

Analysing David Peace

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Edited by

Katy Shaw

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Analysing David Peace,
Edited by Katy Shaw

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To Joy, Mike and Kristian

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INTRODUCTION

THE YEAR OF PEACE

KATY SHAW

First came the Channel 4 drama, then the big-screen adaptation. He's in the middle of an exhaustive tour of the festival circuit. What next for David Peace? Of course: to be elevated to the heady realms of academia (Morrison 2009).

David Peace is a contemporary British novelist who was born and raised in Yorkshire but later moved to Japan. Representing English subjects from the East, Peace writes with distance and clarity as well as passion and partisanship, offering twenty-first century readers unique novelised accounts of events we think we know well. On 3 June 2009, the University of Brighton, England, held a one-day symposium on the work of David Peace. *Analysing David Peace* brought together a host of interdisciplinary parties—from academics to journalists, teachers to policemen, footballers to trade unionists—to engage in a detailed discussion on his canon to date. The papers given that day form the basis of this collection.

2009 seemed like an apposite occasion to stage such an event since the year marked a crescendo of critical and popular interest in the author, fuelled in no small part by the release of the film *The Damned United*, the publication of the second instalment of the *Tokyo Trilogy* and the broadcast of Channel Four's TV adaptation, *Red Riding*. Over the course of twelve months, the work of David Peace quickly became “a multimedia event” (Adams 2009). Throughout 2009 the British press lauded Peace as a rising star of contemporary literature. *The Independent* established him as “Britain's hottest author”, while *The Guardian* celebrated him as “the slow-burning, word-of-mouth success story of British publishing”. Tim Adams, writing in *The Observer*, even suggested that for the whole of 2009 “on TV and on the big screen and in all good bookshops, Peace will certainly be with you.” In recognition of this prolific period, Peace's publisher Faber branded 2009 “The Year of Peace”.

Peace found himself at the centre of this storm when he moved back to the UK after fifteen years spent living in Tokyo. While the UK press were eager to welcome him home, the author was less enamoured with his new-found fame. Previously, “no one knew me at all when I went out”, he reflected, “now people stop me in the street” (Alfree 2009). Celebrity not only raised Peace’s profile on the streets of Yorkshire but positioned him as a regular contributor to newspaper columns, literary festivals and author signings across the UK and Europe. However, this explosion of popular and critical interest was no accident. Rather, the “Year of Peace” marked the intersection of a specific set of circumstances that conspired to propel the author and his work into a wider global consciousness.

Changes in social, economic and political conditions played a significant role in the growing popularity of Peace throughout 2009. Although they address key decades of the twentieth century, readers quickly found that the novels of David Peace also speak profoundly to the world of the new millennium. Read in the UK in 2009—a year of industrial disputes, spending cuts and political movement to the Right—the worlds of Peace’s novels seemed particularly resonant. His fictional tales of police corruption entered a contemporary reality consumed by cases of vice involving the Metropolitan and West Yorkshire forces (Dodd 2009), while the missing school girls of the *Red Riding Quartet* were hauntingly raised by the cases of Madeleine McCann, Natascha Kampusch and Shannon Matthews. Elsewhere, the abuse of power, a theme across Peace’s texts, manifested itself in the 2009 Haut de la Garenne child abuse scandal. The growth of the BNP and the far Right compounded fears expressed in Peace’s early novels, while the 2003 invasion of Iraq raised the author’s representations of post-war Tokyo to a heightened state of significance.

Politically, 2009 also marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the 1984–5 UK miners’ strike. Its commemoration produced a renewed interest in Peace’s first post-*Quartet* novel, *GB84*, and drew its author into a wider debate about the history and legacy of the conflict. Set against a range of competing cultural representations of the strike period, *GB84* became an important part of debates about how to remember—and more specifically how to prevent people forgetting—this seminal event. Peace participated in conferences, exhibitions and talks to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary, offering his own work as a political intervention rather than a concerted attempt to re-write existing histories of the dispute. Most notably, his introduction to Keith Pattison’s photographic record of the year-long conflict, *No Redemption* (2010) proposes the strike as “the most cataclysmic event in post-war British history”. Peace praises Pattison’s perspective as sympathetic to his own, an approach to the past that offers

“a story and a history of resistance, resilience and sacrifice which should be an inspiration, which should never be forgotten” (Peace 2010). Raising the legacy of the strike in the twenty-first century, *GB84* and the twenty-fifth anniversary celebrations tapped into a seam of scars across the UK that continued to fester a quarter of a century later.

Three years on from its publication in 2006, *The Damned United* had become a critical success and subject to a film adaptation by 2009. The popularity of the novel played a central role in raising the profile of Peace’s other texts and led many readers back to the *Red Riding Quartet*, which was reprinted by publisher Serpent’s Tail under the banner “By the author of *The Damned United*”. The success of the film, and the rising profile of its star Michael Sheen, compounded the influence of the novel and the public’s fascination with Brian Clough, initiating an outpouring of books about the manager and his time at Leeds United. As a tragic hero accessible on both the printed page and the big screen, Peace’s Clough quickly became shorthand for other contemporary sporting falls from grace. In the light of revelations about affairs and addictions, disgraced golfer Tiger Woods was explicitly described in terms of Peace’s fictional manager. “For Brian Clough striding into Leeds in David Peace’s *The Damned United*” claimed Paul Hayward in *The Guardian*, “read Woods at Augusta. The shadows, the corridors, the ghosts” (Hayward 2009). In his review of ex-Leeds player John Giles’ autobiography, Hayward develops this argument, suggesting that “a measure of how deeply *The Damned United* invaded the psyche is that when John Giles speaks of Leeds in the Don Revie era his phraseology fires you straight back into David Peace’s book” (Hayward 2010). By 2009, the figure of Brian Clough, the football team Leeds United and the sporting novel had become recognised “David Peace territory” (Simpson 2010).

The publication of the second volume of the *Tokyo Trilogy* in August further fuelled this “Year of Peace”. Acclaim for *Tokyo Year Zero* was exceeded by the second volume of Peace’s post-war trilogy as critics commended a move away from his characteristic repetition and narrative fragmentation towards a clearer framework and inspired approach to another contentious criminal case in Japanese legal history. *Occupied City* also drew away from a specificity of setting to align itself with wider themes of occupation and invasion. Peace argued that while he was writing the *Tokyo Trilogy* the 2003 invasion of Iraq was “uppermost in my mind” (Peace in Unsworth 2009). Speaking to occupied sites across the globe, *Occupied City* transcends the limits of its immediate subject to offer a mediation on the influence of history. Read in a 2009 context of the second Iraq war, an invasion of Afghanistan and international political

upheaval, the novel brought the world of post-war Japan to bear on the political reality of the present.

2009 also witnessed the passing of a collection of writers who formed some of Peace's most significant literary influences. Gordon Burn, J.G. Ballard, David Seabrook and Peace's literary agent, William Miller, died within twelve months of each other from January to November. Burn was a respected journalist and author whose first book, *Somebody's Husband, Somebody's Son* (1985), re-visited the hunt for the Yorkshire Ripper to explore the role of 1970s Northern culture in creating crime. Burn went on to write about the Moors murderers, Fred and Rosemary West, and the disappearance of Madeleine McCann. His treatment of real-life crime as a product of its age was a clear influence on Peace's later approach to deviance. J.G. Ballard was an English novelist whose work explores the trappings of modernity and advances in technology. Ballard's distinct style and fragmented dystopian worlds confront the impact of change on the human consciousness and examine relationships between humans and technology. His influence can be felt in the stark, barren landscapes and fractured relationships that characterise Peace's novels. Seabrook was a crime writer and journalist who became famous for re-visiting problematic convictions and unsolved crimes. Found dead in his apartment in 2009, he had been working on a book about the mysterious death of solicitor David Jacobs. This project was a logical extension of his long-term interest in the darker side of contemporary British society, a passion shared and developed by Peace. Miller was an editor and publisher who also worked as a literary agent at the English Agency Japan. In his *Guardian* obituary, Peace described Miller as "an agent, editor, teacher and, most of all, friend" (Peace 2009). Miller was instrumental in getting Peace's novels published and proved an effective sounding board for the author's ideas. In their shared concerns about society, modernity, crime and writing, Burn, Ballard, Seabrook and Miller shaped the work of David Peace. Their deaths marked a profound sense of passing and underscored a year of immense change for the author.

Interest in Peace reached a height in 2009 when British broadcaster Channel Four announced that it had adapted the *Red Riding Quartet* into three feature length episodes. *Red Riding* debuted on Thursday 5 March to 2.5 million viewers and marked a wider trend in contemporary British television drama (Holmwood 2009). The first decade of the new millennium saw a host of British television programmes examining, or set in, the UK during the 1970s and 80s. From *I Love the 1970s/80s* clip shows to nostalgic re-runs of *Top of the Pops II* and old sitcoms like *The Good Life*, British television was suddenly obsessed with recapturing the best bits of

these not-too-distant decades. The most successful of these programmes was the BBC drama series *Life On Mars* and its spin-off *Ashes to Ashes*. Set in the same period as *Red Riding* and also tackling police corruption, crime and social change, *Ashes To Ashes* created popular protagonist Detective Gene Hunt, a 1970s man of misogyny, defiance and non-traditional policing. However, unlike *Ashes to Ashes*, *Red Riding* was less interested in capturing nostalgia than it was interrogating the pervading and problematic legacy of these decades. As TV critic Sam Wollaston was quick to point out: “next to *Red Riding*, *Ashes to Ashes* looks like *Grange Hill*” (Wollaston 2009). Positioning *Ashes to Ashes* as a softer, teenage drama against *Red Riding*’s adult world and themes, his review foregrounds the very different perspectives offered by these drama series. Where *Ashes to Ashes* chooses to focus on cultural icons, popular music and stereotypes from the period, *Red Riding* tears apart audience expectations to reveal a past that is startlingly reticent to the present.

Offering popular appeal and a high dose of gritty Northern realism, *Red Riding* was largely a critical and commercial success. Even those challenged by its multiple plots, characters and crimes were forced to concede that “it wasn’t the easiest thing to follow, and maybe it didn’t all quite add up in the end (what was that swan about again?), but for sheer atmosphere, passion and period recreation, it was hard to beat” (Dean 2009). While the trilogy marked a wider haunting of the collective consciousness by the pervading presence of the 1970s and 80s in contemporary British television drama, it did not seek to distract from the present with nostalgia for the past. Instead, it offered contemporary viewers a disturbing, opaque prism through which to examine the problems of the present. The success of this approach was marked by a deal to bring Peace’s texts to the big screen when director Ridley Scott bought the rights to make a movie of the *Red Riding Quartet* following its Channel Four broadcast. From *Serpent’s Tail* to the silver screen in ten years, by 2009 the success of the *Red Riding Quartet*, *GB84*, *The Damned United* and the *Tokyo Trilogy* had cemented David Peace as a key author of the twenty-first century.

Central to understanding Peace’s work is an appreciation of the contexts it examines. Offering a useful outline of the political landscape of the 1970s, Maguire’s essay opens the collection with a timely reminder of the long-standing tensions and traditions of Northern England and its industrial trade heritage, as well as wider parliamentary disputes across the decade. Interrogating Peace’s representation of the building industry as a conscious and historically apt intersection of vice, economics and politics, it offers the vicious and fraught world of the *Red Riding Quartet* as a

factually tethered backdrop to wider critiques of crime and policing during the period.

Peace's novels offer readers a world in which the past is subject to the politics of the present and, as such, history is presented as a highly significant, if deeply elusive, informing presence. Charles' essay suggests that the intensity of Peace's texts leads to the splintering of narratives as moral and physical terrains become damaged by events. The social and psychologically symbolic movement of characters dramatises spaces, developing ghosting associations of the North to draw attention to the construction of time. Escaping the straightjacket of linear chronometric narrative, time is experienced diversely as a product of memory and a multilayered construction. In novels that offer *déjà vu* as a structuring principle, trauma is reflected in the physical composition of the texts, their tortured and fragmented states demanding a re-configuration of past time in present space. Mapping his-story onto existing spatial and temporal frameworks, Peace offers an antithetical presentation of order and disorder, carving into old landscapes which penetrate and strain under his new creations and renovations of the recent past. Charles' essay explores the extent to which the *Quartet* can be understood through these engagements as well as through wider interactions with genre, realism and modernism.

At the end of the twentieth century, historian Tony Judt bemoaned an increasingly common "idea that we live in a time without precedent: that what is happening to us is new and irreversible and that the past has nothing to teach us" (Judt 2009, 19). Keyes and Lockwood argue that Peace's fictions are significant because they counter this trend in their conscious decision to foreground historical periods, events and controversies as well as "areas of English society [which] are unexplored in other contemporary fiction" (Cartwright 2009). In their essays, Keyes and Lockwood suggest that Peace's novels share a sympathy with those of J.G. Ballard in their desire to turn to the past to confront issues such as the "death" of the city and the occasion of the "Fugue". At the heart of Peace's texts lies a profound exploration of power, its sources, distribution and effects. Keyes and Lockwood argue that although Peace's novels are ostensibly about very particular periods, they transcend the specific times of their titles as a result of this pervading concern and insistent refusal to sideline the significance of the past. Claiming that "much of popular culture is predicated on the erasure of history", Peace foregrounds his own work as occupying a space in which history is not removed but re-opened to reveal new ways of thinking about the past and present (Allfree 2009).

Any collection of essays on the work of David Peace would not be complete without the voice of the author. In an essay based on a series of

conversations with Peace, Gregorits explores *GB84* and Peace's thoughts on the writing process, reading experience and historical legacy of this novel. In conversation, Peace offers a revealing insight into the challenges of creating a political novel in the twenty-first century as well as his desire to experiment further in the areas of Gothic and Faction. Reflecting on *GB84* as an intervention in an existing—and already highly contested—history, the essay chronicles a fascinating debate about the role of the author and the function of the novel in the construction of the historical past.

Whannel's essay analyses Peace's protagonist Brian Clough within wider developments in British sports journalism and media history during the 1970s. Examining concepts of masculinity and a weight of history carried over from the *Red Riding Quartet*, it offers a critical introduction to the context in which Peace constructs his fictional manager. Analysing a range of symbols that function throughout Peace's work, the essay foregrounds the significance of time and the supernatural in Clough's "damned" spell at Leeds. Exploring the dysfunctional relations underpinning the manager's career and personal life, Whannel's essay offers *The Damned United* as a novel of transition, chronicling the changing face of football and one of its most iconic managers during the 1970s.

The success of the 2009 adaptation, *Red Riding*, resulted in its release in America, not as a TV series but as three theatrical movies. Shown back to back in selected cinemas across the United States, *Red Riding* was released by IFC alongside a complementary brochure given to viewers buying tickets for all three films. The key feature of this brochure was an essay by influential American film critic David Thomson which is reprinted here. Thomson explores *Red Riding* as a representation of Britain, and specifically Northern England, at a key point in time. Bravely taking up the challenge of unravelling the many plots, characters and twists of the trilogy, his essay establishes *Red Riding* as a highly significant film, one worthy of a place alongside American classics such as *The Godfather*.

Fitzgerald develops this argument in an essay addressing the close relationship between Peace's texts and Grisoni's television adaptations. Setting the four novels of the *Quartet* against the three screen translations of the trilogy, it evaluates the ways in which *Red Riding*'s range of directors set about bringing Peace's fictional worlds to the screen. Fitzgerald, like Thomson, foregrounds the significance of context in understanding both the novels and their adaptations, presenting a case for *Red Riding* as a significant text not only in terms of Peace's work, but in the context of wider developments in British television drama of the new millennium.

Interrogating the boundaries of history, time and fiction, the novels of David Peace do not offer answers, only more questions. In doing so, they effectively mobilise the contemporary reader as an active participant in a wider and unfinisable project of understanding. This collection draws upon and develops these ideas, as well as exploring the social, cultural, political and economic contexts informing Peace's work. Moving from the crimes of the Yorkshire Ripper and the political rise of Margaret Thatcher to the machinations of Leeds United and the 1984-5 UK miners' strike, the following essays provide an overview of Peace's novels to date, as well as a discussion of significant debates informing his canon.

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CHAPTER ONE

POLITICS, CLASS AND THE 1970s/80s

PADDY MAGUIRE

The novels of David Peace are set in very specific historical and cultural contexts. His first five novels have a titular historical specificity which informs their narratives, while the sixth, *The Damned United*, is constructed around a shorter chronological span of the forty-four days Brian Clough spent as manager of Leeds United football club. These historical contexts are located very firmly, and arguably self-consciously, within a wider national narrative of industrial and economic decline experienced in the old, pre-eminently Victorian, industrial heartlands of Britain—or as one of Peace’s characters summarises it, “A collision of the worst of times, the worst of hells. The Medieval, the Victorian and the Concrete” (Peace 2001, 305-6). However, the landscape of Peace’s novels is not only one of physical decay and urban blight, but one of moral decay and social and cultural dislocation.

The trajectory of British post-war development, particularly in the periods in which Peace’s work is set, was one of economic decline culminating in crisis. This problem was particularly acute in manual industries like coal mining, shipbuilding, steel-working, chemicals and heavy engineering, the core industries of the Northern communities populated by Peace’s protagonists. In his novels, the emphasis is very much on communities subtly constructed and densely populated by an often bewildering array of working class organisations. These were the kind of groups frequently examined by British sociologists of the 1950s and 1960s, perhaps most famously in the deeply influential work of the cultural commentator Richard Hoggart, himself a working class, grammar school product of Leeds. However, the kind of tribalistic, casually misogynist, introverted, intellectually insular and vaguely paranoid communities depicted by Peace are almost the reverse image of Hoggart’s self-improving working class of the 1950s.

To some extent, a communal emasculation of British heavy industry reflected the economic decline and dislocation of this period. Long before the onslaught of Thatcherite inspired closures which led to massive confrontations and the first national mining strike since the General Strike of 1926, problems were recorded in almost all the “old” industries, from cotton textiles in Lancashire to shipbuilding in the North East and steel making in South Wales. The communal, as well as the economic, guts were being ripped out of the old industrial heartlands of the UK, just as the densely-packed terraced streets of working class communities were being replaced by the sub-modernist, cut price industrial build monstrosities of the 1960s and 70s council estates. But, and this would be a crucial historical “but”, this relative decline was located within the context of a long post-war boom and a political consensus that placed full employment as a major political objective.

Full employment and increasing affluence not only encouraged labour mobility (aided by massive housing programmes) but appeared to signal the disappearance of class as a major political and cultural factor. Contemporary studies like Goldthorpe and Lockwood’s *The Affluent Worker in the Class Structure* celebrated the apparent elimination of class, while would-be modernising Labour politicians urged the Party to shift their allegiance from an apparently disappearing class. However, as the post-war boom began to falter, far from disappearing, class conflict in the shape of industrial unrest was rapidly escalating. Like the “Irish Question” in late Victorian and Edwardian politics, the “Trade Union Question”, having increasingly concerned governments from the mid-1950s, moved to the centre of the political stage. Class was very much back on the agenda and it is that conflict, cultural as well as industrial and political, that dominated the communities which Peace so expertly dissects. As the 1960s turned into the 1970s, industrial skirmishes appeared on the brink of escalating into full-scale pitched battles. The Leeds clothing workers strike of 1970 and the viciously contested national building workers strike, both of which prefigured the use of flying pickets made prominent in subsequent mining disputes, foregrounded discontent as a sign of things to come. To commentators, there was little doubt that this was a potentially decisive period, one which could permeate all aspects of British society. It seemed that the balance of power in industrial affairs overwhelmingly favoured the workers, not only for objective reasons but because of the inadequacies of their would-be managers. These failings would haunt Ted Heath’s Conservative government, which owed its demise to an inability to manage a rapidly worsening industrial and economic climate.

However, it was not only Conservative administrations that experienced such difficulties. By the end of the 1970s, with his government struggling to deal with widespread disputes in the “Winter of Discontent”, Labour Prime Minister Jim Callaghan warned his Cabinet that “the balance of power between employers and trade unions had shifted significantly in the last ten years [...] The Trades Union Congress must be brought to recognise that a new agreement with the Government was essential, if they were to avoid having their powers greatly reduced by an incoming Conservative government” (Cabinet Office 1979). Callaghan was a veteran of the industrial and political struggles which had punctuated British domestic politics in the preceding decade. Coming from a working class and trade union background, he had figured prominently in the internal party opposition to Wilson and Castle’s attempts to restructure the legislative parameters of industrial relations with “In Place Of Strife” in 1969 (Castle 1984, 560). This document itself had been a reaction to growing industrial militancy, historically more significant than the photogenic student disturbances which characterised not just British but Western European societies in the late 1960s and 70s. Industrial and ideological class war, occasionally conducted through set-piece confrontations, particularly in the mining industry, dominated domestic policies until much of the battleground was erased, in a consciously ideological fashion, by the dismantling of British industry in the 1980s.

Callaghan was not alone in recognising the historically pivotal nature of this period. As David Howell, incoming Energy Minister, wrote in a note for the new Conservative government in August 1979, the object was to engineer “the revival of enterprise in our society”. This was not simply a matter of policies but of an ideological divide as “huge forces, collectivist and corporatist, will be pushing and leaning the other way.” To the recipient, the Chancellor Geoffrey Howe, in an observation which clearly pre-figured Thatcher’s concern with “the enemy within” in 1984, victory depended on cutting the economic ground from underneath their opponents: “underlying the urgency to find solutions to our economic difficulties—low growth, inflation and so on—there is lurking a political danger which threatens the very survival of our democracy. I am sure the changes in the fiscal environment can contribute towards defeating the challenge” (Prime Minister’s Office 1979). The spiralling decline of the British economy, stimulated by the 1974 oil crisis and resulting “stagflation”, permeated almost every aspect of politics and culture during the period. National decline, industrial following imperial collapse, appeared to raise questions of national sovereignty as much as of national identity. As Kenneth O Morgan observed in his biography of Callaghan, “Union power

gripped the public mind. Britain, in the last phase of Labour corporatism, seemed close to being ungovernable” (Morgan 1997, 673). To Bernard Donoghue, who served as an adviser to both Wilson and Callaghan, it appeared that “people want a change and they hate the trade unions. All the other arguments are at the margin.” (Donoghue 2009, 64). Political decay would provide the domestic landscape of the 1970s just as economic, industrial and urban decay would dominate that of the 1980s. The language of conflict was increasingly prevalent. As Douglas Hurd remarked from his vantage point as Heath’s political secretary after the Government’s first, failed, encounter with miners and power-workers in 1972, “the Government was now wandering vainly over the battlefield looking for someone to surrender to—and being massacred all the time” (Hurd quoted in Ziegler 2010, 350).

The extent of this crisis should not be under-estimated. For Heath’s government, the impact of the oil crisis appeared to signal the moment when a relatively genteel, if accelerating, decline turned into a national collapse. After a brief period of economic optimism fuelled by the first of the great property booms, internal forecasts warned that economic development would be thrown sharply into reverse, just as the government embarked on its second unsuccessful conflict with the miners. With industrial output likely to decrease the following year by around 8%, the only hope seemed to be to try to last through to March, when fuel demands would lessen since “the major burden must fall on reducing the demand of the public sector” (Ziegler 2010, 351). This strategy collapsed in electoral defeat. As the replacement Chancellor Denis Healey warned the newly formed Cabinet, they faced “an economic situation which might well be the worst which had ever been faced in peacetime” (Cabinet Office 1974). This government would also collapse in the bitter disputes of the Winter of 1978/79, ushering in another Conservative administration, one even more committed to free market economics than Heath’s government had initially been. It was one which also arrived in an apparently deepening economic crisis. From the viewpoint of a number of government strategists it was potentially a worse crisis than that faced by the Heath government in the aftermath of the OPEC inspired oil crisis, not least as the historic response of the British government to economic problems—currency depreciation—was no longer available.

It was quite clear to the new government that the battle must be rejoined. They claimed “the Government’s strategy aims at a fundamental change in the British economy. This requires changes of attitudes; and a vital part of those changes must be a clearer understanding of the market economy and its opportunities and penalties [...] the government intends to

change, and to change radically, the framework of expectations that forms the key to individual behaviour” (Cabinet Office 1977). In an industrial battlefield, defeat must carry with it clear penalties and as such Government not only sought to absolve itself of a range of social and economic responsibilities but to actively transfer the cost of economic collapse to its perceived opponents. Howe claimed “the unions asked for free collective bargaining and must now answer to their members and to the public at large for the results [...] the responsibility for bankruptcies or redundancies is theirs” (Maddox 2003, 177). Even some members of the Cabinet feared that the onslaught on British industry could be terminal as “there was a danger of widespread damage to the country’s industrial base. It was not a matter of individual firms going out of business; there was a risk that whole lines of production would disappear and open the British market to foreign firms who were not necessarily better or more efficient.” Unlike the Heath government’s abandonment of free market principles in the face of a collapsing economy, the Thatcher government remained committed, with the Prime Minister ensuring that the Cabinet agreed there was no alternative and that the “present economic strategy” was the only option (Maddox 2003, 133-135).

Industrial collapse under the ensuing monetarist onslaught was accompanied by a vigorous re-engineering of the market as the state increasingly transferred assets to the private sector. Between 1979 and 1990 some sixty per cent of state owned industries, and some 600,000—largely unionised—workers were transferred to the private sector, not only substantially diminishing public enterprise, but also providing a substantial new source of revenue for the Treasury. As Paul Addison has pointed out, in a single year, privatisation receipts would equate to some ten percent of Government revenue and the sale of BT alone netted £5.4 billion for the Treasury (Addison 2010, 290).

If the decaying industrial landscape and embittered social relationships of the 1970s and 80s are the backdrop to Peace’s *Red Riding Quartet*, so too is the apparent moral collapse perceived by many contemporaries of the period. Leeds had been identified in the early 1950s as having the most corrupt and ill-disciplined police force in the country. Conservative Home Secretary Sir Maxwell Fyfe was so dismayed by its record that he wanted to launch an official investigation under the Tribunals Of Inquiry Act of 1921 but was over-ruled by Prime Minister Winston Churchill on the grounds that any exposure of police corruption would undermine public confidence in the force. Concerns largely centred on the alleged collusion of the local police with betting shops. Such relatively low level corruption was endemic and soon new areas opened up as old ones, like betting, were

legalised—particularly in the developing vice, drugs and pornography work of local police forces. These growing opportunities for corruption would see the Metropolitan Police overtake any of its regional rivals in prominent corruption cases, with 478 officers leaving the force as a result of disciplinary proceedings after the new Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Sir Robert Marks, launched an anti-corruption campaign in 1972 (Campbell 2010). The high profile exposure, and subsequent conviction, of officers including Commander Ken Drury, Head of the Flying Squad and Wally Virgo, Head of the Serious Crimes Squad, in the early 1970s not only altered public perceptions of the police but closely informed media representations in popular TV series such as *The Sweeney*.

Investigative journalism also became an increasingly diverse presence in both print and broadcast media. Frequently it involved the inter-face between public and private enterprise, nowhere more so than in the growing municipal sector. The rapidly expanding budgets of local authorities offered fertile ground for malpractice during this period. In association football, which Peace's *The Damned United* portrays as a kind of tribalistic, macho, introverted and inherently unstable world, the petty corruption of powerful club owners/directors like Louis Edwards of Manchester United and Bob Lord of Burnley was based on local authority contracts for school meals and other outlets for their products. The match fixing and betting scandals of the 1960s continued to echo through the 1970s, not least with allegations against Leeds' (and then England's) manager, Don Revie. However, these paled into financial insignificance when compared with the largest area of local authority finance—housing.

The numerous opportunities for corruption offered by a combination of cost-plus agreements, time/volume based bonus systems and poorly structured contracts facilitated collusion between the various professionals employed by local authorities and the large contractors who assiduously courted them. In particular the single party municipal fiefdoms of the North, in a period of aggressive urban renewal and regeneration, provided rich pickings for many councillors, council officials, contractors and assorted architects. The most famous case, which like Met corruption, would reverberate throughout the 1970s and beyond, was the intricate web of political and financial corruption spun by John Poulson, a man who might have taught Peace's John Dawson everything he ever wanted to know. As Dominic Sandbrook has pointed out, while Poulson and a string of officials were convicted, the real scandal—the corrupt practices of the Home Secretary who, alongside his wife and son, were in Poulson's pay—the corruptions of the State were carefully ignored (2010, 54). As the Cabinet concluded when considering the ramifications of the developing

scandal and the measures that ought to be taken to investigate, “it would be essential not to compromise the established practice whereby Members of Parliament pursued many different types of activities outside the House of Commons, often in return for remuneration which involved no impropriety of any kind” (Cabinet Office 1972). In a way that stands as a metaphor for the UK in the 1970s and 80s, the lower orders would be deeply suspect and the higher orders deeply defensive as Britain’s class structure, and the articulation of class power was, sometimes carefully, often chaotically, and ultimately irreversibly, realigned forever.

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CHAPTER TWO

“NO REDEMPTION”: THE DEATH OF THE CITY IN THE WORK OF DAVID PEACE

JARRED KEYES

Yorkshire is always the last bastion of common sense. Like the bloody resistance (Peace 2001a, 29).

From the “haunted city” (Peace 2000, 212) to the “City of the Dead” (Peace 2001a, 322), the works of David Peace are replete with images of a decaying and dying metropolis. Examining representations of the city throughout the *Red Riding Quartet* and *GB84*, this chapter will explore how the plight of the city provides a means by which Peace’s work critiques Thatcherism. As a “last bastion of common sense”, the state of Yorkshire forms the backdrop to Peace’s ongoing examination of the social, ideological, physical and economic costs of deindustrialisation in Britain during the 1970s and 80s. To explore the connection between the notion of “No Redemption” (Peace 2010) and the “death” of the city, this essay will identify two competing visions of a governmental and ethical city in Peace’s work. This will lead to a discussion of Peace’s figurative investment in a tower block in Leeds and a consideration of the trope of spectrality in his various representations of cities and the Yorkshire Moors. The essay will conclude by analysing the image of the necropolis and how this vision aligns with Peace’s apparent literary disinterest in Britain post-1985.

Asked by an interviewer in 2009 about the historical settings of his novels, Peace answered by posing the following question:

People often say to me ‘why don’t you write about now?’ But what is ‘now’? How can you write about now? People writing about Blair and the Iraq War, that is just journalism. I’m deeply suspicious of fiction about the

recent past. You need distance and time to be able to contemplate an event fully (Geoghegan 2009).

The “distance and time” Peace believes are necessary to fully “contemplate” an event may help to explain the historical settings of his work. In the same interview, Peace explained that upon completing the last part of the *Tokyo Trilogy*, his attention would turn to “a history of the UK from 1967 to 1984, which will be a very long book” (Geoghegan 2009). That novel—provisionally titled *UK-DK* (UK decay)—would, in Peace’s words, be “based on *Paradise Lost*” and map “the rise of Thatcher’s Right, as well as the decline of the Left” (Hart 2006, 557). In literary terms, it is no coincidence that Peace’s intention to engage the political consolidation of neoliberalism in Britain overlaps the reluctance of his novels to explicitly engage with the present. However, as this essay will argue, the judgement of the present is always implicit in Peace’s work and is key to understanding the contemporary relevance of its images of dead cities.

Peace’s “view of life in contemporary Britain is essentially pessimistic”. His cynicism reflects a deep sense of “disappointment and anger that things did not get better after 1997” (Hedgecock 2009) following the election of Tony Blair’s New Labour government. This anger is at once attributable to the defeat of the 1984-5 UK miners’ strike and the consolidation of the changes that defeat signalled in the political mainstream. For Peace, the 1984-5 UK miners’ strike represented the “most cataclysmic event in post-war British history” (Peace 2010) and, as such, its defeat signalled the emergence of a new vision of society. Peace argues that:

[Thatcher’s] big notion was that there *is no community*, there’s just yourself, and your family [...] She wanted to pave the way to employment laws being run roughshod over, that people shouldn’t join trade unions. All these things that British people now take for granted were formed during that time (Gregorits 2004).

One of the more “unacceptable” things about the New Labour government, Peace contends, was its failure “to repeal any of the Conservative anti-union legislation that was enacted before, during, and after the strike” (Peace in *Socialist Worker* 2010). As a result, the “many legacies of the strike [...] still divide Britain” (Peace 2010). Based on the conflicting values of Thatcher’s “anti-social egoism” (Hobsbawm 1994, 410) and the collectivism of trade unionism, the metaphor of a still-divided Britain is central to understanding the stylistic development and spatial logic of Peace’s work.