A Sheffield Hallam University thesis

"There's Something Wrong with This Place": Spatial Tension in British Horror Cinema.

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Candidate Declaration

I hereby declare that:

1. I have not been enrolled for another award of the University, or other academic or professional organisation, whilst undertaking my research degree.

2. None of the material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award.

3. . I am aware of and understand the University's policy on plagiarism and certify that this thesis is my own work. The use of all published or other sources of material consulted have been properly and fully acknowledged.

4. The work undertaken towards the thesis has been conducted in accordance with the SHU Principles of Integrity in Research and the SHU Research Ethics Policy.

5. The word count of the thesis is 84,129.

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Finally, my biggest thanks are reserved for Linda, Mark and Adam for always being there, and for providing the comfort that only family can offer. This thesis is dedicated to them.

Abstract

All narratives occur within spaces and places, and yet space remains a marginalised aspect of narrative analysis. Through the use of vague statements concerning space, the concept is reduced to being merely the site of narrative events. And yet more than any other cinematic form, the horror genre utilises space to generate its affects. The genre generates fear and horror through the representation of various tensions, and these include spatial tensions. Space is often an antagonistic device, exerting an influence upon both narrative and characterisation inasmuch as tension is generated through the effect that space has upon the individual. Spaces can code a film as belonging to the genre through their associations with particular emotions; the old dark house; the graveyard. Other tensions are elicited where individuals or groups compete to express meaning onto space. Particular cultural practices are intertwined with spaces in ways that imbue those spaces with a sense of foreboding and danger. Spaces can be used to reflect the psychological state of narrative actors, through aesthetics that are angular and disturbing.

Whilst spatial theory is a well-established component of both human geography and philosophy, it is yet to be applied to horror studies through a sustained analysis. This thesis addresses that lack, and is concerned not only with events that occur *within* particular spaces, but *why* they occur within those spaces. Through doing so, my intention is to imbue films from within the horror genre with an additional layer of analytical interest.

Introduction

'It seems to be well established that physical space has no "reality" without the energy that is deployed within it'. (Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of* Space, p.13)

 "There's something wrong with this place" (Darts Player, *An American Werewolf in London*)

Many readings of literary and cinematic texts are concerned with the examination of gender, sexuality and race as the fundamental components of identity formation, whilst barely acknowledging the function and importance of space as a sphere of influence upon identity. It is especially frustrating to encounter textual analyses that make very vague statements about various forms of space, such as 'the sprawling metropolis,' or 'the wild space of the rural' without particularly expanding upon or justifying these points. Essentially, these stereotypes are not challenged in the same ways that stereotypes about gender, race and sexuality (rightfully) are, and as such they contribute towards a marginalisation of space as an ideological notion. Space is reduced to being merely the *site* of narrative events, where factors more worthy of examination might occur. This demotion of space is not particular to the contemporary era; Doreen Massey has argued that a prioritisation of time by philosophers such as Henri Bergson reduced space to having the status of a static temporal moment.[1] So space, within the modernist era in which Bergson was writing, was denied the fluidity and complexity that time was assumed to have, and within contemporary textual analyses space is denied the breadth of examination that other aspects of critical theory are given. I would strongly contest the idea that space is a marginal element in the formation of identity; it is itself an intrinsic influence upon culture and identity. As such, this thesis is concerned not only with events that occur *within* particular spaces, but *why* they occur within those spaces; I am fundamentally interested in the effect space has upon both characterisation and narrative.

Throughout this thesis, I refer to spatial theory as the framework that drives my analyses, but some preparatory clarification of this term is necessary. There is no singular field of scholarship that could be described as spatial theory; rather, there are

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[1] Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage, 2005), 22.

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varying strands of academia that have theories concerned with space and my own analyses therefore draw together elements of philosophy, cultural theory, social psychology and, particularly, human geography to tease out spatial readings of cinematic narratives. It is not my intention to claim that there is a lack of critical theory concerned with space; on the contrary, the examination of space has been explored in great detail within the academic fields detailed above. However, there is a relative lack of cinematic analysis that utilises theories of space, and this is especially true of horror studies. I am not suggesting there are *no* such analyses, indeed there *do* exist a number of academic examinations of space within cinema, some of which have proven to be inspiring during the writing of this thesis. Peter Hutchings' *Uncanny Landscapes in British Film and Television*[2] and Charlotte Brunsdon's *London in Cinema*[3] proved to be useful resources in my own discussions of (particularly) urban spaces, given five of my chapters examine narratives set within London, whilst Adam Scovell's *Folk Horror: Hours Dreadful and Things Strange*[4] offers insights into the specifically rural narratives found within the Folk Horror genre. However, whilst these, and many other, sources informed my own analyses, they do not sufficiently explore the impact that space has on narrative events in the same way that my own chapters do, and at times they fail to expand upon generalised spatial terms. My own writing always justifies its use of any spatial terms, and my collation of theories of space into a singular analytical tool ensures my own work's originality and offers a new means of reading horror narratives.

Those sources that are concerned with cinematic spaces rely upon the concept of landscape (I will expand upon this term shortly), and speak broadly about the externalised visual elements of space. For example, Martin Lefebvre's *Landscape and Film*[5] leans into the similarities between landscape art and the cinematic frame, and whilst this is an illuminating thread, it resigns space to the status of the purely visual and gazed upon. My own engagement with space positions it as more than a passive phenomenon, and instead views it as an actively antagonistic element within horror narratives. Essentially, those examinations of cinematic landscapes are concerned

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[2] Peter Hutchings, *Uncanny Landscapes in British Film and Television*, Visual Culture in Britain v. 5, n. 2 (01 December Winter 2004).

[3] Charlotte Brunsdon, *London in Cinema* (London: British Film Institute, 2007).

[4] Adam Scovell, *Folk Horror: Hours Dreadful and Things Strange (*Leighton Buzzard, Auteur: 2017).

[5] Martin Lefebvre, *Landscape and Film* (London: Routledge, 2006).

with wider visions of space that have at their centre the audience's relationship with the filmic frame. I am fundamentally concerned with the inner workings of space, and how place (being space invested with cultural meaning) is an expression, and repository, of power. It is not enough to observe and comment upon the visual differences between various spaces (inevitably distilled to an urban/rural binary), and indeed my own analyses examine the ways in which spaces both directly act upon those experiencing them and inform the cultural identity of those living within them.

It is my intention within this thesis to examine a variety of spaces, as represented within British horror cinema, and to assert how these spaces are fundamental to how a particular sample of British horror films look, how their narratives work and how their protagonists and antagonists behave. Whilst space is an often overlooked aspect of narrative design within analyses of horror cinema, the genre has an identifiable history of utilising space to engage with fear and other emotional responses. A film such as Robert Wiene's *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*[6] makes use of angular, distorted shapes within its set design, and heavily contrasted uses of shadow and light to reflect the unsettled psychological state of its narrator. The film uses its spaces to externally express interior mood and states of mind. George Romero's *Dawn of the Dead*[7] utilises hordes of lumbering zombies within a post-apocalyptic shopping mall to express ideas about the stupefying effects of consumerist spaces, whilst Myrick and Sánchez's *The Blair Witch Project*[8] builds upon a tradition of films that have their protagonists venture into a variety of backwoods locales, including the forest, where the comforts, attitudes and visibility of the urban are displaced by an unforgiving, unknowable landscape. All three of these examples recognise space as being more than merely the site of their narratives, and fully utilise the particularities of those spaces to inform characterisation and narrative, as well as using these spaces as antagonistic devices in and of themselves.

This project has grown out of a lifelong fascination with horror cinema, dating back to the early 1980s, and the arrival of a Betamax video player into the family home. It was not until much later that I became fully aware of the idea of generic partitions within the field of horror cinema, and even later still that I began to realise the deeper

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[6] *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*, directed by Robert Weine (Decla-Bioscop, 1920), film.
[7] *Dawn of the Dead*, directed by George A. Romero (Laurel Group Inc, 1978), film.
[8] *The Blair Witch Project*, directed by Daniel Myrick and Eduardo Sánchez (Haxan Films, 1999), film.

ideological concerns the genre was engaging with. During my undergraduate degree, I made my first foray into writing about the genre, although these early attempts were informed by psychoanalysis and gender studies. It became quickly apparent that these two modes of critical examination were deeply established, and I wondered how I might say anything new about films that had attracted so much academic analysis. Then, whilst undertaking a Masters degree I became profoundly interested in spatial theory (via the fact that I was writing about the novels of J.G. Ballard and the postmodern landscape) and as this critical framework worked its way into my consciousness, it started to impose itself onto my regular viewing of horror films. In reading academic examinations of horror cinema, it was apparent to me that there are no sustained explorations of the importance of space within the genre. There are essays, chapters and articles that do indeed discuss the use of space within particular films, and whilst many of these are acknowledged within the following chapters they largely fall into the categories of the gothic or the sublime. Whilst this relative lack of sources that engage with horror in spatial terms means there is a shortfall of research materials, it also enables my own thesis to address this lacuna and to contribute a fresh perspective to horror studies, as well as an original contribution to academic knowledge.

As has been discussed so far, this thesis will be concerned with narrative analyses, and this is largely the result of my academic background in English studies. Given the nature of the medium of film, there will be some acknowledgement of the aesthetic values that varying spaces have upon the overarching narrative of the films examined, but these ideas will be part of larger narrative examinations, rather than strands that diverge into discussions of aesthetics in and of themselves.

In initially preparing my project, I identified a number of films that engage with ideas of space to a considerable degree, and these films were drawn from a variety of national backgrounds. However, given that my thesis fundamentally examines how space is produced (invested with meaning) within horror cinema, I felt that I could engage more fully with British space, and its own peculiarities, having spent my entire life experiencing that space. In addition to this sense of personal engagement with British space, I recognised that my project would gain far more focus from this cultural specificity; there are clearly cultural and spatial differences to contend with when examining texts from a variety of countries, and whilst comparative studies are hugely

important, I realised that my own project and my own interests would be better served by a specific focus upon British texts. However, there is clearly scope to extend my model of analysis to texts from other national cinemas outside of my thesis, either as ancillary studies or a more sustained project post-thesis. Additionally, my methodology has allowed me to think about films from within other genres in terms of their spatial engagement, such as British social realist cinema. Speaking of social realism, my own cinematic choices do tend towards realistic representations of space, wherever possible. There may be occasional supernatural elements (*An American Werewolf in London*)[9] or distorted and dystopian versions of familiar spaces (*28 Days Later*),[10] but by and large these cinematic worlds are contained within spaces that are familiar. As my critical framework is grounded in spatial theory that is itself an examination of real spaces, the inclusion of narratives that occur in fantastical spaces would require an entirely different set of critical ideas.

There are numerous debates around which qualities contribute towards a film being classified as horror, as well as arguments concerning particular films' claims to being British. Therefore, it is important to engage with these debates and set some definitions for my own project. The question of what constitutes a horror film is the more problematic and contested question. There persists an outdated notion that horror should contain gothic and supernatural elements; a view that negates the fluidity within genre that allows a horror film to contain elements of the thriller, or the science fiction film. Some recent opinions (such as a *Guardian* piece by Steve Rose)[11] have argued that there are cinematic examples that would be best defined as 'Post-Horror' because of a level of intellectual engagement that writers such as Rose feel is not present within other films from within the genre (cited examples include *The Witch,*[12] *It Follows*[13] and *A Ghost Story*[14]). However, horror cinema has always produced films that have demonstrated an overt intellectual engagement, from *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* through to *Psycho*[15] and *The Shining.*[16] The responses[17] to the idea of post-

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[9] *An American Werewolf in London*, directed by John Landis (Universal Pictures, 1981), film.
[10] *28 Days Later*, directed by Danny Boyle (DNA Films, 2002), film.
[11] Steve Rose, 'How Post-Horror Movies are Taking Over Cinema,' *The Guardian*, Jul 11, 2017.
[12] *The Witch*, directed by Robert Eggers (Parts and Labor, 2015), film.
[13] *It Follows*, directed by David Robert Mitchell (Northern Lights Films, 2015), film.
[14] *A Ghost Story*, directed by David Lowery (Sailor Bear, 2017), film.
[15] *Psycho*, directed by Alfred Hitchcock (Shamley Productions, 1960), film.
[16] *The Shining*, directed by Stanley Kubrick (Warner Bros, 1980), film.
[17] David Church produced an important examination of the term, that examined its popular usage (amongst other similar terms, such as 'elevated horror'), and identified a corpus of films that

horror have suggested that it may be the case that the writers adopting the term are simply trying to justify reasons why they have enjoyed films from within a genre that is (they might argue) largely puerile and sensationalist. In a sense, my own research will invest the films I am reading with an additional layer of intellectual engagement, further challenging this notion that only a select few films (and 'auteur' directors) within the genre are worthy of critical examination. It is somewhat significant that few (if any) of my chosen texts would meet the post-horror criteria.

In terms of a film's Britishness, James Leggott[18] has discussed the British government's 2007 Cultural Test, which set out to define British cinema through criteria that included such elements as 'UK setting, British lead characters (and) British subject material'. With that in mind, my own cinematic choices are films that are made in Britain and concerned with British space. For example, both *Death Line*[19] and *An American Werewolf in London* are directed by Americans but are filmed in Britain and concerned with British spaces. Having been directed by Americans and featuring at least one American actor prominently in each film does not reduce any sense of Britishness these films have. One of the questions my project has elicited is whether I might consider the potential differences between 'British films' and 'films about Britain'. I feel this question is pertinent, and whilst I am inclined to maintain my stance that my chosen films should be produced within Britain, and be concerned with British space, it is useful to consider this subtle distinction. For example, a film that was always on my potential list of chapter choices was *The Descent*, featuring as it does a largely British crew and fulfilling much of the criteria for being a British film. However, the film's narrative takes place within the United States, and as such I cannot realistically compromise my own personal set of criteria.

Whilst it would be useful to be able to define my chosen films as categorically being contemporary British horror cinema, the inclusion of two older films prevents the use of this description. I could, realistically, have replaced *An American Werewolf in London* with a more contemporary werewolf narrative. Indeed, the constraints of my

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demonstrate aesthetic and narrative qualities that may suggest an element of separation from other films within the genre. His text is entirely free of the hyperbole that marked the journalistic advancing of the terminology. See David Church, *Post-Horror: Art, Horror and Cultural Elevation* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021).

[18] James Leggott, *Contemporary British Cinema* (London: Wallflower Press, 2008).

[19] *Deathline*, directed by Gary Sherman (American International Pictures, 1972), film.

word count did see me omit a chapter on *Outcast*,[20] a shape-shifting narrative that was released within a period roughly contemporaneous to most other films examined within this thesis (and I had produced a chapter on *Dog Soldiers*[21] that I ultimately felt lacked a strong enough line of argument to justify its inclusion). Similarly, I could have chosen to examine *Creep*[22] in isolation, rather than alongside *Death Line*.[23] However, I felt the two films complemented each other, offering as they do confirmation that the phenomenon of the non-place is one that persists through differing eras of the Underground transport system. I would argue that my spatial readings have not been previously applied to canonical films, such as *An American Werewolf in London*, and the inclusion of some older films is therefore entirely justifiable. I would perhaps concede that it may have been useful to include some other older examples in order to strike a temporal balance. However, there exists the possibility of applying my methodology to these cinematic texts in a post-thesis project.

Throughout my thesis, I will refer to an idea that is an overwhelmingly fundamental aspect of my methodology: the identification of cinematic texts that have an element of spatial tension and competition within their narratives. This need not necessarily be the explicit focus of the narrative arc, but there needs to be an element that is significant enough for me to make a close reading. It is my assertion that horror can best be defined as a representation of tension. Most often, tension within horror films takes the form of fear or disgust, but within my own readings this tension is spatial. By this, I mean the narrative should contain a situation where there is a competition to assert meaning onto space, and that competition can either occur between different protagonists or indeed between protagonists and an antagonistic space. It is always space itself that is central to both characterisation and narrative within my readings. Again, this analysis of the effect of space upon narrative and characterisation is surprisingly vacant from academia concerned with horror film. However, analyses of the importance of space upon human endeavours are most certainly found within the works of spatial theorists and human geographers. The second aspect of my methodology, therefore, is the identification of theoretical texts

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[20] *Outcast*, directed by Colm McCarthy (Bankside Films, 2010), film.
[21] *Dog Soldiers*, directed by Neil Marshall (Kismet Entertainment Group, 2002), film.
[22] *Creep*, directed by Christopher Smith (Pathé, 2004), film.
[23] *Death Line*, directed by Gary Sherman (Rank Film Distributors, 1972), film.

that allow me to build up a framework that can engage with my research questions and aims.

Chapter Overview

The following chapters are thematically divided into pairs, and those themes can be understood as such:

Chapters one and two explore narratives in which urban residents spend time within the rural, and the films explored within these chapters are predicated on their protagonists having spatial assumptions that are subverted to varying degrees.

Chapter one examines ideas of spatial expectations within *Sightseers*,[1] and particularly how those ideas are idealised versions of space that inevitably lead to disappointing existential encounters. I argue that the film's protagonists are escaping *from* the city as much as they are escaping *to* the country, precisely because of an inability to form satisfactory identities within the built environment.

Chapter two explores the ways in which spaces are figured as either exclusive or inclusive within *Eden Lake*.[2] My reading introduces the idea of existential insideness, and how the close-knit communities encountered within the rural have an inherent distrust of visitors to their communities. These encounters generate spatial tension through a sense of threat, and *Eden Lake* amplifies this pervading danger through the use of an isolating landscape.

Chapters three and four are centred on narratives that use the London Underground as their primary setting, and how the space has a pervadingly nullifying effect on the identities of people spending time within that space.

Chapter three centres on *Death Line*,[3] and how the space of the London Underground conforms to the idea of the non-place; a space in which the individual's expressions of identity are placed on hiatus because of the functional singularity that the space encourages. There is an innate tension in the idea that the individual spending increasing periods of time within the non-place will inevitably spend longer periods of time suppressing their identity, and eventually become a non-person.

Chapter four also examines the London Underground through a reading of *Creep*.[4] The film suggests a conflation between a person and the space(s) they

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[1] *Sightseers.* Ben Wheatley. Studio Canal, 2012. Film.
[2] *Eden Lake*, directed by James Watkins (Rollercoaster Films, 2008), Film.
[3] *Death Line*, directed by Gary Sherman (Rank Film Distributors, 1972), film.
[4] *Creep*, directed by Christopher Smith (Pathé, 2004), film.

occupy. The space in which the film's antagonist, Craig, lives is incapable of sustaining life, and as such it embodies ideas of abjection. Because of this, Craig is a similarly abject figure who must be avoided because of the threat his unhealthy body poses, and similarly the Underground is placed out of view of properly functioning society.

Chapters five and six explore the idea that the dystopian landscape is one in which expressions of identity are reduced, because the need to find security from a pervading threat takes precedence over the idea of reiterating cultural expressions of identity. Within such circumstances, the individual inevitably has an overwhelming urge to risk their safety in order to cling to ideas of pre-catastrophe domestic spaces in order to reaffirm their sense of personal identity.

Chapter five analyses *28 Days Later*,[5] and how the abandoned landscape offers few opportunities to invest space with meaning, and especially when the individual is reduced to the condition of merely surviving. Significant spatial tension arises when a landscape that is ordinarily filled with vibrant life and motion is rendered silent and still, and in such circumstances the individual finding themselves experiencing that landscape enters into a cultural stasis.

Chapter six continues the themes explored within chapter five, through an examination of *28 Weeks Later*.[6] The film suggests that within dystopian narratives, and especially ones characterised by a pervading threat, spaces are characterised purely in terms of their ability to facilitate survival. Because of this, the individual must be prepared to sever emotional and cultural ties to particular spaces, and abandon any space that becomes compromised. The film offers examples of individuals who fail to do so, as well as an example of an individual who survives precisely because they recognise the need to exercise an emotional detachment from important spaces.

Chapters seven and eight examine narratives in which significant spatial tension is elicited through the representation of communities that hold cultural beliefs that are parochial, due to elements of geographical isolation.

Chapter seven further interrogates the spatial tensions that are present within *An American Werewolf in London*,[7] and especially in the attitudes that both rural and

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[5] *28 Days Later*, directed by Danny Boyle (DNA Films, 2002), film.
[6] *28 Weeks Later*, directed by Juan Carlos Fresnadillo (DNA Films, 2007), film.
[7] *An American Werewolf in London*, directed by John Landis (Universal Pictures, 1981), film.

urban residents have when encountering the others' spaces. The rural is figured as a space that embodies temporal ideas that are viewed as being archaic, and at odds with the ideas of modernity found within the city. The film's protagonist, David, is presented as a figure that embodies a figure that has internalised an exaggerated version of the rural, through the werewolf's curse, and this internalisation is portrayed through a series of intense dreams which symbolise the absorption and emergence of David's lycanthropic other.

Finally, chapter eight explores *Calibre*,[8] and the pervading sense of dread and tension that is generated through the isolation of the film's primary protagonists. The film demonstrates how geographical isolation allows for a parochial cultural form to endure, and this is especially threatening when set against ideas of national law and order as practiced within wider ideas of society. These factors enable *Calibre* to be viewed as, to some degree, a Folk Horror narrative. Indeed, this chapter explores the inclusion of a pagan festival within the film, and whether this lends weight to the idea that the film belongs to that genre.

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[8] *Calibre*, directed by Matt Palmer (Wellington films, 2018), film.

Literature Review

A Brief History of space

At this point, it would be useful to discuss the spatial theories, and theoreticians that I intend to draw influence from within my readings of cinematic texts. The following paragraphs by no means constitute an exhaustive history of the development of spatial theory; rather, they reflect the particular elements of the field that I have found contain sufficient relevance to inform my own work.

Philosophical and Abstract Ideas of Space

The theorists found within this subdivision can be thought of as discussing *ideas* of space, space as a philosophical concept, rather than as a corporeal phenomenon.

Throughout this thesis I refer to the production of space. This is a term that is derived directly from Henri Lefebvre's book of the same name.[1] Lefebvre's seminal text sets forth the idea that space is 'produced,' insofar as it is invested with cultural meaning. Lefebvre argues that there is a disjunction between what he terms 'mental' space and 'real' space, providing a fundamental definition of the difference between the two spaces when he states 'it seems to be well established that physical space has no "reality" without the energy that is deployed within it'.[2] Physical space is geographical space that has not been subject to cognitive investment, and the energy that he discusses is, essentially, mental space expressed upon a physical canvas. Lefebvre's text, therefore, seeks to recognise the ways in which spaces are produced, and how both the produced spaces and the act of production itself are expressions of ideology. This idea, which is similarly expressed by other spatial theorists detailed within this literature review and throughout the following chapters, informs many of the arguments I set forth, and I have chosen to distinguish 'mental space' as cognitive space, and 'real' space as existential space throughout my own analyses.

At the core of Lefebvre's spatial concerns is his theoretical triad of spatial practice, representations of space and representational spaces.

- Spatial practice refers to the ways in which space is repeatedly produced, through routines and acts that confirm the 'reality' of a particular space.

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[1] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991).
[2] *Ibid*, 13.

- Representations of space are the codified versions of space that we find in maps, plans and models, and so forth.
- Representational space refers to the abstract level where space is produced and practiced.

Lefebvre's definitions of the varied types of space as he views them are instrumental in my own attempts to set some spatial definitions for my own readings of cinematic texts. Certainly, Lefebvre's idea of representational space is a category I have tried to understand and use within my own writing, describing it as 'cognitive' space, the internal space where ideas about space are formulated and held in place. However, there is significant difficulty in both understanding and applying Lefebvre's ideas within narrative analyses, given the deeply abstract nature of his writing (his work is largely conceptual, rather than being grounded in real-world application). I have therefore adapted certain of his ideas in a way that is, perhaps, simplistic in order to find applicable uses within my thesis.

As a Marxist thinker, it is clear to see that Lefebvre is concerned with how space, as a produced category, is subject to exploitation in much the same way that material capital is produced and exploited. Lefebvre suggests that as 'each mode of production has its own particular space, the shift from one mode to another must entail the production of a new space'.[3] So, the shift in emphasis from agrarian to industrial modes of production brought with it a shift from rural to urban modes of living. But, he argues, whilst both the spaces of agrarian and industrial production were produced by a workforce, that workforce did and do not manage those spaces. Lefebvre argues that those who possess the capital that facilitates the production of space utilise that power 'to organize social production'.[4] It is arguable that within our own contemporary political climate, where construction projects are outsourced to private companies and private investors, the collective majority have less ability to actively produce the spaces in which they live, work and perform leisure activities. Indeed, Lefebvre argues that 'today more than ever, the class struggle is inscribed in space'.[5] My own readings of cinematic texts demonstrate the ways in which the narrative spaces examined are subject to competitions of power.

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[3] *Ibid*, 46.
[4] *Ibid,* 48.
[5] *Ibid*, 55.

Whilst Lefebvre's text, offering as it does the idea of space as a production, has proven to be a profoundly valuable theoretical framework, the text that has resonated most deeply with my own spatial interests has been Edward Relph's *Place and Placelessness*.[6] Relph's writing explores the meaning of the concept of place, with an understanding that places are 'an integration of elements of nature and culture'.[7] This correlates with my own ideas about the distinction between space and place, with space essentially being unaffected geographical data, until it is invested with cultural meaning and transformed (both cognitively and existentially) into place. Relph catalogues an extensive range of spaces and places we might experience in both the natural and built environments, including (amongst others) primitive space, perceptual space and existential space. These distinctions are categorised by Relph in terms of how consciously people utilise these spatial stances, and how these concepts influence the individual's engagement with physical space. So primitive space is 'the space of instinctive behaviour and unselfconscious action in which we always act and move without reflection'; perceptual space is 'the egocentric space perceived and confronted by each individual'; existential space is 'the inner structure of space as it appears to us in our concrete experiences of the world as members of a cultural group'.[8] These definitions have become important for my own understandings of space and place, and I have attempted to utilise these concepts within my own readings of cinematic texts; I have directly adopted Relph's concept of existential space to describe the immediate experience of space encountered by our physical senses.

Key to Relph's understanding of place is his assertion that there are very different types of engagement with place, which can be loosely defined as 'insideness'[9] and 'outsideness'.[10] In a general sense, Relph describes the condition of insideness as such: 'to be inside a place is to belong to it and to identify with it, and the more profoundly inside you are the stronger is this identity with the place'.[11] He makes a series of complex distinctions that describe the levels of engagement, or lack thereof, with place. For example, he describes 'existential insideness' as the condition of 'knowing implicitly that *this* place is where you belong – in all other places we are

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[6] Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion, 1976).
[7] *Ibid*, 3.
[8] *Ibid,* 8.
[9] *Ibid, 55.*
[10] *Ibid.*
[11] *Ibid*, 49.

existential outsiders no matter how open we are to their symbols and significances'.[12] In complete contrast to existential insideness, which is arguably the most profound connection an individual can have with a place, Relph describes existential outsideness as being the condition in which 'all places assume the same meaningless identity and are distinguishable only by their superficial qualities'.[13]

This last attitude towards place is an increasingly prevalent one, because of a spatial condition which Relph describes as 'placelessness'. This is essentially a 'weakening of the identity of places to the point where they not only look alike but feel alike and offer the same bland possibilities for experience'.[14] Relph argues that placelessness occurs when places lose their authenticity, through a variety of processes that include 'mass communications, mass culture, big business, powerful central authority, and the economic system which embraces all these'.[15] Essentially, difference is viewed only in terms of its commodification, and any marker of identity that proves to be attractive will be reproduced nationally and globally, so that more and more places look alike.

Relph's assertion that urban centres are demonstrating increased levels of sameness was explored further by the French anthropologist Marc Augé, in what has come to be regarded as his defining text: *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthology of Supermodernity.*[16] Augé shares many of the same concerns as Relph, in believing that space (and particularly the urbanised space of the postmodern city) has become homogenised, and that an increasingly globalised spatial commonality has created an absorption and recapitulation of 'exotic' elements that lose their authenticity once they are reproduced in spaces of consumption around the world. The same is true of specific spatial histories and identities, as he argues that 'supermodernity…makes the old (history) into a specific spectacle, as it does with all exoticism and all local particularity'.[17]

Where Relph is largely concerned with the concept of placelessness (a pervading sameness found within spaces of consumption and habitation), Augé's most

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[12] *Ibid,* 55.
[13] *Ibid*, 51.
[14] *Ibid*, 90.
[15] *Ibid*, 90.
[16] Marc Augé, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthology of Supermodernity* (London: Verso, 1995).
[17] *Ibid*, 89.

incisive concept is that of the non-place. Augé posits the idea that our own era (or at least the era in which he wrote his text) can be described as supermodernity and that 'supermodernity…naturally finds its full expression in non-places'.[18] These non-places are spaces that are not created in relation to a historical identity, meaning they are largely devoid of significance and unconcerned with identity. The kinds of spaces we might recognise as being non-places include transitory spaces, such as train stations and airports, but also supermarkets and even motorways. These spaces are usually entirely functional, and they encourage a peculiar paradox insofar as they often require an overt proof of individual identity upon entering the non-place (showing your tickets at an airport; the use of a credit card in shopping centres), but then allow the user to enjoy an anonymity once entrance has been negotiated.

Within these non-places, Augé suggests that 'everything proceeds as if space had been trapped by time, as if there were no history other than the last forty-eight hours of news'.[19] This statement bears testimony to the fact that within airports, supermarkets and even within the vehicles in which we travel from place to place (assuming that the vehicle and the routes we take conform to the model of non-place), we are given only an immediate sense of the present moment. We may read the day's papers, or listen to the radio reporting news stories from that day, but the non-places themselves do not convey any sense of an identity that is dependent upon history (in most cases; certainly older railway stations do at least bear architectural evidence of an identifiable past). This, Augé argues, is because the non-place actively encourages non-attachment; these spaces are designed to be transitory and, like hotel rooms, they are symbolically recreated every day for a new batch of participants. What is potentially most alarming about the increased existence of, and exposure to, such non-places is the effect they might have upon the identities of people spending significant periods of time within them; whether such exposure might subdue elements of personal expression and individuality, and in a sense create non-people.

As is the case with Lefebvre, Augé's writing is markedly abstract, despite finding reference points within specific spaces. Additionally, the concept of non-place is very specific 20th century urban structures, and is therefore not readily applicable to narratives that have at their core rural locales. However, as two of my narratives take

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[18] *Ibid*, 88.
[19] *Ibid, 84.*

place almost entirely within train stations, the concept of non-place has proven to be a useful addition to my theoretical framework.

Space is, very often, conflated with time and both are used as a means of measuring the other. For example, we might suggest the passage of time via the travelling of physical distance ('it takes a couple of hours to get there'). Predictably, the advent of the mechanical age saw a prioritisation of time, as industry and capital became dependent upon the notion that time is money, and that production is a temporally quantifiable commodity. Doreen Massey, in *For Space*,[20] contested the ways in which space is viewed as being in service to ideas of time.

Fundamental to Massey's conception of space is the challenging of the idea that space is homogeneous, and that the multitudes of space we recognise across the world can be understood via a linear notion of progress. To exemplify this, she talks about how the discovery of the Americas was seen as the discovery (by white Europeans) of a culture, or indeed several cultures, that was further back in a linear, temporal race for technological and cultural progress. The clear problem with this view, Massey argues, is that it treats space as an embodiment of the temporal, progressing in a uniform, Western-orientated manner, rather than treating other spaces as being culturally different from each other in relevant ways. So, whilst time and space become conflated in this linear model, Massey argues that 'it seems in general to be perceived that space is somehow a lesser dimension than time: one with less gravitas and magnificence'.[21]

To continue to think of space in such restrictive, temporal ways allows Western culture, in particular, to continue to imagine other cultures as being spatially, temporally and therefore culturally 'lagging' and essentially inferior. Massey argues that to decentre the primacy of European history is to 'move away from the imagination of space as a continuous surface that the coloniser, as the only active agent, crosses to find the to-be-colonised simply "there".[22] In tracing back this attitude of favouring the temporal, Massey argues that Henri Bergson's assertion that time 'cannot be broken up into discrete instants' has a negative effect on space, as it becomes the opposite to this fluid conception of temporality; static and knowable Once space is viewed as

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[20] Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage, 2005).
[21] *Ibid*, 29.
[22] *Ibid*, 63.

being more than a frozen slice of time, we can then recognise it as a representation of coexisting diversity.

Massey suggests that there is a 'dichotomy between space and time, within which the language of space is reserved for the essentially immobile'.[23] But space is far from immobile; as the product of social interactions, space is in a constant state of flux, reflecting the changes in cultural attitudes of the societies that produce it. Part of the problem is the idea that space is unchanging; that it can be mapped out, and be reduced to the purely geographical. Massey states as much when she argues that there has been a tendency to view 'time as (being) interior, as a product of (human) experience, in contrast to space as material *in opposition to* time's incorporeality: it is the landscape outside the window, the surface of the earth, a given'.[24]

Human Geography

Whilst the sources detailed above are overtly theoretical and grounded in space as a philosophical concept, there are other works that locate spatial examinations in more specific and corporeal bases. Within such texts, there emerges both a dichotomy between rural and urban space, and a clear preoccupation with the latter. In *Space, the City and social Theory*,[25] Fran Tonkiss is concerned with the ways in which space is organised within the city, and the way in which the space of the city 'both provides the basis for social relations, and offers a reflection of them'.[26] Key to her understanding of life within an urban centre are the psychological stresses that result from living in such close proximity to large numbers of other people, demonstrated through the statement of 'being in the crowded city magnifies the contradiction between the collective nature of social life and the radical solitude of the individual, between the claims of the group and that of the person'.[27] Whilst it is tempting, Tonkiss argues, to view individual isolation as an act of rejecting the collective nature of city living, it is in fact a necessary means of maintaining psychological wellbeing in such a heavily populated arrangement.

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[23] *Ibid*, 45.
[24] *Ibid*, 117.
[25] Fran Tonkiss, *Space, the City and Social Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015).
[26] *Ibid,* 2.
[27] *Ibid*, 11.

An aspect of the large-scale collective living found within the city is the idea of community; a term perhaps more commonly thought of as being relatable to smaller settlements. Tonkiss discusses how community is not necessarily an always positive ideal, stating that it can often engender a 'compulsory familiarity'[28] and a 'retreat to familiarity and intimacy as the safest place to be'.[29] Implicit in this statement is the idea that community, whilst being theoretically inclusive, can become an ideological tool of exclusion. This is evidenced in the way that urban planners 'striate the city by income group,'[30] leading to the potential for the idea of community to take on ideas of prestige and derision, depending on which postcode your income can afford you. Such economic segregation 'produce(s) and reproduce(s) difference in ways which are marked in space,'[31] especially where economically prestigious communities overtly demonstrate their relative financial comfort and, in the most extreme circumstance, see their communities become gated.

Such a 'retreat to familiarity' is detrimental to a wider, collective urban identity. Tonkiss suggests that where financially solvent residents opt for 'private schools over local state schools, private health and support over local services, private leisure over municipal clubs and facilities,' there is a corresponding effect upon collective services, wherein 'schools "fail," services cut back or close, amenities degrade or disappear'.[32] By opting to use private facilities, even eschewing state education and health facilities, those groups with access to an excess of wealth are able to exert an influence upon space, in both an abstract (economic) sense, and an actual (physical) way.

A philosophical preoccupation with urban space is understandable, given that most people within the Western world were living in towns and cities by the latter half of the twentieth century. However, the rural has by no means escaped the same critical examination that its concrete counterpart has experienced. Michael Woods' *Rural*[33] offers a history of the concept of rural space in opposition to urban space, examining the ways in which the two terms gained their definitions, and how the two spaces began to become increasingly divergent. Woods is concerned with how the space of

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[28] *Ibid*, 25.
[29] *Ibid*, 26.
[30] *Ibid*, 21.
[31] *Ibid*, 32.
[32] *Ibid*, 55.
[33] Michael Woods, *rural* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011).

the rural is subject to commodification, and has become constructed as a model of fantasy in counterpoint to the urban; essentially being 'endowed with symbolic importance as a signifier of national identity, or as the counterpoint to modernity'.[34]

Key to Woods' claims about the symbolic identity of the rural is the notion that many urban residents have 'impressions of the rural (that) are received through the media rather than through direct experience of rural areas,' leading to a 'stylized and exaggerated version of the rural that is detached from the everyday material experience of rural life'.[35] Clearly, this means that any experiences urban residents have of actual rural spaces can often fail to meet these idealised expectations. However, Woods does point out that the mediated, televisual versions of the rural (which often conflate spatial and temporal idealism) have become somewhat subject to museumisation, wherein the filming locations have been confused with the representations, meaning 'the actual landscape has been modified to incorporate elements of the fictional setting'.[36] This acknowledges the importance that the symbolic images of the rural have for urban residents, and demonstrates the ways in which those images are offered to countryside visitors.

Woods' book demonstrates how there is a profound longing for the rural, on the part of those living within cities. However, this is (again) not necessarily predicated on any truly reflective experiences of rural space, but rather on symbolic ideas about the rural. This longing for the rural can be expressed through the ruralisation of urban space, which is an 'incorporation of rural landscape features into the urban built environment,' and is 'usually informed by a moral geography that contrast(s) the purity and orderliness of the countryside with the chaos and degeneration of the city'.[37] This conscious adopting of rural iconography is apparent in other expressions within the urban, such as farmhouse kitchens, fashion choices that hint at countryside practises (wax jackets, etc) and even vehicle choices (SUVs). Woods suggests that the adopting of such ruralised items hints at 'aspirations towards a rural lifestyle, or at least by a desire to advertise that the owner can transgress the urban-rural divide by escaping to the country for recreation'.[38] So whilst the majority of people live within the city, the

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[34] *Ibid*, 1.
[35] *Ibid*, 32.
[36] *Ibid*, 37.
[37] *Ibid*, 44.
[38] *Ibid*, 45.

rural is viewed in contradiction to that space's flux, and offers both an actual retreat from the urban, as well as the prestige of *seeming* to be able to afford a retreat from the urban.

Whilst Woods' text does briefly comment upon televisual and cinematic versions of the rural, the other spatial sources detailed above are geographical and sociological in nature, and do not therefore offer examinations of filmic space. Whilst this is, perhaps, outside of the remit of these sources, it means I have extrapolated the theories found within each text onto my own 'spatial theory' framework and applied them in ways that deviate form their intended purpose, ensuring my narrative readings have a sense of originality.

Landscape

As discussed within my introduction, landscape is a concept that arises often where space is discussed across a range of critical frameworks. Whilst the chapters contained within this thesis do not engage in detailed examinations of landscape, they do acknowledge the term and the concepts it denotes. What follows is a brief acknowledgement of some of the landscape sources that have informed my understanding of spatial theory.

John Wylie examines the concept of landscape via a deconstruction of our understanding of the term. Key to Wylie's assertions about landscape is an idea that is reminiscent of other key spatial theorists, such as Henri Lefebvre and Edward Relph, inasmuch as Wylie views the *idea* of landscape as being produced, in much the same way that other spatial categories are constructed. Essentially, the geographical reality of any given landscape (this view contains a hill, a forest and a river) is objective, but any cultural values proffered upon that landscape are subjective. For example, certain geographical features may be viewed as being either aesthetically pleasing or pragmatically advantageous in terms of habitation. The assigning of value to landscape is both influenced by the cultural values of the viewer, and informs those cultural values in a spatial exchange, expressed by Wylie as such: 'what we witness when we examine landscape is a process of continual interaction in which nature and culture both shape and are shaped by each other'.[39]

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[39] John Wylie, *Landscape* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), 9.

Much of Wylie's writing about landscape is centred on representations of landscape within art. This is entirely relevant to film studies, given that cinematic landscapes are essentially subject to framing devices. Any given landscape is part of a spatial continuum, and yet a specific section of an available set of visual information is framed and given the label of landscape. In its simplest terms, this happens on a personal level, where an individual will momentarily 'freeze' a geographical scene and make an aesthetic decision regarding its completion (its 'frame'). In terms of art (including cinema), this decision results in a vista that is presented to a viewer. Because the framed landscape is the result of a subjective presentation, we are offered the artist or director's 'vision *and* the visible landscape imprinted on each other,'[40] meaning we are simultaneously viewing objective geographical information that is subjectively presented within a frame.

Martin Lefebvre further examines the idea of the framed landscape within the introduction to *Landscape and Film*.[41] Lefebvre suggests that landscape is the result of mental activity and, like Wylie above, suggests that 'nature is what we usually conceive of as existing independently from us, whereas it is our (real and imaginary) interaction with nature and the environment that produces the landscape'.[42] This 'real and imaginary' interaction with objective geographical data is the act of framing, and there is an inherent sense of distance in this act. The observer cannot be inside the landscape in order to frame it; rather, they must be able to view a scene from afar in order to take in its totality before exercising the act of framing. This practice of visually containing an environment is, Lefebvre argues, 'reproduced… by looking through the camera's *viewfinder*. The term itself betrays the process involved: that of finding a view by creating or shaping it through the framing'.[43]

For my own purposes, I am interested in how the presented frame can visually express narrative information, and this is an idea that is examined within the introduction to Graham Harper and Jonathan Rayner's *Cinema and Landscape: Film, Nation and Cultural Geography: Film, Nation and Cultural Geography.*[44] Specific sets

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[40] *Ibid*, 3.
[41] Martin Lefebvre. *Landscape and Film* (London: Routledge, 2006).
[42] *Ibid,* xv.
[43] *Ibid.*
[44] Graham Harper and Jonathan Rayner, *Cinema and Landscape : Film, Nation and Cultural Geography: Film, Nation and Cultural Geography* (Bristol: Intellect, 2010).

of visual information may evoke emotional or cultural ideas; vistas of natural beauty may be designed to elicit feelings of awe and pleasure, whilst a landscape of untamed geographical information may relay the idea that this location is geographically and culturally distanced from ideas of civilisation. This is because 'the majority of film is metonymic in nature, and is based on an identifiable range of designations'.[45] Within my own chapters, I suggest that particular images immediately suggest narrative information; for example, an abandoned cityscape inherently evokes ideas of catastrophe and unrest, and having a singular figure within such a frame signifies isolation and despair.

Most of the 'spatial' texts discussed above are unconcerned with cinematic space, and I am therefore setting forth an original contribution to knowledge in the way in which I apply these theoretical frameworks to the reading of cinematic narratives. As discussed within my introduction, there *are* examples of the application of theories of space within film studies, but not to the same degree, or analytical extent that this thesis intends.

Defining Horror

The fundamental question that my research intends to answer is that of 'how does spatial theory intersect with horror cinema?' The main body of this thesis will answer this question through the textual analysis of films from within the genre. Two questions related to this primary inquiry are 'why horror?' and 'what is horror?' I have addressed the first of these two questions earlier within this introduction, when I argued that horror cinema has always demonstrated a profound engagement with space, with many individual films utilising their *mise en scéne* as antagonistic devices that help to create the necessary exaggerated tensions that (for me) characterise horror narratives. And yet there have been no sustained studies of the importance of space within the genre; an imbalance this thesis intends to address.

The second question is problematically subjective, and whilst I have discussed how, for my own personal understanding of the genre, I have defined horror as a particular representation of a set of tensions, any definition is entirely contestable.

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[45] *Ibid*, 20.

What follows, then, is a review of texts that have informed both my understanding of what horror is (and is not), and which qualities help to define a film as being British.

Noel Carroll's *The Philosophy of Horror*[46] is, as its name suggests, philosophical in nature and has the intention of examining the reasons why people are attracted to horror narratives within both literature and film. Carroll makes it clear from the start of his enquiry that his hypotheses will not be informed by psychoanalysis, but rather he is concerned with theories of affect. Carroll suggests that the horror genre produces two fundamental paradoxes: '1) how can anyone be frightened by what they know does not exist, and 2) why would anyone ever be interested in horror, since being horrified is so unpleasant?'[47] The bulk of his analyses attempt to answer these two questions. Carroll also makes the assertion that he is concerned only with narratives in which the sense of horror is inspired by a monstrous figure; therefore, he is unconcerned with narratives that are centred upon an entirely human antagonist. This, I believe, excludes a wealth of potential narratives for analysis, as does his desire to avoid psychoanalytic readings. However, Carroll does carefully distinguish horrific narratives featuring monsters from other narratives that may have monstrous elements, when he argues that 'what appears to demarcate the horror story from mere stories with monsters, such as myths, is the attitude of characters in the story to the monsters they encounter'.[48] The horror narrative *must* elicit a particular affect. My own narrative analyses do include some traditionally monstrous figures (the zombie and the werewolf), but also focus upon variations on monstrous humanity (serial killers and murderous communities), and so I have adapted some of Carroll's assertions to suit my own purposes.

Within his text, Carroll describes the emotional responses to the horror narrative as 'art-horror,' clearly defining the term as a reaction to fictional situations (works of art), and he suggests that art-horror is comprised of a range of emotional responses, such as fear and disgust. The fact that monsters are 'un-natural relative to a culture's conceptual scheme of nature' means they are 'not only physically threatening; they

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[46] Noel Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror* (London: Routledge, 1990).
[47] *Ibid*, 8.
[48] *Ibid*, 16.

are cognitively threatening'.[49] Monsters exist outside of a culture's schemata, and thus they are culturally challenging, as well as disgusting on a purely abject level.

Carroll theorises that two important elements of composition for horror's monsters are fusion and fission. He argues that fusion 'often entails the construction of creatures that transgress categorical distinctions such as inside/outside, living/dead, insect/human, flesh/machine, and so on'.[50] On the other hand, fission entails 'contradictory elements (that) are distributed over *different*, though metaphysically related, identities'.[51] So fusion describes a monster that embodies dualistic qualities; zombies would fit into this category, as they are (in many of their iterations) medically dead, yet animated, functioning creatures. With fission, the monstrous character embodies qualities that are 'split or broken or distributed over time'.[52] So, the werewolf would fit into this category. Whilst it is tempting, Carroll would argue, to define the werewolf as a fusion of man and wolf, the fact is that the two states of being do not exist simultaneously; rather, they occupy the body at separate moments. Another way of thinking about fission is to think of a character as having disparate elements that are 'distributed over *different*, though metaphysically related, identities';[53] the *doppelganger* is an example of this sort of fission.

Whilst Carroll's text is justifiably venerated within horror academia, the limitations he sets for his own analyses make his text, for me, incomplete. However, the analyses he does offer are extremely insightful and I am interested in exploring ways in which I can reconfigure these analyses to serve my own spatial interests, inasmuch as spaces can be defined as embodying ideas of fusion, fission and monstrosity.

The importance of Carroll's text is demonstrated by the volume of its citations within studies of horror cinema, and the same is true of Barbara Creed's *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis.*[54] Creed's text examines a number of feminine archetypes within film, and specifically the horror genre. Creed's analyses borrow much from Julia Kristeva's work on abjection, and how abjection is

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[49] *Ibid*, 34.
[50] *Ibid*, 43.
[51] *Ibid*, 46.
[52] *Ibid.*
[53] *Ibid.*
[54] Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis* (London: Routledge, 1993).

ascribed to figures (often feminine) within horror as a means of Othering them. Creed describes this idea of abjection as being a 'means of separating out the human from the non-human and the fully constituted subject from the partially formed subject'.[55]

Noel Carroll talks about the horror narrative as a means of confronting the monstrous, in order to expunge the fear of it, and in a similar way Creed talks about cultural rituals as a means of confronting the abject; as a way in which the 'demarcation lines between the human and non-human are drawn up anew and presumably made all the stronger for that process'.[56] Within Creed's analysis, the abject figure *must* be confronted precisely because it exists on the other side of a border that fascinates the human subject, yet simultaneously threatens its stability. One of the ways in which the fully formed subject protects its vitality is through the expulsion of waste materials (blood, urine, faeces). Creed argues that the 'body ejects these substances, at the same time extricating itself from them and from the place where they fall, so that it might continue to live'.[57] This idea of spaces that embody abject elements is fascinating, and I am interested in identifying abject spaces within the set of films I am analysing. It is entirely possible to transpose Creed's (and obviously Kristeva's) conception of the abject body onto a spatial framework. So, where the abject body fails to separate out the non-human from the human, the waste material from the vital, the abject space is one in which the non-human (especially figures that threaten the human's continued functionality) and undesirable materials exist. It follows that individuals and groups existing within abject spaces are inherently conferred upon them an abject status, and this is an idea I have explored throughout my thesis.

One such space is the place where corpses are to be found. The space of the graveyard is an often-used setting within gothic narratives, but we might also consider any space that is infested by the dead (in any of the un/dead forms; the vampire and, especially, the zombie) as being abject spaces precisely because of the presence of the corpse, or the creature existing in a state between the healthy body and the corpse. If, as Creed suggests, the 'concept of a border is central to the construction of the monstrous in the horror film,' and 'that which crosses or threatens to cross the "border" is abject,'[58] then the corpse represents the ultimate border crossing of death. The

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[55] *Ibid*, 8.
[56] *Ibid.*
[57] *Ibid*, 9.
[58] *Ibid*, 10.

return of the corpse after death, or at least entering a state that exists between life and death, is representative of the body as imperfectly formed, subjectively. To destroy the threat of the imperfectly constructed subject, then, is to attempt to preserve the equilibrium that the fully formed subject requires to exist.

The concept of the abject is key to many examinations of the horror film, and particularly narratives that centre on the body. One other theory that finds its way into many textual analyses is that of the Uncanny, most often attributed to Sigmund Freud's essay of that name.[59] Whilst the concept is entirely useful in its existing form, it has been re-examined and refined by the cultural theorist Mark Fisher, in his book *The Weird and the Eerie.*[60] Fisher's text examines what he perceives to be two of the subtler modes of affect that are to be found within a variety of fictions, including horror, but which can also be described as being at play within wider cultural examples. These modes are described as the weird and the eerie, and Fisher summarises his thoughts on them when he says that 'what the weird and the eerie have in common is a preoccupation with the strange. The strange – not the horrific'.[61] So, Fisher immediately suggests that the weird and the eerie are affects that are more subtle and complex than the merely horrific. Fisher describes the weird and the eerie in relation to their closest analogue; Freud's concept of the Uncanny. Fisher, like other critics, points out that the phrase in Freud's original text, *unheimlich*, is more correctly translated as unhomely, and this fundamental misunderstanding of the term significantly embodies how the essay itself has been, in Fisher's view, misunderstood.

Fisher argues that the concept of the uncanny has been (mis)understood to essentially contain both the weird and the eerie, amongst other subtle modes of affect. Fisher suggests that Freud's '*unheimlich* is about the strange *within* the familiar, the strangely familiar, the familiar as strange – about the way in which the domestic world does not coincide with itself'. Essentially, he argues, the uncanny 'operates by always processing the outside through the gaps and impasses of the inside. The weird and the eerie make the opposite move: they allow us to see the inside from the perspective of the outside'.[62] This is a useful distinction when applied to the filmic image, given the

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[59] Sigmund Freud, 'Das Unheimlich,' *Imago* no.5 (1919).
[60] Mark Fisher, *The Weird and the Eerie* (London: Repeater Books, 2016).
[61] *Ibid*, 8.
[62] *Ibid*, 10.

inherent distance and detachment on the part of the viewer, who is always (if unconsciously) 'outside'.

Apart from disentangling the weird and the eerie from the uncanny, Fisher inevitably details the differences between the weird and the eerie. One of the key differences he asserts is that the 'weird is constituted by a presence – the presence of *that which does not belong*'. By contrast, he argues that the eerie is 'constituted by a *failure of absence* or by a *failure of presence*. The sensation of the eerie occurs either when there is something present where there should be nothing, or if there is nothing present where there should be something'.[63] Even this brief distinction between the two affects highlights how complex they are, and how inappropriate it is to simply 'fold' them into the concept of the *unheimlich*.

The subtleties of Fisher's concepts make them useful in supporting analyses of a range of horror films, and particularly those that could be described as Folk Horror, given there is a pervading sense of unease within these narratives. Indeed, Fisher himself utilises readings of the work of the writers Alan Garner and Nigel Kneale, both of whom have produced work that has been retroactively defined as belonging to the sub-genre. I am interested in Fisher's use of the weird and the eerie in relation to landscapes, and will therefore refer to his text whenever a landscape might otherwise be described as simply being uncanny.

Much of Fisher's work was concerned with the cinematic and televisual style that has retrospectively come to be grouped under the sub-genre of Folk Horror. The term is still relatively formative, in comparison to other more well-defined horror sub-genre definitions, such as the Gothic and the Slasher movie. By far, the most concerted attempt at investing the term with some definition has been made by Adam Scovell, in his book *Folk Horror: Hours Dreadful and Things Strange.*[64] The term Folk Horror itself was introduced to the wider consciousness by actor/writer Mark Gatiss, during his BBC Four three-part documentary *A History of Horror* from 2010.[65] The term has gained much cultural capital within the horror community, with entire conferences being devoted to the subject. And yet, the label has not been convincingly defined, and remains somewhat mercurial. This is precisely why Scovell's book is so important; it

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[63] *Ibid*, 61.
[64] Adam Scovell, *Folk Horror: Hours Dreadful and Things Strange* (Leighton Buzzard: Auteur, 2017).
[65] *A History of Horror*, BBC Four, October 18th, 2010, Television Broadcast.

seeks to define the narrative qualities that ensure a film (or TV show, or even other cultural expressions) might be described as folk horror.

Scovell argues that within Folk Horror 'the landscape must in some way isolate a key body of characters, whether it be just a handful of individuals or a small-scale community'.[66] It is true that many examples of folk horror are period pieces; for example, two of the 'unholy trinity' of Folk Horror films (*Witchfinder General*[67] *and The Blood on Satan's Claw*[68]) are set in the Seventeenth century. Within this time period, there is a more pronounced sense of distance (both physical and cultural) between the town and the village, meaning a sense of isolation is more easily achieved. However, there are examples of Folk Horror narratives with contemporary settings, where the sense of difference between the urban and the rural is retained, allowing for physical and cultural isolation. A key idea of Folk Horror is the notion that rural spaces in some way embody cultural practices that are entirely at odds with modernity's ideas of rational, scientific thinking. So, the protagonists within Folk Horror films will often find themselves isolated physically from the urban, but also isolated culturally from the ideas that are prevalent within the urban. Whilst Scovell's argument is useful in identifying a spatial tension within Folk Horror films, I further expand this view in applying ideas drawn from my theorists in explaining precisely *why* these tensions are present.

The folk of Folk Horror refers to the fact that the films will, more often than not, make use of elements that could loosely be termed folkloric. These folk practices are usually portrayed as surviving not out of necessity, but as very definite cultural choices that serve to separate the communities practising them from the communities relying upon science and rational thought that are found within towns and cities. Scovell argues that the use of such antiquated practices is supposed 'to imbue a sense of the arcane for eerie, uncanny or horrific purposes'.[69] Because of this continued practising of arcane rites, there is a dualistic resisting of the qualities of modernity on the part of rural folk, and attempts to repress the past by the urban visitors to the rural locales, who are appalled by these rites. The resulting cultural conflict is intrinsically a spatial tension. Whilst some commentators on Folk Horror have used Scovell's paradigm as

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[66] *Ibid*, 17.
[67] *Witchfinder General*, directed by Michael Reeves (Tigon Pictures, 1968), film.
[68] *The Blood on Satan's Claw*, directed by Piers Haggard (Tigon Pictures, 1971), film.
[69] *Ibid,* 7.

a de facto explication, others have chosen to stretch the definition of what does and does not constitute Folk Horror. In my opinion, these commentators often miss the point (and certainly stray too far from Scovell's own suggestions); any film taking place within a rural setting, with a narrative that contains some form of spatial tension, is often (in my estimation) incorrectly assumed to be Folk Horror. This is a trend that I intend to address and refute, and indeed I explore the generic makeup of the Folk Horror film within my analyses of *Eden Lake*[70] and *Calibre*.[71]

As I have argued, there is a lack of scholarship that directly examines horror cinema's engagement with space, and therefore it is entirely justifiable for my own examinations to readdress older, canonical cinematic examples utilising a spatial viewpoint. However, I am keen to largely locate my own examinations within contemporary horror cinema. Part of this rationale is the fact that the horror genre is undeniably rejuvenated; this is certainly why writers such as the previously mentioned Steve Rose have coined the term 'post-horror'. One text that examines this revivification of the genre is Johnny Walker's *Contemporary British Horror Cinema*.[72] Walker's text fundamentally challenges the tendency, within academia and beyond, to repeatedly valorise horror cinema's past, whilst simultaneously failing to recognise the worth of horror cinema's present output, claiming that 'twenty-first century horror films are repeatedly dismissed as being inferior to those that preceded them'.[73] In seeking to explain the relative lack of British horror films produced within the 1980s and 90s, Walker points to the 'video nasty' panic of 1984, which saw new classification rules effectively limiting the right to buy and loan films that were now deemed to be too traumatic for public viewing. The commercial viability of horror cinema, within Britain, was clearly impacted by the potential difficulties in receiving classification for any horror films released.

The moral panic that plagued the release of horror films within the UK during the 1980s was, Walker argues, 'given new life' after the murder of toddler James Bulger in 1993. The two children who murdered James reportedly cited *Child's Play 3* as being influential on their actions; a claim that was refuted by several psychiatrists and teachers involved with the case. Again, this demonization of the genre had

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[70] *Eden Lake*, directed by James Watkins (Rollercoaster Films, 2008), film.
[71] *Calibre*, directed by Matt Palmer (Wellington Films, 2018), film.
[72] Johnny Walker, *Contemporary British Horror Cinema* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016).
[73] *Ibid*, 7.

industrial effects upon its creation and reception within the UK. As the 90s drew to a close, though, the British film industry found itself rejuvenated, and this included the production of British horror films. Walker credits much of this rejuvenation to 'a boom in cheap digital filmmaking technologies, which prompted the production and distribution of micro-budget genre films'.[74] Coupled with the changing nature of production was a tendency to ascribe fluidity to the genre that may have been missing during the 1980s and 90s; as Walker states, 'one of the most striking things about British horror cinema after the year 2000 was, on many levels, its variedness'. This idea of what is and is not horror is a hugely contentious question within film studies and it is important, within my own project, to attempt to set some personal definitions. I would agree that the genre is far more fluid than previously thought, and any definitions should avoid the use of aesthetic checklists, and any set of generic clichés. Walker would seem to agree, when he states 'it would be rather limiting to view recent British horror films solely in light of Gothic literary antecedents'.[75] This acknowledges, in a sense, the problems with Noel Carroll's analysis of the genre, relying as it does upon ideas of monstrosity. There persists an idea that horror should necessarily contain some supernatural elements. This view, in my opinion, denies the inclusion of a wealth of films that might otherwise be thought to belong to other genres entirely.

One of the necessary aims of my project is to justify the reasons that I have chosen to limit my textual analyses to British films, and to define precisely what I consider to be a British film (in this case a British horror film; the issue of what is and is not a horror film will also require some discussion and justification). James Leggott's *Contemporary British Cinema*[76] is invaluable in its examination of the evolution of the British film industry, offering very valid reasons why a film may or may not be considered to be British. Leggott's undertaking is considerable, and by no means uncomplicated; as he states, 'a national cinema is as problematic to define as a national identity, and...the link between the two is far from straightforward'.[77] Here, Leggott has clearly defined two strands to the consideration of cinematic Britishness; the industrial and the cultural.

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[74] *Ibid*, 14.
[75] *Ibid*, 5.
[76] James Leggott, *Contemporary British Cinema* (London: Wallflower Press, 2008).
[77] *Ibid*, 1.

In terms of the industrial Britishness surrounding a film, Leggott states that the Films Act of 1985 stipulated that a film wishing to be defined as British 'had to employ a labour force largely made up of UK citizens and the film had to be made by a company registered in the UK'. However, in 2007, films became subject to the 'government's Cultural Test,' which established the four quantifiable categories of 'cultural content, cultural contribution, cultural hubs and cultural practitioners'.[78] So, for a film to be considered British (in industrial terms), it should contain a 'UK setting, British lead characters (and) British subject material'. This viewpoint has informed, to some extent, my own estimations of what is and is not a British film, and my own cinematic choices are films that are made in Britain and concerned with British spaces. Speaking specifically about the British horror film, Leggott suggests that a 'tendency towards high-profile sequels and remakes was emblematic of a reflective turn in the wider culture, offering a space for some kind of interrogation of Britishness past and present…(that) also spoke of a lazy attempt to revive former glories'.[79] This, he suggests, could go some way to explaining the 'relative lack of attention given, for example, to the rebirth of the British horror cinema in the 2000s'.[80] However, within the period of British cinema's rejuvenation, Leggott suggests that a cultural trend towards cinematic realism 'resulted in some horror films with a 'naturalistic edge that therefore have some claim to being markedly British in attitude'.[81] Certainly, the films that my thesis examines are largely realist in terms of their tonality; whilst a film such as *28 Days Later* may introduce an entirely fictional threat, the idea of a virus infecting the country's population is not implausible. Essentially, my own cinematic choices avoid the supernatural and gothic, where possible.

I would like to highlight some miscellaneous sources that have proven to be useful throughout my thesis. As more than half of my chapters are concerned with films that are wholly, or at least significantly, concerned with London, Charlotte Brunsdon's book *London in Cinema*[82] as proven to be insightful in its examination of the ways in which London is symbolically represented on screen through the use of its highly recognisable landmarks, but how these icons present a distant version of London, in

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[78] *Ibid*, 8.
[79] *Ibidi*, 6.
[80] *Ibid*, 13.
[81] *Ibid*, 59.
[82] Charlotte Brunsdon, *London in Film* (London: British Film Institute 2007).

contrast to the authentic version of London that is explored through narratives that take in the lives of ordinary Londoners. Brunsdon includes some analysis of *28 Days Later* within her text, and I found this to be useful in informing my own readings of that film, as well as the others that take in cinematic London.

Peter Hutchings' article 'Uncanny Landscapes in British Film and Television'[83] has informed my understanding of how cinematic landscapes are imbued with significant meaning because of existing ideas of Britishness, and especially in terms of the rural and notions of the countryside as a repository of a sense of heritage. Similarly, Hutchings' writing has influenced my own readings of the dystopian urban landscape, and how individuals finding themselves within these spaces can often suffer from crises of identity, and risk a dehumanising effect once the company of fellow people is lost. This idea will be seen most clearly in my readings of *28 Days Later* and *28 Weeks Later*.

Craig Ian Mann's *Phases of the Moon*[84] was supremely useful in terms of guiding my research into werewolf narratives; whilst this thesis only contains a chapter on *An American Werewolf in London*, I did omit a chapter on *Outcast* due to word count constraints, and had additionally prepared a chapter on *Dog Soldiers* that I felt was not quite strong enough for inclusion. Mann's text specifically avoids what he views as a conventional method of examining werewolf narratives, inasmuch as he chooses not to rely upon psychoanalytical readings that position the figure of the werewolf in terms of a man/beast duality, and instead explores the ways in which the figure symbolises cultural concerns contemporary to the films explored within his book. Conversely, Chantal Bourgault de Coudray's *The Curse of the Werewolf: Fantasy, Horror and the Beast Within*[85] embraces this idea of psychological duality, and examines the idea that the werewolf is an externalised projection of man's inner animal. However, this is not the sole focus of Bourgault de Coudray's book, which offers an insightful and extensive history of the figure of the werewolf, from its earliest representations within various mythologies, its links to the Early Modern witch hunts to its inclusion within Gothic horror cinema.

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[83] Peter Hutchings, 'Uncanny Landscapes in British Film and Television,' *Visual Culture in Britain* 5:2 (2004), pp. 27-40.
[84] Craig Ian Mann, *Phases of the Moon* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020).
[85] Chantal Bourgault de Coudray, *The Curse of the Werewolf: Fantasy, Horror and the Beast Within* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006).

Similar to Bourgault de Coudray's work on the werewolf, Roger Luckhurst's *Zombies: A Cultural History*[86] gives a thorough history of the figure of the zombie, from its origins in West African and Haitian mythology through to its appearances in numerous examples of the horror film. Luckhurst's text is especially useful in defining the zombie as a figure that has lost its autonomy, and it is this definition that has allowed me to definitively view the infected within *28 Days Later* and *28 Weeks Later* as zombie figures. Of more specific use in terms of my research into the zombie, Dahlia Schweitzer's *Going Viral: Zombies, Viruses, and the Ends of the World*[87] is an exemplary examination of cinematic narratives that centre on viral threats that include zombie narratives. Schweitzer's text suggests these narratives express cultural concerns over pandemics that include the AIDS virus and Ebola outbreaks, and I found the book incredibly useful in recognising the physical and cognitive boundaries that characters within zombie narratives construct and observe in order to maintain their medical and their mental health status.

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[86] Roger Luckhurst, *Zombies: A Cultural History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2015).
[87] Dahlia Schweitzer, *Going Viral: Zombies, Viruses, and the Ends of the World* (New Brunswick: Rutger's University Press, 2018).

Chapter One

'It's a Bloody Heritage Place': Violent Identity Formation within Ben Wheatley's *Sightseers.*

The twentieth century saw a definitive shift from rural modes of living towards urban dwelling; a necessary adaptation to the preponderance of work taking place within towns and cities, and the need for a workforce to live close to those sources of work. Whilst this shift in spatial emphasis from the rural to the urban had begun during the Industrial Revolution, this process intensified greatly during the twentieth century. Michael Woods states that 'in Britain…half the population was already living in urban areas by 1851, and that proportion increased steeply to four-fifths by 1951,' adding that 'people moved to towns to escape the poverty, isolation and lack of social mobility of the countryside, hoping for better living conditions and opportunities for advancement'.[1] Woods' statement suggests that the urban, when set against rural spaces unable to sustain a workforce, was viewed in almost utopian terms by migrating rural folk and given the importance that the urban clearly has to huge swathes of the UK's contemporary population (if population figures and cultural engagement are used as indicators), it is tempting to assume two things: the urban is an intrinsically more desirable space for the modern Briton, and the rural is, conversely, a fundamentally less desirable space.

And yet, the rural still inspires fascination and desire in the contemporary urban subject. A glance at British TV scheduling reveals a demand for shows that deliver the space of the rural into the urban home, in the form of drama (*Emmerdale*[2]) and explorations of the flora and fauna of the greenbelt (*Springwatch*[3]). A programme such as *Escape to the Country*[4] tells a narrative of families, albeit those that are financially solvent, looking to exchange the flux and dense population of the contemporary city for the apparently communitarian space of the rural. The idea is predicated on a desire to have the best of both worlds; to maintain a financially rewarding working life within the city (the source of capitalist investment), whilst enjoying the tranquillity, and associated prestige, of a rural home life. There are, understandably, problems with this

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[1]Michael Woods, *Rural* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), 26.
[2] *Emmerdale*, ITV, 1972 – present, television broadcast.
[3] *Springwatch*, BBC, 2005 – present, television broadcast.
[4] *Escape to the Country*, BBC, 2002 – present, television broadcast.

notion of being properly invested in dual spaces, but these will be addressed later. Whereas the previously discussed shift in spatial emphasis from the rural to the urban was predicated on economic necessity, the (re)emergence of the country as an alternative to the city is not premised on economic necessity (although the facility to enjoy such spatial choices is borne of economic standing) as much as it is a cultural and aesthetic choice. For those urban dwellers re-migrating from the city into country homes the rural is desirable for a host of reasons that include a change of pace from constant activity to (relative) stasis, and the kinds of visual landscapes that the city simply cannot provide. However, from where do we derive our impressions of rural spaces? Certainly mediated, subjective portrayals of the rural within televisual and cinematic images inform our perception of the rural, as does the literature that sells us country holidays and homes. These second-hand ideas of the rural are important, because there are undoubtedly people living within towns and cities whose only experiences of rural spaces have been fleeting glimpses through windows during high speed train and car journeys, or forays into the peripheries of our own urban locales. Essentially, many urban residents' experiences of rural spaces are liminal impressions that are devoid of any substantial engagement.

Given the mediated impressions of the rural that many urban dwellers are subject to, it is inevitable that an existential encounter with the countryside may not meet any expectations the individual might hold of that space. Ben Wheatley's third film, *Sightseers,*[5] deals with an escape from the urban into the rural that is filled with such spatial expectations and inevitable disappointment. Rural space (and the journey *away* from urban space) becomes, in the film, an arena of identity formation; an attempt to shed the traumas that the urban has inflicted upon its protagonists, and replace them with their cognitive ideas of rural idealism. The film demonstrates how, for *Sightseer's* male protagonist Chris, the rural is ultimately subject to the same factors that problematised his urban experience; an inability to forge an authentic identity and the belief that he is subject to class based inequalities.

Ben Wheatley has forged a cinematic identity that is filled with stylistic and tonal nuance. His approach to film making is often rooted in British social realism, and

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[5]*Sightseers.* Ben Wheatley. Studio Canal, 2012. Film.

indeed many of his characters would be perfectly at home within the seminal social realist films of Alan Clarke or Mike Leigh. Wheatley's films adopt the stark, unromanticised violence of Clarke's *Scum*[6] *and The Firm*,[7] whilst Leigh's *Nuts in May*[8] serves as a perfect companion piece to *Sightseers* in its elongated study of a couple holidaying in the countryside, and having their spatial expectations challenged and, ultimately, disappointed. Whilst Wheatley and his partner, Amy Jump, generally prepare the scripts he films, *Sightseers* is an exception in that it was largely drawn from material written by the leading actors, Alice Lowe and Steve Oram (who developed their characters whilst touring as part of one of Steve Coogan's live shows), with Jump providing additional material and the benefits of her script editing experience. And yet the film is identifiably Wheatley, in terms of visual style and tonality. Despite being largely comedic, although admittedly very darkly so, *Sightseers* is run through with the same brooding undercurrent that permeates Wheatley's other films, such as *Down Terrace*[9] and *Kill List,*[10] both of which examine the violence that is present beneath seemingly mundane domestic situations, and acknowledge the apparent claustrophobia of the urban family home.

Lack of Agency within the Urban

Sightseers is a tale of two new lovers, Chris and Tina, leaving the city for what is partly a caravan tour of some of northern England's sites of heritage, and partly (to quote Chris) an "erotic odyssey"; there is a sense that the two have had little opportunity to spend any intimate time together, perhaps because of their respective personal domestic situations, and so the holiday is a honeymoon of sorts. Chris is acutely misanthropic, with an apparently deep-seated anger that is usually barely suppressed. It later transpires that he has recently been made redundant and is embittered by the experience, hinting at workplace conflicts and a class-based animosity that he believes underlies his redundancy, and his inability to forge a satisfactory identity within the city. Chris begins to express these feelings during time he and Tina spend at their first caravan site, as he relaxes with a beer, and whilst considering a tree he says to Tina, "take the noble English oak, old knobbly. That won't stab you in the back or belittle

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[6] *Scum*, directed by Alan Clarke (Kendon Films, 1979), film.
[7] *The Firm*, directed by Alan Clarke (BBC, 1989), television drama.
[8] 'Nuts in May,' *Play for Today*, BBC, January 13, 1976, television film.
[9] *Down Terrace*, directed by Ben Wheatley (Mondo Macabro, 2009), film.
[10] *Kill List*, directed by Ben Wheatley (Rook Films, 2011), film.

your five-year plan. That tree won't steal things that belong to you and put them in another place just to piss you off. That tree won't involve itself in low-level bullying that means you have to leave work". Clearly, Chris is suffering from stresses that originate within his workplace, and have the effect of stymieing his ability to assert himself professionally. These working conditions have become conflated with the space of the urban for Chris, and the fact that he projects behavioural idealism onto a tree (a de facto symbol of the natural world) suggests that it is the people within his experience of the urban that he wishes to set himself apart from and, by extension, the space that he associates with those people. The rural, as personified by the oak, is a space that Chris assumes will not foster situations in which he feels belittled and powerless. Fran Tonkiss states that 'being in the crowded city magnifies the contradiction between the collective nature of social life and the radical solitude of the individual, between the claims of the group and that of the person,'[11] and the rural is an attractive space for Chris not only because it contains fewer people in general but, more importantly, none of those he has experienced within the city in particular. Whilst we are not privy to much exposition regarding Chris' life, it is likely that he is not a highly sociable participant within the spaces in which he lives and works (the fact that he and Tina are drawn to each other, and are similarly socially awkward is a good indicator of this), and because of this magnifying effect that Tonkiss discusses Chris' lack of agency is amplified within the competitive urban arena. However, whilst the rural may not explicitly magnify any sense of difference between the collective and the individual (given the reduced levels of population encountered within that space), the difference is still present in a sufficient degree to create tension for Chris.

Tina lives alone with her mother, and their relationship has seemingly become strained after the accidental knitting needle-based death of their dog Poppy, for which Tina's mum blames her. The relationship between Tina and her mother is implicitly odd, with Tina's mother constantly critiquing her, and flitting between moments of detached indifference and an affection that seems cloyingly infantilising. When Tina tells her mum that she's going on holiday with Chris, it becomes an argument, with Tina angrily saying "I'm 34 years old, and I've found someone who likes me and I like him, and I'm going on holiday with him". There is a sense that Tina is fully aware of the

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[11] Fran Tonkiss. *Space, the City and social Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015), 26.

infantilisation that her mother has imposed upon her, and in stating her age alongside her intention to go on holiday with Chris, she is affirming her status as an adult (explicitly rejecting the infant status) and recognising that the domestic space she shares with her mother is part of the controlling process, with her (temporary) departure from that space an attempt to resist that control.

Tina's dialogue with her mother is very much reminiscent of the way a teenager tussles against a parent and it is difficult to view their interactions as taking place between two adults, because of the way her mother speaks to her, and seeks to control Tina's access to a potential partner (representing as he does, an avenue of escape from the controlled domestic space), telling her that she doesn't like Chris at every opportunity. At one point as Chris and Tina are seated in the car and about to depart, Carol (Mother) looks Chris directly in the eyes and says "I don't like you". Whilst Carol clearly resents the influence Chris has upon her daughter, and the fact that he offers her a means of spending less time under her mother's gaze, she does in fact extend this antagonism directly towards Tina. In a scene in which Carol is visibly distraught, Tina asks her why she is upset, and Carol replies "I was just thinking about Poppy. She was my only friend". Tina responds with "aw Mum, I'm your friend" and is offered a steely gaze, and a response of "you're not a friend, you're just a relative". This harsh statement suggests a detachment and a sense that relationships within the urban landscape are, often, circumstantial rather than markers of affection.

Carol's grief is manifested as a prolonged lamenting noise, which seems to mimic a dog's howl, perhaps as an act of post-mortem simpatico with Poppy. Her living room wall is covered with pictures of the deceased canine, and it is clear that even in death it is Poppy, not Tina, who is the recipient of Carol's affections, and that particular relationship is therefore written upon the domestic space. Harold Herzog states that 'when asked what they specifically get from their relationships with pets, people typically mention companionship, having a play partner, and the need to love and care for another creature'.[12] Poppy does indeed seem to represent an emotional locus for Carol, and to a lesser extent Tina. It is as though Poppy is a conduit for their mutual need for affective displays, that cannot be demonstrated directly toward each other. After rowing about Tina's holiday plans, Carol is seen brushing Tina's hair and there is

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[12] Harold Herzog, 'The Impact of Pets on Human Health and Psychological Well-Being: Fact, Fiction, or Hypothesis?' *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 20:4 (2011), 236.

a sense within this scene that Tina has become a surrogate grooming recipient for Carol; she is simply filling the void that Poppy's death created, rather than enjoying the affections one might expect from a mother/daughter relationship. The departure of Poppy from the domestic space means the potential for demonstrations of affection (even through the proxy figure of the pet) has been greatly reduced. In the same way that Chris conflates his workspace with an inability to assert himself professionally, Tina's domestic space is representative of a lack of agency and a lack of love. For both, leaving behind their unsatisfying urban identities is a means of removing themselves from a sense of spatial tension, and (for better or worse) invests their journey with a sense of great expectation.

Spatial Tension

Sightseers does not belong to the horror genre simply because of its lingering representations of murder. If horror cinema is characterised by tension - be it figures grasping out of the darkness or the expectation of horrific or abject events - then within *Sightseers*, that tension is represented through the difference between the expected, cognitive spaces that Chris and Tina hope to experience within the rural and the actual, existential spaces that they do encounter and that subvert their expectations. Edward Relph describes cognitive space as the 'abstract construct of space derived from the identification of space as an object for reflection'.[13] It is this abstract idea of space that contains the individual's notion of how a space could and should be; how they *expect* a particular space to be. Conversely, existential space is, according to Relph, the 'experience of space' that can be described as 'the lived-world'.[14] Essentially, existential space is space *as we find* it, regardless of our cognitive expectations.

There is clearly a fundamental difference between these two ideas, and even during the film's opening credits, we are given some indication of this dichotomy between the cognitive and the existential, when we see Tina place a length of red wool over a map, linking the places they will visit. This thread mimics the road lines on the map, but it is a physical, raised version of those lines, attempting to bridge the distance between the representative space of the map, and the physical expectations she has of those places. This speaks of her desire to experience the world physically, rather

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[13] Edward Relph. *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion Limited, 1976.), 24.
[14] *Ibid*, 22.

than through vicarious representations; to move away from the insular, domestic sphere she shares with her controlling mother. Adam Lowenstein describes Tina's home life as being 'nightmarishly cluttered and suffocating,' and because of this the 'road in its own right already feels liberatory'.[15] In a sense, whatever Tina finds out on the road is not as important as actually being on the road itself, symbolising as it does a move away from the limiting space of the home, with its lack of agency. This is why the road lines on Tina's map are emphasised so greatly, because they symbolise a means of being anywhere other than the home. Tina has built up a cognitive idea of the experience, including as it does liberation from the domestic realm, but it is equally important that she explores the road with Chris, given their relationship offers the chance for the reciprocal affection that her domestic life cannot offer her.

Relph states that 'our experience of place, and especially of home, is a dialectical one – balancing a need to stay with a desire to escape,'[16] and Tina clearly demonstrates a desire to escape the home she shares with her mother, because of the control her mother exerts, and the experiential limitations the home represents for her. And yet despite the positive aspects that the holiday entails, there is clearly some trepidation on Tina's part; if not with regards to the romantic commitment it involves, then with regards to the spatial upheaval that the holiday represents. Just before their journey begins, Chris tells Tina he likes her room, to which she responds, "I like the bits...but at the same time, if it was all destroyed, I'd be quite happy". Despite the nihilistic tone here, she is describing a process of spatial investment, in which she has been able to produce a personal and unique place within the otherwise controlled domestic space. Tina's 'bits' transform the space of her room into a personalised place; it is those objects, rather than any geographical or historical elements associated with the room, which invest the space with meaning. The significance of her bits, as her only avenue of an expression of personal and spatial identity, is demonstrated in the fact that she brings many of them along with her, as though she is moving in with Chris rather than simply going on holiday for a week. Essentially, whilst Tina does wish to experience some (relative) freedom, and a temporary escape from her mother's domineering attitude, she is reluctant to sacrifice the investment she has made within

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[15] Adam Lowenstein, 'A Cinema of Disorientation: Space, Genre, Wheatley,' *Critical Quarterly* 58:1 (2016), 8.
[16] Relph, 42.

her domestic space, and so transposes that investment via the placing of bric-a-brac within the caravan. Whilst she wishes to commit to new physical experiences, she is at least partly rooted to the familiarity of her urban space.

Mediated versions of space

Tina is obsessive about her bric-a-brac, collecting items from every place she visits, and this suggests both that these items are fundamental expressions of her sense of identity, and that she cannot experience places in an entirely authentic way. Relph states that 'it seems that for many people the purpose of travel is less to experience unique and different places than to collect those places'.[17] It is in this sense that Tina uses items of bric-a-brac as mediating devices, which enable her to remain rooted within the transposed domestic space of the caravan, rather than allowing herself to enter into a fully authentic experience of other spaces she encounters. She chooses, instead, to bring into the space of the caravan simulated, proxy versions of the places she visits through the collecting of memorabilia; collecting a *version* of the places she visits. This practice is enabled by the fact that the caravan is a fundamentally mobile space in both geographical and cognitive terms. Relph asserts the idea that a site of residence (especially a transient one such as a vehicle or temporary camp) can be both in a place and be a place in its own right,[18] and because of the spatial duality that the caravan represents Tina is never quite fully present within the places on her itinerary. She instead attempts to dualistically occupy both the spaces she visits and the transient domestic space of the caravan.

Ultimately, a dual spatial investment ensures a lack of authentic engagement with either space, and this lack of spatial authenticity is succinctly demonstrated by her bringing along pot pourri for the caravan. Chris asks her "what you bringing that for? We don't need pot pourri," and she responds with "I don't think I could cope without pot pourri Chris". Like the 'bits' from her room, Tina's pot pourri allows her to inhabit a cognitive, idealised version of the rural. Pot pourri is a mediated version of the fragrance of the rural, designed to deliver a simulation of the natural world into the urban home (and with it, the idea that the urban home and the rural are diametrically opposed). Tina's travels will bring her into contact with the authentic smells of the rural,

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[17] Relph, *85.*
[18] *Ibid*, 29.

but she still chooses to bring along the version that fits with her cognitive expectations of space, and the habit of simulation that her investment in mediated versions of space entails.

Idealised notions of space

Chris has imbued considerable cognitive energy into his idea of how the rural will be, representing as it does a complete opposite of the urban space that he associates with a lack of agency. Key to Chris' cognitive expectations of the rural is the fact that for him, the destinations on their holiday itinerary are representative of English heritage, or at least an *idea* of English heritage that idealises rural space and invests it with meaning derived from expert opinion, rather than personal experience. Michael Woods says that the 'rural idyll fed on discourses of anti-urbanism, agrarianism and nature that were used to differentiate between the urban present and a romanticized rural past, particularly by nostalgic urban residents'.[19] Woods seems to suggest that an idealised version of the rural is utilised as escapism; a mental and spatial retreat from the urban that idealises the rural in relation to dissatisfying ideas of urban space, and in doing so conflates the spatial and the temporal. As discussed earlier, this is evident in the number of TV shows bringing the space of the rural into the home of the urban viewer. The rural is consistently portrayed as being a space of stasis, and representative of traditional values and aesthetics. Regardless of the perceived differences in cultural and aesthetic values that the rural may hold in relation to the urban, it is within the space of the latter that Chris has been unable to locate an authentic identity, and so the holiday represents an escape *from* that space, as much as it represents an escape *to* the rural as a space that he believes is free of the factors that have compounded his identity struggles (such as an hierarchical class structure). Chris' initial embracing of the spatial change is exemplified when he tells Tina "This is exactly how I imagined it. No one sticking their nose in, no one penetrating my mind". His cognitive expectations of rural space have built in an idea of autonomy, and a release from the structures he has experienced within his working life. He believes the rural is a space free of the 'noise' of the urban, both literally and metaphorically.

Fran Tonkiss states that 'there are…problems…which may be seen as the product of urban processes: that is, problems *of* the city. Most notable here are the

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[19] Woods, 21.

ways in which cycles of economic and spatial change make certain spaces and certain people redundant'.[20] Chris works within the plastic moulding industry, a field affected deeply by recession and competition from overseas industries. Certainly, the types of work we associate with the city are a challenge to urban residents forming profound spatial connections, given that most industries or commercial ventures are subject to financial uncertainty (and the potential lack of job security), meaning a place of work may not exert a long-term spatial influence upon the individual. Urban residents must fully accept the cyclical flux of industrial trends within the metropolis, or resign themselves to a semi-nomadic existence, travelling often significant distances on daily work commutes; the idea of both living and working within a local community is largely incompatible with city living. Chris demonstrates feelings of alienation from this urban environment (or at least an alienation from other people within that environment), and his redundancy from his job has engendered a sense that he has little use value within the city, that his potential is untapped and unappreciated. He says, "there's something in me Tina," asserting his belief that he has a purpose and an authentic identity, but it is just as likely that what he feels is, rather, a *lack* of something; a deep-rooted dissatisfaction, and his statement may as well be read as "(I hope) there's something in me Tina".

And yet whilst we can read the urban as a space that limits authentic identity, and commodifies its residents, it is also entirely possible that Chris is fundamentally unable to locate an identity within *any* space, including the rural. If we accept that Chris' inability to express an authentic identity is the result of external forces applied by factors within the urban, then it is likely that his situation can be explained by what Edward Krupat has called 'environmental *determinism,*' a condition that 'implies that external forces dictate responses and require people to behave in specific ways'. However, Krupat suggests that 'this is a passive view of the individual and downplays the ability to select and choose, to arrange and change the environment to fit one's needs'.[21] Rather than viewing Chris as a victim of the potential depersonalising effects of the urban, I would suggest that he has a fundamental inability to relate to others within that space. We are given a hint at Chris' lifelong lack of integrity, when Tina asks him "what were you like at school, Chris?" and he responds with "I wasn't like anything.

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[20] Tonkiss, 46.
[21] Edward Krupat. *People in Cities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 12.

I was, like, invisible". Clearly, Chris has struggled with an enduring inability to assert an identity, and his introspection, coupled with his lack of professional success has inspired a need for personal change that he has conflated with a need for spatial change. Because of that desire, he has invested considerable cognitive energy into the rural as a space of potential and a space in which he can re-forge his personal identity.

Bloody Heritage Places

There is a resulting tension between the cognitive spatial expectations that Chris has developed, and the existential versions of rural space he encounters, and this tension is first apparent when he and Tina visit the Crich Tramway Museum, where Chris is outraged by another visitor who repeatedly drops litter, even whilst riding in one of the trams. Chris says to Tina (with regards to this behaviour that fails to treat the museum as a sanctified space) "it's a bloody heritage place," and his anger is due to the idealism which he has invested into a place that represents a past that is so attractive *precisely* because of its selectively idealistic historical portrayal. Clearly, the time that the museum alludes to (whilst not specific, one would assume it suggests a time before the mass production of the car) would not have seen places being littered with Cornetto wrappers, but there would almost certainly have been other forms of litter, and antisocial behaviour. Relph, in discussing heritage tourism, suggests that 'perhaps in a few years we will be able to choose not where, but when in the plastic past we wish to go for our holiday'.[22] The wilful conflation of a when and a where is apparent in Chris' attitude, as he seems to consider these places to be revered, spatial *and* temporal ideals. Chris chooses this destination because it is a *when* rather than a *where,* as though the museum has been plucked from time and placed into a sacred stasis. However, Michael Woods might have sympathy with Chris' spatial frustration when he argues that places of rural commodification, as they grow in popularity and visitor numbers, can suffer from a 'negative impact through congestion and pollution and the development of commercial ventures that are more and more removed from the original rural attractions'.[23] Essentially, the historical and cultural aspects of such places are reduced to items of memorabilia (a tramway pencil case, etc), and there is

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[22] Relph, 103.
[23] Woods, 99.

every likelihood that such spaces become nothing more than items on a spatial checklist, and indeed, this is actually true of Chris and Tina's itinerary, to some extent.

This littering man dies under the wheels of Chris' caravan as he is reversing out of the Tramway museum car park, and whilst there is the potential for some ambiguity regarding the 'accidental' nature of the incident (the camera shows the man in Chris' wing mirror, and it is therefore plausible that Chris did see him), Chris does later tell Tina it was indeed an accident; this is at a stage where the pair have committed very intentional murders and would have little reason to withhold the truth. However, it is the first of Chris' deliberate murders that reveals how he utilises an anger that results from his sense of class division to explore a wilful (if frankly psychotic) location of identity. Edward Soja suggests that 'class struggle...must encompass and focus upon the vulnerable point: the production of space, the territorial structure of exploitation and domination, the spatially controlled reproduction of the system as a whole'.[24] Given Chris' inability to assert himself within the workplace, and the urban space that contains his working and domestic spheres, his foray into the rural is partly predicated on the belief that he can treat that space as an arena for identity formation and reinvention. Soja's suggestion, that the class based preoccupations that result from urban living are present within the rural, informs Chris' engagement with the rural from this point on, and is demonstrated clearly in two particular scenes within the film.

Class divisions written upon space

The first of these examples occurs during Chris and Tina's stay at their first caravan site, where Chris' quest for an authentic identity becomes bound up with a class-based struggle for the right to occupy space within the rural. Chris and Tina meet another couple, Janice and Ian, and this other couple are shown arriving at the caravan site at the same time as Chris and Tina. Both couples are intent on reaching the same spot at the site (Dingly Dell) to avoid having to set up at the only other free spot next to the toilet block. Chris overtakes them (a dangerous manoeuvre, given they are driving on a narrow lane shared by walkers), and secures the prime spot in what becomes a representation of the kind of aggressive competition for space, and property, that we associate with urban life. Krupat describes this competitive behaviour within the urban as being suggestive of an 'urban ecological' model of behaviour, wherein 'just as plants

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[24] Edward Soja, *Postmodern Geographies* (London: Verso, 1989), 92.

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compete for light, space, and water, so do people in the city compete for scarce economic and social resources'.[25] This is certainly applicable to the competition for space demonstrated here, given there are only two spaces available, and one of those spaces is more desirable than the other. The vying for a better wage, more prestigious living space, the respect of acquaintances is here reduced to being the first to reach a space that is not located next to the toilets; the symbolism here suggests a desire to avoid domestic spaces that are undesirable both in terms of a lack of financial and social prestige, and to avoid sharing space with people who are viewed as being somewhat lower in status. In competing for space in such an aggressive way, Chris is indeed demonstrating a territorialism that takes in both space and class. He has consistently felt 'invisible' and 'voiceless' during his time spent living in the city, but within the rural he is here able to symbolically redress the class divisions that he believes have suppressed his identity. Janice may complain to Ian that she "thought we would be at the Dingly Dell," but within the space of the rural, the privilege they might enjoy within the urban is essentially placed on hiatus.

Whilst it is fair to describe Chris as a somewhat neurotic and sensitive character, and to disregard his claims of class prejudice as hyperbole, he is not alone in transposing his own ideas of urban class stratification onto the space of the rural. This idea is demonstrated in the very apparent differences between both Janice/Ian and Tina/Chris, and the ways in which their own caravans (as units of transposed urban space) reflect their own spatial/class engagements. Chris imposes himself upon Janice and Ian and asks that he and Tina have a look around their caravan, and whilst Ian acquiesces, Chris and Tina are treated with obvious disdain. Even before Chris and Tina enter the other caravan, their own strongly regional accents are markedly different to Janice and Ian's own lack of accent, speaking as they do in the homogenised delivery typical of the middle-class. As they discuss their respective caravans, Tina and Janice disagree on the merits of their own décor preferences, with Janice preferring minimalism over 'clutter'. Tina says, "it's beautiful in here, it's just like a hospital," suggesting that Janice's space is clean, white and, frankly, impersonal. This sterility, coupled with the lack of any apparent spatial investment (certainly, there is none of the bric-a-brac that Tina favours), is reminiscent of the architect Le

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[25] Krupat, 50.

Corbusier's dictum that a 'house is a machine for living in,'[26] a space containing only that which is necessarily functional. Janice and Ian's caravan is a more luxurious model than Chris and Tina's, reinforcing the idea that the couple are more financially solvent, and that within the space of the urban they would live in an entirely more prestigious residential area than either Chris or Tina (and the caravan is, after all, an extension of the individual's urban status). The interior of their caravan is filled with clean, white lines and the latest caravan appliances (Chris marvels at the lack of visible buttons on display). Chris and Tina's caravan, on the other hand, is a somewhat confused space, struggling as it does to contain the sheer volume of items forced into it. However, regardless of this, the clear disdain shown towards Chris and Tina (and their ideas about expressing their identities within their caravan) can only be viewed as elitist.

What really instigates Chris' first deliberate murder (that we know of[27]) is Ian revealing he is an author, with Janice proudly chiming in that he is writing his third book (walks along the ley lines of Britain). Chris has not revealed his redundancy to Tina at this point, instead telling her that he has taken a sabbatical from work in order to write a book, saying he took "a bit of time off work…(to) y'know, find my voice". This phrasing is significant, given that Chris had earlier told Tina that whilst at school he felt invisible. Chris' choice of phrasing suggests he feels subdued, and as his anger is focussed upon what he views to be class prejudices, it is likely that Chris feels not merely subdued, but actively suppressed; not only invisible, but voiceless. As the rural is filled with new spatial experiences, it has the potential for new identity formations and whilst Chris seems to use this potential as an opportunity to reinvent himself, he is unable to find creative inspiration, struggling to write more than a few sentences. Given Ian's apparent success at both creative endeavours, and forming what seems to be an authentic connection with the space of the rural, it is perhaps a jealous anger that sees Chris follow him on his morning reconnoitre, and deliver a fatal blow to his head with a rock. Whilst Ian walks openly and freely around the landscape, Chris

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[26] Le Corbusier, *Vers une Architecture*, 1923.
[27] There are two moments that suggest Chris may have killed before the caravan holiday with Tina: firstly, whilst walking through some woods he tells Tina that he had brought his last girlfriend to the same particular spot, to which Tina replies "this is a ditch" (there is a possibility that he might have killed and buried her there), and secondly, after Tina deliberately knocks down a jogger, Chris complains that such random acts are not his style, and says "I've done more murders in the last fucking three days than in the entire six months since I got made redundant".

utilises trees and rocks to remain undetected as he follows Ian, before literally using that landscape against him as he bludgeons him with a piece of that terrain. In a sense, Chris' actions allow him to form a relationship with the geography of the rural, as out of necessity he blends in to, and disappears amongst, its features. This relationship is, whilst clearly psychotic, more authentic than the relationship he had with the urban, and the relationship he has with the mediated spaces of heritage he and Tina visit. Murder has, to borrow Tina's phrase, allowed him to find his 'oeuvre'.

In the build up to this murder, Chris is seen brooding over Ian's words, and this is interspersed with scenes of some shaman (who are staying in the site's yurt field), dancing around a fire as they sacrifice a chicken. All of these elements ensure the murder has a ritualistic feeling, as though it is effecting some profound change within Chris' psyche (and at this point the soundtrack interjects Vanilla Fudge's rendition of Season of the Witch, which reinforces this idea of transformation), but it also demonstrates how important Chris' cognitive relationship with space is. He clearly retreats into his own thoughts (the inner space where personal change occurs) where presumably he formulates this plan to follow and kill Ian. The beheading of the chicken is contrasted with a shot of Janice cracking an egg into a pan; whilst this latter act clearly mirrors the assault on Ian, the chicken and the egg here represent the death of Chris' previous, urban incarnation and the rebirth of his more assertively assured identity. The removal of Ian's physical presence allows Chris to then adopt aspects of his identity; from that point onwards, both Chris and Tina pretend to be married and claim that Chris is an author (writing his third book). He takes and uses Ian's camera, but he takes seemingly random snaps, rather than the composed, creative photos we see Ian taking. He takes photos of himself and Tina having sex, but in a scene where Tina looks through the camera, we learn that Ian has already taken candid shots of himself and Janice. It is as though Chris is implicitly aware of his own inability to construct an authentic identity and has instead chosen one that is a performance, and results from his harvesting aspects of the identity of his victims; he and Tina even steal Janice and Ian's dog, Banjo, who then becomes a surrogate for Poppy, Tina's deceased pet, and who becomes a mediating presence for Chris and, especially, Tina, just as Poppy was a conduit for Tina and her mother's expressions of affection.

Museumification of Space

Relph suggests that 'an inauthentic attitude to place is nowhere more clearly expressed than in tourism, for in tourism individual and authentic judgement about places is nearly always subsumed to expert or socially accepted opinion'.[28] As suggested earlier, it could be argued that Chris and Tina's engagement with the spaces they visit is rendered inauthentic because of the way in which Chris has reduced them to merely being items within his itinerary; he has clearly calculated the date and even the time that they will visit each particular heritage site ("Blue John Cavern opens in forty five minutes"). We see a touristic engagement with a site of heritage when Chris and Tina visit Fountains Abbey, and they take pleasure in performing the daily tasks (turning a flour mill; ringing bells) that, in all probability, the monks of Fountains Abbey may have found to be perfunctory, and even tedious. Such sites of heritage may well be preserved places of historical value, but any perceived sense of value they have is mediated through, as Relph states, 'expert or socially asserted opinion'.[29] This is demonstrated in the way that Chris merely recites the lines fed to him by brochures and placards; "this was a thirteenth century ruin founded by monks". Chris regurgitates these lines with the same inflections that someone might use when stating an opinion derived through observation. Where these snippets of tourist spiel are not readily apparent, it is reasonable to assume that the individual is more likely to form a personal connection to, and opinion of, a place. Chris' wilful reliance upon mediated information, though, ensures that he avoids having to form personal and authentic beliefs regarding the spaces he encounters.

This inability to happen upon a personal sense of connection with place is exemplified in a scene which also demonstrates a second incident of a conflation of class with the space of the rural. This occurs when Chris and Tina (with Banjo in tow) visit a stone circle (Long Meg and Her Daughters, near Penrith). Whilst the site is one of heritage, and has attracted expert opinion and analysis, it is not subject to the same elements of museumification that informs such places as the Crich Tramway Museum. The tramway museum has a guided tour, a gift shop and has been purposefully preserved in a temporal stasis. By contrast, the Neolithic stone circle's heritage status has meant its site remains respectfully untouched by development, but other than that it simply persists. Because of this lack of prescribed opinions and behaviours available

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[28] Relph, 83.
[29] *Ibid.*

to Chris and Tina, they are essentially subdued, and do little more than merely pass through the circle, with cursory glances at the stones.

A spatial tension arises, however, when Banjo defecates within the stone circle, and a passing rambler approaches Tina, insisting that she pick up the excrement. Whilst the stone circle is largely free of the 'socially asserted opinion' that Relph suggests is redolent within heritage sites, this rambler does behave in ways that suggest he is a 'gatekeeper' of sorts. He tells Tina that "this is a site of natural beauty and geographical interest. I think you need to sort that out". Once Chris realises what is happening, he defends Tina and his own attitude becomes little better than the man who littered at the Tramway museum. Chris says "well a dog does a shit, you can't do much about that mate," to which the man replies "well you can pick it up and take it away with you". The rambler is not unreasonable in suggesting dog excrement should be picked up, but this opinion is informed by the value he has invested into this space; it being a site of "natural beauty and geographical interest". He fails to condemn the act of fouling a public space in and of itself, and instead condemns it based upon the *precise* space in which it occurs; a space that he has invested with significance and even reverence. Relph suggests that 'Landscapes are...always imbued with meanings that come from how and why we know them; but whereas with place this intentionality is focussed and directed onto an inside that is distinct from an outside, with landscape it is diffuse and without concentration'.[30] The stone circle, then, becomes a site of distilled and protective feeling toward the larger space of the rural, and as such the rambler's reaction towards Banjo's defecation is similarly focused and exaggerated.

Chris has not made the same spatial investment as the rambler, with regards to the stone circle, and this is because in the absence of mediated information, the space requires a concerted and personal effort for a connection to be established so that the site can become spatially significant on a personal level. Chris has failed to connect to the space because of the lack of arbitrated information, and he has already demonstrated an apparent lack of the sort of creative thinking that would facilitate a more personal and profound connection with space (his failure to write more than a few lines in his notepad suggests, at the very least, a writer's block, and quite probably a complete lack of imagination). However, this does not necessarily mean that the

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[30] *Ibid*, 123.

rambler's cognitive ideas about the stone circle are more valid than Chris and Tina's. The rambler says "I'm entitled to walk in the countryside without having to encounter dog excrement," and whilst a failure to pick up dog droppings from urban pavements is viewed as being a highly antisocial act, the countryside is expected to exist in a natural state that would include animal faeces. One wonders whether the rambler would be so begrudging of cow or horse dung, given that farm animals are associated with the rural, and routinely graze on the land close to the stone circle. Like Chris, he has an idealised version of rural space in mind, and the fact that Chris and Tina are rural interlopers means that their dog (and its excrement) is viewed as being an element that does not belong there.

As Tina becomes increasingly upset about the situation, Chris argues with the rambler claiming that he is exercising a class-based prejudice against he and Tina ("did you go to a public school?"), and whilst the rambler is largely objective and calm, he is somewhat patronising towards Tina and eventually says to Chris "people like you…" before Chris attacks him with an improvised walking stick. After administering the fatal beating, Chris suggests to Tina that '300 <u>years</u> ago his <u>ancestor</u> <u>would</u> have strode down a path just like this, you know, and he'd have seen some <u>common</u> strumpet like you and he'd have gone, 'I'm <u>gonna</u> have a bit of that.' And I'd have had to have <u>stood</u> by and <u>watched</u> him". Just as his stalking of Ian facilitated a more authentic connection to the landscape, this murder allows Chris to begin to use his imagination and to visualise scenarios that may have occurred within the space, imbuing it with qualities outside of the immediately present moment. Indeed, after the murder, Tina encourages Chris to write down his feelings; Chris manages a couple of lines before mental exhaustion sets in. As was the case when Tina realised Chris had killed Ian, Chris frames the murder in terms that suggest he was acting on behalf of Tina, when in fact both scenarios occurred because of Chris' extreme sense of low self-worth, which he believes stems from being subject to lifelong class prejudices. Whilst Tina congratulates Chris on finding a means of stimulating his creative forces ("I think you've found your oeuvre, Chris"), she is actually contributing to the enablement of his psychotically cathartic behaviour, and ensuring he continues on an increasingly dangerous trajectory that pulls her into its gravity.

Conclusion

Sightseers suggests that any engagement with spaces outside of the individual's usual spatial experience is, ultimately, shaped by the geographical impressions that have already framed the individual's life. These insights into, for example, urban spaces will naturally feed into expectations of the rural, and this is especially true where urbanites spend almost all of their lives surrounded by the built environment. Of course, the converse is true of rural residents, although it is far more likely that they will have routine engagements with the urban, given so many facets of our lives depend upon the institutions that are located within towns and cities. Encounters with unfamiliar spaces have the potential to be marked by wonder and curiosity; the nature of these encounters need not be as drastic as travelling from a rural village to a bustling metropolis. Indeed, someone living in a large city might visit another city of similar size, and still be fascinated by new buildings and peculiarities not found within the spaces that form their usual spatial experiences. What problematises new spatial encounters is the fact that the individual holds preconceived ideas of how those experiences will play out, and often those expectations are derived from mediated versions of space encountered vicariously. This is demonstrated throughout *Sightseers* in the way that Chris relies upon touristic opinions and drifts though places in much the same way that one may drift through a museum or a gallery; stopping to glance at points of interest, in prescribed spots.

Where the individual has preconceived ideas of how exactly new spaces will look, feel and impact upon their experiences, there is an inevitable tension that arises when those expectations are not met. This spatial tension is exaggerated to great effect within *Sightseers*; there is a certain unease that results from Chris investing the rural with the potential to enable an escape from the factors that have contributed to a beleaguered existence within the built environment. Whilst Chris' initially believes his escape to the country will enable a shedding of urban-based traumas, the realisation that his personality struggles cannot be resolved through spatial change ensures he instead seeks to reinvent himself through the borrowing of aspects of identity from the people he kills, and to project his feelings of suppression and low self-esteem onto those he encounters on his travels.

Sightseers focuses upon the urbanites' expectations of the rural, and whilst there is a significant element of spatial tension because of the disconnect between

these preconceived ideas, and the reality of the experiences Chris and Tina are subject to, they serve an essentially comedic arc, and so these tensions are often resolved through the use of humour (and darkly comedic violence). The following chapter, conversely, examines similar spatial presumptions stemming from an urbanite's limited experience of the rural, but contrasts these with the rural inhabitant's perceptions of the city resident. Unlike *Sightseers*, *Eden Lake*[31] does not offer the same comedic avenues of resolution and is a wholly more sombre experience.

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[31] *Eden Lake*, directed by James Watkins (Rollercoaster Films, 2008), film.

Chapter Two

"Slapton Quarry, my Arse": Spaces of Inclusion and Exclusion in Eden Lake

Eden Lake,[1] James Watkins' 2008 offering, is a somewhat polarising addition to the contemporary British horror cannon; whilst the film has attracted largely positive reviews, they are markedly noteworthy for either praising the film's ability to generate fear alongside its exploration of behavioural mores,[2] or else it is praised for what some reviewers have viewed as an accurate representation of 'broken Britain'.[3] However, this latter aspect - the film's representation of its working-class characters as lawless, feral and entirely amoral – has inspired some less than favourable critiques. Owen Jones, commenting upon what he views as a skewed and reactionary representation of working-class youth within the film, argues that the central protagonists (Kelly Reilly, Michael Fassbender) 'find out the hard way why the middle-classes have every reason to fear the lower orders'.[4] Whilst his view is argued well, and entirely valid, Jones' reaction (as representative of much of the film's criticism) suggests that a potential (mis)representation of class is the film's only narrative point of interest. However, to focus entirely on issues of class is to ignore the film's engagement with space which is, in both visual and narrative terms, a central concern. The film's tensions result from an inability on the part of both the middle-class couple, Jenny and Steve, and a gang of local youths to authentically occupy a space that has been earmarked for a gentrification process that will both economically and spatially exclude both parties.

This chapter will examine firstly *Eden Lake's* status as a horror film; given the film's narrative has proven to be so polarising, it is appropriate to discuss its somewhat ambiguous status as horror, and why it is most appropriately placed into that category, rather than be defined as simply a thriller. Ideas of authority will then be discussed, and how the presence, lack of and precise nature of authoritative expressions within the film give rise to a number of behavioural and spatial tensions. Next, a key narrative issue will be explored, in the idea that spaces can be either socially or physically constructed as inclusive and exclusive zones that generate tensions for those finding themselves excluded. I will then explore the idea of spatial expectations, and how

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[1] *Eden Lake*, directed by James Watkins (Rollercoaster Films, 2008), Film.
[2] Peter Bradshaw, 'Eden Lake,' *The Guardian*, Dec 9, 2008.
[3] Chris Tookey, 'Eden Lake: A Great Movie (If You Can Stomach it),' *Mailonline*, Sep 11, 2008.
[4] Owen jones, *Chavs* (London: Verso, 2012), 130.

tension arises when a cognitive, imagined idea of a particular spatial experience is subverted by the reality of space as it is encountered, in much the same way that the preceding chapter has done, except this chapter will also examine rural expectations of urban dwellers. I will also discuss the ways in which memory informs spatial expectations. This is followed by a consideration of the key spatial differences between urban space (particularly London) versus the rural, and how each particular space encourages particular cultural engagements.

Is Eden Lake a Horror Film?

Within a thesis that proclaims to examine British horror cinema, there is an expectation that the films contained therein sit decisively within the genre. Such objectively simple generic placement, however, is not easily achieved. The questions of what horror is (and is not), and why the genre is enduringly fascinating have inspired dedicated academic deliberation,[5] and whilst this discourse has helped to define elements within *some* films that are accepted as belonging to the horror genre, there are other films that evade such precise categorisation. *Eden Lake* is one such film (as is the subject of this thesis' final chapter, *Calibre*)[6] and occupies a somewhat problematic space; the ambiguous threshold that separates the horror film from the thriller. As such, it is a perfect foil for the above questions. Mark Jancovich has argued that 'genre definitions are produced more by the ways in which films are understood by those who produce, mediate and consume them, than they are by the internal properties of the films themselves',[7] and yet 'genres cannot...simply be defined by the expectations of "the audience." because the audience is not a coherent body with a consistent set of expectations'.[8] Essentially, any aesthetic and thematic properties a film demonstrates may well define that film as horror for *some* viewers, but not for others, regardless of how clearly any one individual believes a particular film is generically coded. Clearly, then, it is necessary to proffer some subjective argument on my part if I am to count *Eden Lake* amongst my other examples of British horror cinema.

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[5] Andrew Tudor titularly framed the question in his article *Why Horror: The Peculiar pleasures of a Popular* Genre, whilst Noel Carroll's *The Philosophy of Horror* is an ambitious exploration of the genre's fascination.

[6] *Calibre*, directed by Matt Palmer (Wellington Films, 2018), film.

[7] Mark Jancovich, 'Genre and the Audience: Classification and Cultural Distinctions in the Mediation of *The Silence of the Lambs*,' in *Horror, the Film Reader*, ed. Mark Jancovich (Abingdon: Routledge, 2002), 151.

[8] *Ibid*, 153.

The film that best exemplifies the horror/thriller ambiguity is Jonathan Demme's *The Silence of the Lambs*.[9] The film's narrative centres upon a trainee FBI agent assisting in the investigation of what appear to be related murders. This premise, the pursuit of a serial killer, is a trope immediately familiar to the thriller. However, it is a theme that has been explored often within the horror genre; John Carpenter's *Halloween* provides exemplary evidence of a film that utilises the serial killer trope and is almost universally considered to sit comfortably within the horror canon.[10] There would seem to be sufficient elements of graphically represented murder and mutilation within *Silence's* narrative to ensure its untroubled inclusion within the horror genre. But, as Jancovich states, many of the film's reviews presented it 'as offering the pleasures associated with the horror movie – that it will be gripping, terrifying, shocking, etc. – while also legitimating the film through its distinction from the genre'. This distinction, Jancovich claims, is presented through reviews and opinions 'in two main ways: first, through claims about the film's aesthetic "quality," and, second, through claims about its politics, which are generally defined in terms of feminism'.[11] It is true that the film was, in one sense, distinguishable from much of the output that sits more decisively within the horror genre in terms of its overall aesthetic polish and it employed a cast of actors more aligned with non-genre films, but these factors more than likely resulted from a budget afforded a film clearly pitched at a wider audience than a genre film might realistically be expected to reach.

Any claims towards an overt exploration of cultural or political concerns are clearly subjective and bring to mind Jancovich's earlier point that such readings are the product of consumption, rather than 'internal properties' that a film may possess. In any case, any perceived element of intellectual and political engagement that Demme's film is credited with does not intrinsically separate it out from horror cinema; the volume of academic work examining the genre is testimony to its ability to express a range of cultural and political themes. What does decisively cement *Silence's* status as horror is the fact that the film is not afraid to linger on the acts of violence that help to generate the tensions and shocks that, for many genre viewers, exemplify the horror film. For example, within the scene in which Hannibal Lecter escapes from a cage in

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[9] *The Silence of the Lambs*, directed by Jonathan Demme (Orion, 1991), film.
[10] *Halloween*, directed by John Carpenter (Compass International, 1978), film.
[11] Jancovich, 156.

which he is being temporarily incarcerated, he is shown biting a guard's face, then repeatedly striking another guard with a baton. The scene concludes with views of Lecter's face and white outfit covered in blood, standing over one apparently dead guard, laying in a pool of his own blood, and another seriously injured, and it is this treatment of violence as a set piece (and the camera's refusal to cut away) that ensures the film demonstrates the tension, shock and disgust that aligns it with other films that are less controversially classified as belonging to the horror genre.

Eden Lake shared neither the budget nor the audience of *The Silence of the Lambs*; it grossed under $4 million in worldwide box office returns compared to the latter's $130 million and was produced with a meagre $2 million budget. *Silence* had a production budget of $19 million, an even greater contrast given that *Silence* was released in 1991 and *Eden* Lake in 2008. Whilst it may be tempting to assume that *Eden Lake's* modest budget means it is easier to align it with the more marginalised horror category, the production values alone do not guarantee its passage into the genre. There is nothing implicit within *Eden Lake's* narrative that suggests it *should* belong to the horror genre; rather, like *Silence* it is the film's willingness to linger upon its acts of violence, and the tensions it elicits that ensures its generic credentials. Andrew Tudor argues that 'along with narrative tension, which is an expectation audiences have of every kind of horror movie, horror fans also clearly expect monstrosity, though in quite what form is open to question,'[12] and *Eden Lake* delivers its monstrosity through the representation of its teenage antagonists.

Within his book *The Philosophy of Horror,* Noel Carroll offers a sustained analysis of what precisely constitutes a horror narrative, or a horrific figure. Within this text, Carroll is largely concerned with the idea of the monster, and whilst he states that he avoids reading human antagonists as monstrous, his arguments are very much applicable to *Eden Lake's teenagers.* For example, Carroll suggests that a 'recurring symbolic structure for generating horrific monsters is the magnification of entities or beings already typically adjudged impure or disgusting within the culture'.[13] Within *Eden Lake*, the gang of antagonistic teenagers that first taunt and then attack Steve and Jenny are already coded as being somewhat dangerous figures. The nature of

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[12] Andrew Tudor, 'Why Horror: The Peculiar Pleasures of a Popular Genre,' in *Horror, the Film Reader*, ed. Mark Jancovich (Abingdon: Routledge, 2002), 50.
[13] Noel Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror* (London: Routledge, 1990), 49.

this demonization will be expanded upon later, but briefly, the gang's monstrosity stems from the fact that adults are implicitly wary of teenagers when gathered in even small numbers, and even more so when the teens can in some way be aligned with the stereotype of the hoodie (again, this term will be explored in more detail further). In keeping with the ambiguous line that the film treads, the gang are exaggerated versions of teen figures, rather than entirely fictional creations; the film's gestures towards cinematic realism mean that nothing is ever *quite* unbelievable. Arguably, the gang express fears about the kinds of behaviours that teenagers are *imagined* to indulge in. Whilst they are shown to bully another child, and generally behave in antisocial ways such as littering and playing loud music, the escalation of their behaviour (the torture and murder of Steve) is exaggerated to the point that it stretches its realist aesthetic. This exaggeration works to elevate the teenagers from being simply troublesome to actively threatening. It is this escalation of threat that provides both the narrative tension and the presence of monstrosity that ensures *Eden Lake* can be considered a horror film.

The horror genre is not unique in portraying acts of violence and murder, but it is the *focussing* upon these acts, and the affective reactions they engender, that codify the genre. Carroll suggests that 'the character's affective reaction to the monstrous in horror stories is not merely a matter of fear, i.e., of being frightened by something that threatens danger. Rather threat is compounded with revulsion, nausea, and disgust'.[14] There are several moments during *Eden Lake* where acts of violence are rendered as set pieces, and especially the torture and eventual death of Steve. The film's teenagers are not implicitly frightening; rather, it is the nature of the violent acts they threaten, and eventually act out, that elevate them to the status of horrific figures. These actions challenge the viewer, insofar as they are graphically represented and lingering in their portrayal of the destruction of the body. They therefore imbue the narrative with elements that render the film's teens as being monstrous.

Authority

Malevolent children have long been used within horror cinema to express fears concerning adolescents and young adults becoming autonomous and threatening

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[14] Carroll, 22.

figures. From the insular group identity of the children within *Village of the Damned*,[15] the matricidal zombie child Karen in *Night of the Living Dead*[16] through to the demonic children of *The Exorcist*[17] and *The Omen,*[18] the idea that children (even teenagers) can be monstrous figures resonates so profoundly because they are implicitly believed to embody innocence, and adults are believed to have an innate level of authority that children are expected to acknowledge. Indeed, *Eden Lake* places great stock in this idea right from its opening scene in which we see Jenny playing a game of peek-a-boo with her class of nursery-age children. These children obediently follow Jenny's instructions and are silent when she raises a finger to her lips. This scene, embodying as it does wilful obedience to authority, is intended to serve as a counterpoint to the antisocial, aggressive and criminal behaviour enacted by the teenagers later in the film. However, the comparison is not entirely fair. It is not unreasonable to suggest that children of such a young age are far more likely to recognise parental authority, as well as the *in loco parentis* authority of the teacher. Through its teenagers, the film suggests that the influence of 'authority' figures lessens as children enter their teens and become less reliant upon familial relationships, instead looking to their peers for influence and approval. Peter Bradshaw suggests that at its core, *Eden Lake* is 'about older people and the young: a gang of feral children who are as powerful as adults,'[19] and it is certainly true that much of the narrative tension derives from the lack of control that Jenny and Steve are able to exercise over both the teenagers and the situation that they find themselves in as a result of the autonomy that the gang demonstrate. Any assumed sense of authority on the part of Steve and Jenny is, in the first instance, predicated on their status as adults, but any loss of authority is further complicated by Jenny's status as teacher; a role that is often recognised as authoritative even outside of the classroom.

Bradshaw further states that the gang 'instinctively exploit the indulgences and prerogatives extended to them as children, having semi-comprehendingly imbibed a sense of resentment and entitlement from their own elders'.[20] Despite the gang comprising members of varying ages, and demonstrating behaviours that attempt to

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[15] *Village of the Damned*, directed by Wolf Rilla (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer British Studios, 1960), film.
[16] *Night of the Living Dead*, directed by George A. Romero (Image Ten, 1968), film.
[17] *The Exorcist*, directed by William Friedkin (Hoya Productions, 1973), film.
[18] *The Omen*, directed by Richard Donner (Twentieth Century Fox, 1976), film.
[19] Bradshaw.
[20] *Ibid.*

locate their collective identity as a semi-mature group, they are repeatedly spoken to, and spoken about, as children. Steve and Jenny first encounter a lone boy, Adam, who is collecting insects in the woodland that surrounds the quarry, and when Jenny speaks to him he tells her that his mum has told him not to talk to strangers. Adam is perhaps in his early teens, old enough to be left to wander the woodlands on his own, and yet his mother's admonishment infantilises him. The same is true when Steve and Jenny first see Brett and another member of his gang bullying Adam. Jenny is alarmed by their behaviour, but Steve says "just boys being boys; as long as they leave us alone". Steve's flippant attitude towards this behaviour immediately marginalises the severity of the physical intimidation directed towards Adam and belies both a belief that the gang will not trouble himself and Jenny because of their own status as adults, and a belief that children cannot pose a significant physical threat. Even when the gang begin to direct their aggression towards the couple, Steve fails to sufficiently acknowledge the potential threat and potential level of criminality involved. For example, Brett watches Jenny sunbathing through his binoculars, and the camera lingers on her body, demonstrating his own sexual desire (which immediately problematises any attempts to view him simply as a child). As the gang leave the beach, and they walk past the couple, Brett shows his genitals to Jenny. If this act was performed by an adult, it would implicitly be viewed as sexual misconduct. It is even probable that if the act had occurred in a more public space (such as the village), there would be immediate repercussions.

Undoubtedly, there is a clear distinction between a reduced capitulation to authority, and the actively disrespectful and aggressive behaviour that is directed towards Steve and Jenny. This distinction is a crucial concern within *Eden Lake's* narrative and is explicitly stated in a scene where Steve and Jenny drive up to the quarry from London. As they drive, a radio talk show takes calls from parents on the subject of unruly children, ASBOs and precisely where the behavioural breakdown occurs. One parent calling in to the show says "It's just a case of, well, y'know, it's your problem, you sort it. Well, it's hard to do when you've not got the backbone of the school behind you". Clearly, then, the preceding scene of Jenny's class filled with obedient children is given extra gravitas when framed with this commentary, suggesting that obedient behaviour stems from early childhood instruction. Whilst the film does not offer any direct insight into the gang's school experiences, there are a

couple of hints at the lack of influence that schools may have played in the teenagers' development. In particular, Brett often speaks monosyllabically, and at times in almost broken English. Throughout the film he speaks in short phrases, often no longer than a couple of words that are repeatedly stated in such a way as to suggest he may find it difficult to formulate further speech. Tellingly, in a scene in which the gang have coerced Adam into leading Jenny to a clearing where they intend to inflict some violence against her, Brett appears and says "how now brown cow". This phrase reveals both the fact that Brett may know that Jenny is a teacher, and that he associates teachers and schooling with a rudimentary educational stage.

The classroom scene, demonstrating obedient childhood behaviour, and the commentary offered by the mother on the radio suggest a parental deferment of responsibility, and an assumption that the guidance and discipline that are apparently absent in children who are given ASBOs should come from somewhere other than the home (or, at the very least, should result from a system of mutual support). However, the film does go to lengths to demonstrate the ways in which parental models of behaviour can be crucially influential upon children, and how just as Jenny's class learn respectful behaviour from her classroom games, the gang who terrorise her and Steve are simply regurgitating the behaviours that they have experienced at home. Owen Jones argues, of *Eden Lake*, that 'perhaps most disturbing is the role of the parents...who routinely swear and slap their kids about. In a shocking finale, it is they who apparently torture the girlfriend to death after she kills a couple of the "chavs" in revenge'.[21] In the context of models of behaviour, and capitulation to authority figures, it is indeed true that *Eden Lake* demonstrates parental authority that is gained through the threat of violence. In an early scene in which Jenny and Steve are sitting in a beer garden (they are staying overnight in a local pub, before venturing out to the quarry), a child repeatedly pesters its mother. Steve, annoyed by this boisterous behaviour, says "that child needs a good…" but is interrupted by the child's mother slapping the boy very forcefully. What is most disturbing about the scene is the fact that nobody intervenes, protests or even turns at the sound, suggesting the behaviour is far from unusual, and not worthy of either condemnation or intervention. Indeed, as Jenny stares, the mother stares back, challenging her to speak out. Steve's initial wish that

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[21] Owen Jones, *Chavs* (London: Verso, 2012), 131.

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the child be (presumably) smacked, hints at an externalised belief that misbehaviour should be stemmed through short, sharp shocks.

In another scene at the end of the film, Jenny has escaped the gang but inadvertently found her way to Brett's home. Here, the parents of the children are gathered, at a party, when they realise two of the children have died (and, in particular, they realise Jenny has stabbed the youngest, Cooper). Before dealing with Jenny, Brett's father orders him to go to bed, and when Brett protests his father strikes his face. What these scenes demonstrate is that any sense of authority that these parents exercise is rendered through threats of violence. What this essentially means is that the children moderate their behaviour only when this behaviour is directed towards their parents (for fear of violent repercussions) and learn that violent authority is an effective means of asserting their identity.

Spaces of inclusion and exclusion

As discussed earlier, *Eden Lake*, for my purposes, justifiably earns its status as horror cinema through the various tensions it elicits. Its willingness to linger on prolonged acts of violence generates affective tension, but the film also explores spatial tensions of varying kinds. These tensions largely stem from the ways in which the gang and the couple find themselves either included or excluded from particular spaces within the film, such as the village and Slapton Quarry. Ultimately, the space in which most of the narrative unfolds (the woodlands surrounding the lake) is private property, and as such there is an implicit tension surrounding the right, or lack thereof, to use it as a space of leisure.

The space of Slapton Quarry (the site being redeveloped as Eden Lake) is some ten miles from the village where Brett and his gang live. This is no small distance, even given the fact that the gang travel to and from the quarry on bikes. So why exactly do the gang retreat there? As has been discussed, the behaviour of the teens is self-regulated when in the company of their parents, because of the threat of reprimanding physical violence. The lake and the woodland are spaces in which Brett and his cohort can indulge in behaviours that do not incur the repercussions they would if they were performed at home. An example is the way in which the gang treat the wildlife they encounter within the woodland. They are seen taunting a badger that they have trapped, and this mirrors behaviour they demonstrate earlier in the film, when they are

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shown taunting an animal (presumably a rabbit) in a hutch in Brett's back garden. In the latter scene, Brett's father shouts at the boys, moderating their behaviour, but within the woodland, when Steve and Jenny find the gang taunting the badger (the gang have stolen Steve's car, and he has followed them to ask for his keys back), there is no such reprimand. In fact, Steve tells Brett that he is not interested in whatever they are doing to the badger, and simply wants his keys back. This mirrors his earlier attitude when he sees the gang bullying Adam and says "just boys being boys. As long as they leave us alone". Steve's attitude towards the gang's persistent antisocial behaviour hints at a belief that the regulation of the gang's behaviour is in no way his responsibility, even when that behaviour is directed towards himself and Jenny.

The behaviours that the gang (and Brett in particular) indulge in can be viewed as both a reaction against the domestic situations in which they are controlled by parental violence, and a reproduction of that same violence. The woodland and the lake, then, are treated as spaces in which any sense of behavioural conformity (or at least the sort of capitulation to authority that is necessarily practiced within the domestic space) is placed on hiatus. Whilst the space around the quarry was public parkland, where it is entirely possible that the gang still ventured and indulged in antisocial behaviour, the fact that its status has now changed to private property means that the teens are able to indulge themselves without any apparent fear of repercussion. In this sense, the space can be understood in terms of what Michel Foucault called the crisis heterotopia. This space, he asserted, is one 'reserved for individuals who are, in relation and to the human environment in which they live, in a state of crisis'.[22] Foucault specifically alludes to groups of people for whom this sense of crisis is linked to physical change, such as pregnant or menstruating women, the elderly and teenagers. The teenagers (and perhaps, in Cooper's case, almost of teen age) that comprise Brett's gang are undergoing the physical and hormonal changes expected of individuals transitioning from childhood to young adulthood. Perhaps more importantly, they are also exploring the corresponding behavioural changes that embody a rejection of parental (and other forms of) authority, and instead looking to the support and approval of their peers.

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[22] Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias,' *Architecture, Mouvement, Continuité, no.5 (1984)*: 4.

Given the lack of any overarching authoritative influence upon the gang, within the space of the quarry and woodland, their behaviour is, in its mildest expressions, indulgent and hedonistic and, at worst, aggressive, threatening and criminal. Because these behaviours would not be viewed as being socially permissible if they were observed by others within the village, they align the space of the quarry more correctly with Foucault's concept of the heterotopia of deviation. Foucault describes this space as being one 'in which individuals whose behavior is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed'.[23] Whilst Foucault gave examples such as prisons and psychiatric hospitals (places where people are actively placed and excluded from society at large), the woods can still effectively be aligned with this concept, given that the gang remove *themselves* there in order to indulge in behaviours that are impermissible in other, more publicly viewed spaces. Certainly, the dangerous sexual behaviour that Brett exhibits towards Jenny, and the violence directed at both animals and other people are behaviours that would be considered criminal in a more socially constructed space.

Whilst the film does predominantly locate its 'improper' demonstrations of behaviour in spaces that are removed from the larger public gaze, It is notable that the parents of the gang (or at least the group of adults associated with Brett's father) do indulge in behaviours that are both sexualised and violent within the domestic space, suggesting there are influential factors at work in relation to the gang's behaviour. For example, when Jenny, having escaped the gang and the space of the quarry, stumbles into Brett's garden, Brett's family and their adult friends are gathered together, in what is seemingly a garden/house party. The party is centred on a large hot tub, containing two topless women, and a fire pit. Music is playing at an antisocial level, and it is no coincidence that, essentially, the garden party mirrors the physical layout of the lake, as well as the behaviour of the gang at the quarry. The gang sit on the shores of the lake, playing music at a volume that irritates Steve to the point that he confronts them; they drink alcohol; Brett demonstrates a sexualised gaze towards Jenny, and indecently exposes himself to her. The parallels between the two groups are clear, and the fact that the teenagers' behaviour is so closely linked to that of the adults suggests

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[23] *Ibid, 5.*

how formative domestic models of behaviour are, in determining the mis/behavioural traits of children.

It is clear, then, that Brett and the other teens' engagement with the space of Eden Lake is a counterpoint to the exclusionary space of the village (where their behaviour is regulated by the threat of parental punishment), and is therefore inclusive, because of the ways in which the gang can indulge in unregulated behaviours. The fact that the quarry is no longer a public space, and to all intents and purposes has a blanket exclusion policy in place, means that the gang are free to enact their deviant behaviour without interference (we are never shown any evidence of security guards enforcing the exclusion policy, and the perimeter fence marking the space as private is minimal, and apparently easily breached). The fact that the quarry and surrounding woodlands has lost its status as public space enables the gang to misbehave without any apparent danger of intervention, but for Steve, this change of use is viewed as being profoundly detrimental. Tim Cresswell argues that 'the very materiality of a place means that memory is not abandoned to the vagaries of mental processes and is instead inscribed in the landscape – as public memory'.[24] Steve's engagement with Slapton Quarry is based upon positive memory associations; he has enjoyed previous visits to the quarry with friends and seems to have a genuine appreciation for the aesthetic qualities therein. Whilst the redevelopment does not, it seems, intend to radically alter the aesthetic qualities of the space (its 'very materiality'), it is the 'sealing off' of the space from public use that ensures it will be resigned to the status of memory for Steve, and others who have enjoyed the woodlands as a space of leisure. In being excluded from the space, and having no possibility of actively engaging with it, it is inevitable that the space as place of public use can *only* exist as a memory for Steve.

It is clear that Steve is resentful of the redevelopment, both because it relegates the space as he knows it to the status of memory, and the Eden Lake project's homes are pitched towards a socioeconomic category that he is unable to find a place within. Edward Relph suggests that 'space is claimed for men by naming it,'[25] and the quarry's titular modification visibly irks Steve, as he first sees the billboard advertising the redevelopment project and tells Jenny "Eden Lake, my arse; it's Slapton Quarry". This statement suggests an irritation that is grounded in more than the change of name;

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[24] Tim Cresswell, *Place: An Introduction* (Chichester: Blackwell, 2015), 120.
[25] Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion, 1976), 16.

rather, it is an anger directed at the fact that those with the financial resources to buy into the development are buying into the erasure of Slapton quarry's status as public space. Doreen Massey argues that 'one of the concerns we have regarding the privatisation of public spaces is the fact that it entails 'the vesting of control over spaces in the hands of non-democratically elected owners'.[26] When Steve incredulously says, of the proposed change of name, "it's Slapton Quarry," he is implicitly decrying the transfer of ownership of the land from public to private investors. The fact that the space of the quarry, and the surrounding woodland, was public parkland, and has now been bought by a private company suggests that the local authority has either been approached with an offer to purchase the land, or else have actively courted buyers.

In either case, the suggestion is that the use of the land by the public is viewed as being less important than the initial price of purchase by the development company. One must wonder whether there is an assumption that the residents of Eden Lake will boost the local economy, which is questionable given the exclusionary language that advertises the new homes. The feeling is that the community will be insular and idealistic; the name itself explicitly suggests the idea of spatial perfection. Not only does the redevelopment price Steve out of the space (perhaps reminding him of his place within a socioeconomic hierarchy), but it also intrudes upon his cognitive idea of the space; ensuring it can exist only within his memory. As Relph suggests, the 'withering away and modification' of places is 'prevented by ritual and tradition that reinforce the sense of permanence of place'.[27] Despite the fact that the space has been used as a public park, its previous incarnation as a quarry has informed its identity, both in terms of the lake (essentially, the centre of the quarry flooded with water), and by virtue of the persistence of the name. The redevelopment marks a decisive alteration of the permissible use of the space, and the loss of any sense of tradition that has marked Steve's (and others') engagement with that space.

Spatial expectations

Much of the spatial tension demonstrated in the first half of the film results from Steve's expectations of the space of Slapton Quarry (that are so informed by the social conditions prevalent during his previous visit), in contradistinction to the space he

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[26] Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage, 2005), 152.
[27] Relph, 32.

encounters, given it is already in the early stages of modification. Steve has invested significant cognitive energy into a spatial idea that takes in the positive experiences his previous visit has offered him, and the fact that the space allows him access to the particular aesthetics that such an unspoiled rural space contains. In Jenny's case, her own engagement with the space of the quarry is initially characterised by her reluctance to share Steve's enthusiasm, and a belief that a cheap camping trip is less romantic than a weekend away in a more recognisably prestigious location.

Cresswell states that 'memory appears to be a personal thing – we remember some things and forget others. But memory is also social. Some memories are allowed to fade – are not given any kind of support. Other memories are promoted as standing for this and that'.[28] In Steve's case, his previous time spent at the quarry has indeed become conflated with the memory of the social interactions that occurred at that time; he apparently previously stayed at the same pub that he and Jenny spent the night at and camped out at the lake with male friends. Whilst this visit with Jenny is, in part, an attempt to tap into the positive associations that were built during his last visit, it is inherently difficult to experience a reproduction of the same pleasures, given that so many factors present in his previous visit are now modified. Indeed, when Jenny is clearly less than impressed by the atmosphere at the pub (with its child smacking, and constantly arguing clientele), Steve says "it was alright last time I was here". Presumably, the memory he has of that previous visit is pleasurable because it involved homosocial bonding, and perhaps the group identity negated the same elements of social exclusion that is felt this time. Steve and Jenny are treated as outsiders from the moment they arrive at the pub, when another presumably local patron quickly steals a parking space that Steve had intended to occupy, and whilst standing at the bar waiting to be served, the barman speaks to Jenny rather than Steve, whose Irish accent further alienates him from the local dialect. The same alteration of socialised elements ensures that this latest visit to the quarry inevitably fails to meet any spatial expectations. Quite apart from the personal weight of expectation that colours Steve's experience, the space has significantly changed in terms of its accessibility. Because the space is now both physically and culturally

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[28] Cresswell, 119.

demarcated from its previous status as public space, there is the possibility of an involuntary fading of any meaning and cognitive investment that the space represents.

There is a fundamental paradox at work, in relation to how the proposed new community is advertised, and how this image relates to the way in which the space is essentially predicated on exclusionary spatial practices. Relph argues that the identity of a place can be reduced to three fundamental components: 'the static physical setting, the activities, and the meanings,'[29] and within the space of the quarry there is a wilful modification of the latter two categories that relies on a contradictory, apparent stability of the first category. As a site of natural beauty that was fully accessible to the public, the quarry was a space in which people walked, took pleasure in the observation of natural elements, enjoyed the (largely) unspoiled rural vistas and engaged in other various outdoor activities; Steve and his friends had previously camped there, and had even scuba dived in the lake. As the land is now essentially private property, anyone performing these activities is inherently trespassing, and therefore these activities are now rendered illicit. And yet the ability to perform these activities is not implicitly altered by this change in land ownership; rather, it is the exclusionary access to the land (and the right to enjoy the activities the land affords) that has been modified. Once the new homes are built, the activities that were previously enjoyed within the space will effectively be privatised, ensuring that those activities and their meanings are modified to exclude all but a particular group of citizens (i.e., the Eden Lake residents).

The exclusive nature of the redevelopment is clearly stated on the advertising hoarding, which reads: 'A secure gated community of fifty superior New England homes set around a beautiful lake within 300 acres of private woodland'. This language is simultaneously exclusory and inclusive. Secure, gated and private all suggest the exclusion (potentially by force, or at least by legal right) of those who cannot afford the homes. 'Community' implies an exclusive group of residents, as does the word superior, suggesting as it does elements of distinction and prestige. In describing Eden Lake as containing 'New England' homes, the advertisement suggests a separation from the past and the current version of England (perhaps prefigured by the unruly behaviour viewed up to this point). This phraseology alludes to both the idea of a new

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[29] Relph, 47.

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England, and to the colonisation of North-East America by English puritans (where the unspoiled new world served as a retreat from the old world). This community is primed to occupy, exclusively, a desirable tract of unspoiled rural land.

The promotional advertising for Eden Lake clearly aims to use the exclusive access to this land as a selling point. Given the homes will surround the lake, the woodland will essentially serve the same purpose that it did whilst it was a public park, inasmuch as it is intended to be a space of leisure. The privatisation of this land is not so much a means to exclusively occupy a site of natural beauty as to create an exclusionary perimeter. It would be entirely conceivable for the project to occupy the space in the immediate vicinity of the lake, whilst simultaneously using the proximity to the woodland as a selling point (if the woodland retained its status as a public space). However, in securing the woodland as private property, and advertising the community as gated, the developers are implicitly offering an element of separation to the potential homeowners. What is important to the Eden Lake project is not so much the ability to utilise the lake and woodlands as spaces of leisure, but rather to use them privately. Whilst the members of the public enjoying the space of the quarry could be described as enjoying the opportunity to be immersed in a space of natural beauty in an authentic sense, the exclusionary nature of the redeveloped community (with its reliance upon a financial engagement with space) would ensure the same is not true of those people buying into the space as an exclusive community.

Relph suggests that 'an authentic attitude to place is thus understood to be a direct and genuine experience of the entire complex of the identity of places,'[30] and the ways in which the space of the quarry has been enjoyed by members of the public bring to mind Relph's description of the fundamental components of 'the static physical setting, the activities, and the meanings'. The space has not been subject to an entrance fee, guided tours or mediated in any way, ensuring that the individual responds to, and engages with the space in entirely authentic ways; the activities performed therein giving meaning to the individual experience of the woodland Indeed, Relph further states that an authentic experience of place should 'not (be) mediated and distorted through a series of quite arbitrary social and intellectual fashions about how that experience should be, nor following stereotyped conventions'.[31] There is a

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[30] Relph, 64.
[31] *Ibid.*

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sense of authenticity within the woodland that has been built up through its use as a public site of natural beauty, and it is this authenticity that is being borrowed by the language contained within the development's advertising. The advertising hoarding has some conceptual art that shows the proposed homes situated around the lake's perimeter, with people apparently enjoying the aesthetics of the space. This image seems to prefigure the way in which Steve and Jenny, and Brett's gang sit around the edge of the lake, enjoying the atmosphere it provides, and so even this projected spatial engagement seems borrowed and predicated on the authentic ways in which the space has been utilised.

Jenny's own spatial expectations regarding the quarry are problematised by her conflation of the idea of mediated space and the romantic experience. Steve's own positive, and authentic, appreciation of the quarry's aesthetic qualities has led him to consider the place to be romantic enough to ensure his proposal to Jenny is memorable. However, Jenny does not have Steve's positive spatial and social appreciation of the quarry, and so is dubious about the space as a site for a romantic break, as evidenced when she says "so, Cat's boyfriend is taking her to Paris for the weekend, and my boyfriend's taking me to a disused quarry". Her statement reveals two things: firstly, she is unable to visualise the quarry as an aesthetically pleasing, suitably romantic location for a weekend away. Secondly, Jenny attaches value to Paris, because it is subject to considerable cognitive investment as a site of romantic ambience and prestige. Speaking of the image that is collectively held in place of any particular city, Kevin Lynch suggests that 'there seems to be a public image of any given city which is the overlap of many individual images. Or perhaps there is a series of public images, each held by some significant number of citizens'.[32] Essentially, a city such as Paris has a profoundly mediated image that delivers ready-made tropes to potential tourists. Part of the attraction of a Paris holiday is, it would seem, the prestige of having the means to spend time there; Jenny only knows about Slapton Quarry because Steve has previously spent time there, and so were she to tell her friends she had spent the weekend camping there, they would not be able to draw upon a preconceived image of the space given it is a localised beauty spot with no collective image held together, as Lynch says of the imageable city, 'by some significant number of citizens'. Lynch describes imageability as 'that quality in a

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[32] Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1960), 46.

physical object which gives it a high probability of evoking a strong image in any given observer,'[33] and his description is as applicable to the natural landscape as it is the built environment.

It is the evocation of a strong spatial aesthetic that inspires Steve's return to the quarry, and his desire to share that experience with Jenny. Jenny, certainly initially, cannot see past the fact that the site is fenced off with some evidence of redevelopment; there is no indication of any significant level of physical modification as yet, and when Jenny says "this is getting more and more romantic, you've brought me to a building site," there is more than a touch of exaggeration to her statement. Relph suggests that a 'direct experience of place can be…profound, and whether it is an abrupt and ecstatic experience, or a slowly developed, gently grown involvement, what is important is the sense that *this* place is uniquely and privately your own because your experience of it is distinctly personal'.[34] Steve's previous visits to Slapton Quarry have been marked by the profound effect that Relph discusses. Because of this, he is able to disregard the apparently dishevelled facade that the initial space of the quarry presents. Steve has achieved what Relph terms 'emphatic insideness' with the space, which Relph suggests 'involves emotional participation in and involvement with a place'.[35] This level of engagement can only be achieved once the individual has attained a familiarity with a space and formed emotional attachments to its features. For Jenny, this process is made easier because of Steve's enthusiasm to share the space with her, and she eventually enjoys the space not only because of its visual splendour, but because she is experiencing it with Steve.

The Concrete versus the Natural Environment

Any cognitive spatial expectations, that may or may not tally with existential experiences of a particular space, are inevitably dependent upon the individual's familiarity (or lack thereof) with that space. Whilst Brett and his gang use the space of the quarry as a retreat from the parental authority exercised within the village, they do live within commutable distance from the space, and so the landscape is not, realistically, aesthetically vastly different to the views they can enjoy at home. Their retreat to the quarry does not involve any expectations of, or a need for, spatial change

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[33] *Ibid*, 9.
[34] Relph, 38.
[35] *Ibid*, 50.

in a physical sense; rather, it is a desire to find behavioural freedom that inspires their visits. For Steve and Jenny, however, the aesthetic splendour of the rural landscape is so markedly sublime because it is diametrically opposed to the concrete vistas of London, with the latter containing scant 'unspoiled' visual information. The film demonstrates aesthetic *and* cultural differences between the two environments that support ideas discussed earlier, concerning exclusionary and inclusive spaces, and the right to occupy the space of the quarry. James Leggot suggests that (cinematically) 'the countryside usually figures...as a place of either refuge or violation for the city resident. Evidently, the rural is still perceived ambivalently within the British imagination as a place of both nostalgia and dread'.[36] Slapton Quarry/Eden Lake adheres to this idea of ambiguity and spatial duplicity; quite aside from any apparently positive qualities that the rural evokes, there is also a distance in both physical *and* cultural terms that facilitates the narrative events and serves to isolate Steve and Jenny.

Whilst *Eden Lake* spends very little time within the city (by the four-minute mark, Steve and Jenny are already at the B&B situated close to the village), the visual information its early scenes offer acts as stark contrast to the later rural panoramas. As Steve's car leaves the city, we see precisely how dominated the urban landscape is by manmade structures. Within this vista, it is significant that there are some trees visible, but they are very strikingly dwarfed by the concrete environment. The city's skyscrapers permeate the skyline (identifiable as London through its imageability, to come back to Lynch), and the motorway seems to circle and supress the older structural elements. Cranes are visible markers of the city's constant state of flux, and this tableau suggests the new subsuming the old. The effect of these temporal markers, the jostling of old architectural forms against the new, is a lack of cohesion. Whilst it is possible to pick out individual landmarks (such as the London Eye), there are many elements that are essentially competing for space in what is a jarringly confusing totality. This is entirely in contrast to the space of the quarry, where the landscape is almost completely natural, and so has a flowing cohesion and an organic order. However, the transition from urban to rural space is not marked by an abrupt border; rather, the drive from London to the quarry serves as a spatial gradation.

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[36] James Leggott, *Contemporary British Cinema* (London: Wallflower Press, 2008), 40.

Relph describes roads as 'cutting across' or being 'imposed (up)on the landscape rather than developing with it,'[37] and certainly as Steve and Jenny drive up from London, the motorway is (unlike the rural locales it cuts through) homogenous, bland and detached from its surroundings with the only indication of location being the changing place names on the roadside direction signs. Essentially, those travelling in cars along the motorway are placed into a spatial stasis, meaning they do not authentically take in the changing ambience of the spaces they pass through. Therefore, when Steve and Jenny arrive at the village where they spend the night at a B&B, it is akin to stepping abruptly out of the urban and into the rural, in the sense that the motorway serves as a very gradual dilution of the built environment in transition to the far more naturally dominated space of the village and the quarry. Given their uniformity, and the fact that they are so explicitly manmade, roads are almost a cartographic element extrapolated onto space; the cognitive rendered in the existential. Indeed, Doreen Massey describes maps as being space 'as a flat surface, a continuous surface. Space as the completed product. As a coherent closed system'.[38] Massey's statement suggests that mapped space lacks the potential for the subjective interpretation that allows for a personal and authentic connection to space.

Whilst it would be disingenuous to suggest that the built environment is completely lacking in opportunities to form authentic connections to the spaces it offers, it is true that the natural environment demonstrates less imposed order and prescribed spatial habits. This is exemplified in the different ways in which the city, the motorway and the space of the quarry are navigated. As Steve and Jenny leave London, they negotiate the terrain via the numerous street signs and familiar roads that lead them onto the motorway, where the abundant signage informs the motorist of their location and numerically demarcates the distance between points on the road. Once Steve and Jenny drive into the forest surrounding the lake, there are no such precise spatial divisions and markers. Steve essentially drives along any path that is safely navigable. At one point, Steve's sat-nav (which he has named Kylie, due to its Australian accent) offers the navigational advice of "at your first opportunity, turn around". This advice is prescient, given the fate that awaits the pair within the quarry, but whilst Steve and Jenny find the comment humorous it does illustrate how the space

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[37] Relph, 90.
[38] Massey, 152.

of the woodland and the quarry is not quantifiable in the same way that the rigorously demarcated space of the city (and the motorway) is.

Steve's engagement with the natural environment is curious inasmuch as there are behavioural elements that suggest both an inauthentic imposition of spatial ideas onto the space of the quarry, and a simultaneous recognition that the space itself has an explicit authenticity that the built environment lacks. For example, to an extent Steve views the rural as a passive space that is exploitable and exists to have expectations imposed upon it, rather than as an active space that generates its own expectations and experiences. As Leggott suggests, 'The countryside is usually depicted as a place for masculine bonding, a bolt-hole from the repressive city, a site of childhood longing or bucolic playground for the landed gentry'.[39] This is precisely the attitude that marked Steve's previous visit to the quarry with his friends, and this visit with Jenny seeks to recapture some of that feeling. Given the change in dynamic during this foray into the rural, Steve's expectations are inherently likely to fall short of the mark. Leggott's suggestion that the rural is little more than a space of leisure for the financially solvent is given credence in the way that Steve enters the quarry in a luxurious four wheeled drive vehicle, packed with expensive camping equipment and scuba-diving gear. In travelling to the quarry with such lavish intentions, Steve ensures he is not opening himself up to an authentic engagement with the space, given his enjoyment of it relies so heavily upon accessories that, realistically, most people visiting the quarry would not have access to.

Indeed, Brett and his gang are both scathing and seemingly envious of Steve's car, his camping equipment and even of his relationship with Jenny (Brett certainly demonstrates an attraction towards her, albeit an inappropriate and unpleasant one). This sense of envy is reminiscent of Steve's resentment of the change of status of the quarry from public space to private land. Just as the Eden Lake project reminds Steve of his place within a socioeconomic hierarchy, Steve's own status elicits sneers from the youths who eventually steal his car, his belongings and subject him and Jenny to acts of torture. In taking Steve's possessions, Brett is essentially attempting to plagiarise Steve's identity and his status. He wears his sunglasses and covets his partner, and generally indulges in inauthentic and performative behaviour. The gang's

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[39] Leggott, 40.

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engagement with the space surrounding the quarry is similarly inauthentic, given it does not demonstrate any appreciation of its particular aesthetic spatial qualities; rather, their presence is predicated on the space's seclusion and opportunity to (mis)behave in ways that are hidden from the view of their parents.

Whilst Steve's reliance upon costly accessories and status symbols does ensure he exercises a partly inauthentic engagement with space, there are some moments where it is clear that he has a profound appreciation of the quarry's spatial qualities. Relph states that 'An authentic attitude to place is thus understood to be a direct and genuine experience of the entire complex of the identity of places – not mediated and distorted through a series of quite arbitrary social and intellectual fashions about how that experience should be, nor following stereotyped conventions'.[40] Whilst Steve does attempt to impose his expectations upon the space of the quarry, he does demonstrate facets of engaging with the space in ways that are unmediated and authentic. Indeed, part of his resentment towards the change in ownership of the land is the fact that the use of the space will thus become entirely mediated and prescribed, as well as exclusionary. His recognition of the explicit visual beauty offered by the space, and its potential for behavioural freedom factors into his desire to revisit the space and to share it with Jenny. Jenny bemoans the fact that her friends' partners choose conventionally romantic destinations for weekends away, but Steve's choice of location is genuinely predicated on the stunning natural beauty surrounding the quarry. It is this sense of splendour that he wishes to share with her, and its importance to him is demonstrated in the fact that he had planned to propose to her within that space. In doing so, he recognises the inherent authenticity that marks the space and it this authenticity that he hopes will lend their weekend away, and his proposal, sufficient gravitas.

Conclusion

Eden Lake is a critically divisive film, and especially in the portrayal of its working-class characters. Whilst the film does explore the reiteration of parental violence and suggests that positive behavioural influences must be derived from both the schooling and domestic spheres, the idea is problematised by the fact that the unruly teens, and their dysfunctional home lives, are explicitly working class. There is therefore a danger

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[40] Relph, 64.

that the narrative becomes something of a skewed comment upon class, rather than a de facto condemnation of lawless behaviour. However, the narrative does at least demonstrate that problems concerning antisocialism and knife crime are not exclusive to the city, and do indeed exist within rural locales, despite the presence of abundant natural beauty and increased access to space. Here, rural space is aesthetically idealistic, and yet teeming with both the social tensions that are found within the city, and the parochial tensions that so often form the basis of many rural horror films (including Backwoods and Folk Horror).

Because the narrative occurs almost entirely within the rural, there is a hyperbolization of the insular and local factors that see the villagers mistrust Steve and Jenny (as outsiders to their community) and go to great lengths to maintain a localised moral authority, generating significant spatial tension. Indeed, this sense of socialised threat is an extension of the geographical unease that the space of the woods exerts upon the couple, once their situation becomes threatening. Where the natural space was once sublime and open, it then becomes unknowable and antagonistic. In having the space of the quarry embody such dualistic properties, the film demonstrates how space is far more than merely a backdrop to narrative events.

The space of the lake and the woodland is the heart of the film, and it is this space that serves as the focus for both the gang and Steve's desire to project their own behavioural expectations onto a space that they view as being a passive recipient for their identities. To an extent, the quarry simply serves as a counterpoint to the restrictive space of the home for the gang, and the city for Steve, but its visual splendour is a constant presence throughout the film. The loss of public access to this magnificent tract of land brings with it a spatial inauthenticity that is clear from the advertisement hoarding which presents an idealised image of the quarry, that claims to offer the tranquillity of the unspoiled natural setting but is predicated on exclusionary practices that are entirely at odds with the open and free ideas associated with the rural. Ultimately, the quarry becomes the site for the projection of spatial ideals. The site becomes a playground for the teens, in which they can exercise a degree of autonomy, but the same is also true of Steve, who enjoys the sights and activities that are not available to him within the city. The space represents a profound level of inclusivity for both groups, and its privatisation therefore brings an exclusion that

(certainly in Steve's case) fosters a deep resentment and a pervading sense of spatial tension.

Chapter Three

Down in the Tube Station at Midnight: (Non) Place and Placelessness in London's Underground via Christopher Smith's Creep.

Space is perhaps the single most neglected area of examination within horror studies (and, to an extent, within film studies more generally). More often than not, the term is used fleetingly, and without sufficient engagement. When space *is* given attention, it is frequently in service to two particular ideas: the space of the Gothic[1], or the notion of gendered space[2]. Whilst these areas are, clearly, entirely relevant, their dominance threatens to limit the scope of potential examination that spatial theory can offer to horror studies. The field of spatial theory[3] - encompassing as it does human geography, philosophy and political analysis – has the potential to facilitate readings that open up radical ways of approaching film studies, and particularly readings that engage with contemporary political concerns. One of the most pertinent questions horror academics must engage with is that of what is and is not horror. There can be no definitive answer; rather, there can be personal boundaries and definitions that each writer chooses to work with. There are some sustained, and convincing, analyses of what horror may or may not be[4], but for the purpose of my own exploration I elect to think of horror as a representation of various tensions[5]. One of the ways in which horror elicits its particular affects is through the use of exaggeration (exaggerated fears and threats), and as my own interests are in spatial theory, I am interested in how horror is generated through exaggerated spatial tensions.

One of spatial theory's key concerns is how space is 'produced,' by which I mean how it is invested with meaning. Space is, like any other 'product' subject to ownership, competition and exploitation, and where there is little opportunity to invest

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[1] Fred Botting discusses how, within Gothic tropes, 'horror is most often experienced in underground vaults or burial chambers'. Fred Botting, *Gothic* (London: Routledge), 48.

[2] Barbara Creed suggests that 'the symbolization of the womb as house/room/cellar or any other enclosed space is central to the iconography of the horror film'. Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1993), 55.

[3] As stated within my introduction, there is no clear 'field' of spatial theory; rather, I am drawing on other academic areas of interest to facilitate spatial readings.

[4] Noel Carroll's work is particularly extensive in this respect – Noel Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror* (London: Routledge, 1990).

[5] Andrew Tudor talks about tension as a facet of horror, but largely as narrative tension that elicits physical affects. The idea of spatial tensions is almost entirely absent from horror studies. Andrew Tudor, 'Why Horror? The Peculiar Pleasures of a Popular Genre,' in *Horror, The Film Reader*, ed. Mark Jancovich (Abingdon: Routledge, 2002), 47-55.

space with meaning, a particular tension can arise; a feeling that one lacks agency. One facet of (particularly urban) space that engenders this lack of agency is the non-place; I will offer some analysis of the concept further into this chapter. Non-places are an increasingly prevalent element within most of our lives, and the fact that they are entirely functional and usually in service to capital means that when we use these spaces, we are passive consumers, not involved in investing these spaces with meaning. If, as Marc Augé[6] suggests, these spaces are unconcerned with identity, then what affect might such spaces have upon the identities of people spending increasing amounts of time within them? I will explore this question through a textual analysis of Christopher Smith's *Creep,*[7] which is distinctive in being one of the few films to utilise the space of the London Underground to generate its tensions (and certainly one of the only contemporary examples). My own reading suggests that the film effectively represents the ways in which the non-place demands contractual relations of its users, subdues individual expressions of identity in ways that ensure the individual feels isolated (if not physically, then at least behaviourally) and ultimately affects its users in such a way that increased exposure to the space of non-place may subdue identities to the point where individuals might be described as non-people. The film exaggerates this loss of identity, and the affective reaction to the space of non-place by aligning the Underground (and the film's protagonist) with ideas of abjection, which can serve to usefully describe both space and those within that space.

Non-Place and Placelessness

In 1995, the French anthropologist Marc Augé produced what was to become his defining text, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthology of Supermodernity*[8] in which he posited the idea that our current temporal moment (or at least the moment in which his text was produced) could be thought of as supermodernity. As this name suggests, rather than being a stage beyond a supposed postmodern moment, Augé views supermodernity as being an exaggerated version of the qualities of modernity; a 'hyper' version (and indeed the term hypermodernity is often used interchangeably with supermodernity) that is defined by an accelerated loss of identity, an

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[6] Marc Augé, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* (London: Verso, 1995).
[7] *Creep*, directed by Christopher Smith (Pathé, 2004), film.
[8] Augé.

overabundance of information and the shrinking of distances facilitated by the increased importance of the internet.

Twenty years before Augé's text, the human geographer Edward Relph[9] had explored the loss of spatial identity that he described as placelessness. This is essentially a 'weakening of the identity of places to the point where they not only look alike but feel alike and offer the same bland possibilities for experience'.[10] Relph argues that placelessness occurs when places lose their authenticity, through a variety of processes that include 'mass communications, mass culture, big business, powerful central authority, and the economic system which embraces all these'.[11] These are qualities that resonate with Augé's descriptions of supermodernity. Essentially, Relph suggests that rather than there being no places at all (as the term placelessness might suggest), there are fewer opportunities for places to be invested with authentic identities; instead, there are spaces that are facile approximations of place. This lack of spatial difference can be observed whenever we visit new towns and cities, and we recognise many elements that are quite deliberately reproduced from place to place. Both public and commercial buildings follow seemingly identical blueprints, and looking at the ever-increasing suburban outskirts we see identical pockets of new-build estates popping up. Relph suggests that a place that is properly invested with meaning typically 'involves an integration of elements of nature and culture'[12] and these new constructions do nothing to reflect any sense of local geographical or cultural markers of identity. Instead, they seem to hint at remote and disconnected inceptions; they are discrete units of space that have interchangeability at their core. Walking along any city street, we find the same configuration of chain businesses, with interiors that are as uniform as possible from branch to branch. Once inside these repetitive spaces, their actual location becomes less important than the business identity itself; we may momentarily forget that we are in Sheffield or Newcastle, but there is little doubt that we are in a particular coffee shop chain. The effect of this proliferation of homogenous spatial elements is that unique buildings, and independent businesses are increasingly less prevalent (the latter lacking the financial backing and 'knowable' brand identity

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[9] Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion, 1976).
[10] *Ibid*, 90.
[11] *Ibid*, 90.
[12] *Ibid*, 3.

that the chain companies are able to invest each branch with[13]) and the factors that make a city noteworthy are usually historical elements, protected by heritage status; those factors that cannot be changed.

There are echoes of Relph's placelessness in Augé's work, and in particular in his conception of the non-place. These, he asserted, are the spaces in which 'supermodernity finds its full expression'. They are 'space(s) which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity'.[14] Augé described non-places as being largely transient spaces that are usually entirely functional. These are spaces that we are supposed to pass through with singular purpose, and as such they do not encourage demonstrations of individuality, and indeed they foster a peculiar anonymity. Examples of the most commonly experienced non-places are supermarkets, hotel rooms and train stations. Within these non-places, we are initially required to confirm our identity (although it is only our unique financial identity that is called upon, rather than any facets of our individual personalities), particularly through the use of a bank card, a room booking or a travel ticket. Once our identity (credit status) has been proven, we can then enjoy what Augé called the 'passive joys of identity-loss'.[15] Our identities are then only required during a time of crisis (our card being rejected, and so on), when we are reminded that the 'user of a non-place is in contractual relations with it (or with the powers that govern it)'. [16]

It is my intention to utilise Augé's theoretical framework as a means of finding meaning within *Creep*'s narrative. With that in mind, the ideas that will form the basis of my textual analysis are:

Contractual relations: essentially the relationships that the individual enters into with the space of non-place, or the rules that are observed when using the space.

Isolation and a lack of relational identity: the ways in which the space of non-place encourages the suppression of expressions of identity, and prevents the formation of an authentic connection to the space.

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[13] It would seem that whilst chain coffee shops offer brand (and spatial) familiarity, increasing numbers of customers are choosing independent shops, because of the uniqueness of their spaces and the increased choice of coffee blends, given they are not tied to a particular brand identity (Nathalie Ola, 'Have we reached peak Costa Coffee,' *The Guardian*, Jan 31, 2018).
[14] Augé, 63.
[15] *Ibid*, 83.
[16] *Ibid*, 82.

Imposing meaning onto non-places: the ways in which the contractual relations governing the use of non-places are subverted, in ways that enable individuals to form gestures towards relational identities with the space.

Abject space: whilst Augé does not explicitly deal with the concept of abject space, it is possible to suggest that certain aspects of the space of non-place can ensure a sense of discomfort that is reminiscent of Barbara Creed's descriptions of abject space.

Non-places, non-people: finally, I would suggest that the ultimate end to this analysis is the idea that if the space of non-place can be shown to be a space in which authentic identities are suppressed, then people spending a significant amount of time within these spaces may experience a lasting loss of identity outside of these spaces.

Whilst the purpose of my analysis is a narrative examination of *Creep*, it will be useful to first look at one of the most prominent non-places within contemporary urban life that also serves as the location in which *Creep's* narrative takes place.

Train Stations and the London Underground

Train stations are, in terms of their function, entirely transient spaces. They are a space between destinations, not destinations in and of themselves. As is the case with Relph's concept of placelessness, the non-place is homogenous and bland, and train stations certainly demonstrate high levels of sameness and a lack of unique identity. Train stations largely fit into two categories; the Victorian station, retaining the design features particular to that period, or the modern station that more closely resembles the interior of a shopping centre, often with uniform white tiles and atriums. In both cases (but more particularly with the latter), we find the same chain businesses that we find in shopping centres (including those ubiquitous chain coffee shops), and the two spaces therefore become somewhat conflated; if not for the departure boards, it is entirely possible to believe one has wandered into a shopping precinct. So, not only do train stations and shopping centres demonstrate high levels of sameness from station to station and mall to mall, their homogeneity even means their specific functions are not always readily discernible.

Within London's Underground railway, the potential for sameness is vastly increased, given the subterranean nature of the system's location. Whilst the above-ground

entrances may demonstrate some limited degrees of individuality, the platforms themselves are incredibly uniform and devoid of identity, encouraging, as Augé suggests, 'neither singular identity nor relations; only solitude and similitude'.[17] Given how claustrophobic, isolating and oppressive the space of the underground can be, it is somewhat surprising how few examples there are of the space within horror cinema. Hammer's version of *Quatermass and the Pit*[18] used the fictional Hobbs End as the location for an excavated Martian craft that, ironically, calls into question our collective identity. *An American Werewolf in London*[19] used the location of Tottenham Court Road Station as one of a number of transient urban spaces (that included the urban park and the wasteground) in which the titular werewolf was able to hunt and kill its victims (this point will be explored in further detail within Chapter Seven). *Death Line*[20] made great use of its Russell Square setting and, like *Creep*, explored the effects that such a space, a non-place, might have upon an individual spending their lives entirely within that space. Whilst these examples all offer thought provoking explorations of the effects that the space of the Underground might have upon its users, the space remains relatively overlooked, and especially within a genre that very often exploits oppressive spaces.

Christopher Smith's *Creep* is one of very few films to use the space of the London Underground as a narrative setting, and especially in the period that the film was produced. Other films that are roughly contemporaneous to *Creep* may have used claustrophobic spaces to generate their affects (*The Descent*[21]), but *Creep* offers an engagement with subterranean space that is far more complex than the merely claustrophobic. The film is, for the most part, set in the Charing Cross station, and concerns a German woman, Kate, trying to make her way to a party in another part of London, where George Clooney is thought to be in attendance. She finds herself first locked inside the closed station, and then abducted by a monstrous figure that inhabits an abandoned space that intersects with the Underground.

Contractual Relations

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[17] *Ibid*, 83.
[18] *Quatermass and the Pit*, directed by Roy Ward Baker (Hammer Film Productions, 1967), film.
[19] *An American Werewolf in London*, directed by John Landis (Universal Pictures, 1981), film.
[20] *Death Line*, directed by Gary Sherman (American International Pictures, 1972), film.
[21] *The Descent,* directed by Neil Marshall (Pathé Distribution, 2005), film.

As discussed above, the non-place is a space of function that is, more often than not, demarcated for very specific use; it is not a place of leisure and improvised behaviour. Augé describes the individual's relationship with the non-place as such: 'the user of a non-place is in contractual relations with it (or with the powers that govern it)…the ticket he has bought, the card he will have to show at the tollbooth, even the trolley he trundles round the supermarket, are all more or less clear signs of it'.[22] Whilst we might recognise these contractual relations at work within the non-place, and to some extent we might even welcome such structured functionality, it is entirely possible that this behaviour unconsciously bleeds into our interactions outside of the space of non-place. I would suggest that this is the case with Kate, whose initial behaviour suggests she is calculating and even unsympathetic towards others, evaluating her relationships on the basis of how useful people might be to her. Kate is introduced at a party, where she exchanges barbs with a work colleague, Guy, who is also a cocaine dealer (and, apparently, *her* cocaine dealer). As Guy flirts with Kate, she responds with a series of put-downs (she tells him she'd rather sniff glue than flirt with him for a line of cocaine, and tells him the only feelings she has for him are pity and disgust), to which he responds with "well I hope you remember that when you're trying to score later". She then tells a friend that "men are such simple creatures," before blowing Guy a kiss, eliciting a fawning look. How does this behaviour relate to the space of non-place? If, as Augé suggests, the 'user of a non-place is in contractual relations with it,' and non-places are embodiments of the values of supermodernity, then those values are apparent in Kate's own interactions with other people, where she is interested only in the exploitation of functional contracts; what others can do for her.

This attitude is shown most explicitly in the way Kate interacts with two separate homeless people. The first is a man, sitting beneath a cash machine who asks her if she has any change. Her response is dismissive, but rather than simply saying no, she says "this machine dispenses notes. If you're looking for change, why don't you hang around a phone box?" Whilst clearly sarcastic, this statement does hint at her implicit belief in appropriate functionality; if the homeless man wants to be given 'change,' then he needs to relocate to a site where change is in use. Whilst he does not specifically ask Kate for coins (rather, the word change is a metonym for spare money), Kate takes the phrase very literally, implying the clear instructions of the

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[22] Augé, 82.

functional non-place. Her second interaction is within the Underground, when she tries to buy a travel ticket, but has no change. Another commuter, waiting to use the ticket machine, tells her she must go to the booth to buy a ticket, but Kate asks her if she has any change. The commuter reminds Kate of the rules (Augé's 'contractual relations'; you must either have change or buy a ticket from the booth), which in a sense simply reiterates the need for appropriate functionality that Kate reminded the first homeless person of. A homeless woman inside the Underground then offers the other commuter a travel card for £1.50, to which she agrees. Kate then offers the homeless woman a £20 note for the card, to which the other commuter says "it's illegal to buy from tramps anyway," invoking the strict rules of use once she has been outbid by Kate. Whilst we might view Kate's actions as an attempt to push against the strict rules of use that the station operates on, that Mahyar Arefi describes as the 'codes…and instructions (that) shape the individual's behaviour and obligations,'[23] she is simply entering into another relationship of transaction, one in which she views the homeless woman purely in terms of her current use value. The fact that she gives this woman a (relatively) large sum of money is in no way an act of altruism; rather it is an act that exploits her particular needs. Kate meets this woman again (along with the woman's boyfriend, Jimmy) as she tries to find her way out of the station, and repeatedly offers Jimmy money to assist her. She extends this spatial idea of contractual relations onto the people within it, viewing them as exploitable factors in service to her needs.

The space of non-place is designed in such a way that its users are reminded of its particular function constantly; when you enter a hotel room, it is little more than a bed and a bathroom (you are here to sleep and take a shower, before moving on); it is well established that supermarkets are meticulously designed spaces that encourage customers to move through them in particular ways, anticipating and guiding the shopping experience at every turn. Augé suggests that 'a person entering the space of non-place is relieved of his usual determinants. He becomes no more than what he does or experiences in the role of passenger, customer or driver'.[24] Within the space of the Underground, we see these very structured patterns of use at

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[23] Mahyar Arefi, 'Non-Place and Placelessness as Narratives of Loss: Rethinking the Notion of Place,' *Journal of Urban Design* 4:2 (1999), 182.
[24] Augé, 83.

play. After waiting a while for the train, we see Kate fall asleep, and it is likely that this was facilitated by her drinking a bottle of vodka. Kate drinks her vodka next to a man who eats a kebab, but as neither of these activities is encouraged within the space of the station, they are performed in a hurried, purely functional way. The activities of eating and drinking are outside of the remit of the passenger, and so become bereft of any 'enjoyment' or social value, and in fact activities that might seem unremarkable in places proper can become, in the non-place, even outrageous. Within stations, the tannoy voice reminds us that smoking is not permitted in any part of the station, whilst passengers are encouraged to report any behaviour that arouses suspicion ('see it, say it, sorted'). This is an understandable measure, taken after the 2005 bomb attack that occurred between Kings Cross St Pancras and Russell Square, but within a space that discourages expressions of identity, it is probable that most behavioural expressions can seem exaggerated and even suspicious. As Fran Tonkiss states, 'being just another face in the crowd…can lead to feelings of insignificance and the impulse to exaggerate one's individual qualities, to emphasize the matter of personality in the realm of the impersonal'.[25] What Tonkiss suggests is that there exists an underlying tension whenever the individual is within the non-place; a desire to express one's individuality set against a sense of conformity that is expressed by the very space of non-place itself. Clearly, then, these strictures that we are subject to within these spaces act upon us in profound ways, and there is a very real danger that we absorb and extrapolate these narrow behavioural terms onto spaces outside of the non-places that encourage them.

Isolation and a Lack of Relational Identity

As stated earlier, Augé views non-places as being 'space(s) which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity'.[26] To be clear, in discussing Augé's use of the term 'relational' I refer to spatial elements that are in some way *authentically* connected to an individual or a group; elements that enable the individual or group to form relationships with a particular space. Any gestures towards identity that non-places might offer are facile, and in service to their primary (capital generating) functions. A hotel room may display on its walls some artefacts that locate it within a particular city (a painting of the Tyne Bridge in Newcastle or the Mersey

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[25] Fran Tonkiss, *Space, the City and Social Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015), 118.
[26] Augé, 63.

Docks in Liverpool), but these gestures have no more relational identity than the name of these landmarks on a map. In fact, if a hotel room in Liverpool were to have a painting of the Tyne Bridge on its wall, it is not a stretch of the imagination to suppose that the incongruity may go unnoticed.

There are two ways in which the space of non-place can be isolating: firstly, as Augé suggests, within these spaces we are 'alone, but one of many,'[27] and become 'subjected to a gentle form of possession' in which we experience 'the passive joys of identity-loss'.[28] We may not be physically isolated - and Augé's phrasing suggests (somewhat ironically) that there is a pleasure in being relieved of the need to express individuality - but the pressure to subdue our identities within these spaces ensures we are isolated in behavioural terms. Secondly, the space *can* become literally and physically isolating if it is entered outside of its designated hours of use. As I asserted earlier, horror represents an exaggeration of a particular set of tensions, and within horror narratives that lean towards the dystopian, we see hugely exaggerated ideas of abandonment and isolation; the iconic image of a deserted London in *28 Days Later*[29] or the incongruous sight of a shopping mall in stasis within *Dawn of the Dead*[30]. Horror cinema very often utilises abandoned or isolated spaces as a means of generating spatial tension, and therefore the non-place experienced outside of its hours of use is a useful representation of that tension.

After falling asleep on the platform, Kate awakens to a locked and deserted station. The station's location far beneath the streets of London is an immediately isolating factor; in pretty much any above-ground location, a person would stand a good chance of finding some way out (a fire exit; a window where a passer-by could be alerted) in the, admittedly unlikely, case of a lock-in. This is clearly not the case within a locked Underground station. An empty train arrives, which Kate boards as the alternative is to spend the evening in the deserted station. The arrival of this train is unusual because the station is closed, and the non-place is governed so tightly by its rules of use, and an adherence to a timetable. The timetable is particularly important within a travel station, as it designates not only the hours of use, but also further specifies the times that the user will arrive at and depart from the station. Augé

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[27] *Ibid*, 82.
[28] *Ibid, 83.*
[29] *28 Days Later,* directed by Danny Boyle (Fox: 2002), film.
[30] *Dawn of the Dead*, directed by George A. Romero (Laurel: 1978), film.

suggests that 'the link between individuals and their surroundings in the space of non-place is established through the mediation of words,'[31] and in a sense, any identity that a station has *is* textual, given its purely functional identity, and its lack of behavioural and relational potential. In fact, the textual beacon of the departure board is the absolute focus of attention for those waiting to board their trains, who sit and stand almost in behavioural stasis. There are no real markers of geographical identity and so the name of the station (emblazoned onto its Roundel) is its only marker.

Unbeknownst to Kate, the cocaine dealer from the party, Guy, has followed her to the platform and boarded this empty train. He flirts with Kate, and suggests her earlier behaviour betrayed a mutual attraction, before he attempts to sexually assault her. During this assault, Guy is himself pulled away and attacked by an unseen assailant. Clearly, the isolated nature of the Underground is a factor in Guy's behaviour, as is the fact that the non-place has very particular patterns of use. If the scheduled trains have finished their journeys, then there is absolutely no reason for anyone to be there. Therefore, Guy knows that his actions are unlikely to be witnessed or interrupted. Fran Tonkiss states that 'gendered perceptions of safety and danger in the city are based on an unstable geography…a railway station or park that might seem quite safe at midday appears unsafe at midnight. In a practical sense, it is no longer the same space'.[32] As the non-place, being an entirely functional space, ceases to effectively operate outside of its hours of use, it is more than simply a 'different' place; it is effectively a spatial void. It is almost inconceivable that anyone should be inside a train station or shopping centre outside of its business hours. After Guy is attacked, Kate flees the scene and tries to find a way out of the station, encountering only locked exits and absolute isolation. The only figure of 'authority' she finds is a CCTV security supervisor, manning the night watch from within an observation office. As Kate pleads for his help, via the security camera, he says "how do I know there aren't a gang of crackheads with you?" and she responds with "do I look like a crackhead to you?" throwing her arms out to draw attention to her clothing and to what she believes to be her clearly respectable appearance. But she is in a non-place outside of its designated hours, and so any status she believes she has is entirely secondary to that fact. The fact that Kate directs her appeal to a camera demonstrates

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[31] Augé, 76.
[32] Tonkiss, 103.

how we assume these ubiquitous devices are there (at least partly) for our protection. But, as Tonkiss states, CCTV is often a 'passive spectator… (that) mimics the common stance of actors in public space'.[33] In this sense, the security supervisor's apathy can be read as reflecting a more general reluctance (within the space of non-place) to step outside of the expected behavioural parameters. The security supervisor responds with "It's hard to tell, I'm watching you on a black and white monitor in a long shot". There is a distance, and a lack of presence at play. The supervisor is viewing Kate's reduced and distorted image, and within the non-place, where the individual is subject to Auge's 'passive joys of identity loss,' we place our individuality on hiatus. Within such spaces, we instead project very subdued, mediated, and even distorted versions of ourselves.

Imposing Meaning onto Non-Places

Within the non-place, the individual's identity is subdued through an adherence to contractual regulations that work to suppress expressions of individuality. Augé suggests that 'when individuals come together, they engender the social and organize places. But the space of supermodernity is inhabited by this contradiction: it deals only with individuals (customers, passengers, users, listeners), but they are identified (name, occupation, place of birth, address) only on entering or leaving'.[34] Within *Creep*, we see an example (in Jimmy and Mandy) of the ways in which it is possible to subvert these strictures, and impose meaning onto the space of non-place.

The security supervisor's reluctance to assist Kate is partly due to the fact that the space of the Underground is being used as a shelter by a homeless couple, Jimmy and Mandy (the woman who sold Kate the travel ticket), and he is unsure whether Kate is part of "the homeless crowd". Kate encounters the couple as she is looking for an exit, and she asks Jimmy to show her where the security supervisor's office is, but he tells her that "we're not messing with him, cos he don't mess with us". Their presence within the station is tolerated, provided they remain anonymous figures, not drawing attention to themselves or making overt demonstrations of identity (observing the non-place's 'contractual relations'). During the station's opening hours they sit largely in silence and after the station has closed they live within a storage hatch within

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[33] Tonkiss, 76.
[34] Augé, 89.

one of the walls. Essentially, they are tolerated as long as they behave in similar ways to the passengers using the station, whose time there is spent in a behavioural stasis. However, the fact that the section of the Underground that Jimmy and Mandy occupy is a makeshift home makes it a more relational space than the platform. As Relph states, 'being lived-in confers some authenticity on even the most trivial and unrelentingly uniform landscape'.[35] Their appropriation of the space is reminiscent of the ways in which the space of the Underground was used during air raids in both world wars. The people sheltering there were drawn to the space purely because of its advantageous location underground, but they recognised that spending significant periods of time within that space, devoid of relational or historical elements, could have detrimental effects upon their individual and group identities and so measures were taken to personalise the space in order to limit these depersonalising factors. During WW2, some shelters had libraries, equipment for playing records and some even produced newsletters.[36] Clearly, these measures helped to maintain morale and encourage a group identity in opposition to the identity of the German forces dropping bombs on London. But these acts of personalisation were also an attempt to impose familiarity onto the space precisely because it is so bereft of relational identity. Jimmy and Mandy's 'home' contains little more than some sleeping bags, a lamp and their heroin paraphernalia, but it is a space that they have invested with enough meaning to differentiate it from the impersonal non-place of the Underground platform.

Abject Space

So far, I have argued that non-places are isolating spaces that severely limit expressions of personal identity. I will now highlight how *Creep* conflates the space of the Underground with the abject and undesirable space of the sewerage system, suggesting the railway elicits a similar degree of (at least aesthetic) undesirability. I will also explore the film's representation of its antagonist, Craig, and suggest the ways in which the non-place has limited his opportunities for personal identity formation, and ensured he is viewed as a non-person.

Kate eventually encounters the figure that attacked Guy; the assailant, Craig, is a male who seems to have either suffered from birth defects, or received severe

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[35] Relph, 80.
[36] Christian Wolmar, *The Subterranean Railway* (London: Atlantic Books, 2004), 285.

injuries at some point in his life, meaning he lacks any particularly identifiable features. It is therefore difficult to define his age, or any particular details about his appearance. Craig has apparently lived his entire life within a clandestine, and now defunct, experimental medical facility, the purpose of which was to conduct experiments upon children. This facility is housed close to the underground and seems to interconnect with a sewerage system. It is significant that there are some parallels between the sewerage system and the Underground railway. Clearly, a system of pipes that carries away the body's waste materials needs to be kept at some physical distance, for the purposes of hygiene. Similarly, London's transport systems have a history of being kept at some distance from ideas of civility, for the purposes of both hygiene and aesthetics. Prior to the advent of the railway, the *de rigueur* form of transport was the horse drawn carriage or, for the general public, the horse drawn omnibus. Given the widespread use of horses as a means of pulling public vehicles, and as a means of private transport, it was inevitable that a great deal of dung was produced which, according to Christian Volmar's history of the London Underground, would be 'dumped in vast dung heaps in the poorer areas of town, contributing greatly to the squalor, stench and unhealthiness of Victorian London'.[37] Clearly there was little regard for the citizens lacking the financial resources to live elsewhere who, like the 'mechanics' of the transport system, were viewed as being an undesirable element.

The decision to locate London's new railway underground was also informed by a desire to separate the functional from the formal. Wolmar discusses how 'soaring land values and the vested interests of the major estate owners made surface developments in the centre of London prohibitively expensive and prompted a plethora of schemes for creating railways underneath and through London'.[38] So there was, from the outset, a desire to keep the perceived 'base' functionality of the railway out of sight, and especially out of sight of the more wealthy parts of the city. Clearly, the same can be said of the city's sewerage systems, although the necessity for hygiene-based distance is understandable. At the start of the film, we see two sewerage workers performing a routine tunnel check and finding a blocked inlet pipe. The blockage is described as being the result of "shit…tampons, condoms, pretty much anything that will fit down a toilet". These are the things that people want to forget about, because

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[37] *Ibid, 11.*
[38] *Ibid, 16.*

they symbolise bodily functions, things that are expelled in order for the body to work correctly. Barbara Creed, discussing the abject nature of the body's ejected materials, states that 'although the subject must exclude the abject, the abject must, nevertheless, be tolerated for that which threatens to destroy life also helps to define life'.[39] In a similar way, the space of the sewerage system is tolerated, because it undoubtedly improves the health of society, by removing a source of potential disease, but that system must be kept at sufficient distance to prevent its intrusion upon the lives of the people who benefit from it. We engage in the expulsion of the abject bodily elements on a daily basis, but to talk about it is taboo, and the subject is therefore excluded from 'polite' conversation. One of the workers, Arthur, describes the way in which different parts of the sewer have different smells, depending on which part of London they run beneath, as though even shit is spatially apportioned, and subject to distinctions of class and culture. The other worker, George, responds by saying "this ain't the fucking Discovery Channel…there's nothing I wanna know about shit". The correct distance between the subject and the abject must be observed, and George's statement suggests that watching a documentary about the sewers is clearly distance enough. It is even significant that George is working the tunnels as part of a probationary programme. His transgression against society's normative behaviour (he was charged with a minor drug offense) means that he is viewed as being as similarly disposable and abject as the bodily detritus that he wades through.

Non-Places: Non-People.

Augé argues that 'if a place can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place'.[40] Given that anyone spending significant amounts of time within the non-place will be subject to this lack of historical and relational identity, it is possible to suggest that such persons are in danger of becoming non-people, and this is certainly true in the exaggerated scenario of a person spending their entire lives within such a space. This is precisely how Craig should be viewed, in light of the very

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[39] Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis* (London: Routledge, 1993), 9.
[40] Augé, 63.

narrow experiences his space offers him, and the ways in which it is devoid of opportunities for identity formation.

Because the sewerage system is essentially the city's colonic tract, and the Underground was, from its outset, viewed as a dualistically functionally vital, yet abjectly undesirable space, the medical facility's placement within proximity to both of these systems enables it to remain undetected. Because of this proximity to the abject space of the sewerage system, and the non-place of the Underground railway the medical facility is, like both of these spaces, neither relational nor concerned with identity. Inevitably, then, Craig has had no opportunity to form any relational bonds outside of his very narrow experience of space. Relph suggests that properly invested places 'are differentiated because they have attracted and concentrated our intentions, and because of this focusing they are set apart from the surrounding space while remaining a part of it'.[41] This is precisely the case with the space that Jimmy and Mandy occupy, which exists as a pocket of relational identity within the larger non-place of the Underground. They actively make their space relational, through small acts of personalisation; they have some personal items within the space, they have their dog with them and they talk about the space in relation to other spaces, and how they are planning to leave for Jimmy's hometown. This contrasts with Craig's relationship with the space he occupies, which is almost entirely centred upon memories and artefacts from his past. The abandoned facility is filled with reminders of the infancy of its former subjects; toys, cots and even deformed babies preserved in jars. Relph states that 'space is never empty but has content and substance that derive both from human intention and imagination and from the character of the space,'[42] but the space that Craig inhabits is decaying, both physically and culturally, as though being the only 'active' participant within the space, Craig is unable to cognitively sustain any character that the space once had. It is understandable that Craig, having spent his life within this facility, has had no age-appropriate examples to assist in his development, and so in a sense he is in a suspended, infantile stasis. As is the case with a young child, his behaviour is largely imitative. Craig's tendency towards the mimetic is shown in a horrific scene, in which he has abducted Mandy and strapped her down to a birthing table. He goes through the mime of washing his hands

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[41] Relph, 28.
[42] Relph, 10.

underneath a tap that seems to have stopped working some time ago, even turning the tap off with his elbow, as he must surely have watched a surgeon doing. He puts on a surgical robe, a pair of filthy latex gloves and puts a gas and air mask on Mandy's mouth before picking up a saw and performing a procedure that is left to the imagination. This is, presumably, a recreation of an event that has left an indelible mark upon Craig's memory, and as he must surely associate the medical procedure with new life being brought into the world, it is entirely possible that this pantomime is a futile attempt to invest the space with some active meaning.

Whilst the image of a homeless person with a dog plays, to some degree, on stereotypes, it is also the case that dogs are the de facto domestic pet. Having Jimmy and Mandy's dog, Ray, within their living space therefore invokes some idea of a recognisable domestic setting. As a counterpoint, Craig is followed wherever he goes by a pack of rats. Rats represent an abject aspect of the natural world; traditionally viewed as being disease carriers, they inhabit entirely abject spaces such as sewers, and have come to be largely associated with dead matter and spatial decay. They are, then, an appropriate companion animal for Craig, who is physically abject and occupies a space that is decaying both literally and symbolically. Throughout the film Craig emits high pitched squeals, and it is possible that he is attempting to imitate the noises that the rats produce, in an act of simpatico and self-identification. This further reinforces the notion that Craig has had no opportunities for identity formation, if he is reduced to identifying with a pack of rats. It transpires that Craig is in the habit of abducting people from the space of the sewerage system and the Underground, and housing them in a seemingly disused section of the sewerage facility. We see Craig cutting some flesh from one of his captured victims, and throwing it into a pit filled with rats, and we can assume that as he doesn't have access to a source of food within the facility he is also consuming this raw flesh. Craig is, like the rats, merely surviving as he flits between the facility, the sewerage system and the Underground, hunting for food. His isolation within a space so lacking in opportunities for identification has reduced him to something less than human, a facile approximation. It is possible to view Craig's space in terms of what Relph calls 'primitive space,' which he describes as being 'structured unselfconsciously by basic individual experiences, beginning in infancy, associated with the movement of the body and with the senses'.[43] Craig's

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[43] *Ibid*, 9.

actions suggest an infantile exploration of both his senses and his spatial surroundings, as he seems to look and move around the spaces he encounters with apparent curiosity. There is a sense that Craig is somehow not fully formed and is still coming to terms with his own physicality, and his surroundings. This aligns him, as a non-person, with the space of non-place, as described by Augé, when he suggests that 'place and non-place are rather like opposed polarities: the first is never completely erased, the second never totally completed'.[44]

Kate is initially held captive by Craig, but manages to escape along with one of the sewerage workers from the beginning of the film, George, and as they overpower Craig, and are about to kill him, he repeats the final words Mandy spoke, before he performed his fatal act of surgery upon her: 'please don't hurt me. I'll do anything you want'. It is only when he repeatedly says Mandy's final word 'Jimmy' that Kate realises he is simply mimicking her dying pleas. Having no speech of his own, Craig does not recognise the meaning or significance of Jimmy's name and is simply repeating what he recognises as a plea, in order to save himself. As the film draws to a conclusion, we see Craig's inability to express any authentic identity facets leading to his death, as he carries out a purely functional act of hunting for food, whilst Kate is reduced to a distraught and dishevelled figure who, in the film's final moments, sits on the platform with Ray the dog. In a final ironic moment, a commuter mistakes her for a homeless person and places some change on the floor for her, the irony of which elicits an exasperated chuckle from Kate. Craig's life spent within the space of non-place has led to both his complete lack of identity and his monstrous acts, and within the context of the film this is an exaggerated version of the idea that non-places have a suppressing influence upon those who spend time within them. However, Kate's own descent into a loss of identity is far less exaggerated, and as such it is far closer to possibility.

Conclusion

The preceding reading of *Creep* demonstrates the value and effectiveness of utilising spatial theory as an analytical tool, given space is literally (and inescapably) everywhere, and spatial theory allows us to recognise the ways in which we are able to become active participants in the production of the spaces we experience. It is also

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[44] Augé, 64.

the case that spatial theorists can, and should, start to explore the horror genre as a narrative form that represents exaggerated fears about space, and to view films from within the genre as expressions of spatial engagement and spatial concerns. A film such as *Creep*, whilst offering a narrative that is nightmarishly exaggerated, does not offer a fantasy space. The underground (as one of many non-places we all encounter on a daily basis) is a space that actively works upon the identities of those spending time within it, and the film demonstrates how train stations are spaces that are specifically entered to satisfy a singular need, and one that involves financial transactions. Any behaviours that fall outside of this narrow remit appear to be exaggerated, because of the otherwise subdued nature of expressions within the non-place, and similarly these discrete units of space do little to engage with the spatial and cultural particularities of their locations, instead simply reiterating brand identity and function.

Because the individual has a limited and purely functional relationship with the non-place, these spaces have little significance outside of their singular purpose. However, the film demonstrates how people subverting that specific objective can impose a degree of meaning onto these spaces. For example, the homeless couple who live within the underground invest meaning onto the space simply because they live within it, and whilst the station does not offer the same opportunities for personal investment that a traditional home might, it is still a lived-in space. Because of this, they attempt to interact with the station's visitors in ways that fall outside of the prescribed behaviours, which is jarring for passengers encountering them.

Whilst this couple continue to express the few facets of relational identity they share (making a home within the space of the Underground which contains a pet dog), it is clear that their identities are subdued because of prolonged exposure to the non-place, and this is all the more true of Craig, who does not have the advantage of a companion nor a relational existence outside of the facility in which he grew up. He becomes an exaggerated embodiment of the effect that non-places have upon the individual; he even lacks physical features that are distinctive (whilst he is distinguishable because of the physical injuries or defects he bears, he is almost 'unformed'). His habit of mimicking the speech of those he encounters suggests a lack of personal identity aspects, and indeed Craig is merely surviving in the spaces in which he spends his time, in much the same way that any time spent within the non-place is functional and

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singular, without the possibility of spontaneous acts or expression of identity. As befits a horror narrative, Craig represents an exaggerated idea inasmuch as spending significant periods of time within non-places is to risk the suppression of personal identity and to experience profound limitations on self-expression. These ideas, supported by a strong performance from a leading actor, also inform the characterisation of the antagonist who is central to the next chapter's film. The following chapter will also share some of this chapter's thematic concerns, such as the idea of the suppression of personal identity expressions, and will suggest that the ideas of non-place and placelessness are not exclusive to the contemporary era.

Chapter Four

Going Underground: Space, Relational Identity and Abjection within Death Line

The subject of the previous chapter, *Creep,*[1] is inevitably compared to a film that preceded it by 32 years; Gary Sherman's *Death Line* (known in America as *Raw Meat*).[2] The comparisons are fair enough, given that both films take place within London's Underground railway system and centre upon monstrous figures, having apparently spent their entire lives within that space. Smith has denied the influence of *Death Line* upon *Creep,* instead suggesting that John Landis' *An American Werewolf in London's*[3] one scene set within the Tottenham Court Road station was his only cinematic point of reference, in regard to the London Underground.[4] Nevertheless, the films share several thematic ideas: the impersonal space of the Underground station; a monstrous antagonist who has spent their entire life within the Underground and adjoining spaces; and the way in which this space isolates a passenger finding themselves trapped within it.

Whereas Smith's film only briefly allows a glimpse at life above ground during its preamble, *Death Line*'s narrative flits between above and underground locations, allowing the more relational domestic and leisure spaces to serve as comparisons to the space of the Underground, and indeed the narrative is constantly drawn back to the Russell Square station to reinforce the contrast between the two spaces. The film's central conceit concerns the disappearance of passengers within the Underground who, it transpires, have been routinely abducted by an individual who is the last surviving member of a lineage of miners who were trapped during a cave-in, as they were constructing a station. This station was abandoned, as the railroad company became bankrupt and it was consequently deemed to be financially implausible to dig out the miners. Because of this abandonment, the miners have resorted to cannibalism and (presumably) inbreeding in order to survive. The result of these defective social circumstances is this individual – referred to in the film's credits, and therefore throughout this text, as 'the Man' - is profoundly unhealthy both physically and

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[1] *Creep*, directed by Christopher Smith (Pathé, 2004), film.
[2] *Death Line*, directed by Gary Sherman (Rank Film Distributors, 1972), film.
[3] *An American Werewolf in London*, directed by John Landis (Universal Pictures, 1981), film.
[4]Christopher Smith, interviewed by Adrian Hennigan, accessed October 9th, 2019, http://www.bbc.co.uk/films/2005/01/20/chris_smith_creep_interview.shtml

mentally, and his social and cultural experiences are, understandably, extremely stunted.

The space of the London Underground, and particularly the Russell Square station, will be examined in terms of its alignment with Marc Augé's concept of the non-place, including the kinds of behaviours that are to be found within such a space, as well as those facets of identity that are inevitably suppressed within a space that lacks a definitive sense of relational identity. The Underground will also be examined through an exploration of Edward Relph's idea of 'inside' and 'outside' models of connectedness to place. The space of the abandoned station will be aligned with the idea of repressed, deviant behaviour that suggests it is a space of abjection, and I will draw upon Barbara Creed's writing on the subject (given her application of the theory in relation to horror cinema). I will argue that the space that the film's antagonist occupies can be read in terms of Foucault's writing on heterotopias, and finally, I will suggest the fact that the man embodies a temporal stasis ensures his presence within the Russell Square station proffers upon him a hauntological status, and I will draw upon Mark Fisher's work to illustrate this point.

Clearly, there are some analytical points of similarity between this chapter and the previous one, given both films examine monstrous figures within the London Underground. However, the stations in which both narratives largely take place differ in terms of the comparisons that are made between them and other spaces. In the case of *Death Line*, the Russel Square station serves as a counter-space to the abandoned station in which the Man lives, and I will therefore explore the idea of spaces that have been drained of their cognitive meaning to support this idea.

Non-Place and Behavioural Stasis

The space of the Underground railway system has a particular set of characteristics, in both its physical placement within the city and the behaviours that it encourages and discourages. Fundamental to an understanding of the properties of this space is the idea that it is one of many 'non-places' that are to be found within the cultural environment of the late twentieth century and beyond, and in particular the city. Marc Augé set forth the idea of the non-place, in his book *Non-Places: Introduction to an*

Anthology of Supermodernity.[5] Augé defines the non-place as a space in which the individual is expected to behave in prescribed ways, performing specific, often singular functions, and where any individual expressions of identity are suppressed. The space of non-place is essentially a space 'which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity'[6] and Augé posited examples that included supermarkets, hotel rooms and airports. Train stations, and particularly those stations within the Underground, conform perfectly to Augé's description. They are entirely transient spaces that serve a very specific function; the boarding of, and alighting from trains. These are not spaces that encourage behaviours outside of the prescribed uses that the space has been designated, and indeed stations regulate the behaviours contained within them with the constant reminder to report any behaviour that arouses suspicion; the specific behaviours that may be considered suspicious are not detailed, perhaps leaving the passenger to deem it safest to simply not behave in any particularly overt way. It is this behavioural singularity that ensures the non-place is bereft of the expressions of individuality that are found in other, more culturally invested spaces, where socialisation is conducive to the space itself and, importantly, within the non-place the individual has no role to play in the investment of spatial meaning; rather, they are simply invited to encounter the space entirely on its (usually capital generating) terms.

Whilst Augé's theory relates to the time in which his book was produced - the cultural moment that he termed supermodernity - the same attitude towards space can be discerned in the London Underground of 1972. *Death Line* demonstrates the subdued, isolated occupation of space that Augé describes, when he says that the individual is distanced from his usual concerns 'temporarily by the environment of the moment'.[7] Within the Russell Square station, people sit and stand alone, whilst in one of the train carriages we see a disparate group of people, most of them sitting almost in stasis, there being no function other than travel. A man studies a crossword whilst another smokes a cigarette; singular, time-killing activities. For most people, a train journey is a functional activity that connects two properly invested spaces: home to work, or home to a place of leisure. Because of this, the space of the underground,

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[5] Marc Augé, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* (London: Verso, 1995).
[6] *Ibid*, 63.
[7] *Ibid*, 83.

and the space of the train carriage, is a space of behavioural stasis where identity and individuality are 'paused' for the duration of the time spent within that space.

Within the non-place, where behavioural expressions are subdued, it could be argued that reactions to crises within these spaces are, accordingly, somewhat subdued. If, as Augé argues, the 'user of a non-place is in contractual relations with it (or with the powers that govern it),'[8] then the individual is expected to travel, wait for their transport to arrive or enter into specific consumer relationships. Any events that potentially draw the individual out of that relationship are therefore anomalous. This model of behaviour, and the potential of it being subverted, initially propels *Death Line*'s narrative. In the film's opening scenes, a well-dressed gentleman (whom, it later transpires is James Manfred, OBE, a government official) is seen leaving a striptease cabaret and then entering the Russell Square station. It would seem, however, that Manfred does not intend to travel on the train; rather, he propositions a woman there whom he likely believes to be a sex worker. Manfred's behaviour suggests an inclination towards activities that are outside of the expected remit for a person of some responsibility, and indeed later in the film an MI5 agent (Christopher Lee) describes Manfred's inclinations as "extramural perversions". The pursuit of these inclinations is undertaken in spaces that are culturally singular and spatially liminal; the striptease club is a space in which sexual proclivities are explored, whilst the Underground station is a space in which people's behaviour is subdued, and therefore the soliciting of sex work is less likely to be contested.

Insideness and Outsideness

The spaces we encounter on a regular or occasional basis become part of our larger spatial experiences and our spatial identities, and there are varying levels of connection we might establish with these spaces. Edward Relph defines the most authentic connection the individual has with a place as 'existential insideness,' and conversely the condition of having hardly any connection to a place is described as 'existential outsideness'. Existential insideness, Relph argues is the condition of having a 'complete and unselfconscious commitment to a place'.[9] Existential outsideness, on the other hand, is the condition in which 'places cannot be significant

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[8] Ibid, 83.
[9] Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion, 1976), 50.

centres of existence, but are at best backgrounds to activities'.[10] It would seem difficult, if not impossible, to form the profound relationship that suggests existential insideness with the space of the underground, given it demonstrates a limited potential for cultural expression and given its transitory nature; there may be some elements of busking and art displays, but these are realistically incidental to the stations' use. However, it can certainly become a familiar space in which people routinely utilise its designated purpose (boarding and departing from trains). The Underground is not, in all probability, a space of existential outsideness; the space does not encourage activities outside of its very specific functions, but the fact that its singular function is a fundamental aspect of the lives of many city dwellers means it is a familiar space. The regular users of the Underground might best be described as demonstrating 'behavioural insideness' which, according to Relph, 'consists of being in a place and seeing it as a set of objects, views, and activities arranged in certain ways and having certain observable qualities'.[11] Relph is describing a highly structured, purely functional engagement with space here, one that ensures the spatial participant remains somewhat detached from the space itself and instead observes the usage that the space prescribes. The Underground is a purely functional space because it serves an isolated purpose, whilst encouraging neither relational engagement nor expressions of identity. Manfred is not a behavioural insider, as he does not intend to utilise the space's singular function, instead taking advantage of the fact that the subdued behaviour within the station allows for the soliciting of sex work; a sex worker standing inactively, waiting for solicitation, would to all intents and purposes look no different to a passenger silently awaiting the arrival of a train. In a sense, whilst a sex worker might ensure they do not appear to behave in ways that deviate from the non-place's proscribed usage, Manfred's brash mannerisms mark him out as potentially exploiting the expected behavioural codes within the station.

The woman whom Manfred propositions rejects his attempts at seduction with a knee to his groin, and proceeds to steal the money he offers her, but it is whilst he is incapacitated that he is then more severely attacked by an unseen assailant. A young couple, Patricia and Alex, find Manfred unconscious at the bottom of the stairs leading up from the platform and Patricia is concerned that he has had an accident, or is

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[10] *Ibid*, 51.
[11] .*Ibid*, 53.

perhaps a diabetic. Alex, however, says "leave him alone, he's a drunk." Alex's desire to ignore this potential crisis can be partially explained by a psychological concept known as the bystander effect, or bystander apathy. The term relates to the observable fact that people are far less likely to assist others in crisis, when there are other observers present. Hortensius and de Gelder suggest that the most commonly held reasons for this phenomenon are the 'feeling of having less responsibility when more bystanders are present (diffusion of responsibility), the fear of unfavorable public judgment when helping (evaluation apprehension), and the belief that because no one else is helping, the situation is not actually an emergency (pluralistic ignorance)'.[12] Alex is an American, and he tells Patricia that "in New York you walk over these guys" which, given the density of New York's population, certainly correlates with the theory that the greater the number of bystanders, the less likely an individual is to assist, and that he implicitly fails to recognise the presence of an unconscious person as a potential emergency. This suggests that Alex's apathy is a response developed through spending time within a densely populated city, where there is an abundance of impersonal non-places. However, Patricia points out that they are not in New York, and indeed they are seemingly the only other people within the station (other than the unconscious Manfred). Alex's desire to pass by Manfred without assisting is, therefore, due to the profoundly depersonalising effect that the non-place exerts upon its users, that ensures the space is single-minded and transitory. To assist an unconscious person within the non-place is to step outside of the remit of the passenger, who is expected to rapidly pass through the space.[13]

As Augé suggests, the non-place is typically devoid of historical or relational elements, which ensures a kind of cultural stasis, where the only temporal moment that is acknowledged is that of the current day. Augé argues that 'everything proceeds as if space had been trapped by time, as if there were no history other than the last forty-eight hours of news.'[14] This is certainly the case with train stations where the daily papers are the only marker of any passage of time other than the timetables displayed on the departure boards, which simply repeat daily arrival and departure routines that

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[12] Ruud Hortensius and Beatrice de Gelder, 'From Empathy to Apathy: The Bystander Effect Revisited,' *Current Directions in Psychological Services* 27, no.4 (2018): 249.
[13] The use of the term rapidly is somewhat optimistic here, given the ubiquity of delayed and cancelled trains.
[14] *Auge*, 84.

give no indication of any temporal identity; the numbers simply being travel data. Whist *Death Line* and *Creep* are separated by some 32 years, the space that both of their narratives use – that of the London Underground – is not significantly different because of this passage of time; the advertisements plastered onto the station walls may allude to products from a particular era (or at least their design may place the adverts in a particular moment), and the electronic departure boards are the only real indicator that *Creep* exists within the digital age. In using scenes from above ground locations, *Death Line* reinforces this idea that the Underground exists in a temporal stasis. We are shown busy London streets, shops, cafes and pubs, all deeply embedded with details that firmly locate these settings in a particular year through items of fashion, décor and other cultural artefacts. It follows that once inside the non-place, the individual's sense of the fluid temporal passage that occurs in properly invested spaces is placed on hiatus, and they are instead subject to the lack of historical or relational identity that typifies these spaces. Even the passage of time is suspended within the Underground; the clocks and departure boards may give what we assume to be accurate markers of hours and minutes, but within the subterranean space, we cannot reliably say whether it is night or day. In fact, this standard and natural, temporal binary is less important within the Underground than the routine arrival and departure of the trains as a marker of time. Indeed, when the police investigating Manfred's disappearance ponder why Manfred disappeared from the steps where Alex and Patricia noticed him, they are able to eliminate the possibility of him travelling to another station because they know the scheduled trains had finished their commute. The timetabling of train arrivals and departures is the fundamental focus of the space and reinforces its functional singularity.

The Man is never shown to venture beyond the space of the Underground, and so his only relationship with the current temporal moment is through the very subdued expressions of culture he finds there. In a way, he represents an exaggerated sense of the disjunction between the non-place and the space that is invested with proper cultural meaning; he is bewildered, bedraggled and bereft of any sense of location within the contemporary cultural moment. The Man abducts first Manfred, and then Patricia, and as each is contained within the Underground (albeit the abandoned station in which the Man resides), they lose their connection to the temporal, cultural fluidity of the city beyond the station, and become either silent or hysterical and entirely

unable to express the cultural identities they would express in spaces of familiarity. Augé suggests that 'the possibility of non-place is never absent from any place,'[15] and given the likelihood that increased exposure to the space of non-place subdues the individual's connection to historical and relational cultural elements, it follows that the possibility of becoming a non-person (even for the specific time spent within non-places) is never absent from any individual's personal identity formation. As an exaggerated embodiment of the space of non-place, the Man is a cultural shade, lacking temporal expression and even lacking language. Indeed, the only recognisable words that he speaks throughout the film are those contained within the one clear phrase he must surely have overheard within the station: "mind the doors". This statement is used by the Man as an exclamation and is uttered with varying degrees of expression and volume when the man abducts and attempts to first placate, and then seduce Patricia. The Man has no idea what the words mean precisely, but he recognises the importance of the phrase because of its repetition within the Russell Square station, and so repeats it to Patricia as an attempt at entering into a cultural simpatico; to align his experience of culture with what he believes to be her own.

Reduced Cultural Investment

Edward Relph suggests that it is possible for places to die, once they are no longer the recipients of active cultural investment. The term he uses is a German word, abbau, which approximately means reducing or unbuilding.[16] This concept can be applied to the space in which the Man lives, the abandoned station, which is a visibly decaying and dying space in both corporeal and conceptual terms. Whilst the Man's prolonged exposure to the non-place of the Underground station has severely limited his opportunities to experience the fluid cultural expressions that are present within above ground locations, it is the space of the abandoned Victorian station that best exemplifies his own cultural stasis. As has been demonstrated, the Russell Square station is a non-place, but as the space that the Man lives in was never completed, what relational value does *it* have? In one sense, when the company that employed the miners abandoned the station (and the workers trapped by the cave-in), it ceased to be invested with any cultural meaning, as though the fact that it was no longer accessible and visible meant that it was erased from existence. However, the company

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[15] *Ibid*, 86.
[16] Relph, 32.

knowingly abandoned eight men and four women, and presumably expected them to die either of suffocation or starvation but, as Inspector Richards tells Inspector Callhoun (the policeman in charge of the Manfred case), there were pockets of air that ensured the miners could breathe, and "as each one died, the others ate him". So as the abandoned station was never completed either structurally or culturally, it follows that the miners consigned to their deaths within this space were deprived of active models of cultural activity to respond to and were effectively locked into a cultural and temporal stasis.

This stasis is physically evident, as the space of the abandoned station is understandably filled with artefacts contemporary to the time of the cave-in; the Man is dressed in anachronistic (and extremely dishevelled) clothing, and the space is scantly illuminated by oil lamps. The abandoned station is separated from the contemporaneous Russell Square station physically, temporally and even aurally; where the Underground station is subject to the routine and punctuating thunder of trains passing through the tunnels that connect it to other stations on the line, the abandoned station's only ambient sounds are the occasional scurrying of rats and the seemingly omnipresent drip of water. The infestation of rodents and the slow but steady onslaught of moisture leaking through into the Man's lair demonstrate how this space is a version of the contemporary station that has been emptied out of its cultural and cognitive values. As this space has been denied the daily intake of passengers, who would continually (and unconsciously) perform the ritual of holding the space's singular use in place, it has both physically and culturally withered. Maintenance workers are shown within the Russell Square station, ensuring the platforms are clean and that the structure of the station is maintained, but the abandoned station does not have this investment, and so the natural spatial elements, such as the moist rock that exists just behind the clean tiles of the contemporary station, and the rodents that naturally inhabit this space, are able to make their way through to the man's lair, as though these elements have been repressed by the intrusion of man-made structures. Their re-emergence ensures the abandoned station is a squalid and unhealthy environment, incapable of sustaining life.

Whilst we are not really given any details concerning the cultural practices that the trapped miners indulged in, we do know that the Man and one singular woman are the sole occupants of the space. There are two cultural practices that we see the man

perform that we can assume have been passed down through the (presumably) increasingly inbred generations that survived the cave-in. The first of these practices is revealed when the Man returns to his lair with the still barely alive body of Manfred. He is placed in a charnel area, where bodies are strewn about and hung on hooks. These bodies show signs of decomposition and it is clear that the Man has been removing flesh for his and his mate's consumption. This area, then, is a larder of sorts. As it is explained that the tunnel collapsed in 1892, it seems unlikely that the trapped miners could survive purely by resorting to the cannibalisation of their own dead (or even turning on their own living for sustenance), and so it is probable that they have survived by eating the rats present within the space and, at a later stage, people abducted during forays into the Underground. This practice of consuming human flesh can be understood as cannibalism, providing the Man and his kin have always considered their meat to be of the same species as themselves. Whilst the biological similarities between the Man and the passengers he abducts are clear, there are cultural differences that suggest that the Man potentially views his victims as being an entirely different species to himself and his cohort, or at the very least an exploitable set of closely related beings. This disjunction between the miners and the people on the other side of the cave-in is facilitated by a combination of physical and cultural isolation.

The second cultural practice occurs when the Man's partner dies. Both are visibly in poor physical health; their pallid skin is covered in pustules and sores, and their hair is thin and patchy. After the Man has attacked some maintenance workers within the Russell Square station, a police pathologist is able to examine a sample of his blood and diagnoses him with septicaemic plague. This is explained to be a condition common to rats, and so we can assume that the Man has received rat bites or, at some point, eaten a rat infected with the condition. It is probable that his partner suffers from the same malady, and during the scene that introduces their shared space, we see the Man tending to his heavily pregnant, and dying, mate. Upon her death, the man places her in a space that is seemingly reserved for the bodies of his kin who have passed away; some are almost entirely skeletal whilst others are seemingly more recently deceased. These corpses each have an artefact of some clear sentimental value, such as items of jewellery. The man continues this tradition by placing a pocket watch, taken from Manfred, onto the corpse of his mate. Whilst

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the Man, and by extension his deceased kin, has a markedly reduced version of what we might recognise as a cultural life, the fact that the space in which he and his mate live is invested with such cultural and historical tradition makes it a more significant and relational space than that of the Russell Square station.

Relph argues that if places are 'sources of security and identity for individuals and for groups of people, then it is important that the means of experiencing, creating, and maintaining significant places are not lost'.[17] Undoubtedly, what makes the Man's space a relational place of significance is the history that the miners have accumulated, and the fact that he continues the ritual of placing the dead into a specific area of his space, and the placing of a 'sacred' item onto the body of his mate, suggests that he is aware of the importance of investing his space with some cultural meaning. The motivation for abducting Manfred, and one of Russell Square's maintenance workers, would seem to be for the purpose of food. However, when the Man abducts Patricia, he does not physically incapacitate her; rather he simply transports her to his lair, where he treats her with what seems to be relative tenderness and makes romantic overtures towards her. Whilst his attempts to seduce Patricia can be viewed in terms of him realising that he needs to replace his female companion in order to procreate (and of course, he may well simply desire some company), it is equally possible that he recognises that if he were to live alone within his space, it would be far more difficult to hold in place the cultural practices and spatial investment that have been sustained, albeit in apparently diminishing fashion, in the years following the cave-in. The Man understands that without the presence of another within his space, his relational place will become bereft of both physical inhabitants and cultural identity.

Heterotopic Space

The space of the abandoned station is a conflation of several sub-spaces, designated for particular functions: the charnel area; the sleeping quarters; the tomb. All of these spatial elements exist within a space that was never designed to contain them, and indeed this spatial conflation and reappropriation ensures the abandoned space can be viewed in terms of what Michel Foucault called the heterotopia. Foucault suggests that the heterotopia is a kind of 'counter-site' in which 'the real sites, all the other real

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[17] *Ibid*, 6.

sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted'.[18] The Man's lair is in essence a condensed version of the larger space of the town or city, containing as it does all of the necessary spatial elements that allow the Man to function. However, whilst the abandoned station is a space in which the Man can function, it is clear that it is not a healthy space, and his continued existence there is purely circumstantial and habitual, rather than the result of deliberate spatial choices. Because of the accidental nature of the space's use as a place of habitation, it conforms to what Foucault terms the 'crisis heterotopia'. These are, he suggests, spaces 'reserved for individuals who are, in relation to society and to the human environment in which they live, in a state of crisis'.[19] The crisis, in this case, is the fact that the space itself is unfit for human habitation, as evidenced by the poor health suffered by the Man, and the fact that he is the last of his kin. Key to this state of crisis is the lack of food available to sustain the Man, and it is the survivalist actions that he takes (the hunting and cannibalisation of people from the Russell Square station) that allows his space to be regarded in terms of another of Foucault's categories; the 'heterotopia of deviation'.

Foucault posits this form of heterotopia as a space 'in which individuals whose behaviour is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed,'[20] and uses the examples of prisons and psychiatric hospitals. To return to Chapter Two, *Eden Lake's*[21] teenage gang demonstrated behaviour that was antisocial, and actively criminal ensuring their actions were deviant and imbued the space of the woodland with a spatially deviant status. Clearly, the acts of cannibalism that the Man and his kin have indulged in proffers upon them deviant status, even if those actions have arisen out of pure desperation. However, the miners were not abandoned because of these actions, which arose at a later stage. They were abandoned because they were viewed as being the property of the construction company who, after the cave-in and the ensuing bankruptcy, deemed them to be an asset that could be written off. Clearly then, the miners (and by extension, the Man) have always been at least partially viewed as deviant elements, presumably because of their class status. Whilst this

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[18] Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias,' *Architecture, Mouvement, Continuité, no.5 (1984)*: 3.
[19] *Ibid.*
[20] *Ibid*, 48.
[21] *Eden Lake*, directed by James Watkins (Rollercoaster Films, 2008), film.

seems to be a subjective assumption, *Death Line* does in fact provide further evidence of the alignment of class with the space of the Underground. This is seen most prominently in the way that the police take the disappearances within the Underground more seriously once a notable person has gone missing. Inspector Calhoun says, "Manfred isn't just a member of the public, to be shoved away in a file somewhere," and admits that other persons have been reported missing previously, with the Russell Square station being their last known whereabouts. In a scene in which Inspector Callhoun and his assistant Detective Sergeant Rogers are searching Manfred's house, the MI5 agent Stratton-Villiers (Christopher Lee) appears, apparently to curtail their investigation, and sneeringly describes these lost people as "missing dentists…missing greengrocers". Callhoun even remarks "what would a geezer like Manfred be doing on public transport?" suggesting that the space itself, and the mode of transportation it facilitates, is an undesirable element. Indeed, the very fact that Manfred explicitly visited the Underground with the intention of soliciting sex work suggests that he himself viewed it as a space of deviancy.

Abject Space

As has been discussed so far, the space of the abandoned station is a more relational space than the Russell Square station because of the historical elements it contains, and despite the relatively little cultural investment that has taken place there. It is also possible to consider the space to be a heterotopia of deviation, because of the incidence of cannibalism that occurs there. But because of this element of deviation, the space can also be considered to be one that embodies ideas of abjection. There are two ways of recognising abjection within the film: considering the space of the abandoned station to be an abject space, and also considering the Man to be a figure who embodies ideas of abjection. Barbara Creed says, of the notion of abjection, 'abject things…exist on the other side of the border which separates out the living subject from that which threatens its extinction'.[22] Creed's statement implies a distinction between that which is filled with life, and that which is filled with death, or at least elements that threaten life. It follows, then, that the term abjection usually indicates an element of physical repulsion, and the abandoned station is indeed a repulsive space, redolent with decay and death; it is a dank, dimly lit space containing

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[22] Barbara Creed, The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis (London: Routledge, 1993), 10.

rodents and rotting flesh. The space exists on the other side of a literal, physical border and a behavioural border that marks out the Man's activities as both deviant and abject. If, as Creed suggests, the border marks out the living from something threatening, then the behaviours that the Man indulges in throughout the film (abduction and cannibalism) mark him out as deviant, and in terms of Creed's statement a literal threat to the travellers within the Russell Square station. However, it is the condition of his space that marks him out as an abject and therefore monstrous figure.

The Man himself is an embodiment of his space, with his physical markers of illness, his debased mannerisms and his lack of language. Creed suggests that 'the ultimate in abjection is the corpse,' conflating it with 'bodily wastes such as shit, blood, urine and pus'.[23] The Man and his female partner are so diseased and dishevelled that some of the more recent corpses within their lair are far more recognisably human than the cannibals themselves. Indeed, when the Man is spotted within Russell Square (by the maintenance workers and Patricia) it is as much his abject appearance as his anomalous presence that elicits their looks of horror and screams. He is recognised as a threatening figure even before he attacks or subdues. The circumstances of the Man's isolation, however, problematise the idea that his actions can simply be separated out from ideas of culturally 'proper' behaviours. If, as Creed suggests, the 'subject must exclude the abject,' then we must consider the original conditions of exclusion that bestowed such abject status upon the miners, insofar as they were abandoned because they were viewed as not being financially worth the cost of rescue. This suggests the notion that the prevailing ideology of the Victorian era conflated class with financial and cultural worth (and to be fair to the Victorians, the idea persists to some degree); the working-class of that period would certainly have embodied some of Creed's notions of abjection, given the lack of general health and the incidence of disease suffered by the Victorian poor. The problem, therefore, lies not with the miners (or by extension the Man) but with industrial, capitalist attitudes that commodify the workforce.

The 'border' that exists between the abandoned Victorian station and the contemporary Russell Square station is symbolic, then, of the need to regulate actions

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[23] *Ibid*, 9.

so that they conform to dominant, ideological notions of behaviours that are healthy and acceptable, as opposed to those considered to be deviant and unhealthy. But this border is also a spatio-temporal marker that can be understood in hauntological terms. Mark Fisher has described Hauntology as being the 'nostalgia for lost futures,' and this statement suggests that futures that never materialised, and the pasts that suggested the possibilities of those futures, are always present within the contemporary moment, and 'still effective as a virtuality'.[24] The presence of these 'spectres' (paradoxically present yet absent) can be thought of as temporal hauntings, and within *Death Line*, whilst the Man physically manifests within the Russell Square station to abduct people, he is effectively a spectre, embodying the past via the temporal moment of the cave-in, and a lost future via the station that should have been completed instead of the one at Russell Square. When the Man travels between the abandoned station and Russell Square, it is as much a temporal journey as a spatial one. As discussed, the cave-in locked the abandoned station into a cultural and temporal stasis, as evidenced by the anachronistic cultural artefacts found there, and the fading elements of culture that the Man clings to. Because of this stasis, when the Man travels between his lair and the Russell Square station, he is literally travelling between two temporal states.

After his partner dies, the Man enters the Russell Square station and attacks some maintenance workers, and whilst he does bring one of them back to his lair (presumably to serve as food), his attack is visibly emotional and angry, as though he holds an awareness of the abandonment that initially isolated his kin, and 'cancelled' his future. In that context, his attack is a cathartic expression of rage, and his repeated forays into the station are a return of a repressed temporal moment; one in which a significant number of (working class) lives were consigned to a slow death because their class status enabled the company to view them as being an expendable asset. Whilst the political climate of 1972 may (one would hope) be kinder to its temporal residents, the cave-in, and the trapped miners, has been comfortably consigned to a historical aside. This is evidenced in the scene in which Inspector Richards recounts the incident to Inspector Callhoun, with a historian's enthusiasm, and the latter is tetchily dismissive, as though the details are tedious. The 'haunting' that the Man inflicts upon the contemporary station, then, is a condemning presence that refuses to

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[24] Mark Fisher, 'What is Hauntology?' *Film Quarterly* 66, no.1 (2012), 19.

allow its cancelled future to be entirely buried along with the abandoned station and its miners.

Conclusion

What *Death Line* manages to do so effectively is to offer a complex and ambiguous antagonist that sits comfortably within horror cinema's pantheon of monstrous figures, whilst simultaneously being a sympathetic character who is a victim of circumstance and prejudice. As is true of the preceding chapter's antagonist, Craig, through a combination of appropriate exposition, and a masterful performance from actor Hugh Armstrong, the Man is given psychological depth that results from the historical trauma of abandonment, and the way in which he is locked into a temporal stasis via the space he inhabits. The film effectively explores a number of spatial concerns throughout. Whilst the abandoned station is shown to be a space that suffers from a lack of cultural investment, due to its uncompleted status, the fact that it is a lived-in space means it has more relational value than the space of the modern Russell Square station. The latter suffers from the lack of historical and cultural identity that marks it a non-place; purely functional and discouraging of expressions of individual identity. The Man's lair, conversely, is marked by his own authentic behaviour, reduced in scope as it is by his physical seclusion and cultural isolation. His space has elements of historical and cultural identity that can be seen in the way that the deceased members of his group have been laid out in a makeshift tomb and had items of some totemistic significance placed upon their bodies. Because of the relational values present within the Man's lair, he is an existential insider; this place has significance for him, and he expresses himself within it. By contrast, the people using the Russell Square station are subdued and almost in stasis; at best having merely an incidental relationship with the Underground.

The Man's cultural status is conflated with the space he inhabits in two ways throughout the film. Firstly, his ancestors (the miners originally trapped by the cave-in) were viewed as being unworthy of rescue, because the cost of digging them out was seemingly more than their lives were worth to the company constructing the station. The abandoned station therefore becomes a space that embodies this idea of an underclass, and the Man inherits that status because he inhabits that space. Secondly, because the abandoned station is incomplete, it lacks the structural protection that the

contemporary station has, and the natural elements are able to dominate the Man's environment. The station is damp, and rodents are present. The space is unhealthy and ill suited to sustaining life. It is an already abject space because of the threat it poses to the healthy body and is made more so because of the bodies of those the man has abducted for the purpose of food. The Man himself is an embodiment of this abject space; he is unhealthy and diseased and poses health threats to the healthy bodies within the Russell Square station both through his attacks, and through the possibility of infection he poses. This abject status is used to effectively portray the Man as being a monstrous figure, both reviled and feared, but the narrative presents enough exposition to ensure the Man is more than merely monstrous.

Chapter Five

Space, Memory and Identity in 28 Days Later

Horror cinema has traditionally drawn upon a number of monstrous figures that have endured throughout the genre's numerous phases. Whilst there is intertextuality at play with some of these monsters (Stacey Abbott has substantially demonstrated the intersections between the vampire and the zombie),[1] each has a fundamentally unique identity that, according to Noel Carroll, represents an 'abnormal' disturbance of 'the natural order'.[2] The specific cultural meanings attached to these figures, however, are mercurial and reflective of changes in critical focus. The vampire, in its earliest cinematic outings, represented a fear of the East, and personified a Western dread of lascivious foreigners. The same figure later came to reflect concerns regarding drug addiction, and diseases transmitted through the blood. The zombie is a figure that has changed rather drastically from its first incarnations on screen. Early cinematic representations, such as those contained within *White Zombie*[3] and *I Walked With a Zombie*[4] utilised imagery drawn from West African and Haitian folkloric tradition, whilst George A. Romero's seminal debut film, *Night of the Living Dead,*[5] reflected contemporary concerns regarding science and technology when he had his zombies (a word he never used within his film) rise from the grave, due to radiation dispersed into the Earth's atmosphere after a returning space probe exploded. What unifies these varying iterations of the zombie is a pervading loss of autonomy and personal identity. In the earliest representations of the zombie, either living people or recently deceased and reanimated corpses are held under a magical thrall that compels them to work tirelessly. In the case of Romero's zombies, the figure is a purely instinctual revenant, intent only on consuming the living. The figure was once again subject to representational evolution in 2002, with the release of *28 Days Later,*[6] written by Alex Garland and directed by Danny Boyle.

The characteristics of the early cinematic zombie are drawn from what are almost certainly misconceptions concerning plantation workers on various Caribbean

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[1] Stacey Abbot, Undead Apocalypse: Vampires and Zombies In the Twenty-First Century (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016.

[2] Noel Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror* (London: Routledge, 1990), p.16.

[3] *White Zombie*, directed by Victor Halperin (Halperin Productions, 1932), film.

[4] *I Walked With a Zombie*, directed by Jacques Tourneur (RKO Radio Pictures, 1943), film.

[5] *Night of the Living Dead*, directed by George A. Romero (Image Ten, 1968), film.

[6] *28 Days Later*, directed by Danny Boyle (DNA Films, 2002), film.

islands, including the lumbering movements that would come to be synonymous with the creature. Roger Luckhurst suggests that the perception, by American and European observers, of the figure of the zombie as a mindless, shuffling automaton could have derived from the fact that their 'shuffling gait might have come either from being in chains or from a distinctive way of moving that slaves developed to conserve energy'.[7] Whilst the ghouls of Romero's film (which itself became a blueprint for almost all future representations of the zombie) differed from the Caribbean zombie by virtue of the fact that they were reanimated dead people, they shared the same hobbling movements as their predecessors; in this case, the particularities of their movements resulted from their decomposition. Garland and Boyle drastically moved away from Romero's conception of the zombie as a reanimated corpse, and instead gave their threatening horde the status of being very much alive, but infected with a virus that locks its victims into an uncontrollable, permanent state of rage. The fact that the infected were living creatures led many to question the appropriateness of inferring upon them zombie status, but it was their rapid, adrenalized movements (which were inevitably reproduced in successive zombie narratives) that caused commentators such as Simon Pegg to vehemently denounce that status, when he declared that 'ZOMBIES DON'T RUN!'.[8] Pegg's petulance is not entirely justified; whilst they may not be dead or shambling, their lack of autonomy and their loss of personal identity ensure that Boyle's infected deserve to be considered an evolution of earlier representations of the zombie.

Romero's zombie films portrayed a world that was increasingly overrun by the undead horde, and who vastly outnumbered the living and *28 Days Later* is equally dystopian. Much of the writing that explores Boyle's film inevitably focuses on the figure of the infected, reading it in terms of its similarity to the zombie; indeed, the following chapter will do as much, to an extent. Some articles and chapters (Charlotte Brunsdon's and Peter Hutchings' work) *do* examine the film's spatial concerns, but not to the extent that this chapter engages with spatial theory. The following is therefore concerned with the ways in which the abandoned urban landscape within Boyle's film directly and symbolically affects the personal and group identities of both its human protagonists and infected antagonists, and particularly in terms of the lack of spatial

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[7] Roger Luckhurst, *Zombies: A Cultural History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2015), p.36.
[8] Simon Pegg, 'The Dead and the Quick'. *The Guardian*, November 4th, 2008.

investment that results from mass depopulation. Space, within the film, is represented as a receptacle of identity that is disrupted by the dissolution of societal structures, and subject to tensions that arise from the attempts made by characters to reaffirm spatial identity through acts of memory. It is also arguable that the film's narrative elements derive tension from the ways in which spatial access is layered within the post-viral landscape, and space becomes a site of competition, resulting from shared identity positions, or combative stances.

The Abandoned Landscape

28 Days Later begins with a prologue that serves as a primary explanation for the narrative's later scenes of abandonment. A group of animal rights activists break into a laboratory in Cambridge, where experiments are being conducted on chimpanzees. The chimps have been infected with the Rage virus; the virus resulted from experiments in which an inhibitor was developed that was intended to suppress excessive anger in humans, but mutated when it was merged with the Ebola virus as a method of delivering the inhibitor. The resulting virus was incredibly contagious, with a single drop of blood or saliva being a sufficient means of contagion, and infection occurring between ten and thirty seconds. Once infected, the victim experiences uncontrollable rage, and an overriding desire to attack any uninfected person they encounter. The activists (completely unaware of the existence of Rage) are understandably disgusted by the scenes of vivisection and captivity within the laboratory, and set about releasing one of the chimps. A scientist returns to the lab at that moment, and tries to intervene, arguing that the activists have no idea what they are about to do. Inevitably, the activists release the chimp which proceeds to attack one of them, infecting her with Rage. This activist then infects another (vomiting blood into his face; a common behaviour of the infected), setting in motion an unstoppable chain of infection and destruction. This scene cuts to a black screen that serves as both title and exposition, containing as it does the phrase 28 days later, denoting the passage of time since the initial infection of the activists.

Jim is, or was, a bicycle courier, who had been hit by a car and placed into a coma. He awakens in a London hospital bed, unharmed thanks to somebody locking the door to his room and sliding the key underneath. Clearly, this had taken place once the madness had spread to the city. Understandably, then, his transition from medically

induced stasis into the middle of a seemingly abandoned city is startling. Garland and Boyle's decision to forego any prolonged scenes of the infection spreading, and the resultant civil unrest means that Jim's gradual discovery and exploration of London's empty streets correlates with the experience of the viewer, eliciting a sense of increasing eeriness as the city's abandonment slowly unfolds. Within the urban landscape, there are undoubtedly patterns of activity relating to particular buildings. Commercial businesses generally operate within specific hours, whilst leisure buildings (such as those in the hospitality sector) keep early and late evening hours. Essentially, for the majority of a twenty-four-hour cycle, there is always some visible activity taking place within a large urban area. However, some buildings exist outside of these patterns of use, operating as they do on a twenty-four-hour basis and it is these that are rendered most disconcerting within the dystopian landscape.

It is precisely one such building that serves as Jim's introduction to an abandoned London. Waking up in a hospital bed, oblivious to the events that have occurred, Jim's situation evokes John Wyndham's *The Day of the Triffids*,[9] and is echoed in Robert Kirkman's apocalyptic zombie comic *The Walking Dead*.[10] Within dystopian narratives, and especially those that centre on a medical threat, the hospital is figured as the last bastion of activity when all other civic structures have been abandoned, and so being confronted with an entirely empty hospital signifies the final and total collapse of society. The building is in a state of disarray; a frozen moment of chaos. Whilst the overturned furniture and phones hanging from their cradles are unsettling, it is the complete absence of people that is most pressing. Jim acknowledges this, as he repeatedly, and anxiously, shouts 'hello'. Charlotte Brunsdon suggests that 'without people, without crowds, without the anonymity of the press of people, the city is revealed as recognisable, but eerie: a city which is only buildings'.[11] The hospital is indeed reduced to the status of being merely a building, without the presence of staff and patients, and the activities occurring that proffer upon it its identity. The 'recognisable, but eerie' impression increases as Jim leaves the hospital in search of answers and, most importantly, other people.

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[9] John Wyndham, *The Day of the Triffids* (London: Michael Joseph Publishing, 1951).
[10] Robert Kirkman, *The Walking Dead* (Portland: Image Comics, 2003-2019).
[11] Charlotte Brunsdon, *London in Cinema* (London: British Film Institute, 2007), p.50.

The disconcerting emptiness that Jim encounters once he explores the streets of London can be read through the lens of Mark Fisher's work on the weird and the eerie. Essentially a re-examination of the parameters of the uncanny, Fisher's concept explores what he perceives to be two of the subtler modes of affect that are found within a variety of fictions, including horror, but which can also be described as being at play within wider cultural examples. These modes are described as the weird and the eerie, and Fisher summarises his thoughts on them when he says that 'what the weird and the eerie have in common is a preoccupation with the strange. The strange – not the horrific'.[12] Indeed, Jim's initial exploration of London is marked by a lack of explicit horror; the feeling is that the city's residents have vanished, rather than been decimated by the virus. The appropriateness of Fisher's sense of the eerie is confirmed by Boyle, when he suggests that 'we decided to follow one of our instincts which was that...rather than trying to litter the world with corpses, that we were better to kind of try and make it almost symbolic really, that the emptiness of the place stood for something that had gone wrong,' whilst Garland says that the lack of bodies within the hospital and the city streets was an aesthetic decision, arguing that it was intended to induce a surreal atmosphere.[13] The lack of immediately overt horror within the abandoned city does indeed produce a sense of the oneiric, and the complete lack of bodies or other survivors allows for a prolonging of that effect, as well as a suspension of any explanation.

Fisher states that 'the eerie…entails a disengagement from our current attachments,' but that 'this disengagement does not usually have the quality of shock that is typically a feature of the weird'. Jim's passage through London lacks any immediate sense of danger; there is a gradual delivery of information that suggests a major event, but it seems that this event has passed. Fisher further posits 'the serenity that is often associated with the eerie – think of the phrase *eerie calm* – has to do with detachment from the urgencies of the everyday'.[14] There *is* a certain tranquillity to Jim's explorations, given there are no people and no traffic within the city, but this absence is discomfiting, rather than overtly shocking. Jim *expects* to find people, and it is this lack that Fisher asserts is so indicative of the eerie, which is 'constituted by a

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[12] Mark Fisher, *The Weird and the Eerie* (London: Repeater Books, 2016), p.8.
[13] *28 Days Later*, 'audio commentary with Danny Boyle and Alex Garland,' directed by Danny Boyle (DNA Films, 2002), film.
[14] Fisher, 13.

failure of absence or by a *failure of presence*. The sensation of the eerie occurs either when there is something present where there should be nothing, or if there is nothing present where there should be something'.[15] Whilst the experience of encountering spaces that contain few people is not entirely unusual, the spaces that Jim traverses are central points of congregation within the country's capital. It is difficult to imagine Trafalgar Square and Piccadilly Circus being devoid of people even in the early hours of the morning; indeed, despite filming these scenes on Sunday mornings at dawn, the production crew still needed to ensure people returning from clubs were corralled away from the filming environment, and any stragglers who ended up in frame were removed in post-production.

Moving around a town or, especially, a city involves a necessary negotiation of the identity of the individual as part of a larger group identity sharing the same spaces. Edward Krupat suggests that the urban resident (especially those living in densely populated cities) experiences a

High-density living (that) definitely has the *capacity* to be stressful. It creates problems of coordination among people, can reduce people's ability to control their environment, and requires active coping. Yet...people are capable of developing complex individual and collective modes of adaptation by which these problems can in many instances be overcome.[16]

City living necessitates a particular behavioural contradiction; the individual must cognitively acknowledge the proximity and volume of those who share the same urban space, and yet exercise sufficient affective detachment from others to enable an efficient spatial engagement. As the above quotation suggests, people not only develop the means of enduring prolonged exposure to large numbers of people, and the resulting complications of spatial negotiation, but actually find methods of retaining a sense of individual identity. This dichotomy is facilitated, according to Krupat, in the way that people 'maximize involvement with some at the expense of being indifferent to others'.[17] Clearly, then, the individual's daily spatial practices involve being a part of, and yet apart from, the urban mass. To be thrust into a situation where that mass

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[15] *Ibid*, 61.
[16] Edward Krupat, *People in Cities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p.112.
[17] *Ibid*, 59.

is entirely absent (or even vastly reduced) is to experience the 'disengagement' that Fisher suggests is characteristic of the eerie.

Perhaps *the* seminal fictional work that deals with dystopian isolation (and one cited as an influence on Romero's zombie films, as well as Stephen King's epic dystopian novel *The Stand*)[18] is Richard Matheson's *I Am Legend*,[19] in which a man, Robert Neville, finds himself alone in a world decimated by a virus that has turned everyone but Neville into a nocturnal, blood feeding 'vampire'. The comparisons between this tale and Boyle's film are clear, and Kyle William Bishop says of Matheson's narrative 'Neville, the only non-infected (and, because of his immunity, non-*infectable*), suddenly becomes the marginalized Other of the story — his singularity literally alienates him'.[20] Similarly, Jim's isolated status places him into a form of cultural stasis. Whilst later in the film Jim and other survivors seek each other's company for the purpose of increased chances of survival, he initially searches for other people in order to reaffirm his own humanity; to dispel the anguish of finding himself completely alone. Other people collectively infer a cultural status upon each other, simply through the act of participating in shared cultural practices (observing the same unconscious rules regarding permissible behaviours; reiterating the symbolic meanings of cultural artefacts), and the same is true of the spaces that are shared by people with the same cultural values. As Edward Relph states, 'space is never empty but has content and substance that derive both from human intention and imagination and from the character of the space'.[21] Without the presence of a population ('human intention'), the city is no longer representative of the symbolic cultural investment that is reinforced (subconsciously) through the habitual use of its spaces.

28 Days Later makes great use of London's most imageable points of reference; Kevin Lynch defines imageability as 'that quality in a physical object which gives it a high probability of evoking a strong image in any given observer'.[22] As Jim leaves the hospital, and begins his passage through the city, there are two layers of visual information represented on screen. Firstly, there are panoramic shots that

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[18] Stephen King, *The Stand* (New York: Doubleday, 1978).
[19] Richard Matheson, *I Am Legend* (New York: Gold Medal Books, 1954).
[20] Kyle William Bishop, *American Zombie Gothic: The Rise and Fall (and Rise) of the Walking Dead in Popular Culture* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2010), p.107.
[21] Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion, 1976), p.10.
[22] Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1998), p.9.

convey a strong sense of 'postcard' London: St Paul's Cathedral; The London Eye; Piccadilly Circus. Viewed from an elevated position, these elements evoke a distinctive portmanteau of London's iconic features, and such an overarching depiction is, according to Lynch, 'the overlap of many individual images. Or perhaps there is a series of public images, each held by some significant number of citizens'.[23] In any case, this quintessential perspective of London, held in place by years of representation and collective agreement, operates as visual shorthand for a set of cultural ideas. Whilst these shots effectively invoke and establish archetypal views of London, there are shots that demonstrate a second layer of meaning, and convey the 'inner' qualities of these iconic spaces. Viewed from a panoramic distance, the city does not immediately convey a sense of the eerie; there is clearly no traffic (either mechanical or pedestrian), but in such shots the grander pieces of visual information demand much of the viewer's attention, rather than peripheral minutia. Once London's 'inner' spaces *are* revealed, it is clear that there has been a total collapse of the structural and cognitive ideas of the city.

As Jim's progress is shown from the level of the street, the absence of other people is more apparent. There is a stillness and silence that is entirely alien to the metropolis; cars sit in frozen postures, and the city is a static snapshot, decaying and slowly fading from cognitive reality. Jim himself seems utterly bewildered, as he slowly meanders along deserted pavements and roads, repeatedly shouting "hello," as though the complete lack of other people has reduced his language to this singular, probing word. There are two particular images found within Jim's wanderings that encapsulate the collapse of the cognitive version of the city. As Jim walks across Westminster Bridge, disconcertingly free of human traffic and festooned with litter, he surveys the emptiness, as the Palace of Westminster serves as a backdrop. As the meeting place for the Houses of Parliament and Lords, the Palace is a synecdochical symbol of the system of government that structures the lives of the UK's population. Standing inactively, it becomes symbolic of the collapse of cultural cohesion that results from the catastrophic depopulation of the country.

This idea is explicitly suggested by the fact that Jim steps over piles of detritus that include miniature renditions of both the Elizabeth Tower (itself visual shorthand for

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[23] *Ibid*, 46.

the Palace of Westminster), and the Union Jack; clearly items of tourist miscellany that have been scattered during a moment of hysteria. Both the tower and the flag come to suggest the symbolic and literal collapse of the government, and indeed the fact that London has 'gone' carries the significance of its status as the country's capital, given that it has, as Brunsdon suggests, a 'strong metaphoric and metonymic presence in the cinema, standing variously for England, Britain, the British Empire, the government'.[24] The second image that expresses the collapse of the capital occurs a little further into the city, when Jim happens upon a bus lying on its side. Brunsdon argues that 'the red double-decker London bus is widely recognised as a signifier of London, and is often referenced when people wish to speak scathingly of clichéd London imagery in the cinema'.[25] Where the tourist souvenirs represent the dissolution of a wider, abstract system of structure in the fall of the government, the bus conveys a sense that the fundamental, immediate aspects of society have failed. The dramatically overturned bus is itself a static representation of a moment of disruption, but it more profoundly suggests a loss of mobility that characterises life within the city.

Space, Memory, Identity

If places are spaces invested with cultural meaning, then it follows that the mass depopulation resulting from the spread of the virus ensures that there are vastly fewer uninfected people present, and therefore any cultural values (this place is important for this reason; this area of the city is associated with specific activities; and so on) that have been suffused into particular elements of the built environment have ceased to be held in place, precisely because those cultural values need to be recapitulated by a populace. Relph states that 'If places are indeed a fundamental aspect of man's existence in the world, if they are sources of security and identity for individuals and for groups of people, then it is important that the means of experiencing, creating, and maintaining significant places are not lost'.[26] Whilst the country's population has not been *entirely* decimated within Boyle's post-viral landscape, the few uninfected survivors the film offers expend their energies finding shelter and food, and avoiding infection; understandably, reiterating the meaning of particular spaces is no longer important in such circumstances. Undoubtedly, there are elements within the city that

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[24] Brunsdon, 13.
[25] *Ibid*, 38.
[26] Relph, 6.

still evoke some remnants of their cultural status; the Palace of Westminster is still the Palace of Westminster but, in such culturally reduced conditions, it is only nominally so. Essentially, the post-viral landscape is one in which the act of 'maintaining significant places' has become difficult, to say the least, because the larger structures of socialisation that required places to have symbolic value have ceased to exist.

Krupat suggests that the 'built environment can be thought of as relating to people in each of five ways,' and one of these ways he describes as 'cognitive'. He explains his use of the term as such: 'The city as a whole and each of its component parts from large to small "speak to" people. They provide cues to behavior (i.e., what is appropriate, how best to accomplish one's goals), and these are the intended meanings of design'.[27] It is this overarching cohesion, built into the environment (as Krupat suggests) that is lost to the upheaval of mass infection. This is in part the result of mass depopulation, but partly because most people left in the city are infected; given how transmissible Rage is, it is to be assumed that the infected hugely outnumber the uninfected. Whilst the uninfected survivors have a set of concerns that ensure the reiteration of cognitive spatial meanings are far less important than those immediate concerns, the infected have even less inclination to acknowledge the pre-viral meanings that are physically and cognitively built into the environment. In fact, it would be more accurate to suggest that the infected have absolutely *no* awareness of cognitive spatial ideas, reduced as they are to the condition of experiencing only the singular biological/cognitive imperative of expressing rage. They demonstrate a basic spatial criteria that includes avoiding open spaces during the day (the infected have an apparent aversion to light; perhaps resulting from the fact that one of the characteristics of infection is a reddening of the whites of the eyes, indicating an increased presence of blood), and occupying spaces that indicate the presence of uninfected people.

As stated above, the primary concerns for those who have escaped infection are to remain uninfected, and to find sources of shelter and food that will enable them to avoid moving around spaces that may bring them into contact with the infected. However, particular characters within the film do demonstrate definite inclinations towards retaining cognitive ideas of space, and especially spaces such as the home,

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[27] Krupat, 159.

that infer upon them facets of what Relph calls 'security and identity'. Despite the tumultuous circumstances that the uninfected survivors find themselves in, it is important to preserve a sense of personal identity. Relph suggests that 'the person who has no place with which he identifies is in effect homeless, without roots,'[28] and because identity is unavoidably tied to meaningful spaces, the loss of such spaces entails a corresponding loss of selfhood. During his exploration of London's streets, Jim meets a pair of survivors, Selena and Mark, who save him from a group of the infected and take him to their shelter, a newsagent's stall in the London Underground.[29] Whilst Jim was spared the experience of watching the collapse of society, Selena and Mark have been exposed to its full dissolution. As such, they are understandably more cautious than Jim, and even regard his (still fresh) reaction to events with sardonic cynicism. Selena and Mark's reasons for saving Jim's life are never explained, outside of the fact that he is the first uninfected person they have seen for six days. They are clearly managing to survive adequately, and so it is probable that in such circumstances Jim's humanity is reason enough for him to be rescued and included in their group. Indeed, one of the film's most endearing narrative points is the way in which Jim is able to 're-humanise' Selena who, when he first encounters her, is emotionally detached and methodical in her self-preservation. If meaningful places are lost, then the need for relationships that maintain identity and confirm humanity become even more important.

Meaningful places are not, however, immediately and universally abandoned in either physical or cognitive terms. After being taken to the newsagent's stall that serves as Selena and Mark's shelter, Jim is given a brief account of the events that decimated the population. Understandably, his thoughts turn to his parents, and he is nonchalantly told that they will be dead, like Mark's and Selena's families. The three travel, the next day, to Jim's family home, where he finds his parents are indeed dead. They have taken overdoses, and Selena tells Jim that he should be grateful for this relatively peaceful end, given it was completely on their own terms, and did not result either from infection or at the hands of the infected. It is entirely explicable that Jim should have such a strong desire to return to his home, given that Relph describes it

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[28] Relph, 55.
[29] It is ironic that Jim, with his reduced sense of personal identity, retreats to the Underground, given the previous two chapters have spoken about that space in terms of non-place, and the suppression of personal identity that results from spending increased periods of time within such spaces.

as 'the point of departure from which we orient ourselves and take possession of the world,'[30] and that having 'roots in a place is to have a secure point from which to look out on the world, a firm grasp of one's own position in the order of things, and a significant spiritual and psychological attachment to somewhere in particular'.[31] Jim has so far been unable to locate himself in the world that he has been thrust into (and in fact he has barely had the chance to take stock of that world), and so his pilgrimage to his family home, his 'secure point,' is as much an attempt to reposition himself as it is an enquiry into the status of his family.

Whilst Jim must confront the fact that his parents are dead, he does attempt to centre himself within the space of the home, and he does so largely through acts of memory that allow him to retreat into a cognitive space in which his parents are alive, and the virus has not ravaged the city. In a sense, Jim's parents have followed the very same logic; when he finds their bodies, his mother is clutching a photograph of Jim as a child, and written on the back are the words 'Jim – with endless love, we left you sleeping. Now we're sleeping with you. Don't wake up'. They have chosen to end their lives whilst being locked into an emotional and cognitive state that reunites their family, in the space of the home. Similarly, as Mark and Selena sleep, Jim lights a candle and allows the space of the kitchen to evoke memories of his parents, rendered onscreen in a visually degraded manner that is reminiscent of VHS or even Super 8 home video footage, as though he is replaying a moment that was 'recorded' because of its significance. Jim remembers his mother returning home with groceries, and as his father speaks to Jim within the reminiscence, Jim answers in the present suggesting that he is entirely immersed in this clearly contented cognitive space. This internal process maintains the meaning of the home, and prevents it from simply being an empty house. The importance of such spatial reiterations is described by Tim Cresswell as such: 'Place is a kind of "necessary social construction" – something we have to construct in order to be human'.[32] Given how fragmented Jim's sense of personal identity is, this is clearly a necessary moment of reconstruction. However, the candle that Jim lights attracts the attention of a couple of the infected, who burst through the kitchen's patio doors and skylight. Whilst Mark and Selena are awoken by

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[30] *Ibid*, 40.
[31] *Ibid*, 38.
[32] Tim Cresswell, *Place: An Introduction* (Chichester: Blackwell, 2015), p.51.

the commotion, and fight off the infected, Jim's idyllic moment is shattered, as is the serenity and cognitive security of his family home. Maria Balshaw and Liam Kennedy suggest that 'Even as place provides a point of settlement and definition...its contours remain contested and porous, and so affective responses to place often make it the locus of struggles over "representational rights"'.[33] It would be greatly understating the situation to suggest that there is a 'struggle' to locate a representational position within the space of the post-viral city, but even given the fact that the uninfected population is vastly reduced, and face a constant threat of attack from the roaming infected, there *are* still attempts to invest space with meaning. As the above example demonstrates, though, these attempts are contested by the presence of the infected, who disrupt spatial meanings, and yet are incapable of inferring upon space any meanings of their own. In the case of Jim's home, the infected not only physically threaten the safety of Jim's group, but they also ensure the space can no longer be the site of Jim's retreat into a familiar cognitive moment.

Where Jim attempts to momentarily retreat into a cognitive space of domestic comfort, in order to re-centre himself, there is an even more explicit example of this sort of spatial struggle for 'representation rights' later in the film, when Jim and Selena encounter another pair of survivors. During the attack on Jim's home by the infected, Mark sustains a deep cut on his arm that is, presumably, infected by the blood spatters resulting from the fight. Upon seeing the gash on his arm, Selena does not risk waiting to see if Mark is indeed infected, and proceeds to kill him with her machete. This act both reinforces the idea that the virus is incredibly contagious (and anyone suspected of infection needs to be dealt with immediately), and further illustrates how contestable both spaces and relationships have become; Selena has been surviving with Mark for at least six days, and yet her slaying of him demonstrates her emotional detachment from such units of familiarity. This form of behaviour is, Dahlia Schweitzer suggests, a prevailing characteristic of outbreak narratives where the 'fear of infection makes one especially aware of the distance between bodies, making a suspected carrier feel uncomfortably close'.[34] The act of separating out the infected body from the uninfected space clearly has a biologically sound logic, but the infected also carry the threat of

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[33] Maria Balshaw and Liam Kennedy, 'Introduction: Urban Space and Representation' in *Urban Space and Representation*, eds. Maria Balshaw and Liam Kennedy (London: Pluto Press, 2000), p.7.
[34] Dahlia Schweitzer, *Going Viral: Zombies, Viruses, and the End of the World* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2018), p.48.

spatial disruption; their presence within space renders that space no longer fit for cognitive investment.

After leaving Jim's family home, he and Selena walk through London, and through the grey mass of the built environment they see a window in a tower block that is framed by flashing fairy lights. They (correctly) assume this is a sign of life, and move towards it. The architect of the beacon is Frank, a taxi driver who lives in the building with his daughter Hannah. Jim and Selena's introduction to Frank happens during one of the film's most adrenalized scenes, in which the pair is ascending the tower's staircase when they hear some infected enter the building. The scene becomes a race against time, as the pair (especially Jim) struggle through fatigue to make it up the staircase, and are confronted by Frank, wearing police riot gear. He allows them into the entrance to his floor, before brutally dispatching with the oncoming infected. Jim and Selena investigate the apparent sign of life because more people increase the chance of survival, and Frank has set up this beacon with precisely that in mind. Schweitzer states that 'barriers are another repeated visual trope in the outbreak narrative...(that) can be tangible, as in masks or protective gear or metal doors to block out dangerous microbes or they can be political, as with quarantine regulations, travel restrictions, or border policies.'[35] Frank has created physical barriers that hinder the possibility of the infected reaching his flat. Firstly, he has placed a large number of shopping trolleys at the entrance to the building's staircase, that both slow down the progress of any infected and alert him to their presence. Secondly, he stands at the entrance to the floor on which his flat is located, and repels any infected using a police riot shield and an iron bar. This physically enforced border effectively separates out the threatening world beyond the flat, and the security and cognitive familiarity of the domestic space within.

The normality found within Frank's flat is jarring, as is his own demeanour (once he sheds his body armour and visor), because it is so welcoming and gentle in comparison to the brutal behaviour he demonstrates against the infected. Undoubtedly, the retention of a warm domestic ambience is facilitated by the fact that Frank and Hannah are a familial unit. Whilst the tower block is abandoned and derelict, and the physical borders that Frank has constructed ensure it is unwelcoming, the flat

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[35] *Ibid*, 42.

itself is a space filled with cognitive investment because, as Relph states, 'being lived-in confers some authenticity on even the most trivial and unrelentingly uniform landscape'.[36] Such places are rarities, luxuries even in an environment that has become threatening and devoid of spatial and cognitive cohesion. Peter Hutchings argues that within the abandoned landscape, emptied as it is of the potential for individual and social agency, there is the possibility of subjects 'regressing to something less than human'.[37] It is arguable that Selena, when Jim first meets her, has allowed her humanity to recede, and instead relies on a pragmatic and ruthless sense of personal identity; traits she allows to surface in order to better her chances of survival.

This contrasts greatly with the relationship between Frank and Hannah, partly because Selena does not have access to a space that is secure enough to invest with cognitive meaning. Frank's home retains its cultural values through both the continuation of the family unit, and the recapitulation of memories. The fairy lights, and the fact that the initial scenes within the flat are accompanied by the tune *Frosty the Snowman*[38] reinforce a sense of familial warmth. The flat is filled with family photographs, and when Frank wants to offer Jim and Selena a drink, Hannah suggests "Mum's crème de menthe". Clearly, then, this space is invested with family values and memories that facilitate the continuation of their humanity. Whilst the flat itself is a sentimental space, containing associations with Frank's life before the virus, it is place rather than merely space precisely because it is the location in which the father/daughter relationship is maintained. Jim finds this relationship endearing, telling Selena that he thinks they are good people; in all likelihood, a recognition of their humanity. Her cynical response is "well that's nice, but you should be more concerned about whether they're gonna slow you down".

Whilst Frank's home is an environment that allows for the retention of the family unit, in cognitive and emotional terms, he confides in Jim that it cannot physically sustain him and Hannah. The act of signalling with fairy lights is, then, an attempt to find suitable travelling companions, rather than to attract more people for his domestic unit. Bishop, referring to *I Am Legend*, suggests that Robert Neville's house is not only

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[36] Relph, 80.
[37] Peter Hutchings, 'Uncanny Landscapes in British Film and Television,' *Visual Culture in Britain* 5:2 (2004) p.29.
[38] Walter Rollins and Steve Nelson, *Frosty the Snowman*, 1950.

'a refuge and a source of comfort and familiarity, the converted home unfortunately ties him down to one place and requires considerable attention and upkeep'. This is true of Frank and Hannah's flat, as is Bishop's further argument that 'rather than roaming across the country in search of other survivors, Neville must stay close to home; furthermore, he cannot let go of the lost past that the house represents'.[39] Whilst Frank is indeed emotionally tied to his home, and the memories it contains, it is his status as father (a status that is symbiotically linked to the home) that prevents him from becoming mobile.

Frank explicitly states that he and Hannah can no longer stay in his building, given there is no water supply, and there has been no rain to fill the numerous receptacles he has placed on the building's roof ("You'd never believe it, needing rain so badly. Not in fucking England!"). In addition, he suggests that if he and Hannah left the building in search of other survivors, something might happen to him and his daughter would be left to fend for herself. Undoubtedly, if the flat had a source of fresh water, Frank would be more inclined to remain in the space that contains so many cognitive elements (memories of his wife, for example). Like Neville, Frank's stronghold requires a significant physical investment, given he needs to voraciously defend it, placing his own uninfected status at hazard. Unlike Neville, though, Frank does not believe that he and Hannah are the last uninfected people alive. He has a radio, and has found a transmission being broadcast from a squadron of soldiers near Manchester, who claim to have "the answer to infection". Just as Selena recognised the need for others, for the purposes of protection and the confirmation of her own humanity, so too does Frank understand that he must relinquish his domestic space to improve the chances of survival for his daughter.

Layers of Spatial Access: Inclusion and Exclusion

Throughout *28 Days Later* there are varying levels of spatial competition (contending attempts to invest space with meaning); most obvious of these is the fundamental desire to occupy a space that is free of the infected, and therefore free of the infection. Schweitzer asserts the idea that 'metaphorical lines are drawn between those who are not infected and those who are deemed infectious or more likely to be infectious. While

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[39] Bishop, 105.

it may be unattainable, distance from disease is an aspirational ideal'.[40] The ways in which these lines are observed and enforced throughout the film demonstrate the overriding urge to both avoid spaces that have been tainted by the presence of the infected, and to repel the infected from the spaces that uninfected people have chosen to occupy. Within such spaces, absolute 'distance from disease' may well be unattainable, but the infected are kept out of range as much as possible, using means that are as violent as practical, although it is certainly arguable that Selena, when repelling the infected in Jim's home, demonstrates a reckless abandon given how much blood is spread around the kitchen. Frank defends the entrance to the floor on which he lives within his tower using police riot gear. He bludgeons the infected who attempt to storm his space, and mercilessly throws them down the stairwell. When Jim and Selena enter the building, there are no infected bodies at the bottom of the stairwell (we see Frank's victims land on the shopping trolley barrier he has assembled), and so it is clear that these 'impure' bodies have been removed, precisely because their very presence within this space is a threat to the health of Frank and his daughter. Clearly, Frank takes extensive measures to ensure a barrier between his space and the infected is maintained.

Bishop suggests that 'Zombies...never transcend their essential identity as dead, decaying bodies,'[41] and whilst Boyle's infected are not dead, they are certainly decaying and biohazardous beings. The zombies of Romero's films (and, by and large, those within other zombie films) do not revert to the status of the living, and Boyle's infected similarly do not 'transcend their essential identity' as infected, threatening beings. Their presence in any space renders that space potentially hazardous to the biological health of uninfected survivors; even when the infected are corpses, rather than mobile threats. The pervading nature of this threat is demonstrated in a scene in which Selena, Jim, Frank and Hannah have left London to drive to the military camp; the broadcast that Frank listens to divulges the coordinates necessary for finding the soldiers. Arriving at a military blockade on the outskirts of the city, the group find nothing but bodies and abandonment. A soldier's corpse lies atop part of the defensive structures that comprise the blockade, and a crow pecks at this body. Frank, already angry that the radio broadcast has led him to an apparently abandoned camp, kicks

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[40] Schweitzer, 48.
[41] Bishop, 21.

the fence that the soldier is on top of to scare away the crow, and as he does so a single drop of blood falls from its beak and into Frank's eye. This dead soldier is, in fact, a dead infected and this single droplet of blood is enough to infect Frank who, upon realising what is happening, apologises to Hannah for losing his temper, tells her he loves her and then, with increasing anger, yells at her to keep away. Before Jim has a chance to deal with Frank, he is shot by soldiers who have been watching from the edge of the blockade. The caution that Frank exercised within his domestic space (the use of protective clothing; the removal of infected bodies) is abandoned, partly because this is a space that is unfamiliar, and one in which he has no investment. It is also true that Frank feels his personal role as protector has been reduced because his family unit is bolstered by the inclusion of Jim and Selena. There are touching scenes that occur during their journey from London to Manchester that demonstrate how that familial unit can itself be transposed from one space to another, in a way that reiterates the cultural values initially located within the space of the home.

Essentially, whilst space is an important receptacle of cognitive investment, and indeed the impetus needed for the cultivation of that investment, it is the cognitive investment itself that is more important than any particular space in affirming the identity of the group and the individual. Moments before he is infected, Frank expresses his anger concerning the blockade's abandonment, and chastises the rest of the group; Selena and Jim have begun to view Frank as a parental figure (Jim even calls Frank Dad in his sleep). It is during this momentary fragmentation of the group, the transposable unit of spatial and cultural stability, that Frank strays from the cohesive identity they have collectively fostered and becomes careless, infected and dead.

As has been suggested thus far, the uninfected survivors construct barriers to protect themselves from attacks by the infected. Whilst it seems to be the case that these barriers restrict the infected's freedom of movement, it is fairer to say that the fact that the survivors rely so heavily on these fortified spaces means that it is *their* spatial patterns that are impeded. Darren Reed and Ruth Penfold-Mounce suggest that within zombie narratives (they talk about *The Walking Dead* in particular), mobility is key to survival, not only insofar as humans need to move more quickly than zombies, but also in the sense that survivors must be willing to abandon former homes and be willing to either continually survive on the road, or else be prepared to abandon a

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temporary camp once it becomes compromised.[42] This idea finds justification in the way that Jim and Selena keep moving, and once they encounter Frank and Hannah, the group then move on together. There is an implicit knowledge that the infected greatly outnumber the uninfected survivors, and that they will relentlessly continue to hunt for people to dissipate their rage; after the attack on Jim's home, Selena says "we have to leave now. More infected will be coming; they always do". It is the infected, then, who exert the strongest influence upon space, insofar as they are a continually moving presence that threaten to disrupt spatial stability and render any spaces they pass through potentially infectious and uninhabitable.

28 Days Later, like so many other dystopian narratives, suggests that this continual process of upheaval will ultimately be resolved when an idyllic space is finally encountered; one that is believed to represent some attempt to re-establish the cohesion of a pre-catastrophe society. This is certainly Frank's motivation for leaving the emotionally stable environment of his home, to travel to Manchester where he believes there is a gesture towards larger ideas of community, and an answer to infection. Bishop suggests that Romero's zombie films invariably portrayed groups of survivors 'forced into hiding, holding up in "safe houses" of some kind where they barricade themselves in and wait in vain for the trouble to pass. This claustrophobic situation invariably reiterates societal problems and tensions, particularly those of the patriarchy, gender, and race'.[43] Essentially, survivors eventually find ways of dealing with the threat offered by the undead (or at least emotionally and cognitively adapt to the fact that they exist), and it is inevitably other people who pose the greatest challenge to survival. The same has been true of many of the zombie narratives that followed Romero's (*The Walking Dead*, for example, derived most of its narrative tension from the threat posed by competing groups of human survivors), and *28 Days Later* similarly follows this narrative arc. This is most clearly seen in the latter part of the movie, after Frank has become infected and been killed by the soldiers who sent out the radio broadcast. Jim, Selena and Hannah are taken to the army base; a reappropriated country mansion.

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[42] Darren Reed and Ruth Penfold-Mounce, 'Zombies and the Sociological Imagination: *The Walking Dead* as Social-Science Fiction,' in *The Zombie Renaissance in Popular Culture*, eds. Laura Hubner, Marcus Leaning, Paul Manning (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p.133.
[43] Bishop, 115.

This house (already surrounded by a high wall) has been heavily fortified, with mines placed within the surrounding lawns and barbed wire barriers offering some resistance to the numerous attacks from the infected. As Schweitzer notes, 'in zombie narratives, there is inevitably a hyperbolization of physical structures: building walls, fortifying existing walls, and barricading windows'.[44] This statement is demonstrably true of the army base; where Selena and Frank deal with relatively minor attacks from the infected as and when necessary, these soldiers are approaching their situation as just another set of martial circumstances, and have therefore applied military precision to their spatial practices. Indeed, the soldiers' nominal leader, Major West, says at a dinner held in honour of the new arrivals "This is what I've seen in the four weeks since infection; people killing people, which is much what I saw in the four weeks before infection, and the four weeks before that, and as far back as I care to remember, people killing people, which to my mind puts us in a state of normality right now". As much as Major West's statement attempts to rationalise and normalise the post-viral upheaval, it is clear that the army base is a space that is both physically and politically exaggerated.

Bishop's statement that the compressed and insular conditions of survival within zombie narratives 'invariably reiterates societal problems and tensions, particularly those of the patriarchy, gender, and race,' is played out beat for beat within the military space. Soon after arriving at the mansion, Jim has a conversation with West regarding the purpose of the base, and West responds with "don't worry; you're quite safe here," and punctuates this statement with a ruffle of Jim's hair (a gesture that is both patronising and attempts an avuncularity). It is significant that this is articulated to Jim, once alone with West, rather than to the group as they arrive. Therefore, implicit within that pronouncement is the suggestion that Jim, as a male, will be allowed to integrate into the group, provided he accepts West's status as leader (the ruffle of the hair infantilises and subjugates Jim). Whilst showing Jim around the house, he is taken to a courtyard, where West keeps one of his soldiers, Mailer, chained up because he is infected with Rage. Housing such a hazardous being within the relative safety of the grounds (for the purpose of observing how long it will take Mailer to starve) demonstrates West's arrogant desire to express a political control of the spaces he encounters; throughout the film there is a fundamental spatial

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[44] Schweitzer, 162.

imperative to maintain spaces that are biologically safe, and in allowing Mailer to be housed within the proximity of his troops, West places their lives at hazard. Whilst Mailer is infected, and therefore a biohazardous being, he is further dehumanised by the act of chaining him to the ground via a collar. The fact that Mailer is black adds an uncomfortable element to these bonds (alluding as they do to slavery), and especially given the upper echelon of West's group are all white; West (who is commanding officer), Sergeant Farrell (essentially second in command) and Private Mitchell (who appears to be something of an unspoken leader amongst the lower ranking soldiers) are all white. Schweitzer argues that infected characters within viral outbreak narratives are 'not only...lumped together, individuality abandoned, but they are also considered less worthy, less human, and more expendable. The infected, along with anyone deemed potentially infectious, are dehumanized in the interests of security'.[45] Whilst this is true of almost all encounters with the infected throughout the film (who are killed without impunity), it is especially true of Mailer whose captivity and fetishisation is racially problematised by the soldiers' later attitude towards Selena.

It transpires that West has transmitted his message not because he has the "answer to infection," but because he promised his men they would have women; he rationalises that "women mean a future". West may dress this reasoning in philosophical terms, suggesting that he intends to begin a repopulation programme in order to preserve humanity, but his men do not have such lofty aspirations; their leering treatment of Selena and Hannah suggest that they are possessed of a longing for sexual gratification that is not so different from the infected's overriding desire to express rage. Schweitzer suggests that 'in addition to complicating the role of the hero, outbreak narratives often complicate the role of the villain. Categories are fuzzier as blame becomes harder to place'.[46] Like the zombies of so many preceding narratives, the infected are nominally villainous. However, whilst they are undoubtedly a profoundly threatening presence, there is never a sense of purposeful volition to their actions. Carroll states that 'Monsters are not wholly other, but derive their repulsive aspect from being, so to speak, contortions performed upon the known'.[47] The idea that Rage exaggerates an existing emotional response is demonstrated in the film's

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[45] *Ibid*, 178.
[46] *Ibid, 81.*
[47] Carroll, 166.

opening shot. A chimp within the Cambridge research facility is bound to a gurney, and in front of this chimp are several monitors, each playing various scenes of civil unrest and violence that range from riots to murder. These scenes are presumably played to the test subject so that its reactions can be monitored (the chimp has electrodes attached to its head), but also to placate it, given it is likely to be infected with Rage. The fact that the chimp is not demonstrating the signs of extreme agitation that is so common amongst the infected suggests that it recognises a commonality in the behaviour displayed onscreen; Rage is a 'contortion performed upon the known,' and the infected are themselves demonstrating hyperbolized versions of behaviour exhibited by their uninfected counterparts.

Like the infected, the soldiers do not fall into easily defined behavioural categories. Whilst they initially appear to fall into the role of saviours, they do demonstrate the worst of human nature in their treatment of Selena and Hannah, and anyone who opposes their desire to enslave the two women sexually. David Harvey argues that "Ideological and political hegemony in any society depends on an ability to control the material context of personal and social experience'.[48] West is expressing an ideology that seeks to control not only the political parameters of the army camp, but also any spatial access experienced by those living in the camp (either as cognisant participants, or unwilling captives). Whilst West ostensibly expresses a desire to reconstruct society ('personal and social experience'), he and his men have redefined the boundaries of permissible morality, precisely because they have absolute political control of their space, and because there is no longer an overarching and cohesive moral code governing society. West never forbids the possessive treatment of the women who are now essentially captive within their base; rather, he urges his men to "slow down". This he says in response to an incident that occurs during the evening after they have 'rescued' Jim, Selena and Hannah, when they are holding a dinner in honour of their new 'guests'. An attack by the infected triggers an alarm, and the men quickly (and excitedly) repel the invaders. Returning to the house in high and adrenalized spirits, a swaggering Mitchell finds Selena alert and brandishing her machete. He patronisingly removes this weapon, denigrating her fighting abilities that have, so far, kept her and Jim alive, before making a joke about his "big chopper" and then issuing a sexual threat towards her. Understandably, Jim

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[48] David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), p.227.

intervenes and is subdued by Mitchell until Sergeant Farrell attacks Mitchell in retaliation. Farrell's actions here, and a philosophical speech he gives at the dinner table (condescendingly dismissed by West, who says "have you met our new-age Sergeant?"), ensure that the group of soldiers cannot be reduced to a monolithic, villainous threat.

Because of Farrell's and Jim's opposition to the subjugation of Selena and Hannah, they are both expelled from this hypermasculine and toxic space; they are taken to a wooded area on the edge of the estate, where they are to be executed (although only Farrell is shot, whilst Jim manages an escape). On the way to this abject space, that serves as a dumping ground for the bodies of the infected that have been killed during the attacks on the house, Mitchell tells Jim that he is "gonna have the black one". Not all of Mitchell's cohort are white, yet he is not shown expressing any racial prejudice towards them. Mitchell's reduction of Selena demonstrates how she is viewed in denigratory racial terms, because her gender already diminishes her politically (in terms of the ideology practiced within the space of the army camp). The soldiers, then, enforce spatially exclusive practices inasmuch as civilians are viewed as inferior spatial participants, because they lack sufficient military training, and women are especially objectified as offering little outside of their horrifically hyperbolized domestic and sexual roles. Indeed, during the dinner West says to Hannah "I don't suppose you can cook can you? Can't tell you how badly we need someone with a little flair in the kitchen". Hannah's gender means she cannot be viewed (by the men) as a potential addition to the defensive unit, and instead she is misogynistically assigned a role that corresponds with West's view of women. In fact, the man who has fulfilled that role up to the point of Hannah's arrival is Jones; clearly less hypermasculine than his fellow soldiers, he wears an apron and is nicknamed Doris by his cohort. In the absence of women, Jones has been assigned the role of de facto feminine figure on account of his apparent lack of traditional masculinity.

Conclusion

28 Day's Later's most significant tensions arise from the portrayal of a city that is emptied of its usual activities and its cognitive and cultural investments. Whilst the film generates startling moments of horror through its omnipresent threat of attack from

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the infected, it is the eeriness of the abandoned urban landscape that evokes a sense of trepidation throughout the film's London scenes. Where rural stillness is simply viewed as tranquillity, the same quietude within the city is discomfiting because it denotes the lack of the activities that are ubiquitous within the metropolis. Significant spatial tension is elicited not only through the absence of people within spaces that should ordinarily be filled, but because that absence itself suggests a chain of events that resulted in the apparent depopulation.

Within a built environment that is emptied of its residents, and therefore its cognitive investment, it is inevitable that the person finding themselves alone enters a cultural stasis. The film teases out the question of what it means to be human in such circumstances and offers examples of behaviours that demonstrate varying degrees of humanity. The soldiers have the company of their platoon, and yet they behave in ways that are selfish and lascivious. Selena is initially detached and focussed purely on survival, but through the fellowship of Frank, Hannah and Jim she can reconnect with her authentic humanitarian values. Within such culturally reduced circumstances there is a need for the individual to either make a concerted effort to retain a sense of decency towards other survivors, or else succumb to a feral abandonment of behavioural mores that prioritises the needs of the individual over the identity of the remaining survivors; the next chapter will examine this idea further, positing the notion that situational detachment is not always entirely negative.

Where spaces have lost their cognitive cohesion, there is a danger that anyone encountering those spaces will have difficulty forming authentic spatial relationships. In such conditions, it is therefore understandable that Jim, Frank and Hannah are intent on maintaining a relationship with their own domestic spaces, given the home is the locus of their identities. These specific geographical locations are cognitive storage sites, containing as they do memories of events that have contributed towards the individual's understanding of familial relationships, but the film demonstrates how the fundamental elements of kinship that family homes foster can be transferred from place to place; the relationships are ultimately more meaningful than the locations in which those correspondences have grown. Through this realisation, Jim and Selena can locate a representational position within the space of the post-viral city and the spaces beyond the city. Indeed, failure to recognise the importance of interpersonal relationships over connections to specific spaces results in a situation in which

survivors are reduced to defending spaces against attacks and succumbing to a binary dynamic of inside/outside, us/them. Whilst Major West claims to have the "answer to infection," the behavioural example set forth by his group of men provides the antithesis to a solution in their desire to exploit the circumstances of their situation to satisfy their immediate physical needs

Chapter Six

28 Weeks Later: **Reiterating Spatial and Cultural Values**

2002 was a significant year for the cinematic zombie, insofar as it saw the release of *Resident Evil*[1] (based on the video game series, which was itself heavily inspired by George A. Romero's zombie films), and the arguably more ground-breaking *28 Days Later*.[2] These two films undoubtedly rejuvenated the onscreen zombie, given its relative lack of screen time in the 1990s, compared to the number of films that followed 2002. For instance, 2004 saw the release of two films deeply indebted to Romero: Edgar Wright's *Shaun of the Dead*[3] both nominally and contextually paid homage to Romero's zombie mythos, whilst Zack Snyder's *Dawn of the Dead*[4] was an official remake of Romero's seminal 1978 film,[5] albeit one that differed significantly inasmuch as its fast running, adrenalized zombies had far more in common with *28 Days Later's* infected than it did with Romero's shambling undead. Romero himself participated in this renewed examination of the zombie film, with the release of 2005's *Land of the Dead*,[6] in which he explored the ways in which his cinematic world had begun to restructure itself, and how the zombies that populated it had begun to demonstrate facets of cognition. The zombie film, then, was revivified to an extent that ensured its survival into the foreseeable future.

Whilst *28 Days Later's* narrative offered an optimistic closure for its protagonists, the film's artistic and commercial success (grossing over £59 million globally)[7] ensured it was inevitable that a sequel would be considered. Danny Boyle was committed to direct another project (although he was executive producer for the sequel), and instead offered the role to Juan Carlos Fresnadillo. This change in directorial vision accounts for the rather marked tonal shift within *28 Weeks Later*.[8] Where Boyle's film was, at least in its initial London scenes, oneiric and languid, Fresnadillo's film is an entirely faster affair, more driven by action sequences than panoramic explorations of the post-viral landscape. Yet the two films share many

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[1] *Resident Evil*, directed by Paul W. S. Anderson (Constantin Film, 2002), film.
[2] *28 Days Later*, directed by Danny Boyle (DNA Films, 2002), film.
[3] *Shaun of the Dead*, directed by Edgar Wright (Studio Canal, 2004), film.
[4] *Dawn of the Dead*, directed by Zack Snyder (Strike Entertainment, 2004), film.
[5] *Dawn of the Dead*, directed by George A. Romero (Laurel Group, 1978), film.
[6] *Land of the Dead*, directed by George A. Romero (Atmosphere Entertainment, 2005), film.
[7] https://www.boxofficemojo.com/release/rl1262585345/
[8] *28 Weeks Later*, directed by Juan Carlos Fresnadillo (DNA Films, 2007), film.

spatial concerns: the symbiotic relationship between space and identity; an apparent opening up of spatial freedom, tempered by the viral threat; and the urban landscape as a space that has lost meaning through a lack of cognitive investment. Similarly, there will be some overlap between the preceding chapter (which examined *28 Days Later)* and this chapter, which will examine the film's engagement with space through its examination of the reiteration of the family unit within spaces of conflict, the hyperbolization of both spatial boundaries and the behaviours that occur within the film's spaces, the ways in which spaces either retain elements of authenticity or else become inauthentic through the actions that occur within them and finally the ways in which spatial boundaries are observed and either maintained or transgressed.

Reiterating cultural and spatial values

As its title suggests, most of the film takes place 28 weeks after the initial outbreak of the Rage virus, and the narrative centres on the attempt by NATO forces, led by the US army, to repatriate Britain, and particularly the formation of a safety zone within London's Isle of Dogs district. However, the film's opening sequences take place during the initial outbreak, and place them in around the same timeframe as the events of *28 Days Later.* Don and Alice, a married couple, are sheltering in a farmhouse, alongside the elderly couple whose home it is (Geoff and Sally), a young man (Jacob) and a young woman (Karen), whose boyfriend (Sam) has apparently left the house five days ago and has not returned. As is the case with *28 Days Later,* uninfected survivors seek shelter from the groups of infected people who roam the landscape, looking for the signs of life that indicate the presence of uninfected people. The act of utilising a space purely for reasons of shelter means that, to all intents and purposes, this status is the only signification that such a space might be granted. Edward Relph suggests that this sort of spatial engagement can be described as 'behavioural insideness – or physical presence in a place'.[9] The term denotes an engagement with space that is fleeting, and based purely on that space being one in which particular behaviours are pursued; behaviours that are, significantly, relatively unimportant facets of the individual's spatial identity. Essentially, the body is present ('physical presence'), but none of the individual's identity is invested into the space. Relph's term finds its most clear context within urban spaces, and the ways in which people

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[9] Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion, 1976), p.50.

encounter particular spaces as a result of their behavioural patterns; people spend time within train stations and supermarkets, because the behaviours they exhibit (the need to travel or buy groceries) require they do so. Unless the individual works in one of these spaces, then any engagement is transient and unlikely to require any significant cognitive investment.

Whilst the assembled survivors are primarily gathered within the farmhouse for the purpose of sheltering from the infected, there are additional aspects of spatial engagement and interpersonal relationships that ensure their behaviour cannot entirely be described in terms of behavioural insideness. The farmhouse is, for Don, Alice, Jacob and Karen, a space that Relph might describe in terms of 'emphatic insideness'. Within such spaces the individual must demonstrate 'a willingness to be open to significances of a place, to feel it, to know and respect its symbols'.[10] The farmhouse is not simply a refuge; it is a space in which the gathered survivors reaffirm each other's humanity and reiterate aspects of culture that might otherwise be jettisoned in cases where people are bereft of the company of others. This group also recognise the fact that, despite the profound upheaval that has occurred, this space is still Geoff and Sally's home, and any engagement they have with the place always acknowledges this fact. The use of the term 'place' here, rather than 'space,' denotes the signification present in the home; as Tim Cresswell states, 'place, at a basic level, is space invested with meaning in the context of power'.[11] The significant cultural investment that is present within the farmhouse (as a locus of group identity) is demonstrated in the opening scene, in which a dinner is prepared for the gathered survivors. In *28 Days Later*, when Jim is rescued from a group of the infected by Mark and Selena, he is taken to their shelter; a newsagent kiosk within the London Underground. The Underground is itself a clear example of a space in which behavioural insideness is practiced (people utilise the space for the sole purpose of travel), and Mark and Selena's shelter is similarly a space in which the singular activity of sheltering occurs. Once there, Mark throws a box of Maltesers at Jim's feet, and tells him to eat; an action that suggests the act of eating is nothing more than a perfunctory necessity.

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[10] *Ibid*, 54.
[11] Tim Cresswell, *Place: An Introduction* (Chichester: Blackwell, 2015), p.19.

The dinner at the farmhouse, conversely, is an act of cultural reification. Rather than simply eating foraged items of confectionary, seated on the floor of a cubby hole, the group of survivors partake in what is essentially a ritualised act that, in the circumstances, possesses a rebellious quality insofar as it carries a refusal to completely disregard pre-catastrophe cultural practices, and momentarily allows the company of other people to be more important than the constant acknowledging of the events occurring outside in the wider world. Peter Hutchings suggests that within the abandoned landscape, emptied as it is of the potential for individual and social agency, there is the possibility of subjects 'regressing to something less than human,'[12] and the maintaining of the ritualised group dinner ensures some element of humanity is retained. Don and Alice joke about the fact that their pantry is limited, whilst Geoff offers some tasting notes with regards to a bottle of wine that Don has procured. The normality of the dinner is surreal, given the severity of the situation that the group are sheltering from. Sniffing a glass of wine in order to detect its characteristics seems, in such circumstances, incredibly luxurious. However, the effect of this act, and maintaining the ritual of sitting down to dinner, allows a momentary element of escapism to be enjoyed.

Relph argues that 'Home is the foundation of our identity as individuals and as members of a community...(it) is not just the house you happen to live in, it is not something that can be anywhere, that can be exchanged, but an irreplaceable centre of significance'.[13] It is entirely understandable, then, that Geoff and Sally have remained in their own home, rather than attempt to find other survivors; whilst we are not offered any information regarding the circumstances in which the rest of the group came to take shelter within the farmhouse, it is likely that they happened upon Geoff and Sally, rather than the converse, given the fact that Geoff and Sally are an elderly couple (and implicitly less physically mobile than the younger members of the group). Their home offers far more than shelter; it is the centre of their identity as a married couple, and retains profound emotional significance, in much the same way that Frank and Hannah remained within their flat not only because it provided safety but because it allowed them to retain a connection to their pre-catastrophe family life. In the case

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[12] Peter Hutchings, 'Uncanny Landscapes in British Film and Television,' *Visual Culture in Britain* 5:2 (2004), p.29.
[13] Relph, 40.

of the farmhouse, there are family photos within the home that reiterate the couple's status as grand/parents (regardless of whether their grand/children have succumbed to the virus). Indeed, their age and their acute attachment to this home allows them to be viewed in familial terms, with regards to the gathered groups of survivors. Geoff and Sally can be thought of as grandparental figures, whilst Don and Alice (being parents of two children) can be regarded as parental figures. Jacob and Karen, being younger still, can be considered to be the 'children' of the group. This dynamic is exemplified in the scene where the meal is served. Karen places her own plate to one side, saying that Sam (her boyfriend) will be hungry when he returns. Jacob rebukes her statement, suggesting that Sam's failure to return to the farmhouse indicates he is either dead or infected ("if he's still breathing, which I doubt, it won't be the pasta he's interested in; it'll be your fucking neck"), causing Karen to argue with him. Don scolds Jacob, and the scene momentarily becomes a family drama. This home, then, is a centre of significance for the other members of the group, and is a familial space by extension. Edward Krupat argues that the single most important factor in the development of a unified sense of community is the family, and he states that 'urban people continue to rely strongly on members of the immediate family, although extended family ties seem to be weakened in the city, largely because of spatial separation and the existence of alternative kinds of bonding material'.[14] It is significant that the farmhouse is on the outskirts of London, the periphery of the urban where, according to Krupat, there is a stronger compression of signification with regards to relationships. The farmhouse embodies both 'traditional' aesthetics and modes of living and it is, therefore, an appropriate space for this adoptive, extended family to develop.

It is tempting to assume that the static family unit that is cognitively attached to the space of the home is one that enjoys relative safety (relative inasmuch as their numbers allow for better means of protection). However, as Don and Alice's conversation in the kitchen demonstrates, their food supplies are most definitely finite (Don bemoans the fact that they are down to their last tin of tomatoes, and have five tins of chickpeas). Darren Reed and Ruth Penfold-Mounce suggest that within zombie narratives mobility is key to survival, not only insofar as humans need to move more quickly than zombies, but also in the sense that survivors must be willing to abandon

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[14] Edward Krupat, *People in Cities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p.154.

former homes and be willing to either continually survive on the road, or else be willing to abandon a temporary camp once it becomes compromised.[15] In such circumstances, the cognitive signification of the home (in terms of a *particular* physical location) must become secondary to a willingness to become mobile, in order to find food and other survivors and escape any attacks from the infected. It is significant that Don and Alice's children, Tammy and Andy, escaped the initial outbreak of Rage by virtue of the fact that they were in Spain, on holiday with their school. This temporary fracture of the family unit is an event that allows the children to be shielded from the civil unrest that followed the viral outbreak. Cresswell states that 'places are not always stationary,'[16] and this view can be demonstrated by the fact that Don and Alice, whilst having left the location of their home, have transposed elements of their family unit to the farmhouse. Whilst their own children are in Spain, Alice gazes at the photos of Geoff and Sally's grandchildren (allowing herself a reiteration of her own status as mother), and the presence of the younger Jacob and Karen allows Don and Alice to retain their parental roles vicariously.

The family unit is a demonstrably transferable set of relationships; whilst most usually associated with the space of the home, it can exist outside of any particular space, and even retain its values when the family is mobile. Indeed, Fresnadillo describes the family (Don and Alice's) as the 'heart of the film,'[17] and suggests that the absence of Tammy and Andy evokes a profound emotion. This absence engenders a corresponding desire to express the parental relationship on the part of Alice, and this yearning hinders her ability to distance herself from the compromised space of the farmhouse during a time of crisis. During the dinner scene, as Jacob and Karen argue over the fact that she believes her boyfriend will return, there is a frantic knocking on the door of the house, followed by cries for help. Alice recognises the voice as belonging to a boy, but Don urges caution in opening the door. Don acquiesces and opens the door to this boy, who is immediately pulled into Alice's arms. The boy has, it transpires, fled from his parents who are part of a larger group of the infected. The boy has led this group to the farmhouse, and moments after he has taken a place at

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[15] Darren Reed and Ruth Penfold-Mounce, 'Zombies and the Sociological Imagination: *The Walking Dead* as Social-Science Fiction,' in *The Zombie Renaissance in Popular Culture*, eds. Laura Hubner, Marcus Leaning, Paul Manning (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p.133.
[16] Cresswell, 13.
[17] *28 Weeks Later*, audio commentary with Juan Carlos Fresnadillo and Enrique López-Lavigne (DNA Films, 2007), film.

the dinner table and voraciously partaken of the meal, the infected begin to enter the home. Dahlia Schweitzer suggests that 'metaphorical lines are drawn between those who are not infected and those who are deemed infectious or more likely to be infectious'.[18] When the boy first bangs on the door of the house, Karen shouts "Sam!" believing her boyfriend has returned. Geoff, however, puts his hand over her mouth and urges her to be quiet. Similarly, once the boy starts to shout, asking to be let in, Alice rises from the table and moves towards the door before Don grabs her arm and says "wait...don't know who's out there". Both Geoff and Don recognise the potential threat that this child poses; even though he demonstrates the power of speech (something that is immediately lost once an individual becomes infected), his presence potentially places the group in danger. They cannot definitively know that this boy is not infected, and nor can they discern whether this boy is alone, and therefore the action that is most beneficial to the group is to ignore his pleas and to maintain a distance between their healthy bodies, and this body that has an unknown health status. As Alice has already shown to ruminate on the status of her own children, the diminishing of her parental role (enforced by the distance between herself and her children) means she is unable to detach herself form this child in a moment of crisis, which ultimately puts her own healthy status at hazard.

Hyperbolized behaviours

Schweitzer argues that within "zombie narratives there is a constant emphasis on the need to barricade, to isolate and protect in order to keep others at bay'.[19] Whilst the farmhouse does indeed bear evidence of attempts at fortification (the windows are barricaded, with material placed between planks of wood in order to prevent light being projected out, or anyone looking in), it is also true that there is a hyperbolization of *cognitive* structures. Where ordinarily a sudden knock on the door, accompanied by cries for help, might be startling and elicit curiosity, in the zombie narrative the same actions inspire extreme fear and caution; hyperbolized reactions that acknowledge both the severity of the threat the infected pose, and the need to ensure any space used as a shelter does not exhibit evidence of habitation. Krupat argues that 'We must remember that behavior...is the property of a person-in-environment *system* and is not

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[18] Dahlia Schweitzer, *Going Viral: Zombies, Viruses, and the Ends of the World* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2018), p.48.
[19] Ibid, 162.

an attribute of a person,'[20] and that 'just as various species adapt their behavior according to their needs for dominance and survival, so does the human animal adapt its way of life to the requirements of the environment'.[21] Given the post-viral environment is one in which any contact with infected or potentially infectious people is an encounter that carries a large risk of becoming infected, the individual (or, in this case, the group) must adapt to this environment through spatial practices that conceal their presence, and behavioural practices that limit their empathy towards people who are not members of their group. It is Alice's failure to adapt to these necessary spatial and behavioural parameters that ultimately compromises the safety of the house and the group. Conversely, it is Don's willingness to prioritise his own safety, and his willingness to become immediately mobile that ensures he survives the attack on the shelter.

As the infected storm the farmhouse, Don urges Alice to get to an escape hatch that the group has established (a loft in an adjoining barn, from which they can escape to a boat waiting on a nearby river). However, the boy panics and runs up the staircase towards one of the bedrooms. Alice follows him, and Don having lost a crowbar he was using to repel the infected has no choice but to follow her. Once in one of the bedrooms, Don urges Alice to follow him to an *en suite* bathroom, but she will not leave the boy who has hidden in a wardrobe. As the infected enter the room, they effectively form a barrier between Don and Alice, and in that moment Don instinctually prioritises his own safety and closes the bathroom door before escaping through a window. Schweitzer suggests that 'during a viral outbreak, not only are the infected lumped together, individuality abandoned, but they are also considered less worthy, less human, and more expendable. The infected, along with anyone deemed potentially infectious, are dehumanized in the interests of security'.[22] This attitude of maintain a self-preserving distance is extended to anyone who willingly (or otherwise) exposes themselves to the possibility of infection. As Jacob, Geoff and Sally make their way to the escape hatch, Geoff attempts to hold back the infected but is overpowered. Sally hesitates (succumbing to a need to wait for her husband, rather than preserve her own health status), before reaching her hand up to the loft where Jacob is waiting for her

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[20] Krupat, 11.
[21] *Ibid*, 50.
[22] Schweitzer, 178.

but upon seeing the infected close in on Sally, Jacob quickly closes the entrance to the loft. He recognises that her proximity to the infected, due to her hesitancy, ensures she is potentially infectious. Her unwillingness to leave her husband has ensured she lacks the necessary mobility to survive the attack on the home. Similarly, Alice's immediate empathy towards the boy ensures her own safety is set aside in favour of attempting to protect this child. Her behaviour is prefaced by the earlier scene in which she looked at the photo of Geoff and Sally's grandchildren with a certain melancholy, and spoke to Don about how relieved she is that they had sent their own children on a school trip. Whilst empathy and the desire to protect others are clearly positive and humanitarian traits, they are not, to return to the earlier quotation from Krupat, 'requirements of the environment'. It may be tempting to denounce Don's act of self-preservation as selfish and even cowardly, but his actions align him with *28 Days Later's* Selena, who repeatedly tells Jim that becoming attached to others slows a person down, and that she would kill him "in a heartbeat" if she thought he was infected. Don has adapted to the conditions of the post-viral landscape, and has adopted the emotional detachment necessary to survive that environment.

One of the behaviours that ensures Don survives the attack on the farmhouse is the way in which he exercises not only physical mobility, but also *cognitive* mobility; he shows a willingness to consign spatial and emotional bonds to the realm of memory, in order to be able to emotionally cope with the post-viral landscape. Alice's inability to be fully present in the moment is demonstrated in her dwelling on the fact that she and Don are separated from their children. She says to Don "thank God we paid for that school trip. Can you imagine if we hadn't have done?" Don responds with "I don't want to imagine". Alice unnecessarily dwells on an event that did not occur (her children being exposed to the virus and the ensuing civil unrest), and as such she expends considerable emotional energy in her response to this non-event. Don's response, on the other hand, suggests he pragmatically refuses to waste energy contemplating a possible past, and instead focuses on the present moment, and the fact that his children *did* leave the country and are therefore safe. In the same way, as he and Alice become separated, he tells her to leave the boy. Don has refused to become emotionally attached to this child, and certainly will not place his own survival at hazard to save him. The same is true of *28 Days Later's* Selena, who makes it clear to Jim that her own uninfected health status means she will not become emotionally attached

to other survivors, and clearly demonstrates this through the slaying of Mark once it becomes clear that he may have become infected.

Don's willingness to adapt to changes within his environment, and his ability to emotionally detach himself from spatial ties are demonstrated later in the film when he is reunited with his children. After escaping the farmhouse, via the boat that was moored on a nearby river, Don finds his way to a military camp, and at the point that the film returns to him he is a section officer within a safety zone that NATO forces have established within London's Isle of Dogs. His children have returned to the country, alongside other Britons who were abroad at the time of the initial outbreak. Whilst describing the events that led to his separation from Alice (whom he believes to be infected or dead), Don tells his children that they will be moving to a new house, because their old home is outside of the security zone, adding that he would not want to return even if they could. Krupat identifies 'six needs common to all people that can be addressed by a behavioral approach to urban design,' one of which he terms '*Security*...the need to feel safe and secure in the place where one lives is one of the most basic concerns of all urban dwellers'.[23] Because Don's survival has resulted from his willingness to abandon spaces (and people) that represent a threat to his own safety, the decision to relinquish his physical ties to his former home is definitive. His attitude results from his experiences during the initial outbreak, where he has defended a space until it became compromised, and abandoned it once his own uninfected status was placed in danger. Given he has direct experience of a loss of security, it is quite understandable that he wishes to live within firmly enforced safety boundaries. Don's children, however, have been spared the experience of the civil unrest that (presumably) saw Don and Alice flee London for the outskirts of the city, where the relative lack of people would mean a corresponding decrease in *infected* people. Living abroad at the time of the outbreak, the children would have perhaps witnessed news footage during the early days of the unrest (before the collapse of Britain's infrastructure), and therefore only vicariously experienced the panic and threat that the infected pose. It is this lack of visceral experience, and the absence of the traumatic memories that result from such experiences that find Tammy and Andy surreptitiously leave the safety of the security zone to travel to their family home.

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[23] Krupat, 162.

Cresswell states that 'For many, the most familiar example of place and its significance to people is the idea of home,'[24] whilst Relph suggests that 'To have roots in a place is to have a secure point from which to look out on the world, a firm grasp of one's own position in the order of things, and a significant spiritual and psychological attachment to somewhere in particular'.[25] It is understandable, then, that Tammy and Andy feel a strong urge to revisit the one space in which they have invested considerable emotional and cognitive energy and that, in return, allowed the formation of their own positional identities. Returning to Britain, and yet being displaced from their significant spatial position, they are placed into an identificatory stasis. Like Alice, the children cling to the specific spatial location of the home, rather than recognising the fact that the relationships that are fostered within that space are transferrable units of association. Similarly, where Don is able to consign the home and the relationships contained within it to memory, Andy has particular trouble doing the same. Indeed, he says to Tammy (with regards to their mother) "I get worried I'm going to forget what she looks like...I don't even have a picture of her". Their pilgrimage to their home is, then, an attempt to both reiterate their attachment to a significant space and to retrieve artefacts from that space that allow them to emotionally connect to the family dynamic they enjoyed within the space of the home.

Spatial Authenticity

As noted previously, outbreak narratives often make use of exaggerated versions of boundaries and barriers. This hyperbolizing effect can be seen in both the physical and cognitive borders that are observed throughout the film, and in the corresponding separation that exists between 'inside' and 'outside' spaces. Additionally, there is a hyperbolized cognitive and cultural distance between the uninfected people inhabiting the inside spaces, and the infected who inhabit those spaces that lay on the other side of these borders. Schweitzer suggests that the barriers found within outbreak narratives 'can be tangible, as in masks or protective gear or metal doors to block out dangerous microbes, or they can be political, as with quarantine regulations, travel restrictions, or border policies'.[26] These barriers are most clearly found within the military safety zone on the Isle of Dogs, but they are also present in the early

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[24] Cresswell, 39.
[25] Relph, 38.
[26] Schweitzer, 42.

farmhouse scene. Physically, the house has been insulated in such a way that the presence of the group sheltering within is concealed from any infected who might come across it. The windows and doors have been covered by planks of wood, and material has been stuffed into any spaces between the planks. These measures both fortify any potential points of entry against an attack, and also prevent the emission of light (the interior of the house is lit by candles) and prevent any prying eyes from peeking between the gaps. Fran Tonkiss suggests that 'People make sense of their world by connecting and separating things, by drawing distinctions and ordering relationships, and these processes leave their mark in space'.[27] This idea is exemplified in the way that uninfected survivors form bonds based on the need for mutual protection, and distinguish themselves from their infected counterparts in both their uninfected status, and their attempts to reiterate cultural values that prevent their dehumanisation. The farmhouse is a space that collates a group of survivors in an ordered relationship that is based on what Krupat terms the 'functional' aspect of community; the size of the group ensures a greater capacity to protect the space, and the functional group offers the possibility of 'social control and sociability'.[28] The group reaffirm their own status as uninfected survivors, whilst allowing certain cultural elements to be maintained that have the effect of humanising their collective identity. A fundamental aspect of this confirmation of group identity is the 'social control' practiced in ensuring their presence is hidden from the 'outside' world, and ensuring their space is not subject to invasion.

In maintaining aspects of culture within the space of the farmhouse (the extended family unit; the ritual of sitting to dinner), the group confer an authentic status upon the space. Relph suggests that authenticity 'consists of an openness to the world and an awareness of the human condition, so inauthenticity is an attitude which is closed to the world and to man's possibilities'.[29] Relph's description of an inauthentic attitude towards space is perfectly typified by the way in which the infected engage with (or rather fail to engage with) the spaces they encounter. Relph further states that 'An inauthentic attitude to place is essentially no sense of place, for it involves no awareness of the deep and symbolic significance of places and no appreciation of

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[27] Fran Tonkiss, *Space, the City and Social Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015), p.30.
[28] Krupat, 142.
[29] Relph, 142.

their identities.[30] The infected demonstrate no awareness of any of the cognitive investment that particular spaces contain, and instead gravitate towards spaces purely on the basis that they may contain uninfected survivors. Because of this complete lack of awareness of spatial signification, the infected can themselves offer no deliberate meaning to spaces, and any signification that their presence does confer is entirely incidental and biological, rather than cognitive (their presence within space makes that space unhealthy and unsafe, and so on).

Relph suggests that 'The meanings of places may be rooted in the physical setting and objects and activities, but they are not a property of them- rather they are a property of human intentions and experiences'.[31] As has been discussed so far, the cognitive values of the farmhouse are derived not only from its status as an established family home, but from the collective 'intentions and experiences' that result from the group sheltering there. The military safety zone has none of the established physical values that the farmhouse (or any other home) has, and nor do the people gathered there necessarily have the experience of surviving in the post-viral landscape; given Tammy and Andy arrive by plane, it seems probable that a large proportion of the residents were abroad at the time of the initial outbreak. And yet the space still derives signification from the collective status of the gathered repatriated citizens. Within the safety zone there are two sets of interpersonal dynamics: firstly, there is the wider relational dynamic that results from many people inhabiting the same space, and secondly there are smaller, more intimate sets of relational units that occur where already existing relationships are transposed to this new space. This latter aspect is demonstrated in a scene where one of the American soldiers (Doyle) is scanning the safety zone through the scope of his sniper rifle. Doyle surveys the building in which the safety zone residents are staying and witnesses one couple arguing, another couple making love and Tammy and Andy jumping up and down on their beds, before their father playfully tucks them in. These behaviours relay the fact that the occupants of the apartments Doyle observes are experiencing an inherent sense of security; they are certainly relaxed enough to demonstrate behaviours that would attract the attention of the infected were they to take place in spaces that did not benefit from the separation that the military have enforced.

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[30] *Ibid,* 82.
[31] *Ibid, 47.*

Spatial security, however, does not necessarily engender spatial authenticity. Whilst it is true that some of the repatriated Britons were London residents before the outbreak (Tammy and Andy lived in London, for instance), many will undoubtedly have previously lived in other areas of Britain. Because these people have been supplanted from places that were spatially significant, the safety zone is unavoidably transient in nature; indeed, the apartment block that houses the residents is to all intents and purposes a hotel. Tammy and Andy initially bemoan the conditions of the refugee camp they were placed into in Spain, comparing it unfavourably with the relative luxury of their new accommodation, but the Isle of Dogs serves much the same function essentially; it is a 'holding' space, in which these Britons become reacquainted with their country, before they are assigned new homes. Given the profoundly restrictive spatial practices within the safety zone, and its implicit status as a transitory space, any relationship the Britons form with the space is entirely mediated and therefore an authentic connection to that space is very difficult to achieve.

As the new arrivals make the final stretch of their journey to the safety zone via train, a soldier tells them that "Inside District One, we believe you will be pleasantly surprised. We have hot and cold running water, 24-hour electricity, a medical centre, a supermarket and even a pub". Whilst this speech is designed to ensure the new arrivals gain feelings of security and familiarity from the promise of these creature comforts, it has the feel of a tourist guide's *spiel*. As was discussed in Chapter One, in relation to Sightseers and the mediated information within the heritage industry, Relph argues that 'An inauthentic attitude to place is nowhere more clearly expressed than in tourism, for in tourism individual and authentic judgement about places is nearly always subsumed to expert or socially accepted opinion, or the act and means of tourism become more important than the places visited'.[32] The safety zone is described in precise detail to the new arrivals, even before they have reached the space itself. The behaviours that are permissible within the zone are also clearly delineated; whilst the need for incredibly tight security measures is understandable, these spatial restrictions ensure those entering the space are placed into a cultural stasis, where simulations of pre-viral life are offered to them. Indeed, the distance between this *version* of Britain and the memories the safety zone residents have of their country is demonstrated when Tammy says to Andy "we're nearly home". Whilst

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[32] *Ibid*, 83.

Tammy's statement suggests they are one step closer to returning to their family home (Don has yet to tell them that they will not be returning to their house), it also indicates an implicit realisation that this space is mediated (*nearly* but not *quite* home), and Tammy's statement could well be read as acknowledgement of the distance between their memories of London, and the version offered to them via the safety zone. The spaces they encounter are *not quite* authentic.

Inside – Outside

Whilst the safety zone can be viewed as a space that fails to foster authentic spatial engagements, it is also a space in which very clear delineations are observed with regards to inside and outside spatial practices. As Tammy and Andy are transported to the Isle of Dogs via train, a member of the military offers a description of the safety zone:

> We are headed for the green zone, our area of security and reconstruction, designated as District One. District One is located on the Isle of Dogs. Although the Isle of Dogs is completely safe, the surrounding area of London is not. There are a large number of bodies still left to be cleared in the original outbreak of infection. Rats and wild dogs are prevalent, as is disease. New arrivals are reminded, for their own safety it is absolutely forbidden to cross the river and leave the security zone.

This preamble tells the new arrivals that the safety zone is a healthy space, and conversely the areas outside of that zone (which are, effectively, the rest of the country) are both unhealthy and unsafe. Indeed, it is implied that these two conditions are corresponding states. Whilst the army are adamant that the infected have starved to death, the above speech suggests that the virus itself still poses a threat via the numerous bodies that lay around the country. Within this context, the spaces outside of the safety zone are essentially abject, given those spaces potentially threaten the healthy individual with infection and disease, and Barbara Creed describes 'Abject things…(as those that) exist on the other side of the border which separates out the living subject from that which threatens its extinction'.[33] The world outside of the

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[33] Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis* (London: Routledge, 1993), p.10.

militarised Isle of Dogs ('the border') holds the potential for infection, and therefore threatens the health of the safety zone, and the 'living subject(s)' within.

The very term 'outside' becomes, within the narrative, suggestive of separation, abjection and danger. During the farmhouse dinner scene, when Jacob scolds Karen for believing her boyfriend will return he says to her "There *are* no survivors. It's just us in here, and them out there". This statement clearly has implications outside of their immediate situation; Jacob is acknowledging the division between the uninfected and the infected, the healthy and the unhealthy. His statement suggests that anyone not taking shelter, and therefore being exposed to the outside world, is either dead or infected. However, when Jacob further suggests that should Karen's boyfriend return, "it won't be the pasta he's interested in, it'll be your fucking neck!" he is acknowledging the fact that it is far more likely that anyone attacked by the infected has, in all probability, become infected themselves rather than be killed during an attack. This is because the virus has an incredibly rapid infection rate; once bodily fluids are transmitted from the infected to the uninfected (either through bites and scratches, or the vomit that the infected frequently project), infection occurs within twenty seconds. Whilst any virus that is capable of such rapid transmission would, realistically, kill its host before it could be transmitted to others, the portrayal of the Rage virus corresponds with other hyperbolized aspects within the film. Stacey Abbott suggests that 'By eschewing reality in favour of effect, the zombie genre in the form of *28 Days Later* and many subsequent films, focuses not on the process by which society would be deconstructed' but rather 'conveys the horror of the fragility of the human body and society...in structurally simplistic terms'.[34] The primary threat the infected pose is, then, an invasion of the body. Any spatial boundaries that are enforced throughout the film serve the purpose of, ultimately, protecting the body from infection; the virus' virulence stems not only from the fact that it is incredibly transmittable, but also because humans themselves are highly infectable.

As has been discussed thus far, any spaces that are occupied by uninfected survivors are given signification simply because those gathered within those spaces have shared behavioural needs (hiding from the infected; protecting each other from attacks), and their commonality allows for a reiteration of cultural values (talking about

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[34] Stacey Abbott, *Undead Apocalypse: Vampires and Zombies In the Twenty-First Century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), p.86.

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their lives, their pasts, and so on). On the other hand, the infected are incapable of such cognitive activities, and as such any spaces they occupy or pass through become potentially unhealthy and abject; not only are the infected incapable of investing any spaces with cognitive meaning, but they also actively denigrate those spaces via their own pestilence. These spaces become as cognitively emptied as the infected themselves. The idea of a person bereft of all cognitive signification is described by Schweitzer as such: 'Zombies are us, hollowed out. They emphasize what we can become when only a body is left'.[35] This 'hollowing out' is equally applicable to the spaces that have been rendered unhealthy by the presence (however fleeting) of the infected; places that simply become spaces (rather than meaningful places) because of their presence. On the train journey from the landing strip to the safety zone, Andy and Tammy look out at streets that are completely devoid of life and vitality. Any cognitive investment that the spaces outside of the safety zone once contained has begun to fade. Relph suggests that the 'withering away and modification' of places is 'prevented by ritual and tradition that reinforce the sense of permanence of place'.[36] Whilst this idea is evidenced within the farmhouse scene, where the group of survivors acknowledge both their own kinship, as well as reiterate the family status they enjoyed before the outbreak, it is clear that without a population to perpetuate 'ritual and tradition' the residential streets of London are no longer spaces that are redolent of community. This idea is presented even more explicitly once Tammy and Andy surreptitiously leave the safety zone to revisit their family home.

Once Tammy and Andy leave the prescribed spatial boundaries of the safety zone, they encounter streets that still bear the marks of civil unrest; overturned cars, broken glass and the detritus that reveals how long it has been since the collapse of the city's municipal infrastructure. Relph argues that the identity of a place can be reduced to three fundamental components: 'the static physical setting, the activities, and the meanings,' and that 'the meanings of places may be rooted in the physical setting and objects and activities, but they are not a property of them- rather they are a property of human intentions and experiences'.[37] Given those 'intentions and experiences' have disappeared alongside the virus ravaged population, all that is left

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[35] Schweitzer, 151.
[36] Relph, 32.
[37] *Ibid*, 47.

is the 'static physical setting'. Tammy sees a moped outside of a pizza restaurant, and looks for the bike's keys within the shop. Inside, half-eaten food sits rotting on the plate, whilst a decomposing member of staff lies on the floor of the kitchen. The elements that gave this space its cognitive meaning are literally decaying, and what is left is a spatial phantom. The only active expressions of intention within London's streets are the various pockets of evidence of the military's 'reconstruction' project. Relph argues that 'Landscapes are records of construction rather than destruction, and, except for appropriate monuments and memorials, evidence of disaster and suffering, even a disaster as great as World War I, is removed as quickly as possible'.[38] It is certainly true that the reconstruction of London (as symbolic of the reconstruction of Britain) is in evidence as Tammy and Andy first run, and then ride a moped through the streets. Furniture removed from residences is piled up outside houses, whilst there are heaps of plastic bags bearing biohazard warnings. Body bags are burned on bonfires, whilst a soldier removes graffiti from the roof of a house that reads 'I am here'. It is clear the virus has enforced a depletion of London's cognitive values, but the military reconstruction entails an equivalent erasure of both the city's physical artefacts, and any signs of the traumatic events that occurred during the outbreak.

The importance of a separation between the inside and the outside, the healthy and the unhealthy is expressed by Schweitzer who argues that 'in zombie narratives there is a constant emphasis on the need to barricade, to isolate and protect in order to keep others at bay. This arguably reflects our anxiety over our inability to contain things'.[39] This view affirms the need to maintain the health of any occupied space, through the exclusion and expulsion of individuals who threaten that health (via their potential to be infected or infectious). There are two key moments within the film's narrative that express this need for spatial and cognitive separation. Firstly, the farmhouse scene demonstrates a chain of events that is initiated by Alice's overwhelming urge to protect the boy knocking at the door; even though the boy represents a potential threat to the health and safety of the group. Had the group ignored the boy's pleas, he may have continued on to other dwellings in search of shelter and the group of infected following him may have simply continued their pursuit without viewing the cottage as a potential source of uninfected life. However, the one

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[38] Edward Relph, *The Modern Urban Landscape* (Kent: Croom Helm, 1987), p.106.
[39] Schweitzer, 162.

action that definitively places the group in danger is when Karen removes some of the material that the group have placed between the boards on the windows. Karen does this so that she can look outside, but in doing so she attracts the attention of one of the infected who have pursued the boy. This infected woman breaks through the boards, pulls Karen's arm through the window and bites into it. Karen, now infected, attacks Jacob but is killed by Don. However, the scuffle has attracted the attention of the infected who storm the farmhouse. Karen's actions ensure the complete dismantling of the cultural and cognitive investment present within the house, and the infection of all except Don. Karen behaves so carelessly because rather than being cognitively present within the farmhouse, and fully invested in the group identity shared therein, she is emotionally rooted to the outside world via her missing boyfriend. Indeed, as she gazes out of the gap between the boards, Karen says 'Sam' indicating that her attention is elsewhere; she fails to be fully present and invested in the space of the house. David Harvey, in discussing Foucault's writing on punishment and discipline, argues that the 'the body...(is) the irreducible element in our social scheme of things, for it is upon that space that the forces of repression, socialization, disciplining, and punishing are inflicted'.[40] Karen neglects to protect her own body, and as such it is through her body that the infected are able to enter the healthy space of the house. In the first instance, her health is violated by the infected's bite, and then her own body becomes a vehicle for the virus. The body, in this case, becomes a synecdoche representing as it does the group and the space in which that group shelters.

The second incident in which the need for physical and cognitive separation is discarded is when Tammy and Andy leave the safety of the military project, and travel to their family home to retrieve some of their possessions. This subversive act is aligned with the actions of Alice and Karen insofar as it demonstrates a preoccupation with the past, memory and spaces that are deemed to be unhealthy. The allure of such spaces is understood in terms described by Relph, when he suggests that 'those aspects of space that we distinguish as places are differentiated because they have attracted and concentrated our intentions, and because of this focusing they are set apart from the surrounding space while remaining a part of it'.[41] Given the safety zone

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[40] David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), p.213.
[41] Relph, 28.

is a space that is transient in nature, it is understandable that Tammy and Andy experience a spatial dislocation. It follows that they deem it necessary to revisit their family home to 'touch base' with the identities that have been developed within that space. Having been absent from the country during the civil unrest, and having not been subjected to the trauma of encountering the infected, Tammy and Andy do not place the same explicit importance on observing spatial boundaries as those who have experienced the threat the virus poses first-hand.

Whilst the military have explicitly warned the repatriated Britons that the areas outside of the safety zone carry the threat of disease, it is still entirely unexpected that the virus is still present within any living creature. However, this is precisely the case when Tammy and Andy encounter their mother; having escaped the farmhouse, Alice has made her way back to the family home. During the attack on the farmhouse, she was bitten and infected, and yet she has not succumbed to the virus. Rather, she is an asymptomatic carrier. This biologically liminal status ensures that Alice is still a threat to the health of the residents of the safety zone; to return to Schweitzer, "Fear of infection makes one especially aware of the distance between bodies, making a suspected carrier feel uncomfortably close'.[42] The army exercise the correct spatial attitude in treating Alice as though she is a direct threat to the health of the safety zone. However, Don's status as section officer means he has access to all areas within the safety zone, and his desire to visit his wife ensures his own inevitable infection brings about the dissolution of the safety zone, and the infection or death of the residents within. It is significant that these events occur once Don has been reunited with his family unit, and bears some similarity to the way in which *28 Day's Later's* Selena 'softens' somewhat, once she is part of the group identity offered through her association with Jim, Frank and Hannah. In Selena's case, though, this softening is viewed as a redemptive and humanising; in Don's case, through his failure to continue to correctly exercise the appropriate spatial caution that saved his life during the farmhouse attack and through his own and his children's transgressing of spatial boundaries, the virus is able to once again render London unsafe and unhealthy.

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[42] Schweitzer, 48.

Conclusion

The film suggests that within the dystopian landscape, and especially one in which there are constant dangers, individuals and groups can only ever experience limited levels of engagement with specific spaces since they must be prepared to prioritise mobility in order to maintain their distance from threats. Because of this, any cognitive ties to particular spaces must be severed. Additionally, spaces are then viewed purely in terms of their functionality and their suitability to aiding survival. This set of spatial criteria is very different to any that may be experienced in pre-catastrophe times. There is a danger that the individual who fails to detach themselves from their spatial ties will hesitate in recognising threatening situations and fail to act appropriately in fleeing spaces in which they have invested cognitive energy. This is demonstrated within the film, and especially in the opening farmhouse scene. Conversely, Don's willingness to exercise spatial detachment is precisely what enables him to flee the farmhouse and survive the attack. Whilst this ability is clearly figured as advantageous in survivalist terms, it carries with it the possibility of minimising relationships with both significant spaces and significant people who are overly attached to those spaces. In Don's case, his actions may have ensured his survival, but they are the cause of some post-traumatic stress and significant guilt.

Given the reduced nature of spatial engagements within zombie narratives, there is a sense that any cognitive and cultural investments that occur within any given space are luxurious, and even potentially dangerous. Lighting a candle might give away a secreted position; adopting a too relaxed attitude may dull the senses to danger. However, there is value in attempting to balance the imperative need for safety with a desire to retain behavioural elements that encourage humanity and a cultural identity that is not simply an opposition to the external threat. In expressing elements of cultural identity within space, that space then takes on an authenticity. Much of this sense of the authentic results from the shared identity of those sharing a space, and an acknowledgement of any cultural significance a space already has for those residing within it. *28 Weeks Later* reveals the importance of retaining cultural practices, and how they help to coalesce a group identity in the face of a threatening external force. Conversely, the film demonstrates the ways in which spaces can be entirely inauthentic where cultural expressions are imposed upon a group within spaces where there are no existing cognitive ties, and relationships that are incidental. The safety

zone is an ultimately facile space because it is mediated, and whilst it may contain small elements of pre-existing familial connections (such as Don and his children), it is predicated on an us/them, inside/outside binary.

Chapter Seven

"There's Something Wrong With this Place": *An American Werewolf in London*

Of all of horror cinema's classic figures of monstrosity, none is more closely aligned with a particular space than the werewolf. The vampire, whilst nominally associated with Eastern Europe (and the aristocracy) via Bram Stoker's seminal novel *Dracula*,[1] has extended its characterisation, and is now present across every nation, class, gender, race and cinematic location; from a small industrial town in Iran, via *A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night*,[2] to the plains of the American Midwest in *Near Dark*.[3] Zombies, by virtue of their status as deceased and reanimated persons, are most commonly figured as an urban horde; indeed, George A. Romero's hugely influential *Dawn of the Dead*[4] has his undead roam the space that exemplifies the (un)living end of consumerist urban spaces in the shopping mall, whilst *28 Days Later*[5] sees its living, yet deadly, infected masses tear through tower blocks, city streets and underground stations. However, there is no spatial precedence for the likelihood of the zombie being present within the city; rather, it is the increased presence of people (the material required for the appearance of the zombie) that allows for this. Indeed, there are many examples of the rural zombie; *The Living Dead at the Manchester Morgue*[6] has its antagonists shamble through the Lake District, whilst *The Walking Dead*[7] has placed its human survivors outside of the city precisely because of the decreased number of zombies within the rural. Essentially, location, for the vampire, zombie (and serial killer) is an incidental narrative factor. The werewolf, however, is firmly rooted within the rural, and particularly those areas that remain uncultivated and densely arborescent.

The figure of the werewolf has, as Craig Ian Mann has argued, 'long been associated with the "beast within," a view which emphasises 'the psychological dimension of "werewolfism".[8] Indeed, many representations of werewolves within cinema position the creature in terms of a human/bestial duality, and the condition of being a werewolf is viewed as an external expression of an internal struggle. This is

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[1] Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, 1897.

[2] *A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night,* directed by Ana Lily Amirpour (Logan Pictures, 2014), film.

[3] *Near Dark*, directed by Kathryn Bigelow)F/M, 1987),, film.

[4] *Dawn of the Dead*, directed by George Romero (Laurel Group, 1978), film.

[5] *28 Days Later*, directed by Danny Boyle (DNA Films, 2002), film.

[6] *The Living Dead at the Manchester Morgue*, directed by Jorge Grau (Star films, 1974), film.

[7] *The Walking Dead*, created by Frank Darabont (2010 -), TV Series.

[8] Craig Ian Mann.*Phases of the Moon* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh university Press, 2020), p.2.

partly, and understandably, the result of the influence that psychoanalysis had upon late nineteenth and early twentieth century thinking (the period that saw the birth of cinema and, as a result, the horror film), and partly because, as Chantal Bourgault de Coudray asserts, the werewolf lacked 'a generating text as famous as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*(or) Stoker's *Dracula*'.[9] Because of this lack of a lycanthropic urtext, it is not difficult to view many cinematic representations of the werewolf as borrowing heavily from the conflicted figure(s) of Dr Jekyll/Mr Hyde,[10] perhaps the closest analogue within the literary period that gave birth to *Frankenstein* and *Dracula*.

The *idea* of the werewolf, though, has long been present within human history and mythology: from early modern Europe, where cases were often aligned with the witch hunt fervour; the Norse berserkers, who would wear wolf skins and gnaw at their shields; the Arcadian king Lycaon, turned into a wolf by Zeus; the Epic of Gilgamesh (thought to be the oldest recorded story in human history), in which the Goddess Ishtar turns a suitor into a wolf. These tales suggest the idea that the human turned wolf (or something in-between) has returned to a pre-civilised state of behaviour. However, it is equally important that the figure of the werewolf is expelled from civilisation, and returned to a pre-civilised space, outside of the village, town or city.

Mann has endeavoured to invest the idea of the werewolf (and specifically cinematic representations of the creature) with a cultural, rather than psychoanalytical, understanding. It is my intention to similarly avoid the well-trodden notion that the figure of the werewolf is an externalised representation of an internal conflict; rather, it is this idea that the werewolf embodies both a pre-civilised space *and* time that informs the following examination of the werewolf in British horror cinema.

This chapter will first examine the idea of the rural versus the urban, and how *An American Werewolf in London*[11] exaggerates the parochialism found within the country in order to set it apart from the selective detachment practiced within the city. The rural is a space that is viewed as being temporally lagging behind its urban counterpart, and as such the idea of lycanthropy is not immediately dismissed. Next, I will explore the idea of spatial insideness and outsideness, and how an intense form of existential

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[9] Chantal Bourgault de Coudray. *The Curse of the Werewolf: Fantasy, Horror and the Beast Within* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 76.
[10] Robert Louis Stevenson. *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde. 1886.*
[11] *An American Werewolf in London*, directed by John Landis (Universal Pictures, 1981), film.

insideness is achieved within the small-scale communities found within the rural. By contrast, the built environment contains numerous spaces in which its residents must encounter masses of people on a daily basis, and these spaces are therefore more difficult to connect with in profound ways. I will move on to discuss the idea that the film's protagonist, David, internalises the rural through the werewolf's curse. The condition of lycanthropy is conflated with the space of the rural, because the communities inhabiting that space are shown to more readily accept the existence of the werewolf. David's internalisation of the rural is expressed through a series of dreams that become increasingly surreal and reflective of his burgeoning werewolf-in-waiting. Finally, I will examine the ways in which the werewolf is able to successfully hunt within the city because it attacks people within liminal spaces. These zones are on the periphery of cultural investment, and as such the creature that would ordinarily be at odds with the city's ideas of modernity is able to stalk its prey, and indeed once the wolf is loosed upon the fully invested city streets, it is unable to successfully hunt.

An American Werewolf in London

Whilst technically a joint UK/US production, it is not difficult to think of *An American Werewolf in London* as being a British horror film, given it utilised a largely British production crew, featured a cast of almost entirely British actors and, most importantly, was concerned with British spaces. Certainly, being directed by an American, and featuring two American actors in prominent roles does not detract from the sense of Britishness that permeates the film. What *is* important is the way that an idea of Britain is filtered through Landis' American sensibilities. Whilst Britain sits on the very western edge of Europe, and has cultural peculiarities that mark it out as very different to its continental cousins (famously reserved in comparison), it *is* still a European country, and whilst Britons may, or may not, identify as Europeans as strongly as those nations not separated from the continent by water, an American may well have less difficulty viewing the UK as part and parcel of a larger idea of Europeanness. It is this European status that connects Britain to the werewolf mythos. The werewolf is very much rooted in European folklore, and it was the traditional practices that survived in areas of Europe that initially inspired Landis' script. He recounts the story of how, whilst serving as part of the production crew for *Kelly's Heroes*,[12] he was being driven down a small

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[12]*Kelly's Heroes*, directed by Brian G. Hutton (Katzka-Loeb Productions, 1970), film.

road in the former Yugoslavia, and the vehicle he was in passed a gypsy funeral that, even in the Yugoslavia of 1968, seemed archaic. The gypsies took measures to ensure the deceased would not rise from the grave, and Landis described his feelings as 'you felt like you were on another planet. You really were removed'.[13]Landis adds that even his Yugoslavian driver found the scene to be remarkable and comedic, suggesting that it was a ritual particular not only to a group of people inhabiting a particular space, but also to a particular time. The fact that Landis was raised in the modernist city of Los Angeles clearly marked this superstitious behaviour as surreal and temporally disjointed. Indeed, the idea that different spaces can embody different stages of cultural development lends itself to an examination of the differences between the space of the rural and the space of the urban.

The Urban Versus the Rural

Doreen Massey has spoken about the problems associated with viewing spaces in temporal terms. She has argued that placing spaces, as static moments, onto a timeline allows a prioritisation of particular spaces as being temporally, and thus spatially, advanced as though there is a race towards a westernised cultural model.[14] This argument suggests that there is a tendency to make cultural assumptions regarding particular places, because of the apparent presence (or lack of) particular facets of modernity. Whilst Massey's argument seeks to critique the prioritisation of western culture over other cultures (especially those historically colonised by western nations) that are 'less developed,' it is possible to use this framework to discuss a similar prioritisation of the urban over the rural. The urban most readily conforms to an idea of modernity and progress, given it is in a constant state of renewal and change, but this does not necessarily mean the city possesses a higher cultural status than its rural counterparts. Rather, it is the result of the city being a densely populated space filled with manmade structures, and the necessary infrastructure to serve its population. The presence of specific cultural elements, in this view, is a measure of functionality. The smaller settlements found within the rural do not share the same fundamental need for larger elements of infrastructure (and the need for that infrastructure to be constantly maintained and improved upon), and this can be viewed as the rural being spatially and culturally much 'simpler,' and the villages found there

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[13] Interview with John Landis, DVD extra, *An American Werewolf in London.*
[14] Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage, 2005), 69.

as existing in a kind of relative stasis. For the purposes of horror cinema, though, where tensions are exaggerated in order to elicit feelings of terror, this idea can be pushed a little further. Peter Hutchings states that, 'far from representing an idyllic social constancy, country folk are instead sometimes revealed as decidedly primitive and altogether too close to nature, with rural traditions themselves involving a deeply unhealthy insularity'.[15] Cinematic representations of this perceived parochialism, and mistrust of strangers (particularly those from the city) are used effectively within the horror genre to infuse narratives with a tension that arises from the space of the rural itself, embodied as a space of hostility that is filled with a sinister secrecy practised by rural residents. The differences between the urban and the rural are exaggerated to generate narrative tension. This is certainly the case with Landis' film, almost from the start.

As the title credits begin, the screen is filled with expansive panning shots of the Yorkshire Moors (in reality, these shots were filmed in rural Wales; perhaps adding to the theme of one thing passing for another), and the bleak hills and fields, covered in a dense layer of mist, are jarringly contrasted with the soundtrack; the visuals are accompanied by Bobby Vinton's rendition of 'Blue Moon'.[16] This song is sickly sweet, sentimentally romantic and evokes images of 1960s America that are entirely at odds with the stark northern English landscape. The effect of this juxtaposition could be categorised as 'weird,' at least in the way the term is used by Mark Fisher, who describes the weird as 'that *which does not belong*. The weird brings to the familiar something which ordinarily lies beyond it'.[17] Immediately, then, there is a spatial discomfort as this aural representation of Americana is positioned against the bleakness of rural England. This is suggestive of what is about to occur on screen; the disjointed placement of two New Yorkers into that landscape. The film's narrative begins with two American backpackers, Jack and David, riding in the back of a truck that is transporting sheep. The image of the two sitting amongst the sheep immediately, if heavy-handedly, marks them out as 'lambs to the slaughter,' but also suggests the use of the term sheep to denote creatures without autonomy. Within the context of the English rural space, Jack and David are, as urbanites, ill prepared to

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[15] Peter Hutchings, 'Uncanny Landscapes in British Film and Television' *Visual Culture in Britain* 5:2 (2004), 35.
[16] Bobby Vinton, 'Blue Moon,' *Blue on Blue*, Epic, 1963.
[17] Mark Fisher, *The Weird and the Eerie* (London: Repeater Books, 2016), 10.

navigate the terrain, both physically and culturally. Indeed, the man who gives them a ride in his truck offers them some parting instruction, when he says "keep off the moors, stick to the roads". As city residents, used to the highly structured and clearly demarcated spaces of streets and avenues, their passage through the rural is naturally more easily facilitated by the following of the one manmade constant; the road.

Other than the thin road, winding its way through the fields and hills, there are few features that stand out. Whilst it is tempting to suggest that the rural landscape contains less visual information than its urban counterpart, it is far more accurate to state that there is less *manmade* visual information. Landscape is, as Tim Cresswell suggests, 'an intensely visual idea. In most definitions of landscape the viewer is outside of it. This is the primary way in which it differs from place. Places are very much things to be inside of'.[18] This statement is especially true for the urban resident. Towns and cities are filled with visual information, competing structures and a wealth of names demarcating even the smallest of spaces. The larger space of the city is filled to the brim with smaller places. It is difficult to view the city as a landscape from within; one can view elements, but there is no overarching coalesced image until one steps outside of the city. Interestingly, within London, Hampstead Heath is noted for its view of the city as a landscape from Parliament Hill, because of its elevation, and its distance from the centre of the city. Parliament Hill may well still be *inside* the city of London, but there is enough spatial separation from the very centre for it to allow a glimpse of the landscape of the city. One can recognise elements of the city landscape from within, a glimpse of the London eye or the Gherkin, but these glimpses are akin to pieces of a jigsaw puzzle and it is only once physical distance is achieved that one begins to see the complete visual picture.

This is not the case with the rural landscape. One can assert that one is within the city, whilst experiencing a limited view of it as a whole (we are prevented from seeing great distances within such spaces because of the sheer size, number and proximity of the buildings within). Within the rural, though, we can say we are in the 'country' and still be able to view large tracts of the surrounding land, and the landscape is always visible; there is a sense that the individual is 'inside' the rural, and yet the landscape is 'out there'. With the city, manmade structures dominate, and the

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[18] Tim Cresswell, *Place: An Introduction* (Chichester: Blackwell, 2015), 17.

natural world is relegated to parkland or the glimpses of the rural experienced if one veers close enough to the edge of the city. Within the rural, though, manmade structures are much less predominant, and it is the natural landscape that offers navigable information; undoubtedly, someone living in a rural area learns to make landmarks of hills, streams and copses of trees precisely because those are the visual elements present within that landscape. People adapt to the environment in which they find themselves spending extended periods of time, and Edward Krupat suggests that rather than assuming that the abundance of information present within the city leads to a sensory overload, it is possible 'that environments filled with many sounds, sights and smells (can) excite and please rather than distress and disturb'.[19]However, when one environment is abruptly exchanged for another, there is a resulting spatial tension. The sheer volume of sights and sounds within the city may well be confusing and somewhat overpowering for the rural resident spending time within the city, but what of the *lack* of sights and sounds encountered within the rural by the city dweller? On the one hand, the relative serenity may prove to be refreshing, but it is possible that the *loss* of familiar levels of audio and visual information is as traumatic to the urbanite as the imposition of increased levels of audio and visual information is to the rural dweller in the city. The city dweller may be on a state of alert, subconsciously aware that familiar, subliminal sounds are missing, and focussing on the reduced sights and sounds that *are* present within the rural.

This can be seen in the way that Jack and David are spatially confused within the rural environment. After leaving the truck driver, the pair wanders along a road, until they happen upon a village, East Proctor, and the two spend a short period of time within a pub there, The Slaughtered Lamb. After apparently offending the gathered villagers (of which more later), the pair leave the pub and set out to find another place to stay in another village. They soon fail to adhere to the truck driver's advice ("stick to the road, stay clear of the moors"), which is again repeated by the pub's patrons, and before long they have wandered away from the safety of the road and onto the featureless moorland. Both the truck driver and the villagers offer this advice because of the presence of a werewolf on the moors (even if the truck driver is unaware of the threat lurking on the moors, he recognises the inherent danger of two

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[19]Edward Krupat, *People in Cities*(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 123.

city residents haphazardly wandering across unfamiliar terrain). However, the advice also suggests that the city dweller must navigate the one familiar structure available to them; the one feature that is found within the city. The villagers may well be able to traverse the featureless fields at night (and indeed they do, when they come to David's aid, once the werewolf attacks), but this is because it is their landscape. Jack and David walk seemingly aimlessly, first along the road before drifting onto the moors. The moment they leave the road, it begins to rain heavily, as though leaving the manmade structure has opened them up to the natural word, and the feeling that the road is a protective structure is reinforced. They then hear an animal howling, and begin to think of possible reasons for those howls; they jokingly suggest it could be the hound of the Baskervilles or Emily Bronte's Heathcliffe, and these allusions to literary figures highlight how little they know about the environment they have found themselves in, instead relying upon stereotypes and fictional figures as explanation for this unfamiliar sound.

Within the city, the surprise of an unexpected sound is prevented from being too shocking by virtue of the fact that the city is filled with abundant sounds, and at all hours of the day. An explanation can easily be chanced upon, because there are plenty of potential options for explaining any given sound (that is not immediately recognised). Being in an unfamiliar environment, though, negates this and especially when in the unfamiliar rural. Michael Woods suggests that a 'fear of the wilderness runs through the folklore of medieval Europe, with tales of the evil spirits, monsters and savage residents in the forests, marshes and mountains'.[20] The monstrosities within these tales are personifications of rural fears that result from its distance from settlements, and the fact that there are many factors within the rural that are unknowable, and therefore dangerous. To a much lesser extent, people misread the urban landscape, but logical explanations are inevitably sought for any unfamiliar sights and sounds. In a sense, fear of the wilderness is an acknowledgement of the lack of control people have within the rural, whereas the urban is a highly structured, very tightly controlled space. There may be fears that arise from urban elements (increased crime rates; traffic dangers), but these are acknowledged as being man-made, and therefore knowable, elements. Having little apparent knowledge of Britain's wildlife, David suggests the noise may be a coyote, until Jack informs him that there

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[20] Michael Woods, *Rural* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), 18.

are no coyotes in England. They reassure each other that it is probably a sheepdog which, under the circumstances, is a reasonable conclusion. The very palpable fear experienced by the pair results as much from the sense of confusion and lack of knowledge of their environment as it is an assumption that their lives are in danger.

Spatial Insideness and Outsideness

Within any given environment, the individual experiences a certain level of connectedness that is best understood in terms put forward by Edward Relph, when he posited the concepts of insideness and outsideness. Relph suggests that there are three levels of engagement (insideness) with place: 'behavioural insideness – or physical presence in a place; emphatic insideness which involves emotional participation in and involvement with a place; and existential insideness, of complete and unselfconscious commitment to a place'.[21] Conversely, the condition of being profoundly detached from a particular place would be described as existential outsideness. Within the city, consisting as it does of multiple spaces of varying levels of function, the individual has a complex and fluctuating sense of insideness as they pass through these zones. Whilst the city can be recognised as an overarching, conceptual space, it inevitably contains a plethora of spatial and cultural subdivisions that engender various levels of insideness and outsideness for individuals and groups. Within the urban, there is a fundamental contradiction at work wherein the spaces encountered are filled with people, sometimes literally shoulder to shoulder, and yet there is a pervading sense of anonymity. The individual navigating the city must encounter large numbers of strangers, and yet cannot be expected to engage with or even register most of them. This behaviour, the dualistic physical closeness but psychological distance from strangers, is a coping mechanism developed by the individual to manage being submerged within crowds of strangers on a daily basis.

Stanley Milgram adapted the term overload, 'drawn from systems analysis,' to refer to 'a system's inability to process inputs from the environment because there are too many inputs for the system to cope with'. He further stated that 'City life, as we experience it, constitutes a continuous set of encounters with overload, and of resulting adaptations'.[22] Working from this model, Krupat suggests that 'people are

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[21] Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion, 1976), 50.
[22] Stanley Milgram, 'The Experience of Living in Cities, *Science* 167 no, 3924 (1970): 1462.

active in dealing with their environment and...they develop mechanisms for coping in order to meet the city's demands,' and that 'urbanites become close to some people and sensitive to some important parts of their environment but at the expense of alienation from other aspects of the city and its people'.[23] The urban environment, then, is a spatially complex system that requires the individual to engage in a suitably complex and contradictory relationship with it.

The rural, by contrast, does not share the city's multiplicity of functions and identities, and so it is tempting to assume there is a sense of behavioural stability (and even a relative stasis). Within the city, the small and familiar patterns of living found within the rural are reproduced in urban communities, because, as Fran Tonkiss states, 'the idea of community is not simply an antidote to the anonymity of the city; it is a rejection of the urban as a space of strangers, a retreat to familiarity and intimacy as the safest place to be'.[24] Clearly, then, existential insideness (a profound connection to a particular space, best exemplified in the space of the home) is a highly desirable condition, and one that is actively produced wherever communities exist. However, it would be entirely idealistic to assume that the small-scale communities found within the rural (and reproduced within urban sub-strata) are lacking any spatial problems. Indeed, in terms of the cinematic rural, Hutchings suggests that a 'negation of positive rural values counters a tendency apparent in much British film and television of figuring the countryside in more conventional terms as a site of peaceful repose to which one retires in order to escape the bruising instabilities of the modern metropolis'.[25] Whilst the rural, as discussed above, is relatively less spatially and culturally complex than the city (given the latter contains larger numbers of people, with an increased variety of spatial needs), it is still naive to represent it as being entirely unified and singularly knowable. It is the idea that the rural is cloyingly insular and protective of its traditions that is exaggerated to great effect within Landis' film (and indeed a great number of others).

David and Jack's status as American tourists marks them as outsiders within Britain, in a broad sense, but their status as New Yorkers means that they are further distanced from the rural. As they enter The Slaughtered Lamb, the gathered locals

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[23]Krupat, 56.

[24] Fran Tonkiss, *Space, the City and Social Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015), 26.

[25] Hutchings, 34.

abruptly stop their conversations, laughter and darts game to stare at the strangers who have intruded upon their space. In terms of the film's narrative, we know that this apparent tension results from the fact that the locals have gathered inside the pub for mutual support and protection, given that it is a full moon that evening (carrying with it the threat of the werewolf). The silence and stares that greet Jack and David are therefore questioning: how much do they know, and are they seeking refuge in the pub for the same reason that the locals are? It is almost as if they have walked into a private function. Whilst the appearance of two strangers within a small and insular community is reason enough to elicit the undivided attention (and suspicion) of the locals, it is the peculiarities of the village as much as the space itself that they are keen to protect (and indeed, such behaviours actively produce space). Relph states that the 'significance of place in human experience...is apparent in the actions of individuals and groups protecting *their* places against outside forces of destruction'.[26] It is not just the physical space that is protected, but the cultural expressions of those who inhabit that space. To this end, the villagers are frankly unwelcoming and even hostile towards Jack and David. This hostility is made even more acute because the threat posed by the werewolf is viewed as being internal, rather than external. It is a threat that the villagers not only choose to deal with at a local, collective level but also wish to hide from any outside parties. This idea is explored in further detail in a BBC radio adaptation of the story, in which it is revealed that The Slaughtered Lamb's chess player (and apparent patriarch of the village of East Proctor), George, is a special police constable for the village, a role he undertook in order to be able to better conceal the identity of the werewolf; his own brother.[27] Whilst it may seem prudent (and logical) to alert the authorities to the fact that there is a werewolf roaming the North Yorkshire moors, the villagers (at the behest of George) deal with (or rather hide from) the problem because their shared space is small, insular and self-contained; as though the werewolf itself adheres to this spatial insularity. As the radio play asserts, the presence of the werewolf is viewed as a curse and a source of shame, which is precisely why its presence is kept a secret.

Whilst the landlady of The Slaughtered Lamb is, somewhat begrudgingly, cordial towards Jack and David (agreeing to make some tea for them), a profound

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[26] Relph, 1.
[27] *An American Werewolf in London*, BBC Radio Collection, 1997. Audiobook.

tension sets in when Jack makes the faux pas of asking about one of the locals' traditions. Given it is the evening of a full moon, the locals have gathered (or at least the men have) in the pub for what is presumably mutual support and protection. Part of this protection, it seems, lies in a talismanic painting on one of the pub's walls; a pentangle. Whilst it is never explicitly explained that the pentangle is a protective talisman, it is implied that it is an aspect of local tradition. It is, essentially, a symbol of existential insideness that carries profound significance for the village and its inhabitants. It is therefore contextually jarring that Jack simply asks outright "what's that star on the wall for?" Whilst his question is clearly not intended to cause offense, and is simply an expression of curiosity, it unknowingly lays bare the village's peculiarities and secret keeping. Whilst the extent of the werewolf curse is never spoken about, outside of the radio play's detail regarding the werewolf being the brother of George, it is possible that the curse has existed in their region long enough to have required the passing on of the protective traditions practised by the villagers. However, even if George's brother (identified in the radio play as Larry Talbot, in homage to the titular character from *The Wolf* Man[28]) is the only local recipient of the curse, the rituals of protection are still profound expressions of existential insideness because, as Massey suggests, 'traditions do not only exist in the past. They are actively built in the present also.'[29] Knowledge of the werewolf and the protective pentangle are, then, intimate details that are divulged to members of the East Proctor community out of necessity. In so casually asking about the pentangle's purpose, Jack is attempting to bypass the necessary community membership, and existential insideness required to be privy to such information.

Whilst the scenes within The Slaughtered Lamb offer a fairly clear cut example of the spatial differences that exist between the rural and the urban, it is David's relationship to the spaces he encounters within the city that offer a more complex idea of insideness and outsideness. After leaving the pub, Jack and David set off to find another village, but soon drift away from the road, and onto the moors where they are attacked by the werewolf. Jack is fatally mutilated, as David flees. Upon hearing Jack's cries for help, David runs back but is himself attacked by the werewolf, sustaining several scratches, before the werewolf is shot by the East Proctor villagers. Before

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[28] *The Wolf Man*, directed by George Waggner (Universal Pictures, 1941), film.
[29] Doreen Massey, 'Places and Their Pasts,' *History Workshop Journal* 39 (1995): 184.

passing out, David turns his head to see a man lying next to him, naked and dying from his gunshot wounds. When David opens his eyes again, he is in a hospital room in London and it is primarily through this institution that he is 'reintroduced' into the space of the city. This idea that he must be removed from the rural, and be reminded of the cultural values of the city (modernity), is reinforced by the fact that he is questioned by the police (symbolic as they are of the city's authority) and by Dr Hirsch's constant reassurances (and reaffirmation of logical ideas) that David was attacked by a man, and not by a werewolf. Indeed, Dr Hirsch, whilst a likeable character who is not entirely dismissive of David's claims in the same way that the police are, does exercise a medical gaze upon both David and the idea of lycanthropy. The idea of a medical gaze is important, in this case, because it carries with it ideas of logic and control. Those qualities belong to the city, the space of modernity, science and progress. Which is not to say that the rural is a space that embodies the opposite qualities (tradition, superstition and stasis), but certainly horror narratives exaggerate those stereotypes to generate spatial tension.

Woods claims that the terms 'urban' and 'rural' 'may have originated as a way of differentiating between the enclosed and defensible spaces of early towns, and the open and uncontrollable spaces that lay outside'.[30] It follows that such spatial terms are directly relatable to the ways in which wider ideas of cultural expression and knowledge are associated with the two spaces. Certainly within Landis' film, the rural is figured as a space where knowledge is insular and superstitious. Spending time within the rural, David has been exposed to such traditional (uncontrollable) ideas that are at odds with the enclosed systems of knowledge found within the city. His reintegration into the cultural space of the city is, therefore, through the scientific space of the hospital. The medical/scientific gaze exercised by Dr Hirsch is very much apparent when he decides to investigate David's story, and visits East Proctor himself. Once he has found the Slaughtered Lamb, Dr Hirsch asks for a Campari and soda, eliciting sneering looks from the few patrons present. This simple exchange presents Dr Hirsch as having apparently sophisticated wants, next to the villagers with their simpler tastes. But the Slaughtered Lamb is a small country pub, catering to a small but regular set of local customers. It is therefore understandable that the pub serves a relatively small selection of spirits and beers, and it is in fact Dr Hirsch who is

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[30] Woods, 3.

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attempting to impose cosmopolitan urban tastes onto the rural. The same is true of an exchange he has with George, the village patriarch and chess player. Dr Hirsch points out a move on the board, and asks if George would like a game. When George declines, Dr Hirsch says "surely I'm not that impressive," to which George replies "no sir, you're not". Clearly, there is resentment that results from Dr Hirsch's air of cultural superiority.

However, Dr Hirsch definitively alienates himself from the locals when, like Jack before him, he asks about the pentangle on the wall, in a similarly casual manner; he simply points at it, and asks "oh, what's that? 'to which the landlady replies that "it's been there for two hundred years. We were going to paint it out, but it's traditional, so we left it". If true, then the curse has been present within the area, and managed by the locals, for a significant period of time. Dr Hirsch creates even more tension when he casually asks about the attack on Jack and David. The locals deny any knowledge of the incident, believing Dr Hirsch to be a police officer. When he tells them he is a doctor, they become hostile and tell him "there's nothing for you here". As was the case with Jack's query, Dr Hirsch's questions attempt to breach the insideness of the villagers' traditions. Upon returning to London, he describes their practices, and their denial of the attack as a "mass neurosis". In this way, his medical gaze reduces not only the villagers' traditions and beliefs, but the rural space they occupy, to the status of archaic superstition.

Internalising the Rural

The degree to which David can be considered to experience London as an insider or an outsider is largely the result of two factors that ensure he is spatially dislocated: firstly, his status as an American in England, and secondly the fact that he is, essentially, a werewolf-in-waiting. In surviving the werewolf attack, he has simultaneously internalised the werewolf's curse, and the space in which the werewolf is able to thrive (i.e. the rural).Whilst this internalisation is an imposition upon David, the same could be said of his time spent in London. Relph states that 'character and meaning are imputed to landscapes by the intentionality of experience,'[31] and David is, after all, removed from the rural and into the city quite against his will. In addition, the death of his friend ends his plans to travel from England to Rome (and elsewhere).

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[31] Relph, 122.

Therefore, he has no spatial expectations regarding London, and indeed his idea of the city is the result of, firstly, his time spent within the hospital, and then time spent with Alex (a nurse he becomes romantically involved with) at her flat. His experiences within the city are, therefore, lacking intention and are, rather, passively attained.

To consider the first point (an American in England), David is essentially spatially and culturally distanced throughout the film. Initially, within the rural scenes, he is a city resident, entirely unaware of the traditions (and dangers) embedded into the rural (and this point is reinforced when the same spatial naivety is true of Dr Hirsch when he visits East Proctor). Then, during his stay in the hospital, his cultural identity is the source of discussion amongst the nurses, as one nurse (nurse Gallagher) tells Alex that she believes David to be a Jew, stating that she "had a look," implying that she saw his (presumably) circumcised penis. Despite Alex informing nurse Gallagher that it is a common procedure, there are other suggestions that David is Jewish. Both he and Jack use Yiddish insults (schmuck and putz), and in a later dream sequence, David dreams that he is at home with his family, where they are suddenly attacked and murdered by a group of creatures (at least one of which is werewolf-like in appearance) wearing Nazi uniforms. Matthew Beresford suggests that the appearance of these Nazi monstrosities is a 'comment on Hitler's links with the werewolf'.[32] Hitler identified with the figure of the wolf (the name Adolf is derived from an older German term, Athalwolf, meaning noble wolf), and, as Bourgault du Coudray attests, during the end days of the Third Reich, the 'Nazi military resuscitated the image of the werewolf,' using the term as a name for the 'underground movement organized by fascist loyalists at the end of the Second World War'.[33] At this point in the narrative, David has been visited by the increasingly decomposing figure of Jack, who warns him that they were attacked by a werewolf, and that David's survival means he too will become a werewolf during the next full moon. This dream, then, is an expression of David's subconscious fear of his impending monstrosity, and this is expressed in the image of Nazi monsters; the film was released in 1981, and the script had been drafted as early as 1969, so the horrors of the Holocaust were very much in living memory, and Landis is himself Jewish. For David (as a Jew), the Nazis are the most monstrous figure that his

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[32] Matthew Beresford, *The White Devil: The Werewolf in European Culture* (London: Reaktion Books, 2013), 221.
[33] Bourgault du Coudray, 100.

subconscious mind can draw upon, and their conflation with elements of the werewolf represent the inevitable transformation he will himself suffer. Whilst David being Jewish is never negatively figured within the narrative, the dream sequence is best described by Jon Spira (writing about the identificatory impact the film - and David's Jewishness - had upon himself as a young, Jewish viewer) when he says 'it embodies this primal fear that our new western society could turn on us interlopers at any moment, systematically destroying us like animals while hatefully spitting on our culture'.[34] Whether overtly expressed within the film or not, David's Jewishness is clearly part of his foundational sense of identity, and it is one of the many elements at hazard because of his werewolf-in-waiting.

This dream represents the final stage of an internal process, in which David's submerged, secondary identity subconsciously rejects any sense of belonging and insideness, and fractures any sense of unity he has, resulting in him becoming more and more spatially dislocated. The 'bleeding' of the rural into David's internalised sense of identity is represented through a series of four dreams, each increasing in intensity. In the first of these dreams, we are presented with a camera POV (which we assume to be that of a lupine creature, given its proximity to the ground), which seems to follow a 'desire line,' an informal path made and maintained by successive travellers. Desire lines often indicate a preferred route across ground, and usually denote a shortcut. It is probable that in this case, the informal path was simply easier for the camera to navigate, but it represents the very minimal presence of people within a landscape filled with trees and undergrowth; enough to have created a desire line, but not enough to necessitate a structural path. The second dream takes place in even deeper undergrowth, where we see a naked David running and jumping over fallen branches and then stalking a deer, before pouncing upon it, tearing off its head and biting into the flesh. The meaning is clear; David's werewolf-in-waiting is becoming an increasingly strong presence within his subconscious mind, and its desires are manifest within the dream. David's third dream sees him running through a forest, again dense with no paths or desire lines, wearing the clothes and backpack he wore when he was attacked by the werewolf. He wears an anguished look on his face, and

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[34]Jon Spira, 'Why I Love...An American Werewolf in London,' *BFI*, Nov 27, 2013, accessed Jul 21, 2020, https://www.bfi.org.uk/news-opinion/news-bfi/features/why-i-love-american-werewolf-london?fbclid=IwAR2IgXwcHfzyEt5AT9_D4YjJw5ZfuBakUm3Q14h-PMDKmFn6_xumgbmIPZQ

there is a sense that he is running *from* something. The scene is reminiscent of the one on the moors, in which David flees from the werewolf as Jack is slaughtered, and indeed David *is* fleeing from his werewolf-in-waiting identity. He eventually comes to rest behind a tree, where he watches another version of himself, laying in his hospital bed. Nurse Alex Price approaches the bed, and as she smiles at David, he suddenly snarls, revealing bestial yellow eyes and large fangs. This dream clearly expresses a further strengthening of the burgeoning monstrosity hidden within David's psyche, symbolised by the duality of David watching himself, and the stark contrast between the human observing the monster. However, these dreams do not simply represent a psychological binary between man and beast. The increasingly dense woodland that serves as the backdrop to these three dreams can be aligned with what Relph describes as 'primitive space... (the) space of instinctive behaviour and unselfconscious action in which we always act and move without reflection'.[35] Whilst David and Jack were attacked on open moorland, the dense forest within the dreams serves as a kind of ur-space; the space in which the werewolf-in-waiting can thrive and behave in unselfconscious ways, as a counterpoint to the space of people, the city.

David's final dream takes place within the family home and seems, at first, to be a memory, given its initial ordinariness in comparison to the previous rural dreams. Just prior to this dream, David is visited by Jack for the first time, who informs David that he was attacked by a werewolf, and now carries the curse. Understandably traumatised by this experience, David tells Dr Hirsch that he would rather not be alone, and so Alex is assigned to watch over him. As a gesture of comfort, she offers to read to him, and as she does so, David apparently drifts off to sleep. This scene transitions, via a fade, to David's family home. David's younger brother and sister sit in front of the television, watching The Muppet Show (in which Kermit the Frog and Miss Piggy discuss the violence inherent in a Punch and Judy show – a meta reference outside of the remit of this chapter), his father reads a newspaper, his mother cleans dishes and David sits at the table busy with college work. Relph describes this sort of domestic space as such: 'home in its most profound form is an attachment to a particular setting, a particular environment, in comparison with which all other

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[35] Relph, 8.

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associations with places have only a limited significance'.[36] For Relph, home is the foundational element of identity formation, and this final dream sees that profound attachment to space, to existential insideness, severed in the most forceful way possible. David's mother answers the door to a group of Nazi monstrosities, symbolic of David's own impending monstrous becoming, who shoot David's family and slit his throat, whilst simultaneously destroying the family home. His own internalised werewolf-in-waiting is clearly ready to absolve him of any sense of spatial stability he might believe he has. To further punctuate this sense of spatial dislocation, Landis adds a coda to this dream. David apparently awakens after the destruction of his family home, and Alex is still watching over him in his hospital room. David tells her he has just had a nightmare, to which she replies "not to worry, I've just the thing". She then opens his curtains, to reveal one of the Nazi monstrosities who proceeds to stab her repeatedly. David awakes from this dream within a dream with a not unreasonably exclamatory "holy shit". The appearance of this monstrosity, a token of David's werewolf-in-waiting, within the hospital room is the final 'bleeding' of the internal into the external; what Andrew Tudor describes as 'the eruption of abnormality into a mundane setting' that allows for the 'genre's most common means of narratively exploiting its physical environment'.[37] This final aspect of David's dreaming, the passage of the rural monster into the space of the city, heralds the literal eruption of David's werewolf-in-waiting into the space of London.

Liminal Spaces within the City

David's transformation with the next full moon is an inevitability (the film's title alone alerts us to that fact). He transforms twice whilst in London, and there is a marked difference between the two experiences. In the first instance, he is able to successfully hunt three times. The ability to do so is facilitated by the fact that he (or at least his lupine other) seemingly restricts his hunts to spaces that are, within the context of the city, liminal. His second transformation takes place within the centre of the city, and is entirely chaotic and beyond his control.

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[36]*Ibid*, 40.
[37] Andrew Tudor, *Monsters and Mad Scientists: A Cultural History of the Horror Movie* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 123.

After being discharged from hospital, David is invited to stay with Alex, where she declares her attraction to him. After consummating their relationship, David receives a second visit from Jack, who attempts to convince David to kill himself before he transforms and kills others. David is then left alone whilst Alex goes off to work her shift at the hospital. After wandering restlessly around the flat all day, David eventually sits down to read, and as the full moon rises he suddenly shouts out, begins to tear at his clothes and endures horror cinema's most memorable werewolf transformation. Just as the film's opening panoramic shots were rendered weird by the inclusion of Bobby Vinton's rendition of 'Blue Moon,' David's transformation (including as it does his agonised screams and the sound of his bones crunching and elongating) is jarringly accompanied by Sam Cooke's rendition of the same song;[38] again, this swinging, soulful arrangement is deeply unrepresentative of the horrors represented on screen. As Stacey Abbott suggests, 'this use of pop music also establishes an unsettling contrast between its upbeat tone and the violence and horror on display. It makes the visuals all the more horrible by contrast to the music'.[39] Similarly, the transformation is made more horrific (and surreal) by virtue of the fact that it occurs in the safety of the home (albeit Alex's home). Whilst Landis' decision to play out the transformation in the space of the brightly lit home was a stylistic choice, one that would allow each elongated bone and sprouting hair to be viewed in explicit detail, it also eschewed the gothic conventions that had been prevalent in previous werewolf films (Universal's and Hammer's output, certainly). This is the space of daily life, and, to return to Tudor, the 'eruption of abnormality' places its comforts and familiarity at hazard.

David's first attack takes place on the outskirts of Hampstead Heath, where a young couple, Harry and Judith, are visiting friends for dinner. After leaving a taxi, Harry suggests they go to the back of the house to frighten their friends. In doing so, they wander onto parkland that the house backs onto, where they are attacked and killed by the werewolf. As the parkland is part of the heath, it is a space that exists as a border between the concrete structures of the city, and the remnants of the rural that the city has, essentially, been built upon. Woods describes such 'liminal zones where

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[38] Sam Cooke, *Blue Moon*, RCA, 1958.
[39] Stacey Abbott, 'Children of the Night. What Music they Make!: The Sound of the Cinematic Werewolf,' in *In the Company of Wolves: Werewolves, Wolves and Wild Children*, ed. Sam George and Bill Hughes (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), 81.

the entanglement of the rural and the urban is most pronounced' as being 'exurban'.[40] Whilst many urban parks were developed during the Victorian period as a means of having easy access to the countryside's healthy properties, they were essentially built upon undeveloped, common land. The urban park is a reminder of pre-developed space, and occupies the position of allowing city residents to experience the rural without needing to leave the space of the city. And yet, such parks are strangulated by the surrounding structures of the city, and as such are dislocated from the outer-urban; instead, offering mediated *versions* of the rural. However, it is appropriate that David's lycanthropic identity is able to kill his first victims on the edge of the heath, given his identity is itself liminal, balanced as it is between man and wolf; what Noel Carroll has termed a figure that embodies 'fission,' where the 'contradictory elements are, so to speak, distributed over *different*, though metaphysically related, identities'.[41] The werewolf is man yet wolf, and the urban park represents both the inside *and* the outside of the city.

David's second attack occurs on a piece of wasteland that seems to be a scrapyard, where he kills three transient men who are warming themselves by a fire. The werewolf is able to hunt, undetected and uninterrupted, within this space because of its lack of spatial and cultural investment. This space's liminality centres on its use as an area where cars are processed at the end of their period of usefulness. The vehicles within the scrapyard are in a state of transition; no longer functioning, but not yet returned to the materials that can be used in the construction of functioning objects. The space does not generate culture, or relations between groups of people, or between people and the space itself. Indeed, the three transient men use the space precisely because it is largely undesirable. Their own relationship to the space is purely functional, and their relationship towards each other is, similarly, functional. They can be effectively aligned with the no longer useful vehicle shells that are brought to the scrapyard to be processed, and placed out of view of correctly functioning society. These three men are homeless, presumably have no jobs and serve no apparent function within the city. Massey argues that we should 'always recognise space as always under construction,' and that it is 'a product of relations-between, relations which are necessarily embedded material practices which have to be carried out, it is

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[40] Woods, 46.
[41] Noel Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror* (London: Routledge, 1990), 46.

always in the process of being made. It is never finished; never closed. Perhaps we could imagine space as simultaneity of stories-so-far'. This space seems to fulfil none of Massey's criteria, inasmuch as it demonstrates no element of progression or relational identity. Like the sewerage tunnels of *Creep*,[42] it is an abject space that performs a purely functional purpose that happens away from the more properly invested spaces within the city, and like *Creep's* monstrous antagonist, David is able to slaughter these three men because the space does not invite the participation of people outside of its singular function.

David's final victim, Gerald Bringsley, is attacked in the Tottenham Court Road Underground station. If liminality can be defined as a 'space or phase of transition in which a person is no longer what they were, but is not yet what they will be,'[43] then train stations (as well as airports and other forms of travel 'waiting' areas) are liminal spaces insofar as they are transitional spaces, in between properly invested places. The people populating these spaces are not even passengers until they board their trains. These 'waiting zones' conform to what Marc Augè termed the 'non-place'. As discussed within chapters Three and Four, the non-place acts upon those experiencing it in such a way as to discourage expressions of personal identity, and to instead encourage a behavioural stasis. Within the Underground station, passengers find their only purpose is to wait for their train, and it is this single-minded functionality that ensures Gerald's response to the threat of attack is dulled. Augé suggests that users within the subway experience a behavioural loss of freedom 'because the coded and ordered character of subway traffic imposes on each and every person codes of conduct that cannot be transgressed without running the risk of sanction, either by authorities, or by the more or less effective disavowal of other users'.[44] When Gerald is attacked on the Underground, he first admonishes what he believes to be prankish behaviour (presumably by hooligans), deeming it to be outside of the acceptable code of conduct for the space, even threatening to report the behaviour. Then, when fleeing the werewolf he falters in choosing an escape route. It is possible that even in such extreme circumstances his ingrained use of the permissible routes within the station override his urge to escape. We see this when he leaps over a turnstile; it feels

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[42]*Creep*, directed by Christopher Smith (UK Film Council, 2004), film.
[43] Ian buchanan, *Oxford Dictionary of Critical Theory* (Oxford: Oxfrod University Press, 2010), 294.
[44] Marc Augè, *In the Metro* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 29.

transgressive. The werewolf clearly does not adhere to such spatial codes, and moves freely and effectively.

David's second transformation occurs in the heavily populated Piccadilly Circus which, unlike the three liminal spaces described above, is bristling with people undertaking a number of activities, ensuring the space is filled with cultural investment. After making a phone call to his family home (ostensibly to say goodbye), and speaking to his sister, David attempts to cut his wrist in the phone box. Unable to do so, he leaves the booth and sees a beckoning Jack across the street. He follows Jack into an adult cinema where, after being introduced to the victims of his previous evening's "carnivorous lunar activities,"[45] David once more transforms into the werewolf. The adult cinema is itself a peripheral space, insofar as the films screened within it represent private behaviours (and the act of watching those films is, similarly, private). David is aligned with the peripheral space of taboo firstly through the fact that the cinema gives little indication of what it contains within (presumably, due to decency laws). The cinema's front contains some small advertisements, hinting at the titles being shown, but passing pedestrians would have little idea of the activities occurring within. David's dualistic identity similarly gives no indication of the werewolf beneath his human guise. Secondly, David's transformation is aligned with the sexual activity shown within the cinema; as John Landis states, the physical change is essentially "an erection metaphor," with David's limbs growing longer and more hairy.[46] This space, then, is a metaphorically apt location for David's final transformation, reflecting as it does his concealed 'deviancy'.

David's eruption into the space of Piccadilly Circus (literally bursting through shutters that have been pulled down over the cinema's entrance to contain him) is both physically and cognitively confrontational. The appearance of an archaic creature that should not exist is understandably alarming to the crowd who have flocked to the site of an apparent disturbance, and yet this temporal dichotomy (a mythological figure transposed into the contemporary city) is somehow fitting within Piccadilly circus, where electronic billboards advertising technology companies are set beside the Shaftesbury Memorial Fountain and other elements from bygone eras. The effect of these juxtaposing spatial features is one of temporal disorder; various structural

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[45]A vitriolic phrase uttered by his freshest victim, Gerald.
[46]*An American Werewolf in London,* Interview with John Landis, DVD Extra.

elements coexist in ways that disrupt any sense of historical cohesion. It is inevitable that a city as large and as significant as London is undergoing a constant level of structural and cultural change, but earlier spatial elements are in danger of diminishing in significance, unless they are visually and culturally significant to an extent that warrants their preservation; as Kevin Lynch asserts, imageability is 'that quality in a physical object which gives it a high probability of evoking a strong image in any given observer'.[47]Structures within the city are retained, and protected against architectural flux, because they elicit, according to Charlotte Brunsdon, 'a strong metaphoric and metonymic presence,'[48] i.e. they are essential in contributing to an idea of that particular space.

Spatial elements that do not inspire large-scale emotional attachments are in danger of being swept away by structural changes, that exert a corresponding temporal transformation; a displacement of history in exchange for contemporary cultural expression. The same is true of spatial attitudes, where larger numbers of people sharing heavily populated spaces acquire behavioural adaptations out of necessity. As Stanley Milgram observed, 'The principal point of interest for a social psychology of the city is that moral and social involvement with individuals is necessarily restricted. This is a direct and necessary function of excess of input over capacity to process'.[49] This deliberate spatial detachment is contrasted with David's more demonstrative behaviour, and is seen within the film's London scenes once David has left the hospital. He and Alex take the Underground, and whilst standing within a packed carriage David makes fun of some punks, who are notably visually and behaviourally striking when compared to the other passengers, who sit and stand impassively. In another scene, David awakens in the wolf enclosure within London Zoo, and steals a coat to conceal his nakedness. As he stands at a bus stop, wearing only a feminine coat, he elicits merely a couple of glances from other people within the queue. These examples of detached and subdued behaviour (on the part of the Londoners David encounters) contrast greatly with the, admittedly singular, example of behaviour we see occurring within the rural when Jack and David visit East Proctor. The village enjoys a spatial and, to an extent, temporal stability due to the fact that

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[47] Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1998), 9.
[48] Charlotte Brunsdon, *London in Cinema* (London: British Film Institute, 2007), 13.
[49] Stanley Milgram, 'The Experience of Living in Cities', *Science* 167, no. 3924 (1970), 167.

there is no need for structural flux and there is an inherent relational stability that results from the villagers' long-term membership of their community. Of course, this insularity is exaggerated within the film in order to generate spatial tension, and contribute to the sense of danger and horror present within the village and the moors.

The presence of Jack and David within the village is disruptive and threatening to the pervading sense of secrecy and control the villagers have exercised upon their collective space. Their response to this potential threat is to adopt a guarded and protective attitude, and to expel the pair from their space once Jack transgresses the boundary that separates the spatial insider from the outsider, when he asks about the pentangle on the wall of the Slaughtered Lamb. They are able to do so because they share a profound commonality and a connection not only to their shared space but to their group identity. Conversely, the people assembled in Piccadilly Circus have none of the relational sympatico demonstrated by the villagers of East Proctor. The Londoners may share the same spaces on a daily basis, but the sheer number of spatial participants encountered within those spaces means the individual learns to 'disregard the needs, interests, and demands of those whom one does not define as relevant to the satisfaction of personal needs'.[50] Because of this necessary prioritisation of the self (in order to avoid being emotionally and culturally overloaded by the volume of stimuli experienced within the city), the people within Piccadilly Circus panic and flee from the werewolf. This contrasts greatly with the residents of East Proctor, who employ cohesive action to protect themselves from the threat of attack. Whilst they initially (and presumably consistently) do so by sheltering together in what is essentially a sacred and protected space (the pub, with its talismanic pentangle), they do act once they realise David and Jack are being attacked, and venture onto the moors en masse, where they fatally shoot the werewolf. Their implicitly group-focussed way of living ensures they behave in unselfish ways (eventually; the landlady of the Slaughtered Lamb acts as a voice of reason in urging the men to act) that protect the collective rather than the individual.

Conclusion

At the heart of the film is a tension that arises from the differences between the rural and the urban, in both cultural and spatial terms. This tension is shown to be present

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[50] *Ibid*, 167.

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within both spaces, with rural folk and urbanites demonstrating attitudes that are mistrusting of the others' space. As is befitting a horror narrative, these anxieties are exaggerated greatly to generate fear and apprehension. For example, within the film's rural spaces there is a parochialism that is expressed as an aggressive and unwelcoming attitude towards Jack, David and Doctor Hirsch when they visit the Slaughtered Lamb. City folk are viewed as being an objectionable presence within the tight-knit community of the village, and this antagonism is utilised to great effect to instil a sense of danger. The representation of the rural as a space that is filled with superstitious beliefs, and a fierce protection of an insular dynamic, is contentious given it associates the space with beliefs that are archaic. It is problematic to impose temporal meaning onto spaces, because there is a tendency to view the rural as being somewhat culturally lagging behind the urban, because of an apparent predilection towards slower rates of adopting contemporary ideas. However, whilst the urban might be viewed as a space that embraces contemporary ideas and adheres to an objective logic, the film presents the space as being similarly controvertible.

The spatial stances demonstrated within the rural and the urban result from the degrees to which the participants are considered to be insiders or outsiders. The rural is figured as a space in which closer social ties are more readily available than the relationships that are found within the urban. There is an inherent familiarity within rural communities, because of the relatively small numbers of people sharing spaces, and because of this, membership of these communities is earned through time spent within them. The intrusion of outsiders is, then, a source of great tension and the film demonstrates this through Jack and Doctor Hirsch asking, apropos of nothing, why there is a pentangle on a wall within the Slaughtered Lamb. Such intimate details are familiar to an insular community, and are therefore somewhat sacred. The same attitude is not demonstrated within the film's urban scenes, largely due to the fact that the larger numbers of people found within cities necessitates an entirely different level of engagement, wherein the individual must practice a form of detachment in order to cope with the cloying spatial configuration.

Through receiving the werewolf's curse, David becomes a figure who embodies an exaggerated version of the rural. Whilst he is reintegrated into the urban through the institution of the hospital, and the authority of the police and American embassy, he becomes increasingly troubled by his intense dreams which represent the

internalisation of the space in which the werewolf within can roam and hunt freely. This space is idealistic, given the urban neither offers the spatial freedom that the wolf desires, nor the cultural acceptance of the idea of lycanthropy. Because of this internalised conflict, David is a liminal figure who can no longer find a place within the urban, and yet is unconditioned to the insularity of the rural. He is therefore confined to hunting within the city's liminal spaces, and once transformed within the centre of the city, amongst the multitude of people therein, he enters into a confused state where he is unable to successfully move freely, and his very presence challenges the logical ideas of the urban.

The themes of selective engagement and hostile parochialism will be further explored within the next chapter, which explores a film that generates very significant spatial tension through its portrayal of a rural community that resents the intrusion of urban visitors, but offers a counterpoint to this in the acknowledgement that it has become increasingly difficult for isolated communities to financially sustain themselves in an economy that requires a sustained level of globalised participation.

Chapter Eight

Insularity, Authenticity and Folk Horror in *Calibre*.

Noel Carroll has asserted the belief that texts (both literary and cinematic) are 'denominated horrific in respect of their intended capacity to raise a certain *affect*'.[1] Whilst the emotion that is most commonly associated with the genre is fear, Carroll states that often this 'is compounded with revulsion, nausea, and disgust'.[2] Carroll's argument centres upon humanity's confrontation with monstrous figures, and whilst his assertions are completely sound in relation to the monster within horror texts, there are other modes of affective dissonance at work within the genre. As has been asserted throughout this thesis, horror narratives can be thought of as expressions of various tensions, and a number of these tensions can be thought of as spatial. The spaces represented within horror films can indeed generate aesthetic tension through fear, and even 'revulsion, nausea, and disgust'. However, spatial tensions are often created through narrative events and their corresponding affective reactions that are more subtle than those listed above. Examples of circumstances that generate spatial tensions include individuals finding themselves displaced from a space in which they have invested facets of their identity; competing attempts by individuals or groups to impose their identities upon spaces; the extent to which individuals find themselves included within, or excluded from, particular spaces.

One ubiquitous narrative scenario, found across a variety of cinematic genres but used to great effect within the horror genre, is the town versus the country, the urban set against the rural; indeed, this idea has informed the preceding chapter, as well as the first two chapters within this thesis. Within horror cinema, such narratives have most often been classified as 'Backwoods Horror,' or else many have (more recently) been designated the title of 'Folk Horror'. The latter term is difficult to pin down; whilst it lacks the wealth of scholarship that other sub-genres have attracted, the works that do engage with the term have rarely agreed on a definitive set of criteria. However, both backwoods and Folk Horror narratives almost always locate themselves within the rural, and whilst it is tempting to simply categorise such films as 'rural horror,' there is an implicit element of comparison with urban spaces and urban

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[1] Noel Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror* (London: Routledge, 1990), p.14.
[2] *Ibid, 22.*

residents that generates affective tension within these narratives. Matt Palmer's 2018 film *Calibre*[3] elicits its spatial tensions through its portrayal of an insular rural community, the ways in which outsiders are viewed by this community, and how the cultural particularities practiced by the local folk become threatening to a pair of non-locals spending time within the community.

This chapter will examine the spatial tensions present within *Calibre* by firstly examining the idea that spatial participants have varying degrees of 'inside' and 'outside' status, depending on the emotional and cultural ties they have to particular spaces. These ties determine the authenticity that any spatial engagements possess. Correlative to this idea is the notion that behaviours within particular spaces can be viewed as being appropriate or inappropriate. Outside of the more obvious examples of behaviour deemed to be improper in general spatial terms (antisocialism; nudity; etc), this chapter suggests that there are behaviours that are deemed to be gauche when performed by participants who lack an authentic engagement to a particular place. Next, the idea of a resistance to outside forces will be explored, and particularly the ways in which the insular, traditional community represented within the film finds it increasingly difficult to survive economically because of its geographical and cultural distance from large urban settlements. Finally, the significance of the film's inclusion of the pagan festival of Alban Eiler will be explored, and will be framed in a larger question of whether *Calibre* can be considered to be a Folk Horror film.

Brief Synopsis

The film concerns two Edinburgh residents who have maintained a friendship since meeting years before at a private school. Vaughn is likeable, quiet and polite. Marcus works in finance and investment, and is more forthright and assertive than his friend. Marcus has convinced Vaughn to accompany him on a hunting trip to the Highlands of Scotland; Vaughn has never hunted, and has only fired a rifle on a firing range when at school. After spending their first evening in the village of Culcarran drinking heavily and tussling with the locals, the pair goes hunting early the next day, with Vaughn being particularly delicate. After spotting a deer, Marcus urges Vaughn to take a shot, but upon firing his rifle the shot misses and fatally wounds a boy who was standing unseen behind the animal. Despite Marcus urging Vaughn to flee the scene, he checks

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[3]*Calibre*, directed by Matt Palmer (Wellington films, 2018), film.

on the boy and is confronted by the child's father, who raises Vaughn's rifle, before he is himself shot dead by Marcus. From this point, narrative tension is generated through Marcus and Vaughn's attempt's to conceal their crimes, and the question of whether the villagers' apparent mistrust of the pair will be validated by the discovery of the slain father and son.

Insiders, Outsiders and Authentic Spatial Engagement

Edward Relph suggests that there are three levels of engagement (insideness) with place: 'Behavioural insideness – or physical presence in a place; emphatic insideness which involves emotional participation in and involvement with a place; and existential insideness, of complete and unselfconscious commitment to a place'.[4] Large urban environments can be viewed as consisting of smaller zones, separated by various designations of use that include leisure, business and residency. People living within cities routinely practice all three of Relph's levels of engagement within these zones, but are existential insiders only with regards to the most important spaces within the town and city; those that are shared by communities, and are the recipients of the most emotional and cognitive energy. Edward Krupat suggests that 'High-density living definitely has the *capacity* to be stressful. It creates problems of coordination among people, can reduce people's ability to control their environment, and requires active coping'.[5] The idea of community is a vital method of coping with the sheer number of people encountered within a city, and the stresses that Krupat suggests are symptomatic of the urban environment. Spaces in which communities live are important centres of meaning, that allow groups of people to maintain a sense of identity within a larger space that contains a multitude of people from varying socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. Communities within cities act as bases of emotional stability, which people can return to (in both physical and cognitive terms) when the larger idea of the city poses an 'overloading' threat.

Managing overload conditions within the city requires a prioritisation of certain relationships at the expense of others, given urban residents find themselves 'caught in a web of highly segmented roles and strictly functional relationships that either call for little allegiance in the first place or split personal commitments so greatly that little

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[4] Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion, 1976), p.50.
[5] Edward Krupat, *People in Cities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p.112.

investment can be given to any single one'.[6] Communities offer the individual (and the group to which the individual belongs) opportunities to engage in authentic relationships, and it would seem this is far more easily achieved and maintained within rural spaces where there are fewer competing social and cultural needs. Indeed, Michael Woods suggests that 'The notion of community has long been synonymous with rural life' because its 'forms of social interaction (are) based on a stable and structured community'.[7] Within the city, communities are conceptually (and often culturally) separated from one another, more so than they are physically distanced; neighbourhoods populated by very different cultural or socioeconomic groups may be physically disconnected in very minimal ways. Rural communities, however, are characterised by geographical separation from other each other and, more importantly, urban environments. This sense of physical separation is immediately apparent within *Calibre*. As Vaughn says goodbye to his fiancé, there is a park visible at the end of his street. Like all urban parks, this plot of land is mediated and enclosed by the built environment, and as such it is a mere gesture towards the rural. As discussed in the previous chapter, Woods claims that the terms 'urban' and 'rural' 'may have originated as a way of differentiating between the enclosed and defensible spaces of early towns, and the open and uncontrollable spaces that lay outside'.[8] In this sense, urban parks are enclosed and conceptually separated from the manmade structures that surround them. Essentially, they are controlled versions of the rural that are designed to be recreationally 'consumed' within the larger space of the city.

As Marcus' jeep travels through Edinburgh, the environment is almost entirely composed of manmade structures. As the vehicle leaves the city, there is a gradual shift in environmental elements; from the motorway on the outskirts of the city, where large trees and fields begin to become more apparent, until they make their way into the Highlands, and the car becomes almost imperceptible when set against the ranges of hills and open landscape. This entirely natural space conforms to Woods' assertion that the urban's counterpart is 'open and uncontrollable'. There is no mediation at work here; this space is vast, monolithic and entirely authentic. There are, Woods claims, ways in which urban residents attempt to 'consume' the rural through the 'incorporation

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[6] *Ibid*, 131.
[7] Michael Woods, *Rural* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), p.164.
[8] *Ibid*, 3.

of rural landscape features into the urban built environment, usually informed by a moral geography that contrasted the purity and orderliness of the countryside with the chaos and degeneration of the city'.[9] This idea is exemplified in the mediated space of the urban park, where trees are placed in uniform patterns that echo town planning more than they do the natural patterns of growth found in the rural. Attempts to harness mediated elements of rural space within the urban can also be seen in the way that 'Urban consumption cultures can exhibit preferences for commodities associated with rural iconography'. Woods suggests that one of the ways this is expressed is through 'the popularity with urban residents of sports utility vehicles (SUVs) originally designed for off-road rural travel'.[10] The fact that Marcus drives an SUV demonstrates his own desire to consume the rural (in much the same way that *Eden Lake's* Steve does), as does his inauthentic engagement with the space. Indeed, the reason he has taken Vaughn to this specific area is because his father used to take him there to hunt. Marcus believes this very occasional engagement with the space affords him a certain 'insider' status, but it is very clear from his behaviour within the village of Culcarran that he is, to return to Relph, experiencing the space in terms of 'behavioural insideness,' which 'consists of being in a place and seeing it as a set of objects, views, and activities arranged in certain ways and having certain observable qualities'.[11]

Behavioural insideness is in evidence when the individual has either spent a limited period of time within a particular space, or else have found themselves not requiring (or even failing) to engage with a space to the degree that ensures that the space becomes more than a background to particular activities. Relph suggests that 'For outsiders, those who experience a place only in terms of a crass level of behavioural insideness and who know only its mass identity, preconceptions and established attitudes always outweigh direct experience'.[12] Marcus demonstrates a failure to engage with the village of Culcarran in ways that transcend behavioural insideness, transposing as he does 'established attitudes' more appropriate to the city, and he consistently pursues an agenda that prioritises his own plans over any specific spatial circumstances that may arise. After checking in at the village guesthouse, Marcus and Vaughn visit the local pub. As Marcus uses the bathroom, Vaughn is

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[9] *Ibid, 44.*
[10] *Ibid,* 45.
[11] Relph, 53.
[12] *Ibid*, 60.

greeted at the bar by Logan, the community's de facto leader. Logan speaks warmly to Vaughn, seemingly pleased to see visitors to his community, perhaps because the village (and others within the vicinity) are suffering the effects of an economic slump. Indeed, Logan tells Vaughn that a large country club has opened some fifty miles away, and much of the seasonal hunting trade that the community rely upon has been lost to this large business. Vaughn is sympathetic and genuinely courteous to Logan, but when Marcus returns and is introduced to him he is perfunctorily polite; after exchanging greetings, he actually turns his back on Logan, until the latter excuses himself. As Vaughn reproachfully looks at Marcus, he responds with "he would've rattled on for hours".

Krupat suggests that urban residents 'become close to some people and sensitive to some important parts of their environment but at the expense of alienation from other aspects of the city and its people,'[13] and it is in this way that Marcus remains emotionally detached from Logan and, by extension, the community that he represents. His transposing of such behaviour onto the space of the village can be viewed in terms of what Relph describes as a 'deliberate adoption of a dispassionate attitude towards places in order to consider them selectively in terms of their locations or as spaces where objects and activities are located, and which 'involves a deep separation of person and place'.[14] An authentic engagement with space would entail the acknowledgement not only of the individual's status as spatial outsider, but also a respectful acknowledgement of the relationship that members of a community have with their place. Essentially, to experience a place authentically is to understand that it is 'not just the "where" of something: it is the location plus everything that occupies that location seen as an integrated and meaningful phenomenon'.[15] Recognising the meaning suffused into a particular space (and acknowledging one's own status as outsider) ensures the individual behaves in ways that are appropriate. The behaviour of Vaughn and, particularly, Marcus can therefore be described as inappropriate in these terms.

(In)Appropriate Spatial Behaviour

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[13]Krupat, 56.
[14] Relph, 51.
[15]*Ibid*, 3.

Cresswell argues that 'an outsider is not just someone literally from another location but someone who is existentially removed from the milieu of "our" place— someone who doesn't know the rules'.[16] Whilst it is tempting to assume that the 'rules' that govern the cultural and behavioural differences that separate a Scottish city from a village in the Highlands are minimal, Maria Lewicka suggests that 'people display stronger attachment to residential neighborhoods that have preserved traces of their historical past than to brand-new settlements erected in history-deprived parts of cities'.[17] The rural is characterised precisely by its preservation of historical elements and by its 'depiction of traditional folkways and mores and its evocation of continuity despite the march of time and change'.[18] Whilst Edinburgh is a city known for its highly imageable traditional elements, Relph suggests that, generally speaking, contemporary built environments are characterised by spatially homogenous elements, whilst unselfconsciously created places are 'peripheral to the main thrust of the society,' and 'have acquired nostalgic value and are zealously being preserved or even recreated, hence guaranteeing their inauthenticity'.[19] Given rural communities exist in spaces in which traditional modes of living are prevalent, the attitudes found within large, cosmopolitan cities are not readily transferable. For example, the deliberately selective engagement with spatial elements and spatial actors that occurs within the city (out of necessity, as Krupat has suggested), takes on an element of aloofness when practiced within the rural, where there are fewer relationships at work, and those that do exist are more intimate precisely because of the lack of spatial and cultural distance between participants.

A spatial outsider, and especially one experiencing a significantly differing set of cultural and spatial elements, may find their transition from rank outsider to semi-active participant within a space is more easily achieved through an 'active interest in the history of a place... (as) a means through which a newcomer may feel a part of the place's history and thus develop emotional bonds with the (new) place'.[20] Essentially,

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[16]Tim Cresswell, *In Place/ Out of Place: Geography, Ideology, and Transgression* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), p.154.
[17] Maria Lewicka, 'In Search of Roots: Memory as Enabler of Place Attachment,' in Place Attachment: Advances in Theory, Methods and Applications, eds. Lynne C. Manzo and Patrick Devine-Wright (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), p.54.
[18] Catherine Fowler and Gillian Helfield, 'Introduction' in *Representing the Rural,* eds. Catherine Fowler and Gillian Helfield (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2006), p.2.
[19] Relph, 68.
[20]Lewicka, 54.

such an attitude could be described as appropriate spatial behaviour. This willingness to be open to the cultural particularities of any given space should, though, take into account the need to recognise existing layers of insideness and access to traditions; Jack and Doctor Hirsch, within *An American Werewolf in London*, fail to recognise this need when they immediately ask about the pentangle within the Slaughtered Lamb, and unknowingly attempt to lay bare East Proctor's most intimate secret. Marcus and Vaughn's first evening within the village pub does not demonstrate a respectfully subdued and open attitude towards the cultural particularities of the Culcarran community. As discussed above, whilst Vaughn is respectfully polite to Logan, Marcus is detached and aloof. His snubbing of Logan at the bar is contextually slight, but he demonstrates a more serious lack of appropriate behaviour when he responds to Logan's statement "I hear that you lads might need a ghillie out there with you tomorrow". This archaic term is derived from the Gaelic phrase *gilledubh*, meaning a benevolent woodland fairy, 'clothed in leaves and moss'.[21] The term denotes an attendant who accompanies a party on a fishing or hunting trip; someone local, with an intimate knowledge of the hunting ground. Someone who is, essentially, an existential insider with regards to the local terrain. Marcus responds to Logan's enquiry (presumably a generous offer to refer a suitable ghillie) with "we'll be stalking alone. It's all cleared with Lord Griffin. My father knew him, so..." With this singular, brief exchange Marcus dismisses Logan's status as community leader, and instead defers authority to the landowner. Given Logan has already spoken about the loss of local business due to the large country club, accepting his offer of a ghillie would have been a welcome economic gesture, and an opportunity to 'develop an emotional bond' with both Logan and the community.

In bypassing Logan's local 'authority,' and instead seeking permission to hunt from the landowner, Marcus is dismissing Logan's, and the community's, relationship with the local woodland. Additionally, suggesting his father (a spatial outsider) was an acquaintance of Lord Griffin demonstrates the ways in which Marcus believes that professional, business relationships are more valuable than emotional allegiances. Given Culcarran, and its neighbouring communities, are suffering an economic slump it is quite probable that they are reliant on the land for both its economic opportunities (locals serving as ghillies; visiting hunters using local facilities, and so on), and its

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[21] James Mackillop, *Dictionary of Celtic Mythology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p.253.

pragmatic providing of game. Indeed, Marcus and Vaughn are invited to dine with Logan and his cousin, Al, and are served venison. As the accident that saw Vaughn shoot a boy was centred on the stalking of a deer, it is likely that this meal has come directly from the forest. Whilst it seems the land technically belongs to a member of the landed gentry, it is still cognitively and culturally tied to the local villages. Marcus' actions, then, can be viewed as lacking appropriate decorum. His failure to consider local ties to the land and its people is also evidenced by his behaviour in the pub. After Logan excuses himself, Marcus and Vaughn take a seat, and drink heavily (ordering pints and whiskies each time they visit the bar). At one point, two young women from the village ask if they can join them, and Marcus agrees. Because Marcus and Vaughn are newcomers and outsiders, it would be appropriate to behave more cautiously and indeed the fact that they invite the women to sit with them irks at least one of the locals, who aggressively confronts Vaughn as he approaches the bar. Marcus feels the need to intervene (to Vaughn's irritation), but the situation is diffused when Logan tells the local to sit down. He then offers Vaughn some advice, when he says "keep an eye on your friend". A third warning comes when a local approaches Marcus and says "do yourself a favour; stay clear of that wee lassie". When Marcus responds with "what if I don't?" the local says "just offering some friendly advice, pal. It's your funeral".

Because of the inherent insularity of rural villages, ideas of sociality are hyperbolized, and in the same sense any offense caused by Marcus and Vaughn's flirtations with the locals is similarly magnified. Sociality is more pronounced in smaller settlements, where there is an increased sense of commonality. Mihaylov and Perkins describe 'social bondedness' as 'feelings of membership or belongingness to a group, including an emotional connection based on shared history, interests, or concerns' and the 'emotional ties to one's community (that) are based not only on individual, intrapsychic processes but also on external, social processes that foster social cohesion and social control'.[22] The local males are protective of the two young women that Marcus and Vaughn allow to sit with them, because the women are local, and the local men presumably believe the women should restrict their romantic intentions towards local men. However, because the village is comprised of tightly interconnected

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[22] Nikolay Mihaylov and Douglas D. Perkins, 'Community Place Attachments and its Role in Social Capital Development,' in *Place Attachment: Advances in Theory, Methods and Applications*, eds. Lynne C. Manzo and Patrick Devine-Wright (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), p.69.

relationships, the local men (especially those old enough to be parents) demonstrate behaviour that is almost *in loco parentis*. This is clearly the case when one of the pub's patrons warns Marcus to stay away from Kara (the more assertive of the two young women). After leaving the pub, Marcus retires to his room with Kara, and they apparently have sex and use cocaine; a habit that Marcus has opted to indulge in during his vacation. After he and Vaughn have returned to the scene of the hunting accident, and buried the child and his father, they awaken at about noon to find a group of local men vandalising Marcus' jeep. When the two confront the men, one of them (Brian, the brother of Logan) head butts Marcus, and expresses his anger at the fact that Marcus slept with Kara and gave her cocaine. Brian later justifies his actions by saying Kara is the daughter of his best friend, but the severity of his reaction momentarily suggests that his behaviour is no different than if she were *his* daughter, and Marcus' actions therefore carry a greater sense of inappropriateness.

Resistance to Outside Forces

The community of Culcarran is subject to an internal dichotomy, insofar as the village needs the income that visitors from outside of the community bring, and yet the members of the community are fiercely defensive of their traditional and insular way of life. Doreen Massey argues that 'However much heritage industries might wish on occasions to preserve things in aspic they cannot actually ever hold them still,'[23] and whilst the community of Culcarran have an intense desire to preserve their traditional way of life, this position is economically unsustainable. Indeed, whilst the community is markedly insular to the extent that it almost seems conspiratorial, there are pockets of resistance to the parochial attitude exemplified by Logan's brother Brian. Logan himself is welcoming to visitors, because he recognises that visitors bring economic stability to the region. As he and Al dine with Vaughn and Marcus, he says to the latter "we've rested on past glories here, fallen behind". Logan is acknowledging the infeasibility of remaining antagonistically opposed to visitors, and even to the widening of spatial ideas that will encourage economic growth. After Marcus tells him that he works in finance and investment, Logan claims "there's real potential for development here," before giving Marcus his business card; inferring Marcus' professional contacts may be utilised to bring investment to the area. Cresswell suggests that 'the

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[23] Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage, 2005), p.119.

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permanence of place and the mobility of capital are always in tension and places are constantly having to adapt to conditions beyond their boundaries. Places compete to get a share of the mobile capital – encouraging companies to invest in their particular form of fixity'.[24] As Logan admits, the community is not generating a sustainable level of income, and so it would seem that there are two particular choices available to Culcarran's residents: either attract financial investment in the form of redevelopment projects or, as Cresswell states, monetise the particular geographical and cultural aspects that exemplify their rural community. This is, essentially, the strategy that the country club investors have adopted; competing for capital generated in areas outside of their own immediate region.

Logan is not alone in demonstrating an openness to outside investment and visitors to his community. As Marcus and Vaughn first arrive at the local guesthouse, the proprietor welcomes them by recounting their full names, and indeed other members of the community seem to know who they are and why they are visiting the region. Dawn Keetley[25] has argued that *Calibre* can be aligned with the Folk Horror sub-genre because of the isolation faced by the film's central protagonists, and in the way that the film demonstrates elements of conspiracy throughout its narrative. It is certainly a compelling argument, and especially given there are several moments where members of the community are privy to the whereabouts and activities of Marcus and Vaughn. However, it is also entirely reasonable that the presence of two visitors to the community has become a relatively rare occurrence, in light of the fact that the country club has diverted much of the hunting trade away from the village. The guesthouse proprietor is, then, immediately aware of the identity of the two newcomers because there are so few visitors to the community. This relative lack of contact with community outsiders also explains why the two young women in the pub, Kara and Iona, immediately insinuate themselves with Marcus and Vaughn. The two men represent a change to the usual associations found within the village, but they also embody a connection to the larger communities found outside of the Highlands.

Relph suggests 'the places to which we are most committed may be the very centres of our lives, but they may also be oppressive and imprisoning. There is a sheer

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[24] Cresswell, 93.
[25] Dawn Keetley, 'Calibre – New Folk Horror?,' *Horror Homeroom*, February 6 2019, http://www.horrorhomeroom.com/calibre-new-folk-horror/

drudgery of place, a sense of being tied inexorably to *this* place, of being bound by the established scenes and symbols and routines'.[26] Whilst the insularity that the Culcarran community represents is clearly comforting in terms of a sense of collective identity, it is clear that the community offers its younger members a relative lack of opportunities for both economic and personal development. The feelings of oppression that Relph talks about are expressed by Iona, when she talks to Vaughn about the village. Vaughn says "so, you grew up here?" and Iona replies "Yep. Should probably think about leaving soon though, before it's too late". Iona's statement has a narrative prescience; the father and son are later discovered within the woods, and Vaughn and Marcus are apprehended by the villagers, and Iona's statement can be read as a warning to Vaughn (it is *he* who should leave, before it is too late). However, she is more directly expressing the feeling that the community provides little in the way of opportunity for a young woman, and the only way to enrich her life is to move away to a larger community before she finds herself too deeply ingrained in the lives led by the community elders (marrying another villager and starting a family, and so on).

Whilst Logan expresses awareness that the community needs to expand its cultural horizons in order to survive their economic slump, and Iona expresses dissatisfaction with the claustrophobia inherent within Culcarran's insularity, there are other voices that vehemently defend the cultural values of the Highland community. Chief amongst these is Brian, who views the welcoming of visitors to the community as symbolic of a decline in autonomy within the village. He assaults Marcus because he slept with Kara and gave her cocaine and his anger results from a belief that Marcus (an outsider) has somehow defiled the community with his actions. Logan convinces Brian to apologise to Vaughn and Marcus in the village pub, and buy them a drink. After begrudgingly shaking Vaughn's hand, he mockingly apologises to Marcus, before grabbing his nose; knowing it is probably broken after his earlier assault. Brian then offers up a speech, decrying the presence of community outsiders, when he says "Investments? Grants? Shite; the lot of it. And fucking embarrassing, begging to city twats like this. Now we all know what should be done, facing up to how fucked we are, and doing whatever's necessary to look out for ourselves, whatever's necessary. Like folk used to. Cos nae other bastards will".

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[26] Relph, 41.

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Cresswell states that 'The creation of place necessarily involves the definition of what lies outside. To put it another way the "outside" plays a crucial role in the definition of the "inside,"[27] and that 'the stronger the spatial classification – the greater the desire to expel and exclude – the easier it is to upset those who invest in an existing order'.[28] Brian's absolute refusal to consider the possibility of inviting external investors into the space of the community is based on two particular factors: firstly, the belief that the community can somehow provide for themselves (despite the fact that this has clearly become increasingly difficult). Secondly, his antagonism is evidence of a profound mistrust of outsiders; viewing their presence within his community as a threat. As Cresswell suggests, such parochialism is more pronounced where communities have a strongly defined set of cultural values. Whilst large urban spaces are defined by their cultural multiplicity and their tendency to, as Catherine Fowler and Gillian Helfield state, define "the national" in terms of technology, progress, and forward development,'[29] smaller rural communities are 'frequently endowed with symbolic importance as signifiers of national identity, or as the counterpoint to modernity'.[30] But, as Massey suggests, such communities cannot be preserved in aspic, and Logan reaching out to outside investors can be viewed as an attempt to do whatever's necessary to look out for his community.

The Significance of Alban Eiler – Is *Calibre* Folk Horror?

The sense of dissociation from traditional rural values that is felt by the community's younger residents (that is, essentially, a dissatisfaction regarding the region's insularity) is summarised by Logan, when he invites Marcus and Vaughn to the community's celebration of the Alban Eiler festival, and he says "it's just a piss up and a bonfire these days really, but it brings everyone together". The festival marks the end of the hunting season for the community, and acknowledges the date in the pagan calendar when light and dark are in balance, and day and night are of equal length. The festival ushers in spring, the rebirth of the land and 'the renewal of life and the fertility of the soil'.[31] Logan's somewhat rueful statement suggests that whilst the

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[27] Cresswell, 165.
[28] *Ibid*, 166.
[29] Fowler and Helfield, 2.
[30] Woods, 1.
[31] Ian Scott, 'Alban Eiler,' *Sentient Metaphysics,* https://sentientmetaphysics.com/alban-eilir-the-spring-equinox/

festival's original pagan meaning may have become diluted and even lost to the younger generation, it does reify the community's bonds. There is a sense that Alban Eiler is still observed (even if only in a perfunctory manner) within Culcarran because the community still maintains both a geographical and a cultural distance from Scotland's larger urban settlements, where such customs have lost their importance. The same is true of *An American Werewolf in London's* scenes within East Proctor, where the locals maintain their belief in arcane practices largely because of their distance from the city. The absence of the observation of Alban Eiler amongst city folk is demonstrated by the fact that neither Vaughn nor Marcus is familiar with the festival. This tradition, like others, is therefore tied to a sense of place that aligns the community and its people with a particular idea of the past and its customs. Relph states that the 'withering away and modification' of places is 'prevented by ritual and tradition that reinforce the sense of permanence of place,'[32] and it is in this way that the festival reiterates not only the communal bonds that the villagers collectively share, but also the connection they have to the land. Indeed, the festival acknowledges the changes in ecological conditions that encourage the growth of many plants, and the sowing of vital crops. Celebrating the renewal of the soil, then, has very real and pragmatic significance for communities that have direct ties to agricultural practices. Given the profound connection that exists between the people and the land, Logan's statement regarding the diminishing significance that the festival holds for the younger members of his community is also suggestive of a corresponding loss of communal engagement.

Calibre's narrative does explore the significance of Alban Eiler, in relation to the events that occur during Marcus and Vaughn's visit to Culcarran. In its most clear terms, the spring equinox symbolises the seasonal change from winter to spring and the corresponding ecological turn that sees the dispersal of winter's frosts and the onset of agricultural conditions that facilitate the increased growth of flowers and plants. The economic slump that has blighted the community is clearly akin to the conditions the earth endures during the winter months, when the few robust plants that *do* grow are less easily harvested. Essentially, during this period the land itself is unable to sustain the community. The equinox offers agricultural hope to the community, and this is directly comparable to the optimism that Logan upholds when, after telling Marcus about the region's economic downturn, he says "we'll make it

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[32] Relph, 32.

through this stretch". Just as the land will regenerate and provide crops, so too will the community recover from their economic hardships and prosper again. Evidently, the fates of both the land and Culcurran's people are symbiotic because, as Relph suggests, 'the relationship between community and place is indeed a very powerful one in which each reinforces the identity of the other, and in which the landscape is very much an expression of communally held beliefs and values and of interpersonal involvements'.[33]

The idea that Culcarran is geographically distanced from larger urban communities adds weight to the case that *Calibre* might be read as Folk Horror. There is a fundamental difficulty in classifying a film as Folk Horror, given the term is somewhat ambiguous, and lacking a definitive explanatory set of criteria; scholarship exploring the sub-genre is still relatively sparse in comparison to other sub-genres within horror studies. Andy Paciorek has suggested that 'there appears to be a "Folk" ambiance and aesthetic that more often can be felt intuitively rather than defined logically'.[34] Whilst this statement *is* subjectively insightful, there have been attempts to pin down some aesthetic and narrative characteristics that mark particular cultural artefacts as Folk Horror. The films that comprise a generally agreed upon corpus very often generate tensions via geographical and cultural separation. Often (and especially in the case of the canonical early examples of films within the genre), there is a marked distinction between urban and rural attitudes, with geographical distance fostering localised cultural practices that are portrayed as being at odds with a generalised idea of morality.

Adam Scovell suggests that one of the key characteristics of Folk Horror narratives is the way in which 'the landscape must in some way isolate a key body of characters, whether it be just a handful of individuals or a small-scale community'.[35] Culcarran, like its neighbouring Highland villages, is undoubtedly remote and this distance from larger towns and cities means the community is economically isolated. Certainly, it would seem that the chief means of revenue for the villagers is the land itself, either through the ways that it provides agricultural sustenance, or else attracts

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[33] *Ibid*, 33.

[34] Andy Paciorek, 'Folk Horror: From the Forests, Fields and Furrows an Introduction,' in *Folk Horror Revival: Field Studies*, eds. Katherine Beem and Andy Paciorek (Wyrd Harvest Press, 2015) p.11.

[35] Adam Scovell, *Folk Horror: Hours Dreadful and Things Strange* (Auteur: Leighton Buzzard, 2017), p.17.

visitors hoping to hunt in the forest. Within Folk Horror narratives, the landscape is generally shown to be an isolating force, with regards to visitors to smaller communities. This idea can be seen within *Sightseers* and, especially, *Eden Lake*, whose central protagonists find themselves in a threatening situation precisely because the landscape is difficult to navigate. Within Folk Horror narratives, there is a tension that results from the clash of cultural ideas that ensues when the relatively modern notions found within the urban are set against the often archaic beliefs found within the rural; as Scovell suggests, 'Folk Horror, the horror of "folk", is out of time and within time, with strangers in the landscape who have survived the ravages of modernity'.[36] The beliefs found within such isolated communities are either presented as being belief systems that have survived erosion, due to the geographical distance of the communities they are practiced within, or else they are presented as arising directly because of that distance. This cultural clash finds its most successful expression in Robin Hardy's *The Wicker Man*,[37] one of the three canonical Folk Horror films that have come to be known as 'the unholy trinity,' the other two being *Witchfinder General*[38] and *The Blood on Satan's Claw*.[39] The importance of this thematic concern is evidenced by its presence within contemporary examples of Folk Horror, such as *Wake Wood*[40] and *The Ritual*.[41]

The spatial isolation found within *Calibre*, however, is as threatening to the residents of Culcarran as it is to its visitors. It is this isolation that ensures the members of the community have fewer opportunities to find work, given the locality provides a very finite set of economic opportunities. As Woods suggests, 'rural localities today are tied into networks centred on urban sites of economic, political and cultural power,'[42] and it is the reality of this need to expand the spatial boundaries of the village, in order to prosper economically, that irritates Brian and the other villagers that share his parochial views. During his tirade in the pub, Brian says the community need to look out for themselves "like folk used to". This position is idealistic and entirely untenable, given the community are unable to find economic

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[36] *Ibid*, 10.
[37] *The Wicker Man*, directed by Robin Hardy (British Lion Films, 1973), Film.
[38] *Witchfinder General*, directed by Michale Reeves (Tigon British Film production, 1968), film.
[39] *The Blood on Satan's Claw*, directed by Piers Haggard (Tigon British Film Production, 1971), film.
[40] *Wake Wood*, directed by David Keating (Hammer Films, 2009), film.
[41] *The Ritual*, directed by David Bruckner (Entertainment One, 2017), film.
[42] Woods, 44.

stability without the financial support that visitors from larger communities bring; support that Brian derides when he dismissively says "begging to city twats like this". What Brian fears, in accepting economic support from outside the community, is that any capital injected into Culcarran will entail a relinquishing of authority and autonomy; an exchange that will diminish the cultural authenticity of the community. Relph suggests that 'the relationship between community and place is indeed a very powerful one in which each reinforces the identity of the other, and in which the landscape is very much an expression of communally held beliefs and values and of interpersonal involvements'.[43] It is, within this context, understandable that Brian fears economic investment will bring spatial changes, and given how deeply the community are tied to their particular place those spatial changes will, he fears, become social and cultural changes. His fears are not entirely unfounded, given the opening of a large country club (itself a contrast to the small, local businesses found within the villages) has diverted much of the vital trade away from Culcarran.

Scovell suggests that within Folk Horror narratives, 'the halting of social progress can have a number of names but, for the sake of simplicity...it is best to refer to it as skewed…folklore, superstition, and even to some extent religion, form through this very physical but also psychical isolation'.[44] *Calibre's* gesture towards folklore and superstition is, in fact, perfunctory. In a film like *The Wicker* Man, the belief system observed on Summerisle fundamentally informs the community's social structure. Whilst the Alban Eiler festival would seem to suggest an element of the arcane that is usually found within Folk Horror, its observation (or lack thereof) is not a driving narrative element. Rather, its symbolic presence within the film serves to exemplify the two opposing sociocultural stances found within the community; an attitude of steadfastly resenting the intrusion of outside influence upon the village, and one that acknowledges the need to embrace wider ideas of community and modernity. It is the balancing of these two internal notions that align the narrative with the concept of Alban Eiler. The festival signifies the transition from winter to spring, and the corresponding renewal of the land. On the day of the festival, the spring equinox, day and night are of equal length, because the forces of darkness (death) and light (life) are in equilibrium. Similarly, the two opposing spatial views within the community seem

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[43] Relph, 33.
[44] Scovell, 18.

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be equally, if antagonistically, balanced. Logan's viewpoint, of being open to the influence and assistance of outside forces in order to boost the local economy, is symbolic of the balance found at the time of the equinox. Brian's view that the village should remain parochial and insular, at the risk of depriving the local economy of assistance from outside, represents the shift from balance to deprivation that is found during the winter months. Significant tension is elicited when one of these viewpoints threatens to subsume the other.

It is entirely appropriate that this stability is tested during the day of the festival. After the shooting of the father and son in the forest, Marcus and Vaughn return during the early hours of the morning of Alban Eiler to bury the bodies. The rest of that day generates incredible tension, as the pair attempt to behave in ways that will not arouse suspicion. For Vaughn, this is particularly difficult, as he is largely unable to conceal the effects of shock resulting from the fact that he (accidentally) shot a child. During the evening's celebratory gathering, Logan asks Marcus and Vaughn to help search for the missing father and son (actually Logan's brother-in-law and nephew), and the pair agree. The search, assisted by a dog, inevitably results in the bodies being found, prompting Marcus and Vaughn to attempt to flee. Vaughn is immediately apprehended, and is taken to a farm on the outskirts of the community, where Brian demands he be summarily executed whilst Logan, although understandably deeply shocked, urges his clique of community leaders to remain level-headed. As Brian urges Logan to allow him to kill Vaughan, Logan replies "People know they came here; his wife, for a start. Now if we kill them, this place will be riddled with police in no time, and I'm not talking local ones I'm talking *real* police". This emphasis that Logan places on the term '*real*' reveals the fact that the community adhere to an authority that, as far as possible, is self-governing.

Scovell argues that 'Folk Horror often denies reason and embraces new forms of, often theological, moral authority; it just so happens that this is linked almost consistently with the topographical location of its societies'. [45] This idea is true of Culcarran; the geographical isolation experienced by the community results in a cultural separation. This geographical distance is shown most prominently during the initial journey from Edinburgh to the Highlands, which sees a radical shift in landscape

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[45] *Ibid*, 37.

from one in which manmade features dominate, to one in which small settlements are dotted around a landscape comprised of vast hills and forests which visually dominate these manmade elements. This isolation undoubtedly accounts for the parochial attitude of villagers like Brian; as James Thurgill notes, 'landscapes act upon their inhabitants, shape their spatial experiences and co-produce the narrative's horror'.[46] Where many Folk Horror narratives express this localised autonomy via skewed religious practices, *Calibre* instead offers a community governed by its own 'moral authority' that avoids deference to national governance and procedure. This self-governance is apparent in the way that the community look to Logan when decisions need to be made. As Al tells Marcus, after he and Vaughn are invited to dine with Logan, "Logan and his father before him, they held this place together". Logan himself says 'It pretty well comes down on the individual folk to maintain the order of things". It is apparent, then, that the community view themselves as an independent entity outside of national ideas of identity. Indeed, Dawn Keetley suggests that 'what is crucial to Folk Horror, rather than "folk" more broadly, is a community bound together by shared (folkloristic) beliefs, traditions, and practices—a community bound so tightly, in fact, that it constitutes a "tribe".[47] This tribalism accounts for the ways in which the community members view inappropriate behaviour as an insult to the community as a unified body, rather than an individual slight on a particular member. The killing of Logan's brother-in-law and nephew, then, is a crime that the community views as an attack on the community at large, and is exacerbated by the fact that it is committed by outsiders.

Whilst the community do have shared bonds that align them with this idea of tribalism, there are clearly differences of opinion concerning how much power should be exercised locally. Marcus and Vaughn are detained by a group of local men, rather than handed over to the police (either the local constabulary or the 'real' police), and their crimes are discussed and dealt with in a space that is on the periphery of the community. Whilst it is typical for Folk Horror narratives to follow an arc in which a group of rural folk collectively adhere to a belief system (often incorporating archaic cultural elements), under the leadership of an enigmatic figurehead, *Calibre* generates

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[46] James Thurgill, 'A Fear of the Folk: On Topophobia and the Horror of Rural Landscapes,' *Revenant Journal Issue 5.*
[47] Dawn Keetley, 'Introduction: Defining Folk Horror,' *Revenant Journal Issue 5.*

narrative tension in the way that it presents its kangaroo court as operating in such a way that the vast majority of the community are unaware of the proceedings. Of course, it is entirely possible that Logan and his cohort implicitly know that the other members of the community will approve of their methods, but there are a number of details that suggest this clandestine procedure would not meet the approval of the Culcarran community. Brian's speech in the pub suggests that this localised form of self-governance has fallen out of favour, when he says the community should be "doing whatever's necessary to look out for ourselves, whatever's necessary. Like folk used to". Brian, and those who sympathise with his views, clearly bemoans the shift in cultural attitudes within the community that threatens the localised morality that he favours.

Logan himself is loath to allow the situation to descend into vigilantism, and it is through his intercession that Vaughn is offered the chance to walk away from the situation; the choice given to him is that he either shoots Marcus, or Brian will be allowed to kill them both. Whilst the conversation that leads to this decision is not shown, it is clear that Logan has asked for Vaughn's life to be spared because he is about to become a parent. As Vaughn recoils at the suggestion that he should shoot his friend, Logan says to him "do you really wanna leave your wife and unborn child alone?" It is this harrowing scene that exemplifies the way in which *Calibre* explores the meaning of Alban Eiler. Brian's vengeful desires are symbolic of darkness and the (temporary) death of the land, whilst Logan's optimism and benevolence are symbolic of light and the return of fertility to the soil. In facilitating Vaughn's pardon, Logan balances the forces of darkness (destruction) and light (rebirth) and allows

Conclusion

Calibre has, since its release, been consistently described as a thriller, and whilst there is significant narrative tension throughout, there are sufficient elements of spatial tension that justify its inclusion within the horror genre. Indeed, there is a pervading sense of dread that is sustained throughout most of the film once the central narrative event, the killing of the father and son, has occurred. These feelings of discomfort are heightened (or indeed facilitated) by the particular spatial configurations in which the narrative events take place. The accident and subsequent murder that sets the main thrust of the film into play is able to be initially covered up because of the isolated

nature of the setting in which they occur, but equally that same seclusion ensures the Culcarran villagers are able to exercise an autonomous moral authority. The intense parochialism practiced by the Culcarran residents (or at least a faction of them) ensures the deaths of two of their members is felt at a profound level, because the villagers share such a strong cultural and spatial simpatico.

Whilst the death of two people is, naturally, an understandable source of tension there is considerable unease generated by less consequential events, such as the ways in which Marcus and Vaughan interact with the villagers with their actions within the village being viewed as inappropriate and jarring. The selective engagement exercised within the urban (a necessary spatial stance that allows the individual to avoid feelings of overload when living amongst large numbers of people) is antithetical to the relational dynamics within the rural. In consistently failing to acknowledge Logan's position as de facto leader of the community, Marcus essentially attempts to bypass his status as an existential outsider. The same is true of Marcus giving cocaine to, and sleeping with, one of the community's young women. Whilst there is an element of territorialism in the community's reaction to Marcus' actions, there is also a familial concern for the wellbeing of one of their members and indeed this sense of an intense shared cultural background is at the heart of the spatial tensions presented within the narrative.

Because the relational bonds the villagers share is so profound, and is facilitated by the village's spatial isolation, there is an inherent mistrust of outsiders and a resistance to influences that they present. This parochialism is, however, revealed to be felt as cloying by some of the community's members, and there is therefore an element of spatial tension in the juxtaposing of the intensity of the bonds resulting from the community's insularity, and the potential for cultural stasis that this provincialism fosters. The idea that a remote community is mistrusting of outsiders to that community allows for *Calibre* to engage with Folk Horror ideas, inasmuch as the village's geographical isolation allows for a limited capitulation to wider ideas of authority and morality. The decreased possibility of Marcus and Vaughan seeking assistance from outside of the community ensures the narrative is incredibly tense throughout.

Whilst the numerous references to the Alban Eiler festival would seem to add to the idea that *Calibre* is Folk Horror, the festival does little to drive forth narrative events. Rather, it is the festival's symbolism that serves as a summation of the competing spatial forces within the village. The parochial attitudes within the community wish to resist the influence of the outside world entirely, and to adhere to an autonomous moral authority. The members of the community that are open to wider ideas of community are intent on ensuring the village survives their economic downturn, and it is the balancing of these two antagonistic stances that ensures the film can, ultimately, be considered to be Folk Horror

Thesis Conclusion

In my introduction, I stated that I am fundamentally interested in the effect that space has upon both characterisation and narrative. Given this thesis examines British horror cinema, I have therefore demonstrated the importance that space has in generating horror within the films examined in the preceding chapters. Essentially, I have successfully explored the ways in which spatial theory intersects with horror cinema. Throughout the close readings of my chosen films, I have discussed how there are no sustained academic analyses of space within horror narratives, and the depth and range of my own examinations of space and horror is evidence that spatial readings of horror texts are important, and offer new ways of understanding horror cinema. Correlative to this lack of spatial scholarship is the challenging of spatial stereotypes. Whilst it is understandable that a chapter or paper that examines (for example) horror and gender may not have scope to offer more than a passing reference to space, there is a danger that phrases such as 'the sprawling urban' or 'the wild rural' contribute towards a marginalisation of spatial ideas. This thesis counters this marginalisation, questions these stereotypes and greatly elaborates on existing ideas of space within horror cinema.

During the writing up of my research, some key ideas made their way into my readings, whilst others lacked sufficient relevance. Initially, I believed Henri Lefebvre's work would define much of my thesis, and yet I felt it was too obtuse to be applicable to my own way of thinking. Instead, I gravitated repeatedly towards Edward Relph's writing, which resonated far more with my own spatial interests and balanced a theoretical framework with plentiful real-world applications. Similarly, Edward Krupat's work on urban living proved to be fundamental in the chapters that examined the built environment, and especially the work that expanded upon Stanley Millgram's ideas of overload and selective engagement. To illustrate the impact that particular strands of theory had on my thesis, I will outline the fundamental arguments that framed the readings of my chosen cinematic texts:

Both *Sightseers*[1] and *Eden Lake*[2] present narratives that explore the idea that the individual who is resident within the city, but finds themselves preparing to holiday

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[1] *Sightseers.* Ben Wheatley. Studio Canal, 2012. Film.
[2] *Eden Lake*, directed by James Watkins (Rollercoaster Films, 2008), Film.

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within the rural, has a set of cognitive expectations concerning the latter. These imagined estimations are idealised, partly because the *idea* of the rural is formed through mediated information. This idealism also results from a desire to escape *from* the city, rather than an explicit wish to escape *to* the country. Within both films there is a sense of dissatisfaction that stems from the pressures associated with city living, such as the need to compete within the workplace and the tensions that arise when the individual must attempt to balance the needs of the individual in an environment that forces large numbers of people to share spaces on a daily basis.

Because the existential encounters with the rural in these films differ so greatly with the cognitive expectations the protagonists have, there is a great sense of disappointment which contributes towards a spatial tension. Whilst this tension is not, in and of itself, enough to generate horror, the narratives have other forms of tension that do elevate their spatial anxieties to horrific heights. In *Sightseers*, Chris channels his disappointment regarding his expectations of the rural, and the misanthropy he feels towards the people he finds within that space, into acts of violence that allow him to explore a murderous identity formation that is centred on exerting power over others. In the case of *Eden Lake*, because Steve has previously visited the space of Slapton Quarry, and built up positive associations with the space, his exclusion from the site both disappoints his spatial expectations, and reiterates his place within a fiscal hierarchy (given the proposed Eden Lake community is exclusive, and clearly beyond his financial reach). The resulting spatial tension is heightened via the threat posed by the gang of youths who terrorise Steve and Jenny, and significant tension is generated through the isolation that the quarry represents. This sense of geographical separation is one of the spatial ideas that found its way into a number of my readings, and is especially relevant where a film may (or may not) be classified as Folk Horror.

Both *Death Line*[3] and *Creep*[4] examine the idea that certain spaces can be thought of as non-places, because of the lack of expressions of identity that occur within them, and the singular functions that they encourage. These spaces elicit non-attachment, and are transitory and there is a danger that the individual, spending increasing periods of time within these spaces, will become so used to subduing their identities within these spaces that they find themselves suppressing aspects of their

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[3] *Death Line*, directed by Gary Sherman (Rank Film Distributors, 1972), film.
[4] *Creep*, directed by Christopher Smith (Pathé, 2004), film.

identity outside of those spaces. Indeed, both films express the idea that people spending more and more time within non-places have the potential to become non-people. In reality, most people have manageable engagements with the non-place, but the horror narrative exaggerates fears to incite its affects. In this way, both film's antagonists, having spent their entire lives living in close proximity to the non-place, have severely reduced aspects of identity.

The conflation of a person and a space is also explored in the way in which both film's antagonists are considered to be abject figures because of their association with spaces that are similarly abject. The spaces in which they spend the majority of their time are decaying and marked by a lack of physical and cultural investment and as such they are unable to sustain lives in healthy ways. Because of this, both the Man and Craig must be held at some distance because of the threat that their abject bodies pose to the healthy bodies, and the healthy spaces, they encounter.

This idea of spaces that are considered to be abject, because of the presence of unhealthy or threatening bodies, is also explored in my chapters on *28 Days Later*[5] and *28 Weeks Later*.[6] Because the films' infected antagonists render any space they come into contact with potentially unhealthy, they have far more freedom of movement than their uninfected counterparts. In order to survive the risk of infection, survivors must adopt a detached attitude towards cognitively significant spaces. Locations must be evaluated purely in terms of their survival advantages, and any failure to sever spatial ties will increase the risk of becoming infected. Both films demonstrate this, and *28 Weeks Later* does so particularly well in its opening scenes, where the only person who survives an assault on a 'safe' space is able to do so because of his ability to properly subdue his own attachment to that space, and to be willing to abandon it as soon as it becomes compromised.

Whilst actions that demonstrate a desire to cling to cultural and cognitive elements that are tied to specific spaces would seem to limit the individual's ability to evade threats, both films reveal how these actions can have some value. For instance, they contribute to the individual and the group retaining aspects of humanity. Whilst it can be argued that these aspects do little to aid physical survival, they ensure that

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[5] *28 Days Later*, directed by Danny Boyle (DNA Films, 2002), film.
[6] *28 Weeks Later*, directed by Juan Carlos Fresnadillo (DNA Films, 2007), film.

survivors are not reduced to the status of merely existing; of becoming little better than the infected they spend so much time evading. However, as important as these spatial ties can be to the fundamental identity formations of those living within them, my chapters examine how the relationships formed within those spaces (and especially the home) are far more important than the spaces in which they are formed. The formation, and retention, of these relational bonds allows for a sense of humanity to be fostered in much the same way that clinging to relational spaces enables aspects of identity to be preserved. In allowing those important relationships to become mobile, the uninfected survivors are able to better evade threats from the infected, whilst limiting their own emotional detachments.

Both *28 Days* and *28 Weeks Later* demonstrate the ways in which the abandoned landscape is bereft of cultural and cognitive investment. Significant spatial tension is elicited through the portrayal of empty streets that would ordinarily be filled with people and various activities. The initial scenes in *28 Days Later* are filled with a paradox, inasmuch as there is a tranquil quality to Jim's languid exploration of London that is coupled with an underlying sense of dread that stems from the lack of a population, and the evidence of upheaval that Jim encounters. There is a sense that the abandoned landscape is one that has entered into a cognitive stasis, given there is a lack of populace to retain cognitive and cultural ideas of the city. In *28 Days Later's* initial scenes, Jim's bewilderment perfectly encapsulates the idea that the person finding themselves thrust into such a situation become similarly subdued and becomes an embodiment of the cognitively static environment.

An American Werewolf in London[7] explores the idea that space can be conflated with time, inasmuch as the rural is portrayed as being a space in which archaic superstitious beliefs retain their power, and it therefore follows that the spaces in which these beliefs are observed are locked into a particular temporal moment precisely because those beliefs belong to a bygone era. By contrast, the space of the city is one in which logic and reason are observed, and the built environment is therefore viewed as being modern and progressive. Spatial tension is generated through the encounters that both rural and urban residents experience with each others' spaces.

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[7] *An American Werewolf in London*, directed by John Landis (Universal Pictures, 1981), film.

Correspondent to this idea is the concept of insider and outsider status. Rural spaces are typically home to smaller communities, where fewer residents lead to an increased sense of familiarity and intimacy. Any intrusions into these communities are viewed with an element of suspicion, and *An American Werewolf in London* perfectly demonstrates this idea in the two scenes where first Jack and David, and later Doctor Hirsch, visit The Slaughtered Lamb. Jack, David and Doctor Hirsch all fail to recognise the intimate relationship the locals have with their space, and the ideas that are shared amongst the villagers, and their intrusive querying of their traditions ensures they are held at some distance, and viewed as being existential outsiders.

Finally, *Calibre*[8] also explores the idea that small-scale rural communities have far more clearly relational bonds than their urban counterparts, and the film exaggerates this sense of parochialism to generate fear and horror. Indeed, the film is characterised by a pervading unease throughout, and much of this is due to spatial tension. Much of this tension arises from Marcus' inability (or unwillingness) to properly moderate his behaviour in such a way as to acknowledge his position as a relational intruder to the community. In this context, the mistrust shown towards him is contextual.

The insularity found within small rural communities is exaggerated to great effect, and contributes towards the film's sense of anxiety. However, once the narrative events begin to unfold, the feeling of unease becomes threatening as the outsiders find themselves totally isolated and unable to seek assistance from the outside world. The overarching feeling of oppressive isolation, coupled with the community's deference to their community leaders (as opposed to national ideas of law and authority) enable the narrative to be aligned with other Folk Horror narratives. In fact, these two factors are far more important in categorising *Calibre* as Folk Horror than the inclusion of the Alban Eiler festival, which is relatively unimportant within narrative terms, and is instead a symbolic framework that reflects the opposing forces that are at work within the village.

As the above summations demonstrate, a number of theoretical frameworks have emerged as being most instrumental in my close readings. Fundamental to my analyses is the idea that space is produced, inasmuch as space becomes place via

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[8] *Calibre*, directed by Matt Palmer (Wellington films, 2018), film.

the expression of cultural identity on the part of those inhabiting, or utilising that space. Naturally, as is the case with material production, this process is subject to ideological notions of power. Those with the most financial or cultural resources find themselves in a more advantageous position in that production, and those lacking those resources have far less opportunity to impose meaning onto the spaces they encounter during their lives. Throughout my thesis, I have suggested that spatial tension is elicited via competing elements of production, and whilst this tension is observable in our daily lives it is greatly magnified within horror narratives to generate affect.

It is clear that Edward Relph's work on existential insideness and outsideness has significantly informed my writing throughout this thesis, and it has been applied to most of my analyses. The idea of insideness and outsideness allows for the spatial tensions necessary for the generating of fear and horror, inasmuch as space becomes territorial and the site of expressions of culture and power that are seen to be under threat when outsiders enter into that space. Places become repositories of cultural identity, and insideness allows for cultural membership to be achieved and, conversely, this necessitates the exclusion of those outside of that relationship. Such dynamics are inherently prone to tension and violence.

The methodological framework used throughout this thesis has proven to be successful. In restricting my readings to British horror films, I have collected together a cohesive set of texts that offer a range of spatial concerns. Had I chosen to expand my criteria to include global films, that cohesion would have suffered. Of course, had I chosen to extend the range of my research, it would have been possible to divide my chapters in terms of their national focus. However, I ultimately felt that this may have diluted my resultant scope and knowledge base. Similarly, limiting my chosen films to those that can be described as largely offering realist narratives (*An American Werewolf in London* is the only film that gestures towards the supernatural) has enabled me to apply elements of human geography and spatial theory that are grounded in real-world observations. To include significant elements of the gothic would have pulled the focus of my research away from my chosen theoretical framework. The potential to examine films from outside of Britain, as well as films that deal with gothic elements, is certainly something that offers possibilities for post-thesis research.

I have, for the most part, found my initial research questions to have served me well. I would, however, have liked to have been able to expand upon some elements of my research, but the limitations of my word count prevented this. For example, my chapters on *28 Days Later* and *28 Weeks Later* stimulated my interests greatly and had I the space, I should have liked to have spoken about other dystopian narratives. Indeed, in compiling an initial list of potential films to examine, I had included both *The Day of the Triffids*[9] and *The Girl With all the Gifts*.[10] These two films would offer me the chance to discuss ecological dystopias, and whilst they were omitted from my thesis the potential to write about them at a later date remains. Similarly, I would have liked to have paired *Calibre* with another film that sits less ambiguously within the Folk Horror subgenre. My interest in Folk Horror has evolved greatly during the writing of my thesis; scholarship on the subject has blossomed within the last five years, and whilst I was initially a little sceptical of some of the initial discussions on the matter (I felt there was a tendency for academics to be insufficiently discerning in their categorisations of potential cinematic texts), I have refined my own thoughts to the point where I could speak at length about a number of films. Again, this is a strand that has the potential to become the focus of post-thesis research.

Ultimately, my thesis has satisfied the aims outlined within my introduction, and the writing process has allowed me to refine my own thoughts on space and horror cinema, as well as my thoughts on space and film more broadly. My research has confirmed that the application of spatial theory within horror studies is under-utilised, and my own chapters demonstrate the ways in which this strand of knowledge can offer new insights into films that have already been subject to much scrutiny, and to new films from within the genre.

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