious and politically-pressured liberalism, is seen by Andy Willis as being emblematic of the series' fundamentally reactionary position. However, it is also worth reflecting on the uncertainty and anxiety with which the British State of 2006 is constructed in its nebulous and incomprehensible character. As the programme progresses, the core office of the station is situated within a wider building that increasingly encroaches on its space. This threat is personified in the character of Frank Morgan and the mysterious 'Hyde' to which he reports. The deterritorialization of globalization that threatens Manchester finds an echo in the move into the faceless and incomprehensible remote systems of 2006. The police procedural traditionally sees the police form a thin blue line around the citizen against the criminal world. In *Life on Mars*, Gene and his team extend that trope to form a thin blue line around a post-war England whose way of life is on the verge of being eradicated. It is my contention in this chapter that a recurrent trope of the 1970s is the conception of the decade as a turning point in the role, identity and landscape of the State. It is notable that in *Life on Mars*, not only this transition depicted, but it is the newly emergent State that is the only facet of the seventies landscape in the programme to show forward-momentum and dynamism. It is the state rather than the community that both survives and shapes the changes to the country between 1973 and 2006.

Ultimately, however, it is not a sense of momentum that is shared by the rest of the series. *Life on Mars* engages with both historical and generic representation to construct a circular past and layer it with a present defined by loss. Richard Sparks describes television as a paradox between 'fixity and evanescence'.[38] *Life on Mars* as a series, has a finite length, but at its end Sam chooses to return to the endless loop

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[38] Sparks, *Television and the Drama of Crime*, p. 113.

of serialised television. He throws himself back into a 1970s that the programme not only recognises has gone but, with its overtly fictionalised and mythic nature, equally recognises may never have actually existed in the first place. Sam is not merely an avatar for the viewer in terms of being an epistemically aligned representative of Millennial Britain, he is a viewer within the world of the programme itself. Unable to shape the future or change the past, he instead chooses to lose himself in its televisual echo.

Part Two: *Red Riding: In the Year of Our Lord 1974*

The *Red Riding Trilogy* (Channel 4, 2009) is a three-part adaptation of David Peace's quartet of novels written between 1999 and 2002. Peace's novels rework real life historical events, such as the Yorkshire Ripper murders, into a conspiracy thriller narrative. Peace utilises the genre's paranoid atmosphere and complex narrative structure to build a potent attack on police corruption during the 1970s and 1980s. The televisual adaptation collapses four novels into three televisual films, each with a different director and different aesthetic. I will concentrate on the first part, *Red Riding: In the Year of Our Lord 1974* (directed by Julian Jarrold), starring Andrew Garfield and Sean Bean. This episode establishes a set of events that the protagonists of the following two parts subsequently investigate. The episode follows journalist Eddie Dunford (Garfield) as he traces the murder of schoolgirls back to powerful business tycoon John Dawson (Bean) and begins to uncover a web of corruption that extends beyond Dawson to the police, church, and media. Eddie becomes romantically involved with Paula Garland (Rebecca Hall) the widowed mother of one of the missing girls. After Dawson has Paula killed in retribution for Eddie's attempts to expose him, Eddie shoots and kills Dawson before committing suicide by driving into the police car sent to catch him.

Tone vs Narrative

The 1970s offered by *Red Riding* is tonally very different to that of *Life on Mars*. The programme works to draw a distinction between a view of the seventies built on pop culture and nostalgia, and its own stark vision of the past. In *Red Riding,*

tone works with the narrative to draw out the generic concerns of the novel, as the programme reflects the paranoid atmosphere of the conspiracy thriller, a genre that has a close association with the 1970s itself. The programme also utilises that tone to draw out the thematic concerns of both the novel and the television series. Tone thus becomes one of the key means by which the programme's vision of the 1970s is shaped. However, the use of tone in *Red Riding* is also complex. Fisher highlights the fury of the novel, describing it as a 'how[l] of agony'[39] with its brutal narrative and the visceral speech of the characters. In the televisual adaptation, this fury is refracted through an atmospheric and grim, but lyrical and peculiarly muted, arthouse aesthetic. If one can argue that the tone of *Life on Mars* undermines the stability of its narrative, then similar questions can be asked about the complex interplay between tone, narrative, subject matter, and the source material in *Red Riding*. This section of the chapter will aim to unpick the tension between these elements.

It is first useful to consider how *Red Riding* utilises genre and fiction as a means by which to 'do' history. The programme aligns the events of the 1970s with a genre that itself has a particular association with the decade – the conspiracy thriller. Jonathan Nichols-Pethick notes how genres dealing with crime and law 'perhaps more than any other' incorporate a 'range of social and political issues […] and filter them through the "rules" of the genre'.[40] *Red Riding*, interweaves an arthouse aesthetic with an overt generic identity as a conspiracy thriller, and a project to assemble real events into that generic narrative structure. As such, it offers an

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[39] Fisher, *Ghosts of My Life*, p. 80.
[40] Nichols-Pethic, *Tv Cops*, p. 3.

interesting example of how fictionalised versions of a historical past can be used as a space for counter-histories.

While the programme avoids overt moments of self-reflexivity, storytelling is a key theme throughout *Red Riding*. The programme directly engages with the question of power surrounding the narration of events, frequently depicting itself as filling in the blanks around the version of the decade told in the media. Dunford is shown repeatedly scrolling through archived newspaper reports in his office, later separating individual stories out from the flow of the published papers. As he sits on his bedroom floor reordering individual cuttings, there is a sense that he is almost trying to re-edit them to draw out different narrative connections to the ones initially presented by the paper. The programme opens with a press conference. This conference immediately places the narrative being put forward to the media by the police – that Claire Kempley is missing – at the centre of a number of different interests, all of which are utilising that story for different ends. Cuts between close-ups of the faces of Claire's mother (Jennifer Hennessey), Eddie, and officers Malloy (Warren Clarke) and Jobson (David Morrissey), establish the key players at the press conference like pieces on a chess board, lined up, and at odds with one another. The earnest plea by Mrs Kempley is immediately undermined by Eddie and colleague Barry Gannon's (Anthony Flanagan) cynicism as they question the parents' involvement. This cynicism is later matched by the police themselves, as they state that, despite the plea for Claire's return read by her mother at their behest, they are certain that she is already dead.

The print media comes under particular attack. Eddie's boss, editor Bill Hadley (John Henshaw), shows more concern for the popular 'spot the ball' feature than investigative journalism, and the tendency of both the papers and the public

who read them to forget the lives at the heart of the stories sold is criticised. This is evident in the juxtaposition of the yellowing front page in the Ridyard's window with the crisp fresh cover showing the Claire Kempley disappearance, presented as today's cover story but tomorrow's half-remembered gossip. The names of former victims Susan Ridyard and Jeanette Garland are dropped into conversation by Eddie's relatives at his father's wake. This casual indifference is contrasted with the devastating effect of their disappearances on their families, a devastation embodied in the character of Jeanette's mother Paula.

Red Riding thus overtly distinguishes itself from a genre defined by its factual nature in the news and, in so doing, explores the potential for counter histories that present truth in fictionalised format. The programme explicitly addresses concerns surrounding the power to narrate history and select what is told, by whom, to whom, and for what purpose. Storytelling is never presented as either a benign or reliable form. Instead it is open to manipulation and overtly used to protect people in power. The media is not the purveyor of a shared cultural history that unites the audience and nation as it is in Sandbrook's documentaries or *Life on Mars*. Rather, it is seen as fragmentary, unreliable, and open to abuse. This representation of both the narration of events, and the bodies that narrate them, saturates the programme with a paranoid sense of unreliability, and fractures any concrete sense of a coherent whole.

The nation as already fractured.

One of the most unsettling aspects of the historical landscape in *Red Riding* is the presentation of a nation that is mapped but utterly fragmented. *Life on Mars*

positions 1973 as the moment when the community is under threat but still present. Conversely, the landscape of 1974 in which *Red Riding* immerses the viewer is already totally and irreversibly devastated. The nation is revealed as a broken heart whose severed arteries Eddie tries, and ultimately fails, to re-connect. As with *Life on Mars*, *Red Riding*'s utilisation of space is key in this respect. If space in *Life on Mars* can be described as an interplay between the generic and the historical, then space in *Red Riding* can be divided between professional space, domestic space, wild space, and the linking spaces that join them all together. A key focus of the story, both narratively and thematically, becomes the establishment of links between initially isolated and fragmented people, events, and places. Official buildings such as the police station and newspaper office are frequently established by a wide shot before being broken down into an intricately linked series of corridors and offices. The individual elements of the buildings are subsequently joined together as Eddie begins to uncover links in the story. This culminates in Jobson's journey from his office, with its official certificates and medals, down into the bowels of the station where Eddie is being beaten. The symmetrical nature of much of the framing, and the claustrophobic tone of the programme as Eddie travels downstairs to underground bars, or attempts to gain access to protected spaces, initially presents individual places in isolation. *Red Riding* then foregrounds Eddie's attempts to link them together as he spends much of his time driving between them through the sparse Yorkshire landscape, mapping their relationship to one another. The most dominant type of space is the linking spaces as roads and corridors hold a prominent place. This trope of establishing sealed and guarded worlds and their boundaries, and then linking them together, can be applied to the programme more broadly over the course of the series. Both the region of Yorkshire and the time frame of 1974 have

geographically and temporally far-reaching effects that are explored in later episodes.

The 1970s of *Red Riding* is not the space of possibility when a different road may have been taken, as it is in *Life on Mars*. Instead, it is painted as the timeless aftermath of trauma: the past as a site that is already irrevocably broken and collapsed into stasis. While domestic space is repeatedly visited in the programme, it is neither the site of reassuring collective nostalgia as it is in *The 70s*, or even the melancholic spaces of memory as in *Life on Mars*. It is instead both isolating and intimately linked to the spaces of power; its structure shaped and dictated by events in the offices of official institutions and the criminal underworld of backalleys and scrublands. Furthermore, it is always positioned as a space already irretrievably broken, introduced by long shots that function as tableaux of spaces already destroyed. Overtly, in the Romani camp that Eddie encounters after the fire, or covertly, in the homes of the murdered and missing children and the Dunford household itself, all domestic space is presented as being devastated by the aftermath of loss. Eddie's own home is established in a longshot that situates it in the heartland of suburban normality. Its space is then fractured upon his arrival into the house as the programme breaks it down into a series of disorientating close-ups that initially mask Eddie's spatial relationship to the rest of his family around him. Dialogue and image are curiously split from one another as the camera lingers on people who aren't talking and frequently refuses to show the faces to which some of the most prominent voices of the scene belong such as Eddie's sister. The picture the scene creates is thus one of shattered individuals trying, and failing, to make connections with one another. The two family homes shown – the Dunfords and the Garlands - are those of families irreparably damaged through loss. This sense is exacerbated as

the Garland's semi-detached house is pushed to the edge of the frame, severing it from the adjoining house and giving it a fractured and isolated feel as the programme immerses the viewer in a past that is itself a broken aftermath.

Red Riding as counter-narrative: tone and subject

In this manner *Red Riding* establishes its vision of the 1970s as a deeply discomforting counter-narrative set apart from mainstream versions of that past that, in the world of the story, are overtly utilised to obscure the truth. This discomforting atmosphere is both enhanced and undermined by the tonally complex nature of the programme. Through tone, *Red Riding* both articulates the paranoia of the age and the violence that permeates its masculine world, and offers a muted reflection on its own grimness, an almost meditative presentation that sits at odds with biting social commentary. This juxtaposition creates a key distinction between the novel and the television series. For Mark Fisher, the 'visual poetry' of the televisual series allows it to capture what he describes as the 'apocalyptic lyricism' of the novels, where their 'hypnotic and oneiric' qualities combine 'actuality and theology' to present a time and a place 'stained by particular occurrences'.[41] I would argue, however, that there is a crucial distinction between book and programme in how anger and rage are created and executed. The driving fury of the novels collapses in on itself in the television show, which articulates that fury in a peculiarly muted fashion.

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[41] Fisher, *Ghosts of My Life*, p. 80-84.

If, as Pye argued, attitude forms a key component of tone, then *Red Riding*'s attitude to the past is complex. The programme articulates a tangible hatred towards the past it portrays, yet not only is *Red Riding* unable to articulate a space outside of that past, leaving the viewing suspended in it, the programme's rich atmosphere arguably saturates the audience in that past in such a pronounced manner that the line between wallowing in, and relishing, its own grimness becomes blurred.

In writing on 1970s crime films, Leon Hunt immediately draws a comparison between the tone of the genre and the broader 'spirit' of the decade that exists in popular consciousness. Hunt remarks 'these were not happy times and these are not happy films' as he accounts for their paranoid and bleak atmosphere.[42] Interestingly, it is primarily through establishing a similar tone that *Red Riding* marks itself as being about the 1970s. It is an adaptation whose status as an adaptation is played down. Instead, the programme aims to immerse the viewer in a tonally rich 'spirit of the times' eschewing a historical reconstruction that pushes either a pop culture or a consumer-based aesthetic to the forefront. It is also a world that is marked as slightly inaccessible in its complex interplay of boundaries, and intricately linked distortions and manipulations of the truth. Throughout the programme, the viewer is left to swim in a dialect that is highly colloquial, both geographically and temporally, as the language and references used and made by the characters remain unelaborated upon and unexplained.

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[42] Leon Hunt, 'Dog eat dog: *The Squeeze* and the *Sweeney* films' in Steve Chibnall and Robert Murphy (eds.), *British Crime Cinema* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 146.

Violence, Masculinity, and the pleasures of the image.

Key to the establishment of *Red Riding's* tone is its presentation of a world that is unambiguously male and unambiguously violent. While violence and masculinity and the pleasures of the image are handled differently than in *Life on Mars*, the three remain intimately connected in *Red Riding*. Michael Kackman, while talking about American spy thrillers rather than conspiracy thrillers, makes the relevant assertion that citizenship in those texts, as in *Red Riding,* is historically a 'position that has been both gendered and racialized, with full agency reserved for white men'.[43] Despite the disturbing nature of much of the violence in *Red Riding*, it nevertheless remains intimately connected with masculinity, and there is an unsettling hint of pleasure in its visceral nature. Eddie himself partakes, slamming Jack White against the wall of the urinal, and eventually shooting Dawson in the club. These are dangerous men controlling a dangerous world. The programme lingers over bloodied hands and faces that texture the landscape in the same way that the visceral language used by the characters does. However, as Kackman goes on to note, frequently, the notion of National manhood 'not only works to exclude women and people of colour from full citizenship and agency; it is also an impossible ideal for white men themselves'.[44] *Red Riding* shows the dangers faced by individuals who are unable to achieve agency in such a prejudiced world, as for example Paula. It also complicates notions of the masculine ideal through the casting of Andrew Garfield as Eddie, whose youth and boyish appearance sits at odds with his position as the protagonist of the story. Furthermore, Sean Bean, as the most established and

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[43] Michael Kackman, *Citizen Spy: Television, Espionage, and Cold War Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), p. xxxiii.
[44] Ibid.

recognisable actor, offers a particularly violent and disturbing articulation of masculinity in the character of John Dawson.

Violence is central to *Red Riding*'s exploration of masculinity and, as in *Life on Mars*, the two remain intimately connected to one another. However, the pleasures of violence on screen in the respective series are handled in two very contrasting ways. Violence in *Life on Mars*, while being a cause for concern at moments, is generally offered as a generic pleasure, taken out of the narrative to be relished for its own sake. It follows a mould identified by Richard Sparks in *The Sweeney* whereby the series offers a 'removal of the sphere of action from everyday experience and concerns'.[45] Furthermore, Sparks notes how in programmes like *The Sweeney* violence employed by heroes can easily be separated from the violence deployed by villains as both come to 'signify different things'.[46] Violence in *Red Riding*, by contrast, is presented as having far-reaching consequences. The programme concentrates on images of its aftermath rather than its execution. That aftermath shapes the story both in the first instalment, and across the series with Eddie's act of violence, the shooting of John Dawson at the Karachi Club, becoming the catalyst for the events of *1980* and *1983*.

Red Riding's use of violence to drive the narrative forward is complicated by a representation of it that encourages a reflection on its devastating aftermath. As with the establishing shots of locations, violence is frequently presented through a series of images that almost exist as separated tableaux. The programme encourages a focus on the aesthetic composure of these images in a manner that takes them out of narrative flow. While the presence of violence saturates *Red Riding*, it is rarely

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[45] Sparks, *Television and the Drama of Crime*, p. 27.
[46] Ibid., p. 106.

actually witnessed. The series instead offers images of the aftermath of violence. These images are dwelled upon in a way that takes them out of a narrative context as the programme meditates on pristinely constructed shots. The programme opens on one such shot as the camera pans slowly over the body of Claire Kempley. Her blonde hair and the white feathers that surround her dramatically stand out against the deep blacks of the *mise-en-scène* and give the shot a surreal and aesthetically striking composure. The image is thus marked as something to be considered on its own, outside of narrative context, in a manner that is deeply unsettling. The presentation of Barry Gannon's murder is also indicative of this approach. The murder occurs off-screen and is presented instead in the slightly surreal, carefully composed, shot of Eddie standing over a cascade of smashed glass, with stains of blood just visible amongst the icy blues of the debris. The brutal nature and sheer violence of Gannon's death hovers ominously around the edge of the frame, in the remaining blood, and in the graphic description of the car accident communicated verbally to Eddie by colleagues and the officer at the scene.

Red Riding privileges the visual over the aural, with dialogue often muted to the background of scenes. Frequently, the focus of the spoken word is at odds with the focus of the image itself. This dynamic, and the overtly pictorial qualities of the tableaux and their resultant dislocation from the narrative, exhibits a complex self-reflexivity and an awareness of image as image. Christine Geraghty has argued that adaptations frequently demonstrate a tendency to romanticize their own subject matter.[47] One could argue that there is an element of aestheticization to *Red Riding*'s violent and disturbing subject matter that sees it romanticize its own grimness. The striking aesthetic composition of these shots, and their resistance to being

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[47] Geraghty, *Now A Major Motion Picture*.

incorporated fully into the narrative flow, ask for the consideration of them as visual compositions in their own right. This results in an uneasy aestheticization of violence and its effects that is discomfortingly separate from the disgust and anger of both the programme's narrative, and Peace's original novel.

There is in *Red Riding* an ambivalence towards the subject matter that complicates the uneasy relationship between tone and narrative. This ambivalence creates tension between the furious drive towards identifying and exposing John Dawson and the corruption that supports him, and the static atmosphere of the programme. This complexity extends to the privileging of image, whereby the programme complicates pleasure in its visual quality by foregrounding the disturbing nature of the impact of violence. Thus, the images possess the power to attack and undermine any sense of comfort in the past as identified by Boym, but combine this brutal anti-nostalgia with the same stasis identified by Fisher in hauntological artefacts, only without their lost futures, because these are already destroyed in a past that the series cannot leave behind. I would thus argue that *Red Riding* articulates a deep disgust towards the world it is depicting and the people who shape it, while simultaneously dwelling in that past. The programme lingers in a state of stasis that replaces the momentum of the anger in the books with the muted rage of melancholia, collapsed in on itself, and unable to move forward.

Psychology, Fairytales, and Social Targets

Throughout the series, then, tone is used to articulate both the psychological and the social as well as personal and collective expressions of anger, grief, rage, and loss. Time, and its construction on screen, is crucial to these expressions. The series

uses tone to express a specific 'spirit of the age' and attack a specific past, whilst also exploring more universal concerns as it focuses on individual psyches devastated by grief and unable to move forward through time. *Red Riding* interweaves the historically specific with universal and timeless allegorical qualities. This duality is embodied in the preponderance of fairy-tale imagery, as the hard-swearing and violent male world of politics and power in 1974 is juxtaposed with allusions to the Red Riding Hood of childhood fables.

This contradiction is manifested in the character of John Dawson. Interestingly, Julian Jarrold cites Dawson as being the character through which the programme most potently compresses the 'spirit of the times'. Dawson occupies an ominous and foreboding position in the world of the story. He only appears after nearly an hour of screentime, but his presence is established well before as his name is discussed with increasing frequency as Eddie begins to trace his involvement. The casting of Sean Bean, with his association with Yorkshire, and his stature as a performer, exacerbates the sense of shock around his character's savage personality, as Dawson's opening monologue sees him establish his violent, nihilistic, and deeply prejudiced worldview. Dawson represents several types of criminal threat bound in one, breaking the law not only for strategic purposes, but for pleasure as well. He is a magnetic and highly conflicted character. He is both socially situated and marked as embodying a mythic evil, whose primal, almost bestial nature eschews any melancholic nostalgia for a lost masculinity. Dawson represents a timeless threat that transcends his social circumstances, becoming the wolf in *Red Riding*'s fairytale.

The mythic and timeless quality to the threat of Dawson is also offset by potent social commentary. Both Peace's novels, and their televisual adaptations, attack the specific historical society represented. The 1970s British society depicted

is shown to be deeply corrupt and exploited by ruthless individuals who are able to capitalise on a growing consumer market. Dawson himself embodies the contradictions oft-cited of the seventies as a transitional point between a post-war industrialised culture marked by class, and the consumer-driven aggressive capitalism of Thatcher's Britain. He is both a self-declared 'Labour man' and a Thatcherite business tycoon. Intent on transforming social space into a shopping mall, he exhibits both entrenched racist attitudes and an astute enough business savvy to exploit a growing migrant workforce. He offers a face that is both slick and savage. He is the only character marked as a modern and fashion-conscious consumer. He wears 1970s couture, drives period sports cars, and hosts dinner parties in his newly-built home with its notably 1970s architecture. Importantly, Dawson draws together not just the post-war consensus and modern Britain, but Wartime Britain as well. His references to his time as a soldier, and the opportunity that the chaos of the war brought him, undermine any sense that there was ever a united British nation. Dawson is a character who poses a threat both personal to Eddie, emphasised in his seductive draw over Dunford and his victimization of Paula, and to British society more generally. As such, he embodies the tension between the two modes of engaging with the past that runs throughout *Red Riding* more broadly.

Theme and Tone: Space and Power

The relationship between space and power is arguably the key theme of the programme. It comes slowly into focus, as Eddie's investigation leads him to not solve one murder, but to link together spaces and map their relationship to one

another. In so doing, Eddie can begin to understand the power dynamics that shape the world of 1970s Yorkshire. The meditative quality of the tone, and the aestheticization of beautiful images that draw attention to themselves as singular compositions, allows *Red Riding* to thematically develop its subject matter as Eddie begins to link these images together, and uncover the articulation and consolidation of power through space. Again, Eddie's ability to move between spaces and link them up is key. This is explicitly demonstrated when he literally begins to piece clues together over a map pinned to the wall of his room. Eddie's reoccurring dream shows him standing on the moors of Yorkshire, surveying the different landscapes, as he begins to draw connections between the smouldering ruins of the Romani camp, John Dawson's luxurious home, and the building site where Claire Kempley's body is found. Dawson is revealed to be flexing his political muscle by getting the police to clear out the site of the camp so he can develop it into a shopping mall. Dawson's domination of space is materialised when he gets an employee to wheel out a model of the proposed build and then picks at the tiny replica trees. The conspiracy thriller narrative consolidates the sense of the linking of disparate places and events while unveiling their connections to one another. The generic structure thus allows *Red Riding* to draw attention to the framework and dynamics of the world depicted as being neither organic nor natural but constructed and actively protected and maintained. John Sumser has argued that crime dramas 'not only represent a moral point of view but provide insight into what is considered natural about the world'.[48] *Red Riding* develops this potential by rendering visible the connections between spaces, and the power relations that maintain them.

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[48] Sumser, *Morality and Social Order in Television Crime Drama*, p. 17.

In this manner, the state itself is drawn into the centre of *Red Riding*'s

engagement with the past. Sparks has argued that 'it has always been at the edges of

maps that dragons and sea monsters live'.[49] *Red Riding* directly challenges that

assertion. The programme draws a line between bodies in liminal spaces of

undeveloped wasteland right back to the heart of the police station and the

handshakes between men of power. Arjun Appadurai's *Modernity at Large* argued

that the late twentieth century saw the state become severed from the national

interest. *Red Riding* not only presents the idea that the state works against the general

public's interest but presents a state that is part of a hidden landscape which

dominates the nation, and through which power, abuse, and corruption are enacted

and maintained. Eddie traces Dawson's connections back to officials in both the

police force and the media. His journey down the rabbit hole of corruption

eventually leads him, as does Paddy Considine's investigation in *1980*, back into the

bowels of the police station. This is corruption that operates vertically, with low-

level employees such as uniformed officers and prison wardens being on the payroll

as well as officials higher up, as well as horizontally, as it extends across different

institutions. The use of a large cast of established and recognisable actors such as

David Morrisey and Eddie Marsan in smaller roles gives them a weight that draws

attention to the number of cogs in an intricate machine whose power dynamics see

each individual involved in its running.

Ultimately, the 1970s as a site through which to explore corruption and the

changing nature of the state is employed differently in *Red Riding* to *Life on Mars*.

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[49] Sparks, *Television and the Drama of Crime*, p. 95.

Leon Hunt argues that crime dramas of the 1970s, frequently showed 'hard men' doing 'unpopular things to protect the national interest'.[50] This format is echoed in *Life on Mars* as 'the nation' – being the police and the ordinary community it polices – is protected and served by individual officers who form the last bastion of its defence. In *Red Riding,* distinctions between different institutions such as law enforcement, the church, the legal system, the media, and private business, are flattened out. Instead, society is divided between those in positions of power, the people they coerce into helping them maintain it, and the passive helplessness of the individuals who are victimised. As Barry Gannon repeatedly states 'everything is linked'. The intricate web of power that forms the architecture of individual institutions and their hold on the community allows the programme to pinpoint the 1970s as a significant moment in the relationship between the public and the state and the state's position in popular consciousness. The state emerges not simply as the bureaucratic leash that it is in *The Sweeney* and *Life on Mars*, dogged by a soft liberalism and a tendency to hamstring individual officers, but as a web of power relations whose hold across all areas of society is strengthened as the post-war consensus cracks during the decade. *Red Riding* undermines the sense of national interest entirely. The country's landscape is presented as already hopelessly and irrevocably broken, where individuals are isolated from one another and 'community' is merely a façade for the corrupt web of power that lies beneath it. Rather than being the diffuse threat of Hyde and 2006 that is seen to intrude onto the world of the 1970s in *Life on Mars*, the state is, in *Red Riding*, the very concrete and

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[50] Leon Hunt, ''Drop Everything… Including Your Pants!': *The Professionals* and 'hard' action TV' in Bill Osgerby and Anna Gough-Yates (eds.) *Action TV: Tough Guys, Smooth Operators and Foxy Chicks* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 129.

mappable skeleton of the world depicted. It is neither abstracted nor deterritorialized, and is instead embodied in the thematic drive to link power with corporeal space.

In this manner the programme does manage to echo the novel's potent attack on the era it represents and utilises tone to do so. However, I would argue that despite this fact, the focus of the first instalment of *Red Riding* is different to that of the novel, and to either *Life on Mars* or *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*. This difference is evident in the interplay between the universal, the socio-historical, and the personal and psychological. To understand the dynamic between these different aspects it is worth returning to Pye's final area of concern surrounding the question of tone – that of perspective. Eddie's position as the programme's protagonist has a significant effect on the manner in which the text constructs the past. The narration's attachment to his perspective orientates the viewer in a landscape that is marked as psychological as well as social. John Ellis has argued that television more broadly has a tendency 'to favour the psychological over the structural, or the personal over the political'.[51] There is a constant interplay in *Red Riding* between the subjective personal story of Eddie, and a larger narrative that creates a tonal exploration of a time and a place, the spirit of the age, and situates it socially and historically. The world of *Red Riding* is one that is psychological as well as social. Eddie's dreams and hallucinations intermingle with events throughout the episode, and the cinematography reflects both his isolated state of mind at the opening, and his growing attachment to Paula.

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[51] Ellis, *Seeing Things,* p. 125.

The perspective offered by the programme is closely aligned to Eddie. The narrative is shaped by his agency as his investigation pieces together the disparate strands of the story. However, that perspective ultimately separates itself from him, rendering him another node in the societal machine that *Red Riding* attempts to map. Throughout the programme there are moments when the camera marks itself as separate from Eddie, particularly when the character of Maurice Jobson (David Morrisey), who will move to the forefront of the programme in the third episode, is involved. The camera lingers in Malloy's office after Eddie leaves the room, and eventually separates from him entirely in scenes in which he is not present. This builds the sense that Eddie's role in the story is complete, leaving him to fulfil his personal vengeance while the larger picture built over the course of the episode continues. This perspective opens up room for a more omnipotent viewing position in the narration, able to draw together strands that Eddie is not. However, this wider perspective offers none of the reassuring sense of a collective viewing experience from which the audience can survey the landscape of the past comfortably. Instead the programme creates a sense that, while the bigger picture is there, it is ultimately obscured from the viewer in its entirety. Interestingly, it is only on personal terms that the episode is able to offer any closure. Eddie can achieve personal vengeance for himself, Paula, and Jeanette as he shoots Dawson, but the broader world that he has discovered remains untouched and largely untroubled by his actions.

Theme and Tone: Loss and Grief

Throughout *Red Riding*, then, there run fundamental schisms and tensions in its construction of the past: between the grim subject matter and the visually-rich

imagery; between the generic and fictional, and the factual roots of the story;

between the personal/psychological, the historically specific, and the universal; and

finally, between a narrative and genre that drives forward towards answers and the

conclusion to the conspiracy it sets up, and a static tone of a collapsed past. It is my

contention that the final tension mentioned here is the one that ultimately dictates

how the past is constructed on screen. *Red Riding*'s tone shifts the programme's

focus away from the 1970s, and even from the individual stories of Eddie and Paula,

to a more universal exploration of grief and loss with the former two being used in

service of the latter. In *Red Riding* the landscape of the past is shaped by the

emotional devastation of grief, and the distance opened up between Eddie and the

wider point of view of the narrative allows the story to move to a more general

reflection on the aftermath of loss.

Loss saturates *Red Riding* and it is grief that is the most consistent link between

individual characters whether Eddie, who is dealing with the loss of his father, or the

parents of the missing girls. However, the individual characters themselves are

presented as being trapped in their own pain, isolated and unable to connect.

Cinematic language that is generally used to unite individual characters, for example

shot-reverse-shots or two shots, are used instead to fragment them and stress their

inability to communicate. The one notable departure from this trend, and the only

moment when close-ups of characters are placed together in symmetrical framings, is

in the programme's opening at the conference for the missing Claire Kempley. Eddie

arrives at the conference having recently lost his father, and meets offers of

condolences with a glib and defensive hardened exterior. He maintains this façade as

he listens to details of the Kempley case and speculates callously with Gannon.

However, as the conference progresses and Claire's mother begins to talk, there are

cuts between Eddie and Mrs Kempley with both characters framed identically as they stare straight ahead into camera. There is distance between both the characters in this moment, as Mrs Kempley is not directly addressing Eddie, but it is the only moment when two characters are aligned in such a manner. This alignment is used to link the two characters through grief, as Eddie can see his own pain and loss reflected in Mrs Kempley; a mirroring compounded by the two shots being the only use of symmetrical framing in the whole episode.

Thereafter the episode is dominated by characters who cannot connect. After being forced to realise his own grief as he looks at its reflection in Mrs Kempley, Eddie tries and fails to similarly align himself with Paula. Their relationship is at the heart of the episode, but it is marked by his failure to comprehend or feel her. They are repeatedly shot in conversation with one another in a manner that fragments, rather than unites, them. When Eddie confronts her about sleeping with John Dawson the programme cuts between a profile shot of Eddie and one of Paula facing the camera. The cinematic narration thus divides rather than aligns them in a moment when their respective facades appear to be dropping. Paula herself remains unknowable to Eddie throughout. She herself explicitly addresses this fact when she resists being fitted into the neat outline of a grieving mother, remarking 'you think you're the only man that's tried to save me'.

The programme privileges Eddie's psychology over Paula's. She is frequently shot from his perspective, and the viewer is aligned with him as he uncovers more information about her. But *Red Riding* also establishes the fact that she exists outside the edges of Eddie's perception, and that her grief exists outside the edges of his comprehension. Paula moves through the different caricatures of femininity through which Eddie tries to understand her; fitting into none comfortably, whether that be

his first impression of her as a grieving mother trapped in an empty family home, or their subsequent meeting where she is seen as a figure of destructive feminine sexuality, drinking in a bar, wearing red, and smoking. The complexity and depth of her self-hatred, anger, and grief is presented as being completely inaccessible and incomprehensible to Eddie. This fact is made explicit as he finds her sitting by the empty bed in her daughter's bedroom, performing a puppet show, and talking to an imaginary version of Jeanette. The camera pushes through the door over Eddie's shoulder as he walks into the room, tingeing his entry with an intrusive quality that marks her pain as being completely inaccessible to either Eddie or the viewer. She remains with her back to camera and is shot at an obscured angle when she does speak. If *Red Riding* explores the stasis of loss, then Paula is the character presented as being most concretely unable to move forward. She is trapped in a cycle of anger and grief that Eddie cannot understand, and that his boyish attempts to suggest that they run away from, or that he can solve, prove utterly inadequate in addressing. Ultimately, Paula herself is saturated with a frustration and rage that, like the muted anger in the tone of the programme, has collapsed in upon itself, leaving her trapped. Frequently she is shot against doors and windows as if to communicate her desire to break out of the stasis that she has fallen into, but the only path she takes out of her house is the route she walks to the home of the Dawsons and the man who destroyed her own.

Conclusion

Ultimately, if *Life on Mars* utilises tone to reflect on loss and anxiety, then *Red Riding* provides an exploration of loss and anger. The anger in Peace's novels might

be described as the rage of mourning. It pushes forward through time in the narrative-drive to expose the corruption uncovered across the body of the novels. Conversely, the anger in the first instalment of the televisual adaptation might be described as the muted rage of melancholia: an anger that has collapsed inwards and fallen back onto itself. The attitude embodied in the programme's point of view and tone exhibits a tangible hatred towards, and disgust of, the world and events it depicts, but that tone nevertheless simultaneously immerses the viewer in the past with the borderline-indulgence and passivity of self-hate.

The *Red Riding* series spans from events that take place before the first episode during the 1960s up until the 1983 of the final episode, which sees the narrative remain unresolved. Despite the spread of events, and despite the open-ended conclusion to the final episode, *Red Riding* is precisely bounded, both in its tone and its rich attempt to create a 'spirit of the age'. As such, the programme offers no release in its drive towards the future. Instead, the programme leaves the viewer trapped in an abject past that is neither the melancholic half-life of Gilroy's lost Empire, nor the fragmented snow globe of Fisher's hauntology. Loss and anger dominate the programme and the potential, identified by Fisher and realised in *Darkness at Noon*, for personal, collective, national, and historical emotional states to be bound and articulated together, is fulfilled. Tone, point of view, momentum, and stasis become the dominant means by which the past is experienced. The programme thereby aligns the historical, personal, national, and universal in a manner that constructs the emotional landscape of grief.

This is a two-way process and if these factors are used in the construction of this emotional state, grief, loss, and anger are also reflected back onto the personal, national, and historical. In considering representations of the 1970s this is a

particularly illuminating project. *Red Riding* overtly attempts to construct the 'Spirit

of the age', and it is one that is primarily understood through grief, anger, and loss.

The programme deals with abject and traumatic pasts. The 1970s as the site on

which these traumas are played out will be explored more thoroughly in the next

chapter, when I will look at representations of The Troubles in Northern Ireland. I

would like to conclude this section on *Red Riding* by noting a fundamental

difference between it and the texts in Chapter Three that is crucial in understanding

the unique shape of the seventies that it constructs. The 1970s in *Red Riding*,

uniquely in all my case studies, is represented not as the space of possibility where

what has been lost in the present might have been saved, nor as the site of a primal

trauma as in the texts to be discussed in the next chapter. Instead, the decade is

constructed as a world already broken beyond repair. Individual losses are played out

against the abstracted loss of a country whose landscape is already, and concretely,

broken and corrupt. Tone and emotion are crucial in this construction of the past.

The ambivalence identified by Freud in melancholia results in an attitude to the

decade that both hates it and will not leave it behind. Instead, like the character of

Paula circling her empty house, bars, and the route to John Dawson's home, it

remains muted and looping in time.

Part Three: *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*

This chapter finishes with a consideration of the filmic adaptation of John Le Carré's 1974 novel *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy*. *Tinker Tailor* has been adapted four times: firstly, and most famously by the BBC as a 1979 television miniseries starring Alec Guinness as George Smiley; then as a BBC Radio 4 series in 1988 and again in 2009; and, finally, the 2011 filmic incarnation which is the subject of this chapter, directed by Tomas Alfredson and staring Gary Oldman as Smiley. In finishing with *Tinker Tailor*, I am concluding the chapter with a film and genre that brings to the fore the relationship between the nation and the state, and how one can be used to consolidate or challenge the identity of the other. In writing about spy thrillers, David Seed argues that they are texts that are 'self evidently political'. Seed explores how the genre plays out issues and anxieties surrounding national identity and standing, both globally, and within the internal structure of the nation state itself.[52] For Seed, the genre's exploration of national rivalries 'constantly veers towards a paranoid vision of 'violation by *outside* agencies' and 'violation of individual autonomy by *internal* agencies'. [53] The genre thus plays out concerns surrounding the cohesion, stability, and moral integrity of the nation state in a global context.

It is within this generic history that Seed situates Le Carré's novels, and within which, he argues, Le Carré himself consciously aimed to situate them. Le Carré's work is described by Seed as being overtly 'defined against' Ian Fleming's James Bond series. The success of the Bond film franchise during the 1960s

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[52] David Seed, 'Spy Fiction' in Martin Priestman (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 115.
[53] Ibid.

catapulted James Bond to the forefront of the public imagination as he became the defining image of the British agent.[54] Le Carré, himself a former intelligence officer, developed, in contrast, a more 'realistic' vein of spy fiction that sought the 'deglamorising of espionage' and offered a distinctly 'ironic view' of the Intelligence Services.[55] *Life on Mars* explores a nation's history and collective memory through the televisual output of the past era while *Red Riding* combines the fictional with the historical to create the 'spirit of the times'. Le Carré's work both reflects and defines itself against generic and fictional forms of storytelling in order to mark itself as offering a version of national history that is more 'real'.

Seed also proposes that spy thrillers are responsive to, and reflective of, national anxieties and discourses at their time of writing, particularly at moments when 'popular anxieties were growing over the credibility of government processes'.[56] Thus Le Carré's work grew 'out of a deep public distrust of political life' which developed during the 1960s and 1970s.[57] If James Bond came to define the spy of the 1960s, then one might argue that George Smiley offers a mould of Intelligence Officer who encapsulates the 1970s and its paranoid thrillers. Le Carré paints a picture of fading Imperial might, deeply disturbed internal cohesion, and a paranoid uncertainty over one's personal and national identity. Again, the 1970s emerges as a crucial point of transition. *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* shows oak-panelled rooms and ruling elites under threat, having to reconcile themselves to a new global order in which British standing is severely diminished, and a changing domestic landscape where the tectonic plates of privilege are slowly beginning to

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[54] Ibid., p. 126.
[55] Ibid., p. 123.
[56] Ibid., p. 115.
[57] Ibid., p. 126.

shift. If Bond offered 'compensatory fantasies' to a Britain in decline,[58] then *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* plays out those anxieties across the body of an ageing George Smiley as he tries to negotiate both this new world and his own deep-rooted paranoia and anxiety.

Once again, I would argue that the tone of the study text complicates both the genre and the novel. The inherent anxiety and instability of the spy thriller and Le Carré's book are complicated in the film by its cool and, to borrow Mark Fisher's words, 'curiously distanced', tone.[59] Writing in *Cineaste*, Darragh O'Donoghue notes that both the 1979 series and the 2011 film were born at times of great national insecurity following the respective 1978 Winter of Discontent and 2008 global financial crisis. O'Donoghue argues Alfredson's film, like previous versions, 'sweats physical and moral decay'.[60] However, critical reaction to *Tinker Tailor* has been divided. Some critics, like O'Donoghue, align Alfredson's adaptation with le Carré's unsettled and paranoid tradition. Others, Fisher included, argue that the film presents a glossy and anaemic vision of the past decade. I argue that while each of these readings of the film might be considered valid, both must be understood as co-existing with the other in the text itself. The result is a unique tone that is quite different to either that of the novel or the television series, and one that configures the nation and the state, and the relationship between the two, quite differently.

The filmic *Tinker Tailor* presents a version of the decade that is marked as secret. One of the key pleasures it offers is the experience of entering elite worlds

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[58] Ibid.
[59] Mark Fisher, 'The Smiley Factor' in *Film Quarterly* (Winter: 2011), p. 41.
[60] Darragh O'Donoghue, 'Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy' in *Cineaste* (Winter: 2011), p. 59.

marked by power and secrecy. The space of the Circus, introduced as the camera tilts

up its impressive façade, is both guarded externally via security checkpoints and

internally as Smiley and Control (John Hurt) must pass through its many layers and

labyrinthine layout. The *mise-en-scène* of the Circus itself compounds this sense as

spaces connect onto one another in surprising ways, whether by a large hole in the

floor of one of the central offices that exposes the level below, or in the myriad

networks of viewing points from which the characters survey one another.

This sense of secrecy is exacerbated as the film situates the general public,

and popular versions of the decade, at the edges of its covert spaces. This is a world

in which spies drink at cafés while members of the public spend time with their

children only a few feet away. Alfredson frequently utilises a horizontal movement

in his frames to indicate the normal world going about its business, blissfully

unaware of the machinations of the intelligence services. As Smiley and his co-

workers travel through public streets, people walk and cars drive across the frame.

This horizontal movement is often emphasised by the cinematography with a

repeated use of tracking shots, and by a plethora of striking horizontal lines that

cross the *mise-en-scène*. Interestingly, both in the dress of its occupants and its *mise-

en-scène*, this normal world is the one that is marked as both fashionably 1970s and

consumer-driven. This is particularly evident when Smiley pauses outside a

supermarket, or fashion-conscious schoolgirls pass Ricky Tarr (Tom Hardy) outside

an airport. The consumer-driven pop-culture world of the public thus exists in sharp

contrast to the rather muted and antique appearance of the milieu of Smiley's world.

It is worth emphasising that this mundane, easily-accessible, version of the decade is

relegated to the edges of *Tinker Tailor. S*everal critics have cited claustrophobia as a

key tone of the novel. I would argue, however, that rather than demonstrating

distress at being separated from popular versions of the decade, the filmic incarnation revels in its seclusion in the heart of power, batting away the normal seventies with a dismissive hand.

The 1970s presented in the film is overtly marked as that of a secret Britain, and one through which power is landscaped and wielded. In that respect there are direct parallels with *Red Riding*, but *Tinker Tailor* exhibits an attitude towards this secret history and space that exists in direct opposition. Rather than showing characters trapped in this secret world, a key trope of *Tinker Tailor* is characters expelled from it expressing despair at their exclusion, as done by both Connie Sachs (Kathy Burke) and Jim Prideaux (Mark Strong). Both Connie and Jim remain in state institutions with Jim teaching at a boy's school and Connie running a student home in Oxford. These are presented as melancholic and irrelevant spaces. Their countryside settings and damp greens and greys mark their distance from the heart of the capital, and the browns and golds of the rooms of power. The Circus itself is presented as being in the very heart of the country. Its gilded façade and cast-iron rails mark it as an institution of the state as it sits surrounded by red buses in the heart of the capital. It is aligned with the landmark of St Paul's. The cathedral is frequently seen in the background, often from an obscured angle, as the spies operate within the unremarkable streets nearby. There is a sense that the Circus itself is another national monument, connected to both St Pauls and Westminster, as officers enter the gold-plated offices of government. These secret spaces are part of these national structures. They are not ironically hidden near national landmarks, but sit in plain sight, visible to the trained eye and allowing for a fluid movement by agents from the Circus to the government.

The trend of marking people and places by their distance from the heart of government is continued throughout the rest of the film. While containing scenes set as far away as Budapest and Istanbul, *Tinker Tailor* nevertheless exhibits a curious lack of interest in anything outside of Westminster's immediate radius. Alec Guinness' description of Control's dislike for 'everywhere except Surrey, the Circus, and Lord's Cricket Ground' in the television series might be applied to the film as well. Spaces further afield are marked as either spaces of exclusion (Connie's Oxford and Jim's school), spaces of flashbacks and memory (Ricky's recollection of Istanbul), or the rather hallucinatory and amorphous sphere of the USSR that exists only in conversation or in Jim's fragmented recollection of trauma and torture. In each case events in these places are important only in their relation to the machinations of the Circus. The home of the intelligence services is itself a space that reinforces the privileging of an elite and powerful heart. The pinnacle of this is the central office of The Circus, which sits locked in a sound-proof iron bunker. The office's striking décor, and the film's repeated cuts back to it, reinforce the sense that it forms the core of Smiley's world.

Tonally the film reinforces this depiction of a world of quality to be admired. *Tinker Tailor* marks itself as 'tasteful'. The film utilises a consciously restrained aesthetic that distances it from ordinary and gauche consumer versions of the decade. It offers a muted colour palette of deep blues and browns and avoids popular culture period signifiers. Nevertheless, *Tinker Tailor* is as interested in period details as is *Life on Mars,* and considerably more so than *Red Riding*. It depicts a world that is unmistakably that of the 1970s through the precise cut of expensive suits and period clothing and hair, and exhibits what O'Donoghue describes as a 'Merchant Ivory-

like obsession with period detail'.[61] There is a tension between what several critics have noted as its cool and glossy engagement with such detail, and the melancholic construction of an autumnal sense of decline in these elite spaces. I shall return to discuss this tension later. For the moment, it is worth exploring the film's aim to offset this 'digital sheen'[62] with an emphasis on surroundings that are expensive, but not slick, as a slightly shabby opulence saturates the text. Smiley and Guillam (Benedict Cumberbatch) climb a once-impressive set of stairs to Control's dilapidated and dishevelled room and recoil at the smell inside, and Smiley's own home offsets rich décor and antique furniture with a world-weary and dilapidated feel as he wakes alone with rumpled pyjamas and hair.

The film establishes an old-boys' club in the institutions of the nation state. Politicians and spies play squash with one another and discuss state business in a steam-filled changing room whilst smoking cigarettes and doing up damp shirts with messy hair. Any unease concerning power and corruption is offset by a rather casual elegance and there is an ease with opulence throughout the film. Men in positions of power are so comfortable with their surroundings that they are able to recline on leather sofas at the heart of government and butter toast with an almost admirable indifference. This slightly surreal effect of mundane and casual attitudes in circumstances marked as extreme or elite is repeated throughout the film. Spies make idle conversation about the affordability of rented accommodation, and a silent watcher absentmindedly flicks through a magazine while Jim is being tortured. These spaces are elite and the film reinforces their position at the heart of the state whilst holding a complex and ambiguous attitude towards them. The melancholia

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[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid.

surrounding their proposed decline is offset by an admiring and cool reflection of their elegance, and a certain wry cynicism towards their machinations.

Thus, *Tinker Tailor* creates a tangible sense of pleasure in its place in the heart of the country's hidden power structure. The film uses that attitude and that pleasure to align the viewer, national heritage and history, and the state itself, rather than to fragment them. The narrative may contain anxiety concerning the integrity of the nation state, but the tone of the film arguably affirms and consolidates the corridors of power that it depicts. *Tinker Tailor* does this not only by offering the pleasures of accessing these elite spaces in the first place, but through imbuing them with a sense of solidity and permanence. Le Carré's novel positions Smiley as the best of post-war Liberal Britain. Le Carré's Smiley is a figure who challenges the hyperbolic nationalism of James Bond, but through whom genuine affection for the fading glories of post-Imperial Britain are expressed alongside a concrete sense that his days are nearly over and 'Liberal Britain' is now a directionless, corrupt, and failed project in the emergent global landscape.

The tone of the filmic adaptation complicates such a presentation. This complication is reflected in the critical division where some accounts of the film see it as recreating the paranoid and anxious atmosphere of the book, while others argue that the film's glossy reconstruction of the 1970s undermines the tone of the novel. I will discuss how this ambiguity affects the way in which Smiley himself is presented later. For now, I will start unpicking the film's tone by exploring how its uniquely cool and distanced qualities are constructed through a cinematic narration that reflects the qualities associated with its idealised version of Smiley himself; a

version of Smiley quite distinct from the flawed and more fallible subject of the novels.

The narration marks itself as classy, understated, cool, and clever. It firmly guides the viewer through a past of which it is utterly in control. The defining characteristic of the film's tone, and one that undermines any sense of paranoia generated, is its highly controlled nature. Critics such as Jean Oppenheimer describe the film as a voyeuristic world of paranoia and suspicion.[63] Much of the cinematography aims to reference the paranoid world of the conspiracy thriller as for example the use of long lenses, or the proliferation of shots of characters watching one another through the myriad network of windows and viewing points. However, I would argue that the panic and anxiety that lie at the edges of claustrophobia and paranoia, and that are key to their creation, are firmly undercut by the controlled nature of the cinematography. Peter Guillam's theft of files from the Circus is emblematic of this effect. The film establishes tension as Guillam's attempts at a casual manner are offset by the cracks in his performance. The slightly paranoid camera angles repeatedly show other officers operating at the edges of the frames and stress the myriad connections between different areas of the offices. This tension, however, is balanced by the slow but purposeful movement of the camera. Frequent recourse to long shots holds the viewer back from becoming fully immersed in the scene as the shots foreground the striking composition of the frame rather than the action taking place within it.

The control exhibited by *Tinker Tailor*'s narration plays a key role in establishing a world that is marked as adult, as elegant, and as exhibiting a knowing

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[63] Jean Oppenheimer, 'A Mole in the Ministry', in *American Cinematography* (December, 2011), pp.28-34.

and wry gaze over the movements of the powerful and elite. This is a film that marks itself as quality; in the accuracy of detail of its reconstruction and high production values; in its impressive cast list; and in its restrained tone and beautiful cinematography. The film's slightly obscured presentation of the narrative also enables it to mark itself as 'clever': visual information holds far greater importance than verbal information, and the clarity, or lack thereof, of the plot, places demands on the viewer.

Narratively the film follows Smiley's accumulation of information in order to discover the identity of the mole. Information within the film is presented in a highly complex way. It exists not solely in service of the narrative, but occupies a position that might be best described as that of image and metaphor. Information tends to travel in an embodied form. It is stored in files, on tapes, and within individuals that Smiley must identify, acquire, and decode in order to uncover his target. There are repeated shots of files traveling independently through the Circus as they ride through its layers in lifts. The framing of these shots echoes the many shots from behind characters' heads as they walk through the building. The camera sits mutely behind the files filming their journey as if from their point of view. The files have a narrative significance that foreshadows Guillams' and Smiley's need for the information they hold. They also function on a metaphorical level comparable to that of the repeated shot of trains moving through tracks that are attached to Smiley's point of view as he observes from a window the train line that comes to signify his own mental processes.

Both Christine Geraghty and Kamilla Elliot, in their work on adaptation, have questioned the usefulness of separating, in Geraghty's words, 'films' [as] visual' and

'novels [as] verbal'.[64] In fact, as Elliot argues, the interaction between both modes of address can become a key theme of a text.[65] This analysis might be effectively applied to *Tinker Tailor*. The power of image and the visual is overtly set against the power of the verbal in the film. The dynamic between visual and verbal forms of information is used to stress a thematic concern of all incarnations of Le Carré's world: the power of watching and the powerlessness in speaking. This is a film in which conversations are key. But, notably, these are conversations which revolve around one character talking and, through talking, placing themselves in a position of weakness. The other character, usually Smiley, simply watches in these moments. The watcher's silence marks their dominance and aligns them with the silent power of the controlled camera. Smiley's position in this dynamic that is significantly reversed in the conversation that arguably lies at the heart of the film; that between himself and Karla. It is a meeting that is oft referenced but never seen and is instead relayed in detail by Smiley to Guillam in a rare moment of loquaciousness by Oldman's character. The thematic concern of control is thus drawn out by this repeated trope of the power of watching as opposed to the powerlessness in speaking.

The significance of the act of watching is emphasised by the proliferation of windows throughout the film. The majority of scenes open with either a character or the camera looking through one. It is important to note that windows are not a particularly covert means of observing someone. A sense of control as opposed to a sense of anxiety and paranoia is thus created, as the film explores a subtle distinction between watching and spying. The most effective means of acquiring information is

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[64] Geraghty, *Now A Major Motion Picture*, p. 1.
[65] Elliot, *Rethinking the Novel/Film Debate*.

presented not as spying but as the less extreme and hysteric act of observation. There is a dismissive impatience with the acts one might traditionally associate with espionage. Attempts to disguise oneself, such as that of the Russian 'diplomat', are immediately seen through. Ricky Tarr, the figure who performs most of these acts - travelling abroad, adopting a disguise, and peering through windows with telescopes - is marked as a character who is actually rather blinded and vulnerable to manipulation. The overall effect of this is to bring into focus the cognitive processes behind the observation, the intelligent mind that processes the information calmly gathered by the camera. This focus contributes to the controlled tone of the film, and builds upon the sense of a tastefully restrained elegance and an ease with an elite and secret history.

The overall tone of the film is dictated by the relationship between Smiley and the camera. The cinematography regards Smiley as a subject of interest, both as a watcher himself and as a performance by Oldman. Cinematography in the film is presented as an agent of Smiley's consciousness, and it is used to align the viewer with him. More than any other text discussed in this chapter, the presence of the camera is felt throughout *Tinker Tailor*. Its presence is articulated through the theme of the power of watching; through its constant movement through the *mise-en-scène*; through strikingly framed shots that draw attention to their own composition; through the use of obscure or unexpected angles such as the repeated shots of the backs of characters' heads; and through the use of long lenses to film conversations from a distance. The last of these strategies creates a slight disconnect between word and image, a trope repeated as the camera frequently wanders away from conversations in the *mise-en-scène*. During these moments, the camera's constant

movement creates the sense of a probing and cognizant intelligent presence controlling its movement. This is a film in which the camera is in charge. It does not merely observe the action, or even seamlessly blend into the tonal milieu of the film as does cinematography in *Red Riding*. Instead, the camera in *Tinker Tailor* is declared as a separate presence, moving through each scene, focusing its attention in precise ways, and positioning the viewer in relation to the action. In writing on adaptation Christine Geraghty notes how art cinema adaptations 'add a possible second author, the director, with his own markers of style'. [66] Such a forcefully articulated narrational presence presents *Tinker Tailor* as a heavily authored text. However, the relationship between the camera, and Smiley as a character, creates a complex dynamic in which control, the key theme of the film, does not belong entirely to either.

Throughout *Tinker Tailor* there is a constant interplay between Smiley as watcher, as subject, and as performance. Despite his central position in the narrative, Smiley is not properly introduced until seven minutes in, well after the establishment of Control's character. Smiley is discussed before the camera reveals him to be present within the scene already. He introduced by a slightly obscured close-up of the back of his head, and he is identified as he moves ever so slightly at the mention of his name. The 1974 novel gives Smiley a deliberately unprepossessing presence which enables him to observe situations unnoticed. Smiley's subsequent rise to become a significant figure in literary history, and the iconic nature of Alec Guinness' portrayal of the character, preclude that as a possibility for the 2011 film. From the moment of his introduction, Oldman's Smiley carries a huge weight. While

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[66] Geraghty, *Now A Major Motion Picture*, p. 51.

Smiley is positioned as an observer, it is his watching face as much as the subjects he surveys that is frequently the point of interest of the camera.

As well as bringing into focus Smiley's silent cognitive processes, these moments also present Smiley as performance. Oldman's portrayal is thus brought to the forefront of the film. Christine Geraghty has argued that adaptations allow the performance of an actor to become more visible than they might otherwise be, and this assertion is particularly valid when considering the scene that I propose is the most significant in the film; that in which Smiley recounts his encounter with Karla. Smiley's usual taciturn nature, eroded by drink, sets his monologue in this scene in stark contrast. Guillam watches Smiley in silence throughout, encouraging the viewer to do likewise and to appreciate Oldman's performance. Guillam's unbreaking eye contact as he stares at Smiley is juxtaposed with Smiley's own distanced stare. Smiley recalls the conversation as if performing on stage, acting out the interrogation of Karla against an empty chair. A rare close-up of Smiley is utilised in the scene, but rather than making visible his character, it has the slightly paradoxical effect of opening up Oldman as a performer rather than Smiley as a man. Smiley's glasses, makeup, and grey hair radically alter Oldman's appearance. This altered appearance, and the slightly stylised nature of the monologue stress the actor's performance as the focus of the scene.

Aflredson's camera interweaves its observation of the film's central character with a sense that the camera in many ways belongs to Smiley. The cinematography aligns the viewer with Smiley's consciousness, and concedes control to him as he becomes the means by which the viewer moves through the 1970s of *Tinker Tailor*. This is particularly notable in flashbacks narrated by other characters, such as Ricky Tarr's recollection of his time in Istanbul. Mark Fisher describes Smiley as

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'cultivating a particular kind of silence – not the mere absence of chatter, but the authoritative probing silence of the psychoanalyst".[67] As Tarr narrates his story, there is a disjunction between word and image that separates the camera from the control of Tarr's verbal narration. The camera's purposeful movements through Tarr's account of events creates a disjuncture between Ricky's shaken emotional state as he recalls the events to Smiley, and the probing coolness of the camera. There is a sense that both the camera and Smiley are moving through Ricky's story with a slightly sceptical attitude as the focus of the cinematography is frequently separate from that of Ricky's words. There is also a sense that both Smiley and the camera are picking up on more than Ricky is letting on with his narration; more perhaps than Ricky himself can understand. Throughout the story the camera reinforces the alignment of the viewer with Smiley's intelligent, information-gathering consciousness. It is not so much linked to Smiley's point of view by a focus on what Smiley literally sees, but is instead linked to his cognitive processes, as it focuses on what he is mentally considering. This is particularly evident in moments when the cinematography focuses on details that Smiley doesn't wish other characters to realise he has noticed. A notable example is the shot of Bill Hayden slipping his shoes back on underneath Smiley's dining room table, an action emphasised through a close-up, but with which Smiley purposefully avoids eye contact.

Smiley's own reoccurring flashback of the office party, along with his monologue to Guillam, forms the heart of the film. This has the interesting effect of bringing Smiley's very personal memories, distinct in a film that follows him from a controlled distance, to the forefront. It also has the effect of aligning and

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[67] Fisher, 'The Smiley Factor', p. 38.

intermingling the characters of Karla and Anne. For a film that tonally and thematically is preoccupied with observation and control, the scene significantly denies those two powers to Smiley. Karla and Anne remain unseen, and their destabilised position in Smiley's memory and emotional core mark them as unique in the landscape of the film. Again, the cinematography draws attention to itself by refusing to show either character, despite their immense significance to Smiley. This both affirms the power of the camera as it holds the viewer back from information Smiley himself finds traumatic, and reinforces the troubling nature of, and anxiety surrounding, Karla and Anne for Smiley.

Fisher identifies a rage at the heart of Oldman's performance. For Fisher, this rage is emblematic of the film's reductive approach to its source material as it ultimately psychologises Smiley and locates his motivation in his personal life. However, I would argue that, while *Tinker Tailor* may situate the moment when Smiley 'bares his soul' at its centre, the overall tone of the film complicates such a project, and makes the rage identified at the core of Smiley peculiarly muted and unsettling. The film's cool tone and use of cinematic narration and point of view allows for access to, and an affirmation of, Smiley's cognitive processes. It combines a wry disdain towards the world through which he moves with an admiration of its complex landscape and machinations. The character of Smiley and his personal relationship with Karla and Anne allow the film to intermingle the emotional landscape of the individual and the nation. However, such an alignment is executed in a way that leaves this emotional core, of Smiley and of the film itself, unknowable. The result is a vision of the past with an unsettling edge to it, a fact hinted at by Fisher in his description of the film as 'curiously distanced'.

If Smiley is initially introduced as the film's subject before being aligned with the viewer mentally and psychologically, the end of *Tinker Tailor* sees him overtake the narration and return to become the film's subject again. In the final scenes, Smiley exhibits an epistemic superiority to both viewer and camera, as well as an unnerving opacity, both of which sees him remain unknown. As Smiley makes his final move to capture the mole, the camera separates from him. Instead, the viewer is situated with Peter Guillam as he moves into the building. Once in the building, as in the opening scene, Smiley is revealed to be already present, this time sitting coolly in place with the mole at gunpoint. The camera pans slowly but steadily to the left while the Russia informant leaves the room. Only after a long cut back to Guillam does it turn to identify Hayden as the traitor, postponing the moment when it acquires information that Smiley has already long-possessed. The scene thus stresses Smiley's epistemic superiority, both over the other characters in the diegesis of the story, and over the cinematic narration itself. 'The future is female' might be written on the wall outside the house, but Smiley is in this moment utterly victorious. He has outwitted Hayden, the rest of the Circus, the camera, and the viewer. This victory is stressed in the final scene. Smiley's slump against the wall when he sees Ann in the flashback is offset by his purposeful walk through the Circus. As Smiley sits down at the head of the table in Control's former seat, the camera pushes into a close-up of him that paradoxically preserves his unknowability; his face remains shielded from the viewer by his iconic glasses that in some ways turn the gaze of the camera back on itself.

Despite cutting an ageing and cuckolded figure in an autumnal world, Smiley is thus still able to occupy the national ideal of a male heteronormativity that Kackman argues is so frequently embodied by the character of the spy. As noted earlier, *Tinker*

Tailor itself offers a cool criticism of the more traditionally heroic Ricky Tarr, who engages with the Bondian pursuits of romance, travel, action, and a fashionable appearance. Instead, the film promotes the more studied and intellectual ageing masculinity of Smiley. Smiley is repeatedly told that his world is changing. However, the circular narrative sees him sit in Control's position at the end of the film, giving his character a steely ruthlessness and solidity that undercuts such accusations. The film thus presents a complex version of lost masculinity. Pam Cook argues that in *Raging Bull* the concept of a lost masculinity is 'played across the body' of Jake LaMotta (Robert DeNiro).[68] In *Tinker Tailor*, it is played across the mind of Smiley. The film aims to situate him in a disappearing world, whilst simultaneously giving a certain solidity to that world as Smiley emerges victorious. Smiley's himself exhibits a sceptical attitude towards Connie's patriotic pride as she reminisces about the 'real war' that was World War II when 'Englishmen could be proud'. Despite this fact, the film mimics much of Connie's nostalgia in its affection towards Smiley, and *Tinker Tailor*'s complete lack of interest in the future that is so often foreshadowed further undermines that future's imminent arrival.

The question of loss, a question central the novel, is thus largely absent from the film. The resultant anxiety surrounding loss is thereby largely removed; by the cool and distanced tone of the film; by Smiley's own control of the story and his victory at its conclusion; and by the film's admiration of him as a character. Power is explored very differently in *Tinker Tailor* to *Red Riding*. In both texts the power structures of the worlds depicted ultimately remain largely unchanged. However, *Red Riding*'s rage towards a corrupt and aggressively expanding system is by no

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[68] Pam Cook, *Screening the Past: Memory and Nostalgia in Cinema*, (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 176.

means reflected in *Tinker Tailor*. Throughout Alfredson's film there is a plethora of imagery of Smiley restoring the status quo, from calmly letting a fly out of the window of a car, to replacing Control at the head of the table at the end of the film. Unlike Eddie, who slowly pieces together the structures of power with growing rage and horror, Smiley understands the world in which he lives from the film's opening. He seeks not to expose or destroy that world and its power structures, but merely to replace one malfunctioning cog – the mole who sits around the head table at the Circus. While none of the high-level agents who hold a seat at that table are particularly sympathetic, the repeated circling of the table through cuts between head shots of those sitting around it, and the metronome that ticks on the desk throughout, creates the sense of a machine with one faulty cog that just needs a little tinkering to get Smiley back at the table. A job that, as the final shot emphasises, is completed to perfection by the end of the film.

Tinker Tailor in many ways embodies the concept of Game Theory that underpinned Cold War strategy itself. The British state is presented as a self-regulating machine; a spinning top of power, where individual agents pursue their own interests in a dynamic which nevertheless forms a delicate but longstanding equilibrium. The casual elegance with which the film approaches its elite and ostentatious settings is replicated by the casual ease with which spies negotiate their world of power and secrecy as if playing a game. This trope is made explicit in the significance of Control's chessboard. While this approach exhibits something of a wry disdain towards the state, the elite secrecy of the world of *Tinker Tailor*, and the calm and control with which both Smiley and the camera move through it, nevertheless give that state security. Self-reflexivity is again aligned with a sort of

stasis. The film constructs a circular self-contained world, but tonally eschews any of the anxiety of *Life on Mars* or the disgust and muted rage that shapes *Red Riding*. Instead, there is a cool affirmation of the corridors of power; a sense that decadent and cynical though it may be, Smiley's world of the Circus is part of a national heritage that is rich and strong.

Tinker Tailor's self-conscious status as an adaptation plays a key role in shaping both its tone and its attitude towards the national landscape that it presents. Christine Geraghty argues that adaptations 'have doubleness written into their makeup' whereby they are able to 'draw attention' to their origins whether that be the original source text and/or any previous adaptations made.[69] As such, adaptations are able to 'weave together literary source, cultural value, and national identity'.[70] *Tinker Tailor* is a text that is conscious of its many authors, not just Alfredson and Le Carré, but Oldman and Guinness in their respective performances as Smiley as well. The film presents itself as a text that has a rich cultural heritage, paradoxically both fictional and real, through Le Carré's heavily promoted time in the intelligence services, Smiley's status in the fictional cannon, and Guinness' 1979 performance of the character. It is notable that the vast majority of critical reviews of the film compare Oldman's performance to that of Guinness. The television series is memorialised in the written commentary on the filmic adaptation with a huge amount of affection and reverence. Oldman and the filmmakers have been keen to distinguish their Smiley from Guinness' Smiley visually, but the two characters nevertheless have a striking resemblance to one another. The use of a large cast of established British actors further works to situate the text in a rich national filmic heritage. Kackman argues

[69] Geraghty, *Now A Major Motion Picture*, p. 11.
[70] Ibid., p. 19.

that spy texts are a fertile ground for working out questions of national identity as they explore a 'central tension' between 'who or what was the voice of the nation – the agent or the agency.'[71] Alfredson's *Tinker Tailor* offers a resolution to this tension as Smiley himself comes to embody a rich national and cultural heritage whose legacy is shown to continue from Le Carré, to Guinness, to Oldman.

Ultimately this sense of security must again be situated within the overall tone of the film. *Tinker Tailor*'s unsettling coolness and the gloss that so many critical reviews of the film have highlighted complicates such a reading of it. The casting has drawn attention, with several reviewers arguing that Oldman, Cumberbatch, and Firth, were too young and attractive to convince in their roles. In this vein, O'Donoghue concludes that the film 'feels like an exercise, rather than a matter of life and death'.[72] I would argue that while *Tinker Tailor* does have a glassy, almost cosmetic, feel, thematically this tied into the inscrutable heart of the film. This inscrutability is embodied by Karla's invisible presence and the absence of a clearly articulated threat from the USSR; an invisibility and absence exacerbated by the film's contemporary landscape in which the Soviet Union has dissolved. The result is that Smiley is shown to face a Russia that operates more as a dark mirror to Britain than as an external threat. Karla possesses an ideological purity and security that Smiley cannot access as their conversation takes on the qualities of a confessional, a fact exacerbated by a Jim Prideaux's description of Karla as priest-like. In this way a spiritual paralysis, quite different to that of the book, suffuses Alfredson's *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*. *Life on Mars* deals with loss by oscillating between affection for

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[71] Kackman, *Citizen Spy*, p. xx.
[72] O'Donoghue, 'Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy', p. 60.

the past and anxiety at its absence. *Red Riding* immerses the viewer in the muted rage of grief. *Tinker Tailor*, on the other hand, coolly holds the viewer back from a vision of the past whose emotional core remains unknowable. While the film aims to intertwine the state with the cultural heritage of the nation, that project is unsettlingly complicated as both facets are kept at a remove by the distanced qualities of the film. Thus, the identity of the nation remains ultimately unknowable: Karla of the books, a figure who embodies a concrete ideology and nation is, like the USSR he represented, now an absent figure in 2011. Instead *Tinker Tailor* can only offer the inscrutable site of a well-known actor in visible make-up doing an impression of another well-known actor who performed a character created by an author writing under a pen name who used to be a spy. *Tinker Tailor* arguably is the 'show room' of the 1970s critiqued by Fisher, but the film's unsettling edge and gloss is intriguing when considering the construction of the 1970s in a destabilised present. *Tinker Tailor* depicts the inscrutable games of spies spying on spies and its glassy surfaces reflect adaptations of adaptations, adding an unnerving layer to Smiley's and the camera's controlled movement through their rich and secretive world.

Conclusion

This chapter looked at how the historical and the generic intersect through taking adaptations as its case studies. I aimed to understand how the past is predominantly shaped through tone. I demonstrated how tone, in all three texts, in some way complicates or undermines the narrative and the original source material, whilst also drawing out their thematic concerns. One of the crucial themes addressed in this chapter, and one which will be developed in the rest of the thesis, is the relationship between the nation, state, community, and individual. All the case studies position the 1970s as a transitional moment when this dynamic in some way changed. Each of these texts reflects this change in a slightly different way. *Life on Mars* creates a schism between the individual and the beleaguered local community, and the encroaching bureaucracy of the increasingly faceless state which will drive society towards the alienated landscape of twenty-first century Britain. *Red Riding* uses the 1970s to present a past already that is already hopelessly corrupted, where the concrete structures of power begin to emerge from the shadows. *Tinker Tailor* ostensibly presents the autumnal landscape of a post-Imperial Liberal Britain, but gives it a glassy, albeit opaque, solidity as Smiley emerges victorious.

In this manner, all three texts fundamentally configure the 1970s through questions of loss and grief. The different ways that the texts articulate the resultant emotions ultimately shapes the dynamic between the past and the present on screen. Questions of teleology, momentum, and stasis play a significant role. Freud's distinction between a state of mourning, which works through grief and loss and drives towards the future, and melancholia, which collapses back in on itself and loops in the past, can be seen to be played out across the texts. All texts intertwine the generic with the historical. All three texts use this intersection to self-reflexively

explore their own relationship with image. I aimed to understand how this self-reflexivity might be understood in terms of momentum. I considered whether self-reflexivity within the texts possesses the forward-driving self-awareness identified in reflective nostalgia by Boym, or the helpless stasis of Fisher's conceptualization of hauntology. The texts, I argue, combine both characteristics in different ways and, in so doing, signal the possibilities of exploring images and concepts that can only exist as the imprint of a lost object. This set of questions will be further explored in the next chapter, which considers a set of histories that have a very contentious relationship with their mediated representation, before being developed concretely in my final chapter.

For the purposes of this chapter, I have engaged with these issues in order to unpick the role emotion and tone plays in the construction of the past on screen. I looked at the ways in which emotional responses to grief and loss are configured differently in the bodies of the texts through tone, whether they are expressed as personal, collective, national, or historical. The intersection between these different emotional landscapes is significant. Each of the case studies in this chapter, in one way or another, engages with the need identified by Fisher and Boym to develop a broader collective picture of the past, whether that be through the muted rage of *Red Riding*, or the anxiety of *Life on Mars*. *Tinker Tailor* ostensibly sits at odds with this project, but I would argue that its glossy tone and unknowable core ultimately offers a rather cool deflection of the loss and pain bound in the history it depicts. All three texts thus utilise tone and emotion to construct a lost historical landscape, and shape how that past persists in the present.

The question of 'cool' is particularly important when considering how *Tinker Tailor* uses tone to position the past in the relation to the present, and I will return to

this question at the end of Chapter Four. In considering tone, emotion, and the image I would like to conclude this chapter with a final image from *Darkness At Noon*. This image echoes both the case studies', and Fisher's, project to explore how past, present, and future - collective and individual - sit in relation to one another when considering histories bound with loss. Fisher recognises the difficulties and dangers of losing the present and future in ghosts of the past. Nevertheless, both he and Koestler argue for the human necessity of the emotional state bound within this melancholia. For Rubashov the memory of the patch of blue triggers other memories. This prompts him to reflect on The Party's disapproval of the 'counter revolutionary' nature of the oceanic sense, or of concepts such as The Infinite, eschewed by both Rubashov and The Party as the emotional needs of an individual were seen to exist in opposition to The Party's collective goal. But Rubashov concedes that ultimately his fight against the oceanic sense across his life has failed. In a brief meditation on the future, at the end of a book spent revisiting the past in an empty present, Rubashov finally concludes,

> Perhaps later, much later, the new movement would arise – with new flags, a
> new spirit knowing of both: of economic fatality *and* the 'oceanic sense'.
> Perhaps the members of the new party will wear monks' cowls and preach
> that only purity of means can justify the ends. Perhaps they will teach that the
> tenet is wrong which says that a man is the product of one million divided by
> one million, and will introduce a new kind of arithmetic based on
> multiplication: on the joining of a million individuals to form a new entity
> which, no longer an amorphous mass, will develop a consciousness and an

individuality of its own, with an 'oceanic feeling' increased a millionfold, in
unlimited yet self-contained space.[73]

Koestler's reflection on a collective oceanic feeling is illuminating when
considering Fisher's work. Fisher repeatedly comes to the edge of expressing the
need for a shared sense of memory, place, and time; a sort of oceanic sense version
of post-war Britain. This 'oceanic sense' Britain is an image of a place in time which
only ever existed as a remembered loss, but which nevertheless is, for Fisher, not
only potentially useful, but emotionally necessary. This possibility, and its potential
expression or complication through representations of the 1970s on screen, will be
developed across the body of the thesis. The challenges of configuring such a
collective sense will be explored more concretely. The next chapter will address the
complexities of national identity across the United Kingdom as it looks at
representations of the Troubles in Northern Ireland. Loss and grief, and the
representation of the decade itself, I will argue, inevitably must be configured
differently in these texts, as they represent a region that has a particular set of
traumas in relation to the 1970s. Questions of mourning, melancholia, stasis, and
momentum, and the texts' engagement with images of the past, will thus be
developed and complicated as I continue to understand how the 1970s is constructed
on screen.

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[73] Koester, *Darkness at Noon*, p. 265-6.

Chapter Three: Remembering the 'Troubles' and the Peace Process

Introduction

In the second episode of *The 70s*, Dominic Sandbrook addresses the conflict in Northern Ireland, introducing it as 'the decade's most dreadful dilemma'. The programme cycles through archival footage showing familiar images associated with the Troubles such as rioting in the streets, masked gunmen, and car bombs. This footage is intercut with an English news report from the 1970s, in which the anchor asks: 'How is it that over a thousand people have died in a part of the United Kingdom that, five years ago, appeared no more important to the British government than London taxi cabs?' Framed by Sandbrook as a 'bloody battle to control the streets of Northern Ireland,' the conflict is shorn of any meaningful political contextualisation. It is instead presented as having burst out of nowhere onto the 1970s landscape to the bewilderment of the British public who struggled to understand this 'unfathomable relic of ancient history'. For Sandbrook, the Birmingham Pub Bombings of 1974 marks the shocking arrival into the British consciousness of violence in Northern Ireland as the IRA, inspired by 'Marxist terror groups wreaking havoc in continental Europe', sought to take their struggle 'from the killing ground of Belfast to the quiet streets of Middle England'. 1974, Sandbrook argues, signalled the arrival of a new form of violence, of which the victims 'weren't policemen or soldiers' but 'ordinary young men and women on an ordinary night out'. For Sandbrook, the Birmingham pub bombings saw Britain enter 'a new age of insecurity where even going for a quiet pint could get you killed'.

Bloody Sunday, which occurred two years previously and involved violence by the British State against Northern Irish civilians, although shown briefly in archival clips, remains unnamed and unremarked upon. The legacy of the conflict for Sandbrook thus becomes 'the spectre of the international terrorist'. 'Forty years on', he concludes, 'we still live in the bomber's shadow'.

Sandbrook's Anglo-centric account of the Troubles repeats several tropes of representing the conflict on screen that have been identified by existing scholarship on representations of Northern Ireland. Before outlining these debates, it is worth noting how the 1970s emerges as a critical decade across accounts of Northern Ireland and the Troubles. British histories of the 1970s have a tendency to elide the violence of the Troubles, a fact noted by Andy Beckett whose account of the seventies describes the conflict as 'the great unspoken' of the decade.[1] However, not only is Northern Ireland key to understanding the 1970s, the 1970s is a key period in histories of Northern Ireland and the Troubles. The seventies saw the escalation of the political tensions that arose in the region during in the late 1960s as the conflict reached a violent and traumatic climax.

The case studies for this chapter are three films that address the Troubles in Northern Ireland during the 1970s: *Five Minutes of Heaven* (Oliver Hirschbiegel, UK/Ireland, 2009), *Shadow Dancer* (James Marsh, UK/Ireland, 2012), and *'71* (Yann Demange, UK, 2014). All three films have been made since the 1994 Ceasefire and need to be considered in light of the growing historical space not just from the violence of the 1970s, but from its political resolution in the 1990s as well.

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[1] Andy Beckett, *When the Lights Went Out: What Really Happened to Britain in the Seventies* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd, 2009), p. 96.

The films, I propose, demonstrate how different ways of managing a traumatic legacy can shift and emerge over time. This will also allow for a consideration of how representations of the seventies exist on a fluid timeline, both in terms of how they develop over time, and also how the decade's existence signifies different things, and has a different dynamic to the present, in different parts of the UK. Before moving on to the case studies, it is important to outline key debates in existing scholarship concerning the representation of Northern Ireland and the Troubles on screen. It is my contention that all my case studies self-consciously engage with previous forms of representation as they reconstruct a conflict that has a contentious and complex relationship to its existence in the media.

John Hill has argued that 'most standard histories of British cinema ignore Northern Ireland altogether,'[2] despite the fact that much of the cinematic and televisual representation of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland has been 'left to the British and American cinemas'.[3] For Hill and others such as Kevin Rockett and Lance Pettitt, the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland occupy a unique position, culturally and geographically, as they, in Rockett's words, 'remai[n] defined in relation to Britain and the USA'.[4] John Hill has attached self-consciously generalised positions to these cultural views of Ireland. Hill argues that the representations of Ireland that emerge from America tend to portray it as a 'generally blissful rural idyll', while British cinema constructs it as a 'primarily dark and strife-

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[2] John Hill, *Cinema and Northern Ireland: Film, Culture and Politics* (London: BFI, 2006), p. 2.
[3] John Hill, 'Introduction' in John Hill, Martin McLoone and Paul Hainsworth (eds.), *Border Crossing: Film in Ireland Britain and Europe* (Antrim: W&G Baird Ltd., 1994), p. 3.
[4] Kevin Rockett, 'Culture, Industry and Irish Cinema' in John Hill, Martin McLoone and Paul Hainsworth (eds.), *Border Crossing: Film in Ireland, Britain and Europe* (Antrim: W&G Baird Ltd., 1994), p. 127-8.

torn maelstrom'.[5] Writing in 1988, Hill argued that these images had become so pervasive that they provided 'the framework for certain sections of Irish film-making as well'.[6] As such, these trends of representation were echoed by indigenous Irish cinema such as Neil Jordan's *Angel* (Ireland, 1982).[7]

For Hill, the predominant mode of depicting the conflict in Northern Ireland has been, as exemplified in *The 70s*, a failure to meaningfully contextualise the Troubles historically and politically. The result is that the conflict is rendered largely 'incomprehensible'.[8] The 'main attitudes to violence' that thus emerge are ones in which it is either 'attributed to fate or destiny' or to 'deficiencies of the Irish character'.[9] As Hill argues, 'both attitudes share an avoidance of social and political questions' with the conflict being only explained through 'metaphysics or race, not history or politics'.[10] For Hill, Carol Reed's 1947 *Odd Man Out* (UK) is a paradigmatic example. Hill argues that *Odd Man Out*'s fatalistic portrayal of Johnny McQueen (James Mason), a member of the euphemistically titled 'Organisation', set the template for films to follow as it depicted Johnny's doomed journey through the dreamlike spaces of an unnamed city that stands in for Belfast.

Luke Gibbons has echoed several of Hill's concerns in his writing on romanticism in representations of the Irish landscape, as has Kevin Rockett. More recently, Martin McLoone has criticised a 'tradition of representing political

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[5] John Hill, 'Images of Violence' in Kevin Rockett, Luke Gibbons and John Hill (eds.), *Cinema and Ireland* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1988), p. 147.
[6] Ibid., p. 178.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Hill, *Cinema and Northern Ireland*, p. 194.
[9] Hill, 'Images of Violence', p. 149.
[10] Ibid.

violence in Ireland as an atavistic fault of the Irish themselves'. [11] For McLoone,

such an approach 'den[ies] the historical, social and political roots of such violence'

and elides the role of Britain and the British state in the conflict.[12] Thus, McLoone

argues, the majority of films about Northern Ireland utilise 'the tragedy of the

Troubles as a backdrop against which entertainment thrillers and dramas are played

out'.[13] Subsequently, the 'human tragedies' of 'ordinary people caught up in the

conflict' are foregrounded in these texts at the expense of an examination of wider

social or political narratives.[14]

Both Hill and McLoone question whether this excision of the political in an

exploration of the personal is an inevitable consequence of the format of the

conventional narrative film and its 'reliance on individuals'.[15] Both critics argue that

a film like *In the Name of the Father* (Jim Sheridan, Ireland, 1993) concentrates on

the relationships between its central characters at the expense of a robust exploration

of the British justice system. For both critics, this focus on the individual also allows

the films to differentiate types of violence, whether by juxtaposing the protagonist

with the more hardline members of paramilitary organisations, or by using personal

conflicts to contrast the 'illegitimate' and 'criminal' violence of the organisations

with the 'legitimate' force utilised by the institutions of the state. McLoone and Hill

argue that a notable consequence of this focus on the individual is the resultant

opposition between the 'private and the personal at the expense of the public and

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[11] Martin McLoone, *Irish Film: The Emergence of Contemporary Cinema* (London: British Film Institute, 2000), p. 4.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Martin McLoone, 'Film, Television and the Troubles: A Troubles Archive Essay', <http://www.troublesarchive.com/resources/Film_Television_and_the_Troubles.pdf>, accessed 28th July, 2015.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Martin McLoone, *Film, Media and Popular Culture in Ireland: Cityscapes, Landscapes, Soundscapes* (Norfolk: Biddles Ltd., 2008), p. 196.

political'.[16] As Hill argues, 'It is a conventional part of the vocabulary of 'troubles' filmmaking to counterpose the public and private spheres'.[17] This division also reinforces the convention of portraying the Troubles as a masculine conflict in which 'the function of female characters' becomes 'to embody the 'benefits' that accrue to men once they abandon violence and settle for a domestic existence'.[18]

The gendering of the Troubles as masculine has been commented upon by Ruth Barton who argues that, particularly as the 1990s developed, the conflict was used in film to explore 'issues of masculinity'.[19] Some filmmakers have sought to explore the role of women within sectarian conflict, notably Pat Murphy in *Maeve* (UK/ Ireland, 1981) and *Anne Devlin* (Ireland, 1984). However, the use of the Troubles to explore masculinity, a masculinity moreover that is defined in relation to a domestic and non-political femininity, is still a key issue when considering representations of the conflict on screen.

Critical discourse on masculinity in representations of the Troubles has documented a shift between films made before and after the peace process. Emilie Pine's 2014 work on 'post-conflict films' observes that they 'not only represent the Troubles as an all-male experience, but as a testing ground for masculinity'.[20] Similarly, Sarah Edge has argued that the cinema of the peace process rearticulated and redefined new forms of masculinity. For Edge, these new masculinities moved

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[16] Hill, 'Images of Violence', p. 155.
[17] Hill, *Cinema and Northern Ireland*, p. 201.
[18] Ibid., p. 237.
[19] Ruth Barton, 'Feisty Colleens and Faithful Sons: Gender in Irish Cinema', *Cineaste*, 24:2/3 (March 1999), pp. 40-45.
[20] Emilie Pine, 'Body of Evidence: Performing *Hunger*' in Tony Tracy and Conn Holohan (eds.), *Masculinity and Irish Popular Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 159.

away from an ''imperialist'-based definition of Irish masculinity' to 'hybrid variations of Irish/British masculinity which', she argues, 'have become better suited to retaining control of the peace process itself'.[21] Edge's assertion that contemporary culture sees notions of masculinity in flux is particularly resonant when considering representations of the Troubles that are set during 1970s. When analysing my case studies, I will explore how films made in this unstable present survey an earlier decade which is represented as a time when similar uncertainties were pervasive, and when a younger and more violent masculinity emerged, and began to shape the course of the conflict.

The work of Barton, Pine, and Edge highlights the centrality of the peace process to changing representations of the conflict. Writing in 2007, Jennie Carlsten and Brian McIlroy both explored the role cinema might play in the immediate aftermath of the peace process.[22] While McLoone argued that cinema focuses on the personal at the expense of the political, Carlsten and McIlroy posited that the personal narratives of films like *Omagh* (Pete Travis, Ireland/UK, 2004) could come to 'function as representations of national trauma'.[23] For Carlsten and McIlroy, then, the films were able to work through questions of trauma, and its impact on memory and national identity, through a focus on the personal. Thus the films are seen as active participants within the narratives and language of the peace process as they

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[21] Sarah Edge, ''He's a Good Soldier, He Cares About the Future': Post-Feminist Masculinities, the IRA Man, and 'Peace' in Northern Ireland' in Tony Tracy and Conn Holohan (eds.), *Masculinity and Irish Popular Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 199.

[22] Brian McIlroy, 'Memory work: Omagh and the Northern Irish monumentary' in Brian McIlroy (ed.), *Genre and Cinema: Ireland and Transnationalism* (Oxon: Routledge, 2007), Jennie Carlsten, 'Mourning and solidarity: The Commemorative Cinema of *Some Mother's Son* and *H3* in Brian McIlroy (ed.), *Genre and Cinema: Ireland and Transnationalism* (Oxon: Routledge, 2007).

[23] Carlsten, 'Mourning and solidarity', p. 233.

focus on the question of reconciliation, and facilitate an engagement with how a traumatic and recent past can be negotiated in the present.

In a different manner, both Hill and McLoone have explored whether or not the peace process has permitted the emergence of films that represent the conflict in new tonal ways. Thus, McLoone argues that the bleak nihilism of a film like *Resurrection Man* (Marc Evans, UK, 1998) 'could only come out of a situation that is seen to be improving'.[24] On the other side of the spectrum, Hill argued that the ceasefire facilitated 'new, more optimistic scenarios than had previously been the case'.[25] Nevertheless, Hill remains circumspect about the possibilities for texts to move beyond the filmic legacy of the Troubles. He notes the persistence of recurrent representational tropes in films like *The Boxer* (Jim Sheridan, US/Ireland, 1997),[26] and argues that films that try to comically engage with this traumatic history, such as *Divorcing Jack* (David Caffrey, UK, 1998), 'struggle to convert paramilitary conflict into genuinely comic material'.[27]

McLoone was initially critical of post-ceasefire cinema for failing to replicate the more politically charged character of Irish cinema in the 1970s and early 1980s. However, writing on *Hunger* (Steve McQueen, UK/Ireland, 2008) in 2009, McLoone argued that the historical distance that was opening up, not only from the events it portrays, but the Good Friday agreement as well, allowed *Hunger* to engage with its subject matter in a way that would not have been previously possible. McLoone exhibits a tentative optimism that, as the twenty-first century progresses, this increasing distance will allow for 'greater artistic achievements'.[28] Over the

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[24] McLoone, *Irish Film*, p. 84.
[25] Hill, *Cinema and Northern Ireland*, p. 196.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid., p. 210.
[28] McLoone, 'Film, Television and the Troubles: A Troubles Archive Essay'.

course of the chapter I will be exploring whether the films discussed, all made after *Hunger*, fulfil this potential to engage with the Troubles on screen – and the 1970s that they revisit - in a new way.

What is particularly evident in the scholarship discussed thus far is the critical focus on *how* such a sensitive and recent part of history should be represented. This focus is reflected in the press materials surrounding my case-studies, as each of the texts was discussed in the light of how they chose to engage with the conflict, and whether or not those choices were appropriate. This focus also speaks to the heavily mediated nature of the history being engaged with. From the news footage of the Civil rights march in October 1968 that brought the conflict to international attention, right through to films made well after the Peace Process, the relationship between historical event and image is significant. It is also a relationship that is controversial and politically charged; whether in the censorship of news reports, or the contested representations in fiction film which, as Lance Pettitt argues, 'have played a major role in the maintenance and reshaping of perception of the Troubles and to this extent […] have performed a political function'.[29]

In considering the changing nature of representations of the conflict, one of the developments Hill addresses is the manner in which films made towards the end of the nineties engage with the Troubles as image as much as history. A film like *Resurrection Man,* Hill argues, 'may be loosely based on actual events', but is ultimately 'less concerned with the accurate recreation of an historical period than with the reworking, and hybridisation, of the representational conventions associated

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[29] Lance Pettitt, *Screening Ireland: Film and Television Representation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 245.

with 'troubles' drama'.[30] Furthermore, the 'generic play and stylistic mix-and-match'
of the film 'also suggests a knowingness about the way in which representations of
the 'troubles' had by this time become sedimented into a set of readily identifiable
conventions that had lost the power to surprise or shock'.[31]

Thomas Hemmeter has explored the potential of post-ceasefire cinema like
The Boxer to 'convey the inadequacy' of representational myths by engaging with,
and then subverting, generic conventions.[32] Hemmeter argues that a genre film with
political and historical subject matter does not necessarily offer a reductive
representation of the society it reimagines on screen. Instead, engaging with
conventions of representation can enable a text to not only make visible those
conventions and expose their artificial nature, but bring into view the society for
whom those images are intended. I will look at how my case studies address the
Troubles both as history and as image, and how they use one to comment upon the
other. I will consider how my texts interweave questions of the historical with the
representational, and utilise this interaction to engage with more universal questions
of shaping a traumatic and difficult past, and its legacy in the present.

Hemmeter's work also raises the question of who is being represented and for
whom. In regards to cinematic images of Northern Ireland this question is intimately
bound up in the region's relationship to Britain. As McLoone argues, 'In the context
of Northern Ireland and its contemporary politics, the question of who speaks in and

[30] Hill, *Cinema and Northern Ireland*, p. 206.
[31] Ibid., p. 208.
[32] Thomas Hemmeter, 'Hollywood genre formulas as contact zones: The case of Jim Sheridan's *The Boxer'* in Brian McIlroy (ed.), *Genre and Cinema: Ireland and Transnationalism* (Oxon: Routledge, 2007), p. 79.

for this landscape is a matter of intense controversy'.[33] McLoone has argued that the

nationalist community is often politically undermined in cinema, both British and

Irish. Other voices, such as Brian McIlroy, have focused on the elision of the

Protestant and Unionist experience, with McIlroy arguing that members of this

community are 'demonized or decontextualised' on the rare occasions that they do

appear on film.[34]

The dynamic between Britain, the British State, and Northern Ireland, has

formed the focus of both filmic and televisual representations of Northern Ireland as

well as much of the critical commentary. McIlroy criticises this focus for utilizing an

'anti-imperialist myth' that frames the conflict as a struggle between Britain and

Ireland rather than as a civil conflict, and omits the Protestant experience as it does

so.[35] Others such as Lance Pettitt have argued that 'colonial ideas have structured the

economic, political and cultural relations between Ireland and Britain for several

hundred years […] inform[ing] deep-seated attitudes in both Irish and British

people'.[36] Thus, for Pettitt, a post-colonial understanding of the relationship between

Britain and Ireland is key, and allows for an analysis of how this relationship is

played out on screen. The relationship between the British State and Northern

Ireland is important when considering *Five Minutes of Heaven*, *Shadow Dancer*, and

'71. How the films negotiate the dynamic between the former imperial centre and the

periphery, and the manner in which they account for different perspectives, will be

explored. These questions are particularly resonant in representations of the

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[33] Martin McLoone, '*December Bride*: A Landscape Peopled Differently' in James MacKillop (ed.), *Contemporary Irish Cinema: From the Quiet Man to Dancing at Lughnasa* Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1999), p. 52.
[34] Brian McIlroy, 'Challenges and Problems in Contemporary Irish Cinema: The Protestants', *Cineaste*, 24:2/3 (March 1999), pp. 56-57.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Pettitt, *Screening Ireland*, p. 3.

seventies, as the decade saw the end of Britain's status as an imperial power. I will

consider how texts produce in an increasingly globalised present reflect back upon

this period as questions of devolution and globalisation continue to shift both

Britain's and Ireland's place in the world and challenge the integrity of the nation

state.

Chapter One explored concerns in heritage discourse surrounding how the

nationally and regionally specific is condensed and sold in cinema for a global

audience. The chapter also considered concerns that images and narratives of

specific historical pasts are becoming increasingly deterritorialized from both their

spatial and temporal referents. These questions are particularly relevant when

considering representations of Northern Ireland and Belfast on screen. The dynamic

between the regional, national, and global is further complicated by the fact that the

films must navigate a regional identity that is based partly on the struggle for a

heavily contested and specific territory. Writing on representations of Belfast,

McLoone has commented on the tension between the city's reputation as

'notoriously territorial' and its cinematic image which is defined by a sense of

placelessness.[37] McLoone demonstrates how films have repeatedly 're-imagined'

Belfast's landscape 'for symbolic or allegorical purposes'[38] again citing the

'expressionistic city of darkness and fatalistic doom' of *Odd Man Out* as a template

for subsequent films. These re-imagined mythic Belfasts, McLoone argues, end up

reinforcing the real city's 'pariah status and [obfuscating] considerably the

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[37] Martin McLoone, 'Topographies of Terror and Taste: The Re-imagining of Belfast in Recent Cinema' in Ruth Barton & Harvey O'Brien (eds.), *Keeping It Real: Irish Film and Television* (London: Wallflower Press, 2004), p. 135.
[38] Ibid.

underlying politics of Northern Ireland' in their treatment of the city's topography.[39]

This chapter will explore the ways in which the case studies negotiate these

elements, and consider how they oscillate between the local and global, and the

specific and universal, in order to do so.

Finally, I consider the question of temporal specificity. I ask whether or not

the "1970s" exists differently in relation to Northern Ireland and Northern Irish

history, and I consider the effect this has on how the seventies must be conceived of

more broadly. Sandbrook positions 1974 as the year in which the violence of the

conflict in Northern Ireland 'arrived' for mainland Britain. In filmic histories

exploring the Troubles however, the decade is positioned as the devastating peak of a

conflict long-entrenched. Similarly, if Sandbrook offers an account of the 1970s in

which the decade must be revisited through the prism of 'Thatcher's Britain' of the

1980s, it might be argued that films that represent the conflict ultimately revisit the

decade through the prism of the 1990s and the Peace Process. Looking at filmic

representation of the Troubles should therefore enable an exploration of if and how

the "seventies" must be considered as existing differently in relation to the region. It

should also enable an examination of whether or not the division, enforced by

Sandbrook between Belfast and the 'quiet streets of Middle England', is ultimately

sustainable when considering these films.

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[39] Ibid.

Part One: *Five Minutes of Heaven*

Five Minutes of Heaven is a British and Irish film written by Guy Hibbert and directed by Oliver Hirschbiegel. The film premiered at the Sundance film festival in 2009 but failed to secure a cinematic release and was instead broadcast on BBC Two in April of that year. *Five Minutes of Heaven* stars Liam Neeson and James Nesbitt as Alastair Little and Joe Griffin, two characters based on real individuals of the same name. It is split into two parts, opening in 1975 with a reconstruction of historical events as Alastair shoots and kills Joe's brother Jim (Gerard Jordan), before moving into 2008 and presenting an entirely fictionalised set of events as Alastair and Joe agree to meet to film a television programme about reconciliation. Very much the product of a contemporary landscape shaped by the Peace Process, *Five Minutes of Heaven* takes the question of reconciliation as its central theme, asking how contemporary Northern Ireland can move forward after the violence of the 1970s.

Hill and others argued that the Peace Process resulted in the production of films that 'would have been difficult, if not impossible, to make at an earlier stage'.[40] However, *Five Minutes*, despite being made eleven years after the Good Friday Agreement, takes a more cautious approach. The film problematizes attempts to move forward by focusing on the struggle of its central characters to leave the 1970s behind, and by focusing on the legacy of trauma in the present. Despite this caution, *Five Minutes* does reflect the self-conscious engagement with the 'Troubles' not only as a set of historical events but as 'image' on screen that Hill identifies in the

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[40] Hill, *Cinema and Northern Ireland*, p. 196.

cinema of the Peace Process. From the opening where Neeson's narration accompanies archival images of chaotic violence, to the television crew's clumsy attempts to shape Alastair and Joe's meeting into a palatable narrative, *Five Minutes* engages with discourses of representing the Troubles on screen. The film thus questions the role visual media plays in enabling society to adjust to the aftermath of violence.

Most significantly when considering the representation of the 1970s, *Five Minutes* inextricably links the decade to contemporary society, creating an interdependence between past and present as it does so. The film presents a 2008 landscape that can only be understood by considering both the violence and trauma of the 1970s itself, and the subsequent moves towards reconciliation. For Sam Wollaston, writing in the *Guardian*, the 1975 opening forms the strongest part of the film where 'there's an urgency' that is lacking 'in the latter part'.[41] Wollaston concludes that this indicates 'perhaps the sad truth […] that the Troubles make for more exciting drama than either truth or reconciliation'.[42] Wollaston is not alone in highlighting what he perceives to be a notable split between past and present that results in a rather unbalanced film whose second and third acts lack the impact of the first. I will argue, however, that key to *Five Minutes'* engagement with the 'Troubles' on screen is the relationship between the 'past' of the opening third and the 'present' of the rest of the film. The potency of the opening section is thus able to reflect the characters' struggle to contain 1975 in 2008.

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[41] Sam Wollaston, 'The Weekend's TV: Five Minutes of Heaven and Lewis', *The Guardian* (9th April, 2009) < http://www.theguardian.com/culture/2009/apr/06/weekends-tv-television-review>, accessed 3rd May, 2015.
[42] Ibid.

Five Minute's opening third offers a relatively conventional approach to portraying the Troubles on screen. The conflict is depicted as a world of violence and chaos that shatters the domestic security of Joe when Alastair murders his brother. In the context of exploring the 1970s on screen, however, the film's opening also has the effect of establishing the decade as a primal site of trauma. The opening signals the film's project to approach the historical through the fictional as *Five Minutes* immediately constructs the history that it is presenting as one that is intimately bound up in mediated images. The opening titles outline both the fictional and factual strands interweaved stating 'This film is a fiction inspired by two men who bear the legacy of one of these killings'. This blurring between the historical and the fictionalised is continued as a shot of the young Alastair (Mark Davison) prefaces clips of archival footage that show violence and, significantly, the aftermath of violence, during the 1970s. The opening also immediately establishes the importance of the past in the present through Neeson's narration which ties together the disparate archival footage. Neeson's opening line 'For me to talk about the man I have become, you need to know about the man that I was' makes this link explicit. If the past is needed to understand the films' present-day setting, then it is only from his present-day adult self that Little can reflect on his youth in the 1970s.

The opening also articulates a self-conscious awareness of the Troubles as image, both during the decade and after. Neeson, reflecting on the archive, remarks 'When you got home and switched on the TV you could see it was happening in every other town as well'. The film ultimately complicates this use of archive as it is retrospectively attached to the television programme within the diegesis of the film. During the opening third, however, the most prominent effect it has is to

immediately establish the sense of incomprehensible chaos and violence identified by Hill in earlier representations. *Five Minutes* immediately positions itself as a film that is uninterested in causes. The opening cycles through soundless fragments of archive which, although tied together by Little's narration, are neither fully contextualised nor explained. Towards the end of the segment Little falls silent, creating the sense that there are no words that can meaningfully explain the images. His direct address to the audience, 'you', presents the images as ones familiar to the viewer as well as Little – a shared cultural reference point of violent chaos against which he can paint his own personal history.

The streets of 1975 Lurgen are presented as an environment in which violence has become normalised. Soldiers stand by roadblocks, children play with toy guns, and the sound of a car boot being slammed causes alarm. As Alastair's parents sit down to their evening meal, an unseen radio or television reports on yet another attack, to which neither of them react with surprise or interest. This is not 1971. This is 1975, and the middle of the decade is presented as a point in time when events are already in motion and well past the point of no return. Alastair has the gun and the target, and any causes for the events of the film's opening happen well before the narrative begins. How Northern Irish society arrived at this point is not a question the film aims to answer or even raise. The focus instead becomes how the violence of 1975 shapes 2008.

Conventions of Troubles film-making are engaged with by *Five Minutes* to shape the historical landscape of the 1970s. A notable example is the film's use of the trope of 'counterpos[ing] the public and private spheres' in order to position the

mid-1970s as the point of no return.[43] 1975 becomes the moment when the violence that has established itself in the public invades the private and domestic. It spreads from the military presence on the streets and media reports on the television into the homes of the Little and Griffin families. To this effect the threshold between the street and the home is a significant space throughout the film. The street is privileged in the film's opening both as a space of overt violence in the archival footage, and a space where the potential for violence has saturated the mundane as soldiers are stationed at a military roadblock on a seemingly quiet street. Alastair himself is filmed like a stranger in his own house. His bedroom is introduced without him and he is framed as a threatening presence in the *mise-en-scène*. The camera depicts him looming over the toy box in which he has hidden a gun, and isolates him standing at the top of the stairs, completely separated from his parents having dinner. Alastair's uneasy presence in his house is contrasted with Jim Griffin's (Joe's brother) walk through the shared spaces of the family home and his friendly interaction with relatives living there.

The opening establishes the street as a space of violence and contrasts it with the Griffin home. This dynamic is then brutally subverted when Alastair, standing outside the Griffin house, fires through the living room window and kills Jim as he sits on the sofa watching television. The sense that the domestic has been breached is emphasised by a shot of Jim from Alastair's point of view, framed through the living-room window while sitting on the sofa. As Alastair fires the gun, the sound of the television inside the house spills into the silence of the street shattering the divide between the two spaces. The film focuses on Alastair in the build-up to the shooting, but the camera separates from him after he kills Jim in order to take in the aftermath

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[43] Hill, *Cinema and Northern Ireland*, p. 201.

of his actions. Rather than staying with Alastair after the murder, the camera turns to Joe and follows him as he himself crosses the threshold of his home. This action is echoed by the adult Joe throughout the rest of the film. His childhood home breached in 1975, Joe hovers on parallel thresholds during 2008: escaping the car to smoke by the side of the motorway; escaping the pseudo-domestic environs of the hotel by going to the balcony; standing outside his own home when he receives the letter; and storming through its door to arm himself before he goes to meet Alastair. This motif culminates as Joe physically removes Alastair from his domestic space, falling with him through the window of his childhood home in a reversal of the events of 1975. This movement is emphasised by the cinematography in the scene as the camera slowly pushes through the window before tilting down to the two men lying on the pavement below. Only after the domestic space, breached in 1975, is restored by this action, can Joe begin to let go of the past.

Television plays an interesting role in the relationship between politicised violence and the domestic. The archive, the news report in the Little household, and the adult Alastair's recollections of watching televisual images of chaos, all speak of a decade in which violence saturated screens. However, television simultaneously functions as a signifier of domestic normality. *Five Minutes* uses television to link the family homes and paint a shared cultural background, as both families sit down to watch Bruce Forsythe. The television is privileged in the film's opening as it is used to draw parallels between the families, and it becomes the focal point of a normal family evening and collective memory as described by Joe Moran. Attention is drawn to Forsythe as a television personality, as Alastair's friend discusses him with the Littles, and Jim smiles whilst watching Forsythe on screen. Forsythe, and

the type of family-orientated Saturday Night television that he represents, is thus positioned as a vehicle for a shared domestic routine and culture.

Television is also central to the film's portrayal of the moment at which that collective normality was shattered. TV's established place in the heart of the living room becomes increasingly uncomfortable as the night of Jim's murder wears on and the camera begins to linger on the television in an uncanny manner. The laughter of the studio audience becomes the aural signifier of the breached boundary between street and home. It takes on a ghastly quality as it intermingles with the sound of Jim's ragged breathing after he has been shot and continues unaffected by the dying man in front of the screen. As will be discussed, the film's contemporary setting overtly explores the limitations of television as a tool of reconciliation. As Joe moves towards an acceptance of the past at the film's ending, however, television is once more used as a signifier of a now-restored domestic space. *Five Minutes* concludes as the camera pans from the TV screen to Joe's family gathered on the sofa as they watch it, the sound of the television once again forming the backdrop to the living room of the ordinary family.

Five Minutes focuses on an act of sectarian violence by a Protestant upon a Catholic victim. It is therefore worth considering how the film sits in a cinematic tradition of representing Loyalism on screen. As discussed previously, McIlroy and others have argued that this tradition has tended toward either eliding or pathologizing the unionist perspective.[44] Hirschbiegel's slightly depoliticised account does not seek to explore the political causes or ideologies behind the

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[44] Brian McIlroy, 'Challenges and Problems in Contemporary Irish Cinema: The Protestants', *Cineaste*, 24:2/3 (March 1999), pp. 56-57.

conflict, but neither does it present its young protagonist unsympathetically or pathologise his choices. Instead, *Five Minutes* interweaves sectarian violence with youth culture as Alastair is positioned as an ordinary boy shaped by a historical period that is saturated by violence. One of the first things Alastair mentions is his young age at the time of the Troubles, and this sense of a boy simply responding to his contemporary cultural landscape is stressed during the film's opening.

This sense of depoliticisation is further exacerbated by relatively superficial divisions between both communities. Signifiers of cultural identity extend no further than the colour of the flags that fly in the streets. Alastair's childhood home is marked out as a Protestant household by no more than the picture of Elizabeth II on the mantelpiece. Meanwhile, Joe's Catholic neighbourhood in 2008 is marked out by no more than a sign for Celtic at the local club. In Alastair's bedroom posters of George Best and Bruce Lee sit alongside the Union Jack, and there is an interchangeability between the pop culture figures of the decade and the flag as a signifier of political identity. As Alastair looks in the mirror both the poster of Best behind him and the flag stuck onto the glass are visible in the shot. He is thus presented as a young man concerned more with image than identity as he tweaks his collar and considers his reflection before retrieving the gun he has hidden in his toy box.

Emilie Pine situates *Five Minutes* amongst other texts that utilise the Troubles as a 'testing ground for masculinity'.[45] For Pine, the 'male-dominated narrative [is] framed not by paramilitary, colonial or community politics, but by a struggle over the subject's masculine definition.'[46] Alastair's opening statement, 'For

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[45] Pine, 'Body of Evidence', p. 159.
[46] Ibid., p. 159-160.

me to talk about the man I have become' establishes this understanding of the conflict. Over the course of the film the legacy of the Troubles and the 1970s is explored by focusing on Joe and Alastair's struggle to work out what kind of men they are, and what kind of men they want to be, in 2008. As demonstrated by the case studies in the previous chapter, the seventies is frequently presented as an era when masculine identity was destabilised. An interesting effect of *Five Minutes*' representation of masculinity and identity is that it is 2008 rather than 1974 that is the site of a masculinity in flux. The seventies, in contrast, although violent and traumatic, is presented as shaping a much more solid sense of identity. It is 2008 that sees a masculinity previously formed around sectarian identity struggle to adapt to the millennial landscape. Echoes of the conflict still exist in the heavy security at the club and Alastair's frosty welcome. However, Alastair's description of a former Loyalist paramilitary who has 'killed a few Catholics in his time, but is now killing his own', sees Alastair and his generation having to question what kind of men they have become now that violence for the sake of violence can no longer coalesce around sectarian conflict.

In many ways *Five Minutes* fits both Carlsten's description of 'commemorative cinema' and McIlroy's account of 'monumentary' as the film attempts to work through questions of trauma and its impact on memory and national identity.[47] As with the films discussed by Carlsten and McIlroy, *Five Minutes* actively participates in the narratives and language of the Peace Process. The film thus foregrounds the question of reconciliation, and explores how a traumatic history

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[47] McIlroy, 'Memory work', Carlsten, 'Mourning and solidarity'.

in living memory can be negotiated in the present. It also focuses on personal experience and memory to explore questions of national trauma, particularly through its use of the flashback. However, there is a marked difference between the history on display in *Five Minutes* and the majority of Carlsten and McIlroy's case studies. Unlike a film like *Omagh* (Pete Travis, Ireland/UK, 2004), *Five Minutes* presents a series of events that is resolutely uncontested and undisputed. McIlroy argues that the Monumentary takes as its central question, 'how do the suddenly bereaved grieve and move on from that grief'.[48] *Five Minutes* approaches that issue by presenting a past that must be contained in the present, not revised. Mrs Griffin's hypothetical question 'Why didn't you do something?' becomes the link between Joe and 1975 that he must sever in 2008. In this manner the film shifts its focus from *what* happened in the past onto *how* that past can be negotiated in the present.

Traces of the 1970s linger in 2008 through the repetition of location, action, and cinematography. As Alastair sits in his flat alone eating dinner, the camera repeats its earlier movement in the Little home as it pans past the door to the room and along the wall. This repetition of movement directly connects his isolated state in the present to earlier events in the film. Similarly, as Joe stares at himself in the mirror of the hotel bathroom, the film echoes the introduction of a young Alastair as he considered his reflection. The most pronounced link between the past and the present is aural. Joe's lack of psychological and emotional control is emphasised by the sound of his mother's rattling teacup that spills into the present and that sits in stark contrast to the silence of the image from the past in which he reaches out to touch her hand. If the Troubles is a history where the legacy of trauma is located in image, then *Five Minutes* attempts to negotiate that legacy by mastering image via

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[48] McIlroy, 'Memory work', p. 266.

word throughout the film. Alastair's greater control over the past is signified by his ability to narrate it in the present, whether by his voice-over that ties together the disparate images at the start of the film, or his polished interview style. This contrasts markedly with Joe's nervous chatter in the car and vocalisation of internal thoughts as his voice-over involuntarily spills over from narrating fragmented flashbacks into his contemporary diegesis. Alastair, in comparison, is composed and retains control of when he speaks. His voice-overs always occur in the context of purposefully addressing someone rather than as a symptom of a psychology not under control, whether that be the interview with the TV crew or his later address to an unseen counsellor.

The film's structure and intensive focus on Alastair and Joe utilises the language of individual subjective memory to present a unified vision of the past. Despite foregrounding the subjective device of the flashback, *Five Minutes* notably lacks the 'ambiguity and polysemy' that Carlsten argues are critical to Commemorative cinema.[49] Neither of the subjectivities displayed in the film contradict one another. Instead, Alastair and Joe are aligned, and each man's story is inextricably linked with the other to form a unified whole. The opening scene moves seamlessly between the two narrative strands, a fact emphasised by the fluid movement of the camera from Alastair to Joe as it turns to follow him into the house. This link is repeated as the adult characters are introduced through cuts between their respective taxi rides to the filming location, their cars linked spatially by the horn of a speeding car on the motorway. Ironically it is only Alastair who has any real understanding of Joe's emotional and mental state, and despite Alastair's control over the course of the film, and despite his attempts to narrativize the past in the

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[49] Carlsten, 'Mourning and solidarity', p. 240.

present, it is only Joe who is able to give Alastair's story a conclusion at the film's end.

It is thus not the past of the 1970s that must be contested in *Five Minutes* but rather the present and future of 2008 as the contemporary setting of the film moves into, in Jamie Hannigan's words, 'the 'What if?' category'.[50] *Five Minutes*' hypothetical nature is reinforced by its self-reflexivity, particularly in its use of the television production within the diegesis of the film, and the casting of established stars (Neeson and Nesbitt) whose performances become the focus of the film. Thus the role of visual media in presenting traumatic history, and the limitations of its attempts to do so, is overtly explored. The artifice of the television crew's attempts to shape Alastair and Joe's meeting into an 'acceptable' story is stressed throughout, whether in the 'neutral' placelessness of the country house location, or the repeated attempt of the make-up artist to 'touch up' Joe. Richard Dormer's TV Producer Michael might repeatedly tell Joe 'I just want you to be you', but it is clear that what Joe is does not suit the purposes of the crew, a fact made explicit when Joe exclaims 'I've got all the wrong feelings'.

Brian McIlroy describes 'speech therapy' as a key convention of the 'Monumentary', whereby 'individuals voice long repressed feelings' while 'the camera's quiet and extended attention [is given] to the grieving and pained faces of the bereaved'.[51] *Five Minutes* both utilises and undermines this convention. The camera frequently lingers on the faces of Joe and Alastair and mimics the attentive

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[50] Jamie Hannigan, 'Five Minutes of Heaven', *Film Ireland*, 129 (July-August 2009), p. 44.
[51] Brian McIlroy, 'Memory work: Omagh and the Northern Irish monumentary' in McIlroy, Brian (ed.), *Genre and Cinema: Ireland and Transnationalism* (Oxon: Routledge, 2007), p. 267.

stare of Alastair's counsellor or the members of Joe's self-help group to stress the therapeutic nature of their speech. These extended takes also encourage an appreciation of performance, as does the significant casting of both Neeson and Nesbitt. The faces of the stars are foregrounded by the camera, a foregrounding replicated in the DVD cover and posters for the film which show half of each man's face against a black background. As Wollaston notes the casting of Protestant Nesbitt as the Catholic Joe and the Catholic Neeson as Alastair Little sees the actors having 'swapped sides' which, he argues, is 'in keeping with the spirit of the film' with its focus on 'reconciliation, redemption, [and] reunion'.[52] The fame of both actors and their role in representing Northern Ireland in the film industry more broadly, particularly Nesbitt's role in *Bloody Sunday* (Paul Greengrass, UK/Ireland, 2002), creates a sense that not only can the visual text within the diegesis offer the arena in which past traumas can be addressed (if not solved) in the present, but so too can the film itself.

However, the film also complicates the monologues as their performative nature is acknowledged. The opening monologue given by Alastair, initially played over archival footage of violence, is retrospectively attached to the artificial environs of television production, as Alastair repeats the speech surrounded by screens and recording equipment. As Alastair stops and starts at the request of Michael, *Five Minutes* not only exposes the constructed nature of the programme within the diegesis, but questions the constructed nature of its own project to narrativize the past. The opening monologue of the film itself is retrospectively complicated by Alastair's assured delivery and ability to stop and start at will. It becomes unclear if the audience is watching a performance by Neeson, or a performance by Alastair.

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[52] Wollaston, 'The Weekend's TV'.

Furthermore, despite foregrounding the importance of dialogue and the potential for re-narrating the past in order to contain it in the present, *Five Minutes* also ultimately affirms the limitations of speech. Resolution comes through physical confrontation rather than verbal reconciliation at the film's end. It is with their bodies that the two men reverse Alastair's violation of the boundary of the Griffith home thirty-three years previously as they fall from Joe's window into the street.

Five Minutes overtly eschews broader perspectives, whether political, governmental, or paramilitary. The result is that the television crew is positioned as the only official voice in the film, and one that must be resisted by its central characters. Michael repeatedly uses the words 'we', but it is only through the personal histories of Joe and Alastair, set against the desire of the television crew to simplistically rework history for its own ends, that the past can be truly contained in the present. While this focus ignores the broader political landscape and elides the role of the British state, it also marks the past presented as being that of the civilians at the heart of the community. Subsequently, the 'answer' to dealing with that past is presented as lying within the community rather than as anything that can be imposed from outside. Lurgen thus sits at the core of the film, a fact made evident as Alastair on the streets of Belfast is dependent on Joe's call from his home-town to finally move on.

Five Minutes explores questions surrounding the Troubles as 'image' and the complications of narrativizing a traumatic history. Ultimately, however, the film echoes McLoone's assertion that cinema of the Peace Process affirms rather than

interrogates the filmic language it uses to present history on screen.[53] The film thus undermines the project of the television crew within its diegesis but draws a distinction between their attempts to manipulate history and its own project to engage with the past. *Five Minutes* achieves this with cinematography that repeatedly stresses its separation from the camera within the diegesis and affirms its own cinematic language as it does so. As Joe walks down the stairs to meet Alastair, cuts between shots of the cameraman going down the stairs in-front of him and close-ups of Joe's face both align and separate the cinematography of the film from that of the television crew. The sense of separation is privileged as the man filming stumbles, but the camera pulls back past him and through the crowd of producers, decisively marking its independence from them. Frequently the camera both encompasses the diegetic camera's field of vision in its frame before moving away to stress the broader perspective it offers. This sense of relative omniscience is furthered by a focus on details missed by the camera of an uninterested television crew, such as Joe's hands touching his trousers where the knife has been hidden. Thus, while the authority of the visual language of the programme-makers might be undermined, the cinematic language of the film itself is not.

Notably, despite critiquing the hackneyed narrative closure sought by the television makers, the film itself feels compelled to provide a clear and decisive ending. Alastair and Joe may have had to resort to a physical confrontation, but it is Joe's words 'we're finished' that finally offer release. This release is affirmed as the camera separates from Alastair in a high angle shot that echoes the earlier image of Alastair and Joe lying on the pavement, a symmetry that draws attention to the visual coda offered by the film. The focus on the ending in critical reviews suggests that

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[53] McLoone, *Irish Film*, p. 134.

filmic attempts to provide closure for the traumatic history of the Troubles are still contested. This uncertainty is tangible in *Five Minutes* itself as it both criticises the impulse to shape the past into a comfortable narrative in the present, but ultimately reproduces that tendency. The question underpinning critical discourse on Northern Ireland on screen - 'how should this history be imagined' - is thus of central importance in *Five Minutes of Heaven*, as the film explores and embodies the uncertainties and insecurities of trying to address it.

This insecurity is evident in the *Five Minutes*' tentative engagement with generalisations towards its end as the film tries to balance a specific political and historical situation with a more universal exploration of violence and trauma. Alastair himself draws connections between Northern Ireland and other political situations including civil conflict in Kosovo and terrorism in contemporary Britain. Alastair attempts to turn his personal and specific story into a universal discussion of violence through his work with other victims of violence in different contexts. Ultimately, however, he must return to the local rather than seek refuge in the universal. Joe is drawn back to the events of 1975 temporally through his repeated flashbacks whereas Alastair is drawn back spatially through his relationship with place, a fact made clear as he stares longingly up at an airplane on his arrival back in the streets of his childhood. Joe might complain about being trapped in the same factory for years, while Alastair is off 'living the life of Riley', but Alastair, despite his attempts to escape, remains spatially drawn back to Lurgen. His flat in Belfast is physically connected to the town by the railway directly outside his window, and once in Lurgen he experiences his only flashback, seeing an image of his younger self walking the streets as he sits in the café.

Five Minutes thus shows a desire to create a future that has echoes of what Pettitt identifies as the 'post-national', as the film draws links with other civil conflicts. The film nevertheless negotiates the dynamic between the local and the global in an anxious manner, demonstrating the difficulty of using the violence of the 1970s and Northern Ireland as a background against which to explore other issues. These difficulties that will be pertinent as I now consider the subsequent films to be discussed in this chapter: *Shadow Dancer* and *'71*.

Part Two: *Shadow Dancer*

Shadow Dancer is a 2012 British and Irish Co-production funded by the BBC, BFI, and Irish Film Board. It was directed by James Marsh, who also made the second part of the *Red Riding Trilogy,* and was written by journalist and novelist Tom Brady, who adapted his 1998 book. Both novel and film explore the dangerous world of MI5 informants, focusing on the relationship between IRA volunteer Collette McVeigh (played by Andrea Riseborough) and her MI5 handler David Ryan (named Mac in the film and played by Clive Owen). The film has divided critical opinion. It has been praised as a tonally rich work that evokes 1970s thrillers, and criticised for, in Darragh O'Donoghue's words, 'turn[ing] away from history to cinematic models'. [54] In this this second view, *Shadow Dance* is argued to evacuate the political and cultural specificity of the original work to become an universal and sleek thriller that has an 'ersatz feel'.[55]

The critical response to *Shadow Dancer* raises interesting questions about what is potentially a changing characterisation of the 'Troubles' onscreen. These changes could arguably only begin to unfold as distance grows not just from the violence on the streets of 1970s Northern Ireland, but from the Peace Process of the 1990s as well. In the DVD commentary, both director and writer express a desire to universalise the subject matter in order to make it appeal to a contemporary audience.[56] There is a sense throughout *Shadow Dancer* that the film is trying to approach the 'Troubles' from a fresh perspective. *Shadow Dancer* thus seeks to

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[54] Darragh O'Donoghue, 'Shadow Dancer', *Cineaste* 33:3 (Summer 2013), p. 52.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Tom Brady and James Marsh, audio commentary on *Shadow Dancer* (2012) (DVD, Paramount Home Entertainment, 2013) ASIN: B009007ZSQ.

overtly distance itself from previous cinematic representations of the conflict, both in terms of the content of the film, and the aesthetic and tonal approach.

Furthermore, as O'Donoghue notes, *Shadow Dancer* positions itself within the cinematic and literary history of the Spy Thriller, the most obvious comparison being le Carré's *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*. This alignment raises further questions when considering the representation of the 1970s onscreen. *Shadow Dancer* echoes several of the questions raised by *Tinker Tailor* about the changing landscape and identity of the British nation state but in a context that has a complex colonial and post-colonial legacy, both onscreen and off. This legacy is explored as the relationship between an agent of the British Government and a Northern Irish citizen forms the heart of the film. Notably, the questions posed by *Shadow Dancer*, while similar to those of *Tinker Tailor*, are played out over a different timeline in *Shadow Dancer*'s Northern Irish context. Thus, if *Tinker Tailor* explores the legacy of Imperial Britain in the paranoia and anxiety of the 1970s landscape, then *Shadow Dancer* takes as its focus a 1990s landscape shaped by the legacy of the 1970s. Despite spending less than five minutes in the earlier decade, it is the legacy of the seventies that shapes the film. The events of the opening scene not only form the ground on which the McVeigh family of 1993 has been built, but, in the end, prove impossible for Collette to leave behind.

Described by Brady as 'the critical scene in the film', *Shadow Dancer*'s 1970s opening plays a crucial role in enabling the audience to 'understand why [Collette] does what she does'.[57] The opening shows the shocking murder of

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[57]Brady, audio commentary on *Shadow Dancer*.

Collette's brother who is shot and killed upon leaving the house to buy cigarettes for their father at her behest. In a film that privileges atmosphere over exposition, the opening establishes the world of the 1970s that will cast its shadow on the action, landscape, and tone of the rest of the film. The house itself, the crucial locale, is initially a tactile and gentle environment. It is saturated by sepia tones and the gentle sounds of ordinary domestic life rather than being the politicised and paranoid space that it will eventually become. The home is portrayed as the site of memory; the camera moves through it, fragmenting its space and occupants, and presenting a collage of small, but rich, details, such as Collette's father's hands knotting his tie, or her brother checking coins. There are echoes of *Five Minutes* as the violence of the street, glimpsed through the curtains as Collette sits by the window, spills into the home. Her brother, caught in the crossfire of an unseen altercation between the British Army and the IRA, is brought inside and laid on the table, the family gathered around him. While this moment is crucial for Collette's entire family, a fact emphasised in the shot of them all silhouetted against the window, it is intimately tied to Collette herself and her personal guilt. The scene opens on her and closes on her stricken face as she is shut out of the room by her wordless father. The sheer brevity of the scene along with its rich atmosphere is crucial to its impact. Its central importance is explicitly marked by the manner in which it bookends the film with the only other significant act of violence: the murder of Mac. *Shadow Dancer* closes on a parallel close-up of Collette's face, tying its brutal conclusion directly to its opening five minutes, and creating a sense that whatever the characters might do in the 1990s, the shocking refusal of a reconciliation was the only possible result.

This irreparable finality sees *Shadow Dancer* present the relationship between politicised violence and the domestic fundamentally differently to *Five

Minutes of Heaven. *Five Minutes* presents violence as an external force that breaches the home in 1975, and, while both Joe and Alastair struggle with its consequences in 2008, conflict retains an alien presence in the domestic environs. In *Shadow Dancer*, political conflict and violence not only enters the space of the home, it saturates it and fundamentally changes the entire family and the space in which they live. Upon Collette's return from London, the McVeighs gather in the kitchen while the television plays in the background, but the image is markedly different to Moran's portrayal of a united viewing family, or the images of Joe's relatives gathered in front of the television screen. While the family are gathered in one frame, the effect is to fragment rather than unite them, a visual trope that is repeated throughout the film. Collette, her son, and her brother Connor (Domhnall Gleeson) sit at the table while the mother (Bríd Brennan) walks away to the foreground of the shot. Her other brother Gerry (Aidan Gillen) is separated to the right of the frame with his back to the family as he intently stares at the screen. Moreover, the television itself does not hold a benign place in the home and instead actively contributes to events. The television broadcasts a news report on the Downing Street Declaration which triggers a response from Gerry that is of interest to MI5, and that prompts them to recruit Collette to spy on her family.

This scene also demonstrates how the space of the state and home overlap with one another, a fact made explicit during Mac's interrogation of Collette when he says 'I know it bugs the hell out of you that your Mum won't get the washing machine fixed'. This comment is echoed later when Collette chides her Mother about the machine, overshadowing a moment of domestic intimacy. After Gerry switches off the television and joins the family at the table, there is a cut to another shot of the family with Collette and Gerry in the foreground watching Connor and his nephew

play in the garden. Again, the effect is to fragment the McVeighs despite uniting them in one frame. The image speaks of concealment, whether in the frosted glass at the sides of the frame through which the garden is barely visible, or the manner in which Collette and Gerry, backs to camera, are in focus, while Connor and his nephew, faces visible, remain blurred. If *Tinker Tailor* depicts a conflict played out in the spaces of power then *Shadow Dancer* depicts a conflict that spreads from the offices of government to the civilian street, but whose primary zone is the kitchen, living room, and bedroom of the family home.

The blurring of the political and familial extends to the dynamic of the IRA itself. The brothers strategize in the house, and Internal Security Officer Kevin Mulville (David Wilmot) uneasily blends a hostile and militaristic manner towards Collette with familial intimacy; interrogating her while plastic sheeting is laid out in the next room by her potential executor, and then buying her son a birthday gift when next encountering her. The interplay of these roles is made explicit in Kevin's remark to Collette that 'a volunteer is never off duty' and her response, 'neither is a Mammy'. It's also an interplay that extends beyond the IRA to the British intelligence services as Mac visits his boss Kate Fletcher (Gillian Anderson) in her home, where the wooden panelling in her kitchen visually echoes the *mise-en-scène* of the McVeigh house.

There is, however, an ease with which Fletcher is able to send her son out of the kitchen and away from the discussion which is out of reach for Collette, whose own family are the stakes on which political conflict plays out. The wordless look of understanding Fletcher gives her husband, who remains out of focus in the back of shot, and the baking equipment laid out in the kitchen, give Fletcher's home-life a untouchable security and stability that the McVeigh household cannot share. Her

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move to the sink to throw away the whiskey echoes the position Collette's mother holds for most of the film. However, Fletcher's rather cool dismissal of the financial value of Collette's life drastically reinforces the division between the home where Fletcher takes that decision, and the home where its consequences will be played out.

A notable effect of the politicisation of the domestic sphere, and one that starkly contrasts with *Five Minutes*, is the manner in which *Shadow Dancer* subverts the convention of eliding female experience or positioning female characters as either the rewards or stakes of a male conflict.[58] In *Five Minutes* the female characters become both the living embodiment of a home that has been violated, with Joe's relationship with his mother being destroyed by the death of his brother, and the promise of a restored home through the figures of Joe's wife and daughters. In *Shadow Dancer* both Collette and, importantly, her mother, are active participants. While the film's exploration of femininity is less straightforward than this initial reading allows, it is for the moment worth noting that *Shadow Dancer* does not confine the feminine to the domestic nor the domestic to the apolitical. The casting of Brid Brennan as Ma is of particular significance due to her previous roles in *Maeve* and *Ann Devlin*, films that self-consciously explore the elided role of women within Northern Irish history. The scene in which the family move to the garden after eating closes on a shot of Ma, standing by the sink and trapped in the frame, an image that recurs throughout. While it initially speaks of the helplessness of a mother unable to protect her children, it changes meaning at the end of the film. Ma is revealed as the second informant, and the image of a mother standing by the

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58 Hill, *Cinema and Northern Ireland*, p. 237.

sink is politicised as it is from her position within the family home that she gathers information and actively participates in the conflict.

Five Minutes continues to wrestle with the questions of recovery and reconciliation that are identified in critical discourses on 'Commemorative Cinema' and the 'Monumentary'. Hirschbiegel's film explores how the past on screen can be used as a site to work through trauma. Its engagement with the conflict's legacy, both cinematic and historical, is thus focused around the question of how contemporary society can come to terms with this legacy in the cultural imagination. By contrast, *Shadow Dancer* explicitly distances itself from these issues, presenting the Troubles, and the subsequent Peace Process itself, as vanished worlds.

The transitional nature of the 1990s, and the potency of the legacy of the 1970s is central to *Shadow Dancer*. Both merge with one another so that the film creates a landscape of the Peace Process that itself, like the world of Gene's Manchester or Smiley's Circus, is now gone. O'Donoghue notes how *Shadow Dancer* 'has a Seventies feel to its art direction', which creates the sense that 'the Troubles had caused time to stand still in Northern Ireland'.[59] The muted browns and beiges of the McVeigh home, unchanged in the nineties, give the latter decade a sepia-infused atmosphere that visually and tonally aligns it with the 1970s. As Mac interrogates Collette in a hotel, he might use the technology of the nineties to do so, but the *mise-en-scène* itself is peculiarly liminal, containing the televisions and VCRs of millennial Britain, but a colour palette and furniture that belong as easily in the previous two decades. Traces of the 1970s saturate the *mise-en-scène*, whether

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[59] O'Donoghue, 'Shadow Dancer', p. 52.

the worn-out graffiti on the wall of the garden, or the abandoned rooms of the tower block still used for interrogation and torture. The now-dated paper archives and red phone boxes of the 1990s mark it as a world that is, like the 1970s, now vanished.

Throughout, the film displays a certain fatigue towards the conflict, with Marsh openly expressing reservations about returning to a situation that, he argues, 'we're glad to have got beyond'.[60] This is a film in which the intransigence of Collette's brothers is beginning to sit at odds with a world grown weary of conflict. As members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary arrest Collette, the film hints at a social context that fosters division and has a devastating effect on Collette's child, but which is marked by a routinised weariness. Ma tells the officer 'We've had enough' and that her daughter 'is a Ma', and he responds 'we've all had enough […] I'm a Fa'. This fatigue is also evident in *Shadow Dancer*'s attitude towards the troubles as 'image'. If *Tinker Tailor* dismisses the ordinary pop culture seventies of previous representations, then *Shadow Dancer* seeks to distance itself from the conventions and iconography of the 'Troubles' film.

The opening scene stresses the violation of the home, but it also demonstrates a refusal to follow Collette's brother outside into the action of the riot and the milieu of the 'Troubles' film. This is reflected again at Brendan O'Shea's funeral, the scene that most overtly engages with conventions of the 'Troubles film'. Tension between the RUC and members of the Catholic community escalate as members of the IRA are prevented from giving O'Shea a military salute. The scene rapidly maps conflict within the community: between the RUC and the funeral-goers, and between

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[60] Marsh, audio commentary on *Shadow Dancer*.

members of Sinn Fein and the IRA. The sight of rioting crowds and military vehicles amidst terraced housing evokes the images of chaos and disorder that have saturated representations of Northern Ireland. However, the scene also self-consciously engages with the question of image, a fact made explicit in the presence of the news media, on hand to capture the ensuing violence, and Gerry's strong-arming of Liam Hughes (Michael McElhatton), the representative of Sinn Fein, to carry the coffin in front of the cameras. Marsh is careful to distinguish the focus of his film from either that of the media within the diegesis of the scene, or previous cinematic representation. Initially Marsh employs a handheld camera, circling Gerry and Connor as they begin to make their move, visually echoing previous representations of violence on the streets of Belfast. As the scene progresses, however, the camera separates itself, staying back with Ma as she leans against the wall, in the directors' words 'totally disenchanted' with the demonstration in front of her.[61] This disenchantment is shared by the film itself as the camera refuses to follow the escalating violence of the crowd as they move down the street, and instead remains with the coffin lying abandoned in the front of the frame.

Significantly, the riot itself is of no narrative importance, with the relevant action happening in Kevin's departure from the scene to go and search the McVeigh house. This sense of narrative misdirection finds expression across the film as a whole. *Shadow Dancer* builds to the concluding revelation of Ma as the second informant, but the film also sees the McVeigh family trapped in a struggle marked as increasingly irrelevant. The representation of the two brothers echoes what McLoone cites as the 'myth of Frankenstein' whereby leaders within the IRA struggle to keep

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[61] Ibid.

control of a younger more violent element.[62] In *Shadow Dancer*, however, there is a sense that that myth has reached its conclusion with the more hardline Gerry steadily becoming a man out of time whilst fighting a battle that history dictates he will lose, and Mac himself finding out his own operation is merely misdirection.

This inertia and claustrophobia is compounded by an atmosphere that echoes the 'worn-out fabric' of *Tinker Taylor Soldier Spy*.[63] *Shadow Dancer*, however, combines this atmosphere with a striking tone and aesthetic that distinguishes its project to reimagine the Troubles on screen. Marsh himself has spoken of his desire to distance himself from a look associated with 'Troubles films' in which they would be, in his words, 'obliged to do lots of handheld camerawork'.[64] He thus states that his pursuit of a 'sleek' aesthetic was in part designed to reimagine the conflict visually.

Shadow Dancer is a sparse and controlled film, with a muted colour palate and minimal dialogue which sees characters speak very little when what is said is at a premium. Small pieces of information are pursued by individual characters rather than attempts to map or define the landscape. Even the government itself is trying to assess Gerry's general reaction to political developments rather than uncover any specific plot. This disinterest in mapping the landscape or wider narrative is reinforced visually through fragmented images of confinement that see Collette and other characters trapped in claustrophobic environs that are broken down to

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[62] McLoone, *Irish Film*, 60.

[63] Tim Robey, 'Berlin Film Festival: Shadow Dancer, Marley – Review', *The Telegraph* (14th February, 2012) < http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/film/filmreviews/9080199/Berlin-Film-Festival-Shadow-Dancer-Marley-review.html>, accessed 18th May, 2015.

[64] Marsh, audio commentary on *Shadow Dancer*.

subjective moments of tonal affect. As Collette meets Mac by the coast to discuss their plan, the camera lingers on close ups of rain on the car window, taking the shot out of any broader narrative flow and privileging the image on its own.

If in *Five Minutes* it is the future that is opened up as a contestable space, then in *Shadow Dancer* that future is shut down. Changes in the political landscape are already in motion and the film focuses on a shrinking world that is unable to leave the past behind. *Red Riding* utilises the structure of the thriller to see its multiple protagonists combine to uncover a wider picture that extends across society and through time. Conversely, *Shadow Dancer*'s focus is not on mapping or uncovering the power relations that shape its world, but rather on the constricting circles of its central characters.

Shadow Dancer's engagement with the spy thriller and its evocation of texts like Le Carre's *Tinker Tailor* places the relationship between the British state and Northern Ireland at the heart of the film. The film uses its focus on that relationship to both subvert the tendency of British Cinema to ignore the role of the British state in the conflict, whilst also using the conflict itself to engage with how the British Government is represented in the generic landscape of the Spy Thriller. *Tinker Tailor* may dismiss anything outside of the immediate radius of Westminster, but the relationship between the 'centre' of London and the 'periphery' of Belfast is of central importance in *Shadow Dancer*.

The British presence in Northern Ireland is presented as an external one, with Fletcher's office situated in Belfast like 'a colonial outpost'.[65] The reach of the state

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[65] Ibid.

extends from government offices, through public spaces, and into the private homes of ordinary citizens, while the state's centre exists as a rather nebulous and omniscient presence articulated in Fletcher and Mac's repeated reference to 'London'. Nevertheless, *Shadow Dancer*'s recognition of the unequal power dynamic between London and Belfast does not result in a comfortable separation of place. From the film's outset, it is careful to establish the stakes of the conflict as exceeding violence on the streets of Northern Ireland. The opening scene in the McVeigh household is followed by a cut to the adult Collette in the heart of London as she takes the tube with the intention of leaving a bomb on the underground. London in 1994 is thus immediately linked to Belfast in the 1970s.

Furthermore, the dynamic between Mac and Collette is complex and shifts over the course of the film. Mac is shown arriving in Northern Ireland via military plane which marks the external nature of his presence and positions him with the power of the state behind him. However, as the film progresses, Mac's representation forms the nexus of a series of anxieties surrounding both the British presence in Northern Ireland, and the figure of the British Agent in contemporary texts.

If Smiley is, in David Seed's words 'defined against' James Bond,[66] then one could argue that Clive Owen's Mac can be defined against Gary Oldman's George Smiley. *Tinker Tailor* offsets anxieties about the international standing of the British nation state by the affirmation of characters who stand within a rich national filmic and literary history. *Shadow Dancer,* on the other hand, subverts such an approach.

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[66] David Seed, 'Spy Fiction' in Martin Priestman (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 126.

As Eric Kohn has observed, the casting of Owen, an actor often touted to play James Bond, is significant,[67] and the film's impatience with the generic conventions of the thriller and its masculine milieu is echoed in its impatience with the figure of the British agent. Mac is introduced with the observational powers of the nation state behind him, having Collette followed by agents through the underground, and observing her on monitors after her arrest. However, over the course of the film, Mac becomes defined by his inability to truly see anything. This inability culminates in his failure to read and understand Collette and, ultimately, his death.

It is instead Collette who is filmed with the inscrutability of Smiley. Despite the cinematography lingering on her face, and despite her stripped-back appearance with minimal makeup, the film stresses the inability of the characters around her, and ultimately of the camera, to 'read' her. A key part of this is Marsh's inversion of the cinematic language of power and perspective. The opening interrogation of Collette sees Mac and the camera dominate her physically, standing over her and looking down on her. However, *Shadow Dancer* also develops a visual motif of what Marsh terms the film's 'power shot';[68] a close-up from a slightly high angle which expresses a character's dominance in the scene through their ability to withhold their face from the camera, despite the camera being physically above them. In Mac and Collette's initial interaction, Mac's power to speak is juxtaposed with Collette's terrified silence. Over the course of the film, however, this dynamic is inverted. Mac's words are proven to be ineffective and Collette, whilst constantly trapped

[67] Eric Kohn, 'This Year's James Bond Is James Marsh's 'Shadow Dancer'', *Indie Wire* (30 May, 2013) < http://www.indiewire.com/article/this-years-james-bond-is-james-marshs-shadow-dancer> , accessed 18th May 2015.
[68] Marsh, audio commentary on *Shadow Dancer*.

within the *mise-en-scène*, is afforded a measure of power and control through her silence and her ability to withhold herself from the camera.

Collette's inscrutability extends to the film's refusal to visually align the audience with her. Again, there is a series of inversions of cinematic language that echoes the visual trope of encompassing characters within the same frame but visually fragmenting them. Scenes are frequently opened with shots that initially appear to be subjective representations of Collette's occupation of a specific space, such as rain beating on the window of a car in which she sits, or the landscape rushing past a train on which she travels. However, when cutting to broader perspectives of the scenes that situate Collette spatially, these 'point-of-view' shots are noticeably at a skewed angle compared to her perspective. The 'subjective' shots are thus retrospectively transformed into representations of misalignment, rather than synchronicity, with her world-view. Similarly, Marsh uses shot-reverse-shots to reinforce divisions between conversing characters rather than unite them, refusing to present individuals from the perspective of the other person to whom they are speaking. Cinematic narration is thus used in *Shadow Dancer* to create a world in which few people are able to communicate and connect. The zenith of this is the central pairing of Collette and Mac who are fundamentally unable to understand one another.

Throughout the film Collette and Mac are simultaneously presented as a pair and separated from one another. As they walk to the car after the initial interrogation the shot emphasises their differences rather than their new-found alliance. Mac glances at Collette while she stares straight ahead, her blue clothing isolating her in the blacks and greys of the *mise-en-scène* that Mac himself blends into. This is exacerbated by the use of the liminal space of the coast where they meet. This

location that might be romantic in another film, but here it comes to embody their inability to relate on that level either, as Collette kisses Mac in desperation and he rejects her.

Justin Chang attaches Collette's inscrutability to her femininity, arguing that the 'the film is also subtly perceptive about how easily a woman can be trusted, and therefore underestimated, in an aggressively male-dominated world.'[69] Collette is able to manipulate the men around her; getting her brother to fetch sweets for her as a child; subtly flirting with Kevin as he interrogates her; and hiding her true intentions from Mac. Darragh O'Donoghue is critical of this representation arguing that it privileges Collette's sexuality and femininity rather than presenting her as a 'woman with thought-out political ideals.'[70] As O'Donoghue argues, 'her red coat in grey surroundings marks her as a scarlet woman, overly sexual in a sexless world' and, 'like the classic Hollywood femme fatale, when Collette *does* make a decision, it results in the death of the male closest to her'.[71]

I would argue, however, that a key manner in which *Shadow Dancer* creates unease and anxiety surrounding the character of Collette is not through presenting her without 'thought-out political ideals', but by refusing to reveal what those ideals are. Collette's ideological investment in the conflict is obfuscated throughout the film as she disarms the bomb, goes to the funeral of the man her brothers killed, and expresses misgivings to her mother. Much of the shock surrounding her decision to kill Mac stems from the revelation that she herself was unwilling to reconcile. The

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[69] Justin Chang, 'Shadow Dancer', *Variety*, 425:12 (6 Feb 2012) p. 49.
[70] O'Donaghue, 'Shadow Dancer', pp. 50-52.
[71] Ibid.

extent to which personal guilt, familial loyalty, or ideological commitment played a part in that decision is left unclear. This lack of clarity is emphasised in the extended high-angle close-up of Collette's face with which the film closes. Her expression in the shot is far from neutral and she is not denied cognitive or emotional interiority. However, just what her thought process is, or what she is feeling, remains opaque, a fact emphasised by the manner in which her face is partially obscured by the car window and the reflection of the passing landscape in the glass.

The anxieties identifiable in *Shadow Dancer* are not dissimilar to the anxieties expressed by *Tinker Tailor* through the character of Karla, as the ideological security he possessed and represented became intermingled with the unknowable figure of Ann. Both films approach their subject matter with a sleek visual style and controlled cinematography that creates a rather cool tone and unknowable central character. Ultimately, however, *Tinker Tailor* shuts itself off from contemporary Britain. Alfredson's film leaves its autumnal world spinning in a circular stasis presided over by the unknowable figure of Smiley, whose careful presentation articulates a desire to cut off and protect a stable national ideal. *Shadow Dancer* is similarly set in a world of a conflict that is constructed as having run its course. However, *Shadow Dancer*'s brutal conclusion and refusal to offer resolution or understanding projects forward anxieties about the inability to map or comprehend contemporary conflict. The shockingly unyielding ending is in stark contrast with the self-consciously cautious approach of *Five Minutes* that implied the need for film to offer a form of resolution to a conflict that was still struggling to be managed and narritivized in the present. This raises the question of shifting representations of the 1970s, where the decade's position as a site of trauma and change is explored in different ways to different effect. In *Five Minutes* the historical

specificity of 1975 Lurgen operated as primary site of trauma whereby the seventies and its violent legacy in image must be contained and suitably narrativized in the present. *Shadow Dancer* demonstrates a shift in approaching the history of the conflict both through its sleek tone and through the manner in which it presents not only the violence of the 1970s, but also the landscape of the peace process during the 1990s, as vanished worlds. Instead, both decades are arguably used to articulate the concerns of the present. The question of shifting representations of the 1970s and subsequent issues will be further explored as I now address my final case study in this chapter, *'71*.

Part Three: *'71*

    '71 is a 2014 British thriller written by Gregory Burke and directed by Yann Demange. It is set in Belfast in 1971 and follows the story of British soldier Gary Hook (Jack O'Connell) who must try and make his way back to his barracks after becoming separated from his unit during a riot.[72] Upon release, the film's combination of a historical milieu with 'real-world relevance' and 'high concept entertainment' received significant critical attention.[73] Kenji Fujishima in *Slant Magazine* describes *'71* as 'the latest test case for that never-ending question of whether it's possible to wring white-knuckle entertainment out of a painful real-life atrocity without veering into crass exploitation'.[74] Fujishima's review is emblematic of a critical reception that generally combined an appreciation of *'71*'s ability to absorb the viewer in the sites of the past with discomfort surrounding the appropriateness of that approach in relation to its historical setting.

    What seems to have drawn attention is not so much *'71*'s subject-matter, but the presentation of that past in an affectively absorbing and stylised manner. Critical response has framed the film as being more invested in referring to, and situating itself within, a cinematic landscape rather than an historical one. Thus, Adam Nayman in *Sight and Sound* focuses on the 'almost otherworldly cinematic quality' of the film,[75] whilst Mark Kermode in *The Observer* traces its cinematic forebears from *Resurrection Man* to the 'post-apocalypse cinema' of *Mad Max* (George Miller,

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[72] *'71* was produced by Crab Apple Films and Warp Films and premiered at the Berlin Film Festival in February 2014.

[73] Nev Pierce, ''71', *Empire Magazine*, (November 2014)

[74] Kenji Fujishima, ''71', *Slant Magazine*, (2014), <http://www.slantmagazine.com/film/review/seventy-one>, accessed 12 March 2015.

[75] Adam Nayman, 'Troubles and Strife', *Sight and Sound*, 24:11 (Nov 2014), p. 10.

Australia, 1979), *The Warriors* (Walter Hill, USA, 1979), and *The Road* (John Hillcoat, USA, 2009).[76] A recurring tendency in reviews is to split the film into two sections; the 'realism' of the opening section with its gritty presentation of a riot on the streets of Belfast, and the mythical quality of the rest of the film, as Gary journeys through the increasingly dreamlike spaces of the city. These reviews frame this division as a juxtaposition of the 'real' opening with the increasingly 'unreal' remainder. However, I would argue that one might as easily understand *'71* as blending two forms of representing the Troubles on screen. Thus, the visceral aesthetic of the opening third, reminiscent of *Bloody Sunday*, becomes blended with the mythic and aesthetically striking cityscapes of *Angel* or Carol Reed's *Odd Man Out*. Reed's film is echoed by *'71* not only visually through *'71*'s dreamlike cityscape, but narratively as both films follow a young man attempting to traverse a city caught in sectarian conflict.

'71 reflects the dominant mode of representing Northern Ireland on screen as a helpless Gary is plunged into a maelstrom of violence that he can neither understand nor control. Rather than unconsciously reproducing these conventions, *'71* overtly attaches them to the points of view articulated within its cinematic narration. In this manner the film is able to bring various representational perspectives into view and under scrutiny. One could argue that Northern Ireland of the 1970s and the violence of the Troubles forms the backdrop rather than the subject of the film as its focus becomes the point-of-view of the British Army. However, *'71*'s overt engagement with conventions of representing the Troubles on screen both allows for an examination of the perspective that has so often produced those

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[76] Kermode, Mark, ''71 Review – Jack O'Connell excels in muscular, moody, Troubles thriller', *The Observer*, (12th October 2014) <http://www.theguardian.com/film/2014/oct/12/71-review-muscular-moody-belfast-thriller>, accessed 11th July, 2015.

conventions, and raises interesting questions about the changing uses of the 1970s on screen.

Five Minutes of Heaven positions itself as telling the story of the civilians living at the heart of the conflict while *Shadow Dancer* oscillates between both Collette and Mac. *'71* overtly establishes its perspective as that of the outsider, attaching the viewer to the British Army through the character of Gary, and immediately positioning them as an external force. The cinematic gaze of the film is thus explicitly marked as 'external'. Furthermore, this narrational viewpoint is denied epistemic superiority as its incomprehension of events is stressed throughout, and it is denied stability as it becomes increasingly fragmented as the film progresses.

Northern Ireland's complex relationship to mainland Britain is established from the outset. The Barracks Officer's opening address to the troops states 'You are going to Belfast. I take it you all know where Belfast is? Northern Ireland. United Kingdom. Here. You are not leaving this country', a statement Gary later echoes whilst trying to comfort his anxious brother. However, the irony of this assertion becomes clear as Northern Ireland is immediately constructed as an alien environment to Gary and his squad. The sea between mainland UK and the island is foregrounded in both the film's opening and close by repeated shots of the crossing. The journey there is presented in a slightly disorienting fashion as a shot of the blank water of the trail left by the boat rather than the distance ahead. There is then a cut to Gary as he looks to the right of the *mise-en-scène*, which fails to comfortably account for the previous shot as a point-of-view shot, and obscures the spatial dimensions of the boat. The journey thus becomes primarily about leaving Britain

behind rather than establishing the destination, leaving Northern Ireland as an unknown other.

Representations of the Troubles have historically reinforced a sense of incomprehensible violence. *'71* reflexively engages with that trope by attaching that incomprehension to Gary and, through him, to the external perspective of the British Army. This is particularly evident in the riot sequence that dominates the first part of the film. Upon entering the city, Gary and the troops arrive in a landscape saturated with signs of recent violence. Visual signifiers of the Troubles fill the *mise-en-scène* as buses and cars burn, and smoking barricades block the streets. These signifiers are presented in a self-consciously limited fashion that is attached to the soldiers' newcomer status as the first burning car comes into view through the back of the van in which they sit. As mothers hurry children off streets and bang dustbin lids, the film rapidly cycles through familiar images associated with violence in Northern Ireland. However, this is not presented as incomprehensible violence but as violence that is incomprehensible to the poorly-briefed troops and Gary. The scene takes place in one street, a location whose geographical coherence is established with a series of longshots, before being broken down and fragmented as the tension escalates. The cinematography mirrors Gary's confusion. The film cuts between brief glimpses of various characters, snapshots of violence, and longer close-ups of Gary's face that make his struggle to understand what is happening the focus of the scene. The music utilised in the sequence refuses to offer any explanatory cues that direct the audience to certain moments or characters and mark them as significant, instead maintaining one note of growing dread as the tension rises.

Gary's own incomprehension and inexperience is shown to extend up the hierarchical chain of the army in the figure his earnest but woefully naïve Lieutenant,

Armitage (Sam Reid). Armitage awkwardly introduces himself as 'a new boy myself' to the smirks of his troops, and ignores the advice of his more experienced Sergeant (James McArdle) to suit the troops in riot gear, a decision that results in Gary getting separated from his unit. The inability of the troops to comprehend the situation is emphasised as the faltering soldiers are juxtaposed with the local residents and the speed with which they react. Violence is presented as having become routinised as children play on streets strewn with rubble while beatings take place out of focus in the back of shot. Gary's unit might be new to Belfast, but they walk straight into an established dynamic between the RUC, Army, and residents. The resident of the house being searched pleads 'For God's sake, will you never leave us alone?' to the RUC officer, and the soldiers are met with immediate and open hostility that they struggle to comprehend. Instead they can only react with confusion to the hatred aimed at them as representatives of the army in a place where the uniform they are wearing now signifies something quite different.

The Belfast of *'71* is not a city of incomprehensible violence, but a city defined by a complex, structured matrix of interlocking forces and interests. The topography of the film partially reflects McLoone's descriptions of the unreal cinematic Belfast of *Odd Man Out*. Gary flees through an increasingly nightmarish maze of buildings and streets. The mobile camera foregrounds the pleasure of movement over the specific environment through which Gary is passing as the hand-held cinematography affectively absorbs the viewer in the thrill of the chase by filming the run from Gary's point of view. But this unreal placelessness is juxtaposed with an antithetical stress on the importance of understanding both the cultural and spatial geography as Gary's attempt to traverse the city forms the central

plot of the film. The film's title – '71 – is itself imposed on top of what appears to be archival footage of Belfast, aligning time and space, and stressing the film's setting as a specific place at a specific moment.

This complex attitude to space extends to the film's ambiguous representation of sectarian space. '71 both reinforces a sectarian division of the city and undermines it. Before venturing into the city, Armitage and the other lieutenants sit a classroom while the Commanding Officer (Sam Hazeldine), with a map pinned to the board, delivers a lecture on the geography of the city,

> This is basic information but necessary. Roughly – very roughly – you can divide the city between the Protestant-Loyalist East, here in orange – friendly – and the Catholic-Nationalist West in green – hostile. Both communities have paramilitary factions itching to get at each other. You also need to be aware that in the Republican movement we've seen a split between the old official IRA elements and younger, more radical, street-fighting element – the Provisionals. [*Points at map*] This is the front-line boys. Catholics and Protestants living side by side – at each other's throats, divided by the Falls Road. You can use the Divis flats at the top of the Falls road as an orientation point, but do not enter the flats, they have become an IRA stronghold. Very dangerous.

This speech functions as a key scene of exposition. It sets up the film's narrative as Gary will go on to encounter the various factions mentioned and end up in the Divis flats. However, this rather blunt attempt of the army to take control of the city by mapping it, is also immediately undermined the moment the troops arrive in the city, instantly lose their way without street signs, and Armitage is unable to

find their location on the map. Earlier attempts to simplify the city's topography in a school classroom are rendered absurd as Belfast is revealed as a city in which nothing can be simply defined. Gary runs through rows of houses, joined by holes in walls and winding alleys. The disorientating fluidity of movement between the spaces is underscored by the mobility of the camera, and there is a focus on linking spaces as corridors, halls, doors, and streets are foregrounded throughout. Furthermore, it is the Divis flats that briefly function as a sanctuary, while the Protestant bar becomes a site of danger as it is bombed in a sequence of events caused by agents of the British Army.

The territorial nature of the conflict is stressed in a city of restricted space as road blocks line the streets. The ability to not only map, but move through space, is not neutral and, similar to *Red Riding*, it is intimately linked with power. The MRF (Military Reaction Force), led by Captain Browning (Sean Harris), are presented as the most powerful force in the conflict in part through their ability to move in and out of any space. They are introduced slipping in and out of buildings at the army complex and stroll into the Map briefing late with an ease of movement that is underscored by the camera's slow pan as they enter. It is notable that the briefing, a scene about the controlling and understanding of space, is filmed from their point of view once they enter the room, only reverting back to Armitage once they leave. Their unmarked car and plain clothes afford them an ease of movement denied to Gary and the rest of the army, and gives them the ability to access each of the groups in the conflict and play them off one another.

This blurring of space extends to the cultural geography of the conflict. *'71* draws links between the groups of young men that it follows rather than setting them in opposition with one another. *'71* is uninterested in explicating the specific

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political situation it represents but it does explore the more universal causes of why

young men choose to join military and paramilitary organisations. The film opens

with a black screen against which the sounds of a fight can be heard. Only once a

boxing match is shown are the noises revealed as sport not combat, blurring the

division between both forms of violence. This blurring is continued as the soldiers

train on an assault course, an exercise that will later be echoed in Gary's attempt to

traverse the city. Echoing *Five Minutes*, the joining of organisations and

participation in violence is bound up predominantly in questions of youthful

masculinity and a search for identity and belonging rather than political ideology.

The youth of the boys is emphasised throughout the film. A local woman (Denise

Gough) defends Garry and Thommo (Jack Lowden) telling their attackers 'these

boys are young enough to be your sons', and Gary's reaction to the unnamed

Loyalist child who helps him (Corey McKinley) draws parallels between the child

and his younger brother.

'*71* draws further connections between different groups and characters as the

division between the domestic and political is broken down over the course of the

film. Spaces bleed into one another making divisions between distinct types of space

untenable. Separation of the private and the public is unmaintainable as it is the

RUC's movement into the domestic space of the house that triggers the riot on the

street outside, and the corridor as an indeterminate linking space is privileged. The

visual motif of shots of a corridor filmed through an open doorway draws links

between the children's home, the Loyalist Pub, the houses of Sean (Barry Keoghan)

and Eamon (Richard Dormer), and eventually the Army barracks. Schools and

houses double for military spaces and the institutionalised space where Gary's

brother lives doubles for a home. This blurring of spatial identity also elides

distinctions between the civilian and the military, as well as the public and the private. In this manner the film's refusal to differentiate between the 'illegitimate' violence of the paramilitaries, and the 'legitimate' violence of the state, is compounded.

Importantly, the relationship between space also links Northern Ireland to mainland United Kingdom. Belfast is initially positioned on the periphery and shaped through an external perspective, its strife-torn streets contrasting sharply with the peaceful hill where Gary plays football with his brother. Elements of this dynamic echo Sandbrook's juxtaposition of the 'killing grounds' of Belfast with the 'quiet streets of middle England'. However, whereas Sandbrook links the spaces by the transgressive actions of the IRA, *'71* unifies them as institutional links between Belfast and mainland UK are identified. Thus, the domestic space that has been militarised in the Divis Flats is mirrored in the institutional space that is trying, and failing, to function as domestic space in the Derbyshire children's home. The film thus reflects the complexity McLoone identifies in the dynamic between the centre and periphery',[77] and accounts for the complexity of the United Kingdom's cultural and geographical topography.

Significantly, while *'71* aligns its perspective with that of the British Army, the film ultimately deconstructs that perspective and complicates the topography of the institution that holds it. The film thus demonstrates the potential identified by McLoone for visual media to 'challenge the primacy of the outsider's view' even as

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[77] Martin McLoone, 'National Cinema and Cultural identity: Ireland and Europe' in John Hill , Martin McLoone and Paul Hainsworth (eds.), *Border Crossing: Film in Ireland, Britain and Europe* (Antrim: W&G Bairds Ltds., 1994), p. 146-7.

it reflects it.[78] In his analysis of *The Boxer,* Hill argues that the British Army holds

an 'omniscient view' and 'privileged form of vision' that not only stresses their

dominance but 'gives credence to the notion that the British Army is in some way

'above' the conflict'.[79] Conversely, in *'71*, not only is that view presented as woefully

incomplete, it is fragmented as the British Army comes to embody the divisions that

shape British society more broadly. Noticeably the dysfunctional structure of the

class system sees Lieutenant Armitage elevated in rank above men who are more

experienced than him. The Sergeant's superior epistemic position to his senior

officer is highlighted when he responds with an innocuously phrased but loaded 'are

you sure, sir?' after Armitage eschews riot gear, and the soldiers glance at one

another in a wordless acknowledgement of the Lieutenant's naivety as Armitage

chooses to ignore the Sergeant's advice. The hierarchical order is deeply ingrained

but also malfunctional as soldiers struggle to hold rank in the streets, and their

commanding officers struggle to issue orders. It is also a structure that is utterly

unanswerable to the mistakes it makes, where officers pull rank when their decisions

are questioned, and the chain of command seeks primarily to protect the existing

power structure.

The deconstruction of the British perspective on Northern Ireland, and of

British society through it, is exacerbated in *'71* by the manner in which the film

complicates the cinematic language of point of view. In his review of *'71* for *Sight

and Sound*, Trevor Johnston describes the character of Gary as 'an everyman,

virtually to the point of anonymity'.[80] Gary is a character defined by his silence who

occupies a peculiarly passive role at the heart of the film. The film's narration both

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[78] Ibid. p. 152.

[79] Hill, *Cinema and Northern Ireland*, p. 205.

[80] Trevor Johnston, ''71', *Sight and Sound*, 24:11 (Nov 2014), pp. 66-67.

accounts for his point of view, but frequently invites reflection back onto Gary in a manner that exacerbates his opacity, rather than revealing his interiority. As Gary lies in bed at the barracks, the camera cuts from a point of view shot of the lights above him, back to a close-up of his face. This close-up, however, is framed at an angle that disconnects the two shots as much as it joins them, a trope that is repeated throughout the film. Rather than clearly explicating the thoughts of the central character, these moments draw attention to his cognitive processes, while stressing the fact that they remain impenetrable. Experiencing events through the eyes of Gary, a character who is, in Eamon's words, 'a piece of meat' to the army, allows the film to challenge the authority of that army by privileging his experience and revealing the callous disregard for him that the military demonstrates. Gary himself, however, provides a curiously opaque centre to the film. This opacity prevents his personal story from becoming a straightforward means by which the past is unified and contained as it is in *Five Minutes* through the resolution of the personal stories of Joe and Alastair.

Johnston has noted that the 'distinctive power balance within the British forces' also forms the focus of *Black Watch*, *'71* screenwriter Gregory Burke's 2006 play about an army regiment on tour in Iraq.[81] It is a power balance explicitly critiqued in *'71,* notably through ex-Army medic Eamon's stinging assessment of the British Army as 'posh cunts telling thick cunts to kill poor cunts'. Eamon's line also creates a sense of interchangeability to the circumstances that indicates how the conflict is used in the film more to reflect upon the manifestation of power, both

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[81] Ibid.

within military organisations and across British and Irish society more broadly, than to explore the historical specificity of the people or places represented.

This focus on power is reflected in *'71*'s attitude to identity itself. As in *Five Minutes*, signifiers of cultural identity in *'71* extend no further than the self-consciously attenuated markers of flags on streets, or orange and green sections on a map. Instead the film focuses on how power manifests itself at the expense of the soldiers on the ground, who have more in common with one another than with their superior officers. There is a slightly performative aspect to identity throughout *'71*. Gary, unable to say whether he is Catholic or Protestant, is identified by his boots and shirt and, as his understanding of the situation becomes more nuanced, he is able to shed his uniform over the course of the film. Similarly, while Belfast is carefully established as an unknown place to Gary, its *mise-en-scène* shares the same palate of muted browns and greens as the scenes set in England. Subsequently, the locations have a homogenised appearance that blurs distinctions between them.

The zenith of this exploration of power are the agents of the MRF who are able to move through the city uninhibited in unmarked cars and clothing, and able to access every faction involved. Both Browning's interactions with Boyle (David Wilmot) as a representative of the IRA, and his desire to replace Boyle with Quinn (Killian Scott), present all groups as being motivated by the same self-interest. As an intelligence service, the MRF also have the effect of separating the British state from the rest of the army, and presenting that state as operating with its own separate agenda. While the army on the ground are denied the power and control that the British forces have in *The Boxer*, the upper echelons of power in *'71*, and the state through them, are nevertheless presented as untouchable.

Conclusion

Ruth Barton has been critical of Anglo-centric tendencies in earlier British representations of Northern Ireland. These tendencies, she argues, result in texts that are ultimately more concerned 'with critiquing' issues shaping mainland Britain than with addressing 'British policies in Northern Ireland'.[82] These criticisms can arguably be applied to *'71* and the manner in which it utilises the Troubles as a background against which to explore the British Army. Trevor Johnston has been critical of the film's 'spotlighting' of the British Army 'while only sketching in the local roots of the turmoil'.[83] For Johnston, this spotlighting results in a 'partial approach' that utilises 'the Northern Irish setting as a handy provider of explosive conflict and readymade tension'.[84] What is particularly interesting about Johnston's criticism is his grouping of *'71* with other 'recent thrillers', including *Shadow Dancer*. These more recent representation of the conflict, he argues, lack the political engagement of the generation of filmmakers who were working 'on the small screen while fires were still raging in Northern Ireland'.[85] I raise his argument not to validate or criticise *'71*'s potential for reflective historiography, but to highlight a shift in the manner in which the Troubles, and the 1970s that they shape, are constructed and utilised in contemporary films like *Shadow Dancer* or *'71* in comparison to the cinema of the Peace Process.

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[82] Ruth Barton, *Irish National Cinema* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 160.
[83] Johnston, '71', pp. 66-67.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid.

Five Minutes of Heaven struggled with the question of whether the specific and relatively recent history of the Troubles can now be used to address universal questions of managing traumatic pasts and contemporary conflicts. The film displays a self-conscious awareness of the mediated history of the conflict, exploring both the potential and limits of visual representation. Television is used to signify both the breach and restoration of the domestic environment. Its active role in the history revisited is foregrounded through the plethora of archival images of violence that have defined representations of Northern Ireland, and through the destructive attempts of the television crew to reductively shape the legacy of trauma in the present to fit a more palatable narrative. However, *Five Minutes'* meticulous self-awareness ultimately results in circular consternation whereby the film affirms its own cinematic language, and is hesitant to either address universal concerns through its specific history, or fail to provide a well-defined conclusion.

Shadow Dancer begins to address contemporary concerns as the film revisits the Troubles of the 1970s and the Peace Process of the 1990s. While engaging with the mediated legacy of the conflict, the film also self-consciously positions itself as offering a tonally different approach, with a sleek-aesthetic that recalls Alfredson's *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* more than previous representations of the Troubles. The film presents both the landscape of the 1970s, and the Peace Process itself, as vanished worlds. But while it replicates *Tinker Tailor's* autumnal circularity, its nihilistic ending transposes a diffuse sense of discomfort onto its historical landscape that articulates unease surrounding Britain's contemporaneous stability and standing.

 It could be argued that *'71* extends this possibility, using the 1970s and Northern Ireland to explore British troops entering civil conflict in a manner that is shaped as much by the failures of Afghanistan and Iraq as the relative success of the Peace

Process. Writing on representations of Irishness in post-9/11 American culture, Diana Negra argues that 'Irishness' was reworked in response to 'the traumatic perception of discredited/dysfunctional national identity' in order to offer new self-narratives in a rapidly altered global landscape.[86] Albeit very differently, *'71* could be argued to address self-narratives concerning Britain's global role in the twenty-first century, as recent history inflects the film's nihilism concerning military intervention. *'71* intermingles various forms of representing the Troubles on screen, Through overtly attaching these representational tropes to the external perspective of its cinematic narration, the film both distinguishes its own project to visualise the Troubles, and comments on the contemporary national context of its production.

Peter Bradshaw suggests that *'71*'s stress on the army's treatment of British citizens (evident in the Officer's line 'you are not leaving this country') is an anachronism, 'born of our more modern suspicion that the Paras were encouraged to behave as if they were suppressing an uprising in a far-flung part of the empire'.[87] This anxiety over the role of the army is exacerbated in light of subsequent events during the decade. The choice of the year 1971, as the year preceding Bloody Sunday, is therefore significant. Browning and the MRF display total dominance in the film. But their active escalation of tensions as they give bombs to the Loyalists, and replace Boyle with the more violent Quinn, are inflected by the knowledge that the historical situation would escalate further and last longer than anyone had anticipated. In many ways, 'the hopelessness' that mainland Britain once projected

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[86] Diane Negra, 'Irishness, Innocence and American Identity: Politics Before and After 11 September' in Ruth Barton & Harvey O'Brien (eds.), *Keeping It Real: Irish Film and Television* (London: Wallflower Press, 2001), p. 62.

[87] Bradshaw, Peter, ''71 review – nail-biting action thriller set during the Troubles', *The Guardian* (9th October, 2014) <http://www.theguardian.com/film/2014/oct/09/71-review-yann-demange-belfast-troubles>, accessed 11th July, 2015.

onto what a contemporaneous review of *Angel* described as 'the Irish situation' is, in *'71,* projected back onto Britain itself.[88]

This shift has interesting implications when considering how the 1970s is constructed on screen, and how the decade can be used to engage with broader questions concerning history and its retelling in image. Throughout all three films, the seventies is a decade of shatterpoints, where the historical landscape is marked by moments of irreversible trauma. This is stressed by the temporal structures of *Five Minutes* and *Shadow Dancer*, where the legacy of the opening acts in the 1970s defines events of the 1990s and 2000s. *'71* does not juxtapose the past with the present, but the film equally stresses the decade's place as a defining trauma on the nation's historical landscape.

It is not just a specific place that *'71* is set in, but a specific moment as well. This fact is stressed by the film's title – *'71* – which is imposed upon the archival pan of Belfast's cityscape in a manner that aligns both time and space. Writer Gregory Burke has stated that he chose to set the film in 1971 because it was a time when tensions had escalated, but the British Army had yet to fully established their presence in Belfast, and had yet to understand the full scale and length of the conflict into which they were entering. Chaos, rather than being an unreflective device with which to present Northern Ireland, thus becomes a focus of a film that is overtly uninterested in the causes of the conflict. *'71*, as with *Shadow Dancer* and *Five Minutes*, thus situates the 1970s on a timeline quite different to the texts discussed in previous chapters. The decade is presented as neither the beginning of modern

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[88] Hill, 'Images of Violence', p. 180.

Britain, nor the conclusion to the post-war settlement, but rather as the nadir of a traumatic and violent situation that is long-entrenched, and that will continue long after the decade concludes.

In this manner, the 1970s is positioned in this chapter's case studies in a way that allows the texts to offer a broader consideration of moments on a historical timeline where the inertia of preceding circumstances sweeps a society towards traumatic and devastating events. Again, the 1970s emerges as a decade crucial to understanding the nation's sense of self, both in terms of its domestic (in)cohesion and its place on the global stage. Just as, as Hill and others have argued, understanding the role Britain played in Northern Ireland is essential in understanding the conflict, so Britain's history with Northern Ireland, and the violence of the 1970s, is used by these films to try to understand Britain's role in the world today.

Chapter Four: Making Up The Self: Young consumers in the 1970s

Introduction

In January 2011, Meera Syal appeared on BBC Radio 4's *My Teenage Diary* (2009-present). The episode opens with the host, Rufus Hound, introducing the audience to the Britain of 1976 in which the teenage Syal wrote her journals: 'punk rock is born [with] the first chart single from The Damned, The Sex Pistols swear on TV, Britain and Iceland square up in the so-called Cod War, and Harold Wilson resigns as Labour Prime Minister'. Syal jokingly responds, 'Did all that happen? I never knew!'. When Hound chastises her for the absence of Cod Wars and the Labour leadership from her teenage diaries, she adopts a thick Black Country accent and the dramatic intonation of an adolescent: 'Nothing happened in Bloxwich. Nothing.' Throughout the rest of the episode, Syal and Hound reflect on her diaries with a mix of humour and pragmatism, where nostalgia for the past is undermined by an adult re-evaluation of the teenage-angst that shaped the journals. The Sex Pistols may be 'sticking pins in their bits and vomiting on stage' but, in the 'small world' of Syal's teenage years, 'punk' existed in the form of songs made up with her best friend demanding that their parents let them stay out until 10pm, and meeting boys at Judo shaped the landscape of her 1970s Britain as much as Harold Wilson or David Bowie.

Syal's 1996 novel *Anita & Me* is based on her childhood experiences growing up in the West Midlands during the 1970s. Both the novel, and its 2002 filmic adaptation (Metin Hüseyin, BBC, UK), engage with the issues and themes that shape discourses around the decade that Hound touched upon in his introduction. What is notable about both the book and film is that the texts construct the same sense of continuity with, and progression from, the past that shape the interview. At the end of 'My Teenage Diary', Syal stresses the universal nature of adolescent experience, and the similarities between her teenage years and those of her daughter in twenty-first century Britain. But while sympathetic to the difficulties of youthful experience, the perspective from which Syal assesses growing up in the 1970s - in interview and book - is clearly articulated as adult: critical and rational, and able to firmly demarcate the boundaries of a teenage world.

The case studies of this chapter are two texts that have biographical and autobiographical elements. They focus on issues of identity, consumption, and pop culture as they follow the lives of characters growing up away from the metropolitan and cultural centres of the nation. I look at the 2002 filmic adaptation of *Anita & Me,* and *Good Vibrations* (Lisa Barros D'Sa, Glenn Leyburn, UK & Ireland, 2012), a film based on the life of Belfast music entrepreneur Terri Hooley and his attempts to create a local music scene at the height of the Troubles. I will focus my analysis on questions of point of view and cinematic narration, both of which, I argue, assume greater significance in texts which are biographical or autobiographical in nature. I will engage with concerns surrounding media, consumption, and identity, and related discourses of 'retro' and hauntology in the work of Mark Fisher and Simon

Reynolds.[1] I will seek to demonstrate how *Anita & Me* and *Good Vibrations* address and manage these concerns in a different manner to texts previously discussed in this thesis. In this way, I will conclude the thesis by looking at two texts that shape a different dynamic between the past and present on screen.

Anita & Me is distinguished from previous case studies by the powerful sense of momentum that the film creates as childhood is reviewed from the perspective of adulthood. This momentum, I argue, extends beyond that of an individual surveying their childhood and becomes, through the film's narration, that of a nation that has settled into the changes that have shaped the past 30 years. Thus, the naiveties and uncertainties of the past decade are looked back on with critical affection from a position of stability and security. As Mark Sinker notes in his review of the film, *Anita & Me* is inflected throughout with the knowledge that 'Meena' will grow up to be 'Meera'.[2] Through the alignment of character, camera, and viewer, the film is thus able to create stability and momentum as it revisits the past. *Good Vibrations* shares similarities with *Anita & Me* in terms of how point of view is articulated in cinematic narration. Albeit differently, it also avoids the stasis or circularity identified by Fisher and Reynolds in the cultural output of the twenty-first century; a stasis and circularity that defined other representations of the 1970s considered in this thesis. However, *Good Vibrations* also offers a contrasting tonal variation in its recreation of the past. Examining *Good Vibrations*' unique tone and its relationship to point-of-view, will allow me to conclude the thesis with an understanding of how and why the 1970s is a significant decade to revisit in contemporary Britain.

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[1] Mark Fisher, *Ghosts of My Life: Writings on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures* (Winchester: Zero Books (2014), Simon Reynolds, *Retromania: Pop Culture's Addiction to Its Own Past* (New York: Faber and Faber, Inc., 2011).
[2] Mark Sinker, 'Anita and Me', *Sight and Sound*, 12:12 (December 2002), p. 39-40.

Chapter One outlined a binary drawn by scholarship on heritage cinema between the 'distanced' cinematic narration of heritage that takes pleasure in a stable separation of past and present, and the immersed subjectivity of 'alternative heritage' that demythologizes previous national narratives. This chapter will explicitly challenge that binary and show how cinematic narration can accommodate multiple perspectives and simultaneously articulate the subjective and collective. Critical discourse on the biopic in cinema has explored how the genre has been able to articulate the history and identity of a nation through a representative individual. My case studies both complicate that notion as they subjectively express the central characters' personal experiences, and also support it; through the characters themselves as conduits through which to express national identity, and through a cinematic narration that is used to shape a collective perspective from which the past can be reviewed. I will explore the potential and limits of these films to fulfil this promise to 'demythologise' national heritage by offering personal experience and memory as a counterpoint to public memory.[3] I will also consider the manner in which the texts re-mythologise the histories they depict in different ways and with different results.

In order to achieve this, the chapter will develop ideas introduced in Chapter One concerning the significance of 'the ordinary'. A key means by which biopics shape the histories that they represent is through negotiating a distinction between 'ordinary' and 'extraordinary' lives. The terms on which the biopic constructs the fame or notability of its subject is of significance in this regard. In writing on the

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[3] Andrew Higson, *Film England: Culturally English Filmmaking since the 1990s* (London: I.B. Tauris ltd., 2011), p. 244.

Hollywood biopic, George F. Custen tracks how the genre shifted its focus from the 'political leader' in the first half of the twentieth century, to the figure of 'the entertainer' in the second half.[4] Drawing on the work of Leo Lowenthal, Custen argues that this change reflects America's move to 'a culture of consumption rather than one of production'.[5] Custen discusses films from a different culture and context but his work is nevertheless useful as my case studies arguably extend this trajectory. *Anita & Me* and *Good Vibrations* position their central characters not just as entertainers who appeal to a society of consumers, but as consumers themselves. The character and identity of both Meena and Terri is discovered, constructed, and expressed through their consumption of pop culture, fashion, and products. Such patterns of consumption are frequently presented to the viewer for nostalgic recognition, establishing a collective identity built out of a shared memory of the commercial and cultural output of the decade. This is important as it allows the texts to explore one of the key themes in representations of the 1970s; that the decade was the moment when notions of identity and self-identity took on greater significance and complexity. Consumerism is frequently portrayed as playing a key role in the post-war transformation from a class-based collective society into a consumer-based individualistic one. The seventies is thus positioned as the moment when a person's self-identity began to be determined not solely by their class, gender, race, or job, but by the clothes they wore, the music they listened to, the shops they went to, and lifestyles that they led.

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[4] George F. Custen, Bio/Pics: How Hollywood Constructed Public History (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992), p. 84.
[5] Ibid., p. 85.

There are recurrent anxieties around an identity constructed by consumerism that are usefully embodied in discourses surrounding the transformation of football from an expression of collective identity into a consumerist leisure pursuit. Alexander Shea has used Ernesto Laclau's concept of 'the empty signifier' in relation to football-branding in the twenty-first century.[6] Laclau, Shea argues, defined 'the role of the 'empty signifier' in neoliberal capitalism' as one whereby 'brands would 'empty' themselves of their controversial signification, their political roots, and market themselves using bland catch-all terms with which anyone could associate'.[7] For Shea, the mega-clubs of the twenty-first century are similarly 'sanitizing their self-images'.[8] Shea's slightly romantic appraisal of an emaciated footballing culture in a globalised world is familiar, but it is interesting how the article criticises the way in which corporate football has 'de-territorialized' the clubs. Taking Qatar Airway's advert for FC Barcelona as his focus, Shea explores how the club - perhaps more than any other in Europe tied to a specific identity and place as a signifier of Catalonia - is de-localised from its stadium and city in the advert. It is instead transported to a fantasy island, reachable only by the airline that sponsors the club, and a 'hyper-modernist' airport that is at once everywhere and nowhere in its bland ubiquity.[9] Football, Shea argues, now takes place in a de-territorialized space, empty of historical or political significance, where a group of disparate individuals consume the sport devoid of collective purpose or identity.

But the article itself is contradictory and uncertain. Shea remains careful to affirm the value of the complexities of identity in the twenty-first century. He

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[6] Alexander Shea, 'Against Sanitised Football', in *The Blizzard* 17 (May, 2015).
[7] Ibid. 132
[8] Ibid., p. 130.
[9] Ibid.

uneasily negotiates a distinction between the 'de-sanitized' football he calls for and less comfortable versions of identity as expressed through sport; settling on a eulogy for the diminishing value of a club crest, and ignoring the more troubling signification of a national flag on a football shirt. Higson's work on heritage cinema is inflected by the same anxiety surrounding the de-territorialisation of history. He acknowledges the role heritage cinema played in 'the new enterprise culture' as it aided the 'commodification of museum culture' in the 1980s, and contributed to the rebranding of 'cool Britannia' for a global audience by the Blair administration during the 1990s. My case studies in this chapter actively contribute to these discourses. The films explore the new sense of possibility and freedom in relation to identity that arose in the 1970s: whether celebrating its arrival, testing its limits or, crucially I would argue, mourning the betrayed promises it offered. The 1970s offer a brief space where self-expression through consumption arrives, but it is still experienced in the texts as grounded in regional identity and dictated by local specificity. To return to *My Teenage Diary*, The Sex Pistols in 2016 may have become another of the icons of an icon that 'evoke[s] nothing' as Fisher describes them, [10] but, in 1976 for Syal, they were shaped by a bedroom of a fourteen year old girl in the West Midlands, and remained grounded in local experience.

I will consider how *Anita & Me* and *Good Vibrations* negotiate the set of anxieties concerning both consumerism and identity, and history and the image, with which I closed Chapter One. Both case studies are reliant on the popular culture of the 1970s and both the central characters utilise it in order to shape their identity.

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[10] Fisher, *Ghosts of My Life,* p. 77.

Fisher and Reynolds argue that the persistence of past forms of popular culture has resulted in a 'slippage' between past and present. This slippage fractures a coherent and confident sense of both the present and the future. Chapter One raised the significance of the fragment in relation to these discourses as scraps of the cultural past operate as a form of deterritorialized history; images and sounds taken out of context that signify a collapsed historical timeline in which the present is lost. I will look at how my case studies utilise popular culture and to what effect; whether in an attempt to stress the material form of the historical period they recreate; fetishize sounds and images of the past as icons of retro in the digital age; or mourn the loss of a pre-internet world, where cultural ephemera had a material presence, and whose patterns of consumption were both collective and localised.

Importantly, I will argue that, while *Anita & Me* and *Good Vibrations* engage with these concerns, and while they use the ephemera of past periods, these strategies do not result in the collapse of the historical timeline. Chapter Two looked at three case studies defined by a circular and static melancholia whereas Chapter Three looked at texts that explore the mediated legacy of traumatic pasts in the present. Chapter Four will close the thesis by looking at texts that handle temporal linearity and shape the relationship between the past and the present differently to any of the case studies discussed so far. As I focus on cinematic narration and point of view, I will use my analysis of these films to solidify the argument made across the body of the thesis that it is narration and tone that play the dominant role in governing how the past is defined in relation to the present.

Finally, I will address the question of historical specificity and argue that it is not lost in these texts. Reynolds himself questions whether hauntology is not in fact just 'menopause muzak', designed by and for a specific demographic in a specific

time: 'British and mostly male […] the kind of person who remembers watching *Doctor Who* back when it was *worth* watching'.[11] Developing Reynolds' line of thinking, one might conceive of hauntological reimaginings of post-war Britain as products of a society coming to terms with the fact that what it meant to be a teenager or rock star in the postwar years was not the blueprint for future generations, but a specific result of a specific culture at a specific time. I will look at why the 1970s is a significant decade to return to in regards to hauntological anxieties. I will argue that seventies can offer a unique space in which to explore these concerns, and a unique space in which to address broader questions of history. Andrew Higson argues that 'narratives of nostalgia will very often return to a moment of stability and tranquillity as they themselves chart the process of decay, the fall from this utopian ideal'.[12] Conversely, I will look at why the 1970s, as a decade associated with instability, transition, and trauma, is an important decade to revisit in millennial Britain, and to what effect it can be recreated in the present.

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[11] Ibid. Reynolds, *Retromania*, p. 343.

[12] Andrew Higson, *English Heritage, English Cinema: Costume Drama Since 1980* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 83.

Part One: *Anita & Me*

Anita & Me follows the experience of the teenage Meena Kumar (Chandeep Uppal) as she grows up in the fictional mining village of Tollington in the early 1970s. Based on the semi-autobiographical novel by Meera Syal, the film addresses several key themes of the decade. Meena has to negotiate the forces shaping her sense of self as national, regional, and familial identity are shown to collide at the moment when consumer society began to take hold. Set away from elite centres of power and culture, *Anita & Me* in many ways conforms to Sarah Neely's idea of alternative heritage as the film's cinematic narration is shaped around the point of view of a young female protagonist. *Anita & Me*'s representation of British Asian experience also allows the film to recognise the past as, in Higson's words, a 'multicultural space'.[13] In this manner *Anita & Me* is able to construct a national identity that is both fluid and representative of the changes to British society in the twentieth century. The film's West Midlands setting also embodies what is, for Higson, another key aspect of this less restrictive vision of national identity; the accounting of 'forces of devolution' and 'regionalism' by moving beyond the metropolitan centres and the home counties that shape heritage cinema in order to develop a more complete picture of Britain.[14]

Despite the film's focus on a famous figure, questions of the ordinary are central to the national history offered by *Anita & Me*. In writing on the biopic, George Custen argues that films which deal with famous figures interweave the

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[13] Higson, *Film England*, p. 202.
[14] Ibid., p. 107.

ordinary with the extraordinary, constructing their exceptional protagonists in such a way that 'the viewer [can] relate to the 'normal' aspects of private life' such as the characters' romantic or familial relationships while still 'venerating their unusual achievements'.[15] Thus, Custen argues, it is 'the comforting genius of these films to suggest that despite the untouchability of their deeds, despite their unusual gifts, most of the greats are normal, just like you and me'.[16] There is nevertheless a fundamental difference between the films Custen discusses and *Anita & Me*. While presenting recognisable and relatable aspects to their central figures, and drawing comfort from so doing, the classic Hollywood biopics ultimately construct lives marked as extraordinary. These extraordinary lives are defined as different, to both the lives of the other characters in the films and, by extension, to the lives of the viewers as well. Contrastingly, *Anita & Me* uses the well-known figure of Syal in a manner that allows its central character to stand for ordinary experience, and to become an avatar through which 'we' in Britain today can remember our shared recent past. Cinematic narration plays a crucial role in this, enabling a film built around the point of view of an individual to encompass a collective national experience by aligning camera, character, and viewer as it revisits the past.

Throughout *Anita & Me*, cinematic narration aligns the audience with Meena and her experience, overtly marking the story as hers. However, rather than reflecting the uncomprehending or unstable perspective of a child, Meena's point of view is used to clearly guide the viewer through the world of Tollington in 1972. This precedent is established from the film's opening as Meena's narration accompanies images of herself and Anita (Anna Brewster). Meena introduces Anita

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[15] Custen, *Bio/Pics*, p. 19.
[16] Ibid., p. 176.

and herself by directly addressing the viewer with chatty informality: 'This is Anita, gorgeous isn't she, and a natural blonde. This is me, Meena, I'm not blonde, but I've got nice eyelashes'. The sense that Meena is the conduit through which the viewer will encounter the world of Tollington in 1972 is consolidated as the opening sequence then follows her bike ride through the village. As Meena rides she introduces the key figures and locations of the village. She thus functions as the means by which the audience is situated in the time and place of the film. In this sequence Meena exerts explicit control over the cinematic narration. The camera follows her movement as she cycles through Tollington and her voiceover introduces the local shopkeeper Mrs Omerod (Lynn Redgrave) and vicar, 'Uncle' Alan (Mark Williams), who are then filmed in a closeup approximating Meena's point of view. The sequence concludes with Meena's statement 'my village, full of merriment, mayhem, and a mysterious monster'. A cut to a close up of her diary reveals her narration to be an essay that she is reading out to her class, explicitly marking the version of Tollington that the audience is being offered as hers.

Neely argues that 'alternative heritage' films undermine the notion of heritage as 'something […] possessed' as they set the audience adrift with characters who have no control over their environments and who exhibit a 'disjointed relationship to it'.[17] Contrastingly, it is Meena who guides the viewer through the world of Tollington, her control extending not just to the environment but to the cinematic narration. Meena's voiceover retains power throughout the film. Frequently dialogue provided by Meena interrupts and overrides diegetic dialogue, such as when she finishes her father's well-worn declaration that he 'has asked the

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[17] Sarah Neely, 'The conquering heritage of British Cinema Studies and the 'Celtic Fringes'' in Hill, John, and Rockett, Kevin (eds.), Film History and National Cinema: Studies in Irish Film 2 (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), p. 55.

universe some very big questions about life, death, and meaning'. Meena's narration frequently punctures assertions made by other characters with a lightly sardonic and astute perspective. These moments create a sense of ambiguity around how knowing her retelling of the decade is, as for example when she remarks that herself and Anita are 'perfectly matched, because Anita is glamorous and sophisticated, and I'm good at tidying up'. The film balances a recognition of the limits of Meena's childish perspective with a cinematic narration that allows her to guide the viewer comfortably through 1970s Tollington. *Anita & Me* thus eschews immersing its audience in the inarticulate and confused world of childhood seen in films like Lynn Ramsey's *Ratcatcher* (UK, 1999).

Custen argues that the structure of the biopic is also used to stress a character's extraordinary talents. This is done even when focusing on stages of the character's life before they achieve renown. Such pre-famous moments are used to display 'embryonic' talent, or the experiences through which the character learns and develops the skills that will later define their position in popular consciousness.[18] Meena's role as a writer is stressed throughout the film. However, pragmatic humour is used to undercut her romantic pretentions to be a great artist as she remarks 'I have realised I now have enough pain to create something truly bostin. So I have started writing professionally, and my pen name shall be Sharon De Beauvoir. I may not have consumption… yet. But, like all the great writers, I am lonely and different'. Rather than being presented as a remote talent, Meena-the-author is constructed as a much more universal and mundane figure: a teenager writing a diary. Moreover,

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[18] Custen, *Bio/Pics*, p. 68.

when she does achieve literary success, it's in the prosaic form of a short story in *Jackie Magazine*.

While Meena is the focus of the narrative, the narration encourages the audience to experience the past with her, rather than aligning the viewer with other characters as they observe her. Custen argues that biopics frequently use diegetic audiences to function as validation for the talents of the subject. The viewing audience is thus aligned with the audience within the film in a manner that develops a 'collective' appreciation of the central character's artistry or skill.[19] This strategy is frequently subverted in *Anita & Me*. Meena is repeatedly shown surrounded by an audience in the diegesis of the film, who fail to appreciate or understand her and her stories. After she delivers her opening speech on Tollington she is met with silence from her class, a moment echoed when her family react with horror to her short story at Diwali, and when her class again stare at her in bemusement after she reads out an essay on her grandmother. Rather than aligning the viewer with the audience in the film, such moments instead work to align the viewer with Meena. The cinematic narration creates collusion between the camera, Meena, and the viewer, zooming in slowly on her as she reads her story and shooting her classmates from over her shoulder as they stare back at her impassively. Her audience in 1972 might not 'get' her, but Meena's position as storyteller in the film's narrative creates a comradeship between camera, character, and viewer that allows her audience in twenty-first century Britain to do so.

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[19] Ibid., p. 175.

Anita & Me nevertheless relies on the figure of the adult Syal to supply meaning throughout. The story being told is marked as 'autobiographical'; by the attachment of the cinematic narration to Meena's point of view, by the privileged position of the diary within the narrative, and by Syal's presence as Meena's aunt. As Mark Sinker noted in his review of *Anita & Me*, 'Meena's escape into educated media success' ultimately shapes the film.[20] The figure of the adult Syal as the destination for Meena provides assurance that her story will have a positive ending, and also draws comfort from a mode of fame that is neither untouchable, nor isolated from the world around it. Instead, Syal offers the reassuring familiarity of a well-known presence on national television screens, recognisable to an audience familiar with the BBC on a Saturday night, and domestic comedies such as *Goodness Gracious Me* (BBC, 1998-2001) and *The Kumars at No. 42* (BBC, 2002-3).

Discourses on the biopic and on heritage cinema frequently stress the importance of 'authenticity'. Custen highlights the oft-used strategy of promoting a biopic as 'authentic' by stressing the involvement of the subjects themselves, or of people close to them.[21] Higson identifies a similar desire to promote 'authenticity' in heritage cinema which, he argues, is keen to stress its 'quality' by displaying fidelity to either the historical period portrayed, or, if an adaptation, the source material drawn upon. In both cases notions of authenticity and quality are intertwined and crucial to the version of history being portrayed on screen. Casting plays a central role in the films' signalling of this authenticity and quality; whether by the use of major stars to echo the stature of the famous figure being portrayed as described by Custen,[22] or, as in Higson's case studies, by drawing upon a group of actors

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[20] Sinker, 'Anita & Me', pp. 39-40.
[21] Custen, *Bio/Pics*, p. 13.
[22] Ibid., p. 18.

associated with quality heritage cinema who 'bring with them […] the qualities and connotations of the British theatre tradition'.[23]

Eschewing either Hollywood notions of stardom or pretensions to middlebrow respectability, *Anita & Me* instead compounds the sense of the ordinary through casting. Unknown actors Chandeep Uppal and Anna Brewster play the young leads, while the adults are recognisable from the Saturday night television and comedic sketch shows with which Syal is associated. Mark Williams from *The Fast Show* (BBC, 1994-7) and Kathy Burke from *Harry Enfield and Chums* (BBC, 1994-7) play Reverend Uncle Alan and Anita's mother Deidre Rutter. Syal's frequent collaborator and co-star on both *Goodness Gracious Me* and *The Kumars at No. 42*, Sanjeev Bhaskar, plays Meena's father, while she herself appears in the film as Meena's Aunt Shaila. In Chapter Two, Christine Geraghty's argument that an actor's performance in a filmic adaptation has a heightened visibility was explored in relation to *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*.[24] I argued that the perceptibility of Gary Oldman's performance as George Smiley served to legitimate the sense of a rich heritage, both fictional and real: the iconic Smiley and the 'quality' incarnation of him in the performance of Alec Guinness. Alfredson's *Tinker Tailor* thus includes itself in a cultural legacy that is passed from le Carré, to Guinness, to Oldman. Several performances in *Anita & Me* are similarly conspicuous, but in a manner that stresses neither the 'authenticity' nor the 'quality' of the film, but rather undermines them in humorous ways.

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[23] Higson, *English Heritage, English Cinema*, 29.

[24] Christine Geraghty, *Now A Major Motion Picture: Film Adaptations of Literature and Drama* (Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008).

The core characters in Meena's life – herself, her mother (Ayesha Dharker), her father, and Anita – are performed with seriousness and nuance. However, they are surrounded by a supporting cast of familiar faces from Saturday night television, all wearing 1970s clothing and hairstyles, and delivering larger than life performances. Mark Sinker is critical of the 'broadbrush' performances by the supporting cast which sees well-known comedy actors Kathy Burke and Mark Williams don 'unconvincing' accents and wigs.[25] Sinker argues that the film struggles to successfully integrate the television comedies evoked by these actors, resulting in an uneven tone and awkwardly meshed styles of performance. However, I would argue that the incongruity of seeing Burke, Williams, and Syal in 1970s wigs and costume is recognised by the film and enjoyed throughout. Syal's performance is very visible, but her role is a comically antagonistic busybody, peripheral to the emotional core of the film. She is humorously shunted aside in favour of Meena's mother by Nanima (Zohra Sehgal), and steps in dog waste upon her arrival. The casting of the supporting characters thus establishes a series of comforting winks between the film and the viewer, while leaving the dramatic heart of the film and core characters untouched and presented with an earnestness that is not undermined by self-reflexivity.

An interesting point of comparison to the way *Anita & Me* constructs fame and utilises Syal's position in national television history is the role of Lenny Henry in the BBC Drama *Danny and the Human Zoo* (BBC, 2015). *Danny* is based on Henry's childhood experience growing up in 1970s Dudley. The programme shares several similarities with *Anita & Me* including the regional setting, the semi-autobiographical status, and the presence of Henry playing an adult family member

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[25] Sinker, 'Anita & Me', pp.39-40.

of his younger self. It also relies on the real-life Henry's move into media success to create meaning; even more so in the case of *Danny*, as the programme tracks Danny's move onto the nation's television screens. However, there is a fundamental difference between the manner in which the texts construct their central characters; *Danny* promotes the unique destiny of the individual at the heart of its narrative, while *Anita & Me* uses its central character to explore 'our' national history. From its opening, which sees Danny (Kascion Franklin) being told 'you should be on the telly or something', the 1970s Britain of *Danny and the Human Zoo* is ultimately used in service of explaining the central character, whose escape from his surroundings is presented as the destiny of a unique individual. Lenny Henry's performance plays a significant role as he takes on the part of his own father with a dramatic seriousness that compounds both the 'authenticity' of the programme, and the special nature of its protagonist.

Knowledge of Syal's later success shapes *Anita & Me*. However, the film's focus is not so much on 'explaining' a famous central figure through their childhood, but on using the childhood of that figure to develop a collective memory by which a nation can remember itself. Rather than landmarking famous events in Meena's development, the story is structured around universal and recognisable moments in childhood: the start and end of the summer holidays, the birth of a baby brother, or the visit of a Grandmother. Most notably, it is the era-defining arrival of the motorway that provides the spine of the film. Thus, the more generalised rites of passage are structured around a specific event that anchors Meena's youth to the place and time in which it was spent, and to the wider theme of a changing national landscape during the 1970s.

This focus on ordinary experience is also embodied in the way Meena is presented as an enthusiastic consumer of popular culture. *Anita & Me* explores the familiar theme of the 1970s as the moment when traditional signifiers of identity came to be challenged in a more individualistic and consumer-orientated society. This clash is depicted as Meena tries to balance the expectations of her parents with her own desire to shape her identity through *Jackie Magazine*, clothes, and pop music; a desire humorously emphasised when Meena responds to the question 'what do you want to be when you grow up?' with 'blonde'. As discussed in the introduction to this chapter, critical discourse has argued that biopics reflect the twentieth-century change to 'a culture of consumption [from] one of production' through shifting focus from political leaders to entertainers.[26] The films discussed in this chapter, I propose, not only appeal to a society of consumers, but construct their central characters as consumers themselves. *Anita & Me* thus presents the biography of a consumer with whom the audience is aligned in their own memories of the decade and its pop-culture output.

In many ways *Anita & Me* does not conform to the anxieties surrounding consumer society as expressed by Reynolds and Fisher. The film revels in the bright and breezy pleasures of consumption embodied in the cheap plastic of Anita's brightly coloured jacket, the visceral pleasures of the funfair, and the upbeat pop soundtrack. Furthermore, Meena is able to rework the pop-culture of the time into her own version of the decade, building not just her identity but her narrative out of it. Meena repeatedly uses the language of popular magazines as for example in her description of Tollington as a 'hotbed of poptastic action', a fact made explicit when she tells her teacher that she got the words used in her story 'out of *The Reader's*

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[26] Custen, *Bio/Pics*, p. 85.

Digest'. Consumerism as performed by Meena is thus shown to be a creative and expressive activity in which the audience can share. Anita and Meena's den is located in the 'Yeti's garden', a space marked as creative in its semi-fictional nature. The den is used equally for consumption and creation as the girls paint their toenails and daydream about a consumer lifestyle in London where they party with pop stars, wear heels, and 'zoom up the motorway and never come back'. The *mise-en-scène* of the den combines the lyrical and natural with man-made artefacts of consumerism. The girls decorate sheets with pictures of pop stars, and stacks of Jackie magazine and cassette tapes can be seen in the frame. Anita herself engages in creative activity as she cuts pictures from magazines, literally reworking consumer culture to put her mark on the natural environment surrounding them, while Meena writes in her diary.

In Alexander Shea's account of football and consumerism in the twenty-first century, a key point of anxiety is the manner in which football has become a 'de-territorialized' form of consumption. For Shea, institutions once grounded in the local community have become international corporations disconnected and removed from the local areas that they used to represent. This argument is equally applicable to music in the digital and globalised world of the twenty-first century, where vinyl has given way to cassettes, CDs, and now MP3s, and the virtual space of the internet has become the dominant form through which music is consumed. The 1970s offer a unique space to explore these discourses. The decade can function as a brief moment when the freedoms of self-expression through consumerism have arrived, but consumption itself is still grounded in regional and local experience. This possibility is demonstrated in the use of music throughout *Anita & Me*.

In his discussion of pop music and cinema, Ian Garwood notes that consumers of pop music are frequently seen in active and creative terms. Garwood

argues that 'it has been commonly accepted that pop fans use music imaginatively in the construction of identities, in a more intense manner than is associated with most other cultural forms'.[27] This description is echoed by Andy Bennett's argument that music is inextricably bound up in youth culture and identity.[28] For Bennett, music has a malleability of meaning that allows for creativity and expression through consumerism. This malleability comes from the fact that music is both mass-produced, and able to be reworked and transfigured at the point of consumption by fans. Thus, pop music helps to 'fashio[n] new forms of local identity', [29] not just through the production of local artists, but by taking on new meanings in the places where it is consumed; meanings that are 'inextricably bound up with local experience'.[30]

Key to Bennett's argument is the flexibility of both music and environment. An individual, Bennett argues, can shape both personal and collective forms of identity through the consumption of music, a reworking that can extend to the local environment itself. Consumers of music can thus become the 'author' of the 'spaces and places' that they occupy.[31] As Meena and Anita walk through Tollington, there is a sense that they become the authors of their local environment, shaping it to their movement and mood as they go. The music playing non-diegetically on the soundtrack reflects their buoyant state of mind, and gives them ownership of their surroundings as Meena dubs them the 'hard Wenches of the Yard' and they push younger children out of the way. The film explicitly presents the potential of music

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[27] Ian Garwood, 'The Pop Song In Film' in Close-up 01 (London: Wallflower Press, 2006), p. 98.
[28] Andy Bennett, Popular Music and Youth Culture: Music, Identity and Place (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press LTD., 2000).
[29] Ibid., p. 69/70.
[30] Ibid., p. 1.
[31] Ibid., p. 64.

consumption to express the complexities and dynamism of a freer form of identity. Meena fails to impress her family by singing a traditional song, but responds to her Aunt's criticism that she sings Punjabi with 'a Birmingham accent', and her mother's instruction to 'learn to sing your own songs', with a much less listless rendition of The Pipkins' 'Gimme Dat Ding'. This moment is echoed at the film's conclusion when her Uncle and Father perform Domenico Modugno's 'Volare' for the village at Hairy Neddy's wedding.

In this manner a mediated and global form of culture becomes the antithesis of the de-territorialized forms of consumption described by Shea, Fisher, and Reynolds. Music is shown to be malleable enough to adapt to the local space, which itself is able to retain a vivid and particular character. A humorous disjuncture exists between the pop-music version of the 1970s, familiar from mediated versions of the decade, and its execution in the village of Tollington. This disjuncture is personified in the figure of 'local rocker' Hairy Neddy (Max Beesley), who falls a long way short of the Glam Rock icon as he is introduced struggling to unload his 'dual pulse electric organ' from his van whilst being told to 'bog off' by his girlfriend. Songs familiar to popular memory are intertwined with a specific local experience and history. This is exemplified by the repeated trope of Meena and Anita walking through the village while iconic pop songs of the decade play non-diegetically on the soundtrack. 'I Hear You Knocking' accompanies Meena's initiation into Anita's gang as she helps them to steal sweets from the village shop. Running out of the shop, the girls use the space of the village and its daily rhythms to make their escape, blending into the crowd of women who appear on time to catch the factory bus. The cinematography in the scene underscores the communal nature of village life and ties the music to it. The girls are shown in a long shot as the extras fill the frame, and the

camera separates from them as they enter the yard in order to follow Anita's mother, Deidre, as she returns home.

The regional West Midlands setting is key to the form of national identity and history constructed by *Anita & Me*. Dave Russell has argued that British cinema has largely neglected the majority of the country in its focus on London and the Home Counties.[32] Not only does *Anita & Me* eschew this focus on the capital and the South, it also avoids the other heavily mythologised part of the country that Russell himself focuses on, the North. Instead the film takes place in the liminal space of the, in Russell's words, 'ill-defined and oft-ignored Midlands'.[33] Reflecting the presentation of a central character that undermines any pretensions towards the great or romantic, Tollington is situated in a part of the country that has neither the prestige of Southern England nor the 'cool' and mystique of a city like Manchester. Instead *Anita & Me* is set in a liminal space that is neither fully rural nor urban, a liminality that is cultural as well as geographic. The Midlands, as Russell notes, are 'sandwiched between the two most culturally laden spaces within the nation's imaginary', fitting into neither the tradition of Home Counties Heritage nor the equally mythologised 'authenticity' of the Northern Realist tradition.[34]

Anita & Me's locale is used to reinforce the film's focus on 'the ordinary'. Meena juxtaposes her own mundane reality ('a trip to the sewage works in Dudley') with iconic narratives surrounding seventies culture ('discoing in America with David Cassidy or sunbathing in Spain with T.Rex'), exposing their mythological

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[32] Dave Russell, *Looking North: Northern England and the national imagination* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), p. 7.
[33] Ibid., p. 9.
[34] Ibid.

nature as she does so. Notably, it is also an ordinary experience where the more universal tropes of teenagehood are grounded in a particular time and place through the film's construction of a solid sense of local identity. Local institutions such as the church are embodied in specific characters, and dated colloquialisms such as 'bostin' and 'bog off' are used throughout. Meena's childhood itself is intertwined with the fate of the village through the era-defining and location-changing arrival of the motorway, which aligns Meena's own move into adulthood with the development of her town and nation.

This stress on the ordinary, and the pragmatic tone which it shapes, also creates distance to the events depicted. This distance enables *Anita & Me* to engage with the past in a manner not dissimilar to that used in Sandbrook's documentary series, where the narration shapes the sense of a national viewing family looking back on its naïve past self. Point of view plays a central role. *Anita & Me* confirms the assertion made by Wilson that cinematic narration can both reflect a character's point of view and offer a wider perspective that stands outside the limits of their outlook. This wider perspective is subsequently used to create a space where critical assessment of the character's choices and actions can be made even as their subjective experience is accounted for by the narration. I argue that *Anita & Me* constructs a narrational point of view shaped around a collective present-day perspective from which the 1970s is revisited. Frequently, an epistemological disjuncture between Meena in the seventies and the viewer in millennial Britain is used to humorous effect, as for example in the irony of *Jackie Magazine*'s advice to Meena to emulate Michael Jackson and to 'always smile' because 'guys wont date a grumpy gal'. Throughout the film there is a sense of ambiguity around exactly how

knowing Meena is. Her childish hero-worship of Anita is deconstructed over the course of the film and offset by moments of sharp pragmatism in the aural narration that create a slight disjuncture between Meena-the-narrator and Meena-the-character. In these moments Meena's spoken narration is aligned with the cinematic narration and the viewer, rather than with her character in the diegesis of the film. Meena's narration is frequently paired with high angle or long shots reminiscent of those identified by Higson in the 'gaze' of heritage cinema, as for example the shot of her yard at the film's opening. However, rather than being completely divorced from character point of view, the shots remain in dialogue with it, constructing a sense of a contemporary perspective from which the camera, the character, and the viewing nation can observe their past selves.

For both Reynolds and Fisher, the isolated nature of consumer society results in a popular culture that has become a 'privatised' rather than a collective experience. This anxiety is offset throughout *Anita & Me*. As with Higson's assertion that 'heritage culture becomes the object of public gaze', so in *Anita & Me* consumer culture of the 1970s becomes the object of a shared national past.[35] If Meena can construct her individual identity around consumption in the 1970s, then the cinematic narration can solidify a collective sense of self in Millennial Britain by looking back at what 'we' consumed. The *mise-en-scène* of *Anita & Me* is filled with everyday objects as for example Mrs Omerod's shop, described by Meena as 'sel[ling] everything' and displaying Weetabix, Lux flakes, and Chivers jam in the window. The film blurs the distinction between such popular culture ephemera and other aspects of the local historical environment, whether the village fete, the closed mine, or the factory buses, thereby intertwining what 'we' consumed with how 'we'

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[35] Higson, *English Heritage, English Cinema*, p. 38/9.

lived. Alison Landsberg has argued that prosthetic memory has the potential to use mass culture to speak to collective experience and 'a past that is not at all privatised'.[36] *Anita & Me* arguably facilitates such a collective view of the past whereby a nation can remember itself through a focus on the popular culture of a consumer society.

Sarah Neely stresses the potential of alternative heritage to explore the lives of characters at the edge of national myth and memory. In contrast, *Anita & Me* consolidates the position of its young protagonist at the centre of ordinary experience. The question of national identity that Higson pinpoints at the heart of heritage cinema is also a central part of *Anita & Me*. The film uses this focus to establish a dynamic and progressive form of national identity that is reflective of the changes to British society over the past forty years. Rather than positioning itself as oppositional, *Anita & Me* relies on the construction of a comforting and distanced narration that creates a unified position from which a developed multicultural society can survey the period of its birth critically, but with affection. This unified position – marked as 'present' and separated from the past – may seem to echo the project of Dominic Sanbrook's *The 70s*. However there is a crucial point of difference between the two texts as it is change from the past, rather than continuity with it, that sits at the core of the dynamic between past and present in *Anita & Me*. Throughout his documentary series on the decade, Dominic Sandbrook tries to alleviate concerns over a changing national landscape by identifying the figure of the 'Ordinary

[36] Alison Landsberg, 'Prosthetic memory: the ethics and politics of memory in an age of mass culture' in Grainge, Paul (ed.), Memory and popular film (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 149.

Briton'; the representative of the Silent Majority whose tastes and concerns, Sandbrook implies, are frequently elided in more politically charged versions of the decade. Sandbrook thus positions his version of the 1970s as a depoliticised representation of what 'we' all want. *The 70s* draws comfort from establishing the consistent and fundamentally unchanged face of the Great British Public and a national character that existed before the breakdown of the post-war consensus and continued to exist after.

Conversely, it is the difference between British society then and now that is emphasised in *Anita & Me*. The film thus creates a sense of a changing national identity, and it is that change that facilitates a more enlightened position from which present-day Britain can critically survey its past. Notions of decline surrounding post-imperial Britain's position in the modern world are challenged by the film's celebration of an evolving British society. Humour is used to undermine xenophobic nationalism, embodied in the character of Mrs Omerod and her repeated references to World War II, and her crusade to use the proceeds of the village fair to fix the church roof rather than sending the money to a cause abroad. Omerod herself is presented as becoming rapidly obsolete. She is comically oblivious to the realities of her daughter's life, and the vicar explicitly warns her that she will be left behind. Distance is frequently created by the humorous disjuncture between the enlightened perspective of the narration and the antiquated attitudes of the characters, whether that be the local women gathering around a new-born's pram whilst blowing cigarette smoke, or the local paper branding Meena a 'pint sized dusky heroine'.

There is nevertheless ambiguity in the presentation of the village as the film explores a communal way of life built around industry that is rapidly becoming lost. Meena introduces Tollington as a place 'which used to have a mine' but 'now has

got a very good pub instead'. The clearly articulated local character of the film and novel's setting is also intertwined with the pathos of how the Midlands landscape changed with such rapidity during the decade. But this is accompanied by a powerful sense of inertia in the village's drive towards modernity, embodied in the inevitable arrival of the motorway. Furthermore, *Anita & Me* humorously undermines the pathos of loss by juxtaposing it with the blasé attitude of several of the characters. Thus the Vicar's politicised cry that the motorway is 'another example of the fat cats ignoring the common man' is rebuked by Ned's pragmatic reply 'yeah, but it means I'll get to Birmingham in half an hour which is brilliant', a position echoed by Syal's Aunt Shaila's in her final remark in the film; 'we'll take the new motorway, so convenient'.

Anita & Me does not offer an engagement with the past that is solely comfortable, however, nor is everything within the film comfortably subsumed by the cinematic narration. While the narration is structured around, and reflective of, Meena and her worldview, the limits of this world are clearly delineated. Meena moves between a series of spaces whose boundaries are comfortingly defined, whether by the heavily patterned wallpaper in the *mise-en-scène* of her home, or the foliage and iron fence that surround the den she builds with Anita. These spaces in turn lie within the bounds of her village, so that even when sneaking out of her house to visit the local fair, she remains within the confines of her community. Frequently the film hints at a wider and darker world outside of Meena's immediate experience, as for example when she catches glimpses of domestic violence in the homes of Sam (Alex Freeborn) and Anita, or peers round the wall of her own kitchen to see her mother sobbing. The film only lightly registers her parents' own histories and

experiences in India, echoing the extent to which they exist outside of Meena's sphere of comprehension. However, this wider history is nevertheless registered in moments such as the cut to an uncharacteristic close-up of Meena's father as he quietly states 'nobody gave us any medals' after Meena complains that he didn't fight in 'the war' like Anita's father.

Furthermore, not all moments of racism or xenophobia are comfortably dealt with by a shared narrational viewpoint which reassuringly affirms that they are no longer seen as acceptable in contemporary society. This is evident in the deeply personal moments of hurt experienced by Meena when Anita's mother names her new dog 'nigger', and when Anita and Sam assault Mr Bhatra (Ajay Chhabra). Throughout the film, images are generally subservient to a voiceover narration that shapes the way they are interpreted, presenting Meena as able to clearly articulate her own story. These moments of personal hurt, however, are defined by their inability to be articulated by the aural narration and cannot be comfortably absorbed into the narrative. After Deidre Rutter names the dog there is a cut from a shot of Meena's shocked reaction to herself and Anita in the den as Meena's voiceover states 'Anita never cries'. In this moment Meena eschews her usual forthcoming nature in regards to her feelings, instead refracting them through an observation about Anita. Meena's isolation in that moment is echoed later when her fight with her family and subsequent grounding to her room is not shown with the film instead cutting from her accidentally swearing during Divali celebrations to a shot of her staring out of her bedroom window with tears visible on her face. It is notable that moments such as this utilise an emotive original score rather than one of the pop songs that make up the majority of the film's soundtrack, with the score offering a

more diffuse indication of the emotional temperature and meaning of the scene in absence of the usually dominant voiceover.

The most virulent expressions of racism in the film cannot be comfortably set aside, as with the attitudes of the comic and increasingly irrelevant Mrs Omerod. They instead come from the younger generation in the form of Anita herself and local bad boy Sam Lowry. Sam presented with ambivalence and complexity. He mixes a flirtatious attitude towards Meena and a recognition of their shared outsider status in the village, with a racist undertow to his comments that becomes more overt as the film progresses.

It is through the characters of Sam and Anita that the film most rigorously interrogates the freedoms associated with the 1970s and critiques the notion that the decade was a time when class was eradicated in Britain. There is a desperation to the unarticulated, passive, plight of Anita, whose entrapment in her seventies environs sits in striking contrast to the distance that Meena can establish from her childhood and the agency that is accorded to Meena by a narrative that reflects her experience. Anita's domestic instability occasionally enters into Meena's worldview. When this instability does appear it is again marked by its inability to be clearly articulated, whether in the unseen figure of Anita's father throwing plates out the back door of their house, or the unremarked upon bruise visible on her mother's face. Only at the film's ending is the interior of Anita's home shown as she leans motionless against the wall while Meena speaks to her through the letterbox. Anita's isolation and helplessness is compounded by her silence as she listens to Meena speak. Throughout the film Anita echoes Meena's tendency to embellish the truth. She too

attempts to write her own identity and life, creating an elaborate history for her father's war service and stating 'I want to die somewhere else. Somewhere better. I ain't meant to be here'. But Anita's attempts to author herself and her life lack the triumphant vindication of Meena's, whose voiceovers are reinforced by a cinematic narration that reflects her point of view, and by her implied future success in the figure of Syal.

Sinker identifies a 'confidence' in *Anita & Me* that he links to its likeable 'semi-finishedness' which manages to situate 'Powellism' not only amongst the social and cultural factors that gave rise to it in the 1970s, but amongst the 'ordinary spite, ordinary foolishness, ordinary kindness' of daily life.[37] Thus, Sinker argues, society's imperfect journey towards 'mutual understanding' is 'mirrored' in *Anita & Me* by the 'patchiness of the film's styles'.[38] This confidence is also embodied in a cinematic narration that clearly separates the past from the present, establishing both difference and distance and creating comfort in the representation of the decade. The repeated high-angle shots of Tollington might underscore the communal nature of village life, but they also establish distance from it, a distance compounded at the film's ending when the camera comfortably separates itself from its environs.

A sense of 'hindsight' thus dominates the film. Annette Kuhn has argued that a distinguishing feature of autobiography is that 'the narrator, the writing I, is set up in a relation of identity with the central protagonist, the written I'.[39] Despite the fact that the writer and the subject are presented as one and the same person they

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[37] Sinker, 'Anita & Me', p. 39-40.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Annette Kuhn, Family Secrets: Acts of Memory and Imagination (London: Verso, 2002), p. 148.

nevertheless occupy two different time periods and, by extension, perspectives; 'the writer in the moment of writing' and 'the self of the earlier years of the real life being written about'.[40] The interplay of Meena's childish perspective with a wider, more omniscient, point of view within the cinematic narration of *Anita & Me* similarly allows the film to construct a clearly articulated contemporary perspective from which 'we' in present-day Britain can recall our past. As Kuhn notes, there is a 'causal logic' in autobiography where the past is 'ordered retrospectively from the standpoint of the present, the moment of telling'.[41] A defining characteristic of the way *Anita & Me* presents the past, and one which distinguishes it from previous case studies, is the sense of momentum the film creates in its separation of past from present. *Anita & Me* thus avoids the 'strange simultaneity' that Fisher identifies in hauntology, where the present exists only as an indeterminate space of loss.[42]

Past and present are clearly separated in *Anita & Me*. If, as Wilson argues, attitude is a key part of cinematic narration, then the attitude to the past established in the film might be ultimately described as adult and pragmatic; the decade is viewed with critical affection, and comfortably left behind as the film closes. Rather than mourning the 'betrayed promises of youth culture', such an attitude allows *Anita & Me* to take a more critical approach to teenagehood.[43] Romantic notions of youth culture are frequently undermined by a robust deconstruction of its pretensions. Such comically deconstructive moments include Anita's exaggerated entrance as she emerges from a cloud of smoke in slow motion, or Meena's description of Sam having 'hair like Donny Osmond… But unlike Donny, he smokes

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[40] Ibid., p. 149.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Fisher, *Ghosts of My Life*, p. 9.
[43] Ibid., p. 57.

and brews his own cider'. When considering the question of attitude, especially regarding texts dealing with popular music, the notion of 'cool' becomes relevant. It permeates the work of both Reynolds and Fisher. In Fisher's description of hauntology melancholia is interwoven with a fascination with the materiality of the past. Fisher outlines an aesthetic and formal style in hauntological texts that reinforces a sense of loss through weaving together fragments of pop culture debris in the present while focussing on its material forms in the past. Both Fisher and Reynolds criticise a contemporary youth culture that is incapable of offering an original output and is instead reliant on recycling the popular culture of previous generations. But in their discussions of contemporary acts, in particular those they define as being representative of the zeitgeist (notably Burial and Ghost Box), it is evident that it is in the interplay between tone, aesthetic, and the fascination with the materiality of the cultural ephemera of the past, that 'cool' in Millennial Britain, is created.

Befitting of a project to construct an 'ordinary' version of the decade, *Anita & Me* is unashamedly 'uncool', with the pragmatism of the filmic narration being reinforced by a tone that is bold and energetic, but not lyrical. The film's bright colour palette, stable cinematography, and functional editing offers neither the instability of memory, nor the stylish retro aesthetic and fascination with the materiality of the past that are so central to constructing the cool melancholia of Fisher's hauntology. For a film that utilises popular music as one of its main avenues to the past, the iconic image of the vinyl is notably never shown, nor does *Anita & Me* fetishize the physical forms of past popular culture. For Fisher, a defining feature of hauntology is the presence of aural or visual markers of 'the no longer'. Both the fragmentary quality of archive and its sonic equivalent in the music sample or

crackle are similarly absent in *Anita & Me*. Thus, while the film uses popular culture to revisit the past, that popular culture remains comfortably situated within the cinematic narration rather than being employed to destabilise the relationship between past and present. This, in turn, allows *Anita & Me* to create a trajectory between past and present that is predicated on change and momentum. Simon Reynolds, deconstructing the term 'metastasis', draws a link between reflexivity and stasis. To return to the use of Syal in *Anita & Me*, her position in popular consciousness and her body of work are invoked with what might be described as self-awareness rather than self-reflexivity. Thus the past is visited and viewed from a position of pragmatism rather than neuroticism as the film constructs a vision of the 1970s shaped from a present that is able to clearly distinguish itself from the past .

Chapter Three explored how representations of 1970s Northern Ireland have changed during the ten years between 2005's *Five Minutes of Heaven* and 2014's *'71*. Writing on the Britpop phenomenon of the 1990s, John Harris describes a decade that addressed the question 'who are we now?' with optimism and confidence. For Harris, the 'Britpop' music scene of the nineties self-consciously positioned itself as representing the society that produced it, even as Tony Blair walked into 10 Downing street carrying a guitar, and the 'rebranding' of national identity became even more entangled with political spin.[44] *Anita & Me* is the earliest film discussed in this thesis. One might argue in fact that the film is more representative of the confidence of the 1990s than it is of twenty-first century Britain. *Anita & Me* offsets the anxieties articulated by Fisher and Reynolds with a sense of momentum that is notably absent from the case studies of Chapter Two, and

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[44] John Harris, *The Last Party: Britpop, Blair and the Demise of English Rock* (London: Harper Perennial, 2010).

that is problematised by the case studies in Chapter Three, which addressed the legacy of traumatic histories. I will conclude this chapter by considering these issues in relation to 2012's *Good Vibrations*. *Good Vibrations* draws together all these elements as it combines characteristics of the hauntological and melancholic with the pragmatic tone of *Anita & Me* and the charged historical milieu of the texts discussed in Chapter Three. I will consider how *Good Vibrations* shapes a unique relationship between the past and the present, and what that relationship illuminates about the significance of the 1970s as a time to revisit in contemporary Britain.

Part Two: *Good Vibrations*

Introduction

Good Vibrations is a Belfast-set biopic of music enthusiast and flawed entrepreneur Terri Hooley. The film chronicles Hooley's attempts to foster a local music scene during the height of the Troubles. It explicitly deals with themes of consumerism, identity, and location, and how music intersects with all three. As with *Anita & Me*, I shall explore how the central character becomes the conduit through which the audience accesses the world of the film. I will consider how and to what effect point of view and cinematic narration govern the relationship between past and present. I will also explore how *Good Vibrations* addresses the relationship between consumerism and identity – individual and collective – and how Terri is constructed as what might be described as a 'romantic consumer' in opposition to the romantic artist of more traditional biopics such as Ian Curtis in *Control*.

As in *Anita & Me,* location plays an important role in *Good Vibrations* as both films represent a region that sits in opposition to the metropolitan centre of the country. The dynamic between region and metropolitan core is even more explicit in *Good Vibrations* due to the fractious relationship between London and Northern Ireland during the seventies. As explored in Chapter Three, Belfast is also a location that is heavily and contentiously mediated in relation to the 1970s. *Good Vibrations* self-consciously addresses the mediated nature of the history it constructs, as the location and its mediated legacy - visual and sonic - sits at the heart of the film. There is a complex set of engagements with two very different sorts of mediated memory. One operates in the cultural pleasures of nostalgia, while the other

encompasses the traumatic legacy of the Troubles on screen. In this manner the film demands two diverging engagements with the mediated past as it intermingles a set of signifiers recognisable from one legacy (the Troubles in archival footage) with another (a fetishistic nostalgia attached to vinyl and retro culture). Image is of crucial concern in this part of the chapter as I aim to understand how the persistence of the image in the present shapes our relationship with past. Nostalgia and retro have been criticised for choosing to eschew the present for the deterritorialized shadow of the past. Conversely, texts representing Northern Ireland in the 1970s have explored the difficulties of leaving the image of the past behind, with image's material link to a specific place in a specific time being a source of concern and difficulty.

Character and Camera

Like *Anita & Me*, *Good Vibrations* utilises the main character as the principal means to orientate the viewer in the past. The film's intensive focus on Terri, and its formulaic structure, have received criticism, with press reviews dismissing *Good Vibrations* as an unreflective hagiography. Trevor Johnston in *Sight & Sound* describes it as a 'print the legend biopic',[45] while Robbie Collin in *The Telegraph* asks 'is life really as formulaic as biopics make it look? The plot trajectory of *Good Vibrations* is so predictable you could chart it with a quadratic equation'.[46] These reviews conflate an intense focus on an individual with a privileging of a personal timeline. They argue that that approach compresses the complexities of history into a story shaped around the key monuments of one person's life, thereby offering the

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[45] Trevor Johnston, 'Good vibrations', *Sight & Sound* 23:4 (April, 2013), pp. 91-92.
[46] Robbie Collin, 'Good Vibrations, review', *The Telegraph* (28 March, 2013) <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/film/filmreviews/9959509/Good-Vibrations-review.html>, Accessed 20th August, 2017.

most straightforward encounter with the past possible. *Good Vibrations* is ostensibly very formulaic. Terri functions similarly to Meena as the film facilitates a straightforward separation of past and present through the use of voiceover and flashback as Terri reflects on his earlier life. However, the timeline of *Good Vibrations* is deceptively complex. It simultaneously looks back from distance, immerses the viewer in the sites of the past, and presents fragments of history (aural and visual) that are able to transcend their context of production whilst remaining anchored to a specific time and place.

While Terri and his life might be marked as extraordinary, *Good Vibrations* uses its focus on him to explore a place in time, and the ordinary lives that peopled it. Terri's relationship to 1970s Belfast, as both a product and author of the city, allows him to be representative of his location in a different manner to any of the characters previously considered in this thesis. As an individual, Terri Hooley is someone who might be described as a local icon rather than an international or even national one. The film focuses around the production of a pop single that has since transcended its time of production in The Undertones' 'Teenage Kicks'. The legend of the man who produced it, however, remains widely unknown, something recognised by the directors who recall being familiar with Terri solely from 'living in Belfast for so long'.[47] If *Anita & Me* appeals to shared memories of the pop culture 1970s to shape an 'ordinary' experience of the decade, then *Good Vibrations* positions itself as telling an untold story at the edge of two distinct mediated legacies. As Graham Young notes, *Good Vibrations* aims 'to tell the story of vinyl

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[47] Paul Webster, 'Good Vibrations', *Film Ireland* 143 (Autumn, 2012), pp. 10 – 11.

amid the bombs and shootings of 1980s Belfast'.[48] This project is explicitly

acknowledged by the directors, with Barros D'Sa stating a desire to create an

'alternative story […] set during the troubles' but not 'about the troubles […] There

were lots of people like Terri who loved Belfast, but didn't want to accept the

version of the city that the Troubles offered'.[49]

     This project is established from the film's opening flashback of a young Terri

playing in his garden. The scene immediately orientates the viewer in the past

through Terri's personal life and is explicitly marked as a subjective encounter with

the past. The low-level of the camera echoes the stature of a child as it follows a

young Terri running through his garden. Fragmented cuts, slow motion, and sunlight

flaring into the lens of the camera, give the sequence the dreamlike quality of

memory. Pam Cook has identified cinema's potential to replicate the affective

language of memory through such techniques. But *Good Vibrations* immediately

intertwines the cinematic language of subjective memory with what might be

described as visual media's potential to embody national and collective memory.

Thus, archival footage detailing the history – political, cultural, and social – of

Northern Ireland across the twentieth century rapidly flashes up on screen. Archive

is used to establish Belfast's traumatic history. The sequence cycles through familiar

footage of popular culture and then the Troubles, the speed increasing as the violence

in the imagery intensifies. The identity of individual decades in mediated

consciousness is established as the footage is categorised under the 1950s, and then

the 1960s. There is then a cut to archival images contained within a television screen

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[48] Graham Young, 'Film Review: Good Vibrations', *Birmingham Mail* (5th April, 2013)
<http://www.birminghammail.co.uk/whats-on/films/film-review-good-vibrations-15-2520972>,
Accessed 20th August, 2017.
[49] Webster, 'Good Vibrations', pp. 10 – 11.

within the *mise-en-scène* of the Hooley home. The potency of the 1970s as the locus of a particularly traumatic incarnation of the region in image is reinforced through titles far bigger than that of the preceding decades stating '1970s'.

Rather than unreflectively using archive to introduce a 'maelstrom' of violence, [50] *Good Vibrations* proposes the possibility of revisiting the fatigued association of Northern Ireland with the Troubles through a unique gaze of a unique individual. The collective memory of archive is thus positioned as Terri's to re-vision after losing his eye, with the doctor's assertion that he will now 'see things differently' being overlaid onto the footage. There is then a cut to the Hooley family on the sofa as Terri rubs his fake eye and leans forward to stare at the images on screen with impatience. The shot of the Hooley family is carefully composed to draw attention to its own framing, its symmetrical and staged qualities echoing a family photograph. The family's proximity to the television screen is stressed by cuts between them and the TV, which is itself framed squarely to create symmetry with the family. The image sits within the tradition of the nation as represented by the ordinary viewing family, despite the violence on the screen. The desire to 'see things differently' is emphasised as Terri states 'What a fucking nightmare' in a tone that is as tired as it is disgusted, a fatigue exacerbated by his subsequent scathing assessment of the Troubles: 'some people called it a revolution. Others called it the 'Troubles' an equally useless word'. The archival footage and the 'Troubles' as a term become equated, and the film echoes Terri's own impatience towards them as it uses the figure of Terri to identify an untold story of Northern Ireland during the 1970s that existed in between the images of violence.

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[50] John Hill, 'Images of Violence' in Kevin Rockett, Luke Gibbons and John Hill (eds.), *Cinema and Ireland* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1988), p. 147.

Terri's brusque assessment of the situation is almost comedic in its irreverence, signalling an impatience with not just the visual legacy of the Troubles, but, as with *Shadow Dancer* and *'71*, the tonal legacy. While Terri and his life might be marked as extraordinary, he is presented as an irreverent eccentric rather than as the more serious figure of the romantic genius. Terri may be at times abruptly sketched and trite, but in spite of and, arguably, because of, these factors, *Good Vibrations* offers the possibility of exploring 1970s Belfast with an unexpected tone. Terri's idiosyncratic eccentricities are reflected in the irreverent humour of the film, which utilises his persona to shape a rebellious attitude towards its subject matter in its refusal to take either Terri or itself that seriously.

Dormer's performance plays a key role. Belen Vidal argues that performance is 'one of the main attractions of the popular biopic',[51] but explores critical resistance to impressionism and impersonation which, she argues, contain a suggestion of the 'superficial', a 'vehicle of cliché and caricature, but not of memory or soul'.[52] *Anita & Me* reflects this hesitation towards impersonation; the core dramatic characters operate with relative invisibility of performance, whilst the more visible pleasures of impressionism are left to the supporting cast. In *Good Vibrations*, it is Dormer who offers a heightened performance that is notably more ostentatious than that of the other cast members. In previous case studies there is a tendency to leave the most overt 1970s fashions to the supporting characters, whilst toning down the appearance of the central character to preserve their dramatic integrity. Examples include

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[51] Belen Vidal, *Heritage Film: Nation, Genre and Representation* (London: Wallflower, 2012), p. 117.
[52] Belen Vidal, 'Morgan/Sheen: the compressed frame of impersonation' in Tom Brown and Belen Vidal (eds.), *The Biopic in Contemporary Film Culture* (London: Routledge, 2014), 141.

Smiley's austere appearance in *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*, or Sam Tyler's comparatively restrained clothing and hair in *Life on Mars*. In *Good Vibrations*, it is Terri who is dressed in the most ostentatiously '70s' fashions, with his flares, vest tops, and unflattering haircut. Dormer's performance borders on the tongue-in-cheek as he stresses Terri's idiosyncratic manners and accent, itself foregrounded from the opening voiceover where Dormer's pronunciation is delivered with relish.

If Fisher criticises Oldman's Smiley for the incongruous sex appeal of his inscrutable cool, then that is a cool denied to Hooley. As Terri enters a local pub to Johnny 'Guitar' Watson's 'Gangster of Love', the camera echoes the song's hyperbolic qualities by filming Terri at an exaggeratedly low angle, and moving with him in slow motion through the pub. The scene then cuts from the nonplussed faces of the locals sitting at the table, to a shot into which Terri slides into position in the centre of the frame. This overblown performance of 'cool' undercuts any aspiration towards its lofty heights with a cocky indifference that matches Terri's own disregard for the social rules and conventions of the increasingly sectarian local community.

Good Vibrations engages with the analogue ephemera and aural fragments of retro that have provoked such a melancholic response from Reynolds and Fisher. The film also situates these fragments of popular culture within a traumatic legacy of violence. However, these elements are interwoven with a tongue-in-cheek irreverence that results in a complex tone that is as uncomfortable at times as it is unexpected. Critical commentary on the film has remarked upon the incongruity of encountering the 'punch-the-air [...] cheeriness' of *Good Vibrations* in the milieu of

the Troubles on film. [53] A milieu whose discomforting aspects *Good Vibrations* does not ameliorate, as the film simultaneously confronts the violence and trauma of that history. The arch humour in a heightened situation as Terri enters the pub echoes some of the pragmatism used by *Anita & Me* to separate the adult present from the youthful past. But cinematic narration in *Good Vibrations* ultimately eschews a straightforward separation of the past and the present. Voiceover is important, as Terri's narration is a primary means by which tone is shaped, and the dynamic between past and present governed. Terri's acerbic commentary is used to create an ironic distance between word and image, whether that be the impatience with which he dismisses the term 'Troubles' as 'useless', or the arch humour of his description of his friendship with Eric (David Wilmot) as 'part pharmaceutical, part philosophical'. However, the film also obscures exactly how self-aware Terri is, and playfully varies how much control the narration has over the image.

Voiceover is foregrounded from Terri's opening statement 'Once upon a time in the city of Belfast, there lived a boy named Terry with a 'y''. The opening scene then sees Terri recount how he became 'Terri with an 'i'' after being shot with an arrow by a child in his neighbourhood. Voiceover is used to shape the scene's tongue-in-cheek tone, but Terri does not maintain the arch clarity about the absurdities of his younger self, or the control over the sites of memory and history, that Meena does in *Anita & Me*. Instead, Terri's narration oscillates between a dominant control of the image, to being absorbed in, and subservient to, the sites of the past. Terri's opening line initially sees voiceover as dominant over both image and sound as the music fades down so that he can be heard clearly. But, as the scene

[53] Tara Brady, 'Good Vibrations', *The Irish Times* (29th March, 2013),
<http://www.irishtimes.com/culture/film/good-vibrations-1.1341951>, Accessed 21st August, 2017.

progresses, there develops an interactivity between his speech and the world he is narrating that does not give one clear control over the other. Terri speaks in the past tense, but the voiceover is reactive to the events it narrates, frequently being interrupted by them in a manner that denies it any clear separation from the past. His statement 'everything was rosy' is cut off by an abrupt edit from the dreamlike slow motion of a young Terri running through his garden, to a close up of a sign getting hit by a tomato. Throughout the sequence, the rapid editing is neither subservient to, nor shaped by, the voiceover. Instead, editing establishes the separate elements of the scene in a patchwork, interweaving divergent modes of cinematography, *mise-en-scène*, diegetic dialogue, voiceover, and music. Thus, it is the editing rather than the voiceover that structures the scene, tying together the close-ups of the boys, their shouts, and the voice of young Terri, with the narration of his adult self, thereby immersing the voiceover in the world of the past.

The ambivalent nature of the voiceover's relationship to the past is reinforced by the scene's use of music, which itself holds an uncertain status. 'I Saw The Light' is both diegetically anchored to the record player on which the film opens, and detached from the scene as it bleeds into the montage of archival footage that follows. The move to archive also demonstrates another aspect to voiceover in the film, which is its ability to pause the timeline at certain moments, but also to lose control of the image entirely. It is the arrow in the diegesis of the film, not the voiceover, that drives the move into the next scene, as it abruptly interrupts Terri's narration. The shift in dynamic between the aural and visual is compounded when, after the doctor's assertion that Terri will 'see things differently', sound loses control of the image entirely as the quality of the music becomes haunted and echoing in response to the rapidly-cycling images of violence. The next time Terri's voice is

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heard, he is sitting on his sofa during the 1970s remarking 'what a fucking nightmare', his speech overtly expressing frustration at being trapped in, rather than in control of, the sites of history.

Good Vibrations thus creates sense of ambivalence surrounding not only how knowing Terri is, but also surrounding its own timeline, removing the direct and clear sense of momentum and teleology offered by *Anita & Me* through Meena's narration. The resultant effect is a film in which the tenses are somewhat obscured, a fact explicitly established in the subsequent scene in which Terri DJs to an empty club. The scene overtly plays with its use of tenses as Terri reminisces about a pre 1970s music scene in Belfast, and the past tense used within the voiceover narration is situated within the 1970s itself rather than in the present day,

> I'd been going out in this town since I was 15. I saw Roy Orbison at the Ritz. I saw the Rolling Stones at the Ulster Hall. I saw Dylan. I saw Hendrix. I saw The Who. The Animals. I saw the Kinks. I saw everyone. Everyone who came to Belfast, that is, and everyone did come. Until they stopped coming.

Once again, the voiceover occupies a reactive, rather than proactive, role as editing shapes the aural narration in the scene rather than the reverse. Cuts to an empty hall precede, and apparently prompt, Terri's remark that the residents of Belfast 'stopped coming', thereby compounding the sense that the past tense used in the narration is itself locked in the 1970s rather than delivered from the clarity of the present. As Terri meets his future wife Ruth (Jodie Whittaker), a complex interplay between the tenses used in the cinematic narration begins, a fact tacitly reinforced by the use of the Shangri-Las 'Past, Present and Future' to score the scene. Terri

remarks 'A proper record collection should have a track for every moment, and this was the moment for the Shangri-Las'. The dialogue itself blurs the tenses, simultaneously stressing the importance of that present tense moment in the 'this', being about the promise of a future relationship, and being narrated in the past tense while the camera's rhythmic glide along the bar gives the scene a reflective quality. Terri narrates the story of the lost music scene to Ruth within the diegesis of the scene itself, but that past is not easily contained. He lists the 'anarchist friends, and Marxist friends, and socialist friends, and pacifist friends, and feminist friends and… friends who were fuck-all' he has now lost to sectarian division. The tense of the diegetic space of the *mise-en- scène* itself becomes uncertain as the people he is recalling literally walk into the frame, the dreamlike surreal quality of the moment shaped by the slow-motion glide of the cinematography. The unstable status of the scene is compounded aurally. The music is originally anchored to the diegesis of the club in 1970s Belfast as Terri selects the record to play. However, it is then decoupled from the moment shared with Ruth as the song bleeds into the murmurs of the crowd of Belfast's former social landscape and Terri's past self, who walks into the shot handing out drinks.

Pam Cook and Annette Kuhn align cinema's ability to replicate the formal properties of memory with an affectively potent and emotionally intensive tone.[54] Conversely, in *Good Vibrations*, the irreverent construction of its central character is frequently reflected back on the formal language of memory to imbue it with an ironic and caustic tone. Moments when the film replicates the affectively potent

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[54] Pam Cook, *Screening the Past: Memory and Nostalgia in Cinema* (London: Routledge, 2005), Annette Kuhn, *Family Secrets: Acts of Memory and Imagination* (London: Verso, 2002).

properties of memory, such as the fragmented opening and the use of archive, are interwoven with moments when the cinematic language of subjective experience is undermined with humour. Examples include Terri's drug-fuelled flight over London, and the return of 'I saw the light', the song that scored the film's more haunted opening, as a drunk Terri lies back on his bed and the film depicts his inebriated vision of the unifying power of music. More unsettlingly, this cartoonish subversion of the cinematic language of memory is used in scenes that draw on historical trauma, as for example when Eric recounts his abduction by sectarian militants. Eric's story is accompanied by a flashback that is constructed in a slightly cartoonish fashion as he stares directly at the camera while narrating the events as they occur around him. The scene is concluded by a series of still images that are rapidly edited together. The cuts are accompanied by sound clips of scissors snipping as the scene utilises the mish-mash DIY aesthetic of punk. The flashback is thus linked to Terri's punkish imagination as he listens, but the film uses the unique eccentricity of that perspective to unsettling effect. The cinematic language of memory, usually used with emotive intensity when exploring traumatic history on screen, is thus deployed in a manner that interweaves arch irony and comic distance with affective absorption.

Location, Consumerism and Identity

The use of tone and tense is of interest. In many ways *Good Vibrations* engages with the preoccupations of retro as articulated by Fisher and Reynolds. However, the film addresses these issues through a different tone to hauntological discourse, and one that shifts the relationship between past and present, and time and place. *Good*

Vibrations thus addresses questions of location and identity in a unique manner. Consumerism is more explicitly addressed in this film than any other considered in the thesis and it becomes a key means by which Terri shapes both himself and the world around him. Terri is a consumer, and the film utilises fragments of the mediated past to tell his story. But rather than offering a deterritorialized and privatised splintering of collective culture, *Good Vibrations* deeply intertwines its central character with place, as the film follows Terri's self-conscious attempt to carve out a space for collective consumption in amongst a landscape of politicised national trauma.

Good Vibrations sets up a sense of fluidity and exchange between character and location. Terri is presented as living a regionally and historically specific existence, being both representative of, and actively wanting to shape, his location. He aims to transform both the literal space of the city by creating safe places for the youths to enjoy a local music scene, as well as influence the city's mediated image – visual and aural – locally, nationally, and internationally. The film opens with an act of politicised violence by local children, before linking Terri's childhood to the wider history of Northern Ireland through the archival montage. Terri is thus established as a product of his time and circumstance. However, there is immediately a sense of interaction and exchange between Terri and his historical environment, as he switches off the television and walks outside determined to shape the landscape of Belfast in his own vision.

As explored in Chapter Three, the dynamic between public and private is a flashpoint in representations of the Troubles on screen. The threshold of the home is frequently presented as the site where public and private space intersect, and violence crosses into the lives of ordinary families. *Good Vibrations* reverses this

flow. In the film, it is the world of the domestic, and the pleasures of consumption and companionship that saturate it, that repeatedly spill out from home to street. Frequently scenes take place on thresholds, whether that be the doorstop of Terri's new house, or the entrance of the Good Vibrations record store. The sequence in which Terri and his friends open the store begins with a cut from the sectarian space of the pub to the contrasting communal landscape of the store. There is exchange with the street as Terri rolls out a sign onto the pavement. As the group stand drinking whiskey out of teacups on the doorstep of the shop, the threshold is marked as simultaneously communal, commercial, and domestic. Cuts between close-ups of the ephemera inside (tills, money, records), and outside, blend the two spaces, creating a sense of unity rather than of a breach in their exchange. The scene concludes by stressing the effect of the interior space on the exterior. It closes with a longshot from outside the window that frames the group dancing inside while light spills into the darkened street, before cutting to a long shot of the store's sign left out in the street at night.

Good Vibrations is not only about a character who is representative of a space and place in time, but about Terri's active attempts to shape it, and his use of consumerism to do so. Representation of the music industry is of interest in this regard, particularly when considering the tendency of music biopics to draw a distinction between the romantic figure of the artist and the capitalist industry that surrounds them. A relevant example would be Anton Corbijn's *Control* and the manner in which Ian Curtis (Sam Riley), as the worthy figure of the romantic artist, sits in opposition to representatives of the music industry, such as the band's canny and financially-minded manager Rob Gretton (Tony Kebbell), or the comedic Factory Records owner and television presenter Tony Wilson (Craig Parkinson).

Good Vibrations, by contrast, offers an interesting reconfiguration of this dynamic. Simon Reynolds argues that 'one of punk's genuinely revolutionary aspects' was 'the reinvention of the independent record label' as a response to 'the feeling that rock 'n' roll had been taken over by corporations and degenerated into showbiz'.[55] *Good Vibrations* constructs a vision of the music industry that separates both the independent producers and socially-minded BBC from the corporate aspects of the industry. In contrast to the cynical greed of Gretton or the comedic buffoonery of Wilson in *Control*, *Good Vibrations* presents the architects of the independent music scene and the civically-minded BBC as what might best be described as romantic consumers.

BBC Radio DJ John Peel serves as the apotheosis of this figure, entering the film immediately after Terri's drunk, yet inspired, vision of a local community united by music. Interestingly, Peel's cameo is given the most 'Rock Star' presence in the film, a mystique exacerbated by the fact that the real Peel died nearly ten years before *Good Vibrations*' production. Peel's name is mentioned throughout while he remains unseen. There is a sense of escalation towards his presentation that aligns his introduction with the Belfast music scene's journey towards success. Peel is introduced by photograph, then as an absent presence in the BBC studio, before his voice is briefly heard during the radio debut of 'Teenage Kicks'. His appearance at the concert that concludes *Good Vibrations* is utilised to signal the film's zenith. Actor Kieron Forsyth, playing Peel, arrives at Terri's moment of ultimate despair to bring news that the concert is a success. Peel's embodied introduction is weighted for maximum impact. The camera follows Forsyth over the shoulder into the hall,

[55] Simon Reynolds, *Retromania: Pop Culture's Addiction to Its Own Past* (New York: Faber and Faber, Inc., 2011), p. 249 – 252.

further delaying the reveal of his face whilst mirroring his movement and giving it purpose. There is then a cut to the band members of Rudi on stage who remark 'it's John fucking Peel' in a reversal of the star-struck dynamic that normally sees members of the audience react with reverence to those on stage.

Despite his star quality, Peel, like Terri, is nevertheless presented as a true fan of music. He is introduced in archival footage with two photographs that stress his dual identity as industry professional and music fan, but with weight given to the latter over the former. The photograph on the left shows him at work in a radio studio, but it is smaller and heavily pixelated. The frame is weighted to stress the picture on the right, which is clear, larger, and shows him sitting amongst the crowd in a field at Glastonbury Festival, smiling at the unseen act on stage. He holds a camera in his hand, but it is facing downwards as he is caught up in the moment of performance rather than the attempt to document it - the ultimate music fan. Far from being an act of passive absorption in a hyper-mediated world, media and consumer culture, and consumerism itself, is presented throughout the film as an act of creative expression and the means by which environment can be shaped.

Crucially, Terri's role as an active consumer is driven by his collective desire to reshape his location and its artistic legacy rather than his own. The film's opening title, 'based on the true stories of Terri Hooley', makes this clear; he might be the focus, but the point of interest is not one man, story singular, but rather the collective stories of the place that he inhabited. The representation of music is key in establishing this focus. The manner in which cinematic narration aligns the viewer with Terri as he experiences music also plays an important role. This chapter

challenges the division in critical discourse between the distance of the heritage gaze and the immersed subjectivity of alternative heritage, and *Good Vibrations* encompasses both points of view. Scenes of live music are constructed around Terri's ability to stand back and survey the effect of the music, while simultaneously stressing his own immersion in the evanescent moment of the live performance. The camera focuses on the audience rather than the act at gigs, and the cinematography is aligned with Terri's point of view as a watcher in the crowd. Music in these scenes is used to bind together the aural with the different aspects of the visual on screen, stressing its collective qualities.

This precedent is established at Terri's first gig, which functions as his awakening to the unifying potential of a local music scene. The scene opens with an over the shoulder shot of Terri and his business partner Dave (Michael Colgan) as they stand in the foreground with their backs to the camera. Local band Rudi play on stage in the background of the shot. The centre point of the image is the crowd who occupy the middle of the frame and who obscure the band on the stage. The film cuts to the reverse angle of the shot, but again the diegetic audience continues to dominate the screen rather than the individualised figures of Terri and Dave. The crowd move in the foreground of the frame, and Terri's gaze is drawn to them rather than to the act on the stage. As the scene progresses it explicitly becomes about the power of unity between audience, musicians, and Terri, as close-ups of Rudi are intercut with close-ups of the audience. Terri moves to the bar to survey the whole scene. There is then a cut to a point-of-view shot that pans across the space of the pub, reflecting Terri's focus on the potential of the crowd rather than the band. This potential is then made explicit as the music fans in the pub force members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary out of their space with united chanting led by Rudi. The

scene ends with a close-up of Terri staring at the band in wonder, for the first time being truly interested in them as he recognises the power of unity they generate, and that unity's ability to reclaim the space of the pub from the intrusion of sectarian divide.

This image of collective unity through music embodies the film's project to articulate the shared identity of a particular place and space in time. Martin McLoone argues that the punk movement in Belfast, while being in direct dialogue with its London-based cousin, stood for something rather different in its Northern Irish context. Reynolds has described punk in mainland UK as being 'driven by an apocalyptic appetite for destruction and collapse' that rejected 'the sixties idea of progression and maturity', and was 'literally hopeless'.[56] In contrast, McLoone argues that 'punk in Northern Ireland offered a confrontational style that in the end seemed to endorse the old hippies dream of peace, love and understanding'.[57] Punk in Northern Ireland thus became not 'a revolt against the complacent certainties of the parental generation', but against 'the complacent certainties of a sectarian political culture' that had fostered 'social disharmony and communal breakdown'.[58] In this context, far from the vehement nihilism of the Sex Pistol's 'no future for you', punk in Belfast opened up a brief space for communal unity and hope.

Good Vibration's representation of punk thereby involves the intersection of questions of identity, location, and history. I previously questioned whether or not the 1970s exists on a different timeline in different parts of the national body. That

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[56] Reynolds, *Retromania,* p. 240.
[57] Martin McLoone, *Film, Media and Popular Culture in Ireland: Cityscapes, Landscapes, Soundscapes* (Norfolk: Biddles Ltd., 2008), p. 179.
[58] Ibid., p. 177.

question is relevant here when considering how *Good Vibrations* explores and reverses the ebb and flow between the mainland music scene of the decade and its incarnation in Belfast. The film self-consciously addresses the relationship between the local, national, and global in a particular place at a particular time, and it uses consumerism to do so. From the opening where Terri is politically labelled and targeted, *Good Vibrations* self-consciously challenges the question of identity. 'Terry' becomes 'Terri', and he uses this change to switch off the mediated images of violence in Belfast, before going out into the streets to transform the space of the city. Thus, rather than following an individual's quest to express and shape the self, *Good Vibrations* follows Terri's quest to collectively express and re-shape Belfast.

1970s Belfast is the point of interest for McLoone as he explores the punk movement of the time. Similarly, for *Good Vibrations*, it is 1970s Belfast that is the point of interest as the film explores the life of Terri Hooley and his determination to carve out a space for what might almost be described as a third way identity in between the sectarian divide. Terri's position as neither one thing nor the other is reinforced throughout. This is done visually through repeated shots of him either breaking the composure of the frame or being centrally positioned in between divided groups of people. It is also done verbally when he states 'I didn't consider myself either [protestant or catholic]', and challenges his father's rigid approach to social reform questioning 'did it ever occur to you that there might be more than one alternative?'. Terri's quest to reclaim the lost space of the city echoes what McLoone identifies as the punk movement's attempt to open up a 'new space' in 'the darkened and empty urban streets'.[59] This project is most explicitly embodied in the opening of the record store in Victoria street, transforming the colloquially-known 'Bomb

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[59] Ibid., p. 181.

Alley'. The record store operates as a place of sanctuary for local youth, and Terri aims to expand that space of safety and pleasure, whether by taking gigs out on the road at a time when night driving is fraught with danger, or by forcing the RUC out of the pub.

Good Vibrations offers a self-aware deconstruction of identity whereby it is shown to fluid and complex, but simultaneously historically contingent and grounded in local experience. The film explores identity while also approaching the subject with wary cynicism. *Good Vibrations* does not simply present the binary of an emergent identity bound in consumerism and popular culture, and the traditional rigidities of sectarian divide. Instead, the film explores the complexities and limits of both, blurring distinctions as much as separating them. There is a biting impatience with labels across the spectrum, from those of popular culture to those of national identity and political affiliation. The opening sees the failed attempt of Terri to correct neighbourhood children with 'My Dad's not a communist, he's a socialist', before they change his personal identity from 'Terry with a y' to 'Terri with an i' without his consent or control. This fluidity is bound with violence, an association further evidenced when he lists how his 'anarchist friends, and Marxist friends, and socialist friends, and pacifist friends, and feminist friends, and friends who were fuck-all' were lost as 'the first shot was fired, the first bomb exploded […] suddenly I didn't have any more Marxist or feminist or anarchist friends. I just had Catholic friends and Protestant friends.'

Notably, sectarian identity is presented as being as equally flexible, and even superficial, as other forms of identity. Chapter Three explored how texts representing

the conflict in Northern Ireland often draw a distinction between the older members of sectarian groups and the emergence of increasingly violent younger members during the 1970s. *Good Vibrations* repeats this trope, marking the more traditional signifiers of identity such as religious or communal background as fluid and historically contingent as they are shown to shift over time. Moments of unity and connection between disparate groups allows the film to underline the complexities of identity, as well as the fatigue of the people caught up in a conflict shaped by it. Terri and Rudi are stopped on the road by British soldiers as the conflict again disrupts and reverses ordinary life; the band members humorously line up on the side of the van facing the grass verge to urinate, but are then forced to the other side of the van and lined up against it by the military. Terri then physically turns around, breaking the composure of the shot, and faces the soldier in a moment of companionship as they bond over their shared disdain toward the devastating consequences of intransigent politics. This moment breaks through the soldier's identity as a member of the British Army, embodied in his uniform, and Terri and the bandmembers' unmarked identity as either Protestant or Catholic, and visible identity as music fans with their punk clothing and hair.

This cynicism towards identity extends to consumer culture, which it is not cleanly celebrated as either a promising capitalist utopia or the means of self-determination and liberation. Terri's father's scathing assessment of the music industry as 'the most rotten industry there is… Bribes, payola, cartels' is reinforced by Eric's entrepreneurial success in the drug trade that is facilitated through his music industry connections. Hooley Senior's statement is further reinforced by the visual motif of shots of music executives, framed squarely and facing the camera from across their desk, which draw parallels between the executives and the

similarly framed bank manager. This motif is echoed in shots of Terri himself in his own store, interweaving the financial and corporate with Terri's project.

Furthermore, the film does not avoid the problematic aspects of the emergent liberties surrounding identity. Pop culture ephemera is shown to be a means of expressing new forms of identity, a notable example being the 'Peace and Love' lapel badge on Terri's chest. The badge is foregrounded early in the film when Terri runs into a former friend and now paramilitary member who flicks the badge whilst remarking 'I'd forgotten about those'. As the music scene develops its growing reach is reflected in the badges seen behind the shop counter, whose number increases as the film progresses. The badges thus come to function as physical embodiments of the sanctuary offered by an emergent form of identity based on music. However, as Mark Fisher states in his discussion of retro signifiers in *Life on Mars,* 'everything is so iconic and the thing with icons, after all, is that they evoke nothing'.[60] The liberating promise of decoupling symbols from their original context and meaning is celebrated in *Good Vibrations*. The film nevertheless problematizes this project through the unsettling use of a confederate flag on the lapel of the Rudi guitarist, which offers an uncomfortable contrast to the peace and love badges. The peace signs themselves are undermined by their presence on the side of the building of the 'fucking hippies' who have won a Nobel peace prize, but who refuse to fund Terri's store. Symbols of musical success are also challenged as Terri pulls gold records off the walls of the executives and smashes them in a rage, before hyperbolically branding the executives 'fascists', thereby undermining his earlier measured rebuttal to his father's critique of the industry.

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[60] Fisher, *Ghosts of My Life*, p. 76/77.

Good Vibrations thus approaches the signifiers of identity with cynicism and wariness. Importantly, however, film approaches regional identity not as an academic or theoretical pursuit, but as territorialized and real. *Good Vibrations* clearly establishes a project to not just wrestle the territory of Belfast from sectarian division, but to reconfigure Belfast in the wider imaginary. The introduction, which concludes with archival images of violence, foregrounds the widely mediated picture of Belfast as a site of incomprehensible chaos. The subsequent scene addresses the withdrawal of both tourists and residents from the space of the city, as Terri lists the bands who once toured there but who stopped after the escalation of violence, a list that precedes his closest friend Eric telling him he is 'clearing off to London for a while' after being abducted by paramilitary forces.

Like *Shadow Dancer*, *Good Vibrations* addresses the power dynamic between London and Belfast, albeit through a struggle for cultural capital rather than military or political. Dave Russell has explored London's dominance in the music industry in relation to bands from the North of England. Russell argues that much of the popular culture produced in those regions is in part defined by its relationship with, and resistance to, London.[61] This dynamic is reflected in *Good Vibrations* where it is exacerbated by the politicised relationship between the heart of the British State and Northern Ireland during the 1970s. Violence is shown to have destroyed the local music scene of the 1960s and repelled touring musicians from the city. The conflict is also depicted as having trapped the local bands and prevented any chance

[61] Russell, *Looking North*.

of them achieving wider success, as evidenced when the frustrated members of Rudi remark 'who's gonna come to Belfast to sign us'.

However *Good Vibrations* is not just about London's dominance or Belfast's attempts to resist it. Instead, the film focuses on the possibility of engaging with the dynamic between the two places in order to reverse the flow. This potential is expressed in Terri's determination to drag the heart of music culture away from the centre to the periphery. Terri's initial project sees him keen to bring outside forms of music to Belfast, but once the city's music scene begins to develop, he immediately privileges local bands. He thus sticks a poster for Rudi and The Outcasts over one of the Rolling Stones and chooses domestic bands to fill the Ulster Hall over the 'fucking show bands' of the internationally recognised Clash or Siouxie Sioux as suggested by the financially-minded Dave. This project culminates in Terri's visit to London. London is initially equated to Belfast in its introduction by archival footage. However, the capital is pointedly differentiated as the stock images depict a city of tourism and leisure, offering a stark contrast to the politicised images of violence used to introduce Belfast. The postcard image of London is then exaggerated and undermined in Terri's drug-induced kaleidoscopic vision of flying over the city, its landmarks springing up like cardboard cutouts. Terri then encounters a reality constructed out of image and façade in a series of shots of the impregnable doors of the record companies which bar his entrance to the industry. Each shot is followed by a subsequent interview with a corporate executive who exhibits a shallow interest in image rather than quality of music. The subsequent effect is that it is the UK capital, rather than Belfast, that is presented as a city that is, quite literally in Terri's flight over it, two-dimensional.

Good Vibrations frequently appeals to the legacy of popular culture. However, the film does so in a manner that foregrounds the characters' subjective experience of that popular culture in the historical moment of its production, rather than the sounds or images that have lasted through history. The montage of the pressing of Rudi's record 'Big Time' interweaves the production of the record with a conversation between the band and Terri, the meaning of which relies on an unspoken understanding of the challenges faced by local bands in that particular historical circumstance. This specificity is juxtaposed with images of the record being pressed, as the film cuts from one image of the sleeve, to a kaleidoscope of the same image multiplied many times, signalling the record's move into the broader public consciousness and mediated memory. The film's foregrounding of the records themselves, as well as providing the nostalgic pleasures of retro, is also evidence of a music scene where the songs produced ultimately became more famous nationally and internationally than the individuals or bands who made them. 'Teenage Kicks' is the most successful record to emerge from the Belfast Punk scene. It is also a song that is notable for being, perhaps uniquely, associated more with the Radio DJ who first played it (John Peel), than with the band who wrote it, or the place and space that they represent.

The film acknowledges the elided nature of the history it documents but simultaneously aims to circumvent it. The pinnacle of the 'Big Time' montage is not Rudi's debut on Top of the Pops, or even their signing by a major record label, but the arrival of the pressed single at the record store before it achieves renown. Furthermore, *Good Vibrations* exhibits a notable disdain toward the impact of this wider mediated success outside of Belfast. The Top of the Pops debuts of both Rudi and The Undertones are experienced at a distance from Northern Ireland, and the

only tour depicted in the film is that of local villages. The culminating moment of achievement, the radio debut of 'Teenage Kicks', is thus experienced on the streets of Belfast, grounding the single in space and time. The importance of location in this moment is stressed as Terri ignores the telephone call from the representative of Sire Records in London to walk out onto the street whilst commanding 'Tell [the executive] if he wants to talk to me, he can come here and do it'. The transformative power of Terri's words is underlined by a high angle shot of Terri standing bathed in the spotlight of an army helicopter, with the militarised space of the street being converted into one of the concert.

The film focuses on the regional but situates its story nationally and globally. The regional is thus offered as a space in which to establish collective forms of identity through which the ebb and flow of market forces between the centres of power and outside can be encountered and shaped. Anxieties surrounding the erosion of local identity are thus countered by the vibrancy of exchange. London might be ridiculed upon Terri's arrival, but its role in inspiring the music scene in Belfast is simultaneously reinforced as Terri remarks 'what's London ever given us? Apart from Ray Davies. And Joe Meek. And John Lydon. And The Clash. And… fuck… Abbey Road.' The enmeshment of the local with sectarian divide in *Good Vibrations* means that the realities of a territorialized and fixed existence are offset by a knowing awareness of the importance of fluidity and exchange. The film thus acknowledges the dangers of what Boym recognises in idealised and fixed utopias of lost homelands.[62] What is mourned instead in *Good Vibrations* is Belfast as the site

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[62] Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001).

where the local, national, and global can intersect, as evidenced by Terri's opening eulogy for the city as the site of touring artists, and his project to open it up once again to the wider music world.

Global exchange is foregrounded as necessary and liberating, as is the ability of image and sound to become deterritorailzied and thereby to travel through space and time. Terri aims to open up Belfast once again as the hub of a flow between national and international music cultures, but he does so through the privileging of a location in a specific moment in history. Thus the film reinforces McLoone's assertion that punk in its Belfast incarnation, through the realities of the everyday challenges it was rebelling against, had an authenticity and specificity to its project that its British incarnation lacked.[63]

The final gig declares this sentiment emphatically, not only through the film's cinematography which, as discussed earlier, privileges the collective unity of the audience, but through Terri's dialogue as he remarks,

> No leaders, no Godfathers. Thank you for coming. When I look at youse all gathered here it confirms something I've always felt. When it comes to punk, New York has the haircuts, London has the trousers, but Belfast has the reason. Good Vibrations isn't a record shop. It's a way of life.

The film thus concludes with a celebration of a place and space in time that is nevertheless shared with the outside world. Terri situates Belfast's punk scene within a larger global movement, whilst privileging the evanescent collectivity of its regional incarnation. This duality is reinforced through the figure of John Peel who

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[63] Martin McLoone, *Film, Media and Popular Culture in Ireland*, p. 166/7

introduces Terri and who symbolises a wider media legacy as he remarks 'Belfast

has the best audience'.

Part Three: Archive, Image and (no) Conclusion

Perhaps justifiably, *Good Vibrations* has been criticised as an uneven film that struggles to smoothly integrate its generic structure, patchwork aesthetic, and traumatic subject matter. However, its inconsistency plays a crucial part in establishing what is the defining characteristic of the two films with which I have chosen to close the thesis. Both *Anita & Me* and *Good Vibrations*, through tone, narration, and structure, offer a different way of holding the past in the present. These films might be defined as creating a sense of acceptance towards the histories they depict that none of the other case studies possess. *Anita & Me* separates the past and present and utilises cinematic narration and a pragmatic tone to create a teleological sense of momentum, leaving the 1970s comfortably behind at its conclusion. For *Good Vibrations*, it is the film's ability to hold contradiction rather than resolution that enables it to create a sense of acceptance and explore a story that is part of an unhappy past, but whose core runs in between the trauma that has echoed on in image.

Good Vibrations is historically specific and determined to anchor itself to a place and space in time. However, the film is simultaneously comfortable with not providing conclusions or answers for the history amongst which it takes place. This ability to hold contradiction is embodied in the film's patchwork form and the blurred tenses of its cinematic narration. It is also evident in the use of archive, where frequently image cannot be held comfortably by narration, whether cinematic or aural. *Good Vibrations* positions itself as telling the story of a character and a place who are what time and circumstance made them. Crucially, however, the film

also presents the history it depicts as an evanescent moment among many, creating ebb and flow rather than circularity, and acceptance rather than melancholia. The film's open ending is not positioned as a traumatic inability to offer solutions, but rather as an understanding of the story it tells as being one among many, and one that will continue beyond the span of time addressed by the film. Thus, a caption that tells of the store's closure in 1982 is immediately followed by one telling of its reopening in 1984, then closure in 1991, re-opening in 1992, closure in 2002, and then reopening in 2004. The final caption 'Terri still hasn't had his signed photo of the Shangri-las' ends the film on a beat of whimsy that recognises the continuation of, and lack of conclusion for, a past event in the present, with the 'still' raising a tongue-in-cheek expectation for the future. Here as elsewhere in the film, it is *Good Vibrations*' ability to construct a 1970s that is historically contingent that is crucial in its ability to deal with the seventies as a decade of trauma and violence. The refusal to conclude is bound in a refusal to offer answers or solutions to the past. Instead, the film accepts a lack of resolution and does not offer either vindication or tragedy in the life-story of its protagonist. Terri's personal arc is left unresolved as *Good Vibrations* balances collective moments of triumph with personal moments of unhappiness. *Anita & Me* creates comfort and security as Meena 'grows up' to become Meera Syal and separates herself from her story in the film. The zenith of *Good Vibrations*, however, are evanescent moments of collective unity, such as listening to Teenage Kicks on the radio or the Ulster Hall concert, rather than the attainment of long-term success or transformation by Terri.

 Good Vibrations is notable for its irreverent humour and anarchic disregard for the conventions of representing traumatic histories on screen. The film nevertheless approaches its subject matter with an earnest tone that is able to

articulate and hold sadness. Pain and its historical echo form a part of Fisher's hauntological examination of the past but, despite his criticisms of the chic aesthetic of *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*, there is a stillness and a distance in Fisher's work that, I would argue, situate it similarly within the realms of cool. Fisher critiques *Tinker Tailor* for its sheen, but I would argue that it is not glossy so much as frozen and withheld: to be cool is to be brief, uninvolved, and in control of your own emotions. *Tinker Tailor* draws on national trauma in the shape of a post-war landscape devastated by World War II, and the Cold War that arose in its aftermath. Pain and trauma thus sit at the edges of *Tinker Tailor*, but, with its controlled aesthetic and circular story, the film creates a frozen stasis that is defined by these two things whilst being unable to articulate them or move forward. When *Tinker Tailor* deals with the 1970s in image, most explicitly in the cultural legacy of the texts it draws upon, it does so in a controlled manner, solidifying cultural validity through Oldman's opaque performance and its expensive aesthetic. Alfredson's film separates its environs from millennial Britain in a self-contained and self-regulating world protected by its own coolness and circularity. In contrast, *Good Vibrations*' scrappy aesthetic and earnest approach to its subject matter eschews cool, intermingling humour with sadness and distance with inertia. Although messy, this mix indicates a certain acceptance of a traumatic past for which the film can offer neither answers nor resolutions.

The repeated use of archive is emblematic of this approach. The proliferation of archive throughout the film acknowledges both the dominance of images of violence in relation to Northern Ireland in the wider public memory, as well as the trauma that defined the lived experience of the decade in that region. Sandbrook's documentary series utilised fragments of archive to build a tangible sense of 'HMS

Britain', sailing forth on a bumpy but linear journey across the twentieth century. In *The 70s* disparate pieces of archival footage are contained by narration; both aural in Sandbrook's voiceover, and visual in the televisual narration of the programme itself. In this manner fragments of image in *The 70s* are 'rebuilt' into a cohesive whole in service of a greater picture. *Good Vibrations* also relies on the use of archive, and the film similarly intermingles disparate types of footage – cinematic, televisual, political, and entertainment. By contrast, however, *Good Vibrations* nevertheless concedes that there are moments when the archive cannot be contained or controlled by its own narration. When Rudi and Terri return to a Belfast besieged by another wave of violence, the film cuts between disparate archival shots of the city burning and close-ups of each individual character. These close-ups break the diegesis of the story as the actors face the camera whilst sitting in front of a staged black background while light flickers on their faces, ostensibly from the fire in the footage itself.

This use of archive embodies several of the anxieties expressed in different texts throughout this thesis: the idea that image has exceeded history, the idea that the past cannot be easily separated from the present, and the idea that grand narratives have irreparably shattered into fragments. But *Good Vibrations* does not try to solve these problems. Nor does it offer resolution for the moments when the images of the past spill out into the diegesis of the story being told. Instead, the film is comfortable with discomfort and rather than giving itself the burden of re-writing or re-contextualising a history bound in trauma, it accepts the devastating legacy that persists in image at the edges of its story.

The 1970s is arguably a stress point in Northern Irish history, being the apex of violence in a traumatic and long-lasting conflict. *Good Vibrations*, from its

opening, aims to position the decade as such. Nevertheless, the film ultimately reconciles the past it revisits by situating it within the wider ebbs and flows of history, positioning the story as one amongst multiple stories and multiple times. After Ruth tells Terri she is pregnant, there is a cut from him staring out of a window of a bus to archival footage that mirrors the image of Terri as an unnamed child stares back from his own bus window in the archive. This leads into more archival footage of children and their parents with the disparate images being tied together by Terri's narration as he muses on parenthood. The sequence concludes with a shot of a family running across a street that bears the marks of violence as a car burns in the background.

The sequence is scored by Suicide's 'Dream Baby Dream'. In both aesthetic and tone it echoes an Adam Curtis documentary as electronic music and arch narration stitch together archival footage of twentieth-century history. But at the core of Curtis' use of archive is the sense that, behind the footage that is being sewn back together, there is a wider, lurking narrative of power, the full picture of which lies just outside the edge of our comprehension. *Good Vibrations* similarly bleeds Terri and his life into a twentieth century shaped by inertia and the image. However, what defines this sequence is its ability to account for trauma and sadness, but in a manner that accepts an unhappy past and lets it go. Instead, the sequence shows a moment in time and space, one that is interwoven with uncontainable images of trauma that it does not feel the need to contextualise or narrate. *Good Vibrations* offers no claim of making its past less uncomfortable, or of making the messy disparate aspects cohere. Instead, in looking at the images on the wall of Plato's cave, it recognises that all it can do is shrug.

Conclusion

This thesis aimed to understand how the seventies are remembered in contemporary Britain by mapping representations of the decade in televisual and filmic texts of the twenty-first century. The thesis outlined how the seventies are reconstructed and reflected upon, and how representations of the decade have changed over the past ten years. In so doing, the thesis explored how and why the seventies have become a privileged site through which to understand the present, and what that in turn reveals about how British society sees itself today. In order the achieve this, the thesis married a socio-historical understanding of Britain during both the 1970s and after the millennium when the texts were made with close textual analysis of how the past is constructed in visual media. The thesis used these discussions to engage with broader questions of history and historiography as it considered how these particular pasts exist in relation to the present.

Chapter One reviewed scholarly literature to outline the relevant critical fields. The chapter also identified key themes and questions in historical and historiographical discourses that are not just reflected in the core texts but, in some cases, actively engaged with. Chapter Two looked at texts that took as their focus the state and intertwined historical representation with generic history. The chapter established the importance of tone and point of view in constructing the past on screen, a focus that was developed across the rest of the thesis. Chapter Three looked at the traumatic legacy of the 'Troubles' on screen and how this difficult history is dealt with in the case studies. The chapter explored the complexities of 'national' history by asking if the decade must be remembered differently in different parts of the United Kingdom. Finally, the thesis concluded with case studies that engage with

questions of retro and consumer culture and the construction of consumer identities. I demonstrated how these texts offset anxieties surrounding the past's unwanted persistence or loss in the present by establishing a different relationship between past, present, and future to those of previous case studies.

Three main areas of consideration underpinned this thesis, the first of which might be described as sociohistorical. The thesis aimed to understand the significance of the 1970s as a historical period itself, while also exploring what the decade offers as a site to revisit in present-day Britain. The thesis displayed an awareness of the artificiality of dividing history into ten-year chunks, but nevertheless asserted the significance and importance of the 1970s as a meaningful historical period. I explored how the decade is presented as a time when material changes were made in British society. The seventies is defined by the collapse of the post-war consensus and the ascendency of much of what shaped the subsequent forty years: globalisation, economic liberalism, consumerism, and individualism. The thesis outlined the unique relationship the 1970s has to the present day as the decade in which 'modern Britain' was born. I explored how the seventies has become an important site to revisit in our own troubled times as the liberal world order that arose out of the chaos of the decade itself comes under attack in the aftermath of the financial crisis of 2008. I demonstrated how the decade's unique relationship with contemporary Britain allows it to become a site where the anxieties and hopes that have been borne out by recent historical events are articulated and explored in my case studies. Looking back at the shifting representations of the 1970s made between 2002 and 2014 allows for the identification of many of the ambivalences and anxieties that have driven and shaped a post-Brexit national landscape. These texts

foreshadow our contemporary climate, in which any sense that the issues of the 1970s were resolved has been undermined. This is evident in the destabilising effects of financial austerity following the crisis in 2008, the re-emergence (or death rattle) of nationalism, the UK's exit from the European Union, and the resurgence of tensions concerning Northern Ireland.

The second area of consideration might be termed 'textual'. The thesis offered an in-depth exploration of the complexities with which the past is constructed on screen. Close textual analysis allowed me to assert and demonstrate the importance of the undervalued and oft-ignored role of point of view and tone. It has been a central aim of this thesis to demonstrate how television and cinema utilise their linguistic and narrational capacities to shape the past in the present. I provided close textual readings of my case studies that moved away from reductive binaries and fully explored complexity within individual texts. I identified how cinematic narration is predominantly responsible for governing how the past is experienced in the present, and how it can operate with a complexity that allows it to speak in a multiplicity of tenses. Rather than trying to identify a 1970s aesthetic or style, comparison and contradiction has been explored across the body of work by a focus on narration, point of view, and the importance of tone.

The thesis aimed to address the critical deficit of in-depth analyses of tone. Analysis of my case studies identified the richness of tone in visual texts and the central role it plays in shaping the past in the present. Thus, while Douglas Pye attaches tone to a rather reductive description of 'attitude', careful analysis of my case studies revealed the richness of tone as existing in the intersection of image, sound and, through editing, space and time. I demonstrated the reliance on tone and mood in both case studies and critical discourse to articulate concepts explored

throughout the thesis such as time, the legacy of the past, loss, and trauma. It is through tone that these concepts are most powerfully engaged with whether that be Freud's writing on melancholia or Koestler's conception of the Oceanic Sense. In this manner, I hope to have broadened the critical understanding of the importance of tone by demonstrating how its ephemeral nature offers a rich space for idea and emotion to meet and create meaning.

Tone as a space for emotion and concept to meet brings me to the final area of consideration in the thesis. This area encompasses broader questions of history and historiography as I looked at how the texts reflect and engage with universal questions of the past and its legacy in the present. Thus, I considered how the texts use tone and point of view to shape the intersection of the individual and the national, the personal and the collective, and the persistence or loss of the past in the present. I also used a focus on tone and point of view to approach the vast and unwieldly question of image as I considered how the texts dealt with the sonic and visual legacy of past forms of popular culture. Throughout these discussions my major consideration, and one that drew together close textual analysis of both tone and point of view, was the question of how the past is situated in relation to the present. I explored how my texts understand the past and, through it, history, with a focus on the concept of the national. If, as it is frequently presented, the 1970s is the decade of modern Britain's birth, then understanding how it is reflected upon and reconstructed in the present illuminates much about the nation's sense of self. These questions are particularly resonant in a contemporary climate where discourse surrounding the place the nation and national identity in the twenty-first century has exploded.

Throughout the thesis I aimed to understand how and to what effect my case studies shaped the historical timeline, whether that be with a teleological sense of linear progression or the circular stasis of melancholia. Starting from Freud's juxtaposition of the circularity of melancholia with the linear progression of mourning, I considered how both momentum and stasis are created and operate within my case studies. As part of my aim to avoid reductive binaries I considered how both these qualities interact within individual texts. I explored how the texts use these qualities to position the past in relation to the present. Chapter Two explored histories that in one way or another have collapsed and are floating in the shadowlands of grief. These texts revisit the decade through the rubric of grief and loss. Thus, *Life on Mars* anxiously positions the 1970s as the last bastion of a lost national landscape, while the muted rage of *Red Riding* configures the decade as site of unresolved primal trauma. *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* offers a cool deflection of pain as the film recreates a circular Britain on the autumnal cusp of decline. Chapter Three considers the difficulties of leaving behind a particular historical period, especially one with a pervasive media legacy. In these Northern Irish set texts, the 1970s exists as the site of a primal trauma, the legacy of which must be dealt with in the present. The chapter explored how films such as *Five Minutes of Heaven*, *Shadow Dancer*, and *'71* deal with the persistence of the conflict in image. The chapter also identified how new ways of engaging with this difficult past and its legacy on screen have emerged over the course of the twenty-first century. Chapter Four dealt with two films that engage with retro and popular culture. In critical discourse retro and nostalgia are typically aligned with a sense of stasis and circularity. The chapter explored how these films subvert this assertion in their interactions with past forms of popular culture. I showed how both texts exhibit a

tangible desire to restore temporal linearity and momentum, and to understand the decade in space and time rather than dissolving the present into the past. Thus, *Anita & Me* is defined by the pragmatic momentum with which it looks back on a 1970s that it is happy to leave behind, while *Good Vibrations* is comfortable with the ambivalence of holding a painful past in the present, whilst also accepting that time and space have moved on.

Over the course of the thesis I hope to have demonstrated how the 1970s allows contemporary Britain to reflect upon itself in a way that no other historical period can. As Andrew Marr's description of the 1970s as a 'national nervous breakdown' indicates, the decade is intimately linked with the nation's sense of self. This is partly due to the seventies' reputation as a liminal space of transition, conflict, and trauma. There is a tendency, as evidenced in the work of Caitlin Shaw, to try to understand contemporary Britain through the lens of Margaret Thatcher and the 1980s, in a chronology that begins in 1979.[1] It is my hope, however, that over the course of this thesis I have demonstrated the importance of the transitional space of the 1970s. The liminal qualities of the decade, far from relegating it to a cultural wasteland between the 1960s and 1980s, in fact imbue the seventies with a rich sense of multiplicity. The 1970s is a decade in which the collapsing post-war consensus exists alongside the emerging neoliberal world order, where the declining collective exists alongside the rising individual, and where present day Britain can articulate itself and its sense of self by meeting the decade that gave birth to its recent past. In writing about nostalgia, Boym argues that in its more nuanced 'reflective' form it has

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[1] Caitlin Shaw, *Remediating the Eighties: Nostalgia and Retro in British Screen Fiction 2005 to 2011* < https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/42144707.pdf> , accessed 15th August 2018.

the critical capacity to be directed not just towards the past but 'sideways', allowing us to 'explore the side shadows and back alleys [of history], rather than the straight roads of progress'.[2] Here, fiction opens up the possibility to look for the 'unrealized dreams of the past and visions of the future that have become obsolete'.[3] I would argue that, because of its transitional nature and liminal identity, the 1970s has an unique ability to become a space of possibility in relation to today's world that no other decade can.

I would like to conclude by considering a recurrent theme that arises from both critical discourse and the case studies themselves. That theme is the question of longing identified by Boym in her discussion of nostalgia. I would argue that all the case-study texts, written and visual, engage with a need to articulate or conceive of a broader story when understanding the past; a need that is neither inherently reflective nor restorative. It exists as much in Sandbrook's mythologised vision of the 'millions of Ordinary Britons' as in Riz Ahmed's 'Englistan' where he questions, 'Is British great? Well hey don't ask me. But its where I live and why my heart beats,' in a song that's about the 'mean and pleasant' land in its contemporary lived reality.

I would argue that this longing and need has particular resonance in relation to Britain's 1970s, as condensed by Bernard Summer of Joy Division in the image of the empty chemical factory with which I concluded Chapter One.[4] Going back to an unhappy beginning, and a decade where image is intertwined with trauma, allows for

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[2] Svetlana Boym, "Nostalgia and its Discontents," *Hedgehog Review* (2007), < www.iasc-culture.org/eNews/2007_10/9.2CBoym.pdf> accessed 1st June, 2016, p., 9.
[3] Ibid., p. 10.
[4] Dave Haslam, *Manchester, England: The Story of the Pop Cult City* (London: Fourth Estate, 2000), p. xxiv.

contemporary Britain to understand itself in a way that going back to a period of stability cannot. The remembered 1970s is a site of shadowlands where multiple histories are layered on top of one another. The decade's liminal and transitional nature provides a non-fixed space where these fragments can be shaped into an imperfect whole, both within individual texts and by considering them as a broader group of representations. In Chapter One I looked at Joe Moran's identification of a recurrent motif in British cultural history of a 'once possessed common culture that has now fragmented'.[5] I would argue that this idea of a nation always just gone is an incarnation of a broader, universal human longing to rebuild after a shattered past that extends well beyond the national. Moran cites Modernist poet T.S. Eliot as someone whose work is suffused with this longing. Eliot's poem 'The Wasteland' itself interweaves a mythic past with his contemporary Britain. The poem draws on highbrow and lowbrow culture in a disunited structure that splinters locationally, temporally, and narrationally as it encompasses multiple voices. Its final section is shaped around the falling towers of

> Jerusalem Athens Alexandria
>
> Vienna London
>
> Unreal[6]

where they are rebuilt upside down with an apocalyptic circularity. The poem then concludes with an image of loss, grief, and acceptance,

> I sat upon the shore

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[5] Joe Moran, *Armchair nation: an intimate history of Britain in front of the TV* (London: Profile Books, 2013), p. 4-5.

[6] T.S. Eliot, 'The Waste Land' in T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land and other Poems* (London: Faber and Faber, 1981), p. 41.

Fishing, with the arid plain behind me

Shall I at least set my lands in order?

London Bridge is falling down falling down falling down

Poi s'acose nel foco che gli affina

Quando fiam uti chelidon – O swallow swallow

Le Prince d'Aquitaine à la tour aboilie

These fragments I have shored against my ruins

Why then Ile fit you. Hieronymo's mad againe.

Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata

Shantih shantih shantih[7]

It is not an image of hope but an image of understanding what is left behind and what was lost. The end of 'The Wasteland', as with Rubashov pressing his head against the glass in *Darkness at Noon*, aims to hold the contradiction of temporal linearity with the infinite, and historical contingency with the echo. I would argue that revisiting the 1970s allows for an exploration of these universal issues in a unique way with reference to Britain. This, combined with the complexity of visual narration and tone, allows representations of the 1970s to open up a space to consider the country's history in multiple tenses – where the past tense meets the conditional perfect and room opens up for the future imperfect, where never-formed might-have-beens can breathe.

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[7] Ibid., p. 43.

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A Passage To India. Dir. David Lean, Prod. EMI Films, UK/USA, 1984. Main Cast: Judy Davis (Adela Quested), Peggy Ashcroft (Mrs Moore), Victor Banerjee (Dr Aziz Ahmed) James Fox (Richard Fielding).

American Graffiti. Dir. George Lucas. Prod. Universal Pictures, Lucasfilm, Coppola Co. Productions, USA, 1973. Main Cast: Richard Dreyfuss (Curt), Ron Howard (Steve) Paul Le Mat (John).

Angel. Dir. Neil Jordan. Prod. Bórd Scannán na hÉireann/Channel Four Films, UK/Ireland, 1982. Main Cast: Stephen Rea (Danny), Veronica Quilligan (Annie), Honor Heffernen (Deidre), Alan Devlin (Bill), Peter Caffrey (Ray).

Anita and Me. Dir. Metin Hüseyin, Prod. BBC, UK, 2002. Main cast: Chandeep Uppal (Meena Kumar), Anna Brewster (Anita), Sanjeev Bhaskar (Mr. Kumar), Ayesha Dharker (Mrs. Daljeet Kumar), Meera Syal (Auntie Shaila).

Anne Devlin. Dir. Pat Murphy. Prod. Bórd Scannán na hÉireann, Radio Telefís Éireann, Aeon Films, Ireland, 1984. Main Cast: Brid Brennan (Anne Devlin), Bosco Hogan (Robert Emmett), Des McAleer (James Hope), Gillian Hackett (Rose Hope).

Ashes to Ashes, UK, BBC, tx. March, 2009. Prod: Matthew Graham, Ashley Pharaoh. Main Cast: Keeley Hawes (Alex Drake), Philip Glenister (Gene Hunt).

Billy Elliot. Dir. Stephen Daldry, Prod. Studio Canal, Working Title Films, BBC Films, UK/France, 2000. Main Cast: Jamie Bell (Billy Elliot), Julie Walters (Sandra Wilkinson), Gary Lewis (Jackie Elliot).

Bloody Sunday. Dir. Paul Greengrass. Prod. Bórd Scannán na hÉireann, Granada Television, Hell's Kitchen Films, Portman Entertainment Group, UK/Ireland, 2002. Main Cast: James Nesbitt (Ivan Cooper), Tim Pigott-Smith (Major General Robert Ford), Nicholas Farrell (Brigadier Patrick Maclellan), Gerard McSorley (Chief Supt. Lagan), Kathy Kiera Clarke (Frances).

The Boxer. Dir. Jim Sheridan. Prod. Universal Pictures, Hell's Kitchen Films, USA/Ireland, 1997. Main Cast: Daniel Day-Lewis (Danny Flynn), Emily Watson (Maggie), Brian Cox (Joe Hammill), Ken Stott (Ike Weir).

Chariots of Fire. Dir. Hugh Hudson, Prod. 20th Century Fox, Allied Stars, UK, 1981. Main Cast: Ben Cross (Harold Abrahams), Ian Charleson (Eric Liddell).

Control. Dir. Anton Corbijn, Prod. Northsee, UK, 2007. Main cast: Sam Riley (Ian Curtis), Samantha Morton (Deborah Curtis), Alexandra Maria Lara (Annik Honore).

Cradle to Grave, UK, BBC, tx. 03.09.2015. Writer: Danny Baker, Jeff Pope. Dir: Sandy Johnson, Prod: Kate Crowther. Main Cast: Peter Kay (Fred Baker), Laurie Kynaston (Danny Baker), Lucy Speed (Bet Baker), Alice Sykes (Sharon Baker).

Cycle of Violence/ Crossmaheart. Dir. Henry Herbert. Prod. Lexington Films, UK, 1998. Man Cast: Gerard Rooney (Kevin Miller), Maria Lennon (Marie), Enda Oates (O'Hagan).

Dance With A Stranger. Dir. Mike Newell, Prod. Goldcrest Films International, UK, 1985. Main Cast: Miranda Richardson (Ruth Ellis), Rupert Everett (David Blakely), Ian Holm (Desmond Cussen).

Danny and the Human Zoo, UK, BBC, tx. 31.08.2015. Prod. Juliet Charlesworth. Dir. Destiny Ekaragha. Writer. Lenny Henry. Main Cast: Kasicon Franklin (Danny) Cecilia Noble (Myrtle) Lenny Henry (Samson).

Das Auto, UK, BBC. Prod: Lucy Hetherington and Fatima Salaria. Dominic Sandbrook (Himself – Presenter).

December Bride, Dir. Thaddeus O'Sullivan. Prod. British Screen Productions, Central Independent Television, Channel Four Films, Little Bird, UK/Ireland, 1991. Main Cast: Donal McCann (Hamilton Echlin), Saskia Reeves (Sarah Gilmartin), Ciarán Hinds (Frank Echlin), Patrick Malahide (Rev. Edwin Sorleyson), Brenda Bruce (Martha Gilmartin).

Distant Voices, Still Lives. Dir. Terence Davies, Prod. BFI, UK, 1988. Main cast: Freda Dowie (Mother), Pete Postlethwaite (Father), Angela Walsh (Eileen), Dean Williams (Tony).

Divorcing Jack, Dir. David Caffrey. Prod. Scala Productions, UK, 1998. Man Cast: David Thewlis (Dan Starkey), Rachel Griffiths (Lee Cooper), Jason Isaacs (Cow Pat Keegan) Laura Fraser (Margaret), Richard Gant (Charles Parker).

East is East. Dir. Damien O'Donnell, Prod. Film Four, UK, 1999. Main cast: Om Puri (George Khan), Linda Bassett (Ella Khan), Jordon Routledge (Sajid Khan), Jimi Mistry (Tariq Khan).

Far From Heaven, Dir.Todd Haynes's, Prod. Focus Features, USA, 2003. Main Cast: Julianne Moore (Cathy Whitaker), Dennis Quaid (Frank Whitaker) Dennis Haysbert (Raymond Deagan).

The Fast Show, UK, BBC, tx. 27.09.1994. Prod. Charlie Higson, Paul Whitehouse, Geoffrey Perkins. Main Cast: Paul Whitehouse (Various), Charlie Higson (Various), Arabella Weir (Various), Simon Day (Various), John Thomson (Various), Mark Williams (Various).

Five Minutes of Heaven. Dir. Oliver Hirschbiegel. Prod. BBC Films/Big Fish Films/Irish Film Board, UK/Ireland, 2009. Main Cast: Liam Neeson (Alastair Little), James Nesbitt (Joe Griffin).

Glory. Dir. Edward Zwick, Prod. TriStar Pictures, USA, 1989. Main Cast: Matthew Broderick (Col. Robert Gould Shaw), Denzel Washington (Pvt. Trip).

Good Vibrations. Dir. Lisa Barros D'Sa & Glenn Leyburn, Prod. Canderblinks Film and Music, Revolution Films, Northern Ireland Screen, UK/Ireland, 2012. Main Cast: Richard Dormer (Terry Hooley), Jodie Whittaker (Ruth), Michael Colgan (Dave Hyndman).

Goodness Gracious Me, UK, BBC, tx 12.01.1998. Prod: Jon Plowman. Main cast: Sanjeev Bhaskar (Various), Meera Syal (Various), Kulvinder Ghir (Various), Nina Wadia (Various) Dave Lamb (Various).

The Great War, UK, BBC, tx. May, 1964. Prod: Tony Essex. Main Cast: Michael Redgrave (Himself – Narrator).

Harry Enfield and Chums, UK, BBC, tx. 04.11.1994. Prod: Peter Bennett-Jones, Maureen McMunn, Nick Mortimer. Main Cast: Harry Enfield (Various), Kathy Burke (Various), Paul Whitehouse (Various).

Hunger. Dir. Steve McQueen. Prod. Film4/Channel Four Film/Northern Ireland Screen, UK/Ireland, 2008. Main Cast: Michael Fassbender (Bobby Sands), Liam Cunningham (Father Dominic Moran).

In the Name of the Father. Dir. Jim Sheridan. Prod. Hell's Kitchen Films, Ireland, 1992. Main Cast: Daniel Day Lewis (Gerry Conlon), Pete Postlethwaite (Giuseppe Conlon), Emma Thompson (Gareth Pierce).

Inspector Morse, UK, ITV, tx. 6.01.1987. Prod. Ted Childs. Main Cast: John Thaw (Endeavour Morse), Kevin Whately (Robbie Lewis), James Grout (Superintendent Strange).

Joy Division, Dir. Grant Gee, Prod. Hudson Productions, Brown Owl Films, UK, 2007. Main Cast: Peter Hook (Himself) Tony Wilson (Himself) Bernard Summer (Himself).

The Kumars at No. 42, UK, BBC, tx. 12.11.2001. Prod: Lissa Evans, Richard Pinto, Sharat Sardana. Main Cast: Sanjeev Bhaskar (Sanjeev Kumar), Vincent Ebrahim (Ashwin Kumar), Indira Joshi (Madhuri Kumar), Meera Syal (Sushil Kumar).

Letter From An Unknown Woman, Dir. Max Ophüls, Prod. Universal Studios, USA, 1948. Main Cast: Joan Fontaine (Lisa Berndle), Louis Jourdan (Stefan Brand).

Life on Mars, UK, BBC, tx. July 2006. Prod: Matthew Graham, Tony Jordan, Ashley Pharaoh. Main Cast: John Simm (Sam Tyler), Philip Glenister (Gene Hunt), Liz White (Annie Cartwright), Ray Carling (Dean Andrews), Chris Skelton (Marshall Lancaster).

The Long Good Friday. Dir. John Mackenzie. Prod. British Lion Film Corporation/Handmade Films/Calendar Productions, UK, 1980. Main Cast: Bob Hoskins (Harold Shand), Helen Mirren (Victoria).

Mad Max. Dir. George Miller. Prod. Kennedy Miller Productions/Crossroads/Mad Max Films, Australia, 1979. Main Cast: Mel Gibson (Max Rockatansky), Joanne Samuel (Jessie Rockatansky).

Maeve. Dir. Pat Murphy. Prod. BFI Production Board/Radio-Telefis Eireann, UK/Ireland, 1981. Main Cast: Mary Jackson (Maeve Sweeney), Mark Mulholland (Martin Sweeney), Brid Brennan (Roisin Sweeney), Trudy Kelley (Eileen Sweeney), John Keegan (Liam Doyle).

Mickybo and Me. Dir. Terry Loane. Prod. StudioCanal/Working Title Films/Irish Film Board, UK/France, 2004. Main Cast: John Joe McNeill (Mickybo), Niall Wright (Jonjo).

Mississippi Burning. Dir. Alan Parker, Prod. Orion Pictures, USA, 1989. Main Cast: Gene Hackman (Agent Rupert Anderson), Willem Dafoe (Agent Alan Ward).

My Teenage Diary Series 2 Episode 4, BBC Radio 4, tx. 11.01.2011. Main Cast: Rufus Hound (Host), Meera Syal (Herself).

Neds. Dir. Peter Mullan, Prod. Blue Light, UK, 2010. Main cast: Conor McCarron (John McGill), Greg Forrest (Young John), Peter Mullan (Mr. McGill).

Nothing Personal. Dir. Thaddeus O'Sullivan. Prod. British Screen Productions/Irish Film Board/Channel Four Films, UK/Ireland, 1997. Main Cast: Ian Hart (Ginger), John Lynch (Liam).

Odd Man Out. Dir. Carol Reed. Prod. Two Cities Films, UK, 1947. Main Cast: James Mason (Johnny McQueen), Robert Newton (Lukey).

Omagh. Dir. Pete Travis. Prod. Tiger Aspect Productions/Hell's Kitchen International, Ireland/UK, 2004. Main Cast: Gerard McSorley (Michael Gallagher), Michele Forbes (Patsy Gallagher).

Prime Suspect, UK, ITV, tx. April, 1991. Prod: Sally Head, Don Leaver. Main Cast: Helen Mirren (Jane Tennyson).

Ratcatcher. Dir. Lynne Ramsay, Prod. Holy Cow Films, UK, 1999. Main cast: William Eadie (James Gillespie), Tommy Flanagan (George Gillespie), Mandy Matthews (Anne Gillespie), Lynne Ramsay Jr. (Anne Marie Gillespie).

Raging Bull. Dir. Martin Scorsese. Prod. United Artists, USA, 1980. Main Cast: Robert DeNiro (Jake LaMotta), Cathy Moriarty (Vikki LaMotta), Joe Pesci (Joey LaMotta).

Red Riding: In the Year of Our Lord 1974, UK, Channel 4, tx. November 2009. Dir. Julian Jarrold. Main Cast: Andrew Garfield (Eddie Dunford), Sean Bean (John Dawson), Rebecca Hall (Paula Garland) David Morrisey (Maurice Jobson).

Red Riding: In the Year of Our Lord 1980, UK, Channel 4, tx. November 2009. Dir. James Marsh. Main Cast: Paddy Considine (Peter Hunter), Maxine Peak (Helen Marshall), David Morrisey (Maurice Jobson)

Red Riding: In the Year of Our Lord 1983, UK, Channel 4, tx. November 2009. Dir. Anand Tucker. Main Cast: David Morrisey (Maurice Jobson), Mark Addy (John Piggott), Peter Mullan (Martin Laws).

Resurrection Man. Dir. Marc Evans. Prod. Revolution Films, UK, 1998. Main Cast: Stuart Townsend (Victor Kelly), John Hannah (Darkie Larche), James Nesbitt (Ryan).

The Road. Dir. John Hillcoat. Prod. 2929 Productions, USA, 2009. Main Cast: Viggo Mortensen (Man), Kodi Smit-McPhee (Boy), Charlize Theron (Woman).

Shadow Dancer. Dir. James Marsh. Prod. BBC/BFI/Irish Film Board, UK/Ireland, 2012. Main Cast: Andrea Riseborough (Collette McVeigh), Clive Owen (Mac), Gillian Anderson (Kate Fletcher), Aidan Gillen (Gerry McVeigh), Domhnall Gleeson (Connor McVeigh), Brid Brennan (Ma).

Skyfall, Dir. Sam Mendes. Prod. Eon Productions, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Columbia Pictures, UK/USA, 2012. Main Cast: Daniel Craig (James Bond), Judi Dench (M), Javier Bardem (Raoul Silver), Ralph Fiennes (Gareth Mallory).

Some Mother's Son. Dir. Terry George. Prod. Castle Rock Entertainment/Hell's Kitchen Films, Ireland/USA, 1996. Main Cast: Helen Mirren (Kathleen Quigley), Fionnula Flanagan (Annie Higgins), Aidan Gillen (Gerard Quigley), David O'Hara (Frank Higgins).

Strange Days: Cold War Britain, UK, BBC, tx. November 2013. Dominic Sandbrook (Himself - Presenter).

The Sweeney, UK, ITV, tx. January, 1975. Prod: Ian Kennedy Martin. Main Cast: John Thaw (Jack Reagan), Dennis Waterman (George Carter).

This Is England. Dir. Shane Meadows. Prod. Warp Films, UK, 2006. Main Cast: Thomas Turgoose (Shaun), Stephen Graham (Combo) Jo Hartley (Cynth).

Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy, UK, BBC, tx. September 1979. Dir. John Irvin. Main Cast: Alec Guinness (George Smiley), Michael Jayston (Peter Guillam), Ian Richardson (Bill Hayden), Alexander Knox (Control).

Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy. Dir. Tomas Alfredson. Prod. Studio Canal, UK, 2011. Main Cast: Gary Oldman (George Smiley), Benedict Cumberbatch (Peter Guillam), Colin Firth (Bill Hayden), Tom Hardy (Ricky Tarr), John Hurt (Control).

Trainspotting. Dir. Danny Boyle, Prod. Channel Four Films, UK, 1996. Main Cast: Ewan McGregor (Renton), Ewen Bremner (Spud), Johnny Lee Miller (Sick Boy), Kevin McKidd (Tommy) Robert Carlyle (Begbie).

Velvet Goldmine. Dir. Todd Haynes, Prod. Channel Four Films/New Market Capitol Group, US/UK, 1998. Main cast: Ewan McGregor (Curt Wild), Jonathan Rhys Meyers (Brian Slade), Christian Bale (Arthur Stuart), Tony Collette (Mandy Slade).

The Warriors. Dir. Walter Hill. Prod. Paramount Pictures, USA, 1979. Main Cast: Michael Beck (Swan), James Reymar (Ajax), Dorsey Wright (Cleon).

Who Do You Think You Are?, UK, BBC, tx. 12.08.2004. Prod. Colette Flight, Maxine Watson. Main Cast: David Morrissey (narrator).

Young Mr. Lincoln. Dir. John Ford's, Prod. 20th Century Fox, USA, 1939. Main Cast: Henry Fonda (Abraham Lincoln), Alice Brady (Abigail Clay)

24 Hour Party People. Dir. Michael Winterbottom, Prod. Film Four, UK, 2002. Main cast: Steve Coogan (Tony Wilson), John Thomson (Charles), Lennie James (Alan Erasmus).

The 70s, UK, BBC, tx. April 2012. Prod: Steve Condie and Dominic Crossley-Holland. Dominic Sandbrook (Himself - Presenter).

'71. Dir. Yann Demange. Prod. Crab Apple Films/Warp Films, UK, 2014. Main Cast: Jack O'Connell (Gary Hook), Sam Reid (Lt. Armitage), Richard Dormer (Eamon), Barry Keoghan (Sean), Charlie Murphy (Brigid) David Wilmot (Boyle) Killian Scott (Quinn).