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**Men, Manors and
Monsters:
The Hoodie Horror and the
Cinema of Alterity**

Katerina Flint-Nicol

Submitted in fulfilment of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in Film Studies

School of Arts

University of Kent

July 2018

Word Count: 97,205



It's hard to imagine anyone writing a learned social, cultural and political history of the hoodie.

(Alexis Petridis, The Guardian, 2007)

Acknowledgements

There are so many I wish to thank, it's difficult to know where to start. But I shall start here. First, I'd like to thank the Arts and Humanities Research Council for funding this research. Thank you to Maurizio Cinquegrani and Peter Stanfield as part of my supervisory team for your advice and input.

To my parents, John and Joan Nicol, I cannot thank enough. You both supported me unwaveringly throughout all my crazy, and not-so crazy endeavours, and never once passed judgement. The trust and space you gave me from a young age allowed me to find and make my own way, to experiment, and to learn. It is because of you I found all the obsessions I still have today! All those years you tolerated Paul Weller played on a loop on the loudest setting was just one piece that brought me to this thesis. For everything I am, have and will be, I owe to you both. To mum, I'm sorry I could not complete this thesis before you passed away. I don't know what you would have made of it, but I never thanked you enough for those times you sat and listened to my ideas. By the end, it was too late to make you aware. I hope though you realised. Watching Mike Leigh films is not the same without you. Finishing this in your absence was the hardest thing. And for dad, for ever asking, 'when will you be finished? When can we go on holiday?'. It's done and yes, we can now take a trip. Where would you like to go? For Purdie, for all those hours of walks of procrastination through fields, woodlands, on seashores, in summer and through the snow. Thank you for listening. Maybe next time less dead rabbits?

To all those in the Melodrama Research Group and friends at The University of Kent in no particular order, Frances, Sarah, Lies, Ann-Marie, Maria, Alaina and Dom. Thank you all for your friendship; for the nights in the pub and the days trading ideas. To Dom, for reminiscing over Bowie. You all reminded me what friendship is. Special thanks to Frances for all the advice, texts and supportive coffee breaks. I don't think 'this' would have got over the line without you. You are a dear friend and someone I strive to be. And thanks to those who offered advice and chatted, Lavinia Brydon, Cecilia Sayad and Lawrence Jackson. Lawrence – our knowledge of

British cinema will conquer the world some day! For other friends outside of my university cocoon, Tanya, Irene, Julie, Russ, Liz, David and Ann, I thank you for remaining (as friends, not the referendum. Although, that too). For all those missed nights out, birthdays and celebrations, I am sorry. There's much to make up. Thank you though Russ for that wonderful year of 52 gigs. Those twelve months probably elongated this process. But what a year. A shout out to David and Ann for much needed theatre trips – all of which were welcome diversions.

Finally, but in no means least, I've saved the best, if not the most vital thank you, until the end. To my supervisor and now friend, Tamar Jeffers McDonald, a simple thank you feels nowhere near enough to express the gratitude I have for everything you have given me in the last few years. You are simply astonishing, not just as an academic, but also as a human. The energy, verve, the knowledge, the advice, the encouragement, and all the support you gave, displays the commitment and love you have for your job. You are held in the highest regards by so many. You are beyond doubt the role model for academics, and someone we all in the PhD community strive to emulate. If any of us can become a tenth of who you are, your job will be done. Thank you for the cake, the tea, the gin and the Sleaford Mods tickets. Throughout it all, you were the safe hand on the tiller. I'm guessing now it's a case of 'say hello, wave goodbye'? But do I really have to leave now?

Oh yes, to the holy trinity that is Polly, Paul and Ray. You have no idea how you got me through all of this, nor who I am. But thank you.

In the words of Vinnie Jones: it's been emotional.

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Full referencing details are provided in the Filmography.

Abstract

The central aim of this thesis is to establish and explore what this thesis titles, the Hoodie Horror cycle. Asserting the cycle began with *Kidulthood* (2006) and lasted for ten years, ending with the 2016 film, *Brotherhood*, this thesis argues the Hoodie Horror cycle is a male-centric collection of films that takes its cue from the contemporary figure of the Hoodie, whilst drawing extensively upon the motifs, concerns and iconography of the tradition of the social realist film. Central to the representations across the films is the abject. Not a psychoanalytical model of the abject, but rather a socio-cultural theory of social abjection. There are two main tenets to this research.

First, this thesis determines the Hoodie as what Imogen Tyler would term, a national abject. Employing Tyler's paradigm of social abjection, this thesis examines both media and political rhetoric in the early years of the new millennium, establishing the Hoodie as a figure of neoliberal governmentality that seeks to demonise the underclass as a mechanism to gain public consensus for punitive penal measures and a decrease in welfare support.

Secondly, an analysis of the films establishes the central iconography of the cycle, men, manors and monsters, whilst arguing the filmic strategies exploit the image and discourse of both the Hoodie and associative discourse of the council estate as stigmatised territory. Inspired by Tyler's theory of social abjection, the thesis asserts the employment of a socio-cultural model of abjection provides the platform for what this thesis conceptualises as the monstrous realism of the cycle. In so doing, the Hoodie Horror cycle can be situated in the histories of both the social realist text and the British horror film. Indeed, an overarching concern of this research is to assert how, in the Hoodie Horror film of the new millennium, horror is the new realism.

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Section One:

Introduction

1.1 Representation matters

The 2016 comedy *Grimsby* (Louis Leterrier, 2016) opens with a satirical sequence that mocks 'the chav lifestyle' that has come to signify Britain's poor. The film begins with Nobby (Sacha Baron Cohen) and his girlfriend Dawn (Rebel Wilson) fervently having sex to *Bump N' Grind* by R. Kelly. The scene is shot entirely in close-ups, but as Nobby finishes, the camera pulls away and we see that the couple are not alone in their bedroom, but in a public place, a furniture shop, 'test-driving' the mattress. As an ecstatic Nobby says 'We'll take it', the camera cuts to the red-faced and nauseated teenage shop assistant looking away in disgust. *Parklife* by Blur starts up with that instantly recognisable jangly guitar hook, the 'Oi', and the first spoken line, 'Confidence is the preference for the habitual voyeur...'

It should be of no surprise that characters such as Nobby and Dawn are unabashed by a public display of sexual behaviour. As music and image combine, the figurative shorthand imbued in *Parklife* and Nobby's Mod haircut prompts our cultural memory into contextualising identity and space. The joke of the scene plays on and plays up to our perceptual understanding of the underclass as vulgar and lacking in taste, configured in the 'chav', a figure who is encapsulated in both Nobby and Dawn. R. Kelly, the epitome of black American music that appeals to 'chavs' for the materialism and 'bling' it embodies (Reynolds, 2012: 24), provides the ideal anthem for their impromptu sex session.

The sequence continues with Nobby, sporting an England top and hair styled as Liam Gallagher's, carrying the mattress home through the derelict streets of Grimsby. As Nobby journeys home we are introduced to the streets and residents

of his home town: teenage smoking mums sporting tracksuits and pushing prams, garbage riddled streets, derelict graffitied shops, abandoned cars, couples having sex in the street, lard-gutted slappers, wasters drinking in the day on the street, and overlong queues for the Job Centre, are all mocked here, serenaded by Blur's *Parklife*. Recognisable stereotypes and representations abound, absorbed into a Britpop celebratory new-lad narrative. Nobby oozes the 90s New Lad. The Gallagher-esque Mod haircut and England football shirt instantly locate Nobby as the retro swaggering underclass male with a love for music, football and a hearty national pride. The teenage pram-pushers – the chav mums – are recognisable by a 'trail of fag ends ... baggy tracksuit trousers ... gold-hooped earrings ...' (Davidson, 2004: 14). The squalid streets strewn with litter and lined with neglected buildings, speak of the territorial stigma that has configured council estates in the popular imaginary as 'warehoused poverty'. The sequence is a parody of what Owen Jones would describe as the 'parasitical dysfunctional underclass of failed citizens' (Jones, 2012: 81).

This comic set-piece is an ideal opening sequence for an underclass comedy as it rapidly constructs and sets expectations for identity and space specifically by exploiting the audience's knowledge of the stereotypes and signifiers of the underclass that prevail in contemporary British popular culture. We recognise a 'chav' when we see one: slack-jawed girls in tracksuits, sullen youths in hooded tops, adolescents in Burberry caps. As journalist Gina Davidson contemptuously noted, if you take the clothes and, 'Throw them together, along with a pack of

Regal, you have the uniform of what is being described as the UK's new underclass – the 'chav' (Davidson, 2004: 14).

Why do we recognise a 'chav'? 'Chav', a term from a popularised vocabulary of class, became widely circulated in the public arena in the early 2000s. Broadly acknowledged as an acronym for 'Council Housed and Violent' or 'Council House Associated Vermin', the term quickly caught the public imagination and became the pejorative term for Britain's poor. Repeated associations with other buzzwords for anti-social behaviour, such as 'dole-scrounger', 'hooliganism', and 'teenage-mums', in cumulative newspaper articles, TV programmes (*Little Britain's* Vicky Pollard and *Shameless*), photographs and online blogs (*Chav Town*), organised the 'Chav' in the public imagination as slothful, work-shy, uneducated, culturally low and parasites of the state – all by choice – rather than by being disadvantaged by economic circumstances. Concurrently, New Labour redesigned citizenship around the binary of work/worklessness, inclusion/exclusion, reconfiguring poverty as a matter of choice and thus furthering the naturalisation of poverty and disadvantage (Tyler, 2013: 161-62). The 'chav' was woven into all manner of social ills and came to symbolise a perceived moral decline in the nation. In public culture the 'chav' became a figure of 'mockery, contempt and disgust (Tyler, 2013: 165) and indicative of 'class bile' (Toynbee, 2011) and 'social racism' (Burchill, 2011). We recognise the 'chav' because of repeated fabrications through popular cultural forms (Fig 1).

The film sequence is crafted out of the political ideologies of New Labour and parodies Broken Britain, inviting the audience to engage freely in the 'pleasures of hatred' (Billig, 2001: 267). In *Grimsby*, animating the perceptual realities of buzz-

words, the dole-scroungers, chav mums, chav-scum, teenage pram-pushers, congeal into the cinematic fiction and invite us to view those living in poverty through a comedic prism. We can laugh because the figure of the 'chav' allows us to constitute ourselves 'other than poor' and 'other than culturally low'. If we aren't a 'chav' then we have style. Extending visibility to marginalised communities in such cultural enterprises as underclass comedies – here specifically *Grimsby* – does not propose to enrich cultural knowledge or 'make visible' marginalised communities.

The reasoning for beginning with *Grimsby* is not only because it is an example of film explicitly exploiting contemporary British cultural stereotypes, but for how the opening sequence resonates with the overarching interests of my research: discourse and representation; concerns and themes of class, gender and identity; and film's relationship with fashion and music. My research addresses the Hoodie Horror cycle, a loose-knit collection of films that, as does *Grimsby*, draws upon contemporary visions of a British underclass. Loosely contextualising the films within a framework for conceptualising film cycles, and specifically locating the cycle within two canons of British cinema history – horror and social realism – my research succeeds previous scholarship on British cinema by undertaking a sociocultural approach to British film. By this I mean not only approaching film as a cultural product, but also seeking a wider cultural contextualisation. To distinguish the Hoodie Horror, my research involves understanding the impact of a broader British culture on the films and untangling the function of fashion, music, media and politics, and the interplay between all, in the construction of representation and

space. The primary aim is to examine how the abject discourse of the Hoodie is cinematically animated, and how the animation engages with film form in the cycle. In short, this thesis is on the filmic strategies for representing the underclass in the Hoodie Horror cycle. This thesis asserts the cycle begins with Menhaj Huda's 2006 film, *Kidulthood* and closes with Noel Clarke's 2016 film, *Brotherhood*, the third film in the *Hood* trilogy. Along with these two texts, the films that formulate the cycle are: *Adulthood* (Noel Clarke, 2008), *Eden Lake* (James Watkins, 2008), *The Disappeared* (Johnny Kevorkian 2008), *Harry Brown* (Daniel Barber 2009), *Heartless* (Philip Ridley 2009), *Cherry Tree Lane* (Paul Andrew Richards 2010), *F* (Johannes Roberts 2010), *Citadel* (Ciaran Foy 2012), *Community* (Jason Ford 2012), *Ill Manors* (Ben Drew 2012), *Piggy* (Kieron Hawkes 2012), and *The Selfish Giant* (Clio Barnard 2013). As you can see, the thesis constructs the cycle on feature length films that have received a theatrical release. I have provided a synopsis for each film, all of which you can find in the appendix. With a focus on the figure of the Hoodie¹ and council estates, my research will establish the relationship between the media and political discourses of both, and their representations in the films. Drawing upon Imogen Tyler's timely work on abject states in a neoliberal contemporary Britain, this thesis will situate both Hoodie and council estate within Tyler's paradigm of social abjection and argue for the cinematic animation of the abject that fastens the cycle. Exploring the filmic strategies, my research posits these abject states are subjected to a process of horrorisation in transferring the representations from the public imagination to the screen, a process that furthers

¹ Within this thesis when Hoodie is capitalised, it is referring to the symbolic figure; when hoodie is in lower case, it is referring to the garment.

their abjection. In so doing, I argue the films are inflected with neoliberal ideology and are inherently political, despite any perceived absence of design. Furthermore, this project will survey how the cycle is influenced by two imposing canons of British cinema, the social realist venture and the horror film, and establish it within both legacies. Overall, by privileging the abject state, this thesis will propose how horror became the new realism in British cinema of the 2000s. This introduction will proceed as follows. First, I introduce the films that begin and close the cycle and how they engage with neoliberal ideology, specifically in the figure of the Hoodie. Here I also introduce a key term, monstrous realism, which this thesis asserts is the realism of the films and one formulated from two traditions of British cinema, the horror film and the social realist text. Next, I will expand on what the Hoodie Horror is. Here, the thesis engages with the challenges of constructing a cycle based on differing film forms and in a national cinema context outside of Hollywood. I assert how the abject, in the form of social abjection and most notably in the neoliberal figure of the Hoodie, provides the cohesive platform that unites the films into the Hoodie Horror cycle and expand further on why neoliberal ideology is crucial in illuminating the cycle. Furthermore, I will place the cycle within a historical trajectory of British cinema and develop the term, monstrous realism. This will then be followed by a statement on race and gender. The statement is succeeded by an exploration of how the cycle engages with the genre and concept of horror, followed by the literature review of two key texts for this thesis, Johnny Walker's research on the Hoodie Horror taken from his 2016 work, *Contemporary British Horror Cinema: industry, genre and society*, and Imogen Tyler's theorizing of social abjection, a paradigm which underpins this thesis. Lastly, the

introduction closes with the Fashion of Fear, which is an analysis of the media and political animation of the Hoodie and council estates employing Tyler's theory of social abjection.

As introduced earlier, the Hoodie Horror cycle is a loose-knit collection of films straddling the breadth of British cinematic genres and film-making practices. The first films of the cycle were Menhaj Huda's provocative, if at times sensational, teenage drama *Kidulthood* (Menhaj Huda, 2006), its follow up, Noel Clarke's brutal tale of redemption and hope on a council estate in *Adulthood* (Noel Clarke, 2008), and James Watkins' generic tour de force, *Eden Lake* (James Watkins, 2008). The cycle comes to a close quite appropriately with the final film of what has come to be known as Noel Clarke's 'Hood trilogy', *Brotherhood* (Noel Clarke, 2016), a film criticized in many reviews as uneven, predictable and misogynist: the film credits eleven women as 'semi-nude woman' or 'sex-slave' (Bray, 2016). The downward trajectory of the *Hood* trilogy from creative film-making to genre fodder coincides with the ascension of the hoodie as fashion item from signifier of the neoliberal other to consumerist acceptance in the popular cultural arena. The hoodie was brought into the public imagination when the Bluewater shopping centre in Kent banned those wearing the fashion item from its premises in 2005. By 2017, the fashion pages of the weekend edition of *The Guardian* were providing advice on 'Five Ways to wear a Hoodie' (Anon, 2017). The repositioning of the hoodie from othered to mainstream mirrors the tiredness of the abject discourse of the Hoodie epitomised by Noel Clarke's *Brotherhood*. By the film's release, the Hoodie had lost its potency, as more imperative discourses – Brexit, immigration, terrorism in the name of Islam – had replaced it in the machinery of neoliberal governance. Clarke's

Brotherhood highlights how exhausted the Hoodie discourse had become, as it is a highly generic piece that stews the already essentialist discourse into a derivative flat-packed gangster film too reliant on recycled narratives of what has already been said before. The technical proficiency polishes the film of any of the pulse and potency of *Kidulthood*.

The films in the cycle either explicitly draw upon the abject discourse of the Hoodie, monsterring the Hoodies in the process (*Citadel*, Ciaran Foy, 2012; *Heartless*, Philip Ridley, 2009; *F*, Johannes Roberts, 2010); centralise the pathologization of council estates that coalesce with the discourses of the Hoodie (*Community*, Jason Ford, 2012; *Citadel*; *Harry Brown*, Daniel Barber, 2009); or find synthesis with the contemporaneous discourses (*The Selfish Giant*, Clio Barnard, 2013; *Piggy*, Kieron Hawkes, 2012). The films privilege an urban, underclass male experience – the neoliberal other – as a state of abjection; an experience that involves mental illness, violence and death (not necessarily all three simultaneously in all films). Drawing their subject or subtext from the problems of social-economic exile, the films centralise the abject experience as a consequence, not of broader governmental, political or economic strategies, but of the neoliberal ‘failed citizen’ or the intergenerational culture of parasitical and dysfunctional behaviour, so much so, that the cinematic worlds of these abject figures and communities are decoupled from wider society.

The cycle is marked by a meeting of class politics and film style, in which the comprehension of the underclass – reconfigured here into the abject state of the Hoodie – collides with a stylised treatment of realism. Indeed, the Hoodie Horror

cycle is a reformulation of two stalwarts of British cinema, social realism and horror, two canons that have characterised, in many respects, the history of British cinema. The every-day lives of the abject figures of the films are represented in what I term as 'monstrous realism', an aesthetic which allows this thesis to examine in detail changing conceptions of 'social class', moving to a broader understanding of 'social classification' under the machinery of neoliberal governance. Key to this aesthetic is how both social realism and horror dissolve into a form that establishes the Hoodie Horror under the umbrella term, 'social horror', whilst destabilising these two canons in redefining the parameters of both. This approach acknowledges the tension between the two cinematic heritages in British film culture (Pirie, 2009; Rigby, 2000), which has led to the identification of realism with 'quality' and 'responsible engaged cinema' and horror as one of the forms 'looked down upon as an irresponsible project' (Higson, 1983). Yet while the aim is not to resolve the friction between the two, this thesis seeks to scrutinize the engagement between the two forms, exploring how the cycle mirrors the development of the British horror film as a form 'no longer concerned with gaudy, blood-red spectacle but with the very frightening possibilities already within our everyday lives' (Rose, 2007). Indeed, this thesis will examine how in the Hoodie Horror, horror became the new realism.

1.2: What is Hoodie Horror?

Academic work on the Hoodie Horror is still in its infancy and while my intervention may not be the first, it is the first extensive investigation into this unconventional cycle. Mark Featherstone in his article, "Hoodie Horror": The Capitalist Other in

Postmodern Society' undertakes a cultural history of the other rather than a strict cinematic study, configuring the Hoodie as the contemporary, violent incarnation of the 'capitalist other', the latter being a concept that itself has undertaken various guises, but persisted, in history (proletariat, *lumpenproletariat* and so on) (Featherstone, 2013). Contextualising the demonising discourse of the Hoodie in the media, notably the August riots, as Hoodie Horror itself, Featherstone argues that the mediated figure of the Hoodie as capitalist other is ideational, or a 'hyper-reality' that is again, when reconfigured in films such as *Eden Lake* and *Heartless* (Philip Ridley, 2009), perpetuates the mythological representation as authentic (Featherstone, 2013). The films, for Featherstone, offer opportunities to critically examine the iniquitous nature of capitalist normativity, and can be approached as 'projection[s] of the evil socio-economic system that scapegoats others to hide its own monstrosity (193). Johnny Walker, like Featherstone, establishes connections between the films and the media incarnations of the Hoodie. However, Walker challenges any leaning towards realism or authenticity by arguing that both culture and film are reliant on constructions of stereotypes, both of which are founded in excessive representations. The excessiveness of journalistic constructions configures the Hoodie as an urban Folk Devil for the twenty-first century, a representation, for Walker, that finds a natural home in the monsters of horror (Walker, 2016).

My intervention seeks to develop and expand upon the initial work of both Featherstone and Walker; the latter's work I will return to in more depth at a later point. While I too contextualise the films against the demonising discourses of the

Hoodie, here I depart in a significant but nuanced degree from Featherstone, for I will argue for the construction of the Hoodie as a national abject drawing upon Imogen Tyler's paradigm of social abjection as a strategy of neoliberal governance as outlined in her book, in *Revolted Subjects* (Tyler, 2013). It is arguable that the differences between my scrutiny and Featherstone's will be for some a matter of terminology and just a variance between 'capitalist' and 'neoliberal', for both are economic and social ideologies that valorise free markets and minimal state intervention. Though this thesis does not have the scope to discuss this much further, there is an important distinction to make here. In configuring the Hoodie as a 'neoliberal other' as opposed to Featherstone's 'capitalist other', my analysis acknowledges the specific strategies neoliberal governmentality employs in creating national abjects. It also underpins the topicality of the cycle by exposing how pejorative name-making (chav, hoodie) has become the perceptual framework for class formation and creating states of alterity in a neo-liberal state.

Undertaking a social and cultural analysis of empirical materials (news media reports, political speeches, policy documents) that tracks the repetitive fabrication of the Hoodie across media accounts, and political strategies and discourse, I will establish the Hoodie as the neoliberal 'other', or failed citizen; a reconfiguration of the underclass discourses as ideological conductor of neoliberal governmentality. I expand the parameters of the discourses to incorporate the territorial stigmatization of council estates – spaces inhabited by Hoodies – as a conceptual categorization of a 'new class of problem people'. This cultural evaluation provides the foundation of my thesis, a groundwork utilised as a springboard from which I

approach a study of the cycle. At this point, I would like to take some time to explore concerns as to why the Hoodie Horror is deserving of such focus.

A potential charge that could be levelled at the Hoodie Horror as a cycle, is its unimportance to the study of British cinema, a charge this thesis aims to contest. It is not an aim of this research to argue for the films as works of art; rather when we consider the commonalities between the films, in how we organize the films into a cycle, we can begin to understand the significance of the films in what they express about British culture and society in the 2000s, and more specifically what the films say of how the British underclass is culturally and publicly imagined. Furthermore, tracking the commonality between the films challenges our assumptions as to how national films outside of Hollywood should be organised and hence contributes to our understanding of how to approach non-Hollywood film cycles. Moreover, this thesis proposes that the cycle destabilises the two canons of British cinema, horror and social realism, by redefining the parameters of both. My approach nudges against the dominant mode of analysing horror films and proposes a differing perception of what can be understood when we articulate the term 'horror', whilst exerting how British realism became synonymous with the abject, not only in the films, but also within the popular cultural discourses of the underclass during this period. In the Hoodie Horror, social realism and horror dissolve into a form that resides under the broad umbrella term, social horror. It is a cycle where two cinematic heritages coalesce and inform aesthetics, narrative and representation.

In the 1970s, film scholars Margery Rosen and Molly Haskell asserted that film acted as a cultural product, mirroring the everyday (Rosen, 1973; Haskell, 1973). In

establishing a history of film that seeks to construct a relationship between cinema and the social, Peter Stanfield challenges the accepted idea that film is a 'barometer of the times' and the lazy critiques that measure films in their ability to mirror or reflect back society, which can often lead to a high level of selectivity. Stanfield understands that such an approach can result in a biased selectivity of films, elevating some to be the epitome, or 'classics', of the genre or cycle (Stanfield, 2015: 2-5), a pitfall Walker falls foul of in his assessment of the Hoodie Horror. The elevation of certain Hoodie Horrors established by film criticism and already present before academic enquiry arguably positions *Eden Lake* and *The Selfish Giant* as epitomes, not of the cycle, but within the films' individual cinematic canons. However, while I will not specifically argue against this stance, my research seeks the resonance of conceptualised abject states between the films rather than grouping them through traditional modes of association, such as narrative. Individual films may retain their *par excellence* status, but this will be due to the hierarchy of national film-making practices (*The Selfish Giant* as a social realist drama), over effective genre pieces (*Eden Lake* as a rural horror), not for how they epitomise the Hoodie Horror. While individual films retain their celebrated status, and individual generic markers, it is how each film participates in the group that this thesis seeks to illuminate. As Derrida says of genre, it is 'a sort of participation without belonging – taking part without being part of, without having membership in a set' (Derrida, 1980: 206). It is how and where each film animates the social abject that allows us to approach each film as a Hoodie Horror. *Eden Lake*, then, can remain a rural horror and *Selfish Giant* be an example of social realism, but to approach the films in how they partake in the Hoodie Horror cycle provides

opportunities to unpack and understand both films in ways traditional and accepted enquiries into genre and canon affiliations do not allow.

Looking beyond the weary approach of films as cultural reflections, Stanfield develops an alternative method in finding synergy between films and their social and cultural significance, by constructing an industrial thread to his approach to film cycles. Stanfield theorizes cycles as being 'rooted in the practice of making and exhibiting films' (Stanfield, 2015: 5). Examining industrial practices is not a major strategy of this thesis. That is not to say that commercial reasoning is irrelevant, but rather that the Hoodie Horror requires a differing mode of investigation due to the divergent national industrial structures of film production. The Hoodie Horror cycle cannot be categorized by a series of runs. Neither is this an investigation of production or reception of films. This is not to deny lack of economic positioning behind the exploitation of the Hoodie in these films. The prevalence of hoodies in marketing materials and their utilisation in the construction of the films' 'monsters' suggest a strategy of utilising the contemporary currency of the image and discourse in some form. Rather, this thesis focuses on, and advocates for a cohesion in much the same vein as the films of Barbara Creed's seminal work, *The Monstrous Feminine*. Proceeding through celebrated horror films such as *Aliens* (James Cameron, 1986) and *Carrie* (Brian de Palma, 1976), Creed considers representations of female monstrosity in line with Julia Kristeva's lexicon of abject symbolism, asserting that these films construct the female and often the maternal female as the abject personified (Creed, 1997). As with Creed, this thesis seeks to locate the abject in the films, specifically, here social abjection as hypothesised by

Imogen Tyler, in the underclass male and the cinematic spaces he inhabits. But while Creed seeks to track the reconfigurations and representations of the female as monstrous in eclectic films such as *Carrie*, *Aliens*, and *The Brood* (David Cronenberg, 1979), this thesis aims to elucidate the mutual representations of social abjection in the films which establishes the connections between the films, in order to establish the cycle.

Establishing film cycles in national models whose output is not as industrious as that of the largescale operation of Hollywood is problematic and as Gary Needham asserts in his approach to Italian *Giallo*, a different approach in cycle formation is required. Needham argues the *Giallo* resists generic definition in the conventional American cinema/Hollywood sense, but rather is 'a conceptual category with highly moveable and permeable boundaries' that requires an alternative approach beyond solely taxonomic securing (2002). Looking beyond generic markers to construct cycles, Hoodie Horror has a precedent in scholarship on British cinema. Clare Monk's work on the underclass cycle of the 1990s, identifies class representation and national ideology across a range of genres in films such as, *The Full Monty* (Peter Cataneo, 1997), *Brassed Off* (Mark Herman, 1996) and *Trainspotting* (Danny Boyle, 1996) at a time when Britpop and Cool Britannia aided a resurgence and re-branding of Britishness on the global platform of popular culture (Monk, 2002a). As with Needham's introduction to *Giallo*, I will posit that despite a certain resistance, there are identifiable conventions such as iconography, settings, characters and themes in which social abjection can be found, that constitute a Hoodie Horror. The title of my thesis, 'Man, Manors and Monsters' provides the overall arc to the main

body of my research, and are the structures through which I track and assemble common configurations of social abjection found in the cycle.

This thesis theorizes a cycle rooted in a textual exploration of the associations between film and its social contexts, between film and representation, and in how film exploits contemporary and topical discourses. On a broad level, both horror and social realist films are approached in academic enquiry as to what they reveal about society. The continuing popular psychoanalytical approach to the contemporary American horror film invites a revelatory reading of films as collective nightmares. Robin Wood's 1986 pioneering work on 1970s American horror film 'The American Nightmare: Horror in the 1970s' theorizes the figure of the monster as a dramatization of society's anxieties and a threat to social stability, characterising the films of this period as nihilistic and portraying traumatic events or societal fears through the framework of a horror narrative (Wood, 1986). Adam Lowenstein's *Shocking Representations* discusses film's capacity to opaquely allegorise a nation's history as a collective trauma (Lowenstein, 2005). At a contrasting end of cinema practice, social realism is perceived as a reaction to mainstream practices that seeks to comment on, or break away from, traditional conventions in order to redress inequalities in representations and to make visible 'working-class life'. The British New Wave is approached as portraying anxieties over the demise of the working class in a society facing economic and social change (Hill, 1986). As John Hill later notes of the British New Wave, it was not just the case of films providing social extension by simply representing, or opening up the working class in popular culture, but rather, portraying the working-class at a

critical time of societal change – the transition to a post-industrial nation – and how this change impacted on working-class lives, resulting in a sympathetic view of the working-class male (Hill, 2000a).

While there is the potential for this thesis to resort to the dangers Stanfield warns of, providing a simplistic reflectionist or symptomatic reading of the Hoodie Horror, it is the qualification and nuance of my approach that avoids such a trap and moves beyond contextualising the films as mere social commentary. Rather, my interest in the films is how in subsuming the abject discourses, they conceptualise the Hoodie and the underclass this abject figure symbolises, from a particular perspective. As this thesis will demonstrate, the cinematic animation of the Hoodie and all the attached discourses is a two-fold process, concerning firstly, how the films transfer ‘verbatim’ the discourses as a source for narrative and aesthetics, and secondly, how the filmic animate the figure of the Hoodie and the geographies the Hoodie inhabits onscreen. The films, I will argue, are not concerned with a perceived social reality for the Hoodie, but rather with *how* the Hoodie is conceptualised and imagined as a social abject in the public domain. The Hoodie is what Imogen Tyler argues to be a national abject, both a fetishized figure and a function mobilised by the mechanisms of neoliberal governmentality to legitimize and procure public consent for government policies (Tyler, 2013: 8-10). In essential terms and with a focus on this thesis and the films, the Hoodie symbolizes identity and class formation in the public arena by those with power as a subjugating process. The Hoodie Horror, then, is informed by neoliberalist ideology of ‘othering’ and nation-crafting. The representations of the underclass in the films, to return to

Featherstone's understanding of the Hoodie and discourse, is the authentication of myth-making (Featherstone, 2013). The configuration of the Hoodie in the public arena conceptualises the Hoodie as abject, with poverty, death and violence popularised as normative and authentic. The repetition of representations and discourses result in a 'reality effect' where horror is imagined as a truth. When such discourses and representations are traced over into the Hoodie Horror, the perceived authenticity is recycled into these cinematic fictions perpetuating the mythology of the Hoodie as abject other and housing estates as monstrous geographies. The films form part of what Stuart Hall and colleagues posits to be the formulation of public opinion into consent through 'conversations between neighbours, discussion at street-corners ...' (Hall *et al*, 1978: 129). But, just as Tyler revises 'street-corners' to encompass social media, so this thesis revises public opinion again to incorporate the films. While I am not arguing this is the overt project of the films, their conservative ideology yet perpetuates the abject discourse. The iconography of the Hoodie Horror already resides in the cultural memory as sites and figures associated with the tradition of social realism. When informed here with the demonising discourses, the Hoodie Horror reinforces the popular perceptions and further perpetuates the monstrous discourse as authentic, creating a cinematic universe that 'horrifies the real'. This horrific reality of the Hoodie Horror is where the British horror film and social realist venture find congruence.

While I will return and expand on the monstrous realism of the Hoodie Horror shortly, I want to briefly highlight the significance of horror and the cultural

moment to the cycle. The recent impassioned discussion taking place on social media over the announcement that Jordan Peele's 2017 film, *Get Out* – a horror about the theft of black lives by white people – would be competing in the comedy and musical category in the 2018 Golden Globes, resonates somewhat with the concerns of horror taking on a cultural role in representation: albeit a converse one to the Hoodie Horror cycle. Michael Dango's article on *Get Out* proposes it is a critical necessity that the film is approached as a horror, for this is the sole genre that can animate and express the horrifying experience of black lives under a white supremacist patriarchy, what Dango names as a 'monstrous social structure'. In order for audiences to engage with political anxieties and contemporary fears, Dango asserts that horror is the genre to deliver, since its ability to tap into a palpable reality equates it with the documentary (Dango, 2018).

While it would be straightforward and plausible to discuss the Hoodie Horror in terms of its ability to provide social commentary in expressing contemporary anxieties and fears of the British urban underclass, this would be somewhat misguided and mistaken analysis. Film critic Chris Tookey's assessment of *Eden Lake* as a film that taps into these fears and anxieties as a film 'willing to say what other films have been too scared or politically correct to mention: the true horrors we fear day to day are ... our own youth' (Tookey, 2008a), is one such example that applies this sluggish and derivative reading, but one that fails to acknowledge the origin of such tales of terror. The anxiety *Eden Lake* and films in the cycle expose are political ones over the body politic and nation-state; discourses constructed from political strategies and a wider culturization of social conflict that depoliticises

and ignores the struggles of marginalised communities (Buden, 2007). Here, 'the making visible' so associated with the intentions of social realism, serve to populate cultural spaces with neoliberalist visions of an underclass that threaten the stability, and borders of nation. It is not societal fears the films express, but the extension of the policing of identity as neoliberal governance in cinematic form. The cycle as cultural moment here reveals not that we fear our youths, or the lower classes, but the historically and politically contingent construction of identities such as the Hoodie in the continued history of governmentality and class struggles.

This class formation as horror is realised in the Hoodie Horror in the term I introduced earlier, the horrifying of the real, or monstrous realism. This conceptualisation falls in with the wider contemporary scholarly approaches that are revisiting the form of British social realism. David Forrest's *Art, Nationhood and Politics* challenges the traditional approach to comprehending social realism by repositioning contemporary texts within the framework of authorship and art cinema in an endeavour to reclaim the films as a movement of film style, rather than a focus on content alone (Forrest, 2013). Concurrently, Stella Hockenhull's work also seeks to initiate further reconsideration of recent social realist output through the parameters of style. For Hockenhull, traditional theoretical approaches to the form are too restrictive and do not lend themselves to satisfactory readings. In its place, Hockenhull proposes to relook at the films afresh through the lens of aesthetic theory, an approach that she argues unlocks the emotional aspects as articulated through the films' visuals (Hockenhull, 2009). It is within this rethinking of the realist form that this thesis situates the Hoodie Horror. The framework of the

monstrous realism of the films takes its cue from John Hill's assertion that realism is a mode that articulates a 'perceived social reality', but one that is not 'fixed', but rather contingent on historical flux and shifts (Hill, 2000a). The realism of the Hoodie Horror draws upon the authentic myths of the discourses of the Hoodie and underclass in contemporary culture, and the explicit renderings of iconography, characterisation and settings, associated with the tradition of social realism. This thesis will illuminate this monstrous realism with discussions on the formal and stylistic features of the cycle, and its content. The over-arching position of this work is to establish the cycle within the progression of social realism as conceptualising class identity via the transition from 'the public to private', and 'political and the personal' (Higson, 1986) and in line with Hill's tracking of the decline of the working-class representation to underclass identities (Hill, 2000b). It is within the Hoodie Horror that horror meets realism as reciprocal content and form.

As James Leggott observes in his excellent overview of contemporary British cinema, films such as *Urban Ghost Story* (Geneviève Joliffe, 1998), *Dead Man's Shoes* (Shane Meadows, 2004) and *The Last Great Wilderness* (David McKenzie, 2002) have been punctuated with the 'kitchen-sink legacy' of social realism. In addition, horror films such as *My Little Eye* (Marc Evans, 2002) and *Freeze-Frame* (John Simpson, 2004) provide a form of social commentary (Leggott, 2008: 59). This pull towards realism for more recent British horror films is matched, I will argue, by a gravitation of more contemporary British social realist ventures (in all its guises, Brit-grit etc.) towards horror. Graham Fuller's survey of the British tradition of social realism as a 'cinema of misery' charts how the socially conscious dramas, the

'torchlight' of British cinema, have been etched since the Free Cinema movement, with the agonizing suffering of individuals who are blighted by a milieu of emotional and spiritual impoverishment, traumatic events and economic deprivation (Fuller, 2011). Descriptions such as 'grim', 'depressing', 'malignant' and 'suffering' are mournfully tailor-made encapsulations of a cinema obsessed with 'those who appear doomed to lives of pain' (36). Fuller briefly observes how the ending of Shane Meadows's *This is England* (Shane Meadows, 2006) is 'horrific' (38), a conceptualisation of realism I would like to extend here. *Nil by Mouth* (Gary Oldman, 1997), *Tyrannosaur* (Paddy Considine, 2011), *Ill Manors* ('Plan B', 2012) and *The Selfish Giant*, are all examples of the development of the British social realist drama from miserablism to horrific realism.² By this I do not argue for the films to be reclassified as horror texts, but rather, to acknowledge the excessiveness of depictions of the underclass in these films as abject states in both representation, and within the narrative trajectories. This horrific realism witnesses the passing of the working-class in popular cultural forms, and animates individuals and communities that have replaced the working-class: the underclass. The image of the charred, taut body of Swifty (*The Selfish Giant*), Joseph drunkenly kicking his dog, Bluey, to death (*Tyrannosaur*), and Michelle offered for sex to employees of a string of fast-food shops to pay back the money she owes for losing a phone (*Ill Manors*), construct a monstrous reality for those who reside on the margins of society. Social realism conjoins with horror in the strategy of othering abject forms

² At the conference 'Contemporary Horrors, Destabilising a Cinematic Genre', held at the University of Chicago, April 2014, Adam Lowenstein responded to my paper on Hoodie Horror that he has always seen horror in British social realism and provided the example of the brutal assault of Joe Lampton in *Room at the Top* (Jack Clayton, 1959). I agree with Lowenstein on this point and am always reminded of the closing scene of *Kes* (Ken Loach, 1969). My point here is the pronounced centrality of abject states in realist texts.

that cinematically animate what Owen Jones terms ‘social distancing’ (Jones, 2012: xii) and what Tyler expresses as a disgust consensus (Tyler, 2013: 23-24). Revolting aesthetics and narratives widen the imagined space between audience and the configurations of marginalised communities. This ‘distancing’ occurs in both the film structures (narratives that place protagonists in extremely difficult events) and aesthetics (configurations of housing estates). The more abject the figure, the more excessive the plot and the more revolting and extreme the aesthetics. The horrific realism of these films allows the audience to experience marginalised existences at a ‘safe’ distance, reinforcing the alterity of a monstrous underclass. For what better way to spacialize otherness than through the strategies of horror?

The final area this thesis seeks to address is the paradoxical presence of the monstrous realism in the cycle. While I historicise the films by fastening them to contemporaneous discourses, I perceive them as haunted not only by the ‘passing’ of the working-class, but also by the cinematic heritages of both horror and social realism. The contention is the films are marked by a certain anachronism where a ‘jumbling up of time’ materialises in representations and film form. The monstrous hoodies of *Heartless*, *Citadel* and *F* are conjured as monsters from a horror heritage – demons, zombies and *gesichtslosgeists* (faceless ghosts) – that are reliant on the gothic structure of concealment and unveiling of identity, a structure most readily associated in classic gothic texts such as *Dracula* (Stoker, 1897/2004) and *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (Stevenson, 1886/1993), and celebrated in Hammer horror films productions. If we ruminate on Swifty’s parents in *The Selfish Giant* – put upon mother and drunken father – would these characters be incongruent if placed in

kitchen sink dramas and films of the British New Wave? Indeed, if we think of the landscapes of *The Selfish Giant*, are we not put in mind of the techniques and formulas of the social realist films of the 1960s? Are we not pricked to return to the conceptual framework of 'That Long Shot of Our Town from That Hill' (Higson, 1996: 134)? While the form may be relevant as a means to communicate the persistence of an underclass discourse through history, are such evocations of the past appropriate to articulate the present? Council estates are conceptualised as dystopian waste grounds, abandoned by residents (*Citadel*), or as haunted houses, troubled by loss, grief and violence (*The Disappeared* (Johnny Kevorkian, 2008) and *Heartless*), visions which imply a retreat from modernism and a failure of a belief and hope in the future, of new beginnings that the construction of council housing promised.

In his book, *After the Future*, Franco Berardi touches upon 'the slow cancellation of the future' not in terms of the direction of time, but rather a 'psychological perception' that shaped a belief in a temporalization that witnessed a culture ever progressing (Berardi, 2011: 18-19). The idea of 'a future cancelled' resonates with work by Mark Fisher and Simon Reynolds. Fisher, in his penetrating book *Ghosts Of My Life*, approaches popular cultural forms as being haunted by a persistence of previous incarnations; he suggests that the comfort of the already known is recycled resulting in anachronistic texts 'saturated with a vague but persistent feeling of the past' (Fisher, 2013: 14). Reynolds' work on music culture, *Retromania*, views the obsession with, and the recycling of, past forms and feels that the temptation of the pastiche, homage and retrospection, produces what he terms

'dsynchronia', a temporal disjuncture. But rather than effecting a feeling of the uncanny, such ahistorical forms are naturalised as a normative expectation (Reynolds, 2012). It is within this recycling, this persistence of identifiable forms, the safety of the known, that I wish to place the Hoodie Horror. This thesis will argue that in a desire to exploit and expose the contemporaneous, the films suffer from a retreat from the experimental and the innovative to embrace the recognisable, resulting in a paradoxical form that is both antiquated and current. Is it that the films are unable to articulate the now, or is that there is no sense of a present to communicate?

1.3: Race and gender statement

Before I proceed further, I would like to make a qualification concerning the research. This thesis is predominately concerned with class and with how the discourse of the hoodie flattens intersectional identity into a representation contingent on class identity. While at certain junctures my work engages with issues that specific representations present, my thesis does not explicitly address race or female representation, and I would like to outline the reasoning behind this decision.

One film that might ostensibly seem to fit with my project is Andrea Arnold's 2009 feature, *Fish Tank* (Andrea Arnold, 2009). Much of the marketing for the film featured the central character, Mia, in a hoodie, and it thus a potentially prime text for this research. While the gender focus would also place it outside the predominantly male-centric universe of the Hoodie Horror, it is Arnold's direction and handling of her subject matter that ultimately drives the film's omission. As

much as the film is centred on a teenage girl growing up on a council estate, it endeavours to decrease attention from a class discourse in favour of illuminating a story of an individual teenage girl navigating the passage from adolescence to womanhood. This is in part due to Arnold's direction that refuses to make judgements, despite the gravity of plot. The camera closely envelops Mia, drawing attention to her relationship with space through sensory channels. The film can be directly compared to *The Selfish Giant*, in how Clio Barnard's framing of Arbor and the housing estate spectacularises poverty that unlike *Fish Tank*, corroborates associative underclass discourses and invites an emotional engagement from the spectator akin to 'pity-porn'. *Fish Tank* engages with the personal, rather than making an explicit engagement with overriding social and cultural concerns. Female representation has a continuing history of being secondary to a male focus in British social realism (not discounting other film forms). Here Arnold, in her exploration of female girlhood, endeavours to find a different cinematic language to animate the difference in female experience.

With regard to race, films such as *Attack the Block* (Joe Cornish, 2011) and the *Hood* trilogy can be placed within a contemporary history of television and film that takes in narratives of racial identity and landscape, *Bullet Boy* (Saul Dibb, 2004) and *Top Boy* (Ronan Bennett, 2011-2013) being some of the other most recognisable examples. However, when approached via the Hoodie Horror cycle, the films' treatment of their black protagonists finds synergy with the white, male underclass characters in *Harry Brown*, *The Selfish Giant* and *Eden Lake*. In essence this thesis is a study of a class discourse onscreen, specifically the underclass, and how this

homogenises different working class identities into a single framework. Films such as *Attack the Block* do not necessarily address a unique black experience in the way such texts as *Pressure* (Horace Ove, 1976) or *Handsworth Songs* (John Akomfrah, 1986) do. This research engages with the stereotypical and fetishized character constructions through classed constructions of marginality and 'otherness', rather than within representations of ethnicity.

This is not to deny the presence of specific instances in films that do emphasise the question of race. The rape of Christine by Rian in *Cherry Tree Lane* (Paul Andrew Richards, 2010) and Pest's identity in *Attack the Block* are two instances that invite further enquiry. While I will touch upon these examples in the specific chapters, an extensive examination of race together with class remains outside the scope of this research. The argument here is that in the essentialist discourse of the Hoodie, as a configuration of class, and its animation and assimilation into the films, is a discourse where class supersedes race and gender, or, rather, a class reading levels *both* into a homogenous construction in the figure of the Hoodie.

1.4: The problem with horror is ...

Always changing. Always in process.

(Peter Hutchings, 2004)

The term 'hoodie horror' first began appearing in connection to film in 2008, in reviews of *Eden Lake*. But the term had already been in circulation prior to this in media reports of assaults and violent acts allegedly perpetrated by Hoodies (Kelly, 2006a: 11). The eye-catching convenience of alliteration for newspaper headlines aside, while the term had initially served to denote adolescent deviancy in varying

forms, when applied to film the term was initially exercised as a descriptive categorisation to set expectations and firmly plant the films in the horror genre. However, for this thesis, I expand the reach of the term to encompass films such as *The Selfish Giant*, *Ill Manors* and *Adulthood*. The reasoning behind this is that the corresponding representations of identity, space and place across these films are beyond superficial images of adolescents in hoodies and sullied council estates, but rather are congruent with representations of poverty and violence. Despite the high walls of genre and sensibilities, there are comparable narratives, aesthetics and representations that are at play here and puncture each film structure. However, the question of horror requires resolving.

Despite the wealth of scholarship on cinematic horror – including anthologies (Jancovich 1992; Gelder, 2000), psychoanalytical analysis (Creed, 1997; Clover, 1992), historical accounts (Skal, 1994; Tudor, 1973), reception studies (Hills, 2005) and cultural analyses (Crane, 1994) – horror remains a nebulous term. It is often charged with the ability to capture ‘the cultural moment’, and viewed as a form sensitive to the political, adept at adapting to social and cultural anxieties. As Paul Wells states ‘the history of the horror film is essentially a history of anxiety in the twentieth century’ (Wells, 2000: 3). As a genre it is marked by an eclectic range of conventions, narratives and aesthetics and as Brigid Cherry argues has ‘fragmented into an extremely diverse set of sub-genres’ and as those groupings and smaller communities modify and adjust, so the boundaries of the entire genre shift and transforms (Cherry, 2009: 2). While it may be relatively easy to recognise a horror film – a stranded group of friends approaches a derelict house, a couple slashed to

death after having sex, or a group of decaying corpses hammering at the windows of a shopping mall (Worland, 2006; Cherry, 2009) – there is still disparity and wrangling over what constitutes one, despite a focus on questions of genre boundaries. The overall genre has no distinctive iconography that binds *all* films, is not limited to specific geographies or historical periods and reacts to shifting social and cultural concerns (Hutchings, 2004). Even within the transitory nature of horror as a genre, there are other considerations that affects the genre's composition: industrial and economic models of genre, genre hybridity and questions of authorship are some such considerations. Recent movements such as the New French Extreme films and the glut of Japanese horror from the 1990s and early 2000s challenge the more totalising theories. as questions are raised as to how national horror intercalates with the more universal conventions and concerns of the genre. With Hollywood remakes of the products of both these national horrors, the function of transnationalism in the formation and development of the genre becomes an increased mode of enquiry, furthering our understanding of horror cinema.

Steven Schneider's preliminary scholarship on cinematic horror seeks to answer the question as to why some horror films are successful in eliciting the desired emotional response in viewers whilst others fail. In brief, what makes a horror film horrifying? Critical of Noël Carroll's analysis of horror christened 'art-horror' for being too narrow in its consideration of horror as a genre-specific emotion, Schneider gravitates towards Robert Solomon's contention that horror can be experienced in isolation, separate from narrative and strategies of the genre

(Schneider, 2004). This idea of 'non-generic horror' is informative when considering disputes over generic mappings of films, differences of opinion which as Mark Jancovich has noted, can be divisive. When it was claimed *The Silence of the Lambs* (Jonathan Demme, 1991) was an example of a horror film winning a mainstream award, one fan remonstrated, '*Silence of the Lambs* is a thriller you dickheads!' (Jancovich, 2002: 15). At the opposing end, as Schneider argues, there are horror films that do not succeed in their reason for being, to horrify, or, even in endeavouring to produce 'bounded experience[s] of fear' (Pinedo, 1997: 41). Some, such as film critics Mark Kermode and Nigel Floyd regarding James Wan's film series, *Insidious* (James Wan, 2010) and *The Conjuring* (James Wan, 2013) as 'cattle-prod' cinema, claim that even films highly versed in the mechanisms of horror are not horror films, because in essentialist terms, the films are not designed to invoke terror or horror, but rather are designed only to induce a reactive 'jump' in the spectator.³ Alternatively, if, as Stephen Prince argues, we watch horror films for the sensations, the thrills and the spectacle of violence, it may be that we are 'drawn to the films for their ability to visualise wounding and violent death in novel and imaginative ways' (Prince, 2004: 244) – what Isabel Pinedo frames as 'recreational terror' (Pinedo, 1997) – not because we wish to be horrified or scared.

Whether we come to understand horror through generic structures, as an emotive sensibility or as an expression of history, the horror genre has an enduring appeal. Prince argues that its appeal lies not within the genre's ability to resonate with cultural or social concerns and issues, nor for the genre's ability to invigorate and

³ A more detailed discussion by Nigel Floyd and Mark Kermode on 'cattle-prod' cinema can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ab8oi4ThVS0>.

transform, while yet replaying repetitive plot structures for the audience's pleasure. Rather, the horror genre's distinctive quality is in how it pushes beyond the cultural moment to explore more profound concerns that extend beyond culture and society: the fundamental questions of human existence. In essence, Prince argues that at the heart of horror, the 'anxiety' of the genre, is 'the nature of human being' (Prince, 2004: 2). As he further argues, the human form in the horror genre is always under threat from defilement or destruction. When a person's body is violated and polluted, its very ontology is contaminated and metamorphoses into an anomalous entity. In horror, people transfigure into ghosts, zombies, all manner of the undead, werewolves and vampires. The boundaries on which our social existence are constructed are breached, threatening the social order (2). Anthropologist Margaret Mead posits that the fundamental anxiety that human beings share is the integrity of self and community and therefore we erect rituals and customs to maintain identity and guard against violation. Fears endure that some are unable to maintain integrity of self and therefore threaten the social order, resulting in the observance of customs and obedience to taboos (Mead, 1949).

It is within these margins of horror as concerned with self, identity and community that I situate the Hoodie Horror. For clarity, I am not constructing a case to recognise the films as horror films as Walker's work seeks to do. Acknowledging the presence of generic horror films in the cycle presupposes this thesis does not require to defend those films' genre credentials. Nor will this thesis undertake a revisionist approach to British social realism to claim previous examples such as *Kes*

(Ken Loach, 1969), *Ladybird Ladybird* (Ken Loach, 1994), or *Nil by Mouth* as horror texts, despite there being early signs in these films of the 'monstrous realism' of this cycle. Rather this thesis seeks to construct a hypothesis as to what a Hoodie Horror is, to locate and track the 'horror' across popular cultural forms including the cycle, and analyse how this configuration of horror amalgamates the films into a cycle.

The horror in the Hoodie Horror pivots on the concept of social abjection. Abjection is, as Tyler articulates, 'an act of casting down; an act of abasement. That which is cast off; refuse, scum, dregs. That state or condition of being cast down; degradation, humiliation' (Tyler, 2013, 20). Central to Tyler's account of social abjection are two states – 'states of being' (human life) and 'states of belonging' (political life) – and the process of 'making and unmaking' of both (20). The abject is a spatializing politics, what Owen Jones terms, 'social distancing' (Jones, 2012: xii), which functions to create distance (geographically, imaginary, symbolically) between the body politic and those excluded to the border zones of the social proper (Tyler, 2013: 41). For Tyler, social abjection assists in understanding subjectivity and sovereignty and how the 'violent exclusionary forces' of sovereign power creates the dregs and refuse of social life (21). But as Tyler goes on to expand, abjection is not just solely the act of subjugation, there is also the condition of being abject.

This thesis will argue that the Hoodie Horror cycle concerns itself with anxiety over citizenship in neoliberal Britain during the early years of the 2000s, and configures horror, in the concept of social abjection, as a strategy for identity formation,

establishing it as the film cycle *par excellence* of neoliberal Britain. In centralising and spectacularising abject states, presenting the subjectivity of subjugated forms, the cycle reflects not only the passing of the working-class, but by assimilating the demonising discourse of the Hoodie, reflects ‘class-making’ in twenty-first century Britain, with the films examples of British cinema defining itself as ‘other’ to other national cinemas. Furthermore, in concerning itself with the bordering strategies of social abjection – that creates ‘wasted humans’ within and at the borders of sovereign states (Bauman, 2004: 5) – the Hoodie Horror is the cinema of alterity, a cinematic furthering of neoliberal governance that allows audiences to define identity, self and community as other than low. The disciplinary forces, the discriminatory practices of sovereignty in a neoliberal state through its process of inclusion and exclusion, does not fully expel ‘failed citizens’ (constituted as ‘waste populations’), as these forms constitute the boundaries of the state, enabling identity formation through ‘disidentification with another: “that-is-not-me”’ (Tyler, 2013: 26).

The essentialist representations elide any political struggles of these minority subjects into the cinematic fiction. Even *The Selfish Giant* and *Kidulthood* as examples of cultural film-making sully and problematize both films’ projects of authenticity with essentialist and demonising discourse. Arbor’s diagnosis of ADHD in *The Selfish Giant* finds a resonance with how, when class is imagined as a race, conditions such as poverty and disadvantage are perceived as a hereditary condition or a disease (Tyler, 2013: 188), whilst the gun culture and aspirational lifestyles inherent in the *Hood* trilogy and in *Ill Manors* perpetuate the stigmatizing

discourses already surrounding council estates and an urban underclass youth (Tyler, 2013: 159-63). Both films raise questions of representation, authenticity and film-making practices. How do films construct marginalised states without furthering their abjection?

Abjection has a long history with horror. Monsters, zombies, vampires, blood, vomit, mutilated corpses, cannibalism, religious abomination: the horror film is abundant with images of the abject. Indeed, as Barbara Creed notes, when we allude to individual horror films and how they 'scare the shit out of me', we are identifying those films as 'abjection at work' (Creed, 1997: 10). What perverse pleasure we take in watching horror also propels us to eject the abject/horror from our presence from the 'safety of the spectator's seat' (10). Abjection is concerned with bordering, with the 'ritualistic, cultural construction of borders', separating self and non-self, cultural borders or separating out what is taboo (Hills, 2005: 58). Julia Kristeva's seminal psychoanalytical account of abjection, *Powers of Horror*, has had a significant influence in the fields of humanities and arts, and especially within work on horror. In Kristeva's account, she explores the various ways in which abjection functions in human societies, as a process to demarcate the border between human and non-human. Kristeva expounds abjection as that which does not 'respect borders, positions, rules', and that which 'disturbs identity, system, order' (Kristeva, 1982: 4). For Kristeva, it is societies' use of ritual that brings contact with the abject and allows the abject to be excluded. The abject has the power to pollute, to contaminate, to defile and to destroy and therefore must be propelled away for it threatens stability of the subject and life. The subject must

therefore separate itself from the abject by dispelling the abject to the other side of the border in order for the subject to retain integrity of form. These rituals of defilement, as Kristeva names them, were a danger the area of religion had functioned to confront (1982: 64). Barbara Creed notes how modern horror film mirrors such rituals as outlined by Kristeva, with the construction of the monstrous. For Creed, the function of the monstrous in the narrative of horror films is to 'bring about an encounter between the symbolic order and that which threatens its stability' (Creed, 1997: 11). We are confronted in horror films with that which frightens, repels and disgusts us. Nevertheless, the abject must be tolerated for 'that which threatens to destroy life also helps to define life' (9). Just as we are perversely fascinated with images of the horrific in horror films (10), so we are captivated by the abject. As Kristeva states, abjection is particularly concerned with ambiguity for, 'while releasing a hold, it does not radically cut off the subject from what threatens it – on the contrary, abjection acknowledges it to be in perpetual danger' (Kristeva, 1982: 9).

While abjection has a long association with psychoanalytical readings of the horror genre, the concept has also been appropriated into the development of universal and transhistorical approaches to horror in an effort to valorise 'horror's cultural value' and in the process validate psychoanalytical theory itself (Hills, 2005: 46). Positioning the Hoodie Horror within the paradigm of social abjection allows this thesis to wrestle the films away from the regulatory psychoanalytical, transhistorical and totalising prehistorical approaches, to historicise abjection within a specific social and political account. This cultural approach is more suitable

for a cycle of films that are not concerned with repressed fears, but rather with a symbolic threat of contamination from a 'failed citizen'.

1.5: Some kind of cycle?

Johnny Walker's chapter, 'Heartless Hoodies', in his 2016 book *Contemporary British Horror Cinema* is the first published academic study of the Hoodie Horror cycle. Contextualising the films within the abject discourses of the hoodie found in the British media of the 2000s that came to signify 'Broken Britain', Walker places the cinematic animation of these discourses directly within the horror genre, suggesting the films allegorise societal fears towards an underclass youth (Walker, 2016: 86). While he acknowledges the films are apparently informed by both 'realist' and 'horror' traditions, resulting in an intertextual hybrid and allegorical form, Walker is somewhat suspicious of the realism of the films and subsequently the cycle's ability to pass, as he sees it, as social commentary. Arguing that the cultural discourses often animated Hoodies in configurations akin to the othering of monsters of horror films such as 'feral youths ... running wild like a pack of wild animals' (Broadbent cited in Walker, 2016: 93) that sought to generate fear and perpetuate class antagonisms, Walker posits how films such as *Eden Lake* and *Cherry Tree Lane* exploit the fear and class stereotypes of these reports and 'revel in the same kinds of excesses as reactionary news media' (Walker, 2016: 97). Walker constructs the relationship between the films and the reportage showing how both rely on configurations of the Hoodie and feral youths as exaggerated stereotypes. Drawing upon Richard Dyer's essay on social stereotypes, Walker

argues the films draw upon either the hooded sweatshirt as signifier of deviancy (94) or on broader constructs of the underclass as feral youths (96).

For Walker, the cycle configures its monsters as essentialist forms of the Hoodie of the media. His search for stereotypes extends to place, as he conceptualises settings of the cycle within the uncanny landscapes of horror cinema, for these are unwelcoming and dispossessing vistas that play out 'recurrence[s] of stories in which individuals or groups of characters are transplanted into hostile, unfamiliar landscapes' (Leggott cited in Walker, 2016: 97) and animated as the vista of Broken Britain. The school in *F* is thus the 'terrible place' of the modern horror film (Walker, 2016: 106), the London of *Heartless* can be correlated to configurations of the city found in other London-set horror films, and the countryside of *Eden Lake* speaks of the rural horror films of both American and British cinema history, from *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (Tobe Hooper, 1974) to *Blood on Satan's Claw* (Piers Haggard, 1971) by being 'merely a genealogical extension of the homestead horror' (102). It is clear from the analysis that Walker is seeking the horror in the films at the expense of any form of realism. Indeed, he rejects the claims of those who have advocated that the films function to reflect contemporary British society. Challenging *The Daily Mail's* film critic, Chris Tookey, for his reading of *Eden Lake* as 'thoroughly credible' and for representing 'the true horrors we fear day to day ... our own youth' (Tookey cited in Walker, 2016: 97), Walker decries the veracity of the films by disputing any films' ability to *truly* reflect an actuality. Rather he asserts the films conflate the already exaggerated and reactionary underclass discourses with established markers of horror films, to create genre-laden horror vehicles

which perpetuate what he considers to be the mythologizing of an adolescent underclass masquerading as authentic representation (97). However, Walker's reading of the cycle is not without its problems. His approach to defining the horror, denying the realism and constructing the formation of the cycle, underlines the inherent problems with the Hoodie Horror cycle, but also the broader challenges of establishing cycles within a national cinema. Walker's reliance on genre definitions built primarily for American and Hollywood film genres, most notably horror, not only confuses the boundaries between genre and cycles without sufficient justification, but also results in an approach that neglects to address how a grouping of films from a film-producing nation other than Hollywood can resist generic definition under Hollywood terms. In an apologist strategy of locating and fixing the horror, 'Towards a Cycle' narrows the Hoodie Horror into the horror genre, ironing out the complexities the cycle presents, where a more discursive approach between textual and cultural features would allow what unites the films to unfurl.

1.5.1: Towards a cycle?

It is telling that Johnny Walker's assessment of this assemblage of films is titled, 'Towards a Hoodie Horror Cycle'. Although acknowledging the disparate nature of the grouping, Walker circumvents establishing an initial classification by focusing on the cycle's antecedents and influences, trajectories he considers far more tangible to locate. Whether Walker is ambivalent on how to unify the cycle, or decided not to 'fix' the cycle with a more precise identity, his approach results in the Hoodie Horror cycle conceptualised in an indistinct shape, despite his acknowledging the

topicality of its subject matter. Rather, Walker looks to trace the cycle's lineage via a working-class masculinity, a much more straightforward relationship to establish. He cites two British films, *The Great Ecstasy of Robert Carmichael* (Thomas Clay, 2005) and *The Football Factory* (Nick Love, 2004) as predecessors to the Hoodie Horror, due to both focusing on working class and violent male adolescents. In terms of themes and style, Walker turns to the French film, *Ils* (David Moreau and Xavier Palud, 2006) since James Watkins, director of *Eden Lake*, and Johannes Roberts, director of *F*, cite this as providing inspiration to their own work, and in terms of narrative and concerns, *Ils* is comparable to *Eden Lake*, the Hoodie Horror *par excellence*.

Cycles housing differing film forms are not without precedent in British cinema. In 'Underbelly UK', Claire Monk argues for an 'underclass' cycle of films occurring in the 1990s that drew upon social issues faced by those considered to be in that social stratum, with *Raining Stones* (Ken Loach, 1993), *The Full Monty* (Peter Cattaneo, 1997) and *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* (Guy Ritchie, 1998) as some examples (Monk, 2000a: 274-87). Situating the films within the legacy of British social realism, Monk paints the cycle with a broad brush. Acknowledging the breadth of the cycle, in that it houses films ranging from the more commercial outings to examples of cultural film-making, she unifies the group as being preoccupied with a male underclass identity, economically disempowered and disenfranchised. Crucially, though, and more specific for the concerns of this thesis, Monk recognises the cycle as being 'loose-knit, spanning a range of genres ... and including films aimed at both minority and mainstream audiences' (274).

There is, then, precedence in British film history for grouping films in a cycle not by the boundaries of genre or sub-genres, but rather via subject matter and representations. However, what Walker's intervention highlights is the challenge in providing a cohesive framework through which to approach the Hoodie Horror. One contention is the inclusion of the word, 'horror' in the classification. The word functions as both descriptive and as a signifier, implying the film at hand is a horror film. With the term itself already in circulation in media reports of youth deviancy, 'Hoodie Horror' initially surfaced with regard to film in reviews of *Eden Lake*. Henry Fitzherbert writing for *The Sunday Express* entitled his review of the film 'Scared witless by Hoodie Horrors' (Fitzherbert, 2008: 60), and Jim Clarke, highlighting the upward trajectory of Michael Fassbender's career, also nominated *Eden Lake* a hoodie horror (Clarke, 2008: 19). It's worth noting that in both articles, 'hoodie horror' was encased in speech marks, denoting a certain novelty in the term. The film itself is generally accepted as a horror film, albeit with differing opinions as to *what kind* of horror film.⁴

The reticence of Walker to define the cycle exposes twin critical and theoretical predicaments: how to find unity in films of such varying genres and forms, and then how to house the cycle under the term 'horror'? As Walker highlights, films such as the coming-of-age *Summer Scars* (Julian Richards, 2007) and revenge thriller *Harry Brown* have also been labelled in some quarters as a Hoodie Horror. Other films he

⁴ There should be no concern of any apparent generic impurity in *Eden Lake*. James Leggott notes the array of influences explicitly in play in the British horror film of the twenty-first century, from the 'Europeanisation' of *Severance* (Christopher Smith, 2006) and *Dog Soldiers* (Neil Marshall, 2002), to the intertextual borrowing and fan sensibility of *Shaun of the Dead* (Edgar Wright, 2004) and *The League of Gentlemen's Apocalypse* (Steve Bendelack, 2005). Brigid Cherry's 2009 *Horror* also argues how the term horror usually denotes whatever subgenre is popular at the time describing horror cinema as 'a set of subgenres within shifting boundaries' (Cherry, 2009: 15).

cites such as *The Children* (Tom Shankland, 2008) or *Donkey Punch* (Oliver Blackburn, 2008) reveal either how indiscriminately the term Hoodie Horror is applied, or how its definition has been permitted to remain undetermined. But it is the very word *horror* in the cycle's name that first problematises Walker's approach to the films. Indeed, its appearance in the cycle's title functions as a primer, furnishing the reader with expectations of the films being in the horror tradition. Walker's interpretation of the function of the term horror in Hoodie Horror leads him on an essentialist search for evidence of mechanisms of the horror genre in the cycle in order to establish its horror credentials. But despite acknowledging the diversity of films to account for, Walker's analysis declines to engage with those films not comfortably defined as horror, such as *Harry Brown* or *Summer Scars*, resulting in a less innovative and a more partisan reading than the cycle requires. The weight of analysis in Walker's chapter draws upon those films which are already accepted as conventional horror films, *Eden Lake*, *F*, *Cherry Tree Lane* and *Heartless*. Focusing on how the films adhere to the general iconography of horror films, monsters and landscapes, as markers of the cycle, Walker accedes to what Andrew Tudor conceptualises as the 'empiricist dilemma' (Tudor, 1973: 135-38) and what Brigid Cherry defines as the 'self-defining entity' in genre classification (Cherry, 2009: 21-23). Tudor outlines an issue with genre classification in a 'chicken and egg' scenario. Choosing Westerns as a case in point, Tudor argues that in identifying the markers of the genre, one must have first identified those films as westerns. But these can only be acknowledged as westerns on the basis of the markers, which can only be realised once the films have been agreed to be westerns ... (Tudor, 1973: 135-38). In a similar stance to Tudor's, Cherry argues that

thinking of genre classification as a 'categorical type' with common characteristics can be a contradictory and self-defeating process. That is, as you identify essential features drawn from films considered typical of their genre, you are simultaneously categorising those films as being typical of that genre. Also, approaching genre in terms of 'distinctive characteristics' risks limiting the genre within those genre-defining films and distinctions that excludes films that are too divergent (Cherry, 2009: 21-23).

Walker's analysis of the Hoodie Horror falls into this very predicament. By eliciting horror tropes, Walker safely redeems the cycle in the name of horror, constructing a seemingly more secure and stable grouping of films and therefore eradicating the issue of defining the more conflicting films as horror. However, Walker can only do so because he narrows his analysis to the formulaic horrors in an approach that 'looks for horror in the wrong place'. By this I mean that Walker's overriding concern in establishing it as a grouping of horror films fails to engage with, and therefore fundamentally misunderstands, what is the horror of these films. Such a search for symmetry can be found also in Barry Keith Grant's scrutiny of what he calls the Yuppie Horror film. Although Grant argues the Yuppie Horror cycle functions on a differing logic to the horror genre, he proposes it shares much 'style and syntax' with the genre (Grant, 2004: 153) and seeks to prove films such as *After Hours* (Martin Scorsese, 1985) and *Fatal Attraction* (Adrian Lyne, 1987) adhere to the language of horror, an approach anticipating Walker's. Much of the promise of a radical reading is denied in Grant's theoretical approach, for it projects generic horror structures onto the films, as if laying over tracing paper and etching

conventions into the narrative. By ignoring the diversity of film form Walker similarly does not take the opportunity to ask *why* films such as *Harry Brown* or *Summer Scars* have been at moments described as Hoodie Horrors, contributing to a flawed methodological analysis.

Similar problems are encountered in Walker's assessment of the apparent realism at play in the films. Walker contextualises the cycle's realism within two approaches: the authenticity of the demonising discourses that fuel the cinematic representations, and the individual films' employment of realism as a stylistic tool. Walker rightly contests both on the levels of accuracy of the discourses and then by re-appropriating individual filmic style into one associated more with horror. Describing the media discourses of the hoodie as demonising and 'apocalyptic press reportage' (Walker, 2016: 87), Walker argues that the excessiveness of the rhetoric describing hoodies as, for example, monstrous, feral, inhuman, scum, functions to generate fear and create modern day 'folk-devils', and are social constructs that enable the moral majority to create symbolic space between them and the underclass. The Hoodie is not an authentic representation of an underclass adolescent, but rather an act of classist stereotyping that imbues the Hoodie as representative of a moral downturn in the nation and thus a 'state-of-the-nation' signifier for a rotten Britain of the 2000s (88-89). Walker takes similar umbrage with the cycle's apparent cinematic realism and here undertakes a two-forked critique. Drawing upon John Hill's work on British social realism, Walker posits that, much like the Hoodie of the media, realism is another construct that mythologises the working class but is accepted as authentic due in part to an absence of a working-

class presence in British culture (Hill in Walker, 2016: 95). What we understand then of the working-class is always through a mediated form and predominately through 'culturally acknowledged generic demarcations' based upon social stereotypes (Hill in Walker, 2016: 96). For Walker, realism in film is a fallacy, for nothing can ever be truly 'reflective of real life' (Walker, 2016: 96). Citing *Cherry Tree Lane* as an example, Walker argues we then mistake the representations of the youth as realistic for we only know these figures through the demonising discourses of the media. Furthermore, we then interpret the film's form – long shots and close-ups – as 'realism', favouring this cinematic form at the expense of the 'tempered Steadicam sequences' and harsh colours more akin, according to Walker, to *A Clockwork Orange* (Stanley Kubrick, 1971), a horror film. This misdirection, for Walker, results in interpreting the film as 'gritty realism' rather the home invasion narrative it actually is (94-95).

While Walker's example of *Cherry Tree Lane*, in his appraisal of how a hierarchy of concerns can result in a misreading of genre, highlights a valuable lesson in film cycle and genre theory, his reading of realism in the Hoodie Horror returns us to the same problem his theory poses for the location of horror in the films. Again, Walker is asking the wrong question, and here Imogen Tyler's analysis of Owen Jones' criticism of the construction of the Chav in the media resonates. Tyler highlights a fundamental issue with Jones' 2012 book, *Chavs*: that the critical question is not *whether* such demonising discourses stand firm under scrutiny, but rather *how* (my emphases) such figurative representations sustain the mechanisms of power (Tyler, 2013: 170-71). Critical questions for the cycle are, then, not so much whether the

realism or representations are 'true', accurate or authentic, but rather *why* the constructions are posited as a 'truth', and what the function of the aesthetics of horror and disgust is in the representations. Walker's focus on the horror may well establish its generic affiliations. The argument's drive to decouple the realism from horror, aside from Walker's analysis of the Hoodie, leads the cycle into a generic grounding that forfeits the fundamental question: what makes a film a Hoodie Horror?

1.6: Social abjection – the rhetoric of the Hoodie Horror

Imogen Tyler's *Revolting Subjects* provides the preliminary hypothesis for this analysis of the horrorisation of Hoodies and the spaces they inhabit in the Hoodie Horror cycle. Tyler's study is primarily concerned with thinking across, and drawing upon, a diverse body of theoretical scholarship, including psychosocial studies and political philosophy. Tyler admits her work is unabashed in not remaining faithful to Kristeva's 'orthodox psychoanalytical logic', but rather seeks to reposition abjection within the political realms of sovereign power, subjugation and subject making (Tyler, 2013: 13). It suggests avenues for this thesis in not only situating the cycle's representations of Hoodies and housing estates in relation to her paradigm of social abjection, but also situating the Hoodie Horror cycle *within* what Tyler terms the discourse of social abjection. Tyler considers media in all forms critical to what Boris Buden conceptualises as 'the culturalisation' of social and class struggles (Buden cited in Tyler, 2013: 145). Referring to the genre of reality television specifically, Imogen Tyler and Bruce Bennett argue such visibility not only exploits the participants, but can also discriminate by distorting representation, resulting in an

inflammatory discourse of stigmatization (Tyler and Bennett, 2010). For Tyler, political dialogue of neoliberal governance is dispersed from the classical sphere of state mechanisms to spaces of popular culture. It is within these domains this thesis wishes to insert the Hoodie Horror, situating it within the abject discourses of the underclass and housing estates. Although the films are not in the reality television genre, they similarly fetishize the underclass, their excessive representations of abject states thus extending the visibility of these stigmatised forms, adding to the shaping of public opinion about these communities.

In broad terms, Tyler is offering a social and cultural account of neoliberalism as a form of governance, developing her conceptualisation of social abjection as a theoretical resource through which to explore 'states of exclusion' (Tyler, 2013: 4). Arguing that a central tenet of neoliberal states is the procurement of consent for policies and strategies through the production of fear, Tyler posits public anxieties and hostilities are focused towards certain groups and communities within the population that are publicly imagined as a threat to the nation. Terming these figurative scapegoats as national abjects, Tyler determines these figures function as ideological conductors to legitimise repressive state interventions. As with Kristeva's psychoanalytical account of abjection, Tyler's paradigm of social abjection is to do with separating, demarcating and differentiating. As Tyler writes, national abjects are 'the border subjects of the neoliberal body public – those whose lives are deemed worthless or expendable' (10). It is through political, cultural and social mechanisms of communication, such as the mass media, government policy, and public relations, that the stigmatizing discourses of the

national objects are fabricated. Here Tyler extends the communications systems by embracing Stuart Hall's hypothesis of how the inurement of public opinion into consent is achieved through 'repetition and accumulation of expressions and beliefs' (10) in social spaces of everyday life (Hall *et al*, 1978), whether these be pubs, street-corners, or now online, such as wall posts and blogs, as Tyler suggests, re-imagining Hall's argument for the twenty-first century (Tyler, 2013: 10). This thesis does not have the scope for a full examination of this paradigm. Rather, I propose to draw on key elements of Tyler's paradigm of social abjection, encompassing her concept of the national object and council estates as stigmatized territories.

A keystone of Tyler's work is to locate state, nation and subject within the neo-liberal Britain of the early millennium. The body as object has been fundamental to both Creed's and Kristeva's work, as well as approaches to horror in general. Whilst those practices are primarily based within psychoanalytical methods that seek to validate and dominate horror's cultural worth and signify a transhistorical process, Tyler formulates a model that locates 'making object' and the state of abjection as a 'lived process' (Tyler, 2013: 4) within a historically specific political and cultural process of neoliberal governmentality. Crucial for Tyler is considering abjection a practice of 'subjugation and resistance' (4) underpinning the theory of political and state power, and, in Judith Butler's terms, to reflect upon abjection not as a 'permanent contestation of social norms condemned to the pathos of perpetual failure', but instead as 'a critical resource in the struggle to rearticulate the terms of symbolic legitimacy and intelligibility' (Butler cited in Tyler, 2013: 13). For Tyler, the

abject returns as the body as sovereign subject, formed by the machinations of state through its exemption. State power is contingent upon the production of abject states 'to constitute itself and its borders' (46). In *The Birth of Biopolitics*, Michel Foucault argues that since the Second World War anxiety over 'big state' governance has influenced national governments to create conditions that welcomed the free market, resulting in a 'state under the supervision of the market' (Foucault, 2008: 116). Foucault further notes the ensuing paradox. Governing for the market entails governing against the people by deregulating resources and unblocking impediments to maximize capital: the state does not shrink nor relinquish power. Thus, neoliberal politics are state-phobic but also demand of the state 'permanent vigilance, activity, and intervention' (116).

Taking Foucault's work as a cue, Tyler contextualises contemporary Britain as a state that since the 1970s has witnessed the rollback of the welfare state, and the erosion of workers' rights and civil liberties, resulting in a rise of social inequality and the overturning of social mobility (Tyler, 2013: 6). Thus neoliberal governance works to manufacture economic inequality and social insecurity. Tyler argues such a neoliberal state creates what Zygmunt Bauman categorises as 'wasted humans' (Bauman, 2004: 5) and decomposing neighbourhoods (24-25), whilst producing a climate of public anxieties and hostilities that are directed towards populations marginalised as parasitical burdens and threats to the stability and security of the state. It is these populations that are reconfigured into what Tyler categorises as the figure of the national abject, a symbolic figure assembled as an ideological strategy of neoliberal governmentality. The mechanisms of such governance

conflate, reframe and fetishize events, discourses, and figures to mobilise public consensus for punitive reform. In this way the immigrant becomes 'the illegal immigrant', the asylum seeker 'the bogus asylum seeker', those living in poverty 'the chav' and 'the underclass' (Tyler, 2013: 9). These reconfigurations make up the national abject, Tyler argues, and are intentionally perceived and constructed within the political and cultural discourses of the public domain in excessive and distorted forms (9-10) that function akin to Homi Bhabha's concept of 'the discursive strategy of the stereotype', itself a discriminatory practice (Bhabha, 1983: 18). For Bhabha, the stereotype is formed within what he terms the analytic of ambivalence, which ensures the representation is beyond experiential proof. It is this ambivalence that is critical for Tyler's paradigm of social abjection, as she perceives it to provide the national abject with the figurative mobility and the political currency that sanctions the persistent reconfigurations as seen with the chav, the traveller and so forth (Tyler, 2013: 9). If the exemplary neoliberal citizen is defined by its mobility, flexibility and 'individualised notion of selfhood' that seizes the 'right' lifestyle choices (158), then the national abject lies in opposition as a 'failed citizen' (161). In a neoliberal state it is the individual who is responsible for her or his own prosperity. Only the 'right' self-management can enable the aspirations of the citizen to grasp the opportunities presented (158-63). 'Failed citizens', unable to contribute to the advancement of the state, become entrenched within an existence of misery by being denied citizenship and excluded from the state proper as 'wasted humans' to reside at the borders of sovereign territories (Bauman, 2004: 5).

The paradoxical logic of the concept of abjection is present in social abjection in how waste populations are 'included through their exclusion' (Tyler, 2013: 20). Tyler draws upon Georges Bataille's essay, 'Abjection and miserable forms' (1934/1993) to highlight how waste populations – the national abject in Tyler's account – created by the sovereign state constitute a section of the dominant culture. These disposable populations are an unwanted, but necessary, excess that threatens the state from within, but cannot be fully expelled, since they legitimize the sovereignty, and constitute the borders, of the nation state. The national abject is thus the figurative border and also the object the sovereignty seeks to police. It is what Kristeva identifies as the ambivalence in abjection. While the state seeks to expel, to 'vomit' the threat, it never fully releases its control of it. Abjection is to reside within a continuous state of danger (Kristeva, 1982: 11). This translates in Tyler's paradigm into a political process of the sovereignty exploiting, or creating, 'crisis management' events in order to obtain consent for authoritarian governance. (Tyler, 2013: 8). Tyler provides the economic crisis of 2007 and the riots of 2011 as examples; Brexit could also easily apply. Abjection then concerns itself with bordering and surveillance, in both the macro sense of nation-state and in the micro via the formulation of individual identity. Judith Butler and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's assertion that the subject and state are not static or hegemonic entities, but rather fluid forms (Butler and Spivak, 2007) allows Tyler's work to consider 'the making of' both sovereignty and subject in differing configurations (chav, traveller, illegal immigrant), for each crisis or moral panic requires a revolting figure to discriminate against symbolically, in order to govern and secure its borders. Social abjection is an appropriate concept through which to

approach neoliberal governmentality, as the sovereign power is established through exclusion (Tyler, 2013: 46).

Excluding and bordering within the paradigm of abjection requires a process of spatializing to create distance, even symbolically, between the abjected and the abjecting. Tyler identifies that what aides this spatializing is the condition and emotion of disgust. For, drawing upon Aurel Kolnai's essay on disgust, Tyler observes disgust to be a 'spatially aversive emotion' (22), and, as Kolnai argues, feeling disgust initiates an act of flight from a thing deemed revolting, in order to exit the proximity of dirt and to avoid contamination (Kolnai, 2004: 587). Of more significance though to Tyler's paradigm is Kolnai's work on *moral* disgust and his assertion there is a transference between a physical and moral reaction of repulsion, with a moral reaction being based upon a 'judgement of value' (Tyler, 2013: 23) of that being repulsed. Tyler's national objects become thus due to opinion from popular discourses about behaviour. Chavs are perceived and positioned as parasitic 'dole scum' and slothful criminals (163-67) and the female travellers of *My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding* (2011-2015) are publicly conceived in racialized terms as excessive and failed representations of women with their 'perma-tans' and 'bling-loving' attire (139-45). The judgemental language applies disgust to the culture of the communities and seeks what Tyler brands as 'disgust consensus' (23). In *Purity and Danger*, Mary Douglas posits that no dirt is 'natural', and reactions of disgust are entrenched within wider social beliefs (Douglas, 1966). When repeated and re-enacted through cultural discourses, the disgust consensus shapes public opinion, which is then mobilised in the governance of marginalised

communities. The figurative bodies that are articulated with revolting language are bound to the signs of disgust, and in turn the disgusted response constitutes the 'the truth' of that body and object (Ahmed, 2004: 87-92). The language of disgust is the revolting aesthetic of abjection, for it makes visible in shaping and giving form to the borders of the state. Disgust facilitates identity through disidentification, what William Cohen conceptualises as a 'that-is-not-me' function of disgust aversion (Cohen, 2005: x). Thus, for Tyler, disgust is political, as it is operationalised for the stigmatizing mechanisms of neoliberalist state power to effect social inequality through symbolic violence and demonization, and to reinforce the boundaries between self and those who threaten to contaminate (Tyler, 2013: 24-25).

For Tyler, the symbolic violence acted upon the bodies of the national abject in the public arena, that transforms subjects from the disadvantaged into state leeches, produces two critical outcomes for these marginalised figures/communities. Firstly, it limits the representational agency of those interpellated by the national abject, and secondly, it transfigures the symbolic into a lived experience of 'material violence' (26). That is, demonization in the public imaginary is converted into hostility, discrimination and abuse, experienced in the everyday lives of those constructed as abject.

Tyler applies her paradigm of social abjection to figures and communities that have been subject to these stigmatizing discourses in contemporary Britain: asylum seekers, gypsies, and the poor. But it is the geographical stigmatization of council estates that is of importance to this thesis, as it is from these sites as failed states

that my work on the Hoodie and its relationship to council estates is drawn. Unfortunately, it is not within the scope of this project to outline Tyler's work on the chav and social housing. Rather, I will apply her paradigm to the conceptualisation of Hoodies and estates in the public arena.

1.7: The Hoodie and the fashion of fear

[There] is a very public prejudice in this country towards the underclass. These kids are ridiculed in the press as they aren't as educated as others, because they talk and dress in a certain way... They are aware of the ill feelings towards them and that makes them feel alienated. I know because I felt it myself growing up. These kids have been beaten into apathy. They don't care about society because society has made it very clear that it doesn't care about them.

(Plan B, 2012)

On 12 May 2005 the national press reported on the Bluewater shopping centre in Kent banning individuals from wearing hooded tops from their premises in a zero-tolerance effort to combat crime. The centre's manager, Matthew Clements, declared 'Ensuring Bluewater is a safe and pleasant environment is of paramount importance to us' (Anon, 2005a: 6). Within weeks Bluewater had reported a rise in footfall, an impact attributed to the ban (Derbyshire, 2005). Following the reporting, Tony Blair, speaking after a cabinet reshuffle, announced New Labour's 'bold programme' for implementing their manifesto pledges to 'address head-on the priorities of the British people ... welfare reform ... crime, disorder, respect on our streets' (White, 2005). Blair fully supported the centre's ban, declaring 'People are rightly fed-up with street corner and shopping centre thugs, yobbish behaviour

– sometimes from children as young as 10 or 11 whose parents should be looking after them’ (M. White, 2005: 2).

In May 2005 the figure of the Hoodie was given life and brought into the public conscious. Stigmatized in the cultural imaginary as a figure found everywhere, an ‘eternal slouching, gobbing star of CCTV. A hidden, glowering omnipresence that spews hatred, ignorance and simmering violence’ and a product of ‘disintegrating families, parents as drunk and as foul-mouthed as their offspring’ (Stott, 2005: 14), the Hoodie succeeded the Chav in being the pejorative name of ‘abuse of and abhorrence at Britain’s poor’ (Tyler, 2013: 162). Before the Bluewater ban, a hoodie had been recognised and understood as an item of clothing in Britain. Unisex in design, ageless and an everyday, all-weather, attire item (McLean, 2005: 2), the hoodie had woven a cultural life of its own, traversing leisure wear and subcultures. Originating as sportswear, the hoodie has been worn by surfers and become synonymous with black American hip-hop culture, ‘narrating the experience of social exclusion’ (McRobbie cited in McLean, 2005: 2), before entering the mainstream through global music culture (McLean, 2005:2). In an act of political populism, the Hoodie was appropriated by New Labour, annexed into the wider government strategy as presented in the 2003 White Paper, *Respect & Responsibility – Taking a Stand against Anti-Social Behaviour*. Tyler assesses how before ascending to power in 1997 New Labour rebranded the party in a move to “defang” oppositional class politics’ (Tyler, 2013: 153) by expunging class rhetoric from political dialogue. This is explicitly illustrated in Tony Blair’s Labour party

conference speech in which he declared, 'The class war is over. But the struggle for true equality has only just begun' (Blair, 1999).

In its place, New Labour reformulated class-based inequalities as concepts of social mobility and meritocracy, political ideas that exploited reconfigurations of the underclass, such as the *chav* and *Hoodie*, in order to implement economic, welfare, crime and social justice reform. Much of the New Labour project can be attributed to the sociologist Anthony Giddens, whose political vision was one of a 'new egalitarianism' achieved through neoliberal philosophy (Tyler, 2013:158). Giddens' drive to address inequality was underpinned by a belief in a selfhood fashioned by globalization and consumerism (158). For Giddens, prosperity would be achieved through reframing concepts of class into flexible and individualised notions of selfhood. Wealth is achieved through 'the right kind of (middle-class) self', whereas 'poor self-management' would result in disadvantage and hardship (Gilles, 2005: 837).

Thus the hoodie transformed into *the Hoodie* – a national abject – the ideological conductor of neoliberal governmentality used to validate punitive measures against Britain's underclass. To return to McRobbie's words, no longer would the hoodie narrate social exclusion. Rather, the Hoodie would express social abjection. Applying Tyler's terminology, we can understand how the Hoodie was animated in British popular culture as a reconfiguration of the imagined underclass, as a figure of consent formed by a disgust consensus, and a figure through which economic interests, ideological philosophies and neoliberal governmental mechanics (government policy and rhetoric, law reform and media) congregated to 'legitimize

the social abjection of the most socially and economically disadvantaged citizens within the state' (Tyler, 2013: 171). This chapter establishes the figure of the Hoodie within Tyler's paradigm of social abjection by exploring how the Hoodie was animated within political and media rhetoric of the early millennium, and how this particular configuration is part of a history of categorising the underclass within revolting terminology. Furthermore, I will broaden the discourse to encompass the relationship between the Hoodie and the stigmatizing rhetoric of council estates, examining how popular culture renditions of the Hoodie outside of media accounts furthers the culturalisation of class struggles.

1.7.1: Name-making/class-making

In his 2004 book, *The Philosopher and His Poor*, Jacques Rancière accounts for the numerous historical configurations of 'the poor', as a broad term for the economically disadvantaged, from proletarian, the masses, the slave, and Marx's *lumpen*, to assert that class-making is a practice of name-making. In Rancière's understanding of the word 'poor', the term does not provide any understanding of the lives of those living in poverty. Rather, it is a process of subjugating, making the masses inaudible, and removing their ownership and ability to constitute their own identity in a public arena. It is a process of power relations that marginalises the masses, with names illuminating not the experience of the poor but rather the 'fabrication, abstraction and capitalization of others in the production of knowledge and culture' (Tyler, 2013: 173). The poor then become objects of knowledge, rather than subjects (Parker cited in Rancière, 2004: xiii), and for Rancière are fathomed as a collection of names that 'do not express an awareness of a condition. Their

primary function is to construct something, a relationship of alterity' (Rancière, 1997: 23). Thus the poor are the object, included through exclusion. If the history of class is a 'history of names' (Tyler, 2013: 175), then we can understand how these discourses manipulate the perceptual frameworks of class for political and cultural gain.

With a focus on fashion, media and youth delinquency, Jon Savage's work *Teenage*, unconsciously reiterates the persistency of class and name-making Rancière unpacks. The chapter 'Hooligans and Apaches' focuses on Britain in the closing decades of the 19th century when 'youth crime became a national issue as the children of the urban working class elbowed their way into public awareness' (Savage, 2008: 41). Savage recounts the rise of urban gangs and how media reports explicitly associated these gangs with their aesthetic, explicitly linking delinquency with dress in the instances of the Forty Row and Bengal Tiger of Manchester, the now familiar Peaky Blinders of Birmingham, the Bowry Boys of London (43). The Scuttlers of Manchester were, according to contemporary reports, known for wearing a puncher's cap, narrow-go-wides trousers and heavy customised belts (43), whereas Hooligans wore a neckerchief, cap, and trousers 'tight at the knee and very loose at the foot' (94). Savage's analysis resonates with both Tyler and Rancière in his assertion that youth crime was positioned as a rising threat to national security and order, needing to be contained by 'an anxious bourgeoisie who were determined to see their vision of society prevail' (41). Social and political power structures of the era operated to mobilise the public imaginary through stigmatizing discourse as a means to govern.

Drawing upon Rancière and Savage, we can contextualise the Hoodie within a history of name-making and the working-class and/or underclass. In assessing the contemporaneity of the Hoodie, we can understand, as with the *chav*, a 'return', a persistency, of associating the underclass with negative and threatening connotations, associations that were in existence in Victorian and Edwardian times. As Tyler asserts, contemporary fears and historical beliefs converge in abject figures through the accumulation and repetition of discourses in popular culture's machinery, to come to be what is known of the marginalised figures/communities (Tyler, 2013: 9-10). This speaks to the broader concerns of this thesis in exposing anachronism in such class-based name-making. While 'Hoodie' conceptualises the contemporaneity of the underclass, the associative descriptions explicitly reference a past, yet persistent class identity, resulting in a temporal paradox. As with Simon Reynold's 'dyschronia' (Reynold, 2012), this temporal frisson does not produce a sense of the uncanny. Rather, to return to Mark Fisher's understanding of hauntology and Frederic Jameson's notion of the fading of historicity, such retrospection has been naturalised. Hence, what we understand of the Hoodie affirms what we already know of the underclass from successive historical discourses: same constitution, different name.

1.7.2: The animation of the Hoodie

It is clear that the facilitating mechanisms of popular culture, newspaper journalism, cinema, television and the internet, together transformed this abjection of class into the abject figure of the Hoodie. To return to Tyler's paradigm, the accumulative effects of news stories, images, television programmes and films,

situated the Hoodie as successor to the Chav as national abject. Animated in 'Britain's favourite chav', *Little Britain's* Vicky Pollard (Tyler, 2013: 164) as an authentic social type, and cemented in countless newspaper stories as 'dole-scroungers, petty criminals, football hooligans and teenage pram-pushers' (Davidson, 2004: 14), the chav, through repetitive association, evoked past accounts of the poor as immoral, libidinal, and a contaminating threat to wider society (Tyler, 2013: 163). The Hoodie followed the chav in being illuminated through the demonising external gaze of mediating agencies to becoming another revolting term for Britain's underclass.

By the time the term 'Hoodie' entered the Oxford Dictionary in 2007 (Anon, 2007d), the narrative of the Hoodie had been established in the media. While I agree with Walker that Hoodies in media reports are conceptualisations of a deviant teenage underclass wearing hooded tops (Walker, 2016), it is important to widen the scope, and approach the Hoodie to encompass Featherstone's understanding of the othering of the garment (Featherstone, 2013). While the abjection of the Hoodie focuses on the threat of violence emanating from the figure, it is critical to contextualise this within the Hoodie's politicisation, and the symbolic violence waged on the publicly imagined Hoodie to validate criminalisation of the poor and the social exclusion of the underclass as a whole.

The Bluewater ban on hooded tops introduced an initial blueprint for the animation of the Hoodie in the political and public arena. Journalistic accounts of the Hoodie crafted the figure into a variety of social ills. Headlines (for example, 'Killed by Hoodies' (Lakeman, 2005), 'Hoodie murders man on bus' (Anon, 2005g), and 'Boy's

Throat Slashed in 'Execution Attack: Teenager Killed by Hoodie' (Millar and Pettifor, 2008: 27) positioned the figure of the Hoodie as a violent threat to social order. The fatal attack on teenager Ben Hickman, caught up in gang rivalry in Beckenham, South London, was reported as carried out by a 'hoodie-wearing mob' of around 20 youths (Evans, 2007: 5).

Hoodies began to be held responsible for more high-profile murders, killings that were positioned in the public eye as the senseless murders of innocent victims. The racist killing of black teenager, Anthony Walker, was reported as the action of local Hoodies. In a killing that mirrored the 1993 Stephen Lawrence case, Anthony was murdered with an axe whilst walking home with his cousin and girlfriend: the trio were racially abused and Anthony viciously attacked with a single blow to the head (Williams, 2005: 5). Similarly, the murder of 11 year old Rhys Jones as he walked home from playing football in Croxteth, Liverpool, caught the national imagination as a tragic story of young loss, when it became a country-wide story during the late summer of 2007. Before the murderer was apprehended, media accounts waged a campaign to unearth the killer, again attributing the attack to a Hoodie. Descriptions of a 'hitman Hoodie' (Patrick, 2007b: 4) and of the victim being 'shot in the head by teenage Hoodie' (Storrar and Thomas, 2007: 11), were accompanied by such frenzied rhetoric as 'Yob Britain sinks to a sickening low' (Patrick, 2007b, 4-5), 'horrific shooting comes as yob anarchy terrorises Britain', and, 'Anarchy in UK' (Patrick, 2007a: 1) that sought to incite fear and disgust in the public towards Hoodies, promoting them as a nation-wide problem. Figures were bluntly used as affirmation of a Hoodie crime-wave. Eye-catching headlines such as '2 Days: 8

Dead' (Edwards, 2008: 4), 'Seven Days in Lawless Britain' (Macadam, 2005: 4), and 'Hoodie Hell on Streets Every 8 Seconds' (Lyons, 2009: 9), report how the police struggle to combat a national surge in Hoodie crime, listing murders from around the country in a temporal snapshot of Britain as a country under siege to underclass crime. The accumulation of the media accounts fabricate, fetishize, and normalise the murderous Hoodie in excessive accounts of uncontrollable killing sprees, enflaming a moral panic in which the figure is crafted in the public imaginary on a wave of fear, resulting in the Hoodie conceptualised as Tyler's national abject.

In her paradigm on social abjection, Tyler analyses the August 2011 riots as an example of a discourse on the underclass that harnesses events as apolitical and provides *conclusive proof* (my emphasis) of the existence of an underclass 'defined by their anti-social behaviours' (Tyler, 2013: 182-83). Tyler establishes how the narrative of the August 2011 riots legitimised extreme and malevolent judicial and economic punishments as an arm of neoliberal governmentality, positioning the underclass as a figurative polluting categorization (Tyler, 2013: 183). Within this process Tyler discusses the function of what she describes as penal pornography and humiliation regarding how media vigilantism whipped up hatred towards the rioters (193-94), in what Loic Wacquant labels 'the theatricalization of penalty' (Wacquant, 2010: 206). As the discourse of the Hoodie developed, I assert the narrative drew upon Tyler's concept of penal pornography in establishing the Hoodie as an abject figure. Tyler situates the function of penal pornography within eugenicist claims that underpin the discourse of the underclass (Tyler, 2013: 93).

This thesis will return to the relationship between the Hoodie and eugenics once it has established the penal humiliation of the Hoodie.

Once the Hoodie had been established in the public imaginary, the abject figure was soon included in newspaper campaigns claiming the descent of Britain into a lawless nation, overrun with a feral underclass. A gang of 'hoodie thugs' were named and shamed in a campaign run by *The Mirror*, 'Reclaim Our Street: Hoodie Gang is Named' (Armstrong, 2005). In what Tyler conceives as the 'physiognomical expression' of the underclass (Tyler, 2013: 193), photos of the gang members appeared in a rogues' gallery in the newspaper. The images invite readers to examine the gang's faces for signs for physical signs of degeneracy, similar to Robert Mighall's assessment of criminality and monstrosity in the Victorian era (Mighall, 1999; I will return to Mighall later in the thesis when I discuss the Gothic Abject). In Knutsford, August 2005, a 'gun-toting teenage hoodie' (Russell, 2005: 3) brandished a gun in the street of the market town. The following day a CCTV image appeared in *The Mirror*, alongside an appeal for members of the public to identify the 'Hoodie gunman' (White and Kelly, 2005: 11). The Dundee Forum also 'named and shamed' hooligans and criminals who are residents in an online community and vigilante action (Smith, 2009). The mediating agencies of popular culture succeeded in orchestrating what Foucault conceived as the 'spectacle of the scaffold' (Foucault, 2008) and Wacquant approaches as 'the redistribution of "the whole economy of punishment"' (Wacquant, 2010: 206). The penal pornography of the Hoodie relocates policing and punishment from judicial institutions to popular cultural agencies. The Hoodie is animated in physiological form, perpetuating fear

of the figure whilst constructing a disgust consensus. The Hoodie as national abject is the ideological conductor that situates the underclass not as an effect of economic conditions, but rather a behavioural categorisation, supporting the knowledge of a feral anti-social underclass.

Returning to the function of eugenics in discourses of the underclass, I now consider how the appearance and behaviour of the Hoodie is exploited by political and media mechanisms, asserting how a disgust consensus is created by drawing upon notions of eugenics. Drawing upon Tyler's use of disgust as a spatialising emotion utilised in political narrative as a means of stigmatizing communities, I position the Hoodie as a fetishized figure converted into a 'magnet of fascination and repulsion' (Kristeva, 1995: 118), as a function of social and political categorisation processes and 'othering'. Disgust is provoked to articulate the Hoodie as a revolting subject, to use Tyler's terminology.

Writing for *The Mirror*, journalist and commentator Tony Parsons offered typical, and typically venomous, journalistic accounts of the Hoodie:

Is the hooded top the dumbest teenage fashion of all time? How can you possibly play the tough guy when you look like an extra from *Lord Of The Rings*? ... But the hoodie is to our age what the skinhead's No.1 crop or the Teddy boy's winkle-pickers were to previous generations – a potent symbol of boorish, lawless youngsters ... Yet it is difficult to dismiss the hoodie as a mere passing teenage fad, like bondage trousers or platform boots. It is designed to intimidate. It is built to conceal identity ... Whatever label you stick on it, we all know the feeling of seeing a bunch of kids, hooded or not, swearing too loudly, dropping their fast-food trash and carrying themselves with a mob-handed belligerence that dares you to say something ... None of

these issues touches your life like a gang of kids kicking in your fence ... I would be happy to never see another hooded top in my life. They are the fashion equivalent of dog mess on the pavement – an entirely avoidable eyesore ... What matters is that feeling you get in your gut when you see a pack of yobs getting out of hand and you have to decide in one slightly nauseating moment if you should keep your mouth shut or risk getting a knife in your belly or your head caved in.

(Parsons, 2005a: 14)

Ross Brooke is the weasel-faced yob caught aiming a ball-bearing gun at terrified shoppers in Knutsford, Cheshire. No matter where you live in the country, this vermin-featured lout and his stroppy kind will be familiar to you. You can call them hoodies if you must, but there's nothing remotely new about leering, belligerent morons who excuse every act of yobbery as 'just having a laugh' and then whine that they have 'nuffink to do' – as if they would be turned into caring human beings with a few ping-pong tables and a rousing chorus of Ging-gang-gooly-gooly-watcha around a glowing campfire. Their dozy mothers (the dads are usually harder to find) are almost as bad as the worthless sprogs they raised.

(Parsons, 2005b: 17)

What a crying shame that the little thugs who stoned Ernie Norton to death did not find the other little gang of yobs they were looking for. What a tragedy they didn't all just wipe each other out. What a pity that half-witted hoodie yobs don't just butcher other half-witted hoodie yobs ... First comes the casual and cretinous abuse, showering this man and his son in spit and jeering at Ernie: 'Go back to your old people's home.' ... Ernie Norton died on a tennis court in Kent in 21st century Britain, killed by children after he committed the unforgivably provocative act of telling them to behave.

(Parsons, 2007: 19)

The continual appellations of the Hoodie in language such as ‘cretinous’, ‘vermin’, and ‘weasel-faced’ not only vividly situates the Hoodie within accounts of an immoral and dangerous poor of Victorian and Edwardian eras, but also animates the Hoodie as a racialised figure establishing a ‘sullied urban underclass’ (Nayak, 2003: 82). The terminology further recalls Karl Marx’s conceptualisation of the *lumpenproletariat*. Marx defines the lumpen as ‘social scum, that passively rotting mass thrown off by the lowest layers of the old society’ (Marx, 1848), further describing the class as ‘scum, offal, refuse’ (Marx, 1852). As Tyler argues, it is Marx who consolidates the criminal, the displaced and the disenfranchised into a stigmatizing ‘overflowing heterogeneity’ of an underclass (Tyler, 2013: 185). The language used by Parsons and by other journalistic accounts – ‘We Confront the Parents of Plankton’ (Perrie, 2005) – positions the Hoodie and the underclass as human vermin, as degenerates, defectives, descriptions that reveal a ‘social racism’ (Burchill, 2011). Such articulations make explicit the racializing function of underclass discourses. As Tyler argues, the underclass is ‘imagined as a race and not a class’ (Tyler, 2013: 188), allowing the associated conditions of poverty and disadvantage to be decoupled from political or economic issues and positioned as a ‘hereditary condition, a disease’ (188). We can see this in how Parsons talks of Hoodies as ‘worthless sprogs’ of ‘dozy mothers’ (Parsons, 2005b: 17). The discourse of the dysfunctional behaviour of the underclass as something ‘transmitted down through the generations at the very bottom of the social heap’ (Phillips, 2011) reached its revolting peak with the August 2011 riots. One blogger commented ‘The underclass is not something that you can fix. It needs to be bred out’ (‘Bob’ cited in Tyler, 2013: 189). Imagining the Hoodie and the underclass it represents in racial

terms allows the figure and the wider underclass community to be perceived along the binary terms of citizenship – deserving/undeserving (Tyler, 2013). Racialising and inscribing the Hoodie as human vermin thus positions the figure as underserving, a failed citizen, and therefore abjects it to the periphery of the body politic. Using Tyler’s logic, the Hoodie is included through its exclusion.

1.7.3: Territorial stigmatization

Tyler’s conceptualisation of territorial stigmatization establishes a relationship between Britain’s poor, as configured in the Chav, and the urban areas the figure resides in: the council estate. Drawing upon a disgust consensus, Tyler’s reading of stigmatization functions as a figurative spacialising that animates council estates as dystopian spaces (Tyler, 2013: 162–63). As she asserts, the council estate is ‘metonymic shorthand’ for the underclass, with associative demonising discourses reconfigure poverty and disadvantage as a matter of choice. The bodies that reside within these dystopian borders are inscribed with the ‘revolting discourse’ (162). The territorial stigmatization of the Hoodie proceeds in a similar manner, except the discourse is widened to present council estates as a more menacing threat. In the Hoodie Horror, the dystopian discourse of the council estate is cinematically animated most violently in *Harry Brown*, as explored in section three Manors.

In the week of Rhys Jones’ killing in 2007, *The Sunday Mirror* visited notorious estates in seven cities where teenagers had been murdered to investigate crime as part of the paper’s ‘Lawless Britain’ series. Confronted with gangs of ‘sneering hoodie-clad youth[s]’, the paper’s reporter, Michael Duffy, was repeatedly physically intimidated by the teenagers and warned, ‘Do you know who we are? We

know how to deal with people like you – we run this estate. No one's going to save you here. The police won't come round here, mate. You'll end up dead.' (Duffy, 2007: 16). In portraying social housing estates as anti-social spaces, the account was indicative of how such estates were perceived in the public imaginary as terrorized urban geographies existing outside of societal norms and beyond the judicious arm of the nation-state. Residents spoke of how estates were run by drug-dealers, how they (the residents) lived in an everyday violent reality of gang and adolescent intimidation, and how police were invisible, too nervous to patrol the troubled spaces (16).

Feral gangs of Hoodies were also blamed for the deaths of Fiona Pilkington and her daughter, Francesca. According to journalists, mother and daughter had suffered years of relentless abuse from a local gang before Fiona killed her daughter and herself by setting their car alight in a 'fireball suicide' (N. Parker, 2009: 12). The gang were described as 'hoodie thugs' and its leader a 'street-rat' (13). Further reports framed the gang as part of 'Feral Britain Unmasked' (A. Parker, 2009: 1) and presented the police as ineffective in its strategies to tackle the teenage threat, with the gang continuing in their anti-social behaviour beyond the police investigation and inquest (1-4). As with the chav, the stigmatization of council estates continued with the discourse of the Hoodie. Looking at the language employed to describe the teenage gang in the Pilkington case, we can contextualise the Hoodie and council estates within Tyler's assertion that the bodies of those who reside within the abject zone are inscribed with a revolting class discourse (Tyler, 2013: 162). While estates were already positioned in the public arena as 'barracks

for the poor' (Jones, 2012: 81), the associative discourse of the Hoodie aligned social housing estates further with terrorizing images of stigmatized geographies of inner-city crime and depravity. Inequality was reconfigured into a psycho-cultural problem and estates constituted 'the moral boundaries of the nation-state' (Tyler, 2013: 160). Thus posited as a 'problem', Hoodies and council estates both required policing by political parties.

1.7.4: From failed citizen to hug-a-hoodie and Broken Britain

Abject populations present an opportunity for forms of neoliberal governmentality and are habitually exploited in political strategies to rouse public consent for penal reform. Thus abject populations are configured into political capital (Tyler, 2013: 142). As mentioned earlier, New Labour capitalised on the Hoodie by incorporating the figure into its Respect programme. New Labour's redesign of citizenship into the binary categorisation of work/worklessness and inclusion/exclusion (Tyler, 2013: 161), legitimised the positioning of the Hoodie as a failed citizen, an abject figure. The Respect programme contained some of the most penalising proposals, 'including benefit cuts for errant families, the removal of persistent young offenders from their families ... and the committal of parents to residential homes for 're-training' (Gilles, 2005: 840). In the years, 1997 – 2008, New Labour implemented 3,605 new criminal offences including Anti-Social Behaviour Orders, Parental Orders and Individual Behaviour Orders (Tyler, 2013: 161). The Hoodie, then, was exploited by New Labour as an ideological conductor in order to target the urban poor. In understanding the Hoodie's position in this disciplinary politics, we can position the Hoodie within the wider discourses of the underclass that

established the class as unwilling to 'make the right choices' and 'intergenerational cultures of worklessness' (Tyler, 2013: 161). The Hoodie requires contextualising within the discourses of meritocracy that reconfigured poverty and disadvantage as both a choice and deserved.

David Cameron, leader of the opposition in 2006, seized upon the figure of the Hoodie in a speech to The Centre of Social Justice. Cameron, in a drive to reposition the Conservative party as the party of social justice and to provide a meaningful opposition to the New Labour government, set out a vision of social justice in his infamous 'hug-a-hoodie' speech. Illuminating the hoodie as a 'response to a problem, not a problem in itself', Cameron opaquely positioned youth crime as result of 'family breakdown, drugs, children in care, educational underachievement' (Cameron, 2006). In a thinly veiled speech of neoliberal communitarianism, Cameron appropriated New Labour's vision in decoupling economic and governmental policy from poverty and disadvantage. In his speech, designed to win over voters from New Labour, the Hoodie as national abject is thus exploited for political advantage. To recall a point this thesis has made previously, the discourse of the Hoodie merged with a broader rhetoric of the underclass and became subsumed into the concept of Broken Britain. In a speech that launched his campaign to fix 'Broken Britain', calling for a 'new morality', David Cameron maintained the neoliberal ideology in equating inequality with intergenerational irresponsibility, by stating, 'social problems are often the consequences of the choices that people make ... and the choices your parents make' (Cameron, 2008).

In the landscape of a lawless, burgeoning underclass, the Hoodie was appropriated into the rhetoric of Broken Britain.

1.7.5: Hoodie and the culturalization of politics

In my final argument in establishing the Hoodie as national abject, I return to Boris Buden's concept of the culturalization of politics. As I laid out in the beginning of this thesis, Buden argues that when media channels make visible marginalised communities in such formats as reality television, the representations not only create a profit for the companies but, more critically for this thesis, depoliticise class struggles and further the stigmatization of such communities (Buden, 2007). While I will begin with the representation of Hoodies and council estates in documentary, I will expand this culturalization to embrace how Hoodies have been assimilated into other popular cultural forms (other than the Hoodie Horror cycle) in order to symbolise a classed deviancy.

The ITV documentary *The Duchess on the Estate* (2009) followed Sarah Ferguson, the Duchess of York, as she spent ten days with residents of the Wythenshawe estate in Manchester, the location for the Channel Four series, *Shameless* (2004 – 2013), in an attempt to 'transform it into a thriving community' (English, 2009: 8). Sarah Ferguson recruited a 'mum's army' and helped raised £40,000 to build a community centre (Robertson, 2009). In interviews Sarah Ferguson recounted how she went 'hoodie-hunting' at night on the estate (Roberts, 2009: 25). However, residents voiced anger over how the documentary portrayed, and ultimately misrepresented, the estate as a crime-ridden and deprived 'gun or knife-wielding

area', with 'gangs of people torching cars or intimidating people in their homes' (25).

Nick Couldry's ideas on reality television as the 'secret theatre of neoliberalism' where the unacceptable 'truths of neoliberalism' are reconfigured into an acceptable version 'as play' (Couldry, 2008: 3), has resonance here. Programmes such as *The Duchess of the Estate* rely upon representing council estates and the underclass as communities that require reforming, and thus reaffirm the currency of discourses of deviancy, poverty and marginalisation as normative condition of the communities. In essence, such television programmes play a role in the continued legitimization of discrimination and prejudice against the underclass, by exploiting the contemporary revolting discourses of the Hoodie and associative rhetoric of council estates. Further representations of the Hoodie in other popular cultural mediums also perpetuate the groundswell of explicit stigmatization.

In 2005, artists Gilbert & George unveiled *Hooded*, depicting themselves alongside two hooded young men in a painting aimed in capturing the carnivalesque flavour of their London surroundings (Fig 3). The comic book series *2000AD* published 'Cradlegrave' in 2011. Again, the comic book drew upon the image of the Hoodie, and of council estates (Fig 4) as dystopian spaces, in a story of the 'most contemporary kind of supernatural horror where, instead of being invaded by the monstrous, the everyday environment is its source' (Campbell, 'Introduction', 2011). Arguably the most prominent co-option of the Hoodie comes in the contemporaneous film *Hot Fuzz* (Edgar Wright, 2007). Not only are Hoodies explicitly referenced as a blight to the small town of Sandford (Fig 5), but when

Nicholas Angel (Simon Pegg) seeks the help of local school children in ridding the town of the oppressive Neighbourhood Watch Association, the children immediately put up their hoods, an action that overtly references the abject Hoodie known in the public imaginary. The figure of the Hoodie, then, is congealed within both political and popular culture as a stereotype, a national abject, and becomes part of the vocabulary in which the underclass is illuminated and 'known' within the social sphere. In the following chapters I will explore how the films in the Hoodie Horror further the revolting discourse of the Hoodie and the underclass in cinematic renderings that not only depoliticize class struggles but enable identity formation through Cohen's 'disidentification' (Cohen, 2005: x). In establishing the cycle as a cinema of alterity, this thesis positions the films within the current rhetoric of class that facilitates a 'that-is-not-me' formation of the self.

I will now briefly summarise the structure of this thesis. As previously outlined, the thesis is initially divided into three sections, men, manors and monsters, a structure that provides the overriding arc to the research and identifies the significant iconography of the cycle. The first section men, consists of three chapters and its own introduction. As is evident from the section title, chapters in this first part focus on representation of masculinities through close textual analysis across the cycle, with specific attention paid to the main protagonists, and how these adolescent males are constructed within the discourse of the Hoodie and discursive constructions of a classed masculinity. Initial contextualisation explores further how the monstrous realism of the cycle fabricates narratives of abjection, whilst the hoodie as attire is explored as the function of costume.

The second section, manors, concentrates on the representation of council estates and the wider project of social housing in the films. Again, employing textual analysis of the films and asserting the foundation to the representations is the abject discourse of territorial stigmatization, the section surveys the differing filmic strategies utilised in visualising and fabricating the space of social housing in the cycle. The chapter 'monstrous geographies' focuses on the more realist forms in the cycle and how the estates and their wider spaces are inscribed with an underclass hierarchal patriarchy. The chapter on haunting housing estates explores how in the three films, *The Disappeared*, *Heartless* and *Citadel*, housing estates are gothicised in line with haunted house narratives, explicitly fusing the gothic with social realism. The ensuing gothic realism reconfigures the private realm of haunting to a socio-cultural political arena, positioning social housing as a failed project. The section concludes with two chapters focusing on specific films, *Harry Brown* and *Eden Lake*. The chapter on *Harry Brown* discusses the council estate as a contemporary battleground for citizenship in neoliberal Britain, with particular attention granted to how authenticity is constructed by disrupting the ontology of the film. Finally, the chapter on *Eden Lake* asserts how the film in transferring the very urban discourse of a threatening underclass to a rural setting, fuses the American taxonomy of the rural horror film with the British countryside.

In the final section in the thesis, monsters, there are two chapters, 'the monstrous abject' and 'the gothic abject'. The monstrous abject widens what is deemed 'monstrous' with a focus on *Harry Brown*, *Piggy*, *Cherry Tree Lane* and *Eden Lake*. The aim here is to position the films' monsters within a discourse of abjection and

disgust, placing the films within a legacy of representations of a damaged and violent underclass masculinity onscreen. The final chapter, the gothic abject, asserts the monsters of *Heartless*, *Citadel* and *F* are sites of tension between social realism and the gothic as well as bodies of discourse that fuse mimesis with fantasy and adhere to a traditional gothic narrative structure of concealment and revelation.

1.8: Images for section one

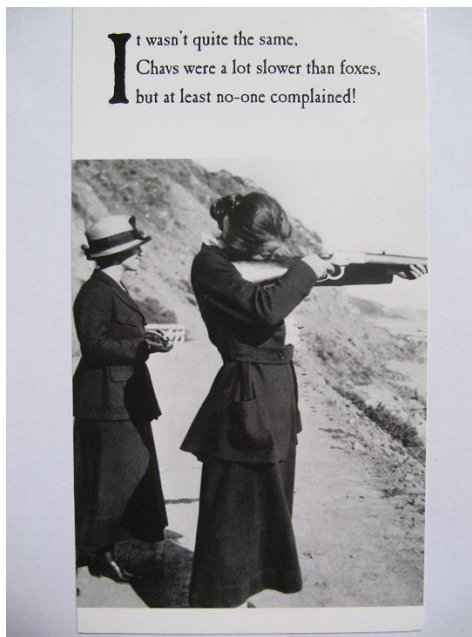


Figure 1: Popular greetings card



Figure 2: *Time*, April 7, 2008.



HOODED. 2006. 284 X 507 CM

Figure 3

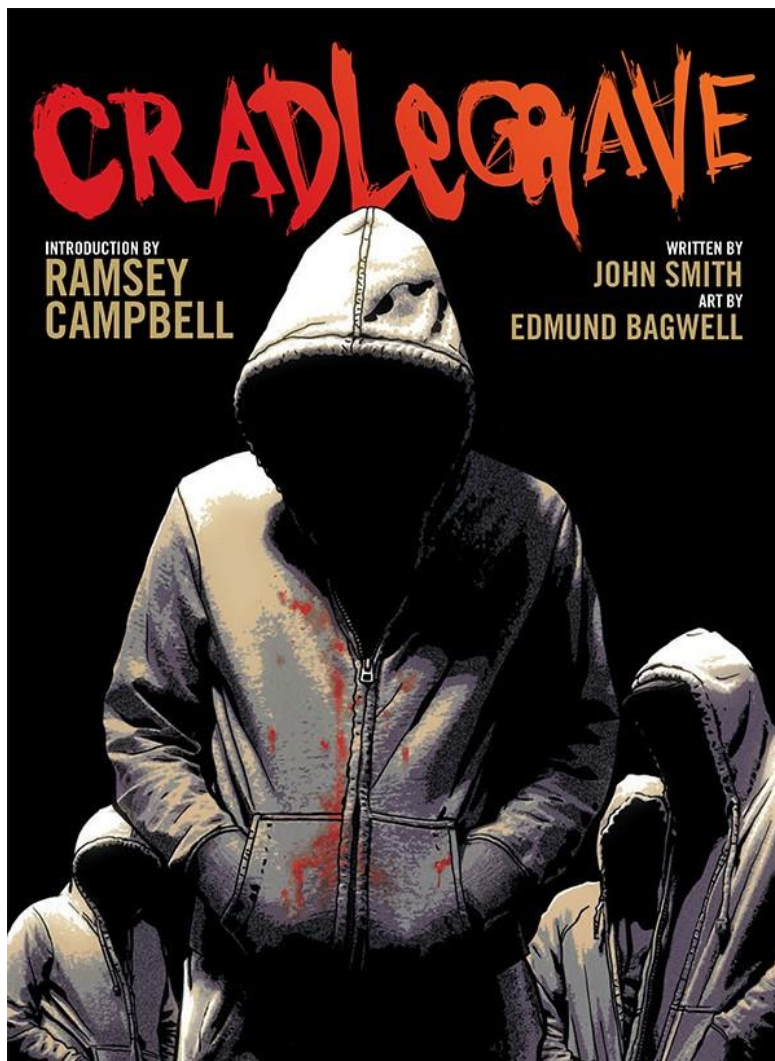


Figure 4



Figure 5

Section Two: Men



2.1: Introduction

It is a reminder that people fight themselves or each other, rather than the system, simply because it's easier and there's an obvious way to do it.

(Hanley, 2007: 9)

Whoever the lady was, she can be upset, because it wasn't made for her.

(Noel Clarke in an interview with Haldar, 2016)

In his 2006 article on European cinema, Thomas Elseasser identifies what he terms a 'cinema of abjection' that materialised in the 1990s across European screens. Elseasser contextualises these narratives of abjection as stories that deny their protagonists all vestiges of selfhood with an increasing intensity, depicting subjects who are 'in circulation but "out of service"' (Elseasser, 2006: 656). For Elseasser, while these films explore questions of the human condition, they also expose societies where the social contract between the state and subject is broken. Essentially, the films depict individuals living on the borders of society who are then subjected to further desolation by the narrative trajectory, raising questions of selfhood, citizenship and nationhood (Elseasser, 2006: 652). I have chosen to begin this section with Elseasser, as his conceptualisation of this 'cinema of abjection' provides a contextualisation to a wider history of British cinema in which the Hoodie Horror can be situated, but also more importantly, suggests a foundation from which to explore the Hoodie Horror's own narratives of abjection which, while sharing similarities with Elseasser's definition, display distinct properties. As I addressed in the introduction, the progression of British social realism has traced the move from the working-class to the underclass with increasingly extreme and

desperate associative narratives and aesthetics. Horror cinema may be considered the onscreen animation of twentieth century anxieties (Wells, 2000: 3), but the British social realist film is also a cinema of anxiety, although one specifically addressing class.

The confluence of both cinematic traditions in the Hoodie Horror furthers this cinema of anxiety, crafting a cycle as a collection of films concerned with fears over citizenship in twenty-first century Britain. These fears, though, are not of a psychoanalytical process associated with horror texts of repression, return and resurfacing, but rather a social and cultural model of defining citizenship in a neoliberal Britain. The Hoodie as national abject is a mechanism in a paradigm of normalization and subjugation of citizen-crafting. The Hoodie, as publicly imagined social abject and failed citizen, delineates the figurative contemporary and national border. And it is the cinematic male underclass body that embodies the abject state and these anxieties.

As addressed in the introduction, this cycle, I argue, is founded on the representation of the abject through the figure of the Hoodie. There is a temporal and symbolic reliance on the extra-filmic abject discourse of the Hoodie, in that the cycle is time-based and co-ordinates with contemporaneous cultural and political imagery and rhetoric that formulates a British underclass in Britain of the 2000s. The abject condition originates from political and media strategies, part of the wider neoliberal project reliant on the national abject for governance and for public consensus to implement punitive penal measures allowing governmental withdrawal from state provision (Tyler, 2013). Whilst Elseasser loosely couples his

European cinema with a political context, his identification of the filmic abject is focused on individual films, products of directors considered auteurs, or films categorised as art-house. The Hoodie Horror differs, as the cycle is not only dependent on explicit politicised references, but also consists of an eclectic mix of genre and cultural film-making. The protagonists, space and place of the films are pre-coded as abject via the Hoodie, and while some films, with *The Selfish Giant* being one example, correspond to Elseasser's choice of art-house films, many Hoodie Horrors follow genre-driven narratives. What is appealing about Elseasser's approach is his idea of the 'spaces' left where a social contract would normally reside, spaces that give rise to considerations of a national and social belonging. It is within these spaces that the Hoodie Horror narratives dwell. There is a tangible absence in the films of state and social contract, ranging from the asociality of protagonists (*Heartless*, *Citadel* and *The Disappeared*), to a scarcity of working-lives (*The Selfish Giant*), or lack of governmental institutional presence (*Harry Brown*, the *Hood* trilogy). In this absence of a social contract there resides a sense of abandonment of individual and place by the state, of living on the margins of society, of being 'out of service', to return to Elseasser (Elseasser, 2006: 656), or, to draw upon horror terminology, there is the 'othering' of individuals and communities. Indeed, the Hoodie Horror is the cinematic juncture where the abject of the social realist text and the abject of the horror film convenes. It is what pervades in this absence and how the abject figures navigate society's borders that, this thesis argues, forms the basis for the narratives of the Hoodie Horror. While the cycle utilises the themes, concerns and iconography of the British realist

cinematic text, the films and the abject state are narrated by horror and the horrifying in the widest and broadest concept of the term.

To return to Noel Clarke's comments referenced at the beginning of this chapter: according to Clarke films such as *Kidulthood* were not directed at a mainstream spectatorship nor conceived with any audience in mind (Haldar, 2016). Rather, Clarke's ambition was to write a film about life for him as a teenager, aiming to represent onscreen the marginalised, those that Clarke felt British cinema had left behind. But when film critics and writers conceive films as 'about disenfranchised youth made for disenfranchised youth by someone who lived it' (Haldar, 2016), the language employed shapes a narrative of othering that establishes a mediated distance between the audience and the film. This nascent space spurs a furthering of otherness, encouraging a symbolic disidentification in a spectatorship, especially one that does not consider itself to be marginalised. When combined with film content that draws explicitly on symbolism – in the form of the hoodie – even a cursory ideological reading positions the Hoodie Horror as a cinema of alterity.

As the title clearly states, this initial section engages with and explores the representation of masculinity in the cycle, considering protagonists that this thesis conceives of as the neoliberal other. Such a term acknowledges the male's abject configuration – the protagonist as other – in both extra-filmic and diegetic worlds, whilst conceptualising the filmic animation within a neoliberal framework. To return to Featherstone's argument, the protagonists of the films, which for Featherstone are the capitalist other, conceal the monstrosity of capitalism, the all-encompassing drive for Mammon (Featherstone, 2013; 178-96). While

Featherstone's analysis is valid, this thesis's focus on the neoliberal mechanisms at play prefers to contextualise the Hoodie Horror male as the cinematic animation of neoliberal governance. The dramatic requirements of the films emulate the new egalitarianism realised by neoliberalism, in that disadvantage is a result of inadequate self-management (Tyler, 2013; 158-61). Poor choices in the film result in trauma and death for the Hoodie Horror male.

This thesis argues the Hoodie Horror is a male-centric collection of films that takes its cue from the contemporary figure of the Hoodie, whilst drawing extensively upon the motifs, concerns and iconography of the tradition of the social realist film. This male focus of the cycle also finds an analogy with contemporary British horror output. Films such as *Dog Soldiers* (Neil Marshall, 2002), *Reign of Fire* (Rob Bowman, 2002), *Kill List* (Ben Wheatley, 2011) and *The Woman in Black* (James Watkins) all centralise male protagonists, with a focus on the destruction of the male body. Whilst the majority of the films in the cycle are generic fare, this does not equate with an absence of complexity. The masculine construction that traverses the films is a multifaceted assembly that requires reading across various platforms – class, costume, discourse, film history. This thesis asserts that the neoliberal other exists, and requires reading, on both narrational and symbolic levels, and is subject to an onscreen hierarchal order as just listed.

The Hoodie Horror male, then, is a cultural and social configuration, and one that is infused with an extra-filmic discourse as well as the historical trajectory of a cinematic British realist masculinity. The Hoodie is the conductor of the discourse of the abject, while the history of British social realism is the history of nationhood as

shaped by economic and social conditions. The male of the cycle is not just a marginalised, disenfranchised or dispossessed figure, but one that is explicitly made abject. He is a figure that marks the symbolic passing of working-class representation in popular culture and the ascendancy of a fetishized underclass. The hoodie as a garment demarcates a terminus for the working-class. The Hoodie Horror male is one who indicates an absence, a failure and that which is no longer. He embodies lost futures of the lower-class male, lives impacted by globalisation, by economic and social changes. The Hoodie Horror male is the human aftermath, the repercussion, the waste population which Bataille (1934/1999), Wacquant (2008), Khanna (2009) and Tyler (2013) all conceptualise as the human cost of the mechanisms of abjection. This neoliberal other is the symbolic abject, a cinematic figure as a site on which economic and social changes, gender and class relations are all inscribed. A default reading of an imperilled masculinity would give rise to declarations of the male in crisis, as had been undertaken previously by Leon Hunt in his engaging research on British low culture, and Linnie Blake on New Labour and the horror film (Hunt, 1998; Blake, 2008). However, this thesis avoids such an assertion for the Hoodie Horror male. As John Beynon argues, the repeated use together of the words 'masculinity' and 'crisis' have resulted in the two becoming synonymous and therefore meaningless (Beynon, 2002: 93). Rather, as already claimed, the lower-class male of British cinema is the site through which social and economic change and nationhood are explored. The Hoodie Horror male embodies contemporary anxieties over citizenship and its inability to script itself to the social and economic demands of contemporary Britain and globalisation.

As referred to the introduction, this thesis privileges a class reading of the films over intersectional constructions of identity, for the process of social abjection in neoliberal Britain is a class-making project (Tyler, 2013: 153-59). Due to this, this thesis asserts the Hoodie Horror male leads a life of bare existence and survival within stories of the abject, or rather impossible narratives, in which he experiences disadvantage, impoverishment both financial and spiritual, and trauma; these are narratives he may not survive. It also requires acknowledging that the men of the cycle range from young teenagers to young men. While the section title, 'Men', may thus seem a little misleading, it actually serves to underline what is central to the neoliberal other of the cycle: the performance of masculinity by young men. The impossible narratives that the Hoodie Horror male is subjected to necessitate they act as men. In *Ill Manors*, as Chris is on the verge of killing little Jake in an act of revenge Chris says 'You're the bad man now. This is where you want to be'. The sub-text of the films is the ethics and morality of how subjugation as an abject impels these boys to proceed as men.

The following chapters of this section seek to explore the Hoodie Horror male as neoliberal other. As outlined earlier, analysis of the male protagonists necessitates exploration of the hierarchy of the construction. Exploring the cycle's masculinities necessitates consideration of, and contextualisation within, the role and influence of fashion and costume, a contemporary cultural history of lower-class male representation, and contemporary discourse.

2.2: The narratives of the neoliberal other

In his insightful article on British misery cinema, Graham Fuller concludes that such films, despite objections from some quarters, are an essential element of any cinema of worth and 'necessary to effect change' (Fuller, 2011: 43). Fuller conceives this cinema of misery as films of the social realist tradition that animate working-class lives consisting of not just poverty, but impoverishment, both economic and spiritual. It is a cinema of suffering and trauma that can be traced to the Free Cinema movement and the British New Wave. For Fuller, this destitution endured can either be a result of individual choices or a wider social and economic decline, but is one that illuminates a desperate class malaise. Fuller does not expand on the nature of change he was referring to, but given the focus of his article, it would be reasonable to surmise he was alluding to the role such cinema can play in confronting social and cultural equality. For Fuller, films have a role to play in achieving social fairness. While Fuller's views on cinema's responsibility as a political voice is highly appropriate, it is challenging to see effected change on viewing the films in the Hoodie Horror cycle. Rather, contemporary cultural output alludes to the widening of inequality, impacting those already marginalised the most. This extension in disparity is exemplified by a simple comparison between *Kes* and *The Selfish Giant*. Despite the forty-year gulf in the release between both films, the plight of Arbor seeks to underline the latter film's conception of the extremity of social and economic exclusion faced by certain communities in the Britain of the new millennium. The films are comparable in terms of male teenage protagonists living in a socially deprived north with a troubled home-life. Despite

nihilistic endings for both films, there is more hope for *Kes's* Billy in that there are employment opportunities awaiting once he has finished school. The prospects for *Arbor* are bleak: criminality or continued impoverishment. And whilst none of the films of the cycle appear in Fuller's analysis,⁵ despite corresponding and overlapping narratives of disenfranchisement, there is a sense that the terminus of the working-class onscreen that Hill refers to (Hill, 1999) lies beyond Fuller's conceptualisation of miserable lives in British realism. What is yonder in British cinema, conceptually, temporally and aesthetically, is the abject existence of the Hoodie Horror male.

In his article on the cinema of abjection, Elseasser sketches the concept of abjection to be one where characters suffer the effects of such a process and exist within a 'double occupancy' (Elseasser, 2006: 655). Elseasser appears to be suggesting this is the cinematic animation of Kristeva's ideas of revulsion and bordering, in that objects deemed abject exist within the margins of the borders but are never fully expunged as their symbolic threat must remain, in order to recognise and maintain said borders (Kristeva, 1982: 136-37). As Tyler contends, 'waste populations are ... included through their exclusion' (Tyler, 2013: 20). For Elseasser, these films are not the abject narratives of victims and oppressors, rather the characters are the end result of the process. The conclusion having been reached, even the oppressors have vacated the narratives, leaving the abject figures existing in a void (Elseasser, 2006: 655-56). The abject in the Hoodie Horror is a variant on Elseasser's estimation, but one complicated by the extra-filmic narrative of the Hoodie.

⁵ Given the tone and content of *The Selfish Giant*, it would be appropriate to conjecture that it would resonate with Fuller's analysis.

As with Elseasser's view, the protagonists of the Hoodie Horror do not realise their abject state or, as in some texts, that they reside in the margins. The hoodie as garment conducts the abject discourse which not only complicates the realism but also serves to subjugate the characters to an identity formation residing outside of the cinematic world, but within public power mechanisms. Effecting one's own subjectivity is problematic for the neoliberal other. The problematic function of the hoodie as garment is explored in the following chapter on the symbolic abject. Whereas there are explicit signals of the discourse of the Hoodie in operation in the cinematic worlds relation in to the monsters of such films as *F*, *Citadel* and *Heartless*, there is no conclusive evidence of it being active in other films in relation to the protagonists. This is different to its symbolic and representational function as costume, which is discussed further on.

The cycle's male is the effect of the process of social abjection and what this thesis conceives as the neoliberal other, the symbolic abject. In *Kidulthood*, Trife, Moony and Jay are only confronted with this status as the neoliberal other when they are accused of shoplifting in a store located in the west end of London. The accusation is unfounded, rather more to do with a prejudice against the trio with regards to their age and appearance, and the scene recalls the ban on individuals wearing hoodies made by Bluewater shopping complex in 2005, as mentioned earlier, the year before the release of *Kidulthood*. As with the actions of Bluewater, so the trio here are denied access to the spaces of consumerism and consumption. They are deemed abject by association in a society that arbitrates adolescents as non-consumers and also criminalises them. The point here is that the identity formed by

the power mechanisms of neoliberal governmentality, a publicly imagined identity, subjugates Trife, Moony and Jay, and disallows these teenagers their own identity and agency.

Abject existences are animated by the Hoodie Horror in impossible narratives where the male protagonists navigate a destructive existence, living with the effects of trauma where the challenge is to survive. In *Kidulthood*, Trife is murdered by Sam; Jake in *Ill Manors* is murdered by Chrisl in *The Selfish Giant*, Swifty is killed by electric shock in an act of friendship towards Arbor. The Hoodie Horror is thus distinguished by its brutalising narratives. What is of importance here, in a cycle that houses a range of film forms, is that the narratives and spaces of the individual films, whether it be the Brit-grit or the more generic horror fare, are interchangeable. The variation in representation is dependent on the filmic strategies directed by the film form, rather than the content or representation. The sink estates of *The Disappeared* present comparable challenges to the estate in *Harry Brown*. Jamie in *Heartless* is killed by Hoodies, as is Trife in *Kidulthood* and Steve in *Eden Lake*. The economic impoverishment borne by Tommy in *Citadel* and Matthew in *The Disappeared* is comparable to the living conditions endured by both Shifty and Arbor in *The Selfish Giant*. The abject configuration of the underclass and the spaces it navigates are animated analogously across the cycle. Not only does the underclass male figure embody concerns over citizenship, but he is subjected to further symbolic violence. The emblematic suffering and trauma of the underclass male onscreen is the corporeal measurement of economic and social

decline of the underclass and the nation: the more abject the configuration, the more extreme is the corporeal endurance.

In the Hoodie Horror, working-class culture is supplanted by the underclass. However, these are not the underclass lifestyle films of the 'cool Britannia' era, such as *Twin Town* or *Trainspotting* that Monk identifies as subcultural and pleasurable spectacles (Monk, 2000a: 276-80). While the cycle continues with the abject condition as normative as suggested in the films of the 1990s, in line with the class narrative of Britain in the 2000s, the films of the Hoodie Horror cycle return to the 'problem and solution' (282) narratives that have afflicted the British social realist text.

The relationship of the Hoodie Horror to the trajectory of the British realist film is one of continuation, advancement and reversal, in that the cycle draws upon – thus continuing – associative motifs, concerns and iconography, but also reverses and challenges some developments of the tradition. Hill notes the narrowing trajectory of British realism from the public to the private, tracing the impact and severity of economic change as 'debilitating, and sometimes brutalising, consequences of unemployment and poverty' (Hill, 1999: 167). The Hoodie Horror complicates the curve of this tradition and challenges a traditional reading of what are deemed public and private realms. The films of the cycle animate the underclass navigating and appropriating public spaces for their own activities, not subcultural as with the films in Monk's analysis, but rather for a local black market economy to operate. Abjected, the neoliberal male of the cycle reformulates traditional notions of both employment and the public sphere for his own requirements. In *The Selfish Giant*,

Arbor and Shifty, excluded from school, start working by collecting scrap for Kitten, while Shifty also looks to race in the horse-trap for him. In *Kidulthood*, Trife wrestles with the choice of a life of criminality or choosing a more traditional role of fatherhood and family. Sam, who succeeds Trife as the main protagonist of the *Hood* trilogy, traverses the same choices throughout the film series, as he struggles to free himself of the pervasive criminal bonds that mark him as a failed citizen, and attain social and economic inclusivity as a working and family man, a neoliberal citizen. Similarly, Jake in *Ill Manors* is coerced by Marcel to kill Kirby as the price for being able to run with Marcel's local crew.

The spaces, geographical and psychological, that the neoliberal other inhabits are local. The working-class academic Lisa McKenzie, asserts how the working-class is managed by stigmatisation through identification with the local (McKenzie, 2017: 1-4). McKenzie elaborates how, in an era of globalisation, the working-class is conceived as backward, old-fashioned and rigid for their strong community values (2). A cursory comparison between the Hoodie Horror, British realism and the fairytale London of Richard Curtis films provides a clear sense of the relationship between the local and the lower-class that McKenzie conceives. The creativity and the scope in the vistas afforded the very middle-class characters of *Four Weddings and a Funeral* (Mike Newell, 1994), *Notting Hill* (Roger Michell, 1999) and *Love Actually* (Richard Curtis, 2003) provide a stark and illuminating comparison with the British realist texts. These broad vistas furnish the characters with a mobility and agency, both geographically and psychologically, not bequeathed or imagined for the lower-class protagonists of the more realist vehicles. The middle-class body

personifies optimism, prospects and individualism, while the underclass body is inscribed with anxiety, the parochial and a symbolic failing of their wider class. In the Hoodie Horror, the neoliberal other is an urban outcast that navigates his local manor, existing to react to events in the immediate locale. Aaron and Ed in */// Manors* are small-time drug dealers who make their money on their local streets. The narrative of *Harry Brown* solely orbits the housing estate where Harry lives. Tommy's solitary existence in *Citadel* is animated by him being from the sole family living on a deserted council estate, financially impoverished and with no means at his disposal to escape. Neither Matthew in *The Disappeared*, and Jamie from *Heartless*, inhabits communities or the social outside of their familial or estate bonds. The local, animated as the manor in the Hoodie Horror, functions to incarcerate and confine its inhabitants geographically, economically, and psychologically.

In the drive to expunge class from party politics and political dialogue, New Labour, and Tony Blair specifically, spoke instead about selfhood and the attainment of social and economic advantage. On ascending to power, Blair declared, 'The Britain of the elite is over. The new Britain is a meritocracy', and, 'fatalism, and not just poverty, is the problem we face, the dead weight of low expectations, the crushing belief that things cannot get better' (Blair, 1997). While it is not within the scope of this thesis to debate political success or failure, the Hoodie Horror suggests a stasis at best, or a widening of inequality between the lower-class and the elite. The cycle would appear to allude to meritocracy as, if not an outright failure, at least a political policy, a façade. More critically, the cycle is suggestive of what Paul Gilroy

sees as a 'poverty of imagination' (Gilroy, 2011). Speaking after the riots of 2011, Gilroy argued for a new way of publicly conceptualising British youth. The continued abject imagery of stigmatization and penal punishment in both media and political narrative, for Gilroy, only served to perpetuate class division and its revolting discourse, undermining any progressive strategies and vision for a civil society (2011). Is this not what the Hoodie Horror illuminates in terms of the representation of the lower-class onscreen? While this is not a 'call-to-arms' for a return to a more politically conscious national cinema, the class representation in the cycle emphasises a certain stasis. The films' local narratives of trauma, death, and failure further entrench and stigmatise the underclass within a fetishized and abject imagined identity. The films focus on a contemporary 'hand-to-mouth' existence, deny mobility and agency to its protagonists, normalising poverty and disadvantage as the result of a destitution of the right sort of aspiration. The desperate narratives that destroy and deny the Hoodie Horror male divest him of citizenship and confine him to societal borders. While this thesis is not advocating, with producer David M. Thompson, that 'there has been too much miserablism' (Thompson in Fuller, 2011: 43) it does seek to raise the issue, as Gilroy has, of the importance of imagining alternative imagery and narratives in animating abject figures and communities.

2.3: The symbolic abject: fashion, costume and realism in the Hoodie Horror

Really. The hooded top is part of our national costume.

(McLean, 2005: 2)

A thesis on the Hoodie Horror would risk the accusation of being remiss if it did not engage with the attire central to the films that spawned the cycle: the hoodie. Across the films the hoodie traverses considerations of both fashion and costume, and problematises the realism of the films through mimesis between the fiction of the cinematic narratives and the abject discourse the hoodie embodies. The hoodie codes the wearer as the symbolic abject, the failed citizen of neoliberal Britain, but also narrates stories of abjection. Furthermore, the hoodie offers an opportunity to contextualise the Hoodie Horror male within a contemporary history of cultural configurations of masculinity. This chapter explores a selection of archetypal examples from the cycle that illuminate how the hoodie not only problematises film form, but also the cinematic function of costume, not just for the extra-filmic narrative it symbolises and how this impacts character, but also in relation to narrative and costume as spectacle. The discourse the hoodie visualises directs narrative, costume and characterisation.

The existing body of scholarship on costume and film predominately focuses on the relationship between costume and narrative, and the question as to whether costume can or should transcend narrative demands. In the seminal chapter, 'Costume and Narrative', Jane Gaines argues that in classical cinema the hierarchy in film instructed characterisation to defer to the narrative trajectory, and spectacle to character. While costume creates its own visual language and 'narrates' characterisation from an interior world, to motivation and to general traits, as with other elements of the *mise-en-scène*, it must oblige 'the higher purpose of narrative' (Gaines, 1990: 193). Costume that exceeded narrative demands would

prove to be distracting (193). Furthermore, Gaines asserts costume that failed to be determined by character would disrupt both narrative and the realism of the film in that 'narrative realism dictates that costume be curtailed by conventional dress codes; continuity requires that it be monitored ... economy requires that it reinforce causality' (196). There is a suggestion in Gaines' position that an excess in costume results in an unwanted spectacle that privileges the visual over narrative, style over content. As Helen Warner correctly summarises, scholarship has assumed costume as spectacle 'disrupts' the narrative flow (Warner, 2009: 182). As Warner points out, subsequent scholarship (Berry, 2000; Street, 2001) continued with this hypothesis. Stella Bruzzi, as a further example, continues this argument by asserting some films explicitly construct excessive spectacle, and that costume as an element of this excess disrupts the narrative with its independent 'spectacular interventions that interfere with the scenes in which they appear and impose themselves onto the characters they adorn' (Bruzzi, 1997: xv). However, Bruzzi elaborates further still of the possibility that 'deliberately unspectacular fashion can still function in a spectacular way' (25).

The hoodie is, as Bruzzi would have it, an 'unspectacular fashion' (25). It is a unitary garment and utility wear, versatile, yet anonymous, ageless, unisex and perfunctory. It is, as Graham McLean highlights, 'only a sweatshirt with an extra bit', that can be pulled on for 'Saturday-morning supermarket trips and lazy Sunday pub lunches, for late-night corner-shop errands and jaunts to the seaside' (McLean, 2005: 2). The hoodie is not a piece of intricate sartorial design or even considered stylish. It is, as Bruzzi would assuredly agree, unspectacular. It is also, however,

centrally positioned in the Hoodie Horror. On one level it is a marker, the definitive iconography of the cycle. As the assorted marketing material suggests, the utilisation of the hoodie was to focus and prime audience expectation, denote characterisation and convey narrative information (Figs 6 – 10). Its centralisation makes visible – spectacularises – the abject state, but also problematises the realism of the films through its mimesis. While the narratives of the Hoodie Horror maintain a certain narrowing of social space that Hill perceives in the development of the British realist text (Hill, 2000a), the hoodie reverses visibility by relocating it to the costume. Scholars such as Hill and Lowenstein have noted how prominent filmic texts of the working-class accord with testing economic and social changes (Hill, 1986; Lowenstein, 2005). The utilisation of the hoodie onscreen scripts the passing of the working-class, and supplants it, crystallising the identity of the underclass in its place. The hoodie is the visual language, the aestheticization of the revolting discourse of the Hoodie. It symbolises citizenship in neoliberal Britain in the twenty-first century.

Post-industrial Britain was a nation subjected to a neoliberal governmentality promoting individualism, class mobility and aspirational living, whilst decoupling citizens who failed to seize opportunity; here the identity of the working-class has fractured, clearing cultural forms of representations of the mythical ‘real working-class’. What has replaced it are visions of the underclass, with the Burberry of the *chav* succeeded by the Hoodie. The hoodie, with its associative abject discourse, calibrates the underclass identity in the public sphere. The identity, as explored earlier in ‘The fashion of fear’, is overdetermined and fetishized, distorts and

fabricates impoverishment, failure, parasitical and dysfunctional behaviour to demonise the underclass in the formation of a moral panic. As Mooney highlights, the demonizing discourses 'often have only tenuous connections to the reality of everyday life' (Mooney, 2008: 14). However, this identity, as a mechanism of social abjection, is also posited as a truth, something known of the underclass through repeated instances of imagery and stories. It conveys a sense of authenticity. The centralisation of the hoodie in the cycle solidifies this abject identity onscreen. It furthers the stigmatization of the underclass and secures it within an immobile and fixed identity. As the hoodie is imbued with neoliberal governmentality, the application of it in films infuses the cinematic texts with a reactionary and neoliberal ideology, resulting in films coalescing with the abject discourses and furthering the stigmatization. The hoodie as a visual language makes spectacle of the abject underclass.

The hoodie as costume then complicates narrative and characterisation by posing the question as to whether a balance can be struck between discourse and character, mimesis and realism. The problem encapsulates the ongoing debate in scholarship on costume between spectacle and narrative. Does the visibility of the hoodie privilege discourse, through the spectacle of the abject, over narrative? The tension between mimesis and realism in the cycle is particularly imbued in the hoodie. As observed by McLean, the hoodie is an everyday piece of clothing, versatile and in circulation through all levels of society in contemporary Britain (McLean, 2005: 2). As Sarah Street asserts in her chapter on *Wonderland* (Michael Winterbottom, 1999), costume is utilised to emphasise the realism of the film

(Street, 2001: 73). For Street, whilst costume in realist texts is still employed as a mechanism through which to explore characterisation, the realist form necessitates a 'fashion system which is reflective of how "ordinary" people use fashion', a system that must also acknowledge the social class (75). Costume, as a component of the *mise-en-scène*, must oblige the film's form and is an 'integral element of establishing verisimilitude' (11). Street expands further on the relationship between costume and realism by drawing upon Joanne Entwistle's conceptualisation of 'embodiment'. For Street, in order for *Wonderland* to capture the 'ordinariness' of the everyday, costume must convince it is commonplace, that it reflects how clothes would be worn outside of the cinematic world (Street, 2001: 74-75). Entwistle's idea of embodiment perceives the relationship between fashion and the body by situating 'wearing' as a social and cultural practice that considers individuality, identity, cultural affiliations and how fashion functions to create states of inclusivity and exclusivity (Entwistle, 2000: 139). As Street summarises, wearing clothes is a process of 'adaptation, negotiation and self-presentation' (Street, 2001: 74); costume in *Wonderland* furthers the realism of the feature by animating the individuality of the main character, Nadia, by conveying a 'lived-practice' of how Nadia has adapted high-street fashion to illuminate her personal style (83-84).

Street's analysis is pertinent here, for it raises analogous issues that aid in illuminating the hoodie's problematic function as costume in the cycle. As explored more in the 'Gothic abject' chapter, the hoodie in films such as *Heartless*, *F* and *Citadel* traces over a far more explicit and essentialist abject discourse abundant in

popular culture. The hoodie's relationship with monsters is not the focus of this chapter, but rather how the hoodie illuminates the protagonists. Firstly, for such a unitary item of clothing, the hoodie in the cycle in its broadest sense scripts the symbolic underclass male urban experience. Here the term 'underclass' denotes not just economic and social impoverishment, but also behaviour. It embodies what is posited as 'real' and 'authentic' (as was discussed in 'The fashion of fear') through the form of mimesis. However, the urban experience, while violent and traumatic for the protagonists, does not consistently denote the protagonists as violent deviants as the extra-filmic discourse would dictate. The mimesis in the tracing over of the symbolic attire is disrupted. As a visual signifier it denotes the extra-filmic discourse, crafting the character within that narrative. However, this chapter argues that when worn by the protagonists, the hoodie signals to a wider framework of an abject state. Here, the hoodie symbolises an abject figure. If we return to the concept of abjection as a spatialising mechanism, the hoodie and protagonist relationship is coded with a symbolic distance: this figure resides on the margins. As an example, when we first meet Jamie in *Heartless*, as he navigates the urban surroundings from a London high street to the waste grounds, he is wearing a hoodie with the hood up, an item he wears consistently throughout the narrative. Arbor too wears his hoodie, first when waiting for Swifty when they first go scrapping after being excluded from school, and later when he sits outside Swifty's home after the latter has died. The hoodie in both instances code the characters as abject figures, as characters who navigate societal borders. However, both instances also illuminate characterisation and an interior world.

As explored in the following chapter on the Hoodie Horror male, both Jamie and Arbor are denoted as insufficient masculinities due to their mental health issues, which hinders their relationship between self and society. Jamie's face is blighted by a port-wine stain, he suffers from depression due to the death of his father when he was a child, and has attempted suicide. He works for his brother, has no friends and actively withdraws from society. Jamie is an urban recluse. Arbor is diagnosed with ADHD, which, due to poor self-management, obstructs him from building relationships both at home and at school. The ADHD codes him as a trouble-maker. As narrative progression contextualises Jamie's characterisation, so the wearing of the hoodie for Jamie is associated with his solitary existence, his active retreat from society to an interior world. Arbor's wearing is more complicated still. The harrowing scene in which Arbor sits outside Swifty's home through day and night and rain is an act of guilt and penance, and one that seeks forgiveness from Swifty's mother for his accountability in her son's death. It is a last act of endurance that demonstrates the depth of both the boys' friendship and Arbor's sense of loss. It is an act that conveys Arbor's acknowledgement and acceptance of his own failings. Arbor pulls the hood so far over his head that he is hidden from the world (Figs 11 and 12). The wearing of the hoodie for Arbor is complicated by narrative and character progression. As with Jamie, it signals a retreat for him and an acknowledgement of his abject state, not in a political or social sense, but rather an acceptance of his failings. Bataille argued that an individual could never be fully abject until accepting the state themselves (1934/1999: 8-14). As a scene that animates the lowest point for Arbor, if we

approach the scene within Bataille's conceptualisation, it configures Arbor as abject.

Returning to Street's analysis of costume and identity formation, it could be argued that the examples of Jamie and Arbor here demonstrate character agency and identity formation that pushes back against the privileging of the discourse imbued in the hoodie. Whilst I argue that the hoodie is utilised here as a device of characterisation, caution needs to be applied in a reading of identity formation and agency, specifically regarding Arbor. In relation to Nadia in *Wonderland*, Street asserts how Nadia adapts and modifies her 'bargain-basement' clothes, arranging them to complement her identity (Street, 2001: 76). As the wider narrative of *The Selfish Giant* conveys, Arbor's family and his living conditions are that of impoverishment, which significantly impacts his facility as a consumer. Indeed, Arbor undertakes scrapping work so that he can help his mother pay the bills. While the wearing of the hoodie here scripts characterisation and Arbor's interiority, the hoodie does not wholly constitute agency or identity formation. The hoodie, as noted earlier, conveys a broad meaning of the state of abjection, one that includes a life of poverty. The narratives of the cycle not only centralise abject figures, but, as outlined in the previous chapters, are themselves tales of abjection. As Elseasser sketches in his article, narratives of abjection revolve around protagonists being progressively stripped of 'all symbolic supports of selfhood' (Elseasser, 2006: 655), a narrative trajectory that similarly saturates the Hoodie Horror cycle. The films, including *The Selfish Giant*, are abject tales of abject states that subject the protagonists to the most extreme experiences of the human condition; there is no

escape from the abject state in the Hoodie Horror. The hoodie as discourse, as device of characterisation and narrative, is the visual language of abjection that functions on one level as a self-fulfilling prophecy. Tyler argues in her work how figures and communities that are subjected to the continual discriminatory practice of being 'made abject' begin to live and embody the abject state themselves (Tyler, 2013: 4-5); there is a transference from figurative form to embodiment of a lived condition. The hoodie as costume directs a similar trajectory, in that by inscribing the body as abject, it makes the characters eventually realise their full abject condition through narrative progression. The concern of Higson over how social realist texts narrate a form of fatalism for the lower-class (Higson, 1996) is fully realised in the Hoodie Horror. The hoodie then subjugates and directs all narrative and characterisation to the spectacle of the symbolism of abjection.

As outlined earlier, the hoodie scripts the whole gamut of abjection onto the characters and into the narratives of the films. While it clothes the protagonists in the *state* of abjection, it can also *narrate* abjection. This is most obvious in the character of Noel Clarke's Sam in the *Hood* trilogy, where the hoodie signifies the essentialist discourse that swathes the monsters of the cycle. It is clear from the two marketing examples (Figs 6 and 7), where Sam is the sole wearer of a hoodie, that he is positioned as the abject villain in both films. His centralisation in the poster for *Adulthood* recognises and demonstrates his move to protagonist (but still villainous) as well as Clarke's ascendancy as an actor, writer and director of British cinema. Throughout both films Sam wears a hoodie. In the opening sequence of *Kidulthood*, Sam's hoodie, which paradoxically makes him visible for being the sole

wearer of such a garment, denotes his violent character. It affords him respect through making others fearful of him. So while the hoodie embodies the discourse and infuses Sam with the extra-filmic narrative of the Hoodie, within the cinematic world when approached as a comparative tool, the hoodie illuminates Sam's identity as experienced by other characters. The hoodie aids in creating character narrative. While the abject construction of character remains stable, the character narrative as visualised by the hoodie is permeable to change. In *Adulthood*, Sam wears it as Jamie from *Heartless* does, as a sartorial defence of concealment, on his release from prison, to be able to navigate the urban-scape unnoticed. However, in *Kidulthood*, it is his hoodie that makes him recognisable and a target for violent attack. Although Sam retains his abject form in both films, the hoodie narrates characterisation and character trajectory within the confines of abjection.

The last example in this chapter is that of Jake from *III Manors*. After passing an initial impromptu initiation, Marcel persuades Jake to run with his crew. Marcel decides Jake's clothes are too bright for their activities and takes Jake and the crew shopping. The following montage is shot by camera phone and disrupts the ontology of the film, similar to scenes analysed further in *Harry Brown*, when the camera phone footage fuses with the film's fiction. The montage encapsulates Jake first choosing new clothes, which include a black hoodie, before the crew take him to a party where he is introduced to hard drugs, alcohol and sex. As the footage is returned to the ontology of the fiction form, Jake, dressed in his new black attire, accompanies the gang to a warehouse lock-up where a rival drug runner is tied up. Jake, fuelled by his new look, steps up as a gang member and joins in the

intimidation and assault of the hostage (Figs 13 and 14). The hoodie aids not only in narrating Jake's transition from weed-smoking teenager to crew-member, it also marks and functions as a symbolic ensnarement of Jake within the abject form. While Jake's performance of the Hoodie Horror manhood is explored more fully in the following chapter, what is of importance here is how the hoodie symbolically supplies an identity for him to try on and perform – an identity which rapidly results in Jake's own murder. The use of the hoodie in Jake's narrative is emblematic of the issue of hoodie as costume across the cycle. While the hoodie in Jake's abject narrative symbolises agency and negotiation in his identity formation, the mimesis of the abject discourse of the Hoodie within Jake's character trajectory enhances the film's claim to verisimilitude but complicates the relationship between the film's fiction and authenticity. The issue with the hoodie is over how the films fuse narrative trajectory with characterisation within the garment's symbolisation. The abject discourse of the underclass underpins not only narrative trajectory, but also elements of the *mise-en-scène*, including the costume. The return of the dramatic drive of 'problem and solution' in the realist text engulfs character in an abject state, resulting in an inevitable fatalism that the protagonists battle to escape. In the Hoodie Horror, narrative, characterisation and costume have to oblige the privilege of the revolting discourse of the underclass. The horror of abjection in the cycle is the new realism.

2.4: Tender masculinities: 'Boys will be boys'



Pity the plight of young fellows.

Regard all their worries and cry.

(‘Pity the Plight’, *Ill Manors*, Plan B feat. John Cooper Clark)

And do the dirty work for them

The kind of work for men

That are with the darkest pasts

Not impressionable young children that never had a chance

Growing up in these manors most are doomed from the start

Cause the minds of their peers are as ill as their hearts

(‘Pity the Plight’, *Ill Manors*, Plan B feat. John Cooper Clark)

Put your head up like a bad man. This is where you want to be

(Chris, *Ill Manors*)

Ben Drew's (aka, Plan B) 2012 directorial debut the rap opera, *Ill Manors*, epitomises the urban underclass male experience animated by the Hoodie Horror cycle. The film interweaves an ensemble of tandem narratives constructing the pervasiveness of abject lives across a localised urban setting in London. The multiple protagonists, Aaron, Ed, Jake and Chris, are situated in their own impossible narratives of a battle to survive, to exist, narratives that seek to illuminate the depth of impoverished lives in Britain of the new millennium. Drug-use, drug-running, prostitution, human-trafficking, and gang-life, all feature in the film, demonstrating that human exploitation is not just a practice for globalisation and corporations, and not just a subject of Dickensian Britain. It is a film of the unloved and the desperate. The stylised back-stories constructed by montage sequences of either flashbacks or homespun cine-film inserts, overlaid with the soundtrack of individualised songs, narrate childhoods lost to abuse, drug-use, inadequate single-parenting, songs that serve to induce sympathy for the characters' plights. Drew views his film, a visually stylised configuration of Brit-grit, as offering the 'dark reality' of lives that some in middle England do not believe exists (Drew interviewed by Bainbridge, 2012: 27). Bainbridge perceives the film as one 'capturing a mood – of desolation and anxiety' rather than a cinematic polemic (Bainbridge, 2012: 27), and a film that seeks to strike a debate on the causes of modern-day destitution. If there is a message the film conveys (and it is reasonable to assume there are some) it is as a nation, we should be ashamed.

Ill Manors' animation of a young underclass masculinity is typical of the cycle of the whole. The male of the Hoodie Horror is pitted against what the films posit as the

real horrors of modern Britain, gun crime, gang-life, drug-use and familial abandonment. These male protagonists navigate and perform the monstrous realism of the cycle. These tender masculinities are confronted with events and lives that prove their masculinity to be insufficient for what the abject urbanscape threatens. The desolate and anxious tone of *Ill Manors* that Bainbridge identifies is the fatalistic abjection that contemporary cultural forms, the British cinematic text specifically here, conceptualise the underclass exist within. As this thesis asserts, the recent trajectory of British social realism envisages the underclass in increasingly revolting narratives and aesthetics, and the Hoodie Horror continues this progression. The narratives focus on the young underclass masculinity that is both violent and angry, and the confrontational challenges he encounters from the socio-economic to complicated communal and homosocial bonds, and how he navigates the adult masculinity that he must perform for his survival. The cycle is concerned not just with a 'slice of life' or the mere 'everyday', but with existence and survival of the Hoodie Horror male.

2.4.1: Narratives of crisis

As outlined in the previous two chapters in this section, for dramatic necessity an abject male is required for narratives of abjection, and this chapter argues how the Hoodie Horror male is crafted within the broad confines of the abject figure, symbolised through the hoodie as garment, and scripted by the overriding discourse of the Hoodie and underclass as abject. I suggest then, the films necessitate a performance of discourse and abjection by the male protagonists that subjugate the protagonists to acts of symbolic violence, a visual measure of the

symbolic abject state of the underclass male. Within the narrative bounds there is space given for variance in the presentation of abject states. However, the elicitation of sympathy and empathy from the audience, coupled with a narrative trajectory of capture and escape, ensure a continued entrapment within the symbolic abject.

As this thesis is concerned with elucidating a cycle, this chapter focuses on the themes, motifs and concerns that construct the Hoodie Horror male – the neoliberal other - across the films. This chapter asserts how the narratives of the Hoodie Horror provide the cultural, social, and aesthetic space that constructs the underclass masculinity within a punishing urban spectacle of violence, trauma and impoverishment that is specific to a national and temporal context. As an onscreen body as site through which socio-economic change and nationhood is explored, this chapter surveys how symbolic neoliberal citizenship in the films is constructed through discourse. While this thesis does position the representations of the underclass masculinity within narratives of a gender in crisis model, it does so with some qualification. If we were to approach the cycle uncritically, the films would appear as reflections of a nation experiencing insecurity and anxiety due to a raging urban criminality. Young, underclass males as disempowered and alienated, and using violence and illegal activities to reconfigure their identities would be a normative coming-of-age ritual. However, while this thesis is not disputing the film narratives do indeed follow a crisis model, these are narratives of a cultural discursive strategy in articulating how lower-class ‘boys become men’ in late modernity, where economic and social transitions have negatively impacted the

labour market and traditional male roles. I do not argue these are 'reflections' on the everyday urban, or argue for authenticity, despite the form of some films or the claim of veracity by writers and directors. It does assert the representations are troubled and experience a crisis in identity which is presented as psycho-social narratives, and that the male protagonists are contingent on a contemporary discursive concern over the lower-class adolescent male, the discourse of Hoodie as national abject, and through a cinematic lineage of a gendered body that is utilised to explore and express cultural and economic fears. As R.W. Connell articulates, 'the body remains the screen on which the well-launched dramas of power and anxiety are projected' (Connell, 1987: 82).

This chapter explores a cultural performance of abjection. I position the male of the cycle within a cultural and social reading of gender, but one that requires contextualisation against the lineage of representations of masculinity in the social realist texts. Approaching the male of the cycle as a cultural and social construction allows for a reading of gender as social practice which is informed by R.W. Connell's conceptualisation of how gender relations are arranged around reproductive grouping but respond to historical and social situations within the power structures of society (2005: 72). The parameters of the chapter's analysis are to approach the male within his social, communal and domestic spheres and to argue that the performance of male underclass abjection reveals a broader range of male anxieties, concerns and resentments that articulate anxieties over citizenship that circle those of economic, social and political disempowerment. Furthermore, this

chapter will comment on how the cycle's animation of the underclass male reveals an absence and a lack in these masculinities as a condition of late modernity.

I begin by broadly summarising recent key texts on onscreen masculinity, with an obvious focus on the British male. To open the analysis I shall start with a broad and constructive platform to the cinematic male, an approach sketched by Pat Kirkham and Janet Thumim. The provision of such a precis here is to illuminate the critical analytical approaches in conceptualising this gender and how these inform the methodology of this thesis. Attention is also granted to scrutinise the idea of a 'crisis in masculinity' by perusing further cinematic enquiry and recent socio-cultural research.

2.4.2: Mad about the boy

And all because I'm mad about the boy

(*'Mad About the Boy'*, Noel Coward, 1932)

Kirkham and Thumim open both their edited collections, *You Tarzan, Masculinity, Movies and Men* (Kirkham and Thumim, 1993) and *Me Jane: Masculinity, Movies and Women* (Kirkham and Thumim, 1995), with expedient summarisations of certain persistent sites that signal particular traits and themes of masculinity which are interrogated in the chapters across both volumes. The broad sites Kirkham and Thumim identify are, the body, action, the external world and the internal world (Kirkham and Thumim, 1993: 11). The body is concerned with the physical body as spectacle, which also can be broadened to comprise actor performance and star persona. Action engages with the *doing*, or acts of men – violence, endurance and aggression – the instruction and formation of the body in constructing masculinity

(12-16). The external world encompasses the male as a social being, with consideration given to patriarchal order and hierarchal status within social and cultural mechanisms (18-21). Lastly, the interior world which Kirkham and Thumim describe as the 'experience and articulation of being' (12) which loosely translates into the expression of male anxiety (22-26).

The British onscreen male as a performance of anxiety is a consistent thread in scholarship. Leon Hunt's work offers such a diagnosis in his analysis of British masculinity in the 1970s (Hunt, 1998). Hunt's assessment of the 'uncertain maleness' of the decade is that this is the first crisis in masculinity since the end of the second world war. This indeterminate male was affected by the decline in industrialisation and labour relations, and the ascendancy of feminism and the gay movement (Hunt, 1998), but a maleness that endeavoured to reassert itself by masculinization after a period of what Fintan Walsh would assess to be a period of social and economic transformation (Walsh, 2010: 9). Nicola Rehling's article on male representation in the British hooligan film (Rehling, 2011: 162-72) and Sarah Godfrey's analysis of Shane Meadows's *Twenty-Four Seven* (Shane Meadows, 1997) (Godfrey, 2013: 846-62) both explore the gender politics of individualism and male collectivity as a response to the shifting nature of working-class identities in a post-industrial nation. Rehling's focus on how violence remasculinizes working-class male identities, relocating homosocial bonds to the tribal formation of hooliganism where, 'football violence is represented as an exclusively male preoccupation, one that enables the enactment of an undiluted, primal masculinity' (Rehling, 2011: 168). Godfrey contextualises the crisis of the 'troubled white masculinity' (Godfrey,

2013: 848) in *Twenty-Four Seven* as part of Meadows' growing oeuvre, and within the cultural and social changes that have impacted employment and gender relations (849). Monk's work on the 1990s underclass film (2000a) and men in the decade (2000b), also situates the representation of an underclass masculinity as a site of anxiety and an effect of the loss of working-class male labour (Monk, 2000a: 280). Monk's work resonates with Rehling's on narrative strategies that seek not only to position male disempowerment as a problem, but also to reverse it, as well as positioning films such as *Trainspotting* and *Twin Town* as 'reassuring' representations of an underclass as subculture (279). Monk positions the films and the underclass male within the lineage of the social realist text, while contextualising the films within the transformed national cultural industries that commodified subcultural lives and the underclass in a reinvigorated national and political identity, exemplified by Cool Britannia and Brit Art (282-83).

The male as a site of political and social anxiety is not only the concern of the realist text. As Linnie Blake's work on the British horror film in the early years of the millennium demonstrates, the changing political and social landscape is reflected in representations of the male in horror. In *Wounds of a Nation* (2008), Linnie Blake asserts that the arrival of the New Labour government in the late 1990s, wrought a crisis in masculinity models as the hybridised model of gender identity the government espoused endangered the traditional roles already under threat from the social changes instigated by the Thatcherite project. Blake argues that what was emblematic of New Labour was its hybridity. And this extended to the model of masculinity that the incoming government conceived and promoted, and that for

Blake, Tony Blair himself embodied (Blake, 2008: 155-59). Blake maps out this model of masculinity as one that fused traditional male characteristics such as assertiveness and decisiveness with more 'new man' qualities such as nurturing in both familial and social justice capacity (157-58). With the nation still in 'trauma' from the catastrophic social and economic changes that Thatcherism heralded in transforming the country from industrialised nation to a service culture, Blake argues how British horror cinema in the new millennium are explorations of the battles between progressive and traditional models of masculinity.

2.4.3: Approaching offscreen crisis of masculinity

There are, though, inherent issues with the employment of word 'crisis' in relation to the position of masculinity, and it is often used too idiomatically to be meaningful. Scholarship on masculinity (Connell, 2005; Beynon, 2002; Nayak and Kehily, 2008) warns to be vigilant on the meaning of crisis when applied to gender. Lynne Segal views the masculine in crisis as a discursive strategy to preserve patriarchal privilege (Segal cited in Beynon, 2002: 91). Connell argues that to speak of a masculinity in crisis is misleading as it pre-supposes a coherent and hegemonic system already in place. Rather, by locating masculinity as a configuration of a social and historical practice within a structure of gender relations, Connell asserts how there can be a crisis of a 'gender order', or a 'tendency towards crisis', where it is more suitable to approach masculinity in terms of a gender disrupted or transformed (Connell, 2005: 84-85). Beynon somewhat agrees by arguing generational changes to masculinity initiates the idea of crisis, when in essence it is a gender in transformation as it realigns itself in response to changing social and

economic demands, demands Beynon categorises into a 'loss of rights' and shifting employment opportunities (Beynon, 2002: 75-97). Mangan, with a focus on the instability and mutability of the masculine identity, asserts that crisis is constitutive of masculinity,

Crisis is ... a condition of masculinity itself. Masculinity gender identity is never stable: its terms are continually being re-defined and re-negotiated and gender performance continually being re-staged. Certain themes and tropes inevitably reappear with regularity, but each ear experiences itself in different ways.

(Mangan cited in Beynon, 2002: 90)

Furthermore, Fintan Walsh asserts how the process of crisis is a constitutive component of political mechanisms, and social and economic structures. Indeed, periods of crisis and trauma are succeeded with remasculinization (Walsh, 2010: 9).

However, Beynon's analysis of writing (including self-help books, media, broadsheets and magazines) and scholarship on masculinity argues of the year 2000 being a watershed for alerting everyone to the 'masculine in crisis' discourse (Beynon, 2002: 72). Citing an array of publications of 'boy in crisis' material that followed Anthony Clare's *On Men* (2000), Beynon views the cultural landscape proliferated with concerning data on the performance of the contemporary male as its gender and thus position within the social being consistently curtailed through employment and familial changes (Beynon, 2002: 77). Beynon briefly elaborates by arguing how available data on masculinity in Britain during the closing decade of the twentieth century displayed boys underperforming at school, young men being responsible for most soft crime and men (Beynon's demarcation) responsible for

most violent crime; men were four times more likely to commit suicide than women, and men's health suffered from negative impact earlier in life than women's (74-78). For Beynon, when this data is combined with the rise of feminism and the gay movement and the social and economic changes wrought by the shift from industrialisation to service industry, Beynon positions the British masculinity as negatively impacted across the strata of social and cultural life and become a site for a vanguard of social concerns and was often 'the cause and symptom of a society in crisis' (74).

Nayak and Kehily's research continues the challenge to the notion of a crisis in gender. Critically they acknowledge that the 'crisis in masculinity' model is the dominant discourse for analysis of the male adolescent but impose four critical qualifications on the use of the term, 'crisis', concerning conceptualisation, cultural differences in gender, the imprecision in application, and lastly the misplaced relationship between gender and employment (Nayak and Kehily, 2008: 38-51). First, they highlight, as Connell has before, the conceptual contradiction in attaching the word, crisis, to a term such as masculinity that is a fluid social construct, temporally and culturally informed, rather than a fixed object (48). Second, the notion of a crisis in masculinity is a western problem relating to the relocation of manufacturing work to developing countries. Therefore, is this a far broader concern of a 'white crisis'? (48). Third, the application of the term is too often indistinct, and is more aligned to the perpetual 'troublesome youth' rhetoric that is interwoven with moral panics and sub-cultures; rhetoric that is class-bound and consistently applied to the lower-class male (49-50). Lastly, the approach to

understanding masculinity within the sphere of employment is too narrow, resulting in a 'cultural dissonance' between political and media articulations and the 'lived experience' of young men (50). Indeed, Nayak and Kehily assert that the crisis in masculinity is a mere 'myth of masculinity' (38) and no more than a 'compelling narrative' (39). Furthermore, Nayak and Kehily observes it is often a narrative applied to lower-class young men for the following reasons (41). First, the concept of youth is often associated with being 'out of control' and threatening and employed to represent 'what is wrong' with society (7). Second, as Skeggs observes, 'the body is the most ubiquitous signifier of class' (Skeggs, 1997:82), and the bodies of lower-class masculinities are often inscribed as disorderly, unruly and disruptive (Hebdige, 1979; Cohen, 1997), or as Nayak and Kehily assert, lumpen (Nayak and Kehily, 2008: 41).

Nayak and Kehily offer a conceptual replacement for 'crisis' by repositioning the gender anxiety to a crisis of identity. They accept how labour market transition from manual labour to the service industry, from full-time to more casual terms of employment as effecting the lower-class male's transition to education to employment, resulting in 'young men attempting to rewrite their labour biographies ... pursuing multiple, fragmented or unaccomplished transitions' (40-41).

The selected scholarship is chosen for the framework it provides for analysis of masculinity in the Hoodie Horror. Kirkham and Thumim's work, and Nayak and Kehily's research, creates a broad and wide platform in which to approach not only a cinematic construction of masculinity, but also the performance of gender, aiding

this chapter with its analysis of enacting male abjection. Monk, Rehling and Godfrey's work supplies an outline of the concerns of scholarship in conceptualising the onscreen British lower-class male, and the cruciality of perceiving the gender as disrupted and distressed within a post-industrial nation and changing labour and gender conditions. What is critical here is how British realist texts conceive identity formation within the political and social national landscape – the individual and society.

2.4.4: Absence in the neoliberal other

But, for young people, hoodies are often more defensive than offensive. They're a way to stay invisible in the street.

(David Cameron, 2006)

The Hoodie Horror continues this avenue of investigation, but with a focus of the underclass male as central to, and the effect of, the political project of neoliberalism, which resonates with Beynon's assessment of cause and symptom, and Nayak and Kehily's notion of cultural dissonance. This chapter acknowledges the gender crisis model in the narratives, but positions it as one of male identity, and how it offers an appropriate platform for the abject discourse of the male underclass.

I begin with a broad brush, with a comparative scrutiny between the body of the Hoodie Horror male across the cycle and the celebrated male of the British New Wave. Whilst approaching the figure for what it is not may come with its own challenges and disadvantages, this avenue aids in appreciating the cycle's masculinity as abject and in perceiving the transition from pleasurable spectacle of

working-class representation to abject spectacle of underclass. If we take the position that the 1960s was a decade that ushered in a focus on working-class representation across cultural platforms, and the body of the lower-class male as a site that is inscribed with cultural and social shifts, then we can logically perceive the male as a body where performance of class is enacted. The body of the Hoodie Horror male then becomes vital to trace a contemporary history of working-class and underclass performance. Kirkham and Thumim's appraisal of the male body onscreen discusses its qualities, both naked and adorned, as an erotic spectacle, cultural icon and a site inscribed on the surface with masculine characteristics (Kirkham and Thumim, 1993: 12-13). While the physical body is approached as signifier of endurance and pleasure, the focus is on 'qualities either asserted or assumed in the construction and development of masculine characters, or they may be signifiers of themes ... concerned with an interrogation of masculinity' (Kirkham and Thumim, 1993: 11). One aspect omitted is the body as signifier of class. The assertion here is how the physical male body in the Hoodie Horror embodies underclass representation. In her chapter on Albert Finney's performance in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (Karel Reisz, 1966), Christine Geraghty observes how the opening scenes establishes Arthur Seaton's masculinity. Geraghty argues how the camera privileges Seaton/Finney's body in the frame that constructs a brawn masculinity as pleasurable spectacle, but also to assert Seaton's sexual prowess and male independence. A certain type of brawn is required for manual labour. As the narrative domesticates and desexualises Seaton, so as Geraghty argues, his body is closed off by the frame (Geraghty, 1993: 62-72). I would also add Finney's physical presence can be read as a signifier of an assertion

of working-class within the public arena. As Geraghty notes, Seaton's body is framed at his work-place 'so that his shoulders, upper arms and face impose themselves on the screen' (63), and later in a 'boozing-match' (63) and then in a passionate embrace with his girlfriend, Brenda, in a shot that 'gives a view of his 'beefy' arms and shoulders' (64). Finney's body is centralised in the frame here as a filmic strategy of 'visual power' (71) to not only to enact the relationship between working-class and manual labour in how employment is a signifier of class, but also to explore 'a working-class community at the point of change' (67). I would also extend this to how the sheer physical presence of actors also aided in asserting working-class representation in cultural forms. As with Alan Bates in *A Kind of Loving* (John Schlesinger, 1962) and Richard Harris in *This Sporting Life* (Lindsay Anderson, 1963), the actors' bodies not only marked an 'arrival' of what Hill describes as 'the new working-class ... identified with affluence, consumption and leisure' (Hill, 2000a: 251), but also illuminated the working-class male as charismatic, sexualised and pleasurable. As Colls and Dodd have observed, representations of the working-class male often 'celebrate' the male body through spectacularising the body in action either at work or undertaking a sports activity (Colls and Dodd, 1985: 24).

In comparison, the physical presence of the male in the Hoodie Horror illuminates the neoliberal other not just as vulnerable and insufficient, but an imperilled and subjugated masculinity. It is the physical manifestation of male disempowerment. The male protagonists of the cycle perform the abject state. Paradoxically, it is their desire for invisibility that makes them visible. Joe in *Piggy*, Matthew in *The*

Disappeared, Jamie in *Heartless*, and Tommy in *Citadel*, all seek to withdraw from society as their mental health and fractured familial relationships prohibits socialisation and entry into community, or wider social structures. Tommy is continually narrated within the domestic and is often framed hiding in his home from the hoodies he considers are stalking him and his daughter, Elsa. Jamie persistently wears his hoodie when navigating his urban surroundings due to his marked face, as mentioned earlier. Joe's voiceover narrates Joe's lone figure in the frame in his workplace, his home and around the local streets, whilst Harry Treadaway's bodily performance of abjection, head downturned, shoulders in, enacts his guilt over his brother's disappearance and the fractured relationship with his father. All are consistently framed as the loners of the narratives, and their lack of physical presence onscreen amplifies the extent of their symbolic abjection, their disempowerment and inability to exert agency over their own lives. Even when framed in a close-up, the wearing of the hoodie serves to conceal and deny the very presence of their bodies from the gaze of the audience (Figs 15 – 18). In *Kidulthood* and *Adulthood*, Sam in both films and Trife in the first film are regularly framed wearing their hoodies. While Sam wears his as a symbol of his machismo in order to assert his male authority amongst his peers, the hoodie also serves to secrete his criminal activities and to conceal his identity, enabling him to navigate his hostile urban seemingly unseen (Figs 19 and 20). In *Kidulthood*, Trife is framed wearing his in a stylised sequence that conveys a moral crossroads for him that necessitates a gendered response and action (Fig 21). The overall message here is how the physical presence onscreen of the male protagonists of the cycle engenders a reading of performance of class. The trajectory from the brute force and

spectacularisation of the male in the British New Wave to the neoliberal other of the Hoodie Horror, demonstrates the cultural and social relevance of the British lower-class within the nation. The sheer physicality of actors such as Albert Finney, Alan Bates and Richard Harris convey the desire to centralise working-class stories and voices to the cultural landscape of Britain in the 1960s. As John Hill asserts, films of this period endeavoured to make visible the working-class to the wider population (Hill 1986; 2000a; 2000b), and the physicality of the actors and space afforded them on the screen, communicated such visibility. The shrinkage of the onscreen presence denoted by the Hoodie Horror male speaks to the broader concerns of this thesis in how the cycle is a haunted form. Returning to Mark Fisher's employment of Martin Hägglund's distinction of Derrida's concept of hauntology between the 'no longer' and the 'not yet' (Fisher, 2013: 19), we can position the male of the cycle as a figure haunted by the symbolic lost futures as conceived in the film texts from the 1960s. Fisher distinguishes the difference between these two directions of hauntology with 'no longer' as something that has passed but remains effective as a signifier, and the 'not yet' as an anticipation, but which is already in effect (Fisher, 2013: 19). Arjun Appadurai's work on postcolonial Bombay also draws upon Derrida's hauntology as a mechanism to critique the inequality effected by social and economic changes and ethnic violence on Mumbai (Appadurai, 2000: 649). Appadurai positions those who have been impoverished by deindustrialisation and global capitalism as 'spectral citizens', a term that encapsulates embodied subjectivities unhomed by Mumbai's transition to global city. Appadurai utilises the notion of spectrality as a path to facilitate 'the steady dematerialization of Bombay's economy and the relentless hypermaterialization of

its citizens' (635). Drawing upon Fisher's and Appadurai's application of Derrida's hauntology, we can position the Hoodie Horror male within the conception of spectral citizenship, in how the figurative possibilities of the spectral can bear witness to the erasure of figures subject to symbolic social, economic and historical violence. The figure of the Hoodie Horror male embodies the symbolic violence enacted upon the working-class by neoliberal ideology.

The 1960s as a period in terms of music, fashion, film – a period of cultural and social innovation – centralised the working-class not only in representation, but also in terms of creative input. Despite the broad generalisation, centralisation of the working class provided the appearance of affording agency to the community in offering platforms through which to tell their stories, resulting in a seemingly democratisation of culture. With this period of innovation and creativity is what Berardi would perceive as a 'psychological perception' of progression (Berardi, 2011: 18-19). With a period of intensified innovation, a persistency of newness as it were, so expectations are set for a future of continual invention. Positioning representations of class onscreen (even within the narrative concerns of an impinging domesticity and consumerism) within this perspective, marked the arrival and heralded a future of working-class representation, that when contextualised against the creation of prosperity (both economic and cultural), symbolised a future working-class affluence. The lack of physicality in the Hoodie Horror as a comparison against this lineage, represents an absence, or in Fisher and Hägglund's terminology, something that is both 'no longer' and 'not yet' and an 'ontological insecurity' associated with late modernity (Giddens, 1991). The shrunken form of

lower-class representation is symbolic of the deleterious impact social and economic transformations and abject discourse have impacted on this community. In essence, the underclass has been subjected to symbolic violence, an act of subjugation of the subject. The future promise of economic and social prosperity for the working-class as symbolised in the potent physical presence of the working-class protagonists of the new wave is absent from the Hoodie Horror male. The absence of physicality communicates a future unarrived.

The intervening years between the British New Wave and the Hoodie Horror cycle have witnessed discursive constructions of masculinity that have endeavoured to reconfigure and renovate masculinity to be 'fit for purpose' for contemporary living but also to posit what a 'real man' is. Ros Coward asserts,

Traditional masculinity has been rendered at best absurd and at worst something menacing – a quality that needs to be taught a lesson ... masculinity is no longer a position from which to judge others, but a puzzling position in its own right.

(Coward, 1999: 91, 94)

In his book, *Masculinities and culture*, Beynon argues there have been four discursive threads on masculinities in circulation bridging the 1990s and the new millennium, the old man/new man dichotomy; the anti-social male; emasculated men and men as victims and aggressors (Beynon, 2002: 120-21), that have resulted in a masculinity been considered as a damaging condition, as a problem to be solved (139). Furthermore, Beynon asserts a contemporary cultural trajectory of formation of masculinity identity, arguing how in the 1980s, masculinity was

reconstructed by economic and commercial endeavours that said “hello” to the yuppie and “goodbye” to the “old industrial man” (96), paving the foundations for the further commercialisation of masculinity in the 1990s with the ‘new lad’ and laddism, so expounded by magazines such as *Loaded* (96). Masculinity then has become unfashionable and unfavourable (77-78), with traditional masculine traits are ‘now seen as the stigmata of deviance’ (Clare, 2000: 68). Whilst much scholarship on male representation in British cinema focuses on the political, social and economic conditions for masculine constructions (with Monk’s work (2000a) on the underclass film of the 1990s as an exception), this thesis expands the remit to the discursive constructions. The reasoning being, the Hoodie as a discourse of abjection has a history within such discursive formations. Beynon talks of the anti-social male (Beynon, 2002: 120), Stanley Cohen’s seminal work on moral panics investigates how societal power mechanisms demonise certain groups and communities – mods, rockers as examples – as a means to determine and marginalise said groups in order to maintain prevailing power structures (Cohen, 1972), and Jon Savage’s work on the creation of the teenager explores how teenage delinquency and style were combined to in a media driven creation of a deviant identity at the turn of the twentieth century with such gangs as the Peaky Blinders, the Bowry Boys, the Forty Row and the High Rip (Savage, 2008: 43). Such discursive constructions of an anti-social masculinity are not new, and it is critical to situate the Hoodie within a legacy in order to appropriately acknowledge the function of discourse in this abject onscreen identity.

The contrasting presence of the neoliberal other in the Hoodie Horror, notable for his very invisibility through the wearing of the hoodie and his delicate physical presence, aids in illuminating the marginalised position of the underclass in Britain in the 2000s. As a community, as configured through the national abject figure of the Hoodie here, the process of social abjection seeks to expel the class to the margins of the social proper. The performance here in the cycle of the abject is initially presented via the shrunken onscreen presence afforded to the male protagonists. Where Walsh asserts periods of crisis result in a remasculinisation of the male (Walsh, 2010: 9), as demonstrated in Hunt's analysis of British masculinity of the 1970s (Hunt, 1998), so the demasculinization of the male of the Hoodie Horror by a contraction in his presence, marks a response to a period of celebration of working-class values. As scholars such as Monk (2000a; 2000b), Smith (2002) and Dave (2006) have observed, 1990s witnessed the recentralisation of the working-class representation in the British cultural landscape. Cool Britannia, Brit-Art, Oasis, Blur, such films as *Lock Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*, *Trainspotting* and the resurgence of Ray Winstone and Paul Weller, all contributed to the renaissance of a pleasurable working-class representation, specifically male, resulting in a retro swaggering masculinity that explicitly recalled the 1960s male (Monk, 2000a, 2000b; Smith, 2002; Dave, 2006). As Bev Skeggs argues, working-class representations on occasions can produce a value, that reconfigures the class from pathological to a site for consumption (Skeggs, 2004: 98). Criminality is one such occupation and Skeggs views films such as *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* as providing a symbolic 'shor[ing] up' of a middle-class superior masculinity (105). As Skeggs writes, 'the hardness of white working-class men...are marketable, offered

as an experience ... offered for others to consume (105). Criminality and violence are re-evaluated and deemed glamorous and desirable, rather than anti-social and a social problem (99). The Hoodie is a symbolic response to such pleasurable excessive spectacles, and a mechanism to restrain agency of the lower-classes. To follow Skeggs rationale, criminality and violence are returned to the realms of social problem. Through the process of social abjection, the working-class are expelled from the cultural landscape. The return of anti-social behaviour to the discourse of social problem, is animated in the Hoodie Horror as activities that mark the rituals of adolescence to manhood in the cycle.

As outlined previously, the figure of the male in the Hoodie Horror is a site through which concerns over citizenship in neoliberal Britain is explored by its association with the discourse of the Hoodie. But as this thesis situates this male within the legacy of the social realist text in its various guises it is also the site, as I've posited, on which anxieties over social and economic shifts are inscribed. Lastly, as a cultural construct, the male is also subject to discursive formations of masculinity. The Hoodie Horror male then is subject to cultural, social and economic discourses that subjugate it as the 'other'. The intersection of discourse and othering construct a narrative that subjects the Hoodie Horror male to rituals to 'prove', and that test his masculinity, a subjugation that enacts a further symbolic violence on underclass masculinity, and that present the protagonists with a narrative of monstrous realism. The focus on class discourse of masculinity in the cycle results in a further absence, that of female representation. Whilst the ensemble narratives of both *Kidulthood* and *Adulthood*, apportion screen time to female stories of Alisha, Becky

and Lexi, the overall narrative arc – and thus protagonist privilege – is placed with the male characters. An overview of the cycle results in a receding female presence, relegated to motherly walk-ons or sexualised territory procured by men. The *Hood* trilogy and *Ill Manors*, despite screen time, are particularly misogynistic. In *Kidulthood*, Jay, Trife and Moony ‘overrun’ Sam’s bedroom when Sam is absent, a space that is perceived as Sam’s manor and territory. Sam’s girlfriend Clare is present, and Jay’s objectification of her delineates her as part of her boyfriend’s territory. Jay’s advances, resulting in engaging Clare in sex, becomes an act of property violation, an act of symbolic theft against Sam. This conceptualisation of women as merchandise is fully realised in *Brotherhood*, where nude and semi-naked women are objectified in ‘deliberately composed frames as just so much eye-catching furniture or sad-eyed livestock’ (Bray, 2016). Such waning and toxic representations of women illuminate a further absence in the male protagonists. Despite sexualised encounters in the *Hood* films, the Hoodie Horror male is strangely desexualised, especially when compared to the virile men of the 1960s British realist texts discussed earlier. Sex is a commodity employed as something to exchange within the local power structures. The prevailing discourse of the underclass in the cycle denies a male sexual potency in favour of constructing the underclass male body as vulnerable, enabling symbolic acts of violence.

The trials task him with a performance of masculinity as a symbolic transition from boy to man. As Linda McDowell observes, a critical process for young men in transitioning from childhood to adulthood is ‘learning how to be a man’ (McDowell, 2003: 10) and lower-class masculinities are often constructed through

representations of violence (15). Much of these trials resonate with the political and media dialogue of the Hoodies, disrupting the fiction of the films with mimesis. While Higson analyses authenticity in the realism of the British New Wave to be established through setting, naturalistic camera-work and regional actors (Higson, 1996), authenticity and realism in the Hoodie Horror is partly created by mimesis of discourse of the Hoodie. The trials also confront the Hoodie Horror male with a local social order, which this thesis posits as a reconfiguration of a patriarchy within an underclass power structure and a local black economy. As Connell asserts, 'there are different ways of enacting manhood, different ways of learning to be a man ... different ways of using a male body' (Connell, 2005: 10) and to embrace knowledge of constructions of masculinity 'we must also recognise the *relations* [original emphasis] between the different kinds of masculinity: relations of alliance, dominance and subordination ... there is a gender politics within masculinity' (Connell, 1995: 37). Connell's conceptualisation of the power relations at play in the construction of male identities resonates with the Hoodie Horror, as the male protagonists are imperilled by a confrontation with an underclass hierarchal patriarchy. It also reverberates with Kirkham and Thumim's categorisation of performing the male onscreen in that the Hoodie Horror narrative can be approached by utilising their categories of action, the external and internal world (Kirkham and Thumim, 1993: 11-27).

2.4.5: Rituals. Homosocial bonds. Trauma. Effect. Citizenship.

These are the tears of a wanna-be thug

Crying tears as thick as blood cause his elders set him up

To take the fall and now he's stuck with no way of getting out

Cause even if there was a way, he'd still want to vent this anger out'

(Pity the Plight, *Ill Manors*, Plan B)

They ain't men. They're just kids. We all are. That's why you're picking on us.

(Leanne, *Summer Scars*, 2007)

The impossible narratives of the cycle necessitate the adolescent protagonists to respond as if men. The requisite to be a man is thrust upon them as their entry into the wider social structures that exist beyond education and the domestic sphere is fraught with actions and moral decisions that test their manhood, trials that impact their homosocial and communal bonds as well as imperilling their own existence. This ritual of transition to maturity, through a configuration of the test of male endurance as a psycho-social experience, constructs the central narrative arc of the films. The discursive strategies of masculinity and class that coalesce in the films present the boundaries of symbolic citizenship in neoliberal Britain in the new millennium.

The centralisation of the male protagonists, even in the ensemble narratives of *Kidulthood*, *Adulthood* and *Ill Manors*, continue the male-centric films that both Hill and Monk consider characterised British cinema in the 1990s (Hill, 2000b; Monk, 2000a); films that animate, 'dramatic conflicts faced by working-class men' (Hill,

2000b: 179). Except here in the Hoodie Horror, the male is coded as underclass. But unlike films of the 1990s that framed a correlation between dysfunctional masculinity as a consequence of rising unemployment, shifting familial roles and the waning of traditional industries (Hill, 2000b: 178), the Hoodie Horror films suggest a decoupling of these male melodramas from such traditional economic conditions. The films follow loosely a neoliberal ideology of individualism where the reconfiguring of governmental responsibility to individual accountability in that your social, economic and cultural status is a result of an individual actions. In the cycle as a whole, the underclass are not the victims of unforgiving economic and social conditions within the cinematic world. Rather the films suggest the Hoodie Horror male is the *result*, the end product, the *creation of what comes after* the economic and social changes the social realist text has traced since the 1960s. The underclass is the community that has been 'left behind'. The 'new' economic and social conditions he encounters is the black economy; an economy reconfigured by the underclass to be a local financial and employment structure for those who have been marginalised and abjected by the social, economic and political shifts that have transformed the nation. It is a response to being marginalised. The narratives are informed by the media reports and political rhetoric that position the underclass adolescent as violent and threatening, forming a discourse of violent underclass adolescent as normative as demonstrated by the Hoodie as national abject. The events and characters of the films interweave then discourse with fiction, displaying a diminishing role for creativity in construction of plot⁶, whilst suggesting that authenticity, so fundamental to realism, is served here by mimesis.

⁶ The problematic fusion of mimesis and fiction is explored further in the section, Monsters.

The obscuring of mimesis, realism and authenticity is highlighted by David Cameron's now infamous 2006 Hug-a-hoodie speech. Speaking at the Centre for Social Justice, Cameron presents strategies for tackling youth delinquency and criminality in a vision of apparent communitarianism. To illuminate his ideas, he aligns the discursive narrative of *Kidulthood* with youth crime in the new millennium stating, 'the characters are simply children in circumstances none of us would want to grow up in' (Cameron, 2006). The conceptual association between fiction and tackling youth crime emphasises two critical issues. First, the argument made by Nayak and Kehily, that discursive constructions of lower-class masculinity involve inscribing the identities as threatening, disruptive and violent. Second, how authentic representation in *Kidulthood*, and by default the wider cycle, resonates as mimesis of discursive strategies of class and masculinity.

In *Kidulthood*, Trife is confronted with a moral choice of two futures: two sets of values. Either to follow a familial future by accepting a relationship with Alisa and being a father to their child, or entering the criminal world as offered by his Uncle Curtis. The strategy of constructing the opening sequence through montage stylistically dramatizes and amplifies pressures teenagers experience, from sexual encounters, bullying and peer pressure. Within this sequence, Trife is framed in close head shots, using school facilities, and his skill, in shaving a gun barrel, which we later find out is for his Uncle Curtis. While the school setting and Trife's bullying by Sam stifles any suggestion of Trife's criminal intentions, narrative developments further pressurise Trife into accepting his Uncle Curtis's offer to work for him. But as is archetypal of the cycle, the film presents the male protagonist as naïve as to

the reality of gang life and what is expected of him and frames the ritual of realisation in close-ups. Curtis demands Trife 'teach' Andreas, a drug runner for Curtis, a lesson by carving a C on his face. The camera frames Trife in head shots as he acquiesces to the order and scores Andreas' face. On completion Trife flees and is framed outside visibly traumatised. The claustrophobic framing centralises Trife's experience (Figs 22 and 23) of this ritual of masculinity that compels him to enter manhood by a shift from naivety to realisation. The physical anguish Trife displays drains the frame of any pleasure in the spectacle and is not a sign of a weak manhood. Rather, it is a masculinity who acknowledges the immorality in the action and feels remorse for his actions. Kirkham and Thumin observe one important element for the presentation of the male body onscreen is 'the process of *forming* [original emphasis] a body that will function effectively, to which audience attention is invited' (Kirkham and Thumin, 1993: 15). In the Hoodie Horror, the male body is not spectacularised for onscreen competition or sporting prowess. It is one crafted to be subjected to violence. Attention is given to the male body to highlight an ill-preparedness, an immaturity that emphasises these 'men' are still boys, and ill-equipped for socialisation into the wider underclass community. The following sequence, stylised in music video-style editing, follows a lone Trife on the backstreets of the west end of London, agonizing over his actions (Figs 24 and 25). Finding resonance with Kirkham and Thumin's analysis of the onscreen male body (Kirkham and Thumin, 1993: 12-15), Nayak and Kehily (2008: 38-51) and Skeggs (1997: 82), the male body here embodies the physical experience of being inscribed with a class discourse. The explicit visual unease of Trife signals a frisson with the discursive strategies that continually conceptualise the underclass male as violent

and threatening. This is not the pleasurable spectacle of swaggering masculinities that have come to epitomise the cultural lower-class male of the 1990s. Rather, this is an embodiment of anguish that signify a remorseful acceptance of entry into manhood and desire to return to a life before, now closed to the male protagonists as a result of their criminal actions. The emotional response of Trife positions him as victim, rather than perpetrator.

It is also a filmic strategy that widens the abject discourse that inscribes the characters with an 'othering' discourse. The visual tactics of placing the camera close to the protagonists during this transition to adulthood invites not only empathy but also provokes debate as to the validity of the discourse of the Hoodie, and to consider contextualising how youths come to undertake acts of criminality. However, while such visuals suggest a potentially progressive reading, it also acts as a consensus of the discourse that posits the problematic underclass as an intergenerational condition, an area I will return to further on in the chapter.

III Manors also employs a similar visual strategy when Jake kills Kirby and Chris's half-sister. I analyse the circumstances of Jake joining Marcel's gang in 'monstrous geographies', so here I concentrate on Jake's killing of Kirby as result of Marcel's manipulation. The non-linear narrative of the film allows the shooting to be performed twice. In the first, the audience experience the shooting with Kirby's story; the second, the one I focus on here, is experienced from Jake's embodied enactment. The creative style in the temporal structure and visual form, then, invites potential contestation to the discourse of the Hoodie, as with *Kidulthood*. As Jake enters Kirby's house, the camera is placed below Jake's face in a low-angled

shot. The skittish movement of the camera captures Jake's inexperience and fear. Aimlessly shooting into his surroundings, we can hear Jake breathing and shouting sorry to his victims (Figs 26 and 27). The film's centralisation of Jake's embodied experience here individualises the adolescent criminal, a stylistic strategy that as with *Trife*, disrupts the homogenising effect of discourse and seeks to solicit a broader understanding to the external pressures that underclass young males are confronted with in their passage to adulthood. Paradoxically, the camera placement denies the visualisation of the victims of the shooting, but by focusing on Jake elicits a sympathy for him, enabling a reading of Jake as victim.

The cultural currency and resonance of such 'wannabe-thug' narratives as epitomised by the *Hood* films is demonstrated with the 2011 parody, *Anuvahood* (Adam Deacon and Daniel Toland, 2011) and more opaquely with Brewis in *Attack the Block*. Adam Deacon, who played Jay in both *Kidulthood* and *Adulthood*, wrote and directed *Anuvahood* in an attempt to move away from the urban film form, and write a comedy on 'the kind of place I come from' (Anon, 2011b). Echoing Noel Clarke's sentiments on *Kidulthood*, Deacon says of the context to *Anuvahood*, 'this is London culture now. It's not black or white, young or old. London is London' (Anon, 2011b). The narrative of the main character Kenneth, who wants to be known by his gangster name Kay, is an explicit parody of the Hoodie character, as the opening scene underlines. The film's opening recalls the initial scene in *Harry Brown*, and knowingly draws upon imagery, themes and motifs readily associated with urban Hoodie narratives. Kay wearing the obligatory hood and is smoking weed with gang members whilst discussing attacking a rival. Intimate camera work,

the dark setting, and the use of urban language, point towards an apparent urban film form, with its associative thematic focus of violence. With Kay confronting his 'rival', the tone lightens as with one punch Kay is knocked to the ground and his gang start laughing at him. Now on the ground, the image of Kay as a threatening criminal is quickly dispelled, activating the film's parodic form. While a simple reading would suggest a mere parody of the Hoodie, it would be just as appropriate to approach the film as highlighting the distance between discourse and the actuality. *Anuvahood* is a reminder that discourses such as the Hoodie as national abject are political and media strategies that fetishize and conflate imagery for their political and economic reasons, and that such discourses are not an accurate or even truthful reflection on urban living.

While *Anuvahood* seeks to reveal the fabrication that epitomises the discourse of the Hoodie through parody, Brewis of *Attack the Block* is a more intricate and nuanced characterisation of identities known colloquially as, wanksta, wigger and wannabe. Wanksta is a wannabe gangsta (gangster); wigger is a white person strongly identifying with black culture, and wannabe is someone performing another identity as a means to disidentify with their own culture (Kitwana, 2005: 113). Kitwana's argument is in identifying with hip-hop culture, white people are identifying with a sub-cultural and political resistance against oppression (Kitwana, 2005: 111-33). Brewis's character is the cinematic acknowledgement of the cultural shift of the 1990s, where hip-hop culture, historically the domain of urban black communities in northeastern United States, transitioned into mainstream culture partly due to the commercialisation of rap music as a global product (xii). The film's

introduction to Brewis is a comedic scene that amplifies through parody the appropriation of hip-hop culture by white middle-class adolescents. Parody is constructed through the music, editing and framing, all of which converge to mock such white appropriation, but also suggests how contemporary identities such as the Hoodie are not formed through violence, but are rather more complex constructions of identification through music. As Moses and the gang carry the alien they've killed to Hi-Hatz's flat, the film introduces Brewis by fetishizing him visually against a soundscape of 'Sound of da Police' by KRS One. Listening to the track on his headphones, Brewis moves as if he is rapping. When his phone rings, his middle-class accent and his promise to his father to return the car Brewis has borrowed from him, mocks his 'wannabe' identification by opening a gap between surface and reality. This is further parodied when the gang surrounds him as they wait for the lift and Brewis announces in urban speak the lift has 'been enough time'. While the narrative is forgiving of Brewis' pretensions, when his intellect and education (a masculine identity more readily associated with middle-class men (McDowell, 2003: 15)) helps Moses overcome the aliens, this initial comparison between him and the gang emphasises not just a white but, more critically, a classed inauthenticity of the appropriation of hip-hop culture. While the overriding discourse of the Hoodie constructs an identity founded in acts of violence and criminality, Brewis highlights, as with Jay from *Anuvahood*, identity is a more nuanced composition and is associated with broader cultural artefacts such as music and fashion. What Brewis demonstrates is the hoodie is more than a signifier of discourse. Brewis may well be a wigga, but his character's function is to remind the audience the hoodie has a more nuanced connotation and can be read as a

fashion and cultural statement of symbolic resistance beyond that of an essentialist discourse of criminality.

2.4.6: The underclass as intergenerational condition

As mentioned elsewhere, Tyler argues an element of the process of social abjection of the underclass is imagining the community as a race, rather than a class. This allows conditions that are posited as 'characteristics' (an issue in its own right) of the underclass to be perceived as a condition, hereditary and even a disease (Tyler, 2013: 188). The discursive strategy animates states such as worklessness, impoverishment and dysfunctionality not only as intergenerational conditions, but as inherited states. Whilst such racializing of class is most explicit in Arbor's condition of ADHD, films in the cycle animate these conditions of the underclass – violent, impoverished, dysfunctional – as problems 'transmitted down through generations' (Phillips, 2011) as well as intergenerational issues. Such discourses normalise 'conditions' of the underclass and, when dramatized, decouple political accountability from social and class conflict (Tyler, 2013, 147). In the Hoodie Horror, these discourses mesh with the social realist form's thematic obsession with damaging parenting. The cycle's claim on realism, fusing social issues with style, further authenticate the underclass as an intergenerational condition.

The initial relationship between Trife and his uncle, as explored above, utilises the discursive construction of the underclass male as a violent criminal, and positions it within a familial relationship of paternal instruction and allegiance. In *Attack the Block*, Moses is characterised by 'yardstick[s] of dominant masculinity' (Kirkham & Thumim, 1993: 18), strength and assertiveness. In the final third of the film, the

audience and Sam are privileged with a brief glimpse of the interior of the flat he calls home. The contradictory images of a cartoon designed duvet set and empty take-away containers assimilate social concerns into a comedy-horror, illuminating Moses as not only less than an adult in terms of age, but also as an adolescent within the domestic home, the latter of which emblematises the fractured familial structure of absentee parenting. In *The Selfish Giant*, Swifty's father, 'Price Drop' Swifty, is coded as the source of the family's impoverished state, not the contextual waning of industry, which is relegated to a backdrop presence. Price drop is a gambler and a drunk, frittering the family's money on his social habits. When the family need money, Price Drop will sell furniture from their own home. Price Drop's financial dealings are notorious around the local estate. When Swifty and Arbor begin scrapping, and push an empty old pram around, a local lad scoffs at Swifty by saying, 'Where's the baby? Or did you dad sell it?!'

Masculine identity as an effect of damaging parenting is overtly realised in */// Manors*, while sub-plots of earlier family lives, illuminated through a stylised framing, editing and shifting the film's ontology, elucidate present day abject existences. There is a fleeting shot in */// Manors* of Jake's home. As Jake rides off in the car with Chris, unaware that Chris is intending to execute him, there is a transitory shot of one of Jake's parents asleep in a chair, through a gap made by the half-drawn curtains. The momentary focus granted to the home here is representative of the marginalisation of the home and domestic sphere in the cycle, (with the exception of the haunted housing estate narratives for obvious reasons), but also of how the domestic is a site of loss, conflict and neglect (themes explored

more fully in 'Manors'). One of the subtexts of *Ill Manors* is how the fractured relationships between parents and their children negatively impact the future lives – what is yet to be – of the offspring; an archetypal motif of the British realist text. The opening image of this section 'Men' is of Chris as he shoots Jake. The morphing of the older Chris with his young self is the film's visual stylisation of this subtext, a visual petition for empathy and compassion and to look beyond the discourse of demonised youth to understand the youth 'problem' not as a cause, but as an effect. Chris, as Plan B sings in the soundtrack's 'Drug dealer', grew up in a single-parent household with his mother, a drug addict. When his mum died from an overdose, Chris spent his time with Kirby, the local drug dealer who peddled drugs to Chris' mum. The film seeks not to wholly excuse Chris's adult criminality, but rather requests the spectator to look beyond the headlines.

2.4.7: Pressurised homosocial bonds

As Kirkham and Thumim argue, a significant element in any analysis of masculinity onscreen is to consider the male's power within a wider context of status and hierarchy for 'patriarchal order continually attempts to define power and masculinity as practically synonymous' (Kirkham and Thumim, 1993: 18). As I outlined previously, the Hoodie Horror male is exploited by a symbolic oppressive underclass patriarchy that has reasserted itself within the margins of society that the wider underclass exists within. This resurgence of such an assertive underclass patriarchy onscreen is one that operates within a local black economy and resonates with Monk's assessment of the masculine dynamic in the gangster films of the 1960s and 1970s (Monk, 1999: 173) in that the cycle's hierarchy is inherently

homosocial, violent and demonstrates a disdain for women. The exploitation the cycle's male is exposed to, function as a double disempowerment, as he finds himself subjugated to a local patriarchal hierarchy that leads to imperilment and/or death.

Central to both *Kidulthood's* Trife and Jake from *Ill Manors* individual narratives is how both are manipulated for others' gain and maintenance of status. Jake is exploited by Marcel, enabling Marcel to seek revenge on local drug dealer, Kirby, in retaliation for Kirby's humiliation of Marcel. Jake, not knowing who Kirby is or how the wider local drug economy operates, undertakes the killing naïve to the wider implications, resulting in Jake's death. Curtis manipulates Trife's manual skills he has learnt at school and Trife's access to school facilities for gun modelling. Even Jamie in *Heartless*, within the mythical urban created from his own psychosis, is misused by Papa B – aka, the Devil – and the Weapons Man, to work on behalf of 'evil' and create chaos by killing. The price of Papa B transforming Jamie's physical appearance is for Jamie to kill and place a heart on the steps of a local church by midnight. Intricately woven within these exploitative tests of manhood are the consequences, other than individual jeopardy, in how the exploitative patriarchal power structures exert pressure on the homosocial bonds of the male protagonists. As with Renton's actions in the closing sequence of *Trainspotting*, where individual survival supersedes homosocial allegiance, so in the Hoodie Horror, individualism is pitted against male communal bonds and where survival is complicated by moral dilemmas.

An ongoing concern of the social realist text and of the underclass films of the 1990s, is how onscreen class identity is partly formulated in relation to what Hill describes as a 'sense of culture and community' (Hill, 2000a: 251). While the trajectory of the social realist text traces the decline of the working-class life in relation to identity and community, films of the 1990s such as *Brassed Off* and *The Full Monty* are noticeable for a nostalgic return to the 'powerful emotional bonds' of homosocial communities (Monk, 2000a: 280), whilst texts such as *Trainspotting* and *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*, reconfigured homosocial bonds to a pleasurable sub-cultural framework (Monk, 2000a: 278). British horror films in the new millennium are also concerned with masculinity identity, male emotions and homosocial bonds; *Dog Soldiers*, *Reign of Fire* and *Kill List* are some such examples. The Hoodie Horror cycle continues these concerns but repositions such male bonds to within ongoing school and gang relationships. The test to these homosocial relationships is one of allegiance, but also the wider context of a masculine morality. The wider context of the local underclass patriarchy is the bearing it imprints on the individual protagonists, where the external and internal frameworks as outlined by Kirkham and Thumim (1993) collide, creating a male anxiety. Masculinity in Hoodie Horror is one associated with trauma and effect. While its physical manifestation in performance, as explored previously, is one marked by absence, masculinity representation is one that suffers loss and absence. Two archetypal examples that I will focus on initially are Arbor and Shifty in *The Selfish Giant*, and Aaron and Ed in *Ill Manors*, and how both films' form aid in constructing masculine allegiance in the cycle.

Aaron and Ed's relationship is constructed as bond formed on the shared childhood experience on growing up in a care home. The film visually narrates the backstory to their friendship through stylised cine-film footage of both as young boys in care. As with the employment of the mobile camera-work in the film, the cine-footage here disrupts the ontology of the fictional construct of *Ill Manors*, to enhance the 'authenticity' and 'realism' of the film, by presenting Aaron and Ed's friendship through the form of intimate home footage. Now working together as local drug dealers, the narrative seeks to test their friendship through a moral dilemma. Throughout the film, Aaron is presented as an individual experiencing an existential predicament. The film opens with Aaron watching interviewed reactions to the 2011 London riots, with one woman blaming irresponsible parenting. Continued close framing of Aaron in head shots constructs this existential dilemma by visualising Aaron in moments of contemplation. As narrative unfolds, the film explains Aaron's dilemma is partly due to his mother wishing to initiate contact with him, a storyline which feeds into the wider concern of the relationship between childhood experiences and adulthood choices. A tension builds in Aaron and Ed's relationship as Aaron becomes more uncomfortable with Ed's misogyny and exploitative actions, events which are explored in more depth in the chapter, 'monstrous geographies'. It is clear Ed's male identity is more suited to this brutal patriarchal existence. But it is Aaron's actions over Katya's baby that provide not only the closing narrative arc, but also deliver redemptive possibilities for both as their friendship experiences a moral questioning. On finding Katya's baby on the train, Aaron wishes to reunite child with mother, unaware of the circumstances of the abandonment. Ed convinces Aaron the unfeasibility of this idea and instead

sells the baby to the local pub landlord as his wife is unable to conceive. Aaron initially accepts this decision, but on meeting Katya and intermingled with thoughts of his own reunion with his mother, assents to the immorality of Ed's child trafficking, and seeks to reverse the situation. In an extraordinary plot development, the pub where Katya's child is catches fire with the baby endangered in an upstairs bedroom. Ed, in an eleventh hour moral epiphany, saves Katya's baby only to lose his own life falling from the pub roof.

The fundamental organising logic of the film, which constructs the monstrous realism within a threatening and misogynist homosocial culture, consistently exerts pressure on the male bonds that compose this patriarchal structure. The film continues what this thesis considers to be the narrative trajectory of the social realist text that the more abject the representation, the more punishing the narrative. Ed and Aaron's storyline position the cycle's masculinity and male identity, or in Kirkham and Thumim's analysis, 'the absorbing question of male anxiety' (Kirkham and Thumim, 1993: 22), dependent upon taking a moral stand, 'doing the right thing', or in terms of neoliberal citizenship, 'making the right decisions'. Whilst the local underclass patriarchal hierarchy is constructed and maintained through violence, exploitation and illegal money-making, the homosocial bonds that support it are precarious, fluid, and subject to an individualism. The logic of the film suggests survival within an existence on society's margins, rather than constructing community, induces a 'dog-eat-dog' ideology that privileges the individual over the communal. While an underclass male identity is

constructed through a capacity for violence and misogyny, durable homosocial bonds cannot withstand what the underclass patriarchy demands.

Swiftly's electrocution while stealing high-voltage wiring in *The Selfish Giant* is a direct result not only of his friendship with Arbor, but Arbor's naivety and Kitten's abuse of Arbor, making both Arbor and Kitten complicit. The narrative context to Swiftly's death encompasses Arbor's desire to financially support his mother, to fulfil the very traditional male role of being the breadwinner, and the local black economy that Kitten profits from. Kitten's physical intimidation of Arbor for stealing from him, forces Arbor into the fatal act of theft. The apportion of blame in the film is not straightforward, and a factor in the film's problematic ideology which is discussed further in the chapter, 'monstrous geographies'. While Kitten is arrested, in a very brief conclusion to his accountability, the film chooses to focus on Arbor's reaction, a response that is presented through film shots that first fetishize and then animate a phenomenological experience of loss, and with a strategy of eliciting sympathy. The film, as with the cycle as a whole, centralises male adolescent trauma, normalising it as a rite of passage of the urban underclass adolescent male. The filmic strategies of *The Selfish Giant* initially spectacularises Arbor's grief and pain by predominately framing him in long-shots. Arbor demonstrates his remorse by sitting outside of Swiftly's home through the rain and through the night (as will be analysed in detail later). He periodically knocks on the front door to speak to Swiftly's mum but is continually turned away and on one occasion Arbor is slapped across the face by Swiftly's father. Once Arbor returns home to work-through his grief, the fetishizing constructed through the framing

strategy subsides, to be replaced by intimate camera work that captures Arbor's phenomenological experience, a physical engagement with grief and loss that he enacts as he hides under his bed. While the location provides a safe space for Arbor to release his unfettered rage, it also psychologises the space to serve as a symbolic confinement and curtailment to Arbor's, and thus representationally the underclass male's, bid for agency. The scene suggests Arbor is enacting a complex series of emotions from grief, loss and guilt. But it is the absence left by Swifty that comes to dominate the closing scenes of the film.

The narrative punishment inflicted in the films of the cycle either results in the death of male protagonists, or compels them to an ordeal, leaving them with a legacy of trauma to take with them into adulthood. In *Adulthood*, Trife is murdered by Sam. In *Heartless*, Jamie, unwilling to continue living in a world he cannot understand, baits the Hoodies to kill him, which they do with Molotov cocktails. The films' abject narratives present the Hoodie Horror male as victim and, those who survive, live with the ghosts, the remnants and with an absence effected by these ordeals. In the closing scene of *The Selfish Giant*, Arbor, in a restorative action, is stroking a horse, an animal so loved by Swifty. It is the experience of residing with loss, with an absence that becomes the normative state not just for Arbor, but for the underclass male across the cycle. The narrative of *Adulthood* is of Sam, now out of prison, confronted with the damaging, and still present, effects of killing Trife. The central narrative arc of the film is revenge against Sam for Trife's murder. This plot is instigated by Jay – now a drug dealer himself and a school friend of Trife – who instructs a local drug supplier Andreas and his minions, Dabs and Omen, to kill

Sam. The closing denouement is the violent confrontation between Sam and Jay, outside Sam's manor. In a highly stylised sequence of man-man combat involving guns and baseball bats, both Sam and Jay arrive at emotionally honest epiphanies as both admit the suffering as a direct result of Trife's murder that both still carry. Sam pulls the gun to his head, but there are no bullets. Jay breaks down accusing Sam with the words, 'I'm here because of you. I'm going to take your life, like you're trash. Like you took mine'. The very underclass masculine activity of fighting becomes a conduit, and the sole mechanism, in the denouement for both to process and express their emotional anxiety over events that have dominated and dictated their transition to manhood as well their status as citizen.

The tension these films create in the psycho-social experiences of the Hoodie Horror male craft the impossible narratives the protagonists navigate. The discursive constructions of male and class identity denote the symbolic borders of citizenship in neoliberal Britain of the new millennium. Whilst the crisis in identity of the protagonists invite empathy, the narratives of abjection further the discursive strategies of the Hoodie and the underclass in general to cinematically animate in a neoliberal perceptual framework, what Tony Blair perceived as, 'an underclass of people cut off from society's mainstream' (Blair, 1997). The blurring of mimesis, authenticity and realism in the films, substantiate the discourse of the underclass as 'other'.

Interwoven with notions of citizenship, the violent rituals of manhood for the Hoodie Horror male produce a psychologised temporality of absence that speaks to the wider concerns of this thesis and secures the male within an unenvisioned

future. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the physical presence of the Hoodie Horror male is a performance of symbolic absence in that cinematic representations of the underclass convey the futures, promised by the filmic texts of the 1960s, as lost and unfulfilled. The Hoodie Horror male is a pale shadow, the spectral citizen in the urban landscape of inequality, a recurring reminder of what is now a heritage of working-class masculinity. Applying Fisher's reading of Derrida's perceptions of hauntology, the underclass onscreen are the spectres of the working-class, a performance of those left behind, of futures *not yet* realised, by the economic and social shifts that have ensued since the 1960s. In the Hoodie Horror, the underclass is not only performed as spectral, but are also characterised by being haunted by past traumas related to the formation of masculine identity. Here, spectres are haunted by ghosts. In *Piggy*, Joe's voiceover states how he was 'tethered' to his brother, John's, murder. The succeeding narrative follows Joe and his mental projection, Piggy, as they enact revenge by murdering John's attackers. Matthew in *The Disappeared*, despite solving his brother Tom's disappearance, will continue to reconcile his refusal of sibling responsibility with Tom's disappearance. The closing of the film is not one of complete resolution. Tom and his father are reunited, but it is only a shared experience of grief and events in the past that salvages their very fractured relationship. The mental illness, a result of Tom's disappearance, remains present as Matthew is unable to comprehend whether his friend Amy was a ghost (newspaper reports show she committed suicide while Matthew was receiving treatment) or a figment of Matthew's fractured psyche. The film closes with Matthew, alone in the graveyard unable to reconcile, or verify, a 'truth' in his recent experiences.

In *Summer Scars*, the narrative of drifter Peter's sadomasochistic abuse of the adolescent gang, functions as a violent marginalised patriarchy in microcosm, a filmic construction that amplifies the violence, fear and humiliation perpetrated on the young in the film and highlights the symbolic damage that is wrought by a hierarchal misogynist patriarchy across the wider cycle. The woodland setting provides an eerily intimate and claustrophobic tone for the violent military-style manoeuvres Peter bullies the feral youths to enact, training the boys for 'action', or as Kirkham and Thumim would elucidate, 'the process of forming a body which will function effectively' (Kirkham and Thumim, 1993: 13). Bingo's murder of Peter, although an action that induces a fraternal allegiance in the gang that makes the film conspicuous in the cycle, still unites the gang in an adolescent traumatic experience. The downbeat ending juxtaposes the cultural identity of children as innocent through the visuals of the group dispersing across the estate's playground, against the auralcape that signifies a disorderly estate – the sound of police sirens. It is a closing scene which articulates underclass adolescence as traumatic ritual, with the police siren warning of a past that will be ever-present in the lives of the gang beyond the closing of the film.

To return to Skeggs, Nayak and Kehily, discursive strategies of a lower-class masculinity secure him as undisciplined, insubordinate and lumpen; an immobile identity that finds resonance with Tyler's national abject, in that both stand in contrary to the flexible identities and mobility of neoliberal citizens. The temporal fastening of the Hoodie Horror male to traumatic events aid in shaping their identities and provides a further stasis to their position. While the discursive

constructions of gender and class disempowers the underclass male, by disenfranchising him from his own identity formation in the public arena, the temporal stasis enacted in the films disempowers him further by defining him within his past. The symbolic violence performed on the Hoodie Horror male in the form of inscribing the male identity with trauma, temporally fastens him to past events; a symbolic disavowal of a hopeful psychologised future.

2.4.8: The fractured psyche of the neoliberal other

Beyond the imperilment of entry into the wider social strata, the Hoodie Horror male is also coded as an insufficient and unstable masculinity due to mental health issues. Matthew in *The Disappeared*, Joe in *Piggy*, Tommy from *Citadel* and Jamie from *Heartless* all suffer from mental illness. Joe suffers from depression, causing him to withdraw from socialising even at work. His condition worsens after his brother, John, is murdered, but it is not until the end of the film that the extent of his mental disorder is revealed. Piggy, who had arrived to avenge John's death, is revealed to be a mental projection of Joe's, meaning Joe is the violent perpetrator and not the passive observer, in a plot line reminiscent of *Fight Club* (David Fincher, 1999). Matthew too suffers from depression as a result of his brother, Tom disappearing, an event Matthew feels responsible for as Tom was in his care on the night he disappeared. The depth of depression is conceptualised in the opening sequence with Matthew being discharged from the local hospital back into the care of his father. Tommy suffers from agoraphobia, the consequence of witnessing the fatal attack on his wife, events which open the film. Jamie, as with Matthew and Joe, suffers from depression. The film suggests this is a combination of a facial

disfigurement due to a port-wine stain and his dad dying when Jamie was at a crucial stage in his development. Whilst not suffering from a mental condition, I place Arbor from *The Selfish Giant* in this categorisation but with a critical variance of significance which I will come to later. Arbor is diagnosed with the behavioural condition, ADHD, which not only impacts his learning, utilised as a narrative development when he is excluded from school, but also influences his ability to sustain relationships. The trials these characters vary from those of Jake, Trife and Sam, but rely more on an explicit judgement of their masculinity as deficient. While the abject state of Arbor, Sam, Matthew, Tommy and Jamie rely upon the discourse of the underclass and council estates, the cinematic animation of the abject extend to their gendered construction. Their mental illness signifies a lack, a deficiency, an absence, that negatively impacts their familial and social ties. These protagonists are animated as sites inscribed with the cultural and social concern for young males. As Beynon has asserted, from the 1990s onwards masculinity has been a significant cultural and social concern (Beynon, 2002: 74), noting a rise in the suicide rate of males, specifically in the 25-35 age group which had reached epidemic levels; the fracturing of families resulting in the displacement of men as more live a solitary life, and a rise of boys underachieving at school (74-75). With regards to gender construction, Connell emphasises the necessity for a relational approach to recognising multiple masculinities, that to perceive what is marginalised, a hegemonic masculinity must be established (Connell, 2005: 76-81). Whilst Connell notes that a hegemonic masculinity is always in flux (76), a marginalised masculinity is 'always relative to the *authorization* [original emphasis] of the hegemonic masculinity of the dominant group' (80-81). Whilst the films do

not explicitly outline what the male ideal is, they do invite the question of what type of man are Tommy, Jamie, Arbor, Matthew and Joe. The pressure the narratives assert on the characters suggest a type of masculinity, as a concept, the characters are challenged to live up to. Can Matthew realise his brotherly responsibilities and solve Tom's disappearance? Can Tommy be the father Elsa deserves and rescue her from the local sub-human Hoodies? Can Jamie fulfil his late father's wishes and be 'man enough' to forget his disfigurement? Their mental health disempowers the characters, but the narrative trajectory challenges the protagonists to overcome their deficient state to be 'the man' they need to be. The test for these protagonists is not one of physical endurance and strength, nor one that challenges their fighting ability and taste for violence. Rather, Tommy, Joe, Matthew, Arbor and Jamie are required to establish their social and familial position by a lone and silent battle with their psyche. Unable to confirm their good health by outward displays of physical wellbeing, these men seek to assure by other means: by their actions. Tommy has to overcome his fear of violent encounters and leaving his home by rescuing Elsa from the tower block lair. Matthew decides to resolve Tom's disappearance, at great peril to himself. Arbor undertakes cash in hand work, a very manual and classed labour of grafting, to establish himself as the breadwinner in his home. Jamie's quest is complicated by his inability to overcome his mental health issues. Rather, he withdraws into a fantasy world of inverted fairy tales. As the local shop keeper warns Jamie, 'it's hell out there'.

The narratives of hauntings of *The Disappeared*, *Heartless* and *Citadel* may initially excuse the mental health of its male protagonists and position it as a narrative

necessity for a haunted housing estate film. If we perceive Matthew, Jamie and Tommy as the male mirror of the female gothic, then issues with mental health can be argued are a requirement. However, the mental health issues of the male protagonists are established prior to the beginnings of the hauntings, they are not 'sent mad' because of the phantoms. In the wider context of the abject state, the rendering of mental health issues here pathologize the identity of the underclass as abject. As highlighted earlier, Tyler asserts how when the underclass is imagined as a race and not a class, disadvantage and impoverishment are pathologized and reconfigured as a hereditary and intergenerational condition, rather than as a political or economic issue (Tyler, 2013: 188). The mental health issues as posited as deficient in these films aid in furthering the discourse of the underclass male as dysfunctional, as inadequate, but also responsible for their own abject state.

This is exemplified most by Arbor's ADHD, a point I will return to later but will briefly highlight here. The condition itself contemporarises the boy's character and, whilst the exact causes of ADHD are still to be established, it is known that the condition can be hereditary. These factors, when meshed with the discursive constructions of class and masculinity, adds to the film's problematic ideology. A further ingredient in characterisation is Arbor's erratic attitude to taking his medication, which further excuses the responsibility the state should bear towards him as a citizen. Whilst I do not argue for an inherent passive reading of the film, I would posit the social realist form belies ideological constructions that perpetrate these abject discourses, constructions that challenge the social realist form's political filmmaking credentials.

2.4.9: Conclusion

In this chapter, I have elucidated the construction of the underclass masculinity across the cycle. As this chapter – and indeed the chapters in this section on Men as a whole – asserts, despite the differing forms of the film the representation of these young men, from characterisation to the life-events the narratives compels them to experience, corresponds across the scope of the cycle. As argued, the young men – the neoliberal other – enact narratives of abjection that construct the protagonists as failed citizens, the after-effect of the social, economic and cultural transformations that have shaken the fabric of the nation since the 1960s. Rather than uncritically positioning these male protagonists as a ‘masculinity in crisis’, this chapter scrutinises such an approach to situate the characters as subject to recognisable discursive strategies of the Hoodie, the underclass and a young urban masculinity. Thus, this chapter comprehends the characterisation of the young men as deficient masculinities, subjugated to established discourse, fabricating tender masculinities under extreme pressure: an abject figure residing in an abject urban experience. The narratives of abjection that construct the cinematic worlds are achieved through filmic strategies of performance, costume and narrative resulting in a performance of discourse and absence. Coupled with the films’ narrative strategy of constructing protagonists who undergo a male inscribed psycho-social experience of the discourse of abjection, the solicitation of empathy in the characters’ embodied crisis of identity furthers the ‘othering’ discourse as the Hoodie Horror male is objectified as a figure of sympathy. The mimesis enacted in the films draws upon a neoliberal ideology, adhering to conceptualising the

underclass as a 'problem' that requires solving. Employing Derrida's hauntology, and Fisher's interpretation of the term, permits comprehension of how the Hoodie Horror male as symbolic figure communicates, through onscreen physical presence and through the narrative events he is confronted with, social, economic and cultural shifts that have led to the ascension of the underclass in cultural forms. However, the depoliticising of class conflict in the dramatization of underclass 'lives' in the films reduces class struggles to 'the entitlement to [lower class] culture, feelings, affect and dispositions ... this is a very intimate form of exploitation' (Skeggs, 2005: 63).

2.5: Images for section two



Figure 6

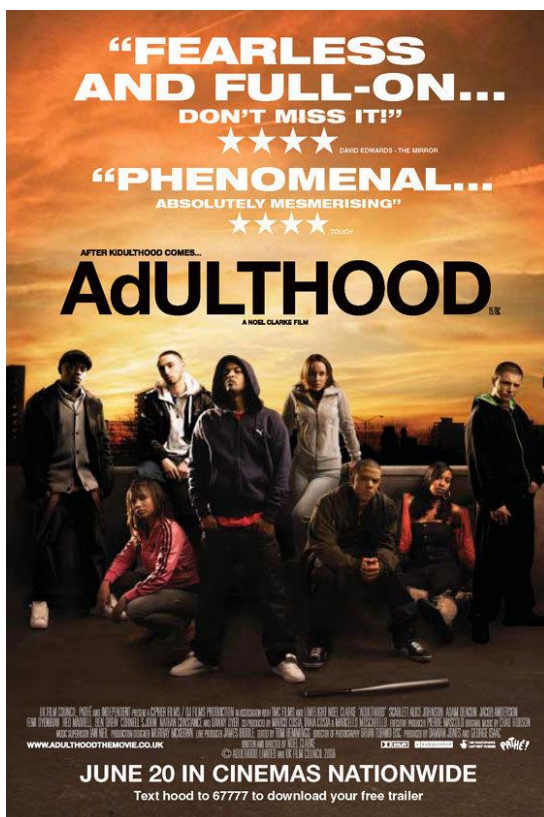


Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11



Figure 12



Figure 13



Figure 14



Figure 15: Jamie in *Heartless*



Figure 16: Matthew in *The Disappeared*

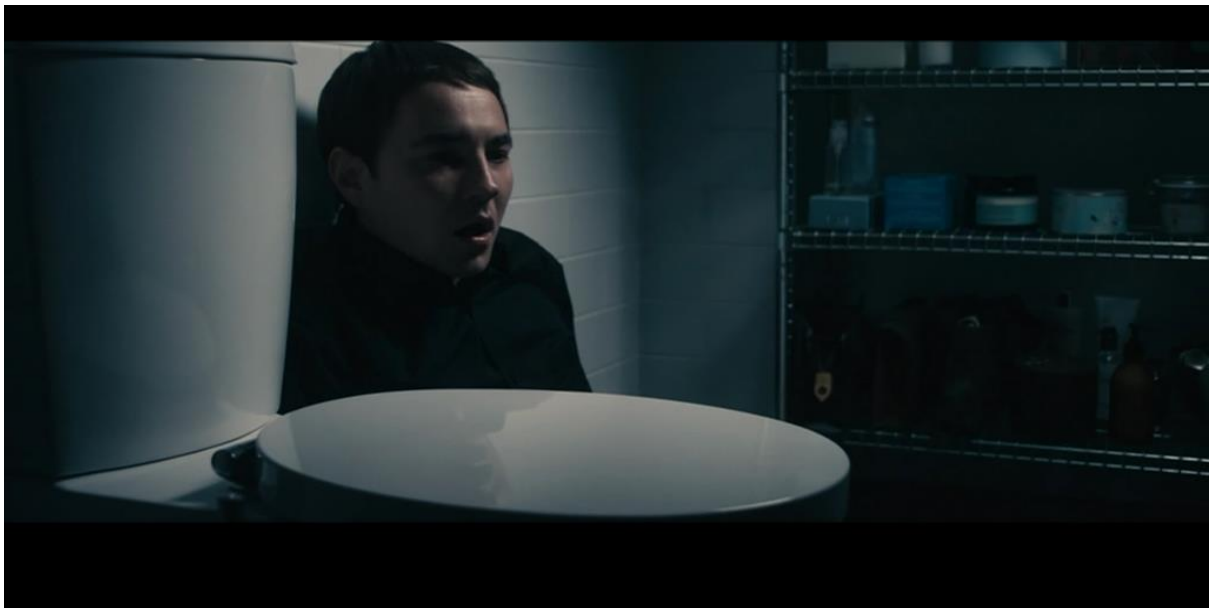


Figure 17: Joe in *Piggy*



Figure 18: Tommy in *Citadel*



Figure 19: Sam in *Kidulthood*



Figure 20: Sam in *Adulthood*



Figure 21: Trife in *Kidulthood*



Figure 22: Curtis persuading Trife to cut Andreas face

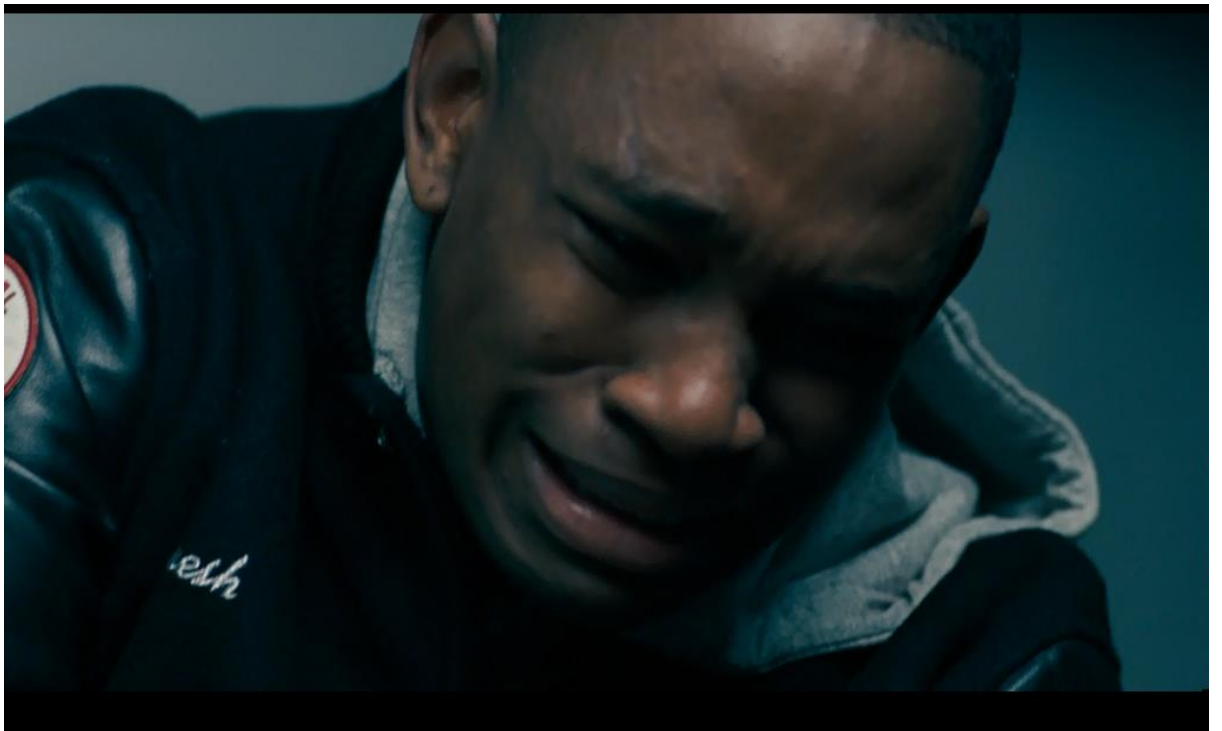


Figure 23: Trife cutting Andreas face

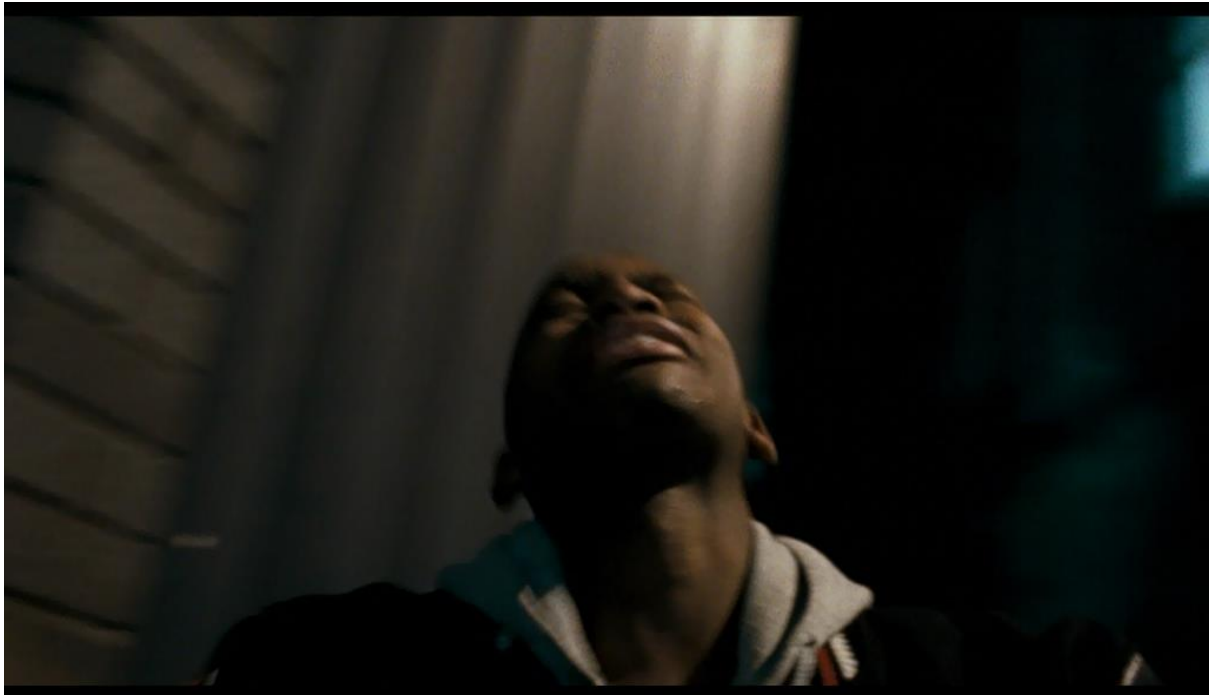


Figure 24: Jake agonising over his actions on Andreas



Figure 25: Trife agonising over his actions on Andreas



Figure 26: Jake in the process of murdering Kirby



Figure 27: Jake shooting Kirby

Section Three:

Manors



My manor manor's ill ya'll, ill ya'll

(‘I am the Narrator’, Plan B)

We're all drinkers, drug takers,
Every single one of us burns the herbs,
Keep on reading what you read in the papers,
Council estate kids, scum of the earth
Think you know how life on a council estate is,
Everything you've ever read about it or heard
Well it's all true, so stay where you're safest.
There's no need to step foot out the burbs

(‘Ill Manors’, Plan B)

3.1: Introduction – It used to be nice round here

The image of the tower block silhouetted against the sky has become part of the basic vocabulary of British cinema, most often invoked as a visual signifier for the marginalised and menacing.

(Burke, 2007: 177)

If Hogarth were here now, he would paint the capital's grimmest estates, not its sewagy, gin-soaked back streets.

(Hanley, 2007: 7)

The focus of this section of the thesis is the monstrous realism of the Hoodie Horror's landscape, and central to this monstrous realism of the cycle is the council estate. The term 'manors' is slang for a territory or home where authority is exercised, often with criminal intent. As the title 'Manors' implies, exploration of the landscape is broadened to the townscapes and landscapes that lie beyond the boundaries of the housing estate, in order to recognise how the films map these geographies as territories. By this I mean public and private spaces are disrupted as the streets, waste grounds, fields and woodlands are presented in 'othering' narratives that inscribe the geographies with class and gender values, and where ownership of space is contested by underclass masculinity, whilst also serving to provide opportunities for personal and material gain. Despite the expansion to wider territories, the council estate lies at the crux of these abject locales for it is here, as the following chapters will illustrate, that geographies are spawned, both figuratively in terms of discourse, but also in the lives of the characters of the films. Using Tyler's concept of territorial stigmatization as the foundation to my research,

I explore how the manors of the films are coded as abject in parallel with the contemporary cultural and social accounts discussed in the introductory chapters. With this as a springboard, the following chapters map the landscape of the Hoodie Horror not merely as homosocial, but as violent patriarchal and misogynist sites, since the landscape violently negates autonomous female agency. In accordance with the overall concern of this thesis, by drawing upon established scholarship concerned with social realism and horror cinema, I also consider the differing filmic strategies that are employed in animating the Hoodie Horror filmscapes and explore how these extend the abject form of council estate and the underclass in popular culture.

My interjection here is threefold. Firstly, in mapping the council estate and further vistas as territories, I establish how the Hoodie Horror advances what both Hill and Andrew Higson describe as 'the narrowing down of social space' (Hill, 2000a: 251; Higson, 1986: 83), and thus inserts the cycle into the social realist tradition. Here I explore how the films' form restricts the visibility of the home, in favour of a territorial landscape that provides a narrative space for what Blair described as the 'black economy' (Blair, 1997). Secondly, I consider the aesthetization of the council estate as an ideological infused structure to determine how these stylised cinematic representations are utilised as filmic strategies in authenticating social housing as abject state. Lastly, this section will demonstrate how the space and place of the council estate furthers the ascendancy of the underclass in popular culture, while social housing itself wanes and passes under a burgeoning neoliberal process of gentrification. The animation of the council estate and its associative territories are

subjected to multi layers of realism, taking on the legacy of social realist tradition, the posited 'realism' of the cultural and political rhetoric of estates as dystopian spaces, and the form of the films. Underpinning these layers of realism is recognising the council estate as what Tim Edensar considers to be 'a normative spacial context' (Edensar, 2015: 62). Our understanding of council estates, according to Edensar, is born out of repeated constructions of such housing across popular cultural media that play out stories of the mundane, the everyday, the 'real'. Repeated engagements normalise the space with the drama, positioning both as an actuality.

As stated, critical to the spaces of the Hoodie Horror is the council estate. As a setting, its persistent use in television and on film has established it as a stable ingredient of realist texts, with *The Bill* (1984 – 2010), *Nil By Mouth*, *My Brother*, *The Devil* (Sally El Hosaini, 2012) and *Top Boy* as contemporary illustrations. This alliance of setting and form has imbued the council estate onscreen with an authenticity that legitimizes the dramas played out there with a truthfulness. Such associative realism has extended to the more recent fantastical animations of council estates in *Trainspotting*, which Murray Smith has nominated as 'black-magic realism' (Smith, 2002: 75) and which can also be found in the E4 series, *Misfits* (2009-2013). However, despite the potency of council estates in British television and cinema, little scholarship has been dedicated to this geography. Smith (2002), Faye Woods (2015) and Andrew Burke (2007) have all bucked this trend by addressing the animation of council estates in terms of the relationship between setting and form, and the locale's status as a modernist project for material

betterment for the poor. This is what is most pertinent about Burke's analysis of council estates in British cinema: the dual function this terrain balances. While the geography provides more formal film qualities, constituting the setting through which working-class narratives are explored and exposed, its structures are ideologically infused and have, for Burke, become representative of the disappointment and failure of state-led projects and politics in modernising the nation on mass (Burke, 2007). Council Estates then have come to represent both the personal and the national. As a setting to many social realist ventures, estates essentially provide the backdrop to what Julia Hallam and Margaret Marshment define to be the social realism tradition: 'the effects of environment factors on the development of character through depictions that emphasise the relationship between location and identity' (Hallam and Marshment, 2000: 2). In essence, characterisation and narrative trajectory in this British canon has been critically dependent upon the synergy between the broader concepts of space, place and identity, but with more concentration on the latter element, a focus that has been transferred into scholarship.

Despite Burke's claim that much of contemporary British social realism confronts the impact of social housing projects in modern Britain (Burke, 2007: 177), traditionally, identity, specifically male identity, has received more scholarly exploration in terms of considering the British working-class, an approach this thesis does not seek to argue against. Recent work by Monk (2000a, 2000b), Sarah Godfrey (2013), Fuller (2007) and Nicola Rehling (2011) extends this legacy by assessing the British working-class and/or underclass masculine identity in British

films of the 1990s and 2000s. Academic pursuit of space and place in British social realist films sits under the long shadow of Higson's influential exploration of 'That Long Shot of Our Town from That Hill' (Higson, 1996). Higson's scrutiny of the problematic rendering of surface and moral realism with narrative in the filmic strategies of the kitchen sink films retains its critical relevance today, especially in approaching films such as Clio Barnard's *The Selfish Giant* in terms of the spectacular framing of poverty employed by the director. Indeed, the concept of moral realism is something I will return to at certain areas in *Monstrous Geographies* and indeed is of importance to the overall arc of this thesis. However, in both these discourses, the presence of council estates onscreen, both edifices and ideology, has been somewhat neglected and marginalised.

Although Burke's exploration is rare in centralising the project of social housing in analysis of early millennial British social realism, he is not alone in concentrating on architecture. Despite the predisposition of academic work on this British canon to veer towards the well-trod ground of identity and representation, there are discourses in their infancy that form the beginnings of scholarly interest that redress the situation. These can be contextualised into two entwined trajectories of investigation.

Firstly, there are investigations of the historical development of social realism in both cinematic and televisual media that conceptualise the tradition moving from an observational style of filming to a more stylised and mediated visualisation of social concerns. Smith's understanding of *Trainspotting* as 'black magic realism' is a prime example that asserts how the aestheticization of poverty in the film fuses a

certain surrealism with the social realist tradition in order to create the subjective experience of heroin addiction suffered by Renton *et al.* The stylisation of realism here does not detract from the film's concern with poverty, unemployment, or the impact of addiction on this impoverished Edinburgh community. Rather, for Smith, this mediated realism animates this community far more appropriately than a straightforward social realist film could (Smith, 2002). Woods's work, 'Telefantasy Tower Blocks' on E4's *Misfits*, finds a symmetry with Smith and other academic work that highlights the fusion of British social realism with other cinematic traditions (Forrest, 2013; Hill, 1999; Walker, 2016) in that the televisual animation of estates in the youth programme draws upon expectations formed by social realism (associated iconography, authenticity, social concerns) but is animated in a surrealist and fantastical style, creating uncanny and fantastical urban geographies. What is important here is Woods' gravitation, like Smith's, towards the aesthetical animation of this urban geography, a stylisation over observational camera work, in skewing the familiar of social realism away from 'ordinary' (documentary look) towards an 'other worldly' (hypermediated perspective) landscape (Woods, 2015: 242).

The second strand of investigation is the critical function of housing estates in onscreen narratives as representative of political ideology and symbols of cultural attitudes towards the lower classes. Burke's piece on *Last Resort* (Pawel Pawlikowski, 2000) and *Red Road* (Andrea Arnold, 2006) melds together the architecture, history and political project of council estates with narrative and identity, to argue that in both films social housing, as symbolised by the structure of

the tower block, is not only a decaying ideological utopia, but decomposing buildings and geographies *now* house decomposing communities, made up of the disempowered and disenfranchised. Indeed, the council estate is haunted by the lost futures modernity and social ventures promised. Lorrie Palmer's analysis of *Attack the Block* furthers the centralisation of estate concrete structures by arguing the film subverts contemporary stigmatizing discourses of social housing by constructing the estate and its inhabitants as a community. As the local adolescent gang utilise the corridors, stairwells and lifts to their advantage, they fend off an alien invasion by skilfully navigating their manor. For Palmer, then, the film's aesthetic treatment of the tower block, colouring it as a sci-fi location and constructing a synergy between the adolescent gang and the tower block's structure in a more positive representation, transforms the council estate from abject geography to pleasurable, and to an extent, progressive, spectacle (Palmer, 2015). It is within these fledging discourses of council housing, style and ideology, that this section, 'Manors', situates and explores the Hoodie Horror.

3.1.1: Council Housing – a dream soured? Or, the poor will always be with us?

Play word association with the term 'council estate'. Estates mean alcoholism, drug addiction, relentless petty stupidity, a kind of stir-craziness induced by chronic poverty and the human caged by the rigid bars of class and learned incuriosity.

(Hanley, 2007: 7)

It is startling to be reminded that in 1980, the year that the Right to Buy scheme was introduced, 42% of the British population lived in council housing

(Dispossession: The Great Social Housing Swindle, Paul Sng, 2017). What are now considered to be abject border zones of the nation, 'holding cages for the feral and the lazy' (Hanley, 2007: 146), and a breeding ground for a scrounging feral underclass, had once been a beacon for modern Britain that offered the working-class a stake in society. As a social project, council housing was intended to introduce equality and opportunity, but resulted in stigmatizing its inhabitants. How have we forgotten, or disregarded, that social housing proposed a domestic and cultural revolution in providing adequate sanitation and accommodation betterment, in part to reform society (Ravetz, 2001)? The answer lies with cultural rhetoric. The power of the neoliberal discourse of successive governments and cultural output has decoupled the failure of social housing from state responsibility, and reconfigured the blame for the decline of the council estate on intergenerational cultures of a menacing and dysfunctional underclass (Jones, 2012; Tyler, 2013). To contextualise the representation of social housing in the Hoodie Horror within its ideological framework, it is constructive at this point to remind ourselves of the history of the council estate.

In its inception, social housing began as a Victorian crusade to eradicate slum dwellings and, in its place, provide clean and comfortable accommodation for the poorest in society. Since these rudimentary beginnings, council housing has evolved through various guises of the Garden City idyll, the Aneurin Bevan championed post-war housing, and the 1960s Brutalist tower blocks. Alison Ravetz theorises the evolution of council housing as a failed project, a utopian vision that sought to establish communities and transform the cultural and material lives of its residents

(Ravetz, 2001). The Garden City idyll, originating from the Arts & Crafts movement, was shaped in a very British tradition that sought to promote active lives for its working-class residents 'harking back to mythic rural and communitarian visions' (Fishman, 1982: 205). The Corbusian 'vertical cities' of high-rise flats for mass society, the 'ultimate episode of utopianism in British council housing' (Ravetz, 2001: 104), initially seduced, as they provided an attractive financial solution for local government bodies and construction companies (107). Ravetz argues both ideals sought to install an active community and cultural life for residents with community centres and shops at the heart of estate life (138). Lynsey Hanley observes the move to the modernist vision transformed a utopian campaign to an industry, administered by construction corporations that corrupted the architectural vision for economic and political gain (Hanley, 2007: 50). Ravetz notes, though, that when architectural interests were favoured over practical living conditions of residents, problems arose that impacted the very vision of community living (Ravetz, 2001). Navigating lifts programmed to stop continually at every floor frustrated residents, irritations that were compounded by the lifts' perpetual failures (109). Deck-access estates promoted functionality, but in reality encouraged invisibility of neighbours and created spaces and areas at risk from anti-social behaviour (183-90). The abstract architectural vision was compounded by a societal control that strove to create a working-class culture that was acceptable to the middle-class visionaries, with no provision for culture or community to evolve organically. As Ravetz observes, the 'dominance of frivolous social and recreational events [especially bingo]' was deplored (146). The utopia then was to create a community, where space and place influenced human

relations, shaping citizenship for the betterment of national interests. Ravetz concludes the failure of social housing is more complex than the discourse of underclass behaviour provides. Unsound architectural vision, the withdrawal of funding, the failure to replenish stock once the Right-To-Buy scheme had commenced, and the absence of organisational structures, were some of the issues Ravetz argues contributed to the failure. The monstrous realism as explored here in 'Manors' must be conceptualised within the waning utopian and communitarian ideology of social housing in its inception, as well as the now dominant abject vision that has come to inscribe estate geographies and their residents in contemporary Britain.

'Manors' is organised into four chapters that address specific thematics, iconography and motifs of the Hoodie Horror relating to landscapes. Chapter 3.2 'monstrous geographies', explores the territories of the Hoodie Horror, with a focus on how style illuminates a hierarchal patriarchal vista that serves to destabilise a sense of community and endangers young masculinities. Chapter 3.3 'The haunted housing estate', discusses the fusion of social realism and the haunted house narrative, in how the associative filmic strategies animate the council estate as spectral and 'out-of-time', illuminating both space and class identity as subject to a temporal paradox. Chapter 3.4 '*Harry Brown* – the battleground for neoliberal citizenship', explores the relationship between the film's ontology and the council estate, with a specific focus on the function of both the underpass and Michael Caine's star persona. The final chapter of 'Manors' looks in detail at *Eden Lake*. The chapter conceives the film as a rotten rural, in that the very urban discourse of the

Hoodie and council estate has been traced into a rural setting, disrupting the concept of what a rural horror film is.

3.2: Monstrous geographies

She's still in there getting jizz on her tits.

When it comes to shutting, I'm top of the class.

She's only top of the class by getting fucked in the arse.

How she's bleeding out her bum.

I'll beat the shit out of her, she best run, run, run.

(Ed, *Ill Manors*)

The above citation is taken from a scene in *Ill Manors* where Ed and a reluctant Aaron pimp a local drug-addict, Michelle, to the men of fast-food vendors along a busy London street at night-time. Michelle is believed to have stolen Ed's phone and Ed decides to sell Michelle for sex until she has earned back the equivalent monetary value. The sequence is a fusion of both realist and video forms, as a series of shots are constructed capturing Ed selling Michelle in shop after shop as Michelle performs various sex acts in a succession of dingy store rooms. The visuals are accompanied to Plan B's song, *Deepest Shame*, that provides an aural commentary of absolution of what led to Michelle to this low-point. At the last stop, the food vendor only has ten pounds, so Ed agrees to a payment of ten pounds and a kebab for Aaron (Figs 28-30). This sequence is symptomatic of the film *Ill Manors* in its determination to elicit both repulsion and sympathy from the spectator. The last transaction legitimises the film's judgement of Ed by positioning him as an object of disgust which the spectator must repel. Simultaneously, the overlaid song provides Michelle's backstory; as a victim of child abuse she is a figure of sympathy. This

sequence of human degradation typifies the monstrous realism of the Hoodie Horror in presenting a reality of grotesque and ugly proportions, a reality to which the audience is petitioned to react with disgust. Michelle's subjugation to Ed inscribes a male authority to the spaces of the sequence, a power relationship that is a motif of the Hoodie Horror. The fusion of patriarchy and ugly spaces are the foundation for this chapter, 'monstrous geographies'. The word 'monstrous' implies a degree of extremity, of the horrific, the immoral, an object that elicits repulsion, whilst 'geographies' construct the spaces and places of the Hoodie Horror. This chapter explores the terrain and its cinematic treatment in the cycle to establish it firstly as abject space. Taking Tyler's territorial stigmatization as abject discourse as its foundation, the chapter asserts that the geographies of the Hoodie Horror present a realism that is at once considered extreme, but also normative. Repeated associations of space and violence in popular culture, discourse, television programmes and cinema, situate criminality, poverty and feral behaviour as the 'everyday life' of council estates and other terrain inhabited by the underclass.

Thus the representation of space in the Hoodie Horror follows a discursive construction of classed space. Central narratives and sub-plots involving drugs – buying, selling, growing – proliferate the Hoodie Horror, as do narratives of marginalisation and loss. The spaces of the cycle are geographies on the borders of the society, spatially and morally. A disgust consensus is established in the animation of the territories as narratives of drugs, killing and misogyny present the geographies of the cycle as revolting. The narratives shape our perceptual fields to mobilise and legitimise moral judgements that construct what Kolnai describes as 'a

sort of “flight from the perceptual neighbourhood” of the revolting thing or person, and from possible ‘intimate contact and union with it’ (Kolnai, 2004: 587). Furthermore, this chapter will determine these spaces as inscribed with an underclass masculinity that establishes an underclass patriarchy on the borders of the society that has abjected its members. In these spaces, masculine anxieties are played out. The Hoodie Horror carries the concerns that have gripped, and somewhat stifled, the social realist tradition – masculinity, home/space, employment. As both Monk and Hill have observed, social realist texts of the 1990s positioned representations of the working-class male as a remnant, devastated by the social and economic changes brought on by Thatcherism (Hill, 2000a; Monk, 2000a and 2000b). As a remnant, the working-class male transitioned into occupying domestic space, resulting in a damaging relationship of the male, familial and home of the underclass, as epitomised in *Nil By Mouth*. Influenced heavily by the social realist canon, the Hoodie Horror advances the representation of the underclass male beyond the domestic sphere and back into a more visible, if not unproblematic, space. In spaces marked as territory, the underclass male unshackles himself from the familial and refashions public space for his own gain, to establish identity and male authority. Finally, this chapter will engage with the idea of home and how this functions as an extension of a character’s manor, but also as a signifier of poverty and lost futures.

The monstrous geographies of the Hoodie Horror take their cue from Tyler’s territorial stigmatization where the council estate was utilised in the public imaginary to further decouple the underclass from the social proper (Tyler, 2013:

162-63). As Tyler asserts, council estates were seen to house 'problem people', and this discourse was inscribed on the bodies of the residents, animated in both the figure of the chav and Hoodie. Journalist and commentator Melanie Phillips determined the same in the Shannon Matthews case in 2008: the events 'revealed the existence of an underclass which is a world apart from the lives that most of us lead and the attitudes and social conventions that most of us take for granted' (Phillips, 2008). The geographies of the Hoodie Horror adhere to this popular 'othering narrative', in that the male characters of the film establish territories by inscribing it with their own criminal culture and self-interest. In *The Selfish Giant*, public roads are exploited by Kitten and others in a male-centric scene of illegal pony-and-trap drag-racing. The transient nature of gypsy culture utilises these public roads as a site for the men to celebrate their own culture and play out a homosocial cultural convention of masculine rivalry for monetary gain (Fig 31). The roads also offer work and income for both Swifty and Arbor as they take to them with their horse and cart looking for scrap to sell to Kitten (Fig 32). For both Kitten and the boys, public spaces offer opportunities to establish a male identity and affirm a masculine dominance in a homosocial culture. Arbor and Swifty work in order to give money to their mothers to help support the family household. Thus, 'scrapping' on the roads provides opportunities both for shaping them as male providers, and for asserting a familial dominance. As low-others, Kitten, Swifty and Arbor are denied entry into the state, marginalised to exist on the borders of society and therefore look to alternative means for an income. Space in *The Selfish Giant* is thus animated as geography for the socially prohibited and is where the black market economy operates. In an inversion of a neoliberal economy and

citizenship, it is fitting that Kitten and Arbor, themselves abject figures, co-opt the surrounding spaces to craft a form of work and income from scrap: the leftovers, the dregs and the disposable. They can be seen as members of 'garbage-can populations' (Khanna, 2009: 193) exploiting the garbage for profit.

The relationship between masculine ritual and the black market economy is a motif of the Hoodie Horror. The *Ill Manors* sequence cited above serves as a grotesque amplification of this motif, but offers a fitting introduction to explore the wider cycle. Hill observes that realist pieces of the 1980s and 1990s in their preoccupation with 'the narrowing down of social space' reflect the erosion of working-class identity and traditions, as the nation transitioned from industrialisation to a service culture (Hill, 2000a: 251). The Hoodie Horror complicates this trajectory, in that while the narrative plays out in the abject space of 'the moral borders' of the nation-state, the cycle widens the social space beyond the domestic. In the Hoodie Horror, as observed in *Ill Manors*, the underclass reclaims public space as a geography for economic advancement by constructing its own market forces of the black economy. Refused entry into the social proper and posited as 'failed citizens' (Tyler, 2013: 161), male protagonists of the cycle create and participate in local criminal economies that affirm the extra-filmic discourse of the underclass by blurring the boundaries between class and criminality, and operating outside of the range of the police. The toxic masculinity that inscribes the territories recalls the masculine dynamic of the British gangland films of the 1960s and 1970s. Monk assesses the gangster films of that period as an 'inherently homosocial subculture' defined by male aggression and a 'contempt for women' (Monk, 1999: 173). The

territory of the Hoodie Horror returns a reactionary masculinity to the screen, re-establishing a misogynist patriarchy that operates within its own hierarchical structures born of its own codes and conventions. As demonstrated by the */// Manors* sequence outlined at the beginning of this chapter, territory is inscribed by a threatening masculinity through language, behaviour and, in places, fashion, is transitory in geography, and open to disputed ownership.

The opening sequence of *Kidulthood* establishes school as a similarly contested territory by abject masculinities. The distinctive stylised realism of the film, characterised by an energetic editing, dramatic and rapid variation of shots, overlaid with music, constructs teenage anxiety as a normative experience (Figs 33 and 34). The sequence crafts male conflict as the vying for male dominance through sexual prowess when Sam, in establishing his authority, informs Trife that he has had sex with Trife's ex-girlfriend, Alisa. The exposition sequence also introduces how patriarchal territory in the Hoodie Horror is extended to governance by the subjugation of the corporeal body. The motif reaches its maximum realisation in the last film of the trilogy, *Brotherhood*, with naked female bodies composed in the frame as set dressing in scenes at Daley's gangland property become the ultimate misogynist mise-en-scène, contradicting the film's more aspirational message⁷. Hierarchical power is inscribed on the male body through murder and/or physical marking, as demonstrated by Trife's carving of Andreas's face from eye to mouth as an initiation into manhood. In *Piggy*, Joe's brother, John, is murdered by fellow

⁷ A significant criticism of the film was its derogatory female representation. Much cited were the credits listing roles such as 'semi-naked lady' and 'sex-slaves', with many critics analysing this as the move into more generic fare to close the trilogy. See Catherine Bray's review for a more in-depth discussion (Bray, 2016).

drinkers from their local pub merely for an incident of male swagger and jostling over a game of snooker. The threat of the male is marked by a visual style that places the camera amongst the drinkers, framing smirking faces at the edges of the frame snatching glances at John which he ignores as he plays snooker. The homosocial space of damaged masculinities Monk discusses in relation to *Nil By Mouth* (Monk, 2000b) spills over here from the domestic into a public sphere, in a masculine display of dominance and territorial rights.

As *Adulthood* returns to the characters when older, so there is parallel adjustment in the space and place of the film. Dabs' tracking and attempted murder of Sam extends the space of the contested underclass machismo to the streets (Figs 35 and 36). In opposition to more staged 'stand-offs' of criminality that play out in warehouses and waste grounds on the edges of towns and cities, popularised in the swaggering films of Guy Ritchie in the 1990s, *The Krays* (Peter Medak, 1990) and *The Long Good Friday* (John Mackenzie, 1980) as examples, that provide locations for the spectacle of assassination, the space of the street signals not only a shift in attitudes to criminality, but also the abject figuration of the underclass male in popular culture that has carried over from the 1990s into the new millennium. This shifting encroachment further signifies the underclass male as an uncontrollable, feral menace that cannot be contained, whilst the spacial shift to a more everyday location intensifies the narrative of a violent underclass as normative. While the *spectacle* of violence is decreased, the *threat* is increased, as the underclass pushes back the borders to extend its territory. Bataille argues that for an act, behaviour, or community to be prohibited, it must be seen (Bataille, 1999); as Tyler

summarises, 'social prohibitions are dependent upon the (re)intrusion of that object ... which has been constituted as abject' (Tyler, 2013: 19-20). The widening spatial invasion of violent narrative, from council estate to open urban space, further legitimizes the othering narratives that seek to prohibit the underclass. The streets are also an indicator of position and inequality in this underclass patriarchy. In its essentialist form, the male power structures mirror the capitalist system of master and worker. Those with money and power reside within properties from which their business is managed, such as Daley in *Brotherhood*, Chris in *Ill Manors* and Uncle Curtis in *Kidulthood*. The streets signify the territory of the workers, as they navigate these spaces on errands for local criminal bosses.

The narratives of *Adulthood*, *Ill Manors* and *Community* engage with drug-taking on both sides of the exchange, addict and pusher, and the films' settings are coordinated appropriately. The sub-plots of both *Harry Brown* and *Attack The Block* revolve around more explicit narratives of growing drugs. While *Attack The Block's* Ron and High-Hatz's business is treated with comedy, in line with the tone of the film, Stretch and Kenny's business in *Harry Brown* is presented as rotten and threatening, a business that needs to be contained and liquated by Harry. Sean Harris's performance in this film is explored further in my section 'Monsters'. Other than *Attack The Block*, the films diffuse any allure of drug culture fabricated by cinematic treatment in *Human Traffic* (Justin Kerrigan, 1999), *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* and *Trainspotting*. The intoxicating black magic realism (Smith, 2002) of *Trainspotting* gives way to functional operational settings, grimy houses and the daily grind of hustling on the street. In *Community*, 'Auntie', a transvestite

nurse, runs the estate by controlling the trafficking of the drugs into the area, securing residents' addiction to maintain his authority. The film differs from the realist texts, in that it veers towards a more generic horror vehicle. The treatment of the film's drug storyline, while drawing upon the sensationalist discourse of housing estates, as sorrowfully conceptualised by Lynsey Hanley in her 'play word association' remark, (see the introduction for 'Manors' (Hanley, 2007: 7)), finds more of a resonance with 'the special stuff' from series one of *The League of Gentlemen* (1999 – 2017). The estate residents of *Community* are a cinematic fulfilment of the discourse of territorial stigmatization of the underclass. The kids are violent and feral, 'sullen youths in hooded tops ... who loiter' (Davidson, 2004: 14), the parents are 'dozy and feckless' (Parsons, 2005a: 25) and the entire community is the cinematic animation of 'good-for-nothing scroungers who have no morals, no compassion, no sense of responsibility and who are incapable of feeling love or guilt' (Malone, 2008: 32). The territorial stigmatization of council estate here is expedient; it comes flat-packed and is all too readily assembled as the abject space of a horror film.

The treatment of drugs in in the more realist texts of *Adulthood* and *Ill Manors*, as with the spectacle of violence, detaches any fascination about or desirability of the culture by positioning it within a narrative logic of victim/entrapment/escape. The change in attitude towards drugs in the 1990s that films such as *Human Traffic* illuminate, and Monk discusses in her article on 1990s British crime cinema (Monk, 1999), bows to the more dominant discourse of criminality, drugs and council estates. As Jones states, 'when many people think of council estates, they imagine a

dirty stairwell littered with hypodermic needles' (Jones, 2012: 215). As I outlined in the introduction, millennial abjects such as the Hoodie and the Chav were utilised to censure the lower classes who had achieved a chic and cool status in the working-class revival of Cool Britannia in the 1990s. Against the abject cultural discourse of the millennium, drug culture was disavowed of its hipness, and returned to a configuration of symbolic disgust as a criminal activity of the 'deserved poor'. Michelle's story in *Ill Manors*, as outlined at the beginning of this chapter, functions as a morality-tale on drug-use, but within this abject world she occupies a double abjection because of her drug-use, but also her gender, as demonstrated by Ed's exploitative and misogynist behaviour towards her. 'Home' for Michelle is a transient space and is dependent on where the drugs are. The squat where we see her injecting functions as the visual signifier of the depth of her abject state, amplified when contrasted to her backstory conceptualised in song by Plan B. Connoted by dark, bare, unfurnished and uncarpeted squalor (Fig 37), Michelle's 'space' is fetishized as an object of disgust, a grotesque drabness that fascinates and repels, yet sanctions the spectator's sympathy, whilst inviting disidentification by deeming the image contents as abject.

Jay's transition to street drug-dealer is visualised spacially from a shift from council estate in *Kidulthood* to the streets as a drug-hustler in *Adulthood*. In a scene with Moony at a boutique coffee shop where Jay endeavours to persuade him to help exact revenge on Sam for their friend, Trife's murder, the setting of the coffee shop signifies waning male kinship and states of citizenship. Jay, dressed in baseball cap, jeans and hoodie, the clothes of the street and of his adolescence, rebukes Moony,

now a law student, who sports a flat cap, placed on his head with precision, and matching jacket, for exchanging estate life for university. Moony initially refuses involvement, asserting he wants to oppose criminality through the law. For Moony education offers a chance to escape his council estate upbringing and his teenage experiences. The two are polar opposites of a model of neoliberal citizenship, epitomised under the New Labour government. Jay, his clothes displaying an arrested development, is failed citizen, a victim, in New Labour rhetoric, of a poverty of aspirations, whilst Moony has grasped the opportunities for advancement offered him and symbolises the meritocracy the New Labour government espoused.

In his writings on space, place and spectacle of the kitchen sink drama, Higson positions the 1950s films as narratives of entrapment and escape for individuals who wish to break out from their working-class lives (Higson, 1996: 146). Even in the transition from working-class to underclass, little has changed in the representations. *Ill Manors* closes with Aaron rejecting a drug-dealing opportunity, and leaves in a taxi driven by the director Ben Drew (Plan B) (Fig 38). The significance of Drew's Hitchcockian self-insertion here cannot be missed. Drew, who grew up in Forest Gate, London, in a one-parent household spent time as a teenager at a local referral unit for children excluded from mainstream education. Despite a disrupted start, Drew has established both music and film careers; he has embraced opportunities, enabling him to transcend his background, positing him as a fluid, mobile neoliberal subject. Drew's timely appearance in the narrative aids in defining what is indicative of the Hoodie Horror, that these, as with the kitchen sink

dramas, are also tales of entrapment and escape, but there is hope, as Drew's celebrity status testifies, albeit one set against a social backdrop where, in the new millennium, the lower-class is still geographically and figuratively a condition from which to escape.

Many of the Hoodie Horrors where there is male warfare for proprietorship of space involve a narrative of a ritual transforming boys to manhood where masculinity is equated with criminality, as already touched upon with Trife in *Kidulthood*. In *Ill Manors*, Jake's approach to buy weed from local council estate drug dealer Marcel escalates quickly into a rite of passage where Jake has to prove his machismo by beating his friend. Jake's naivety about gang code and his misuse of language initially bars him from entering Marcel's space. In an action designed to separate Jake from his current boyhood bonds, Marcel intimidates and incites Jake by calling out his friend's incorrect attire. As Marcel's gang gather round him, Jake moves to gain acceptance and assert his fledging masculinity: he attacks his friend and is thus welcomed to 'ride with the gang' (Figs 39-41). The public space of council estates in *Ill Manors* provides not only the setting for narrative development, but also the space for young adolescent males to play out adult masculine rituals that blur and confuse the boundaries between criminality and the passage to manhood.

As stated earlier, the abject space of the Hoodie Horror is inscribed by an underclass behaviour that extends to fashion and language, with the metropolitan texts of the *Hood* trilogy, *Ill Manors* and *Attack The Block* as prime examples. Fashion, style and language construct both inclusionary and exclusionary space.

While fashion as a consumerist practice excludes Trife, Mooney and Jay from purchasing in West End shops, when Trife is wrongly accused of shoplifting in an act of prejudice by the security guards, fashion worn by the gang is an exercise in power relations of gang membership. In *Ill Manors*, once Jake has passed his initiation, Marcel takes him shopping for new clothes, including a dark hoodie. Marcel advises Jake that he needs to wear dark clothes, the same as the rest of the gang, so that he can navigate the urban locales unnoticed by the police (Figs 42 and 43). *Ill Manors'* affirmation of the Hoodie here constructs it as the symbol of a rite of passage constructing masculine bonds within a criminal gang. These bonds are not the foundations of a communitarian practice but acts of individualism that function as obligations. In return for Marcel's self-interested generosity, Jake is obliged to kill someone for him. The right clothes procure access into gang territory and entry into the alternative patriarchy that exists on the peripheries of the social.

Ed's mock rap lyrics on pimping Michelle demarcate a male territory that subjugates women and crafts male bonds based on shared values. The urban slang that weaves through the films such as 'allow it', 'are you dizzy blood', 'merc him' and 'grimy' are common phrases of the films that signify an urban gang community. To understand and to use the language, whether as a character in the film, or as the audience, is to be included as part of the imagined community. Not to identify with the language is to be subjected to its symbolic exclusionary power, positioning it as articulations of the 'other'. Language employed in the metropolitan films of the Hoodie Horror have been contextualised in cultural discussions as part of a black culture, whilst the films position the language as part of wider urban customs. The

problem of attaching such language to black culture is highlighted by the incident when historian David Starkey made contentious comments about the London riots of 2011. Speaking on *Newsnight*, Starkey claimed the participation of white youths signalled that ‘the whites had become blacks. A particular sort of violent, destructive, nihilistic gangster culture’ (Starkey, 2011). Starkey’s racist remarks articulate the racializing function of underclass discourses and how ‘cultural characteristics’ are positioned as pollutants. While Starkey’s comments can be and must be challenged, his views form part of the ‘othering’ discourse of the underclass.

Both Ben Drew (‘Plan B’) and Noel Clarke position their films as revealing life as they see it, with Drew describing *Ill Manors* as ‘true, dark reality’ (Drew cited in Bainbridge, 2012: 9) and Clarke claiming ‘I just wrote the way I saw things’ (Clarke in Jones, 2016). But when the films are contextualised within the class rhetoric as espoused by Starkey, the realism is problematised by an othering discourse. The language of the films, part of the realism that yet ‘others’ the film, works as a symbolic exclusionary force that creates a virtual space for the film and its characters that excludes audience members who disidentify with the films. The language functions as does the long-shot in *The Selfish Giant*: to fetishize, to close down, and to distance further, already marginalised figures.

3.2.1: Attack The Block

This is the block and nobody fucks with the block!

(Attack The Block)

One anomaly of the cycle worth noting here is *Attack The Block*. The film's narrative sees the estate kids pitted against aliens, in a communal and co-ordinated action between the juveniles to defend their manor, Wyndham Tower. The opening sequences support negative stereotypes of both Hoodie and council estate as the gang is inscribed with the popular abject discourse of the underclass. However, narrative progression disrupts both dominant discourses of poor urban youth and estate criminality. The tower block, emblematic of the decline and failure of the project of social housing, is visually rewritten here with sci-fi treatment and lit with emerald-tinged harsh lighting, comparable to the lighting of the block in *Heartless*, and framed in extreme high angles. The gang go into battle with an arsenal of teenage weaponry, including fireworks, water-guns and baseball bats. The film seeks to subvert the discourse of social alienation, urban decay and adolescent deviancy by constructing, as Palmer observes, 'sites for heroism, sacrifice, and communal allegiance across race and gender' (Palmer, 2015), setting up a narrative that stands in opposition to the other films in the cycle, which construct the underclass male motivated by a self-interested individualism, and the spaces as violent and threatening. In *Attack The Block*, identity, self and places are entwined in a visual display of body and space that deconstructs council estates as stigmatized geographies and sites of social inequalities. The film frames the gang navigating the stairwells, corridors, lifts and walkways with a verve, ease and confidence of fluid motion that resonates with a De Certeaudian ideal of space and identity only articulated when it is activated by human movement (De Certeau, 1984). As Palmer observes in her acute analysis of the film, the gang's unity with the structures is demonstrated in their spacial awareness of light switches in the

corridors and a working knowledge of stairwells and lifts (Palmer, 2015), which is advantageously utilised by the gang when going into battle with the aliens. The film then challenges and disrupts the dominant abject discourses of the Hoodie and council estate, by reclaiming identity and space in an affirmative text of community amongst underclass adolescence and social housing that positions both as saviours of the nation.

The Hoodie Horror's concern with territory is to reveal an underclass re-establishing visibility at the societal margins, outside of the home. Hill discusses how realist films of the 1980s and 1990s perceived a decline in the working-class, as it receded into identification with the domestic and familial sphere, resulting in what Hill terms as a 'certain terminus' (Hill, 2000a: 251). The Hoodie Horror affirms this terminus and perceives the underclass as a visible classed identity in the public imaginary. The territory of the films is the landscape of the underclass as response to the severe economic conditions, exclusionary forces of neoliberal governance, and a desire to establish an identity and labour provision in an alternate economy. Contrasting to the British realist texts of the 1990s, and the privileging of domestic space in the haunted housing estate, the home is generally marginalised in the Hoodie Horror in favour of a focus on an underclass economic framework. When the home is a focus, it is a signifier of absence in the form of impoverishment and a psychologised loss of what might have been, conceived in images and narratives that emphasise the abject state of the underclass.

As we see in the haunted housing estate, the homes of Matthew in *The Disappeared* and Tommy in *Citadel* are conceptualised within a narrative of

haunting. As discussed in the chapter on the haunted housing estate, to resolve the issues of transforming a geography that is a known entity into a place that embodies 'sense of isolation and abandonment' (Kevorkian in Gilbey, 2010), the domestic is gothicised with a palette of blue. The mise-en-scène of the interiors are bare of any signs of personalisation or consumerism, amplifying the lives of the protagonists as impoverished and coding them as the neoliberal other (Figs 44-47). Both Shifty and Arbor's home in *The Selfish Giant* find resonance with this animation of domestic destitution. Swifty's home is often framed at a distance, a strategy that fetishizes through spectacle the deprivation of the home and Swifty's family. Shots of the house capture the broken front fence and plastic sheeting that functions as a window. Even the school children judge the home, gleefully deriding it by shouting 'Look at the fucking state of Shifty's home. It's fucking disgusting!' (Figs 48-50). A domestic mealtime scene affirms what the weary exterior presents: destitute lives. Shifty's dad has sold the settee, the one piece of furniture the family had to sit on. A dinner of a bowl of beans for each child, sitting on the floor in the front room, captures the underclass family of Broken Britain. However, the narrative logic assimilates a neoliberal ideology by shifting accountability from governmental responsibility and harsh economic conditions to the individual in the person of Shifty's father, a gambler and drinker. The visualisation of Shifty's family echoes the popular rhetoric of estate underclass families that are publicly conceived as 'unemployed communities full of feckless, work-shy, amoral, dirty ... animal-like individuals' (Jones, 2012: 24). Whilst narrative events (Shifty's death) and aesthetic choices (the framing of his mother) work to elicit sympathy, the

political undertones of the film problematise its realist form by perpetuating the abject discourse of council estate and underclass.

The homes of the Hoodie Horror illuminate not only the material impoverishment of the underclass, but also a psychological, somewhat spiritual destitution. Whilst the home is a diminished space in the cycle, it signifies an absence beyond the lack of material advancement. The domestic sphere is where individual trauma and tragedy is played out. Arbor withdraws under his bed in an act of self-admonishment because of grief-induced anger at the loss of his friend, Swifty. The blurred framing of holding hands with an imagined Swifty presents a complex emotional scene of grief, loss, past, present and future. The centralisation of the hands in the frame underscores Swifty as an absence in Arbor's life, a presence as an absence that serves to remind Arbor of his failed responsibility towards Shifty as a friend (Figs 51 and 52). In *Adulthood*, Sam endures two emotional scenes associated with home that highlight the ramifications of his past actions to the present. In a poignant conversation with his mother, Sam is moved to tears as she recounts how his actions – as played out in *Kidulthood* – have negatively impacted their family, damaging familial relations and causing Sam's brother, Omen, to rebel and follow his deviant path. Sam visits Alisa in her home for information. Here, he is too confronted with the results of his killing of Trife, when Alisa introduces the daughter she had with the murdered man. Alisa's disgust towards Sam culminates with her spitting on him (Fig 53). Lexi's harrowing confession to Sam of being gang-raped, and the accounts of the trial where the accused were found not guilty, and her father's shame and disappointment, is framed from overhead as the couple lie

in bed. The camera here is an interloper in a scene of intimate delicacy (Fig 54). The home then becomes a focal point not for familial relations, but for individual trauma and loss. The domestic sphere consists of dwellings full of traumatic memories that fabricate a presence of absence in the lives of the characters. The absence here is misappropriated childhoods and an immaterialisation of a future. Underclass lives suffer in the Hoodie Horror from the actions of the underclass male who refuses to put familial bonds before self-interest. The effects of individual choices that both Tony Blair and David Cameron warned of in their speeches (Blair, 1999 and Cameron, 2008), are animated as actions of a toxic masculinity that reverberate as intergenerational issues of a class that live under 'the crushing belief that things cannot get better' (Blair, 1997).

3.2.2: *The Selfish Giant*: Poverty of the imagination and temporal stasis

Really, *Ill Manors* looks like many other British urban crime films; it could have been made at almost any time, and there's not much substance under the urban style.

(Bradshaw, 2012)

The Selfish Giant has Ken Loach's *Kes* in its DNA; Chapman looks eerily like the young David Bradley in some scenes, and Sean Gilder is a grisly, ironic, unfunny reincarnation of Brian Glover's PE teacher: a father figure who can only destroy.

(Bradshaw, 2013)

What is provocative but not surprising about Peter Bradshaw's scrutiny of both films here is how hierarchal value accords Barnard's *The Selfish Giant* the ability to evoke the very British tradition of social realism, but censures *Ill Manors* as

unoriginal and superficial. While I do not wish to debate the films in terms of quality, Bradshaw's appraisals speak to the widest parameters of this thesis in terms of British film culture, class representation, and film style. As alluded to in the introduction, many writers on British cinema, specifically those who write on horror, criticise the valorisation that the realist form receives in British film culture (Petley, 1986; Rigby, 2000; Pirie, 2009), to an extent it has become its own tradition. It is not difficult to take such a position when Bradshaw's analysis engages with the style of *The Selfish Giant* at the expense of a critical appraisal of the film's politics.

Bradshaw's comments provide the invitation to discuss the problematic politics and form of *The Selfish Giant*, and here I focus on the space and place of the film. As with the other Hoodie Horrors, the landscapes are male-centric and exploited for the opportunities of financial gain. However, it is the relationship between the film's form, place and identity that requires a scrutiny of its own. The film shares an amplification of absence in its presentation of poverty and loss with *Citadel* and *The Disappeared*. But while those films are complicated further, and potentially explained, by the application in both form and aesthetics with a narrative of haunting, the animation of the abject in *The Selfish Giant* is symptomatic of how the knotty relationship between representation and social realism has developed, a relationship that continues to be dogged by what Higson perceived in 'That Long Shot of Our Town' (Higson, 1996). As Higson observes, there is a tension between content, form and style that is not effectively resolved. The pull between historical authenticity of place, psychologized character space and a poetical framing of this

place and space, renders a spectacle in social realism that problematizes the ideology of the films. If the claim of the tradition is to discern the working-classes, now the underclass, onscreen, the films are, for Higson, successful, although they represent the lower class from a position of moral and class authority that animates them as a condition from which to escape. An issue of *The Selfish Giant* is how both the narrative and the aestheticization of the landscape naturalise Shifty's and Arbor's condition as inescapable, whilst the dramatic display of poverty in the film is at risk of fetishizing impoverishment.

Social realism has advanced to represent those living on the margins of society (Hallam and Marshment, 2000), an extension that focuses on the under-represented, temporally at moments of social and economic change (Hill, 2000a: 250). Social realist texts have become entwined with an observational style which not only privileges a complex relationship between space, place and identity, but also, as Samantha Lay underlines, produces a 'distance between text and spectator' (Lay, 2002: 22). Higson highlights the tension in the idea of place between the 'surface' realism that authenticates a sense of place, and the 'moral' realism that commits to documenting the humanity of 'ordinary people' (Higson, 1996: 136-37). This results in a poetical style of realism articulating what Higson sees as 'a belief that we can *see the real* in images which document the social condition of the people who inhabit the landscape' (141; emphasis in the original).

This legacy of this poetic observational style is realised in *The Selfish Giant* through the use of the long shot. Barnard repeatedly frames Arbor and Swifty at a distance within the northern landscape, providing shots that sanction their abject state

through a continued visual association with poverty, loss and a bucolic fatalism that renders both figures in an indifferent landscape (Fig 55). It is no longer 'That Long Shot of Our Town from That Hill' but, simply in terms of representation and for the British canon, just the long shot. The distant framing of both boys constructs an expanse between audience and subject, crafting the image as spectacle and inviting the spectator to gaze from a distance upon the image. The urban environment which the boys are framed navigating – full of burnt out cars (Fig 56) and empty, gated, shopfronts (Fig 57) – fabricates not only an impoverished area, but an abject landscape where both humans and materials are the 'scrap', the dregs and the left-behinds. The edgelands widen this abjection to incorporate a more politicised image of a northern landscape with an eerie inhabitation of remnants of a once prosperous industrialised north, with the images of advancement in the pylons, and semi-feral horses that introduce a psychologised temporality (Fig 58). In the edgelands, we are confronted with a historicised image that speaks of Berardi's 'cancelled future' (Berardi, 2011). The framing of the power stations, looming opaquely in the distance over the edgelands, underlines them as a visual reminder of a residual, once-prosperous past of industrialization, a period that transported the nation into modernity, and brought the promise of work, security, material betterment and citizenship for the workers. The relationship between industrialization and the lower classes has been a focus of previous realist texts, specifically those set in the north, as well as writers such as Charles Dickens and Elizabeth Gaskell. Taking this into account, then certainly, *The Selfish Giant* is not necessarily undertaking a fresh approach. Indeed, the waning of industry and its impact in the north has already been visited in *The Full Monty* and *Billy Elliot*

(Stephen Daldry, 2000), albeit in a more humorous and sentimental tone, but possibly also with a more creative approach. The distant framing relegates the power stations to a spectral-like presence in the hinterland of the urban and functions as a visual prompt for the spectator that industrialisation is now just another narrative in the nation's historical past. The stations' ethereal representation signifies what *could* have been for Arbor and Swifty, but is *now* no longer. The temporal indicators of the power station psychologise the image for the boys in that the image communicates their lost futures, affirming their abject state. The long shot complicates this abjection by offering an image of a pastoral that beautifies what is wretched. The representation and framing of the council estate (discussed earlier in the chapter) as desolate and dilapidated further affirms this abjection. While the surface realism creates a sense of place, a setting for the narrative to unfold, the paradox of the moral realism of the long shot 'others' the landscape and the figures within it as abject, for the long shot establishes a view 'from a position of class authority' (Higson, 1996: 151). It further confirms the 'truth' of the extra-filmic discourse of the underclass as established via the Hoodie as national abject. However, gazing upon the spectacle of this 'beautiful tragedy' (142) elicits sympathy from the audience for the condition of the abject state. The organisation of the narrative and image serve to illuminate the abject as an object of fascination within a visual pleasure of the spectacle, constructing both Swifty and Arbor as sympathetic victims, but fetishized within the long shot at a safe distance from the audience, securing their 'othered' status and enabling the spectator to disidentify with the image onscreen.

The use of the long shot in *The Selfish Giant* thus speaks to the wider concerns that contemporary social realist texts poses, in terms of representation, form, and the relationship between both. As this thesis repeatedly asserts, the trajectory of the canon bears witness to the passing of the working-class and the centralisation of an underclass in popular cultural form. But as the utilisation of the long shot demonstrates, animating the underclass onscreen is problematic, as it risks furthering the abjection of figures and communities already marginalised. Social realism, a cinematic presence once praised for its political dynamism in awakening the public imaginary to the working-class (Hill, 1986)⁸, risks divesting the underclass of its voice within the social proper. The corollary *The Selfish Giant* should present is to challenge how the underclass is represented onscreen and to acknowledge the role social realist form performs within that discourse. As the long shot illuminates, in furthering the marginalised position of the underclass, it endangers separating the canon from its socialist ideals. Finally, if we return to Bradshaw's comments with an understanding of Higson's seminal article, we can contextualise the film not as an evocation of Ken Loach and *Kes*, but rather as return, an homage, and as a film haunted by the canon's legacy. The organisation of the narrative – characters, image and form – crafts an anachronistic film that perpetuates a sense of the past. The form suffers from a temporal stasis positioning it as ahistorical. As with the films of the haunted housing estate, *The Selfish Giant* returns to its history to illuminate the present.

⁸ Of course, this comes with qualifications as Higson (1996), Hill (1986) and others have discussed the problematic middle-class authorship of the British New Wave.

3.2.3: Conclusion: The end of the manor

Brotherhood closes the Hoodie Horror cycle, and its shift in space is symptomatic of the waning of the cycle as a whole, and of Sam's narrative arc throughout the trilogy. The extra-filmic discourse of the Hoodie has pacified the symbolic threat of the Hoodie, as the hoodie as fashion item has been reconfigured for the mainstream and cleansed of its menace (Anon, 2017). New national abjects have been fashioned from immigrants to those involved in the Brexit debate. In the films, council estates give way to a suburban Hammersmith for the hood's protagonist, Sam. Now a father of two and holding down three jobs, he has exchanged the underclass feral territory for ordered domestic and work spaces. The masculine territories of a black market capitulate to the newly built neoliberal economy of the Westfield shopping centre, the space that closes the film and serves to affirm Sam's transition into the social proper. Family life is established through scenes of Sam's homelife, scenes that admonish the domestic sphere as site of trauma. Sam's transition from failed citizen to neoliberal citizen is visualised in the spaces and places he now occupies. *Brotherhood* also bears witness to the clearance of the underclass from urban spaces through the underlying gentrification to which the film's spaces opaquely refer. In an interview with Noel Clarke, Niloufar Haldarl observes that the Westfield shopping centre, the location for the film's close, did not exist when *Kidulthood* was released, signalling the transformation London has undergone (Haldarl, 2016). Part of this urban redevelopment has been the gentrification process that has impacted the city's housing estates and the project of social housing (Anon, 2015: 1). The fate of Aylesbury estate, the setting for *Harry*

Brown, is symptomatic of successive governments' withdrawal from a social contract of governmental responsibility, a neoliberal project that paradoxically demands state withdrawal from the state. *Brotherhood*, despite its critical disparagement, can be seen, through its choice of locations, as a crucial cultural witness to the effects of the abject discourse of council estates as dystopian and stigmatised geographies in Britain of the new millennium.

3.3: The haunted housing estate

There is no present which is not haunted by a past and future, by a past which is not reducible to a former present, by a future which does not consist of a present to come.

(Deleuze, 2013: 36-37)

If you haven't got posh, then forget it. I don't think we could make a film with some Londoners in a house going, 'Oi, 'ang on, there's a ghost 'ere'.

(Christopher Smith in Gilbey, 2010)

I don't think we have the budgets to do big elaborate horror films here, so we turn to a more reality-based horror, which is a hell of a lot more frightening.

(Johnny Kevorkian in Gilbey, 2010)

The haunted house has a long and significant history in the British tradition of ghost stories and is both an important setting and motif in literature and cinema. A screen adaptation of Sarah Walter's *Little Stranger* due for release in 2018 demonstrates the trope's persistent currency within a cinematic tradition that boasts such notable inclusions as *The Uninvited* (Lewis Allen, 1944), *The Innocents*

(Jack Clayton, 1961), *The Others* (Alejandro Amenábar, 2011), and *The Woman in Black* (Fig 59). As with its predecessor, the castle, the haunted house offers specific material spaces for locations of hauntings. Such hauntings are frequently entwined with an individual psychology such as in *The Innocents*, or entwined with local superstition, as with the cinematic adaptation of *The Woman in Black*. Haunted houses are settings of spatial and temporal anxiety where trauma and history congeal, resulting in a sense of restlessness and loss. While the haunted house is part of a long tradition of British horror, the housing estate as a spectred geography is a contemporary, and, singularly underclass, addition to the canon that relocates the tradition away from the associative bourgeois concerns of family legacy, using it instead to further the marginalisation of the British underclass. The modernist project that strove to purge and evacuate the shadows and clutter of the past, is animated here with new phantasms. That said, the haunted housing estate of the Hoodie Horror is not the first British genre to animate social housing as a phantasmal geography. Predating it is the 1998 British film, *Urban Ghost Story*, concerning a young girl who suffers from poltergeist visitations after a near-fatal car accident. While *Urban Ghost Story* navigates a more traditional psychoanalytical blueprint of home and female monstrosity, the films that form the haunted housing estate are complicated by certain differing characteristics which are deserving of further exploration: firstly, a broad encompassing of the estates into a gothic aesthetic, secondly, promoting a male protagonist and, lastly, explicitly utilising abject discourses of the Hoodie and council estates to move the haunting location away from the traditional bourgeois setting to the territory of the underclass.

While the haunted housing estate shares aesthetic and narrative qualities with its haunted house predecessor, it has its own motifs and themes that problematize the traditional understanding of what 'to haunt' means. As I qualified in the introduction to 'Manors', the housing estate is a staple of the other British cinematic tradition, social realism, where the locale is subjected to a 'slice-of-life' rendering that imbues the estate on film with social and class concerns. It is my contention that to cognize what I term the haunted housing estate requires situating it within both filmic traditions. As with my chapter on the gothic abject, the haunted housing estate must be approached via how it is influenced by both gothic and social realism. At the core of this animation is the abject, a state where both horror and social realism converge to produce the Hoodie Horror. This chapter positions the cultural stigmatizing discourse of council estates as being dystopian geographies as the foundation to these cinematic animations. With both the gothic and British social realism concerned with the abject, there is a synergy found with these film sensibilities and the housing estate of contemporary discourse. The haunted housing estate, then, is the explicit rendering of the fusion of these two very British cinematic legacies. The haunted housing estate of the Hoodie Horror cycle is constituted of three films: *Citadel*, *Heartless* and *The Disappeared*, and this chapter's broad concern is to map out how the filmic strategies gothicise the housing estate and explore the resulting paradoxical temporalities. The overarching claim is to demonstrate how the gothicisation furthers the abject state of council estates within popular culture by rendering it *out-of-time*. To do so, the films' gothicisation process looks to the legacy of British horror cinema for the structure's aestheticization and framing, yielding the return of a past form. As with

the monsters discussed in the chapter on the gothic abject, the films of the haunted housing estate display an attachment to motifs, narrative structures and formulas of past gothic forms which potentially results in what Fisher warns of – ‘the modernist challenge of innovating cultural forms adequate to contemporary experience’ (Fisher, 2013: 11-12). The injection of the contemporary in these films such as *Hoodies* and the eschewing discourse creates a tension between form and content, and the traditional and contemporary. However, contrary to Fisher’s assertion, the gothicisation of estates here is an appropriate aesthetic (while still politically problematic) for the underclass, as abject aesthetics meets abject form.

In the haunted housing estate, contemporizing the haunting narrative denotes the injection of the social into the private. However, animating the council estate as gothic has spatial and temporal implications that influence class representation in the present. To return to the introduction of ‘Manors’, if council estates are landscapes inscribed with class, then the haunted housing estate expresses a socio-cultural and political haunting, animating ‘what haunts our culture’, as Andrew Smith suggests (Smith, 2007: 149). While social housing provides homes to the less financially fortunate, it also creates a geography that blurs public and private space, as well as serving as an ideological vision, all of which require consideration in its spectral cinematic animation. The haunted housing estate imbued with concerns of the social realist text illuminates social housing as a failed project, resulting in films that bear witness to the passing of the working-class.

As I have stated, the three films, *Citadel*, *Heartless* and *The Disappeared*, all both adhere to and deviate from what is considered a traditional haunted house

narrative. While *The Disappeared* is the most faithful to these storytelling conventions, in that its protagonist, Matthew, haunted by visitations of his brother Tom, fulfils an investigative role in solving Tom's disappearance, both *Heartless* and *Citadel* expand the notion of haunting as expressions of loss and passing in both an individual and social context. At this point it would be beneficial to remind ourselves by broadly outlining what constitutes such an expression. While technical advances have transformed cinematic renderings of ghosts and haunted houses onscreen, many of the foundations of the narrative have remained in place. Barry Curtis summarises haunted house narratives revolving around all the things that 'go wrong' with houses (Curtis, 2008: 16), with conflicts and confrontations arising between a space, its troubled past, and present inhabitants. Often there has been family tragedy in the history of the house and a mystery that requires solving. Ghosts, by piercing temporality, seek vengeance by demanding justice for past wrongs. Often the investigator is female (15), especially in gothic tales, and a crisis in objectivity is experienced by the present occupants (24). The protagonist explores the sinister labyrinths in order to uncover what the house seeks to conceal. The house itself is a porous structure, a 'dark place' (10) often found at the edges of towns, isolated and inscribed with tension and malevolence where 'objects refuse to stay stored' (11). Haunted house narratives, then, are concerned with crisis and instability, temporal frissons and confrontations, a restless past and indeterminate futures, and a righting of injustice. The haunted housing estate continues with these tropes, adapting them to *make gothic* the structures and spaces central to the films. The most explicit modification is the move from a female gothic heroine to a male protagonist. Social realism is a form dominated by

tales of working-class masculinities, and much of British horror since the arrival of the millennium focuses on male identity. Given the influence of both these traditions on the Hoodie Horror, male protagonists conform to the privilege afforded the gender by these canons. The precarious lives of the Hoodie Horror male also provide a ripe platform for tales of haunting that necessitate a crisis in vision for the protagonist, more of which is explored in the chapter on masculinities. The temporal frissons and visualisation treatment of the haunted housing estate are more loyal to the accepted conventions.

As I specified in the introduction to 'Manors', there is a focus in this section on the edifices of council estate, be it in the shape of the tower block or in other architectural forms of social housing. The underpass is central to *Harry Brown* as it provides an apt setting for the film's underlying tenet of an ideological struggle between working-class and underclass. The underpass, as an underground structure that has been co-opted and transformed by the estate's adolescents to function as a threatening space, represents the failure of the architectural vision that favoured functionality over communality on the estates. The tower block of the haunted housing estate is, as Burke (2007) argues of the tower block's image in British cinema, a visual signifier of intimidation: a denotation for the abject. The gothic animation of the tower block here that seeks to *make haunted* the council estate finds a resonance with the contemporary abject discourse that makes known social housing projects in the present. It is with this process of gothicisation of the housing estate I will start.

3.3.1: Haunted houses

The haunted house is a scenario of confrontation between the narrative of the inhabitants and the house. What haunts it is the symptom of loss – something excessive and unresolved in the past that requires an intervention in the present.

(Curtis, 2008: 34)

Curtis asserts the haunted house onscreen is instantly recognisable (31). First glimpses of it in films often situate it in long-shots from car windows or from behind trees, framing the building in unsettling self-possession, glaring back in malevolent invitation (Figs 60-62). It is familiar due to its legacy from its literary beginnings to its persistent cinematic presence across national film cultures. It stands within a gothic tradition. We know a haunted house because we are regularly exposed to its form across cultural media. We recognise and understand the genre strategies that the haunted house operates within. Repeated outings normalise the haunted house in cinema and present the gothic state as 'natural'. Of course, there are no natural states of gothic, all aspects are, or have been, subjected to a process of gothicisation. However, the visibility of council estates is problematic for a cinematic animation of haunting that pivots on a locale that is considered remote, secretive and foreboding.

The films hinge on variations of a haunting narrative, but underpinning all three films is the heightened visuals of the estate structures, and in the case of *Citadel* and *The Disappeared* a washed-out colour design. Council estates are often located in populated urban areas. These classed spaces are known to us either through

close spatial proximity, or through discourse in the public imaginary. Converting these recognisable locales to troubled and eerie 'places that are infrequently visited' (Curtis, 2008: 24), requires explicit gothic aesthetic strategies. The films thus employ a profuse visual design to establish and authenticate the estates' gothic credentials. In animating the haunted structures, the films are conventional in their framing and colouring in a strategy to make strange and uneasy what is commonplace, well-known. The films frame the estate structures in various canted shots from a selection of long and medium shots and close-ups. Tower blocks loom down. I will analyse the function of the tower block of *Citadel* in greater detail, but first outline the structures of *The Disappeared* and *Heartless*.

The gothic tower block of *Heartless* is distinct in the Hoodie Horror by its being a product of a crisis of vision of its protagonist, Jamie. Yet as generally with the Hoodie Horror, the filmic strategy of the film of gothicising the structure is to look to a past form, invoking the legacy of British horror film, to animate a contemporary form. Cendrillon Tower fuses Jamie's Faustian re-imagining of his surroundings with its status as the residence of Jamie's father before he married and had a family. Jamie's subjective crisis, inextricable from his mental health issues, is a personal legacy of loss and grief. Unable to accept his father's death and self-conscious of his facial port-wine stain, Jamie retreats into his private world. Seeing the report that the tower is the location of local gang attacks (Fig 63), Jamie appropriates the tower into his vision of hell of earth, heightening its significance. Framed in canted angles and bathed in darkness (Fig 64 and 65), Cendrillon Tower is the gothic manifestation of Jamie's desire for a family of his own and to be reunited

with his dead father, which can be read as a desire for patriarchal authority. It represents a present lack in Jamie, but also a promise of a future of social and patriarchal acceptance. Representing both past and future, this paradoxical temporality the tower block evokes is a trope extended to the other haunted housing estate films.

The Disappeared employs a visual design of a blue palette and canted framing in its strategy of animating the council estate with a 'sense of isolation and abandonment' (Kevorkian cited in Gilbey, 2010), resulting in an ethereal cinematic world. The opening sequence introduces both setting and the film's main protagonist, Matthew, in a colour scheme that establishes a relationship between class, masculinity and space. As with *Citadel*, the estate structures are rinsed in blue and framed in tilted angles (Fig 66-69); the rinsed blue palette of *The Disappeared* hermetically seals Matthew into the cinematic world of the estate. The haunted housing estate, and the Hoodie Horror in general, centralises the council estate, as the predominant space of the films and narrative action irregularly moves outside of estate boundaries. This motif follows the development of British social realism (Hill, 2000a & 2000b) in that the presence of the underclass within the social proper is reduced to the territorial location of the council estate, in line with the stigmatizing discourses of the public imaginary, (see 'monstrous geographies' for more on this). This withdrawal from the public sphere heightens the inhabiting class as marginalised, and when animated within the gothic strategies of the haunted housing estate, animates the underclass as spectral. The colour design of both *The Disappeared* and *Citadel* assists the gothic configurations of this stigmatization,

establishing the bordering of the underclass as an abject community. Matthew has no job and is an unstable subject due to mental health issues, which constitutes him as failed citizen and is communicated by the film's colour design. Matthew's spectral-like presence wanders the estate in his dispirited attempt to solve Tom, his brother's, disappearance. The film adheres to a more traditional haunting narrative with Matthew being haunted by Tom. As with *Heartless*, phantoms are positioned as manifestations of individual psychologies that disrupt and destabilise the private realm of the home.

Citadel employs shots of the tower block as visual motifs of dread. The film opens with a classic haunted house shot (as described earlier) that centralises the tower blocks to the narrative (Figs 70-72), whilst adhering to the haunted house motif Curtis sees as the dwelling evincing 'brooding self-possession' (Curtis, 2008: 31). The angled frame distorts the structures into looming edifices, establishing the film's source of dread and coding the space as uneasy. The narrative rhythm returns to these shots of the tower blocks throughout the film. The continuous presence serves to remind this is the source of all that is malignant in the estate and provides the tower blocks with a form of agency, as if their very presence affects the estate they overshadow. Of course, this is the 'home' for the feral half-human hoodies who spectrally terrorise the neighbourhood. As the priest recounts to Tommy, this is the site of the water supply that infected the children born to a local drug addict, children who begat the tribe of Hoodies. A blot on the landscape is transformed into a pulsating malevolence, its very presence an actual poison to the locale. The extra-filmic disgust consensus of the Hoodie and council estate are configured here

into a contaminating haunting narrative of an intergenerational, degenerative underclass. Thus, the film etches the tower with the narrative of the underclass as abject – their deviancy embedded in the structures – and constructs it as a structural conduit of the failure of socialist values.

The off-kilter framing is complimented with a blue washed palette in a visual design that emphasises the council estate as abandoned, isolated and neglected. The blue-grey washing of the film's colour scheme extends these characteristics imbued within the tower blocks to the surrounding estate, establishing it too as an eerie locale and adding to the film's eerie tone. Edenstown, the estate where Tommy lives and the site of the tower blocks, is empty of residents, apart from Tommy and his daughter, Elsa. The irony of the meaning of Eden is not lost. The desolation of this dystopian vision of social housing works to intensify Tommy's isolation and vulnerability, conditions often associated with the gothic heroine. If we approach what is eerie using Fisher's conception of the term as a 'failure of presence' (Fisher, 2016: 62), the estate is eerie because where there should be people, a community, there is no-one. Fisher elaborates further that the mode of the eerie is often associated with certain structures and locales, such as ruins or abandoned edifices (62). As with the blue palette of the *The Disappeared*, the making eerie of the estates in *Citadel* is an explicit strategy to reconfigure the recognisable council estate as strange, as in the tradition of the gothic.

The lack of presence and the silence of emptiness, washed in blue, reinforces Edenstown as a forgotten town (Fig 73). There is an absence. The estate no longer provides the function for which it was conceived, better homes for the lower

classes. The film's explicit use of the extra-filmic stigmatization of council estates invites analysing the gothic animation of the film's estate within a socio-cultural reading. The failure of Edenstown is the failure of a modernist project to house those that required homes, within 'communitarian structures for self-betterment' (Ravetz, 2001: 138). As with the contemporary demonising discourses, the failure of Edenstown is the responsibility of the Hoodies, 'far removed, in experience and values, from what is described ... as stable and traditional working-class life' (173). Social housing then has become the territory of the underclass, and it is their culture and identity that has replaced working-class culture.

The film's animation of visual eeriness makes spectral the landscape and the residents. Apart from the Hoodies, there is little by which the film attempts to establish the film's time period. There is minimal temporal certainty in the film. The cinematic world is hermetically sealed in the council estate, with no outside influences to situate the film within a definitive historical moment. The pallid colour palette and deserted estate gives rise to a certain timelessness. The film is subject to a fluctuating temporality, as if the film could have been set at any point in the last half century. It is not just the space that is spectral: abandonment becomes temporal in the film. To be forgotten is to be left behind, to be placed in the past, with no presence in the present. The promise of a future embedded in social housing as a utopian vision is cancelled. The film's strategy of declining temporal exposition in order to make ghostly the council estate is a gothic aestheticization of the estate's abject state. The film stresses the liminal status of the council estate,

making it present through an absence. The cinematic world of *Citadel* is a failed, out-of-time utopia, replicating the decline of social housing in millennial Britain.

3.3.2: What is it that haunts?

All houses are haunted – by memories, by history, of their sites, by their owners' fantasies

(Curtis, 2008: 34)

[T]he ghost has become an increasingly appropriate metaphor for the way marginal populations ... haunt the everyday, living on the edge of visibility and inspiring a curious mix of fear and indifference

(Blanco and Peeran, 2010: xiii)

As stated earlier, haunted house narratives provide scenarios of temporal disruption for confrontations between the house and its current residents. These confrontations are often associated with a crisis of perception. Familiar spaces become uneasy and porous interiors disorientate and rearrange objects. The private realm transmits a spatial anxiety that foretells a return. In the haunted housing estate, interiors threaten the same psychological and structural disquiet. However, the films deviate to positioning subjective manifestations as visitations of loss, of the missing and, critically for this thesis, phantasmal figures of class concerns that accentuate social inequalities. I focus here on *Heartless* and *The Disappeared*, with appropriate areas of *Citadel* discussed further in the Gothic Abject and Monstrous Geographies.

The Disappeared is the most faithful structurally to a haunting narrative. The film's positioning of Tom's manifestations to Matthew are narratively paced, and visually

presented as to question Matthew's psychological stability. Only with the end resolution, in Matthew finding Tom's remains, does the film conclude on the existence of ghosts and resolve Matthew's crisis of subjectivity. Tom's spectral presence is not only a request for Matthew to find him and to act as a harbinger of justice, but it also serves as an ethereal materialization of Matthew's guilt and loss. Flashbacks elaborate how Tom was in Matthew's care the night he went missing, and hostilities between Matthew and his father, Jake, constructed in framed spatial tensions (Fig 74 and 75), convey Matthew's guilt and his father's blaming. Tom's ghost disrupts temporality and space and manifests itself through homely objects and possessions, motifs of traditional ghostly narratives. Matthew first hears Tom's voice while watching a recording of Jake's television appeal. The film constructs further Tom's spectral presence through moving toys in the flat, grappling with Matthew, and appearances around the estate (Fig 76-80). Labyrinths and darkened passageways of the haunted house are exchanged here for basement laundry rooms and shop windows (Fig 81). While Tom's presence mediates justice and resolution, his killer and other spirits of the estates are critical in how the haunted housing estate is a vision of a marginalised class. Tom's killer, social worker Adrian Ballan, is also the killer of local psychic Shelley Cartwright and her daughter, Rebecca. Ballan, the film resolves, is a human incarnation of a known murderer from the previous century, a spectral predator of the vulnerable. Amy, Matthew's young neighbour and friend, committed suicide to escape an abusive father. The spirits of the estate are the most vulnerable in society. To return to a political and cultural approach, if we accept the housing estate as social vision of betterment for the most vulnerable, then the ghosts of *The Disappeared* articulate the symbolic

socio-political violence committed against society's vulnerable. Applying Ernest Jones's assertion that haunting is a desire for a reunion, a form of vengeful nostalgia (Jones, 1951: 100), then the ghosts here project a wish for the marginalised to be made visible, to be given a voice. Whereas *Citadel* condemns an intergenerational underclass as revolting, the cause of the estate's ills, *The Disappeared* presents the underclass as a grouping subjugated to social hostilities and symbolic violence. While the film's configuration of this class as victims of poverty, abuse and violence is problematic in that it perpetuates stigmatization and the abject status of the class, the film yet highlights the abject process of subjugation to which the underclass is subject.

Jamie's vision of his 'other home' at Cendrillon tower in *Heartless*, is a gothic and grotesque manifestation of an inversion of home and of the fairy-tale, a preoccupation of the film, that offers transformation and a future for Jamie. It is a realisation of a private realm imbued with a paradoxical temporality that further destabilises Jamie's subjectivity and presents him as contemporary male Cinderella. In an early montage sequence, Jamie is framed sleepless in his bed as the camera slowly wanders, by panning, through his bedroom. The camera privileges the audience pictures of scenes from fairy tales that proliferate the walls, and fairy-tale figurines seated around his room, visuals that invite the audience to conceptualise Jamie's psychology. The scene conjures boyhood fantasies and frames Jamie as rejecting transition into manhood and psychologically and temporally *existing* elsewhere as well as making explicit the film functioning as a contemporary fairy-tale. His bedroom is a psychologised space and narrative cursor, portentous of

future narrative events of fantastic beings, magic and transformation, and signifying Jamie's unstable psyche. These visual cues are hinted at in the name of the tower, 'Cendrillon' being the original French title of Charles Perrault's Cinderella tale (1697/2002), while the name of the young girl, Belle, evokes Gabrielle-Suzanne de Villeneuve's *La Belle et la Bête* (1740/2008).

The haunted house's porous structures collapse under Jamie's unstable vision, as the flat is a literal inversion of Jamie's own home, stripped back and blackened to a gloomy, gothic lair (Figs 82 and 83). Jamie's disturbed vision conjures Papa B, a replacement father in the figure of the Devil, who has the powers to remove the stain from Jamie's face in a Faustian pact. Jamie's vision of a demonic wasteland culminates in this flat. The young child, Belle, who takes care of Jamie during his chrysalis process, is his substitute daughter. *Heartless* employs a traditional gothic style to render the very modern architectural vision that is the tower block. This fractured family of Papa B, Jamie and Belle is the gothic visualization of Broken Britain. The rhetoric of an underclass populated with broken and chaotic urban families, violence and brutality, is animated here in the very British tradition of the gothic. The grotesque is the gothic stylisation of disgust. As I previously discussed in the review of Tyler's paradigm of social abjection, and in the chapter 'Fashion of Fear', disgust is capitalised in the aestheticization of the underclass to justify moral condemnation of the subject, so to abject it from the social proper. In *Heartless*, the distorted family of Jamie, Papa B and Belle – a very British version of *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*'s Leatherface and family – is made monstrous as a grotesque materialisation of a broken and chaotic family. Underclass as abject meets abject

style. If disgust is employed to 'other' the underclass in popular cultural discourse, then *Heartless* furthers this othering through the form of the gothic and grotesque.

To conclude, while the haunted housing estate warrants its own exploration due to its explicit gothic rendering of the locale, it, as with the Hoodie Horror in general, exploits the contemporary discourse of the Hoodie and the underclass and in so doing itself becomes part of the discourse. The films elide the political and social struggles of marginalisation into gothic subjective tales of grief and loss, crystallising current fears in the British consciousness into entertainment. However, the gothic aesthetics should not relieve the films from political scrutiny. The relocation of tales of haunting to council estates as a development in the haunted house narrative suggests the presence of progressiveness in the haunting housing estate. However, such a position shrouds the reactionary nature of the films. While the films may 'make visible' marginalised communities, this visibility perpetuates current beliefs and prejudices held against the underclass. The return to such a traditional form of the gothic suggests a poverty of imagination not only in a cinematic vision, but also in the aesthetic practices of envisioning the disenfranchised.

3.4: Harry Brown – the battleground for neoliberal citizenship



[I]t is not always the pigsty, it is sometimes the pig, that is to blame

(John Burns, quoted in Ravetz, 2001: 22)

But as I stood in front of the mural, paying my respects to Charlie Chaplin and marvelling, yet again, that my picture was up there alongside his, I was happy to know that shortly a car would come to pick me up and take me back to my Surrey paradise.

(Caine, 2010: 351).

Walking back from informing Harry (Michael Caine) of the murder of his friend Leonard, D.S. Hicock comments to his colleague D.I Frampton, 'What a shit hole. You wouldn't live round unless you had to, would ya?' The figures of Hicock and Frampton are framed against the drab and graffitied alleyways and stairwells of the housing estate, as the camera follows from a distance while they negotiate their unnoticed exit from this Brutalist structure. Hicock's question is timely, for it explicitly crystallises an issue the film circles around throughout. What is it about living here, to borrow from Hicock's vocabulary, *that is shit*? The tower block and

council estates in general have become ‘the basic vocabulary of British cinema’ (Burke, 2007: 177) and the setting here speaks of a cinematic realism that situates *Harry Brown* within the prevailing British social realism, traceable back to the documentary tradition that spawned *Housing Problems* (Arthur Elton and E.H. Anstey, 1935), *Not a Penny of the Rents* (Cinema Action, 1968), and *The Block* (Paul Watson, 1972). Placed within more recent examples, *Last Resort*, *Red Road*, and *Nil By Mouth*, the setting ties *Harry Brown* with this realist output and other Hoodie Horrors as films that deal with the legacy of mass-housing schemes via the tower block as signifier of the marginalised (Burke, 2007: 177). But while the film coalesces with what Burke sees as an engagement with ‘struggles and traumas’ of everyday life (177), the film problematises the traditional realism by animating these ‘struggles’ through a revenge-vigilante narrative that seeks to demonise the spaces and communities of the estate through a neoliberal lens. *Harry Brown*’s setting is a ‘problem estate’. The film propels the revenge narrative as a structural necessity through the fetishization of violence, character and setting, constructing a version of monstrous realism.

The opening sequence initially presents what ‘is shit’ by encapsulating the estate’s problems as being as a result of male youth gang mentality: it thus introduces the philosophy of the film by establishing the estate as a dystopian site. A phone-filmed sequence generating gritty aesthetics introduces gang-life – drug-taking, adolescent violent bravado, meaningless killings and senseless loss of life – as the dominant violent culture of the estate, the setting of the film. The film actively exploits the contemporaneous neoliberal stigmatizing discourses of council estates that renders

inhabitants as a 'new class of problem people' (Tyler, 2013: 162). Indeed, central to the film's narrative and ideology as a Hoodie Horror and vigilante revenge thriller is gang violence and Harry's violent retribution, freeing the estate of its problems. What better way to 'clean up the streets' than a vigilante narrative: he is the cinematic animation of punishment. The stylised framing, character development and performance of Michael Caine's Harry, moving 'from an open, gentle expression – into one of hooded-eyed, heavy-set menace' (Bradshaw, 2009) is no coincidence, I assert. In evoking Caine's early role of Jack Carter, the film appeals nostalgically for a bygone working-class masculinity (as explored in depth in the section on Men) as liberator. However, as a counter-point, the film's centralisation of the structure of the estate underpass develops as a recurrent visual trope at significant narrative points that disrupts the film's abject dogma. In an initial sequence, Harry, desperate to reach the hospital to see his wife one last time before she dies, stands at the top of the path before the underpass. In a shot-reverse shot sequence, Harry weighs up risking the intimidating underpass at night, with the longer, safer route of crossing the busy road above. In deciding to remain safe, Harry misses his chance to see his wife, as she passes away before he arrives at the hospital. The impact of the environment on human life will be a main strand of the film and is here established from the outset. To return to D.S. Hicock: what he verbalises is the friction the film develops and then answers between narrative and setting. Are the troubles of the estate due to the ill-conceived architecture of the housing estate, or a result of adolescent gang violence that pervades and controls the estate grounds?

The aim of this chapter, then, is to explore how *Harry Brown* constructs and posits these two tensions within the film's arching neoliberal ideology. In essence, the film is a reactionary piece of cinema, a film that verifies and furthers the popular fabrication of council estates as classed and rampant antisocial spaces, housing an errant underclass. But while this is the default setting for the majority of Hoodie Horrors, *Harry Brown* is conspicuous for its privileging of the underpass in the narrative and its visuals. This is the location of Leonard Attwell's murder, an event that seals and unleashes Harry's conversion to vigilantism. It is a site as an entry and exit to the estate that is tyrannically guarded by the local gang. The formal strategies of the film in utilising camera phone footage of events in the underpass, challenge the relationship between class, representation and filmmaking practices of British cinema, offering an opportunity to discuss how film style crystallises class representation onscreen. However, the underpass is also the site, the structural geography, that obstructs Harry being with his wife in her final hours, opening up the film to the possibility that the architecture and design of the estate is the root cause of its ills. The demonizing discourses of territorial stigmatization are challenged by the notion that the construction and design of council estates privileged architecture and subjected residents to 'architectural fantasises' (Ravetz, 2001: 238) that gave too little store to human relations. Could *Harry Brown* reject its initial reactionary ideology for the progressive, and expose the modernist venture of social housing as an architectural failure?

Interwoven in the film's ideology is Michael Caine's star persona of working-class hero. Caine's hardened southern masculinity is forged in the working-class

landscape of London (Shail, 2004), and coalesces with the gendered class identities of the 1960s that have been recycled into the swaggering masculinities of the 1990s. In *Harry Brown*, Caine's character is a complex construction of an essentialist stereotypical working-class masculinity, *salt of the earth, honest and hard-working* Everyman, and a vigilante who is pitched against the estate gang, members of the violent and parasitical underclass, in order to abject such communities from his 'manor'. This narrative strategy captures what Tyler conceptualises as the political appeal to, 'a mythical "real working-class" in order to legitimize its mockery of the poor' (Tyler, 2013: 170). In the landscape of contemporary British cinema, the character of Harry Brown then is an ideological conductor, a figure of consent that legitimises the demonizing discourses. Underlining his significant relationship to the underpass thus establishes that locale as a transformative site housing an ideological struggle, of two opposing discourses that both point to not only the failure of social housing, but also to the passing of the Welfare State. The council estate here is the cinematic battleground for neoliberal citizenship in contemporary Britain.

3.4.1: Monstrous realism

Do you know who we are? We know how to deal with people like you - we run this estate. No one's going to save you here. The police won't come round here, mate. You'll end up dead.

(Duffy, *Harry Brown*)

The monstrous realism of *Harry Brown* draws upon the cinematic animation of social housing in the cultural memory, and the transference of the stigmatizing

discourses of the Hoodie and council estates. It begins this project in its prologue section, where the formal aspects of the filmmaking reveal the strategies used to authenticate both demonised states – and estates. The opening sequence attributes problems on the estate to drug taking and gang violence. In a sequence shot on a phone camera, we witness a gang initiation of a teenage boy having to take drugs (presumably crack), and then take and hold a gun (Fig 84). The gang members' anonymity is secured by being masked and wearing hoodies, and the setting seemingly anonymous also, apart from graffitied walls. Later events in the film reveal the identities of some gang members and the setting to be the underpass, the central location of the film. In a sudden edit, the action is transported to outside as the teenage drugged-up boy is riding shotgun with another on a scooter around the estate gangways to the surrounding park. The camera phone whirls round the action and setting in frenzied and unhinged motion, reminiscent of handheld shots of found footage texts, such as *Paranormal Activity* (Oren Peli, 2007) and *The Blair Witch Project* (Daniel Myrick and Eduardo Sánchez, 1999) (Fig 85 and 86). On seeing a young mother with a pram, the gang members stop, and the boy pulls out the gun and starts shooting excitedly, eventually hitting and injuring the woman. Speeding away, the boys drive into the path of an oncoming truck and are fatally injured. The camera phone captures all and is left lingering on the ground filming the lifeless bodies in a long take (Fig 87). While this sequence as exposition is important to the film's ideology and narrative in creating the stigmatizing discourses as previously touched upon – discourses I shall return to – the use of camera phone as a filming strategy requires dissecting also.

Whilst camera phones appear in other Hoodie Horrors, most notably *Eden Lake* and *Ill Manors*, the opening sequence of *Harry Brown* incorporates the camera into the diegesis, thus blurring the boundaries between the fictional and 'real' world in a similar way the found footage sub-genre operates. Cecilia Sayad's article on the found footage horror, focussing on the *Paranormal Activity* franchise, investigates how framing (both figuratively and stylistically) as a device disrupts the partition between reality and film (Sayad, 2016). In situating the form of the film series within its relationship to both horror and documentary, Sayad proposes that by understanding how the films stretch the frame beyond the generic markers of the horror filmic world, we can appreciate how the frame offers a development in 'the study of how reality irrupts the horror film' (66), and thus the development of the horror genre. While there is as yet little scholarship on the use of camera phones in film, Sayad's work on the found-footage provides a valuable springboard in understanding the use of the camera phone in *Harry Brown*. Whilst we can understand how the use of the camera phone works to document, audio and visually, the violent events of the film, the function of documentation of the real is problematic. Using the camera phone serves to inject a sense of realism, harking back to the documentary tradition, albeit with a contemporary aesthetic, into the narrative and gives a sense of identity of the underclass, yet it is also within this that monstrous realism – the horror – can be located. In following Sayad's argument that the frame in the found-footage is incapable of demarcating or containing the territory it surveys, the use of camera-phone in the opening sequence here makes explicit the existence of the extra-filmic discourse of the Hoodie and the council estate as an anti-social space – and the film's knowledge of

these facts. The instability of the frame here speaks of, and to, a 'reality' beyond the film frame.

Reports of the craze of 'happy slapping' began to appear in the British media from around 2005. 'Happy slapping' was an indiscriminate attack or assault on an unwitting victim filmed on a mobile phone, with the resultant footage frequently uploaded to the internet or shared via social media. While the craze may have begun as acts of comedy (the craze could be seen as loosely influenced by programmes such as *Jackass* (2000-2002) and *Dirty Sanchez* (2002-)), the resultant moral panic grew out of serious assaults and deaths as a result of these assaults, with the murder of David Morley being one of the first reported (Anon, 2005d: 11). The narrative of *Harry Brown* employs this extra-filmic device in the killing of Leonard Atwell, as the gang captures themselves joyfully murdering Leonard in the underpass.

The opening sequence though moves beyond narrative advancement. Approaching this sequence as exposition, the film establishes teenage gang mentality as the overriding threat to life on the council estate in the cinematic world, at the same time as is it just an everyday occurrence there. It also constructs the film's neoliberal ideology by adhering to the extra-filmic stigmatizing discourse of council estate as metonym for 'problem people'. The use of the camera phone to record the gang initiation and deaths seeks to draw upon a documentary aesthetic, and act as an audio-visual documentation of the events, loosening the boundaries between the fictional diegesis and the surrounding world. Although the fiction of the film adheres to some narrative continuity in later referring to the events, since the

murder of the mother is included as a radio morning news item in the succeeding scene as Harry wakes, and the audience later recognise the voice of Noel Winters and the setting of the underpass, the ontological status of this footage is uncertain. There is no explanation as to how the footage came to be 'found' or incorporated into the fictional world. While this could be an opportunity to philosophise about the notion of film and cinema, that is not within the scope of this thesis. Rather I adopt an abridged approach and contend the use of filming on a camera-phone separates the opening sequence to an extent, thus positioning it as a prologue to the film, an overarching framework through which to approach the film's events, genre and politics.

Paradoxically, the footage resides within the diegesis, but also outside it. It functions as a form of documentary footage, establishing territorial stigma as authentic and 'real', but also as the fictional world of *Harry Brown*. The camera-phone mobilises the audiences' knowledge and awareness of the factuality of the media discourses of 'happy slapping', Hoodies and council estates, evoking real people and ordinary lives outside of the fictional world. Midway through the sequence, an anonymous Hoodie (who we later learn to be Noel Winters), directly addresses the camera. Holding up a gun to the camera phone, he testifies, 'this is how we roll' (Fig 88). Rather than positioning this as a breaking of the fourth wall, this address inserts the publicly imagined underclass and Hoodie identity directly into the film, as a masked, threatening, anonymous figure. This marks a direct transfer of the national abject from the media and political rhetoric. The footage speaks of what Sayad sees as symptomatic of our time in that we live in an era of

filming and broadcasting ourselves, thus ‘turning of everydayness into spectacle’ (Sayad, 2016: 49). Drawing upon an extra-filmic rhetoric of class, space and age through its invocation of the urban, feral youth, the film transforms a means of self-identification into the film’s aesthetic realisation of class formation; this is the film’s animation of the Hoodie. Sayad’s words can be used to indicate how the two realisms – the social realist tradition and the abject discourses – are animated in *Harry Brown*. The film can sit within what I argue to be an overarching trajectory of contemporary British social realism, in that spectacle – excessive representations, dramatic storytelling, monstrous miserablism – is employed more persistently in contemporary texts as *a slice of life*. Spectacle, in the forms of violence, identity, events, *is* the everyday. As established in the introduction, the more abject the site, the more excessive the representation. And as Tyler sets forth in her construction of the national abject, these figures are distorted and fetishized in order to legitimise public consent for ‘punitive governmental measures’ (Tyler 2013: 10). In *Harry Brown*, the ‘everyday’ is constructed as the daily grind of gang violence. Despite the spectacularisation of anti-social behaviour on offer in the film, the onscreen violence of *Harry Brown* is conceptualised as normative, as expected because it resonates with extra-filmic rhetoric of council estates.

This opening footage also seeks to introduce the film’s neoliberal ideology by resonating with the politics of both New Labour and the Conservative party at that time, which decoupled estate issues from the effects of economic policies or fortunes of the nation and attached them to the irresponsible living of their communities. In his 1997 ‘no forgotten people’ speech, delivered at the very

location used for *Harry Brown*, the Aylesbury Estate, Tony Blair vowed to return the workless class from estates 'dependent on benefits and the black economy ... where the biggest employer is the drugs industry' (Blair, 1997) to the formal economy. Over ten years later, David Cameron, appropriating social reform for the Conservative Party in calling for a new morality to fix Broken Britain claimed, 'social problems are often the consequences of the choices that you make' (Cameron, 2008). The surface realism of calls of both for communalism belies the neoliberal strategy of refashioning social ills as a matter of individual responsibility.

The use of the camera phone further serves to authenticate stylistically what is seen onscreen as 'real'. The camera phone's grainy cinematography and handheld form falls in line with a documentary aesthetic, giving weight to the sequence and film as a form of realism. The documentation of gang violence and drug-taking speaks of an engagement with social issues, a territory traditionally associated with social realism in British cinema, albeit one animated here as self-broadcasting. The alignment of form and content within a practice of realism and the 'real', situates the sequence, and the film as a whole, as a variation of social commentary, thus aligning it within the lineage of film-making practices of British social realism. The opening sequence of *Harry Brown* is symptomatic of the monstrous realism of the Hoodie Horror cycle, in that it imbues the strategies of realism with a neoliberal ideology that seeks to cinematically spacialise class discourse by the othering of the underclass. The camera phone as documenting tool dissolves the boundaries between fiction and extra-filmic, authenticating abject discourse as real.

3.4.2: The underpass

To them out there, this is just entertainment.

(Harry, *Harry Brown*)

The abject discourse of council estates constructed in the prologue is continued throughout the film, but increasingly associated with the underpass as the narrative progresses. As mentioned previously, narrative continuity bridges the prologue and the rest of the film through the radio news bulletin in the immediate succeeding scene. The camera, close to Harry Brown, captures him in a close-up, listening to the radio as he lies awake in bed before rising. At the close of that day, Harry hears noises on the estate and draws back his curtains to look out. The film cuts to frame Harry's view for the audience, and we see youths at a distance below vandalising a parked car. The visuals offer no explanations to motive, but rather present the gang as feral and participating in anti-social behaviour as a means of entertainment. We later learn this is Harry's assumption, and as he is the ideological conductor, the film asks the audience to accept this stigmatizing view. As the car alarm sounds, the male owner comes out to challenge the gang. The youths viciously attack the car owner, beating him to the ground and leaving him in a pool of blood as his wife runs to his rescue. As the youths flee, the woman continues to cry out for help as a trickle of neighbours come to their aid. The scene cuts to the camera facing upwards to Harry peering out of his window in a longshot, slowly closing his curtains. No-one else looks out of the rows of windows in the camera's frame as gang violence is not a periodic spectacle, but rather a daily happening, almost a banal one.

The pacing of Harry's experience of violence – both aural and visual – bookmarking the day and his daily routine, frames gang deviancy as an everyday reality not only for Harry, but also for the rest of the estate residents. In her paradigm of social abjection, Tyler argues that the persistent repetition of abject states in cultural discourses enmesh such fabrications in the notion of the everyday and become a normative state: abject normativity (Tyler, 2013). The preliminary scenes in *Harry Brown* construct estate violence as normative by aligning it with the structural pace of the film, the repetition of the daily, entwining it with the daily rhythms of Harry and the estate. Of course, the social realist tradition is associated with 'framing the lives of the real' within their 'real environments' (Forrest, 2013: 16) and with the impact of said environmental factors on identity (Hallam and Marshment, 2000: 184), offering *a slice of life* in order to 'redress social and representational inequalities in relation to class' (Lay, 2002: 15). In *Harry Brown*, observational camerawork of the British realist canon gives way to the stylistic practices of genre filmmaking, in a variation on the tradition with a style that claims to render a realism, no matter how problematic. However, the redressing of class in *Harry Brown* seeks to reinstate the imagined working-class of the worthy, the hard-working, and the upright, and to abject the 'parasitical, pathological underclass' (Tyler, 2013: 170), a narrative strategy that resonates with New Labour's redesign of citizenship that sought to expunge those unwilling to embrace the 'bonds of civil society' (Blair, 1997).

Reinforcing this cinematic message and the righteousness of Harry's vigilante actions is Leonard Attwell's murder and its filming. Leonard is murdered in the

underpass, after confiding to Harry of his continual harassment by the local kids. Leonard shows Harry the bayonet he now carries, admitting he is scared, but Leonard is killed that night. Harry and the audience are only privileged with witnessing the event once he begins his acts of vengeance. Tracking the gang, Harry captures member Marky and tortures him until Marky hands over his phone and plays the footage. In a highly edited scene that draws upon character empathy, realist aesthetics and the fetishized discourses of council estates, Harry, and the audience with him, watch the harrowing events brutally unfurl. The sequence is constructed as the moral centre of the film. It is a scene designed to draw alignment between the audience and Harry, and one that reconfigures the moral realism associated with the social realist tradition (Higson, 1996) for a neoliberal revenge thriller. The morality of the film is inflected with neoliberal ideology of expunging the abject, disposing of the disposables, from the social proper. What we witness, and how we witness, functions to validate Harry's actions and to authenticate the veracity of the stigmatizing discourses of council estates, inside and outside of the cinematic universe.

In a succession of close-ups, the sequence robustly secures the frame and focus on Harry and the camera phone footage. Cutting between the two, the audience watch with Harry the horrific murder and defilement of his friend, Leonard, as the gang urinate on him after fatally stabbing him (Fig 89-96). In breaking the integrity of the frame, the mobile footage is transfigured as the fictional world in two key shots (Figs 91 and 93), recalling the film's prologue, incorporating the mobile phone camera once again into the diegesis. The instability of the frame, to return to

Sayad's work, collapses the film and the surrounding world, and merges the extra-filmic with the diegetic world. The violation of the frame paradoxically enhances the 'realism' of the film as it serves to authenticate 'what is known' by Harry and by the audience of the underclass via the figure of the Hoodie in the fictional world. In a return to documenting reality, realism is not achieved by observational or naturalistic camerawork in *Harry Brown*, but rather through the act of capturing and witnessing events.

If the sequence is the moral heart of the film, then the underpass is *the* abject space. The underpass is critical to the film, narratively and figuratively. Its liminal geography renders cinematically how Tyler conceptualises council estates as subject to the abject discourses, as the moral boundaries of the nation-state (Tyler, 2013). The film constructs the underpass as a passageway between estate as a border zone and the wider local geography. It is within the underpass that the morality – the battle between Hoodie and the working-class – plays out between Harry and the local gang. The underpass acts as entry to those spaces that house abject citizens, those who are 'obliged to inhabit the impossible edges of modernity' (McClintock, 1995: 72), drawing the boundary between 'garbage-can populations' (Khanna, 2009: 193) and wider society; the underpass constructs a binary geography of failed citizens, the undeserving inside the borders, and citizens, the deserving, beyond the confines of the estate. The underpass symbolises, then, the rhetoric of class discourse in contemporary Britain. Enmeshed with the underpass and with the film's broader engagement with class is the character of Harry and the screen persona of the actor, Michael Caine.

3.4.3: Michael Caine

Michael Caine is Harry Brown

(Credit sequence, *Harry Brown* Fig 97)

You failed to maintain your weapon, son

(*Harry Brown*)

You should have called an ambulance for the girl

(*Harry Brown*)

The moral alignment of audience to Harry, necessary for the film's generic trajectory, is possible due to the convergence of Harry as sympathetic character and Michael Caine's star value. While the avenging narrative requires a morality to justify the avenger's motives and actions, Caine's star persona serves to validate the film's ideology by being the *right kind of male* to undertake abjecting the underclass, and thus 'cleaning' the estate of all its troubles. In Harry, generic structures unite with star history to construct an ideologically fused, yet romanticised and essentialist working-class masculinity.

Pat Kirkham's and Janet Thumin's address of the cinematic animation of masculinity asserts that men onscreen are sites where moral conflicts and social anxieties are capable of been played out, but are also gender constructions always positioned within, and subject to, the underlying power structures that support patriarchy (Kirkham and Thumin, 1995: 11). One such area of power relations is the depiction of class, which has critical relevance not just to British cinema of the new millennium, but specifically here to *Harry Brown*, as a film that seeks a particular working-class masculine identity in a period where class identities are in flux, or

rather subjected to the neoliberal strategies that seek to reconfigure class identity in different markers. As Tyler summarises, class identity has been eroded and reconfigured in a landscape of Britain, itself transformed from an 'industrial empire' to a neoliberal society 'characterized by new forms of labour and consumption' (Tyler, 2013: 177). As Hoggart states, 'class distinctions do not die: they merely learn new ways of expressing themselves (Hoggart, 1989: vii).

The character of Harry is constructed as the binary opposite to the estate Hoodies. Where the Hoodies are feral, violent, and brutish products of uncaring and broken families, Harry is an ordered, properly attired, respectful family man. Harry's working-class maleness is constructed by his daily routine and the spatial association with home. His care in dressing himself – with laced up, shined shoes, and tie – present Harry as a man of routine and dignity, possibly alluding to Harry's past spent in the marines, but also visually positioning him within the essentialist discourse of the working-class as honest and self-respecting (Tyler, 2013: 170). His friendship with Leonard, and his interactions with the police and hospital staff, reinforce Harry's working-class affiliations, by presenting him as community focused and able to build communal bonds, as opposed to the violent assertions of the Hoodies. Losing those close to him, his wife, Leonard, and as we learn, a daughter years before, constructs Harry as sympathetic character; his lonely figure is framed alone in his flat, in the local pub, and as the sole mourner at Leonard's funeral. The film's construction of Harry as retired figure situates his working-class credentials as something passing, something lost, but something yearned for as necessary in the present. Whilst Harry is surrounded by ghosts, he is also one. A

nostalgic longing for this working-class masculinity is fulfilled by the star history of Michael Caine. Kirkham and Thumin's analysis that representations of masculinity are subject to temporal, social and cultural provisions, malleable to the application of numerous ideological positions (Kirkham and Thumin, 1995: 18, 28-29), is a useful approach in contextualising Harry/Caine's masculinity. In an era where white, working-class/underclass masculinity has been perceived to be impacted by a rapid de-industrialisation, decreased employment opportunities and at a higher risk of depression (Jones, 2014), such class maleness would be insufficient to combat the feral underclass of the film. Caine's retro-laden masculinity imbues Harry with a nostalgic working-class swagger, 'a specific masculine *class* identity' (Shail, 2004: 73) that constructs the role of avenger and hero as a pleasurable spectacle, and inscribes the council estate as a proletarian sphere, overwriting its abject identity.

Work undertaken by scholars (see Monk 2000a, 2000b; Smith, 2002; Dave, 2006) identifies a temporal tremor in the underclass masculinities of British film of the 1990s. Films such as *Trainspotting*, *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* and *Face* reconfigure rebellious class masculinities of the 1960s into gratifying contemporaneous manifestations that quiver with cultural kudos in a decade conceptualised as Cool Britannia. Caine's screen persona of the 1960s finds cultural resonance with these returning class males. Robert Shail's analysis of Caine in *Alfie* (Lewis Gilbert, 1966), *The Italian Job* (Peter Collinson, 1969) and *Get Carter* (Mike Hodges, 1971), conceptualised Caine as a variation of the working-class hero rebel, at ease in a working-class dominated sphere, reassuringly laddish and rooted in

'proletarian superiority' (Shail, 2004: 73). While Shail notes a hardening of masculinity in Jack Carter, he also highlights Carter's potency and dynamism (75). Caine's Harry amalgamates these pleasurable working-class male tropes into a classed masculinity that the film acknowledges, an awareness evidenced by the film's poster that captures Harry's dynamic swagger against the symbol of a target, an image associated with that epitome of modernist living from the 1960s, the Mod (Fig 98). Harry Brown then is paradoxically progressive in his retro construction, injected with a youthful vigour that propels his vigilantism and broaches an affinity with the spectator. Caine's Harry reinvigorates Caine's iconographic identity for a contemporary moment that requires a working-class masculinity as hero.

3.4.4: Flawed architecture

The dream life luxury living was a pleasant No. 10 whim,
But somewhere down the line of production,
They left out human beings'

(*'The Planner's Dream Goes Wrong'*, *The Jam*, 1982)

[W]here all that is left of the high hopes of the post-war planners is derelict concrete.

(Blair, 1997)

To return to the introduction of Manors, and to the article by Burke, *Harry Brown* falls in line with other texts of British realist cinema by grappling with the legacy of social housing as a political and ideological project. As with many other realist outings, the film veers towards (vehemently) attributing responsibility and blame to the anti-social behaviour of the community. The film in a sense is a cinematic vision

of populism in contemporary Britain. However, the film also suggests visually that some accountability rests with the flawed architecture of misguided utopian ideals. The centralisation of the underpass as a narrative setting and recurring visual trope introduces the possibility of challenging the overriding discourse that stigmatises communities as abject, and replacing it with one that deems social housing as a failed architectural experiment.

Harry doing battle with the underpass is a visual motif of the film, but his initial encounter with this crucial feature of his landscape is bathed with melancholy, as his decision not to risk taking the shortcut the underpass offers stops him being with his wife as she dies. As is a regular robust editing practice in the film, Harry is constructed in the frame as confronting, and being confronted with, his surroundings. In a succession of shots, Harry hurries through the rain and stands before the underpass ruminating whether to chance entering, before deciding to take the safe, but longer option (Figs 99-103). While the overarching creed of the film is to look to human, or rather inhuman relations, for the estate's ills, this sequence offers an opportunity to explore other avenues, and to consider the impact of estate planning on the human condition.

In her book, *Council Housing and Culture*, Alison Ravetz approaches social housing as a utopian project, idealistic in vision, yet corrupted in delivery by 'economics, bureaucracy and politics' (Ravetz, 2001: 107). In understanding how estates came to fail, Ravetz looks beyond the incendiary and simplistic explanations of tenant deviancy, to explore more complex scenarios that take in design, planning, provision and management, amongst other contributing factors (189). She provides

examples of inept planning: Broadwater Farm was constructed between 1967 and 1970, and had to be built on stilts as the location was prone to flooding. The estate also included miles of walkways and decks, spaces giving rise to criminal behaviour (186). London's Barbican, little recognised as a council estate, included a cultural centre that non-residents could only find when a yellow line was painted as a guide (178). Ravetz assesses that estates at most risk of failing were those with architectural flaws, deck access estates which combined 'inter-locked dwellings with public walkways over ceilings, and ground levels given to stores and parking space that were rapidly abandoned to wreckers' (188). Ravetz concludes such designs created 'peculiar horrors' of estates (188). Unsound design constructed unfamiliar geographies that confused public and private space, geographies that provided safe places for criminal activity. The modernism of housing projects that amalgamated architecture, technology and mass production, strove to apply abstract theory to housing, resulting in a 'social-cum-aesthetic philosophy' (107), giving rise to large-scale housing schemes, with little acknowledgement of the impact on human conditions of the residents.

The underpass in *Harry Brown* encapsulates the failure of this modernist vision for council estates and mass social housing. The function of an underpass is to connect the estate, by the quickest and safest means possible, to the wider community. It is an *architectural* solution for practical connectivity for estate residents, rather than a human one, since the people on the estates were thus isolated from their surroundings. It is the effects of architectural vision at the detriment to human relations that *Harry Brown* concerns itself with and provides the film's monsters.

The potency of feral adolescents as estate issue pushes out any significance of contextualising council estate within its historical development. The application of the generic strategies of the revenge thriller endangers *Harry Brown* of being the 'dog-whistle' of contemporary British cinema, bringing to heel those who would position the film as a 'state-of-the-nation' text in its *illumination* of Broken Britain.

3.4.5: Conclusion

In my opinion our feral underclass in this country is too big, it has been growing, and now needs to be diminished.

(Kenneth Clark cited in Anon, 2011a).

The above citation is from Kenneth Clarke's speech to the Conservative party conference in 2011, just months after the London riots. Clarke's comment encapsulates the growing consensus of attitudes towards the poorest in the country in the millennium, which *Harry Brown* anticipates. The closing sequence of the film clearly rejects an alternative discourse of council estates, sites fixed in the national psyche as loci that affirm ideas of belonging and citizenship. The underpass in the film is transformed into the cinematic site that violently 'works through' notions of citizenship, ultimately providing consensus, through formal strategies, identities and representations, of a revolting underclass requiring punitive action. It is a filmic example of how class distinctions are culturally imagined and discursively reproduced in Britain.

As the film closes, the gangs are replaced by children playing, the brown drabness of the film's palette is replaced by the camera looking up to actual blue skylines and sunshine, and Harry Brown is able to use the underpass in line with its design (Figs

104-108). The colours, framing and plot unequivocally present a new dawn, and a new day, for council estates. Harry's cleansing of the estate of its anti-social behaviour transforms the place from abject geography to communal living space for the deserving working-class. Whilst I do not seek to position the film as social commentary, *Harry Brown's* stylised rendering of neoliberal dogma allows us to approach how the public imaginary has shaped the dystopian discourses of council estates, and how it has come 'to feel, think and act about Britain's poor' (Tyler, 2013: 176).

As a closing note of interest, the fate of the film's setting also taps into the demonising discourses and 'cleansing' of estates. As noted above, much of the film was shot on the Aylesbury Estate in Southwark, London, an estate that was called a slum on the day of its official opening ceremony (Ravetz, 2001: 186). Since the release of *Harry Brown*, however, it has been subject to an even more punishing act of neoliberalism. As with many other estates, Aylesbury has been the object of a regeneration plan relocating residents and selling the land to developers to construct luxury flats, with minimal allocation for social housing. The documentary, *Dispossession: The Great Social Housing Swindle*, seeks to look further than the demonising discourses as responsible for the demise of social housing, rather exploring and exposing an agenda behind the defunding, demolition and regeneration of Britain's council estates. The Aylesbury Estate of *Harry Brown* no longer exists. However, the alternative discourse of the decline of social housing as evinced in *Dispossession* and others seeks to challenge what *Harry Brown* abjectly animates.

3.5: *Eden Lake*: The urban pastoral through the lens of a rural horror



How now brown cow

(Brett, *Eden Lake*)

This is Brett's greeting to Jenny as the teenage gang she is desperately fleeing trap her in the bloody woodland nightmare. This seemingly trivial comment is actually one of considerable substance. Having left her fatally wounded boyfriend Steve to find help, and, in the process, wounding herself by stepping on a sharp implement that impales her foot, Jenny has her flight to escape thwarted by what in this hostile landscape proves to be a fault in her character: her belief in the innate goodness of children. Jenny, thinking that the young boy looking for bugs will lead her to safety out of the wood is instead deceived, and led back to Brett and his gang. Brett's gleeful pronouncement of this elocution exercise mocks Jenny's inability to escape whilst hurling back the middle-class disdain she had displayed towards him and the other gang members in previous scenes. Her education and upwardly mobile identity is of no help pitched against bored teenagers looking for violent play. Critically, what this one line encapsulates is indicative of the violent confrontation that forms the basis of the horror running throughout the film: class difference. This is not class in a traditional, albeit long-gone, sense of classification

based on earnings. Rather, the teenage gang, their families and wider community, are constructed within the discourse of the urban underclass, and are made abject through their behaviour. *Eden Lake*, widely accepted as a rural or backwoods horror film, transports an urban feral class to a rural setting. Jenny and Steve as the outsiders are cultured and financially mobile – model neoliberal citizens – and are constructed by the filmic strategies against the local community.

The significance of this scene, then, is in how it highlights what is symptomatic of the mechanics of horror in *Eden Lake*. Rather than spawning from the geography, as is expected of a rural or backwoods horror film, the horror emanates from a discourse on class and specifically from the othering of a publicly imagined underclass such as the Hoodie. Correlating with the breakdown of class distinctions in a post-industrialist Britain, class categorisation is, to some degree, ambiguous in the film, and more akin to the identity politics of neoliberalism. Jenny and Steve's 'class' is never fully defined. From their consumerism (Steve's car, sunglasses and scuba-diving equipment), their lifestyle (weekend breaks and their desire for French baguette and butcher's sausages for breakfast), and their behaviour (Jenny's refusal to swear), the pair epitomises the neoliberalist, mobile and flexible notion of selfhood by adopting the 'right' lifestyle. As Val Gilles summarises, 'prosperity derives from the right kind of (middle-class) self' (Gilles, 2005: 837). Brett's spitting of '*how now, brown cow*' belittles their social mobility whilst drawing attention to his own deficient identity. His actions, in stealing Steve's car, and donning Steve's sunglasses in the closing sequence, posits that social mobility for the underclass can only be acquired through deviancy – by taking, not by earning. The film's release

during a time where 'Hoodie' was the pejorative abusive term for a feral underclass adolescent underscores that Brett becomes representative of the underclass masses. Indeed, the film widens the threat from the youths to encompass their families and the wider community, butting against sensationalist claims that the film highlights a British adolescence out of control. Concerns and issues of an underclass have traditionally been associated with a certain type of film in Britain, the social realist venture. The othering of the underclass in *Eden Lake* is constructed through the mechanisms of a horror film, thus fusing two central traditions of British cinema: the horror film, and the social realist canon.

Drawing upon this view, it is the intention of this chapter to argue for the film's inclusion in the cycle, despite its rural setting, by highlighting the disconnect between narrative, location and horror. I will contextualise how the film follows the narrative trajectory and plot structure symptomatic of an American rural horror, as typified by *Deliverance* (John Boorman, 1972), *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre*, *I Spit on Your Grave* (Steven R. Monroe, 1978), and *Wrong Turn* (Rob Schmidt, 2003), but constructs the scenes of horror from the discourse of an imagined terrorizing urban youth as perceived in the national abject of the Hoodie. *Eden Lake*, due to its setting, appears to be the anomaly of the cycle for not being located on a council estate or within an urban locale. However, I will argue that its setting is something of a 'red herring' in terms of categorising the film for, as stated previously, the film relocates the discourse of stigmatized social housing communities to a rural setting.

Drawing upon, Carol Clover's urbanoia paradigm (Clover, 1992) and Bernice M. Murphy's taxonomy of the rural backwoods horror film (Murphy, 2013), I will

illustrate that while such approaches may account for the transnational qualities of *Eden Lake*, the approach to the Hollywood rural horror film is inadequate to analyse the film's 'rural' community and its violent behaviour. Rather, *Eden Lake* is more akin to Lindsey Decker's concept of 'transnational genre hybridity' (Decker, 2016: 67-81) in that the film uses the narrative structures of an American rural backwoods horror film in order to create a recognisable British genre film, whilst drawing upon contemporary British cultural and social concerns and the tradition of British social realism. As Paul McDonald has argued, 'the presence of Hollywood entertainment [in the UK] is just one example of how the popular imagination of UK residents is continually formed through transnational flows of symbolic goods', resulting in how 'Hollywood film is today as much a part of British culture as fish and chips or warm beer' and equally Hollywood is 'part of the very substance of the [British] film industry' (McDonald, 2008: 220-23). However, despite transposing these American genre mechanics into a national cinema, the film still engages with the British concerns and discourses of class and adolescent deviancy which, albeit unintentionally (James Watkins has been resolute in stating *Eden Lake* is a genre film, not a slice of social realism (Watkins cited in Tookey, 2008b)), elicits semblances with the tradition of British social realism. A film engaging with transnational sensibilities does not equate to a complete Americanisation of British film. *Eden Lake* is a super-hybrid film, in that it engages with both American and British film sensibilities, whilst straddling differing horror sub-genres. By drawing intertextuality from national discourses, American horror films and British social realism, *Eden Lake* functions to horrorise the real, in that it constructs the British underclass within the aesthetics of horror by inserting social problems into a genre

piece, resulting in capturing horror as the new realism in contemporary British cinema. Furthermore, I will argue that the film contains representations and horror comparable to later films in the cycle, and therefore is to be considered a Hoodie Horror.

Released on 12th September 2008, *Eden Lake* was the first film of the cycle to be categorised by description in film reviews as a Hoodie Horror. Henry Fitzherbert's review of how the film left him, 'scared witless by Hoodie Horrors' (Fitzherbert, 2008), encapsulates the approaches that are now familiar critical frameworks for analysing *Eden Lake*. Fitzherbert appraises the film in relation to its considered genre predecessors, the American backwoods horrors *Deliverance* and *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, whilst contextualising and enthusing on, the horror wrought in terms of discourses of class (2008). Fitzherbert is not alone in his reception of the film, but rather his piece is indicative of *Eden Lake's* critical reception. The film's adolescent violence resonated with *The Daily Mail's* film critic Chris Tookey also. Tookey acknowledged the film would be accused of class hatred, but admired *Eden Lake* for its willingness to display 'the true horrors we fear day to day [that] are not supernatural bogeymen or monsters ... They're our own youth' (Tookey, 2008b). For Tookey, the upsurge in the focus of adolescent deviancy within contemporary culture cannot be overstated and the film only serves to capitalise on contemporary fears.

As the first horror film of the cycle, of course *Eden Lake* had yet to be subjected to the generic blueprints that can only be drawn up with a collection of films to compare and contrast. Beyond the exploitation of the image of a hoodie in the

marketing materials for both *Kidulthood* and *Adulthood*, there was no pull to align both these films with *Eden Lake*, a film generically in opposition to the such 'Brit Grit' ventures. On the film's release, 'Hoodie Horror' was still a phrase that served to set up audience expectations by drawing upon the extra-diegetic discourses of Hoodies, and the perfect cultural soundbite to capture an essentialist concept of *Eden Lake*. While later outings, *Harry Brown* and *Ill Manors* would follow the cinematic focus on gang violence, still though, the film is singular in the cycle for its more ruralised setting, a stark contrast to its descendants, which centralise the urban landscape of housing estates. James Leggott observes of the relationship between genre hybridity and critical reception of contemporary British horror films that the greater the critical acclaim and cultural impact, the greater the level of 'generic impurity' of the film (Leggott, 2008: 81). Although not specifically applied to *Eden Lake*, Leggott's observation could undoubtedly pertain to the film. As this chapter will attest, the film is soaked in generic conventions that has led it to be categorised and analysed in terms of differing sub-genres, such as survivalist horror, revenge film, body horror and slasher film, many of which can comfortably sit under the umbrella term of a rural horror. However, when analysed, the horror performed in *Eden Lake* displays more of an affiliation with its urban descendants, *Harry Brown* and *Ill Manors*, than, say, other rural horrors such as *Dog Soldiers*, *A Field in England* (Ben Wheatley, 2013), or more classic examples of *Blood on Satan's Claw* and *The Wicker Man* (Robin Hardy, 1973). When contextualised against the contemporaneous abject discourses of an underclass deviancy, the characters of Brett and his father, Jon, are constructed as more urban figures, displaying a violence associated with the urban adolescent Hoodie and the families and

communities from which they are spawned. This, as I argue problematizes the idea of *Eden Lake* as a rural horror. The horror does not derive from the landscape; there is nothing rotten in the earth (Scovell, 2017).

It is not the first time that the American concept of a rural horror has been problematic when applied to a British horror located within a rural geography. Kim Newman observes the issues in tracing an American rural horror framework against *Straw Dogs* (Sam Peckinpah, 1971). Detecting the geographical variances between rural Cornwall and rural America, Newman discerns that the American Nightmare has no adequate limey cousin, for 'Rural England is too genteel to harbour the Leatherface family in the twentieth century' (Newman, 2011: 86). Rural England is not rural enough. *Eden Lake*, similar in places to *Straw Dogs*, also yields issues with landscape. Reasons for the dissonance between plot and horror may lie with the director, James Watkins. In an interview with *Movie Film Review*, Watkins addressed both violence and classed representation as stemming from his own unnerving experience of living near a council estate and feeling intimidated when walking through the underpass where local adolescents would gather (Tookey, 2008b). *Eden Lake*, then, is an urban horror through the lens of a rural horror film.

3.5.1: The landscape of *Eden Lake*

Writing on the function of landscape in horror films, the film critic James Rose identifies two essential characteristics the horror landscape must possess: it must be both 'civilised' and 'primitive' in order to 'enforce tensions within the narrative' (Rose, 2007). Developing this argument, Rose contends 'Within horror films, the threat often inhabits the depicted landscape and so must be equated with it ... as

hostile and as primitive as the space itself' (2007). Following Rose's lead, both Johnny Walker and Stella Hockenhull focus on contextualising *Eden Lake* not only in its rural setting, but expanding on this, also within the tradition of rural horror cinema. Walker finds semblance between the film and those within the British occult horror films of the 1970s in that both construct rural folks in terms of an excessive and deviant behaviour that has no place within a civilised society; underlying *Eden Lake* are themes of 'excessive reproduction' and bad parenting, whilst the 1970s occult films centralised sexual promiscuity and fertility (Walker, 2016: 101). Drawing upon Carol Clover's renowned description of a rural horror's narrative trajectory as a transition from civilisation to savagery, in that 'People from the country ... are not people like us' (Clover, 1992: 124), Walker reads *Eden Lake's* narrative within this city/country paradigm, describing the rural citizens as 'savage yokels' but also reading the differences between the weekenders, Jenny and Steve, and the rural community as a confrontation between the middle-class and a working-class 'threatening rural other' (Walker, 2016: 101). Hockenhull seeks to approach the landscape of *Eden Lake* within the Burkean sublime, in that horror cinema 'acquires its own visual authority drawing upon specific codes and features', especially within the long-distance shot as it 'provides a perspective enhancing the threatening mood' (Hockenhull, 2009: 80). Hockenhull posits that the film offers the spectator an opportunity to engage directly with the landscape, an idyll imbued with menace and dread. For Hockenhull, the film's director constructs explicit shots and scenes that draw upon a horror vocabulary. Pylons, barbed wire, undergrowth and trees are collectively framed as an aesthetic of horror visualising a threatening

and entrapping landscape that seeks to thwart any chance of escape for Jenny and Steve (92-99).

Both Walker and Hockenhull's approaches underline the complex construction that underpins *Eden Lake*, and gives rise to the film's reputation of being the superlative film of the cycle. It also highlights how space, place and landscape are problematic functions within the film. Walker's assertion that the film follows the narrative trajectory and employs narrative conventions of a rural horror is an appropriate analysis. However, in aligning the hostile community within Clover's convention of an uncivilised 'threatening rural Other' (Clover cited in Walker, 2016: 101), Walker risks generalising, and does not sufficiently acknowledge British historical cinematic animations of a threatening rural, nor the close proximity of the town in *Eden Lake* to the wooded landscape that is the setting for the majority of the film. As I elaborate later, Walker's desire to stress the film's adherence to the conventions of a horror film, and his refusal to substantiate the inflections of realism, leaves him too narrow a framework through which to approach the film. Walker fails to recognise how the film's horror aesthetics subvert the expectations of a rural horror. The adolescent gang and the community within which they live reside in an urban setting, a problematic construct if we are to approach this population as rural and uncivilised, using Clover's paradigm, and thus analyse the film within the rural horror tradition. Hockenhull's methodology, whilst illuminating the function landscape plays in the plot of *Eden Lake*, does not address the critical function of the spectacle of horror that emanates from the adolescent gang and their families within the narrative. Approaching *Eden Lake* as a rural horror restricts analysis to

within that paradigm. Instead I would propose that whilst the narrative trajectory conforms to the conventions of a rural horror, spatial distance and the othering of an underclass community is reconfigured from the convention of geographical distance to the juxtaposition of, and confrontation between, exemplary neoliberal citizens and failed citizens of a stigmatized community.

3.5.2: The British pagan pastoral

Cinematic countrysides are affirmative engagements with nature and the non-human, and nightmare encounters with a monstrous and de-natured in-human; the site where bodies are dismantled and lost, and the place where identities are reconstructed and found. Cinematic countrysides are the transformative possibilities of the wide-open road and enchanted landscapes of the yellow brick road; the degenerate moralities of the outback town and the terrifying realities of the battleground.

(Fish, 2007: 1)

Robert Fish's 2007 *Cinematic Countrysides* seeks to ripen the recent expedited interdisciplinary intellectual pursuit of the cinematic rural, in order to understand 'how film makes rural and rural makes film' (Fish, 2007: 1). This edited collection acknowledges the long established, and ubiquitous, relationship between film and the urban in which cinema's industrial and textual practices mark it as the archetypal medium with which to explore and represent the city, for 'the cinematic city is designed to be both emblematic, and paradigmatic, to our condition' (3). Fish seeks to redress the imbalance with a body of research that evidences how the relationship between cinema and the rural has been underrated. From exhibition to textual practices, Fish pursues a cinematic countryside as a category of distinction

that is a foil to representations of the urban, but also involved in an interdependent relationship with the city in which both shape each other. Working on the oppositional narrative of countryside/city paradigm, *Cinematic Countrysides* explores a multitude of rural landscapes that are constructed as both depraved and 'unmodern', but also authentic and healing; above all, he illustrates that they construct the rural as more than an 'absence of cinematic experience' and can contest and critique concerns and themes of nationhood, identity and representation just as their urban cousins do (6-12).

From *The Wicker Man*, *Kill List* and *The Reeds* (Nick Cohen, 2010), this countryside/city archetype underpins both narrative structure and acts of terror of differing types of rural horror films, both in Hollywood and other national cinemas, and has been most famously standardised in Carol Clover's urbanoia theory. Films pivot on explicit and distinct differentiation between the urban and the rural, not just in terms of landscape but also in characters' identities, with the rural coded as other, monstrous and threatening. The paradigm works best in British horror cinema when it draws upon the gothic tradition or upon folk horror. *The Wicker Man*, *The Witches* (Cyril Frankel, 1966) and *A Field in England* are examples of these traditions, which are the prevailing discourses of British rural horror cinema. Indeed, Tanya Krzywinska places this discernible cinematic rural tradition within the British pagan landscapes of folklore and the gothic. To journey into the countryside is to return to a primitivism, a horror mechanism that articulates modern cultural conflicts and allows rural Britain to be constructed as invested with concerns of modern, or contemporaneous counter-culture so that the 'British pagan

countryside becomes infused with subversive resonance' (Krzywinska, 2007: 84). The pagan practices and communities of *The Wicker Man*, *The Devil Rides Out* (Terence Fisher, 1968) and *Blood on Satan's Claw* explicitly delineate the rural as being in opposition to the urban, and construct the countryside with a visible identity of its own. This idea of the rural as insurrectionary underpins Robert Macfarlane's 2015 article, 'The Eeriness of the English Countryside', in which the author traces the English rural as a haunted and unsettling idyll brimming with a restless dead, through differing cultural forms. Viewing such depictions by way of the ghost stories of M.R. James as a haunting predecessor and presence, habitually returning and renewing, Macfarlane explores more contemporary addresses that perceive a land constituted by uncanny forces, resulting in a 'spectred rather than a sceptred isle' (Macfarlane, 2015: 1-2). Taking in music, novels, art works and theatre, from PJ Harvey's 2011 *Let England Shake*, Patrick Keiller's *Robinson In Ruins* (2010), and Jez Butterworth's *Jerusalem* (2009) to Paul Kingsnorth's *The Wake* (2014), Jeremy Millar's *The Drowned Man (The Willows)* (2015), to Ben Wheatley's *A Field In England*, Macfarlane argues that he finds a radical rural that ploughs a furrow through each illustration. As with Krzywinska's stance that 1970s British rural horror cinema spoke of the sexualised counter-culture of that period, Macfarlane finds these contemporary pastoral spectres make visible dissent and contemporary anxieties regarding a disturbed England consumed in and by globalisation. Punctured with anger under the soil, these rural-scapes, for Macfarlane are where 'the hedgerows, fields, ruins, hills and saltings of England have been set seething' (Macfarlane, 2015: 1-2). It is a landscape troubled with what is missing, rather than populated with what is present.

By comparison, *Eden Lake*, bears little resemblance to such disturbed rural visions, whether contemporary cousins or their predecessors. Though constituted wildly and ominously with violence and dread, the terror is not unearthed, risen or returned from the terrain, but rather comes from the actions of an underclass urban patriarchy that seeks to puncture and demarcate its terrain as bloody and disgusting. Neither is the violence of a revolutionary or subversive spirit, but rather, the violence performed imitates and conforms (and thus is conservative) to prevailing abject discourses of estate communities that stigmatizes inhabitants as criminals, depraved and feral. The film's ideology is bound up with that of neoliberal governmentality, in that it abjects deficient subjectivities that threaten the social order. Brett and his father are Tyler's national abject personified. *Eden Lake* extends this territorial stigmatization beyond the denounced city estates that will form the setting of the film's cycle descendants, *Harry Brown*, *Heartless* and *The Disappeared*, to a more rural setting, enforcing the idea of a feral underclass as a national issue. While the woodland, unknown territory to Jenny, may prove unfamiliar and hostile to her as she battles to escape, it is not the pastoral of the film that is the enemy; it is not a seething rural. Rather it is a landscape that festers with an urban scent.

3.5.3: Urbanoia and the American rural backwoods horror

As part of her seminal work, *Men, Women and Chainsaws*, Clover's theory of urbanoia addresses a certain type of horror film that is structured around the city/rural paradigm, in which country folk are monsterised. Looking beyond revenge films such as *I Spit on Your Grave*, Clover also focuses on other 'trips to the country'

films, including *Deliverance* and *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre*, in order to account for constructions of the rural communities as Other. Where Clover acknowledges how these films owe a debt to the 'universal archetype' of entering the 'deep, dark forest in traditional fairy tales' (Clover, 1992: 124), Bernice Murphy later expands on this othering of the American wilderness, by contextualising it within an American literary and cinematic Gothic tradition (Murphy, 2013).

Clover, focusing on the construction of this rural Other as 'patriarchy run amok', argues the physical construction is symptomatic of a 'larger incivility' in that, physical deformities are external manifestations of 'family wrongness' and offer a horrific threat to 'those from not round here' that encompasses torture, murder and rape. Furthering the notion of how monsterising rural communities accentuates the urban/countryside divide, Clover argues that what underpins these films is a form of 'economic guilt' born of class difference, and of how capitalism has plundered and raped the countryside for gain as typified by, and in, the urban figure as victim in the films (Clover, 1992: 133-34). Whereas the city represents money, attainment, education, self-realisation and culture, the rural represent poverty, dismemberment, lawlessness, backwardness and the uncivilised. Clover summarises that horror films construct the city as 'metaphoric rapist' of the country, a representation which manifests itself in differing and not always explicit ways in the urban/rural paradigm films (129). The 'family' of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* has been decimated by the decline in cattle farming. Similarly, replacing silver mining with nuclear testing has given rise to the feral family of *The Hills Have Eyes* (Wes Craven, 1977), while the members of the rural community of *Deliverance*

are the victims of the destruction of the landscape by the power company building the dam. Appreciating how 'redneck' is 'redskin' rewritten (135), Clover places the urban horror within a cinematic lineage of the settler western, as both types of film narrate economic power of the 'civilised' over the 'uncivilised', whilst representing both communities as violent, but the local populations the more heinous. However, in a time where it is more problematic to depict minorities as monstrous, Clover argues the redneck, due to his 'whiteness' is a 'safe target' on which to project fear.

Given the scope of her 2013 book, Murphy has space for a rigorous expansion on Clover's initial astute theorisation. Murphy, while still focusing on the 'Rural poor as monstrous Other', broadens the reach to incorporate a wider historical approach to the construction of the South. Categorising the genre into two types – with the first being a *Deliverance*-influenced narrative where the 'backwoods man has gone rogue' and the second featuring degenerate and savage family groups – Murphy includes a wider selection of films, which allows her to assemble a taxonomy of the rural backwoods film (Murphy, 2013: 148). Murphy notes such recurring tropes as: the reason for the trip; the last chance for gas; the reconfiguration of the 'old dark house' and the violation of the domestic space by trespassing visitors; rural types as hunters; ineffectual or colluding law enforcement; and the car graveyard (152-76). All of these motifs provide opportunities for the rural/urban paradigm to be made explicit through narrative development and the spectacle of horror. Whereas Clover privileges a historical cinematic approach to contextualising the rural other, Murphy opens this wider to encompass an historical, social and cultural

development of the South and its representation and exploitation in cultural mediums. Agreeing with Clover that the South is seen as the aberrant 'Other', representing the relationship between 'civilisation' and 'savagery' in American culture, Murphy embraces and makes pertinent stereotypes such as white trash, hillbilly and redneck, indicating how the uncivilised South has come to represent the pioneer spirit 'gone wrong' (146-47). In an area that relied heavily on slavery for economic gain, a collective white identity, transcending class divisions, formed in order to maintain the superiority of the white identity. It was the poor whites and their descendants, living in the more remote areas, that came to be known as hillbillies and white trash (139). Murphy argues that due to the particular economic development of America, the once rich and fruitful rural farming economy of the South declined to the degree that communities, families and individuals came to be seen as cultural inferiors who refused to include themselves in a modern America of mass-produced consumerism. Drawing upon the reports issued by the Eugenics Records Office (ERO), Murphy further entrenches the relationship between geography and human condition in quoting how the 1912 report on Hill Folk argues how 'their degenerate condition was increased by their rural environment for they had not been 'subjected to the social influences of a city or even a large town' ('The Hill Folk' cited in Murphy, 2013: 143). Indeed, so lacking was this geography, and so from the wider 'superior' country, that descriptions and depictions centred upon the 'feeble-minded', 'regressive' rural family and the moral stagnation of a rural South (176). For Murphy, such portraits of a stagnant, savage geography incompatible with the values of a modern America are ripe for othering within the backwoods horror film.

It is challenging, then, given the cinematic histories of both American and British rural horrors and how each are dependent upon the relationship between geography, horror and the monstrous Other, to contextualise *Eden Lake* fully within either national sub-genre. Unlike its more contemporary British counterparts, *Kill List* and *The Reeds*, the film neither draws upon pagan focused predecessors, nor situates itself within rural folklore for its horror. *Eden Lake* differentiates itself in part by not looking to 'a past' for its horror, rather, it participates in a present where subjects and communities are made abject in various cultural and media platforms, and thus horrified by this process. On its release, it was generally observed that *Eden Lake* was reminiscent of other backwoods rural horrors, as Peter Bradshaw detects: 'there are the inevitable folk memories of *Deliverance* here' (Bradshaw, 2008). To understand how, in part, *Eden Lake*, signals an engagement with American cinema, we must decouple representation from narrative and see how the film exploits the generic framework of the American rural backwoods horror as posited by Murphy.

3.5.4: The American taxonomy of *Eden Lake*

The opening ten-minute sequence of *Eden Lake* establishes narrative trajectory and concerns, alongside characterisation, while prefiguring the co-ordinates of horror that Jenny and Steve will subsequently encounter. Such construction complies with rural horror film's conventions, in revealing the character flaws that predict the protagonist's ability to escape and dialogue that anticipates future narrative events. Steve, with the double intention of asking Jenny to marry him and revisiting a childhood haunt, takes his girlfriend away for a romantic weekend camping to a

place he had visited with his father. Slapton Quarry, the site of Steve's memory, is due to be transformed into a gated housing community and renamed Eden Lake. This contextualising information implies Slapton Quarry is for Steve an idealised and romanticised geography intertwined with the masculine bonding rituals of a father and son relationship. In short, the quarry has been transformed through the passage of time into a rural idyll for Steve which, in keeping with the conventions of horror cinema, will be reconfigured into a nightmare geography. Such horrorised disparity is extended to the divergence between the Slapton Quarry of Steve's childhood play, and the adolescent games of a more contemporary youth. This convention of distance between idyll and reality is emphasised by the spatializing journey from the city into a more rural location.

Writing of the rural backwoods horror, Murphy observes how the films always depict the protagonists/victims as 'wholesome, middle-class outsiders' (Murphy, 2013: 147). While there are questions regarding the concept of class in *Eden Lake*, as well as a divergence from the backwoods sub-genre favouring male protagonists, the film's intention is to construct Jenny within such realms. The opening sequence witnesses Jenny in her own environment, teaching primary age children in a leafy part of London. Her interactions with the children depict Jenny in terms of her gender, by accentuating long-held values of womanhood: kindness, nurturing, sensitivity and gentleness. Her costume, a Laura Ashley inspired simple summer dress patterned with flowers, emphasises such qualities and projects a certain innocence and naiveté that will serve Jenny adversely later in the film. Of course, this sequence also establishes the city/rural paradigm whilst laying the foundations

for future narrative and genre expectations and character development. Jenny being 'wholesome' is a trait that is returned to throughout the film. She regularly playfully rebukes Steve for his swearing, but it is her killing of Cooper that exposes how her 'urban innocence' ill suits Jenny's chances of survival. Clover writes of *Deliverance* that 'innocence too is an artefact of civilization' and that 'civilisation sits lightly on even the best-bred among us; turn push to shove and we will revert to savagery' (Clover, 1992: 132). Jenny's killing of Cooper bears out Clover's analysis. Having suffered injury, betrayal by a child and witnessing the murder of Steve, Jenny's turn to 'savagery' in killing Cooper is more problematic than Ed's in *Deliverance*. Emerging from the large wheelie bin immersed in the rotting remnants of its contents, Jenny's appearance, as befitting a 'survivalist' or She-Wolf narrative, seals her transformation from innocent to the 'getting-even' female of Clover's paradigm and signifies her intent of revenge. However, in part the appearance is illusory as the narrative does not permit her knowledge that would enable her escape. Narrative hierarchy denies Jenny the knowledge she requires. Jenny is not adorned with the wild and the earth of the woods, but rather with the remains of an urbanisation, for she is covered with vestiges of people's attempts to keep the woods clean of litter. She may be intent on revenge, but her body emerging from the bin is one that is further alienated in her immediate surroundings and remains 'innocent' and therefore unequipped for escape. Unaware when confronted with Cooper that he has left the gang and is on the verge of offering her help, she turns and kills him by stabbing him in the neck with a glass shard. In a highly emotive scene, Jenny is visibly revolted by her actions and tries to save Cooper, cradling him as he dies. Differing from backwoods horror films, the killing of Cooper signifies

Jenny's future demise, not her escape, for in the closing sequence the fact that 'she killed a little one' galvanises the men in the community to seek revenge and kill Jenny.

Eden Lake displays further similarities with the backwoods horror taxonomy, most of which are explicit in the early stages of the film and further the plot whilst introducing the ominous tone that centres around terror and dread created by representations of a feral community. Murphy's taxonomy includes a 'last chance for gas' as a stock trope and one where the outsiders are warned not to continue their journey (Murphy, 2013: 155-56), encountering the local population for the first time. As Murphy notes, a long drive to a remote locale requires refuelling. In *Eden Lake*, the 'long drive' is constructed in a montage that depicts the passing of time via both different Jenny's different activities – sleeping, listening to the radio – and the quality of light, from day through to sundown and finally night time as the couple arrive at the local pub in the town where they are staying overnight. Typical of the film, the mechanics of the rural horror are manipulated to a more national focus, as rather than 'ominous warnings from grizzled old storekeepers/gas station attendants' (155), the couple are confronted with the behaviour of members of a lower class, a confrontation that functions to formulate the couple as outsiders and trespassers. Murphy notes how often the outsiders view the rural in terms of opportunity for recreational activity (154). The purpose of Steve and Jenny's weekend is for Steve to propose, however Steve also scuba dives in the lake and the couple camp and sunbathe, using the surroundings as a peaceful break from the city. It is within these recreational activities that the tensions of the film are

cemented and then developed via further generic tropes. An early scene constructing the beginnings of the tensions between the couple and the local gang composes the hostilities in terms of rivalling for space and recreation. As Jenny and Steve sunbathe and scuba dive, the adolescent gang listen to loud techno music and smoke at the other end of the beach. Noting how part of the normative narrative is in how the 'outsiders' in these films enter an environment that is not their own, Murphy cements this within a trope of trespassing (161). This trope is extended to the iconic terrible house that Murphy argues is consistently returned to as variations on a theme of the cabin in the woods, or the lonely old farmhouse. Protagonists are often found exploring the rural dwellings and end in brutalised ordeals and murder. Again, *Eden Lake* utilises the trope, yet varies it with a nationalistic resonance. As Steve investigates Brett's house illegally, it is not 'a corpse, or dismembered body parts' (152) that he finds, but rather vestiges, but also the portentous threat, of a violent yet slothful family.

Replacing representations of the American South and variations of 'white trash', with a more British focused and modified representation of a violent underclass gives rise to assertions of *Eden Lake's* nationalistic emphasis and its sway towards realism. Walker, writing on *Eden Lake* and other films in the Hoodie Horror cycle, acknowledges the cycle's British element and hybrid nature. However, by consistently contextualising each film within individual genres (homestead horror, body horror, home invasion), Walker opposes the cycle's propensity for realism while paradoxically analysing each film within specific sub-genres paradigms more readily suited to American cinema and films with an American focus. Walker argues

of the cycle's 'credible' representations that, 'such designations, whether in relation to real people of films, should never – because they *can* never – be directly reflective of real life' (Walker, 2016: 96). Walker's inflexibility in consigning the films to 'either one camp or another' does not sufficiently address or accommodate the nuances in *Eden Lake's* utilisation of the rural horror's paradigm for a British context. Walker's determination in arguing that critics' fail to see the horror genres' many paradigms at work by pursuing the realism path, does not allow for how representations of the underclass and working-class have been transfigured in cultural media with the aesthetics of horror. While Walker's contention that the films 'revel in the same kinds of excesses as reactionary news media' is highly appropriate, his reasoning that the cycle exposes 'the futility – and fantasy' (97) of the veracity of representations of the lower classes is more problematic to confidently argue.

3.5.5: British social divisions as horror: The urban pastoral takes a trip to the country

[C]asual, directionless violence ... has become the calling card of a bored, frustrated underclass.

Carl Freedman (Freedman cited in Stallabrass, 2006: 242)

Eden Lake's re-imagining of the rural backwoods horror into a British context injects the film with the immediacy of a contemporaneous resonance, an essential ingredient for a film categorised in a cycle. While blurring the classifying lines between the underclass and working class, the film's construction of the monstrous Other finds a certain echo with Tyler's theory of territorial stigmatization (Tyler,

2013: 162) while evoking Bev Skeggs's argument as to how the working class is constructed in terms of excess (Skeggs, 2004: 99). These threatening representations are also redolent with another creative form's approach to the underclass. Julian Stallabrass's exploration of the British art scene in the 1990s includes his evaluation of particular works of art that sought engagement with an inner-city urban and housing estates, a cycle Stallabrass titles the urban pastoral (Stallabrass, 2006). The line of reasoning of this section is to align *Eden Lake* with the urban pastoral so as to embed the idea of the film as an urban horror through the lens of a rural horror. The feral behaviour of this lower class is first alluded to in a radio programme that Jenny and Steve are listening to on their journey to Slapton Quarry. On a discussion programme, the question of who is responsible for managing apparent feral teenage behaviour – school or family – is debated. Adolescent deviancy and ineffective parenting skills of the lower class are posited by their inclusion on the radio as a contemporaneous, and national, issue to the cinematic world, mirroring existing national discourses outside of the film, whilst functioning to set expectations for future narrative events.

How then can this concept of the urban pastoral aid in deconstructing the horror and its relationship to landscape on display in *Eden Lake*? The key components we can take from Stallabrass's approach are the concept of the abject, othering, authenticity and the visual language through which we come to understand the lower classes as represented in differing cultural media. As argued in this thesis, the Hoodie Horror film is underpinned by the paradigm of social abjection as a process that imagines and configures minoritized populations as revolting. In *Eden Lake*, the

abject discourse of an urban poor adolescent deviant, made horrific in the figure of the Hoodie, is coupled with the stigmatizing discourse of an intergenerational underclass fecklessness. This is configured through using council estates as moral borders of contemporary Britain, and displayed here as a mechanism of horror. Abject discourse becomes abject horror, as the British underclass in the new millennium is submerged in a horror aesthetic in Hoodie Horrors. The 'threatening other' lying in wait in the woodlands of Slapton Quarry is not begot of the rural, but rather it is the 'scum, offal, refuse' (Marx, 1852) of the urban pastoral that are the monsters in *Eden Lake*. The urban pastoral contaminates the rural setting of the film, as if the horrific acts of Brett, the juvenile gang members and their fathers infect the rural idyll of the proposed private housing settlement, Eden Lake. The territorial stigmatization associated with the urban underclass is reimagined here as a monstrous othering. The rural locality functions as a platform on which the abject discourse of the underclass can play out, and in so doing is transformed into the moral borders of contemporary Britain. There is, though, conflict between function and representation. The localisation allows a threatening Other to be contained within an area 'away' from a national audience, but in relocating the urban underclass to a rural setting, the film comes to represent the underclass as a national issue, not just an urban problem. There is no escaping the threat of this feral population in the United Kingdom. Clover's statement in her theory of rural horror, urbanoia, that 'people from the city are people like us', does not apply in *Eden Lake*. For the monsters lying in wait for Steve and Jenny are the threatening urban Other and are certainly *not* like them.

As a reconfiguration of the 'stopping for gas' trope, the couple arrives at a local pub in the town where they stay overnight before heading for the quarry. The warning to turn back is here constructed as a confrontation between cultural differences in behaviour between the couple and the local community that serves to initiate plot tension that will be developed by future narrative events. In a rapidly edited sequence, Steve and Jenny sit in the local pub's beer garden at night surrounded by noisy children. As both comment how it should be past the children's bedtime, Steve begins a sentence, wishing someone would quieten one child (Fig 109). His sentence though is finished by a shot of the mother slapping her child, shouting at her son, 'I bloody told you' (Fig 110). In a tense exchange of glances between the mother and Jenny (Figs 111 and 112), there is an unspoken threat posed by the mother to Jenny, resulting in the latter looking away in embarrassment (Fig 113) as the mother continues to stare aggressively in her direction. In an admission of class difference, and superiority on the part of Steve, he asks Jenny, 'another pint of wife beater?'. As the scene fades to Steve and Jenny in their hotel room, the couple and the audience are privileged with hearing an off-screen argument outside the establishment between another unknown local couple. As a seamless transition from the previous scene, the man shouts at the woman, 'what kind of woman are you ... do you want some beef?'. It's a confrontation Steve comedically mimics to Jenny in an act of lower-class machismo, furthering the couple's supposed behavioural superiority over the local community. Taken as a comparison to the protagonists' behaviour, the construction in these two scenes of the locals begins the monstrous othering of the community, forecasting them as a fatal threat to the couple. It is not the rural territory that is hostile, or the 'funny ways and rituals of

the locals'. This community holds no mystery to either the audience or Jenny and Steve. Rather, the initial encounters with these rural residents introduces the classist horror that the film develops and builds upon during the remainder of the film. The underclass, through their violent and anti-social behaviour, is posited as a social problem that threatens national stability.

The later beach scene where Jenny and Steve are faced with the youngsters for the first time is an expansion on the rural horror trope of trespassing, and further constructs the underclass as threatening other. In a sequence for the battle for 'space' in Slapton Quarry (with reference to lower class behaviour and its threat, the play on Slapton/Slap Town cannot go unnoticed), tension is constructed via close-ups and the alternation of shots showing the spatial composition of the couple, and the gang, within the frame. After witnessing the bullying of the young Asian boy by two teenagers, Jenny evinces concern with the event, her face framed in a close-up that conveys anxiety. Having fallen asleep, Jenny – and thus the audience – is then startled by a dog barking her Jenny's face. As the adolescent gang members situate themselves at the other end of the beach, the dog runs, defecating on the sand, repulsing Jenny. When Steve goes for a swim, uneasiness is increased with successive alternating shots of Jenny, further bothered by the dog, Steve looking on from the lake, and the gang camped at the other end of the beach. Deciding to confront the gang members, Steve is captured in deliberate motion thinking, looking at the kids and then moving towards them. Mocked by the youths at his request for them to keep their dog under control and their techno music down, he asks, 'Don't be dicks' before re-joining Jenny; the gang increases the

volume of their techno music, laughing at Steve as he walks away. Later when the youths leave, menacingly walking past the couple, Brett exposes himself to Jenny.

Returning to Skeggs's argument of how the working-class is conceptualised in terms of excess and the middle-class in terms of their restraint can be helpful here. Skeggs argues that vulgarity is frequently associated with disgust and that the working-class is represented in terms of a lack of self-restraint (Skeggs, 2004: 104). Often represented as tasteless, the working-class is constructed in terms of drinking, smoking and being sexually rampant. Skeggs concludes that by associating working-class bodies with surfeit and disgust, these bodies are represented as resisting moral and cultural governance and are therefore transfigured into a 'social problem' that threatens to contaminate the nation, thus requiring regulating and containment (Skeggs, 2004: 104-5). *Eden Lake*, especially in these scenes, monsterises what begins as low level anti-social behaviour, turning a lack of self-governance and ill-discipline, and an association with dirt and danger, into the aesthetics of terror and fear. Aligning disgust at the working-class functions to maintain a distance from them. In *Eden Lake*, Jenny and Steve, by trespassing into a more lower-class community, risk 'contamination' from being in proximity to its members. It is in moments when both concede to their emotions and therefore respond excessively that their fate is sealed: Steve in accidentally killing the dog and later with Jenny murdering Cooper. Their inability to govern their own bodies at critical moments in the plot is a direct contribution to their own murders. There is no escape from the nihilistic conclusion for Jenny and Steve. Approaching Brett, his gang and the wider community as representatives of an underclass, we can find

resonance with Raymond Williams's ideas in *Culture and Society* on 'the masses'. Williams argues 'the masses' was just another expression for the mob, 'and the traditional characteristics of the mob were retained in its significance; gullibility, fickleness, herd prejudice, lowness of taste and habit. The masses, on this evidence, formed the perceptual threat to culture' (Williams, 1961: 318).

Steve's intrusion into Brett's family home furthers the usual horror trope of trespassing and combines it with the paradigmatic 'terrible house'. Rather than containing mutilated bodies and instruments of torture, however, the house evinces the iconography and revolting discourse of a British working-class and underclass, animating and developing the dread and proximity of danger in the film. What Steve finds inside animates what Tyler came to describe as a 'parasitical dysfunctional underclass of failed citizens' (Tyler, 2013: 160). Here the demonising discourses of territorial stigmatization associated with council estates is constructed in representations of excessive slothfulness, tastelessness and violence.

The kitchen is strewn with unwashed dishes and pans and empty bottles of beer and spirits. In the lounge there is outdated furniture and an unfashionable drinks counter brimming with an array of alcohol. Steve finds a hole in the lounge door (Fig 114), the vestige of a display of violence. Unknown to Steve, outside Brett's dad pulls up alongside Jenny, wanting to get into his drive and calling her a 'stupid bitch' for blocking his drive. He is driving the iconic white van, carrying bags of alcohol, representing a stereotypical image imbued with the negative cultural inscription of a working-class male. As Steve hides in Brett's bedroom, he and the audience

observe the adolescent gang in the garden physically terrorising a pet rabbit (Fig 115). Misjudging Steve's accidental movement for Brett's, Brett's father Jon threateningly shouts up at him, establishing a violent and unstable father and son relationship. Steve escapes unseen. The presence of the brutish Jon, characterised by essentialist abject class discourse, extends the danger beyond the aggressive youth to incorporate a wider masculinity. The threat in *Eden Lake* is no longer a mere gang of kids looking for their own space to hang out, but an aggressive and volatile underclass masculinity.

The construction of dread and fear in this scene diverges from the traditional 'terrible house' found in rural horrors. Jump-scares are omitted and tension is developed through a burgeoning confrontation between class-based masculinities. As Steve becomes caught between Jon and Brett's gang, the threat is not that of the rural, but of lower-class masculinity. Fear in *Eden Lake* is thus formed by and dependent on class. These representations are drawn from the 'authentic' depictions arising from the extra-diegetic demonising discourses of an underclass, and within the British tradition of social realism. Would Jon and Brett be out of place in the cinematic world of *Nil by Mouth*? The dysfunctional masculinity of Gary Oldman's personal account of family life on a housing estate is exaggerated in *Eden Lake* by extending male violence beyond familial bonds. By doing so, this gendered threat can neither be contained by the family unit, nor within the community. By tracing an urban community into a rural setting, the film creates a dislocation between these others and the land. Whereas Leatherface, Lord Summerisle, or the backwoods community of *The Hills have Eyes* are constructed as inhabitants with a

symbiotic relationship to the landscape, and are bound to it, Jon and Brett are not. The threat they pose is not contained by their cinematic universe: rather their reach stretches beyond the screen, as these identities exist also outside of this geographical location.

3.5.6: Hoodie Horror/Body Horror: Performing discourse as horrifying realism

As stated previously, asserting there are realist attributes to *Eden Lake*, and the Hoodie Horror cycle in general, has proven a provocative position to take. However, I argue that the film requires approaching via three conceptualisations of realism: firstly through the perceptual framework of the abject discourses of Hoodies and the underclass, secondly through the accumulative representations of the underclass, the working class and a white, lower class masculinity, found in the British social realist tradition, that have fostered an acceptance as authentic in our cultural memory. A third consideration is to understand how horror is constructed from, and performed as, a discourse of horrifying realism.

Walker's position regarding the casting of Thomas Turgoose, the young star of *This is England*, as Cooper, is, for Walker, a strategy that undercuts the film's realist credentials. Seeing this casting as a deliberate act to utilise Turgoose's 'star currency' and establish generic expectations, Walker finds realism and genre-making film practices to be contrary approaches; Turgoose's inclusion suggests an artifice that lays waste to the film's association with realism (Walker, 2012: 449-50). The challenge with Walker's stance is two-fold. Firstly, he presents a literal approach in translating others' interpretation of an apparent realism in the film into

the film possession of social realism. Secondly, he refuses to consider the possibility of those representations, narratives and iconography, employed in Hoodie Horrors that have previously been associated with realist texts, being approached through a framework of realism. While Walker is right to challenge the veracity of *Eden Lake's* representations, dismissing the film as a pretence of realism narrows the field of vision through which it should be apprehended. It is more advantageous to approach the representations as false due to an erroneous dominant ideology, as this allows for a more nuanced analysis (such as normalization of demonizing constructs), that considers representations in terms of what Rancière conceptualises as *a set of terms*. Rancière writes of the working class being known by 'names [that] do not express an awareness of a condition. Their primary function is to construct something, namely a relationship of alterity' (Rancière, 1997: 23). As Tyler posits, we must consider 'the reality effects of these injurious interpellations' and how these demonizing discourses rework and shape our perceptual frameworks of class (Tyler, 2013: 175). These discourses may be for political or cultural exploitation, but they posit a *truth*, a *reality*, that constructs the abject as something other than us – a 'them' – to be hated or feared.

To follow this position for *Eden Lake*, we can contextualise the film against the discourses attached to Hoodies and the underclass, the abject discourses of othering that acknowledge the aesthetics of disgust within which the urban lower class has been constructed, both cinematically and in a wider British culture. Challenging the veracity remains possible, but the focus remains on the construct, and the significance of the abject state. Extending this nuanced analysis to film

academia paves a path away from austere categorising the film in terms of genre or a practice, say as either horror or social realism, towards an acknowledgement of the hybridity of sensibilities at play in the film, in much the same vein as Smith does when muddying the waters of realism with fantasy, in his conceptualisation of *Trainspotting* as 'black magic realism' (Smith, 2002). The disadvantage of Walker's approach is in choosing not to define what a Hoodie Horror is, but rather choosing to *determine* the Hoodie Horror as strictly a horror film. By analysing the film in terms of the abject discourses of the urban underclass, we can approach the film in terms of the horrifying realism that underpins the Hoodie Horror cycle and has influenced recent British realist output such as *Tyrannosaur*. Here, in *Eden Lake*, the mechanisms of horror spectacularise both the abject dialogue of the British underclass and iconography associated with the British social realist tradition and, in so doing, performs discourse as a horrifying realism.

The confrontation between the couple and youngsters escalates through a series of reprisals. The gang steal Steve's car and, in a tense stand-off, Steve accidentally kills Brett's dog. In an effort to escape the woods and the gang, Steve crashes the car into the tree. Unable to free himself, he implores Jenny to fetch help. Unable to find her way out of the woods, Jenny then encounters Steve, tied up with wire, viciously taunted by the gang. The horror set pieces of the film discussed earlier introduce the realist infused horror schematics that the film fully realises in the scenes of body horror that unfurl precipitously from this point. While Brett, the gang's dynamics, and their bloody actions will be addressed in more detail in the

chapter on monsters, I will touch upon these here to highlight the furthering departure from the rural horror tropes.

The gang's bloody butchering of Steve with a Stanley knife (Fig 116), the burning alive of the young Adam, Paige and 'happy slapping' (Fig 117) and the eventual fateful capture of Jenny, are actions belonging to an urban underclass, representing forms of associative behaviour known to the audience via various contemporary cultural streams. Rampant media reports had already established the Hoodie as violent and murderous by the release of *Eden Lake*. Gang related knife crime ('Boy Murdered by Happy-Slap Yobs' (Box *et al*, 2005)), and acts of meaningless murder, ('Chip-throwing Hoodie Stabs Man to Death in Row on Bus' (Pettifor, 2005)) constructed the Hoodie as a figure of fear. Adolescent and gang crime have a long history in British cinema and television, or rather both media repeatedly return to this territory in generational cycles. The gang in *Eden Lake* establishes its place in the lineage traceable to *We Are The Lambeth Boys* (Karel Reisz, 1959), down through *Scum* (Alan Clarke, 1977), *Quadrophenia* (Franc Roddam, 1979), *The Firm* (Alan Clarke, 1989), to *Bullet Boy*, *Kidulthood* and *Adulthood*. British screen's long-time love affair with the bodies of errant and violent lower-class masculinities is melded here with contemporary abject representations. The realism of both is blurred here into an essentialist animation of a sadistic and brutal underclass youth as monster, who perform 'casual and directionless violence' as his 'calling card', to return to Carl Freedman. But while the visceral violence enacted elicits repulsion and moralistic opposition, the source of such acts belies its cinematic setting.

Brett is not the pantheistic, charismatic leader Lord Summerisle, and Jenny and Steve are not sacrifices to appease the sun god in order yield next year's crop. These rituals are not folk customs, or fertility rites, nor is there a maypole. The earth has not given rise to a contaminating evil, returning to seek revenge. The film closes with Jenny attacked by Brett's father, Jon, and other fathers. As Brett returns home to give his version of events, his father seeks revenge. Having struggled to survive, sacrificing her goodness for her life, Jenny is finally trapped in the 'terrible house'. This neoliberal citizen is mentally and physically overwhelmed in the frame by the tidal wave of an underclass, vengeful masculinity. Jenny is now reduced onscreen to facial close-ups, framing that magnifies her terror (Fig 118).

As she is wrestled into the bathroom by Jon, the camera returns and remains with a lone Brett; Jenny's screams are heard off-screen. This closing killing of Jenny is an appropriate ending to a film fused in horror and realism. A returning trope of British realist ventures is the problematic father, and a persistent perception of adolescent deviancy is that this is the result of 'bad' parenting. The neoliberal government, in decoupling itself from responsibility, transfers accountability to the self and to the family. *Eden Lake* closes with the cinematic animation of the underclass as a community built on an inter-generational culture of violence, thus reasserting the film's horrific realism. James Watkins's closing scenes complicates accountability, in excusing Brett's violent behaviour, by placing responsibility with his father, Jon. Tookey was incorrect in assessing the film as an expression of a nation in fear of its youth. It is not the woods, or the otherness of the rural, that is the locus of dread.

Rather it is the underclass community and its shared vision of violence that is meant to provoke 'our' horror.

3.6: Images for section three



Figure 28

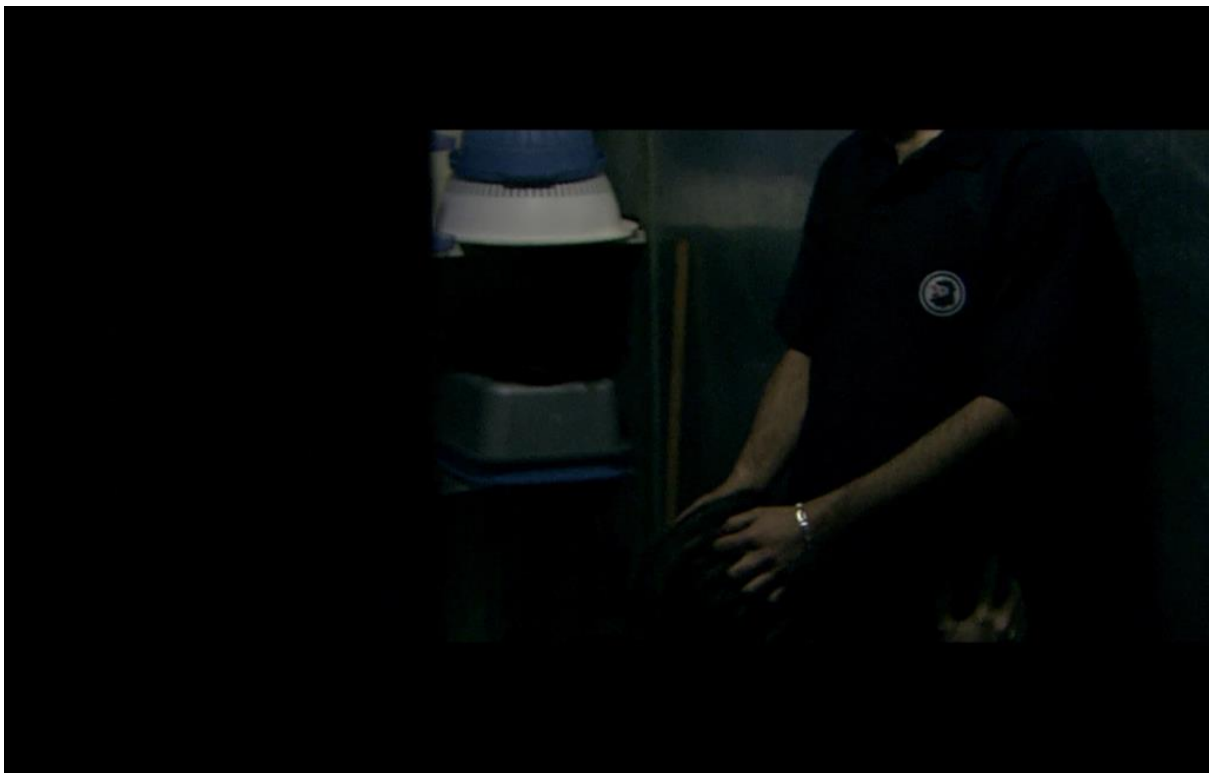


Figure 29



Figure 30



Figure 31



Figure 32



Figure 33



Figure 34



Figure 35



Figure 36



Figure 37



Figure 38



Figure 39



Figure 40



Figure 41



Figure 42



Figure 43



Figure 44



Figure 45



Figure 46



Figure 47



Figure 48



Figure 49



Figure 50

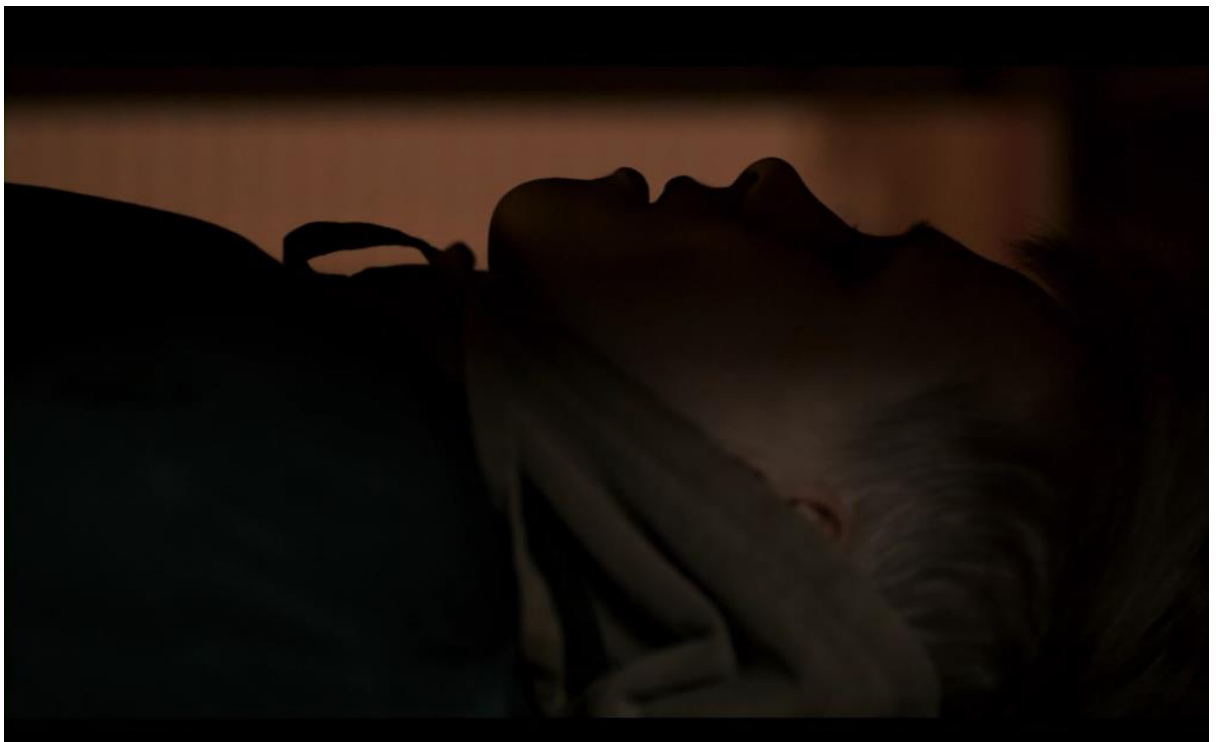


Figure 51



Figure 52



Figure 53



Figure 54



Figure 55



Figure 56



Figure 57



Figure 58



Figure 59 (*The Woman in Black*, 2012)



Figure 60 (*The Watcher in the Woods*, 1980)



Figure 61 (*And Then There Were None*, 2015)



Figure 62 (*The Others*, 2001)



Figure 63



Figure 64



Figure 65



Figure 66



Figure 67

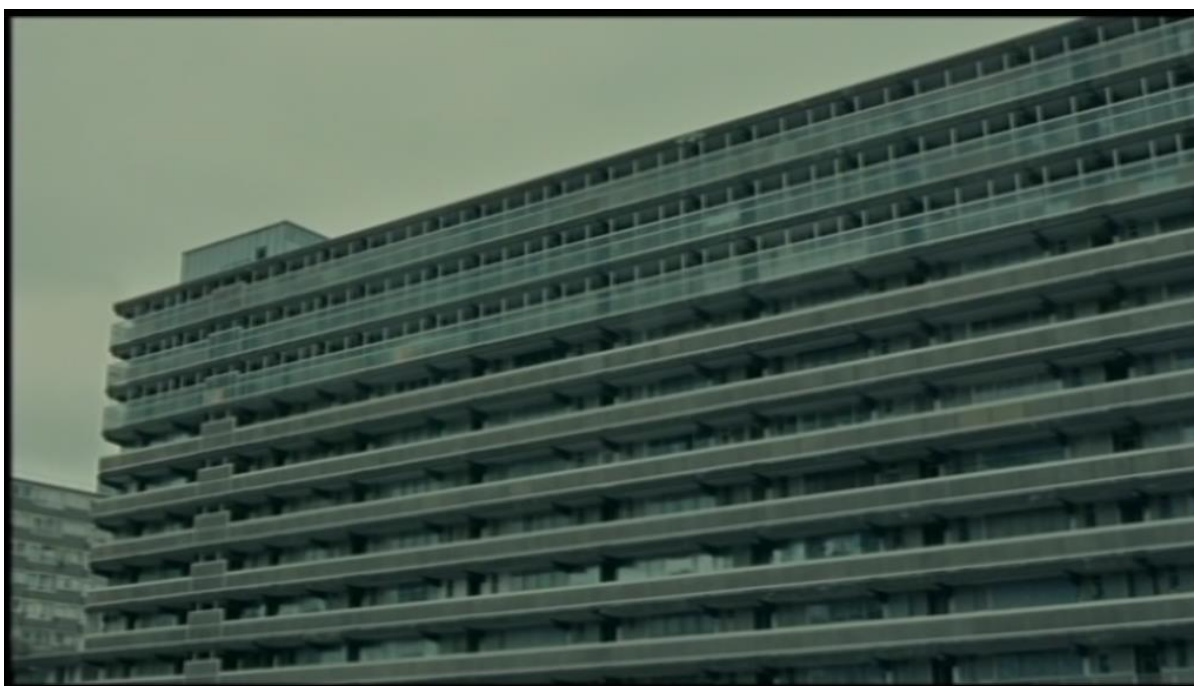


Figure 68



Figure 69



Figure 70



Figure 71



Figure 72



Figure 73



Figure 74



Figure 75



Figure 76



Figure 77



Figure 78



Figure 79

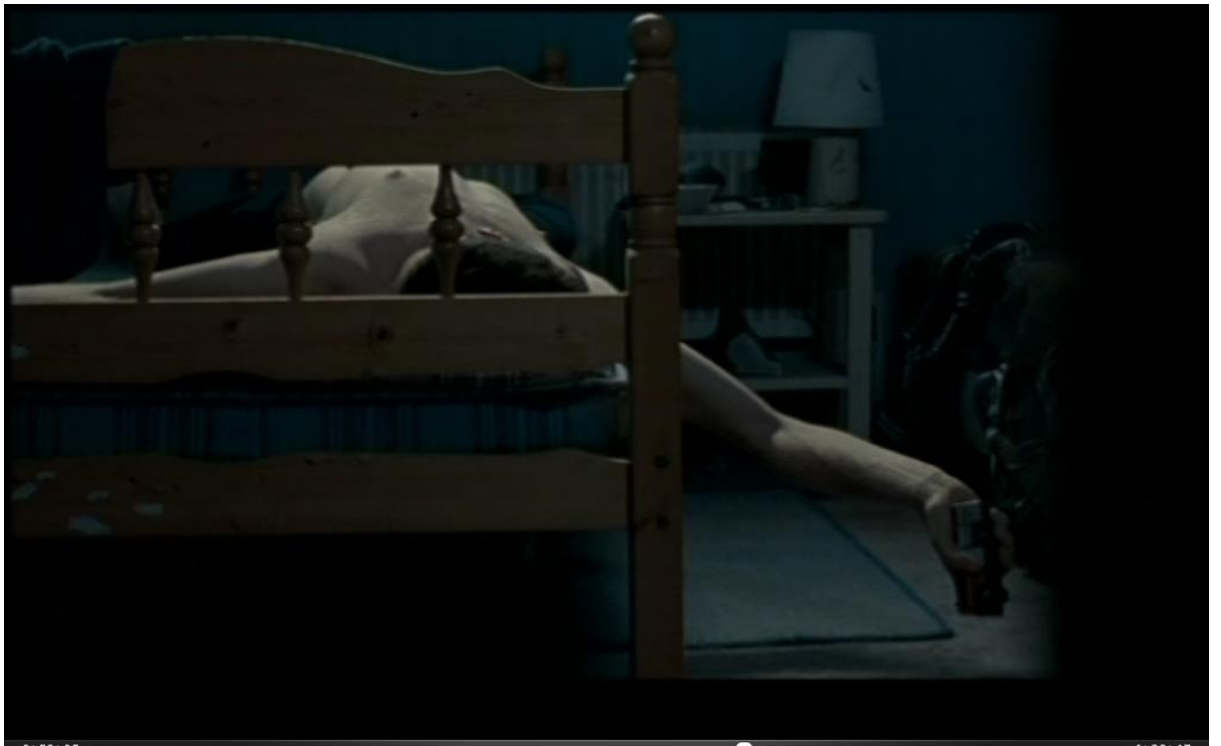


Figure 80

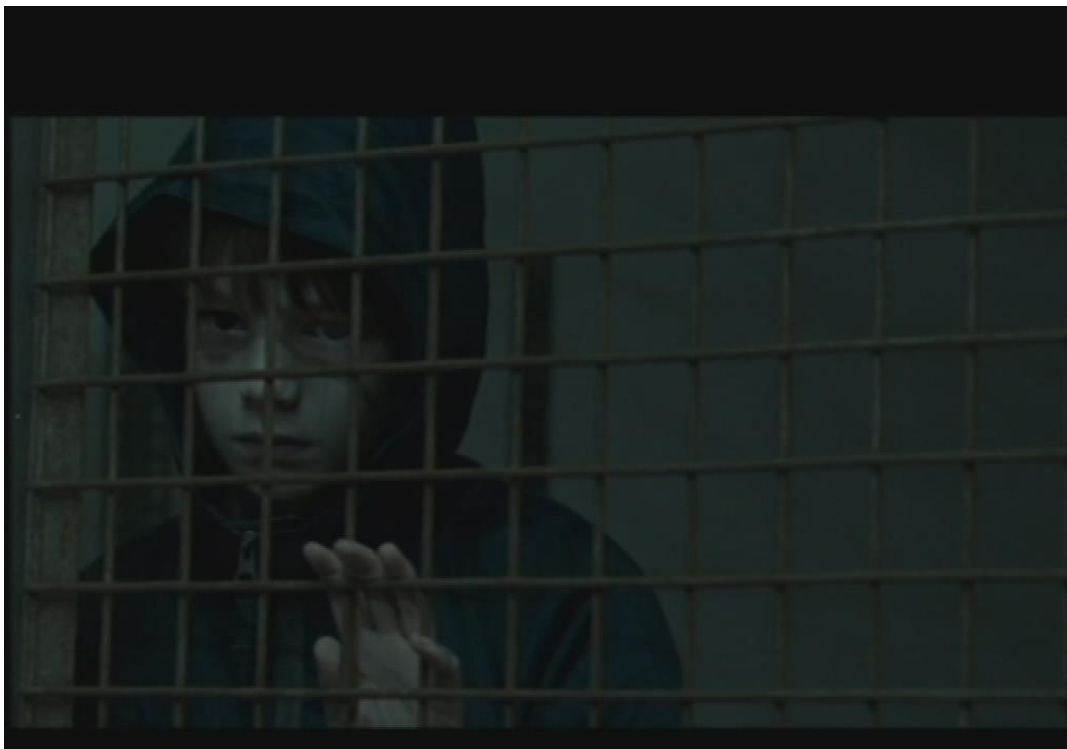


Figure 81



Figure 82

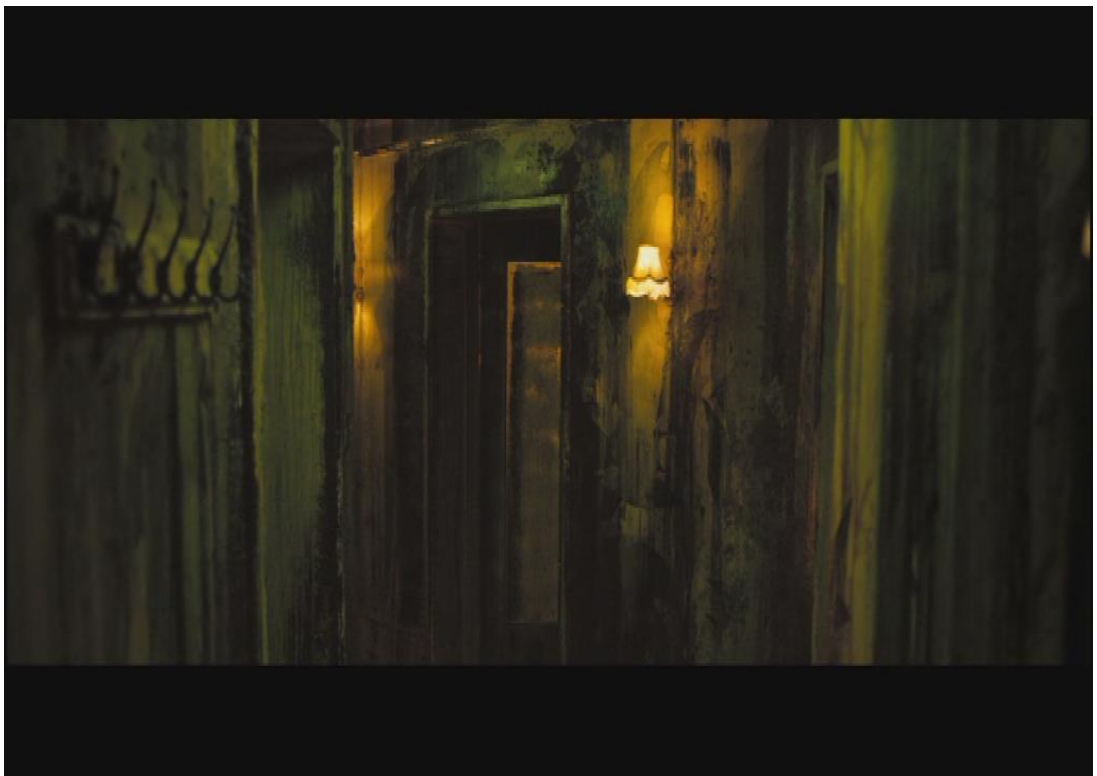


Figure 83



Figure 84



Figure 85



Figure 86



Figure 87



Figure 88



Figure 89



Figure 90



Figure 91



Figure 92



Figure 93



Figure 94



Figure 95



Figure 96



Figure 97



Figure 98



Figure 99



Figure 100



Figure 101



Figure 102



Figure 103



Figure 104



Figure 105



Figure 106



Figure 107



Figure 108



Figure 109



Figure 110



Figure 111



Figure 112



Figure 113



Figure 114



Figure 115



Figure 116

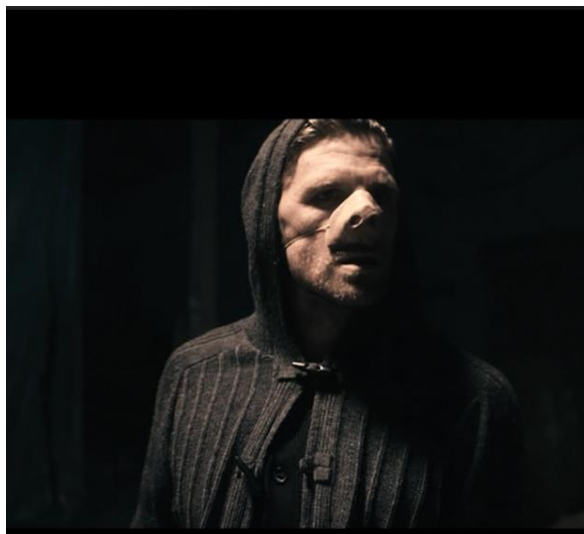


Figure 117



Figure 118

Section Four: Monsters



4.1: Introduction

The trouble with monsters though, whether found or made, is they won't stay put.

(Boyle and Coombe, 2013: 3)

The glaring question the perennial cautionary tale, *Frankenstein* (Shelley, 1818/2010), confronts us all with is: who is the monster, Victor Frankenstein or his creation? The original novel and perpetual cinematic and televisual adaptations continue to engage with questions of morality, ethics and accountability. Two hundred years after its publication, *Frankenstein* still fascinates. Its continued cultural resonance has spawned re-animations across a plethora of genres. Film adaptations specifically re-work the myth to meet particular forms and range from the 1972 spoof *Young Frankenstein* (Mel Brooks, 1974), via the stop-motion Tim Burton animation for children, *Frankenweenie* (Tim Burton, 2012), to the horror melodrama *Penny Dreadful* (John Logan, 2014 – 2016). But the persistent presence of *Frankenstein* in culture necessitates a fresh engagement with the very idea of the monstrous, a re-imagined animation as it were, to allow for differing temporal resonances to play out.

While the function of the monster in tales as a narrative device remains transhistorical, the monster as meaning has ignited differing theoretical approaches in scholarship that can be broadly divided along the oppositional lines of universality versus temporally and culturally specific, and psychoanalytical models versus cognitive illuminations. Psychoanalytical readings dominate the field in works by Wood (1986), Clover (1992) and Creed (1997). Carroll's work on the

ontology of monsters then challenges the traditional interpretations of the embodiment of monsters, since psychoanalysis, for Carroll, 'fails to provide a comprehensive account of the figures of horror' (Carroll, 1990: 174). A further issue with psychoanalytical readings is the charge by such scholars as James Twitchell (1985) and Jonathan Lake Crane of its reductiveness, resulting in a universal, or ahistorical conception: 'in irrevocably linking horror to the unconsciousness we dismiss, all too hastily, the possibility that horror films have something to say about popular epistemology, about the status of contemporary community' (Crane, 1994: 29). Writers Mark Jancovich (1992) and Judith Halberstam acknowledge that the crucial point is the shifting form of monsters, which is dependent on the cultural and temporal. As Halberstam writes, 'the body that scares and appals changes over time, as do the individual characteristics that add up to monstrosity, as do the preferred interpretations of monstrosity' (Halberstam, 1995: 8). Jeff Cohen's treatise on monster culture configures the monster as a site on which societal concerns – economic, identity, sexuality, class – are erected in order to delineate social structures that determine what is prohibited and what is normalised, resulting in the demarcation of a culture's borders (Cohen, 1996: 3-25). If we accept Cohen's assertion that the monstrous body is 'pure culture', both the personification of the fears and anxieties of the cultural moment and a form that can metamorphose to react and to absorb changing anxieties (Cohen, 1996: 4), then we approach the monster as a cultural metaphor, a body inscribed with meaning. A body that is inscribed holds a dual function: while the monster communicates anxieties, a body inscribed demands to be read.

Of course, Frankenstein's creation is not the only monster that is revisited and reworked. Variations on *Dracula* (Stoker, 1897/2004), *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll & Mr Hyde* (Stevenson, 1886/1993) and *The Wolf Man* (George Waggner, 1941) have all received attention, whilst the mad scientist narrative reappears sporadically. This perpetual presence suggests, then, that monsters have a critical role to play in culture. Employing Cohen's succinct appraisal, the monster is a figure on to which societal fears are projected. Monsters, though, are also aberrations. A monster may be a form that makes meaning, but it is also a form that requires animating, a form where fears are made flesh. Noël Carroll's estimation of what constitutes a monster, in his Art-horror treatise, conceptualises monsters as beings who fascinate us because they disrupt, due to their fictitious form, what is possible and known. For Carroll, a monster is 'any being not believed to exist according to contemporary science' (Carroll, 1990: 27). It is monstrous because its very incarnation transgresses the natural and social order. Both vampire and the zombie are the undead and impure beings. Mr Hyde is the embodiment of the human struggle between the civilised and barbarism, and the inability for a human to control her/his basest desires. Mr Hyde is the inner, base self, made visible as if puncturing the very skin that encases it. Monsters, then, are the abject, as they are an invasion into an ordered realm to which they do not belong and thus require expelling. As Kristeva notes of the abject, it is to do with demarcating, delineating and border making (Kristeva, 1982).

To return to Boyle and Coombe's assertion cited at the beginning of this introduction, monsters are not a hegemonic site: animations are responsive to

changing cultural tastes. In cinema, the traditional monster incarnations waned in popularity and gave way to more modern and realist personifications of monstrosity in *Psycho* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1960), and *Peeping Tom* (Michael Powell, 1960). The development of special effects brought more visual daring to onscreen monsters, allowing for updated models on previous, more restrained texts, epitomised in such remakes as *The Thing* (John Carpenter, 1982) and *The Fly* (David Cronenberg, 1986). But while special effects enabled more intense visualisations of monstrosity, amplifying a grotesque nature, the more realist depictions restrained such traditional outward manifestations. Such rejection brought a question to the fore – how do we recognise monsters? Cynthia Freeland’s timely account of realist horror appropriately highlights how the growing subgenre exposed Carroll’s conceptualisation of monsters as too narrow for understanding the very modern monstrosity in these films (Freeland, 1995: 128). Carroll’s account rejects the notion that *Psycho*’s Norman Bates and *The Fly*’s Brundle Fly are monsters. Whilst the films for Carroll display the syntax of horror films, the supposed monsters do not meet all of Carroll’s art-horror criteria, the first because Norman is merely suffering from a mental illness, and Brundle Fly because his girlfriend feels sympathy for him, despite the grotesque transformation, an emotion that negates the fly’s monstrous form (Carroll, 1990: 39-40). Freeland’s detailed analysis of *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer* (John McNaughton, 1986) reconfigures the spectacle of horror in the modern monster away from a transgressive form, as sketched in Carroll’s art-horror, and locates it within the bloody actions of the killer.

4.1.1: A national monster

Our fears are among the most revealing things about us.

(Pirie, 2009: 224)

I've begun with such an exploration and questioning since the monsters of the Hoodie Horror traverse both human and gothic form, inviting critical inquiry not only into the ontology of the monster, but also about how the monster of the cycle and the textual processes of the films engages with, and are influenced by, the legacy of British film history. These monsters are, in essence, very British monsters. They are also bodies of discourse. The gothic manifestations of demons, zombies and *gesichtslosgeists* (faceless ghosts) in *Heartless*, *Citadel*, and *F* draw explicitly on traditional manifestations of the monster that rely upon the relationship between skin and monstrosity, concealment and revelation, whereas the monsters of *Harry Brown*, *Eden Lake* and *Cherry Tree Lane* are shaped by a tradition of representing classed masculinity onscreen. Both, though, are representations of the abject. The monster of the Hoodie Horror exploits the strategic and excessive essentialism of the Hoodie as 'national abject' whilst establishing it within Bhabha's 'discursive strategy of the stereotype' (Bhabha, 1983: 18). Consideration of the ontology of the monsters has given rise to the terms with which I have furnished these two configurations: the gothic abject and the monstrous abject. Both representations take their cue from, and by, exploiting the political currency of the abject discourse of the Hoodie as national abject, a model this thesis presented in the introductory chapter, *Fashion of Fear*. Inflammatory media headlines such as 'Killed by Hoodies' (Lakeman, 2005), and 'Boy's Throat Slashed in 'Execution Attack: Teenager Killed by

Hoodie' (Millar and Pettifor, 2008: 27) that configure the Hoodie as a violent and indiscriminate killer, are cinematically realised in both gothic and monstrous abject. Both are reliant on a mimesis of the Hoodie, and the ontology of the monsters of the cycle are underpinned with this political and cultural discourse of the underclass. As Freeland observes, 'it is no news that art imitates life' (Freeland, 1995: 126), but the brazen tracing of representation and tales of violence here distort the borders between fact and fiction, resulting in a problematic mediated realism of the cycle. The Hoodie Horror monster is an exemplar of Cohen's theory, a cultural form inscribed with a neoliberal rhetoric of class difference, and one that illuminates the fetishization of the underclass in the public imaginary. The Hoodie Horror symbolically discriminates against the underclass by making monsters of this population. The monstrous form is a historicised figure that configures, horrifically, anxieties over citizenship in Britain in the 2000s. The challenge for filmmakers is in how to make the realism horrifying enough, and both chapters explore the filmic strategies employed in the monster-making.

These monsters are not only etched with the abject rhetoric of class, but also with the history of British cinema. The monsters of the Hoodie Horror are the epitome of the cycle in that they are the embodiment of the tension between social realism and horror, the two traditions that this thesis argues exert influence over and are present in the cycle, both structurally and in terms of representation. The unceasing fascination of social realism for masculine and adolescent identity in the social problem film is transfigured here into an essentialist narrative and figure of horror: the monster. In the Hoodie Horror, the social problem film *is* the horror

film. These monsters also reignite the longstanding feud enacted in scholarship on British cinema. David Pirie and Jonathan Rigby, devotees of British horror, have both confronted British film culture's snobbery towards horror, in preference for the authenticity of the realist aesthetic (Rigby, 2000; Pirie, 2009). Julian Petley's seminal article, 'The Lost Continent' contextualises such revilement within two positions of conceit: first, the wider discussion and dismissal of British cinema as a genre cinema, and second, the centralisation and valorisation of realism, at the expense of other film forms (Petley, 1986: 98-119). While the rise in scholarship on British horror has somewhat reconditioned the genre's standing in British film culture, it is still indeterminate whether realism's standing has been reassessed, especially if we consider Peter Bradshaw's comments on *The Selfish Giant* as outlined in the 'Monstrous Geographies' chapter (Bradshaw, 2013). Whether the fantastic on display in these monsters can achieve Pirie's desire of 'erupt[ing] into the dominant mode' (Pirie, 2009: 12) is debatable. The monsters of the Hoodie Horror traverse both the 'lost continent' (Petley, 1996: 98-119) and the vaunted verisimilitude of the realist aesthetic. However, the employment of horror as a textual mechanism through which to animate the lower-class exposes the ideological issue of contemporary realist texts' representation of the marginalised, but also positions horror as a cinematic vehicle for engaging with social issues in British film culture of the new millennium. These films reveal how far the spatialising discourse of the underclass has marginalised this population in the public imaginary. The following chapters explore the monster as discourse in the Hoodie Horror.

4.2: The monstrous abject



To comprehend the monsters of the real requires expanding our understanding of monsters to its farthest reaches, beyond generic markers and structures; to reconfigure and to reappraise what was conceived as monstrous in Britain in the early years of the new millennium. Barry Keith Grant's conceptualisation of the Yuppie Horror film is potentially innovative and attempts to locate the horror in films such as *Fatal Attraction* (Adrian Lyne, 1987), *Pacific Heights* (John Schlesinger, 1990) and *Single White Female* (Barbet Schroeder, 1992), through identifying horror film's 'style and syntax' in the films in focus (Grant, 2004: 153-65). However, Grant's methodology in searching for the old dark house, monsters and the monstrous 'other', impresses more in identifying markers of the horror film, rather than a scrutiny of the yuppie as horror. As this thesis repositions the abject away from the psychoanalytical to the social, and subsequently revisits the nature of horror in the cycle, so monsters must receive the same treatment, since, as Freeland has stated, 'horror concerns monsters' (Freeland, 1995: 130). Monsters of

the real reside within the alterity of representation that underscores this thesis. But still, these monsters require horrorising.

While the gothic abject is a paradoxical fusion of the contemporary discourse of the underclass and an unfashionable monsterisation, the monstrous abject is born of the same abject discourse but requires situating in a different cinematic legacy. As with the gothic abject, the monsters of the real, as this chapter argues, are born of a discourse of the underclass as abject, conceptualised in the figure of the Hoodie, but also of a broader discourse that positions the circumstances of the underclass as an intergenerational condition, as if poverty, unemployment and violence are states inherited. As Tyler argues, imagining the underclass as a race positions disadvantage not as a result of political or economic strategies, but as an inherited condition (Tyler, 2013: 188). In the monstrous abject, violence and anger is a congenital state. The focus of this chapter is to explore this realist monster with a focus on *Eden Lake*, *Harry Brown*, *Cherry Tree Lane* and *Piggy*. The aim is to illuminate the monster within an abject discourse of disgust, and to position the cycle within a legacy of representation of gendered class violence in British film. The monstrous abject is nothing but violent, and triumphs in his violence. Within this remit, the chapter will explore how motifs of social realism have become signifiers of horror in the cycle, and highlight concerns for representations of a damaged underclass male.

In her discussion on *Nil By Mouth*, Claire Monk appraises the representation of Raymond as a 'damaged' masculinity, seeing the character as a product of working-class intergenerational male violence (Monk, 2000b: 164). I posit that such a

representation of a defective classed masculinity is a persistent motif of British cinema, occurring over differing genres, as with Pinkie Brown in *Brighton Rock* (John Boulting, 1948), Carlin in *Scum*, Trevor in *Made in Britain* (Alan Clarke, 1982) and Bex Bissel in *The Firm*. British cinema has a fascination with a violent working-class machismo. Ben Kingsley's Don Logan in *Sexy Beast* and Vinnie Jones's Big Chris in *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* are two such examples. Logan is introduced by a dynamic reliant on a relationship of difference. For Logan to be monstrous, his masculinity must be excessive and more fanatical in his violence than the other gangsters, such as Gal. The shocked and uneasy reaction of Gal *et al* to the news of Logan's imminent arrival, position the latter as an unpredictable presence in the Spanish idyll of the criminal expats. Logan's attire, tight-fitting grey sta-prest trousers and crisp, short-sleeved shirt, conveys a perfunctory ordinariness, whilst the tight and fetishized framing of his body on his arrival at the airport, capturing in rapid editing Logan's ferocious walking, suggests a repressing and reining in of a simmering violence. The anxious concern of the group and Logan's unstable vicious character is brutally realised when he abruptly urinates over the floor of the bathroom, as if marking his territory, before his screaming confrontation with Gal. Filmed on hand-held camera, the unstable movements correspond to Logan's unhinged behaviour, framing the episode as a psychotic outbreak. This ferocious act, endorsing Gal's concern, functions as an affirmative action of Logan's monstrosity, a monstrosity that is shaped by volatility and violence.

Similarly, the coolness and swagger of *Lock Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* does not fully waiver the savage aggression of low-fi criminal fraternity. Big Chris's wild and

sadistic beating of Dog's head with a car door, framed from Dog's POV looking up at Big Chris, serves to divest Big Chris of all waggish attitude to reveal an angry, brutal and untamed machismo. Both of these examples relies on a revelatory act of physical terror as evidence of a monstrosity associated with a classed masculinity. But while the contemporary discourse and cinematic legacy illuminate a context for these monsters, the issue of what denotes these characters as monstrous onscreen remains to be reckoned.

Freeland's interjection on realist horror provides a practical and loose framework through which to approach the monsters in focus in this chapter (Freeland, 1995: 126-42). In acknowledging the restrictions of Carroll's art horror in light of the development the horror genre had taken, Freeland concentrates on *Henry: Portrait of A Serial Killer* as a text through which to elucidate her thoughts, with a focus on monster construction, narrative and ideology. Freeland aligns the realist horror as a cinematic advancement that classical theory such as Carroll's or Aristotle's *Poetics* are not fully equipped to explain. Whilst the classical approach allows for an examination of certain aspects of monsterisation, narrative and plot, it is insufficient, in Freeland's opinion. In terms of the monster, Freeland identifies how realist horror focuses on real-life killers, or draws upon a certain realism in violence that has proliferated across media reportage, easily accessed through repeated broadcasts. The monster retains its status as an object of fascination as the reporting 'glamorises and eroticises its central figure' (Freeland, 1995: 136), but is often deconstructed, resulting in a neutering of its otherness, to become an extension of either the actor's performance and oeuvre, as demonstrated with

Anthony Hopkins/Hannibal Lecter, or the celebrity status of the real-life killer depicted onscreen, as exemplified by Ted Bundy (136). Also, in regard to narrative structure, realist horror privileges bloody spectacle over plot, as the interweaving of reality and fiction relegates plot as secondary. The spectacularization of violence obscures what Freeland sees as the 'classical relation between mimesis and reality' (138), a relationship that is continually problematised through the advent of reality TV, resulting in an ideological effect of perpetuating a confrontation with violence and a gruesome death as a *real* possibility. The challenge in this ideological position that Freeland is keen to explore is one of power structures. Often the victims of the realist monster are female. The mix of 'real' violence and gendered victims positions these films within a conservative dogma of a patriarchal privilege that exposes a resulting problematic morality and ideology of the films that Freeland endeavours to wrestle with (126-42).

The value of Freeland's exploration here for approaching the monstrous abject of the Hoodie Horror is clear. The tracing of the Hoodie and the wider discourse of the underclass is indeed a form of mimesis on film of an assumed reality. The Hoodie is a media creation appropriated and exploited by governments, initially New Labour, as a figurative scapegoat to generate consent for punitive policies. It is a discourse founded in a process of subjugation and governance, as part of a neoliberal philosophy, that seeks to fetishize such figures as the Hoodie as deviant. The popularity and repetition of stories of violence and Hoodies in the media position the events as real, thus securing a 'truth' about the identity of the Hoodie and by association, the underclass. This essentialist discourse is most evident in the cycle in

Heartless, *F* and *Citadel*, where the Hoodies as monsters are clearly traceable from cultural discourse to film. However, defining monsters and what is monstrous is more complex in other films, where performance and the wider discourse of the underclass are brought into play. These more murky and involved configurations are, though, equally critical to comprehending the cycle, and thus justify further exploration and elaboration. These monstrous abjects function to further uphold the implicit neoliberal ideology of the cycle, whilst raising questions about representations of class, specifically a male underclass, in British film. To elaborate further on the real monsters, the chapter will draw upon Freeland's text as a loose framework by which to approach the configurations. By doing so, I am not categorising the films of the Hoodie Horror with Freeland's conceptualisation of a realist horror. As stated throughout this thesis, the cycle is a collective of differing film forms, and Freeland's philosophic model cannot fully tally with the Hoodie Horror. Rather, the objective of this chapter is to address and account for the monstrosity of the monstrous abject of the cycle and elucidate how this problematizes representation.

Of most interest and pertinence for addressing the cycle's realist monster is Freeland's attention to the allure of the monster and spectacle, and the interaction between both, and how these elements illuminate a film's ideology. However, the fascination of the monster as formed by a mixture of killer as celebrity and a violent male sexuality does not apply to the Hoodie Horror. Even the British horror film is not safe from the pervasiveness of class, as exemplified in the seminal *Peeping Tom*. The monstrous abject of the cycle, as with the gothic abject, is conjured out of

a contemporary class discourse that configures the underclass as abject, as an object of disgust. The violence waged is not the surfacing of a repressed sexuality, but of a masculine violence associated with a transhistorical conceptualisation of a threatening male underclass identity. This complicates matters somewhat, as the mimesis in the representations traces over a contemporary stereotype from culture to screen. Whilst the monsters are fleshed out through narrative, the characters retain elements of the underclass stereotype. These monsters then are subjugated to the constraints of discourse. As a counter-position, Freeland ruminates how monsters depicting male violence could just be approached as a formula (137), and the same rationale can be applied to the monstrous figures of the Hoodie Horror. The protagonist of parodic comedy *Anuvahood* (Adam Deacon and Daniel Toland, 2011), Kenneth, is an example from the cycle of how parodies rely upon a particular narrative model. Kenneth wants to be a gangster and quits his job to fulfil his dream but bathetic circumstances bedevil his efforts. Films such as *Anuvahood* rely upon formulae, and an audience knowledge of these, to parody the form. However, as both Stuart Hall (Hall *et al*, 1978: 129) and Tyler (2013: 10) conclude, the repetition of ideas and expressions across cultural platforms congeals and forms an identity in the public realm. A persistent use of a particular classed and gendered representation fabricated across a series of films in a cycle, such as in the Hoodie Horror, coalescing within a history of similar representations in British cinema, suggests a pervasive currency of prejudice and stigma towards the underclass male.

In exploring the monster, I'd like to address the spectacle of extreme violence first, with a focus on the murder of Leonard Attwell in *Harry Brown*, the torture and

killing of Steve and the young boy Adam in *Eden Lake*, and the rape of Christine in *Cherry Tree Lane*. Leonard is murdered in the underpass by the gang of Hoodies that control the estate. After suffering sustained abuse and harassment from the youths, a distraught Leonard confronts the gang armed with a bayonet. The Hoodies taunt, jeer and easily overpower Leonard, taking his weapon and stabbing him with it. As Leonard lies dying, one hooded youth urinates on him (Fig 119). The audience come to know what happened to Leonard as we witness the scene along with Harry, as both watch the footage as it was captured on a camera phone, a filmic strategy discussed further in the chapter on *Harry Brown* in 'Manors'. In *Eden Lake*, Steve attempts to escape the threatening gang of youths in the woods but crashes the car and tells Jenny to get help. The gang captures Steve, tying him up with barbed wire. In a scene of brutal adolescent and gang bravado, Brett bullies other gang members to knife Steve with a Stanley knife. Each member takes a turn reluctantly, with the last boy knifing Steve in the mouth. In a later scene, the gang set fire to the now dead Steve, as Jenny is tied to his body. Jenny escapes, but Brett in an effort to intimidate Jenny to return, places a tyre around the neck of the young Adam, the boy who led the gang to her, and sets fire to Adam's head, an act caught at the back of the frame.

These two examples of spectacles of horror are designed to engage the spectator in an emotive response, an exchange that is formulated on a disgust consensus. Whilst disgust is an aversive emotion associated with an immediate physical response of sickness and revilement (Tyler, 2013: 21), it is also a communicator of hierarchy and value when applied within the power structures of a social and

cultural sphere (Ngai, 2005). When disgust is applied to people, it is done so to separate and demarcate those deemed disgusting as the 'other'. Kolnai observes how disgust invokes a spatializing functionality that hastens a perceived flight from what is deemed vile, in order to escape the risk of contamination (Kolnai, 2004: 587). These judgements of value, Ngai observes, are what Kolnai conceptualises as moral judiciousness. In essence, the immediate physical reaction of revulsion legitimises moral condemnation of the object of disgust.

The scenes in question from *Harry Brown* and *Eden Lake* capture orchestrated representations of sickening acts of depravity, which engage the spectator to condemn those undertaking the actions as lacking morality and humanity. Urinating on a dying Leonard Attwell probes what is the worst action – murder, or defiling a dying human body by urinating on it? The act of comparison between the two acts advances the abjection in the scene. These acts are a visual furthering of the Hoodies' abject state, essentialising the Hoodies as inhumane. The shocking acts of bloody violence in *Eden Lake* function similarly. The increasing ferocity of the knife attacks, on a bound and pleading Steve, culminate in a stomach-churning knifing of his mouth, with the camera lingering on the knife being pulled around the inside of this orifice (Fig 120). However, these atrocities are surpassed in Brett's murdering of Adam by setting him alight. As if this is too excessive a spectacle for the audience, the image of the burning Adam is kept hazy and his screams mute, positioned at the back of the frame. The competition for the most depraved act invites the audience to engage in a 'dare you look away' dynamic, whilst constructing Brett and the gang as immoral, depraved and degenerate. Whereas

Carroll conceptualises monsters as transgressors of form, unknowable to science and laws of nature (Carroll, 1990), the young, human monsters of *Eden Lake* and *Harry Brown* require coding as monsters in a different manner and so the emphasis transfers from form to deeds, as Freeland observes of the realist horror. Their monstrosity is confirmed by their actions. Firstly, the actions are of such an excessiveness, a ferocity of heartlessness, that they divest the Hoodies of humanity, accentuating their feral nature, depriving them of any associative traits that separate the human from animalistic beings. Secondly, the spectacularization of these acts facilitates a disgust consensus between image and audience. The extremity of the violence initiates a 'flight' from the image, but also engages moral condemnation of the deeds and the perpetrators, confirming the Hoodies as abject and legitimising their stigmatization both on and off-screen as low-other.

The rape of Christine by Rian in *Cherry Tree Lane* invokes not only questions about class, but also race. The scene is further complicated by the construction of Christine's character. Unlike Leonard Attwell or Jenny and Steve, Christine is coded as unsympathetic. The opening scene of her arguing with her husband constructs the couple as selfish, wealth-orientated and as ineffectual parents. The couple's affluence equates to a repugnant middle-class identity. This initial character construction complicates the ensuing Hoodie home-invasion by Rian and his gang, by muddying the overall ideology of the film. As with *Eden Lake*, there are transnational qualities to the film, noting the similarities of plot with Wes Craven's *Last House on the Left* (Wes Craven, 1972). However, the couple in Craven's film is more agreeable initially, though critical discussion of their later actions has raised

questions about the couple's moral authority (Lowenstein, 2005: 111-43). In comparison, the moral authority of Christine and Michael in *Cherry Tree Lane* is in question from the outset. While this corresponds to Walker's analysis of the couple in his article on the new British horror film, I do not concur with his assertion that this supposes a progressive reading of the film and concomitant underclass representation by challenging 'the validity of bigoted stereotypes of the "underclass"' (Walker, 2012: 451). Even Michael's killing of Rian does not recuperate the gang. If there *is* a progressive reading to be had of the film, then it is to be found in the film's objectivity. In constructing all characters as unsympathetic, the film refuses to bow to either a conservative or progressive ideology. Or equally, it is simply a confused film.

How can we then approach the rape scene? The overall discourse of the Hoodie is one that provides no credence to individuality or difference, but rather flattens intersectional identity into an essentialist and hegemonic denotation of a mass, positing the underclass as violent and threatening. To take this approach would be to create a hierarchy of value with class as the most important, resulting in minimizing a significance of Rian's race. Indeed, when placed within the wider cycle, Rian's actions, along with Sam's from the *Hood* trilogy and Brett's in *Eden Lake*, are comparable, and privilege a reading of a class discourse, as conceptualised within the figure of a Hoodie. Reena Ahmed observes 'the centrality of class to multi-cultural politics in Britain' (Ahmed, 2015: 10). If we accept Ahmed's position, do we then deny a reading of race into the rape? Whilst the act does not have the impact or the historical significance of Ben's slapping of Barbara in *Night of the Living Dead*

(George A. Romero, 1968), there is still an explicit taboo broken in this scene. The legacy of the black experience in Britain is one of marginalisation and abjection, as represented in *Pressure*, *Burning An Illusion* (Menelick Shabazz, 1981) and *Belle* (Amma Assante, 2013). Films such as *Bullet Boy* and television programmes such as *Top Boy* propel a marginalised black representation into an explicit criminal narrative, blurring issues of race into a broader discourse of criminality that finds resonance with texts engaging with class, (white) identity and delinquency. *Cherry Tree Lane* resides within this muddy collective of films and offers no explicit comment on black representation. Rather, the film aligns Mike and Christine's son Sebastian with Rian due to Sebastian's drug-pushing. While we may consider whether a black boy raping a white woman a more offensive crime than killing her, reading the attack as initialising a disgust consensus, as with the violence in *Harry Brown* and *Eden Lake*, seems prompted by the film. The film thus still privileges questions of class and condemns Rian as abject.

The closing scenes of both *Eden Lake* and *Harry Brown* widen the monster question to incorporate the families, and specifically male relatives, in line with the publicly imagined discourse of an intergenerational violence of the underclass. As riots break out on the estate in *Harry Brown*, Harry rescues Frampton and Hicock, and seeks shelter in the one place he considers safe, Sid's pub. Unbeknownst to Harry but then revealed by Frampton, is the fact that Sid O'Rourke is Noel Winter's uncle, Noel being the leader of the gang who murdered Leonard Attwell, and Harry's target for revenge. The ensuing scene results in a show-down between Sid and Harry, with the former (who, up until this scene, had been friendly with Harry)

unflinchingly deciding to kill him, presumably because of the greater strength of family ties. Similarly, Jenny's escape from the murderous teenagers is mercilessly thwarted by Brett's father. On finding out she has killed the youngster, Cooper, Brett's father, Jon, acts to destroy all evidence of any killings, including Jenny herself: 'if [the police] come round here, they won't fucking find anything'. What plays out is an enactment of the damaged father-son relationship of Jon and Brett. Brett is fearful of his father, because Jon is violent towards him. Whilst Jon bullies the other men, an act echoing Brett's earlier incitement of the gang to murder, the youth is despatched to his bedroom (Fig 121). The closing scenes of the film capture Brett looking in the mirror as he listens to Jenny's screams. Brett deletes all the footage of Steve's murder from his phone and puts on Steve's sunglasses.

This closing sequence of *Eden Lake* is suggestive of the film's strategy of somewhat recuperating Brett from his sadistic and deviant construction, by contextualising his behaviour as an effect of Jon's violent parenting. It is not made clear the meaning of Brett's wearing of Steve's glasses whilst pondering on his reflection in the mirror. Whether this is to shut out his father's brutalisation of Jenny, or a denial of his actions, the film closes with Brett, situating him as traversing polar positions – a survivor of an ordeal, and triumphant in going unpunished (Figs 122 and 123). The film refuses to answer which position Brett finally inhabits and, in doing so, closes on a nihilistic tone, with Brett standing as a cautionary tale, but a caution to what remaining opaque.

While Noel Winters is not admonished for his actions in *Harry Brown*, the injection of familial male relationships raises questions about who the monster is in both

films, by reconfiguring the narrative of adolescent deviancy into a story of intergenerational violence as a threatening concern. In *Eden Lake*, the narrative construction of Jenny as sympathetic character, a survivor of torture, attempted murder, and a witness to the killing and defilement by burning of her boyfriend, serves to accentuate the extremity nature of her fate. Jon's revenge on Jenny at this juncture in the narrative elicits his moral condemnation and begs comparison to Brett's actions. In *Harry Brown* the revelation of Sid's relationship and criminal exploits is a denouement that not only imperils Harry but is an alarming disclosure that questions the validity of Harry's homosocial relationships.

While these narrative developments resonate with the extra-filmic discourse of an underclass formed in an intergenerational culture of deviancy (Tyler, 2013: 163), the denouements are also significant for British cinema as they mark the transition of a motif from social realism to a mechanism of horror. Problematic father and son, and male familial relationships, as Hill observes (Hill, 2000a & 2000b), proliferate the social realist tradition, as exemplified in *Billy Liar* (John Schlesinger, 1963), *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (Karel Reisz, 1960), *Kes*, *Like Father* (Amber Street Collective, 2000) and *Nil By Mouth*. But while the issues with familial ties in the social realist text remain within the personal sphere, the transformation to an inherited violence of the underclass here in the Hoodie Horror reconfigure the ties from a concern of the domestic to a social threat. To return to Cohen's assertion of the monster being a body of culture (Cohen, 1996: 4) and apply it to the monstrous abject of the Hoodie Horror, we can situate the likes of Brett, Jon, Noel Winters and Sid as monsters inscribed as the moral borders of Britain in the

new millennium by conveying the values of citizenship. These figures, as representations of the underclass as abject through their violent and self-serving interests, are projections of the devastation of the working-class and a polarization of social division and heightened class divisions through stereotypes such as the Hoodie. The assimilation of this underclass identity into representations in British film perpetuates the discourse and subjugates the underclass further. These monsters are inscribed within the power structures of a neoliberal state that seeks to subjugate the underclass and construct citizenship in contemporary Britain. However, the temporal resonance of Cohen's monster is disrupted by a heritage of representations of low-class, masculine violence in British cinema. Whilst the figure of the Hoodie is the contemporary configuration, it also coalesces with a screen heritage of lower-class masculine violence. Whilst such a history may not problematize spectator viewing, repeated visions in culture, as Tyler argues as an effect of the process of social abjection (Tyler, 2013), normalise the underclass male as violent, presenting this as his natural and consistent state. This raises questions not just for representations of class, but also for performance.

This brings me to the final monsters I wish to address: Stretch, the volatile drug-dealer in *Harry Brown*, played by Sean Harris; and Piggy, played by Paul Anderson. Freeland briefly observes how the threat of the monster in the realist horror is often pacified through the associative discourse of the actor who plays him, as suggested with the earlier example of Hannibal Lector and Anthony Hopkins (Freeland, 1995: 136). As I have outlined earlier, there is a predilection for a lower-classed masculine role in British film, due in part to the continual renewal of the

British gangster and crime film, but also in part to the fascination with such figures as the Krays. The brutality of the criminal activities of the twins had long been subdued by their mythical and celebrity standing in culture, when the Kemp brothers played them in the 1990 vehicle, *The Krays*, and subsequently Tom Hardy as both twins in *Legend* (Brian Helgeland, 2015). In the two films, *performing* the Krays became the focus of discussions on the films, rather than the brothers and their violence (von Tunzlemann, 2015).

In a similar fashion, both Harris' performance as Stretch and Anderson's turn as Piggy animate a certain enjoyment of their criminality, achieved through the orchestration of both actors' physicality and by framing. I position both within a cultural performance of the discourse of underclass male violence. While this can be constituted within Foucault's assertion that identity formations are historically and culturally specific and contingent on the exertion of power mechanisms that seek to regulate the body (Foucault, 1980: 57-58), these performances also speak of a transhistorical subject formation that regulate the lower classes as 'other' as a persistent identity.

As with *Eden Lake*, *Piggy's* narrative is indebted to an American text, namely *Fight Club* (David Fincher, 1999), in that the film suggests the character of Piggy is a psychological aberration of protagonist Joe's psyche, a materialisation allowing Joe to process his brother's murder. Piggy appears in Joe's life after John's funeral and convinces Joe to turn vigilante and trace his brother's killers with a view to retribution. The film's closing scene blurs the two characters further by positioning Joe as Piggy, thus revealing Piggy to be Joe and establishing Joe as the murderous

avenger. But it is Paul Anderson's illumination of a *jouissance* in the violent acts which eroticizes killing, and by extension the 'other' in the underclass. In a decisive scene in which Piggy murders one of his brother's suspected assailants by continually stamping on his head, the footage is slowed down and Piggy's body is framed in an act of ecstasy. After each ferocious stamp, taking place below the frame, Piggy throws back his head and arches his back in a state of exultation (Fig 124). The eroticising of the act cannot be mistaken. Piggy continues until the head of his victim is so flattened, a towel that is placed over the head lies flat on the floor (Fig 125). While the murder as an act of revenge for the senseless killing of John may be justified, this extreme, violent act of defacement, undertaken with euphoria, disrupts the retribution and makes it untenable. As with the violence in *Eden Lake* and *Harry Brown*, the spectacle of Piggy's savagery requires such extremity to affirm his abject state. And yet, the fascination with brutality requires resolving.

Stretch appears in just one scene in *Harry Brown* in a confrontation with the protagonist. Stretch is the local drug dealer who also sells firearms and weapons, and it is a gun Harry wants to purchase. Stretch is semi-naked; his torso, chest and back are littered with scars. During the exchange with Harry, Stretch injects himself with drugs, with the television on in the background so Stretch can watch the footage of himself having sex with the drugged up girl lying on the sofa. Stretch's swagger is constructed in his volatility. As he walks through the rows of cannabis plants, Stretch stretches his arms out (Fig 126). Harris's animation of Stretch is in deliberate movements and speech, as a man strung-out on drugs needing to steady

himself to navigate space and people (Fig 127). In a sequence that captures a face-off between Stretch and Harry in head shots, Harris is constantly smoothing his hand across his bristled jawline, suggesting an instability below the deliberate movements (Fig 128). While Harris may not imbue Stretch with the ecstasy found in Piggy, his performance in this brief scene constructs the character as a figure of revulsion and fascination, as an abject figure and object of disgust. Harry, as an essentialist working-class figure of decency, functions as a comparative mechanism that accentuates Stretch as abject. But Harris's physical form in the frame makes a spectacle of his body as an object of revulsion at the same time that it reveals a performance of underclass virility. As Steve Neale proposes, spectacle provides an explicit function to 'to stress, to display,' (Neale, 1979: 66-67) by demanding the spectator to engage in a physical act of looking.

Kristeva argues that when a body is constructed and fashioned as disgusting, it is transformed into 'a magnet of fascination and repulsion' (Kristeva, 1995: 118). The compulsion to look that Kristeva alludes to here provides a pertinent avenue by which to approach both Stretch and Piggy. Whilst both are constructed as aversive figures, the spectacle of the pleasure both characters experience in their degradation compels us to gaze upon the image. As Elizabeth Cowie observes, the function of the monstrous in horror is in 'engaging us in a compulsive return to look, to watch, to know, what we dread' (Cowie, 2003: 35). What we look upon and dread in both Stretch and Piggy is a discourse of class. The gratification that both characters embody is a performance of becoming the abject society has told the underclass they are. These are performances of those deemed wretched and the

dregs, revelling in a chaos and dysfunctionality of their own making, and yet fulfilling the abject role afforded by societal mechanisms of power. Monsterising the underclass in these figures is the character equivalent of the long shot in *The Selfish Giant*. It is fetishisation of the underclass that has a spatializing effect in symbolically distancing the wretched from the viewer. Ahmed asserts how a 'disgust at "that which is below" functions to maintain the power relations between above and below' (Ahmed, 2004: 88). Applying Ahmed's approach to the monsters of the real, constructing monsters as an object of disgust perpetuates the power relations between audience and monster and by default a symbolic underclass, which maintains the object at a distance, and enables the audience to continue to disidentify.

However, entwined with the discourse of class is the performance of class. While the monsters here are contingent on the figure of the Hoodie, and by default the underclass, they reside in a legacy of British cinema that privileges a particular identity of a damaged and violent male, this history of which was outlined at the beginning of this chapter. Paul Anderson and Sean Harris are two examples of actors who are known for playing this type of male. Anderson's first role was in Nick Love's remake of *The Firm* (Nick Love, 2009), and he has played criminal supporting roles in *Top Boy* and *Legend*, but is most widely known for playing notorious psychotic gangster, Arthur Shelby, in *Peaky Blinders* (Stephen Knight, 2013-). Like Anderson, Harris has played a share of violent males in *The Goob* (Guy Myhill, 2004), *Southcliffe* (Sean Durkin, 2014) and Ian Brady in the mini-series *See No Evil* (Christopher Menual and Nicola Morrow, 2006). Adding to the veritable list in this

chapter of low-life male roles, we can include Michael Caine as the eponymous protagonist of *Get Carter* (Mike Hodges, 1971), as discussed earlier, and Mortwell in *Mona Lisa* (Neil Jordan, 1986). Both Caine and Gary Oldman developed their careers by seminal roles that, as with the lineage, eroticised the violent, low-class male. This raises two pertinent points of interest.

Fittingly perhaps coming from a country with a reputation for being obsessed with class, British cinema has made monsters out of class. Whilst acknowledging the tradition of gothic monsters, the recurring image of a gendered and class violence encapsulated in performances from Caine, Oldman, Winstone, and here Harris and Anderson, suggest a predilection in British cinema for, and a fascination with, the spectacle of destructive males. As with the abject, the persistent reappearance of these roles reminds us of the threat, but also the fascination, these masculine identities represent. Is it that in making a spectacle from, from fetishizing, the figure of a ferocious underclass male, British film makes safe the threat this identity poses? Or is it that the genres – gangster, crime, social realism – where such identities are centralised are still a lucrative market for the British film industry? The consistent output of low-fi, straight-to-DVD products such as *Rise of the Footsoldier* series (Julian Gilbey, 2007; Ricci Harnett, 2015; Zachary Adler, 2017), *Bonded by Blood* series (Sacha Bennett, 2010; Greg Hall, 2017), *London Heist* (Mark McQueen, 2017), and *Cass* (Jon S. Baird, 2008), demonstrate a viable market for films that revere criminality and a brutish masculinity. For actors such as Anderson and Harris, such roles appear as if a rite of passage for an acting career onscreen as well as an opportunity to put on display, to spectacularise, an actor's skill. Taking

the careers of British working-class actors such as Michael Caine, Ray Winstone and Gary Oldman as examples, such roles become career-defining in establishing credibility as an actor thus serving as career advancement.

The second area such roles posit is the idea of a transhistorical male underclass identity. The proliferation of such characters onscreen challenges the understanding of a temporally specific gender identity, as argued by such theorists as Skeggs (2004), Foucault (1980) and Butler (1993). Rather this legacy of a British male performance implies a natural character, or condition, of the underclass male. British cinema, as producer of specific genres and meeting a supply-and-demand market, plays a role in establishing and perpetuating the powerful myth of the underclass male as violent. This is not to moralise on the output and social responsibility of a national cinema, or to suppose a passive audience unable to question such formulaic filmic strategies, but rather to highlight how the fetishization of the underclass male, through a continual demand from audiences, producers and actors, will persist to be a structural concern for the British film industry.

4.3: The gothic abject

4.3.1: Introduction: Build me a monster

Tommy: 'I saw their faces. What are they?'

Priest: 'Demons.'

Tommy: '*Demons?*'

Priest: 'Fuck's sake. You believe just about anything right now!'

(*Citadel*, 2012)

The gothic abject is a body of conflict and tension. Nowhere else in the cycle is the fusion of realism with horror, mimesis and fantasy, and the contemporary with the historical, so explicit than with the gothic abject. It also a body of discourse. The above conversation concerning the ethereal but murderous Hoodies, between Tommy and the priest in *Citadel*, alludes to an ambiguity in the Hoodie corporeal form. Are the Hoodies human, or something as yet unidentifiable? Indeed, the film's strategy is to tease both Tommy and the audience with this question, to contrive to shroud the Hoodie's identity as a narrative device until the dramatic revelation. The film's schema of concealment and revelation is symptomatic of the other films focused on in this chapter, *Heartless* and *F*. In a set-piece sequence in *Heartless*, Jamie trails a group of Hoodies in an attempt to uncover the identity under the hood, resulting in a shocking disclosure. This strategy is more complex in *F*, as the film is determined to maintain the ambiguity as a mechanism of the horror. All three films function around this misdirection, a structure this chapter situates as a narrative tool of the Gothic. If we think of the works of *Dracula* and *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, there is an element central to the narrative

that relies upon a concealment of identity. This hesitation of identification then reveals a tension in the body of the Hoodies in these films: a tension between the human form of a Hoodie, and a potentially transgressive corporeality that draws upon the gothic monster. From this we can deduct there is a social body and a gothic body in the gothic abject.

This is not the sole tension in the gothic abject. The social body in the form of the Hoodie addresses by mimesis a contemporaneity of the discourse of the underclass as explored throughout this thesis. The social body encapsulates the Hoodie as social abject. But the rendering of these Hoodies in the gothic shape of a monster expresses a return of something passed, or a look back to history. There is tension between realism and the gothic. The social racism of the language employed to animate the Hoodie in the media such as 'vermin', 'cretinous', and 'feral' forms an eugenicist conceptualisation of the Hoodie, by aligning the figure with the *untermenschen* that is, subhuman. If we consider the denial of their humanity in the cultural configuration, then their monster form in these films can be comprehended as a further act of symbolic violence, as both are animations of an object perceived as abject, and other than human. However, there remains a temporal paradox in the cinematic representation of the Hoodie in these films. To animate the contemporary, the films draw on a past tradition of British horror – the gothic. This explicit and essentialist plundering of the past raises issues, however. Firstly, it speaks of an uncreative and fallow approach to filmmaking, and one that seeks profit by exploitation, resulting in a problematic representation of the British lower-class onscreen. Ideological critique is a thorny area of scholarly pursuit and

this thesis acknowledges the ability of an audience to engage with the films independently of the extra-filmic cultural imagery. However, the films' explicit mimesis of the Hoodie is employed uncritically, resulting in the furthering of the abject status of the underclass. Indeed, the films are reliant on the Hoodies 'performing' as seen in other mediums of communication. It is difficult then to construct a progressive reading of the films. Rather, a more acceptable comprehension would be to position the films as texts expressing a neoliberal ideology whilst being morally and ethically problematic due to their rendering of class.

Secondly, the presence of the gothic in the form of demons and ghouls, and the narrative mechanics that construct these beings, results in anachronism that blurs the contemporaneity with historicity. Both Reynolds and Fisher assert how anachronism has lost its 'unheimlich charge' (Fisher, 2013: 14) in that pastiche, parody, retrospection are normalized in contemporary cultural forms. Cultural output, for both writers, displays a withdrawal from innovation and advancement, by embracing textual motifs and processes from past texts (Fisher, 2013 Reynolds, 2012). Here in the gothic abject, the films display an attachment to traditional mechanisms of monster-making that can be traced to *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (Wilde, 1890/1992) as an example, but is also a remnant of Hammer productions. This is not to say that these films display a desire to return to a particular period in time, but rather a persistency, a haunting, of past mechanisms and forms. The monsters are the materialised spectre of the gothic, a cinematic signature that speaks of, to borrow from Derrida, what is 'no longer' (Derrida cited in Fisher, 2013

18), and here I refer to Hammer. The overriding discourse of Hammer is a cinematic tradition born of a long literature history, one of the gothic and gothic monsters. The prevailing narrative of Hammer is one of films that embraced the gothic, setting films in historical settings, plundering tales of old with serialised re-animations, for the fictionalised figures of *Dracula* (1960 – 1974), *Frankenstein* (1958 – 1974) and the *Mummy* (1959 – 1971) have engraved themselves as the primary history of the studio. The enduring popularity in British culture of two of Hammer's key figures, Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee, both of whom have become synonymous with the studio, has no doubt been central in effecting the accepted view of the studios. Tim Burton's brief utilisation of Lee in *Sleepy Hollow* (Tim Burton, 1999) is testament not only to the actor's association with horror, but with a particular type of horror: the gothic. Even the informative and seminal texts that have a focus on Hammer studios, David Pirie's *Heritage of Horror* (2009) and Peter Hutchings's *Hammer and Beyond* (1993), which attest to a more heterogeneous output than history explicitly relates, cannot dispel the myth. The name 'Hammer' conjures up monsters and the gothic. British horror cinema is Hammer.

This chapter will explore the gothic abject by dissecting it into the two bodies of discourse as identified earlier, the gothic body and the social body. Walker's analysis of the representations of the Hoodies as confusing and inconsistent, in that the animation of adolescent deviancy is not monstrous enough in comparison to other contemporaneous horror output, is correct (Walker, 2016: 92).⁹ However, the

⁹ Walker's work here does not extend to *Citadel*, as this was released subsequent to completion of his research. The films that Walker discusses specifically are *Heartless* and *F*.

constrains of a single chapter in which to discuss the films leaves minimal space for Walker to undertake a comprehensive examination as to *why* these monstrous figures are inconsistent. There is indeed a certain flatlining of the horror, specifically in *Heartless* and *Citadel*. The murderous actions, which seem an echo of the inflammatory media reports of killings by Hoodies, are somewhat incongruous with the manifestation of the Hoodies as phantasmal figures. As stated earlier, the gothic abject is a site of conflict between realism and the gothic, and it is this mimesis of the realism, as this chapter explores, that constrains the effect of horror in these films.

The three films considered in this chapter construct the gothic abject through an inter-dependent relationship between behaviour, concealment and 'unveiling' of identity, a relationship that constructs a narrative schema and is, as this chapter asserts, a traditional motif of the gothic monster. Both *Citadel* and *Heartless* follow a classical structure of cause and effect, in that the 'unveiling' functions as confirmation of actions and identity, while *F* subverts the causality by retaining the ambiguous nature of the Hoodies. As a determinant, the Hoodies are introduced by their anti-social actions, their social body. However, there is a tension between what is in the frame and the narration. What is framed is the Hoodies' deviant behaviour that serves to establish identity through resonance with the extra-filmic discourse. In *Citadel*, Tommy's wife is fatally attacked by hooded assailants; in *Heartless*, the Hoodies are loitering on local waste ground; and in *F* the Hoodies, unseen, kill a security guard and partake in low-level disorder. This very human behaviour though is narrated as otherworldly, as the actions of ethereal beings,

thus the films narrate the gothic body. The Hoodies in *Citadel* are constructed within a classic, 'now you see me, now you don't' model where the audience are privileged with reflections in car doors and windows, or as shadows at doors. They are constructed as present by their absence. They have the ability to be heard in houses, but not seen, and they disappear in a glance, only to re-appear instantly. In so doing, their threat becomes a ghostly and pervasive one. The form in shadows is employed in *Heartless*, where Jamie thinks he has seen a Hoodie in the window, catching an image with his camera. Later in the darkroom, as Jamie develops the photo, an image of a demon begins to materialise. The sequence cuts between Jamie's watching face and the developing photo. As the tension and momentum builds, both Jamie and the audience are denied affirmation in knowledge, as Jamie is interrupted by his nephew and the photo spoils (the significance of the nephew for the narrative becomes apparent in the closing sequences). In *F*, the visibility of the Hoodies is initially denied to the audience and characters alike. We do not see who murders the security guard, and out of the darkness, a milkshake hits a school window as Robert walks through the corridor. Framed as disembodied and motiveless actions, these events, the film advocates, have a supernatural source. When the Hoodies appear in the library, they invade the screen as they navigate the library shelves agilely, continuing this see-saw of unease regarding their identity. They have a human form but navigate space beyond the ability of a human. In juxtaposing deviancy within a ghost-like construction, the films introduce the necessary ambiguity, the traversing of the spectral and the actual, that these narratives require if an 'unveiling' is to occur, whilst creating a referral system that allows the audience to recognise the Hoodies by contextualising them within the

popular discourses. These initial introductory sequences begin the affiliation between crime, abjection and monstrosity, a relationship that the unmasking endorses. This act of unveiling is the visualisation of abjection, where criminality is *made* monstrous. To interrogate the significance of the gothic body to the gothic abject, but also to understand how the gothic is employed here, I will draw upon previous scholarship on the gothic and monstrosity in order to elucidate the monster as a site constructed, or rather to explore how the publicly imagined Hoodie is subjected to a further process of symbolic violence in being gothicised. This chapter engages with Tzvetan Todorov's conceptualisation of hesitation in the fantastic, the 'surface-and-depth' model that has been previously applied to other monsters of horror by Catherine Spooner and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, and Robert Mighall's arguments on representation of moral monstrosity in Victorian Gothic fiction (Todorov, 1975; Spooner, 2004; Kosofsky Sedgwick, 1980; Mighall, 1999).

4.3.2: The gothic body

The Gothic cannot be an essence, for what is Gothicized constantly changes. This depends on how each culture chooses to represent itself, and where it locates its progress and its necessary antithesis.

(Mighall, 1999: 286)

As explicitly outlined, this thesis does not present a psychoanalytical model for conceptualising the Hoodie Horror, but rather a social and cultural paradigm that is temporally and culturally specific. Monstrosity, the monstrous, and monsters, all have embodied the deviant and othered form that opposes the healthy, the sane, the beautiful, and the normative, in gothic literature from *Dracula* and *Frankenstein*

to the more contemporary cinematic animations of the Candyman and Buffalo Bill. As Halberstam rightly remarks, the gothic monster is the answer to 'the question of who must be removed from the community at large' (Halberstam, 1995: 3). Halberstam's challenge to the centrality and universality of what she sees as the application of the 'daddy-mommy-me-triangle' of the psychoanalytic to the interpretation of the Gothic narrative and the monster (8), opens a path for an historical and cultural elucidation that releases the monster from being reduced to an essentialist sexual form. Halberstam does not reject the psychoanalytical entirely, but rather acknowledges the limitations of the oedipalized encounter between fear and desire that results in a monsterised animation of paranoia. Resonating with Cohen's view of the monster as a cultural projection responsive to cultural and temporal specifics, Halberstam considers the gothic monster to be a 'meaning machine' and a 'permeable and infinitely interpretable body' open to being inscribed with discourses on class, gender, race, nationality and sexuality (1995: 21-22).

In line with Halberstam's and Cohen's conceptualisation, the gothic monster of the Hoodie Horror as variations on the demon and ghoul is a cultural and social body that illuminates anxieties over citizenship in neoliberal Britain of the new millennium. Whilst the cinematic worlds, via the instable objectivity of the main protagonists, are aligned to a psychoanalytical model of individual fears, this thesis asserts this is to fulfil the genre's affiliation with repression and fear, rather than fitting with the overall ideology of the film. The gothic abject here is an entity of discourse, the end product of the process of social abjection stitched together by

political, cultural and social rhetoric. The gothic abject is a body of class disgust, inscribed with motifs of the gothic. Whilst Mighall, as cited above, is correct in asserting there is no natural state of the gothic, the monsterising of such a recognizable, even notorious, and contemporaneous figure makes explicit the process. In bringing life to this monster, the gothic abject has to be *made* gothic. The first area of this method I would like to explore is the function of ambiguity and how the films establish questions over the Hoodies' form within Todorov's concept of hesitation.

The uncertainty over the form of the Hoodies is partially due to the hoodie as a garment, as the hood allows for the concealment of identity. Whilst the history of the hoodie is one area of exploration, it is not one this chapter engages in extensively. Of more significance is the main protagonists who engage with the gothic Hoodies. Tommy (*Citadel*), Jamie (*Heartless*) and Robert (*F*) all suffer from mental health issues. Tommy is suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder following the murder of his wife. Jamie is a long-term sufferer of depression and has tried to commit suicide previously, and Robert is an alcoholic after being attacked by a student. The films position Tommy, Robert and Jamie as suffering from a crisis in objectivity due to their mental health issues, with other characters disbelieving the protagonists' narration of events, dismissing the apparitions as imaginative figments from men under duress, which is in each case a plausible explanation. Each film draws upon these personal crises in establishing uncertainty over the corporeality of the Hoodies within the cinematic worlds but privileges the audience with the protagonists' engagement with these figures as ethereal beings.

The establishment of the ambiguity in each film relies upon an oscillation between the deviant, but very human actions, of the Hoodies, and their spectral presence: that is, between the discourse of the abject and the discourse of the gothic. As stated earlier, it is the gothic that narrates the objectionable.

This ambiguity of the Hoodies adheres to Todorov's concept of the Fantastic where, in the duration of the uncertainty, hesitation is experienced by those who encounter such other-worldly creatures. This hesitation exists within a crisis of vision. As Todorov explains, it is during this hesitancy that what one encounters leads to an experience where there may be only two possible explanations. For in a world, 'the one we know, a world without devils, sylphides, or vampires, there occurs an event which cannot be explained by the laws of this same familiar world' (Todorov, 1975: 25), hence:

the person who experiences the event must opt for one of two possible solutions: either he is the victim of an illusion of the senses, of a product of the imagination – and laws of the world then remain what they are; or else the event has indeed taken place, it is an integral part of reality – but then this reality is controlled by laws unknown to us (25).

The hesitation experienced by character and spectator alike is amplified by the realist form of the films' settings, such as the council estates and the school. Neither is readily or historically associated with gothic tales or horror cinema as remote castles or haunted houses are. These are not traditional geographies of the fantastic, rather these are ordinary geographies readily available as accessible spaces to the spectator. Cinematically, the council estate is more readily associated with the aesthetic of British social realist tradition, whilst the school setting has a

long association with British television drama such as *Grange Hill* (Phil Redmond, 1978 – 2008) or *Waterloo Road* (Ann McManus and Maureen Chadwick, 2006 – 2015), where contemporary social issues are interwoven into the dramatic narrative. This discord between the realism and the fantastic contributes to, and compounds the vacillation of, identity of the Hoodies.

Citadel, as with *Heartless*, establishes this oscillation between the supernatural and the real in two set-piece sequences that serve to construct and establish the cinematic animation of feral behaviour as ghostlike. Before the attack on Joanne in the exposition sequence, as Tommy takes the bags to the taxi, the Hoodies' reflections are captured in long shot in the car's side mirror and in the shine of the car door. Such framing and distancing initiates and aids in composing the abject form of the Hoodies. Framing in the long shot constructs the Hoodie as abject, by using spacial distance to denote otherness. Working with the hoodie's ability to conceal, reflections of the Hoodies function here to position the Hoodies as beings who can navigate space unseen and unheard, implying a threatening, but equally ethereal presence. Here, pervasive equals preternatural. During the attack, this initial other-worldly construction is reiterated. As Tommy can only watch from the lift¹⁰, a succession of swift shots frames the Hoodies and Joanne at one moment being present in the corridor (Fig 129), and the next not, as if all had vanished. After a moment's hesitation, all reappear in the corridor exiting a flat. The space of the

¹⁰ The lift refuses to work properly by its door not opening and going back down despite Tommy pressing the button. As with the Hoodies, there is an uneasy alliance between realism and horror. Prior representations in television, cinema and the media consistently portrays the inefficiencies of tower blocks and housing estates, such as lifts being out of order. When contextualised within the narrative and with the construction of the Hoodies, the question here is, does the lift not work due to a tangible mechanical problem in a discourse of realism, or is there some supernatural intervention responsible that evokes the tower block as possessed edifice?

corridor coupled with a hesitation that lasts long enough to create a form of temporal suspense confuses both Tommy and spectator into considering the possibility that both Joanne and the Hoodies have evaporated into the ether. Although all reappear from a flat, the question as to the form of the Hoodies has already been prompted, the suspicions of the unearthly introduced. Further into the narrative, with Tommy now a widowed single father suffering from a form of agoraphobia, he encounters the Hoodies again in his home, a set piece that further develops the Hoodies as supernatural entities. Again, the camera announces their presence to the spectator first by framing their distorted reflections in a kettle. Descending the stairs, Tommy finds the front door open and when settled in the lounge finds a needle on the floor. At this point, the lights in the house go out. The running out of electricity intervenes to accentuate the foreboding and, as with the lift in the opening scenes, works to create ambivalence as to the source of the deactivation. Has the money run out in the meter, or is the synchronism due to a more supernatural phenomenon? As a shadow of a figure of a hooded child appears at the glass-fronted front door (Fig 130), Tommy hears footsteps upstairs and looks upwards. As Tommy turns back to the door, the hooded figure punches through the glass in order to open the door. Once Tommy has defended himself against this figure, he rushes upstairs to find his child's cot turned over and the window open, but no sign of the Hoodies in the house. Other than the window, the Hoodies would have had to pass Tommy to escape. Tommy's friend Marie later rationalises the event as a burglary, whereas Tommy, as with Jamie in *Heartless*, is hesitant in accepting a rational explanation.

As with *Citadel*, the presence of the Hoodies in *F* is posited as physical, earthbound existences (due to the wearing of a hoodie and their physical movement), yet one that is omnipresent and non-human, as their initial onscreen presence implies. The film originally denies the frame their physical presence by presenting their actions, ranging from low-level deviancy to indiscriminate and horrific acts of killing, in a sequence that follows the Hoodies advance on, and inexplicable infiltration of, the school. The audience are alerted to a presence when the school's security guard is knocked unconscious outside the building, trapped in a disposal bin and then set alight. Similarly, Robert is first alerted when he witnesses a milkshake thrown against the window of the corridor where he is walking. The camera lingers on Robert looking out into the darkness, seeing no discernible origin of the act. Once the external threat is established, the film presents the physical form of the Hoodies, but still within a setting that amplifies the suggestion that they are not of this earth. In the library, the assistant thinks she hears Robert and calls out his name. The camera, close to the assistant, follows her as she investigates the lines of book-shelves. In a jump-scare, library card listings are thrown into the air by no visible agent, as with the milkshake earlier. The assistant, assuming it is the school children, shouts out 'Some of you kids don't deserve to be in school'. The camera captures, through the gaps between the books and shelves, indiscriminate shapes scuttling through the high-rise bookshelves. The movement is edited to create a 'now you see me, now you don't' pursuit through the bookshelves, images that are intercut between successive shots of the assistant turning her head, unable to conclusively locate or even determine their presence. The slow pace between each shot manufactures an increasing uneasiness whilst strengthening the sense of fear

and dread as the sequence instructs the audience to connect the Hoodie's arrival with the earlier indiscriminate killing of the security guard by undisclosed assailants. At the back of the frame, a Hoodie jumps up onto a bookshelf and tracks the library assistant (Figs 131 and 132). As one jumps down behind the assistant, she turns, and another jumps down (Fig 133). These Hoodies have now invaded the screen after their presence has been denied, but still have their faces obscured. The camera lingers as the Hoodies straighten their form, now surrounding the assistant. At this point, the scene is cut, denying the audience of witnessing the murder. The assistant's brutalised body is made visible later when Robert finds her.

Todorov's ideas on hesitation in the fantastic aid in informing the initial gothic construction of the Hoodie as gothic abject. In order to make something gothic, questions over identity and form are a necessity, especially with a renowned figure such as the Hoodie. The initial question would be the same as animating housing estates as haunted: how to make strange something so recognisable? Once ambiguity has been established, the films develop the tension around the configuration of the abject by focusing on identification through the revelation of the face. Whilst who or what these creatures are remains a concern in the three films, how each text resolves the question, through pacing and denouement, differs in each, impacting not only the narrative but also the delivery of horror.

4.3.3: Monstrous revelations

A Horror story, the face is a horror story

(Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 187)

Revelation of monstrosity as true identity has an extensive history in cinematic horror. From Dracula bearing his teeth to the bodily transformation of Larry Talbot in *The Wolf Man*, or David Kessler in *An American Werewolf in London* (John Landis, 1981), and not forgetting Brundle in the updated version of *The Fly*, the frisson created by such visual exposure not only acts as confirmation of what has been suspected in the narrative, but also functions as a site for horror itself. To reveal is to scare, to disgust, to repel and in a medium and genre reliant on visualisation, it is no surprise that such an exploit has become an expectation and a trope of cinematic horror. *Heartless*, *F* and *Citadel* continue this tradition as the following examples demonstrate.

If we divide *Citadel* into a classical three-act film, then the revelation occurs in the second and functions not only to persuade Tommy to save his daughter, but also that he was correct in thinking these beings were not human. The moment of unveiling occurs in a violent sequence of events that begins with Tommy's friend, Marie, being viciously attacked by the Hoodies, and Elsa kidnapped. In an effort to escape from the chasing Hoodies, Tommy boards a bus, itself an uncanny construction where passengers and the driver are of this world, but eerily drained of life. As the Hoodies board too, their unearthly form is further implied as they are framed as shapes from behind or as presences off screen. The aural scape of their animalistic speak penetrates the screen that frames Tommy's fearful face as the Hoodies indiscriminately and fatally attack those on board. Immediately preceding Elsa's kidnap, one of the Hoodie's face is unveiled to reveal a green, pustulent, half gnome-half human visage. More mortal than the demons of *Heartless*, the Hoodies

of *Citadel* appear as sick and suffering, their countenance nauseating, a visualisation of disgust that makes a spectacle of repulsion; this serves to arouse aversive emotions and shape Tommy's, and the spectator's, perceptual fields to affirm the Hoodie's abject state, stigmatizing them as revolting figures. The abject discourse that surrounds the Hoodies in this cinematic world is visually inscribed by the gothic onto their faces.

The moment of unveiling occurs earlier in the narrative in *Heartless* than in *Citadel*. Adhering to the much-used gothic trope of investigation, Jamie begins to wonder about the origin of the graffitied images of demon-esque faces that have populated the urban architecture and the waste ground he navigates. The film builds up to the revelatory sequence by positioning the Hoodies as half-way beings that are constructed as spectral and unearthly forms who can move freely but unseen, but also as ones who behave as youths hanging out on street corners reminiscent of the adolescents Tony Blair was referring to when he told reporters, 'people are rightly fed up with street corner and shopping centre thugs' (Blair cited in White, 2005: 2). In essence, these beings are constructed as urban demons: urban denoting a certain type of behaviour and demon implying a certain visualised form. Jamie, as we learn, has retreated into a fantasy world and his imagination has constructed the Hoodies as demons. Contextualised within a narrative that presents reality to Jamie as a modern-day hell, the unmasking of the demon Hoodie confirms what Jamie suspects. Jamie is surrounded by a semiotic netherworld his fragile mind pieces into a reality; he sees imprints of demon faces in local graffiti, and when his local shopkeeper tells him, 'it's hell out there' this serves to compound Jamie's

belief in the existence of other-worldly beings. The unveiling occurs in the narrative as the last sign Jamie requires to validate his own intuition. Provided with the opportunity to follow a Hoodie one night, Jamie locates a gang existing on local waste ground. The connection between the space of urban borders of waste ground, deviant behaviour and monstrosity of form is being prepared for both Jamie and the audience in this short sequence. In brief, abject space and abject form are being constructed and crystallised visually and aurally. Peering through a hole in the fence, Jamie begins to photograph the figures as they throw bottles into the fire, holding their arms aloft and releasing fox-like screams into the air. Jamie photographs the gang but, as the camera film ends and unwinds, the noise alerts the gang to his presence. Jamie steps back from the fence as the figures stealthily move through the darkness towards him. Furtively, one demon figure moves in on the frame in a sequence devised to maximise tension and to focus the horror on the revelatory knowledge of the Hoodie as demon. Moving from long shots to close ups, the Hoodie unmask himself to Jamie and the spectator, as its countenance threateningly protrudes the gap in the fence, an image synchronised with one last animal scream (Fig 134). In keeping with horror film traditions, Jamie's horrified response is framed in reverse shot to function as confirmation for the audience. The ambivalence created by the disparity between clothing, bodily shape and the aural landscape is erased in this moment of revelatory visage: a grotesque mouth, filled with excessive sharpened canine teeth, and green snake-like skin, confirms this is no human, but a monstrous form that inhabits a hoodie.

Halberstam's historical survey on monsters from literature to film observes that the medium of cinema narrows the monster's capacity to fuel horror via its own appearance as visualisation exterior to the imagination, since this fails to be 'monstrous enough' (Halberstam, 1995: 3). Unable to rely upon the monster's visible manifestation for horror, sketching the scope of horror becomes the responsibility of the monster's actions¹¹, which in the modern horror film Halberstam considers occurs predominately in the 'explicit violation of the female body' (3). Halberstam's observations here have importance for the conceal and reveal trope in the films in focus here, and resonate with the masking and unveiling theory, more widely known as the traditional psychoanalytical surface and depth model of the gothic. As scholars such as Spooner and Kosofsky Sedgwick have noted, gothic narratives have been approached primarily as texts concerned with the 'return of the repressed' (Spooner, 2004: 2) where the surface is presented as the rational and the social, but superficial and therefore trivial in comparison to the depth, for this is the locus for the buried psyche which holds all the meaning (Kosofsky Sedgwick, 1980: 11). As Kosofsky Sedgwick argues, such a methodology ignores and rejects any significance of the surface (141). Spooner and Kosofsky Sedgwick's work on clothing and the gothic articulates the problems of this psychoanalytic model, positioning it as too simplistic for suggesting that the mechanism of disguise could indicate an authentic and monolithic self (Spooner, 2004: 5). While Spooner warns against a mere reversal of the model to privilege the surface, she asserts gothic garments 'articulate the body in a range of characteristic themes ... madness, monstrosity, the grotesque', rendering the body as a

¹¹ There are some notable exceptions to Halberstam's appropriate summary, one being David Cronenberg's *The Fly*.

historically specific form, but not one that is passively governed (4-13). Furthermore, Spooner aligns her argument with Halberstam's conceptualisation of gothic selves as fluid, mobile and performative (Halberstam, 1995: 64) by advocating for the significance in the disguise, as this is more constitutive of subjectivity than the interior (Spooner, 2004: 4-6). As Halberstam observes, the gothic self 'subverts the notion of an authentic self and makes subjectivity a surface effect' (Halberstam, 1995: 64).

The reasoning of both Halberstam and Spooner, as outlined above, is of use here for it aids in illuminating how the gothicising on display in the gothic abject is not employed to create a progressive subjectivity, but functions as a means of class prejudice which further abjects the underclass in the public arena. Firstly, following Halberstam's history of the monster, we can locate the revelation of hoodie as monster as an historical and bygone mechanism. Whereas such an employment could be contextualised as ubiquitous nostalgia, the exploitation of the Hoodie as a discourse of the abject in the films speaks more to an impoverished imagination that sought to trace over one 'discursive strategy of the stereotype' (Bhabha, 1983: 18) to another stereotype, the gothic monster, a process of stereotype mapping Walker engages with (Walker, 2016: 94-96). However, this thesis expands this tracing over of stereotypes to assert that the gothic act of unmasking is affirmation of the disgust consensus as outlined previously in the Fashion of Fear. Initially, the unveiling of the gothic abject would appear to support the 'surface and depth' model in suggesting that the 'real' selfhood of the Hoodie is the monster. However, let's consider what this act of unmasking accomplishes. The wearing of the hoodie

(as a fashion garment) indicates a particular type of behaviour, for it is inscribed with the revolting discourse of the neoliberal other, the Hoodie. Uncovering to find a monster under the hood does little more than to affirm what is already known: the deficient subjectivity of Hoodie as neoliberal other. Thus, diverging from the traditional approach, the function of unmasking, or *making known*, in both *Heartless* and *Citadel*, serves not only to *affirm* rather than to reveal, but the act of disclosure also affirms the monolithic identity of the Hoodies. As with *Citadel*, the unmasking in *Heartless* functions to confirm suspicions of the lead character, Jamie, of the Hoodies' unearthly form, forging a relationship between the determining anti-social behaviour and animation of a monstrous visage. In making a spectacle of monstrosity, Jamie concludes he has unearthed the 'authentic', inhuman, identity of the Hoodies. Jamie is vindicated in a succeeding scene, when watching news reports of indiscriminate murders carried out by a gang of hoodies, the eye witnesses report the gang were wearing demon masks. However, a young girl contests this by declaring the Hoodies to be actual demons. Authenticity, realism, or monolithic: whichever term we apply to this revelation, what has been uncovered is a form of strategic essentialism. In gothicizing the Hoodie into non-human form, the films not only eradicate humanity, but also produce a reductive form constructed from pure deviancy. As with Spooner's and Halberstam's arguments, all meaning for the Hoodie is poured into the surface, which is the hoodie as inscribed with discourse. However, the gothic abject challenges Halberstam's idea of the gothic selfhood as fluid. Rather, the function of the gothic body in these films is an act of disclosure of a monolithic and essentialist identity of the Hoodie. Although the gothic speaks of a phantasmal form, the grotesque bodies

do little more than sustain the Hoodie as feral, anti-social and deviant. It is the antithesis to Spooner's assertion of the gothic body defined by historical context (Spooner, 2004: 13), for the gothic abject is not just passive, but subjugated to its historical and cultural context.

Central to this act of unmasking is to affirm the face, and specifically its skin. The function of the skin for the gothic abject further demonstrates not only its allegiance to the gothic, but also a return to the past in how physiognomy is employed to reveal monstrosity. Halberstam elucidates that an aspect that remains a constant for the construction of monsters, although exposed to mutations and transitions, is skin. Vampires puncture skin, Frankenstein's skin is a patchwork border, Dorian Gray desires a canvas to conceal depravity, Leatherface wears skin as a trophy and Buffalo Bill covets female skin as a transformative property (Halberstam, 1995: 7). As Halberstam correctly points out, skin is the absolute boundary, but also malleable, which therefore results in it being the site of violent acts and disruption (7). Looking to *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2* (Tobe Hooper, 1986), Halberstam also perceives a progressiveness, a transgressive ability in skin, in that it provides a platform for the re-gendering of identities, by a literal stitching together of pieces. Indeed, Halberstam views monsters as a patchwork form, which more contemporary examples such as Buffalo Bill in *The Silence of the Lambs* and Sally Rag in *The Nightmare Before Christmas* (Tim Burton, 1993), stitch and unstitch, to construct their subjectivity (Halberstam, 1995). The gothic abject stands in opposition to this progressive potential. The skin of the gothic abject is not a disruption, nor a tool for self-determination. Rather, it demarcates and reinforces a

boundary. The skin of these monsters is inscribed with the discourse of neoliberal citizenship as represented by the Hoodie.

While this chapter has concentrated on an ideological reading of the gothic abject, tracing how gothicisation articulates the process of othering by exploiting contemporary British class identities, it has not engaged with the affect of horror. Mighall's work on moral monstrosity and representation in writings on Victorian criminality and gothic fiction cautions against privileging cultural readings of horror texts over analysis of the mechanisms of horror. As Mighall asks, 'Is it not ... the business of the gothic to be scary or sensational?' (Mighall, 1999: 167). Viewing cultural readings of horror as tautological exercises, Mighall determines on an epistemological approach, an emphasis which he considers to allow for a more focused study on the tools of horror, rather than the reading. The critical crux for Mighall is to be aware of 'the different motivations and discursive practices of scientists and novelists', for each strive to 'produce different "truths", and strive to elicit different responses' (168), in that science pursued an epistemological path in determining monstrosity, whereas gothic fiction *creates* monstrosity in order to induce terror, to scare, to horrify. This is an essential differentiation for Mighall as it allows him to reject the model of gothic fiction as articulating 'cultural anxiety', thus downplaying ideological and psychological interpretations of texts in favour of a focus on generic considerations and obligations.

The value of Mighall's methodology for analysis of the gothic abject is how it provides an approach to delineating the monstrous forms of *F* from those in *Citadel* and *Heartless*. This is not to mean that the monsters of *F* do not share an

ideological reading with the other two films; the monsters from all three explicitly exploit the abject discourse of the Hoodie in the making of the monsters. Indeed, Johannes Roberts, the director of *F*, has explained how catching sight of hoodies for sale on a market stall resolved the issue over the form of the monster for the film. (Roberts, 2011.) However, the obvious distinction of *F* is its refusal to unmask identity and the impact this strategy has on the affect of horror. Employing Mighall's approach here avoids retreating into a taxonomy of the films on the grounds of their 'scare appeal', by allowing theorisation on the choice of mechanisms present in the film. For *F*, focusing on the face releases the gothic body of the monstrous Hoodies from the constraints of the social body, illuminating the film as conscious of its strategy of horror.

4.3.4: The 'unspeakable' form in *F*

What do you want?

(Robert, *F*)

Differing from *Citadel* and *Heartless*, the gothic abject of *F* does not participate in any moments of uncovering; the identity and indeed the motives of these monsters remains shrouded. The bodily form, dressed in jeans, trainers and hoodies, as with the other two films, here seems distinctly human, and in a momentary shot during the closing third of the film, the audience are privileged with the disclosure of one of the monster's hands bleeding. However, such straying towards an identifiable human form is too fleeting and counteracted by the focalisation on the dematerialisation of the face in the construction of the Hoodie. As Spooner notes, the erasure of the body is a recurrent theme in gothic fictions, most notably H.G

Wells's story *The Invisible Man* (1897) (Spooner, 2004: 6), and the gothic abject of *F* draws upon this concept. The hoods do not simply hide or veil their identity: the monstrous Hoodies are defaced. To sufficiently understand the construction here, we must decouple the cinematic animation from the contemporary cultural construction. Walker crisply suggests the essence of the film's Hoodies lies in how 'their faces are fully blacked out' and how beyond the wearing of a hoodie, each is indistinguishable from the other (Walker, 2016: 93). This description does not sufficiently encapsulate the defacement, for underneath their hoods is a blackness, a void: there is a vacuum for a visage, a cavity of nothingness, an eternal abyss. Individuality – indeed, the visage as acknowledgement of human form and a surface as representative of what constitutes personal identity – is defaced and, critically, replaced with an horrific absence. As with the gothic Hoodies of *Heartless* and *Citadel*, the construction of the Hoodie here rotates on the disruption of surfaces and boundaries, returning it to the discourses of the abject and of gothic monsters. The skin as a boundary has not been inscribed with the abject, it has been obliterated and the body is presented as lacking wholeness and integrity, a condition of the gothic body as outlined by both Halberstam (1995) and Spooner (2004). Here there is no identity to reveal. It is the effacement that indicates a representation that draws upon the gothic notion of the 'unspeakable', a form that finds a synergy with the process of social abjection that results in humans as waste products (Khanna, 2009: 193). However, it is the gothic foundations, the mechanism of erasure, that is the focus.

It has often been observed that there are more effective ways of evoking terror, fear and horror than the intricate descriptions and creations of horrific spectacle. If we take our cue from Edmund Burke's belief, 'to make anything very terrible, obscurity seems in general to be necessary' (Burke, 1998, 102-3), then to stop short of absolute unmasking allows the imagination to engage, seek and wonder over the constitution of the 'unspeakable'. Objects that are ambiguous, indeterminate or nebulous affect hesitation and fascination within an audience, determined to evoke reactions of uncertainty, insecurity and a sense of dread and doubt. It is a tool of gothic forms and horror in general to initiate, sustain and swell suspense and terror. As Mighall notes, 'terrors that defy description are more fearful than those brought under the sway of descriptive language.' (Mighall, 1999: 185). Mighall further notes how the model of the 'unspeakable' was adapted in the late Victorian Gothic writings and shaped with a physiological focus for narratives concerned with the 'visibility of vice', as with such tales as *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (186). I argue that the gothic abject of *F* is constructed within an incarnation of the 'unspeakable', existing within Todorov's idea of hesitation (Todorov, 1975). In this film, corporeality is crystallised from a human body, yet one with its countenance defaced and replaced with black nothingness. It is a conflicted construction that represents the figure of the Hoodie as corrupted and impure, recognisable by its clothes, yet unimaginable and indescribable. The 'visibility of vice' is reconfigured here to ensure identity is invisible. As Alexandra Warwick and Dani Cavallaro write of an intention tasked to veils and masks, 'this surface, moreover, may turn out to conceal not a presence but an absence, not a depth, but a vacuum.' (Warwick and Cavallaro, 1998: 133).

When Roberts asks the Hoodies 'Who are you? What do you want?', there is no response. The erasure either leaves an inability to communicate or a refusal. The silence amplifies the vacuity of the visage.

Indeed, the monstrous Hoodie of *F* is enveloped in silence. In contrast to *Heartless* and *Citadel*, the film consistently frames the silent figure of the Hoodie in close-ups. The camera hangs close to the Hoodies, lingering on their form. The performance of such an entity of an abyss emphasises the deliberate movement and silence of the body. It is the spectacle of horrific absence. Walker observes that the school setting functions as the "“terrible place” of modern horror cinema' in that its 'brooding corridors' and 'tight dark spaces' update the original association with the continuation of the family unit to the absence of the family and a reflection of societal breakdown (Walker, 2016: 106). While space and place are discussed in this thesis's section entitled 'Manors', what seems of more significance to the location of the film than generic marking, is the darkness and silence, the latter being an area omitted from Walker's analysis. Whilst the film does draw upon the tropes of the 'old dark house', quietness emanates throughout the building. Combined with the shadows, the darkness and the tight camera work, an intimacy of fear and tension is created, horrifically complementing the figure of the Hoodie as unspeakable form. In the confrontation with Robert, the movement of the Hoodie communicates a self-possession (Figs 135-137). There is purpose and stillness to its movements and as it lands the camera captures it as it slowly rights itself to face Robert. The enveloping and seemingly enclosing darkness amplifies the

spectacularising of absence, constructing a prevailing sense of dread, unease and ambivalence.

Intensifying this perturbed ambivalence is the question of motivation. Along with the question of identity is the question of why. Predating the similarly unexplained evil in *It Follows* (David Robert Mitchell, 2014), *F* provides no contextualisation as to why the Hoodies attack staff and pupils. Why this school? Why now? Why these victims? The opening prelude that illuminates Robert's alcoholism, marriage and family breakdown suggests that the Hoodies are failed students, a notion that is fostered by the film's title – F for fail – and by nervous threats of some of the victims: 'You don't deserve to be in school' cries the library assistant. However, the killing throughout the film is presented as indiscriminate, unexplained and lacking motive. The narrative focus privileges Robert and is driven, firstly, to justify his anxieties and thus vindicate him and, secondly, by his desire to protect his daughter and thus potentially heal their fractured relationship. However, the sequence of events and the enigmatic atmosphere that permeates the narrative does not cement the Hoodies' presence to Robert, leaving the possibility open to interpret the film in terms of a variation on the 'home invasion' film, in the vein of the French film, *Les* (David Moreau and Xavier Palud, 2006). It is not just teachers the Hoodies attack, but also pupils and support staff. The question of motivation is suspended over the narrative and the film refuses to resolve this, along with the form of the Hoodies. It is through this invisibility of motivation that allows these Hoodies to 'just be'. They just are, they just exist, and they just terrorise.

Ambivalence, hesitation and dread are not resolved with the film's ending. The Hoodies continue to exist within the parameters of Todorov's hesitation. The gothic body of the Hoodies in *F* annexes the social body. Both *Citadel* and *Heartless* to some extent resolve the 'Hoodie issue' to differing degrees. The overriding discourse as illuminated in the social body succeeds in the conflict to control the identity and form of the gothic abject in those films. However, all three films end on a pessimistic, if not nihilistic, tone. In *F*, as well as the moral implications of Robert's actions, the film opts not to determine the fate of the Hoodies. It refuses to return the Hoodies to the demonising discourses of the social body, thus retaining their gothic body. As Robert leaves his estranged wife to her fate in the school now overrun with the monstrous Hoodies, the open ending conveys the sense the Hoodies will exist beyond the film's close. The narrative focus shifts from the Hoodies and returns to Robert. While he escapes from the school in order to save his daughter's life, the audience are invited to linger on the moral implications of his decisions.

4.3.5: The social body

The body is a highly restricted medium of expression since it is heavily mediated by culture and expresses the social pressure brought to bear on it.

(Entwistle, 2000: 14-15)

As stated in this chapter's introduction, there is a conflict in the gothic abject between the social and the gothic body. This chapter asserts the gothic body is constrained by its social sibling, and it is this tension and restraint that Walker perceives in his analysis of the monstrous Hoodie as confused and inconsistent

(Walker, 2016: 92). Residing in this anxiety, there is a tension between realism and the gothic, as the mimesis of the Hoodie battles with the gothic narration. It is within this mimesis that this chapter locates the social body of the gothic abject. I explore how the hoodie as garment and Hoodie as discourse operate as subjugating forces, aiding in determining the gothic face and ethereal configuration of the gothic abject. The social body tethers the gothicisation of the Hoodie to the contemporary discourses, discourses that, ultimately, the Gothic body/Abject cannot transcend. Drawing upon Joanne Entwistle's *The Fashioned Body* (2000) and Foucault's work on discourse and bodies in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1977/1991), I will outline how the social body is a body inscribed with the discourse of the social abject. Constructed as essentialist, and yet positioned as a figure of excess, the social body aids in re-enforcing the Hoodie as gothic abject as the boundary between 'us' and the contaminating other, continuing the process of alterity. However, the mimesis also constrains the effect of horror in these films. It is because the social body is constructed from the Hoodie as a fetishized, publicly imagined figure, that the revolting subject, even when cinematically animated, remains the ideological conductor of neoliberal governmentality and withers the gothic abject's ability to effect horror. It is this 'othered' stereotype as body of discourse, I propose, that is traced, unimaginatively, into the films discussed in this chapter and is further subjugated to a disempowering process, in that Hoodies are 'gothicised' in a process of monster-making. Thus, the gothic abject exists as a body inscribed with discourses. Again, as with the gothic body, I will turn to the monstrous Hoodies of *F* to explore how differing strategies taken in the gothic narration influence the delivery of horror in these films. The social body, then,

restricts and fastens the gothic body to the contemporary and explicit social and cultural process of social abjection, rather than permitting a return to a psychoanalytical model.

In his 2005 article, 'Violence and Vision: the prosthetics and aesthetics of terror', Allen Feldman discusses the relationship between the photograph that depicts violence and surveillance in Belfast during the period of political violence. Feldman asserts how mechanisms of power employ visualised violence in subjugating processes that serve to instil and sustain fear and anxiety, as a function to govern. The result is 'compulsory visibility' that renders bodies political and configured as ideological objects. Feldman's concept of a scopic regime is one of 'an ensemble of practices and discourses that establish the truth claims, typicality and credibility of visual objects and politically correct modes of seeing' (Feldman, 2005: 429). Feldman's argument has much in common with Tyler's paradigm of social abjection. In terms of Hoodie Horror, and specifically the representation of the Hoodie in the gothic abject, in visualising the discourse of Hoodie as social abject, the films enter into the abject discourses themselves, despite any lack of intention. The mimesis in these constructions position the films as part of the scopic regime that functions as an arm of neoliberal ideology and governmentality to affect the 'hardening of public opinion into consent' that Tyler associates with the role of the national abject (Tyler, 2013: 10).

4.3.6: Abject presence

Foucault's body has no flesh; it is begotten out of discourse by power

(Turner, 1996: 36)

In each of the three films in focus in this chapter it is the social body marked as the social abject that announces the Hoodies' presence in the films. Aberrant actions ranging from low-level deviancy such as loitering, to the more serious crimes of murder and assault, introduce and establish the abject form of the Hoodies. Indeed, preceding the films, advertising material for both *Citadel* and *F* centralises the hoodie within the marketing images, a stratagem that acknowledges and exploits the currency and audience awareness of the cultural and social figure of the Hoodie as abject discourse. In *Heartless*, the audience are introduced to the demon Hoodies initially through their graffiti, and Jamie's apparent captured glimpses of Hoodies at the windows of abandoned buildings. The first visualisation of the Hoodies is as Jamie follows them loitering under the railway arches and through waste grounds where the Hoodies are drifting, kicking empty bottles and making fires. In *F*, it is the throwing of a milkshake against a window that alerts Robert to their presence (as mentioned earlier). The Hoodies also brutally murder a school's security guard by setting him on fire. *Citadel* dispenses with such flirtation with gothic monstrosity, by determining the Hoodies murder Tommy's wife, Joanne, within the opening scene. Assaulting and poisoning Joanne, the murderous Hoodies inject her with an unknown substance that proves fatal. This sequence is framed in a long shot, spatialising the assault at a distance and with further mediation as the camera is with Tommy in the lift, looking out into the corridor. Putting aside any horror effect in these actions, the deviant behaviour the monstrous Hoodies enact embodies a mimesis of the media reports that not only disrupts the delivery of horror in the films but furthers the abject discourse of the Hoodie. It is the relationship of the visual signifier of the hoodie as garment and the visualisation of

deviancy in the films that establishes the gothic abject. Thus, the body of the gothic abject is a complex framework constructed out of body, dress and culture.

Entwistle argues the body is always situated within culture and, when it is examined, historical and social constraints should always be taken into account, so that the body can be approached as something other than a biological entity (Entwistle, 2000). Elaborating on the body as a socially constructed object (12), Entwistle assesses the function of dress on the body, concluding codes of dress seek to discipline the body and determine its performance, thus delineating the body as temporally and culturally specific (16). Foucault argues that in modernity, the body is invested with, and subjected to, the regimes of the interdependent relationship between power and knowledge. The notions of power and knowledge are, for Foucault, entrenched within his concept of a discourse, which in turn determines how people function. Bodies invested with power replace rituals around the body for Foucault, and function as surveillance mechanisms that operate for 'the monitoring of contagions, the exclusion of delinquents' (Foucault, 1980: 55). Furthering the relationship between managing bodies and the power mechanisms of governmentality, in *Discipline and Punish* Foucault theorises how communities and populations are managed within the political/social sphere (1977/1991). In terms of the individual, Foucault assessed that with the passing of the very visible spectacle of the gallows as public execution, so the punishment of an individual for crimes committed is transformed. Aside from the obvious loss of life, punishment, before the ascendance of the penal system as the normative route for legal retribution, focused on the explicit art of inflicting pain. The

ceremonies of torture, dismemberment, the exposure of mutilated flesh, flogging and branding constituted 'the gloomy festival of punishment' that centralised the body as the target of penal repression and functioned as a theatre of punishments for any spectators (Foucault, 1977/1991: 8). With the installation of a penal system where punishment is hidden and transformed from spectacle to timetabled, Foucault argues that penalties still directly affect the body, but now the infliction of bodily pain is not the main constituent for punishment. Rather, the body becomes a conduit and instrument for the deprivation of liberty of an individual. Now the body is mired in a 'system of constraints and privations, obligations and prohibitions' as it is subjugated to 'an economy of suspended rights' (11). In lectures formulating his *Society Must Be Defended* (2004), Foucault engages with the formation of populations through the classification of class and race under his term 'state racism', a process exemplified by Nazism (Foucault, 2004: 257). Foucault argues that the political mechanisms and structure of contemporary societies are formed upon the invention of race and that 'state racism' as a technology of power is a process by which the state can exercise sovereignty by distinguishing, dividing and managing populations through appealing to disdain and hatred for other races (83-86).

Drawing upon work by Frantz Fanon (2004, 2008) and Judith Butler (1993), Tyler proposes a theory of social abjection where 'abjection is understood as a mechanism of governance through aversion' (Tyler, 2013: 37). Tyler is asserting how social and political structures regulate individuals and communities by inciting and cultivating these bodies as not only abject but also presenting these abject

states as a regulatory normative state (36), mechanisms of hygienic governmentality. As Fanon argues, hate is cultivated and 'he who hates has to show his hate in appropriate actions and behaviour' (Fanon, 2008: 37). Viewing these abject states as modes of state formation, we can approach the concept of hygienic governmentality as a process which asserts 'that an abject population threatens the common good and must be rigorously governed and monitored by all sectors of society (Berlant, 1997: 175). In other words, hygienic governmentality is the process of governing by social stigmatization, in that images and narratives of a 'threatened "good life"' (175) are repeatedly wielded in a public rhetoric owned by those privileged with power, and thus holding up these national abject states as ideological figures designed to consolidate 'nation ideals of selfhood' (Badiou, 2010: 81). As with Tyler's paradigm of social abjection, hygienic governmentality is a partnership between state and public where public consent is operationalised resulting in forms of discriminatory violence towards the abject states.

It is these discourses that the exploitation of the hoodie and the Hoodie trace over into the films through the act of mimesis engendering the monstrous Hoodie a Foucauldian body subjugated to strategies of aversion and hygienic governmentality. The discourses that publicly imagine the figure of the Hoodie as national abject function as a mechanism of symbolic surveillance that inscribes and regulates the figurative body of the Hoodie as violent, disgusting and an undeserving failed citizen that requires 'managing' by the state. However, the emphasis on mimesis in the bloody deeds of the gothic abject results in a cinematic animation of the Hoodie as monster lacking the shocking, the grisly and the

spectacle of the terrifying actions required to gain any parity with such seminal monsters as Leatherface, or the Cenobites of *Hellraiser* (Clive Barker, 1987). The drive to capitalise on the currency of the Hoodie results in a tempered monster, albeit murderous, but one that is anti-social rather than monstrous or evil. When in *Heartless* the Hoodies attack Jamie and his mother, murdering her by setting her alight, the murderous attack is framed in a sequence of medium shots and then off screen (Fig 138), ensuring the spectator is denied the full visualisation of the assault, but not denied the aural landscape of dying by fire. In *Citadel*, Marie's vicious attack by the feral Hoodies in the underpass is framed in long shot. The camera, placed alongside Tommy, follows Marie as she walks through the underpass determined to prove to Tommy that adolescents are not the demonised entities he believes them to be. As she draws level with the Hoodies, they brutally bludgeon Marie, bringing her down as if an animal. Although the Hoodies are murderous and undeniably savage, the employment of spatial distancing in the visualisation of their assaults results in thwarted spectacles that fail to heighten any monstrosity or to elicit terror. With the Hoodie's attacks happening off screen and in the distance, the effect of the violence is anesthetised and functions as a form of cinematic reportage, in that it captures the act rather than engaging and exploiting the act for an effect of horror. The acts themselves are visions of violence that are already embedded in the media discourses resulting in Hoodies being the 'othered' embodiment of unprovoked disorder and violence. In tracing over this disorderly behaviour and not creating or re-imagining the cinematic Hoodie as a figure distinct from the Hoodie of the discourses, this cinematic twin is an impotent figure. If the Hoodies of the extra-diegetic discourses stood in front a mirror, the Hoodie as

cinematically animated would be reflected back. Paradoxically, the Hoodie is too well known (outside of the cinematic world) and framed at too great a distance in *Heartless* and *Citadel*, for these films to fully maximise and animate the monstrosity. To draw upon Turner's evaluation of Foucault's work on discourse, the gothic abject has no flesh, its animation is devoid of imagination or spirit, but rather remains a body inscribed with discourse.

The social body of the Hoodie in *F* is, as with those in *Citadel* and *Heartless*, situated within the discourse of social abjection. However, in this film it is utilised sufficiently differently in terms of narrative and aesthetics to warrant further analysis here, as occurred with the gothic body. The violent acts of the monstrous Hoodies in *F* are comparable to those of the other two films in that the violence comprises vicious attacks of assault and murder, and follows the act of mimesis that is pervasive in the cycle. As with the gothic body, it is the film's treatment of this behaviour that establishes a far more impactful and prolonged effect of terror and suspense. The initial sequence of scenes, covered previously here, in which the security guard is murdered and the milkshake thrown at the window, denies the visibility of the assailants to the audience. This decoupling of a corporeal form from the violence creates a suspense not only over identity, but over the actions themselves. A milkshake has never been so menacing as here, when thrown from out of an abyss. Where in *Citadel* and *Heartless* the Hoodies are framed performing violence, initially in *F*, the acts are constructed as *the* spectacle of violence. In *Eden Lake*, the scene in which Steve investigates Brett's home is constructed in the vein of 'investigating the terrible place' as common in rural horror films, but where

remnants of slothful and violence familial behaviour are the horror, in place of the traditional instruments of torture and pickled heads in jars. *F* displays similar strategies in that it makes horror of the mimicked violence by employing tactics of the gothic.

Further filmic strategies of *F*, such as location, action in enclosed spaces and minimal lighting to create darkened spaces, constructs a locale that, unlike *Heartless* and *Citadel*, provides a more direct engagement with the Hoodies, drawing the acts to the forefront of the frame and fusing terror with intimacy, resulting in amplifying the threat they impose. Rapid and incisive editing constructs a velocity in the acts of violence. The attack on the head teacher, Sarah Balham, is visually crafted in such terms. Realising Robert was right over the school being invaded, Sarah locks herself in her office and endeavours to reason with the Hoodies. The camera constructs tension through editing as it focuses on the Hoodies, using a fire extinguisher to smash through the windows and unlock the door, and then surround Sarah. The quietness of this movement accentuates the brutality of the act as one Hoodie then runs at the head with the fire extinguisher, which is raised in the air in preparation for bludgeoning. The swift editing cuts the scene just as the extinguisher is being brought down upon Sarah's head. The forefronting of the violence by the framing and editing intensifies the acts and demonstrates how the film understands how to 'make horror' out of discourse. The filmic strategies ensure the acts as horror are foregrounded rather than the discourse. While the film resolves this issue where the other films cannot, the resolution creates a further complication with the gothic narration of the Hoodie.

As I explored earlier, the erasure of the face of the Hoodies in *F* allows the figure to retain its phantasmal configuration as it remains an ambiguous form; it continues to reside in the moment of hesitation, where the Hoodies of *Citadel* and *Heartless* do not. Such defacement voids human form, including rationale and reasoning, thus animating these figures as motiveless. However, the filmic treatment of the Hoodies' acts of violence furnishes the bloody deeds with an energy that disrupts this reading, and is suggestive of a purpose and motive in the form of reprisals and revenge of the Hoodies. Such an analysis finds resonance with the film's narrative of disgruntled students unhappy by being failed on their work and attacking teachers. However, this is problematized by the indiscriminate nature of the attacks and murders. Students, teachers and support staff alike are victims. As the film never seeks to resolve this line of enquiry, the ambiguity of identity and motive remains mysterious, emphasising the gothic body and nature of the monstrous Hoodies of *F*. As pointed out earlier, such strategies contrast to those of the other two films, as both return the Hoodies to their social body and to discourse. In *Citadel*, the priest recounts the story of a local pregnant drug-taker, who gave birth to twins in one of the tower blocks. Abandoned by the father (revealed later as the priest), the mother dies and the twins grow up feral and spawn the grotesque Hoodies that menace the estate. The denouement in *Heartless* is Jamie's realisation of his own crisis of objectivity that animated Hoodies as demons. In the final scene, Jamie witnesses the Hoodies remove their demon masks, returning to their human form. However, whether human or demon, the Hoodies in *Heartless* are still crafted within the extra-filmic discourse of the Hoodie, and attack Jamie by setting him alight as they did his mother. In essence, the Hoodies of *Citadel* are returned to the

discourse of an intergenerational culture of immorality that pervades the conceptualisations of the underclass (Tyler, 2013: 161), and the Hoodies in *Heartless* return from their gothic form to pure discourse.

4.4: Images for section four

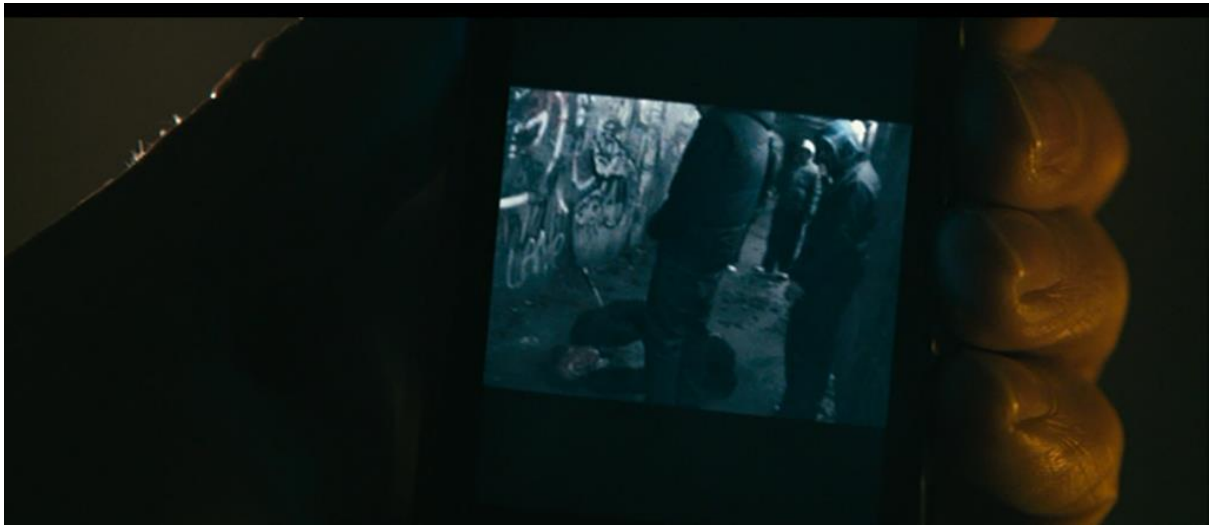


Figure 119



Figure 120



Figure 121



Figure 122



Figure 123



Figure 124



Figure 125



Figure 126



Figure 127



Figure 128



Figure 129



Figure 130

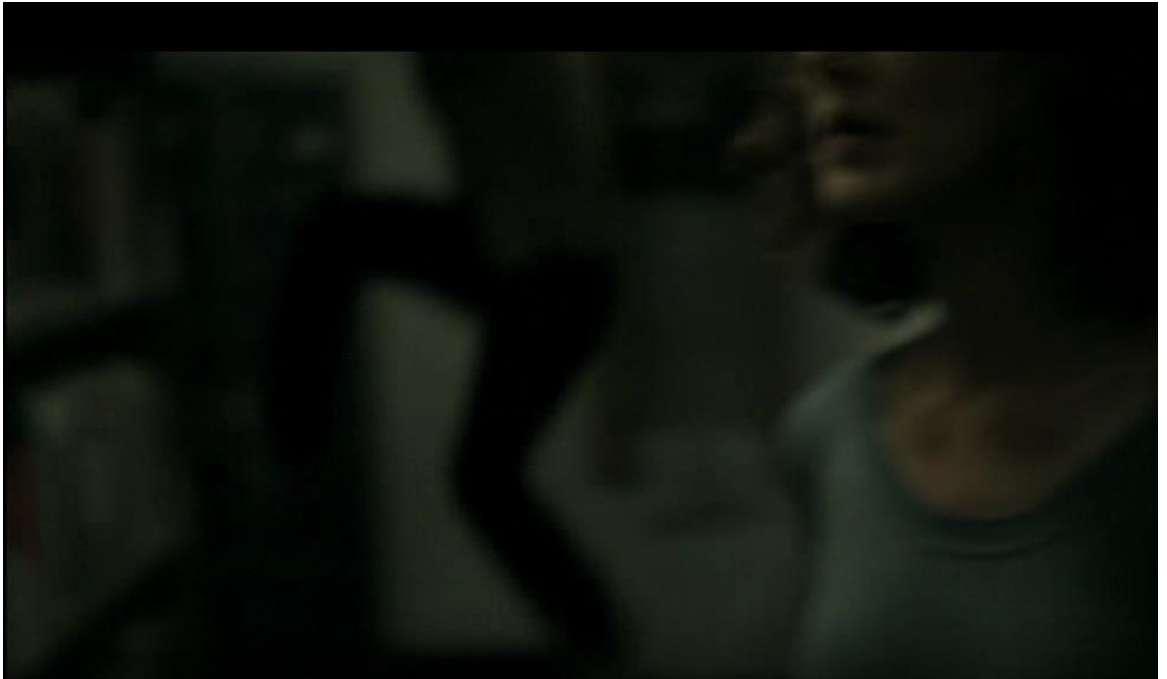


Figure 131



Figure 132

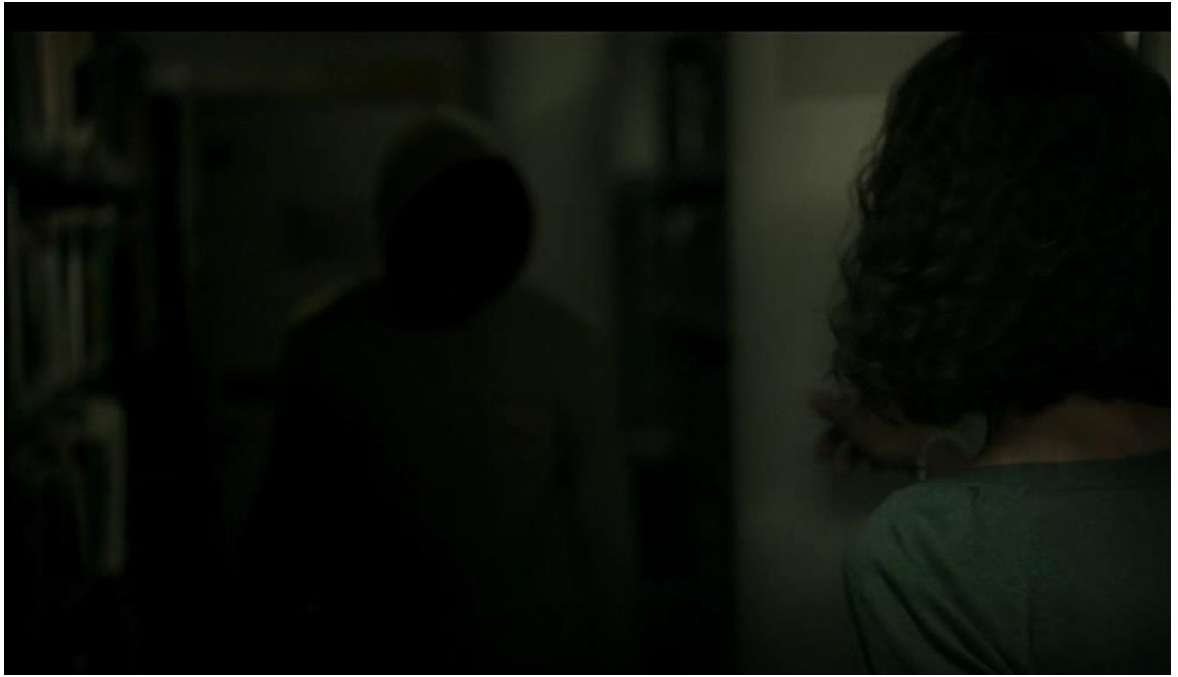


Figure 133



Figure 134



Figure 135



Figure 136



Figure 137



Figure 138

Section Five:

Conclusion

5.1: The waning of a cycle

This thesis asserts how the Hoodie Horror cycle closes with Noel Clarke's 2016 film, *Brotherhood*. Clarke's *Hood* trilogy offers a guiding arc to the cycle, while comparing the aesthetics and content of *Brotherhood* with *Kidulthood* illuminates the trajectory of the extra-filmic classed concerns that provide the content, motifs, concerns and iconography of the cycle as a whole. As this thesis asserts, the cycle is a temporally specific collection of films that exploit the discourse and imagery of the Hoodie, and its associative rhetoric that encompasses the underclass and council estates. It does not serve as commentary on the condition of the underclass, but rather on the *perceived* condition of the underclass. The cycle animates the politically inflected neoliberal discourse of the underclass as abject. The cycle had already demonstrated signs of slowing with a three-year hiatus between the release of *Brotherhood* and the 2013 film, *The Selfish Giant*. Indeed, in terms of the number of releases, 2012 is arguably the year the cycle is at its peak with four films – *Citadel*, *Community*, *Ill Manors* and *Piggy* – released during the twelve months. Considering the relationship between the cycle and the abject discourse of the Hoodie as asserted by this thesis, it would be reasonable to consider a correlation between a 'spike' in releases and the riots in England the previous year, in the summer of 2011. Indeed, in his chapter on Hoodie Horrors, Walker constructs the history of the Hoodie as one that weaves its way from David Cameron's speech on 'Broken Britain' and culminating in the riots of 2011 (Walker, 2016). A premise of this thesis was to establish a relationship between the films of the Hoodie Horror cycle and the media and political discourse of the Hoodie. A

significant element of this premise is to demonstrate not only the scale, but also the meaningful cultural presence of the Hoodie as national abject before the London and Manchester riots of 2011: a discourse that incorporates, rather than being sustained by, Cameron's soundbites on 'Broken Britain'. Reflecting on this context, it would be a too simplistic argument to fabricate a correlation between the cycle's peak in 2012 and the England riots of 2011. Rather, I would like to concentrate on the waning of the cycle by focusing on two areas: analysis of *Brotherhood* and its reviews, and the decline of Hoodie as national abject. The premise here is how the Hoodie's cultural currency as demonised figure had lost its resonance as other political topics were bubbling and would soon usurp the Hoodie as one particular national abject. The perceived failings of *Brotherhood* provide an appropriate reasoning for the demise of the Hoodie Horror cycle, whilst offering a platform to explore the cultural waning of the Hoodie and its associative discourses.

Post-riots, the Hoodie's function as a national abject began to diminish. Tyler's analysis of the riots of 2011 provides a key element as to why. Tyler's examination of the media and political accounts of the events and the subsequent harsh penal response to those involved served to further 'entrench[] and legitimise[] the perceptual framework of the underclass and further stigmatise[] the impoverished communities from which the ... rioters came' (Tyler, 2013: 204). The rioters, through the orchestration of a characterisation of the uprisings as violent and criminal, confirmed the very consensus that deemed the underclass as feral, dysfunctional and a product of chaotic family life. In essence, the rioters enacted the very abject forms they had been informed they were. David Cameron's initial

response to the riots was to reinforce this discourse by claiming the events demonstrate ‘the slow-motion moral collapse that has taken place in parts of our country these past few generations’ (Cameron cited in Stratton, 2011). The media spectacle of the events sought to manufacture public anxiety, a fear harnessed by the incumbent government to implement extreme punitive measures. However, once the riots had passed, and the ensuing judicial process was completed, the use of the Hoodie as ideological conductor began to wane.

The riots did not immediately affect an ‘alternative aesthetic’ (Tyler, 2013: 204) for stigmatized communities. Media reports of Hoodie and crime continued, however the *political* rhetoric of Hoodie as abject figure began to shift and recede as other political topics provided alternative figures to demonise. In April 2012, in a speech to the Policy Exchange think tank, the then Employment minister Chris Grayling urged companies very explicitly to hire school leavers, ‘the surly young man in a hoodie’ (Hall and Kirkup, 2012), rather than employing Eastern Europeans, despite their experience and skills. Grayling’s speech was to serve to encourage employers to hire locally, rather than electing the easier option of hiring those from outside of Britain’s national borders (Hall and Kirkham, 2012). Reflecting on this with historical hindsight of media and political panic over immigration in 2015 – and the referendum of 2016 with the ensuing political and media debate on Brexit – the Hoodie’s reduced function as national abject can be contextualised. The centralisation of the Hoodie and the underclass as a political arm of neoliberal governmentality dwindled as fresh concerns for the government surfaced that threatened the nation’s borders, requiring state vigilance and intervention

elsewhere. Furthermore, as outlined in the introduction, the hoodie as fashion attire had shifted from clothing for criminality and the disenfranchised, to fashion garment for the fashion conscious (Anon, 2017). Approximately ten years after the Hoodie had been animated by the Bluewater ban, both hoodie and Hoodie had been exhausted of its cultural otherness.

As outlined in the introduction to this thesis, Tyler asserts in *Revolting Subjects* (2013) how her paradigm of social abjection is and should be transferable; the communities/figures which are deemed national abjects are fluid and contingent on the political focus of the time. One such example is the immigrant as national abject as reports of migrants 'flooding Europe' began to circulate in 2015. The 'crisis' in immigration in 2015, as constructed by media and political rhetoric and imagery, led to David Cameron's employment of derogatory language in stating the necessity of maintaining security at Europe's borders when, 'you have got a swarm of people coming across the Mediterranean, seeking a better life, wanting to come to Britain' (Cameron cited in Elgot and Taylor, 2015). As Tyler highlights in her work, national abjects are created partly through the use of dehumanising language and incitement of fear within the rhetoric. The EU referendum of 2016 and the continued discussion of Brexit maintained the discourse of migrants as national abject. One most notable image was Nigel Farage's unveiling of the anti-migrant poster in 2016, depicting queues of non-white refugees with the slogan, 'Breaking point: the EU has failed us all'. Subsequent reports on the progress of Brexit fetishized and vilified anyone who voted remain and were deemed opposed to Brexit, by claiming such individuals to be unpatriotic and risking the stability of the

nation. The front page of *The Daily Mail*, April 19, 2017 demonised remainers by leading with 'Crush the Saboteurs', as a warning by Theresa May to those who seek to halt Brexit. In the second decade of the millennium, the cultural currency of Hoodie as demonised figure contracted as fears over immigration and the process of Britain decoupling from the European Union engulfed both political and cultural spheres of the United Kingdom.

The period that witnessed the Hoodie's status as national abject recede also comprised the waning of the Hoodie Horror cycle. As noted earlier, there was a three-year lull between *The Selfish Giant* and *Brotherhood*. Noel Clarke's final *Hood* film performed positively financially at the British box-office but received a lukewarm reception by film critics. The film grossed £1.98m in its seven-day opening period, with a release in a mere 220 cinemas (Gant, 2016). The film achieved an opening weekend site average of £4,581, which was the highest of any film on release in the same period (Gant, 2016) and seemingly connecting with an audience. Despite not reaching the opening weekend surprise success of *Adulthood*, *Brotherhood* achieved a financial ambition few predicted would materialise, considering the industrial and cultural context of the film's passage from inception to screen. Such factors include, the dissolution of the UK arm of Revolver Entertainment in 2013 (the company that distributed other urban dramas such as *Ill Manors*, *Sket*, and *Anuvahood*), the tiredness of 'Hood' narratives, and the challenges Noel Clarke faced in raising finance for the film.

The film itself closes both Clarke's *Hood* trilogy and the cycle. Sam Peel is now a father of two and living with his family in a comfortable and respectable terraced

house in Shepherd's Bush. His partner, Kayla, is a solicitor and he works three uninspiring jobs so that he can support his family (more of a masculine necessity, rather than a financial need), only returning to gang life when his brother is attacked whilst on stage in the opening sequence of the film. Characters from the previous two *Hood* films reappear, including Sam's criminal nemesis, Curtis (Trife's uncle in *Kidulthood*), Desmond and Henry. Following a rather predictable gangster narrative of Sam unable to be free of his past, the film was criticised for embracing generic contrivances, whilst abandoning the trilogy's initial realist, bold and brutal precedents. As film critic Nigel Andrews concludes of *Brotherhood*, 'class war and ... authenticity go thataway' (Andrews, 2016). It is the shift towards the gangster genre that mutes the anti-aspirational and bombastic energy and tone of the previous two films, a shift that invited the more unfavourable criticisms. At best, *Brotherhood* is viewed as uneven with some notable moments of gallows humour (Ide, 2016) and Clarke's self-effacing performance (Bray, 2016). At its worst the film is 'a silly gangster-porn version of kids' TV' (Bradshaw, 2016). Criticised for its clichéd rendering of B-movie standard gangster types (Andrews, 2016; Ide, 2016; Smith, 2016), the most scathing analysis was saved for Clarke himself and the film's imbalanced and misogynist gender politics. *Variety* film critic, Catherine Bray, was the most withering, rightly reproaching the film's rendering of women as wavering between the progressive with Sam's partner as financially independent and a prostitute enabled to exact payback on an abusive client, or misogynist and toxic with female prostitutes 'arranged within deliberately composed frames as just so much eye-catching furniture or sad-eyed livestock' (Bray, 2016). *The Telegraph's* critic, Patrick Smith, reserved scorn for Clarke himself, proclaiming the film to be

formulaic and brimming with risible performances ranging from ‘the pantomime to the flat-packed basic’, and these factors represent Clarke’s faltering career as ‘trite and tired-out’ (Smith, 2016). There is even evidence in the film that is suggestive of Clarke’s awareness of the passing of the time and the receding relevance of what had served as the initial vision for the urban drama. When Sam (played by Clarke) confronts gang members as he is leaving Daley’s residence, Sam asks ‘get out of my way blud’, urban speak that was the accepted language in the previous two films. In *Brotherhood*, the gang snigger and laugh at Sam as ‘nobody talks like that anymore’.

In a statement defending the film’s knotty representations, social stereotypes, generic affiliations and glamourising of violence, Clarke describes during a talk at a film festival in Toronto the challenges he faced obtaining funding for the film, finally attributing the direction of *Brotherhood* on the influence of these financing sources (Powell, 2016). Clarke expands by stating, ‘if [investors] don’t feel the audience is going to watch the movie and they are not going to make enough money, they are not going to make the project’ (Powell, 2016). Clarke goes on to note how previous projects he had written that offered diversification in genre and representation away from the style, themes and narratives of *Kidulthood* and *Adulthood* had either been refused financial support or, if the films had reached a release, were ignored by audiences (Powell, 2016). The finer points Clarke is opaquely insinuating regarding his own industry experience is a correlation between investment in British film production and the continual reprise of familiar forms and representations. Clarke’s commentary cannot be credited with providing an original

insight into the British (or any other) film industry, and his comments could be interpreted as a director deflecting culpability for a critically-ravaged film. However, Clarke's rudimentary analysis raises pertinent issues that resonate with the wider parameters of this thesis in respect to the agency of lower-classes over their identity and representation onscreen, and in the wider sphere; an area I will return to.

The critical reception of *Brotherhood* that describes the film as 'tired' can be applied to, and takes on extra resonance for, the Hoodie Horror cycle as a whole. *Brotherhood* emblematises a film cycle that had exhausted the creative possibilities for its contents – men, manors and monsters, shall we say – beyond the stereotypes and essentialist representations the Hoodie Horror explored. Indeed, a thematic concern of this thesis is to argue that despite any dramatic and aesthetic treatment, whether it be the more realist forms of *Kidulthood* and *The Selfish Giant*, or the haunting narratives of *The Disappeared*, central to the cycle has been the continuous discursive constructions of the underclass, male adolescence and housing estates that have become pervasive and positioned as 'true' and 'authentic' representations in British culture. In essence, what is deemed stereotypical in *Brotherhood*, has been present in the earlier films in the cycle as discursive constructions and discourse. It is that *Brotherhood* is much more explicit, direct, and even self-reflexive, in its engagement with genre.

It is though within these perceived creative failings and the film's veering towards a more generic constitution for the film, that provides a platform to examine how *Brotherhood* is a filmic reflection on the concerns and issues of the cycle as a whole,

as defined by this thesis. The film's characterisation of Sam and the locations Sam now navigates display effects and consequences to the revolting class discourse of citizenship and stigmatization of council housing that is the pervasive context for this cycle. In *Brotherhood*, the character of Sam Peel has transformed from low-level deviant to father, family-man and working three low-paid jobs as to fulfil what he views as a familial and masculine responsibility. Sam's transition symbolically enacts neoliberal citizenship as defined firstly by New Labour and then by the succeeding coalition and Conservative governments in that citizenship is designed around the binary states of 'inclusion/exclusion and work/worklessness' (Tyler, 2013: 161). Sam has transferred from being a failed citizen, delineated in the figure of the Hoodie, to citizen, now that he is contributing to society by means of employment. As Tyler observes, in neoliberal Britain only employment can provide a return to citizenship within the social proper (161). In *Brotherhood*, Sam is granted citizenship into the body politic through his embracing of what sociologists such as Anthony Giddens, the architect of the New Labour project, Tony Blair and David Cameron would position as the right choices and appropriate self-management. Sam's management of multiple jobs and family commitments is a performance of the mobile and fluid citizen that a neoliberal ideology promotes. The spaces of the film that Sam navigates visually and spatially emphasise Sam's new-found status as citizen. He no longer lives on a council estate in Ladbroke Grove, and has relocated to a comfortable terraced house in Shepherd's Bush. Sam's transition out of the abject border zones – the overriding public identity of which is social housing – unshackles Sam from the discourse of an abject class that is inscribed on the bodies who reside on estates. Sam's frequenting of the gym,

shopping at Westfield shopping centre and meeting Detective Lynch at boutique coffee shops, amplifies what distinguishes Sam's citizenship, mobility, financial prosperity and a 'right' self-management. The spaces Sam now occupies also provide commentary on the abject discourse of social housing and the wider associative process of gentrification, a topic discussed earlier in 'monstrous geographies'. Westfield shopping centre was not in existence when *Kidulthood* was released, so its inclusion in *Brotherhood* provides a visual signifier of urban development and gentrification that has come to spatially shape not just London but, more critically, local communities in cityscapes. An element of such regeneration is the removal of 'undesirable' communities and individuals – those who do not have the financial means to reside in the newly refurbished geographies. There is a clear distinction in *Brotherhood* between the 'types' of characters who reside within these new gentrified areas, and those who exist within the streets, the chicken shops, of Ladbroke Grove – the locations for the previous two *Hood* films. *Brotherhood*, then, invites an opportunity to examine citizenship and gentrification in a post-Hoodie, neoliberal Britain.

5.2: Thesis overview

This thesis thus started out by introducing the core aims and challenges of this thesis; to formulate a time-based national cycle shaped by differing film forms, but critically a cycle bonded by the representation of social abject forms. What is vital to this project, as outlined in the introductory chapters, was to determine how this research was not seeking to position the films as horror films, but rather expanding the notion of horror through the key concept of the abject. A central tenet was to

establish the films as a Hoodie Horror, a categorisation not contingent on film form, but rather on the collective depictions of discourse of the Hoodie and the associative demonization of council estates that fabricate the underclass as revolting and abject. Furthermore, the introductory chapters asserted how this thesis argues the Hoodie Horror cycle is a male-centric collection of films that takes its cue from the contemporary figure of the Hoodie, whilst drawing extensively upon the motifs, concerns and iconography of two traditions of British cinema, the social realist film and horror cinema. The discourse of the underclass as abject gives rise to fabricating these classed representations in the film as the 'other', situating the Hoodie Horror cycle as a cinema of alterity. In essence, the cycle – via the discursive strategies of class, space and masculinity, and the filmic strategies that illuminate these representations, resulting in the films' 'othering' of the underclass – invites disidentification.

The introduction continued by analysing, by way of a literature review, two key texts for this thesis, Johnny Walker's research on Hoodie Horrors and Imogen Tyler's paradigm of social abjection. The introduction then closed with my own research, employing Tyler's theoretical resource, on the political and media dialogue that constructed the figure of the Hoodie as an abject form. Walker's research, while providing a valuable starting point for my research, offers a limited analysis of the cycle, concentrating on generic structures of the films which explicitly categorises them within the horror genre. Tyler's theory of social abjection provides the theoretical basis for my research, by conceptualising how figures such as chavs are the publicly imagined ideological conductors for neoliberal

governmentality. Lastly, the 'fashion of fear' analyses media reports, political dialogue and policies, by employing Tyler's paradigm in order to establish the Hoodie as a successor to the chav. Here, this thesis demonstrates the Hoodie as national abject figure constructed to do the work of neoliberal governmentality, in order to delineate citizenship and the national borders of Britain in the new millennium.

The three sections of this thesis – 'men', 'manors' and 'monsters' – established the main concerns, themes, motifs and iconography of the cycle, all of which are formed from the films' exploitation and/or assimilation of the Hoodie as abject figure into the narratives and aesthetics of the films.

The first section, 'men', explores the representation of adolescent masculinity, with a focus on narrative trajectory, costume and finally the role of discourse in the representation of young men. The initial two chapters served to contextualise representation of masculinity, by establishing the narratives of the films as narratives of abjection, which sought to provide an introduction to the wider framework of the thesis. By establishing the cycle as narratives of abjection, it enabled this research to locate the cycle within the history and development of British cinema, specifically how the cycle is influenced by the tradition of social realism. Furthermore, these chapters introduce how the masculinities of the Hoodie Horror are social and cultural configurations of the discourse of the Hoodie and the perpetual discursive construction of an underclass youth as troublesome and unmanageable. The following chapter focused on the hoodie's function as costume, acknowledging the blurred lines between fashion, costume, mimesis and

fiction that the utilisation of the attire in the films poses. The chapter explores the paradox of the hoodie for although existing scholarship on costume is ill-equipped to appropriately analysis the hoodie, the academic enquiry the hoodie induces encapsulates the ongoing debate in scholarship on the frisson between spectacle and narrative in relation to costume. The chapter asserts an overriding finding of this thesis, in how the extra-filmic abject discourse inscribed into the hoodie subjugates narrative trajectory and characterisation to the ideology of that discourse. And as the thesis as a whole concludes, the problem the use of the hoodie poses here is in how mimesis serves as authentication in terms of realism, resulting in a disruption of fiction and realism itself. The last chapter in the section utilises close textual analysis to illuminate the main characteristics and concerns of the representation of the underclass masculinity in the film. It begins with exploring the onscreen physical presence of the protagonist and asserts how the male is a haunted figure as it performs an absence. By placing the Hoodie Horror within a history of performance of lower-class masculinity in British cinema, this chapter asserts how the male of the cycle is a performance of abjection, a symbolic representation of the marginalised position of the underclass male in contemporary Britain. The chapter expands on the relationship between the onscreen body and class representation by establishing how lower-class masculinities are continually employed in British films as a mechanism through which to express social, economic and political changes in the nation. In the Hoodie Horror, the bodies of the adolescent underclass masculinities are utilised not only to express concerns over citizenship within neoliberal Britain, but to delineate the borders of the nation in the new millennium. Approaching the Hoodie Horror male thus allows the thesis

not to fall into the trap of conceptualising the males as the obligatory 'masculinity in crisis'. Rather, the chapter explores the nuances of this term and demonstrates how the young men of the cycle are symbolic constructions of discursive strategies that position the underclass as a 'problem' to be solved.

The second section, 'manors', continued this discussion of the abject form as represented within the cycle but with a focus on the geographies and spaces. The chapters demonstrate how the council estate is a core and critical space across the films and that while the differing filmic strategies vary in how this urban geography is constructed, the abject discourse of council estates remain a consistent ideological underpinning throughout the cycle. 'Monstrous geographies' demonstrated how the spaces of the films are inscribed with a misogynist, underclass patriarchy delineating it as territory that confront the young protagonists with a violent and threatening urbanscape. As with the other chapters in this section, here I argue how the spaces in the films take their cue from Tyler's conceptualisation of council estates as stigmatized spaces but I add that they are also influenced by the history of British social realism. The chapter on the 'haunted housing estate' asserts, as with the later chapter on 'the gothic abject', how both the very British cinematic traditions of the gothic and social realism are fused to illuminate the ideology of social housing as a failed and passed vision for Britain.

The two chapters that follow focus on single films, *Harry Brown* and *Eden Lake*. The chapter on *Harry Brown* demonstrates how the centralisation of the structures of the council estate to the narrative depict how citizenship within neoliberal Britain is determined. Additionally, the film's utilisation of Michael Caine's star persona, that

continues to align him with a working-class authenticity, further legitimises *Harry Brown's* neoliberal ideology that demonises the underclass and positions responsibility for the failure of social housing with 'the new class of problem people'. The final chapter of the section, *Eden Lake*, challenges the idea of the film as a rural horror and asserts that, despite the film's rural setting, it is a Hoodie Horror for its depiction of a threatening underclass. The chapter establishes the film as a super hybrid and transnational form that fuses the American taxonomy of a rural backwoods horror with the very British and urban discourse of underclass criminality. Furthermore, the chapter explores how the horror of the film is explicitly constructed from the abject discourse of the Hoodie and underclass that 'others' both as dysfunctional, chaotic and threatening.

The final section, 'monsters', is comprised of two chapters that explored the construction of monsters of the cycle, representations based upon an essentialist discourse of the Hoodie and the discursive construction of the underclass male as violent. The chapter, 'the monstrous abject', focused on the constructions of the 'monsters' in four films of the cycle, *Eden Lake*, *Harry Brown*, *Piggy* and *Cherry Tree Lane*. Following on from the ontological analysis of *Harry Brown*, this chapter explored how the monsters of these four films is reliant on a degree of mimesis of the discourse of the Hoodie, that challenges the fiction of the film, whilst merging with a discursive construction of the underclass male as violent, resulting in a subjugation of these monsters to discourse. Furthermore, the chapter argues how these representations are problematic, when viewed within the history of underclass masculinity in British cinema by stating how the continued cinematic

illumination of the underclass male as violent, positions and authenticates this characterisation as a constant and natural condition of this gendered class. The final chapter of this thesis, 'the gothic abject', continued the main theme of this thesis with exploring how the abject discourse of the Hoodie is utilised to other the underclass onscreen. With a focus on *Heartless*, *F* and *Citadel*, this chapter asserts how two cinematic traditions, social realism and the gothic, are fused in animating the Hoodies as various gothic monsters. Through close textual analysis of the construction of the monsters, the chapter argues how the gothic abject is constituted of two bodies – the gothic and social – and is reliant upon an inter-dependent relationship between behaviour, concealment and 'unveiling' of identity; a relationship that constructs a narrative schema and is, as this chapter asserts, a traditional motif of the gothic monster. Ultimately, the potential of these monsters is constrained by their subjugation to the discourse inscribed by the social body. The chapter demonstrates how the monsters of *F* require differentiating and are more successful as 'classic' monsters as they maintain their status as gothic monsters, because the film refuses to resolve their identity. This contrasts to both *Citadel* and *Heartless*, where the monsters are returned to their social body and therefore become monsters of discourse only.

Ultimately, this thesis establishes two points: a relationship between the films and the figure of the Hoodie as created in the media and political dialogue; and the formulation of a cycle comprised of diverse film forms. Upon reflection, both these areas presented unique challenges during the course of my investigation and, in the case of the latter factor, it was how to approach this demand of defining the cycle

which shaped the research and developed the project by widening the parameters of the research. The nature of this challenge – and the subsequent fruitful approach I adopted in response – was characterised in the initial reactions I received from peers in categorising *The Selfish Giant* as a Hoodie Horror: how can a social realist text be seen as a horror film? The *horror* of that assumption was too sacrilegious for some. Of course, a simple answer is that a Hoodie Horror film is not a horror film. However, this did not answer the question sufficiently as it still does not resolve what the ‘horror’ is. In conceptualising the representations as not just abject, but the social abject, solved the initial enquiry and aided in constructing a methodology that formulated the coalescence of social realism and horror in the films, in both structure and aesthetics. While it has been clear for some time that British social realist texts, in all their variations, have focused on abject states, very little scholarship has specifically employed this term or explicitly constructed a paradigm of abjection as a platform for research. The abject has remained a staunch territory for horror cinema. This thesis rectifies this omission in literature on British cinema, within this specific cycle, and presents a model that can be utilised elsewhere in perceiving the British underclass onscreen. An intervention of this thesis is to ascertain how the underclass is explicitly ‘othered’ in cultural discourse, an ‘othering’ which is furthered, both consciously and unconsciously, by the filmic strategies in the individual texts. The fetishization of the underclass in the cycle provides a cinematic opportunity to further disidentify with this community. Furthermore, in disrupting what is considered ‘horror’ in the new millennium also challenges the umbrella term of social horror, by relocating its emphasis and application away from the horror film and centralising the societal and cultural

concerns inferred by the term. The thesis has also touched upon the discursive construction of social realism and raises important questions as to what constitutes realism not only in the cycle, but within a wider British cinema. The assimilation of the discourse of the Hoodie, and the wider discursive constructions of the underclass in the cycle, sees mimesis serve as realism and authenticate the representations as a 'truth'. This thesis provides an important groundwork for identifying the nature of this relationship and there is potential for further and broader investigation into the relationship between discourse, narrative, aesthetics and realism in contemporary British realist texts. One area of my research that proved surprisingly overlooked was scholarship on the representation of council housing in British film. Other than Murray Smith's book on *Trainspotting* (Smith, 2002) and a selection of articles, details of which I have cited in this thesis, there is very little research into the area. And, as I outlined in 'monstrous geographies', much of the research focuses on the geography's relationship to identity, rather than exploring the ideology of social housing. This thesis thus provides an original contribution in overtly addressing this gap, with a view to develop this research into other areas of British cinema history.

An overriding concern this research evokes is not necessarily the ethics of representing the underclass as 'other' in the cycle, but rather the continued abject representation of the underclass in a national cinema so obsessed with class. What the cycle highlights is how the knotty relationship between realism and discourse onscreen normalises the underclass condition as an abject state. While it is critical to continue to highlight the cultural, social and political stigmatization that the

underclass is subjected to, it is important to create alternative representations and aesthetic practices for narrating discourses of stigmatization and the abject. In essence, what the Hoodie Horror emphasises is the 'poverty of imagination' in how we'd like to see the underclass, and an 'impoverishment of ... diversity of expression' (Gilroy, 2011) in the cinematic conjuring of the underclass in British film of the new millennium. If, as this conclusion states, the shape, form and character of the national abject has moved beyond the Hoodie to demonize other perceived threats to government, citizenship and the nation state in the second decade of the twenty-first century, then it will be important to observe whether such a discourse is perpetuated and promoted within contemporary film texts, in a manner comparable to the Hoodie Horror cycle investigated here. After all, it is only by diversifying representation, questioning negative media discourses, and challenging the dominant culture's prejudices that the underclass onscreen may receive an alternative animation and cease being a cinema of alterity.

Appendix

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A Clockwork Orange (Stanley Kubrick, 1971)
A Field in England (Ben Wheatley, 2013)
A Kind of Loving (John Schlesinger, 1962)
A Taste of Honey (Tony Richardson, 1961)
Adulthood (Noel Clarke, 2008)
After Hours (Martin Scorsese, 1985)
Alfie (Lewis Gilbert, 1966)
Aliens (James Cameron, 1986)
An American Werewolf in London (John Landis, 1981)
Anuvahood (Adam Deacon and Daniel Toland, 2011)
Attack the Block (Joe Cornish, 2011)
Belle (Amma Assante, 2013)
Billy Elliot (Stephen Daldry, 2000)
Billy Liar (John Schlesinger, 1963)
Blood on Satan's Claw (Piers Haggard, 1971)
Bonded by Blood (Sacha Bennett, 2010)
Bonded by Blood 2 (Greg Hall, 2017)
Brassed Off (Mark Herman, 1996)
Brighton Rock (John Boulting, 1948)
Brotherhood (Noel Clarke, 2016)
Bullet Boy (Saul Dibb, 2004)
Burning an Illusion (Menelick Shabazz, 1981)
Carrie (Brian de Palma, 1976)
Cass (Jon S. Baird, 2008)
Cherry Tree Lane (Paul Andrew Richards, 2010)
Citadel (Ciaran Foy, 2012)
Comedown (Menhaj Huda, 2012)
Community (Jason Ford, 2012)
Dead Man's Shoes (Shane Meadows, 2004)

Death Wish (Michael Winner, 1974)
Deliverance (John Boorman, 1972)
Dirty Sanchez (2002-)
Dispossession: The Great Social Housing Swindle (Paul Sng, 2017)
Dog Soldiers (Neil Marshall, 2002)
Donkey Punch (Oliver Blackburn, 2008)
Drop the Dead Donkey (1990 – 1998)
Eden Lake (James Watkins, 2008)
F (Johannes Roberts, 2010)
Face (Antonia Bird, 1997)
Fatal Attraction (Adrian Lyne, 1987)
Fight Club (David Fincher, 1999)
Fish Tank (Andrea Arnold, 2009)
Four Weddings and a Funeral (Mike Newell, 1994)
Frankenweenie (Tim Burton, 2012)
Freeze-Frame (John Simpson, 2004)
Get Carter (Mike Hodges, 1971)
Get Out (Jordan Peele, 2017)
Ghost Stories (Jeremy Dyson and Andy Nyman, 2018)
Gran Torino (Clint Eastwood, 2008)
Grange Hill (Phil Redmond, 1978 – 2008)
Grimsby (Louis Leterrier, 2016)
Hammer Horror productions: *Dracula* (1960 – 1974), *Frankenstein* (1958 – 1974)
and *The Mummy* (1959 – 1971)
Handsworth Songs (John Akomfrah, 1986)
Harry Brown (Daniel Barber, 2009)
Heartless (Philip Ridley, 2009)
Hellraiser (Clive Barker, 1987)
Henry: A Portrait of a Serial Killer (John McNaughton, 1986)
Hoodie Holocaust (Adam M. Williams, 2011)
Hot Fuzz (Edgar Wright, 2007)

Housing Problems (Arthur Elton and E.H. Anstey, 1935)
Human Traffic (Justin Kerrigan, 1999)
I, Daniel Blake (Ken Loach, 2017)
I Spit on Your Grave (Steven R. Monroe, 1978)
Ill Manors ('Plan B', 2012)
Its (David Moreau and Xavier Palud, 2006)
Insidious (James Wan, 2010)
It Follows (David Robert Mitchell, 2014)
Jackass (2000 – 2002)
Kes (Ken Loach, 1969)
Kidulthood (Menhaj Huda, 2006)
Kill List (Ben Wheatley, 2011)
Ladybird Ladybird (Ken Loach, 1994)
Last House on the Left (Wes Craven, 1972)
Last Resort (Pawel Pawlikowski, 2000)
Legend (Brian Helgeland, 2015)
Letter to Brezhnev (Chris Barnard, 1985)
Like Father (Amber Street Collective, 2000)
Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels (Guy Ritchie, 1998)
London Heist (Mark McQueen, 2017)
Love Actually (Richard Curtis, 2003)
Love, Honour and Obey (Dominic Anciano & Ray Burdis, 2000)
Made In Britain (Alan Clark, 1982)
Misfits (Howard Overman, 2009 – 2013)
Mona Lisa (Neil Jordan, 1986)
My Beautiful Launderette (Stephen Frears, 1985)
My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding (2011 – 2015)
My Brother, The Devil (Sally El Hosaini, 2012)
My Little Eye (Marc Evans, 2002)
Night of the Living Dead (George A. Romero, 1968)
Nil by Mouth (Gary Oldman, 1997)

Not a Penny of the Rents (Cinema Action, 1968)
Notting Hill (Roger Michell, 1999)
Pacific Heights (John Schlesinger, 1990)
Paranormal Activity (Oren Peli, 2007)
Peaky Blinders (Stephen Knight, 2013-).
Peeping Tom (Michael Powell, 1960)
Penny Dreadful (John Logan, 2014 – 2016)
Piggy (Kieron Hawkes, 2012)
Pressure (Horace Ové, 1976)
Psycho (Alfred Hitchcock, 1960)
Quadrophenia (Franc Roddam, 1979)
Raining Stones (Ken Loach, 1993)
Red Road (Andrea Arnold, 2006)
Reign of Fire (Rob Bowman, 2002)
Rise of the Footsoldier (Julian Gibley, 2007)
Rise of the Footsoldier 3 (Zachary Adler, 2017)
Rise of the Footsoldier Part II (Ricci Harnett, 2015)
Rita, Sue and Bob Too (Alan Clarke, 1987)
Robinson In Ruins (Patrick Keiller, 2010)
Room at the Top (Jack Clayton, 1959)
Saturday Night and Sunday Morning (Karel Reisz, 1966)
Scum (Alan Clark, 1979)
See No Evil (Christopher Menual and Nicola Morrow, 2006)
Severance (Christopher Smith, 2006)
Sexy Beast (Jonathan Glazier, 2000)
Shameless (2004 – 2013)
Shaun of the Dead (Edgar Wright, 2004)
Silence of the Lambs (Jonathan Demme, 1991)
Single White Female (Barbet Schroeder, 1992)
Sleepy Hollow (Tim Burton, 1999)
Snatch (Guy Ritchie, 2000)

Southcliffe (Sean Durkin, 2014)

Straw Dogs (Sam Peckinpah, 1971)

Summer Scars (Julian Richards, 2007)

The Arbor (Clio Barnard, 2010)

The Bill (Geoff McQueen, 1984 – 2010)

The Blair Witch Project (Daniel Myrick and Eduardo Sánchez, 1999)

The Block (Paul Watson, 1972)

The Brood (David Cronenberg, 1979)

The Children (Tom Shankland, 2008)

The Conjuring (James Wan, 2013)

The Devil Rides Out (Terence Fisher, 1968)

The Disappeared (Johnny Kevorkian, 2008)

The Duchess on the Estate (2009)

The Firm (Alan Clark, 1989)

The Firm (Nick Love, 2009)

The Fly (David Cronenberg, 1986)

The Football Factory (Nick Love, 2004)

The Full Monty (Peter Cattaneo, 1997)

The Goob (Guy Myhill, 2004)

The Great Ecstasy of Robert Carmichael (Thomas Clay, 2005)

The Hills Have Eyes (Wes Craven, 1977)

The Innocents (Jack Clayton, 1961)

The Italian Job (Peter Collinson, 1969)

The Krays (Peter Medak, 1990)

The Last Great Wilderness (David McKenzie, 2002)

The League of Gentlemen (Jeremy Dyson, Mark Gatiss, Steve Pemberton, Reece Shearsmith, 1999 – 2017)

The League of Gentlemen's Apocalypse (Steve Bendelack, 2005)

The Long Good Friday (John Mackenzie, 1980)

The Nightmare Before Christmas (Tim Burton, 1993)

The Others (Alejandro Amenábar, 2011)

The Reeds (Nick Cohen, 2010)
The Selfish Giant (Clio Barnard, 2013)
The Silence of the Lambs (Jonathan Demme, 1991)
The Texas Chainsaw Massacre (Tobe Hooper, 1974)
The Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2 (Tobe Hooper, 1986)
The Thing (John Carpenter, 1982)
The Uninvited (Lewis Allen, 1944)
The War Zone (Tim Roth, 1999)
The Wicker Man (Robin Hardy, 1973)
The Witches (Cyril Frankel, 1966)
The Wolf Man (George Waggner, 1941)
The Woman in Black (James Watkins, 2012)
This is England (Shane Meadows, 2006)
This Is England '90 (2015)
This Sporting Life (Lindsay Anderson, 1963)
To the Devil a Daughter (Roy Skeggs, 1975)
Top Boy (Ronan Bennett, 2011 – 2013)
Trainspotting (Danny Boyle, 1996)
Twenty-Four Seven (Shane Meadows, 1997)
Twin Town (Kevin Allen, 1997)
Tyrannosaur (Paddy Considine, 2011)
Urban Ghost Story (Geneviève Joliffe, 1998)
Village of the Damned (Wolf Rilla, 1960)
Watcher in the Woods (John Hough, 1980)
Waterloo Road (Ann McManus and Maureen Chadwick, 2006 – 2015)
We are the Lambeth Boys (Karol Reisz, 1959)
Wonderland (Michael Winterbottom, 1999)
Wrong Turn (Rob Schmidt, 2003)
Young Frankenstein (Mel Brooks, 1974)

Film Synopses

***Adulthood* (Noel Clarke, 2008)**

Sam is released from prison and returns to his home. He visits Trife's grave where he is attacked and told there are people after him. Moony is now studying law at university and Jay is making a living from selling drugs. Sam wants to find out who is after him and gets in touch with Lexi, a girl from school, who helps him make contact with Alisa to make amends for Trife's death. Alisa tells him she doesn't want anything to do with him. Sam's brother Omen hangs out with Henry and Dabs, a crew who work for Andreas. Jay approaches Andreas offering him money to kill Sam and Andreas instructs Dabs to do so. Dabs tells Omen they need to kill someone, but not who. Dabs and his crew attack Sam from behind and Dabs instructs Omen to knife him. When Sam turns around, Omen realises it's his brother and refuses. Dabs is knocked out and Sam and Omen are reunited and leave. Sam goes to confront Andreas, without realising Curtis will be there also. Sam informs the police, and the police raid Andreas's place. There is a final showdown between Jay and Sam, with both making an uneasy truce. Sam heads to see Lexi hoping they can have a relationship.

***Anuvahood* (Adam Deacon and Daniel Toland, 2011)**

The film is a parody of the *Hood* films that caricatures both the male hoodies, narratives and settings of both *Kidulthood* and *Adulthood*. The film opens with Kenneth and his gang in what is presented as the planning of an attack on the competition. Kenneth confronts his victim who floors him in one punch. The gang

laughs at Kenneth. Kenneth, wanting to be called Kay, quits his job at Laimsbury's to become a gangster and pursue his music career. He visits the local record shop to be told no-one has brought his music, 'Feel the Pain'. He goes home where his mum berates him for quitting his job as she needs the money to pay the bailiffs. After being humiliated by his seven-year-old sister, he leaves the house to hang with his gang. He meets Enrique who is staying with the local middle-class family. When he returns home later, the bailiffs have taken all the furniture from his home. Kay then decides to make money selling drugs, but what money he makes is taken, with the drugs, from the local 'big man', Tyrone. Tyrone then takes any drugs, music and clothes from the other gang members. The gang blame Kay for this as he was bragging over the amount of money he had earned and berate him for being the worst gangster. Kay returns home where his mum tells him he needs to find a job to help with the family's finances. The next day Kay decides to take back all that Tyrone has stolen from his gang. Leaving Tyrone's, he encounters a rival gang who threaten to kill him. When they realise Kay sang 'Feel the Pain', they grant him respect and let him go. Kay also regains respect from his own gang on returning their belongings. When Tyrone realises Kay has stolen back the gang's belongings, Tyrone confronts Kay. Tyrone attacks Kay. Badly beaten, Kay rallies to fight back. Just as Tyrone is about to kill Kay, the local nightclub owner, Mike, arrives and intervenes and humiliates Tyrone in front of the large crowd that has congregated. Kay returns to his job at Laimsbury's.

Attack The Block (Joe Cornish, 2011)

On her way home from work, Sam is mugged by the local gang of hoodies. The gang led by Moses see something unusual in one of the outbuildings on the council estate, Wentworth, where they live. Jerome's dog wanting to investigate runs into the building and is killed. The boys attack the building with fireworks, which kill what turns out to be an alien. Moses puts the alien in his backpack. Now the aliens attack the rest of the estate. Moses and his gang are the only ones who realise what is happening. Sam, trapped in a flat with the gang, join forces. Knowing the tower block so well, they are able to fight off the alien invasion, but Jerome is killed. The gang head to the local drug dealer's flat, where they hide out with Ron and Brewis. Local drug-dealer, High-Hatz, is killed by the aliens. The gang work out how to kill the aliens, and Moses the leader leads the last attack. They gang kill the aliens. The police arrive, not believing their story and arrest the gang.

Brotherhood (Noel Clarke, 2016)

Sam Peel's brother, Royston, is an up-and-coming singer. During a gig at a London nightclub, Royston is shot, but not fatally wounded. The gang who shot him leave a card on Royston's body stating they want to talk to Sam Peel. Sam is now in a relationship with Kayla, has two children and working three jobs. The family now lives around Hammersmith. Sam goes to see his brother in the hospital and Henry tells him about the card. At the gym, Sam sees the owner talking to a crying girl whilst handling a handgun. Unknown to Sam at the time is their involvement with Daley. On his way home, Sam is stopped by a female passer-by, asking for directions. Sam accompanies her to her home and they have sex. Sam visits head of

the gang, Daley, in an effort to make peace, but Daley wants Sam to work for him. Sam refuses, and Daley kills Sam's mother. Curtis, Trife's uncle, is working with Daley and wants Sam killed. The police raid Daley's home and Sam is arrested. Sam is released. Sam works with the gym owner to get back at Daley and then faces one final showdown with Curtis. The police show, arresting Curtis and letting Sam go free.

***Cherry Tree Lane* (Paul Andrew Richards, 2010)**

Middle-class couple, Michael and Christine are at home in the evening, having dinner and continually arguing. Their son, Sebastian, is at football practice. The doorbell rings and Christine answers the door. The couple are attacked by an adolescent trio, Rian, Asad and Teddy. The gang tie up the couple and hold them hostage, waiting for Sebastian to return. The gang, specifically, Rian, want revenge on Sebastian as Sebastian informed on Rian's cousin for his drug-dealing. Teddy takes Mike's debit and credit cards and leaves to find a cash machine. Rian forces Christine into another room and rapes her. Meanwhile, Asad and Mike start talking. Asad allows Mike a drink and opens up to Mike about his life. Friends of Rian arrive, Beth, Charman and Beth's young brother, Oscar. They bring an axe with them or Rian to use on Sebastian when Sebastian returns. Teddy returns with money and gives it to Rian. Sebastian returns, unaware of events at home, and is hauled upstairs by the gang. Hearing Sebastian scream, Mike begins to free himself and is able to cut himself free. He finds Christine, tied up and naked, in the next room. Grabbing a candlestick, Mike heads upstairs to help his son, but the gang are alerted and Asad, Teddy, Charman and Beth flee the house. Mike starts beating

Rian in a fit of rage. Christine finds a severely injured Sebastian, who rapidly loses consciousness. Mike calls 999 and heads to the kitchen. Unbeknown to Mike, Oscar is still in the kitchen. The film closes with Mike and Oscar staring at one another; Mike with knife in hand.

Citadel (Ciaran Foy, 2012)

After witnessing his wife fatally attacked by a gang of hoodies outside their flat on the council estate, Edenstown, Tommy finds himself widowed and a father to a daughter, Elsa. Edenstown is in the process of being redeveloped, and while the residents have moved away, Tommy and Elsa are left as the sole occupants on the estate before they are rehomed. Crippled with agoraphobia and afraid, Tommy becomes increasingly convinced he and Elsa are being terrorised by the local gang of Hoodies who murdered his wife. Tommy's fear is made the more real when a local priest makes tells him Elsa is in danger from the local gang. Unable to cope, he and Elsa stay with a friend, Marie, before they are due to leave the estate. On the way to the bus stop, Marie is brutally attacked by the Hoodies, and Elsa is kidnapped by the gang as Tommy and his daughter are trying to flee. Tommy turns to the local Priest and a young boy, Danny, for help. The Priest only agrees to help get Elsa back if Tommy helps him blow up the tower block where the gang live. Tommy reluctantly agrees. Tommy, the priest and Danny enter the tower block and rescue Elsa. The priest is killed in the process. Tommy and Danny detonate the explosives as they escape from the gang, blowing up the block.

***Community* (Jason Ford, 2012)**

Film students, Isabelle and Will, decide to make a documentary on the local no-go area, the Draymen Estate. The estate, where even the police do not venture, has become an urban legend with stories of local disappearances, insalubrious residents and brutal violence. Isabelle and Will want to dispel these rumours and decide to visit the estate, interview the locals and make a sympathetic documentary. After arriving at the estate, the friends first encounter a group of young boys. In an uneasy encounter, the boys show the friends the local wild animals the gang have killed. Isabelle and Will ask to meet the families on the estate, and the boys take them to meet their parents. On meeting the parents, the friends soon realise many of the residents have serious drug problems and are addicted to what they receive from 'Aunty', a local resident and nurse. Sensing increasing danger, the friends try to leave the estate, but are stopped by the local boys. Will is killed and Isabelle is captured and imprisoned by Aunty, who force feeds Isabelle to take the drug the other residents take. Freeing herself, Isabelle steals a car in an effort to escape. Just as she thinks she is free, the tyres burst and she is recaptured. The film ends with another student documentary filmmaker interviewing Aunty in the local town.

***Eden Lake* (James Watkins, 2008)**

Nursery teacher, Jenny, and her boyfriend Steve travel to Steve's childhood idyll, Skipton Quarry, for a romantic weekend away where Steve plans to propose. At a stop-over at the local pub, the couple meet the local residents who are abusive and hostile. Reaching the quarry the next morning, the couple set up camp on the

seemingly deserted beach. After falling asleep in the sun, the couple are woken by local youths at the other end of the beach. In an uncomfortable encounter, Steve asks the kids to turn their music down, but is met with ridicule. That night, Jenny thinks she hears the kids in the woodland and the next morning the couple find some of their possessions missing. After having breakfast in the local café, Steve breaks into the gang leader, Brett's house to look around. That night back at the quarry, the gang steal Steve's car. Confronting the gang, Steve accidentally kills Brett's dog. In trying to escape the gang, the couple crash. Leaving Steve in the car, Jenny goes for help. The gang capture Steve and brutally torture him. Jenny frees Steve but leaves him in hiding as he is too injured to escape quickly. Betrayed by a local boy, Jenny too is captured by the gang. Steve dies and the gang set fire to his body. Jenny escapes and fleeing the gang, kills two gang members. The car she is driving crashes into a local garden, where the local community are having a party, taken in by the families, Jenny realises she is in Brett's house. Before she can escape, Brett and the others return. Jenny is forced into the bathroom by three fathers. The film closes with Brett putting on Steve's glasses as we hear Jenny scream.

F (Johannes Roberts, 2010)

Teacher Robert Anderson gives a student a 'F' for a piece of work and is subsequently attacked. Fast forward some months and Robert has returned to work but has lost his family and now has a drink problem. At work he is taunted by his pupils, including his daughter, Kate, with whom he has a strained relationship. Robert circulates a report to all the teachers, informing them of increased attacks

on teachers at schools by pupils. Robert is warned by headmistress, Sarah Balham, of drinking during teaching hours. In a tense altercation with a pupil, Robert gives detention to his daughter, Kate. During the detention Robert and Kate have an argument and Robert strikes her round the face. Kate reports Robert to the headmistress. At the same time, the school comes under attack from unknown assailants wearing Hoodies. Robert senses danger, but no one takes him seriously, thinking he is delusional and drunk. The faceless Hoodies attack and kill a security guard and then the school librarian. When the school security does not take him seriously, Robert takes matters into his own hands as the Hoodies continue to kill indiscriminately. When Kate is stabbed, Robert faces down a Hoodie and saves her. Leaving the school, both realise Kate's mum has arrived to take her home and is unaware of the attack and murders. Kate tells Robert she will never forgive him if they don't go back for her mum. Robert drives Kate to the hospital.

Harry Brown (Daniel Barber, 2009)

Retired Royal Marine Harry Brown spends his time between the hospital, visiting his terminally ill wife, Kathy, and playing chess with his friend Leonard Attwell in the Barge pub owned by Sid Rourke. On the night Kathy dies, Harry is unable to get to the hospital in time for fear of using the underpass that is used by the local gang, headed up by Noel Winters. Leonard tells Harry that he is being harassed by Noel and his gang and that he now carries an old bayonet for self-defence. Harry tells him to go to the police. When Leonard is beaten, then stabbed to death in the underground passage, Inspector Alice Frampton and her partner Sergeant Terry Hicock are sent to investigate. When the police tell Harry the gang would could

claim self-defence as Leonard was found carrying a bayonet, Harry decides to take matters into his own hands and to serve his own justice. Harry visits the local drug dealer to purchase a gun. Whilst there he rescues a young, female drug-addict and kills the drug-dealers. Harry kidnaps one of the gang who murdered Leonard and uses him to find the other members. Harry confronts the gang in the underpass and is wounded. Simultaneously, the police raid the estate and a riot ensues. Frampton and Hicock are attacked in their car. Harry rescues both and takes them to his local pub. Here Frampton tells him that the landlord, Sid Rourke, is Noel Winters's uncle. In a violent showdown, Noel Winters kills Hicock and attacks Frampton. Harry kills Winters. The film closes with Frampton reassigned and Harry walking through the underpass.

***Heartless* (Philip Ridley, 2009)**

Jamie Morgan is an emotionally disturbed twenty-five-year-old photographer, blighted by a port wine birthmark on his face and still grieving for his dead father. Living the life of a loner, Jamie lives with his mother, Marion, and works for his brother, Ray, and with his nephew, Lee, in Ray's photography studio. On his way home, Jamie is drawn to local graffiti. Following a mysterious Hoodie to the local waste ground, Jamie thinks he sees demons. Returning home, Jamie meets his new neighbour, A.J. On television that night, there are reports of gangs of Hoodies wearing demon masks, killing local residents. During this time, Jamie meets an aspiring model, Tia, at his brother's studio and is taken with her. At Marion's birthday, Lee gives her an expensive necklace as a present. Walking back from visiting his father's grave, Jamie's mother Marion is attacked and set alight by the

Hoodies. Jamie's mental health declines and he believes his mum was killed by demons. Jamie's neighbour is attacked, and Jamie believes the stomach wound was made with claws. Jamie is mysteriously contacted and invited to meet Papa B at a local council tower block, Cendrillon tower. Papa B, aka the Devil, offers to take away Jamie's birthmark, if Jamie works on his behalf. Papa B sets Jamie on fire and when Jamie wakes, he peels back his skin to reveal no birthmark. Jamie is reborn and has a new-found confidence, taking Tia out for a date. Jamie is visited by the Weapons Man, who works for Papa B. Jamie is instructed to lay a human heart outside the local church. Unwillingly, Jamie murders a local male prostitute and cuts out his heart. Tia asks Jamie to help her retrieve some items from the safe at Jamie's brother's studio. At the studio, Jamie's nephew Lee arrives and is attacked by the local gang. Lee has stolen from the gang and it is revealed Lee persuaded Tia to start a relationship with Jamie in order to retrieve the necklace he gave to Marion. Jamie's reality unravels as he begins to understand there is no Papa B, and he still has the birthmark. Papa B is the local gang leader, and the Hoodies aren't demons, but local youths. After fleeing the gang, Jamie takes on the local Hoodies and is killed.

III Manors (Ben Drew, 2012)

Aaron and Ed are selling drugs when they are caught by undercover police. Aaron runs and hides but Ed is arrested and spends the night in jail. The next day, Kirby is released from prison and shakes down Marcel for being on his patch. Kirby takes Marcel's money and clothes, leaving Marcel to get home in his underwear. Kirby visits Chris so that he can restart his drugs business. Jake and his friend want to buy

some weed and approach Marcel. Marcel agrees to sell him some, but only if Jake attacks his best friend. Jake does as Marcel tells him. Jake joins Marcel's gang. Marcel buys Jake new clothes, they go to a party and Marcel takes him to the warehouse where the gang are holding another dealer hostage. Kirby chats up two school girls in the local café and persuades them to visit him at home later, telling him he is a scout for a fashion photographer. Marcel tells Jake he has to kill someone for him in return for all the clothes he has brought Jake. Jake takes the gun and goes to the house that night where he kills Kirby and one of the girls. Ed has lost his phone and thinks a local heroin user, Michelle, has stolen it. To pay him back, Ed sells Michelle for sex at the fast-food restaurants along the high street. The school girl Jake shot was the sister of Chris. In revenge, Chris gets Jake to kill Marcel then Chris kills Jake. On the train to visit his mother, Aaron sees a young mother, Katya, push her baby in the pram on to the train as the doors close. Not knowing what to do, Aaron returns home and Ed sells the baby to the couple who manage the local pub. Katya has been trafficked into the country as a sex-worker and left her baby on the train so that her child could escape the local pimp. Michelle saves Katya from the pimps and together they find Aaron so that Katya can be reunited with her child. They all go to the pub, but a fire has started upstairs. Ed saves Katya's baby, but dies when he falls from the top floor. Aaron takes Katya and Michelle to his social worker. The next day Aaron leaves. Chris is arrested for possession of drugs and Katya's pimps are raided and arrested.

***Kidulthood* (Menhaj Huda, 2006)**

The film is an ensemble piece that follows the lives of a group of schoolchildren over a period of 48 hours. The film opens at school and we are introduced to the main characters. Trife is shaping a gun barrel using the school equipment, which we later find out is for his Uncle Curtis. One girl, Katie, is bullied both by a group of girls and by Sam Peel. In a confrontation, Sam tells Trife he had sex with Trife's ex-girlfriend, Alisa. Later that night Katie commits suicide. The students are informed the following morning of Katie's death and are granted the day off to mourn. The teenagers are planning for the party taking place that night. Friends, Trife, Moony and Jay, decide to spend the day drinking and smoking weed and head to Sam's flat to take back the Gameboy Sam stole from them the previous day. Sam isn't there and Jay has sex with Sam's girlfriend. Sam returns and a fight ensues, with the gang beating Sam and stealing his weed before fleeing. Alisa and Becky decide to spend the day together. Alisa is pregnant with Trife's baby. They both drink and take cocaine before heading to Becky's sometime boyfriend. Becky performs oral sex in return for drugs. They both head to the west end to shop for a dress for the party. Jay, Trife and Moony also head to the west end, where all three are asked to leave a shop under suspicion of shoplifting. Trife heads to see his uncle. Moony and Jay meet up with Becky and Alisa. Jay, thinking the baby is Sam's, tells Alisa that Trife doesn't want anything to do with her. Alisa heads home, leaving Becky with Moony. Trife, now with his Uncle Curtis, is pressurised by Curtis to cut a drug dealer's face. Trife does, but runs out, mortified with his actions. At the party, Alisa and Trife talk and agree to resume their relationship. Trife believes he is the father of the baby.

Sam arrives looking for vengeance and attacks Trife. Jay and Alisa try to intervene but aren't strong enough. Sam hits Trife with a fatal blow to the stomach and Trife dies in Alisa's arms.

Piggy (Kieron Hawkes, 2012)

Joe has mental health issues lives a reclusive life despite working and living in London. He re-establishes his relationship with his brother John. On a night out, John is murdered. Joe, unable to cope, returns to his reclusive habits. One night, Piggy turns up at Joe's flat explaining he was friends with John at school. As their friendship grows, Piggy convinces Joe to seek revenge and kill the gang members who were responsible for John's murder. Together, Joe and Piggy track down each member and exact revenge. Joe begins to have doubts and after a showdown with Piggy, there is a realisation that Piggy isn't real. But there is one last gang member to kill who is now in prison for John's murder. Joe goes into a local pub and randomly attacks a drinker. The film closes with Joe entering prison.

Summer Scars (Julian Richards, 2007)

A group of teenage friends, Bingo, Paul, Ben (who has been left crippled by a joyriding accident), Jonesy, Mugsey and Leanne play truant from school to spend the day in their woodland lair. Paul and Ben are riding on their motorbike when they accidentally knock down a man in the woods. They drive off. The man, whose name is Peter, is not hurt, locates the gang and begins to ingratiate himself into the fraternity by asking for the gang's help in finding his dog, Jesus. The group initially welcome Peter. He encourages the boys to spy on a couple copulating in a car

nearby, and joins the boys in throwing stones at the car before they all run off. Peter also defends the gang against two older bullying lads and teaches the gang military manoeuvres so that they can defend themselves.

However, as the narrative progresses, the more volatile Peter becomes. He begins psychologically abusing the gang in a game of divide and rule, relying on emotional blackmail in exploiting Ben's disability in maintaining his control of the gang. Bingo escapes. The emotional abuse increases as Peter becomes overtly threatening, humiliating the boys sexually and blackmailing Leanne to strip for him. Bingo returns and shoots Peter in the neck. The group run off, initially leaving the crippled Ben. Peter dies and the gang, now including Ben, regroup on their estate and agree to keep events secret to protect Bingo.

The Disappeared (Johnny Kevorkian, 2008)

Matthew Ryan's life is devastated after the disappearance of his younger brother, Tom. Released from hospital where he has been treated for depression, Matthew returns home to live with his father, Jake. Jake blames Matthew for Tom's disappearance because Matthew was charged with looking after him the night Tom went missing. On returning home, Matthew looks through a box of press cuttings and video tapes, one of which has a recording of the police request for information on Tom. Playing, Matthew hears Tom's voice. He plays the tape for his father, but neither hear Tom's voice and Jake, now visibly angry, begins to believe Matthew hasn't recovered. Matthew decides to uncover what happened to Tom and befriends a girl next door, Amy. Matthew begins to see Tom through the flat window and continues to hear his voice. Matthew also starts having nightmares

where he's buried alive. Amy suggests he visits the local medium, Melissa. As the hauntings escalate, Matthew's state of mind deteriorates. When Sophie, the young sister of Matthew's friend Simon goes missing, Matthew realises he must solve the mystery soon. Simon gets angry with Matthew and tells him that he couldn't have visited Melissa the medium, as she and her daughter had died in a fire some years previously. Matthew, now distressed, follows some supernatural clues and visits his social worker, Adrian Ballon, and then a local underground structure under the railway arches. Here he finds Sophie. Simon follows him but is killed by Adrian Ballon who is responsible for the child disappearances and murders. Matthew finds the remains of his brother, who was also a victim of Ballon. Ballon has disappeared. Matthew finds out that Amy had committed suicide a year previously.

***The Selfish Giant* (Clio Barnard, 2013)**

Loosely adapted from a short story by Oscar Wilde, Clio Barnard's *The Selfish Giant* is a social realist tale of two young friends, Arbor and Swifty. Living an almost bucolic existence of a hand-to-mouth survival, both are excluded from school when Arbor gets into a fight defending Swifty. Left to pursue their true vocation, the two friends roam around the town scavenging and stealing metal objects to sell for scrap. Striking up a friendship with a local and crooked scrap dealer, Kitten, Arbor and Swifty begin collecting scrap metal for him by riding around town on a horse and cart. Kitten sees how Swifty has a natural gift with horses and encourages him to ride in local gypsy races. Arbor, who emulates Kitten, feels hurt and excluded, and is envious of Kitten's kindness towards Swifty. Arbor decides to steal pieces of scrap from Kitten and sell them on, along with other scrap to another dealer. When

the plan backfires, Kitten finds out and threatens Arbor into stealing high voltage electric cables to make up for his actions. Not fully aware of the dangers of cutting high voltage wire, Arbor cuts the wire and Swifty helps to lift it, resulting in Swifty being killed by electrocution. Arbor is devastated and Kitten is arrested, admitting responsibility so that Arbor can escape being charged. Arbor sits outside Swifty's house until Swifty's mother allows him to hug her. In a final scene, Arbor takes care of the horse Swifty adored.