

Theories of the Subject: British Cinema and 1968

Martin Jonathan Hall

University of Stirling

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Aiming to make an intervention in critical theory, film-philosophy and British Cinema scholarship, this thesis investigates what a marriage of Lacanian and Badiouian theories of the subject can bring to the study of the radical British feature film of 1968: films which in differing ways represent the political and intellectual debates current in the culture. The question of what can be learnt through an analysis situated within theories of the subject has not been addressed within British Cinema studies. Psychoanalytic film theory in its previous incarnations utilised a section of Lacan's thought in order to focus on the ways in which the spectator was placed into a subject position by the unseen workings of the apparatus. Furthermore, the limited amount of Badiouian film scholarship is concerned with whether films can be thought philosophically. A fuller use of Lacan with Badiou as a hermeneutic model to address films from a specific period and context creates a new interpretive model on the porous boundary between critical theory and film-philosophy. This thesis utilises Lacan's categories of the Imaginary, Symbolic and, predominantly, the Real alongside the Badiouian Event to interrogate the ways in which *Morgan: A Suitable Case for Treatment* (Karel Reisz, 1966), *Privilege* (Peter Watkins, 1967), *Herostratus* (Don Levy, 1967), *Performance* (Donald Cammell & Nicolas Roeg, 1970) and *if...* (Lindsay Anderson, 1968) represent the radical subject of 1968, in order to argue for the efficacy of ideological critique, to think politically about cinema, and advocate the continuing resonance of the period in contemporary praxis.

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Introduction

Opening Remarks

The rebirth of revolutionary action in western society demands, and needs, a parallel rebirth of theory (Nairn, 1968: 89).

This proposition, written in the immediate aftermath of the events of May '68 in Paris, could conceivably have been written at any point from 1922, when Lenin and Stalin first began to argue bitterly about the direction of the nascent Soviet Union, up to the mid-1970s, when what Alain Badiou calls 'a resigned surrender...a return to customs' (2009/2010¹: 1) occurred, after the militancy of the 'Red Years' of 1966-1976 ebbed. Some forty years further on from this retreat, this project returns to Nairn's moment of rebirth, in order to interrogate the British Cinema of the era via theories of the subject emanating from France then and since, in an attempt both to revivify and add to a model of thinking about film, and, in a small way, to revitalise a political tradition, and to think about it philosophically. Alain Badiou, in a piece written forty years on from *les évènements*, suggests that

[t]he second sequence² goes from 1917 (the Russian Revolution) to 1976 (the end of the Cultural Revolution in China, but also the end of the militant movement which arose throughout the world somewhere between 1966 and 1975), and whose epicenter, from the point of view of political innovation, was May 1968 in France and its consequences during the years that followed (2009a: 83).

It is now fifty years since the events of May '68, that 'moment of searing intensity' (Badiou, cited in Pawling, 2013: 88) so resonant in the popular memory of the era. 2018 has seen a variety of conferences, events, and new books on the subject. A number of '68s can be identified in current and past research, which take a number of positions: on one end of the spectrum is Badiou, with his fidelity to the period as both the site of the event of May '68 and of his project of interrogating philosophy and

¹ Upon first mention, the dates of publication in both French and English translation will be given for all Badiou monographs. This is to aid in chronology, as there have sometimes been very large gaps between the two.

² Badiou is referring to historical sequences that have attempted to enact what he calls the 'communist hypothesis'. The first lasts from the French Revolution to the Paris Commune, so roughly 80 years.

politics, and their relations; on the other are Richard Vinen's (2018) recent monograph, and Richard Wolin's (2010) work on Maoism, France and '68, both of which view the era through liberal or conservative lenses. This spectrum is replicated in the stories of '68ers themselves: in a selective list of those faithful in varying ways to the period we could put Tariq Ali, Bernadette McAliskey, Kathleen Cleaver and Gerd-Rainer Horn; in a list of those not, Jack Straw, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, and André Glucksmann. Of course, to make such lists assumes a defined notion of what '68 was, and there is not one; figures from the left such as Régis Debray and more recently Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello (2005)³ have argued that capitalism found ways to incorporate the radical positions taken in May '68, as have liberal/soft leftists such as Anthony Barnett (2017) and Polly Toynbee (2016). The faithful '68ers named above would not suggest that, though they have differing views regarding the long-term effects of '68 and on what the political situation is now.

The revolutionary ferment that has coalesced around 1968 then and since in the popular imagination was multifaceted in its aims and appearance. It has become orthodoxy to refer to 1968 as 'the year of the students', thereby side-lining the revolutionary potential of the workers' struggle in France and Italy in particular. The 'red decade', as Badiou (2010: 1) refers to the period from 1966-1976, was not simply an outpouring of counter-cultural imagination from a predominantly middle-class student body, but a series of events and struggles across the world. It is certainly the case that the students provided the radical spark to ignite already existing tensions in the workplace in France and other European countries, but the privileging of their 1968 over that of others has been potentially a way to defang the revolutionary potential of that year and, certainly post-1989, to historicise it as simply another radical blip on the road to the triumph of capital over labour as seen in neoliberal late capitalism. Moreover, this approach is inextricably entwined with the subsequent history of the New Left, and the turns it took, to which we shall return.

³ For a perspicacious discussion of Debray's 1978 intervention from within the framework of Boltanski and Chiapello, see Le Goff (2014).

Versions of 1968 happened globally, and there is a complex of factors that went into the most well-known European manifestations. Furthermore, there has been an attempt in recent scholarship to see 1968 as a 'transnational' event and to place it within that scholarly paradigm. Timothy S. Brown (2012) sees this as stemming from a methodology which privileges 'the primacy of connectivity'. While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to critique the tenets of transnational approaches to political phenomena (and indeed cinema, as we shall see below), it is the case that we do not share these approaches. Primarily, this is because we see the historical 1968 as being a set of variant national events predicated upon a set of responses to particular, and discrete, formations of capitalism and, indeed, ideology. Transnational capitalism had not had been let loose upon the world in the way that it has now, and 1968 occurred at a time when state (and, indeed, international) checks and balances upon its freedom to insert itself into every walk of life were still in place. While it is axiomatic to state that these national events shared similarities, and indeed influenced each other, to suggest that the various radicals and revolutionaries were battling an enemy manifesting itself in a univocal manner best understood beyond the structure of the nation state, seems to us to be ahistorical. As Jeff Nuttall suggests, there was an 'international student revolt' (1970: 7) and all leftist revolutionary activity is internationalist, but that does not mean that specificities based upon national contexts should be ignored. Adrian Budd, in a sharp critique of the limits of transnational approaches that seek, in a Marxist fashion, to re-centre materialist approaches to the critique of capitalism, suggests that this approach is 'onesided and fails to capture the contradictory nature of the uneven development of the capitalist world system' (2007: 331). Budd's position seems doubly true for fifty years ago. Moreover, this is not an intellectual history of 1968, but an investigation of a set of theoretical approaches from one national context applied to a number of films made in another.

Despite recent compendia (see Klimke, Pekelder and Scharloth's 2011 volume) that seek to look at the period from within the 'transnational turn', there is still a First-world bias within scholarship, in particular memoirs, with less attention paid to events in what was then known as the Second World (more commonly, the Soviet bloc), and

indeed to those in the Third. To give one example of the latter, the only country where a government was toppled at the time was Pakistan, where following student and worker-led demonstrations and revolutionary struggle from November 1968 onwards, the military dictator Ayub Khan was forced to resign in March of the following year. Moreover, the only place where a collective form of democracy took over for a brief period was Czechoslovakia, part of the Second World. To a large extent this thesis will continue with this bias, being concerned as it is with British Cinema and French theory. That being said, neither the texts nor the theoretical model employed to look at theories of the subject in the context of British Cinema are products of closed, hermetic societies and, by definition, a variety of sites outside of Paris and London are of relevance: for example: China; Vietnam; Algeria, and the Soviet Union.

Is 1968 an event, then, or a period? Our intention is to situate it as both. There is the “long ‘68” favoured by Richard Vinen (2018), who sees it as a period encompassing the late sixties and early seventies; the situating of it by Gerd-Rainer Horn (2007) as the high point of a ‘long ‘60s’ lasting twenty years from 1956-76; Klimke and Scharloth (2008) have a similar frame to Horn, with an extra year added at the end; Kristin Ross’s (2002) work privileges the events in Paris but still situates them within the ‘68 years. Badiou’s sense of ‘68, to which this thesis is indebted, posits ‘68 as the principal revolutionary act of the Red Years of 1966-76. Our thinking on this matter has been guided by two factors: the desire to utilise applicable theories of the subject that allow for a confluence of Marxian and psychoanalytic approaches, and to situate them historically to the extent that is appropriate; the need to have a corpus of films that is temporally bound by the reality of what was being produced in Britain that attempted in some form or other to respond politically to the times.

With this in mind, this introduction will advance the following questions:

- Why use French theory to look at British Cinema?
- Why now?

These avenues of enquiry will not be given equal weighting here, for reasons that will become clear but that we will briefly allude to now. Answering the first is the principal

task of this section, and will be given due weight for that reason; this will include a discussion of British Cinema and politics in the 1960s, which films were chosen for analysis, and why. The second is referred to in the first chapter from the point of view of methodology, so we shall limit our comments here to some propositions regarding the current political situation. Following on from this, the chapters to come will be outlined for the reader in order to facilitate a clear orientation through this project. Finally in this introduction, there is a selective literature review of the golden age of psychoanalytic film theory, with particular reference to its origins in '68, and its attempt to be a militant complex of the theoretical currents coming from France at that time, in order to provide a bridge to both its demise and the theoretical model and methodology that this thesis employs.

Part i: British Cinema through the lens of French theory

A: Cinema and Politics

A superficial look at the films produced in Britain in and leading up to 1968 might well give the impression that it was the least radical of any of the major film-producing countries. Prior to this period, there had been the New Wave of 1958-1963, influenced both by Italian neo-realism and trends in the theatre. Most of the films were made by directors with theatre backgrounds and were often adaptations of novels and plays that already had a critical reputation. Many represented young working and lower middle-class people and their relationship to the new affluence of the Macmillan era.

As Sarah Street convincingly argues:

Although new themes were introduced to the cinema screens, they were presented in such a way as to reveal an intensely traditional and conservative bias. Many of the films concern the problems of young men who feel trapped by a provincial and class background, in search of an affluent lifestyle which will enable them to forget all about class barriers and mental obligations, move to London and become successful. But this scenario is shown to be fundamentally flawed (1997: 82).

This was a masculine cinema, with the exception of *A Taste of Honey* (Tony Richardson, 1961), one which presented rebellious young men fighting against the collective routines of working-class life, and moreover from within a worldview which

associated much of the trappings of the new consumerism with women. Men are shown trapped by marriage and relationships in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (Karel Reisz, 1960) and *A Kind of Loving* (John Schlesinger, 1962), having to lose the woman they love in order to gain wealth in Jack Clayton's *Room at the Top* (1959), and choosing family commitment over love and the glamour of London in *Billy Liar* (John Schlesinger, 1963). Two elements connect all these texts: the idea of a generation gap and the stultifying power of the British class system, and the ways in which the education system provided small avenues of opportunity for those who passed their 11+ exam and went to the grammar school, like Billy Fisher (Tom Courtenay) in *Billy Liar*, and none for those that did not, like Arthur Seaton (Albert Finney) in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*. There is no collective, radical answer to the problems of exploitation shown in these films; trade unionism is associated with the generation that fought in the Second World War, and as a bureaucratic part of the problem, which is to be expected in a world in which, as Chris Harman suggests, 'the Labour Party and trade union leaders shared the same ideological framework as the mainstream of the Tory party' (1998: 1), known as 'Butskellism'⁴. Furthermore, the majority of the directors were from middle-class public school backgrounds, so to a large extent we can argue that the films present a picture of working-class life made by those from outside it, and perhaps aimed at those outside it to a degree, as well.

It has become something of a cliché to make the point that British Cinema got on the train to London with Julie Christie at the end of *Billy Liar*, but it is roughly true. International investment following on from the successes of the New Wave, including in the USA, led to a number of transatlantic careers for actors and directors who had begun in the New Wave: Finney; Schlesinger; Christie. At the same time, the sub-genre of British Cinema known as the Swinging London film helped sell an image of London to the world. Such films generally presented a classless London, though not always without interrogating the veracity of that, as we will see in Chapter Two in our analysis of *Morgan: A Suitable Case for Treatment* (Karel Reisz, 1966; hereafter *Morgan*), the earliest of the films chosen for analysis. One of the tacit assumptions

⁴ The compound noun came from the Tory Chancellor of the Exchequer Rab Butler, and Hugh Gaitskell, the former Labour Chancellor and leader of the party from 1955-63.

that the Swinging London films tend to make, aided and abetted by the success of working-class pop stars and actors, is that the class movement of the sixties had produced a country where culturally there was not a need to represent the working class, particularly in its non-urban form. What instead such films as *The Knack...and How to Get It* (Richard Lester, 1965), *Georgy Girl* (Silvio Narizzano, 1966), *Smashing Time* (Desmond Davis, 1967) and later examples like *Joanna* (Michael Sarne, 1968) represent is the sexual revolution and the phenomenon of young people moving from small towns or the suburbs into the city. Even so, there is a tension in these films between the Swinging London discussed in the famous *Time* magazine article of April 1966 and a world more similar to that presented in New Wave films. As Robert Murphy suggests (1992: 143), this is particularly seen in *Georgy Girl*, the last Swinging London film to be made in black and white, which presents a world not much more glamorous than that which had been seen in the films set in the north from a few years earlier. In this way, therefore, some Swinging London films problematise the easy binary between the working-class north and classless London. On the other hand, films like *Blow-Up* (Michelangelo Antonioni, 1966) and *Alfie* (Lewis Gilbert, 1966) show the opportunities, sexual and creative, available to young working-class men in the metropolis, and some of the self-inflicted pitfalls.

Despite their representation of aspects of the sexual revolution, what Swinging London films do not do is necessarily prefigure the libertarian desires of 1968. There are no major characters who come from the student movement in these films, and politics is remarkably absent, unlike in French cinema of the time, where even in his films prior to his turn to an explicitly political cinema, Jean-Luc Godard was already starting to interrogate revolutionary struggles against imperialism and the Marxist politics of the day, in particular in *Le Petit Soldat* (1960), *Pierrot le fou* (1965) and *Masculin, féminin* (1966). To some degree the lack of representation of the student movement is because the student left, such as it was in the first half of the decade, was quite conservative in Britain. As Richard Vinen (2018: 201-5) describes, many students who would have considered themselves progressive or even radical were members of or supported the Labour Party up until the mid-sixties, with disenchantment only setting in after Harold Wilson's first election victory in 1964, and

more so after his second in 1966. Even later than that, the first-past-the-post system of British electoral politics meant that many people who were considerably to the left of Labour were still prepared to vote for it, as smaller parties had either lost influence, such as the Communist Party after its support for the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956, or, like the International Socialists, who became the Socialist Workers Party in 1977, did not stand in elections.

Furthermore, it is the case that the New Left in Britain espoused a different politics from either the Communist Party or, to some degree, the International Socialists. While there are different strands to the New Left, with some being more Marxist than others, it is the case that the journal associated with it, the *New Left Review*⁵, departed in various ways from orthodox Marxism, through its focus on the works of Antonio Gramsci, the Frankfurt School and, most importantly for our purposes, Louis Althusser, with contributions from all first appearing between 1965 and 1967. New Left politics, in various forms, are key to the events of 1968 and, indeed, of relevance to the evolution of approaches to Film Studies afterwards.

Following on from the Swinging London film, there is no identifiable style in British Cinema for the period in which the majority of our films were made. Robert Murphy, perhaps somewhat conservatively, subtitles the relevant section of his book on the decade 'The Sense of an Ending' (1992: 156); this makes sense when thinking of the national cinema overall from within the prism of an archetypal view of the 1960s, in particular prior to its demise and near-extinction in the 1970s, but less so when thinking of the films that were produced that made a radical intervention into the world of the feature film during this period, both politically and aesthetically. In order for films to form part of the corpus of this project, the following criteria had to be met:

- They had to have been produced in the period leading up to and including 1968.
- They had to be radical politically and/or aesthetically.

⁵ The journal was founded in 1960 by a merging of *The New Reasoner* and the *Universities and Left Review*. It was to a large extent kept going in the decade through the figure of Perry Anderson, who both edited and bankrolled it.

- They had to feature a collective or individual subject who represents some aspect of the long '68, and in doing so, could be interrogated from within the chosen theoretical model
- They had to be narrative feature films made for the cinema.

To elaborate, the first of these is of course hugely important for coherence. A longer view could have been taken based upon the political change of direction that occurred after 1973, and which is situated in the public memory with the advent of the Oil Crisis and the three-day week that followed it early in the following year. However, this would only have given us one film⁶ that would have met all the other criteria, Lindsey Anderson's *O Lucky Man!* (1973), his follow-up to *if...* (1968). We will return to that film and discuss that approach further in the conclusion. The second and third are predicated upon both fidelity to the era and the theoretical model employed. For this reason, Tony Richardson's *Charge of the Light Brigade* (1968), despite perhaps meeting the second criterion, was discounted, as it does not meet the third. While David Hemmings' cavalry officer is in some ways a rebel, there are many period films of that era that present the spectator with contemporary takes on historical events or characters from novels, and to include them all would have been unrealistic; moreover, such a broad view of the sixties would not have suited the theoretical model, and would not have encouraged depth of analysis. Furthermore, *The Committee* (Peter Sykes, 1968) was ruled out on the grounds of not meeting number three, as its politics are overly conservative and nihilistic, while *Wonderwall* (Joe Massot, 1968) was excluded on the grounds of not meeting the requirements of number two, as was *Joanna*. Criterion number three also tends to privilege films about young people, and for this reason aesthetically radical films such as *Accident* (Joseph Losey, 1967) and *Separation* (Jane Arden/Jack Bond, 1968) were ruled out. Films that were clearly made within the conventions of a specific genre, such as both of Michael Reeves' films of the era, *The Sorcerers* (1967) and *Witchfinder General* (1968) and

⁶ Other films viewed from a little later, with a longer view of '68 in mind, included Barney Platt-Mills' *Bronco Bullfrog* (1969) and *Private Road* (1971), *The Bed-Sitting Room* (Richard Lester, 1969), *Oh! What a Lovely War* (Richard Attenborough, 1969), *A Touch of Love* (Waris Hussein, 1969) and *Deep End* (Jerzy Skomilowski, 1970). They did not meet the other criteria.

Hammer productions such as *The Devil Rides Out* (Terence Fisher, 1968) also did not fit.

The thinking behind number four was two-fold: firstly, to think about films seen by a reasonable amount of people and in a particular exhibition context. In terms of numbers, this was due to a desire to think about the period as one in which radical ideas permeated the mainstream to a large degree, and affected a large number of people, as opposed to films that were seen by tiny groupuscules. This ruled out experimental cinema made for gallery spaces such as those produced by the London Filmmakers' Cooperative and long-lost features such as *Praise Marx and Pass the Ammunition* (Maurice Hatton, 1968), which is also not commercially available. Films made for television that may have met the criteria, such as *The Year of the Sex Olympics* (Michael Elliott, 1968) or Ken Loach's *The Big Flame* (1969), were ruled out on methodological grounds. Theoretical models used to look at television in terms of spectatorship have something in common with the one employed here, but they are not the same; while not a thesis about spectatorship per se, this was enough to rule out films made for television. Other films were ruled out simply because they did not fit tonally, or were considered to meet one or more of the criteria only slightly.

This left a corpus of five films that met all the criteria and which could be subjected to lengthy close analysis from within the theoretical model: *Morgan; Privilege* (Peter Watkins, 1967); *Herostratus* (Don Levy, 1967); *Performance* (Donald Cammell/Nicolas Roeg, 1970⁷) and *if.....* Let us move on now to considering why French theory was chosen to look at British Cinema of this period.

B: Lacan and Badiou: French theory for British films

It is our belief that the study of radical British Cinema requires a radical theoretical model, hence the choice of Jacques Lacan and Alain Badiou. The question of what can be learned through an analysis situated within theories of the subject has not been

⁷ The film was shot in 1968, though not released until 1970 in the US and 1971 in the UK, due to a variety of issues that Warner Bros had with it.

addressed within British Cinema studies. Existing work on this era has focussed on the establishment of a British Art Cinema or been broadly auteurist in scope (for example, Hedling, 1998 & 2001; Orr, 2010); or, films have been evaluated in terms of their relationship to the cinematic and critical traditions of British Cinema (see Hill, 1986; Higson, 1995; Rowe, 1999 and Aldgate and Richards, 1999), predominantly social realism⁸. This is not to say that none of that work cast a theoretically-informed eye upon the British Cinema of the 1960s. Hill, for one, provides the reader with a nuanced discussion of the cinema of the period that is fully informed by the debates taking place within film theory in the 1970s regarding narrative and realism. However, as will be clear by now, this project is neither an investigation of the parameters of realism, nor of auteurism.

Rather, we are seeking to use theories of the subject that are applicable to the chosen texts and the criteria used to choose them, so to that extent this is led by the films; therefore, the theory must be in intellectual concert with the period. Temporally, the sources used extend from around 1960 to the time of writing, though there are one or two earlier sections from Lacan utilised. With Lacan, this has required reconnecting him to 1968 and doing so has been one of the principal tasks throughout. The orthodox view has been that he had a critical or at best ambiguous relationship to the events of May 1968; for example, urging his followers who had become involved in Maoism to 'return to psychoanalysis' (Roudinesco, 2014: 39). However, his theory of the four discourses, which he developed in Seminar XVII in 1969, can be seen very much as a direct, radical response to May 1968. In it, he posits the fourth discourse, the analytic one, as truly subversive, as for him only psychoanalysis can destroy the tyranny of the master discourse (Roudinesco, 2014: 38). This seminar in particular suggests that it might be time to revisit the culture of the era through a Lacanian framework. Furthermore, as suggested, it will be argued that much of his project suits the cinema being analysed here. Badiou, on the other hand, is not only a '68er' but one who has remained faithful to what he considers its politics. Moreover, he sees

⁸ More recent scholarship such as Taylor (2006) has attempted to consider these films with a greater emphasis on textual difference, rather than similarity, in order to suggest that the British New Wave was more heterogeneous than previous scholarship contended.

working through the theory of the subject as a job predicted upon a 'regime of interpretation, marked by the names of Marx and Lenin, Freud and Lacan' (1988/2006: 1). Badiou, therefore, is the glue with which to bind psychoanalytic and Marxian theories of the subject.

However, it is the case that British Cinema was not imbued with the thought of either Badiou or Lacan in 1968. If any contemporary philosopher might be described as the philosopher of 1968, both in Britain and France, it would be Jean-Paul Sartre. He was read by the revolutionaries of the day, and indeed was a speaker in the occupied Sorbonne during the May events (Singer, 2013: 167). While Sartre is a trace in this project, and certainly an influence upon Badiou, particularly in the 1960s, we do not share his belief in the absolute freedom that the existential choice can give to the subject without the need for a causal factor from without. Therefore, our analysis follows Badiou in arguing for the primacy of the power of the 'pure Outside' (Badiou, 2006/2009b: 381), one of the names Badiou gives to the Event⁹ and which he argues Sartre's philosophy does not allow. The chosen model for this thesis therefore enables political readings of films which Sartre's thought would foreclose. To return to Badiou and Lacan, the discipline of Film Studies did not take the Lacanian turn until the mid-1970s. Badiou has not been much used in Film Studies – there is one dedicated volume at the time of writing (see Ling, 2010) and that is concerned with interrogating the relationship between cinema and philosophy, in order to answer the question: can cinema be thought? It is also concerned with the role of cinema in Badiou's philosophy and the relationship of truth to cinema. This thesis, while sharing an interest in the category of truth, does not investigate these matters. Instead, a variety of Badiouian concepts, primarily the Event, are utilised hermeneutically, in order to categorise and recalibrate theories of the subject in a specific set of films. Indeed, none of Badiou's essays on cinema, interesting though they are, have been utilised in this project.

⁹ This word will be capitalised when used to refer to Badiou's concept, in order to provide a differentiation from its numerous other uses throughout this thesis, other than when a source referring to it does not do so. Also, there are times when our use of the term may refer to Badiou's concept as well as to a more general understanding of what is being discussed, or to when it is contested; in these instances, it is not capitalised.

Therefore, there are two paths into thinking about why French theory is being brought to bear upon British films at a particular historical moment: one regarding historical efficacy; one, universalism, with the latter bleeding into the second of our principal questions: why now? These may sound contradictory, but they are not. We are proposing that the theories of the subject to be found in Lacan and Badiou have a specific resonance for the period in question and that, moreover, they have application for films made in the 'relatively tranquil' (Kundnani, 2018: 205) conditions of the Britain of 1968. We have already alluded to how conditions were different in Britain from France. The principal political event of the day and the one most remembered in the popular memory was Conservative Shadow Defence Secretary Enoch Powell's 'Rivers of Blood' speech on the 20th of April of that year, in which he argued against the proposed Race Relations Bill and for an end to immigration from Britain's former colonies. This led to his sacking from the shadow cabinet, and a media outcry. Significantly, however, Powell was supported by some of the industrial working class, most notably the London dockers, and there was no major counter to this from the Left, which showed itself as 'incapable of responding' (Harman, 1998: 142). The student left's biggest mobilisation of the year was the one against the Vietnam War in Trafalgar Square on March the 17th. Some 8000 participants marched to the US Embassy in Grosvenor Square, whereupon a riot ensued. Vinen uses these two events to make the case that there was 'a curious symbiosis between 68 and its enemies: both defined themselves in terms of what they opposed, or what opposed them, more than what they proposed' (2018: 3). This adds to the sense of a fluid, somewhat amorphous '68, without clear goals and without a clear programme for transforming society. However, this picture is not unique to Britain. In France, there were a wide range of forces with different goals, leading to a '68 that was overdetermined, in the Althusserian sense. To think about the situation in Britain a little more, and the extent to which we can argue for this historical efficacy for our approach, we must return to the New Left.

Stuart Hall has argued that despite the association of the New Left with 1968, that was actually 'a second, even perhaps third, mutation' (2010: 178), with the first New Left being born in the double crisis of the Soviet invasion of Hungary and the British and

French adventure in the Suez Canal in 1956. The name came from a current in France, so there was a gaze across the English Channel at its very foundation. As Richard Vinen (2018: 5) suggests, there was a global aspect to the phrase, with currents in the USA and Germany also adopting it. The principal document of the New Left at this time was its *May Day Manifesto*, initially released in May of 1967 and edited by Stuart Hall, E. P. Thompson and Raymond Williams, and republished with additions and under the sole editorship of Williams a year later. The extent to which this is a product of a revolutionary anti-capitalist politics is debatable, although it is a critique of the emerging managerialist mode of capitalism, from a humanist perspective. Its primary concern is to suggest a way forward for the reformist left in the wake of the disillusionment brought about by Harold Wilson's governments. It is principally a product of the first New Left, and is from a British empirical and sociological tradition, rather than a philosophical one.

However, after 1962 the *New Left Review* introduced European thinkers (Kenny, 1996: 141), leading to the first publication of the philosophers and theorists referred to earlier. The first contributions both by and concerning Lacan appeared in the autumn of 1968 in an edition also containing contributions from Lenin, Lunacharsky and Gramsci. What this tells us is that Marxian and psychoanalytic ideas were being read in concert in Britain at the time. The very next issue of the journal was its special on May '68 in France, predominantly consisting of pieces written in response to the events of that spring, but also including a 1908 article from Lenin about the student movement in Russia. Of particular interest for our purposes is the introduction by the editorial team which is absolutely a revolutionary response to May. Having stated that 'all the ideological theories and misleading models of attitude change developed by bourgeois society' (1968: 2) were useless in understanding what had led to this 'sudden shift of consciousness', it discusses the following: the Russian Revolution; the struggles in Cuba and Vietnam; Bolshevism; revolutionary strategy and tactics; the role of the revolutionary party; the failure of the French Communist Party (*Le Parti communiste français* - PCF) to support the events of May; lastly, the democracy of the soviet, followed by a conclusion concerning three lessons for Britain. Firstly, the article discusses the importance of Marxist theory and revolutionary culture, and describes

the version of that in France as 'the most advanced...in the world' (7). Secondly, it talks about the importance of a united revolutionary front and makes the point that 'the revolutionary Left in Britain has a chance of abbreviating the process' (7) which in France had seen the various revolutionary groups coalesce once the actual struggle began. Thirdly, the industrial working class is posited as the instrument of revolutionary activity, and the point is made that the combination of this with the intellectuals had made May possible. The secession of the British working class from its reformist orientation towards Labourism is highlighted positively, though the point is made that it has not 'gained any decisive new orientation' (7) and that revolutionary socialists will be the people to link the emerging student revolt and the working class. Of course, this did not happen to any large degree in the aftermath of this article, though it can be argued that Britain had its 1968 from 1972-1974 during the miners' strikes: the first of which had actually been in 1969; the last of which effectively toppled the Conservative government in 1974. We will return to that in the conclusion. What this brief discussion does give is a picture of a revolutionary politics existing in Britain that tends to be absent from some accounts of the period (for example, those of Vinen and Horn).

At the same time, anti-psychiatry was closely associated with the counter-culture and student movement in broad terms, primarily in Britain through the figures of David Cooper, who organised the Dialectics of Liberation Congress in London in 1967, and R. D Laing, though he did dissociate himself from the movement. There were differences between them, but they both saw perversions of the subject and psyche as being subject to incorrect diagnosis and treatment, with Cooper believing that illness was caused by the disparity between the identity given to us socially (a version of Lacan's Other, to a large degree) and our 'true selves'. Notwithstanding the idealism of the latter concept, Cooper is an interesting figure in the British firmament, not least because he was a revolutionary Marxist of a kind. Moreover, his emphasis upon seeing madness and other 'illnesses' as potentially liberating has something in common with the work of Michel Foucault, for whose 1967 English translation of *Madness and Civilization* he provided the introduction, and also prefigures the work of Deleuze and Guattari and the figure of the schizo. The following remarks from Cooper's

introduction to his edited compendium of the addresses at the Dialectics of Liberation Congress are instructive:

[A] cardinal failure of all past revolutions has been the dissociation of liberation on the mass social level, i.e. liberation of whole classes in economic and political terms, and liberation on the level of the individual and the concrete groups in which he is directly engaged. If we are to talk of revolution today our talk will be meaningless unless we effect some union between the macro-social and micro-social, and between 'inner reality' and 'outer reality' (2015: 9-10).

This gives a clear picture of a counter culture in London that was attempting to merge a traditionally Marxist view of revolution with a politics that recognised individual consciousness¹⁰ and attempted to conjoin them.

What we have been trying to do in this brief discussion is suggest why there might be a historical specificity to utilising Marxian and psychoanalytic theories of the subject to interrogate British cinema of this period. However, of perhaps greater importance is our belief, shared with Badiou, in the importance of universalism. He states that '[t]here is in fact a historical dimension of a truth, although the latter is in the final analysis universal' (2010: 174-5). All socialist politics should have this credo at their centre, which does not mean that the specific interests of particularly oppressed groups cannot be at the forefront of theory and practice at certain times and in discrete ways, but rather that underlying all this are two factors: the universal nature of capital's role in the exploitation of labour; the universal project of freeing humanity from that, via a 'concrete universality of truths' (Badiou, 2003: 7). For our purposes, then, 1968 has a historical dimension – it happened at a particular moment, and in a variety of historical sites – but its truth, via fidelity to the Event of 1968, in Badiouian terms, is universal.

¹⁰ Of course, Marx had talked about consciousness all along, most famously in *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1993) when he said that 'It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness'. However, it was perhaps the case that by 1967 a version of Marxism that had fallen under the spell of economism had become common among communist parties in Europe.

C: Why now?

Since the beginning of the research for this thesis in 2015, much has changed politically in the world. In the UK, there has been the election of Jeremy Corbyn as leader of the Labour Party, leading to a hugely increased membership and an upsurge of support for the party in the General election of 2017. This bucked the trend among social democratic parties in Europe, most of which are doing very badly, a process often referred to as ‘Pasokification’, after the Greek centre left party which saw its support fall to 5% in 2015, having won the election just six years earlier¹¹. Similarly, the Sanders project came very close to succeeding in the USA, before the Democrats balked at his radicalism and decided that Hillary Clinton would be a safer bet. Of course, she lost to Donald Trump, who has driven the country rightwards in a variety of ways. All across Europe the right and indeed far right are rising, though there are gains of varying size for the radical left, too: in France, Germany to a degree, and Turkey. The Syriza project has capitulated during the writing of this thesis. There are other examples and this is discussed further in the next chapter, also in the context of the rise within and without the academy of an interest in communism, both philosophically and practically. Since the crisis of 2008, there has been the beginning of a return to division rather than consensus; what Badiou has named ‘the mass sign of a reopening of History’ (2011/2012a: 42) that neoliberalism had thought closed. In this context, going back to 1968 gives us an opportunity to revisit a site of rupture, and in so doing, think about what lessons might be learnt for the present day; moreover, in the context of a discipline – Film Studies – which, we will argue, performed its own retreat from militancy sometime in the 1990s.

Already in this decade we have seen the Arab Spring of 2010, which certainly shared characteristics with ’68, not least in the role the students played in mobilising the working class, and in terms of the importance of the struggle against US hegemony. If Vietnam played the role of catalyst in much of ’68, so US-led western policy in the Middle East played a central and, indeed, more immediate role in the various uprisings

¹¹ For a thorough and easily digestible discussion of the phenomenon in the context of the rise of Corbyn’s Labour, see Kouvelakis (2018).

of that year. Moreover, the counter revolutions and restoration of power have been backed by the US, and to an extent, Russia. Badiou (2012a) and others have written about why the Arab Spring, named after its predecessor in Prague in '68, failed. Those debates are not our concern here, but it is worth mentioning that Badiou situates at least some of the failure of the Arab Spring in its lack of adherence to the Idea of communism. He writes in a number of places about the need for its rebirth, in order to advance humanity's escape from the period after the waning of the Red Years, which he designates an 'intervallic' one. He describes such periods thus:

the revolutionary idea of the preceding period, which naturally encountered formidable obstacles, relentless enemies without and a provisional inability to resolve important problems within, is dormant. It has not yet been taken up by a new sequence in its development (2012a: 39).

It is our contention that we are emerging from such a period, for better or worse, into a time of increasing antagonisms. What the next stage in the development of the Idea will be is not clear, but what is apparent to even the casual observer, is that the consensus of the current interval that began with the fall of the Berlin Wall, followed by the collapse of the Soviet Union, and which ushered in the neoliberal period in late capitalism, is, to steal a phrase from '68, reaching 'the beginning of the end' (Quattrocchi and Nairn, 1998). Revisiting 1968 in 2018 can only help in bringing that end a little nearer.

Part ii: The structure of the project

Following on from this introduction are four chapters, and a conclusion. Each chapter contains a brief introduction, in order better to orientate the reader and to provide continuity from the previous ones. Three of the chapters are filmic analyses; one, theory and methodology. The logic behind this follows from a desire to look at the films in tandem, other than in the final chapter, where *if...* will be considered in isolation. Each chapter concerning two films presents the spectator with forms of the individual subject that are congruent to greater and lesser degrees, can be analysed in pairs, and which are ripe for Lacanian interpretation, although Badiou is brought to bear on occasion. Chapter Four, on the other hand, concerns the collective subject of

1968 and is analysed via a Badiouian model, though one that involves his reading of Lacan; moreover, his indebtedness to him. The film presents a notably different subject from the other four, indeed from any other British film of the period, and requires a different approach – though one that is in concert with the Lacanian analyses in the previous chapters.

Chapter One sets up the theoretical models employed; at this stage, we will refer to that in the plural, but in the chapter, the extent to which there are one or many theories of the subject will be investigated. A variety of problems with psychoanalytic theory are considered, in the context of the move away from ‘Grand Theory’ that happens roughly around the same time that the neoliberal period commences. A counter argument is then proffered, in order to make a case for the importance of ideological analysis and the centrality of politics to theories of the subject. Following on from that is a necessary detour into Gilles Deleuze; necessary both because of his ubiquity in Film Studies in recent years and his and Lacan’s perceived relationship to 1968. The interest here is two-fold: to interrogate the different ways in which Lacan and Deleuze approach desire, and from that to think about, and problematise, a possible binary between psychoanalysis and philosophy. Next is a discussion of the subject of 1968, via both Lacan and Badiou. This entails an examination of truth, history and temporality. The section ends with a repositioning of Lacan in the Freudo-Marxist tradition via a discussion of structure and anti-capitalism. The principal sections on Badiou then follow, with consideration of the compossibility of Lacanian approaches, and what this reveals about the relationship between philosophy and psychoanalysis.

Badiou and the collective subject faithful to the revolutionary event are then explored, via a sustained engagement with his work on 1968. The differing subjects present in the film texts are interrogated, in order to clarify the methodology of the project. This includes a discussion of what happened in French thought during the period in question; specifically, how Marxism was effected by its meeting with structuralism, what this meant for individual and collective theories of the subject, and what contemporary work on the subject can bring to bear upon these debates. Our sense of

1968 is married both to Lacanian and Badiouian approaches here, and to the material sites of the subject in the chosen films. We then return to the question of whether there is one theory of the subject, or multiple, and come to a conclusion regarding this that is conceptually sound, but which takes into account the particularities of representation in the corpus of films, and why British Cinema requires this at this historical juncture.

Chapter Two is a sustained engagement with *Morgan* and *Privilege*. Of prime importance is the characters' – and by extension the subject's – relationship to the Lacanian Imaginary¹² and Symbolic, a discussion of which sets up the principal thrust of the chapter: the individual subject's relationship to class and power. Desire, the death drive¹³, *jouissance* and the symptom are considered, in order to think about the confluence of Marx and Lacan, and the political project of 1968. Identification is a major theme in this chapter, so for that reason Lacan's Mirror Stage is explored, in order to think about its efficacy for filmic analysis, and to suggest some problems with its usage in Film Studies regarding Lacan's concept of the gaze. Class, and class struggle, are interrogated throughout. The path taken to individualism by the subject is considered in the context of Morgan's (David Warner) turning away from the path of political struggle in favour of the classless dream of the 1960s. Following this, the role of ideology in the life of Steven Shorter (Paul Jones) in *Privilege* is explicated, in terms of his, and the diegetic population's imaginary relationship to their actual existence. An analysis of the dystopian state represented in the text and Steven's relationship to it is woven throughout. The Real's role in shattering the identifications thrust upon Steven is laid out for the reader, as is the fading of the subject and his symbolic death, a concept that is even more pertinent to Chapter Three, to which we will now turn.

Chapter Three brings together *Herostratus* and *Performance* and concerns the films closest to a notion of 1968 marked by the liberation of the individual, in sometimes

¹² We capitalise this and Lacan's other categories of the triad throughout; where this is not so, that is because the author being quoted does not capitalise it.

¹³ James Strachey, in the Pelican/Penguin Freud library, translates *der todestrieb* as the 'death instinct'. Throughout this thesis we will use the term the death drive; it is the more common expression and is the one attributed to Lacan by the majority of his various translators.

contradictory ways. This chapter contains our most extended discussion of the death drive, leading to a discussion of Lacan's work on the figure of Antigone, which is utilised further later in the chapter. Editing and its role in the destabilising of the spectator in temporal terms, and its ability to disrupt spectatorial pleasure is investigated. *Herostratus* concerns the figure of Max (Michael Gothard), whose desire is to kill himself and have it filmed by an advertising firm, and indeed both films are concerned with positing the death drive as alienation behind the Symbolic order. *Performance* plays upon mirroring and merging, and this is analysed via a further discussion of Lacan's Mirror Stage. Identifications and the swapping of subject positions is key here. Our discussion of the death drive facilitates here an analysis of the films' endings in tandem. Mediation and the ambiguity of the death of the subject are woven throughout the chapter in order to think about the ways in which both films subvert the utopian, liberatory subject of 1968.

Chapter Four considers *if...* via a predominantly Badiouian model. The film, which concerns a small group of public school boys whose rebellion culminates in a revolutionary attack upon the establishment of the school, is pregnant with the radical possibilities of the time, and for this reason, and in order to provide some context for the reader, there is an overview of the French left in the late 1960s, with particular emphasis given to Maoism and its relationship both to 1968 and to Badiou's thought. European Cinema relating to May '68 is briefly considered, in order to think about which of Badiou's '68s are represented, and why one version of the events may have become hegemonic. There is then a sustained engagement with the Althusserian concept of overdetermination from within our Badiouian prism, in order to think about contradictions, how they are present in the text, and the extent to which the Event of the end of the film is overdetermined. Textual hints at what is to come are proffered, which then take the reader into a discussion of who and what – the girl¹⁴ (Christine Noonan) – it is that most subjectifies the boys, and what is destabilised by this. Finally, the Event of the end of the film, which the chapter has been leading the reader to, is interrogated via a full complement of the Badiouian concepts that the

¹⁴ She is not named within the text. This is in keeping with her role as a force, rather than an actual individual with a story separate to her role as progenitor, as discussed in Chapter Four.

thesis has explicated for the reader, in order to provide a sustained and full textual analysis.

Part iii: The gilded youth and short middle-age of psychoanalytic theory

The origins of psychoanalytic film theory can be traced to the events of 1968 and the subsequent response to the perceived need both to establish a theory of spectatorship and a theory of the subject inflected by the critical thinking of the day. Specifically, Lacan's reworking of Freud, Althusserian Marxism, Saussure's work on the structure of language, and Barthes's in the field of semiotics were brought together to create an interpretive schema that was generated by a belief that a critique of dominant modes of production and representation was possible, and indeed necessary. This developed throughout the 1970s in broadly speaking two complementary strands, each with offshoots: psychoanalytic and semiotic. These strands informed the majority of subsequent forms of analytic discourse used in Film Studies, at least until the self-proclaimed break from 'Grand Theory' that takes place through the work of David Bordwell, Noel Carroll and others. As well as this rupture, Film Studies also saw the increased usage of Deleuzian approaches from the 1990s onwards and the designating of that and other continuations of theory under the umbrella of film-philosophy. For our purposes, the psychoanalytic approach taken in the 1970s, as much as it can be examined discretely, is the base upon which much of the conceptual framework of this thesis will turn and from which it will distinguish itself. There are roughly two phases. Apparatus theory, as the first of the post-1968 uses of psychoanalysis, was a logical extension of structuralist methods into film analysis that incorporated Althusser's analysis of the methods of interpellation present in the subject's ideological calling into the unseen structures of society. It was particularly useful for an analysis of identificatory structures present in the film viewing process. Lacan's Mirror Stage served as a metaphor for the spectator's relationship to the screen, with the darkened auditorium replicating the womb-like plenitude of the Imaginary, in which the Mirror Stage takes place, prior to the creation of the subject in language that signifies entry into the Symbolic Order. It is perhaps both tricky and methodologically risky to situate

this approach through the cherry-picking of individual theorists, but the work of Jean-Louis Baudry, Christian Metz and Laura Mulvey requires explanation, as it both provided the base for the psychoanalytic approach for the next two decades or so, and the ground for the turn away from psychoanalysis referred to above, due to, amongst other things, their rather selective and reductive reading of Lacan.

Baudry, with his 1970¹⁵ paper 'Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus', pursues the implications of perspective and ideological positioning for the cinema. The cinema, through its editing and camera movement, reproduces Renaissance perspective for the spectator, with its attendant illusions of power. An illusion is created that the spectator is the producer of meaning, rather than an unwilling recipient of a subject position created by the technical apparatus of the film and its screening. Baudry takes Lacan's tropes of immobility and specular immaturity to show how the conditions of screening are 'filling the gap, the split, of the subject on the order of the signifier' (Baudry, 1999: 353). According to Baudry, that first misrecognition of the specular image in the Lacanian mirror that constitutes this gap is reproduced via the specific apparatus of the invisible construction of the filmic text and its representation in a space of Imaginary plenitude.

The work of Metz introduces a greater concern with Lacan's Symbolic, due to his insistence on film as a language. In fact, Metz can be considered key to both psychoanalytic and semiotic approaches, and in many ways he achieves an intertwining of the two. Ferdinand de Saussure's work on semiotics, specifically his belief that language could be understood as a set of rules and structures, is central to both structuralist approaches in general, and Lacan's work up until the late 1950s. Metz's first two books, *Language and Cinema* (1974/1990) and *Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (1975/1984) both deploy Saussurean tropes, though not uncritically, to look at both convergences and divergences between 'natural', spoken language and the specificities of the language of film. As Lapsley and Westlake (1988: 38) suggest, Metz

¹⁵ The paper was first published in English in 1974/5. This period marked the publication of key papers by Metz and Mulvey as well and can therefore be argued to mark the beginning of Lacan's use in Anglo-American Film Studies.

was attempting to discover whether or not film was a form of writing, and therefore unproblematically subject to the theories of language common to semiotics and literary theory, or was an extension of reality, as earlier theorists such as André Bazin had posited. Metz equivocated: he thought that it was a language, but one with no *langue*. In particular, this was because Metz believed cinema to be unidimensional; not a form of intercommunication, nor dialogic, in the Bakhtinian sense. This one-way form of communication is key to many of the psychoanalytic approaches that came in the wake of Metz and was fertile ground for a Lacano-Althusserian model, due to its utility for theories of spectatorship that denied the agency of the spectator in the process of the making of meaning and assumed that popular film was complicit in the production of capitalist ideology *tout court*, with no attendant ability for the spectator to read against this. This very denial, of course, was key to the rejection of these approaches in the 1990s. We will return to this in the next chapter.

Laura Mulvey's 1975 paper 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' might well be the most anthologised essay within the discipline of Film Studies, due to its central role in both psychoanalytic and feminist discourse. Via a conceptual framework based on Freud's positions on scopophilia and voyeurism, she indulges, *inter alia*, in a virtuoso reading of *Rear Window* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1954, US) as a metaphor for spectatorship. L.B Jeffries' (James Stewart) position of immobility in his wheelchair mirrors the similarly inert spectator and his gaze upon the 'screens' outside his window positions the spectator accordingly: masculine; controlling; desiring; investigative. Mulvey takes this spectatorial position to be paradigmatic of all Classical Hollywood cinema and its creation of the gaze through the three looks: 'the camera as it records the pro-filmic event, that of the audience as it watches the final product, and that of the characters at each other within the screen illusion' (1999: 843). Of course, as she suggests, narrative cinema subordinates the first two to the third in order to 'prevent a distancing awareness in the audience' (843). Her entirely necessary polemic calls for the destruction of masculine pleasure via a new form of cinema. She posits a cinema with no active position for the female spectator: as classical narratives are part of a discourse of masculinisation (the male hero strives, battles other men upon his

Oedipal journey¹⁶, and in so doing, 'gets the girl'), female spectators are forced to identify against their own interests either via identification with the passive, secondary female character, or through a cross-gender identification with the male position, paralleling, of course, the real struggles of women within patriarchy. Of course, due to the subordination of looks, all spectators are suspended in a fantasy world, blind to the workings of the apparatus and the ideological positions it creates.

By the 1980s, a second phase had begun, which attempted to utilise the important groundwork laid by the approaches discussed above and to align it with an interest in the spectator's role in the production of meaning. In some ways, it could be argued that Film Studies was somewhat late to the party, as Roland Barthes' late 1960s work in literary theory, specifically, 'The Death of the Author' and 'From Work to Text', had posited the reader as the site and producer of meaning, as opposed to the unknowing recipient of ideological messages via an authorial voice or an intricate system of linguistic codes¹⁷. From the point of view of such approaches, a number of problems can be identified with the work of Baudry, Metz and Mulvey. The principal one, of course, is the denial of the agency of the spectator that can be seen in apparatus theory.

Again, while it may be unwise to cherry-pick a theorist or two, in a brief survey such as this, it will suffice. Stephen Heath, in his 1981 work, *Questions of Cinema* and others, introduced a concern with how the spectator is sutured into the text, and in doing so posited a form of identification concerned with interaction as a two-way process. In terms of suture, as formulated by Jean-Pierre Oudart (1966) and Daniel Dayan (1974), the concern is solely with the operations of shot/reverse shot. They take as their model Jacques Alain Miller's seminal 1966 paper, 'Suture (elements of the logic of the

¹⁶ For a full discussion of Oedipal narratives, see Bellour (2001)

¹⁷ It is not a surprise that Film Studies found itself in this position. The importance of providing a theory of authorship for film, as seen in the work of François Truffaut, Andrew Sarris and, to an extent, Peter Wollen, amongst others, had created this situation. Briefly, as film is a popular and mass-produced art, discussing how authorial imprints could be read in the films of a given director was hugely important in allowing Film Studies to develop as a discipline, due to its role in creating some sort of equity with literature and Fine Art. In this context, it is not surprising that the next move for Film Studies (when it made *its* move 'From Work to Text') was to a paradigm that saw mass-produced texts as purveyors of ideology. Such positions also had their antecedents: specifically, in the work of the Frankfurt School on popular forms of entertainment.

signifier)', in which he discusses the suturing of the subject in the Symbolic Order through the prism of Lacan's discussion of the 'Fort/da' game and the child's entry into language. On the other hand, Heath's conception is more broad-ranging, allowing as it does for suturing to occur via other aspects of the cinematic (specifically, editing) process. He also problematised the tendency of structuralist approaches to use a stand-in bourgeois spectator as representative of 'all' subjects through a simple proposition: 'the subject is not equivalent to the individual'¹⁸ (1979: 26). With this move, he makes a break with the Althusserian model, where this equivalence is made for the purposes of an explication of ideological positioning via interpellation, specifically Althusser's famous assertion that '*ideology has the function (which defines it) of "constituting" concrete individuals as subjects*' (1998: 299, his emphasis). In Heath's model, the two-way process allows for a subject both constituted by the cinematic process and as active part of its constitution. He states that 'meaning is not just constructed 'in' the particular film, meanings circulate between social formation, spectator and film; a film is a series of acts of meaning, the spectator is there in a multiplicity of times' (Heath, 1981: 107). With this, he comes closer to a truly Lacanian notion of the gaze, as we will see in the next chapter.

The principal arena in which later approaches affected a marriage with psychoanalytic approaches was in feminism. After Mulvey's intervention, feminist theory responded with a variety of attempts to discuss the specificities of the spectator's position when the spectator in question was not a (white, middle-class) heterosexual man. Some disagreed only with Mulvey's emphasis on the active/passive binary and called for the psychoanalytic framework to be retained (for example, E. Ann Kaplan's 1983 article 'Is the Gaze Male?', which puts forward an exploration of motherhood as a response to the structure of Mulvey's conception of the gaze). In contrast, though still retaining the psychoanalytic framework, Gaylyn Studlar (1984) used Deleuze to posit a passive, masochistic, pre-Oedipal desiring subject, in contrast with the post-Oedipal, sadistic desiring subject of Laura Mulvey. In general, post-structuralism's insistence on reading 'against the text' aligned nicely with a desire to interrogate the imagined, gendered

¹⁸ This statement also chimes with Jodi Dean's (2016) recent work, which will be utilised in this thesis, particularly in Chapter Two.

spectator of apparatus theory, though this spectator (as still fundamentally a position affected by a confluence between the viewer and text) is different from the 'real' spectator of reception-based approaches that came into fashion with the turn against 'Grand Theory' and which will be discussed below. Having said this, feminist approaches saw the commencement of discussions of a historical spectator as part of feminism's larger project of the reframing of history in order to reposition excluded voices¹⁹. We will return to these approaches in the next chapter in order to problematise this version of psychoanalytic theory's analysis of the subject and identification via a consideration of more recent work and a differing use of different Lacan.

¹⁹ The use of psychoanalysis in a post-structuralist fashion to bring to the fore those excluded by an androcentric discourse was not limited to feminism. Similar attempts were made regarding the post-colonial subject, and later, the queer one.

Chapter One: Theories, Subjects, Method

Introduction: A radical Lacan for a radical era?

Whilst Lacan's theoretical project was clearly central to the intellectual life of France in 1968 (see Turkle [1992²⁰] and Roudinesco [2014] for accounts from different eras) if not to the events of May, there is no doubt that he has taken on a secondary role in the narrative of post-1968 critical theory and philosophy since the 1990s. The thought of Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, Jacques Derrida and Jean Baudrillard has at various times come to the forefront of the study of culture and society in the intervening years. In fact, Teresa Brennan (1993), Joan Copjec (1995) and Todd McGowan (2007) all in differing ways make persuasive arguments that Lacan suffered a process of 'Foucauldinisation' during the 1970s through the notion of a panoptic, controlling, Foucauldian gaze being used in conjunction with a restrictive reading of 'Mirror Stage'-era Lacan in the analysis of spectatorship.

In terms of European philosophy we have two major figures who each continue to interrogate and make use of Lacan in contemporary thought: Badiou and Slavoj Žižek. Indeed, Badiou refers to Lacan as 'the greatest of our dead' (1989/1992: 28) and clearly sees working through Lacanian psychoanalysis as the task for the contemporary philosopher. We will return to Badiou later in this chapter, as his project is key to the theoretical framework being set up. Žižek, of course, has done more than any other contemporary figure to propagate Lacanian thought, and its continued use in Film Studies, via a number of methods; for our purposes, his interest in how textuality can be best understood through this prism is most prescient. Furthermore, there are numerous scholars working in philosophical terms with Lacan in the 21st century, and these inform what is to come as well.

This chapter has a number of aims. The reasons for the demise of psychoanalytic theory will be considered, as will some of the approaches that attempted to supplant it (and, we will argue, theory in general). Whilst the full complement of reasons for this

²⁰ Originally published in 1978. Turkle's is the first English language account of Lacan's influence on French cultural and political life.

intellectual turn are beyond the scope of this thesis, a number of ways to counteract it will be elucidated. Following on from that, an examination of Deleuze will be undertaken in order to explicate further for the reader why Lacan and not Deleuze is the principal figure in the framework of this thesis, particularly given the latter's ubiquity in how critical theory has tended to approach 1968 since the 1990s. This will be done via a consideration of desire; specifically, the desiring subject. The (assumed) oppositional positions on it taken by psychoanalysis and Deleuzians are the main theoretical impasse that tends to remain uncrossed. The next section will then illuminate which Lacan is being considered, and why, in order to navigate the reader through relevant contemporary scholarship on Lacan. This will aid in setting up our framework. This will lead to a discussion of the subject and truth in Lacan and Badiou. Following that, an analysis of the conjunction between the Badiouian Event and the Lacanian Real for the analysis of filmic texts of the era in question will be undertaken. Both thinkers' positions regarding 1968 will be interrogated, in order to tease out the variant forms of the subject relevant to the period and the films, and how best to address them. As discussed in the introduction, this project, while clearly very heavily indebted to theory in and of itself, is led by the films and the typologies of the subject contained therein.

Part i: The untimely near-death of (psychoanalytic) theory, and why it needs revivifying

Let us turn to the rupture in theory referred to in the Introduction. There are a number of concurrent strands to this, but they coalesce in David Bordwell and Noel Carroll's 1996 edited compendium, *Post-Theory*. For the purposes of this thesis, the key intervention is Stephen Prince's 'Psychoanalytic Theory and the Problem of the Missing Spectator', as it summarises the main arguments against what many saw as the totalising project of (Lacanian) film theory, while not, unlike Bordwell, for example, dismissing psychoanalysis out of hand. Much of Prince's argument is persuasive, particularly in terms of his assertion that Film Studies at that point had dismissed an entire tradition of empirical methods due to its interrogation of the subject and not

the 'real viewer' (1996: 72). He discusses psychoanalysis's problem with reliable data²¹ and makes the now well-known point that 'film theorists ... have constructed spectators who exist in theory; they have taken almost no look at real viewers. We are now in the unenviable position of having constructed theories of spectatorship from which spectators are missing' (83). This oversight, if that is what it was, has, of course, been amply addressed in the last twenty years. Approaches reinserting the historical and contemporary viewer or audience have become the norm within the discipline, from Jackie Stacey's *Stargazing* (1993) to Janet Will Brooker and Deborah Jermyn's *The Audience Studies Reader* (2002). Indeed, *Participations* (2003 -) is an entire journal dedicated to this field. Furthermore, it is rare to see the use of the designation 'spectator' in the majority of Film Studies these days; instead, 'reception' and 'audience' are more common. Similarly, Martin Barker (2000) has likened psychoanalytic approaches to 'effects theory', in the context of the latter approach's positing of an audience vulnerable to 'negative' identification. Allied to this, we have the rise of cognitive approaches, alluded to in Prince's essay and amply illustrated by the work of Warren Buckland (2008) and historical poetics, exemplified by David Bordwell's work of the last twenty years. As McGowan and Kunkle (2004: xix-xx) have pointed out, the study of the conditions of reception has become ubiquitous in such work since the 1990s, at the expense of the textual, interpretive model that this thesis will employ.

There are a number of useful ways of combatting these positions: firstly, via a discussion of the importance and efficacy of ideology; secondly, and in a related manner, situating such approaches within the debates around 'the end of history' and the concurrent domination of neoliberal ideas that began in the 1990s, which we have suggested are under threat; thirdly, through the return to Lacan taken by Todd McGowan, Slavoj Žižek, Sheila Kunkle and others in recent years. Let us look at the first three of these now.

²¹ A version of this argument had been levelled at psychoanalysis long before its use in the analysis of film. Essentially, it goes like this: Freud's case studies are based upon a small sample of people from a specific social background at a particular moment in history in a small selection of places and therefore cannot be used as the basis for a theory of human behaviour.

While the desire to re-energise the spectator via a move away from the passive spectator of 1970s theory can only be commended, it is difficult to see how empirical studies of audience behaviour, for example, account for the role of ideology. In short, why should the reader believe an 'individual' (I put the term in parenthesis to draw attention to its assumed agency) free to make the choices that empirical studies observe? What of the structuring function of ideology? To give an example, Stacey's (1993: 191-92) discussion of a female spectator's identification with Lauren Bacall, while rightly describing this as a form of self-commodification, does not take us very far if our interest is in ascertaining what forces (both extra-textual and textual) were at play in this individual's decision-making process. In short, Stacey discusses how the empirical spectator recognises herself in Bacall; a psychoanalytic approach would be much more interested in detailing how the subject misrecognises herself in such forms of identification (what Metz [1984] would describe as secondary identification, primary being with the look of the camera), or how such formulations may be a form of false consciousness, in the Marxian sense. Mary Ann Doane (1980: 16), in discussing identification with the star, asserts that '[t]he presence of the star insures that I do not identify with the character as "real person" but as superperson, as "bigger than life", as part of a spectacle performed for me'. Doane's comment both details the hierarchies of power at work in the process and how spectacle and by extension narrative are complicit in the creation of the feelings of agency felt by Stacey's audience member from the 1940s. However, the approach of this thesis is not predicated upon false consciousness, or any other approach which denies *collective* agency. Where there is agreement with such a conceptual base is when a text presents a subject for identification who is herself blind to the workings of ideology within the story world of the film.

The turn to empirical methods can be situated within the advent of postmodernism, particularly in terms of Jean-François Lyotard's postulate that the era expressed an 'incredulity toward metanarratives' (1984: xxiv). The metanarratives of the Enlightenment and Modern periods that had aimed at revolutionising social relations were seen as irrelevant to an increasingly saturated, open and neoliberal world. The

exclusion of psychoanalysis has been understood by Benjamin Noys (2007: ii) as an example of a ‘threat of a ‘totalising’ explanation that threatens the ‘openness’ of the open society²²’. This then became popularised, or diluted, within more mainstream discourse through Francis Fukuyama’s (1992) notion of ‘the end of history’. Subverting the Marxian *telos* that posited socialism as the last form of government, Fukuyama suggested that, in the wake of the fall of the Berlin wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union, liberal capitalism had positioned itself as the only form of government. A discussion of the overall effect of such an ideological position (masked as non-ideological) upon the political and social landscape is not our concern here; for our purposes, it is of use to examine what this meant to the debates with which we are concerned and why now may be a time to return to a concrete analysis centred upon a clear division between neoliberal capitalism and a radical left politics founded upon Marxism and, indeed, communism.

With this in mind, it is our view that there is a need to return to ideology and the subject in this thesis for two principal reasons: firstly, and axiomatically, because the time of the films in question and the modes of address in which they indulge, are from the period which marked the beginning of the Red Years and which was the last key radical event in what Badiou terms ‘the short century’ (2007: 31) that begins with the Russian Revolution in the middle of World War I and ends with the termination of the Cold War. This century is in opposition to the one in which neoliberalism has risen. He describes that century thus: one which “calls for renunciation, resignation, the lesser evil, together with moderation, the end of humanity as a spiritual force, and the critique of ‘grand narratives’” (31). Secondly, because this world, which has held sway since the 1980s in Europe, appears to be drawing to an end, as suggested in the introduction to this thesis. Since the financial crisis of 2008 and the seismic shocks it set in train, there has been, to varying degrees, a return to oppositional politics and a

²² We should point out here that the opposite argument has also been made, namely that psychoanalysis led to neoliberalism. This is an argument made by Adam Curtis in various films and has antecedents in Foucault, who talks about its ‘normalizing functions’ (1998: 5), and in Deleuze and Guattari’s belief that the Oedipal triangle imprisons desire. These positions suggest that psychoanalysis leads to a normative and acquiescent subject. We shall return to this at various points in order to counter it. Moreover, Badiou discusses May ‘68’s relationship to neoliberalism – see Chapter Four.

subsequent rise of the left, and the right. With the exception of Emmanuel Macron's in France and to a degree Angela Merkel's in Germany, governments of the centre which propose a third-way, non-ideological politics of managerialism are thin on the ground. Instead, we have seen the rise and failure in Greece of Syriza's challenge to the European Union and austerity, the election of Trump, the rise of Corbyn in the UK, the contested space that is Brexit, the rise of Sanders in the US, the election to parliament of fascists in Germany for the first time since World War II, an alliance between populists and the far right in Italy, the continuing drive rightwards of some of the countries on the eastern periphery of the European Union and an independence insurgency in Catalonia, of varying political colours. In terms of the rise of the left specifically, there has been a notable uptake in political engagement in a variety of Marxist and non-Marxist movements since the protests in Seattle at the World Trade Organisation summit in 1999, taking in Occupy, Stop the War, and Black Lives Matter along the way. This phenomenon is beginning to be analysed in a variety of ways in recent publications by, among others, Jodi Dean (2016), Chris Nineham (2017), Liz Fekete (2018) and Žižek (2018). We are returning to a world of division, one in which the grand narratives of yesteryear are proving themselves alive and well. We will return to this throughout when considering the extent to which, philosophically and politically, 'the long night of the left is drawing to a close' (Douzinas and Žižek, 2010: vii).

Alongside this revivification of Marxist approaches to political theory and the political landscape, there has been a renewed interest in communism as an idea; indeed, as the 'pure Idea of equality' (Badiou, 2009a: 81). This debate has taken place in a variety of fora, but has principally coalesced in three large international conferences under the banner 'the Idea of Communism', which took place in London, New York and Seoul every two years from 2009 – 2013. The papers from all three have been collated in three compendia. Both Badiou and Žižek have been central to this, but it is the former who has the greater role as the intellectual origin of much of this, and whose maxim 'from Plato onwards, Communism is the only political Idea worth of a philosopher' (cited in Douzinas and Žižek, 2010: x), has been central. Much of the thought collected within these volumes is voluntarist in nature, often anti-party, and owes something to

the Maoism that ran through much of the French left in the late 1960s and 1970s. What it has in common is a rejection of the politics of compromise so key to the neoliberal project and a desire to re-centre communism in any debate upon radical democracy.

Part ii: Why not Deleuze? Desire and its vicissitudes

As stated in the introduction to this chapter, the different ways in which psychoanalysis and Deleuzian philosophy and schizoanalysis perceive the role of desire is key to an understanding of why this thesis rejects the latter and privileges the former. How both thinkers approach desire must therefore be framed within a potential disjuncture, though one that our combining of Lacan and Badiou will address: that between philosophy and psychoanalysis, with the latter's status as curative praxis positioning desire as foundational. Philosophy, on the other hand, for Lacan, 'remains absolutely inadequate to the true nature of desire' (Clemens, 2013: 54). It is of note that Deleuze devotes very little time to it²³, prior to the co-authored works with Guattari, which suggests that it enters his methodology via the process of his being 'guattarized'²⁴ (Žižek, 2004: 20) in the anti-Oedipal, anti-psychoanalytic texts. Some commentators do not refer to this conceptual leap and its anomalous nature (see Hallward, De Bolle and Friedman [all 2010], for example), whilst more critical voices, such as Badiou (1997/1999) and Žižek, take as their target Deleuzians who base their view of him upon the co-authored works²⁵. We will firstly discuss desire in

²³ There are nine references to desire in the main body of *Difference and Repetition* and three in *The Logic of Sense*. Moreover, philosophical works on Lacan and Deleuze without Guattari do not particularly engage with desire: Bartlett, Clemens and Roffe (2014) mention it only a handful of times. On the other hand, works on the co-authored texts (either openly or via the unacknowledged leap referred to below) are either dedicated to it (Goodchild, 1996) or contain large sections on the subject (Adkins, 2007; Abou-Rihan, 2008). Massumi (1992) is an exception, perhaps due to his providing of a creative commentary on Deleuze and Guattari, as opposed to an exegetic text.

²⁴ A discussion of why Deleuze's position towards psychoanalysis changes is too long to get into here. It is clear that the works with Guattari are considerably more antagonistic and it may well be that the position taken by many Deleuzians of conflating the solo works and the co-authored ones has not just been unhelpful, but has actually created a Deleuze that he himself would not recognise. Both Badiou and Žižek concentrate on the early Deleuze, with the latter going so far as to suggest in his introduction that 'there is another Deleuze, much closer to psychoanalysis and Hegel (2004: xi), though we should also allow that Žižek's book is as much about the author's usual interpretative schema as it is about Deleuze, who hardly appears in the second half.

²⁵ See Kaufman (2004) for a full discussion of Badiou's and Žižek's positions.

Deleuze (and Guattari), prior to rising to a plateau via a discussion of Oedipus. After that, there will be a brief descent into the polyvalent meaning of desire in Lacan. The Deleuzian notion of desire is affirmative, does not require an object and is not founded on lack. This originates with Spinoza, for whom 'desire lacks nothing because it is not defined by the tendency towards an object' (De Bolle, 2010: 14). This also suggests a fundamentally, anti-Hegelian, anti-dialectical slant to Deleuze's project: a rejection of all 'recourse to mediations' (Badiou, 1999: 31), which is at odds with the psychoanalytic method. Žižek (2004: 34) takes this rejection of mediation further and points out that it is 'the same as the lack of subjectivity, because subject *is* such a mediation'. For psychoanalysis, of course, desire is key to the subject/subjectivisation; lack is foundational; all is mediated. In turn, desire is of course central to psychoanalytic film theory, both in terms of the spectator and the ways in which the characters' desires drive narrative. Deleuze's anti-dialectical approach can be traced to his Spinozan vitalism and his belief in univocal, neutral Being as the only ontology (Deleuze, 1994: 35; 1990: 180). Badiou sees this as key, hence his choosing to name his monograph 'the clamor of being' (1999: 35) from this same section on ontology. For Lacan, on the other hand, the function of the lack in desire is ontological (1998: 29), as much as he allows the latter term to enter his discourse. Again, we can understand this with recourse to the disjunctive relationship between philosophy and psychoanalysis: if the fundamental question of the former is, 'why is there something, and not nothing?', then the latter does not provide an answer, preferring to remain 'indifferent or suspicious' (Clemens, 2013: 45) to it. Also, the psychoanalytic subject is one of multivocal mediation, created as it is on the metonymic chain of signifiers via the gap between the Symbolic and the Real. This subject, for the anti-Cartesian Deleuze, is only 'a certain type of simulacrum' (Badiou, 1999: 80).

For Deleuze and Guattari, desire is a productive force and needs no recourse to the negative. It finds itself in the figure of the schizo, 'this explosion of the unified subject in the impersonal multitude of desiring intensities' (Žižek, 2004: 30), which frees the subject from the prison of the Oedipal triangle. S/he inhabits 'the universe of reproductive and productive desiring machines' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1984: 5). Further on, they state:

It is, rather, the subject that is missing in desire, or desire that lacks a fixed subject; there is no fixed subject unless there is repression. Desire and its object are one and the same thing: the machine, as a machine of a machine. Desire is a machine, and the object of desire is another machine connected to it (1984: 26).

The desiring-machine and its object(s) constitutes an attempt here to refute the psychoanalytic notion of partial objects that represent whole figures, in particular familial ones, which are foundational in Freud and, to some extent, Lacan. Of course, both Deleuze and Lacan paradigmatically decentre the subject: the former via the schizo and the Body without Organs, which is desire, non-desire and the ability to desire (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988: 149), the subject as ‘a residuum of the interaction between desire and the body without organs’ (Adkins, 2007: 131); the latter via misrecognition in the subject conceived ‘as split from its desire’ (Copjec, 1995: 25) (in the early Lacan) and its formation in the unbridgeable gap between the Symbolic and the Real where the *objet a* is located (the later Lacan). We come here to another fundamental chasm: that between Deleuze’s disavowal of representation and its absolute centrality to Lacan, psychoanalysis in general, and the study of film *tout court*. De Bolle (2010: 16) uses the metaphor of the factory (of production) to describe the Deleuzian unconscious, as opposed to the theatre of psychoanalysis, with all the attendant notions of representation that the latter metaphor engenders. Of course, for Deleuzians, the particular, ill-conceived play that is performed on the psychoanalytic stage stars the structuring figure of Oedipus and is to him that we will now turn.

For Deleuzians, the unconscious cannot be constrained within the Oedipal structure of family relations. For example, Adkins postulates that ‘Oedipus facilitates...social production by producing subjects amenable to...repression’ (2007: 140), while Hallward (2010: 44) discusses the crucial role that Oedipus plays in the filtering of desire through representation. However, Flieger²⁶ points to Deleuze and Guattari’s

²⁶ Flieger also goes so far as to suggest that Deleuze and Guattari are ‘neither anti-Freudian, nor even “anti-Oedipal”’, but ‘caricatural’ (599). She then suggests that we have a classic case of *Verneinung*, or Freudian denial. There is not the space here to explore fully the ramifications of this point, which Flieger leaves hanging, but it is worth noting that we might read the ‘guattarized’ Deleuze as performing an Oedipal attack upon the Symbolic Father of the early Lacan (in *Anti-Oedipus*, in particular), whilst

‘nearly obsessive underreading of Oedipus, patently narrow and ungenerous’ (1997: 600), while Deleuze and Guattari themselves praise Lacan for showing that ‘Oedipus is imaginary, nothing but an image, a myth’ (1984: 310). It is this imaginary position of Oedipus that provided such fertile ground for the analysis of narrative in psychoanalytic film theory in the 1970s and 1980s; so much classical and, indeed, post-classical cinema presents Oedipal narratives for the spectator’s identification. Much of the pleasure (of classical Hollywood cinema in particular) for the (male) spectator lies in taking up the position of the Oedipal hero. It is precisely this form of identification that makes clear the importance of exegeses of cinema’s role in the reproduction and maintenance of ideology that post-theory disavows.

It is also of note that many Deleuzians, in their discussion of the nomadic subject, do not consider situating Oedipus in a position outside the family and the law, despite his nomadic status being self-imposed in *Oedipus at Colonus*. As Dolar (2016: 64) argues, ‘Oedipus is not a reduction to the family, but rather the inner disruption of the family’. In Deleuzian terms, he is a deterritorialised figure of the outside, of the desert. Furthermore, Zupančič (2003: 176), situates the Lacanian Oedipus as ‘a desire to know, beyond the limit’, positing an Oedipus that is close to a Deleuzian notion of desire in the Body without Organs. Moreover, Lacan moves further away from Oedipus as structural ontic of desire in the later seminars, a move noted by Bartlett, Clemens and Roffe (2014: 66-70), in the context of a discussion of the lack of attention given to points of interaction by both Lacanians and Deleuzians. Flieger, in being an exception to this, explicitly uses Deleuzian language in her discussion of an Oedipus for the ‘New Age’ (1997: 601) and, in doing so, accuses Deleuze and Guattari of conflating ‘the symptom with its cause’ (602). This point is vital in arguing against those, such as Adkins, who would see Oedipus as the cause of repression in late capitalism; instead, she posits Oedipus as a symptom or enactor. This allows us to problematise the

potentially continuing to venerate, possibly via a process of disavowal and ignoring of the Real (in *A Thousand Plateaus*), the Real Father of the late (perhaps Deleuze-inflected) Lacan; in other words, Lacan as *objet a*, the object-cause of desire, potentially functioning, as the incorporeal Deleuzian quasi-cause, which Žižek (2004: 27) reads as a version of the lost object. Of course, this attack is even easier to read in Guattari, who was both a pupil and analysand of Lacan, though we might argue that such a position is a little reductive in this instance.

sometimes antinomical positions taken by Deleuze, Guattari and their followers regarding the constitutive role of Oedipus. He is either too much, and responsible for all, 'overdetermined', as Flieger suggests in the title of her paper, or meaningless, an empty signifier; or, to complete the triad, irrelevant, as 'meaning doesn't matter, only function does' (607). This last criticism is effectively a charge against hermeneutics qua the interpretive 'science' used to interrogate representation via its constitutive desire to know. Lastly, it is worth remembering that Lacan reminds us that Oedipus did not suffer from the Oedipus Complex (1992: 304).

In Lacan, desire, as suggested, is ubiquitous. The following section is key: 'man's desire is the Other's desire [*le désir de l'homme est le désir de l'Autre*] in which the *de* provides what grammarians call a "subjective determination" – namely, that it is qua Other that man desires' (2006: 690). We have here the desire of the other as constitutive, namely: it is that which the *désirand* attempts to guess, via Lacan's famous interrogation, '*Chè vuoi?*' (What do you want?) (690). Desire here is not productive in the Deleuzian sense, though it is circulatory and is constituted 'under the sign of mediation: it is the desire to have one's desire recognized' (148). It is only in this 'symbolic exchange that I am able to announce to myself my own desire' (Boothby, 1991: 119). It is in this interrogative constitution of desire that Lacan's status as (anti) philosopher can be glimpsed. Psychoanalysis is seen traditionally as a provider of answers; philosophy as a poser of questions. Lacanian desire takes the second route and aligns itself with philosophy as ontology via the determining interrogative that is desire.

An interpretation of desire in Lacan's work also necessitates an investigation of *jouissance*²⁷, particularly as, as described by Braunstein, there has been an opposition between the early Lacan²⁸ of desire and the signifier, and the late Lacan of *jouissance*,

²⁷ We italicise this and all foreign language terms throughout, the exception being if it is being quoted from a source who does not.

²⁸ I have mostly confined myself to the early Lacan here, as it is that Lacan that tends to figure in Deleuze and Guattari's critiques. After 1964, there is a move towards privileging the drive over desire, which also manifests itself in his increased criticism of Oedipus from Seminar XVII onwards. This reading of 'two Lacans' has become somewhat standard in recent years and the second Lacan will return below.

objet a and the drive (2003: 114), which he suggests is unnecessary, though Copjec (1995: 182) gives it a historical dimension and relates it to the disempowering of the Oedipal father in the postmodern era. This latter point is of use when looking at the British cinema of 1968 and will be returned to in Chapter Three. *Jouissance* is a slippery term but for our purposes here, we might think of it as an excess, a surplus, although in its initial version it is aligned with the Real and the relationship between the infant and the mother-as-plenitude before the crack in the Real that leads to lack and the *objet a*. Braunstein suggests that we can think of it as being on the opposite end of a pole to desire, with the former as lack and 'jouissance as positivity' (2003: 104). At this juncture, we can return to Deleuze and Guattari and the Body without Organs, specifically, the well-known section in *A Thousand Plateaus* where they discuss the priest qua psychoanalyst and his betrayal of desire: '*Jouissance* is impossible, but impossible *jouissance* is inscribed in desire' (1988: 154). However, *jouissance* is not proscribed in psychoanalysis; rather, it is castrated via the cut in language once it is spoken. We have here an interesting impasse: the schizo Body without Organs can access *jouissance* without recourse to language (if we take a Lacanian/Saussurean view that schizo-language is just so many meaningless elements of *parole* that do not cohere due to there being no *langue* within which to understand them). This is indicative of what we will call a surplus agency that can be read in Deleuze and Guattari's schizo in the sense of her/his ability to satisfy desire/*jouissance* via its constant circulation on the limit that is the Body without Organs, whereas for Lacan, 'desire sustains itself by remaining unsatisfied' (Zupančič, 2000: 242) and is the 'desire to know the last word on desire' (Lacan, 1992: 309). Cinematic desire also remains unsatisfied, particularly in narrative films that do not provide the degree of closure common to the Hollywood model. In terms of spectatorship as understood via the Lacanian models of the 1970s and 1980s, desire is constituted via the illusion of mastery created by cinema as a language, with the image laying in the Imaginary and desire circulating between the registers.

To leave *jouissance*/desire and to return to desire *tout court*, we could suggest that Lacan's postulate that 'the only thing of which one can be guilty is of having given ground relative to one's desire' (1992: 219) is somewhat Deleuzian in its positivity and

in its un-Freudian denial of guilt and emphasis upon the subject's pursuit of her desire, which effectively means the pursuit of fantasy. Where Deleuze differs markedly, of course, is in his refusal to admit the psychoanalytic 'lack' and its concomitant notion of the object-cause of desire. Lack is occasioned by the subject's constitution in language, which preceded it, with its castrating cut between the signifier and signified, which is recognised by the infant in the moment when it is first left by the m/Other, which then creates desire in the subject's need to know the desire of the other. The object-cause of desire is the *objet a*, that is, any object that sets desire in motion; the gaze being a prime example. Lacan sees it in the Imaginary in his earlier work, then later in the Real. In its role as what is left over when the Symbolic intervenes in the Real, it marks the lack described above when the desire of the other is first situated. Due to this constitution, desire, for Lacan, is 'refracted, alienated and circulatory' (Flieger, 1997: 609).

To conclude this Deleuzian detour, we will suggest some ways in which this discussion will be of use in what is to follow: firstly, desire and its relationship to May '68 and the political event will be relevant to our analysis of the film texts in later chapters. Badiou (1999: 11) and Žižek (2004: 20) suggest that Deleuze is 'aristocratic' and 'profoundly elitist' respectively, positions in opposition to the commonly perceived view that Deleuze is a thinker of the Red Years, whereas Tomšič (2016: 146) posits psychoanalysis's 'critical stand towards the established social order', also in opposition to (Deleuzian) orthodoxy. Establishing the radicality of the Lacanian psychoanalytic project is central to the next section of this chapter, in which this thesis's use of Lacan will be explicated further.

Part iii: A new Lacan for a new world: recent work on the gaze

As the post-68 wave of theoretical work on film had assumed that ideology was pervasive, much of Film Studies was predicated upon a theory of ideology derived from Marx. Moreover, there was the widespread belief, perhaps best exemplified in Jean-Louis Comolli and Jean Narboni's 'Cinema/Ideology/Criticism' (1969) and Colin

MacCabe's 'Realism and the Cinema: Notes on some Brechtian theses'²⁹ (1974) that classical modes of narrative, based as they were on the continuity editing system that hid its means of production, could do nothing but replicate the dominant ideology through the illusion of realism created via the elision of construction. The effect of this was two-fold: an interpretive schema, often in tandem with Lacanian-inflected psychoanalytic theory, to lay bare the ideological apparatus of classical narrative; and, a call for radical forms of cinema that did not 'deceive' the spectator and instead displayed their form. More recent work using Lacan to attempt to reinvigorate film theory has taken a different approach.

Both Todd McGowan and Benjamin Noys have relatively recently stressed the importance of a return to Lacan, with the former advocating this in the context of 'a renewal of the endeavor to theorize the filmic experience' (2007: 5) and the latter naming his introductory piece in his edited special issue of *Film-Philosophy* (2007), 'One More Effort'. Similarly, Žižek, who never left Lacan in the first place, has stated his desire 'to instigate a new wave of Lacanian paranoia' (2006: 3). Žižek sees Lacanian concepts in all culture and as embedded in social relations. When he writes about film, he simply transfers these tropes to film texts, quite possibly without much consideration of how texts may function as texts; as re-presentations of ideas and forms of knowledge in a specific milieu. This is not to take issue with his analyses or Lacanian worldview; this thesis shares some of them. What we are suggesting instead is that a contemporary Lacanian film theory needs to take into account the specificities of filmic texts; what makes a film a film.

What Lacanian film theory in its earlier incarnations tended towards was a privileging of the Imaginary and the Symbolic at the expense of the Real. There are two principal reasons for this: one pertaining to a reductive reading of (early) Lacan; the other to a particular view of ideology and culture prevalent at the time. Metz, Baudry and

²⁹ This paper precipitated a series of debates in *Screen* in the second half of the 1970s regarding progressive realism, predominantly in relation to television drama. We will return to this when we consider contradiction in Chapter Four, as it is an interesting, if parallel, line from our methodology and investigation.

Mulvey all assumed that the gaze could be located in the subject via a reading of the Mirror Stage. This gaze was situated in the spectator via the imaginary experience of the viewing process and the determinative power of the signifier in the construction of the subject as ideological position. Also, certain types of narratives tended to give birth to this more than others, and were therefore ripe for analysis, but an analysis based on spectatorship, not hermeneutic interpretation of texts. McGowan and Kunkle, in the first compendium of recent years to attempt to address this misreading, suggest that the function of film for Lacanian film theory in the 1970s was 'to provide the imaginary lure necessary for subjects to accept their subjugation. Hence, film became the handmaiden of ideology' (2004: xvi). McGowan and Kunkle go on to discuss the paucity of this position for an analysis of *contemporary* film but it is our contention that a cinema of the Real existed in the late 1960s, and not just within European Art Cinema.

For Lacan, at least from Seminar XI (1964) onwards, the gaze is not located in the subject; rather, it is in the object, which functions as a spark for desire. While there were isolated attempts to make use of these seminars in film theory (notably Heath [1981]), it was not until McGowan's 2007³⁰ monograph that a concerted attempt was made to effectively reboot Lacanian Film Theory and make a case for a psychoanalytic film theory once more. His work is indebted to Copjec, who made the decisive break from film theory's reliance on the Mirror Stage, noting that it is '*not* in this essay but in Seminar XI that Lacan himself formulates *his* concept of the gaze' (1995: 30). Copjec's work, while clearly taking issue with 1970s' conceptions of the gaze as situated in the subject of the Symbolic Order post-Mirror Stage, does not use this position to make a case against the turn away from Lacan in film theory per se; that is not her interest. Rather, her concern is broader, seeking as she does to interrogate Lacanian and Foucauldian discourses in a discussion of historicity. The principal difference between both early Lacanian film theory and McGowan's position *and* early Lacan and mid-to-late Lacan is the move from the subject of the Symbolic to that of the Real. The centrality of the Real allows for a film theory which can place filmic texts as disruptive;

³⁰ The germ of this book can be seen in his and Kunkle's edited compendium from three years earlier, plus he himself had published a journal article making a case for a return to Lacan in 2003.

as capable of puncturing holes in ideology and the smooth running of the Symbolic, in this case, the language-machine of Hollywood cinema. Lacan, in the scopical field, situates the gaze as *objet a* and suggests that it functions the same here 'as in other dimensions' (1998: 103). It has separated itself off as lack, as a stain; a reminder and a remainder. From this, McGowan can postulate a film theory where the gaze is not the external view of the controlling, mastering spectator of the un-ruptured Symbolic, but the mode 'in which the spectator is accounted for within the film itself' (2007: 8). This allows an escaping of the charge of not differentiating between the specificities of individual spectators that was levelled at classical Lacanian film theory. Of course, an empirical spectator can fail to take up a spectatorial position, but that does not change the gaze employed by the text. Let us now take a closer look at the gaze and the Real that underpin contemporary Lacanian film theory, prior to asking the question: what is the subject of 1968?

One of the reasons that any notion of mastery of the gaze is illusory, is that our understanding of it is always partial, as amply illustrated by Maria Scott (2007: 328). In fact, Lacan himself reminds us that it is 'unapprehensible' and 'misunderstood' (1998: 83). Scott makes much of the structure of Seminar XI as functioning in effectively the same way as the gaze: to lure and tease through glimpses. The kernel of the relevant section of the Seminar, 'Of the Gaze as *Objet Petit a*', is Lacan's analysis of Hans Holbein's 1533 painting, *The Ambassadors*. In it, Lacan discusses the illusion of mastery given to the eye before its abrupt removal by the gaze. We see what appears to be a tribute to human ingenuity in the shape of two men of the world surrounded by the objects they have accumulated on their travels. However, at the bottom is something that is not immediately discernible or recognisable: it is an anamorphic stain and can only be glimpsed if the spectator changes her perspective. Once this is done, a skull, or death's head, becomes visible. This accomplishes two things: firstly, the vanity of material accoutrements is brought to the fore; secondly, and decisively for our purposes, the spectator is implicated in the picture as active involvement must take place if the gaze is to be seen. As McGowan (2007: 7) suggests, this means the spectator never looks on from a safe space. The picture gives us two different kinds of objects: 'the (imaginary) object of knowledge (*connaissance*) and the (real) object of

desire' (Chiesa, 2007: 129). The first object is akin to the eye; the second, the gaze. We have here, then, the gaze as *objet a*, as that which cannot be known, only desired; it is ineffable, akin to a drive, specifically, of course, the death drive. Moreover, when discussing the gaze as *objet a*, Lacan makes the point that 'not only does it look, it also shows' (1998: 75). This suggests the need for valency in the spectatorial position: the spectator must be active in order to be shown, as well as to see.

The relationship of *objet a* to the Real becomes central to Lacan's thought from the late 1960s onwards; somewhat ironically, just at the time that Lacan's earlier work on the constitution of the subject was being taken up in Film Studies, the Real, which does not appear in 1970s' film theory, becomes key to Lacan's project. To some extent, as Žižek (1989: 162), amongst others, has commented, much of what Lacan attributes to the Imaginary in the 1950s he situates within the Real from his later period onwards. In terms of the efficacy of this for an analysis of the radical 1960s and British Cinema, the Real needs to be seen in the context of the symptom and how a confluence between Marx and Lacan can be found there; a different marriage from Lacano-Althusserianism. Žižek reminds us that Lacan credits Marx with the invention of the symptom (1989: 11). In fact, under the heading of 'the Marxist turning point', Lacan tells us that 'the truth has no other form than the symptom' (2002: 210). More recently, the fruitfulness of this encounter has led to a monograph by Samo Tomšič (2015) that attempts both to interrogate Lacan's engagement with Marxian thought and consider areas where the subject of psychoanalysis and the revolutionary subject might coalesce. This volume will be utilised throughout this project. Tom Evers suggests that the symptom is 'the indissoluble point or absent centre of the subject' (2012: 50) and reminds us that Lacan articulated the signifier of the Real (the idea that meaning can be found there) in possibly his most radical revision of his thought: Seminar XXIII *Le Sinthome*. We will return to the symptom throughout, but primarily in Chapter Two, when it will be considered along with the Marxian idea of labour value. While it is important to interrogate new debates on spectatorship, the principal thrust of this thesis is not toward that, but to the subject, and it is to this that we now turn.

Part iv: What is the subject of 1968? Lacan, then Badiou

A: Lacan, Truth and the anterior

Historical eras have master signifiers; moreover, each has a *point de capiton*, a quilting point. A rupture, an event, creates a new master signifier that functions in an anterior fashion. Žižek states that this ‘changes retroactively the meaning of all tradition, restructures the narration of the past, makes it readable in another, new way’ (1989: 56). The status of such a Real rupture changes due to repetition: each repetition assists in the event finding its place within the Symbolic. The future anterior is an important element of Lacan’s understanding of the constitution of the subject and the temporal approach of his project in general. It is Lacan’s use of this register that separates his work from the fixed present perfect tense of Hegelian discourse, a tense that propagates ‘absolute knowledge and philosophical certainty’ (Weber, 1991: 7). The fictive nature of the subject in Lacan prohibits such a fixed sense of knowledge. The temporal flux of this tense as utilised by Lacan to describe the time of the subject has a constitutive role in the misrecognition that is central to the mirror stage and of the hole punctured in the subject by the Real. It is a constant reminder that the subject can never attain ‘Oneness’, due to the fissure that leaves the *objet a* as a reminder. Jacques Derrida, in a discussion of Lacan’s use of the tense, suggests that ‘[t]o deal with this enigma of the future anterior and the conditional...is to deal with the problem of archivization, of what remains or does not remain’ (1998: 39-40). This is pertinent to how 1968 is now seen: which versions of it, and from what perspective.

The use of the tense has a tendency to make history strange: it ruptures the progression of linear time and calls into question history as a concept (Derrida, 1998: 40). Weber suggests that it calls ‘into question the very foundations of subjective identity conceived in terms of an interiorizing memory’, creating an ‘*anticipated belatedness* [of a] history always yet to come’ (1991: 9). Furthermore, there is an ancillary meaning to the tense, when used modally, to surmise, to mark uncertainty (9). The tense’s lack of resolution is part of the lack of Oedipal resolution existent in Lacan’s writing, situating his mode of address outside of and separate from that employed by classical (and much post-classical) cinema. Freud’s *Nachträglichkeit*, or

deferred action, is also predicated upon the register. This word, translated as 'afterwardness'³¹ by Paul Sutton (1999: 80), is of use in understanding the spectatorial process of reconstructing cinematic meaning after a film has been viewed. We will return to the future anterior in the section on Badiou below, as his understanding of the event as taking place within this register is key to an understanding of the historicity of 1968.

Copjec, in her discussion of the emotional effect of May 1968, suggests that Lacan's understanding of the gaze of that month is as follows: 'the gaze that looks at me is that of my own being, to which I am riveted' (2006: 101). This, of course, corresponds with desire being the desire of the Other, as discussed above. From the events of that month, Lacan fashions his theory of the four discourses in Seminar XVII. These are those of the Master, the University, the Hysteric and the Analyst. Despite the *doxa* of recent years that Lacan did not approve of May '68 and was dismissive of it and essentially took a conservative position, Seminar XVII suggests that he thought they did not go far enough; essentially they were asking for a 'new Master' (Copjec, 2006: 90). In the words of Peter Starr, in the immediate aftermath of May '68, he 'articulated a thoroughgoing critique of the quest for the One (truth, system or revolution)' (2001: 34). This is not a conservative position, though it is one that is at an adjunct to the revolutionary fervour of the day and is in line both with his assumed anti-philosophical position regarding truth and a late structuralist distrust of totalising theories. However, while these positions are in line with how Lacan has tended to be seen within the academy, we can problematise them to some degree. In the third phase of his thought, which commences post-'68, he does allow a discussion of truth to take place in the context of the Real. This does not make Starr's contention erroneous; rather, Lacan's view of the specific tenor of the events of May as hysterical is informed by their placement within the three orders of Imaginary, Symbolic and Real.

In *Encore*, Seminar XX, Lacan tells his students that truth 'aims at the real' (1999: 91) and that it is 'never reached except by twisted pathways' (95). Why is this? Because,

³¹ Sutton cites Jean Laplanche as the translator of *Nachträglichkeit* as 'afterwardness'. For a brief discussion, see Sutton (1999).

according to Lacan, people are ‘caught up in the insufficiency of knowledge’ (120), with the subject’s speaking never more than an acknowledgement of the ‘I’, not of what is said as truth. Language speaks the subject. It is ‘through this very impossibility [of speaking the whole truth] that the truth holds onto the real’ (Lacan, 1990: 3). Truth is half-said, for which Lacan came up with the neologism, *le me-dire* (2007: 36), which Badiou describes as ‘an absolute condition for stating the true’ (1982/2009c: 119). There is no straight path towards the truth of the revolution in Lacan; nothing of Badiou’s certainty regarding communism as ‘*the right hypothesis*’ (2009a: 79, his emphasis). It is also in *Encore* that Lacan first uses the phrase *pas-tout*³² (1999: 7), the ‘not whole’ or ‘not all’, one of his most controversial ideas, initially to designate woman’s relationship to phallic *jouissance*. However, Russell Grigg has persuasively argued that we should see it as a ‘conceptual or logical category...that is best taken as a formulation of nonuniversalizable nothing’ (2008: 82). Once again, this appears to provide evidence for Lacan’s dismissal of truth as a category. With this in mind, we can argue that seeing the events of May ’68 as a revolutionary truth would have been predicated for Lacan upon a number of what we might designate as Marxist shibboleths, namely:

1. There is a path to revolution that has an end; history is teleological;
2. There is a collective subject based on the historical agency of a particular group; in Marxism, the proletariat;
3. Revolution involves a form of knowledge that aims at the Real via the category of truth.

Instead, in Seminar XVII, Lacan gives his students the four discourses, which are predicated upon rotations, or revolutionary turns. By definition, continuing these turns place the subject back where she began; there is no revolutionary *telos*. However, there may be historical movement, as explained by Bruce Fink (1995: 132):

Lacan almost goes so far as to suggest a sort of historical movement from the master's discourse to the university discourse,

³² This term also has a relationship to the title of Starr’s paper, ‘Rien n’est Tout’, which translates as ‘Nothing (or No Thing) is All’, which comes from what Lacan said on the steps at Vincennes to the students in 1969 and which was directly addressing the events of the previous year. Moreover, the phrase has a double meaning: the distributive one of ‘No Thing’ and an assumed partitive one, if we take ‘Nothing’ to be a part of ‘All’. The partitive meaning here is also in line with Badiou’s ontology, as ‘nothing’ here can be seen as the empty set, that which is void.

the university discourse providing a sort of legitimation or rationalization of the master's will. In that sense he seems to agree with the argument put forward in the 1960s and 1970s that the university is an arm of capitalist production (or of the "military-industrial complex," as it was called at the time), suggesting that the truth hidden behind the university discourse is, after all, the master signifier.

His positing of the discourse of the university as a contemporary embodiment of the master's will fitting for a capitalist mode of production – if we assume that the master is a form of power situated in feudalism – does both place him in line with student positions in 1968 and cognisant of a form of hegemony, even if he does not quite place it in the language of Gramsci. In order to align further Lacan with the Freudo-Marxist tradition, we need to ask what this new master signifier might be. Samo Tomšič suggests that it would be something which would 'replace the structuration of social links around the imperatives of capital' as the 'discourse is internally broken' (2015: 207). What this clearly suggests is that Lacan was aware that the version of capitalism then dominant – Keynesianism – had had its day. Tomšič's view is that what Lacan is attempting with the four discourses as a response to May '68 is to re-emphasise the primacy of structure (and, by extension, structuralism) in the context of a student population which had rejected it, as shown through such slogans as 'structures don't march in the streets'. A major part of this was to make clear how unstable structures were, and how ridden with contradiction. In this sense, as Copjec argues, the four discourses are '*antistructuralist*' as they are not to be taken as Symbolic, but instead Real, in the sense that they should 'not be located among the relations that constitute our everyday reality' (1995: 11), which is where a structuralist position locates them; in the Symbolic. Tomšič's view is also shared by Adrian Johnston, whose 2007 review of Russell Griggs' translation of Seminar XVII, Griggs and Clemens' 2006 edited compendium of essays on that seminar, and Fink's 2006 translation of *Écrits*, entitled 'Lacanian Theory Has Legs: Structures Marching in the Streets', posits a Lacan attempting to respond to the cultural and historical context of the time via a recalibration of the role of structure. With that in mind, let us move on to our discussion of Badiou, prior to positing the two subjects that this thesis will situate in the British Cinema of 1968: one individual and one collective.

B: Badiou, the Event, Truth and the Real

Badiou's notion of the Event³³ provides us with another potential way of thinking the Real. For Badiou, the Event and being, that most classical of philosophical categories, are irreconcilable and have no relation; or, more specifically, the relationship is void (see Bartlett, Clemens and Roffe, 2014; Hallward, 2003). For Lacan, who does not particularly engage with philosophical truth categories, or generics, as Badiou would call them, the Real pre-exists language and remains in the Symbolic as a form of stain, or trace; specifically, the *objet a*. Later, Lacan begins to mathematise the Real, which brings him closer to Badiou's project. We will return to the concept of the trace and its relationship to the Real shortly, as it is also relevant to Badiou's process of subjectivisation and to the overall framework of this thesis. Firstly, though, we will briefly discuss Badiou's ontology prior to further elucidating his concept of the event.

From the late 1980s onwards, Badiou equates ontology with mathematics, specifically post-Cantorian set theory. This then allows him to separate philosophy from ontology and to think philosophically its conditions, namely: art; politics; science and love. From these conditions come four generic truths: creation; revolution; invention and passion. Ontologically, what Badiou refers to as the situation is the pure multiple, which transforms into the set of elements that belong, or are counted-as-one³⁴. When these are counted, or re-presented, they become the state of the situation. This might be apples, British citizens, or any other recognisable set. The set which is void (or the

³³ It is important to note that Badiou's concept of the Event does have precedents. One of these is Althusser's late work on the encounter, which has been collected in a 2006 volume. However, his concept of 'the materialism of the encounter', which forms part of the title of an essay in the volume, is different from the Event, as the following section makes clear: 'it is clear that the encounter creates nothing of the reality of the world, which is nothing but agglomerated atoms, but *that it confers their reality upon the atoms themselves*, which, without swerve and encounter, would be nothing but *abstract* elements, lacking all consistency and existence. So much so that we can say that the *atoms' very existence is due to nothing but the swerve and the encounter* prior to which they led only a phantom existence (169). For Badiou, it is not the Event – the encounter, here – that gives existence to the parts of a set, but their ability to be counted-as-one. The Event is that which is empty and void, which is *not* counted. It is of interest that Badiou does not refer to this period of Althusser in either *Being and Event* nor its sequel.

³⁴ Each set has an empty set within it, which is void and not counted as part of the situation. To paraphrase Hallward (2003: 89), given a finite set with n elements, the number of subsets is 2 to the power of n : a set \mathbb{N} with 3 elements has eight (2^3) parts/subsets, like so: (x) , (y) , (z) , (x, y) , (x, z) , (z, y) , (x, y, z) and (\emptyset) , which is empty and included in all sets.

symptom, in Lacanese) is that which is not-counted, such as the *sans papiers*, to use Badiou's frequent example. An Event, then, is what is not re-presented, what is not part of this count: 'that-which-is-not being-qua-being' (Badiou, 2006: 198). This void is what is encountered in an Event, from which we can then infer the postulate that all situations are potentially evental.

An Event cannot be inferred as such from any knowledge of the situation. It is a truth-procedure and undecidable. Here, Badiou breaks from the teleological concept of the flow of history, as typically found in Hegelian-Marxist positions; instead, he takes 'Marx in reverse' (2011: 220) as Bosteels aptly describes, due to his insistence on the subjects of history being post-evental, as opposed to the makers of it. For Badiou, the Event is aleatory and the subject is created through fidelity to it, via the making of a (Pascalian) wager. The Event occurs through a fundamental break with the situation. It is in this axiom that we can see a clear difference between the Deleuzian and Badiouian events and it is worth engaging in a brief detour here, in order to clarify this a little further. For Deleuze, events are common, not exceptional, and do not produce a subject, least of all a militant subject of truth. There are many events, but they communicate and are relational within what Bartlett, Clemens and Roffe call the 'Unique Event, and all other events are its bits and pieces' (2014: 56). Deleuze states this: '[i]f the singularities are veritable events, they communicate in one and the same Event which endlessly redistributes them, while their transformations form a *history*' (1990: 53). Badiou suggests that in Deleuze's conception 'the plurality of events is purely formal, and that there is only one event, which is, as it were, the event of the One' (1999: 73), a position that posits being and event as relational. For Badiou, this simply cannot be, as he discusses in the section in *Logic of Worlds* (2009b: 381-7) dedicated to the Deleuzian event, in which he posits Deleuze's four axioms of the Event, which he then reverses to reiterate his own conception. Events for Badiou are exceptions, not any sort of converging of harmonious elements that are relational; they are a rupture and a cut. Badiou argues, *contra* Deleuze, that the latter's conception of the sense-event 'tips it over entirely onto the side of language' (386), whereas Badiou's Event is material in its effects: it creates a subject and 'opens up a space of consequences in which the body of a truth is composed' (386).

Badiou's most utilised example is the figure of St. Paul, from whose subjectivisation, as the title of his 1997 (translated in 2003) monograph suggests, Badiou posits the foundation of universalism. Badiou sees Paul as an anti-philosopher³⁵, who considers there to be no longer 'an admissible place for [philosophy's] pretension' (2003: 58) due to the truth-event of the Resurrection. Paul is therefore posited as a militant figure and the forerunner of all subjects created (divided, more technically) by an Event to which they remain faithful. The Christian Event illustrates the coming to pass of the unknowable void in the set: nothing about 1st century Palestine could allow the contemporary observer to infer its coming occurrence. Badiou situates the temporality of the Event in the future anterior, which also forms the tense for Lacan's formation of the subject, as discussed above. Where there is a difference is in the idea of fidelity: for Lacan, the subject's relationship to her own past is perpetually reconfigured in this tense; for Badiou, for this temporal inscription to happen requires fidelity to the Event that creates the subject, which is itself inconsistent. The lack of causality in the Event, or 'sacralization of the evental miracle' (Bensaïd, 2004: 97) is the basis of the majority of critiques of Badiou's philosophy, and it is to these that we will now briefly turn.

Žižek (1999), Bensaïd (2004), Johnston (2007b), Srnicek (2008), Sotiris (2011) and, to some extent, Hallward (2003), all posit a problem that originates with the potentially politically paralysing effect of the rarity of the Badiouian Event, which is: how can a pre-evental politics be organised if this is the case? How does this essentially undetermined Event sit with the Freudian-Althusserian notion of overdetermination that is central to the Lacano-Marxist mode of subjectivisation? Badiou has always remained faithful to the communist Idea, stating that 'there is no other' (2009a: 79) for those who do not wish to accept western liberal democracy. How, then, is this conceptual circle squared? It may well be that organisation must be limited to the

³⁵ In short, Badiou sees Paul as an anti-philosopher due to his belief that something which is fable (the Resurrection) is real. Other significant anti-philosophers according to Badiou include Rousseau, Pascal, Wittgenstein, Nietzsche, and significantly, Lacan, though his position on him varies. Adrian Johnston (2010: 137) points out, in a perspicacious discussion of literature on the subject, that seeing Lacan as an anti-philosopher, despite his own occasional declarations that he is one, is somewhat problematic as references to philosophers are 'nearly as ubiquitous as references to Freud'.

creation of an evental site, such as the events of 1968. To some extent, as Hallward (2008: 104) has argued in a further paper, *Logic of Worlds* (2009b) is Badiou's attempt to show 'how a truth overturns the very logic of a world by transforming the norms that regulate the manner in which things appear'. In other words, an Event as truth procedure, while still grounded in the inconsistent pure multiple, affects change in previous norms and, in this way, can be conceived as potentially less *ex nihilo* in origin. By this point, Badiou (2009b: 372) sees the Event, or strong singularity, as the fourth form of change, with the others being modification, fact and weak singularity; though as Lorenzo Chiesa (2014: 2) points out, modification affects no real change and has been expunged from Badiou's *Second Manifesto for Philosophy* (2009/2011). Chiesa (3-4) also points out that the Badiou of *Logic of Worlds* suggests that the subject is created through its 'appearing' in numerous worlds, and is therefore open to the Event, while still subject to 'local laws', another way of saying that the post-evental potential of the subject could be locally hampered. Hallward (2008: 105) also suggests that this new approach is more 'materialist-dialectic' and is in line with a Marxist transformative paradigm, rather than simply being an exercise in mere hermeneutics, in the sense of simply seeing the Event as a text to be interpreted.

Another route through this potential impasse can be found in Badiou's *The Century* (2005/2007) in the seminar entitled 'Anabasis', the germ of which Badiou then implicitly refers to in *Logic of Worlds* (2009b: 51) in his discussion of slave revolts. The title³⁶ refers to Xenophon's tale of the homeward movement of a group of mercenaries, who are lost, 'out of place and outside the law' (2007: 82). This movement has the character of a 're-ascent towards the source' (81) and is post-evental (the Event being their abandonment) and, once more, anterior. Nevertheless, in terms of our interest in 1968 as an evental site, a careful and nuanced approach will need to be taken if 1968 is to be seen as both an evental irruption and the culmination of a diachronic series of factors in a particular period that laid the ground for the event

³⁶ Badiou mostly analyses two poems entitled *Anabasis*, one by Saint-John Perse, one by Celan. However, the conceptual trajectory that is Anabasis, and to which he ascribes a particular resonance for the 20th century, derives from the Greek narrative.

of 1968, rather than a site populated with 'people stuck lingering in historical waiting rooms' (Johnston, 2007b: 5).

In the context of situating Badiou with Lacan, we will now return to the Real, the passion for which Badiou (2007) has situated at the heart of the twentieth century. This concerns an encounter with any of the generic truths referred to above. Badiou discusses this encounter in terms of both purification - what Žižek (2004: 165) refers to as 'violently peeling off the imaginary that conceals' the Real – and subtraction, which is that which is removed as minimal difference, the 'empty set'. This latter approach can usefully be considered alongside Lacan's Real. Lacan, of course, positions the Real as an effect of gaps, of that which cannot be symbolised, or, in Badiou's pithy phrase, as 'the impasse of formalization' (2006: 5). Lacan, as an anti-philosopher, mediates any notion of truth via language or the Symbolic. Badiou's empty set, that which cannot be counted, the supernumerary, is, in structuralist terms, what cannot be counted for in language. Badiou, as a philosopher, declares 'the return of truth' (1992/2008a: 129) via a working-through of Lacan's anti-philosophy. Throughout his writings, there are constant references to the importance of Lacan; indeed, we can argue that Badiou sees psychoanalysis as evental, as a point from which philosophy cannot but start again. Philosophy and psychoanalysis disjoin, according to Badiou (1996: 25-26) at the point of the Idea (the void, where the Idea and its knowledge are held together and compossible). Badiou accepts Lacan's contention that psychoanalysis is 'the discourse of the master' (Lacan, cited in Bartlett and Clemens, 2010: 157) while maintaining that what is left behind in this description – the void – is where philosophy will recommence. For Badiou, only through a rigorous engagement with anti-philosophy can philosophy hope to re-engage with its central questions regarding being, subject and truth. Bartlett and Clemens suggest that Lacan is an event for philosophy and that certain notions of his (mathematics as the Real, for one) are 'a trace whose trajectory Badiou will follow' (162).

In terms of the category of truth, it is worth considering the symptom of psychoanalysis as illuminated or disrupted by the act, as it is a particularly useful way of connecting the philosophical and psychoanalytic variants of truth-event/act. The

symptom is the 'correlative excess' (Bell, 2011: 108) of the Real and, as Bell argues, its rupture by an Event (or act, in Lacan) is where Lacan and Badiou are closest: the act 'is precisely a manifestation of the real that underpins and founds the state of the situation' (109). As Žižek (1991: 192) argues, the act is 'performative' and 'redefines the network of its own presuppositions'. Similarly, Badiou's Event strongly reformulates the site of its occurrence in an anterior fashion.

Subjectivisation, as briefly discussed above, concerns fidelity to the Event. Just as an Event cannot be inferred from the situation, so an Event will only be seen to have happened once it is declared by its subjects and after it has ceased to be, effectively. It does not persist in the new world it creates; its subjects do. Lacan, in his most well-known section on the future anterior and the construction of the subject, states that:

What is realized in my history is neither the past definite as what was, since it is no more, nor even the perfect as what has been in what I am, but the future anterior as what I will have been, given what I am in the process of becoming (2006: 247).

This anteriority in the tense, which can be felt in Badiou's post-evental subject of truth, alters the way in which we see Badiou's project. As discussed above, Lacan's use of it separates him from Hegelian discourse. To return to Weber's comment that the future anterior is not a present perfect tense of 'absolute knowledge and philosophical certainty' (1991: 7; p. 48 of this thesis), this is the world that Badiou's critics see him inhabiting due to his return to Platonic certainties. Of course, the tense is closely linked to *méconnaissance* and memory in Lacan, and Badiou's use of it, which he explicitly situates in its Lacanian origin as 'truth's own temporal regime or register' (2009d), suggests a rupture in the absolutist tendency of classical philosophy by the conditional project of anti-philosophical psychoanalysis. History is always yet to come in the anterior register. Seeing 1968 through this register will facilitate a marrying of Lacan and Badiou, though one not without problems, as the punctal, irruptive Event will need to be conjoined with the untimely anterior register of the construction of the Lacanian subject.

To tarry further with the psychoanalytic subject, it is worth considering Hallward's statement that '[a]n event allows the psychoanalytic subject to penetrate the

repression that conceals the truth of their situation' (2003: 107). Repression can usefully be substituted with ideology here, suggesting further confluence between Badiou and psychoanalysis. Moreover, Žižek suggests, in his most sustained engagement with Badiou, that "the 'subject' is the act, the decision by means of which we pass from the positivity of the given multitude to the Truth-Event and/or to Hegemony" (1999: 184). This suggests a precarious status of the subject created by the Event, one noted by critics such as Antonio Calcagno (2008), who notes that there is no guarantee that the subject of the Event will not be a de-politicised subject (or, indeed, not a fascist one). Therefore, just as the psychoanalytic subject can have the veil of ideology pierced by an act/Event, the political subject can pass from one position of repression to another one via the intervention/act.

C: The Event of 1968: the collective/individual subject

As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, our use of Badiou is predicated upon the particular frequency his work gives to an understanding of a specific revolutionary collective subject, one lasting from roughly 1966-1976, with the events of May '68 as its predominant flowering during the period. Moreover, we are going to explore to what extent '1968' can be considered an Event *tout court*. Badiou has returned to the year throughout his work, most recently in a sustained engagement in *The Communist Hypothesis* (2010). However, he does not always refer to it as an Event; at times, he describes it as one of the 'evental referents' (2008a: 164) of the era; a subtle change in inflection, but a change nonetheless. In *Logics of Worlds*, it becomes the relay of the 'strong singularity' (2009b: 375) that is the Paris Commune. It is mentioned throughout *Theory of the Subject* (2009c³⁷), occasionally in *Logics of Worlds* and its companion text, *Second Manifesto for Philosophy*, and not at all in *Being and Event*, which suggests that Badiou's adherence³⁸ to the Althusserian idea that 'philosophy is fundamentally political' (1971: 1) does not extend to all three of his major works; or, he sees politics as a condition of philosophy, not conjoined with it. In *Manifesto for*

³⁷ The book is a collection of his seminars from the 1970s. Structurally, it is therefore in the vein of Lacan's published seminars, being effectively a transcript of his teaching as opposed to a book written as a stand-alone monograph.

³⁸ Badiou discusses Althusser's maxim in *Conditions* (2008a) and suggests his adherence to it.

Philosophy, Being and Event's companion text, it is not only mentioned but, following Sylvain Lazarus, listed as an 'obscure event'³⁹: one of a number 'that we are *in suspension of their naming as political events*' (1989/1992: 84, italics in the original), suggesting that at this point he is undecided about the effect of May '68 21 years on. Fidelity to the Event is what creates the subject of it; at this low point in the history of the left Badiou situates 'the ruin' of 'Marxism-Leninism' (84) in May '68, which is an unintended and unseen effect of the radical anti-humanism that Badiou situates as 1968's 'real legacy' (Pawling, 2013: 125). This is perhaps predicated upon his faith in Maoism, which he describes as 'the only innovative and consequential political current of post-May 1968' (2007: 61) He takes up the effect of May '68 again two decades later in the chapter dedicated to it in *The Communist Hypothesis*. Let us turn to this.

Badiou (2010: 35-40) posits four different, though linked, May '68s, and in so doing, refers to it as a 'heterogeneous multiplicity', which he then breaks down:

1. The revolt of university and school students;
2. The biggest general strike in the history of France;
3. The libertarian May, predicated upon the changing moral climate; sexual relations; individual freedom;
4. The question of what is politics, which continued throughout the 'red decade' to come: specifically, how the vanguard party could act as the representative of an objective agent of social change.

There appears to be a clear disparity between how the event of '68 was considered during the Red Years and how it is considered now, with the contemporary emphasis being upon numbers one and three. Number three, as a politics of desire, is Lacanian in tone; the others, Badiouian. In thinking about this disparity, and what it adds to our understanding of '68 as an event, the following comment from Quentin Meillassoux (2011: 2) is instructive:

If "May 68" was an event, it is precisely because it earned its name: that is to say that May 68, produced not only a number of facts, *but also produced May 68*. In May 68, a *site*, in addition to its

³⁹ Lazarus also describes May '68 as a 'caesura' (2015: 9), suggesting an intellectual rupture and break. We will return to this in Chapter Four.

own elements (demonstrations, strikes, etc.), presented itself. What is the meaning of such a tautology that characterizes all political events (in 1789, there was “1789,” etc.)? It means precisely that an event is the taking place of a pure rupture that nothing in the situation allows us to classify under a list of facts (strikes, demonstrations, etc.).

What we have here, presented using Badiouian terms in a paper on Badiou, is another argument in favour of the undecidability of ‘May ’68, as well as an argument for two May ’68s: May ’68 (the historical moment; the site of the situation, in Badiouese) and *May ’68* (its subsequent creation as a marker; a set of events; an act, in Lacanese; for Badiou, the Event to which its subjects are faithful). Also, this undecidability makes sense of Badiou’s seemingly different positions in the early 1990s and more recently. We have a ’68 represented in anterior terms, constantly being reassessed depending on the political tenor of the time in which it is being so, and this chimes with the positions of Kaufman and Tomšič discussed elsewhere. Kristin Ross (2002: 26), in a similar vein, suggests that 1968 is an Event for Badiou, namely: ‘something that arrives in excess, beyond all calculation, something that displaces people and places, that proposes an entirely new situation for thought’ but she is of the view that an understanding of ’68 requires a synchronic focus upon May *and* a diachronic understanding of a period of 20 years or so, from the mid-1950s to the mid-1970s. She is keen to give ’68 an origin that coalesces around various aspects of post-war French life, whereas Badiou, as discussed above, has been criticised by Bensaïd (2004) among others for seeing events as springing into existence, fully formed and unknowable from anything previously acknowledged in the situation.

For Badiou, 1968 is both an evental irruption and the culmination of a diachronic series of factors in a particular period that laid the ground for the event of 1968. It is telling, as suggested above, that Badiou’s more recent work⁴⁰ allows for a conception

⁴⁰ Badiou has recognised a weakness in his approach in *Being and Event*, and addresses it in its sequel. He has said this: ‘That truths are required to appear bodily [*en-corps*] and to do so over again [*encore*]: that was the problem whose breadth I was yet unable to gauge. It is now clear to me that the dialectical thinking of a singular subject presupposes the knowledge of what an efficacious body is....In short, it presupposes mastery not only of the ontology of truths, but of what makes truths appear in a world: the style of their deployment; the starkness of their imposition on the laws of what locally surrounds them; everything whose existence is summed up by the term ‘subject’, once its syntax is that of exception’ (2009b: 46).

of the event that is less *ex nihilo* in origin, which facilitates an examination of these two aspects of 1968 together. This is to do with his recent concentration on 'being-*there*' as well as being, which is an attempt to think about how the pure multiple, the inconsistency of being, 'might come to appear as situated objects of a world' (Hallward, 2008: 104) and how 'the configuration of a world may encourage or discourage the imminent occurrence of an event' (106). This emphasis has allowed for a subject to be present in a world prior to its formal creation as subject-of-the-event, as discussed here by Hallward:

Although the subject is first and foremost a formal response to an event's implication, Badiou recognizes that in order for a truth's effects to appear in and transform a world, its subject must itself 'live' in that world. In order to appear in a world, a subject must have a 'body', complete with the specialized organs it may require to deploy the consequences of its truth....Understood along these lines, to participate in the affirmation of a truth involves, in any given world, active incorporation into the subject body or corps of that affirmation (107-108).

Following on from this, our understanding of the subject in the chosen film for analysis that represents the revolutionary subject – the Crusaders in *if....* – is predicated upon the idea that they live an in-existent life as that which is not counted but that they are there, nonetheless, and that this positions them to become revolutionary subjects of the Event as members of the corps that is the Crusaders, as discussed in Chapter Four. On the other hand, the individual or psychoanalytic subject of the other four films is not a subject of the Event. What Morgan, Steven, Chas (James Fox), Turner (Mick Jagger) and Max all have in common is a subject position predominantly stuck in the Imaginary and predicated upon a desire for something that cannot be achieved. Morgan, Steven, Chas and Max in differing ways speak in the discourse of the hysteric, with Turner taking on that of the analyst, which he is ill-equipped to do. Let us think a little more about the collective and individual subjects of the era, and how they represent the variety of 1968s in existence then, and created after. This will also provide an opportunity to elaborate upon the methodological framework of this thesis.

We have already discussed in the Introduction the confluence of Althusserian Marxism, Lacanian psychoanalysis, Saussurean and Barthesian semiotics that led to the predominant strain of film theory in the Anglo-French world in the 1970s. What we have not mentioned is the extent to which the turn away from film theory came after an epistemological shift away from historical materialism and Marx in general by the end of the decade in France, a turn so complete that Perry Anderson has described it as a ‘massacre of ancestors’ (1983: 30). Anderson quite rightly situates this in structuralism’s capacity to be ‘an intellectual adversary that was capable of doing battle’ (33) with it, but it is also the case that, Badiou’s work notwithstanding, the French embrace of Maoism can be said to have left historical materialism open to this attack, due to its ultra-leftism⁴¹. There are two aspects to this in terms of the subject: one structural; one political: Althusser’s structural Marxism placed structuralism on ‘*the very terrain* of Marxism itself’ (33) and in so doing drew out some problems in the relationship of structure to subject, and the Maoist turn attempted to create a revolutionary subject that simply did not exist outside of relatively small cadres of the left. French Maoists, with their embrace of voluntarism, effectively disregarded structure, instead preferring to situate political engagement and radicalism in spontaneous activity, such as ‘the investigation’ discussed in Chapter Four.

Moreover, the confluence of structuralism and Marxism via Althusserian approaches did push matters in the direction of the individual subject, via the substitution of “‘structures’ for ‘conditions’ and ‘subjectivity’ for ‘consciousness’” (Lapsley and Westlake, 1988: 11). While the first of these substitutions does not in and of itself lean towards a rejection of the collective, the latter does, when the two are taken in tandem. An emphasis upon how structures encapsulate and limit the agency of the individual took precedence over the Marxian credo that social being determines consciousness. This is a subtle shift, but a shift nonetheless. As part of a contemporary attempt to redress this, and concurrent with the return to communism discussed

⁴¹ I am using the term here in the sense in which it was employed by Lenin i.e. any position that is so far in front of the consciousness and revolutionary capacity of the working class that it effectively leaves it behind, and in so doing effaces its capacity to be the agent of revolutionary change that is its perceived role in Marxism. For a full discussion of this, see Lenin (1920).

above, Jodi Dean, in a perspicacious attempt to shift the conversation in US political theory and practice away from its privileging of the individual, inverts Althusser's thesis that ideology interpellates individuals as subjects, with the aim to 'loosen the hold of the individual form on conceptions of political subjectivity.... [in order] to break free from the individualizing assumptions that hinder understanding the political subject as a collective subject' (2016: 74). She suggests that what contemporary capitalism has done is interpellate subjects as individuals. In marrying this with post-structuralist and psychoanalytic approaches, she attempts both to correct the turn to language inherent in the former approach and to use the latter to problematise Althusser's assumed belief in the autonomy of the individual; in short, it is a material analysis. Dean's work, in conjunction with Lacan's, allows us to think about the subject of 1960s British Cinema as s/he straddles eras and class positions, and in so doing, provides a way into contesting one of the orthodoxies of the period: classlessness and its relationship to the individual, in particular in Chapter Two.

Positioning 1968 as both a rupture and a caesura allows us to see it as functioning as among the last revolutionary stirrings of Badiou's 'short...strongly unified century' (2007: 1) that ends after the Cold War. Badiou's four different 1968s (the student revolt; the general strike; the libertarian May and the question of what is politics) provide a historically specific framework for this division of the subject into individual and collective forms, with number two clearly collective; number three individual; number one contested with number four as the site of this contestation. It is initially on the side of the collective, but this changes as the Red Years wane and the debates set out in this chapter take place. Furthermore, our chosen films all situate the subject as one concerned with liberation and desire. It is the site of this struggle that differs, as well as the intended outcome. We will return to the outcomes and their relationship to the material conditions of the desiring subject in the following chapters and the conclusion.

In *Theory of the Subject*, the first of his major works and the only one to be 'overtly Maoist' (Hallward, 2003: 29), Badiou suggests that the task of Marxists is to catch up with Lacan in order to improve their affairs (2009c: 115), having already suggested a

'false window'; namely, the binary that Lacan might be 'an involuntary theoretician of the political party.... [and] Marxists, unenlightened practitioners of desire' (115). For Badiou, the emergence of Marxism as a discourse of the political subject can be seen 'only from victorious Leninism' (126) in Russia in 1917 and its corollary is Lacan, who provides the site for Freudianism to be retrospectively seen as a theory of the subject. He continues thus:

A line of demarcation had to be drawn between the I and the ego so as finally to isolate the process of which 'unconscious' is the name, just as it was only a question of vague objectivities until Lenin energetically revealed that in matters of Marxism, 'politics is the concentrated expression of economics', and partisan activity, the concentration of politics (126).

Lacan's separation of the subject and the ego via the Mirror Stage and Lenin's praxis of politics as an art founded on economics are seen here as situating the process in the site of the subject of psychoanalysis, which is, via organisation, the formation of the subject of revolutionary politics. These are not separate, but instead meet in their relationships to the Real, as is explicated in the chapters to follow.

Badiou states that the binary of Lacan and Marxism referred to above is false and that 'there is only one theory of the subject' (115). It is our contention that this is true *but* that this illusory binary of the splitting into individual and collective forms *is* represented in the British cinema of 1968, for two reasons. One is because Britain, unlike France, Italy a little later⁴², Czechoslovakia, and to an extent the United States, was not in a revolutionary situation, as discussed in the introduction. Due to this, there simply are not a body of films that represent the collective revolutionary subject. The film that does provide the spectator with that form of the subject has as its title a word used to present a conditional clause. Despite the materiality of *if...* as a text, it is predicated upon asking the spectator to make a leap of faith; in Badiouian terms, to enter a narrative leading to an Event to which she will be a faithful subject. Another reason is that the majority of film made in the west within a capitalist mode of production, even in non-classical, art cinema forms, tends to privilege the individual,

⁴² I am referring here to the 'hot autumn' of 1969. For a full discussion, see Harman (1998).

as does, of course, much of the film theory discussed in this chapter and in the Introduction

. Even when that individual is not presented in an Oedipal narrative that involves the subject striving to overcome hurdles and reach goals, we are still presented with an individual for identification, and the majority of the texts discussed herein indulge in a variety of techniques to affect that. This is not the case in other European countries, where a cinema of the collective, either in terms of mode of production or representation, can be found during this period, as discussed in Chapter Four.

With this in mind, we will affect a Lacano-Badiouian marriage to the extent that each text requires it; therefore, to greater and lesser degrees, depending on the forms of subject presented in them, their relationship to radical and emancipatory currents, and the ways in which they ask for identification from the spectator. This model will allow for a number of conjunctions, confluences and antagonisms to be drawn out; that between philosophy and psychoanalysis (as an anti-philosophy); between desire, death and the subject; between the Real of communism and the Imaginary of sixties' classlessness; between the individual and the state; and, between the collective subject of the Event, the state and consensus.

Chapter Two: The Striving Subject

Introduction

Both *Morgan* and *Privilege* occupy a space, though in different ways, between the New Wave Realist cinema and the more heterogeneous cinema of the end of the decade, which the chapters following this will interrogate. While sharing a concern with the fate of the individual in 'unnatural' environments, they are products of varying styles and perhaps even genres. *Privilege*, like much of Watkins' work, owes much to documentary, specifically the *cinéma vérité* style that had appeared in film-making technique during the previous decade. *Morgan*, on the other hand, has its roots in the New Wave of 'kitchen sink' cinema of 1959-1963 and has been considered a 'Swinging London' film (Murphy, 1992; Sergeant, 2005).

The films were released a little earlier than 1968, and are therefore products of what Chris Harman (1998) refers to as 'the long calm': the period from roughly the end of World War 2 to spring 1968. This was a period of consensus, with the gains made by working people giving the impression of a progressive rebalancing of the needs of labour and capital in favour of the former. Politically, the events of 1968 are the first rupture, though Wilson's 'austerity policy' also commenced that year, prompting a rise in trade union militancy, if not outright revolutionary activity in the UK. Economically, the consensus would grind to a halt and force a reaction after Richard Nixon's unpegging of the US dollar from gold in 1971 and the subsequent breaking up of the Bretton Woods system that had been set up in 1944. Following that, the Yom Kippur War and the oil crisis brought about by the oil embargo of October 1973 saw a dramatic rise in the price of oil and attempts to freeze wages by the British government.

Morgan and *Privilege*'s positions within 'the long calm' reflect their relative positions to it, with the former being broadly, if sceptically, utopian and the latter thoroughly dystopian, despite the ambiguity of the film's climax. As explored below in the brief discussion of the narrative spaces of the texts, to some extent this is to do with genre, with *Morgan* having a relationship to the 'swinging London' film and *Privilege* a foot in

science fiction. In at least superficial terms, we can place *Morgan* with films such as *Darling* (John Schlesinger, 1965), *Alfie* and *Blow-Up*, and *Privilege* with *Seconds* (John Frankenheimer, 1966), *Crimes of the Future* (David Cronenberg, 1970), Watkins' own *Punishment Park* (1971), and *A Clockwork Orange* (Stanley Kubrick, 1971). Not all of the latter films are British, but they are indicative of filmic texts from around this period which place the individual subject at risk of oppression from the state, or state-like organisations; they all contain characters who have not successfully integrated with the world of language and the Symbolic. They are all also concerned with failed attempts to rupture the Imaginary of ideology with the Real, and in so doing lead to re-establishments of the Symbolic.

Specifically, both *Morgan* and *Privilege* contain subjects who have not achieved a successful turn to the Symbolic, and are therefore stuck in fractured Imaginaries. The Imaginary is the order of mirror-images and identifications and, as such, was taken up by psychoanalytic approaches in the 1970s, for reasons already discussed in the Introduction. The discussion below will not use apparatus theory of that period to discuss the spectatorial positions suggested by the texts as such; rather, the chapter will be concerned with how subject positions inhere within the narrative and a hermeneutics of that. Malcolm Bowie posits the Imaginary as 'the dimension of experience in which the individual seeks not simply to placate the Other but to dissolve his otherness by becoming his counterpart' (1991: 92). In essence, the subject later repeats these identificatory processes that formed the ego in her relationships with other subjects, in order to placate the otherness created by the ego's creation in the mirror. The Mirror Stage can be seen as 'the prototype of the typical imaginary relationship' (Benvenuto and Kennedy, 1986: 81); adult narcissistic relationships are an extension of this. The Imaginary is the arena of the illusory fixed subject that people think they are, and is the locus of the narcissistic ideal ego (Bowie, 1991: 92). It is what is there before language beckons the infant into the Symbolic order. Primitive phantasies and attempts at non-verbal communication are contained within it. Furthermore, it has a pejorative aspect, as Lacan uses the term to characterise the subject who wilfully attempts to linger outside the Symbolic, in a delusional, self-reflexive fashion. With that in mind, we will consider both *Morgan* Delt and Steven

Shorter as subjects who do not ‘appropriately’ coalesce with the Symbolic. In order to do that, the respective plots and narrative spaces in which the films take place need to be briefly considered, in order to aid in the navigation of the analysis that follows.

Reisz’s film is a portrait of the psychic unravelling of a working-class artist as he attempts to win back the love of his upper-class ex-wife, Leonie (Vanessa Redgrave) and prevent her from marrying her new love, Charles (Robert Hughes). Morgan indulges in a selection of mad-cap stunts to prove his love to her, and does gain re-admittance to her bed for one night. Enlisting family friend Wally (Arthur Mullard) in her kidnap, he takes her to the country in a bid to return their relationship to nature, but once there, realises that this is doomed to failure, like his other attempts. He is arrested and imprisoned. Upon his release he gatecrashes Leonie and Charles’ wedding dressed as a gorilla, prior to escaping upon a motorbike. He is apprehended down by the docks and committed to an institution. The film ends with a pregnant Leonie visiting him in there, to tell him that the child is his.

Morgan presents a milieu now familiar to the contemporary spectator: ‘swinging London’. This space, considered in the popular imagination to be a classless one, is anything but; the couple’s home, in reality belonging to Leonie, is in Holland Park, and scenes also take place in an art gallery in Mayfair and at the Dorchester. Morgan, meanwhile, is from a working-class family of Communist Party members. It is not made clear where the family home is, though the scenes at Mrs Delt’s (Irene Handl) café were filmed in nearby Notting Hill⁴³. In all of the upper-middle class spaces, Morgan acts as a disruptive force: he waves a gun about in the gallery and attempts to wreck Charles and Leonie’s wedding on the roof terrace of the Dorchester. Throughout the film he breaks in to the house, or refuses to leave once in, or camps outside in Leonie’s car, which he has decked out with posters of Trotsky and Lenin. Essentially, we have two contrasting spaces within the text, neither of which are entirely unproblematic for Morgan: the upper-middle class one to which his wit, talent and to

⁴³ Notting Hill was, of course, still a district with a sizeable working class in 1966, though south London may well be Morgan’s origin, based on the disparaging remark from Leonie’s mother, Mrs Henderson (Nan Munroe), concerning their wedding at Streatham Registry Office.

which the relative levelling out of 'the long calm' have gained him access, and the world of class struggle that he has abdicated, as seen throughout and most powerfully (and humorously) when his mother calls him a 'class traitor'. What Morgan wishes to accomplish is a return to nature, shown by his obsession with the gorilla as a symbol of masculinity.

Privilege, on the other hand, takes place in an entirely different world and through a different representative lens. Set in the near future, it depicts a country where the government has decided to harness the revolutionary potential of popular culture⁴⁴ as a suppressant in order to keep the people from realising the depths of their subjugation. The film, which uses a 'voice of God' documentary style frequently, begins with a ticker-tape parade for Steven, a pop star, who is the most famous person in this dystopian vision of Britain and much in demand, both from the public and his management team, who work him very hard. His name is used to sell a string of businesses, media companies, shopping centres, and various ancillary products. He makes commercials: for example, on behalf of the government to encourage people to eat apples. As the film goes on, the strain from this becomes increasingly apparent. The film utilises fascistic imagery, particularly in its second half, and prefigures reactionary developments from a few years later, such as the 1971 Nationwide Festival of Light. In order to accomplish the government and his management's aims, Steven Shorter⁴⁵ performs two separate shows – one near the beginning and one near the end of the film – that represent a symbolic trajectory from imprisonment to religious redemption. Following on from the second of these, which takes place at a

⁴⁴ Rehan Hyder (2018) argues that the film's themes are influenced by the Frankfurt School, specifically Adorno and Horkheimer's concept of 'the culture industry' in which music functions as a form of 'social cement' (Adorno, cited in Hyder, 182). While this reading is certainly of interest, it is our contention that there is a problem with it: the government's role in the diegetic power structure and its tendencies toward fascism are different to the liberal capitalist state and the role of popular culture within it that is the basis for Adorno and Horkheimer's analysis. Furthermore, we do not share the essentially elitist view of popular culture presented by Adorno and Horkheimer, which does not take into account the ways in which popular culture can destabilise a dominant ideology at a given time.

⁴⁵ It almost seems glib to point out that his initials are SS, bringing to mind the Nazi period in Germany but Watkins has himself said that the point of the film was to 'emphasize the significance of Steven Shorter as an allegory for the manner in which national states, working via religion, the mass media, sports, Popular Culture, etc., divert a potential political challenge by young people' (2016). In terms of Watkins' view and our position on the state represented in the film, please see the preceding footnote.

massive, quasi-fascistic rally, he breaks down, leading to an outburst at a ceremony in his honour, at which he disavows his role as pop deity and tells the public that he hates them. Following this, he is banned from public appearances and effectively erased from history, with the film ending with the detritus of the ticker-tape parade seen at the beginning.

Every aspect of Steven's life is controlled; he has, in Lacanian terms, access to the world of language only when performing, and then he has no choice over the material. The 'voice of God' documentary style employed is key to understanding the position in which Steven finds himself; it is the 'presence made of absence' (Lacan, 2006: 228) that leaves him in the Imaginary. What follows below are some preliminary remarks that will lead us into a more sustained engagement with the films' themes.

Part i: Stunted little creatures

There is a scene a little over halfway through *Privilege* where Andrew Butler (William Job), Chairman of Shorter Enterprises, responds in the following manner to a comment from Steven regarding his desire to end his career. He is looking down from the balcony of an office block upon people far below:

'The liberal idea that given enough education these millions will grow into self-aware, creative human beings is nothing but an exploded myth. It can never happen. They're stunted little creatures'.

After another comment, he finishes his speech with this plea:

'You! You are our chance, Steven. They identify with you – they love you! Steven, you can lead them into a better way of life – a fruitful conformity'.

This exchange is key to the film and is a useful way into its exploration of the individual alienated by the modes of exchange in the Symbolic. Morgan as subject, similarly, has taken on a comparable set of views to Butler, while maintaining a nostalgic, Imaginary identification at the level of the ego with the Marxist tropes of his youth, which I will argue function within the text as a form of the Real; which Alain Badiou situates at the historical aspect of the dialectic, the one on 'the side of force' (2009c: 114).

Prior to further discussion of the films, it is necessary to explicate briefly Lacan's distinction between the ego and the subject, in the context, of course, of the continuing interrogation of the latter throughout this project. The analyses of the texts that follow below focus mainly on the characters as subjects. However, somewhat obviously, ego formation also plays a part. Lacan suggests that 'the ego is an imaginary function, it is not to be confused with the subject' (1988a: 193). Bruce Fink states that the difference between the ego and the subject is best comprehended through the constitution of sexual identity, thus:

Sexual identity...[is] the successive identifications that constitute the ego (usually identifications with one or both parents), accounting for an *imaginary* level of sexual identity, a rigid level which often comes into very real conflict with...masculine or feminine structure...as related to the different sides of Lacan's formulas of sexualisation, any given *subject* being able to situate herself on either side (1995: 116).

Fink suggests the first level outlined here is consistent with the ego; the second, with the subject. Therefore, the ego and its identifications are associated with the Imaginary, whereas the subject is enmeshed with desire, capacity for *jouissance*, sexual relations and object choice. Ego identifications may be cross-sex, allowing for contradictory sexual identities, or sexualisation, as Lacan calls it. Lacan illuminates further the difference between ego and subject:

I have sufficiently emphasized that the unconscious is the unknown subject of the ego, that it is misrecognised [*méconnu*] by the ego, which is *der Kern unseres Wesens* [the core of our being]⁴⁶ ...when Freud discusses the primary processes, he means something having an ontological meaning, which he calls *the core of our being*. The core of our being does not coincide with the ego (1988b: 43-44).

Lacan is in accordance with Freud's ontological approach to the subject, which helps in resolving this specific distinction, particularly as Freud often uses the German *Ich* for both, which does not imply the same level of differentiation as *moi* (the ego) and *je* (the subject) (Boothby, 1991: 36). Lacan uses an analogy of two images being put in

⁴⁶ My translation. Misrecognition is translated back into the French in Tomaselli's translation.

proximity to create an overlap: he suggests that if they are brought close enough together they can give the impression of being one (1988b: 44), though this is not actually the case. Furthermore, he suggests states that the ego is 'a particular object within the experience of the subject', and that it fulfils an 'imaginary function' (44). This postulates an ego that is an object, both alienating and fictive. It is no ontological concept of the 'real' self, due to its formation in the mirror. It is 'a unity of the subject alienated from itself' (Lacan, cited in Boothby, 1991: 38). The subject speaks and is spoken within language and is therefore ostensibly within the Symbolic, the ego within the Imaginary. The subject and its imaginary identity are in conflict: the subject is beyond the Imaginary and is therefore alienated by the ego.

Both Morgan and Steven display signs of conflict between fictive egos based upon imaginary identifications and their places as subjects of language within the Symbolic. In the case of Morgan, there is a striving towards control, itself a trope of the Symbolic. He has lost the power of linguistic expression through creativity and is often limited to the gestural: to squawks, noises, and animal impressions; what Julia Kristeva would call 'the semiotic' (1980), though without the political potential that she situates in writing and its capacity to challenge the phallogentrism of the Symbolic. Kristeva associates the semiotic with the pre-mirror stage in Lacanian terms; in Freudian, the pre-Oedipal. What we have here is a stage before the ego is formed. It is important to state that there is no teleological progression through Lacan's stages; the subject can move in and out of them. Steven, on the other hand, does appear to have access to the world of language and is seen throughout the film performing, but doing so using a borrowed language; a language of management and control, though his performance of it has the ability to disrupt it, as we shall see. He is, in Althusserian terms, an interpellated subject, called into being by a structure of power over which he exercises no power. We have parallel subjects here, both controlled: one who strives for access to a world from which he is being excluded; one who wants to throw away the language of the Other. Both men are 'stunted little creatures'.

In particular, they are 'stunted' because they are guilty; as Lacan states, 'the only thing of which one can be guilty is of having given ground relative to one's desire' (1992:

219). Lacan, as discussed in Chapter One, is positive about this pursuit of fantasy, seeing it as grounded in lack through the *objet a*, which marks the lack where the desire of the other is to be found in the first instance. Both men are guilty of ceding ground on their desire, though quite what they desire is ambiguous. Let us interrogate both men's desire and relationship to the Other.

Part ii: What does the subject desire?

Both Morgan and Steven function as nomadic, Oedipal subjects. By the films' endings, both are perhaps figures of the desert. Morgan has lost everything⁴⁷, but is seemingly happy in his abjection; Steven, on the other hand, has effectively been erased from history at his own request, a trajectory similar to Oedipus in *Oedipus at Colonus*, though this can be read not entirely negatively, as discussed below. Similarly, there is an element of self-imposition in his position, though with less clarity than in the play. In Lacan, desire is always the desire of the Other, first born in that moment of pre-Oedipal realisation when the child realises that the (m)other has desire. This symbolic exchange is constitutive and interrogative, most famously summed up in Lacan's comment: '*Chè vuoi?*' It requires an object and is predicated upon lack. Desire for both Morgan and Steven is to be found within a negative dialectic; it lacks the affirmative aspect of the Deleuzian/Spinozan desire without object. It is mediated.

The narrative of *Morgan* presents the spectator with a subject who desires reconciliation with his wife. In doing so, he would be provided with access to wealth and a certain lifestyle. While we are never explicitly informed that his relationship to this world was antagonistic, there are visual and aural clues provided throughout. The strongest of these is his studio/room in the attic. There is a basic narrative logic here regarding his position as an artist 'in his garret', but his situation there, and the specific quality of the room, is outside of the class space of the rest of the house. There are echoes of a lodger, traditionally an individual from a lower social class than the house

⁴⁷ Though a pregnant Leonie comes to see him in the institution and shows him love, there is no indication in the text that he has her back in his life or that he is going to be released, as discussed below.

owner (it is made clear throughout that it has always been Leonie's house, even when they were together, not theirs as a couple). Reisz creates a set that is at odds with the tidied, *haute bourgeois* decoration of the rest of the house. It is chaotic, jumbled, full of the paraphernalia of disorder: a microcosm of another 1960s to the one presented to the spectator in the rest of the house. As well as this room, Leonie's car, where he starts to live after being told he cannot stay in the house, is another space of chaos. Both function as spaces of the Imaginary, where the subject's desire circulates but struggles to make the jump into coherent language. Both spaces also are sites of the Real of the political imaginary: images of revolution permeate them.

Morgan, however, does not appear to situate the revolution in the here and now. For example, there are none of the contemporary symbols of the struggle that we find in the boys' dormitory in *if....*. Instead, we have images of classical Marxism: Trotsky, Lenin and Marx himself. Much of his 'political' behaviour seems to be nothing more than a desire to *épater la bourgeoisie*. His leaving of the structured Symbolic of Marxism and the Communist Party in order to retreat into fantasy and the Imaginary disrupts both the classical Marxist notion of the creation of the subject of history and any attempt at a teleological journey through Lacan's triad of the mind. As it is not made clear within the text that he ever left the Party, though it is suggested he left its path, it might also be argued that he has failed to reach that particular goal; one set out for him at birth. In Lacanian terms, he has misrecognised Leonie as an ego ideal, or adult version of the ideal ego first glimpsed in the moment of fracture in the mirror. There is an Oedipal rupture here, played out via his failed taking up of the classless fantasy of the 1960s and its model of desiring: acquisitive; plural; mobile.

It is worth pausing with Oedipus. As discussed in the previous chapter (p. 40), Zupančič situates Lacan's Oedipus in a 'desire to know, beyond the limit' (2003: 176). In the same paper, she also states that

there is no such thing as the desired object. There is the demanded object and then there is the object-cause of desire which, having no positive content, refers to what we get if we subtract the satisfaction that we find in a given object from the demand (we have) for this object' (184).

This subtraction for Morgan is at the heart of his fantasy regarding Leonie. His demand is excessive, in the sense that *jouissance* forms an excess of negative pleasure, but the desired object is itself a fantasy: a simulacrum. Morgan's obsessive desire to know, as seen in his hiding and watching and his sonic disruptions of her new relationship, can be formulated in another supposition from Zupančič: 'do not give up on the object-cause which constitutes the support of your fantasy!' (2000: 232). Throughout the text, he pursues his goal in a circulatory fashion, seemingly oblivious to the demanded object's rejection of his advances. He suffers from an excess of demand over need. The satisfaction that he receives is minimal (one evening in her bed and her occasional hints that she still loves him); the object-cause increases, as his demand for the object, so inherent in his sense of himself as subject, also increases throughout the film, culminating in his kidnapping of her in order to take her into 'nature' and away from 'culture'. This 'opposition' is important for Morgan throughout the film.

He constantly returns to the theme of love, asking Leonie on occasion if she still loves him and even more regularly *telling* her that she does in a rhetorical fashion. This interchange of knowledge, or lack of, takes place in a different vocal register from his usual demands upon her and from a different position within the *mise-en-scène*. Morgan is often seated, or crouching, when talking about love. When making his usual, more inchoate demands of her, he is often physically animated: prowling; jumping; or beating his chest. Lacan suggests that 'it is love that addresses itself to knowledge. Not desire. Desire wants to know nothing about it' (cited in Clemens, 2013: 60). Throughout the text, Morgan very clearly does not want to know the desire of the other. He avoids it. His position corresponds precisely to Lacan's dictum upon the mediated nature of desire: Morgan's is 'the desire to have one's desire recognized' (Lacan, 2006: 148). This is his only way of knowing it.

Steven Shorter's desire, on the other hand, is to stop being Steven Shorter, the construct created by the various forces controlling him. He is a blank vessel. In Seminar VII (1992: 120-1), Lacan uses the example of the vase to discuss the 'realisation' of desire situated as nothing being represented as something, in the process connecting desire to the *objet a* as 'a void that has acquired a form' (Zupančič: 2000: 18). Steven's

nothingness is referred to directly by Vanessa Ritchie (Jean Shrimpton), the companion whom Steven is given by the Ministry of Culture as a distraction and whose nominal job is to paint him (to represent him, of course), but who starts to have feelings for him. In an interview with an unseen interlocutor, she states that he embodies 'a strange sort of emptiness'. Surrounding that emptiness is the vase containing the nothing-as-subject that is Steven: the set of constructions of pop star and cultural icon that make up his image. He has no answer to the Lacanian question, *Che Vuoi?* The desire of the Other is at once too much, and too little. There is an 'unbearable gap' (Žižek, 1989: 116) in the question, that Steven tries to fill by offering himself to the Other as its object of desire.

In reality, what the Other wants is being carefully controlled by the state-as-Other and its willing accomplices in corporations: Steven is functioning as a dupe of this dominant ideology. This is in the service of a desire to 'usefully divert the violence of youth...[to] keep them happy, off the streets and out of politics', as one member of his management team states. This is the representation of a form of desire that pre-empts those seen in the cinema of the 1970s and is atypical of the cinema of this era, particularly in Britain; more common are representations of positive, somewhat utopian versions of desire, as represented in much cinema of the late 1960s: we will return to that notion of desire in our discussions of *if...* and *Performance*.

Part iii: Desire, the death drive and the symptom

Steven's desire and trajectory are bound up with the death drive, or death instinct, as is Morgan's, to a lesser extent. Lacan relates drives *tout court* to *das Ding*, the Thing, with the Thing presented as 'the beyond-of-the-signified' (1992: 54). Death connects the Thing-as-bounteousness with freedom from individuation⁴⁸, which is pertinent to Steven's position in *Privilege*. Moreover, the death drive, as well as being an urge to destruction, which we shall see in Chapter Three, is also, as Lacan tells us, 'a will to

⁴⁸ This will also be returned to in Chapter Three, which has a much more extensive discussion of the death drive, one of the principal Lacanian concepts at work there.

create from zero, a will to begin again' (1992: 212). As a form of repetition – as drives are – this forms part of both Morgan's and Steven's behaviour and trajectory.

We can see the symptom as the return of truth; specifically, according to Tomšič, 'the return of truth *as such* in the gap of *certain* knowledge' (2015: 183). He is paraphrasing Lacan in his definition here in order to discuss how a certain truth has a rupturing effect upon the order of knowledge; one based upon 'the autonomy of the signifier' and which is 'conflictual' (183), positing it as having a relationship to class struggle. Of course, Lacan cites Marx as the inventor of the symptom (see Žižek, 1989: 11; Tomšič, 2015: 184) and it is here that we can see a meeting point of Lacano-Marxism. To explicate, it is worth citing Tomšič at length:

[Marx's] invention of the symptom is contained in his correction of the labour theory of value, which equally consists in introducing the triplet formed by the signifier *as such* (exchange-value), truth *as such* (labour-power) and knowledge *as such* (abstract labour...) – three figures of negativity, which move from the appearance of market rationality to the contradictions in the capitalist mode of production. To these three figures, Marx and Freud added the fourth, the surplus-object (2015: 184).

While we are not overly concerned with modes of production in this project, the linking of the symptom (the surplus-object) to the labour theory of value allows for a connection to be made between Lacanian psychoanalysis and the political project of 1968 as an act or event in which the subject manifested. If we assume that the subject enjoys her symptom, as much discussed by Žižek⁴⁹ throughout his oeuvre, then this begs the questions: what is the relationship of 1968 to fantasy? How, in the context of utopian socialism, does "'utopian' convey a belief in the possibility of *a universality without its symptom*, without the point of exception functioning as its internal negation?" (Žižek, 1989: 23) And how does that pertain to 1968? We will return to these questions in the conclusion. At this stage, it is sufficient to state that Lacan posits that in the symptom 'the repressed content is returning from the future' (Žižek, 1989: 56), therefore the journey into the past is the working through of the signifier to

⁴⁹ I have not provided a specific reference here, simply because this idea is manifest throughout his work.

bring about and change the past. This situates it in the future anterior; it is what shall have been.

Ellie Ragland, in a discussion of the Lacanian death drive, describes it as ‘the inertia of *jouissance* which makes a person’s love of his or her symptoms greater than any desire to change them’ (1995: 85). This ‘inertia of *jouissance*’ is to be found in Morgan. Throughout the film, he is cathected to his symptom; he cannot change his desire to put himself back into the marital home in which he is surplus to requirements. In a very real sense, he is the symptom embodied: a surplus object within the emotional and class space. This relates to his political positions as well. At one point his mother recounts a conversation that took place between her and Morgan’s father when Morgan was born: he suggests that she has ‘given birth to a liberal’. If we assume Morgan has been born sometime during World War II, we have a suggestion of anteriority regarding the subject that is actually ontological; quite obviously, Morgan’s father could not have foreseen the changes in the class positions engendered by the plural, educated 1960s. However, as a narrative retold in 1966, it makes perfect sense, making him both the surplus-object of working-class radical culture and of the *haute bourgeois* world in which he has been living, albeit precariously. For Steven, on the other hand, the symptom appears to be the foundation of his entire existence; in this dystopian world, his position within the Symbolic has become symptom. Everything is surplus-object. He moves from one meaningless engagement to another, in each space having to be directed: he is without purpose. By the end of the film, Steven has been wiped from history; made un-subject. This suggests an anterior aspect to his subject-position throughout the text. He shall have been nothing, and makes himself nothing. When the symptom continues beyond fantasy, it becomes the *sinthome*⁵⁰, which is ontological and the only defence from the death drive. In epistemological terms, Žižek (1989: 71-2), in a discussion of Lacan’s response to the philosophical question, why is there something instead of nothing, posits the answer: the symptom. We have

⁵⁰ This play on words was introduced by Lacan as the title of Seminar XXIII, which focusses on the writings of James Joyce. It is intended to sound like ‘symptom’ and represents Lacan’s final thoughts on that topic. In French, the two words sound alike, and there is also the allusion of ‘*saint homme*’ (Saint, or Holy Man), which is referred to in the Seminar in the context of Joyce’s grand project of delving into what it means to be human (2016b: 6).

discussed Lacan's status as anti-philosopher in the first chapter and Žižek's answer is indicative of the epistemological difference between philosophy and psychoanalysis as praxis: the trajectory from the Cartesian subject to the symptom.

Part iv: Imaginary and Symbolic Identifications: the Real holes

We will now move on to an explication of the Mirror Stage. Lacan situates the formation of the ego in the *Stade du Miroir*, or Mirror Stage, originally given as a paper in 1936⁵¹ and published in *Écrits* in 1966 from a revised version written in 1949. The Mirror Stage occurs between the ages of six and eighteen months and describes when the subject begins to see itself through identification with an image, one which appears more full and powerful than the child really is. The infant sees itself in 'the contour of his stature that freezes it and in a symmetry that reverses it' (Lacan, 2006: 76), as fully formed, in essence, compared with the nature of its own relative incapacity at this stage. The subject, through being formed as 'I' through the taking on of the image seen in the mirror, is forever taken in 'a fictional direction' (76), due to this identification with a self that is at once itself and not; and necessarily alienating. The subject becomes aware of herself as a type of *gestalt* and is joyful about the feeling of mastery of this image, in spite of its fictionality. The subject falls in love with her own image and takes this whole image of herself as love-object.

There are three separate phases in Lacan's work on the mirror, all of which are relevant to this discussion. In the 1950s Lacan suggested that the body takes on the image of its species (Ragland, 1995: 36); therefore the mirror is the space wherein the image functions as a bridge for the gap between motor skills and the child's own incapacity, as discussed above. Lacan expands on this in his comments regarding other species' characteristics (2006: 77), suggesting both a social and biological interaction present in the setting up of identifications and the formation of the Imaginary. By the 1950s, Lacan sees the ego as based upon imaginary identifications and suggests that it 'is very close to a systematic misrecognition of reality' (Lacan, cited in Ragland, 1995:

⁵¹ The version given in 1936, to the fourteenth International Psychoanalytic Congress at Marienbad, was actually called 'The Looking-Glass Phase' (Bowie, 1991: 17).

36). In the 1960s he expands upon this, and starts to think about how the symbolic nature of the mirror imposes language on the body, in so doing forming a 'symbolic matrix' (Lacan, 2006: 76) predicated upon the subject's desire for the other to name the ideal she or he that s/he wants to be. Ellie Ragland describes this ideal as 'an unconscious formation already inscribed, not in the other person, but in the Otherness of what one does not know about oneself' (1995: 36), suggesting the ways in which the subject perhaps has a false agency regarding this ideal, and does not understand the extent of the forces outside of the subject that have gone into its construction.

These primary identifications return later in life as secondary ones, particularly in the subject's belief that she can be made whole through others. There is a paradox here: there are two people, both created as subjects via this fictional direction, who both *seem* to each other to fulfil these roles. However, their entry into language and the Symbolic is founded upon the Other, through the lost *objet a*, with its concomitant association of filling the void; therefore, they can never be really made 'whole' by an 'other'. Unconditional love, the principal aim of secondary identifications, can never truly exist because the Real within which the lost object exists prevents it. The ideal unity glimpsed in the mirror, and the inner feelings of chaos and lack of control, create the unstable subject discussed above. The unclear, opaque nature of the mirror, in this sense the gaze of the other, allied to the fact that all later identifications are a replay of the original moment in the mirror, means that there will always be *méconnaissance*, or misrecognition.

In Lacan's final phase of the Mirror Stage, he returned to Freud's work on repetition and the drives, stating that repetition is what gives consistency to both being and body; the ego is 'not a subject of free will, but...an object of drive' (Ragland, 1995: 40). The subject will retain an attachment to that which repeats *jouissance*, which can be manifested in the ways in which symptoms are held on to. Ragland suggests that the Mirror Stage ego by this stage has been 'pared down to its libidinal reality as the object of alien desire and *jouissance*' (40). This allows for some stability for the ego as it stays within limits that are already known. However, due to the dual nature of the ego as resister of change and unstable entity in flux, narcissism will always make the

subject susceptible to despair in identificatory relations (40), due to the radical otherness discussed above. This alienation and its connection to desire is also of relevance to the death drive.

The Mirror Stage is the best known of Lacan's work and formed the basis for much of the spectatorship theory of the 1970s and 1980s, as discussed in the Introduction. It allows for a reading of the gaze as situated in the Imaginary (Baudry) – despite the phrase 'the gaze' not being mentioned within it – and for a concern with film as language in the Symbolic (Metz, Mulvey, *et al*). When the text lends itself to it, it also provides an excellent framework for a discussion of identificatory structures between subjects in a film, and between subjects and the *mise-en-scène*, as will be seen to the greatest extent in our analysis of *Performance* in Chapter Three. What it does not do, however, is provide us with a model for a Lacanian reading of how texts represent the gaze as object, or how the gaze inheres textually. Prior to returning to that below and in Chapter Three, let us consider our textual subjects in terms of the exegesis above.

Certain elements of Morgan's identifications have already been discussed. To that, we can add this: his imaginary identification is with the classical figures of communism; his symbolic, with Leonie and the trappings of her lifestyle. However, there is flux, as we would expect from the non-fixed subject of the anterior. This split originates in the mirror, and can be re-designated as between the ideal ego and ego ideal. A section from Žižek can further illuminate this splitting:

imaginary identification is identification with the image in which we appear likeable to ourselves with the image representing 'what we would like to be', and symbolic identification, identification with the very place *from where* we are being observed, *from where* we look at ourselves so that we appear to ourselves likeable, worthy of love (1989: 105).

Morgan's imaginary identification is with figures of the collective; his symbolic with the individualism of the 1960s. In Morgan's case, the imaginary form of identification also coheres with the Real of his Communist Party background. This Real "'holes" the Symbolic' (Chiesa, 2007: 106) of his desired life with Leonie. Revolutionary fervour created the collective subjects of history that he can no longer access: this is the

imaginary identification that he 'would like to be'. Chiesa, in a discussion of Lacan's reworking of the triad of the mind in the early 1960s, suggests that 'the specular nature of the imaginary order is ultimately dependent upon a real element which cannot be specularized' (106). Morgan attempts throughout the film to 'specularize' via his hoarding of images pertaining to revolutionary struggle. However, he does not have access to the Real behind these images; to the lived experience of collective struggle that has been narrated to him since birth. Let us consider the extra-textual reasons for this for a moment.

As discussed in the introduction to this chapter, the post-war consensus saw a further re-balancing between the needs of labour and capital in favour of the former, creating a set of social relations that were markedly less antagonistic than had been the case in the interwar period. While this led to increased prosperity for the working class, it also led to a reduction in the number of people joining the parties of the far left, in particular the Communist Party, which throughout Europe had mainly become reformist⁵² in orientation, often working in coalition with social democrat parties. In Britain there were the International Socialists and a few other smaller groups, but revolutionary socialism had less appeal than it had enjoyed previously or had been subsumed within the Labour Party. Similarly, the 1944 Education Act and the increasing (though still relatively small) number of working-class children getting a grammar school⁵³ education and in some cases continuing on to university, had both opened up a new world and to some extent begun the closure of an old one: the world of class solidarity.

⁵² I am of course using the term here to refer to parties of the left that believe that socialism can be achieved via parliamentary means.

⁵³ Many, though not all, of the figures of the popular sixties and counter culture who contributed to the perceived classlessness of the decade had been to grammar schools. The following list is only exemplary, and there are many more: John Lennon; Paul McCartney; George Harrison; Mick Jagger and Pete Townsend from the world of music; Albert Finney; Tom Courtenay; Terence Stamp; Rita Tushingham and Alan Bates from acting. Similar lists could be provided from other areas of entertainment. Furthermore, many of these individuals also went to Art College, which effectively functioned as the breeding ground of the scene in the sixties. It is also noticeable that the majority of these figures are male, which perhaps tells its own story regarding the gender imbalance of sixties' cultural life. We can assume that Morgan has been to Art College, though not to grammar school, as the spectator is simply given little information to support that, beyond his mother stating that he 'was clever', as discussed below.

In this context, the signifiers of struggle of which Morgan is so fond – Trotsky, Lenin and Marx – take on functions which correspond to the *objet a*, particularly in its initial sense in Lacanian thought: any object that fills the gap left by the (m)other. It is she who has nurtured his desire via these signifiers of a lost time, and she to whom he returns when he has nowhere to go; when the object-cause of his symbolic identification rejects him. The scene where his mother comes into his old bedroom and tucks him in explicitly infantilises him and re-ties him to the pre-Oedipal. This is the arena of the demand for love, rather than for desire; what Lacan calls a desire that ‘doesn’t satisfy anything but itself’ (1998: 382). Morgan imagines he is safe, cocooned, protected from the symbolic matrix. This scene, and the one that precedes it, are key to the series of identifications and class positions taken on by Morgan in the text and demand further analysis and initially, explication.

Just prior to the scene at his mother’s, Morgan has once again broken into Leonie’s house, set up a selection of speakers in various rooms, and ensconced himself in a cupboard with an amplifier, a reel to reel tape player and controls. Charles and Leonie come in and settle down on the sofa to have a drink. As Charles is telling Leonie that ‘the function of the nursery in marriage is to be occupied by children, not by the husband and wife’, she notices a hammer and sickle burnt into the white rug and does not comment upon it, but looks sheepish and slightly amused. Only when Charles notices it does she say what it is. He then irritatedly gets up and notices another hammer and sickle, this time encrusted in jewels on the underside of the lid of the grand piano. He loses his temper. After a bit more animated conversation, they retire to the bedroom. As they begin to kiss, Morgan presses play on the reel to reel tape player. The countdown of a rocket launch is heard, followed by the explosive sound of the rocket. After tearing out the wires to the speakers, Leonie and Charles find and confront Morgan, who pulls a knife on Charles. Charles shouts at him and tells him that they going to ignore him, lock the door and go to bed, much as one would to a child having a tantrum. Morgan gets up and falls backwards idiotically through a partition.

After this, the action moves to his mother's house, where Morgan is dressed in pyjamas in his old room, surrounded by the detritus of his childhood, looking out of the window, watching a train go by. His mother comes in and after a couple of comments regarding his being there, the following conversation takes place while Mrs Delt is making up his bed:

Mrs Delt: 'You're a class traitor. That's what you are'.

Morgan: 'Them's fighting words'.

Mrs Delt: 'We brought you up to respect Lenin, Marx, Harry Pollitt⁵⁴. You was a firebrand when you were 16! And you was clever. At party meetings, they always used to say to me, "you got an intellectual there, Mrs Delt. Ain't only the middle classes got the brains, you know. It's lads like Morgan who are gonna take over this country one of these days". Yes. Now look at you. I don't think you'll ever take over anything, Morgan'.

Morgan: 'I'm still with you inside my head, Ma'.

Mrs Delt: 'The inside of your head is a flamin' mystery to me. Come on. It's ready for you. Get in'.

Following this, the tone changes, she chuckles, comments on his poorly leg and tucks him in. The final exchange takes place:

Mrs Delt: 'Now you're all tucked up in your own room'.

Morgan: 'I like it 'ere'.

Mrs Delt: 'Never mind. There's still time. Leonie might change her mind, eh?'.

Morgan: 'I'm working on it, Ma'.

Mrs Delt: 'Well, good night, then. Sweet dreams'.

⁵⁴ Harry Pollitt was a well-known figure within the Communist Party of Great Britain who served at various times as its General Secretary, its Chairman and Head of its trade union wing. He was a Stalinist and died in 1960, six years before the film was released.

We then hear Morgan say, in a slightly manic fashion, 'hello dreams' prior to cutting to an image of him in his bed on the railway track outside his room, with Leonie riding by on a horse, dressed in revolutionary garb, leading a guerrilla band. This is the conversation:

Leonie: 'do you love me?'

Morgan: 'yes!'

Leonie: 'then do something!'

Morgan, while Leonie shoots in his direction: 'and you, put a skirt on!'

The two scenes combine the symbolic and imaginary identifications of Morgan as subject, plus the Real is there, punching a hole. The first scene is another failed attempt to affect a cathexis with his symbolic identification; it is Leonie, and in Leonie's house where the place is from which he wishes to be loved. In Lacanian terms the Symbolic is the world of the id, of the unconscious structured as a language. Morgan functions within this space as the child replicating the first loss. To explicate, the Symbolic is concerned with the world of language and the function of symbols. The child enters into it through the *Fort! Da!* game, which was based upon Freud observing his grandson throwing an object out of his cot and then bringing it back in again. Both Freud and Lacan associate this with the child's attempt to symbolise and cope with the primary loss, that of the mother. The child, through this 'primordial symbolization' (Lacan, 2006: 479), learns to master an object and via this enters into the world of culture and signification: the Symbolic Order. However, the primary loss is never assuaged and this entry into the order will always be predicated upon the identification in the mirror. Lacan illuminates this further:

Fort! Da! It is already when quite alone that the desire of the human child becomes the desire of another, of an alter ego who dominates him and whose object of desire is henceforth his own affliction (2006: 262).

Therefore, the entry of the child into the world of language, a world where desire can be spoken, where the subject is supposed to represent herself, is already fictive in nature. Furthermore, the word, as a signifier, only leads to another signifier in the chain: therefore, the signified is never reached and any 'true' meaning is absent. Morgan sits in his little cupboard, adrift from the world of culture and signification, creating his linguistic and aural attacks upon it. He has no access any more to this world, in which his place will have been seen as fictive. He can affect damage upon it, via the symbols of his revolutionary past, which we have suggested are the Real. After he sets himself up ready both to listen and to interrupt, he is named as child by Charles in the text. Charles is everything Morgan is not, allowing the film to set up an easily digestible binary for the spectator: he is urban; suave; upper-middle class, and very sure of himself and his own position within the world. Despite this, his violent response to the Real of communism – he smashes the supporting stand away from the lid of the grand piano – marks him out as still threatened by Morgan and what he represents: the potential end of his position, as Leonie's suitor and as member of the ruling class. Just before he notices the hammer and sickle, she has told him that she's still not sure about both him and their proposed marriage. To continue the exegesis via the *Fort! Da!* Game, Leonie spends this scene and much of the film throwing both men out of her pram and bringing them back in again, with the house functioning as the symbolic pram. Following Charles' outburst and their retiring to the bedroom, Morgan's playing of the soundtrack to the rocket launch is both comic in terms of its obvious phallic metaphor and terribly sad; clearly reminiscent of the Freudian primal scene where the child views the parents having sex. Morgan sets this up himself and places himself in this scenario, where the desire of the (m)other can be directly experienced, in doing so providing a point of identification for the spectator in the theoretical model of Baudry, Metz and Mulvey.

Immediately following this is the scene in his old room, where the spectator is given the clearest picture of Morgan's past. The room is chaotic and full of objects, each signifying an aspect of his boyhood. Initially, prior to Mrs Delt coming into the room, we see Morgan, sitting glumly in pyjamas, watching a train go by. As well as providing the spectator with another potential phallic metaphor (as well as a symbol of both

masculine and industrial power), the train clearly symbolises the potential journeys that Morgan could have taken and the one that he did: to the world of privilege a few miles away in Holland Park. After a brief interchange about how he and his father had both liked the railways, the dialogue cited above begins. The first few lines ending with Mrs Delt's comment that she doesn't think he'll take over anything are a riposte to the pluralist, classless dream of the 1960s. For Mrs Delt, his cleverness and relative education should not have been used to ingratiate himself with the ruling class and 'move up in the world', but should instead have been put to use in the service of the class struggle. This is made concrete by her adding of Harry Pollitt to the more obvious figures of Lenin and Marx. This situates class struggle in the Britain of Morgan's youth, and the very real battles a little earlier of Mrs Delt's youth and early adulthood: the General Strike; Cable St and the fight against Mosley; the split in the Labour movement between the Independent Labour Party and the Labour Party. British Cinema in the 1960s has other figures who are alienated from their families via education – most notably, Billy Fisher in *Billy Liar*, but the alienation is more inchoate and based upon the character's longing for something other than the drab, day to day lives of their family. It is clear that there was nothing drab about Morgan's upbringing. Instead, there has been a rupture at some point, presumably one of Morgan's doing (it is instructive that at no point in the film does Mrs Delt blame Leonie for Morgan's displacement from the world of politics).

With this in mind, how do communism and class struggle function as the Real? The answer is via their functioning as that which holes the Symbolic. Lacan, in a comment in the unpublished Seminar XIV to which he never returned, states that 'the unconscious is politics' (cited in Tomšič, 2015: 20). If we connect this to the much more famous axiom that 'the unconscious is structured like a language', then we can begin to think about the move from language to politics, in order to provide a way to imagine Morgan's ontology as subject. We are proposing here that we take Lacan's two postulates in tandem to structure a political subject as one whose entry into the world of language is predicated upon a specific, if secondary, language: that of revolutionary struggle; Marx as mother's milk. This allows us to then plot a chart for Morgan's trajectory using Althusser's notion of interpellation in reverse, as illustrated

by Jodi Dean, who inverts Althusser's formula to give us: 'the subject is interpellated as an individual' (2016: 74). If we assume that Morgan's subject formation has taken place via the language of Marx, making him a concrete and active subject in Marxian terms, then Dean's reversal allows us to consider how he has taken the path to individualism, that concept so beloved of the 1960s. He has been called into a new being by all the trinkets and fantasies of this new classless world, while at the same time, always realising that he does not belong. Leonie and the world she stands for have become Morgan's 'master signifier': the one, or *point de capiton*, to use another formulation of Lacan's, that gives meaning to and orientates all the other signifiers in his world. As such, it is always haunted by the Real, which can return, interrupt it, and create a new master signifier. Morgan's confusion regarding his unconscious and conscious allegiances is exemplified by the line: 'I'm still with you in my head, Ma'.

The dream sequence (and other similar ones throughout) are indicative of his confusion regarding his position and outline a guilt in his fantasy. Leonie, dressed as a revolutionary, is an image that attempts (and fails) to bring together his various identifications. Žižek suggests that '[t]he hard kernel of the Real is approached in the dream' (1989: 47). In this particular dream, his unconscious desire to bring together the two worlds of revolutionary struggle and his bourgeois wife is further problematised by his throwaway, misogynist comment that she should 'put a skirt on!' Clearly, Reisz's intention is to inject a touch of humour via Morgan adopting the language of the 'lad' in the Swinging London film; however, in terms of the analysis here, it inserts another layer of doubt into Morgan's fevered and fractured mind: he wants Leonie to take on the signifiers of the struggle but also wants her to look like a 'dolly bird': not to threaten him; not to be phallic.

To finish this section of the chapter, we are going to interrogate the dream sequence towards the end of the film, followed by the final scene that follows it. Having just watched *King Kong* (Merian C. Cooper, Ernest B. Schoedsack, 1933) at the cinema, in particular the scene where the beast takes Ann Darrow (Fay Wray) up the Empire State Building, Morgan, in his gorilla costume, interrupts Charles' and Leonie's wedding reception at the Dorchester. He then escapes, initially on foot, then by

motorcycle, finally driving off a pier into the Thames. The spectator sees him waking up on top of a pile of rubbish at the docks, unable to remove the gorilla head, suggesting a blurring of boundaries for the subject. Despite this ostensible positioning in the 'real' diegesis of the film, it becomes clear that the next shot is part of a dream (or that the two have merged, of course). Next is seen a straitjacket on a crane, followed by the policeman (Bernard Bresslaw), who has been friendly and sympathetic to Morgan, encouraging him to get into it. There is then a pan revealing that the crane operator is Charles. Morgan, who is not dressed in his gorilla suit in the dream, gets into the jacket and is hoisted up by the crane, which starts to move down the train track, all to the tune of 'The Red Flag'. As Morgan is lowered, large standees and posters of initially Trotsky and Marx can be seen, before the camera pans to reveal images of Lenin and Stalin. As Morgan sits down in the psychiatrist's chair that the policeman has prepared for him, we hear various lines on the soundtrack from Marx and Engels' *The Communist Manifesto*, culminating in 'all that is solid melts in to air, all that is holy is profaned', with the last phrase repeated, and mouthed by Morgan. The camera circles around Morgan to reveal men with guns, who appear to be Russian workers from the revolutionary era. Leonie, her mother⁵⁵ and his mother arrive on horseback. The spectator then briefly sees the 'real' Morgan waking up in his gorilla suit, only to be immediately placed back in the dream. The policeman shouts 'get ready to fire!' There is a cut to the gorilla-suited Morgan running across the tracks, followed by, back in the dream, 'aim...fire!' The men open fire and the camera circles once more to reveal, in order, his mother-in-law shooting him while dressed in the finery of a lady of the 1910s; his mother performing the same action while dressed as a Soviet commissar, and finally Leonie, in Red Army uniform, opening fire with a machine gun. Quick cuts show his body falling back in the dream and in 'the real world', on top of the rubbish heap in his gorilla outfit. We then see him being taken away on a stretcher by ambulance men, still dressed as a gorilla. 'I dreamt I was dead', he says, followed by 'I've gone all furry'.

⁵⁵ Just after the scene in his bedroom at his mother's house, he dressed as a gorilla and put a small amount of dynamite under Leonie's bed, which his mother-in-law sits on, and is consequently blown up, without being injured. Therefore, she is one of the three women he has wronged, hence her involvement in this scene.

The final scene begins with an ethereal, flower-child type shot of a pregnant Leonie walking through the grounds of what the spectator assumes is an institution of some kind. The camera follows her in a semi-circular motion until she reaches Morgan, who is wearing a tie and has neatly combed hair. He is gardening. There is then a freeze frame on Leonie, as Morgan sees her. He asks if the baby is his and she nods, smiling. She then laughs, initially slightly manically and with an effect suggesting she is not the source of the sound, then happily. There is then a freeze on Morgan's face. As Leonie leaves, the camera zooms back to reveal that the flowers that Morgan is working with are arranged in a hammer and sickle, with a Russian star to their left.

There is, of course, a play on words involving gorilla and guerrilla throughout the film. While Morgan dresses as a gorilla to make some sort of 'return to nature' and its attendant code of a 'natural' masculinity, he indulges in guerrilla operations while in his gorilla suit. The final two scenes constitute his symbolic trial and sentence, and come after his release from his actual sentence for kidnapping, which was his final attempt to return Leonie and him to nature; to remove her from the bourgeois world that he cannot access. The trial scene in the dream involves a merging⁵⁶ of the complex of his identities and fantasies. It is Charles, his romantic and class rival, who produces the straitjacket and that friendly symbol of British consensus, the 'bobby', who helps him into it. This friendliness is further exemplified by the absurd and comic request from Morgan to 'give us a swivel, constable', which he obligingly does, telling Morgan they've 'just got time'. While turning in his chair, he and the spectator hear the spoken words from *The Communist Manifesto* cited above. The first phrase refers to the fracturing of Morgan's mental state and increasing inability to discern objects in this instance (he has already stated, 'I've lost the thread' in the scene in Charles' gallery) with the second pertaining to his perceived political destitution. Marx and Engels follow these lines with the comment that man (their term) is faced with 'his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind' (2016: 10). They are positing people free from 'their imaginary relationship to their real conditions of existence' (1998: 294)

⁵⁶ 'Merging' is a trope present in a number of films of the 1960s and will play an important conceptual role in our analysis of *Performance* in Chapter Three.

as Althusser would write some one hundred and twenty years later. What we have with Morgan, though, who has left the 'true path', is an individual utterly stuck in that imaginary relationship. If we look at this scene through Lacan's Mirror Stage, he is misrecognising himself in the mirror (in this case, via the two versions of him seen by the spectator) from his immobile position as spectator at his own imaginary funeral. There is a material fluidity coupled with imaginary identifications.

The policeman shouts 'attention' when Leonie and the mothers arrive, suggesting a hierarchical structure to Morgan's unconscious self-abjection and trial; he is not being condemned by a soviet. It is their arrival that prompts the sequence of shots that move in and out of the dream space: he is running in the 'real' world and immobile in the dream. His execution encompasses both his imaginary and symbolic identifications - the ideal ego of his mother as communist teacher and the further misrecognised ego ideal of Leonie - with the costume of both signifying different moments in Russian revolutionary history: Leonie as a member of the Red Army representing the purity of revolutionary struggle and his mother's commissar outfit representing what went wrong with the revolution after its bureaucratisation by Stalin⁵⁷. The misrecognition of Leonie here is the fulfilment of her role as object-cause of his desire, as this cross-pollination between her symbolic role as bourgeois girl about town in swinging London with revolutionary soldier is a seeping through of the Real of communism onto a symbolic vessel that has no connection to it. On the other hand, his image of his mother is true, in the sense of being an accurate representation of her politics, though the two images together suggest that Morgan's notion of the Real of communism is that of the Trotskyist Permanent Revolution, not of Soviet bureaucracy. Lastly, Leonie shoots the most bullets and has the biggest gun. Morgan's symptom has persisted beyond his fantasy and he has surrendered to the death drive: to the symbolic death, a concept that has even greater resonance for Steven Shorter, as we shall see.

⁵⁷ Earlier in the film, in discussing his mother, he has said that 'she refuses to de-Stalinise'. This was also true of Harry Pollitt, who disliked Khrushchev's attacks on Stalin, which began after the former's so-called Secret Speech in 1956, in which he criticised the legacy of Stalin. Many western communists left the party after the brutal repression of the Hungarian Revolution in the same year. The fact that Mrs Delt did not put her firmly on the Stalinist side of the argument: a believer in socialism in one country, rather than the Trotskyist doctrine of Permanent Revolution.

After his 'execution', he is institutionalised, and given the symbolic trappings of sanity: instead of a gorilla suit, he has a tie, a v-neck jumper, and combed hair. The cinematography and general look of the final scene are different from the rest of the film, suggesting a dreamscape in a fashion that the actual dream scenes do not: it is idyllic; pastoral; almost bucolic. In these final shots, Morgan's desire is frozen for him and the spectator by the device of the freeze-frame. This device had entered narrative feature film⁵⁸ via its famous usage for the final shot of François Truffaut's debut feature, *Les quatre cents coups* (1959) in order to symbolise the lack of narrative closure for the character Antoine Doinel (Jean-Pierre L aud) and the spectator. In the time between that film and *Morgan*, it had become somewhat of a *nouvelle vague* staple. Its double use in this context suggests a permanent freezing of the characters' positions to each other, despite the novel arrival of a baby in the not too distant future; perhaps, initially, a sign of hope and acceptance. However, the final image of the Real of communism symbolised in nature points to a continuation for Morgan of the misconceptions dramatised throughout the text.

Returning to *Privilege*, Steven's figures of identification, both imaginary and symbolic, are harder to pin down, perhaps due to there being no obvious *point de capiton* in his narrative trajectory; nothing that really fixes him in a set of identifications. He is without family, though he states that his parents are alive, with two of his management team, Alvin Kirsch (Mark London) and Jules⁵⁹ Jordan (Max Bacon), functioning as brother and father figures to him at various points in the plot. In the context of the identifications formed in the mirror, what the text gives the spectator is a figure who functions as an ego ideal for the population, clearly one that they have been encouraged to misrecognise. The film neatly lends itself to a Lacano-Althusserian analysis as it is so clearly about the symbolic role of ideology in the imaginary relationship of people to 'their real conditions of existence'. In Althusserian terms,

⁵⁸ It had been used before this in experimental and short films, notably by Truffaut himself in his second short, *Les Mistons* (1957)

⁵⁹ Commonly referred to as Uncle Julie throughout the film. The pet name creates a certain feminisation in his relationship to Steven.

there are a selection of 'ideological state apparatuses' (hereafter ISAs) (1998: 296) that cohere around the figure of Steven Shorter: religion; youth groups; corporations and the world of commerce⁶⁰. In Lacanese, Steven is the 'subject of the unconscious' of the population, with the ISAs functioning as the controllers of this unconscious; a mutated and monstrous symbolic creating a master signifier of control and quasi-fascism. Referring to our previous discussion of Dean's inversion of Althusser, what we have in *Privilege* is the unconscious of the collective subject of the population being interpellated into a cathected identification with an individual. We will now analyse a number of scenes in depth in order to explicate fully the text's tropes of identification.

In the first performance scene of the movie, having been told by the voice-over that this is 'the near future' and having witnessed the 'first ticker tape parade in British history', the spectator sees the staging of Steven's incarceration. We are also told that he has served a prison sentence, but are never told for what crime, leaving the spectator tempted to think that this is also part of the performance. Steven is in clothes that are a mixture of '60's high fashion and prison uniform, being led by two grinning prison guards. He performs the song, 'Free Me⁶¹', a fairly typical, slightly overwrought sixties piece of mini-opera in the style of The Animals or Gene Pitney. He is un-cuffed by the guards; as he is 'set free' a look of despair can be seen in his eyes, symbolising his real desire, which as we learn, is to stop performing and being Steven Shorter. A middle-aged woman, symbolising the mother, is lowered on to the stage from stage left and goes towards Steven, only to be thrown roughly aside by one of the guards. Steven then fights them both and a violent confrontation is performed. At the end, there is silence for a few seconds, followed by shouts from the crowds of 'bastards!' and concerted booing. Immediately after this scene, the voiceover informs the spectator that all of the country's entertainment agencies had come together in

⁶⁰ While these would not feature as ISAs in Althusser's schema in a description of a capitalist society, in the society of the film, which is to some degree fascistic, they are either state-run or at least state-sanctioned, and part of the way in which Steven's power is used to tame the masses.

⁶¹ The song contains the repeated line 'Set me Free' and is often known by that name; indeed, Patti Smith's 1978 cover of it is entitled 'Privilege (Set me Free)'. Moreover, Paul Jones had left his band Manfred Mann in July of 1966, in order to pursue a solo career and acting. Contemporary audiences would have been aware of this, so a certain extra frisson is created here, in terms of a tension between Jones as star, his desire to be free, and Steven's desires.

concert with the government to agree to use popular music to divert the nation's youth from political radicalism⁶² and to save them 'from the nervous tension caused by the state of the world outside'.

From the outset it is clear that the spectator is not watching another sixties' film celebrating the emancipatory, joyful verve of the pop scene. It is not *A Hard Day's Night* (Richard Lester, 1964) nor *Help!* (Richard Lester, 1965). This is further emphasised by the misery of Steven's face throughout the performance, which is in contrast to those in the crowd, which are similar to what we can see in concert footage from the era. What we have then is a rupture between the collective subject of the crowd and the object of desire. This functions as an example of how '[t]he process of interpellation-subjectivation is precisely an attempt to elude, to avoid this traumatic kernel through identification' (Žižek, 1989: 181), with the 'traumatic kernel' being individuation. The aims of the state have been realised successfully, as at no point in the text is any indication given that anyone wants access to a world (or, indeed, understands that such a world might be possible) discrete from this subjectivisation. As Lacan reminds us, 'there is no other of the Other' (2016a: 206). This abstract notion that marks the zenith of Lacan's structuralist period is concretised in *Privilege*, in the process providing no possibility of transcendence for any inhabitant of this world. The one narrative voice that contradicts this otherwise coherent representation is the voice-over, which does function as a form of metalanguage, which Lacan disavows as a possibility⁶³ on the level of the signifier. Of course, film, being a different representational system from the unconscious and from language, regardless of how much they may have in common, can give the spectator access to forms of narration outside of the diegesis as understood by the characters. The voice-

⁶² It is worth providing a little context to Watkins' themes here. After the BBC's decision not to screen his nuclear war docu-drama, *The War Game* (1965), followed by their refusal to allow it even to be shown in other countries, he had been excoriated in the press from both sides of the political spectrum and not one British film director had come to his aid. In this situation, it is worth speculating that the totalitarian cultural space of *Privilege* at least to some degree bears out his feelings regarding this experience. For a full discussion of this, see Sutpen (2005).

⁶³ Lacan discusses this in 'The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire' as part of his teaching on there being no 'other of the Other', specifically: 'I formulate this by saying that there is no metalanguage that can be spoken, or, more aphoristically, that there is no other of the Other (2006: 688).

over is at an angle to the narrative space of the film; perhaps parodiegetic. It is both distancing, due to its ominous and sometimes declamatory tone, and comforting for the spectator, giving the impression as it does of a certain form of viewing safety, as, like all Brechtian devices, it makes it clear that what we are watching is constructed – for now. The repeated phrase at the beginning and end – ‘in the near future’ – disrupts that feeling of symbolic control.

McGowan and Kunkle (2004: xx) discuss film texts as examples of the Kantian thing in itself, therefore unknowable ‘beyond experience’, suggesting a confluence with Lacan’s postulate of the Thing as the site of the impassable. This unknowability pertains to their model of spectatorship where the form of reception can ‘inhere in the text’ (xx). A Kantian opposition between the noumenal and the phenomenological is useful for considering *Privilege* and specifically, the role of the voice-over in the closed world of the text, with the former functioning as a phenomenological guide to the noumenon that is the text; an interpretive aid for the spectator. We are not saying in a literal way that the world of the text exists independently of human perception; more that it has a number of elements that are somewhat imperceptible without the voiceover to guide us.

From Steven’s perspective, he does not appear to have a place or figure of imaginary identification, in the sense discussed by Žižek above. There is no ‘other’ that he would like to be. One of the reasons for this is that the text is a closed world and provides us with no characters who function outside of the world of Steven’s stardom: we have him; Vanessa; his managers, helpers and hangers-on; representatives of other arms of the state and his fans. Regardless of the theoretical model being employed here, there is a narrative logic at play which is consistent with the closed world of the dystopian sci-fi. Moreover, symbolic identification would situate him with the crowd; from the place where he is observed. From the outset, this symbiosis is fracturing, as seen in his facial expressions. Clearly, the spectator must assume that the symbiosis had been successful, as Steven has been a star for two years and an entire apparatus of control has been built upon this connection. The film begins *in media res* so information we have regarding this is provided throughout the text via dialogue and the voice-over.

Furthermore, the double-meaning of 'Free Me', as both representative of Steven's stage character's desire to escape incarceration and of Steven's wish to stop being this construction, suggests that we have entered a world that is going to be rent asunder. The gaze of Steven here 'marks a disturbance in the functioning of ideology rather than in its expression' (McGowan, 2007: 7); such disturbances

McGowan, following Lacan, associates with the Real, rather than the Imaginary. In the Althusserian sense, ideology here is the Imaginary, and Steven's gaze provides a holding of that for the spectator: an object-clue of what is to come. It lends itself particularly to the Lacanian notion of the gaze as *objet a* because it can be missed by the spectator and attributed to the performance of the stage character – to his performative language in the Symbolic; like Holbein's skull, it requires a specific look from an active spectator.

Prior to the scene at the national stadium where Steven is to be 'released' from his bondage, there have been various narrative clues to the construction of ideological subjugation that the government and its various agencies have engaged in. We will mention a number of these before looking at the rally/concert in depth. In the discussion of the dream palaces, the commercial and conceptual tying of Steven to the service of goods under capitalism has been made clear in a number of lines and scenes: 'Steven will get it for you'; 'keep people happy and buying British'; 'don't forget that when you buy in here, you're buying Steven Shorter'. In Seminar VII, Lacan discusses the service of goods as a procrastinating device for desire: 'as far as desires are concerned, come back later. Make them wait' (1992: 315). What we have here is the subject made object in pursuit of the service of goods: a form of reification where the social relationship between Steven and the public is being expressed through the trade in objects. However, he can no longer be what Lacan refers to as 'the guarantor...of the bourgeois dream' (303). Moreover, we have Andrew Butler stating that 'he [Steven] does not belong to himself. He belongs to the world and therefore no longer has any right to himself'. This brings to mind Marx's comment regarding the use-value of objects not belonging to commodities and how they relate to each other simply as exchange-values (Marx, 1992: 176-7). We have the crowd and Steven here functioning as an example of 'the inseparability of human language and commodity

language' (Tomšič, 2015: 35), taking us back to the discussion above regarding there being no metalanguage in Lacan. The film provides us with another glimpse of this in action: there is no language in it to explain to the spectator this relationship between Steven and the crowd. Even the voice-over does not do this. We are required to make assumptions based on genre, our knowledge of the dynamics of stardom and popular culture in the sixties (rather than in 'the near future').

The political rally/pop concert that takes place in the national stadium is the kernel of the film's representation of the coalescence of state and culture: the voice-over describes it as the 'largest staging of nationalism in Great Britain' and as 'an unequalled expression of national solidarity'. Of course, the scene immediately calls to mind Nazi and fascist rallies, with their performative dimension. It is worth citing Robert O. Paxton's seminal contemporary study on the phenomenon of fascism. He describes the political form thus: '[t]he most self-consciously visual of all political forms, fascism presents itself to us in vivid primary images: a chauvinist demagogue haranguing an ecstatic crowd... [and]... disciplined ranks of marching youths' (2005: 9). All these facets are present in the scene: we have vivid colours (white, and red⁶⁴); burning crosses, with associations of the Ku Klux Klan; the Reverend Jeremy Tate (Malcolm Rogers) shouting at people to conform; marching scouts and other youth groups, all performing Nazi salutes; and a scene of near-hysteria involving disabled people in wheel chairs being brought to the front and attempting to get up and walk. We can add to this list the cultural misappropriation of the non-fascist: in this case, the performance of William Blake's 'Jerusalem'. The voiceover informs us that there was a 'coalition formed due to the lack of difference between the Conservative and Labour parties. We need no longer have any disturbing political differences when we are all of a faith, believing in one God, and one flag'. What is being enacted here is the totalitarian erasure of difference. After the performance of 'Jerusalem', a gun salute is

⁶⁴ Red, of course, is associated with the left. However, the use of it in *Privilege* more brings to mind Satanism and its use in Hammer horror films of the time, suggesting a dark priesthood, as seen most famously in *The Devil Rides Out* (Terence Fisher, 1968) and *Taste the Blood of Dracula* (Peter Sasdy, 1970). From the late sixties onwards, British horror started to become more fascinated with the performative, ritual aspects of horror and Satanism, sometimes in order to provide a thinly-veiled allusion to the 'dangerous' aspects of the counter culture and its liberated sexuality.

heard and the band perform Nazi salutes. Steven comes on and performs an almost identical song to 'Free Me', but with different lyrics about being 'saved'. It is useful at this juncture to consider a possible model for this particular version of Steven.

Cliff Richard, who had played a reluctant pop star in Val Guest's *Expresso Bongo* in 1959, had announced his Christianity to the world in 1964 and had begun to dedicate some of his musical life (and his earnings) to Christian music and organisations. He would go on to become a major figure in the Nationwide Festival of Light. After his announcement, he had given some thought to quitting popular music but had been persuaded by friends that he could perform a useful role in using the power of music and celebrity to evangelise. For contemporary audiences of *Privilege*, this would have been relatively fresh in their minds. The images of people falling out of wheelchairs in their Lazarus-like attempts to walk upon hearing Steven do bring to mind both Bible stories and images of evangelical Protestant churches.

To return to the text, this rally is not an Event in the Badiouian sense. It does not produce a new political subject, though it is an attempt to produce the conditions of a new *dispositif*, in Foucauldian terms; instead, it produces a hysterical subject in the crowd, and one leading to *aphanisis* and its own fading in the person of Steven. Lacan (2007: 32-6) situates a desire to question and to demand answers of the master in the discourse of the hysteric, but in order to prove that the master lacks the answers. This is the impossible demand made of Steven by the crowd, and to which he will give the answer in the following scene. The voice-over informs us that '49,000 gave themselves to God and flag through Steven Shorter'. He does not have the capacity to function as a master signifier in this fashion; he cannot carry the chain of signifiers that are the crowd.

In the next scene, we see Steven watching the reverend's 'we will conform' section of the performance on television. There is a cup made in the image of his head in front of him and he tries to smash it, but cannot. Instead, he starts to break up the room. We discussed above Lacan's use of the example of the vase to discuss the realisation of desire as being nothing represented as something and it finds symbolisation at this

precise moment in the text: Steven attempts to destroy this representation of nothing as something, but cannot. As a substitute, he indulges in some more general destruction, but he must find another way to remove himself as subject from the world created around his emptiness. Vanessa, who has been present during this outburst, implores him to go away with her to her parents' house in the country. Shortly afterwards, she sees the scars and wheals on his back and says 'I thought your act was only pretending. You've got to stop this. You must stop it now. What is it you want?' The other here realises that the Real has impinged upon the symbolic construction that is Steven's image. This is a visual cue to the spectator that perhaps the only way for Steven to escape this situation is via a symbolic death. Moreover, Vanessa asks the question that articulates desire: 'che vuoi?' He still has no answer. We then cut to another interview scene, this time with Alvin discussing Steven's previous girlfriend and indicating that he had her removed. He then asks, rhetorically, 'isn't he entitled to his small corner of the world? But I guess in this deal there are no small corners'. We then cut back to Steven and Vanessa discussing marriage, at his request. She makes it clear that 'it wouldn't work' and that any such union would have to be on her terms and be private, making it clear to Steven and the spectator that he is being given a choice, though whether his renouncing of his construction as pop star would win her is never made clear. In Žižek's (1989: 48) memorable phrase, he must 'break the power of the ideological dream' if he is to really be set free.

Following this is the scene where Steven attempts to affect the rupture with his audience – effectively, with the state apparatus – that he feels is required. It is a ceremony in which Steven is to be given another award. We are introduced by Alvin at the microphone to Leo Stanley (Arthur Pentelow), a director of Federated Records, whose awards ceremony it is. Steven has already been brought in to great acclaim. Leo Stanley proceeds to begin with the traditional introduction, 'my lords, ladies and gentlemen', prior to adding 'and Steven Shorter', once more emphasising his specialness as ideological master signifier but also his outsider status. He tells Steven that 'we are all your fans' and that he 'is more than an artist' He then presents the award. While he has been speaking, Steven has been looking visibly upset and has been staring off to the side. He stands silently for a while before saying this:

'Me...me...you worship me as if I were sort of God...but I'm someone, I'm a person...I'm a person...I'm a person...I'm a person.

The camera continues to focus on Steven's anguished face while the voice-over is heard on the soundtrack, stating:

'When asked the reason for his overwhelming popularity, 93.5% of the population of the British Isles said they loved Steven Shorter because he so willingly shared himself with everyone'.

Steven continues speaking:

'I am nothing. This is me. Nothing. And this is you. Because you have made me nothing. I hate you. I hate you. I hate you. I hate you'.

We then hear the line 'forgive us all' from 'Free me'. The microphone on the statue of Steven spins around, before stopping in front of him; the music also stops abruptly, as if someone had put their finger on the record. There is then silence. Steven leaves the stage and takes his seat between Martin (Jeremy Child), a member of his management team, and Vanessa. Cameramen appear, booing is heard and chaos ensues. Alvin is shouting 'keep back!' The voice-over is heard once more:

'All that Steven Shorter has done is to express a wish to become an individual. But that in an age of social conformity can become a social problem'.

Martin kicks everyone out of the room, apart from Vanessa, before ranting at Steven about what he has done in a belittling fashion, calling him 'a clever little boy'. He asks him if he thinks he's a 'bloody preacher', and if 'he's had a call', or 'a vision'. Vanessa shouts 'leave him alone', so Martin turns on her, effectively blaming her for putting 'moronic thoughts' in Steven's mind. He refers to the damage as 'impossible to estimate'.

We then move to outside of Steven Shorter Television no 3 in 'a suburb of London', the voice-over informs us, where his management has announced that Steven will

make a special appearance. There is an angry crowd. He walks through the crowd with Vanessa while the voice-over inform us of this:

‘On September 26th, with public endorsement, Steven Shorter is banned from television appearances just to make sure that he does not abuse his position of privilege to disturb the public peace of mind’

Then, there is a cut to an interview with Andrew Butler where he discusses how the public know what they want and that they now hate Steven. He talks of his duty to his investors and announces that he will be ‘severing all connections with Steven Shorter Enterprises’. The interviewer asks him if Steven could ever restore his popularity and he replies that he doesn’t think so, before stating: ‘perhaps in a time to come after he’s dead, he may be remembered with affectionate nostalgia’.

The penultimate images of the film are of the street in Birmingham where we began, ticker tape blowing in the wind, the banner with ‘Birmingham’s Boy’ written on it hanging mournfully. The voice-over states this:

‘Within about a year, all that remained of Steven Shorter were a few old records and a piece of archive film, with the sound, of course, removed [cut to black and white silent film of Steven talking]. It’s going to be a happy new year in Britain, this year, in the near future’.

The credits roll over the image of Steven’s face. What we have seen here is as follows: an expression of a desire for individuality; a fading of the subject; a symbolic death and an ideological erasure. Let us consider these occurrences initially in turn, with the caveat that there is overlap between them. Steven’s desire to be an individual is a harking back to the time before his fame, and before the erasure of political difference via the apparatus of the coalition government. The bourgeois individual as a category has its roots in the Reformation and the complex of civic institutions set up by the emergent middle class from the seventeenth century onwards. From this conceptual category we can think the ideological erasure that takes place at the end of the film.

As, in Althusserian terms, the diegetic space of *Privilege* is one in which the state has successfully interpellated all individuals as subjects, where there is indeed an 'imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence' (1998: 294), then such erasure is simply an effect of ideology. We have been told a little earlier by Vanessa "that nobody says 'no' anymore", in the context of her asking Steven why he continues to do as he's told. This has been a catalyst towards his attempt to individuate himself via his attempted rupturing of the symbolic field in which he has been constructed. He has, in Marxian terms, attempted to create a gap through which the subject can be constituted. It is not clear whether he succeeds or not, since what happens to Steven-as-Steven is left ambiguous by the text; what happens to Steven-as-star is not. He is erased, in a manner familiar to the spectator from totalitarian constructions of the fate of the individual such as George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, in particular O'Brien's destruction of the photograph (and effectively the identities) of Jones, Aaronson and Rutherford that proved their innocence, followed by O'Brien's comment to Winston Smith that 'it does not exist. It never existed' (1973: 252-3). By the end, Steven will have never have existed, other than as a wordless image (*Privilege's* Orwellian photograph), positing the anteriority of this trajectory as effaced by ideology. Furthermore, his desire for individuality is predicated upon lack and the illusion of the whole subject glimpsed in Lacan's mirror. This imaginary identification can never be whole, as its replaying in the Symbolic is always predicated upon misrecognition.

Lacan's use of *aphanisis* in his discussion of the subject and the Other in Seminar XI is a useful tool in an analysis of the trajectory of Steven at the end of the text. The term is used in a discussion of the division of the subject and refers to its fading, described thus: 'when the subject appears somewhere as meaning, he is manifested elsewhere as 'fading', as disappearance' (Lacan, 1998: 218). This duality neatly sums up Steven's stage appearance and subsequent fading. As he states that he 'is nothing' he creates the conditions in which he will indeed become that within the world that he inhabits. If we agree with Christine Evans' (2006) point that *aphanisis* is 'an event or happening', then *Privilege* presents us with its staging as a prelude to the text's lack of narrative closure. Lacan connects *aphanisis* with the *vel* of alienation and separation

(1998: 218). The *vel* of alienation is the illusory choice as exemplified by Lacan in the highwayman saying to his victim: your money or your life. As Lacan suggests, '[i]f I choose the money, I lose both. If I choose life, I have life without the money, namely, a life deprived of something' (212). For Steven, his fading as subject is predicated upon this *vel*: if he chooses to carry on as Steven Shorter, he loses himself as 'something'; if he chooses Vanessa and not being a star, he enters the world of the symbolic death and at once becomes 'something', but only outside of the set of social relations inscribed in the world. Ellie Ragland's Heideggerian reading of Lacan and being is of use here: 'individuals vacillate between an absolute sense of being somebody – being "there" (*Da- Sein*) – or being nobody, being "gone" (*Fort- Sein*)' (1995: 98). This has been the case for Steven throughout the text and his speech can be seen as his taking of sides in this particular *vel*: he decides to be 'gone'. This vacillation is also pertinent to the subject positions of Chas and Turner in *Performance*, as we shall see.

This discussion leads us into how we might consider the end of the text to be a playing out of the symbolic death that is an element of the death drive. Lorenzo Chiesa, in his discussion of the three different notions of death that can be found in the late Lacan's theory of the subject, suggests that, '[t]he symbolic death of the individual can logically occur only in concomitance with the *death of the Symbolic tout court*' (2007: 148) before postulating that this is the reason why Lacan's examples are mythic, with Antigone⁶⁵ as the most famous. Steven has willed his symbolic death, an example of what Zupančič (2003: 186) calls 'a stake or a wager in the symbolic order', and in the process has 'killed' the Symbolic in its current form with his role as structuring master signifier; what he does not accomplish is its death in itself. This act is comparable with Antigone's burial of her brother, an act which she knows will bring about her doom. Antigone's burial in a cave finds contemporary parallel in Steven's removal from the Symbolic of the world of the film text; perhaps we might even suggest that he has gone into the Plato's Cave of the Imaginary, to live in a world where he does not see

⁶⁵ A full discussion of Lacan's work on Antigone is beyond our scope here, but the relevant aspect for our purpose here is what Lacan refers to as 'the boundary between life and death, the boundary of the still living corpse' (1992: 268), a position taken by Steven via this act.

what is outside of it, and to which he has no access, and no knowledge. We will return to Antigone in the next chapter, primarily in our discussion of Max in *Herostratus*.

Both films present subjects whose desire has led them to fight against the ways in which they are called into being as subjects; a fight that has removed them both from the Symbolic to varying degrees, and, in Badiouian terms, has left them outside the count-as-one, as void. We will return to their positions regarding 1968 in our conclusion, in order to think further about what they represent within our overall analysis, and the cinema and politics of the time. In the next chapter, we will turn to two films that are more directly products of 1968, with *Herostratus* being released during the events of May, and *Performance* being shot that year. They both present subjects who are sprung from the narrative of liberation present in the era, and whose response to that asks the spectator to question its veracity.

Chapter Three: The deadly subject

Introduction

The previous chapter argued that *Morgan* and *Privilege* were films that came at the end of the New Wave and which nodded towards the Swinging London movie. Those films were predominantly discussed via a Lacanian model with an emphasis on the Imaginary and the Symbolic, though the Real, particularly the Real of Communism, was introduced to interrogate the subject position taken by Morgan in the text. In this chapter, we continue with our investigation of the individual subject, though a very different one from that found in *Morgan* and *Privilege*. Both *Herostratus* and *Performance* construct narratives around the tropes of performance and death, and suggest paths towards *jouissance* via symbolic death. Indeed, Donald Cammell and Don Levy, the progenitors of both texts, committed suicide⁶⁶ much later, as did the lead actor of *Herostratus*, Michael Gothard. Moreover, both texts display an overt concern with representational politics and, in the case of *Performance*, mirroring. We must also consider the production contexts of these two films, in particular *Herostratus*, which was made 'outside' the established film industry on a budget of approximately £10,000 (Buchbinder, 2011: 7), unlike the other films being considered here. The genesis of both films is considerably earlier, with *Herostratus* receiving its first funding from the BFI in 1962 and versions of *Performance* in script form dating back to the mid-1960s. Upon completion, neither film had anything in common with either the New Wave/kitchen sink cycle or the Swinging London film, though the original treatment of what was to become *Performance* was within the tradition of the latter, with a nod to the caper film (MacCabe, 1998: 21).

The two films also, in differing ways, take place within realist versions of the counter-culture, and are attempts to represent responses to it. Furthermore, the first half of

⁶⁶ While this is not of course a direct link to the films' textual concerns, it is worth commenting upon. Levy took his own life in 1987, Gothard in 1992 and Cammell in 1996. The story of the latter's death is well documented in Kevin McDonald's 1998 film, *Donald Cammell: The Ultimate Performance*. I am using the word 'progenitor' here in special reference to Cammell's founding role in *Performance*, which tended to be omitted from discussions of the film until the 1990s, with the film being often credited to Nic Roeg, who of course had the much more successful career. Indeed, McDonald's film is one of the principal reasons that this wrong has been made right.

Performance is the first attempt within British Cinema to provide the spectator with a realist representation of gangsterism, without the genre staples that came from Hollywood which can be found in various films from the 1950s and early 1960s. For example, the Krays are referenced, some of the actors had known links to the underworld (Johnny Shannon, John Bindon) and the accents and use of language all aim for a realist effect. The film also boasted a Dialogue Coach/Technical Advisor called David Litvinoff, a known associate of the Krays. The second half of the film references both the Chelsea set of the late 1950s and early 1960s that Cammell was part of, as well as the privileged world of the rock stars of the counter-culture. Of course, the two together are in many ways a realist representation of that period in the 1960s when the glamorous rich feted the gangster. *Herostratus*, on the other hand, is not concerned with glamour, principally. Instead, it sets up a binary between the transient world of Earl's Court and that of advertising. In this sense, the gap between those twin signifiers is greater than that between the two worlds of *Performance*, making it ripe for a Lacanian analysis; Lacan sees the Imaginary as functioning to hide the division of the subject. This gap is seen in the montage editing style, which tends to ask the spectator to do a lot of work to bring the dialectic to fruition. We shall examine that further below.

Performance is split into two halves: the first concerns a gangster, Chas Devlin, who is having trouble with his employees, specifically his boss, Harry Flowers (Johnny Shannon). We are introduced to Flowers' world and see Chas's violence discussed, somewhat euphemistically, as part of his status as a 'performer'. Flowers decides to 'bring in' to the business a bookmaker called Joey Maddocks (Anthony Valentine) and tells Chas to stay out of it, due to the nature of their 'double personal' relationship in the past. Chas disobeys and picks Joey up from his shop and is reprimanded by Flowers. Maddocks and his gang attack Chas in his flat. Chas retaliates and kills him, making his position within Flowers' gang untenable. He decides to go into hiding. Whilst at Paddington station waiting for a train he overhears a bohemian rock musician called Noel (actor uncredited), telling his mother (actor uncredited) that he has left his digs in Notting Hill Gate, owing his landlord, Turner, some money. He mentions the address and Chas decides to go there, pretend to be a friend of Noel's,

pay his debt, and hide out. When he arrives and the second half of the film begins, he discovers a bohemian household populated by Turner, a faded rock star, and his two lovers, Pherber (Anita Pallenberg) and Lucy (Michèle Breton). Turner does not initially want him to stay but changes his mind. Chas is in contact with his friend Tony Farrell (Ken Colley), who is trying to get him a false passport and a ticket to New York. Whilst at the house, he is unwittingly given magic mushrooms, creating a change in his personality. He informs Turner and Pherber that he needs a passport and they begin to play with his image, transforming him into different characters through costume. Turner, Lucy and Pherber all make advances to him, essentially part of the psychic and sexual games that they are playing. He forgets to make a call to Tony to confirm his escape. In the meantime Flowers' gang has made contact with Farrell and coerced him into betraying Chas. Members of the gang surround the house and he is taken away to see Flowers. Chas demands to be allowed to go upstairs: the gang agrees as he is armed, but demand that he gives up the gun when he comes back down. Whilst up there he shoots Turner, then walks downstairs and is led away to a white Rolls Royce, where he is greeted him like an old friend by Flowers. As the car pulls away, it is Turner's face we see from the car window. The film ends with the car driving down a country lane into the distance.

The primary Lacanian trope within *Performance* is its play upon mirroring, which while occurring throughout, relates primarily to the theme of the merging of the two principal characters in the second half, which, for this reason, the large majority of our analysis concerns. Mirrors abound within the *mise-en-scène* and are used to interrogate identity within the film. Misrecognition drives the narrative and, moreover, is central to Lacan's positions regarding the fictiveness of the subject. The poster for the film references this: it contains two images each of Turner and Chas, under the line, 'Vice. And Versa⁶⁷'. This interrogation takes place within a narrative

⁶⁷ It also plays on there being two 'versions' of each actor, via the device of the four images and having the lines 'Mick Jagger. And Mick Jagger' and 'James Fox. And James Fox'.

framework concerned with temporality: the film is fragmentary, open and has a tangential relationship to narrative closure; Lacan's mode of address, along with the polysemic interpretation of terms found in his work, suggests a lack of Oedipal resolution at the heart of his project. This is particularly seen in the seminar form of teaching and is grounded in a late structuralist view that language can never fully represent the content of the site of psychoanalysis. The Lacanian seminar, and indeed the pieces he wrote for publication outside of his teaching, do not provide their recipients with narrative closure. The Oedipal resolution common to narrative cinema is not made central in *Performance* and it is not a text that overly displays Oedipal conflicts, though there are occasional exceptions to this; classical cinema – and even much post-classical cinema – is based upon a relatively closed structure of equilibrium; its destabilising; struggle, and resolution. *Performance* is flexible; perplexing; open.

Herostratus shares an interest in a play of mirrors, but there is no *gestalt* here, due to the film's concern with creating an opposition between the worlds of Max and Farson (Peter Stephens), the advertising executive who stands in as subject for the world of capitalist exchange and the service of goods. The film concerns Max, a poet and wastrel, who decides to commit suicide and have it filmed by an advertising company in an attempt to ape the original Herostratus, who had sought immortality by setting fire to the Temple of Artemis. He persuades Farson to take him on as a client, and moves into a studio of sorts under the latter's supervision. The film is not overly concerned with plot, and despite its length (142 minutes) nothing very much happens in terms of narrative drive for the majority of it; instead, a series of conversations regarding life, death and existence take place between Max, Farson and sometimes Clio (Gabrielle Lucidi⁶⁸), the latter's employee. Recurring images occur throughout and interrupt the conversations: a hanging doll; a dancing woman; a woman clad in PVC; Max running. Prior to the appointed day of his death, Max and Clio sleep together. On that day, Max goes to an office block from which he is supposed to leap, gets into a

⁶⁸ As well as playing Clio, Farson's assistant and Max's lover, she also plays a mysterious figure in black latex, who is seen at various points in the text walking down the street, swinging an umbrella. It is not clear whether the spectator is meant to interpret this figure as Clio, or indeed Max's fantasy version of her, melding as she does sex and death, or as a completely different character.

struggle with the cameraman (Max Latimer) who is meant to be recording it, leading to the latter falling to his death. Max flees the scene and this is intercut with, *inter alia*, images of Farson and Clio arguing on the stairs. The film ends with Clio standing against a wall, crying.

Primarily, *Herostratus* concerns itself with death and the act, and it will be instructive to consider Max's desire to have represented his final moment on earth as a Lacanian act, and in so doing, the extent to which it is an individualised version of the Badiouian Event. This will allow another version of '68 to be situated in the text. Both films display a certain consciousness regarding their status as texts, as material artefacts: the fragmented form of both, allied to the content, fits perfectly with Jean-Louis Comolli's and Jean Narboni's (1969) contemporary descriptions of the functions of a radical cinema. To begin, let us further consider Lacan's conceptualising of the death drive, initially via a brief history of the concept in psychoanalysis.

Part i: The death drive

'The death instinct is only the mask of the symbolic order' (Lacan, 1988b: 326).

The death drive appears initially in Freud's 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' in 1920 and is further developed in 1923 in 'The Ego and the Id'. Richard Boothby calls it 'Freud's most daring hypothesis' (1991: 2), due to its role in amending his position to one where he saw that the purpose of the psychic apparatus was 'the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain' (2). There are four elements to this: repetition in terms of traumatic dreams; the *fort!da!* game that repeated the loss of the mother; the role of masochism and lastly, empirical examples where he saw patients re-presenting loss. Essentially, Freud situates the death drive in repetition compulsion. The death drive forced Freud into a radical restructuring of his thought, specifically leading to his second topography of the id, the ego and the superego. To some extent, as Ellie Ragland posits (1995: 84), the problems occasioned by this were never resolved; instead, he created an impasse for himself by opposing Thanatos and Eros (the personifications of death and love in Greek mythology) and suggesting that they were

‘opposite and equal’ (Ragland, 1995: 84). This suggests that he never really explored the full extent of the death drive, choosing to situate it in a dialectical relationship with the drive towards life.

Freud also situates the drive biologically, discussing the brief life and death cycle of the first organic life; he suggests that a return to an inanimate state, the first instinct, was therefore a necessary by-product (1985: 311). At this stage, Freud also sees the death drive as an effect of the ego, one in opposition to the sexual and life instincts (316). Jonathan Dollimore suggests that ‘[f]rom the earliest times, death has held out the promise of a release not just from desire but from something inseparable from it, namely the pain of being individuated’ (cited in Royle, 2003: 85). This ‘release’, as well as the pain of being called into being as subject, are relevant to our analysis here. Moreover, after the establishment in ‘Beyond the Pleasure Principle’ of the death drive as a desire to return to an inanimate state, Freud postulates that an element of it is directed to the outside world, as opposed to internally (1985: 381). In thinking about this element, Kristeva states that it ‘is changed into a purely destructive drive, one of ascendancy or strong will power’ (1989: 16). Therefore, in terms of sexuality, this presents itself in sadism; internally, as the masochistic tendency that Freud discusses in ‘The Economic Problem of Masochism’, the paper where the concept of primary masochism is established and its connection to the death drive clarified. Lacan suggests that the discovery of the death drive can be found in embryonic form in even the earliest of Freud’s writings (Ragland, 1995: 84), rather than simply being a product of his thinking after the First World War. From this we can argue that Lacan is postulating an anticipatory meaning to the drive in Freud’s work. He is also doubtful about its articulation in ‘Beyond the Pleasure Principle’, suggesting that it ‘is neither true nor false. It is suspect’ (1992: 213). Lacan relates drives generally to *das Ding*⁶⁹ – the Thing – in terms of the Thing as the site of the impassable (213), that of the opposition between the reality and pleasure principles (43). Richard Boothby describes the Thing as ‘the dream of re-finding a primordially lost object, of recovering an

⁶⁹ The term effectively disappears from Lacan’s work after Seminar VII and is replaced by *objet a*. However, the terms are not synonymous. *Objet a* has some sort of relationship to the Symbolic and is less radically unknowable than the Thing.

original source of utter plenitude' (1991: 31). We can situate death as this 'original source' of plenitude, which positions the Thing as central to freedom from 'the pain of being individuated' discussed above.

Lacan connects the death drive to negative *jouissance*, particularly in his later seminars, and in doing so suggests it functions as a dialectic between pleasure and un-pleasure. In Chapter Two (p. 78), we quoted Ellie Ragland, who describes the Lacanian death drive as 'the inertia of *jouissance* which makes a person's love of his or her symptoms greater than any desire to change them' (1995: 85); here, we can consider this further, specifically its internal, masochistic destructiveness, which is connected to the Thing. Essentially, the subject's inability to recreate the Thing, which is lost as something that can be immediately experienced once it has been defined through language within the Symbolic Order, leads to a death drive based upon the desire to return to the sense of oneness experienced before language makes absent this sense of loss. Both films create spaces of imaginary plenitude and the desire for it that can usefully be explored through the death drive.

When Lacan enters the second, structuralist phase of his work, in which language is a system of difference based upon meaningless elements of *parole*, he begins to see the death drive as being about alienation behind the Symbolic Order. He also postulates the death drive as not being simply a discrete drive in and of itself, but as being found within all drives: '[t]he distinction between the life drive and the death drive is true in as much as it manifests two aspects of the drive' (Lacan, 1998: 257). In the third period of his work, when he refers to the Other as a Borromean knot tying the Symbolic, Imaginary and Real together, he posits 'a traumatic signifying element at its very center' (Ragland, 86-87). This corresponds to a void, created by language (Miller, 1991: 32). Thus the death drive is an attempt to fill this loss, or void, through repetitions. This also associates it with the *objet a*, lack and the Real, through the object's function as that which can restore the gap in language which can lead to the Real. Moreover, Lacan's contention that 'desire comes from the Other, while *jouissance* is on the side of the Thing' (2006: 724) allows us to think about the extent to which our filmic

subjects' seeking of death is predicated upon misrecognition of desire as their own within the Symbolic Order, or upon a Real search for the lost object.

Of particular interest regarding the symbolic death of the subject is Lacan's work on the figure of Antigone, where he develops what Charles Freeland (2013: 146) terms an 'ethics of transgression'. Symbolic death is unattainable and it is of interest that the prime example chosen by Lacan for his exploration of this subject is mythic: Antigone, who is 'symbolically dead for the Other before being dead "in reality"' (Chiesa, 2007: 148). Other examples also fall into literary and mythic categories: Oedipus and Hamlet. Therefore, film texts that represent the symbolic death of the subject fit into a representational schema that aligns with Lacan's thought, where the subject of the symbolic death is represented as object. Alenka Zupančič suggests that what *Antigone* pertains to is 'the representation of the very break with the realm of the representation' (2003: 186) in the context of the breakdown of the symbolic order. Both film texts take this supposition towards its representational limits: *Herostratus* through the narrative trope of the mediatisation of death; *Performance* through its ineffable conclusion.

Part ii: Death, the gaze and the mirror in the picture

Both films present the spectator from their beginnings with varying levels of psychic delirium, with *Herostratus* in particular providing (initially) narratively unjustified images of the principal character running, with jump cuts back to the house in which he lives. The 180 degree rule is broken, collages of images are shown on Max's wall, along with the hanging doll (a baby with an eyepatch), and when jump cuts are not used, breaks in continuity are rendered via blank spaces in the style of Antonioni. *Blow-Up* is in some ways a reference point for *Herostratus*, particularly in terms of the style and mannerisms of Max, which at times do echo those of Thomas (David Hemmings), *Blow-Up*'s main character. In terms of comparisons between our two texts for analysis, both also contain early scenes featuring the spraying of paint or blood, which appear initially as non-diegetic inserts (though they are not). It is not until the later scenes of *Herostratus* that it becomes apparent that the images of Max running

are a flash forward; *Performance's* Turner spray-painting the wall is temporally ambiguous, on the other hand, and it is not made clear whether this is simply parallel editing or a scene that has yet to take place. Overall, what both films present from the outset is an assault on continuity and spectatorial position. The viewing subject is not fixed into any illusory position of omnipotence, as we would expect with a more classical narrative, but must instead interpret from a position that may be one of Lacanian *méconnaissance* in terms of looking; however, what is of interest is the extent to which *Herostratus*, in particular, presents us with a disturbing gaze present in the object of representation, in the manner of *The Ambassadors*, as discussed in Chapter One. Let us move on to looking at specific scenes in order to locate the gaze within them. This approach will allow for an illumination of the film's relationship to the death drive as part of this section of the analysis.

Lacan situates the gaze, or anamorphic stain, as *objet a*, with its attendant tropes of unknowing and desire. In *Herostratus*, the hanging doll is our first example of this, pointing as it does to a possible desired conclusion, but one that is not known by the spectator. We have here an image that is both metaphor and metonym, and which is reasonably easy to miss. It functions as one of the two principal aspects of Max's desire, the other being the notoriety which his proposed suicide will bring, referenced by the film's title. Of course, unlike the original Herostratus, Max will not be present to bask in this notoriety. This at once chilling and bleakly comic image of the doll can be understood through Copjec's postulate that '[a]t the moment the gaze is discerned, the image, the entire visual field, takes on a terrifying alterity. It loses its 'belong-to-me aspect and suddenly assumes the function of a screen' (1995: 35) with all the associations of concealment that the notion of 'screen' engenders. This 'alterity' places the spectator in a markedly different position from the one of post-Oedipal mastery suggested by apparatus theorists such as Metz and Mulvey. This disruption, potentially traumatic for the spectator, is foregrounded in the construction of the text, which displays the radicality common to a section of relatively mainstream cinema in the late sixties. That does not make the stain represented by the doll any less provocative, of course; it merely suggests to the spectator that such a representation *might* be on offer. There is also the possibility that the text here forces the spectator

to confront their role, in the sense that Todd McGowan alludes to when discussing how certain types of film 'force...spectators to experience themselves as directly implicated in what they see' (2007: 163). Where is the pleasure in watching a film about a man's suicide? The need to ask this question is brought to the fore in our first vision of the doll, and suggests that the film will not provide the pleasures of fantasy associated with classical cinema. We can also approach this first 'cut' in spectatorial pleasure via Pietro Bianchi's work on the intrusive gaze. It is worth citing him at length:

In the correlation of the subject and object of vision, the cut concerns, firstly, the object (for example, the filmic text) while, secondly, it concerns the experience of the subject involved (the scopic desire). But what Lacan understood was that these two moments were intertwined together (or knotted as Lacan would say) in a third: the Real of vision as heterogeneous from the Imaginary (2017: 142).

This conception is particularly useful for situating such filmic moments outside both the register of dreams and images (the Imaginary) and of language (the Symbolic). In order to do this, we need to consider the doll as an image that effaces the subject/object relationship, via implicating the spectator and as *objet a*, and in so doing, takes the spectator into a visual field that (briefly) lays bare the complex of desire, death and un-pleasure resonant in such images.

To continue with our investigation of the doll, let us think about what is illuminated by the death drive it represents. As stated above, Lacan in his structuralist phase tends to see the death drive as pertaining to alienation behind the Symbolic Order. Alienation is both a common motif in the counterculture of the 1960s (often at a distance, or 'liberated', from its Marxist roots) and one of the conceptual staging posts⁷⁰ of psychoanalysis and Marxism, particularly in its Althusserian, structuralist interpretation, which was very much the current thinking in the field at the time of the film's production, as discussed elsewhere in this thesis. Moreover, *Herostratus* plays

⁷⁰ Another was the Marcusean end of the Frankfurt School, particularly *One-Dimensional Man* (1991, originally published in 1964). The text's analysis of what Marcuse considered to be new forms of social repression married Freudian and Marxian approaches in a discussion of social control and consumerism. However, like Adorno and Horkheimer, Marcuse was pessimistic about the potential for revolutionary struggle at this point, though he did revise this position to a degree in *An Essay on Liberation* in 1969, written as a response to the events of 1968.

throughout, not always sympathetically, upon Max's alienation. Samo Tomšič, in a perspicacious discussion of how a materialist understanding of alienation leads to the conclusion that alienation *is* structure, states this:

The equivalence between alienation and structure...leaves no doubt that the flip side of the production of surplus is the reproduction of lack – the true 'matter' by which the subject is constituted (2015: 66).

This is seen throughout *Herostratus*, particularly in the frequent exchanges between Max and Farson, where a dialectic is set up between surplus (Farson) and lack (Max), with both fluctuating in their respective positions. With this in mind, let us consider a scene in depth: their first meeting; later, we will also look at the scene in the final third where Farson wakes Max after his night with Clio, as this effectively functions as a parallel scene to the first meeting, and closes the relationship set up here. The meeting scene is sixteen minutes long and is worth describing in depth, along with transcribing the majority of the dialogue, as effectively it sets up the dialectic referred to above.

After Max has persuaded Clio to let him in to see Farson, he is made to wait outside his office. He is then shown in, and saunters through the door, carrying his reel-to-reel tape player and his axe, which he has recently used to smash up his room, the first of his gestures to ape the original Herostratus's desire to use violence to achieve fame. Farson asks him to sit down, tells him that he will be with him in a minute, and carries on reading a document. After being made to wait for around three minutes, during which he smiles sardonically, Max gets out of his chair and sets up the tape player on the floor to the left of Farson's desk. Farson now looks at him. Max sits next to it, presses play, and leans back, relaxing. What plays is a cut up of metallic repetitive noise, an almost ululating vocal performance, the sound of aircraft dropping bombs, and a cat meowing. What follows is the first of the verbal interchanges, which is presented for the reader in full, as it is central to what is to come:

Farson: 'Thank you. Now we've heard the overture and you've made yourself *thoroughly* at home, would you like to explain a little more?'

Max walks behind Farson, attempting to intimidate him, then sits on the desk.

Farson (sarcastically): 'I beg your pardon. Do sit down.'

Max offers Farson a cigarette, and has one himself. He lights his own but does not offer Farson a light.

Max: 'I bring you the biggest proposition that you've ever heard of in your uninspired life...that you just cannot ignore. Me!'

Farson: 'Not a very good selling point, I'd say'.

Max then tells him that he is going to commit suicide, to which idea Farson gives his congratulations, while glaring at him.

Max: 'But I'd like you to handle it for me and you can use it any way you like. I want as many people to know about it as possible.'

Farson: 'Why show a thing like that? Surely the thing is to crawl away into a small hole and die?'

Max: 'Farson, is your odious little mind working? Oh, Fars, Farson, come on! I thought you were one of the guardians of the nation's institutions. But what do I find? A flabby old gentleman, just ready for tea time. Don't depress me, don't bring me down. Farson, you're making me lose my faith.'

Farson: 'Just because a tall, fair-haired, rather common urchin thrusts his way into my office doesn't mean I'm going to get angry or to listen to him. But I would like to know what you want.'

Max: 'You're an empire builder, you're at the top of the rat race. You've really made it. All this expensive crap in here, all these symbols, of all your little frauds, your double dealings. Your dirty little kicks and punches. They told me, Farson, everybody told me about you. They said Farson is the biggest bastard out there when it comes to selling something. Human crapology machine, selling it to the natives.'

There is a cut to Clio absentmindedly playing with a hanging lampshade.

Max: 'Oh come on, Fars, don't let me down, please. You're not getting senile? It's time to put you out to graze. I think you're washed up. Look, you must be able to see something in this, I know you. I know what you can do, I've seen it. Pour out the poison, come on. The poison that makes you money...'

Farson: 'Just supposing I do go along, just supposing, with your macabre little idea.'

Max: 'Fast thinking, little piggy. Got there in the end.'

Max walks back towards an abstract work of art on the wall, which consists of a black layered, geological-seeming canvas. Max then comments on the art and makes a few suggestions regarding the décor. Farson gives the impression that he might be interested and asks Max his name, and tells him he wants to dig around and find out more about him. He also asks him about people in his life who would care if he died. Upon realising that no such people exist, or that Max will not discuss them, but that he thinks he will have a fan club, the dialogue continues:

Farson: 'Why then commit suicide?'

Max: 'Got a headache, Farson. Nothing seems to work.'

Farson: 'Why are you going to kill yourself?'

Max: 'Tell you what. Why don't you do it with me?'

Farson: 'Why are you going to commit suicide?'

Max: 'I'm bored stiff. I could fall asleep standing up sometimes. Do you know that?'

Farson: 'What's the real reason for your committing suicide?'

Max: 'You wanna know why? Cos of *you*, Farson. And all the other freaks in your outfit. And the ten million other freaks around the world who get us all jumping around like Mexican beans. That's why. Always prodding, poking. Can you think of a better reason for anyone wanting to jump off a building than that, Farson? That's it, boy, that's why I wanna commit suicide.'

Farson: 'Why are you going to commit suicide?'

Max, taking a while to speak: 'You sit there so comfortably, don't you, so sure, so confident, on your big behind. Sitting right on the edge of that big, black chasm, Farson, right on the edge. Never once you saw it. You were so padded out, you couldn't see it, could you? All your games, all your diversions, you're so protected and you say why, why, why, like some mindless parrot. Why? Why? Because it's all so empty, Farson, it's all so futile. It's all so needless. And yet everybody sweats. Everybody stands on their head and makes such a fuss about being here and getting the best moments out of it. And yet all the time there aren't any best moments.'

There is a cut to a girl dancing, then back to Max and Farson.

Max: 'I'm tired, and by Christ, I wish you were. You sit here, Farson, and you're getting closer to being a corpse every day. And one day that's all you will be and that's all it'll ever have amounted

to. All your hard thinks, all your double dealings, all the tricks you ever thought up, all the nights you spent awake trying to think, how do I get that, how do I get this? That's what it ends up as, Fars. A decomposing lump of flesh in the ground'.

Then, there is a sound bridge. The spectator hears Max talking but instead sees him at an abandoned car with a child, then running in the street. Both images are flash forwards, but that is not clear to the spectator upon first viewing. The monologue continues while these images are shown, with Max talking about why people can't 'just kick out'. The scene cuts to Max, Farson and another man standing on a high floor of a car park, presumably scouting for suicide locations, and once again, a flash forward.

Max: 'Why can't they do that? Why can't they just sit back in their seat and let it go? The space between birth and death. And it's so full up with bloody noise and racket.'

The scene cuts back to the present scene in Farson's office. Clio shakes her head in the direction of Farson, indicating an unwillingness to have anything to do with this.

Max: 'Have you ever looked at their faces? Have you ever looked, seen what's there? They're all so screwed up, it's unbelievable. And why? Cos they want, they think there should be something else.'

We then cut between an upset-looking Clio and Max, slumped on the desk, and the hanging doll in his room.

Farson: 'I see. A remarkably coherent statement, if I may say so. Now, two proposals of my own to make.'

Farson then proceeds to discuss arrangements for Max staying the night in a nearby location belonging to his company in order to give Farson time to make up his mind about whether or not to go ahead.

There are element of this scene which would not be out of place in any number of youth-orientated films with narratives predicated upon the generation gap: for example, Hollywood rebel movies such as *The Wild One* (László Benedek, 1953) and

Rebel Without a Cause (Nicholas Ray, 1956) from the mid-1950s, and British New Wave films such as *Look Back in Anger* (Tony Richardson, 1959) and *Billy Liar* from a little later. Even *Privilege* shares similar concerns. The modes of alienated masculinity on display are not that different. However, there are two principal differences: the vituperative tone of Max's words and the more nihilistic elements of the content; also, the ways in which the film sets up subject identification for the spectator. Within our theoretical framework, a case can be made that what we have here is a figure stuck in the Imaginary⁷¹ who cannot, and is not willing to, make the leap in to the Symbolic, as represented by Farson, and the world of power and language that he signifies. However, subjects move between these two aspects of the triad of the mind and that can be seen here: firstly, we have Max's relative ease with language; secondly, advertising, while a medium exercising control over language within the Symbolic, is also much concerned with the dream-like order of images and pre-Symbolic identifications found in the Imaginary. The Real appears to be absent at this stage.

What is principally of relevance in terms of how this scene sets up the discourses that will run throughout the text is its representation of the death drive as alienation behind the Symbolic Order, and its concomitant trope of the dialectic of lack and structure. Tomšič argues that Lacan postulates that 'the signifier introduces a constitutive alienation, which contains a break with alienation in nature (in the sense of mirror reflection) and is also irreducible to the capitalist forms of alienation' (2015: 171/2), with the signifier in this case being the discussion of death. Max tries to reduce it to his relationship to capitalism as represented by Farson, and the latter does not allow him to do so, and does not accept this explanation until such time as Max makes it clear that the real reason for his wanting to commit suicide relates to the pointlessness of the space between birth and death. In terms of Marx's interpretation of alienation, it does not just pertain to that which is caused by the work put in to

⁷¹ Jean-Paul Sartre wrote a short story entitled 'Erostratus' (see Sartre, 1975), which concerns a character who is keen to commit a criminal act in order to escape his mundane existence and inscribe himself into history, or, in Lacanian terms, enter the Symbolic. For a Lacanian interpretation of the story that attempts in a somewhat superficial way to foreground this interpretation, see *The Incurable Romantic* (2018).

produce the product of labour; or that which is caused by the worker's relationship to this strange object. This paragraph is instructive:

How could the worker come to face the product of his activity as a stranger, were it not that in the very act of production he was estranging himself from himself? The product is after all but the summary of the activity, of production. If then the product of labor is alienation, production itself must be active alienation, the alienation of activity, the activity of alienation (Marx, 1959: 30).

The 'alienation of activity' flows throughout the scene. Max has no discernible activity, beyond a somewhat solipsistic artistic bent and instead embodies a certain alienation; Farson represents the activity of alienation for Max. What is the symbolic product of Max's labour? Death. Furthermore, Marx also states that '[a]ppropriation appears as estrangement, as alienation; and alienation appears as appropriation, estrangement as truly becoming a citizen... it has to be noted that everything which appears in the worker as an activity of alienation, of estrangement, appears in the non-worker as a state of alienation, of estrangement' (34/5). This dialectic between activity and state is embodied in the positions taken up by Max and Farson in this scene, with each of them misrecognising the other, similarly to *Performance*, as discussed below.

Lacan, in Seminar XVII, which, as stated in the introduction to this thesis, was the first of his seminars to be given after the events of May '68, tells us that 'death is properly speaking unknowable' (2007: 123), a phrase he also uses from time to time to describe the Real. Moreover, in this seminar, Lacan engages throughout with Marxian concepts, in order to illuminate his situating of the modern subject. In order to continue with our analysis of the dialectic of surplus and lack discussed above and embodied in the subject positions of our two principals, we need to consider Lacan's contention that what is contained within Marx's concept of surplus value is the notion that the *objet a* functions actually as surplus *jouissance* (2007: 20). Of course all *jouissance* is excessive, though that is not the same thing as all of it being surplus, which allows Lacan to create this discrete category. Furthermore, he states this: 'in the master's discourse the *a* is precisely identifiable with what the thought of a worker, Marx's, produced, namely what was, symbolically and really, the function of surplus value' (44). Here we have a melding of the material and the ideal, in the form of the worker's

consciousness being seen as the same as the alienation present in the product of work. What we have is *objet a* as proletarian consciousness as well as the object of production created through work. What is key here is that Lacan situates this within the master's discourse, one of the four discourses designated in this seminar and the one to which he attached the students' protestations in May '68, as discussed in Chapter One.

In the scene above, which effectively functions ontologically for the text, as from it all else derives, Max presents his 'version' of alienation via this dialectic between surplus and lack. He at once accuses Farson of being too much, and too little. He trusts him to organise the presentation of his death, while at the same time making it clear that he has no faith in him. This is presented through Max's position and behaviour within the *mise en scène*, as well as within the script. At times he bounds around, full of undirected *jouissance*; at other times, he slumps dejectedly and seems to have no will to carry on. Similarly, his language vacillates between attempts to affect an alliance with Farson, which we can interpret as his desire to resolve the contradictions in this dialectic, and confrontation, where he wishes to place his emphasis upon the gap in the signifying chain that separates him from Farson, or the gap between birth and death referred to above. Moreover, Farson's ability to sell things, to reify, as illustrated by Max's references to this in the scene, make him that who adds what Žižek describes (2003: 145) as "the promise of 'something more'" that is to be found in the commodity.

Let us turn to *Performance*. It does not situate the gaze in the object of representation in the same way. What it tends to do is engage in mirroring techniques between the two principal subjects in the film text, Chas and Turner, in order to interrogate the fictive nature of the subject via the narrative trope of merging. For that reason, much of the analysis here stems from an interrogative use of Lacan's Mirror Stage. Here is an indicative section:

This form would, moreover, have to be called the Ideal-I...in the sense that it will also be the rootstock of secondary identifications, this latter term subsuming the libidinal normalization functions. But the important point is that this form situates the agency

known as the ego, prior to its social determination, in a fictional direction that will forever remain irreducible for any single individual or, rather, that will only asymptotically approach the subject's becoming, no matter how successful the dialectical syntheses by which he must resolve, as *I*, his discordance with his own reality (Lacan, 2006: 76).

Lacan's account of the ontological role of misrecognition in the constitution of the subject is represented cinematically in *Turner*, who has not successfully affected any such dialectical synthesis. He is not a subject of the Symbolic Order, which places him in the Imaginary (his time as a successful rock star is in the past). He believes that Chas's seeming mastery of the language of performance can thrust him back into the world of language through his taking on of the role of Turner's 'Ideal I' in Turner's Imaginary. Turner's becoming is via an attempt to utilise Chas's certainty regarding his own self, in order to affect a successful dialectical synthesis. For Lacan, adult identifications are a playing out within the Symbolic of this initial imaginary relationship with the other in the mirror; the Imaginary is the site of the conception of this stable subject that does not exist, and this is then re-presented in forms of later identification.

Turner lives in a large west London townhouse with two women, which he does not leave; rarely does he speak to anyone who is not present in this space. This imaginary plenitude is disturbed by Chas's arrival. For Turner, it is Chas's assumed control over the language of violence, which Turner associates with the lack at his centre made present since he stopped performing, that allows Chas to take on this role as ideal ego. We can situate this language of violence both within the Imaginary, as something instinctive and creative – a Kristevan semiotic – and within the Symbolic, as an authoritative voice. A stable subject position within the Symbolic is always fictive, due to it being founded upon the misrecognition present in the mirror; therefore, Turner looking to reconstitute himself as subject within language through Chas cannot succeed. Samuel Weber describes this type of identification as one 'whose otherness is precisely overlooked in the observation of similarity' (1991: 13). This imaginary and illusory sense of completeness drives the narrative of *Performance*. Also, Lacan's postulate that aggressiveness is to be found when the subject exposes 'the imaginary

intentions of the subject's discourse...[by dismantling] the object the subject has constructed to satisfy them' (2006: 208) is descriptive of what Turner attempts to do to Chas, through the use of psychedelic mushrooms.

Moreover, this situating of Ideal egos is not just to be found on one side of this relationship. Turner functions as this identificatory position for Chas, through the sexual confidence represented in his relationship with Pherber and Lucy. Furthermore, he is at ease with his sexuality and reconstructed masculinity, represented throughout and most directly when Pherber describes Turner, to Chas, as 'a real man, a male-female man.' This is both appealing and frightening to Chas, whose sexuality is ambiguous⁷²: he has homosexual, sado-masochistic desires and has had a homosexual relationship with Joey Maddocks, the man whose murder has effectively led to his going on the run and coming into Turner's orbit. This secondary identification with Turner briefly changes Chas's masculinity, and allows him to soften and be less violent and defensive (initially, a successful 'dialectical synthesis'), before the return of the gang to his life causes his aggression to resurface. This is a form of identification that can be described as narcissistic; furthermore, the text throughout sutures the spectator to Chas's position, and his gazing upon the figure of Turner/Mick Jagger as star. Moreover, as Lacan states: '[i]f the object perceived from without has its own identity, the latter places the man who sees it in a state of tension, because he perceives himself as desire, and as unsatisfied desire' (1988b: 166); this is a description of the danger of misrecognising the desire of the other as somehow constituent and of oneself as self-identical. Chas's narcissism – seen throughout the text in many shots of him flexing muscles in mirrors, or just looking at himself – places himself as desire, despite his interest in Turner, situating his desire dialectically between that of himself and of Turner. In this same seminar, in which Lacan revisits the Mirror Stage, he states that the double relationship with oneself that is born in the mirror creates a situation

⁷² Mark Gallagher (2004) sees this rather differently. While referencing the Lacanian tropes present in the mirror, in particular in this scene, which he analyses in some depth, he is of the view the the film 'reproduce[s] normative masculinity as the site of narrative conflict and viewer engagement' (162). This fails to take into account the ways in which the text throughout problematises the idea of a 'normative masculinity' in its representations of a diverse set of *masculinities*, and of the identifications set up by them for the spectator. Moreover, he situates Chas's power in the mirror, whereas we are arguing that it is the site where that power is destabilised.

where 'all the objects of his world are always structured around the wandering shadow of his own ego' (166). In *Performance* then, we have represented the constitutive lack felt in the mirror, physically re-presented within the external world, which simply creates more lack.

Let us move on from these opening remarks and interrogate some scenes closely. First, we will consider Turner and Chas's first meeting, after Pherber has let Chas into the house and taken payment for the room. Chas goes upstairs and enters an ornate and cluttered room, described by Colin MacCabe as 'decorated in the Gibbsan⁷³ Moroccan manner' (1998: 9). The room represents the detritus of Turner's career: there are guitars and other instruments, esoterica and overall, what we assume are remnants of Turner's previous life. The two men first gaze at each other through a ceiling mirror, immediately setting up this duality: their difference, and potential merging and similarity. Initially, Turner does not want Chas to have the room. They discuss this, while both standing on opposite sides of a screen: Turner hovering somewhat shyly and Chas walking about and pleading in a slightly threatening manner. The screen qua mirror gives the spectator a clue about how the characters' relationship will develop. Chas, after being told that he 'wouldn't fit in' replies, while staring up at the screen/mirror, 'I'm an artist, Mr. Turner, like yourself.' This intrigues Turner, who changes his position once Chas places them in the same set: this functions as Turner identifying with a Lacanian unary trait, rather than with the whole figure. Lorenzo Chiesa, in a discussion of Lacan's theory of the subject and Badiou's set theory as ontology, suggests that the unary trait is 'an explicit attempt to echo the function of the one in set theory' (2006: 74) and it is certainly the case that there is a Badiouian bent to this scene, which is predicated upon names and categories, and whether or not subjects should be in them. Furthermore, a signifier is always a signifier of difference, not of a sign; as Lacan states, the first thing that a signifier implies is that

⁷³ Christopher Gibbs was the design consultant for Turner's house in the film. He was an interior designer and the man considered responsible for bringing over the various styles from North Africa that constituted the interior design aesthetic popular in bohemian '60s London, particularly around Chelsea. The overall style of Turner's house owes much to Brian Jones' and Anita Pallenberg's house at 1 Courtfield Road (MacCabe, 1998: 44-45), itself designed by Gibbs. For a fuller discussion of *Performance's* relationship to fashion and, indeed, the Swinging London film in this context, see Frey (2006).

‘the relationship of the sign to the thing should be effaced’ (2011: 36), with ‘artist’ being misread as a sign relating to Chas as the thing, in this instance.

Chas, on the other hand, appears to see in Turner ‘the contour of his stature...in opposition to the turbulent movements with which the subject feels he animates it’ (Lacan, 2006: 76). Chas is very uncertain at this stage within the text: he has had to go on the run and leave the space where he is comfortable and is markedly uneasy in the bohemian *demi-monde* into which he has placed himself. Later, while speaking to Tony, he is asked where he is: he tells him that he is ‘on the left’. Geographically, this means West London, but there are other possible meanings: the political left; strangeness⁷⁴; perhaps a place where lack is constituted through loneliness and the fear of being left. Chas, for practical rather than psychic reasons, requires the endorsement of this other ‘artist.’ In his desire to escape the dangerous situation in which his violence has placed him, he *misrecognises* Turner and the house as a person and a space of safety, as somewhere to lay low.

This interchange follows on from Chas’s naming of himself as artist:

Turner: ‘I wonder, if you were me, what would you do?’

Chas: ‘It depends who you are, which I don’t know.’

Turner: ‘Who I am? Do you know who you are?’

Chas: ‘Eh? Yes.’

Turner: ‘Well that simplifies matters. You can stay.’

This short scene is key to the narrative and the discourses present in the text. Turner decides to let Chas stay because of this concrete certainty he represents. Lacan, in a discussion of symbolic identification, suggests that ‘it is in the *name of the father* that we must recognize the support of the Symbolic function which, since the dawn of historical time, has identified his person with the figure of the law’ (2006: 230). The Symbolic Order, within which we can see the name of the Father as a type of master signifier, serves to mediate the Real. Psychedelic drug usage may give Turner access to

⁷⁴ The Latin word *sinister*, *sinistre* in Old French or *sinistra* in Italian, means left. It meant ‘left-hand’ in middle English and is associated with the left hand path in magic, the ‘black’ path. Until the first twenty years or so of the last century, the Roman Catholic Church (and other denominations) forced left-handed children to use their right, because of these connotations.

the Real. In this context, Turner wishing to reposition himself within the Symbolic, via access to Chas's supposed certainty as subject, is his attempt at revivification through relearning the language of communication-as-mediation that will stave off the Real, and with it negative *jouissance* and death. Chas's seeming mastery of what Turner feels he can no longer do makes him appealing, associating him with *jouissance* and knowledge. The spectator next sees Chas leave the room and wash off the hair dye that he had put on as a disguise prior to finding out about the room at Turner's, which has the effect of signalling to the spectator – and to himself – that he does indeed know who he is.

We can also situate Turner's desire here as indicative of the need for certainty represented by the Oedipal father. Joan Copjec states that the move from desire to drive in Lacan's thinking in the 1960s, as discussed in Chapter One, can be seen as part of

a general historic transition whose process we are still witnessing: the old modern order of desire, ruled over by an Oedipal father...replaced by a new order of the drive, in which we no longer have recourse to the protections against *jouissance* that the Oedipal father once offered (1995: 182).

In this context, Turner's desire takes on a historical resonance, and can be situated as an attempt to hold on to something that is in the process of being effaced at the time of the film's production, namely delimited desire; as seen in the way in which the 1960s valorised pleasure as a form of consumption, and the ways in which capital will be set free from its constraints from the beginning of the neo-liberal era. We can consider this from within our discussion above regarding surplus value as surplus *jouissance*: if post-'68, capital creates an excess of surplus value, then alongside that comes an excess of *jouissance*. This is potentially terrifying for the subject, and Turner's desire, while seeming to embody liberation in all its meanings, is an attempt to stave off this fear through the figure of Chas as Oedipal father.

Next, let us consider the 'trip' scene, which we are suggesting is the fulcrum of the narrative. Initially, there is a slightly pejorative discussion about Chas's 'image' and his

'act', and clues are presented that suggest Turner has worked out what Chas is. Following this, we see Turner's face superimposed, via a dissolve, over Chas's and 'time for a change' is heard on the soundtrack. Then, there is a relay of looks between Turner and Chas, almost feline and inquisitive from the former, and somewhat defensive from the latter. Chas tells Turner and Pherber that he requires a photo (for his passport, as is made clear a little later) and they begin to dress him up, and to have fun with his image. There is then a shot of Chas, dressed as a stereotype of a 1930s gangster. This shown in the mirror, split in two. This image represents Turner's notion of what a physical signifier of Chas's masculinity would be, which we can think of as representing a 'maturation of...power...as *Gestalt*...in an exteriority in which...this form is certainly more constituent than constituted' (Lacan, 2006: 76). Turner thinks this power will be available to him through affecting a merger with Chas. However, this mode of desire, as Lacan suggests, is a mirage. Desire is always desire of the Other, and is constitutive. Turner ought to be asking what the Other wants. This failure to do so will have fatal implications, as we shall see. Due to Chas' dissatisfaction with Turner's image of him, Turner begins to ask himself if Chas does know who he is. The unicity that Turner thinks he has found in Chas is beginning to be undermined.

Chas is beginning to be affected by the mushrooms: he is softening, and starting to enjoy being presented in a less traditionally masculine fashion. He is shown in Middle Eastern clothes, which almost function as drag, pleasurably gazing upon himself in the mirror. Mirrors abound in the minutes that follow this shot, acting as both conductors and boundaries between Turner and Chas. What is presented for the spectator is a succession of subject positions, which also function as examples of what McGowan refers to as images that 'sustain the gaze through a fundamental absence' (2007: 18), in the sense that the spectator is presented with a chain of signifiers where each effaces briefly that which came before. Lacan suggests that

[t]here is the real person who is before you and who takes up space...And then there is the Other... who is the subject also, but not the reflection of what you see in front of you, and not simply what takes place insofar as you see yourself seeing yourself (1993: 55-56).

At this point Chas sees himself as other (the 1930s gangster; the hippy in middle Eastern clothing), as imagined by Turner, as who he was before meeting Turner, as himself as ideal ego and the desire of the Other through his identification with Turner, and in Turner as ego ideal imagined in exteriority. Furthermore, he sees Turner as ideal ego in the Imaginary and as ego ideal in the Symbolic. Turner positions Chas in a similar complex of subject positions in this scene.

It is explained to Chas that the mushroom he has eaten is responsible for how he is feeling and what he is seeing. His first response is aggression, along with a little hysteria. Pherber soothes him with conciliatory and loving words. The spectator then sees Turner, in a shot that blurs the lines between the diegetic and non-diegetic, dressed as a 1950s leather boy, in a performance that simulates Chas's mannerisms, deliver the film's most famous line: 'the only performance that makes it, that *really* makes it all the way, is the one that achieves madness. Am I right?' This is the first direct representation of the merging of the two and functions as a representation of Chas's fantasy. Suddenly, Pherber and Chas are on a bed and he is still wearing a very long wig. The following conversation takes place:

Chas: 'What's he want?'

Pherber: 'Maybe a little mirror. A little dark mirror.'

Chas: 'I-mirror...he shan't, the thieving little slag!'

Pherber, who has repeated twice the line 'a little dark mirror' whilst Chas is talking: 'He won't take it away, you fool! He just wants to look at it. He's stuck! Stuck!'

Prior to analysing this conversation, we will briefly discuss what Pherber says next. She talks about how Turner lost his 'daemon', and connects this event to Turner looking in the mirror (this is then represented by a shot of Turner doing just that). She then tells Chas that Turner is not sure if he wants it back. This positions Turner in the narrative as looking for a lost identification with himself as other, as wanting to return to that moment of ecstatic misrecognition that has set up his modes of identification ever since. Pherber then tells Chas that Turner has been waiting a long time to see him, and suggests he goes upstairs.

To return to the quoted passage above, it represents Chas's position as Ideal-I for Turner and the former's anxiety regarding the potential loss of his power as subject. This functions as a form of what Lacan calls the fear of 'the *fading* of the subject' (1998: 208). He situates this in the splitting of the subject – *aphanisis*⁷⁵ – and it is a trajectory that he terms 'lethal' (208). We will see this at the film's denouement. Chas functioning as 'dark mirror' of Turner's desire once more represents his misrecognition of Chas and what his command of the language of violence might mean for Turner. This gap between Turner's need and his demand is the locus of his desire. The question for Turner pertains to whether he again wants access to this language of violence, with 'the little dark mirror' functioning metonymically, with Turner as subject sliding on the chain of signifiers created by his identifying with the unary trait he thinks he has seen in Chas.

Chas re-enters the room where Turner and he first met but nothing is as it was before. There is a zoom into Chas's ear canal, which gives the spectator clarity regarding the point of view of what is to come. The camera then leaves the ear canal via an iris-out, which places us in gang boss Harry Flowers' (Johnny Shannon) office. He is relaxing in his chair, seductively saying 'come in'. The rest of the gang, including Chas, is present. This is a re-presentation of a scene from the film's first half. Flowers morphs into Turner, who is repeating 'me, me', which places Turner as Symbolic Father. Flowers had previously had this function for Chas, as his boss and mentor. Conflict had been seen between the two in a variety of scenes, and in many ways Chas's decision to ignore a direct order from Flowers in order to bring Joey Maddocks in is what led to the violence that has positioned Chas in Turner's house. This substitution of Flowers for Turner is also an indication that Turner may become the object of his anger. The song 'Memo from Turner' (which refers to Chas as 'a faggy little leather boy', amongst other things) can best be understood from within the future anterior register.

⁷⁵ This term literally means, from the Greek, the disappearance of sexual desire. However, as we have discussed in Chapter Two, Lacan uses it to refer to the fading of the neurotic subject and it in this manner that we are using it. Bruce Fink suggests that, in *aphanisis* '[o]bject *a* comes to the fore and is cast in the leading role in fantasy, the subject being eclipsed or overshadowed thereby' (1995: 73). This describes this juncture in the film with alacrity.

'Memo from Turner' addresses the listener (and the accompanying images address the spectator) from within a tone of anteriority. Weber, in his discussion of how Lacan situates the historicity of the subject, argues that the future anterior breaks down the fixed subject positions associated with the absolute knowledge that the present perfect tense engenders (1991: 7-9), in the sense that it suggests simple causal relationships between past and present. Chas's certainty places him within this fixed temporality: despite his repressed sexuality, his use of violence, his physical strength, and even his clothes, about which he is very particular, have all allowed him to see himself in this fashion. Moreover, Turner has also seen this in him as well. This scene displaces Chas from a space of temporal fixity, ironically via Turner's words and, more generally, via the latter's attempt to disassemble him. The future anterior problematises 'subjective identity' (Weber: 1991: 9) and in textual terms, this scene is the principal rupture in Chas's personality, and it will return later, after the arrival of the gang. This creates vacillation for Chas, almost a dialectic of uncertainty, which will later be resolved in favour of violence. The song tells him what he will have been, given what he is in the process of becoming (Lacan, 2006: 247). It tells him to reconfigure his possible pasts to create the various futures that he can become. Towards the end of the song, Turner/Flowers sings 'remember who you say you are': Turner (functioning both as Flowers and as a signifier of Chas's move into anterior time) smashes the mirror. The negative effect of this will return later. At this point, it is positive, and Chas's ability to love is released. He goes to Lucy and the two of them make love, with Lucy turning into Turner at various points, which we can read as both a positive sign of Chas's acceptance of his bisexuality, and, negatively, of the vengefulness to come. The song functions within the narrative as a rupture, and presents us with Chas's move into an uncertain, anterior mode of time, with its connotations of '*anticipated belatedness*' (Weber, 1991: 9, his emphasis). Both the spectator and Chas are waiting for the return of his violence and the smashing of the mirror is a narrative marker of the possible end of the identifications that have been set up.

Part iii: The Lacanian Act and the Subject

In *Herostratus*, death is intended to be *mediated*, not the mediator that it is in *Performance*; that is Max's intention. Instead, he does not go through with the act, although there is ambiguity regarding whether he intended to or not. We will shortly analyse the scene after he wakes up having slept with Clio, as it is following this that the uncertainty regarding his final intention is created. Prior to that, let us think about Lacan and the act. Yannis Stavrakakis, in his discussion of Žižek's use of the act for political purposes, suggests that it 'presupposes a given symbolic order, which is dislocated and, following an encounter with the real, rearticulated again in different – but still predominantly symbolic – terms' (2007: 112). Besides Lacan's concentration on the act in Seminar XV, his most sustained engagement is in Seminar VII and his analysis of the figure of Antigone, as referred to above, and it is this analysis that is most prescient for our purposes. In it, Lacan states that Antigone 'pushes to the limit the realization of something that might be called the pure and simple desire of death as such. She incarnates that desire' (1992: 282). Stavrakakis suggests that the reason that Žižek concentrates on Seminar VII is that it 'allows him to endorse the heroic example' (2007: 113) of the act, and in so doing changes lack materially into an unlimited act. This failure to transform lack is key to an understanding of what happens to Max and will be returned to below. Charles Freeland (2013: 43) posits that '[f]or it to appear, for death to be, it must be included within the symbolic order, it must be symbolized in a primordial act of affirmation'. Max's desire, which in Lacanian terms is always the desire of the Other, is to affect this 'act of affirmation', but he fails to do so. Farson is his chosen mediator, whom the spectator thinks may fail himself to take on his accepted role. It is implied throughout the film from the scene analysed above onwards that Farson will not go through with it. At the end, the man on the roof with Max, the cameraman, and Farson's stand-in here, does attempt to save Max, though it is not at all clear if Max is intending to jump, or merely performing; in the ensuing struggle, as stated above, the cameraman falls to his death. The final scene will therefore form part of our analysis and will be of use in tying together the two texts' endings.

The love scene between Max and Clio is the first time in the film that he shows any real empathy towards anyone else, other than very briefly in the early scene on the stairs in his building when talking to Sandy (Mona Chin), another tenant with whom he has a friendship of sorts. Being with Clio appears to have given him access to another form of desire other than death, though in this instance he misrecognises, to a degree, the desire of the other, as Clio has been told by Farson to go to bed with Max. He repeats the phrase 'I can't believe it's happened' and tenderly offers to protect her while she sleeps. She reacts with tears to Max's protestations of love, which are very innocent, naïve and child-like. The spectator is aware that Farson is watching them while this exchange occurs. After Clio gets up, Farson stops her and asks her how it went. She tells him it was alright. Cuts to black make it clear to the spectator that time has passed and Farson wakes Max. There is then an interchange regarding how the latter feels, what he thinks of his breakfast, and other rather mundane matters considering this is meant to be Max's last morning on earth. Farson becomes annoyed as he cannot get Max's full attention and the following interchange takes place:

Max: 'I feel great! And you want me to jump off a roof.'

Farson: 'That's what you're contracted to do, that's what you're going to do. Today is the day.'

Max attempts to deflect this reality through humour, and talks about the conversation putting him off his breakfast. He kicks away the breakfast trolley and stares at Farson mischievously. Farson proceeds to tell him to be careful, commenting that he has been watching him carefully in the last few weeks and has his measure. Farson starts to lose his temper:

Farson: 'You're a failure! A flop! A monumental flop of all time! What have you ever done? What have you ever achieved?'

There are then cuts to a street corner near Max's flat.

Farson, continuing: 'Your sincerity, your freedom, where's it got you? Nowhere.'

Max, again with humour: 'Breakfast in bed'.

Farson: 'You arrive at my door, begging for hope.'

Max: 'That's a bit strong, isn't it?'

There is a cut to Clio as the girl with the umbrella.

Farson: 'It's true! You came to me because you can't complete anything.'

There are then some comments from Farson regarding Max's flat, and how horrible he thinks it is, followed by this:

Farson: 'What is it you really want? You say freedom. All right. It's not true. What you really desire in your own small, pitiful way, my friend, is fame. Do you know what fame is? The adulation of people you despise. It can be manufactured. I've manufactured it. Don't think you're a hero. You're nothing of the sort. Don't believe your own headlines, I made them. You're nothing. A futile nothing. Have you thought for a single moment what would happen if you didn't? Where would you go to? Where are your friends? Your money? Your talent? Squatting on the Embankment.'

There is then a further cut to the hanging doll and to Max on the wasteland again near the abandoned car, as Farson describes a life of homelessness and doss houses. He then shouts at him for his failure to contribute, for only being someone who tears things down.

Farson: 'It isn't just society that's wrong. It's you! You must face it. Go through with it. And then you may at least have achieved something. Self-destruction.'

After this, in an act of cruelty, Farson lets Max know that Clio had been paid to sleep with him, as part of 'softening up a difficult client'. It is also implied, via Farson's reading of one of Max's poems and the comments he makes afterwards that Max had been a virgin prior to his night with Clio. Max starts to wail and cry, then scream 'why?' He lunges at Farson, Clio wails, and Max misses and lies on the ground. A *tableau vivant* of the three of them remains on screen for a minute or so.

In this scene we witness three elements of interest to us in our analysis of Max as subject: a dialectic of desire; the naming of the symbolic death of Max; also, the most direct reference to the Greek story from which the film gets its name. Farson asks the Lacanian question, '*che vuoi?*' In Chapter One we discussed this form of 'symbolic exchange' and Lacan's postulate that this question is formulated under 'the sign of mediation'. In terms of the second of these elements, this is represented via this notion of self-destruction, which is explicitly tied in Farson's words to a contract and

by extension the service of goods, in the context of Farson's place within the capitalist economy. This is made clear throughout the film, in particular in his first meeting with Max. How might we see this playing out of desire in terms of the Father, whom Farson clearly represents here? This dialectic of desire functions via the interrogative father-figure, which Max has been trying to break down and disrupt. Copjec, in her discussion of Lacan's historicising of this shift away from the modern, Oedipal father, suggests that we can think of this in terms of the 'choice between sense and being...between desire and drive' (1995: 182). Farson represents the figure of desire in terms of his naming of it, while Max is a figure of drive, of being. Naming Max as drive allows us to think about him as a figure of the Real, disrupting the Symbolic.

This entails thinking of a version of 1968 that is the 'Other Side' (to borrow Lacan's title for Seminar XVII) of the libertarian May articulated as one of the four Mays by Alain Badiou and discussed in Chapter One. If that '68, the most well-known and, fifty years on, the hegemonic version, was predicated upon sexual liberation and individual freedom, then *Herostratus*, this scene in particular, presents to the spectator its obscene corollary. Max's entry into the world of sexuality has been arranged solely to prepare him for death. In Seminar XX, Lacan, while revisiting the Four Discourses first formulated in Seminar XVII, suggests that 'love is the sign that one is changing discourses' (1999: 16). In Max's case, this would be away from the hysteric's discourse, with its tropes of rebellion against the master, namely Farson as Father and symbol of capitalist exchange. However, since any decision not to commit suicide also entails another rebellion against Farson (actually the progenitor of this putative rebellion) as punitive father and mediator of his death, the move is asymptotic and Max remains trapped. What we have here is Max trapped in a Borromean Knot, with Farson functioning as the symptom. Lacan postulates the father as a *sinthome* in his later diagrams of the Borromean rings (2016b: 11-14) and this fourth ring's role is to bind the three of the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real. Here we can comment further upon how Max's situation presents us with the underside of the libertarian 1968 via Žižek's already cited comment (p. 77) that "'utopian' conveys a belief in the possibility of a *universality without its symptom*, without the point of exception functioning as its internal negation' (1989: 23). If the libertarian, utopian '68 is the principal

contemporary version of that, then the film represents its negation via the emphasis upon the universality *of* the symptom and the impossibility of escaping it.

Moreover, Žižek, as discussed in the previous chapter (p. 77), states that in the Lacanian symptom 'the repressed content is returning from the future and not from the past' (1989: 56); therefore, as with *Performance*, what we have is a journey of anteriority. Flash forwards are present throughout the film and contribute to the film's peculiar narrative and temporal framing, with the text suggesting that the 'present' time scenes are narratively altered by the flash forwards. These flash forwards predominantly take the form of images of Max running; also, there are images of Clio. Finally, the spectator is given the knowledge of what he is running from: his own death, which it has been assumed he is running towards, metaphorically and literally. As discussed in Chapter One, Lacan sees the future anterior as linked to misrecognition and memory, whereas Badiou sees it as the tense of truth. Badiou is of use here, as his subject of truth is of course post-evental. The text's flash forwards are also post-evental, with the caveat that *the event will not have taken place*. In Badiouian terms, Max is not yet a subject, and that which could have made him one would also have destroyed his status as subject, leaving only a negative trace in terms of memory. Lacan, on the other hand, suggests an anteriority in the constitution of history from as early as his first seminar, suggesting that 'it is less a matter of remembering than of rewriting history' (1988a: 14). The use of flash forwards is an example of this, as film's ability to temporally re-inscribe the subject's narrative position is made use of throughout the text. The order of events is also key here, as an event in a narrative occurs, then its affect is not felt until a second event also occurs. The first recurring event in the text is Max running; the second, the end of the film, after which the first event then takes on a different meaning that cannot be known at the time of its representation. Before turning to the end of the film, let us consider Farson's naming of Max's symbolic death and his role as Herostratus alluded to above.

Farson's pushing of Max to go through with his suicide, via his saying to him that it is the only way he can achieve anything, functions textually as the naming of the symbolic death of the subject. This is Max's bind: as stated above, symbolic death is

not attainable and Lacan's examples are mythic. Max would like to be mythic, and the film teases this out through this naming and Farson's suggestion to Max that all he wants is fame, which names him as Herostratus, who of course wanted to achieve fame from his destruction of the Temple of Artemis. Moreover, Antigone's punishment is to be locked in a tomb, and left to die, hence Lacan's positioning of this as 'between two deaths' (1992). He also makes the point that she has been declaring herself dead throughout the play: 'I am dead and I desire death' (Sophocles, cited in Lacan, 1992: 281). Max too, has been placing himself in this state, at once petrified and full of movement, namely the death drive. After Farson has agreed to take Max on, he is given somewhere to stay; he never leaves this room until the final scene where he is supposedly going to his death. It is dark, impossible to place geographically, and consists of nothing but his bed. It brings to mind a number of different spaces: a film set; a theatre set; a tomb. It is perhaps stretching this comparison a little far to suggest that Farson is a version of Creon in *Antigone*, figure of the Law and punisher, but he is a punitive father; more to the point, what Max's tomb-like status does is to place him between the two deaths. This brings to mind Chiesa's postulate cited above describing Antigone in her tomb as 'symbolically dead for the Other prior to being dead "in reality"'. What *Herostratus* adds to this is its meditation upon mediation. Max's incarceration in the tomb is not only prior to this 'second death', but the second death itself is only to exist so that it can be represented within the Symbolic once more; what Chiesa describes as a 'temporary separation from the Symbolic....which is logically followed by a new symbolic reinscription' (2007: 149). This is comparable with Stavrakakis's critique of Žižek's position regarding the political act discussed above. The spectator is denied this political reinscription. In the final section we will think about just what the political meaning of Max's death might have been, and consider it in tandem with the ending of *Performance*.

Part iv: Death and denouements

Different Lacanian concepts have been used to interpret the two films. Where they coalesce is in their denying the spectator closure through the narrative device of avoiding or creating ambiguity around the death of the subject. Following his time

with Lucy, Chas, still attired in Middle-Eastern dress complete with wig, leaves the basement to get Lucy some soap and is confronted by Flowers' men in the hallway. As stated above, Chas has created this problem for himself by forgetting to ring Tony to set up the collection of his passport for his planned flight to the United States, which has given the gang time to find him. It is axiomatic to state that we can read this as emblematic of both Chas's vacillation between subject positions, leading to his 'choosing' one that will lead to death. He is allowed to go upstairs for a few minutes by the gang, mostly, as alluded to above, because he is carrying a gun and tells them if they won't allow him to do this, 'you'll have to give it to me right here', which he says while pointing at the gun. The fact that he is carrying the gun also points to this vacillation and desire to hold on to his phallic power. He goes upstairs and finds Turner and Pherber in bed.

The memory of Turner's mocking of him during the 'Memo from Turner' scene is returning, creating anxiety and a desire for revenge and for a rupturing of the connection created with Turner. As Flowers had mutated into Turner in this scene, and Flowers' men are waiting to take him away, this also pertains to his fear of punishment from Flowers; Chas, like Max and Antigone, is 'between two deaths', though in a different fashion: the first is his biological, or normal death; the second, what Chiesa calls the Real death, which 'will coincide with the cessation of the subject's *post mortem* survival as an object of the Other's *jouissance*' (2007: 148), and is closely related to Symbolic death, as discussed above. The final dialogue between Turner and Chas then follows:

Chas: 'Got to be off now.'

Turner: 'I might come with you, then.'

Chas, laughing: 'you don't know where I'm going, pal.'

Turner, childishly: 'I do.'

The room is filled with palpable menace, which is emphasised by the soundtrack, which is a repetitive, quickening pulse. Turner starts to pull the covers up to his face, in a frightened fashion:

Turner: 'I dunno.'

Chas: 'Yeah, you do.'

Chas pulls out his gun, quickly slides the chamber back twice and fires. Through a quick collision montage of shots we see the bullet penetrating the ear canal of what the spectator assumes is Turner's head, followed by an image of Jorge Luis Borges'⁷⁶ face, then a cracked mirror. This suggests that the identifications set up in 'the symbolic matrix' (Lacan, 2006: 76) are, at least on the level of the Symbolic and that which can be represented within it, at an end. Turner's misrecognition of Chas is abundantly clear to him the minute the quoted exchange above begins, hence his withdrawal under the sheets, in search of the imaginary plenitude that the formation of the *I* partly disrupts. The Chas from the first half of the film has returned. Lacan states that aggression is represented as 'an image of corporeal dislocation' (2006: 84). Turner's attempts to dismantle Chas have created this rupture within him, and allowed his physical aggression to return.

Regardless of the apparent destruction of the state of compossibility which has been created, the film ends with an image that suggests something quite different: after Chas leaves the house, and he is invited by Flowers into the back of his Rolls Royce, the car moves off, and we see the famous image of Turner's face through the window. This can be seen as an example of a dialectical synthesis that is entirely discordant with reality (Lacan, 2006: 76), as Lacan describes the process whereby the subject attempts to come to terms with the image, the body and their difference. The subjects have merged. Preceding this the spectator has glimpsed what appears to be Turner's presumably dead body in a cupboard. No explanation is given for its appearance there. A further reference to the Mirror Stage provides a way into understanding this seeming impossibility. Turner as seen in the car can be understood as a representation of the virtual complex (the movements assumed in the image, and the conclusion of its and the film's discourses), with the dead Turner as an augmented reality (the reflected environment) (Lacan, 2006: 75), existing separately to the image. Furthermore, Lacan's

⁷⁶ Jorge Luis Borges, particularly his story 'El Sur', or 'The South' is an intra-textual reference throughout the film. We see Turner reading from it. The particular resonance that Borges and that specific story have for the film is analysed by Rowlandson (2013), who pays close attention to the ways in which the film blurs boundaries between fiction and the real, and attributes much of this to Cammell's fascination with the author. While his readings of the gap (or lack of) between characters and actors – in particular his comments regarding Fox's breakdown and Jagger's playing with the Turner image for some months after – are of interest, they do not lend themselves to the reading that we are suggesting.

statement that the obsessive (Chas) and his spectator (Turner) are 'united by the mediation of death' (2006: 250) creates another avenue into comprehending the ending of the text. Death has worked as a mediator to conjoin two subject positions. We can also see Chas's shooting of Turner, and the face in the car, as an example of 'the will to begin again' (Lacan, 1992: 212) that Lacan situates in the death drive. In the same section of Seminar VII, he also discusses the '[w]ill for an Other-thing' (212). Turner/Chas in the car functions as this form of drive made flesh.

It is apparent that the various *gestalts* present in *Performance* have been markers on a narrative trajectory that has been taking Chas and Turner towards death. Turner is represented as a man whose life seems to have been predicated upon a desire to avoid pain and pursue pleasure; Chas, on the other hand, has existed in a more ambiguous state. His tendency to ignore orders and his violence place him between pleasure and un-pleasure, the site of the Thing, in the sense of how it can function as a space of negative *jouissance* as a site of internal destructiveness. Chas resides in this place for the majority of the film. Lacan's suggestion that the death drive relates to alienation behind the Symbolic Order allows us to understand Turner's positioning of Chas as ideal ego. Turner misplaces Chas as the Thing, as the dream that can stand in for what is lost; in this case, this is Turner's desire and ability to perform through the signifier of music. Ellie Ragland suggests that 'human beings pursue objects that sustain fantasies, even though attaining an object of fantasy can never completely close the void' (1995: 87). Turner wishes to fill the void at the centre of the death drive through Chas, positioning the latter also as *objet a*, as his object-cause of desire.

As referred to in Chapter Two (p. 103), Ellie Ragland argues that '[s]ince neither positive nor negative *jouissance* is a temporal constant or a state of being, individuals vacillate between an absolute sense of being somebody – being "there" (*Da-Sein*) – or being nobody, being "gone" (*Fort-Sein*)' (1995: 98). Both aggressiveness and narcissism are present in this and it originates in the *Fort! Da!* Game and the child's entry into language and the Symbolic. This inconstancy is represented in both characters and in a variety of ways in the text. There is a hollowness or nothingness in Chas which the

camera lingers upon through the use of close-ups. For example, in the first scene concerning him, the spectator sees him having aggressive, narcissistic sex, which involves him watching himself in the mirror; the camera hovers on his face, and shows a man who appears to lack being and signification. Fox's performance style gives the impression of a man who is perhaps somewhere else, not really present with the woman in the screen space.

Turner lives in a space which is in many ways geographically indefinable, drifting through it like someone existing in his own time: throughout the text, the other inhabitants of the house do not know where he is, or are not able to situate him as being anywhere specific. The shot of the figure in the car actualises this narrative trope of 'being there' or 'being gone'. Who is there at the end? Who is not? Turner and Chas have vacillated between *Da-Sein* and *Fort-Sein* and have now merged on a plane of both being and non-being. This is another example in the corpus of how 'the Real "holes" the Symbolic' (Chiesa, 2007: 106). We can see this as represented by the bullet, boring a hole in the brain of Turner, in order for this new creature to emerge. Furthermore, when Chas shoots Joey Maddox earlier in the film he whispers 'I am the bullet', which also suggests that at this moment the bullet embodies him, and his entry into Turner's mind. Moreover, it may well be that it is Chas's brain that the bullet enters, signifying the act of violence as act of internal destruction.

To turn once more to temporality, with reference to the death drive, Jacques Derrida, in a Lacanian-influenced discussion postulates an element of the death drive as 'archive fever' (1996: 12), and places it in the tense of the future anterior. What is left, then, at the end of *Performance*? The creature we see in the car can be conceived of as a form of archival trope, prompting a certain 'forgetfulness' (12) in the spectator. What has been glimpsed at the end? At this juncture – as the film ends, and the practice of archiving commences – spectatorship is functioning as a form of deferred action: the spectator must try to reconstruct the film's ending via the traces that led to it and which were presented by what came before. Moreover, the question must be asked whether or not the figure in the window has corporeal and diegetic signification in the text. Chas/Turner possibly exists only as a belated codicil. He is a

signified/un-signified male/male-female who is or is not being taken to his death. This figure has been created within the Imaginary, as an identification formed in the mirror, within the Symbolic, through the merging effected by the gun as symbol and by communication, and within the Real, which has holed the Symbolic, and through the death drive and anterior time. If the image of Turner in the window is but a trace, and the identifications the text sets up are indeed smashed in the mirror, then there is still Chas, hopefully changed, improved, regardless of what is in store for him.

Herostratus's final scenes also present death for the spectator, but clearly not the one that the text has been setting up (notwithstanding how likely it is that the spectator does not expect Max to die). Immediately after the last scene analysed, we are presented with footage of Allan Ginsberg reading his poem 'The Change: Kyoto-Tokyo Express' at the 1967 *Dialectics of Liberation* Congress at the Albert Hall. There have been cuts to this throughout the text. It ends with the line 'come sweetly now back to my Self as I was'. Then there are jump cuts between Max wailing and Clio crying out from her position in the *tableau vivant*, and the hanging doll, now spinning, and the waste ground. Next, there are more jump cuts, though time has now moved on, and they represent the next narrative stage. These are between Max staring up at the roof from which he is meant to jump, the PVC-clad girl walking with her umbrella once more, the sound of a woman crying, and the stairs to the roof. Max climbs through a hatch on to the roof, loudhailer in hand. He looks as disturbed as he did after Farson's verbal destruction of him in the previous scene. He then walks around the roof, gets on to the ledge and begins regaling an imaginary public, from a position not caught by the camera on the roof:

'There's nothing the matter with me. Have you ever seen a genius before?

This last line is aimed at the cameraman, who tells him to 'piss off'.

There is then a cut to Sandy crying and it is clear that the sound of the woman crying a couple of minutes earlier was her.

Max: 'I'm the hero you've all been waiting for. I don't know what lies you've heard or read. This is the truth, the new fashion, a new solution. This is for you more than me'.

The cameraman shouts at him: 'Hold on! Wait a minute! Take it easy!'

He then runs over and attempts to stop Max jumping. They grapple and the cameraman falls to his death. There are cuts to the recurrent image of the dancing girl and to Max shaking in the corner, in the style discussed above. He lies supine upon the roof. The camera then pans around the roof to reveal a long length of rope on a large spool, suggesting that Farson intended to use the rope to fake Max's death⁷⁷, and that the cameraman running towards him was in order to attach him to the rope and to get him on camera. We then see Max running down the stairs, opera is heard non-diegetically and then suddenly is gone and there are cuts to Allan Ginsberg, Farson and Clio, with the latter saying 'wait. Don't come near me'. The spectator then sees, from Max's perspective, an old man covering the dead body in newspapers. He speaks to Max: 'Who are you? I don't want anything to do with this. You understand?' This can be interpreted as a man nearer to death giving Max the benefit of future knowledge regarding how to see death once it is temporally nearer; also, as a comment upon how the media might not view his grand gesture in the way in which he wants it to.

The scene then moves to Farson and Clio on the stairs. She verbally attacks him, calls him stupid, and asks him what he is doing. Throughout the next couple of minutes, the 'answer' given to Clio's questions to Farson is a selection of cuts to different shots of Max outside, looking horrified. There are also cuts to blood, the girl in PVC, the spinning doll and a black and white image of a crowd on its way to a football match. Clio is thinking out loud about what it is that Farson cares about and asks him if it is her. She is in close-up throughout this and Farson can be heard but not seen. She shouts at him to get on his knees, demands that he tells her he cares about her and calls him a fat pig. She shouts about how it all means nothing and how 'you're all the same'. She then says 'there's not one person who's really...' and there is a cut to Max's face again. We then see him start to run. A selection of quick cuts show Max running and the street corner (the flash forwards from earlier, now presented in the plot at the

⁷⁷ It is not particularly worth speculating for our purposes about the survival chance of a man who jumped off a roof with a rope attached to him; in reality, of course, he would at least be seriously injured as the tension would break his pelvis. That aside, the implication of the shot of the rope is clear in the text.

time they take place in the story), Clio crying, the wasteland and the PVC girl with the umbrella. The shots of Max running are cut so that the action is elided and he quickly comes into close up. The soundtrack has been replaced with silence. There are then non-diegetic inserts of an abattoir combined with a woman's voice saying 'stop it. Stop it'. The film ends with Clio crying, standing against a wall, saying that she wants to go and asking to be let out. A man's voice is heard saying 'you can get out'. He then screams this again, followed by 'your choosing', twice. Clio says 'yes, yes, I am. No'. The screen fades to black and 'end' is seen on the credits.

The use throughout the film of scenes of the *Dialectics of Liberation* Congress is the key way in which the film places itself within the actual counterculture and, in the tying of this event to death, is what connects it most strongly to *Performance*. Both films hint at something utopian in the freedom of release from life and what it is to be an individual subject. This is felt throughout *Performance* and is most clearly seen in the film's final shot; in *Herostratus*, however, it is more of a commentary upon the principal narrative action, as little attempt is made to interrogate what a dialectic of liberation might be, assuming we are not meant to see the mediation of death via an advertising film as liberatory. It would be tempting to consider this notion as a satire upon the sixties counterculture's relationship with the frippery and finery of show, in the manner of The Kinks' 'Dedicated Follower of Fashion' or John Lennon's comment when remembering the sixties that 'we all dressed up. The same bastards are in control, the same people are running everything. It's *exactly* the same! They *hyped* the kids' (cited in Wenner, 2000: 107). There is nothing to suggest this, though. Instead, it is best to consider Max's trajectory and the Congress dialectically, and to think about the contradictions present, and how, if at all, they are resolved.

The key element in the final scenes is of course Max's non-death. What happens on the roof is ambiguous: it could be that the cameraman tries to get Max away from the edge because he is in the wrong place; out of shot. This then leads to the conclusion that Farson wants Max to go through with it, which of course is what the previous scene with him and Max has led the spectator to believe. On the other hand, the rope suggests the whole thing was to be staged, as do the cuts to the now spinning hanging

doll, which can be read as a representation of Max's staged death via the rope and its subsequent inscription onto film. Of interest with the final shot of the roof is the use of the pan, a technique which has been remarkably absent from the film so far. Usually, when movement has been suggested, such as the scenes of Max running, it has been via cuts eliding the action. The pan as used here hints at a form of omniscient narration, and indeed gives the spectator more information than is usual in the film, which otherwise eschews conventions such as establishing shots or long shots full of detail that in classical film serve to centre the spectator or to tie up loose ends. Instead, the film draws attention to its status as material film due to the editing. To consider this a little more, let us return to the different versions of death made possible in the text.

If we consider that the death drive has at its heart a desire to use repetition to stave off the loss or void in the Symbolic, and that the Real holes the Symbolic, then we have a way of understanding the different levels of possible deaths present in this scene. Furthermore, Max's symbolic death, despite being named by Farson, was never on offer; it would have entailed Max's erasure from history, from the world of language. Max actually wants his death to be memorialised; like the eponymous character, he longs for notoriety. Any symbolic death is only temporary, as discussed above. It is possible, then, to read Max's accidental failure to go through with his staged death as a retreat from the political possibilities potentially opened up by its representation in Farson's film. While it is clear that Farson would wish to use the imagery for commercial purposes, it is also the case that the representation of Max's alienation could lay bare the contradictions present in the counterculture's relationship to capital, and therefore to a radicalisation of those potentially created as subject by it.

Additionally, as alluded to in the Introduction, we are suggesting that *Herostratus* is a materialist film, one which is engaged in an analysis of its own materiality but that the meaning of this is apparent only at the end. This is seen throughout, particularly in the use of a speed of motion technique (what can best be described as a form of 'fast shaking') to present a variety of ideas, predominantly the inner turmoil of Max. This functions on the surface as a form of expressionism, and does recall Edvard Munch's

1893 painting, *Skrik (The Scream)*, the most famous example of the movement. Some of the images also recall the work of Francis Bacon, which is also a reference point in *Performance*. Predominantly, though, what it does is draw attention to the medium of representation and its material physicality. Žižek, in a discussion of Seminar VII, posits that Lacan

pointed out that the ideology of evolutionism always implies a belief in a Supreme Good, in a final Goal of evolution which guides its course from the very beginning....it always implies a hidden, disavowed teleology, whereas materialism is always creationist – it always includes a *retroactive* movement: the final goal is not inscribed in the beginning; things receive their meaning afterwards (1989: 144).

In the place of evolutionism, we can consider the form of classical narrative film, with materialism as the non-continuity style of forms of cinema which use any type of montage editing where the spectator has to play an active part in the dialectical interpretation of the images. Žižek, in a discussion of Walter Benjamin in the same chapter, also suggests two types of temporality: ‘the empty, homogenous time of continuity (proper to the reigning, official historiography) and the ‘filled’ time of discontinuity (which defines historical materialism)’ (1989: 138). At the end of *Herostratus*, we have a ‘filled time’ of anterior belatedness, where the spectator has to retroactively interpret the preceding two hours based upon the unexpected knowledge that the recurrent images of Max running were actually flash forwards away from his death, which will not have taken place. Like Chas, Max is not existing in the present perfect of Hegelian time, but in the future anterior of discontinuous, ruptured temporality.

What, then, is to be made of the interchange between Clio and Farson and the film’s final scene with a distraught Clio screaming that she wants to get out? The interchange, with its turning around of the film’s established power relationships, feels somewhat tokenistic and unmotivated, and temporally redundant. However, it is important to consider that this takes place before Clio and Farson know what has happened on the roof. There is nothing to suggest that they have seen the cameraman fall. At this point, Clio assumes that either Max is going to die, or that Farson’s staging of this is going to go ahead, and her comments are in that context, and relate to her

horror at what she did the previous night at Farson's insistence. The final scene, on the other hand, presents her desire to leave Farson, but also, to escape the confines of textuality, of the film. The voice off screen is not Farson's and must be read as coming from behind the camera. At the end, then, the materiality of the film bleeds into the characters' motivations. Clio 'knows' she is in a film and cannot get out. Max, on the other hand, is presumably still running, oblivious to the textual machinations in which he has been engaged. However, one scene points to a different and more prosaic ending: temporally, the spectator might consider that the image of Sandy crying takes place after the final scene in the actual plot and represents a reaction to Max telling her what has happened. If this interpretation is taken, then we do have closure, of sorts: Max back where he began, with the spinning doll now read as his continued entrapment.

Both films have tied liberation to death in a variety of different ways. They hint at something utopian in death as the freedom of release from life and from what it is to be an individual subject. This is felt throughout *Performance* and is most clearly seen in the film's penultimate shot; *Herostratus*, moreover, is predicated upon it. In this sense, as suggested above, the films function as versions of the hegemonic, libertarian May, though not unproblematically, as despite the utopian elements, they both ask the question, where does liberation end? The answers are not necessarily the ones the spectator wants, nor expects. Next, a very different subject of 1968 will be interrogated, one that presents us with a collective, militant subject of fidelity to the revolutionary fervour of the period.

Chapter Four: The militant subject of fidelity

Introduction

In the previous chapter, we looked at two films that represent the subject seeking death, and suggested they function as an underside of the liberatory 1968. As with *Morgan* and *Privilege*, *Herostratus* and *Performance* represent the individual subject, and any sort of collective politics is not only absent, but effaced or erased: in-existent, effectively. Indeed, the extent to which the revolutionary fervour of the day is missing from the films is remarkable— with the exception of the odd trace of it in *Performance* in a tangential fashion, and *Herostratus*'s referencing of the Dialectics of Liberation Congress. In this context, and if the film for analysis in this chapter did not exist, we could make the case that 1968 and British Cinema ran in parallel to each other, with only the occasional glimpse between the two taking place. However, *if...* is a film that does represent the revolutionary praxis of the year, and in a very British setting, which itself at first glance seems to situate it still slightly in parallel to 1968, though we shall see that this is not so.

As discussed in the Introduction, it is our contention that while a psychoanalytic model is efficacious for a consideration of the individual subject, it is considerably less so for the collective subject brought into being by *if...*, which posits a militant, collectivised fidelity to the revolutionary Event. This text is a product of 1968 and the rupture with 'the long calm' that this year ushers in. The film began shooting prior to May 1968, but was released after it. A greater emphasis will be placed here on the category of the Real, and how a Badiouian reading (inflected by Lacan) can help in situating the specific qualities of the text. In particular, Badiou's Maoist take on dialectical materialism gives his Marxism-Leninism (in his earlier texts, certainly) an inflection that has great resonance for looking at films from 1968. In order to contextualise the Maoism underpinning Badiou's theoretical project in the 1970s and 1980s, a discussion of Maoism and its relationship to the European left in '68 will take place.

As stated in Chapter One, a Badiouian reading with Lacan can inform and sharpen our theoretical model. It allows for a synthesis of the psychoanalytic and Marxian notions

of the subject, in the process utilising a contemporary philosopher who was a part of the radical 1968 in France and whose concept of the Event is key to our understanding of the year and the film to be analysed in this chapter in particular. Much of Badiou's project is a reading through of Lacan. He states: 'I call contemporary philosopher him or her who has the courage to cross through, without faltering, the antiphilosophy of Lacan' (2008: 176). Our reading of Badiou's reading of Lacan, then, can provide a model of analysis that is dialectically charged with the contradictions inherent in their positions, while acknowledging the symbiosis that this approach brings.

It is not our aim only to read Lacan through Badiou here, nor to limit the analysis to Badiou's earlier work from the period of the film, nor simply to his work which concerns the events of 1968. Badiou's theory of the Event, how the subject is created through fidelity to it, and his conditions of philosophy, are all relevant to our understanding of the text and will be used throughout. Initially, however, in order to understand the specificities of Badiou's approach to the Event, we will begin by discussing the philosophical ferment that developed in the French radical left in 1968, in which Badiou played a role, and which continues to define his thought to this day.

Part i: A (very) brief study of the French Left in 1968: from Marx and Freud to Mao and Lacan

Bruno Bosteels, in an apposite discussion, has gone so far as to suggest that one of the reasons for Badiou's relatively slow uptake in the English-speaking world pertains to his 'long-standing debts to Maoism and to the political sequence of the Cultural Revolution' (2011: 111). It is certainly true that even within the circumscribed world of the far left, Maoism remained a minority taste in the UK in the 1960s; even more so after Badiou's mature work came out from the 1980s onwards. Of course, Badiou's entire project from May '68 onwards is a response to his newfound Maoism, which was the basis for his development of a 'systematic philosophy' (Hallward, 2003: 31). Badiou (2001: 42) himself describes the entanglement of May '68 and the Cultural Revolution as the truth to which French Maoism tried to practise a fidelity in the years after. Perry Anderson, in a discussion of Maoism, goes so far as to suggest that 'a new

gravitational force was exercising a tidal pull on the Western Marxist culture of the late sixties and early seventies' (1983: 72). In this context, it is worth considering what about Maoism caught the mood of specifically the French radical left in 1968: why Maoism rather than Marxism-Leninism⁷⁸?

In her overview of the period, Camille Robcis (2012: 51) makes the point that 'as various critics have pointed out, the "China" that seduced so many Maoist French intellectuals⁷⁹ during the 1960s and 1970s had less to do with the reality of the Communist nation than with the French political, social, and cultural context of the time', as does Belden Fields (1984: 148), who is keen to stress how Maoism 'assumed very different forms in the various national contexts'. This suggests something common in revolutionary politics: a desire to use theory to deal with concrete, material reality, in an adaptive manner, as opposed to an interrogative interest in the conditions of a particular society at a particular moment. Jason Barker (2014: 752) goes perhaps one stage further, and describes Mao as a 'master signifier in French theory of the 1960s and 1970s'.

In an interview from 2008, Badiou identifies three currents in French Maoism: a conservative one, associated with the PCMLF; an ultra-leftist one as exemplified by the GP; and the one with which Badiou was associated, which he describes as 'centre-left...in the sense always advocated by Mao' (131), and centred upon the UCFML⁸⁰. Jacques Rancière (2011: 14) suggests that it was the concept of 'the masses' that gave Maoism via Althusser a particular frequency in France in the 1960s, and makes the point also that Marx never really discussed the proletariat in these terms. 'The masses

⁷⁸ In separating the two so clearly, we are not suggesting that Maoism is completely distinct from Marxism-Leninism; rather, that is a specific form of it, and for the purposes of understanding the French left at this time, best seen as separate.

⁷⁹ Interestingly, Althusser's *Reading Capital*, originally published in French in 1965, in a complete edition featuring contributions by various of his pupils, has only a couple of brief mentions of Maoism, both from Althusser himself. This suggests that his earlier pupils did not embrace Maoism, or certainly not at this point, which is backed up by Étienne Balibar in a 2015 interview, when he discusses the extent to which later pupils (including Badiou) picked up on it.

⁸⁰ The acronyms refer to, respectively, *Le Parti communiste marxiste-léniniste de France*, *La Gauche prolétarienne* and *L'Union des communistes de France marxiste-léniniste*. Other full names of political parties are given in brackets, but the length of the names of two of these groups necessitates a footnote.

make history' was a specific component of Maoism in France in the post-'68 era, leading to projects such as the UCFML-funded *The Book of the Peasant Poor*, which summarised the group's activities in the French countryside (Bosteels, 2011: 114). Moreover, the taking up of Maoist ideas created a useful line of division with the French Communist Party, which was aligned with Moscow, increasingly seen as reformist after Khrushchev's reforms of the late 1950s and early 1960s. Furthermore, the Trotskyist and Maoist left both critiqued Stalinism as a bureaucracy that had turned the revolutionary situation in Russia into a form of state capitalism, and the Cultural Revolution in China was seen as a method of returning revolution to states where those tendencies had taken over. More prosaically in terms of mapping the ontology of French Maoism, the exhaustive *Selected Writings of Mao Tse-tung* appeared between 1962 and 1968 (Bourg, 2005: 2). What is clear from a variety of sources (Bosteels, 2011; Bourg, 2005; Hoffman, 2017; Robcis, 2012) is the importance of the notion of 'the investigation' to the French Maoist turn at this time. Bosteels names the investigation as 'precisely that which enables any given militant process to continue moving along in the spiral between the various political experiences and their effective theoretical concentration' (114). A prime example is the UCFML book referred to above. More broadly, French Maoism broke from Marxism-Leninism in its belief that 'there were more lessons to be learned from practical action in support of the masses than in any theoretical texts' (Fields, 1984: 168). In the desire of participants to make the experience of praxis (and specifically the investigation) live on, we see a precursor of Badiou's fidelity to the Event; in short, the creation of the revolutionary subject, our principal interest here.

Marxism-Leninism – despite its ubiquity in many Maoist groups as a suffix - had been associated in France with the previous generation of leftist philosophers, in particular Jean-Paul Sartre⁸¹. Correspondingly, he and Merleau-Ponty represented the

⁸¹ Following on from our comments in the introduction to this thesis, we should acknowledge again that despite his association with the previous generation, Sartre was a hugely important figure in the events of May '68. Existentialism gave philosophical grounding to the students' intellectual leap into new ways of thinking. Furthermore, it is quite possible to read the Crusaders in *if...* as Sartrean existentialists; certainly, that current of French thought would have been on Anderson's mind. However, as will be clear from the introduction and this analysis, it is our contention that the Crusaders are militant subjects of the Event, rather than engaged in an existential leap into the unknown.

phenomenologists in the intellectual battle with the structuralists, such as Althusser, Lacan, Lévi-Strauss and Barthes. As Barker (2014: 752-53) posits, however, it is debatable to what extent Althusser was a structuralist. What is clear is that he was against phenomenology, and against Hegelian Marxism, as part of a larger project of creating a scientific Marxism adequate to the task of revolutionary theory and praxis in the mid-20th century. Althusser's famous 1970 essay, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses', utilised in Chapter Two, is certainly, to some extent, 'a conversation with Maoism' (Robcis, 2012: 52), though we should be careful of attributing too much in the paper to Althusser's engagement with the ideas of Mao. It is also worth noting that Althusser's membership of the French Communist Party did inhibit his ability to evince Maoist positions, as of course the PCF was on the Soviet side in the various theoretical and political arguments on Sino-Soviet relationships. As Barker suggests (2014: 756-57), Badiou, as a member of the Unified Socialist Party (*Le Parti socialiste unifié* – PSU) at this time was not constrained in this way, and moreover, was attending Lacan's seminars (unlike the Althusserians) and reporting on them to Althusser from 1961 onwards, in so doing providing the impetus for Althusser's papers regarding psychoanalysis, and, in general, the field of Lacano-Maoism. For Badiou, theory and practice are done together and are 'ontologically equivalent' (Barker, 2014: 757). Eleanor Kaufman posits that French Maoism, specifically Badiou's interlinking of that with Lacanianism, was a 'desire structure' (2007: 9) within a libidinal economy, in doing so giving a specifically psychoanalytic tenor to this political move. While a full consideration of the reasons behind political and philosophical leaps is beyond the scope of this chapter, this is of interest as a response to a set of concrete events in the 1960s, as is Samo Tomšič's melding of Marx and Lacan as a response to the Europe of this decade.

Part ii: Badiou, 1968 and the Event (again)

Let us return to Badiou and 1968. In Chapter One we discussed his varying emphases on 1968, while making the point that his fidelity to it as sometimes a relay of a previous revolutionary singularity – the Paris Commune – and sometimes an Event, continues to inform his whole project. Indeed, it is not one of Badiou's 'communist

invariants' (2009a: 81), as he sees it as contested, as 'impossible to reduce...to a conveniently unitary image' (2010: 34). In discussing it at the time of its 40th anniversary, he surmises that the commemoration of it is because it is either seen as dead, or as the origin of our contemporary situation:

We are commemorating May '68 because the real outcome and the real hero of '68 is unfettered neo-liberal capitalism. The libertarian ideas of '68, the transformation of the way we live, the individualism and the taste for *jouissance* have become a reality thanks to post-modern capitalism and its garish world of all sorts of consumerism (2010: 33).

He continues by naming Sarkozy as a product of '68, and overall, the neo-liberal West. Of course, Badiou outlines this argument in order to counter it with his radical fidelity to it, and indeed makes the point that the 'commodified and deformed' (34) commemoration of it in France in 2008 is to mask its revolutionary aspect.

Meillasoux's position regarding it being contested is also similar: 'the event is that multiple which, presenting itself, exhibits the inconsistency underlying all situations, and in a flash throws into a panic, their constituted classifications' (2011: 2). The 'constituted classifications' have gone in a variety of directions since then, as discussed elsewhere. What Badiou's thinking upon 1968 engenders is twofold: an understanding of '68 as an Event that happened in 1968 and which requires fidelity from the militant subject; and an Event that has been subject to distortions since then, which are themselves bound up with what 1968 was. Bosteels suggests that for Badiou '68 has been a 'blinding event to which...[he]...would not cease to bear witness until tracing its formal trajectory, thirty years later, in his *Saint Paul*' (2011: 183). Two conjoined elements are of interest here: the use of the word 'blinding', with its associations of both reverie and lack of sight, and Bosteels' discussion of Badiou's formalisation in the work where he traces the origins of universalism and the militant subject. Of course, much of Badiou's interest in Paul comes from his fidelity to something that did not happen, that was imaginary, which Badiou situates as the foundation of militant faith. From this we can posit that the failure of May '68 – the revolution did not take place, just as the Resurrection did not – ties it to the void, as that which is there prior to the

Event, which does not quite take place; to the place of being qua being for Badiou. 1968-as-truth-event is not seen other than by those who are faithful to it.

To return to Badiou's four May '68s discussed in the first chapter, we can argue that outside the organised left, the primary focus since then, particularly in cultural terms, has been on the third of these, the libertarian May, with the first, the revolt of the students, a close second. The most well-known cinematic representation in European Cinema this century, *The Dreamers* (Bernardo Bertolucci, 2003) focusses on this aspect of it. *Les Amants Réguliers* (Philippe Garrel, 2005) and Olivier Assayas's *Après Mai*⁸² (2012) have a different focus, to some extent. Garrel's film was made as a riposte to Bertolucci's and was an attempt to put the politics back into the events of May '68, which are missing from the hermetically sealed world of *The Dreamers*. To some extent, *Les Amants Réguliers* does address all of Badiou's '68s, but it is still predicated upon number three. *Après Mai* provides a different focus by concentrating on what happens in the months following the rupture that was May, so does address more fully number four, the question of what is politics, though still from within a prism that presents a liberatory '68. Certainly the working class – in its revolutionary form, Badiou's second May '68 – is mostly missing from all three films, though there are some workers present in *Après Mai*.

European cinema's response to (and indeed its representing of the background of) May '68 at the time and in the following few years was rather different. In France, there was Godard's *La Chinoise* (1967), *One Plus One* (1968) and his revolutionary films as part of the Dziga-Vertov group, which explicitly represented the revolutionary struggle, and presented ideas dialectically, in so doing addressing all of Badiou's '68s; as well as the films of Chris Marker and Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet. In Hungary, Miklós Jancsó made *The Confrontation* (1969) and *Red Psalm* (1972), both of which staged confrontations between young groups of revolutionaries and oppressive state apparatuses. In Italy, Bertolucci himself made *Partner* (1968), which focussed

⁸² This is not, by definition, an exhaustive list of French films that reference 1968; rather, it is intended to be indicative of ones from the 21st century. For a full list of French films relating to '68, these two sites are useful: *Cinetrafic* (2018) and *Télérama Vodkaster* (2018).

specifically upon Vietnam and the student movement against it. In Germany, films (if obliquely) responding to '68 started to appear a little later, as the New German Cinema was still in its infancy, despite its announcement via the Oberhausen Manifesto in 1962.

Also, this question must be addressed: in a world of radical change and disruption, why is it that the primary British text that analyses the liberatory effect of violent revolution takes place in a public school? There is not the space here for a full analysis of the English *sonderweg* and its dependence on class, but there is logic in the choice of space for this analysis of the radical sixties. Briefly, it is also worth considering genre, as the public school film was and remains a staple of British cinema, with this film functioning as a prime example; indeed, Stephen Glynn refers to *if....* as 'the *Citizen Kane* of the British school film' (2016: 100), with all the critical acclaim and narrative complexity that such an allusion implies. Of course, in terms of the film's relationship to the broader European struggle, there is the acknowledged influence of Jean Vigo's 1933 film, *Zéro de Conduite*. The public school functions perfectly as it so non-evental: a place of stasis, tradition and atrophy. At one point Mick (Malcolm McDowell) asks 'when do we live?' It is this aspect of the space that creates the conditions for the aleatory gamble and the move of the Crusaders into being subjects of history. The importance of militant fidelity in the creation of the subject cannot be overstated, as Hallward discusses: 'subjectivization essentially describes the experience of identification with a *cause*, or better, the active experience of conversion or commitment to a cause' (2003: xxvi). It is this political trajectory that the film describes and which shall be analysed here.

Part iii: *if....*, overdetermination, the subject and the Real

From the outset, the text presents us with clues that point to the radical act, or Event, that takes place in the film's final chapter. Moreover, the structure of the film reveals an artificiality and constructedness that suggest a reflexivity at its centre. It is separated into eight discrete chapters with headings; one of the Brechtian devices in which the film indulges. This self-referential textuality makes it easier to argue the

case that the film functions as a representation of a Badiouian Event, as it facilitates our understanding of the revolutionary *telos* of the characters as inherited in the symbolic language in which the film situates itself: it is a particularly material film, in the sense that it makes concrete its mode of construction via devices such as the chapters, and in other ways, as discussed below. The question then becomes to what extent is it historically materialist or dialectically materialist, or indeed both? The two forms of materialism are a principal topic in Bruno Bosteels' 2006 essay on Badiou's Theory of the Subject, subtitled 'The Recommencement of Dialectical Materialism'. Specifically, he traces the two approaches via a sustained dialogue with Badiou and Althusser. In thinking about how Althusser's structuralist Marxism can provide a form for both dialectical and historical materialism, Bosteels (2006: 121) states that

it is not just that dialectical materialism is the systematization of historical materialism, but that the latter is also present, as if imminently withdrawn, in the former. Nor is one discipline meant to provide only the empty places, structures or necessary forms which would then have to be applied to, or filled by, the concrete forces, contents and contingent circumstances studied by the other. Rather, what is most striking in the theory of the weakest link⁸³ as developed and recast in the concept of overdetermination is to see how a structure takes hold of the actual moment, how isolated facts are literally thrown together to form a specific conjuncture and, thus, how necessity, far from realizing or expressing itself in history, actually emerges out of contingency.

What we have here is an efficacious way to enter into thinking about the relationship between the structure of Anderson's film and its locating of a specific historical moment. Moreover, overdetermination is key to our reading of the Event of the film and the move of the Crusaders into being subjects of history, giving as it does a way to understand why what happens occurs when it does. The set of determining causes in the text is then given an Althusserian materiality through the device of the chapters. Moreover, the Marxist use of overdeterminism, as Althusser alludes to in his famous essay referred to in the footnote, is an attempt to take a psychoanalytic concept and give it a material and historical status, and thus is in line with the overall approach of

⁸³ Althusser's chapter 'Contradiction and Overdetermination' in *For Marx* (2005, originally published in 1965) concerns itself with Lenin's theme of 'the weakest link', in which he saw the Communist Party as an organisation without such a weak link that must concentrate on finding 'the weak link in the imperialist chain' (2005: 98).

this thesis. Prior to analysing *if....*, let us think about the relationship between Althusser's concept and Badiou's project, with specific reference to the Event.

Badiou returns to Althusser in his chapter on him in *Metapolitics* (2005), entitled 'Subjectivity without a Subject'. He posits that Althusser's philosophy has no place for the subject, 'since there are only processes' (59) in his work. This relates to the extent to which the aforementioned Althusser essay is concerned with a 'theory of causality' (Bosteels, 2011: 56), with, of course, overdetermination being central to that, which, as a concept borrowed from psychoanalysis, is concerned with the subject. What is key for our purposes is the way in which overdetermination can be seen, in Bosteels' memorable phrase, as 'the condensation of contradictions into an explosive antagonism' (56) via the way it 'puts the possible on the agenda....[and]....is in truth the political place' (Badiou, 2005a: 65). Contradiction is key to dialectical materialism and indeed any Marxist understanding of a political situation, but the term as used by Althusser (and Badiou) has a particular Maoist inflection to it. Before continuing with this avenue of enquiry, it is worth returning to the *Screen* debates alluded to in Chapter One, which among other things concerned realism's tendency to resolve contradictions for the spectator (Fiske, 1987: 35) as part of its presentation of a discourse of truth. As Caughie argues:

contradiction, in the Marxist (or Maoist) view, is the motor which drives history and produces change, to be an agent of change the subject (in particular, the revolutionary subject) must experience itself as being in contradiction, incomplete, out of balance, in order that the next step must be taken to progress towards a new position (2000: 105).

We are in agreement with Caughie, and it is our view that the text does set up such a subject position. However, in terms of situating our approach with reference to these debates, it is predicated upon the following positions: *if..* is not a realist film, due to the Brechtian devices mentioned above and because it is not socially extended to any great degree, which is one of Raymond Williams' (1977: 65) four defining elements of the realist text; the 'empirical notion of truth' that MacCabe situates within the 'hierarchy of discourses' (1974: 8) is not present in the text; rather, it is a path to truth as this chapter makes clear; finally, and in concert with this path to truth, the

resolution of the contradictions in *if...* is via its investigation of them, rather than simply an unveiling, which is what MacCabe suggested classic realist texts do (1974: 16).

Mao, at the beginning of his essay 'On Contradiction', suggests this:

The problems are: the two world outlooks, the universality of contradiction, the particularity of contradiction, the principal contradiction and the principal aspect of a contradiction, the identity and struggle of the aspects of a contradiction, and the place of antagonism in contradiction (2007: 67).

For our purposes, this initial precis provides us with the materials needed for thinking about the role of overdetermination in the contradictions present in *College in Anderson's* film. Prior to connecting overdetermination directly to the Badiouian Event, which will involve a further consideration of Badiou's use of set theory as introduced in Chapter One, let us first consider the contradictions present in the text in the light of Mao's dictum. To do this is an exercise in dialectics, and will allow us to consider the different contradictions at principal and secondary levels. Here is a numbered list, in order to make further reference to each of them easier:

1. The Crusaders⁸⁴ and College (P, for principal). While ostensibly the main contradiction, it is not for much of the film, but becomes so at the film's denouement.
2. Mick, Johnny (David Wood), Wallace (Richard Warwick) and the whips⁸⁵ (P). This is the most important contradiction for much of the film. This is due to the role of number six, which while secondary, has the effect of altering numbers one and two.
3. The three boys and the masters (S, for secondary). For the vast majority of the film, much of the boys' problems are not caused by the masters, who have a secondary role in the diegesis behind the whips.

⁸⁴ I consider the Crusaders to be fully formed once Bobby Philips (Rupert Webster) and the girl have joined the three boys towards the end of the film, hence the use of 'Crusaders' for the contradiction with College, and the use of 'three boys' for the other contradictions.

⁸⁵ Prefects within College are called whips. This has two functions: it names their violence and connects College to the world of parliamentary politics, and by extension England, as whips are the figures in a political party who enforce voting a particular way in the House of Commons.

4. The three boys and the other pupils (S). There are isolated incidents of arguments with other boys, but predominantly, with the obvious exception of the whips, other pupils do not overly concern our protagonists.
5. The three boys and the headmaster (Peter Jeffrey) (P). This is qualitatively different from all the other contradictions and, for that reason, is explicated the immediate discussion below.
6. The whips and the masters (S). The site of power in the school is contested to some degree, but often, the whips and masters are on the same side, and should be seen as a somewhat unstable form of *entente* between power bases, with the whips as the more powerful group.
7. The three boys and the town (P). This is initially a clear contradiction, as we would expect in a public school film.
8. The two boys (Mick and Johnny) and the girl (P initially, then S). When they first meet, this is framed from within the contradiction of the boys and the town. However, it quickly becomes secondary once they form their initial bond.
9. Heterosexuality and homosexuality (P initially, then S). This also changes category, for much the same reason as number eight. Once the boys are exposed to a positive version of it, it becomes secondary.

We have here six principal contradictions initially, with three taking on a secondary role. Of particular interest is the fact that the most important of these is not at first the one between the Crusaders and College, but number two, the one between the boys and the whips. As the Crusaders are not formed until close to the film's climax, it could not be otherwise. Once the Crusaders move into being eventual subjects of history, the most important contradiction will be framed visually as number one, but initially much of the power in the school lies with the whips, not the masters, who are either weak, such as Arthur Lowe's Mr Kemp, or figures of liberal consensus, such as the headmaster, whose role is to assuage and efface the contradictions present. The principal, or dominant contradiction at any given point in history can appear in a number of spheres, and relates to both the universality of contradiction and its particularity (Mao, 2007: 75). Contradictions appear and disappear. In *if....*, they are concrete and material, and their appearance or disappearance is what specifies in

Badiouian terms the state of the situation, and leads the spectator to the denouement of the text.

To continue with these opening remarks, we must also state that numbers four, seven, eight and nine are resolved at various points in the text; dialectically speaking, when the contradictions are resolved they contribute to the strengthening of the principal contradictions, numbers one and two. Number five is of a different tenor to all the other contradictions and it is worthwhile spending some time looking at the figure of the headmaster, and specifically his relationship to the boys, as he presents the spectator with an alternative political path to the one taken by the revolutionaries. Situating him at this point in the analysis serves to lay out the path *not* taken by the boys, and indeed by the text *in toto*, which we will argue progresses according to the contradictions set out above. He has only four scenes in the film: two close together approximately a fifth into the film and two towards the end, with the last one ending in his being shot by the girl. In between these two pairs is over an hour of plot in which he does not appear. His role is very specific in the text; he is, in the words of Aldgate and Richards, 'the voice of consensus' (1999: 205), though our analysis will extrapolate more from this textual and political position than they do: he is the one that sets up what College is, and the one who attempts to save it at the end, initially through the device of offering to give the boys responsibility, which in itself is a denial and lack of understanding regarding the contradictions at play in College. Let us consider his scenes in more depth, as the political position he represents functions textually as the exception that proves the rule in terms of the contradictions present, and the overdetermined status of the Event at the film's end.

After seeing him in chapel, his first speaking scene is outside immediately afterwards. He asks Head Boy Rowntree (Robert Swann) if he enjoyed India, asks him to gather the whips in his study later, tells a master that he'll be 'taking the modern sixth for Business Management', and dismisses Mr Kemp's request to use his study for drama practice with a bluff 'I'll have to get back to you on that, Kemp', suggesting he'll do nothing of the sort. What this short scene does is set the headmaster up as both

intimately involved in the school, with a faint air of the benevolent despot, and also lacking in knowledge of the material reality of its day to day running.

The scene just a few minutes later in which he lectures Rowntree and other members of the modern sixth on what College is shows his position more clearly. While walking around the grounds of College, he indulges in a monologue lasting over a minute, opining on College as a symbol of, *inter alia*, 'integrity in public life'; 'high standards in the television and entertainment worlds' and 'huge sacrifice in Britain's wars'. The camera pans to show the cadet force in training, giving the impression that the world appears as he would want it, in front of him, and in line with his thoughts. He then self-deprecatingly refers to some of their customs as being seen as 'silly', 'middle-class', makes the point that 'a large part of the population is in the process of becoming middle-class' and that its values are the ones without which Britain could not function. He moves on to education via a metaphor of it as a 'Cinderella' that has been 'much interfered with' and ends by situating Britain as a country that is a 'powerhouse of ideas, experiment, imagination' from 'atom power stations to mini skirts'. In this he sounds not unlike the prime minister, Harold Wilson, echoing to some extent his 'white heat of technology' speech from the 1963 Labour Party Conference. Wilson, from within the world view of the headmaster, was of course one of those people who had become middle-class and the film takes place on the cusp of the ending of the post-war consensus discussed at the start of Chapter Two. In this sense, the headmaster is a version of that voice of consensus so under threat from the events of 1968.

What we have with the figure of the headmaster is politics reduced to 'a plurality of opinions' (Badiou, 2005a: 24): "the exercise of 'free judgment' in a public space where, ultimately, only opinions count" (11). Against this, Badiou posits a politics of militant subjectivity, where the subject is faithful to an eventual rupture. The headmaster's is a politics without contradictions, a non-dialectical space where truth in the philosophical sense demanded by Badiou is absent and cannot be reached. This is because for Badiou, '*historical...is thus determined as the opposite of nature*' (2006: 182). The headmaster's airy confidence is predicated upon his belief that what he says is wholly

natural, without contradiction, and outside of historical process, in our case historical materialism, with its representation in the text being the Crusaders, and their move into being subjects of history. In Lacanian terms, while he seems to be a figure of the Symbolic, being at least superficially the ultimate arbiter of the Law in College, which functions textually as a microcosm of society, with a specific set of social relations, in reality he is stuck in the Imaginary, as the end of the film makes clear, with the Real quite literally physically holing his attempt to function within the Symbolic, in the form of the gun shot from the girl. His role as the voice of consensus is made even clearer during the next scene in which he appears, which takes place immediately after the boys have opened fire with live rounds during an Army Cadet exercise.

The scene is one of the relatively few in the film that uses a form of distancing as an alienation effect, in order to draw attention to the boys' predicament and their (and the spectator's) alienation from College, and what the headmaster is about to say. After the boys have been called in to see him, the headmaster pulls out a large drawer, in which the chaplain (Geoffrey Chater) is lying, so that they can apologise to him for shooting at him⁸⁶ during the previous scene, which caused him to grovel, squirm and beg for his life. He sits up solemnly, each shakes his hand, then he lies down again, in order for the headmaster to push the drawer back in. Narratively speaking, we can situate this as one of the examples of Badiouian undecidability present in the text, in the sense of it having a faint verisimilitude, or 'minimal intensity' (Badiou, 2009b: 209). Following this, the headmaster proceeds to lecture the boys, in a tone that suggests he is on their side, and which uses stereotypes of rebellion in order to bring them into the

⁸⁶ What happens during the scene where they shoot at him is contested. For example, Izod *et al* (2012: 110) believe that he is killed, which makes the drawer in which he is lay a coffin, of sorts. Aldgate & Richards (1999: 206) do not and simply refer to the boys attacking the cadet corps, of which the chaplain is the head. Sinker is ambiguous on this point, as he refers to him being 'undead' (2004: 72) but makes the point that 'we watch the victim squirm and plead' (70) *after* he has been shot. Hedling (1998: 101) is also ambiguous regarding the chaplain's 'death', but leans very slightly to suggesting he was killed. There is, then, a reading of the scene in the headmaster's office as simply a surrealist episode that brings the dead back to life, but it is our contention that he is not shot dead in the previous scene, for the following reasons: when he is squirming he shows no sign of having been shot; while Mick thrusts towards him with his bayonet, we do not see where the blow lands (he could very well have bayoneted the ground); finally, he is present on the stage during the Founders' Day scene. Of course, his appearance here does not mean that he was not killed, though if so he is brought back to life completely, not just for the purposes of the boys' apology. However, nothing in our reading of the headmaster suggests he has such powers over life and death.

consensus. For example, he notes that 'proclaiming individuality' is a 'quite blameless form of existentialism' and this is 'what lies at the heart of the great hair problem'. After another remark he notes that 'short hair is no indication of merit. So often I have noticed that it's the hair rebels who step into the breach when there's a crisis, whether it be a fire in the house, or to sacrifice a week's holiday in order to give a party of slum children seven days in the country'. While he is saying this the camera pans across the dumbfounded faces of Johnny and Wallace before alighting on Mick, who looks disdainful and vaguely disgusted. There is then a cut back to the headmaster, who is sitting in his chair, hands interlocked: benevolent; sure of himself; patronising. He unlocks his hands, leans forward and continues: 'But of course there are limits. Scruffiness, of any kind, is deplorable'. He stands up and says 'I think you'd go that far with me'. The scene cuts once more to Johnny and Mick, with the former looking uncertainly at the latter. He then proceeds to discuss the fees, making the point that they are 'the salary of the average trainee supermarket manager's wage', 'no mean sum' but 'no more than the cost of keeping a juvenile delinquent in borstal'. After this he proceeds to discuss the importance of 'service', tells them they're 'too intelligent to be rebels: that would be too easy' and announces that he is going to reward them with 'a privilege: work'.

The point of all of this is to efface the contradictions present in *College* and to offer the boys a way into consensus and away from militancy: to prevent their becoming militant subjects of the truth-event of the revolutionary act at the end of the film. This is attempted via language that purports to be dialogic via the rhetorical devices outlined above. What is this but an attempt to interpellate the boys into the rule of law via the naming of them within its strictures? This places it within the subordination of politics to ethics, which Badiou discusses in various places but specifically in *Ethics*, his 2001 short monograph. He situates this turn in 'the intellectual counter-revolution, in the form of moral terrorism [which] was imposing the infamies of western capitalism as the new universal model' (2001: liii). Clearly Badiou is talking about a process which he situates as gaining full steam at the end of the Cold War and during the beginning of US-led western hegemony. However, that is simply to make specific an intellectual approach which has a much longer antecedent and which Badiou

himself situates in the work of Kant (2001: 8). The headmaster is a figure of the Kantian categorical imperative⁸⁷: of a quasi-universalism which both the philosophy of Badiou and the trajectory of the Crusaders rejects. The ultimate rejection of this approach is seen at the end of the film, as we shall see. For the moment, it is enough to think of the headmaster as the text's Imaginary figure of an idealism devoid of subjectivity and militancy who has no access to the Real of the Crusaders' fidelity to the Event.

To return to overdetermination and the contradictions present in the text, the headmaster is also one of the reasons why number two is the most important of the contradictions in terms of causality and narrative trajectory. His attempt to be a figure of consensus creates the space for the whips' abuse of power, and therefore, for the other contradictions to be resolved, or not, dialectically. The contradictions, the overdetermined character of the Event, and the boys' trajectory towards being faithful militants to it, can be construed via Badiou's postulates upon being qua being, which are from the standpoint of post-Cantorian set theory. As discussed in Chapter One, that which is counted, or re-presented, becomes what Badiou calls the state of the situation. What is not re-presented, that which is not counted, is the set that is void. This is included minimally – it is in the world – but does not belong. Badiou uses the example of the *sans-papiers*; people in France who do not have official status within the set that is French people. For our purposes, this is the boys, who are described throughout, particularly by the whips, as 'the wrong sort', as 'unruly elements'. They are not counted in the state of the situation; they are 'the in-existent of the world' (Badiou, 2009b: 507) that is College. This also places the boys as the symptom within the site of the situation, in the sense of that which is required in order for the rest of the elements to cohere. The organisation of the situation structures this, as Hallward (2003: 89) describes: 'the ideology of a situation is what organizes its parts in such a way as to guarantee the structural repression of that part which has no recognizable

⁸⁷ 'Act only according to that maxim whereby you can, at the same time, will that it should become a universal law' (Kant: 1993: 30). The categorical imperative is the foundation of Kant's moral philosophy and stands in opposition to a materialist, Marxist approach. We could argue that it reifies a specific thought in a particular context (individual rights, as granted by the state) into a rule.

place in the situation'. It is important to keep in mind that this is a basic function of ideology: to exclude structurally that which is not required, not wanted, and which has the potential to become the site of the Event. Hallward cites one of Žižek's definitions of ideology: 'a symbolic field which contains such a filler holding the place of some structural impossibility, while simultaneously disavowing this impossibility' (2003: 90). The figure of disavowal is the headmaster. As the figure of consensus, he is blind to the workings of ideology and its structuring function, does not see the contradictions present and attempts to bring the set that is void into the state of the situation, as discussed above, right until the end. This leaves the whips as the guarantors of this structural repression. This is hinted at throughout but is shown most clearly in two short scenes that take place after 65 and 68 minutes respectively.

In the first, we see the whips sitting down to dinner with Mr Kemp. Rowntree proceeds to tell him about the 'lunatic fringe': 'a certain hard core in the studies'. He then discusses the necessity of making 'an example' of them. Kemp replies that 'the headmaster doesn't like too much thrashing', to which Rowntree rejoinders 'you wouldn't like College to get a reputation for decadence'. The scene is filmed in medium shot, with all four whips and Kemp in view from the waist up. Kemp looks uncomfortable throughout, and it is clear that he does not have the stomach for it. This is an example of contradiction number six, and it is one that is quickly resolved in favour of the whips, after this interchange:

Rowntree: 'It's just a matter of proportion. Unruly elements threaten the stability of the house. Best to nip them in the bud'.

Kemp, looking more and more uncomfortable, and at each in turn, except Rowntree: 'Well, you must do what you think best'.

Kemp's line is delivered with him in medium close-up, filmed from over the shoulder of one of the whips. Three of the boys respond with 'thank you, Sir', then there is a cut to Rowntree looking condescendingly off screen in the direction of Kemp. He says thank you as well. The device of having him speak separately makes clear to the spectator where the power lies in this conversation and represents the enforcement of ideology as the organising principle of what is to come.

The boys are called to the whips' study shortly afterwards. As the spectator hears their names shouted out, there is a brief cut to Peanuts (Philip Bagenal), one of the film's more sympathetic characters, shot from the side as he turns on a light in his study in order to illuminate his star chart and so that he can look into his microscope. This larger view of the world, allied to the visual metaphor of Peanuts' ability to look into it forensically with his microscope, provides a counterpoint to the scene that follows. We then see the boys walking to the whips' study; having entered, they stand in a line, exactly as would be expected when called to see the headmaster, and indeed, this is echoed later in the text in the scene in his study analysed above. After a curt 'good evening', Rowntree says 'I imagine you know why you're here'. Mick looks at the other two in surprise and answers 'no'. The scene then cuts to Rowntree in medium close up, who states that they are there for being a nuisance in the house. Mick, somewhat defiantly, repeats 'being a nuisance' back at him and asks 'what have we done?' Rowntree says 'done? It's your general attitude. You know exactly what I mean'. Mick repeats 'attitude?' and Rowntree announces that they have decided to beat the boys for it. The point of this scene is to announce to the boys that they are expected to understand something that they do not understand. This exchange is tonally different to the one with the headmaster as Rowntree *knows* that they are not part of the count, not re-presented in the state of the situation, yet he proceeds as if they are, as ideologically he must be seen to disavow the set that is void. This section from Badiou can further illuminate what is happening here:

the place of thought of that-which-is-not-being is the non-natural; that which is presented *other* than natural or stable or normal multiplicities. The place of the other-than-being is the abnormal, the instable, the antinatural. I will term *historical* what is thus determined as the opposite of nature (Badiou: 2006: 182).

Badiou's ontology situates that which is not being as being, what is not counted, as the Event, as discussed in Chapter One. Badiou, as he himself allows, is echoing Heidegger here, though he is arguing against the latter's idealism⁸⁸ through his situating of that

⁸⁸ Badiou considers Heidegger, who is a hugely important figure in his philosophy, to be still 'enslaved...to...the essence of metaphysics' (2006: 10). And further on in *Being and Event*: 'In opposition to Heidegger, I hold that it is by way of historical localization that being comes-forth within presentative proximity, because something is subtracted from representation, or from the state' (185). This is key to the material situating in Badiou of the Event and its site. Also important here is Badiou's situating of the world of democracy, identities, opinions and politics without a subject in what happens to philosophy

which is evental as historical, and specific and material. This scene and the beating that is to follow are one of the causes of the creation of the evental site at the end of the film and, therefore, contribute to the way in which the contradictions present in the state of the situation in the text provide an overdetermined political subjectification for the Crusaders.

It is also worth considering the extent to which this dialogue functions as a form of Lacan's *vel* of alienation, the most famous example of which (cited on p. 103) is the highwayman giving the false choice of 'your money or your life' (Lacan, 1998: 212), in which deprivation or death is the actual choice. Lacan, in his discussion in the same Seminar of this illusory choice, states this:

If we choose being, the subject disappears, it eludes us, it falls into non-meaning. If we choose meaning, the meaning survives only deprived of that part of non-meaning that is, strictly speaking, that which constitutes in the realisation of the subject, the unconscious. In other words, it is of the nature of this meaning, as it emerges from the field of the Other, to be in a large part of its field, eclipsed by the disappearance of being, induced by the very function of the signifier (211).

At this point in the text, Rowntree's attempt to bring them into the count-as-one, in this case good, upright citizens of the school, is predicated upon the idea that they cannot really choose this, as they are deprived of the right to do so freely: if they agree with him, they will still be beaten, and will suffer the double bind of *aphanisis*, as they will then suffer this 'disappearance of being'. As they are not yet the militant subjects of truth, as the Event is not yet overdetermined, the causes are not all in place, then they would indeed be, in Badiouian terms, part of a 'democracy without a (political) subject' referred to in the footnote above. They would cease to be the set that is void, and would lose the chance of becoming subject.

after Heidegger, which he describes as "the directly ideological meaning of the post-Heideggerian deconstruction, under the epithet 'metaphysical', of the category of subject: to prepare a democracy without a (political) subject, to deliver individuals over to the serial organization of identities or to the confrontation with the desolation of their enjoyment" (2009b: 50), adding that only Sartre and Lacan in the France of the sixties avoided this.

Prior to moving on to further consideration of the contradictions and overdetermined evental site that we are arguing the film represents, we need to tarry further with the confluence of Badiou and Lacan, in order to think further about the subject, the Real and the Event. Žižek, in a perspicacious discussion of Badiou via Lacan's late structuralist emphasis on the primacy of language, suggests this:

There is...a difference between an Event and its naming: an Event is the traumatic encounter with the Real..., while its naming is the inscription of the Event into the language.... In Lacanese, an Event is *objet petit a*, while naming is the new signifier that establishes what Rimbaud calls the New Order, the new readability of the situation based on Decision (in the Marxist revolutionary perspective, the entire prior history becomes a history of class struggle, of defeated emancipatory striving) (1999: 162).

What both Badiou and Lacan make central is this 'decision', and the subsequent (re)constitution of the subject: for Lacan, this is at the level of the individual and is presented via a new signifier; if that is achieved collectively, as in the 'revolutionary perspective' referred to here and central to Badiou, then there is a shifting of the *point de capiton*, and potentially a new master signifier. Lucy Bell, in thinking about both philosophers' situating of the Real, argues that it is in their discrete understandings of the void (2011: 106-107), specifically its location, that the difference can be found. In short, for Lacan it founds the subject⁸⁹; for Badiou, it is being qua being, and therefore the unseen part of the state of situation, or that which is there prior to the foundation of the subject via fidelity to the Event. As discussed in Chapter One, this is often framed within the difference between Badiou's advocacy of the philosophical category of truth and Lacan's association of truth (and philosophy) with the discourse of the University, a position taken by Johnstone (2010) and hinted at by Lacan (2007). However, like much of Lacan's thought, there is a contradiction between positions taken on the category of 'truth'. With this in mind, it is also worth mentioning that Bartlett *et al*, in an interrogation of Badiou, Lacan and Deleuze's discussions of truth, make clear 'the Lacanian insistence on the centrality of truth in analysis' and also

⁸⁹ Specifically, Lacan states this: 'There is a hole there and that hole is called the Other. At least that is what I felt I could name....it, the Other qua locus in which speech, being deposited....founds truth' (1999: 114). Badiou, in his discussion of this statement, suggest that 'there' refers to 'a thought....that can be inferred from thinking' and that this is where 'Lacan localizes the foundation of truth as hole' (2008a: 203).

suggest that this 'integral role' is 'a point often underestimated or overlooked' (2014: 164). Badiou's subject is not mediated through difference or the Other and its occurrence is both singular, as specific to an Event, and universal in its range.

Prior to the turn to militancy that occurs in the final fifth of the film, there are hints given within the *mise-en-scène* of what is to come. The boys' identification with a cause is seen in the choice of images that adorn the study of the three, in particular Mick's section. Allied to the obligatory (both for the time and for many teenage boys) images of the female pin-ups of the day, are images of the participants of a variety of contemporary anti-imperialist struggles. There are images from Africa, South East Asia and Latin and South America, which reference the rising New Left and Third Cinema. We also have 'Missa Luba', Mick's choice of music. The study explicitly links the boys (and the English public school) with the wider (non-European) situation and the radical truth procedures of the day. Identification becomes participation through a choice to show fidelity to the eventual irruption precipitated by the entrance of the girl, to whom we will now turn.

The principal subjectifying push required to create the Event from 'the void of the situation' (Badiou, 2005b: 54) is the entrance into the school of the girl. Her arrival destabilises two elements in order to create the 'historical situation' (Badiou, 2006: 186) that is the revolt at the film's denouement: masculine power and class. In doing so, contradiction eight is resolved dialectically. Badiou discusses the two sides of the dialectic, which he names 'structural' and 'historical' (2009c: 114), with the former functioning as the Lacanian Symbolic, or 'side of place', and the latter as the Real, or 'side of force' (114). College here is the Symbolic: a place of power; of restrictive language; of the 'natural belief' that leads to a world where only 'bodies and languages' exist; in short, the world of 'democratic materialism' (Badiou, 2009b: 1). The Real, on the other hand, is the rupture that holes the Symbolic, and forces the Event; '[a]ll access to....[it].... is of the order of the encounter' (Badiou, 2001: 52), leading to a materialist dialectic, which 'advocates the correlation of truths and subjects' (Badiou, 2009b: 34).

Before interrogating further her key role in the film, let us consider the text's representation of class and gender. The working class is entirely absent: if, as we are arguing, the boys are the set that is not counted, then the working class functions as that in its entirety in the film, which places the boys, both within the diegesis and the social space that is the English public school, as its effective working class. We could argue that they are forced to 'sell' their labour as pupils in order to preserve the future promise of capital, of being part of the ruling class, and prior to that, to have the chance of being counted within the set of pupils in the school. Other than that, we have the figure of the matron (Mona Washburne), who is part of the power structure of the school and clearly not therefore a member of the working class, plus one reference to 'all the others', who are described as 'oiks' in the scene where Jute (Sean Bury) is being taught the correct terminology to be used in school. The only women in the school are the matron and Mrs Kemp (Mary MacLeod). The former is only seen on occasion and takes no active role in the narrative, beyond providing medical examinations for the boys. The latter has a more substantive role, including her part in one of the more curious scenes in the film, in which she walks through the dormitories naked, wistfully picking up soap. This is shown in parallel with images of the boys in their cadet uniforms, prior to going out on exercise. There is a somewhat obvious gender binary being displayed here, plus the scene hints at the freedom available to women when men are removed from shared spaces. Overall, though, women are absent from the school until the girl enters.

Initially dismissed and subjected to a controlling gaze when encountered in the café, the girl then takes control of the situation and provides the spectator with the film's strongest image of freedom, at least prior to the end. This narrative switch happens in only a few minutes. When the boys order coffee, Mick's and Johnny's (and the camera's) gaze tracks up and down her from behind; moreover, they are arrogant and dismissive of her, in a way that suggests they think she will find this attractive. All of this takes place in black and white. Following this, Mick puts 'Missa Luba' on the jukebox, prior to performing a sexual tiger dance with her, and perhaps having sex, though it is intimated by camera positioning that this may be a fantasy on his part, as

well as by the use of black and white⁹⁰, which tends to be used in scenes that have an unclear relationship to narrative verisimilitude. It is also indicated by the unlikelihood of there being a Congolese version of the Latin mass available on a jukebox at a transport café. After this, they play 'paper, scissors, stone'. As the now non-diegetic 'Missa Luba' rises euphorically, there is a cut to the image of freedom mentioned above: the three of them on the motorbike that the boys had stolen earlier, in colour now, in the field, with her arms slowly moving into an outstretched position, Christ-like.

At this point the spectator may assume that this is to be her only appearance in the text. However, her role becomes central when she enters into an organisational relationship to the rebelling pupils later in the film, thereby subjectivising them and herself as militant subjects of truth in their identification with a cause. The film's use of both black and white and colour, allied to the editing and *mise-en-scène*, provides clear markers of this narrative and conceptual journey. This begins when she is next seen by Mick, through a telescope, which is also the film's first example of clear narrative disruption, in the sense that she cannot be where he sees her, logically: she is an example of the Badiouian 'undecidable'. She is seen in what appears to be some sort of building opposite where Peanuts and Mick are sitting with the telescope. The spectator sees the stars, then Peanuts says this to Mick: 'space, you see Michael, is all expanding, at the speed of light. It's a mathematical certainty that somewhere, among all those millions of stars, there's another planet where they speak English'. He then invites Mick to look. Mick's gaze comes down from the stars and sees the girl, brushing her hair in the window, which is open. It is not clear whether she is somehow in the school, or if Peanuts' telescope, added to his discussion of quantum physics, has given Mick the ability to traverse class as well as space at this moment, and given him a window into her house, in order to affect further identification. She is, to quote Peter Hallward (2008: 14) in a discussion of Badiou, an example of 'how a truth overturns

⁹⁰ It is worth mentioning at this point that our interest is in the textual meaning generated by the use of both colour and black and white, rather than in the authorial intention behind it, or the much-repeated story begun by Anderson that it was a financial decision. Furthermore, Anderson had already used the device in his 1967 short, *The White Bus*. For a discussion of Anderson's decision, and contemporary responses to the shifting between stock, see Hedling (1998: 99-101).

the very logic of a world by transforming the norms that regulate the manner in which things appear'. Furthermore, her depiction through a telescope is evocative of both early cinema, specifically George Albert Smith's *As Seen Through a Telescope* (1900) and the Lacanian-informed feminist debates on visual pleasure and gender brought to the fore in the 1970s by Laura Mulvey and others. She waves back, and in doing so disrupts any potential for the gaze to be voyeuristic here. Moreover, as her entrance into College brings about this 'encounter with the real', it also leads to her and the boys ceasing to regard each other sexually, which leads to this new, collective subjectification. As Lacan explains: '[t]he real is distinguished....by its separation from the field of the pleasure principle, by its desexualisation, by the fact that its economy, later, admits something new, which is precisely the impossible' (1998: 167). This textual 'impossible' here is the end of the film, the creation of them as subjects, and which nothing in the state of the situation suggested was possible prior to her entrance.

Moreover, this narrative disruption, created by the entrance into the story space of the girl, is also the last scene before the rebellion takes on its militant tenor, as the next scene, following an address by the chaplain, is the scene referred to above when the boys go on military manoeuvres, and in which they use live ammunition. There is therefore a clear relationship posited textually. However, as we have said, the Event is overdetermined. To consider all the determinations in the text, it is useful to return to Badiou's conditions of philosophy discussed in the first chapter, as we can situate them all to a greater or lesser degree in the film.

As Badiou discretely separates ontology as mathematics from his philosophy – what is being qua being from all other considerations – he can then, in thinking of the Event and its founding in that which is void, name philosophy's conditions: art; politics; science and love. All of these are considered in terms of that which can be classified as radical and new and must be kept separate from philosophy. They are where philosophy must be done, but this does not mean that any of them should be conjoined with philosophy; when this happens, something like political philosophy is created, which, as stated above, Badiou describes thus: "the exercise of 'free

judgement' in a public sphere where, ultimately, only opinions count" leading to 'democratic materialism'. Instead, Badiou demands politics as truth procedure. From these conditions are named four generic truths: creation; revolution; invention and passion. Philosophy, then, must be 'placed in a secondary position, that of identifying, conceptualizing and renaming the truth that emerges within a particular generic procedure⁹¹' (Feltham, 2008: 103), with philosophy compossible with the truth procedures. While these are nominally most present in Badiou's mature work from *Being and Event* onwards, they are there in 'germ form' in *Theory of the Subject*, as Feltham (2008: 71) argues. Moreover, philosophy is not unharmed by its placing with its conditions: Badiou argues that it is 'always damaged, wounded, serrated by the evental and singular character of these conditions' (2004: 101). This is because of its role in the naming of truth procedures, rather than just as an interpretive, hermeneutic tool. While we are using Badiou in a hermeneutic fashion in order to interrogate a text, we are also suggesting that the film contains these conditions *tout court*, and uses them in order to present an Event, which is predicated upon the overdetermined causes found in its presentation of these conditions; that it presents a truth procedure on the 'basis of its suture to the void' (Badiou, 2008a: 201) from which the Crusaders come. Let us consider how these conditions and generic truths are shown in the text.

Politics/revolution is, of course, the trajectory of the film, and the principal area of our exploration, so we will not consider this in isolation here, as it is woven throughout our analysis. Art/creation and science/invention can be summarised quite briefly. The former is seen in the collage of revolution and struggle in the study; the latter in the girl's first appearance in the school through a telescope, immediately after Peanuts has been explaining mathematical probability to Mick. It is love/passion that has a more substantive role within the text and is both one of the contradictions named above and an evental site in its own right. This concerns the growing attraction between Wallace and Bobby Philips (Rupert Webster), a younger boy, which brings the latter into his secondary role within the Crusaders. Homosexuality bubbles under the

⁹¹ 'Generic procedures' are another of Badiou's names for the conditions of philosophy, with 'truth procedures' being used alongside generic truths.

surface throughout the text, and we have named the contradiction between it and heterosexuality as a cause or determination in the text. It is not initially represented in any way that could be considered to be about love, until the pivotal scene of Philips watching Wallace in the gymnasium after 45 minutes. Prior to that, it has functioned as innuendo, primarily in the scene where Philips is making muffins for Rowntree as part of his 'scumming'⁹² duties, with the other whips looking on. Various sexual innuendoes concerning Philips and another boy pass between Rowntree, Barnes (Peter Sproule) and Fortinbras (Michael Cadman), to which Denson (Hugh Thomas) objects, stating that he finds such 'homosexual flirting' to be 'adolescent'. Rowntree, feeling this to be not a true reflection of Denson's tastes, calls Phillips back and informs him that he'll be scumming for Denson from now on. He then turns to Denson and asks him to say thank you. The particular type of sexuality employed by the Whips is also named by Mick at the end of the scene when they are told they are to be beaten: 'the thing that I hate about you, Rowntree, is the way you give Coca-Cola to your scum, and your best teddy bear to Oxfam, and expect us to lick your frigid fingers for the rest of your frigid life'. This, the principal representation of contradiction number nine, explicitly links their sexuality with power, and in so doing critiques their notions of charity and duty as well, which is what the boys have been accused of lacking in that scene.

The growing relationship between Philips and Wallace stands in stark contrast to this, and is represented as natural and beautiful, and as having a causal relationship to fidelity to the Event. The first indication is the gym scene, which is filmed in black and white, and full of longing, desire and romance. After some of the boys jump over the pommel horse under the tutelage of Barnes, we see Philips pulling on his sweater. The music begins with a low drum roll under some violins. The volume of the strings starts to build as he and two other boys start to watch Wallace on the high bars. Adam Scovell (2014), in a subtle and nuanced analysis of Marc Wilkinson's score, refers to this as a 'quiet micropolyphony' in which 'there seems to be a gradual wave of sounds representing some form of realisation'. What is interesting here is that the primary

⁹² This is the word used in the text for the British public school system of 'fagging', where younger boys are expected to perform duties for prefects.

point of view is Philips's, who has only been a minor character at this stage. They exchange glances in a shot/reverse shot, with Wallace smiling up at Philips, who looks smitten. The next forty seconds is filmed in slow motion, with cuts between Wallace on the bars and Philips staring at him. The other two boys are not shown again, as the scene is, of course, not about them or their reaction. Quiet, reverberating strings are heard throughout until Wallace dismounts spectacularly. There is then a brief moment of silence while the speed of motion returns to normal, broken by Barnes shouting 'Back to the House!' The scene is unexpected in its tenderness and is a clue that perhaps something else may be possible in the world of College. Badiou, in a discussion of love as an encounter, states this:

precisely because....[love]....encompasses a disjuncture, at the moment when this Two appear on stage as such and experience the world in a new way, it can only assume a risky or contingent form....And I would give this encounter the quasi-metaphysical status of an *event*, namely of something that doesn't enter into the immediate order of things (2012b: 28).

While this is not an Event of the order of the end of the film, it functions as one in and of itself to the extent that nothing seen in the text at this point has led the spectator to expect it, and because of its role in leading both Philips and Wallace to become eventual subjects: they are faithful to this Event, and to their rebellion later. The riskiness and contingency are shown when the moment is shattered by Barnes's bellowing, amplified by the slow motion and music being rudely interrupted by it.

The next scene involving the two of them takes place in the armoury, importantly after the scene where Mick and Johnny meet the girl. As discussed, that scene marks the beginning of their movement away from their previous conception of heterosexuality as a means of control to one of freedom. The scene in the armoury shows the spectator the trajectory of the Crusaders who have not encountered the girl. It is the first time we see the means of the boys' rebellion, though it is not these actual guns that will be used, and once again, it is in black and white. There follows a conversation over a cigarette, led by Philips, about what the latter wants to do when he leaves school, whether or not his mother is coming to Founders' Day (when the revolt will take place), and his not minding his mother not being married to his 'new dad'. Philips

discusses the importance of having a goal, and gently chastises Wallace for having 'no ambition'. They are then interrupted by the sound of someone coming. Philips gets away, but Wallace is caught by Denson, who asks him to explain himself and who he was with. As Wallace says 'no one', there is a cut to the wall of the boys' study, accompanied by a disjunctive musical cue of strings and brass, which provides the spectator with another narrative marker of what is to come, as we once again see the cut-out images of colonial rebellion. The previous scene was the Event of love, and this is its coupling with the truth of politics. Wallace is faithful to Philips and their love here, and the next scene hints at this conjuncture, and what will be created by it. Moreover, it is Denson's intervention, with all of his privileging of duty over desire, which provides the force in this dialectic between love as truth and duty as the requirement of Badiou's democracy without a subject. It will be Denson's father, the general (Anthony Nicholls), who will be speaking about duty when the boys force the coming to pass of the unknowable void in the set as the creation of the Event of the end of the film.

There is one more very short scene with the two of them together. Once again in black and white, the camera pans slowly across images of boys in bed in the dormitories, prior to pausing on the two of them together, with Wallace's arm around Philips' neck, as they sleep. The music is the same as during the gymnasium scene, once again affirming their love. The next scene is the one with Mick, Peanuts and the girl seen through the telescope. This juxtaposition, allied to Wallace not going on the trip to town that ends with the girl's first scene in the café, suggests that there are two paths to becoming subjects of the Event: one predicated upon the encounter with the real presented by the girl; one founded in same-sex love.

Let us turn our attention to what happens after the boys are given the task of tidying up the theatre stockroom, which is their punishment – actually described by the headmaster in the scene involving the chaplain discussed above as a 'privilege' – for their misdemeanour on military manoeuvres. The cinematography is initially in colour, and perfectly realist, without any hint that what the spectator is seeing should in any way be doubted. Johnny and Wallace are taking things out of the stockroom under the

stage, while Bobby Philips sits on it reading. After the spectator sees the two boys carry a large plastic crocodile to a fire outside, there is a shift to black and white via the camera descending into the stockroom. Johnny and Mick are moving items around and loosely piling them up at the bottom of the stairs. Johnny sees a locked wardrobe, and Mick grabs an axe to break it open. In it are creatures in jars, preserved in liquid, including a human foetus. Mick takes it out and turns around 180 degrees. The camera reveals the girl, whose hands come to rest on it. The three of them exchange glances, and she returns it. The music is similar in tone and style to what has been heard at other moments where Badiou's conditions of philosophy have been present. What is being suggested here is a putting away of death and stasis, along with a rejection of the duality of woman and motherhood, and is a sign of the collective rebirth as subject that is to come.

Following this, Philips and Wallace come down the stairs and the Crusaders are all together, for the first time. They crawl through a gap and find themselves in an anteroom, which is full of rifles, machine guns, grenades, and even a rocket launcher. They pass them around excitedly as one note builds on a violin. The scene ends with a fade to black and the last chapter, 'Crusaders', begins. As suggested throughout, black and white tends to be used – though there are exceptions, such as the chaplain being in a drawer, which is filmed in colour – in scenes that have a less strict relationship to verisimilitude than does the rest of the text. What these scenes tend to do is actuate the characters' desires in some form or other: Mick and the girl having sex; Mrs Kemp wandering the school naked; the girl seen through the telescope; the various scenes showing Wallace and Philips' increasing love. However, this is not to say that the spectator should think of these scenes as dream sequences, or as any other form of surrealism. Moreover, there are perfectly realist scenes in black and white. In terms of the finding of the guns, and the consequent ending of the film, it is worth returning to Badiou's work on St Paul, in particular that on his fidelity to the Resurrection, an Event that Badiou sees as imaginary.

As discussed in Chapter One, Paul's subjectification by the Event of the resurrection means that he must dismiss philosophy, with its emphasis upon guarantees,

knowledge, and logic. Instead, faith in the truth-event of the resurrection establishes a 'community of destiny' (2003: 63) and it is not dependent on the teachings of Jesus, but upon the miraculous Event of his resurrection. There are no differences in Paul's universalism. This takes the militant subject out of the realm of historical tradition – Badiou uses the example of Paul's belief that there is no distinction between Jew (and Jewish law) and Greek (and Greek *episteme*) under the Event of the resurrection – and 'founds the subject as division' (57), through 'the weaving together of two separate paths' (55): the flesh and the spirit. Fidelity to the Event of the resurrection is taken up by both paths without distinguishing between them, as described here: 'the event is at once the suspension of the path of the flesh through a problematic "not" and the affirmation of the path of the spirit through a "but" of exception' (63). The subject of death is briefly suspended through the subject of life's continuance.

To return to the film, what this does is allow us to circumvent discussions regarding whether or not the end – and, indeed, some of the other black and white scenes – have taken place. Specifically, as Badiou situates the Event in the future anterior, which he considers to be 'what supports belief' (2006: 418), it allows us not to have to consider if the ending will have taken place, as what matters are the markers of the journey to it, its representation, and, principally, the Crusaders' militant fidelity to it. The Event will have taken place because there will be subjects of it, who have committed to it via an aleatory gamble. Hallward, in a discussion of Badiou's situating of a material truth, states that it 'always involves a fidelity to inconsistency' (2008: 99). This is key here. The naming of the Event's subjects, who had previously been the set that is void, will have taken place when 'the situation will have appeared in which the indiscernible....is finally presented as a truth of the first situation' (Badiou, 2006: 418), with the 'first situation' here being the one made up of the elements of the English public school. These names are those used to describe truth procedures taking place under the conditions of philosophy. This naming then suspends them 'from the future anterior of a condition' (420). Badiou summarises thus: '[a] subject is thus, by the grace of names, both the real of the procedure....and the hypothesis that its unfinishable result will introduce some newness into presentation' (421). Truth is not conditional, just the coming into time of it.

The final chapter of the film, which lasts just over ten minutes, takes place on Founders' Day, when parents, former pupils and all the members of College celebrate its history and achievements. As the title card comes on screen, a military voice is heard, crying "Guard of Honour... 'shun", followed by the tolling of bells. The title card then cuts to an image of the Union flag, billowing in the breeze, situating College as Great Britain in microcosm. The camera zooms out and tilts down, to reveal a car with a flag on it arriving with a military escort, past the cadets on parade. An officer gets out of the car and walks towards Denson, who salutes him; then, he inspects the troops prior to shaking hands with Rowntree and a bishop (actor uncredited). The spectator is unaware at this point that the officer is General Denson, and has therefore been saluted by his son. There is an elderly man dressed as a mediaeval crusader. They enter into the hall in procession, past rows of boys and parents. The headmaster and other senior staff await them on the stage. Upon reaching the stage, the headmaster kneels and kisses the hand of the 'knight', and Latin words are exchanged; specifically, the headmaster thanks the knight and calls him 'benefactor'. He then gives a brief speech prior to introducing General Denson. He is keen to stress College's history, while laying even more emphasis upon how much College examines tradition and looks to the future. This is in line with his modernising views that have been examined above. Denson then gets up to speak. After some introductory remarks, he says this, which is worth reproducing in full:

Men of College, now, you chaps are probably thinking...
there's nothing much an old soldier like me can teach you.
Well, you may be right. All the same, I'm going to
have a shot at it. First thing, you're lucky.
Yes. A lot of men would give their eyeteeth
to be sitting where you're sitting now.
You are privileged. Now, for heaven's sake, don't get me wrong.
There is nothing the matter with privilege-
as long as we're ready to pay for it. It's a very sad thing,
but today it is fashionable...to belittle tradition.
The old orders that made our nation a-a living force...
are for the most part scorned...by modern psychiatrists, priests,
pundits of all sorts. But what have they got
to put in their place, hmm? Oh, politicians talk a lot about
freedom.

Well, freedom is the heritage of every Englishman... who speaks with the tongue that Shakespeare spoke. But, you know, we won't stay free unless we're ready to fight. And you won't be any good as fighters... unless you know something about discipline-the habit of obedience- how to give orders...and how to take them. Never mind the sneers of the cynics. Let us just be true to honour, duty, national pride. We still need loyalty. We still need tradition. If we look around us at the world today, what do we see? We see bloodshed, confusion, decay. I know the world has changed a great deal in the past 50 years - But England-our England doesn't change so easily. And back here in College today I feel -and it makes me jolly proud - that there is still a tradition here which has not changed... and by God, it isn't going to change! It's up to all of you chaps to give the world a lead. It is Britain's tradition that you have learnt here. Self-reliance, service, self-sacrifice. A tradition of College. And it's up to all of us to reassure the world by our unquestioning obedience...that we still hope - My God, we're on fire!

Throughout the speech, the camera has moved in close-up to various parents in the audience, all of whom look on approvingly. What purpose does this speech serve in the text? It conjoins elements of the positions taken by the headmaster – the interconnection of privilege and capital – with the tradition of service and sacrifice espoused by the whips. The speech encapsulates everything that is the state of the situation that is College: deference; tradition; privilege; unquestioning obedience; fear of the modern; and stasis. What is of interest is that the set of things that makes up College is here equated with that which makes up England, with the latter being substituted for Britain: College as nation, and a unique one at that, hence the contradistinction of England and the rest of the world. The voices that would seek to change all this are in England, according to the general, hence the discussion of the scorning of the 'old orders'; but they are not in College.

This blind faith in the ability of the English public school to be the foundation – on Founders' Day – of the set that is England/Englishness has effectively the status of ontology in this film, and indeed in a whole tradition of film and literature, what Izod *et al* (2012: 111) argue is 'a distinctive British literary and film cycle'; for example, in

filmic terms, *Goodbye, Mr Chips* (Sam Wood, 1939), *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (Gordon Parry, 1951), *The Browning Version* (Anthony Asquith, 1951 and Mike Figgis, 1994) and more recently the Harry Potter series. In Badiouian terms, this makes the English public school being qua being, with the Crusaders as the set that is void; that which is not counted, and is not, therefore, being qua being. Badiou puts great emphasis on structure in the situation, and the way in which the inconsistent multiple – in our case, all that makes up what is College, and by extension England – takes on the appearance of a one, or something that can be counted. As Badiou posits: '[i]t states that the one is and that the pure multiple – inconsistency – is not' (2006: 55). We will return to inconsistency when we consider the Crusaders' actions below. For now, it is enough to see College as performing a structuring function in order to give name to that which is actually indeterminate, and which the Event will re-present as inconsistency.

As General Denson says, 'never mind the sneers of the cynics', people start to cough and a musical hum starts up. He carries on regardless after the coughing breaks out, the smoke increases, and people start to leave. The headmaster says something to Rowntree, who leaves the stage. Some of the audience clap as others leave, and the general only starts to realise what is going on just at the moment when the headmaster is about to interrupt him. This blithe continuation, this attitude of 'keep buggering on', as Churchill was fond of saying, is indicative of the general's world view; he is the England of which he speaks: resistant; impervious; implacable. Once he notices the smoke, he cries 'don't panic!', then 'women first!' After repeating these lines, he shouts 'stand up, stand up for College! Each man with his voice upraised!' This suggests that he believes the values he has been espousing can be put to the test in such a situation. There is then a chaotic scrambling as the spectator sees the ruling class – there is a member of the royal family there, plus a bishop, some lords, and of course the masters and future rulers of the country – scurry out of the door. As they get outside, there is a few seconds of peace before a mortar goes off. The point of view here is from the Crusaders' vantage point, up on the roof. There is then a cut to Mick opening fire with a machine gun, with the girl sitting next to him.

All the Crusaders are dressed in paramilitary uniforms, similar to the ones seen in the pictures in the study and to those worn by the various revolutionary cadres of the day, most famously by Che Guevara and Fidel Castro. They also evoke the Maoist groups seen in contemporary European cinema, most notably those in *Weekend* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1967), who, while disembowelling a man, inform the bourgeois couple (Jean Yanne and Mireille Darc) that the 'horror of the bourgeoisie can only be overcome by more horror'. For the contemporary spectator, they also bring to mind the Red Army Faction, known as the Baader-Meinhof⁹³ group, and its attacks upon individual members of the German ruling class in the 1970s. Both Mick and Johnny are wearing flying jackets, which were less common in such groups, suggesting a specifically British take upon the revolutionary struggle. Despite this, there is a distinctly internationalist feel to the costume.

Bobby Philips does not fire himself, but instead hands rocket grenades to Wallace. The others all fire machine guns. General Denson takes charge of those under fire and orders the breaking open of the armoury. The chaplain hands guns through an open window to the people below, and in so doing once more links church, state and the military in the Badiouian count that is the state of the situation of College, as we had previously seen in his leading of the cadet exercise. We see Fortinbras and Barnes open fire with machine guns. There are moments of levity, too: the knight hiding behind a pillar with his bassinet on; the bishop running across the lawn while holding onto his hat and an *haute bourgeois* elderly woman firing a machine gun, while shouting 'Bastards! Bastards! Bastards!' The headmaster walks into the middle of the lawn, crying 'stop firing! Cease firing!' He then delivers the last lines of the film: 'Boys, boys, I understand you! Listen to reason and trust me. Trust *me!*' There is then a cut to the girl, who pulls a revolver from her belt. The camera zooms in to show the gun in close up, which she fires. This technique has the effect of drawing attention to the gun as phallic symbol of power, which the girl has taken on, and made her own, as shown with the fluid movement with which she draws it, and fires. The next shot is the

⁹³ Anderson planned a documentary about Baader-Meinhof in 1974 (Sinker, 2004: 77) but it never got off the ground. However, this does allow us to see that his interest in such figures extended beyond 1968 and this film.

headmaster with blood coming out of his forehead, dropping to the ground in slow motion while the rest of the action is frozen in a *tableau vivant*. There is then another mortar going off, but the scene is changed. The lawn is clear, and the headmaster has gone, as have the other dead bodies. 'Stand Up, Stand Up', the hymn heard at the beginning of the film, starts up and the defending army of College runs back on to the lawn and begins firing. The remaining seconds cut between that and Mick firing his machine gun, his face contorted in anger, with the latter image being the final shot.

What to make of this seeming anomaly of the cleared lawn towards the end of the film? Various sources, for example, Hedling (2001) and Sinker, do not comment upon it. A number of interpretations are feasible, from the material to the abstract: time has passed; it is a visual metaphor for the struggle needing to be fought continually; a signifier of the film's fundamental artificiality and constructedness; a clue that the film is not meant to be read as a representation of events, but as a structure of desire, hence its title; a sign that what comes after is a mixture of the continuing fight, plus Mick shooting at the audience, as the final shot takes the form of direct address. From the perspective of our analysis, the freeze frame, and the following shot of the empty lawn, function as a form of caesura, effectively splitting the Event. The voice of consensus is dead, so there is nothing to prevent the continuation of the necessary antagonisms. Moreover, this shot allows us to consider the Event as that which happens up to and including the headmaster's death, with what comes after as the beginning of the re-presentation of the state of the situation that now contains those made subject by fidelity to the Event. Badiou has this to say:

The ultimate effect of an eventual caesura, and of an intervention from which the introduction into circulation of a supernumerary name proceeds, would thus be that the truth of a situation, with this caesura as its principle, *forces the situation to accommodate it* (2006: 361).

When the action effectively recommences after the headmaster's death and the shot of the empty lawn, what we see is this forced accommodation of that which is supernumerary: the Crusaders. Badiou talks of the supernumerary as being 'an excess of inclusion over belonging' (102) in the state of the situation. Of course, the boys,

though not the girl, have been included in the College, but they do not belong. The girl has been neither, though the text has presented her as part of the supernumerary excess from the moment she was seen through the telescope. It is vital that it is her that kills the headmaster. Her action is a direct riposte to his final words, which do not include her, and his emphasis on '*me*' in his final words puts him in the position of taking on and becoming the whole set of values that is College. She is the irruption into this world of the feminine, of the working class, of the 'part without a name' (Badiou, 2012c: 66), both literally, and in terms of representing the inconsistency of the pure multiple that College has attempted to present as the One.

Moreover, it is her role, both as cause and as active participant, that saves the film from accusations of being nothing more than a 'teenage hissy fit' (2004: 77), as Mark Sinker describes it. She functions as the creator of a strong singularity, one 'which is ontologically supernumerary and whose value of appearance (or of existence) is maximal' (Badiou, 2009b: 372). The Crusaders have created this site, but she has had the principal role in this: initially, she is objectified in the text, made passive by the gaze of the camera, Johnny and Mick, and the spectator. She begins to take an active role during that scene, and is then seen from another's perspective again, through the telescope, although it is clear that this is a different gaze entirely from the one in the café. Following this, her presence in the stockroom creates the Crusaders as revolutionary entity, and the guns are found soon after her arrival. At the end, she is an equal participant in the revolt; her silencing of the headmaster is a guarantee that they will not capitulate, that the principal contradictions will not be resolved. Her presence and role are the ultimate rejection of the Kantian quasi-universalism found in the figure of the headmaster; revolutionary violence is not something that can be willed as a Kantian universal law. It is dialectical and based on antagonisms.

We have argued throughout that the Event is overdetermined and that the contradictions present and listed above continue through the resolution of some in order to strengthen others. In terms of the evental causes, there has been the violence of the whips, specifically the beating of the boys; the weakness of the masters; the headmaster's lack of understanding regarding the boys' position within College; the

entrance of the girl into College and the growing love of Philips and Wallace. One or two of these would have been enough to cause the boys to rebel further, but all are required to create the rupture in the state of the situation; all these 'isolated facts', in the words of Bosteels above, form a 'consistency' and are a 'necessity' in the forming of the contingent Event. Through this process, contradictions seven, eight and nine are resolved, with the other contradictions continuing beyond the end of the text. The lack of narrative resolution at the end of the film is typical of the cinema of the day, and we have seen similar ambiguity in *Morgan*, *Herostratus*, and in particular, *Performance*. What makes *if...* different, however, is the clear narrative and political trajectory that has been taken; the revolutionary *telos* presented to the spectator. The Crusaders are 1968's representation of the 'community of destiny' situated by Badiou in Paulian Christianity, who will 'come to know everything that....[they]....did not know before' (Mao, cited in Badiou, 2009b: 8). If we take the end of the Event to be the end of the film, then we are not shown what happens to the Crusaders once the Event is finished, requiring a leap of faith from the spectator, rather like the one discussed regarding Chas at the end of *Performance*: that they are made subject via their fidelity to it, which will only exist once it is over as a trace. If, however, we take the shooting of the headmaster to be the final act of the Event, then what we are shown in the final seconds is the revolutionary subject of 1968, faithful to the Event, made new and ready to carry on.

Conclusions and departures

Opening remarks

We have argued that 1968 represents a specific flowering of the radical feature film in British cinema, and that an analytical model based upon Jacques Lacan's and Alain Badiou's theories of the subject is an efficacious way to interrogate the meaning of these texts. Setting up and using the model has involved asking a number of questions that have been answered throughout, namely:

- Why do Lacan and Badiou offer a model for film analysis?
- Why use those theorists to analyse British Cinema from this period?
- Why might it be time to do so?
- What was 1968 and how is it represented in British films?

Those questions have, by definition, led into other ones, and opened up a range of enquiries. We will provide here a summation of the research undertaken, and consider some departures from it, in order to think about what has been done, and what might be done next.

The placing of four of the five films in the corpus into pairs facilitated a comparative analysis of the subject in the text, with the majority of it being predicated upon the Lacanian model that the greater part of the thesis employs. There is not one subject in these films; rather, they present forms of the subject that have a level of congruence, both in terms of the films in each chapter, and indeed, across them. Chapter Two allowed for the setting up of a binary of sorts regarding utopian and dystopian representations of the subject in the period leading up to the events of 1968; one which in many ways problematises the popular view of the decade. Chapter Three presented the reader with a sustained engagement with the subject seeking death, but one that is predicated upon a relationship to the libertarian bent of 1968. The supposedly utopian text in the second chapter – *Morgan* – actually presents for the spectator a troubling picture of a world struggling to live up to the hype surrounding classlessness that permeated both the era at the time and its place in the popular imagination ever since. *Privilege*, on the other hand, takes place in a thoroughly

dystopian universe, one in which fame has been reified as a social good, and where duty to the state and this world's continuance is paramount.

Theodor Adorno, in a 1964 conversation with Ernst Bloch on utopian longing, states that 'what people have lost subjectively in regard to consciousness is very simply the capability to imagine the totality as something that could be completely different' (cited in Bloch, 1988: 3-4). The subjects of all four of the films examined in tandem are suffering from this loss, but, in the case of Morgan and Steven, strive against it; for Max and Turner, there are varying levels of resignation involved. Chas, on the other hand, is given a glimpse of a world that could be different, with terrifying results. What has been of particular interest for us in our analysis of the subject in *Morgan* is the ways in which the film positions a subject set adrift from the certainties given to him by the class politics of the previous generation; a politics that was concrete, practical, and not utopian, due to its belief in the working class as the instrument for change⁹⁴. For Morgan, it is the utopian belief of classlessness represented by his marriage to Leone that he desires to hold on to, a desire constantly quashed by the Real of communism, which is both troubling and soothing for him, depending on the stage he is at in the narrative. We have also argued that the 'lost objects' of communism function as a form of the *objet a* for Morgan, in the sense that it is a remainder of the Real in the Symbolic, and one which cannot be effaced. In both that chapter and the one following it, we suggested that elements of '68 might function as a (utopian) belief in what Žižek describes as a 'universality without its symptom'. He later states that the Lacanian notion of utopia is 'a vision of desire without *objet a* and its twists and loops' (1997), which rephrases the same idea in slightly different terminology. We can now think about the ways in which this concept, and its application to the four Lacanian texts – *Morgan*, *Privilege*, *Herostratus* and *Performance* – might allow us to make

⁹⁴ It is worth noting that Marx and Engels were very critical of the earlier generation of socialists who they pejoratively named utopian – for example, Charles Fourier and Robert Owen – seeing them as idealists. This passage is instructive: 'The founders of these systems see, indeed, the class antagonisms, as well as the action of the decomposing elements in the prevailing form of society. But the proletariat, as yet in its infancy, offers to them the spectacle of a class without any historical initiative or any independent political movement' (2016: 67).

some concluding remarks, and in so doing, consider why *if...* functions rather differently.

Part i: The impossible dream

Desire and, indeed, the drive, have been central to our understanding of the subject in these four texts and the versions of 1968 that they represent. If, to paraphrase Althusser, we see utopian politics as an imaginary answer – rooted in the desire alluded to above – to the problem of humanity’s real conditions of existence, then what do the films tell us about the politics of 1968? Kristin Ross suggests that if there is not a union between the students and the workers, then all we have is ‘a metaphysics of desire and liberation, the rehearsal for a world made up of “desiring machines” and “autonomous individuals” rooted to the irreducible ground of personal experience’ (2002: 12). This positions desire as circulatory, narcissistic, and fundamentally alienating. If we align this with the Lacanian notion of utopian desire outlined above, then what this metaphysics gives us is a non-dialectical politics of identity that seeks to efface contradictions via its concentration on what Badiou refers to as the meaning of metaphysics for its positivist and hermeneutic critics, which he names ‘the reign of the essentially undetermined’ (2000: 179). In the same paper he refers to it as ‘devoid of any assignable signification’ (180); the ultimate example being ‘the affirmed existence of an essential undetermined being’ (183); a higher power, a god. This belief in a higher power is another way to efface the symptom, which it is thought God can remove for us. According to Badiou, Lacan restores the dialectic to metaphysics by reminding us of ‘a negativity which conserves, that is, transforms into cunning power, that which it negates, thereby bringing the appearance of the undetermined to the implacable and repetitive determination of the symptom’ (186). This undetermined being is in opposition to the overdetermined Event, to which we will return in the next part of this conclusion.

This ‘metaphysics’ as seen within the subject in the films predominantly aligns with the Lacanian desire outlined by Žižek and with a belief in the undetermined. Both Turner and Max wish to disavow the material conditions of existence of 1968, including the

politics of the era, which are tangential to their trajectories as subjects, though *Herostratus* does, of course, position Max's desire within the prism of liberation, not least through the intercut found footage from the Dialectics of Liberation Congress. Max neither believes in utopian desire nor a politics of liberation, instead choosing to position Farson as proxy – as higher power, or master – for all that he sees wrong with the world, while holding the view that he can help him to realise his desire, which is to have his death-as-act mediated via the very thing he despises. *Herostratus* in this sense does present the spectator with the search for a master that Lacan situated in the desire of the students of May '68. *Performance*, on the other hand, maintains a closer relationship with utopian desire. Turner wishes to have restored to him the transformative power that the language of violent performance had previously bestowed upon him and which the text connects to the revolutionary music of the day. He recognises in the other the 'cunning power' referred to above, but does not realise that in situating Chas as ego ideal he is misrecognising Chas's ability to function as that which restores him as the fixed subject he never was, as he does not comprehend his nor Chas's ontology as split subject; he sees it, but does not realise its effects until it is too late.

Steven also wishes to withdraw from his conditions of existence, but his situation is materially different from that of the other characters: he lives in a dystopian, quasi-fascist world in which any agency he may have had as subject is subsumed by his status as the object-cause of desire for his fans, and by extension, the nation. *Privilege* presents us with a subject who is 'never more than fleeting...and vanishing' (Lacan, 1999: 142) and who himself has been made by the material conditions of existence into an undetermined subject without signification. By the end of the film, he will never have existed. Morgan, on the other hand, while ending in a state of delusion, as a faded subject, is cognisant of his conditions of existence. Ross's metaphysics of desire and liberation – which we can argue he thinks he wants, through the figure of Leonie as object-cause of this desire – is constantly punctured for him by politics and history, which we have situated as the Real of Communism; in the text, a markedly different politics from much of what is situated in the libertarian May, one that aligns with the politics of the start of Badiou's short century, more than with those of the

Red Years. Despite this, *Morgan*, as the earliest of the corpus, is the only one to represent directly a left politics of revolution that has its roots in a sense of the onward march of the working class, even if *Morgan* functions as a figure of its arrest via the illusion of classlessness. If, as David Harvey alludes to, a Marxian notion of class struggle positions workers 'as appendages of the machines they operate' (2010: 96), which accounts for workers' resistance to new technologies, then we can see the Real of Communism functioning for *Morgan* as anterior signifier of his struggle against the technology of the political imaginary represented by Ross's 'desiring machine': a politics divorced from class struggle.

As discussed in the Introduction, and alluded to at other times, much has been made subsequently of the ways in which 1968 failed. Once again, there is an anterior inflection to this, seen from our contemporary situation: the revolution will not have taken place; instead, we get 1989 and the supposed 'end of history'. This view is what Badiou is so keen to oppose, as discussed in Chapters One and Four. In terms of Britain, there is undoubtedly a utopian dimension to 1968, one which aligns with Ross's view. There was no major attempt to align the working class and the student movement, which is not to say that much of the left did not understand the importance of this, as it did, as shown in the *New Left Review* editorial discussed in the introduction. If much of 1968 was utopian – though we would say that it was not in France, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Pakistan and in other countries where a New Left-influenced intelligentsia aligned with the working class – then for Lacan this is precisely why it was doomed to fail. Adrian Johnston argues that his attitude to 1968 is 'the most notorious example of what could be described as Lacanian anti-utopianism' (2008: 69) and attempts to summarise Lacan's fleeting concern with the concept throughout his teaching and writing under the banner of his belief that *jouissance* is impossible (73) predicated upon the gap between the expected *jouissance* and the obtained *jouissance*. The four films under discussion here all present for the spectator the impossibility of *jouissance* in the Britain of 1968 and do, in this sense, present a Lacanian interpretation of the impossibility of political change in the Britain of the era. We will return to this question of political change in Britain below.

Part ii: The dream made concrete

We have argued throughout that *if...* represents a notably different subject from the four films discussed in the previous section, and it is for this reason that it was analysed via a different, though linked, model. The Badiouian militant subject of the overdetermined Event in the text was created through interaction between the set that was void – the boys – and the working class, the female and love. The principal figure here is the girl, who plays an organising role in subjectifying the boys. We have also argued that *if...* is the only British film of the era that attempts to represent the revolutionary politics of 1968, while pointing out the specificities of this in terms of the film being set in a public school. It is our contention that the film is not utopian but rather, in Badiouian terms, remains faithful to the Idea of communism as rooted in the praxis of May '68. It does not will a 'universality without its symptom' but rather seeks to subtract subjectivity from fidelity to the Event. Lucy Bell discusses the similarities and differences between the Lacanian act and the Badiouian Event in the context of the symptom. It is worth quoting her at length:

the transition from the analytic act to the truth-event entails a movement from mortality to immortality. In both cases, the aim of the process lies in living with a 'piece of the real' and basing one's future existence around it. For Lacan, this is almost synonymous with identifying with one's symptom, living with death, coming to terms with one's own mortality... In Badiou's thought, on the contrary, the void is no longer 'in you more than you', to use the final title of Lacan's famous Seminar XI, but rather in being-as-being, that ontological domain from which subjectivity is subtracted in the fidelity to a truth. The movement from Lacan's ontology to Badiou's philosophy thus entails the evaporation of the notion of original sin and mortality. Living with a 'piece of the real' involves embracing one's subjective immortality due to the constitution of an infinite, universal truth (2008: 111-112).

There are a number of elements of this that are of interest for us. Firstly, the idea of 'living with a piece of the real' and Bell's different readings of it in Lacan and Badiou are useful for thinking about the different ways in which the subjects of the Lacanian films and of the Badiouian one respond to that. The subjects of the first four films to varying degrees all enjoy their symptom, in the Žižekian sense regarding how the

subject gets back the truth of his desire (1992: 154). Moreover, as discussed in Chapter Two, the repressed content of the symptom is returning from the future. In this context, our subjects' futures exist beyond textual temporality predicated upon their anterior trajectories regarding their relationships to the symptom. For our Badiouian collective subject, on the other hand, this piece of the real has taken them out of the realm of the individual, towards the collective fidelity to the universal truth that is created by the Event. The 'piece of the real' constitutes a different subject, in a different time, though one that will have left anterior traces of its own constitution. Hallward argues that for Badiou, 'the symptomal real that literally founds a situation is accessible only to those subjects who actively affirm the implication of an event that took place at its edge' (2003: 150). There is no enjoying of the symptom here, in the sense that Žižek suggests that this happens without quite knowing its logic; rather, the symptomal real is fully understood through fidelity to the Event of which it is the site. The psychoanalytic symptom, then, is in relation to knowledge; Badiou's to truth.

Secondly, it is worth considering what Bell says about the void, in order to reflect upon the modes of subjectification present in the texts. As discussed in Chapter Four, the void is the home of the inconsistent multiple in Badiou, of being qua being, whereas for Lacan it is the foundation of the subject. Our Lacanian subjects, then, either try to name the void themselves – Turner, Chas and Max – only to have it named for them or, in the case of Steven and Morgan, simply the second half of that process. Our collective subject, on the other hand, is created by their fidelity to the Event; by doing so, subjectification is no longer predicated upon the void. Bell situates this as a move from ontology to philosophy, but rather we see it in the context of our corpus as a move to politics, as a condition of philosophy, which of course Badiou separates from ontology. Lastly, the notion of 'subjective immortality' is seen very clearly at the film's climax, when we are left with Mick, carrying on firing, with its associations of destiny and fidelity to the truth. Fidelity is key to understanding the difference between the Crusaders and our Lacanian subject in the context of 1968.

Furthermore, Lucy Bell (2008: 112) discusses Lacan and Badiou's differing positions on Antigone's transgression, which aids further our understanding of the difference

highlighted above, with the former seeing it as acceptance of finitude and the latter as defiance of it. Badiou describes Antigone as 'the principle of the infinity of the real, unplaceable within the regulated finitude of the place' (2009c: 162). This defiance, which we see as the force of fidelity, and its connection to that which breaches finitude and indeed place, is useful in terms of thinking about *if....*, Badiou's concept of fidelity, and what 1968 might mean for politics then and now. As suggested in Chapter Four, *if....* initially functions within the generic confines of the public school film, which is often predicated upon defiance, but it is soon made clear that we are watching something rather different, a text whose form of rebellion asks the spectator to consider the film in terms of the ferment of the day. For the curative praxis of psychoanalysis, the acceptance that Lacan sees in Antigone is key for the subject's trajectory through psychoanalysis; for the questioning praxis of philosophy, her defiance gives one answer to one of its conditions: be faithful to the Idea of politics as seen in Badiou's short century. To paraphrase Lacan to think about Badiou, perhaps we might suggest that for the latter, the only thing that one can be guilty of is giving up on truths. In the film, this takes the form of militant fidelity to the eventual irruption of its end, and to the subjectifying forces that took the included but not-belonging elements into being the revolutionary subject of 1968.

Part iii: Departures

We could argue that much of the 1968 of our corpus points towards the politics of the third way of Blairism that commenced in the 1990s and which was hegemonic until the crisis of 2008: described by Hallward (2003: xxxi) as 'a time of reaction against and aversion to the real'; a world of increased atomisation; the valorisation of the individual; the end of political polarity; in short, defeat. However, this only stands up if we assume a consistent turn away from radical politics post-'68, which would be to ignore what happened in the few years after the production of the films. As Richard Vinen argues, it could be suggested that 'the British 68 happened late' (2018: 218). In 1974, as briefly alluded to in our introduction, a series of strikes dating back to 1969 led to the miners bringing down the government of Edward Heath's Conservatives in a concentrated display of working-class power, for which Margaret Thatcher punished

them a decade later with her attack on the industry and its trade union power base that led to the defeat of the Miners' Strike of 1984-5 and the long decline of the left throughout the rest of the century. While the 1974 strike did not see the working class revolt in concert with the students, as had been the case in France in 1968, Italy in 1969, and in the situation in Portugal that was its contemporary, student radicalisation did grow in the 1970s, not least via the increased number of polytechnics, which had a greater number of working-class students. Moreover, in the contested space of Northern Ireland, the People's Democracy movement began in the October of '68, which combined a nationalist call for civil rights for Catholics with demands for a socialist republic throughout the island of Ireland.

Initially, this might seem to strengthen the case for a longitudinal approach; certainly if our principal focus was on the ways in which radical politics manifested itself in British life during the Red Years, then a set of parameters focussing on 1966-1976 would have made sense. This would also have allowed a cut-off just a little later than the fightback of capital against labour began. However, the cinema of the period does not support this method, with only *O! Lucky Man* fitting our criteria, as previously stated. To add to the comments made in the introduction regarding post-'68 British Cinema, there are no films made during this period set in Northern Ireland or that in any fashion deal with the radical politics ascendant there for a brief period, nor any feature films representing the strikes of the 1970s. It is worth saying a little more about *O! Lucky Man*, however, not least because it presents Mick Travis in the next stage of his journey; what happens when the firing stops; in the words of Anderson, 'what happens after school' (cited in Hedling, 1998: 115). While still oppressed by institutions, rebelliousness and militancy have left Mick, who has become a travelling coffee salesman. The film does present the spectator with an oppositional portrait of the Britain of the early 1970s, but there is no way out for Mick, nor for the spectator. The text suggests that the counter-culture is dead, and has no space within it for the increasingly radicalised working class. In this sense, it is a bourgeois politics that is represented, one that tacitly assumes that change requires the working class to be improved by exposure to the intelligentsia. Mick goes to prison and becomes a proponent of some sort of quasi-religious humanist altruism, and when he does in this

guise meet the oppressed of the world, nearly gets himself killed. At the end of the film, the reflexivity and constructedness seen in Anderson's style come to fruition, as Mick meets Anderson playing himself, and successfully applies for the lead role of the film that we have just watched.

We do not wish to stray into an auteurist method at this stage, so we will limit our remarks to what the text says about the world of *if...* from the perspective of our theoretical model, and not get sidetracked into any discussion of Anderson's politics per se. What *O! Lucky Man* suggests is that Mick was not faithful to the truth-event of the end of *if...*, and that the reason for this might be that the weight of institutions – the police; the law; capitalism in all its manifestations – were simply too much to bear. We can consider the reasons for this via Badiou's thinking regarding the different types of subject position that can be created by the Event: his thought goes through some stages, but by the time of *Logics of Worlds* (2009b: 62-65), there are three – faithful; reactive and obscure – to which he adds a fourth – the resurrected subject – which is essentially a reactivated version of the first one, and which allows for the subject of the Event to be created across worlds (and by extension, times). The latter three all depend on the existence of the first for their own existence. Mick in *O! Lucky Man* is the reactive subject in search of moderation, desiring the reconstitution of a new version of the world he himself had seemed to help destroy. We can only speculate as to how and why he left the rest of the Crusaders and chose to realign himself with the abject world of exchange and the service of goods.

In terms of the theoretical model employed, a variety of other areas of research were available, plus some have opened up during the research process. Regarding the former, radical films pertinent to 1968 could have been chosen from a number of other national cinemas, which could have led to either a concentration on a different national cinema – French being the most obvious – or to a project which did indeed take the transnational approach referred to in the Introduction. We have already stated why the latter approach was not part of our thinking, but that does not mean an approach that cherry picked films from across the world could not have been taken as such. However, that would not have allowed for the intersection of theory and

place that is at the heart of our understanding of the British cinema of 1968, leaving such a project amorphous, and lacking in focus. In terms of the former approach, the answer is simple: it was our desire to write about British Cinema, in order to interrogate what it has to tell us about 1968 in that context. In terms of the new avenues of research opened up by the project, what may well grow from it is a project framed entirely by Badiou's theory of the Event, which would have a corpus of films predicated upon a subject who is faithful to it. This model would facilitate an interrogation of militant cinema across a range of periods and national cinemas⁹⁵. It would be led by the theoretical model, not the films, and would seek to marry an intellectual history of radical cinema with a radical interpretive schema.

Part iv: 1968 ≥ 2018?

The five films considered have all had something to say about the politics – in the broadest sense – of 1968. All of them have a relationship to Badiou's '68s, with the Lacanian texts all functioning as examples of number three, the libertarian May, and *if...* being an amalgam of numbers one and four. Of course, part of what this thesis proposes is a return to number four as a necessary task of fidelity to the politics of which 1968 was an expression. In this context, it is worth saying a little more regarding what our analysis of the corpus of films has added to our understanding of 1968 in Britain, to its cinema, and to the current situation, in both disciplinary and political terms.

It is axiomatic to state that the fulcrum of cultural and political activity in the Britain of 1968 was not to be found in its feature films; rather, it coalesced around student politics – and more radical currents – and a loose amorphous underground, which consisted of a variety of groups with interests that both converged and diverged: squatters (see Cohen, 2018); experimental film makers and artists such as Peter

⁹⁵ A version of this that concentrated on cinema from later than the Red Years might include such films as *Land and Freedom* (Ken Loach, 1995), *Der Baader-Meinhof Komplex* (Uli Edel, 2008), *Éloge de l'amour* (Jean-Luc Godard, 2001), *Mat i syn* (Aleksandr Sokurov, 1997), *Goodbye, Dragon Inn* (Tsai Ming-liang, 2003) and *Interstellar* (Christopher Nolan, 2014). This selection would provide a corpus of eventual films that could be analysed from within the prism of Badiou's conditions of philosophy.

Whitehead and Amanda Feilding; the anti-psychiatry movement; psychedelic ‘happenings’, and so on. However, as outlined in our introduction, it is the ability of feature films to reach relatively large audiences that makes them of interest in any research into a period when the boundaries between the avant-garde, the underground and the mainstream were porous. What is the case is that British Cinema in this period produced a number of texts that asked questions of the spectator with regard to what it means to be a radical subject, and which interrogated the Britain of 1968 in a number of ways. Furthermore, this version of Britain was quite specific, and predominantly centred upon counter-cultural London, with the exception of *if....*. This is not a surprise: London is the capital, was seen in the public imagination as the fulcrum of the counter-culture, and was where the majority of filmmaking took place after the north’s brief flowering earlier in the decade. This London has been represented as a place of death and fantasy, of state-led co-option of the radical, and also as ‘curiously hopeful’ (Savage, cited in MacCabe, 1998: 10). On the other hand, College in *if....* functions metonymically and metaphorically as England, in the psychoanalytic sense of the first as displacement, the second, condensation, which both facilitates an understanding of the changing face of the *ancien régime* of the England of 1968, and of a path to rupturing it.

What is also axiomatic is that the British Cinema of 1968 did not produce a comparable number of politically radical texts to that found in various European cinemas. We have already discussed the reasons for this in our introduction, but it is worth returning to it, from the point of view of modes of production. It has become a cliché to state that much European Cinema is a cinema of authorship, but like all clichés, it is one that is based on truth, notwithstanding the fact that there is a European popular cinema, which does not tend to be given that much attention in the Anglophone world. Thinking about the relative status of directors in Europe and Britain allows us another path into thinking why certain types of films are more likely to get made in one context rather than another. In order to keep these remarks relatively brief, we will use France as a comparative example. By 1968, France had a number of directors with established international reputations who had begun in the *Nouvelle Vague* – Godard, Truffaut, Resnais, Chabrol, Rohmer, Rivette, Varda, Marker, and so on; an older

generation who had continued to work throughout the 1960s – Bresson, Melville, Tati – plus international directors who worked there at various times, such as Buñuel and Antonioni. French cinema was self-sufficient economically and did not have to look to Hollywood and success in the United States either for economic or cultural validation. Moreover, the valorisation of the author allowed for the growth of a cinema predicated upon experimentation with form. We can see this in the *Nouvelle Vague's* focus upon non-continuity forms of editing, such as the jump cut and the non-diegetic insert; in its reflexivity and knowingness regarding its status as cinema, often seen through the revealing of techniques as a form of deconstruction. Furthermore, there was the whole politics of authorship, as seen in the tension between the role of the director and the screenwriter, which Susan Hayward has described as a 'dialectical tension' between the role of the visual and the written (1993: 80). These developments did influence British film-making, but did not become part of the discourse around film to the extent that they did in France. The focus on form is relevant to our corpus, and is alluded to in the second criterion in the introduction, which of course had a role in producing a corpus of only five films.

British Cinema, on the other hand, has always had an Atlanticist tendency, sharpened by a shared language and the dream of breaking America. It had to some degree judged itself on its cultural and economic performance in the United States ever since *The Private Life of Henry VIII* (Alexander Korda, 1933) had become the first British picture to be nominated for Best Picture at the Academy Awards, and the first to win an Academy Award in any category (Charles Laughton for Best Actor). Woodfall Films had been Tony Richardson's attempt to set up an independent production base outside the UK's relatively integrated studio system – itself based on the Hollywood model – but it did not have anything resembling a large output, releasing only two films in 1968, and was dependent on US studios for distribution. Indeed, much of the cinema of 1968 in Britain was funded with US money, including *if...*; Alexander Walker estimates that 95% of the funding for British films that year came from the United States (Sargeant, 2005: 243). Furthermore, British directors tended to get drawn to the USA in a way that European ones did not, to the same degree, a process still taking

place today⁹⁶. The extent to which the mode of production briefly outlined here gives us a picture of Britain full stop is debatable and beyond the scope of this thesis, but it is certainly the case that it is our belief that the production of films is predicated upon both the base and the superstructure, and while the relationship of the latter to the texts has been a common theme running throughout this research, the former category is also relevant to understanding why there were not more radical films produced in Britain in 1968.

As discussed in the previous section, there is a line of argument that '68 happened in Britain a few years later. Following that, there was the explosion of punk rock in 1976, which owed much to the spirit of 1968⁹⁷, even if it tried to adopt a 'scorched earth' position regarding all music that came before it. From our contemporary perspective, knowing that Thatcherism and the subsequent turn to neoliberalism was just a few years away, we can see punk as the last movement of '68, rather than the start of a new cultural form, which was how it tended to present itself. In terms of 1968 itself, our corpus has presented what Badiou, in his discussion of the multiple '68s, calls a 'contradictory effervescence' (2010: 38): there is a revolutionary situation, but it is in a public school, not in the streets; there is liberation, but it can be predicated upon non-revolutionary violence, and may be seeking death; there is transformative power, but it has been co-opted by the state; the politics of the previous generation of the revolutionary left still persists, but it cannot be integrated into the times. This parallels the situation in Britain more generally: there are radical politics, but in a relatively undeveloped way, and mostly confined to the student movement and the small radical left; there is a liberatory sixties, and it is influential, but the country at large is not permeated with it; there is still faith in the institutions of the country, even among much of the student left, with satire⁹⁸ rather than outright anger being the more likely

⁹⁶ See Massa (2018) for a discussion of what he calls the 'Atlantic Drift' in British Cinema, in the context of the contemporary British directors working there.

⁹⁷ Even a cursory look at the music, the tactics employed to 'sell' the bands, and the slogans of the era make this clear. Furthermore, The Clash, the most politically radical of the punk bands, make clear their debt to 1968 in Don Letts' 2000 film *Westway to the World*, the beginning of which has Joe Strummer talking about coming of age in that year, and the extent to which it inspired him.

⁹⁸ See Vinen (2018: 192-195) for a discussion of the enduring fascination with satire in British culture in 1968.

response to the establishment; the working class is in a period of downturn, and will not revive as a transformative force until the early 1970s.

From this we can argue that the chosen films have represented 1968 in Britain in all its contradictions, and that the criteria regarding inclusion in the corpus has been proven to be apposite. Of course, it would be strange if this were not the case, as films are a product of their historical and material context, and do not exist in an idealist universe immune from these considerations. That being said, the extent to which the theoretical model has teased out the specificities of 1968 British Cinema has been illuminating, and it has attempted to marry theory, text and context. In disciplinary terms, Film Studies currently has a plethora of sub-disciplines, some of which were discussed in Chapter One. This project sits on the porous boundary of critical theory and film-philosophy: its psychoanalytic bent puts it in the former camp; its use of philosophy as hermeneutic method the latter. There is a small but growing number of people attempting to come to terms with what a political cinema might be after the crisis of 2008 and to interrogate political film via philosophy⁹⁹ and this project marks an intervention in that, even in the context of the corpus predating the crisis. In both the Introduction and Chapter One, we discussed our belief in the importance of a return to ideological critique, in order to revivify and add to a tradition, but to do so from a contemporary perspective, and using a model that brought together Lacan, building on both his use during his period of hegemony in film theory and via the return to his work begun in the last decade; and Badiou, who has not been used interpretively in the field before to interrogate the subject in cinema.

In order to tarry further with the contemporary, let us consider what this analysis of 1968 might tell us about our situation now. In 1995 Badiou referred to the prevailing attitude in the politics of the time as ‘contemporary abjection’ (2012d: 303). By this he meant capitulation to the existing order, a politics of ‘opinion without any grasp of the

⁹⁹ See O’Shaughnessy (2009), Koutsourakis (2015) and Harvey (2018) for some examples. There will be a volume in 2019 entitled *Cinema of the Crisis* edited by Koutsourakis and Thomas Austin, which attempts to bring together such approaches, and to which we are contributing a chapter looking at the films of Ken Loach from the 1990s onwards via a Badiouian model, in order to argue that his contemporary-set films represent a loss of faith in transformative politics.

real' (303). Similarly, Judith Flower MacCannell, writing in 2006, suggests that 'the historical end to history...is a system without gaps or flaws that refuses to concede to the real of jouissance the power to disrupt (or even energize) it' (213). By 2011, Badiou was confident enough to describe the Arab Spring as the rebirth of history and by 2016, in an attempt to get beyond the 'state-managerial construction' (2016/2018: 75) that he names capitalo-parliamentarianism, he discusses 'the invention of a new political truth that both confronts the principal contradiction between capitalism and communism and...institutes and develops a new modernity' (88-89). Since the end of the Cold War, we have seen the hegemony of the reactive and obscure subjects: the first being the one that declares that the opposition between communism and capitalism that had dominated the short century was wrong, and that what was required was the saving of democracy from dictatorship; what Badiou names as a desire to 'dress up this old pirate's flag in the gaudy colours of the day' (2009b: 55), best defined through its anti-leftism and its counter-revolutionary thrust. What this did was provide an intellectual veneer for the rebalancing of power between capital and labour that began in the mid-1970s and it came from erstwhile Maoists and Trotskyists: André Glucksmann and the *nouveaux philosophes* in France, and figures like the Hitchens brothers in the UK; from subjects previously faithful to Marxism in various forms. The position from which such a subject speaks is one of having resisted 'the catastrophic temptation which the reactive subject declares is contained in the event' (55).

On the other hand, the obscure subject is one that posits a world without its real division (communism vs capitalism) in order to substitute for it what Badiou calls 'the occultation of the present' (60) via the blocking from view of the evental trace with something presented as universal that is not – God or race being two examples used, therefore privileging the transcendent body over an evental one, and in so doing offering this subject 'the chance of a new destiny' (61). Contemporary examples would be the return of the language of religious fervour into politics, both in its western form – the religious certainty underpinning the spreading of liberal democracy in the wars led by George W. Bush and Tony Blair – and in its eastern – radical Islamism. Politically, the denial practised by the reactive subject leads to reaction; the occultation of the

obscure one to fascism (78). As discussed previously, the latter is on the rise, via the extreme right blocking from view the radical answer to the problems generated by neoliberalism.

What we propose is a renewed fidelity to 1968, and indeed to the politics of which it is an example in order to resurrect faith in their eventual trace for the present. This can take a number of forms that are relevant here: the continuation with the philosophical task of re-inscribing the Idea of communism into the Academy; restating the necessity of a political cinema that presents the faithful subject; interrogating such cinema via a method that illuminates that subject; lastly, through praxis, resurrecting the truth-procedure in the present. A research project such as this cannot, by definition, accomplish all of these elements; however, if a marrying of Lacan and Badiou to interrogate the cinema of '68 was the set that is void within Film Studies, then hopefully this thesis has allowed it to form part of a new count, as both a resurrected and new model for analysis.

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