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LIST OF CONTENTS

Introduction 7

Chapter One: Literature Review 33

Chapter Two: Quatermass Adaptation 83

Chapter Three: Quatermass and National Identity 144

Chapter Four: Quatermass and the Uncanny 193

Conclusion 234

References 249

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ABSTRACT

The project investigates the 1950s Quatermass films (The Quatermass Experiment [1955], Quatermass II [1957] produced by Hammer, within their production contexts. Despite the assertion that Hammer horror productions were ‘initiated by the enormous commercial success’ (Hutchings, 1993: 25) of the Quatermass films, they have not been afforded the critical recognition they merit. Reassessment of the cultural importance of the Quatermass phenomenon is needed.

This study addresses critical discourses on British film and the fantastic. As part of addressing the neglect within current scholarship of the Quatermass films, the privileging of the realist aesthetic within film criticism is discussed as part of the context for this neglect. While there has been increased interest in horror and science fiction in more recent writings and hitherto neglected films have been re-discovered, the Quatermass films have not enjoyed comparable critical space. My study goes on to illustrate this gap in the literature on Quatermass, which this study redresses.

An underlying theme throughout the thesis is hybridity. Moving from discussion of how the hybrid text might cause difficulties for critical discourse that seeks finite definitions of film categories and an emphasis on realism within the film text, I address the hybrid within the production contexts and thematic content of the Quatermass films. How does the British/American co-production inform the films and contemporaneous responses to them? How is the hybrid configured within the text; as something troubling, to be feared, or is the response more complex with the potential for more positive readings?

Discussion of the hybrid is combined with the fantastic and the uncanny, the emphasis being on the subversive potential of these modes and how they have potential to destabilise the “real”, and, by extension, dominant ideologies. How might hybridity, the fantastic and the uncanny problematise concepts of identity and “nation”? Concepts of “nation” and “national identity” will be emphasised as contested categories, contingent and inherently hybrid. How are these questions of identity mapped out within and through the Quatermass films and beyond?
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DEDICATION

To my partner, Mike Pacey, whose love, support and patience made it possible for me to complete this work.

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**Introduction**

Picture a scene as told by David Pirie (1973, revised 2008) in his groundbreaking study on English Gothic cinema, *A Heritage of Horror*. A young couple, somewhere in the south of England, possibly the Home Counties, are frolicking in the fields and embracing on a nearby haystack. This simpering and bloodless scene, as Pirie puts it, is rudely interrupted by sonic and kinetic chaos caused by the abrupt descent of an unidentified rocket from the sky, with the couple dashing for cover as the rocket crashes into the earth. The whole scene combines a rural, “bucolic” moment with the intervention of the technological; the shock of the new, indeed. This is, of course, the opening sequence of *The Quatermass Experiment* (Val Guest, 1955), adapted by Hammer from the highly successful BBC television series *The Quatermass Experiment* (1953). For Pirie, ‘the beginning of a quiet cinematic revolution’ comes from this fairly humble beginning (1973: 28).

But, why is it so resonant; what is significant about Quatermass and where might a discussion of it sit within present discourses? One reason might be that it is, as Pirie suggests, ‘possibly the earliest film to be adapted from television’, the new mass medium (ibid). Pirie’s remark here suggests that *The Quatermass Experiment*, along with the second film Hammer produced adapted from a BBC original of the same name, *Quatermass II* (Val Guest, 1957), pioneered the industrial practice of adaptation from television to film. Another significant aspect to *The Quatermass Experiment* was the fact that, according to Pirie and other writers such as Adam Jezard (1995) and Jonathan Rigby (2000), the success of the film began the cycle of Gothic horror films by which Hammer is probably best known (ibid). Pirie states that the impact of Quatermass on the production of horror cinema was immediate. Hammer, the production company for all
three Quatermass films was suffering at the box office during the period prior to
production of *The Quatermass Experiment*. At their ‘lowest ebb’ (Pirie, 1973: 28) in
1955, Hammer was in weak financial condition due to poor box office returns and a
mediocre production and reception could have been disastrous for the company. While
some later critical voices have concurred with Pirie’s view, such as Howard Maxford in
*Film Review* (2004: 64), others, such as Mike Murphy, suggest that the importance of
*The Quatermass Experiment* in changing the fortunes of Hammer has been overstated by
critics (1994: 21). Despite the apparent difference of opinion here, Murphy does concede
that the film marked the beginning of a new cycle of production for Hammer (ibid). The
impact of the film in terms of production, then, suggests it and the other Quatermass
films are worthy of critical consideration. Yet despite the significance of the films, there
has been sparse scholarly attention paid to *The Quatermass Experiment*, *Quatermass II*
and *Quatermass and the Pit* (Roy Ward Baker, 1968).

Hammer was ultimately redeemed by the unprecedented financial success of *The
Quatermass Experiment*, which broke box office records in both Britain and the U.S.A.
(Pirie, 1973: 28). Clearly realising the potential of the commercial impact of the film,
Hammer overturned their 1956 production schedule in order to concentrate on horror
production, thus beginning an association with the genre with which they have become
subsequently synonymous. Indeed, *The Quatermass Experiment* provided Hammer with
their first major box office hit and is regarded by critics as a forerunner of the following
Gothic cycle. This indicates a film of some significance to British cinema culture in and
beyond the 1950s (Hutchings, 1999: 36). The original BBC television series, written by
Nigel Kneale and directed by Rudolph Cartier on which all three films were based (*The
Quatermass Experiment* [1953], *Quatermass II* [1955] and *Quatermass and the Pit*
[1958-9]) were similarly significant in that they were enormously popular with British television audiences (Maxford, 2004: 65). The Quatermass phenomenon, then, needs to be appreciated as a cultural text of some importance, and while the focus of this study is the cinematic adaptations, both the films and the television versions are addressed due to their shared narratives and thematic concerns, as well as their differences where the films depart from the originals and what these differences might reveal about the intentions of the filmmakers in terms of prospective audiences and spectatorship. One of the central arguments in this study is that the concept of hybridity is crucial to understanding the distinctiveness, impact and significance of the Quatermass films. As this thesis identifies, hybridity is evident in the Quatermass films in various ways across their production and content.

The current scholarly work on Quatermass, discussed in more detail in the Literature Review and drawn on in subsequent chapters, is comprised mainly of analysis of the films placed within a broader context. Discussion of the Quatermass films, placed in their historical and cultural contexts, has been undertaken by Pirie (1973) and Peter Hutchings (1993), (1999). Pirie’s account implies that the uncanny informs the Quatermass films but does not explore it explicitly; my study focuses critically on the uncanny, the fantastic and links both of these areas to hybridity, of which more presently. Pirie and Hutchings both draw on social contexts, power and authority, although neither studies focus in depth on the implications of these aspects to concepts of “nation” and “national character”, which is a theme I focus on here, linked to hybridity, drawing on the work of Janet Staiger (1997), discussed below. How is the hybrid configured in the Quatermass films and how does this inform understanding of “nation”? Furthermore, how can such readings inform understanding of “nation” and “identity” in the contemporary moment?
There is room, then, for a sustained and in depth analysis that links the films to their wider historical and cultural contexts, to reflect critically on how the films dramatise cultural concerns and anxieties. Other scholarly works on the Quatermass films are mainly journal articles and analysis of them in chapter-length discussions that have a broader scope. These articles include those by Julian Petley (1989), Mike Murphy (1994), Adam Jezard (1995) and Howard Maxford (2004). The main focus of these is on the production details of the films and their historical contexts, with some brief analysis; they are drawn on in the Adaptation chapter for discussion of the filmmaking process. There is therefore space to combine the two approaches; to engage in textual analysis of the films’ form and content, in order to understand how this relates to the notion of the hybrid and the national, while situating discussion of the films in their cultural, historical and industrial contexts of production.

A recent example of film scholarship, published since the beginning of this study, illustrates the tendency to only address the films within broader accounts of science fiction or horror. David Simmons’ discussion of Hammer’s output in his article ‘Hammer Horror and Science Fiction’ argues strongly for their films to be seen as science fiction rather than Gothic horror (2011: 50). Discussion of the Quatermass films is relatively brief, through particular aspects (their science fiction elements) and within the wider context of other titles by Hammer. The focus, then, is quite broad. The persistent lack of any substantial critical material on the Quatermass films is interesting, especially considering the changes in film criticism since the 1980s, a shift away from a discourse that, as James Chapman et al, in the Introduction to The New Film History indicates, favoured auteur rather than genre films, and avoided commercial cinema (2007: 2-3). Even though there has been, then, a new emphasis on genre film and those texts which
had been previously marginalised, there still seems to be a gap in scholarship on Quatermass, which further indicates the value in sustained study of the Quatermass films within their cultural contexts.

Critical opinion of the opening of *The Quatermass Experiment* offers an indication of this contextualising approach and of further potential for looking at some specific factors that inform the texts and can be traced within them. Pirie likens the abrupt arrival of the rocket as symbolic of Hammer’s intervention in the British cinematic landscape (1973, 29). As Hutchings argues in his later study of Hammer, a problem with this view is it suggests a change from a restrained to a less discreet form of cinema, when in fact the reality may be more complex and tensions between the two impulses co-exist with, as Hutchings puts it, ‘earlier and more concurrent strands of British cinema’ (1993: 43). The troubling of categories that this implies is inherent to fantastic narratives and a theme that runs throughout this study. Hutchings’ approach, which informs this thesis insofar as it is my intention to discuss how the film text engages with the contexts of production and reception, is to view the image evoked by the film’s opening as one which troubles and challenges ‘the types of narrative and representational norms characteristic of British cinema at this time’ (ibid). Hutchings focuses on how Victor Caroon (Richard Wordsworth), the stricken astronaut who returns to Earth on the rocket infected by an alien organism and mutating into something post-human, represents questions around masculinity and sexuality that resonate and engage with post-war gender relations (ibid: 47). Caroon cannot be contained within a system that, for Hutchings, depends on certain levels of conformity of behaviour (ibid: 48). While this enables a contextualised discussion of masculinity, what is somewhat elided by this distinct focus is hybridity.
The hybrid, as a theme, is a rich vein that informs the Quatermass narratives and is present within them. Hutchings alludes to hybridity when he refers to the difficulty in understanding the precise origin and nature of the monster in both Quatermass films and X-The Unknown (Leslie Norman, 1956), and the non-fixity of their form (ibid: 42). What Hutchings does not do is extend this to discuss the nature of the threat in The Quatermass Experiment and Quatermass II in terms of how the alien presence invades, literally, the human and in so doing, troubles subjectivity and identity. A more overt focus on hybridity provides a productive framework for considering the themes of the films and their wider production and socio-cultural contexts; it might also be used to make sense of the relative critical neglect suffered by the Quatermass films. As will become clear, hybridity as a term is used within different contexts, such as discussion of genre and film texts that do not fit easily into a single genre category. Indeed, the hybrid status of many 1950s science fiction/horror films can be one way of thinking about their critical neglect.

In discussing the ‘so called’ creature features of the 1950s, Christine Cornea cites Vivian Sobchack’s discussion of how these films create a problem for both theorists and fans because ‘they do not fit snugly into either the science fiction or horror genres’ (2007: 7). As Cornea goes on to assert, this blurring of boundaries between genres can instead be seen as a sign of their strength rather than a weakness (ibid). I would like to employ hybridity, though, as a device for considering the bringing together of seemingly disparate elements and a subsequent merging, rather than it being solely the blurring of generic boundaries. In the next part of the thesis I outline briefly the reasons why hybridity has emerged as a major theme within this study and how the term is used.

How did the hybrid become a thread running through analysis of the films within their respective contexts? Hybridity is embodied within the figures causing the most anxiety
and dread in each of the three Quatermass films, the first two of which form the main case studies for this thesis. The precise nature of this threat and the responses to it within the narratives are instructive in analysis of how the film text dramatises and articulates issues around hybridity. Caroon in *The Quatermass Experiment* becomes a monstrous hybrid of the alien and human; characters under the control of the alien force in *Quatermass II* are, in effect, both human and not-human simultaneously because, rather like Caroon, there has been an invasive, physical intervention that removes individual will. These narrative aspects indicate the category crisis inherent within the fantastic; a hybridity deriving from the blurring between different categories. Focusing on cinematic examples such as *The Terminator* (James Cameron, 1984), Andy W. Smith discusses the hybridity inherent in narratives employing fantastic tropes and representing characters combining human and non-human elements (2007: 86). In *Quatermass and the Pit*, the hybrid form becomes the human condition itself, when the role aliens played in the formation of humanity is revealed. Rather than the hybrid being something alien that is perhaps to be feared, hybridity appears inherently within, homely rather than un-homely; to be viewed positively, or as a constant human factor to be understood, negotiated with and through which identity can be enriched.

The changing representations of the hybrid can be related to social contexts, as the United Kingdom and British society took stock of and attempted to come to terms with changes in society in the post-World War II era. This model of hybridity, when applied to the Quatermass films, can illuminate discussion of notions of national identity and national cinema; it can thus be combined with an approach that takes in to account scholarship on the national. Andrew Higson has written extensively on notions of national identity and his later revisions to his thesis prove instructive to my study. In
‘The Instability of the National’ he outlines the need to engage with discussions that emphasise cultural diversity and that shift the focus away from notions of coherence (2000: 35). His warning against using terms like ‘identifiably British’ in an unproblematic way is important and one which my study engages with (ibid: 40). The hybrid nature of “Britishness” and national identity is foregrounded then, with the emphasis on identities. The hybrid can also inform discussion of the industrial contexts within the analysis of wider cultural factors. Seeing Caroon in *The Quatermass Experiment*, for instance, as an embodiment of hybridity enables a link to be made to the production contexts and the hybridity inherent within the making of the film, between British and American contexts and influences.

An example of how the notions of hybridity and nation can be applied to critical assessment of film production is how Hutchings states that there is a “Britishness” within the 1950s Hammer science fiction/horror films, in the way that narratives are organised (1993: 41). This sense of “Britishness” being at work in these films is useful in my study for thinking about the degree to which these elements can be identified and how they are arranged in the Quatermass films. Hutchings, though, in this instance, does not explicitly address hybridity, which can be used to problematise definitions of “the national” and national cinema. It leaves space for me to evaluate the impact of the American coproduction on the Quatermass films in terms of hybridity and to link this to the themes within the narratives.

The notion of the nation as heterogeneous and devolved invites a more complex reading of the representation of “Britishness”. While there might be concerns in the film pertinent to the British national context, my stress on hybridity provides a framework to
complicate this and to contribute to the existing literature. Categorising the Quatermass films as unambiguously British might be more complex than it at first appears; the presence within the films of American actors, the use of American finance and the organising of the narrative elements with an international audience in mind all complicate the issue of “Britishness”, whatever that is understood to be, in the films. Do the films, in fact, dramatise an intersection between different cultural identities and factors, such as an idea of national identity and commercial factors? Are these aspects “at war” with each other or is there a more intricate relationship? Jim Leach, as an example of how this might be approached, opens his study on British film with an account of a film written and directed by an English playwright, *Strapless* (David Hare, 1988), with European and American actors, with the first scene shot in Portugal. As he states, the presence in British film of foreign, especially American actors employed because of their box office potential, is so common for it to be, itself, a sign of “Britishness” insofar as it signifies “national” cinema practice (2004: 1). Therefore, hybridity is itself, in some ways, inherent within the “national” and national cinema, especially seeing as, as Leach goes on to assert, it is becoming increasingly difficult to identify boundaries of the national in a global marketplace (ibid: 3-4).

Despite the place of the 1950s Quatermass films within history, and the fact that they pre-date pluralistic approaches to questions of subjectivity and national identity, they still, as film texts viewed in their cultural contexts, demonstrate potential for critical appraisal. As well as the value in applying contemporary film history approaches to previously marginalised forms and genres, and redressing the gap in the literature, there is also the way the Quatermass films resonate with notions of national identity that are

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1 The industrial practice of casting American actors in UK/US co-productions was also a feature of the British film industry in the 1950s; examples are given in later chapters.
current; especially when hybridity as a concept is applied to them, which is part of its value. The part played by *The Quatermass Experiment*, *Quatermass II* and *Quatermass and the Pit* in articulating aspects of national identity and contributing to discourses around it is significant. The articulation of a hybrid identity is an aspect that the Quatermass narratives might be seen to share with more contemporary texts; which might account, indeed, for the live re-make of *The Quatermass Experiment* by BBC4 in 2005. Aidan Power, in his discussion of contemporary science fiction, cites Higson and discusses how, while the nation might be understood in the contemporary moment as diverse and devolved, there remains a powerful feeling that ‘Britain as a region is still a binding communal entity for many millions of inhabitants’ (2011: 145), a notion that suggests more of a co-existence of impulses akin to the comment by Hutchings noted earlier on cinematic trends. As Power goes on to say, it would seem that the idea of nationhood contains both these impulses, cohesion and a desire to pull away from the centre. The nation is defined by the tension between the two impulses and, for Power this is part of the transnational nature of contemporary British science fiction cinema (ibid).

The Quatermass films, then, merit critical re-appraisal and provide opportunity to critically address national identity and hybridity, which are pertinent questions for our contemporary moment, within a more pluralistic society that engages with difference. However, when viewing the existing literature, there appears to be a perceptible gap in the criticism, which, as illustrated by the above example of Simmons’ study, still remains despite changes in emphasis in critical discourses. Critical discourses on science fiction, horror, and on the Quatermass films themselves will be further discussed in more detail. However, a brief survey of some of the works will illustrate this apparent ellipse and help strengthen the case for looking here at the Quatermass films. Despite Pirie’s assertion of
the centrality of the Quatermass films, and of *The Quatermass Experiment* specifically, discussion on them is limited to several pages worth of coverage in his study, situated within a chapter focussing on the development of Hammer Studios, from low budget melodramas and thrillers to Gothic horror (Pirie, 1973: 29-39). Conversely, there are separate chapters dedicated to the Frankenstein and Dracula cycle of films respectively, with a study of Terence Fisher comprising a further chapter. While space is clearly at a premium in a study of an entire genre, it is interesting how much coverage is awarded to discussion of a particular series of films, as if these are considered to be emblematic of either the genre or the studio that produced them. This can cause certain texts to become marginal, or elided altogether as they become less important, or when their value appears to be measured by the degree to which they prompted the more critically lauded or popular material.

This focus on the later Gothic output of Hammer is echoed by Hutchings (1993), who, while situating discussion of horror and of the Quatermass films within wider social contexts and critical discourses, tends to focus on discussion of them as part of a transitional phase in British cinema. Rather than meriting their own study then, the Quatermass films appear to be constructed as part of the development of Hammer towards their “mature” stage of gothic horror production. Despite their apparent status, then, there is surprisingly little critical material, beyond relatively brief discussion of the films in journal articles (e.g. Rolinson and Cooper, 2002), or chapters within larger studies of specific genres in British Cinema.

The hybrid, idiosyncratic qualities of the Quatermass films might contribute to their omission from many of the overviews of Hammer and studies of genre film. However, it
is precisely this distinctive hybrid quality that invites an analysis of them. This relative absence of sustained discussion indicates there may be something specific concerning the subject matter, narrative construction and style, aesthetics and *mise-en-scène* of the Quatermass films of the 1950s that invites further, detailed investigation. Beyond the obvious monochrome cinematography that sets them apart from the colour films of the later period, *The Quatermass Experiment* and *Quatermass II* could be said to possess unique characteristics and qualities that merit re-appraisal through detailed analysis within British cinema practice, critical discourses and the relationship between the texts and their social and cultural contexts. This is especially the case as other horror studies and collected editions, such as Hutchings (2004), Jancovich (2002), Skal (1993) and Silver and Ursini (2000) omit mention of the Quatermass films. In Gelder (2000) there is just one essay, by Paul O’Flinn (1986), with one brief mention of the Quatermass films as part of the move by Hammer towards horror production. This omission further indicates aspects of the films that merit further study, specifically their hybrid status as containing both science fiction and horror elements, and how this influences their placing within critical discourses. As Hutchings indicates, omission from the literature may indicate borderline status and suggest that a text contains characteristics associated with both genres (2004: 2).

The prevalence within critical discourses on British cinema, of the promotion of the realist aesthetic over and above any other filmmaking practice is an issue this study engages with to establish the context for re-appraisal of the Quatermass films. Such a critical discourse can arguably be seen as a historical perspective, considering recent developments in film criticism, a change that has been discussed within scholarship on film. Chapman, for instance, considers how Film Studies as an academic discipline has
relocated popular genres, including horror and science fiction, within academic respectability (2002: 3). Nevertheless, this critical discourse may have informed the critical reception of the Quatermass films at the time of their original releases.

Further, the seemingly unproblematic acceptance of this realist aesthetic has led to the construction of the view that British film is in effect synonymous with realism. This aspect of critical discourse has also been discussed in recent scholarly writing, which indicates that there is a more contemporary tendency to challenge an unproblematic association between British film and realism, or sobriety. Leach, for instance, writes ‘[I]n telling the story of British cinema, critics tend to privilege certain kinds of film’, but in the 1980s a new stress emerged on the need to incorporate a fuller range of production into critical works (2004: 6). Paul Dave recognises this too and notes antipathy towards the fantastic and non-realist modes of filmmaking when he refers to a long-standing opposition between fantasy and realism (2006: 95). It is more useful to see realism and more self-reflexive modes as co-existing within film texts and as interlinked, the interest lying in the tension between the two. As Leach further states, they should not be seen as mutually exclusive but as ‘tendencies’ within film practice, (2004: 66) with realist elements extending ‘into films whose genre and style point in quite different directions’ (ibid: 67). As discussed later in the thesis, this implied hybridity of style is in keeping with the commingling of seemingly disparate elements in British film, the situating of the monstrous within the everyday and the use of realist aesthetics within the fantastic. Leach cites Jonathan Coe in highlighting how the combination of violence and domesticity in Hammer films make them typical of English culture (ibid: 170). This commingling of elements can be used to distinguish British film then, by extension, from other national cinemas, including Hollywood.
There are, then, many reasons why the 1950s Quatermass films produced by Hammer deserve reappraisal, and these are hopefully evident through the discussion so far. The impact of the films on horror production; their cultural resonance in terms of narrative themes; as fantastic narratives, their use of tropes associated with science fiction and horror and the implied blurring of genre; associated with this, their re-imagining and re-articulation of those genre characteristics through the gothic and the uncanny; how they lend themselves to an analysis that takes in to account the interplay between text and contexts (social, cultural, production); what might be articulated about “nation” and “national identity”; the gap in the existing literature and what this might tell us about the discourses on British film and genre cinema, and, of course, how this is in dialogue with the hybrid elements of the narratives. These particular aspects and concerns inform the research questions of this thesis, outlined below. What my study offers as part of the aim of filling a gap in the literature is a particular lens through which to view the films, namely hybridity and the hybrid form, principally through the specific interpretation of the concept as discussed by Janet Staiger in relation to Hollywood films and genre using the writings of Mikhail Bakhtin and Homi Bhabha (1997).

Briefly, for Staiger the hybrid is a moment of cross-cultural encounter rather than being, where most Hollywood cinema is concerned, a combination of two or more generic elements combined from different genres, which for Staiger would qualify as an “inbred” film as the respective genre elements being blended are taken from the same cultural family (e.g. Casablanca [Michael Curtiz, 1942] mixes romance, war and thriller). The hybrid, then, is a dialogue between different states, a mixing together of two or more characteristics from different cultural modes that creates an invigorated form. Therefore, hybridity is a positive, rather than something to be feared due to a challenge to
notions of “purity” or of a whole, discreet self (1997: 10-11). This perspective on hybridity lends itself to discussion of ideas of national identity and national cinemas and helps to complicate such notions, and it can inform discussion of the narrative. Taking into consideration the production context, my study addresses the hybridity inherent within the adaptation and production of the Quatermass films. As suggested above, the 1950s can be regarded as a transitional moment and a time when anxieties over “nation” and “national identity” were discernible. Hybridity, then, can be utilised as a framework to explore notions of identity and belonging in the films, linked to the social context in keeping with contemporary approaches to film scholarship as outlined by Chapman et al in *New Film History* (2007: 6). Hybridity also corresponds with the troubling of categories associated with the fantastic; therefore, science fiction and horror tropes characteristic of the gothic and the uncanny will also form part of this discussion.

Research Questions

This project, then, centres on a re-appraisal of the Quatermass films of the 1950s in order to redress the gap in the literature. In doing so, it is informed by several research questions that drive the thesis with the theme of hybridity as an underlying element. What follows is a brief summary of these research questions followed by an outline discussion of specific aspects that will be picked up on and developed later in the thesis:

1. How do the 1950s Quatermass films represent and engage critically with ideas around “the nation” and national identity?

2. How might hybridity be used as a critical framework, or lens, for interpreting the above representations and ideas of “the nation” and “national identity”, and how do the films engage with the hybrid?
3. What is the significance of the wider historical and cultural contexts of the films’ period of production, principally concerning concepts of “nation” and the international status of the United Kingdom post World War II? How can the films be read against their 1950s context?

4. How might the areas above, namely nation, national identity and hybridity, find resonances in our contemporary moment, given the current debates around immigration, “Britishness” and relationships between the United Kingdom and the European Union as discussed within British media and politics?

5. Finally, and drawing on aspects of Andrew Higson’s work discussed below, if some British films seek to endorse an imagined community, a finite whole (2000: 66), in order to attempt to forge a unified nation from a disparate, diasporic one, there might be other British films that do the opposite or at least present a more complex and less clear-cut representation of the “nation”. Could, then, this be applied to the Quatermass films? How might the films be in dialogue with aspects of their identity that might derive from different constituent parts?

Further to the above specific research questions, part of the wider cultural context will be a critical consideration of the prevailing discourses within the BBC towards horror film production, and discussion of how the Quatermass films were seen critically on their release. Although this area of focus is clearly concerned with the industrial context of production and reception, it is also part of the account within this thesis of the critical discourses towards British cinema and horror film production. Addressing the attitudes towards genre film and Hammer’s output in particular, enables a consideration of how the Quatermass films were seen in comparison to their television counterparts and as part
of the wider film culture, and this can also inform discussion of how the films might have been seen to engage with national identity and “Britishness”.

Specifically, then, this study sees the films as embodying hybridity within both the context of co-production and narrative theme. Within this, the main focus will be on identity – both of the individual subject, and the nation as hybrid. The liminality associated with the fantastic, and the making strange of the familiar of the uncanny, make these appropriate frameworks to use for the study. The troubling of the homely and the conflation of the strange with the familiar is applied to the discussion of the subject/body, the body politic and national identity, informed by notions of the hybrid and the way the films engage with hybridity. The socio cultural fears and possibilities that might be articulated within and through the figure of Victor Caroon (Richard Wordsworth) in The Quatermass Experiment are addressed. If the hybrid is seen positively, could these fears and possibilities be read as opportunities? Similarly, questions concerning subjectivity, control and issues around technology are addressed in relation to Quatermass II. How is modernity with its myriad challenges engaged with and dramatised?

The extent to which the Quatermass films engage critically with concepts and conception of “the nation” is a key concern, which enables the thesis to address hybridity subsequent to the 1950s context of the films. Further to the research questions that focus on national identity and hybridity, a concomitant question, deriving from the focus on hybridity, is a consideration of how the Quatermass films represent the national; as an imagined community, or as something more complex. These questions enable discussion of how characteristics and traits taken as emblematic of “Britishness” might be looked at critically. This further allows for discussion of how the films engage with the changes in
the 1950s concerning the international status of the United Kingdom and the need to acknowledge a more pluralistic conception of identity. This question responds to the work of Andrew Higson in particular, a key scholar on concepts of nationhood and national cinema. Higson’s work is valuable in the way he has revised his arguments to increasingly embrace plurality and a more fragmented vision of identity. He argues for the “nation” not as an imagined community, a finite whole, but as a dispersed, fragmented group of peoples, who might identify with any one of several aspects of their multi-faceted identity at any given time (2000: 66). The nation, for Higson, is inherently diasporic (ibid: 65). The emphasis on the nation as being comprised of a range of communities suggests an inbuilt hybridity. As Higson further states, there is a tension between the idea of the imagined community with its sense of limit and boundaries, and what he refers to as the ‘contingency or instability of the national’ (ibid: 66). As Higson posits, just as there may be consensus films representing the imagined community, others may seek to ‘embrace the transnational or even quite self-consciously to dissolve rather than to sustain the concept of the nation’ (ibid: 67). Could this more subversive potential or at least less consensual mode be seen in some 1950s film?

Higson briefly addresses hybridity when he identifies the conceptual problem in thinking about national cinema. He considers how ideas on national cinema and the nation tend to imagine an already fully formed identity and tradition (ibid). If the nation is inherently hybrid, diasporic, and cultural formations, customs and rituals seek to establish a sense of belonging for the whole, reminders of its fluid, non-fixed nature could cause anxiety for a particular way of thinking that seeks consensus and unity. If a nation, misrecognising itself as whole, is made to engage with its lack of wholeness, how might it receive the hybrid? Key questions concerning hybridity and film inform this study then, which takes
the above concept of Higson’s and applies it to the Quatermass films. My thesis therefore contributes to existing literature by applying concepts to the Quatermass films not covered explicitly or at length by present scholarship.

Methodological Approach

My approach in this thesis, besides the use of selected critical frameworks, will be to combine close textual analysis with a cultural historical approach using primary sources and archival research, particularly concerning the adaptation process but also in assessing the marketing and production strategies and decisions made during these processes. Situating the text within, as Sarah Street puts it, its intertextual and contextual relationships enables a broader understanding of the factors at play in the film text (2000: 1). The text, then, is not to be seen in isolation. An approach to the film text that sees it as part of historical processes and negotiations, discourses and ideologies has been established within scholarship for some time. This, largely more empirical, approach has been discussed at length by cultural historians (Richards, 2000; Street, 2000; Chapman et al, 2007) as well as applied by many of the critical voices this study engages with (Hutchings, 1999). I synthesise concepts and critical frameworks on national identities, national cinema and the fantastic in my thesis, which is concerned specifically with hybridity, identity and how these are represented within the Quatermass films. Through addressing these themes I seek to contribute to the existing literature.

The approach of this thesis is not confined to representation, nor is it what James Chapman would refer to as reflectionist (2007: 6). My approach is in keeping with contemporary scholarship that emphasises the interplay between cultural products and their contexts. Recent academic writings have discussed the developments of trends in
criticism. Richards and Chapman et al have separately outlined two overall main strands in film criticism and their development from the 1970s. The first of these strands is the Film Studies approach, which focuses on texts and is concerned with using theoretical perspectives in discussion of text (Chapman et al, 2007: 4). The chief problem with this approach is the way it deals with the text in isolation, divorced from its wider cultural and social contexts, with the result that the meanings derived from the text, as Richards implies, makes sense only within the logic of film theory (2000: 21). The other strand is that of the Film History approach, which is broadly speaking more empirical and is focused on contextual analysis and, as Richards states, locating study of films within their particular circumstances of production and reception (ibid). As Street indicates, an advantage with a historical cultural approach is that it enables the researcher to undertake a broader focus and for textual analysis to be situated within a wider discourse (2000: 2). The meaning in the text is not applied from theory alone but through a combination of contexts and concepts.

Both Richards and Chapman et al state that there has been a recent narrowing of the divide between the two approaches; what is referred to by Chapman et al as “New Film History”, becoming the focus of their edited collection of the same name (2007: 5). Indeed, for Richards, the two approaches should be used together, as a combined approach is necessary (2000: 21). Richards goes on to outline three main concerns of empirical research; the film content and how its themes are conveyed through screen aesthetics, the circumstances of production and their dialogue with wider contexts and film reception on its release (ibid). The interlinked strands of research methodology outlined here clearly show the link between text and context. Chapman et al propose a similar model that focuses on a ‘more complex relationship between films and social
context’ in its research methods and emphasis (2007: 6). An important approach for this study is what Chapman et al refer to as the ‘cultural dynamics of film production’ (ibid); the interplay between the various processes at play within film production (industrial, economic), and the individual agency of those involved in filmmaking practice (directors, designers) (ibid).

These approaches necessitate the use of primary sources and archive material that, as Street discusses, can provide a sense of the wider contexts and enrich understanding of the text and its intertextual and contextual relations (2000: 5). The study becomes broader and enables an engagement with wider questions of ideology, identity and “nation”, cultural and political significance and reception. The location of the text within wider culture and the particular questions thus identified chimes with the focus of this study as I seek to see the films within their broader picture.

Archival material from the BFI Library and the BBC Written Archives Centre at Caversham form a significant source of research, essential in providing information regarding the prevailing discourses within the BBC towards Hammer, the intentions of programme and filmmakers, critical reception on the release of the films and popular attitudes. A BBC Audience Survey Report reveals much about social attitudes through its use of language. Similarly, a BBC internal memorandum informs us of the attitudes of both the writer and the reader; as Street indicates in her discussion of the use of primary sources, it is important to be alert to the use of language as it indicates the status of the document and the ideology contained within it (2000: 6). Hammer’s marketing and publicity material can reveal the intentions of the agencies involved in producing the films. Contemporaneous reviews can suggest the ways in which the films were viewed.
Again, Street’s discussion of the use of sources identifies areas to consider in relation to such material as reviews; how impartial is the judgement and what discourses are they part of?

The focus in this study, though, will be on consulting a range of sources to consider key questions around the 1950s Hammer Quatermass films as part of their re-appraisal. What were the prevailing ideological discourses on popular culture within the BBC and in critical writing on film? What were the agencies at work on the Quatermass adaptations? How might the films be seen as engaging with their wider contexts? How might they be seen as examples of the cinefantastic?

Outline of Chapters

My thesis begins then, in Chapter One, with a thorough literature review in order to engage with the existing scholarship necessary to help answer my research question, addressing critical writings on the science fiction and horror genre, particularly on Hammer and the Quatermass films. What has been said already about them in critical works and how can this study be informed by, complicate or challenge them? What does the present work on Nigel Kneale argue that might be instructive regarding critical opinions towards the original television series, and how might this impact on perceptions of the films? Discussion of the fantastic and the uncanny will also be included here to help establish the frameworks used in subsequent chapters.

Chapter Two provides the narrative of the development of both the television series and the films and focuses on linking circumstances of production to hybridity and the “national”. One of the chief sources of information for this section of my thesis is the
BBC Written Archives Centre at Caversham, as well as the BFI Library Archives. The chapter discusses the adaptation process, taking into account perspectives on adaptation. However, rather than taking a fidelity discourse approach and being concerned with the differences between the television and film versions in terms of what was “lost” during transition from one medium to another, my focus is on what the changes to the narrative might say about the intentions of the filmmakers. This is combined with analysis of the production and marketing of the films, which can also indicate the perceived nature of the intended audience. Part of this chapter will also address the critical reception of the films; how were they viewed contemporaneously, on release, and what might this indicate in terms of genre and canon formation?

Chapters Three and Four focus on representations of nation and hybridity in the 1950s Quatermass films. Each chapter is thus focused on specific themes and theoretical lenses. Structuring the discussion in this way enables a coherent focus in each chapter while facilitating links to be made across them to hybridity. The first part focuses on national identity within *The Quatermass Experiment* and *Quatermass II*. The discussion will assess concepts of “nation” and “the national”, emphasising plurality and incorporating discussion of the hybrid in to this structure. The articulation and cultural formation of identities in and through film will be addressed, and the means by which the text responds to aspects of the broader social and cultural contexts of the 1950s will form part of the focus. This will be particularly so in discussion of Caroon in *The Quatermass Experiment* and the infiltration of the aliens in *Quatermass II*. The factor of the United Kingdom as a previous colonial power in the context of the post-World War Two political environment, form part of the backdrop of the discussion. How do these factors inform understanding of the co-American production of Hammer’s films and the
presence of American personnel? The chapter also considers the kind of nation and national identity being proposed in the films. Drawing from the work of Jeffrey Richards, I address the question of what traits have been identified culturally as “typically British”, what is this understood to mean and how do the films engage with these questions?

The fourth chapter will focus on both films as science fiction and horror narratives. This is not to focus solely on questions of genre. Rather, the intention is to analyse the films through the Gothic and the uncanny, considering the science fiction and horror tropes associated with fantastic narratives and how these two modes are merged by the use of tropes associated with the Gothic. Taking Rosemary Jackson’s discussion of the fantastic as that which asserts the reality of the narrative and then introduces what is ‘manifestly unreal’ into the films, the chapter considers how the spectator is removed from the familiar and secure to a region close to the supernatural (1981: 34). Consequently, the role of the spectator and how they engage with the world of the text is also addressed. My use of the notion of the uncanny utilises Sigmund Freud’s discussion of it as being comprised of both the familiar and the unfamiliar; the known made strange through the intrusion of that which has previously been concealed. Freud refers to the uncanny as ‘everything that was intended to remain secret, hidden away, and has come into the open’ and which was once familiar (1919: 134). My use of the uncanny departs somewhat from the psychoanalytical focus on repressed fears resurfacing and causing disturbance due to their simultaneous strangeness and familiarity. I consider how the uncanny can be used in considering the means with which science fiction and horror establish a diegetic space in which the spectator can perceive a world beyond the material and the known. The representation of landscape as uncanny is considered as part of the discussion of science fiction and horror tropes. Nicholas Royle’s emphasis on ‘the strangeness of framing and
borders’, liminality and the strangeness of the self through the uncanny will be used here, as it invites a link with hybridity (2003: 2). Using Jackson’s stress on how the fantastic undoes ‘unifying structures and signification upon which social order depends’ (1981: 69) and how the uncanny reveals what is just beyond the homely (ibid: 65) enables a focus on the subversive potential of the fantastic and the uncanny. Combining Jackson with Royle, I also employ the uncanny within discussion of power relations and how the process of the familiar made strange can be utilised politically, to encourage the spectator to see an unhomeliness within the processes of government and societal relations (2003: 4)

My final chapter, the Conclusion, considers further examples of hybridity outside the context of the 1950s Quatermass films. These examples include other instances of the fantastic in film and television. The 1960s film adaptation of Quatermass and the Pit is particularly significant as a text through which the hybrid can be read and contrasted with the interpretation of hybridity in the earlier narratives. Discussion of the hybrid within further fantastic narratives is situated in the wider context of British film practice. The conclusion asks how hybridity can be understood in the multi-platform, multicultural postmodern context of the Twenty-First Century. Furthermore, how do concepts of the hybrid enable a re-configuring of the “national” and of “national cinema”?

The specific areas of focus within my study aim to contribute to continuing discussion within contemporary scholarship of key questions of national identity and cinema, production and spectatorship and socio-cultural applications. How cultural products can be read against and through their historical contexts and the changing resonances texts embody, shifts the emphasis beyond the text alone and is a key concern in my study. As
Tobias Hochscherf and James Leggott assert in the Introduction to their collected essays on science fiction television and film (2011: 3) that scholarship on British film and television culture has only just begun to grapple with the issues that science fiction raises about national specificity, generic identification, authorship and political significance.

It is my intention through this study to engage with this critical discourse, and in doing so, contribute positively to it and relocate the 1950s Quatermass films by reassessing their significance in British film culture.
Chapter One: Literature Review

Introduction

The following literature review critically considers the key scholarship in the field that engages with the core areas of my thesis. This includes the literature on the 1950s Quatermass films and their socio-cultural and production contexts. The main focus of this study is on the Hammer films. However, there is some discussion of the original BBC television series upon which the films were based, and the literature on Nigel Kneale and the BBC is addressed here and in subsequent chapters.

My literature review is in two main sections. Firstly, I outline and discuss the key critical concepts employed, to prepare the reader for their later application. As part of this outline I discuss the theme of hybridity, identifying different interpretations of the term, drawing on Steve Neale and Janet Staiger and indicating how it will be used here. Specific aspects of the fantastic and the uncanny, as representative modes and theoretical approaches, are briefly discussed. I identify key ideas as discussed by Rosemary Jackson and Nicholas Royle, with Sigmund Freud’s definition of the uncanny outlined. These brief discussions of key concepts and positions are intended to introduce the ideas only, as they are employed further in subsequent chapters. The concept of the hybrid complements the fantastic, which carries an inherent hybridity through being concerned with borders and their disintegration, and the sense of being tangential to the “real”, defined in part through relation to it. Both hybridity and the uncanny have been linked to the Quatermass films, but apart from some discussion of Quatermass II in a Peter Hutchings essay focusing on uncanny landscapes, there is no sustained and explicit analysis, certainly of the Quatermass films, of these areas.
Following the outlining of methodologies and approaches, the literature review surveys key questions concerning the nature of British film. Again, this is necessarily selective, with specific focus on the hegemony of the realist aesthetic, which, until it began to be challenged in the 1980s, was prevalent within critical responses to British film. The more recent challenges to the realist approach are also assessed, to discuss the extent to which they engage with the core areas of this study. The tendency for film styles identified as non-realistic to be made more tangential to a perceived core of more lauded realist oriented filmic modes is identified. More recent criticism that challenged the binary opposition of realist versus non-realistic is addressed, and concepts of the central and the marginal within British film are indicated as subjects for further discussion. More specifically, this study engages critically with “marginality” in such a way as to destabilise the use of the term, rather than a core/marginal relationship within culture. Concepts of national identity and culture are reviewed, thinking about how a sense of belonging is theorised and how this might be realised cinematically. What, for instance, has been regarded as being “typically British” and what might such terms mean? Indeed, the problem of how to define and delineate national cinema is discussed, with possible models identified. This leads to discussion of plurality of form, identities (rather than identity), reception, and a more fluid sense of national cinema; how useful, in fact, is this term? Space is opened up, then, to realise a more fluid definition of both cinema and the national, which chimes with the contemporary scholarship that this study engages with and contributes to.

To understand where my study of the Quatermass films can be situated in terms of its contribution to existing scholarship, it is necessary to engage in a detailed survey of horror and science fiction film criticism. The discussion of the existing literature on horror and science fiction identifies key areas that are drawn on in the later chapters as
well as where there is room for further analysis. Critical attitudes and responses to horror will be linked to attitudes towards British cinema as not being worthy of serious study, to identify how one can inform the other through establishing a critical discourse. This study challenges this notion, like others before and thereby further contributes to a larger reappraisal of British cinema and culture. Key writing on Hammer within the context of British film production (Sue Harper and Vincent Porter, 2003) is discussed. Relations between Hammer and the BBC will be indicated although this area is discussed in more depth in the Adaptation chapter. Following the section on Hammer the Literature Review considers the writings on the Quatermass series and Nigel Kneale, to provide an overview of the starting points and perceived identity of the original series, before closing with an outline of the existing critical analysis of the Quatermass films. The focus here is on key literature on Kneale and the original series that might contribute to a sense that the films are not worthy of extensive critical study. As part of establishing the critical context and providing working definitions of terms, this chapter will proceed to outline key work on several core areas. I will now, then, consider writings and positions on hybridity, the fantastic and the uncanny, before discussing critical work on national identity, British cinema and horror film.

**Methodological Frameworks**

**Perspectives on Hybridity**

As established in the Introduction, a key theme in this thesis is that of hybridity. This hybridity is evident in a variety of ways, ranging from the generic identity of the films, to the thematic concerns the narratives address. It is not my intention here to review genre theory but to focus on this particular element, hybridity, discussed by Neale within his

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2 (Petley [1986], Barr [1986], Hutchings [1993], Chapman [2005], [2007], Higson [1983], [2000])
writings on film genre. I then differentiate Neale’s approach from that used by Staiger, whose more complex notion of hybridity I engage with specifically within this thesis. This is not to dismiss the theories of genre critics like Neale; indeed the notion of the blurring of genre categories and boundaries is one that corresponds with many elements of the fantastic and the monstrous, and therefore it still retains some purchase in this study. Staiger’s more specific emphasis, though, enriches the discussion of hybridity.

Neale discusses hybridity chiefly in terms of genre overlap, highlighting how many genres hybridize, ‘thus blurring the boundaries of the genres concerned’ (2000: 3). This hybridity would be in films that contain elements of more than one genre, either through iconography or narrative elements and structures. Given how frequently this hybridity is identified by Neale, it would seem that hybrid genres are frequent, more so perhaps than “pure”, discreet ones, and that films are similarly so. Referring to the Hollywood industry in particular, Neale says that ‘many Hollywood films – and many Hollywood genres – are hybrid and multi-generic’ (ibid: 51). Certain genres display this hybridity, and Neale gives examples of these within his extensive survey. Musical comedy, action adventure, the biopic, for instance, all serve as examples of this trend, which can be seen as economically shrewd business sense as it enables filmmakers to market their product more widely. Some films are problematic because they appear to inhabit different genres and are hard to pinpoint commercially or critically. Blurred boundaries between genres or genres that share elements (i.e. iconography) with others can prove difficult to identify. Neale cites the problem, for instance, in distinguishing between science fiction and horror, which can be significant for this study if part of the reason for the relative critical neglect of the Quatermass films was as a result of their generic cross-over. If the films have been difficult to place as either horror or science fiction they might be, for
instance, elided from genre studies, as has been noted in this study as part of the Introduction. Neale identifies horror/science fiction films that ‘testify to the propensity for multiplicity and overlap amongst and between these genres in Hollywood’ (ibid: 92). While, as Neale indicates, it might be hard to find ‘water-tight’ definitions of horror and science fiction within film scholarship, there are accounts that seek to do this and there are areas of difference between them, as discussed later (ibid).

Andy W. Smith also discusses hybridity in terms of genre, focusing on examples of generic blurring in contemporary horror (2007). Although his application of hybridity is similar to Neale, whose work he draws on, he does offer some different ideas that provide space for discussion in this study. Smith addresses hybridity by discussing films that blur distinctions between science fiction and horror through combining narrative and plot elements from one and visual tropes from another (2007: 87). Difference and hybridity is implied as inherent within fantastic genres, a notion important for my thesis as it enables links to be made between the hybrid, the fantastic and the uncanny (ibid). Smith focuses on *Alien* (Ridley Scott, 1979) and *Terminator* (James Cameron, 1984) as examples of science fiction/horror hybrids. In both films the imagined difference between human and non-human is problematised, argues Smith, referring for instance to the figure of the cyborg (ibid: 86). Opposition between “us” and “them”, for Smith, is reduced because of this hybridity. The reduction of an opposition and the more complex reading of hybridity implied by this provides a link to the ideas of Staiger and is useful for this study. Although the texts Smith focuses on post-date the Quatermass films, he does not argue for a historical specificity for this hybridity, therefore it is applicable to my case studies. If Smith’s argument is using Neale but sharing elements with Staiger, what is her specific interpretation of hybridity?
Staiger identifies a trend in scholarship that sees generic hybridity as being a feature of contemporary Hollywood cinema, which she opposes and argues against (1997). For Staiger, hybridity has always been a feature of Hollywood, and she asserts that Hollywood films have never been ‘pure’ (1997: 2). The notion of ‘pureness’ is impossible because of the inevitable leakage from one genre to another. A genre, Staiger explains, carries in it that which it is not and can only be understood in relation to others; it can only be known through its contexts and impurity is therefore inevitable (ibid: 5).

This relational aspect of meaning and how hybridity is implied through the troubling of discreet boundaries is useful in itself for considering any science fiction/horror text, that, like the Quatermass films, questions the definition of the human by exploring the difference between human and non-human. Speaking specifically about generic purity, Staiger contends that Hollywood films have always been “impure” because of the standard use of multiple genres within a film, stating that there is no evidence that suggests anyone from producers to audiences saw films as being “purely” of one type (ibid: 9). Staiger objects to the use of the term “hybrid” to describe the multi-genre film, or genres that cross boundaries with other genres. The use of the term hybridity, for Staiger, is an incorrect appropriation of a concept derived from cultural theory and post-colonial discourse. Indeed, Staiger states that ‘the use of the term “hybrid” for Hollywood cinema distorts and reduces the potential value that the theory of hybridity has for cultural scholars’ (ibid). Use of the term “hybridity” by genre scholars to refer to generic mixing diminishes the significance of the notion of hybridity. The implication for this study is the need to exercise caution in the use of the term and to discuss genre variability as a blurring of boundaries rather than hybridity.
Staiger outlines how the term “hybridity” derives from botany and zoology and refers to the cross breeding, or cross fertilization of different species (ibid: 10). She discusses Mikhail Bakhtin’s application of the term to literature in reference to different styles originating from the meeting of different cultures; in this, it ‘permits dialogue between the two languages’ and therefore carries positive potential. The moment of hybridisation produces a strengthened, invigorated form (ibid). The idea of hybridity as something to be welcomed or regarded on its own terms is useful for this study in thinking about responses to the hybrid form in the Quatermass films; does it allow for a more complex response, beyond a fearful reaction to an alien presence, especially when the alien is conflated with the human? While there may be a threat, real and/or perceived, how does the alien/human, human/non-human figure destabilise definitions of the self and the human? There is further potential for self-questioning and challenge when considering postcolonial discourses and the other scholar that Staiger discusses in relation to hybridity, Homi K. Bhabha. Postcolonial discourse uses hybridity to discuss the outcome of cross-cultural encounters, states Staiger, who stresses that the exchange does not signal the end for either party, but the start of a new form (ibid).

Again, there is potential to read the hybrid as a form that invigorates as it encourages new modes of thinking and a realignment of value systems. In film practice, a text that results from a cross-cultural encounter might provide renewal of a genre, or present cinematic modes in such a way as to provide a different interpretation of them. To speak of Hollywood genres as being hybrid, for Staiger, is erroneous because the blurring of boundaries in Hollywood film does not represent a dialogue between two different languages. Rather, the intermixing derives from the ‘same language family of Western
culture. The breeding occurring is not cross-cultural, but perhaps, and with a full sense of the derogatory implications involved, even a case of in-breeding’, adds Staiger (ibid: 11).

I am applying the term “hybridity” beyond how it is used by Staiger following Bhabha, which is principally as a generic term. According to Bhabha, as outlined by Staiger, the term refers to a cross-cultural encounter (ibid: 10). This thesis extends this concept and Staiger’s discussion of generic hybridity to apply it to narrative, and the wider contexts of production. This is due to the focus in the study on the analysis of screen texts within their wider social and historical contexts. Is the term being diluted, by being applied widely? In my textual analysis, I stress the way that screen aesthetics, narrative and theme are informed by context, specifically the American co-production of the Quatermass films. Additionally, I consider how social, cultural and historical factors, which surround and impact on my case studies, might be played out in the films' representation of hybridity.

Further, hybridity as a concept is not used here to refer to elements drawn from the same cultural family, such as British television and British cinema. Rather, the term is used to refer to the films as the result of a cross-cultural encounter between the United States and the United Kingdom. Sue Harper and Vincent Porter, in their extensive study of Hammer within the context of 1950s British film, which is discussed in detail below, refer to the films that Hammer produced under their American co-production deal as hybrid in their identity, deriving as a result of their American involvement (2003: 142). The films can therefore be seen to occupy a space in between British and American cultures and to also be articulating discourses around hybridity. There is therefore space for me to look at

3 Hammer signed a five-year deal with the American Robert Lippert productions in 1950. Harper and Porter discuss the interventions of Lippert (2003: 141-144), as outlined below. Hammer’s subsequent financial backers, United Artists, were less directly involved (ibid: 145).
how the Quatermass films might engage with hybridity in their narrative and theme, within the context of their American co-production and also within the context of the 1950s as a time of social and cultural change. The film texts thus evoke and express ideas around hybridity that draw on what was happening in the wider social spheres and in cultural production; Staiger’s model of hybridity provides a method of mapping out how this engagement with the hybrid manifests itself.

Andrew Higson’s discussion of the hybrid is also useful to draw on in this instance and brings further perspectives into the discussion (2000: 67). His analysis of British cinema is utilised in detail in Chapter 3. In his analysis of cultural cross-breeding across and within national boundaries referred to in the Introduction he suggests that ‘modern cultural formations are invariably hybrid and impure’ (ibid). He does not directly refer to Staiger but this notion uses her terms and refers both to production and reception contexts and the formal aesthetics of cultural products. My thesis therefore employs this established approach to consider how the Quatermass films of the 1950s engage with hybridity and notions of identity. Higson asks if some British films might engage with the transnational and provide a critique of the concept of a unified national identity (ibid). There is purchase then in discussion of British films from historical periods and moments to evaluate how they engage with hybridity and plurality, and how by extension this might be applied within a contemporary context.

A particularly useful concept for my thesis that Staiger raises in discussion of Bhaba and hybridity is the challenge to colonial power and to notions of “purity”, offered by the hybrid form (ibid). The hybrid, once seen, ‘forces the dominant culture to look back on itself and see its presumption of universality’ (ibid). The dominant culture, therefore, is
made through the presence of the hybrid to face up to its own vulnerability and its co-
existence with other cultures, other ideologies. In terms of discussion of national identity
and cinema, a space is opened up for thinking about plurality and identities; the specific
emphasis placed on hybridity by cultural scholars chimes with the above discussion of
Higson’s ideas of the multi-faceted, diasporic nation as opposed to the imagined
community. The notion of the hybrid as outlined by Staiger is one utilised within my
thesis to discuss ideas around national identities, national cinema and notions of the self
within the narrative. How might, for instance, the representation of Caroon as part
human, part alien, be read in terms of the hybrid as defined in this way? If the nation is
inherently diasporic, how might this be realised through the hybrid and what implications
are there for notions of the self, the subject, as destabilised? How might thinking about
hybridity in this way inform discussion and application of concepts of the fantastic and
the uncanny?

The Fantastic and the Uncanny

I will now address scholarship on the fantastic and the uncanny and outline some of the
key concepts associated with these modes, which I draw on in the thesis. The ideas
themselves bear close similarity with those associated with hybridity, such as challenges
to fixed categories and ideas of plurality through making visible what has been elided.
There is a similar challenge to dominant ideologies and the inducement to look critically
at the self and social relations, seen especially within the work of Jackson. It is my
intention to provide a brief survey of principle works I draw on here, as I also engage
with them in later chapters. A further theme that links to questions of national identity
and cinema is how the science fiction and horror tropes within the Quatermass films are
filtered through the fantastic and how the uncanny can be used to read them.
Tzvetan Todorov’s definition and discussion of the fantastic has informed Jackson as well as other more recent scholarship (Bliss Cua Lim, 2009). His ideas are expanded on by Jackson and it is her stress on the subversive implications and social aspects that are of interest to me here. Todorov defines the fantastic as a narrative involving doubt and hesitation, which is a feature common to the Quatermass films as events arise within everyday situations that are hard to explain by known laws (1975: 25). An aspect of the fantastic that both Todorov and Jackson identify is the interstitial nature of it, located on the frontier of other states, genres or modes (Todorov: 40, Jackson: 32). An inherent hybridity is implied here, an anomalous category that can serve to challenge definitions of the known. There is the difficulty in naming that which is part of the fantastic realm because of the breakdown of categories; this is applied to Caroon in *The Quatermass Experiment* and the alien form in *Quatermass II* later in the thesis. In the concept of that which defies definition there is subversive potential and a threat to the logic of the known.

Common to both Todorov and Jackson is the location of the fantastic as being within what is recognisably ‘our world’ (ibid). Jackson discusses how the reality of the narrative is established prior to the introduction of the unreal, or that which is problematic within existing knowledge. The location of the monstrous or unexplained within the quotidian is characteristic of texts described as fantastic or uncanny, which is part of their power. Examples of this type of film would be the Val Lewton produced RKO features, such as *Cat People* (Jacques Tourneur, 1942) or *I Walked With A Zombie* (Jacques Tourneur, 1943). Such texts as these, and *The Haunting* (Robert Wise, 1963) and *The Innocents* (Jack Clayton, 1961), maintain and engage in a dialogue with hesitation, uncertainty and
to differing degrees deny full knowledge to the spectator through the use of shadows, oblique camera work and inconclusive narrative resolutions. Another type of film, like *The Damned* (Jospeh Losey, 1961), might ostensibly seem to be concerned with one narrative line (teen gangs in Weymouth), but become something else (science fiction political thriller). It is amongst these examples that the Quatermass films can be placed, in terms of their relation to the fantastic. Do films of this type, which disavow narrative resolution or prove to be an uneasy “fit” in terms of their genre, prove problematic for critical discourse?

Hybridity is implied also through Jackson’s use of the term “paraxis” to refer to the relational aspect of the fantastic. The paraxial area represents the ‘spectral region of the fantastic’, not entirely real or unreal, but somewhere in between the two states (1981: 19). The fantastic exists in a hinterland, Jackson asserts, further emphasising it as in-between space, anomalous and hybrid (ibid: 35). Through the implied interrogation of perception, the terms “real” and “unreal”, lose their value and become relative. Rationality becomes challenged, is seen to lose hold and the ideologies associated with it are similarly de-centred. Hybridity is also implied through the dissolution of limits within the fantastic. The anomalous category alien/human or biological/inorganic hybrid threatens known categories and is thus categorised as monstrous. Jackson’s phrase of ‘limiting categories’, however, allows for a more positive reading of the monstrous figure if it highlights limits and subverts constricting norms (ibid: 48).

I therefore utilise Jackson to consider the transgressive, challenging nature of the fantastic, linking it to the notion of hybridity. The challenge to rationality posed by the fantastic can reveal the constructed nature of reason and dominant ideological ideas of
“reality”, as Jackson indicates (ibid: 22). The “real” becomes the object of enquiry rather than occupying a privileged position and it becomes de-naturalised. There can be a social and cultural dimension to this in terms of a questioning of the normative modes of behaviour and values of dominant ideology. The fantastic opens spaces, allows for a plurality of meanings. A further transgressive aspect is the potential of the fantastic to speak what cannot be said. In the way it re-presents the world, for Jackson, it problematises what has been taken for granted; in other words, what is hegemonic and “natural” (ibid: 37). This concept is particularly useful in thinking about how the fantastic – and the hybrid – effectively reconfigures “the real” and encourages self-examination; in the terms posited by Staiger, to force the privileged to recognise their provisional status.

The Gothic is a term employed within this thesis as it relates to themes associated with the fantastic and the uncanny, discussed below. This section of the thesis introduces key relevant aspects of the Gothic within the existing literature that connect with the themes of my study. The Gothic is generally defined as a form that evokes fear, anxiety, a sense of shock, and a mood of dread (Charlene Brunnell, 1984; Judith Halberstam, 1995; Fred Botting, 1996; Helen Wheatley, 2006: 3). Brunnell notes the specifically subversive potential of the Gothic in that it provides a space for activity that threatens normative thinking and behaviour. (1984: 82). Halberstam and Botting both imply the Gothic as a space alongside what is understood as “the real”. Gothic texts produce the deviant against which ‘the normal, the healthy, and the pure can be known’ (Halberstam, 1995: 2). Botting sees the Gothic as signifying a ‘writing of excess’, which is rather like the monsters who inhabit it (1996: 1). Botting also identifies the Gothic as being fascinated by the ‘negative, irrational, immoral and fantastic’; it shadows the rational world,
troubling culturally defined boundaries, dramatising transgression, evoking and expressing cultural fears and anxieties (1996: 2). It therefore has an affinity with the fantastic as discussed by Jackson. The Gothic as a term, however, as discussed by Helen Wheatley, is identified as ‘difficult to isolate’ (2006: 2). Wheatley proceeds to explain how the term has been used to describe ‘an aesthetic, mode or style, as a set of particular themes and narrative conventions, as a subgenre of fantasy’ (ibid). It is, then, a slippery term. Wheatley identifies characteristics of Gothic narratives; these include the uncanny, evocations of the supernatural, ‘haunted, tortured or troubled’ settings (ibid: 3). Botting notes similar features of the Gothic text, including ‘mysterious incidents [...] monsters [...] the monstrous double’ and alienating landscapes (1996: 2). In specific reference to the monstrous, for Halberstam the emergence of the monster in the Gothic ‘marks a peculiarly modern emphasis upon the horror of particular kinds of bodies’; this suggests horror in terms of the physical, changing body (1995: 3). Given these critical accounts, the Gothic is clearly evident in the narrative elements, themes and visual aesthetics of the Quatermass films. In particular, the effect of the invading alien organism on both the subject and the landscape as discussed in Chapter 4.

Wheatley provides a useful way of thinking about the Gothic, as a ‘mode or style’ as well as a genre (2006: 12). Here Wheatley refers to television, the focus of her study on the Gothic, but her model of flexibility can be applied across cultural formations, and can be used in discussion of the Quatermass films. For Wheatley, the term “Gothic” can thus be applied to a range of texts and it is more inclusive as a term (ibid). Features that are seen as an evocation of the Gothic can be seen in a broad range of cultural products and Wheatley gives examples of these discussed within the literature, including crime drama, science fiction, chat shows and soap opera (ibid: 15-17). The variety of programmes that
are identified indicates a wider definition of the Gothic than as a generic category. Gothic television emphasises the ‘anxieties and paranoia of family life’, which can be extended to filmic examples; the Quatermass films can be understood as explorations of the fear and paranoia within the nation, especially as familial metaphors are often used to refer to nationhood and national identity (ibid: 19). Wheatley proposes an inclusive study of texts that can be defined as Gothic, using examples of sitcoms like The Munsters and The Addams Family to illustrate how the Gothic mode has been used within cultural products to ‘worry at’ domestic life in a particular socio-cultural, historical moment (ibid: 24). By extension this notion of the Gothic mode problematising normative social structures and ways of thinking can be applied to the Quatermass films. Through the narrative content, themes, aesthetics and iconography of the Gothic, as with the fantastic, the Quatermass films of the 1950s can be seen as pulling away at the certainties of the familiar, troubling notions of unified self and identity, and challenging previously accepted notions of “the real”.

This application of the Gothic as a mode to the Quatermass films, as texts that ‘worry at’ social structures, is further illustrated by Botting’s discussion of Gothic texts expressing uncertainties about social practices and institutions, which has resonance for Hammer’s Quatermass films (1996: 5). In The Quatermass Experiment and Quatermass II this is through the intrusion of the inexplicable and the otherworldly. As Botting states, Gothic texts can be characterised by fragmentation of the subject and disruptions of social forms, which can be seen in both films. Science fiction narratives are identified by Botting as texts that dramatise ‘brief incursions of one world upon another’, which can be applied to the Quatermass films (ibid: 158). For Botting, terror is located, in Gothic science fiction texts, in forces ‘encroaching on the present from the future’, which has some purchase in
this study (ibid: 163), In the case of the Quatermass films, fears are dramatised about what might be encountered in the near future, in the modern age. These fears express dissatisfaction, perhaps, or disquiet about technological developments and what their outcomes might be. Amongst the persistent themes of the Gothic identified by Botting in horror cinema are the ‘threat and thrill of scientific experimentation’ and doubling of identity (ibid: 167). The first of these provides further space to see the Quatermass films as examples of the Gothic and the second invites the notion of the uncanny.

Before considering the literature on the national cinema, horror and the Quatermass films I will briefly outline some of the main concepts I am taking from scholarship that addresses the uncanny. As with the fantastic and hybridity, I aim to highlight the key areas of interest and indicate how they are used in the following chapters of this thesis. The uncanny is a difficult concept to define, as evidenced by Freud’s turn to dictionaries and lengthy semantic discussions of the origin of the term “uncanny” (1919). Indeed, Nicholas Royle, more recently, notes how Freud’s essay shows the uncanny cannot be fully understood; he says ‘the uncanny is destined to elude mastery’ (2003: 15). Freud begins with the assertion that the uncanny ‘belongs to the realm of the frightening’ and ‘evokes fear and dread’ but seeks out a more specific definition (1919 transl. 2003: 123). Freud identifies that the uncanny specifically refers to ‘everything that was intended to remain secret, hidden away, and has come in to the open’, and which was once familiar but is now made strange (ibid: 132) Therefore, the uncanny is something, or a sensation evoked by that something, that should have been concealed, perhaps surmounted and forgotten, but which has returned due to a particular set of circumstances; it ‘is in some ways a species of the familiar’ (ibid: 134). What causes a feeling of the uncanny, and what can be termed as having an uncanny quality? Freud identifies examples of
experiences or objects that can be considered as being uncanny, including confusion over inanimate/animate figures, doubles, repetition, elements that re-awaken a repressed childhood fear or surmounted belief (ibid: 139-147). The uncanny can encourage perception of a world beyond the physical. This concept can clearly be linked with the fantastic, but also hybridity. If hybridity encourages a re-think of the self and societal relations, it links to the uncanny through the fantastic, as the subversion of dominant ideology seems common to all three areas. Freud states an uncanny effect can be created when the boundary between fantasy and reality is blurred, which is precisely the nature of the fantastic with its hybrid quality (ibid: 147).

The link between the uncanny and subversion can be made clearer through looking briefly at the work of Jackson and Royle, both of whom will be employed within the chapter that focuses on the uncanny in relation to the Quatermass films. Like Freud, Jackson highlights how the uncanny reveals what was hidden and how it transforms the “real”, the once familiar in to the unfamiliar (1981: 65). The uncanny uncovers what needs to be covered for the world to be comfortably “known” (ibid). Clearly, the uncanny has a subversive potential if it is transformative and confounds attempts to conceal uncomfortable “truths”. Terms such as truth and reality lose their status as naturalised givens and become subject to scrutiny. As Jackson states, the uncanny subverts cultural stability (ibid: 69). If seen in political terms, the uncanny might encourage criticism of social relations, government and power, and at the very least, give space to notions of plurality and de-stabilise certainties. Royle concurs with Jackson when he states that the uncanny ‘is perhaps inseparable from an apprehension, however fleeting, of something that should have remained secret and hidden but has come to light’ (2003: 2). The implication here is of an intention that has been thwarted in some way, subverted. Royle
emphasises empirical questioning when he asserts that the uncanny ‘involves feelings of uncertainty, in particular regarding the reality of who one is and what is being experienced. Suddenly one’s sense of oneself ... seems strangely questionable.’ (ibid).

The uncanny, then, engenders intellectual and psychological uncertainty, emotional and empirical doubt. There is a sense of not knowing the self and the materiality of the surrounding world. Reality becomes a relative rather than a definite term, as the nature of the “real” becomes questioned. Royle expands on the subversive potential of the uncanny in terms of ways of seeing the world, society and our place in it when he refers to Martin Heidegger’s concept that the ‘fundamental character of our being in the world is uncanny, unhomely, not-at-home’, which clarifies the subversive quality of the uncanny and which informs the use of the term later in this discussion (ibid: 4). Something is uncanny not because it makes us feel “strange”, then, but because through it we are reminded of our own inherent strangeness. The uncanny therefore reminds us of the strangeness of the everyday, in terms of our own bodies (becoming aware of our own bodily processes) and also within the cultural and social spheres. What is familiar becomes unfamiliar but what is revealed is its “true nature”, how it really is. This defamiliarisation is akin to Bertolt Brecht’s notion of what is known as the alienation-effect, or more properly verfremdungseffekt, referred to by Royle (ibid: 5). When used in theatre and film practice, the alienation-effect encourages the spectator to see the world as if for the first time, for it to become unfamiliar so oppressive processes can be understood. When the spectator is made politically aware in this way, the state of not knowing, of not being able to see and recognise oppressive processes within government and society and thus be cut off from critical faculties, can seem to be an estranged ordinariness, and uncanny. The uncanny can be applied to both the Quatermass narratives as the body and the body politic become estranged and open to question.
**Key Debates in British Film and Quatermass**

**British Cinema: Definitions and Critical Perspectives**

In the introduction I indicated the critical neglect towards fantastic cinema and the Quatermass films in particular, which has been addressed in recent decades by a shift in critical focus. It is important to set this in context before looking further at this critical neglect, the implications of it and how this thesis responds to it. Was the lack of attention on science fiction and horror part of a wider discourse that saw British film as less worthy of study? British cinema has faced a considerable amount of critical neglect and antipathy. Sarah Street discusses this lack of attention and suggests that one reason for this could be the inferior commercial and cultural status of British film, which contributed to a ‘theoretical and methodological *impasse*’ in critical writing (2000: 4). Street goes on to identify how the predominant emphasis in both teaching and research on Hollywood and European cinema has been challenged by a changed focus within the research, which has altered the nature of critical practice and has encouraged an interest in previously neglected forms and modes (ibid: 5). Jim Leach concurs with Street when he comments on how British filmmakers ‘have sought to emulate the popularity of Hollywood and the cultural status of art cinema’, but critics ‘often feel their films do not fit comfortably into either category’, noting examples of this (2004: 2). This commercial position and critical response suggests an in-between, liminal state for British film. What were the key characteristics of the historical position that tended to neglect British film and non-realist forms?

Writing in the mid-1980s, Charles Barr points out how British film has been criticised as lacking formal or visual conventions. He gives examples of the attitude that British cultural sensibilities are incompatible with notions of a visual film language and film
form. Barr identifies pejorative remarks on British film, inclined to view it as inadequate in comparison with the more lauded national cinemas of continental Europe and when set against Hollywood (ibid: 1-2). This trend becomes mirrored by film academics who focus on Hollywood while ignoring, by comparison, British film (ibid: 4). This academic bias, for Barr, is replicated to some degree by film journals and publications *Movie, Sequence* and *Cinema Quarterly*, which hold varying positions on British film ranging from seeing it as unviable, unable to present artistic or commercial challenge and displaying a “hostility to the established practices […] of British film making” (ibid: 6).

British cinema, then, suffered historically through having low prestige amongst critics and within critical literature and through unfavourable comparison with other national cinemas and the Hollywood mode. Since the time of Barr’s writing, this critical neglect of British cinema, as indicated earlier, has been remedied through a range of works looking at varied aspects of British film and culture. These include studies and edited collections by Higson (1995), Murphy (1997), Ashby et al (2000), Richards (2000), Harper and Porter (2003), and Leach (2004). It is within the background of these works, which place textual studies within their wider cultural contexts, that this thesis is placed.

Also writing in the mid 1980s, Julian Petley sees existing literature on British film practice as “unable to maintain any critical distance from the still dominant realist aesthetic” (1986: 98). Terms and attitudes associated with this aesthetic have been accepted, for Petley, without challenge and used as a framework for analysis. He indicates the privileging of a realist, literary mode of storytelling with the emphasis on content and social meaning rather than form, the tendency being to praise films for their cultural verisimilitude and veracity. Further to the perception of British film having a
‘formal invisibility’, Petley sees a ‘hostility to stylisation’ that would, in itself, serve to inhibit formal development (ibid: 99). Andrew Higson also notes the dominance of the realist aesthetic, which, through identifying certain films as having elements of the fantastic or the poetic, situated them ‘outside the limits of that which is, for the orthodoxy, constituted as ‘British cinema’’ (1983: 81). However, as suggested by Street’s comment noted above, the hegemony of this orthodoxy can be challenged and the concept of national cinema re-configured. This study takes up the emphasis on changing the focus of study on to marginalised forms, thereby reducing their marginal status.

Chapman illustrates the impact of the emphasis placed on realism within British film and the realist discourse in criticism when he discusses critical reaction to A Matter of Life and Death (Michael Powell, Emeric Pressburger, 1946) on its release. He cites the prevailing discourse on 1940s British film; how a ‘critical discourse emerged that preferred films characterised by sober and unsensational narratives and true-to-life situations and characters’ (2005: 37). The “respectable” face of British cinema in the 1940s would include Ealing Studios and the Crown Film Unit produced films, with more visually expressive films seen as more problematic. Chapman considers how hostility to the Powell and Pressburger films has been put down to the realist discourse, citing a contemporaneous review an example of how the ‘true business’ of British film was seen, essentially, as realism (ibid). The ‘overt romanticism’ of this and other films by Powell and Pressburger such as I Know Where I’m Going! (1945) proved problematic for critics and official discourse, states Chapman (ibid: 38). This illustrates the prevalence of the realist discourse and its influence on critical reception, with certain films seen as acceptable and others marginalised. The stylistic playfulness (ibid) of a film like The Red Shoes (1948) and its combination of realism, visual stylisation and the fantastic arguably
proves problematic due to an implicit hybridity. As outlined in the Introduction, though, this conflation of realism and self-reflexive elements could be seen as typical of British film, which can be used to stress heterogeneity and subvert the notion of a core and the marginal. The realist, sober discourse and avoidance of spectacle and sensation have been pervasive, though, and examples of it are highlighted later in this thesis.

Petley problematises the realist critical hegemony, noting that it is one model of interpretation, thereby indicating the possibilities that might be afforded by the application of different perspectives to the analysis of film (1983: 100). Through identifying the prevalence and privileging of the realist aesthetic, then, Petley suggests that the dominance of this led British cinema to be viewed a certain way, which had inhibited critical response to films with a more poetic or non-realist aesthetic, including Ealing, Gainsborough and Hammer. Leach suggests the pervasiveness of the realist aesthetic and attendant notions of sobriety when he comments how the realist tradition influenced performance styles, establishing a restrained mode (2004, p. 104). Hutchings cites Petley’s use of the metaphor of the ‘lost continent’ still waiting to be rigorously explored and mapped’ in relation to fantastic and self-reflexive cinema (1993: 4) and later critiques this metaphor of the ‘dark side’ (ibid: 13). This lost continent has since been partially mapped, although, as this thesis illustrates, there is space for further scholarship, particularly on the Quatermass films. As can be seen by the works this study engages with, there are examples of the changing critical focus on to non-realist forms and interest in the fantastic in British film. These works and collections include Hunter (1999), Chibnall and Petley (2002) and Hochscherf and Leggott (2011). Barr proposes that the binary opposition of realist versus non-realist is too rigid and, once this is challenged, more fantastical or self-reflexive narratives can be placed within a
heterogeneous national cinema culture (1986: 15). Therefore, rather than being viewed as marginal, the Quatermass films could be seen as more central to British cinema culture and the very notion of “centrality” and “marginality” can be challenged.

Considerable work has been undertaken since the early 1980s to redress the imbalance in criticism through re-appraising work previously seen as subsidiary to the main trends in British national cinema, films that mine a self-reflexive or fantastical narrative and film form with a more pronounced visual style. A body of work from Pirie (1974) onwards, including Petley and Hutchings, has sought to re-examine horror and science fiction film within the wider aesthetic and production contexts of British national cinema. There is however, as will be seen further, little discussion of the Quatermass films within the re-focused critical discourse. There is David Simmons’ short account (2011) within a broader discussion of the Hammer films as science fiction works, Hutchings’ article on uncanny landscapes (2004) that discusses both the films and the television versions and the other journal articles cited in the Introduction, but little else. This may be due to, as discussed later in this thesis, factors concomitant with their production and finance, personnel or generic status. Hutchings (1993) suggests that the 1980s resurgence of critical interest in areas within British cinema hitherto neglected, like the auteur films of Powell and Pressburger, ‘reveals the limitations of, perhaps even works to deconstruct, the critically privileged realist aesthetic’ (1993: 13). This view of the critical perspective as problematic suggests a similar analysis could be made of the more recent writing machine that has emerged on horror and science fiction, to interrogate the response to Quatermass.
What has emerged from the newer writing is acknowledgment of the plurality of both national identity and national cinema. Barr, for instance, states that it is more useful to speak of a heterogeneous and flexible British culture, which has implications when defining “national cinema” (1986: 23). Since the time of his writing, as evidenced through the more recent scholarship from Higson for instance, plurality has become emphasised within writing on national identity and cinema. Writing in the mid-1990s, for example, Higson refers to a ‘myth of consensus’ (1995: 273). If concepts of national identity embrace plurality and fluidity, then the same can be said of the film culture that potentially represents changing and flexible social contexts. Significantly, Higson states that ‘national identity is by no means a fixed phenomenon’ (ibid: 4) and that it is in a state of flux, of formation, the implication being that this formation itself is derived in part from cultural products (i.e. films) as well as the critical discourses surrounding them and their production. For the Quatermass films, it may be possible to see that despite possible difficulties in placing them neatly within national or generic categories, if the definitions of both national cinema, and, indeed genre, can be seen as fluid, a more central space within British national cinema can be afforded to them.

**Fantastical Cinema and British Film**

As indicated above, there was a lack of scholarly works addressing horror and science fiction film in the mid-1980s, when Petley used the metaphor of a lost continent in reference to the uncharted waters of self-reflexive and fantastic film (1986). Since that time, this lack of attention has been corrected to some extent by a range of critical material. This includes edited collections (Gelder 2000), (Jancovich 2002), (Chibnall and Petley 2002), none of which include mention of Quatermass; this is also the case for examples of genre studies of both horror, (Hutchings 2004) and science fiction (Telotte,
2001), (Cornea, 2007). It would seem from the absence of Quatermass from these collections that the films sit uneasily in terms of genre. There is, however, a brief analysis of *The Quatermass Experiment* (Landy, 1991) as part of a discussion of horror and science fiction in her study on popular film genres. Hutchings’ chapter on invasion narratives in an edited collection (Hunter, 1999) is another study on Quatermass that situates discussion of the films within the context of other, similar films of the 1950s and 1960s. As indicated below, Hutchings links the films to their social and cultural context and explores the themes specific to Britain at that time. However, there is room to develop this by stressing the hybrid and the uncanny, which Hutchings does not explicitly address. What aspects are focused on by the literature on fantastic cinema in Britain, and what do they say about critical attitudes towards the form?

The marginality of British cinema in historical studies can be similarly found within accounts of the horror and science fiction genres and their relation to it. Hutchings, for instance, remarks that horror was subsidiary to or absent from historical accounts of British cinema practice (1993: 9). He further suggests their lesser status was due to critical perception of horror film texts as commercially driven and formulaic. This mirrors the negative critical attitude towards popular cultural forms as part of the discourse of differentiating between “entertainment” and “art” and further separating out “tasteful” entertainment and material in bad taste (ibid: 10). Marcia Landy also identifies how horror films have suffered from critical neglect in academic study of film, due to their ‘stylisation, seeming pre-occupation with a psychic- not overtly social- landscape, popularity with audiences, roots in mass culture and focus on violence’ (1991: 388). Landy also indicates here how the more fantastical elements within horror and, indeed, science fiction film, were problematic for critics.
Visual style and narrative content were both incompatible, then, with a critical mode that emphasised social realism and regarded horror as inadequate for the exploration of profound themes (ibid: 389). This can be associated with the privileging within national cinema of the realist aesthetic and social realism and it can be seen how the critical view on British cinema generally informs that on fantastical film forms. As Landy further states, the problem lies within critical practice and the ways ‘in which critics have sought to identify social meaning in cinema’ and that horror film, for instance, through association with themes not easily assimilated by realist discourse, had acquired the status of the “Other”, rather like the nature of the figures within the films themselves (ibid: 389). As Pirie points out, there was a lack of critical material on commercial cinema that needed addressing; furthermore, that horror specifically was regarded with more ‘suspicion and scorn’ than other genre cinemas like the western or gangster film (1973: 10). It was therefore a marginal style within a marginal form, making it even more of an “Other” in terms of status.

Besides cultural elitism, the lack of horror films actually being produced is also, arguably, a reason for critical neglect of the genre. A range of reasons is given within the existing literature for the, as Petley puts it, ‘peculiarly slow’ development of the horror film within Britain (1986: 113). Petley attributes this to American influence, censorship and dominant ideas about taste and quality that impacted on production, distribution and exhibition (ibid: 113). Landy also identifies censorship as an issue, leading to a smaller amount of films being produced, many of which were more akin to melodrama (1991: 389). This led, as Ian Conrich observes, to a tendency towards horror themes being incorporated into comedies and thrillers during the 1930s and 1940s (1997: 228). Hutchings also indicates that the presence of horror had to be present in disguised form.
only and that, as a genre or style, horror was therefore not only discouraged but repressed (1993: 25). Petley refers to ‘rigid censorship’ (1986: 114) at this time, and Street concurs, stating that ‘censorship restrictions prevented horror films from being made in significant numbers before 1955’ (1997: 76). Relaxing of censorship in the early 1950s and changing audience demographics both led, for Landy, to a resurgence of fantastical themes and figures in film (1991: 390). The family audience was no longer a viable market and the need to develop alternative markets became apparent (Hutchings, 1993: 39).

Pirie initially proposed that the horror film output by Hammer and the other studios constitute ‘the only staple cinematic myth which Britain can properly claim its own’ through its use of a ‘native Gothic tradition’ (1973: 9). This serves the dual purpose of attempting to secure a place for horror within British national cinema that, by emphasising the literary origin of the films within Gothic literature, serves to write the films as worthy of serious attention. Indeed, Pirie claims special status for horror within ‘English cultural tradition’ (ibid: 10) and, later, argues that the production itself of horror films is, at time of his writing, part of the ‘English popular consciousness’ alongside other familiar elements (ibid: 22).

Writing in the 1990s, Hutchings raises the question of how to place the specific genres of horror and science fiction, as forms of the fantastic in cinema, against other examples of the genres from elsewhere, namely Hollywood. He asks if horror is a ‘local example of a transatlantic cultural mode’ (1993: 16). If this is the case, then, it is important to identify what distinguishes British horror and science fiction from their American counterpart. Do the Quatermass films possess a peculiarly “British” quality and if so, how does that
operate in view of their hybrid U.K./U.S. production status? When Pirie referred to horror traditions as being suitable for a British sensibility, did he have the 1950s Quatermass films in mind as well? On the evidence of Pirie’s study it would appear so, as he emphasises their place in Hammer’s output and links the treatment of technology and government to the national social context. Hutchings notes that British science fiction in the 1950s did suffer from unfavourable comparison with Hollywood versions of the genre. However, they did possess uniquely British characteristics of their own that distinguished them (1999: 33). Within analysis of the Quatermass films this is considered against narrative structure, representation of social class and thematic concerns particular to Britain in the 1950s as well as considering the production contexts.

It is interesting that the period identified by contemporary critics as the time of greatest production activity and popular success of British horror cinema, 1956-1970 is also one characterised by negative criticism set against defensive support for horror (Hutchings, 1993: 3). Hutchings takes a different view to Pirie, stating that the earlier critic was incorrect in commenting that critics were ‘outraged’ by Hammer’s early films such as *The Curse of Frankenstein* (Fisher, 1957) and that, instead, many were ‘bemused’ (ibid: 6). While this does suggest that reaction may have been less severe than Pirie claims, comments by, for instance, Derek Hill (1958/9: 8)⁵, suggest that Pirie was not altogether incorrect. What does perhaps emerge, though, is the sense that, as production of horror had been relatively absent within the British film industry for a considerable time up to that point, critics may have been slow to appreciate the very different visual aesthetics and narrative representations offered by the emergent film output. Elsewhere, though, in

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⁵ Derek Hill, writing for *Sight and Sound*, condemns the ‘need for new sensationalism’ and regards the newer films as abandoning subtlety, opting instead for explicitness and ‘repellent’ detail (1958/9: 8). He utilises two forms of derogatory criticism, focusing on what he sees as “bad taste” and poor writing (ibid: 9).
another essay on science fiction in the 1950s, Hutchings notes the ‘bad critical press’
given towards twentieth century science fiction invasion fantasies, as if they betrayed a
literary tradition (1999: 34). This can further illuminate discussion on literary/non-
literary origins of fantastical film narratives in considering critical reactions to them.

Even if the horror/science fiction cinema produced by Hammer during the 1950s was not
roundly condemned but misunderstood, it is arguably regarded with enough suspicion to
draw attention away from the form and consign it to relative critical obscurity. Pirie’s
assertion that for most critics, horror’s ‘sudden proliferation’ was a ‘thoroughly daunting
and inexplicable phenomenon’, suggests there was something incomprehensible and
bizarre about horror, and that there was a lack of critical language with which to
adequately understand or explain this form of cinema (1973: 22). Hutchings does
highlight the critical verdict as ‘negative’, which accords with observations that the films
were unfavourably received and that this can imply reasons for the amount of time it took
critics to focus on the genre (1993: 4).

Street’s observations that horror films related to their wider contexts and ‘touched on
contemporary issues’ demonstrates how the critical climate has altered in more recent
years (1997: 76). Rather than being unsuitable for exploring significant themes, horror
relates to the wider contexts within which it is produced, being ‘especially imaginative
and pertinent regarding contemporary social themes’ (ibid: 76). However, as Landy
suggests, it is important to view horror not as direct or ‘untroubled reflections of specific
conditions’, as this critical approach has limited potential (1991: 389). Rather,
representation should be seen as the ‘locus of official and unofficial articulations, of
public and private desires and their prohibition, of conformity and resistance to
conformity’ (ibid: 389). It should be regarded, then, as a dialogue, a discourse in which a
range of other discourses are dramatised. It can be a site of meaning with subsequent negotiation and a range of possible interpretations and potential decoding, which is how the texts are viewed in this thesis. Hutchings is in accord with this when he argues for a way of looking at horror as comprising a ‘set of aesthetic conventions…the actual interplay and development of which takes place within particular national contexts’ (1993: 18).

The output of Hammer, through the Quatermass films, can then be seen as a mapping of negotiations of genre conventions, aesthetics and representations relating to the national context. This enables several themes to be identified that recur through horror and science fiction, which are evident in the 1950s Quatermass films, such as post-colonial anxiety and the perceived threat to Britain as an imperial power, crisis of masculinity, sexuality and myths of national unity and consensus, as outlined by Street in reference to Hutchings (1997: 77-8). It is interesting that, as Landy states, horror often appears at times of crisis, as if perhaps to dramatise and map out these fears, citing also the focus on anxiety over gender identity and relations (1991: 394). Landy provides some models for identifying and differentiating horror and science fiction, which will prove useful for application to the Quatermass films in discussion of their hybrid status. With reference to Vivian Sobchack, Landy notes how these identifications and differences can be seen in treatment of power, violence and the monstrous. In horror narratives, the individual is in conflict with themselves or society, or an extension of the self, and in science fiction the focus shifts towards conflict between society, its institutions and an alien ‘Other’ (ibid: 392). This model is useful up to a point but clearly, as seen in discussion on the Quatermass films in this thesis, the distinction between science fiction and horror is not always so clear and the nature of the conflict shifts between these forms of conflict;
individual and collective. John Sears, in his conference paper ‘The Boundaries of Horror in Wolf Rilla’s *Village of the Damned*’ provides some useful perspectives on horror/science fiction genre definition. In identifying the main focus of his paper as how horror narratives typically play with boundaries and relating this to genre specifically, Sears opens up the possibility of seeing a more conscious experimentation with form. Key aspects associated with the blurring of boundaries are identified within Sears’ case study that are applied to Quatermass, such as known/unknown, clean/contaminated, self and other. Further, he identifies specific themes in *Village of the Damned* (Wolf Rilla, 1960) as being post-war English anxiety coupled with frustrated masculinity, invasion and reverse colonisation, worries about difference and the communal mind. These themes provide insight into the nature of the conflict in Quatermass in discussion of the films and indicate the possibilities of detecting common tropes within a range of British horror and science fiction narratives during the mid to late 1950s and into the 1960s.

With specific reference to science fiction, Hutchings considers characteristics of the genre in British cinema during the 1950s and 1960s that differentiate it from the Hollywood model. These characteristics are examined in subsequent discussion. However, an outline may illustrate some of the key differences highlighted. Hutchings notes the Quatermass films as part of a convention of similar films, noting the seeming irony that Britain, a nation with a colonial, imperial past, ‘should have developed a rich tradition of narratives about itself being invaded’ (1999: 33). He adds that this partly enables a view that British science fiction films, rather than being an appendage of the ‘better known’ American product, in fact have a unique, distinctive character of their own (ibid: 33).
The extent to which the invasion narratives dramatised political and social issues such as the Suez Crisis and the changing international standing of Britain as a world power can be mapped on to the films is considered later in the thesis. Could the films be staging anxieties over a changing status for the two powers while playing out concerns over the uneasy relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union? Are the films arguing that Britain needs to shed conventional thinking and philosophy? Hutchings considers invasion narratives in general prior to looking at the Quatermass films, and identifies how in these accounts, humanity, in the necessary imagining of alien life forms within the invasion narrative, ‘becomes limited…fragile and perpetually vulnerable’, which could express a state of mind experienced by an imperial power trying to adapt to changing circumstances (ibid: 35).

The new sense of limit and transience can be linked to ideas of the uncanny and is one of the ways in which this notion is applied to the Quatermass films and linked to hybridity, to build on Hutchings’ analysis. If notions and fears of the transitory nature of the human and of societal frameworks and institutions are revealed by these changing politics, the social world becomes tinged with the uncanny and perceived as such. An intellectual process of self-reflection and re-evaluation of previous, assumed certainties must be undertaken as the ordinary world becomes threatening and tainted by the unfamiliar. Hutchings refers obliquely to this although he does not specifically mention the uncanny, when he refers to the definition of the alien threat against and within the ‘real, even humdrum world’ and how the familiar mingles with the strange with an implied invitation for the spectator to consider their own environment ‘in a different light, seeing it to a certain extent as itself an alien world’ (ibid: 38). This alienation and dislocation of the subject from its surroundings and by implication from itself, is a key factor in
discussion of the case studies in terms of their themes, aesthetics and generic characteristics.

Using the fantastic as defined by Jackson (following Todorov) and the uncanny as theorised by Jackson and Royle allows for development of Hutchings, then. Analysis of the Quatermass films in this thesis employs the uncanny to read the thematic treatment of themes particular to Britain in the 1950s and 1960s, and addresses social and cultural contexts through this framework. Using the uncanny linked to hybridity as defined by Staiger enables development of the existing literature, which does not address in detail these concepts directly; using them as a critical framework addresses a gap in literature on British horror and science fiction.

**Hammer Films**

Since Barr and Petley, then, there has been the kind of rigorous analysis of British cinema and of horror/science fiction they called for. What is the current literature on Hammer and where does this study fit in with it? Sue Harper and Vincent Porter’s in-depth study on 1950s British cinema (2003) is an example that is particularly relevant to this thesis, but to what extent do they address fantastic cinema? Harper and Porter provide a thorough, contextualised study of British film studios but do not focus necessarily on genre cinema in their account of Hammer or on in-depth textual analysis, which leaves space for this thesis to do so. They do, however, outline Hammer’s shift to horror and science fiction film production and cite hybridity as a feature of the 1950s Hammer films, although they do not explicitly use Staiger’s model as outlined above. Their application of hybridity is because of the American co-production deal entered into by Hammer and the impact on the films that this had. Their discussion suggests cultural
difference between the United States and Britain in terms of cinema, which invites an overt use of Staiger’s model in this thesis. Harper and Porter’s discussion is necessarily brief, being part of a broader study. What I want to do here is expand on Harper and Porter’s application of hybridity and link it with Staiger. In terms of science fiction and horror, their emphasis is on impermanence and change as a significant and lasting feature of Hammer’s output. The implied state of flux is in keeping with hybridity as it suggests plurality and non-fixity; a quality of the films that implies the hybrid and is considered later in relation to national identity.

A key analytical account of Hammer situates detailed discussion of the Studio’s films within wider contexts of British horror film as a whole (Hutchings, 1993, discussed below). More extensive studies on Hammer that address specific film texts in detail (Kinsey 2002; 2007) focus on the production background and personnel involved, without close textual analysis. There is, therefore, space for this thesis to critically consider the work of Hammer focusing on the specific Quatermass texts of the 1950s. Pirie’s comments on early 1950s film suggest a slump in cinema attendance and box office revenue in which Hammer possessed ‘considerably more foresight than many other British film companies’ in their response to these problems (1973: 27). Pirie assigns to Hammer sharp insight in what he sees as its ability to anticipate an emerging trend, taste and market for the fantastic and for horror based on the success of their first science fictions films, in 1956 (ibid: 39). He claims that Hammer were able to see beyond the prevailing mood at that time, which regarded science fiction as a finished genre and appeared antipathetic to a revival in horror (ibid). The company was responsive to the market and took advantage of new trends. Being on a modest budget
they needed to respond to and anticipate the market, noting changing demographics and the opportunities afforded by the introduction of the X-certificate rating.

As Harper and Porter state, in order to make more profit, Hammer needed to turn to an international, American market rather than rely on British B-features. This meant entering into co-production with the American Robert Lippert Productions in 1948, an agreement extended in 1950 to a new five year deal, which, while contracting Hammer to distribute twelve Lippert films a year, promised distribution of Hammer films to the American market (2003: 141). Tellingly, Lippert would assist in ‘fine-tuning’ Hammer films for American taste (ibid: 141). The changes to the narratives and aesthetics of the films that this implied further differentiated Hammer films from other British film styles. Harper and Porter highlight differences in Hammer B-feature production to others in the 1950s, which suggests that there was some significant difference already in existence (ibid: 139). The changes to films that were introduced by Lippert Productions included changes in, for instance music and continuity designed to make films ‘less Britishy’ (ibid: 142). This begs the question of what these definitions are, and how certain aesthetics are perceived as such. Implicit here also is the notion that the Hollywood style is more effective than what was being employed in British film. This is illustrated in Harper and Porter commenting that the resulting film changes made them ‘so different to the earlier home-financed Hammers that we must attribute the slickness…to American intervention’ (ibid: 143). Harper and Porter use the term “hybrid” according to Staiger’s model to describe the 1950s Hammer films as they ‘straddled the divide between the two film cultures’ (ibid: 142). This specific reference to hybridity stops short of overtly discussing the mixing of the two cultures and how this is manifest in depth, which provides space for this thesis to do so.
There are clear implications for looking at *The Quatermass Experiment*, which saw intervention from the American co-producers. Scriptwriter Richard Landau was sent by Lippert to ‘make sure that the film would be appropriate for American audiences’ (ibid: 144). Nigel Kneale, writer of the original television series, objected to the narrative changes and to the casting of the American Brian Donlevy in the main role of Quatermass. These changes and the responses to them may have helped establish a critical discourse holding the television series in a higher regard than the film, despite the former being a newer medium. This could be the case especially if the BBC output was associated at that time with British cultural identity, which, if there were felt to be anxieties concerning both the current social/political climate and Hollywood’s cultural hegemony in the film industry, may have been seen as being threatened by a succession of perceived dangers. The extent to which critical space is given to either the television series or feature film version of the Quatermass story could also indicate the regard in which both are held.

**Telefantasy and Nigel Kneale**

The literature on Nigel Kneale, the writer of all three original Quatermass series, provides a sense not only of the perception amongst reviewers and academics of his role within the development of the series and the adaptation from television to film, but also of his own attitudes to both media and the genre of science fiction itself. This indicates how value judgements about the film and television versions can lead to a prevailing negative discourse. It also indicates the significance of the original series and the work of Kneale, for television drama, and how this is seen in criticism. Considering the literature which addresses the context from which the series derived, the BBC itself, also enables
discussion of the significance of Kneale’s contribution to television drama, and the subsequent cultural importance of his work.

Despite Kneale’s involvement with at least some of the adaptation process, the obituaries following his recent death (2006) tended to focus on his contribution to television in reference to Quatermass. Writing in *The Guardian*, John Ezard praises the original serials for their ‘vision and excitement’ and maintains that the medium of television, has not bettered the quality of these works (Thursday November 2, 2006). The Hammer Films versions, however, are mentioned as adjuncts and regarded as inferior to the serials and, for Ezard, become part of a discourse of an ‘anti-climactic’ later career (ibid). This not only presents a hierarchy of value with the ‘vastly better television originals’ (ibid) faring better out of the two versions, but also emphasises the notion of a superior earlier product by implying that they constitute part of a prior moment of creative power that somehow dissipated.

It is worth setting discussion of the relevant literature on the Quatermass television narratives within the wider context of the BBC, to help understand the significance of the original series and introduce aspects that are discussed further in the Adaptation chapter. Looking at some of the wider factors of BBC television in the 1950s also helps to contextualise the above comments on the original Quatermass series. Television as a form of entertainment in Britain had increased in popularity since its inception in 1936. As Lez Cooke observes, until the 1950s television was a ‘minority interest medium’ (2003: 6). Following expansion of the service, television, according to Cooke, emerged as the most popular medium by the end of the 1950s, the period pertinent to this study (ibid: 9). Besides the growth in the service, television benefited from its newness, as
Cooke puts it – a symbol of modernity, then, and possibilities afforded by technological change. The cultural significance of television is illustrated by it being a source for many feature films, including science fiction. According to John R. Cook, who states in reference to the adaptation of another, later BBC telefantasy, Doctor Who, (1963-89; 2005 – present), ‘many British sf films, from Hammer onwards [...] derived their inspiration and their sources from television, beginning life as dramas made for BBC TV’ (1999: 114). As a cultural form, then, television has had considerable significance in terms of popularity, use and influence, which informs its status in both the popular imagination and within critical discourse, including the above comments on the original Quatermass.

Jason Jacobs has written extensively about the development of British television drama (2000). He establishes that the growth of the service in the 1950s was facilitated by the setting up of new transmitters, coinciding with developments in production practice and longer scheduling; the reach of television was to an audience of up to 20 million by 1953 (2000: 110). This is the potential audience that the original series could tap in to, which could account for the popularity and cultural significance of it. What is also worth noting is the particular position of television within the popular imagination, which might give special resonance to cultural products deriving from it. Cook discusses the power of television and its place within cultural memory and imagination, asking why British television science fiction is generally better remembered than its cinema counterpart. He suggests that nostalgia plays a key role and that television, through being watched in the home amongst other domestic activities, becomes bound up with personal experiences and memories (1999: 113). Quatermass, of course, was an original script for television, as Dave Rolinson and Nick Cooper observe, rather than an adaptation from radio, for
instance (2002: 158). This aspect of being written for television suggests that the series “belonged” to the medium of television and might inform its popularity.

That Quatermass was an original script gives an indication of its significance and, in particular, the contribution of Kneale as writer and Rudolph Cartier as producer, to the development of BBC television drama and telefantasy. In an article in *Sight and Sound*, (1959), Kneale gives an account of the production environment from which Quatermass arose, highlighting the prevalence of a discourse favouring an aesthetic of intimacy, which, for Kneale, was limiting (1959: 86). The three Quatermass stories, as outlined by Kneale, map out a move away from an intimate aesthetic determined by circumstances of production and technology to a more developed, expanded production context (ibid). In the article, Kneale looks forward to an expanding television screen, production mode and aesthetic, and predicts an affinity with the cinema in terms of the size of the screen (ibid). This indicates an interest and favourable attitude towards cinema’s potential and a desire for change where television is concerned. Indeed, Jacobs reports how Kneale regarded the early styles and form of television as restricting, because of what he saw as the conception of television as comparable to radio plays (2000: 135). With the Quatermass serials, the intention was to produce a more fluid and visual text that utilised the storytelling potential of the image (Kneale in Wells, 1999: 49).

The prevailing discourse at the BBC is suggested in a statement, quoted by Jacobs, of Basil Bartlett, Television Drama Script Supervisor, whose ideas on television are that it is akin to theatre, and is in fact a ‘by-product’ of it, implying that it should not seek to be like the cinema (2000: 109). This elides the formal specificity of television and the screen image. It also suggests a favouring of culturally “high-brow” formations, rather
than acknowledging that television has the potential to develop its own aesthetic language and practice and could be seen in its own terms. Jacobs sets Bartlett’s position against a contrasting quote from Kneale, which places emphasis on the mutability and flexibility of television, especially as a relatively “young” medium, and on a kinship with cinema (ibid). The use here of Kneale as a counterpoint to Bartlett signals the importance of his contribution and also suggests competing positions within the BBC itself. Jacobs indicates negative critical attitudes towards film when he discusses how for critics in the 1950s, television should avoid imitating film, with the description ‘film style’ used as a ‘code-phrase for flashy and exhibitionist television, one that drew attention to its visuality’ (ibid: 125). The use of film inserts, as a way of expanding the visual range of television, as Jacobs states, was indeed regarded with suspicion by some critics and seen as evidence that television was overreaching itself (ibid: 128). Rather than developing a specific visual practice, television should observe restraint, which is a characteristic discussed in the Adaptation chapter in relation to the BBC itself and its treatment of the fantastic (ibid: 126). What, though, does the literature say of Kneale’s work and its impact in departing from this prevailing discourse, and how might this inform my study?

In his article ‘The Manxman’, Julian Petley describes the ‘unpromising soil’ that was the basis of the making of The Quatermass Experiment, contributing to the idea of the series as special because of its quality despite having humble beginnings (1990: 91). Further, he reports Kneale commenting on the basic resources and how the most efficient scriptwriting practice was to build material out of what was available, and how he would search ‘this huge prop department […] for stuff you could make a story out of’ (ibid). Rolinson and Cooper also stress the novel aspect of the Quatermass serials, going so far as to state that The Quatermass Experiment, transmitted between July 18 and August 22,
1953, ‘revolutionised British television’ (2002: 159). The literature also stresses the impact of Kneale’s work at the BBC; Jacobs states that Kneale and Cartier’s work brought about a direct challenge to the notion of intimate drama (2000: 130). Jacobs goes on to consider how, working with Cartier, Kneale set out to ‘invigorate’ television drama, partly through a change of tempo but also through expanding the types of themes that the form might turn to (ibid: 134). Kneale’s work is characterised, for Jacobs, by a more ‘integrated mixture of studio and film, larger sets, multi-character productions’; further, Jacobs states that the impact of his work with Cartier is in the stylistic flexibility offered by their working methods (ibid: 235). Clearly, then, these texts, and Kneale himself, are seen to have a particular impact on the media that helps establish them in popular consciousness and academic discussion as having a special status that, despite the reported influence of the film versions on horror film production, contribute to the reviewing of them reported above in the obituaries. How, then, did Kneale view the material he developed and that which was later adapted from it? What was his view on genre and current science fiction and horror?

Petley reports Kneale as stating that ‘I don’t see myself as a science fiction writer, and I never have done’ (1990: 92). He seems then to distance himself from the genre within which the work appears, in part, to reside. In his interview with Wells he expresses reluctance to apply the label of science fiction to the Quatermass narrative, preferring instead to regard it as writing for a general audience and not a niche market (1999: 50). Wells establishes that ‘Kneale has consistently denied that he is a science fiction writer’ (ibid: 48), implying that he is linked to this genre. This distancing could be due to the eclecticism of Kneale’s output and an understandable desire to not be characterised and restricted by a generic label that he appears to see as limiting. It is interesting, though,
that Jacobs identifies the use of fantasy and science fiction as genres that enabled Kneale to move away from the ‘intimate’ style (2000: 133). Kneale’s own comments might help to make sense of the apparent tension implied in writing what might be termed “science fiction” whilst professing to dislike the term. In his *Sight and Sound* article, Kneale states ‘I don’t like the term “science fiction” [...] it could be applied just as well to the world we live in’ (1959: 88). This chimes with the themes of this thesis and the discussion of the fantastic and the uncanny, in that it stresses the everyday, ordinary nature of horror; how the monstrous literally invades the commonplace and comes from what appears as a small, insignificant event or encounter but which swiftly becomes something else. It opens up the potential for something fantastic to be already present and that the narrative is happening in the here and now. The challenge to accepted notions of “the real” is implied here and discussed later in the thesis in relation to the uncanny. The notion of using tropes of fantastic narratives within material aimed at a wider audience prompts the possibility of these unfamiliar themes infiltrating the BBC drama department. How were the films and series seen in terms of genre upon broadcast and release? There are certainly implications for how Kneale viewed the Quatermass serials he wrote and subsequently the films adapted from them that form the basis for this study. In adaptation, were the films more recognisable as science fiction than the serials and were they seen as such: to what extent was this connected to Kneale’s response and of later critics?

Despite Kneale’s admiration for the visual potential of cinema, he expresses dislike of popular genre, stating an explicit intention within his writing of the Quatermass serials to critique 1950s science fiction, ‘those terrible American films that were full of flag-waving and that dreadful, crude dialogue and exhibited a singular lack of imagination’
Here there is a criticism not only of commercial cinema as devoid of creative narrative treatment but also an express wish to avoid association with Hollywood as representing a particular kind of American national consciousness. There is an implicit distrust of and distancing from popular film combined with a desire for product differentiation. The ambivalent relationship towards film is reflected in other examples of the literature. In the Wells interview Kneale also indicates his intentions to differentiate his work in terms of narrative style and content, specifically character. Further, he maintains that he did not want to do ‘something terribly “British”’ either, which prompts questions of how the Quatermass serials might be perceived in relation to British narrative traditions, and where the film adaptations can therefore be situated (Wells, 1999: 50).

The process of adapting a six half hour serial in to feature length film will inevitably necessitate removal of scenes and re-writes of material. Petley’s assertion that the series is ‘as effective’ as the film and contains ‘superb scenes’ omitted from the adaptation, could suggest a position that seeks to defend hitherto unknown material, as at the time of his writing the serials were unavailable (1990: 91). Writing later, Hutchings observes that the film versions are more familiar, ‘if only because the serials are much harder to see’, which implies that the case might be different if the television versions were more freely available: a subtle way, perhaps, of saying they were superior to the films (1999: 36). Rolinson and Cooper also concur that the film lost elements from the series that enhanced the quality of the earlier version. They comment that scenes in the series that provided relief from the main narrative were dropped and that characterisation was simplified, implying a reductive tendency within the process of adaptation to film (2002: 159). Perhaps Kneale sets a precedent, or contributes to an existing discourse, when he
critiques the manner in which the film was adapted from his version. Although he praises Richard Wordsworth as Victor Caroon he expressly disapproves of the interpretation of Quatermass by Brian Donlevy, stating he ‘wasn’t interested and was drunk most of the time’ (1999: 51). He remarks on the directing and his own lack of involvement, with ‘It was well directed by Val Guest in a brisk style. I was not asked to do the script.’ (ibid: 51). The brevity of his statements indicates a strong dislike of the film and Hammer’s actions, as if he does not want to dwell on the matter.

This section of the literature has introduced some of the circumstances from which the original Quatermass narratives arose, through assessing the literature on Kneale and the BBC. The prevailing discourses in the BBC and in criticism will be expanded on in the Adaptation chapter, and they link with the aforementioned critical focus on restraint and realism in critical discourses on British cinema. The differences between the television and film versions has been briefly considered, as this will be looked at in detail in the Adaptation chapter, to move beyond assessing what was “lost”. Instead, the focus is on what the changes to the Quatermass narratives might show with regard to the intentions and priorities of the filmmakers. Kneale’s contribution to the development of television drama is evident, and the impact of his work, including Quatermass. What has been the critical material so far on the Quatermass films, and how might they both inform and be developed by this thesis?

**Quatermass in Critical Analaysis**

This literature review has illustrated that there is space for critical writing on the fantastic and British film, focusing on hybridity and the uncanny. There is similarly a gap in the literature on Quatermass; this review will proceed to give an account of some of the key
literature on the film versions as these are the main focus of my study. There is a small range of material looked at closely here, because I refer closely to the other sources within discussion of the production history and critical reception of the films in later chapters. Much of the present writing on Quatermass focuses on production contexts with brief reviews; there is a relative lack of sustained critical, analytical study. The two key sources are sections within studies of the horror genre (Pirie 1973 revised 2008), (Hutchings, 1993), both of which assess the Quatermass films within the context of Hammer’s development in horror/science fiction cinema and make links with the wider social and cultural contexts of the films. While my thesis continues this practice, it constitutes a development through addressing the uncanny and hybridity and considering these aspects in relation to those cultural contexts. Until the 1990s the only significant material was Pirie’s with a brief retrospective journal review (Eder, 1987) of the Quatermass cycle of films. The 1990s and 2000s saw expansion in the material that directly addressed Quatermass, the majority of it being journal articles. Some of these journal articles are substantial accounts of the production history of each film (Murphy, 1994), production histories with brief reviews on each film (The House That Hammer Built, 1997), historical account of The Quatermass Experiment (Maxford, 2004) and adaptation study of the cycle (Rolinson and Cooper, 2002). Other journal articles or chapters in edited collections include studies on or interviews with Val Guest (Jezard, 1995), Kneale (Petley, 1989), (Wells 1999) and an analysis of the science fiction elements of Hammer films, which briefly mentions Quatermass (Simmons, 2011)\(^6\). There is also a detailed critical biography of Kneale (Murray, 2006), which gives historical accounts of the production of the series and films that Kneale was involved in. My thesis responds to these works through expansion and detail, as there are no book-length studies

\(^6\) There is also an MA thesis referenced by Harper and Porter. ‘The Mutant Text: The Transformation of The Quatermass Experiment to Hammer Film’ by Greg Harper (Westminster, 1999). Despite contacting the authors to locate the thesis, at time of writing I have been unable to obtain a copy of the work.
on Quatermass and there is space to fill this gap. Furthermore, what this thesis does is fuse the two approaches indicated above, through providing close textual analysis that situates critical discussion within cultural and production contexts and history. What are the core themes of the literature on Quatermass, then, and how does this thesis respond to and develop them?

Kneale’s own comments on horror, in an interview made many years after the Quatermass series and films were produced, provide a fitting starting point from which to assess the existing literature on the Quatermass narratives. While focussing on the films, this account will refer also to analysis that responds to both the serials and the film, identifying commonalities between critics while also indicating where they differ and how my thesis fits in with them. Kneale expresses preference for a style of horror narrative that employs suggestion, imagination, and plays on fears of the unknown and the unseen especially when evoking the sensation of ‘a place where you had lost all your bearings and were no longer sure of anything’ (in Wells, 1999: 54). Rather than focusing on visual display, Kneale explored horror derived from outside elements that suggested ‘the ultimate and unclassifiable monstrosity’ (ibid: 52). Horror based on imagination can be linked to ideas of how the ordinary can be imbued with a sense of dread through mingling quotidian reality with the unfamiliar, which, in the Quatermass narratives, is achieved through locating the monstrous within a recognisable setting. Critics have remarked on this: Petley, for instance, states that it is the location of ‘strange stories in down-to-earth settings populated by credible characters that gives them their particular power to disturb’ (1990: 91). Kneale states, ‘I like the blending of the ordinary and the extraordinary’, a practice commented on in the literature. When analysing these aspects further, notions of the uncanny provide a framework for discussion.
Rolinson and Cooper highlight the ‘sense of the ordinary from which the menace erupts’ (2002: 159) in *The Quatermass Experiment*, but confine this to the television version, noting the compression of the narrative in to feature length as a problem in adaptation for both series. This privileges the series over the film, carrying the implication that the latter might have employed more sensational means to invoke horror. Pirie, however, identifies in *Quatermass II* (film), that a sense of ‘chaos and nightmare’ is achieved through situating the horror within regular routine. Pirie refers to a ‘ball-of-twine’ theme where Quatermass finds inconsistencies within his schedule and thereby uncovers the monstrous threat of alien invasion (1973: 35). This can be read as an example of the uncanny, in which danger, that which should have remained undercover, becomes exposed and alters the perception of the social world within the narrative. Hutchings indicates this clearly in his discussion of *Quatermass II* as an invasion narrative, referring to the uncanny in all but name. For Hutchings, the location of the narrative within the recognisably “real” helps to define the nature of the alien threat. The ‘mixing of the familiar and the strange, with the strange often concealed within the familiar and close to home’ encourages a critical look within the film and the spectator at the once recognisable, reassuring world (1999: 38). Hutchings here expresses the essence of the uncanny; particularly the idea of the homely harbouring its opposite, and it is surprising that he did not explicitly discuss the uncanny by name here. This could have developed further the idea of both self and other being contained within the same space, of the subject being constituted by both “me”/”not me”, inside and outside, a dis-unified subject, or as Hutchings implies, of the known world as alien (ibid: 38). These possibilities are discussed later in this thesis to fill the gap in the literature, using Jackson and Royle as discussed above.
Critics also highlight themes that invite association with disruption of borders and, by extension, hybridity. Landy reads notions of the loss of ‘all of the recognisable boundaries on which social life depends’ in the mutating figure of Caroon in *The Quatermass Experiment* (1991: 411). Horror derives from the disintegration of defining structures and boundaries and the ‘breakdown of the process of signification’ dramatised through Caroon’s physical change in to an amorphous mass and his loss of speech (ibid: 411). This provides opportunities to consider what comprises meaning and identity, and how the Quatermass films map their de-construction. This is situated within discussion of the subject within signification, the loss of self and the fantastic as outlined by Jackson.

The process by which the monstrous survives and perpetuates suggests fear of undifferentiation and this links to Hutchings’ comments that the aliens are ‘often associated with a contaminating dirtiness’ that provokes ‘disgust and revulsion’, suggesting a tainting that connects alien invasion to viral infection and to the ‘messy eruption of biological processes’ (1999: 41). This has associations with the uncanny in that there is a sense of the unknown and unknowable. The idea of being threatened by an unfamiliar menace beyond present understanding can be used to explore the difficulty faced by representatives of the human race attempting to make sense of and meet the threat. The conventional means of retaliating and defeating an enemy seem inadequate and, as Hutchings proposes in relation to *The War of The Worlds* (HG Wells, 1898), in fact prompt the return of the gaze directed at the aliens back towards Earth and humanity (1999, 39). This can be read, as Hutchings implies, as a redirection of a colonial gaze in the post-colonial moment, in a cultural context that requires a new definition of the nation and its external relations. This provides useful frameworks for considering the Quatermass narratives to link the uncanny to political and social concerns, exposing a
weakness and vulnerability normally kept concealed within dominant ideology, which, when undermined, reveals fissures and interrupts hegemonic processes.

Landy refers to the dialectic within the film between conventional thought and scientific practices, noting that ‘traditional values do not seem powerful enough to intervene and control the changes’, and familiar methods of countering the threatening menace are ineffective (1991: 411). Hutchings also explores this notion in reference to the more successful use of advanced technology in the search for a means of understanding the menace, indicating how this implies that a ‘new way of seeing is required’ (1999: 37). This study explores the dramatisation in the films of the tension between tradition and modernity, through technology, science and ideology.

The relation between the film texts and their social, cultural and political contexts has also been considered by the literature, with some specific connections made between this and notions of a British specificity for the narratives. Rolinson and Cooper state how, for Kneale, the Quatermass stories were ‘extrapolations from the present’ and, while they outline the political situation and how some aspects are explored in the texts (2002: 159), there is space to consider, as this thesis does, how discourses of nostalgia and myth are presented in the texts. They also briefly refer to the texts exploring the ‘emergence of Cold War complexities from the rubble of the morally polarised Second World War’ (ibid: 160); again, this is further explored in this thesis through looking at myth and how definitions of national identity, and cultural memory, are constructed and played back. How can ideas of national unity, be seen in the films and could the narratives be seen to critique these concepts? Hutchings states that the ‘central metaphor of invasion’ carries different connotations in Britain, a notion that can be related to colonialism and the post-
war status of Britain (1993: 41). What can be added to the reading of the changing international political image of Britain in the films is a focus on hybridity. How, then, do concerns over “nation” and identity dovetail with hybridity? How can the hybrid be used in understanding these questions and could there be a questioning, within the films, of conventional notions of identity?
Chapter Two: Quatermass Adaptation

Introduction

This chapter will critically address the adaptation process of the Quatermass narratives within their historical and cultural contexts of production with a greater emphasis on the adaptation of *The Quatermass Experiment* rather than *Quatermass II*. The reason for this emphasis is that there is more material in the BBC archives at Caversham on the adaptation of the first series and far less on the second one, which indicates that the process of negotiation and adaptation was more straightforward for *Quatermass II*; Sue Harper and Vincent Porter state that Hammer acquired the rights to *Quatermass II* more quickly, which suggests that this was the case (2003: 145). Following Chapman et al (2006: 6-9) my critical approach will be cultural historical, focusing on film history informed by selected theories and concepts and making extensive use of primary sources and archive material. The main emphasis is on the details of the process of adaptation from television series to film, which includes critically assessing the original series, the BBC and its relations with Hammer, the negotiation of the rights, the resulting changes and how the films were received on their release.

This chapter in particular makes use of archive material from the BFI Library and the BBC Written Archives Centre. My research at these sites includes production files and correspondence, BBC audience research, reviews and articles, press books, and promotional materials. Through using these sources I have sought to map the adaptation and production contexts of the Quatermass films, including institutional and economic factors, in order to address the research questions set out in chapter one. These factors include negotiating the rights, the screenplay and filming, and the marketing and publicity of the films. This process has enabled me to critically assess the circumstances
of the production context of the films and to therefore interrogate the discourses around Hammer and the adaptations. Attitudes within the BBC towards both popular film and Hammer are illustrated through correspondence, which also shows the working practices and role of the corporation.

The archive sources also enable critical assessment, then, of prevailing discourses within the BBC and towards Hammer. Evaluation of Hammer’s publicity material for the films helps to illuminate the intentions behind the choices that the company made over the film, and helps to make sense of those changes and see them in context; helping to move away from the fidelity discourse of adaptation. How the films were seen in terms of their generic identity and their relationship to ideas around “nation” and national cinema can be seen through publicity material, press reviews and articles, and links with the main research questions of this thesis; how were the films regarded on their release? How might the content of the publicity material used by Hammer chime with the themes of this thesis, such as hybridity, the uncanny and the presence of horror within the everyday? This archive material helps to understand the production contexts, therefore, of the films.

This study does not discuss whether the television or film versions of Quatermass are more effective than the other or suggest what has been “lost” in the transition from one medium to the other. The use of fidelity criticism, while a ‘pervasive’ discourse in adaptation studies according to Brian MacFarlane (1996: 8), is avoided in this study, as it has many limitations, as outlined by MacFarlane (1996) and Imelda Welehan (1999). Fidelity discourses are a ‘doomed enterprise’, to quote MacFarlane (1996: 9) because, as Welehan stresses, a lack of fidelity to the original source will result inevitably from the
adaptation process and the transformation from one medium to another (1999: 7). Although Welehan refers to text to screen adaptation here, the difference in form between television series and film means the observation is applicable in this instance. Adaptation itself carries an inherent hybridity through the blending of sources and ‘convergence of the arts’ (MacFarlane, 1996: 10); Welehan remarks on how adaptation criticism has been referred to as a ‘hybrid study’ itself, which suggests an affinity with the themes of this thesis (1999: 3).

Critical assessment of the adaptation process links to the key themes of the project, hybridity and critical neglect, in various ways. Analysis of the negotiation process between the BBC and Exclusive Films Ltd/Hammer, and the critical reception of the films on their release, indicates contemporaneous attitudes and discourses towards horror and British film further to the discussion in the previous chapter. Assessment of the changes to the Quatermass narratives and the reasons for them allows discussion of the hybrid nature of the films’ American/British production context of financing and personnel. Further, the hybrid nature of the television/film adapted narrative chimes with both the aforementioned production context, as well as key aspects of the story’s fantastic narrative. In particular, hybridity is embodied within the figure of Caroon himself as he transforms from human to part man-part something “Other”.

This study also develops and contributes to the present literature on adaptation, which is largely focused on written text to screen (Mac Farlane, 1996, Cartmell and Welehan, 1999, Jakob Lothe, 2000). The main focus of the Cartmell and Welehan edited collection is on text to screen rather than from one screen to another, as it ‘picks up on an interest in the process of adaptation from text to screen’ (1999: 3). Consequently, much of the
discussion in the texts is specific to the text to screen process, including transference of
destination methods and modes of narration from page to screen (MacFarlane: 13-17),
differences between literary and filmic narration and the specificity of film language
(Lothe: 27-30). There are some compatible areas. As part of a critique of fidelity
discourse, Welehan considers the problematic view that characters from a novel undergo
a “simplification” process in the adaptation from text to screen (1999: 6). Similar
comments have been made about Quatermass, as highlighted in this study. MacFarlane
specifies what the fidelity discourse leaves out, namely the production elements (1996:
10). As MacFarlane goes on to outline, there are other determinants in the shaping of a
film, such as working conditions within the industry, the prevailing cultural and social
climate, and studio house style (ibid: 21). These areas are precisely the production and
cultural contexts that this study engages directly with.

The production context and scheduling of the respective Quatermass productions were
markedly different. The BBC television series *The Quatermass Experiment* was filmed
and broadcast between July and August 1953 and the *The Quatermass Experiment*, the
film Hammer produced based on the original programme, was filmed October to
December 1954 and released in the United Kingdom in August 1955. The second series,
*Quatermass II*, was filmed and broadcast October to November 1955, filmed by Hammer
the following year and released in 1957. Inevitably due to the compression of the
narrative from six weekly half-hour episodes into feature length format and to the nature
of the differences between television and film production and exhibition, changes were
made to the original narrative. Scenes were conflated or cut and characters similarly
altered as part of the adaptation process. The contrasting shooting methods and
approaches to editing of television and film also impacted on the adaptation process. The narrative was therefore shaped by form and material conditions.

The Beginning – Television Series

The series was written by Kneale at the BBC, who was asked to fill a programming slot in the summer schedule. 1953 was part of a period of social and technological changes, with the televised coronation of Queen Elizabeth II a significant event (Norman Davies, 1999: 783) very much in the public mind and the beginnings of space exploration with the initial space tests by the Americans using V2 rockets. This was, of course, before manned flights and there would have been considerable speculation as to what might be “out there” beyond the Earth’s atmosphere in outer space. The amount of science fiction narratives in film and television during the 1950s and 1960s from both sides of the Atlantic, from the Quatermass films through The Thing (Christian Nyby, 1951), The Day The Earth Stood Still (Robert Wise, 1951) to The Twilight Zone (CBS, 1959-64) and The Outer Limits (ABC, 1963-65) bears testament to this interest.

It is worth noting that Kneale himself was not a fan of the science fiction genre and that while it used ideas associated with the fantastic, ‘the piece was very much presented as a standard Saturday night thriller’ with the episode titles made to sound like ‘official or police procedures’. (Pixley: 8) This clearly indicates how Kneale was interested in combining the ordinary with the extraordinary, the mundane with the threatening. Settings were familiar, quotidian, with locations suggesting specific landmarks such as Westminster Abbey, which could create fear more strongly through their sense of being known and invaded by a mutating and threatening outside force. The mingling of contrasting elements suggests the blurring of boundaries associated with the fantastic.
The more sober treatment of the fantastic indicates the BBC’s remit in providing more serious entertainment, through the focus on the everyday. This is emphasised through the use of features like captions, which evoke the television thriller or the documentary. The restrained treatment of the fantastic and the prevalence of a sober discourse within the BBC as part of the ideology of public service broadcasting derived from its first Director-General, John Reith, is well documented (Chapman, 2002: 2, Jacobs, 2000: 18-19, Wheatley, 2006: 28-29). As we shall see, this long-lasting (Chapman, 2002: 2) Reithian principle came to inform attitudes towards genre film and Hammer itself, and sat uneasily with some of the products produced by the BBC (Jacobs, 2000: 19).

Kneale wanted to break the mould of television production at that time, as he ‘desperately wanted to do something different, something fast-moving and adventurous’ (Rolinson and Cooper, 2002: 159). In an interview with Paul Wells, Kneale discusses the approaches to writing television drama, which was bound up in aesthetic practices of stage and radio (1999: 49). The medium, it seems, was yet to fully define itself and the programme was to have a profound effect on television, with its legacy in evidence in a range of productions, from subsequent sequels to the Doctor Who (BBC, 1963-89; 2005-present) cycles. Kneale was also keen to differentiate the Quatermass narratives from the American science fiction as seen in Hollywood genre films, which informs the way science fiction and horror elements of the narrative are infused with the Gothic and the uncanny through the way that the fantastic is interpreted. In the Wells interview, Kneale refers to ‘those horrible people in those awful American science fiction films, chewing gum’ and ‘all the flag-waving you got in those films’, clearly showing a disdain for Hollywood popular genre films (ibid: 50). He does, however, indicate a liking for large screen aesthetics and that he wanted the series to have a filmic quality, suggesting a more
complex attitude towards cinema (ibid: 49). The series was further differentiated by the fact that it was the first original science fiction drama produced by the BBC, the previous ones being adaptations from other media. *The Quatermass Experiment* ‘painted a frighteningly plausible scenario’ for the British public who were ‘as yet untouched by the sobering effects of Suez’ and not aware of the UK’s lower status in the development of rocket research, as Hearn states (1995: 17). The series, then, mined the earliest strains of a vein of public consciousness that would be more present within the popular imagination around the time of the later film versions. The immediate impact, however, of the first series was significant and, at a time of single channel viewing, held widespread popular appeal. Hearn states that it was the first television drama ‘to genuinely grip the country’ (ibid).

*The Quatermass Experiment* was transmitted between July 18th and August 22nd, 1953. During initial writing and planning stages it was titled “Bring Something Back”, a reference to a comment, on a Wardrobe, Hair and Make-Up Requirements form from director Rudolph Cartier (Internal memo, 25th June 1953). The title refers to the idea of contamination while echoing farewell partings to the doomed astronauts of the rocket programme. The name was finalised soon after; Cartier sought permission via letter to film in St. James’s Park on 2nd July, giving the name of the programme now as “The Quatermass Experiment” (Letter to J. C. Dodds, 26th June 1953). He describes the planned scene for filming as being three or four people walking and ‘making conversation’ with ‘no ‘fight’ or ‘chase’ sequences or any other spectacles involved’ (Ibid). Clearly there are efforts here to stress lack of disruption and inconvenience to the authorities with a sense of propriety. The BBC does not want to appear sensational and distances itself from notions of thriller or action, through, for instance, the use of inverted
commas; almost as if there is disapproval of more potentially lurid elements of drama. This could also be indicative of a wider attitude at the BBC towards sensational material and genre film. Further, it suggests the pervasiveness of the realist discourse referred to above and a discourse of restraint.

Helen Wheatley (2006) identifies this avoidance of the sensational in her discussion of gothic and supernatural television. Wheatley notes an interest in fantastic narratives in television production during the late 1940s and in to the 1950s, citing Jason Jacobs’ analysis (2000) of early British television drama. Wheatley addresses the problem this presented the BBC with (2006: 29). Ultimately, fantastic narratives would be broadcast as part of the evening transmission with a warning that the material may be unsuitable for children. Wheatley continues to identify and discuss the anxiety of the BBC concerning the Gothic and the supernatural, material that may cause alarm, especially during the historical moment of the post-war years of the late 1940s and early 1950s. The prevailing attitude within the BBC at this time was that the viewer ‘might be ‘at risk’ from and upset, by inadvertently stumbling across horror and the supernatural during the course of an evening’s viewing’ (ibid: 30). The sentiment that the public needed protection dovetailed with a perceived need to ‘rehabilitate the country’, held within the BBC and can be seen as part of a ‘Reithian conception of the corporation as a benevolent public nanny’ (ibid). The BBC, then, regarded itself as a moral guardian or a parental figure, one that knows what is best for the population, especially those in the provinces, who, as Wheatley notes, were not considered by its top ranking figures as possessing the sophistication necessary to be able to deal with what they might perhaps see (ibid: 31). Clearly, the Gothic and supernatural were an issue for the BBC and their ambivalence, as we shall see, influenced the marketing of their programmes. Derek Johnston makes
similar observations about the BBC and science fiction television, which was not labelled as such and situated within a debate around “high” and “popular” culture (2011: 41-43). How then, could the fantastic be produced on television in such a way that did not violate the BBC’s ideology and remit? Basil Nichols, Director of Home Broadcasting, advocated ‘an aesthetic of suggestive restraint’ in his invocation of the notion of ‘good taste’ (Wheatley, 2006: 32). As Wheatley states, this shaped the corporation’s handling of gothic and supernatural subjects for a considerable length of time, as illustrated by the restraint of the 1968 adaptation of M.R. James’ *Oh Whistle and I’ll Come to You, My Lad* (ibid: 42).

Despite the small budget, the series was effective and a BBC Viewer Research Report for episode six, the final instalment, notes the largely favourable responses although there are some dissenting voices and remarks that are significant and telling in terms of the playing out of the narrative’s finale and when seen in relation to the ending in the film and the comments on it in reviews. The report states that viewers ‘in the main, approved of ‘The Quatermass Experiment’ and considered it a most unusual, exciting and ingenious serial’ (2nd September, 1953). This summary is then supported by comments listed from those who responded to the survey, listed according to their profession, which in itself provides insight into society at that time. Respondents appear to see the series as a whole positively, with one (a joiner) commenting that it was overall ‘very good with the right amount of suspense every week’ (ibid) but that the final episode weakened the overall impression. This reaction is echoed by a radio technician who felt ‘it could have been a terrific thriller’ (ibid) but there was too much unclear dialogue with little explanation and that ‘it was all a deep secret between the scientists’ (ibid). A clerk notes, in reference to the previous episodes, that the ‘first five built up a terrific excitement but
Episode six went off like a wet firework’ (ibid). The report notes that the final episode gave the impression of having been improvised; put together at the last minute to replace material that had been censored. Interestingly, the various respondents do not dwell on the science-fiction and horror aspects of the series; as noted above it is referred to as a “thriller”, which appears to relocate the narrative’s genre away from what might be expected.

This classification corresponds to the characteristic of ordinariness and the focus on the quotidian; the makers of the programme echo this in a Caption Requirements form in which Cartier requests that the roller caption should include, after the title, ‘A Thriller for television in Six Parts by Nigel Kneale’. The generic identity thus chosen for the series is in line with the restrained approach of the BBC, then, as commented on by Johnston (2011: 44). This is partly from the institutional context but also in keeping with Kneale’s intention to critique American science fiction (ibid). For Johnston, ambivalence towards science fiction was part of a perspective that saw the introduction of American culture in Britain as ‘signs of a growing encroachment of American values on to British ones’ (ibid). The handling of the series can be seen within this context. It is also significant that, as identified by Harper and Porter, Hammer’s films were not of the type that Reith wanted to encourage, an ideological position that was held by others at the BBC, as we shall see (2004: 138). If American influence was seen by some in a negative light and Hammer, with their American partners and B-movies, was regarded as problematic by the Corporation, how might their proposal to buy the rights to the first Quatermas series and adapt it be regarded and responded to?
Enter Hammer

Hammer were quick to notice the series and to put in an offer to the BBC for the rights to produce a film version. Hammer producer Anthony Hinds saw the first episode, suggested managing director James Carerras watch the second, and Carerras expressed interest in adapting it to film. The film company approached the BBC for the film rights in August 1953. According to Mike Murphy, ‘Hammer were already on good terms with the BBC and a deal was eventually signed whereby Hammer and the BBC would take a 50/50 share in any profits’, which rather elides some of the protracted negotiations and changes of mind (1994: 20). The background of Hammer and its relations with the BBC are significant, as these aspects inform the context of the negotiations, how the company, their films, and British film in general was viewed by the corporation, and suggests how these might have impacted on subsequent discourses.

Hammer and its distribution arm, Exclusive, had been adapting BBC radio serials for the cinema; these programmes were useful material and made solid commercial sense as they were known products, in the public mind, and more guarantee of an audience. The economic imperative is a discourse that informs the final film versions of the Quatermass narratives. This was a continuation of long-standing industrial practice and, as Murphy indicates it is later, with hindsight, that The Quatermass Experiment can be seen as the start of a cycle for the company ‘as during production it was merely considered just another feature with guaranteed modest success’ (1994: 21). Whatever the case, the Quatermass films form part of the narrative of Hammer’s transition from production of low budget B-features at the start of the 1950s to profitable majors towards its end, as indicated by Harper and Porter (2003: 137). Hammer was, in effect, a family firm with continuity of personnel and a proactive, involved approach from producer Hinds (ibid).
Continuity of personnel would be likely to produce stability on set and in production, helping to engender a house style that could bring financial rewards through familiarity and dependability of product. This would help marketing and ensure distribution. This dependability would have been helped by owner James Carreras choosing pre-existing texts as material for films, ‘which had been popular on the radio and were, in a sense, already pre-sold’ (ibid). Financial outlay was further reduced through recycling of resources. Hammer’s sound business practice would be attractive to potential investors. As outlined previously, Hammer needed access to international markets, hence the American co-production deal. The films produced as part of this deal and aimed at the American market showed a difference in treatment of certain themes, like social class, and different means of creating dramatic tension; they were ‘markedly different’ from the domestic market (ibid: 141).

The hybrid nature of the Hammer co-productions as indicated by Harper and Porter is characterised by difference to domestic products, then, which suggests an intrinsic hybridity manifest within the Quatermass films; Hammer, already producing B-features that departed from others in the period (ibid: 137), became further differentiated. The 1950s co-productions, for Harper and Porter, quote and recycle the themes of American noir, but the films display, through hasty denouements, a sense of unease with the form and its structures (2003: 143). It is as if the films are a less than successful attempt at looking American, which might produce a hybrid form that causes unease with critics who might look to Hollywood films as the more effective, “genuine” product. This critical attitude will be seen as informing the BBC’s attitude towards Hammer, who in the 1940s held ‘minimal status’ critically (ibid: 137). The BBC also seemed reluctant to sell to Hammer, as evidenced by the archive material and Harper and Porter’s comments.
discussed below (ibid: 144). Just as economic factors comprise one discourse informing
the adaptation of Quatermass, another is the original institution from which the source
derived. What, then, was the working relationship between the BBC and Hammer and
how can critical assessment of it inform discussion of Hammer’s intervention and role in
the Quatermass story?

The BBC and Hammer

Hammer had been purchasing popular radio and television programmes from the BBC
for adaptation to film since the early-mid 1940s, such as the Dick Barton serials. As
Howard Maxford refers to them, these were ‘small-to-large-scale transfers’ (2004: 64).
While the relationship between the BBC and Hammer was appropriate and professional,
with clear, due negotiation processes, it seems that Hammer’s filmic output and operating
manner was not always viewed favourably by the BBC; memos and correspondence
within and from the BBC suggest a certain disapproval. For instance, an early memo in
1950 from G. del Strother, Film Bookings Manager, comments on Exclusive, saying how
Carerras has said to have purchased a story of a bullion raid (title not specified). Of
Exclusive themselves, del Strother remarks that ‘this is the company that is getting rich
quick by cheaply filming BBC stories and cashing in on their publicity value. I hope the
firm had to pay a good price for this story’ (Internal memo, 17th March, 1950). This
statement views standard commercial practice, paying less and filming on a budget to
make a profit and using a known product, with disapproval, with the final comment being
particularly arch and indicative of the overall sentiment. It is as if the BBC harbours a
mistrust of popular mass consumer culture while forgetting their own (reluctant,
perhaps), part within it.
Throughout the early to mid 1950s there are numerous examples of films produced by Hammer being offered for sale to the BBC for transmission on television, showing the passage of products in the other direction. The BBC’s response to the batch from 1952 in the viewing notes is interesting in itself for indicating how Hammer’s films and British films in general were viewed by the BBC. River Patrol is called ‘a dreadful little thing’, while Who Killed Van Loon? is condemned with the comment that it is ‘very cheaply made, and looks it’, adding that ‘[E]ven the projectionist didn’t care who killed van Loon’. Death in High Heels, meanwhile, is a ‘quite unbelievably bad British quota film’ (E.D.B., 15th April 1952). None of the batch are recommended for purchase, with del Strother responding that they cannot make an offer on any of the films viewed (30th April, 1952).

The productions of the company are seen as generally poor it seems, and British film appears in a sorry state according to the BBC; a later response from Freda Lingstrom, Head of Children’s Programme Television, to an offer in 1956 of Dick Turpin (David Paltenghi, 1956), calls the film ‘coloured corn’ (Internal memo, 16th March, 1956). Lingstrom sees the film as indicative of supporting features in cinema, identifying the writing, script and pace as particularly faulty as well as ‘the glamorisation of robbery and violence and other doubtful situations’, the tone of her comment suggesting censorious disapproval of the rather “racy” or sensational material that might be found on the cinema screen but not television (ibid). However, her final remark indicates a reluctant preference for American film ‘[I]t is sad to reflect that Hollywood would have made a better job of it’ and that it “would be no match for Robin Hood” (ibid). Hollywood is seen then, as superior in some way, or at least more competent than British productions,

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7 The titles indicate the B-feature nature of the material produced; Who Killed Van Loon? (Gordon Kyle, 1948), River Patrol (Ben Hart, 1948), Death in High Heels (Lionel Tomlinson, 1947).
which, as will be seen, was a feeling shared by some critics at the time (who were cheered by the success of what they saw as a “British” film) and, perhaps, by the viewing public.

Negotiation and Adaptation

The narrative of the negotiation process is interesting for this study because it further implies the attitudes towards Hammer of the BBC and their seeming reluctance to sell the series to them. The negotiations for the rights to *The Quatermass Experiment* took several months; from late August 1953 to April 1954, when Turnell informed Carerras that the corporation had decided to accept the offer. It took a further four months for the agreement to be fully agreed, signed and witnessed on 5th August 1954, almost a full year after the programme was originally aired. During autumn and winter 1953 to 1954 several companies expressed interest and negotiated with the BBC, which itself sent out enquiries to other film companies to see if they were interested in making an offer. Hearn notes that Kneale remarked that the BBC were ‘tarting it about for any sales they could get’, (1995: 17) which clearly expresses his unhappiness towards the whole process; the BBC, not Kneale, held the copyright and the writer felt excluded from the negotiations. Kneale’s comment shows disapproval of the commercial interest of the BBC and the fact that they wanted to make money out of the sale of the rights. This is shown within one of the correspondences to the agents acting on behalf of Launder-Gilliat, one of the film companies who held a more sustained interest in buying the rights, when Turnell informs them that ‘while financial considerations were not of paramount importance, we liked to obtain as much money as possible when we disposed of rights in BBC material’ and that they had received a better offer from elsewhere (Correspondence, 29th September 1953).
It seems that the BBC were doing two things here; financial negotiations and bartering with the various interested parties while also “offering” the rights to others in a superficially altruistic gesture of ensuring all potential buyers had the chance to declare interest. Besides the interest by Hammer/Exclusive and Launder-Gilliat, 20th Century Fox and MGM were also involved for a short time but no offers were made by them. The BBC kept the main parties waiting, informing Hammer in October that they were prepared to consider their offer but had received them from other companies and they were unable to make a quick decision. They also contacted Launder-Gilliat’s agents in November to see if their offer to the BBC could be made ‘more favourable’ (13th November, 1953); internal memos between BBC departments at that time commented that they were pressing for a decision but the size of the offer did not warrant this, adding that Exclusive/Hammer ‘had a better and more definite offer’ (W. L. Shelton, 17th November, 1953). The BBC then decided to contact other British companies to see if they wanted to make an offer, approaching Ealing, London Films Ltd., Adelphi Films Ltd. and J. Arthur Rank, none of whom were prepared to make an offer.

It is tempting to speculate that the BBC were avoiding selling the series to Hammer; perhaps they wanted someone more “reputable” to handle it but also wanted to obtain favourable return; a slightly uncomfortable combination of cultural snobbery and commercial endeavour. This reading complies with comments by Harper and Porter, who state that the BBC did not want to sell the series to Hammer initially because of its B-movie reputation (2003: 144). Further, Harper and Porter maintain that Hammer’s ‘American connections were suspect with the élite at the BBC, who favoured the other companies tendering for Quatermass’ (ibid). There was, then, an ideology that saw
popular cultural form as problematic and this informs the contexts of the adaptation of
the series and the critical reception of the films.

The negotiation process was complicated somewhat when Hinds withdrew Hammer’s
offer in December 1953, stating that the expected production dates had to be filled; the
scripts were then returned. This was noted by the BBC on an internal memo listing the
various interested companies at that time plus the ones the Corporation had contacted
concerning the series and were waiting to hear a reply from. Across the offer listed for
Exclusive, (20% net receipts with guaranteed minimum payment of £2000) is a brief
handwritten note stating the withdrawal and directing attention to the letter from Hammer
(Memo, 9th December, 1953). However, several days later Hammer contacted the BBC
again (not Hinds or Carerras, but an R. Fitchett from the Story Department at Hammer)
stating that their American co-producers had expressed an interest (15th December,
1953). Initially the BBC were reluctant to send the scripts back as they were considering
offers from companies that might cover both British and American rights (Turnell, 21st
December, 1953). Carerras responded that the rights would cover the world and the offer
would be the same as the previous one, but it was not until mid January 1954 that, after
repeated requests from Carerras, the scripts were finally sent to Hammer by Turnell (29th
December, 1953). In March, Carerras contacted the BBC to confirm that Lippert were
‘prepared to go ahead on production’, asking to conclude a deal (10th March, 1954); in
the following month he became insistent, stating in one letter that Lippert had ‘sent one
of their top writers over here’, thereby attempting to apply pressure (5th April, 1954). The
BBC were still waiting to see if Launder-Gilliat would make a firm offer and even
considered ‘issuing some sort of ultimatum’ (Turnell to Shelton, 5th April 1954). It was
shortly after this that Laund-Gilliat withdrew, due to anxieties over the censor and the ‘X’ certificate that the resulting film would surely receive (13th April, 1954).

By late April the BBC had decided to accept Exclusive/Hammer’s offer (Turnell, 23rd April, 1954). As Turnell stated, the Corporation did not intend to give television broadcasts of the programme. Exclusive were given sole and exclusive rights to make a film based on the series and all such a product would entail, (the use of the title, script, advertising rights). However, the Agreement contained certain clauses that imply some caution on the part of the BBC. One stipulation that suggests anxiety over adaptation processes and the nature of the end result was that the ‘presentation of said film be of a standard equivalent to the standard of the Corporation’s television production’ of *The Quatermass Experiment* (Streeton, 9th August 1954). This clause suggests the discourse of sobriety and restraint that has been identified in this study as characteristic of the BBC, and also, in specifying how the film should be, chimes with the perception that there was a certain “business” of British film, that it should be situated within social realism. The fact that the Quatermass films play with this discourse, through framing the fantastic within social realism, is part of their, as Harper and Porter put it, unique quality, and is a strength (2003: 145).

As well as wanting to ensure a certain quality within the film and to be assured of this, the BBC also specified that scripts should be submitted to them prior to commencement of production so that objections could be raised and alterations made as necessary and to keep the Corporation ‘fully informed’ at each stage of the production process (ibid). This suggests a reluctance to fully relinquish hold over the material, as if Hammer cannot be trusted, which must have been a sentiment felt by Kneale, especially as he was not privy
to negotiations over the sale. He was, however, involved in a consultancy role of sorts, meeting with the director employed by Hammer, Val Guest, and scriptwriter Richard Landau, to represent the BBC viewpoint to them on language and procedures for the radio announcements in the narrative. In an internal memo, Kneale recounts how in a revised script, a very ‘un-BBC’ text of a radio broadcast had been written, with a lack of accuracy and without the appropriate tone – a measured, cautious one, judging from Kneale’s comments and amendments (20th September, 1954). Again, this evokes the sobriety, restraint and sense of the “proper” that has been identified with the BBC, aspects that might seem to sit uneasily with the fantastic.

The compression of the series into feature length film has been commented on in critical writing and reviews. Rolinson and Cooper refer to omissions and simplifications, which implies that the film was not as complete as the series and less sophisticated; more straightforward, perhaps functional. Criticising what they see as a clichéd science-fiction style opening, they state that ‘the television version has time to develop a sense of the ordinary from which the menace erupts’ (202: 159). It is true, as will be seen, that characterisation was altered and that the story was shortened, creating the need for these differences. The context of production and reception is important to bear in mind, though, as a six episode series establishes an expectation over narrative pacing that is specific to it; a film intended for theatrical exhibition has to provide a more definite arrival for the narrative and can create the sense of the ordinary from which the threat emerges, for instance, through screen aesthetics, more cinematically. Guest has intimated that Kneale’s writing style was more suited to television, acknowledging that while he was a ‘brilliant writer’ his work was ‘too verbose for the screen’ (Maxford, 2004: 66). This verdict chimes with some of the comments on the BBC Audience Survey on the
over-complicated nature of some of the writing. Accordingly, the finished script presented a considerably altered version of the narrative; Landau’s screenplay compressed three hours of television scripts to less than half the original running time, with a completed script of 150 pages. This was re-worked by Guest while the cast was assembled, including Brian Donlevy for the role of Quatermass (Hearn and Rigby, 2003: 9). This suggests that changes to Quatermass in Landau’s script were present before the casting of the part; while a certain amount of re-drafting was done to marry the screen persona of Donlevy to the role, no less his Americanisation, certain essential changes seem to be made to the personality and attitude of the role before he was cast. This has implications for this study as much of the dissenting voices directed towards the film version were concerning the changes to the role and the perception that this was solely due to casting choice, as if Donlevy and a perceived need to alter the character to suit him has been blamed for the changes.

Kneale’s own feelings about the resulting film may have contributed to discourses on the differences between the two versions and the reduction in the quality of the material once it had been rewritten for screen. In an interview with Adam Jezard, Guest expresses irritation with constantly being told of Kneale’s unhappiness with the film and asserts the need for scripts to be pared down to make them suitable for spectators ‘so they won’t go away yawning’ (1995: 9). Elsewhere, Guest remarks that Kneale felt ‘we had butchered his scripts’ but insists on the necessity for radical changes in the adaptation process (Maxford, 2004: 65). Critical views on release of the film and articles in film trade journals tend to support Guest and Hammer’s work, seeing the large screen as an appropriate place for the nature of the narrative and that the writing and direction is also fitting for it. A review in Today’s Cinema notes the existing market and interest in the
film in an article at the time of release, and favours the cinema as the proper place for fantastic narratives, suggesting that the big screen is more suited to horror and science fiction (D.R, August 23rd 1955: 8). The review notes the expansion of the narrative with added sequences and ‘a more spectacular ending in keeping with the superior large-scale potential of the cinema’ (ibid). In another edition of the same trade journal the writing foregrounds the sense of difference between television and cinema and their respective suitability in relation to the fantastic. For Today’s Cinema, television might seek to represent horror ‘within its limitations’ (August 22nd, 1955: 5). However, cinema is deemed to be the rightful place for fantasy and science fiction, arguing for cinema as opposed to television, with ‘the full-scale spectacular treatment that such subjects demand can only be given to them by the cinema’ (ibid) and cinema being able to reach a larger audience. While this is a partisan position, hardly surprising for a film industry trade paper, it is still significant that film as a medium and the cinema industry are promoted. It also helps give space for a critical re-assessment of the films. Despite the preference placed on writing for television by Kneale, and the implied cultural snobbery towards the commercial aspect of genre cinema, a substantial proportion of popular criticism praises cinema for its suitability for the fantastic and exhibition capacity.

The Actual Adapation

What, then, were the changes to the script made in the adaptation process from television to cinema screen? How did the working practices of a company like Hammer influence and change the BBC narratives; what happens when a commercial company takes on a property like The Quatermass Experiment? What might the changes suggest about the intentions and priorities of the filmmakers? As indicated above, comment exists within present literature on specific changes in the final film so this is briefly addressed here,
with a consideration of the stages of the adaptation through analysis of Landau’s script. There is discussion of how Guest planned to convey the fantastic nature of the Quatermass story as situated within social realism and the particular aesthetics employed to suggest impending threat and menace; aspects which are expanded on subsequently in discussion of the Gothic and the uncanny. The focus is then on comparative analysis of the television and film versions of The Quatermass Experiment, and later in the chapter, of Quatermass II; how do they differ in their treatment of the key themes of this thesis, hybridity and national identity? There is discussion and analysis of key areas of difference between the two versions, using particular moments in the surviving episodes and the scripts of the BBC serial. There is less detail on the film version as a whole as this is discussed in depth in subsequent chapters.

The version of the script written by Landau before Guest reworked sections of it and certain changes had to be made following submission to the BBFC gives an insight in to how the narrative mutated from the television to cinema screen version. Most of the changes to Landau’s version concern the first scenes and the abduction of Caroon from the hospital; the former for narrative expediency and the latter due to the BBFC objections (Kinsey, 2002: 33/34). The opening of both original screenplay and final film is the crash landing of the rocket; dialogue concerning the venture and its risks and implications moved from the opening episode of the series to the scene outside the rocket when the interested parties gather for the emergence of Caroon. This makes narrative sense in terms of the interest of the spectator and what would be anticipated from feature length film, with the expositional episode radically edited; it could be argued that there is a difference in aesthetics between the two media and criticism of the film does not consider this, although some trade papers at the time of production and release did so.
Landau’s screenplay version is considerably longer in the opening sequence, with more characters and a montage of shots showing reactions to the crash and speculation in the nearby village. These draw on contemporaneous fears of the atom bomb, flying saucers and invasion, with a “gung-ho” spirit in evidence. Some of this chimes with the original ideas of Kneale concerning technology and notions of space exploration. Further, it can be seen as a form of London Blitz stoicism; the American screenwriters establishing British cultural specificity at this stage. This evocation of the Blitz is an aspect of 1950s and 1960s British science fiction mentioned by scholars, such as I. Q. Hunter (1999: 105). Although this part of the script was edited out during re-writing, it chimes with the later images in the completed film of the threatened Abbey and power turned off in parts of London. The recognisable images evoke the notion of the heart of the nation at threat from the “Other”.

In Landau’s script Quatermass is still British and Briscoe, the medical scientist who works alongside him, American, although of course in the screened film this is reversed; presumably to match Donlevy’s national identity after casting. The character changes in that respect although it was common practice to write American characters in to films during the 1950s and 1960s to help marketing, not just in the United States but in the United Kingdom also. Examples of this practice, often in British/American co-productions, would be Richard Widmark in Night and the City (Jules Dassin, 1950), Forrest Tucker in The Abominable Snowman (Val Guest, 1957), MacDonald Carey in The Damned (Joseph Losey, 1961) and Bette Davis in The Anniversary (Roy Ward Baker, 1967). The conversation between Quatermass and his colleagues does seem more thoughtful, admittedly, than the screen persona of Donlevy, although he is still a strong figure at this point, stating that if the men are dead they will be seen as heroes, while
shrugging. He is noted as ‘unemotional’ when referring to Caroon, saying that the astronaut should never have got married. Quatermass is also brief and snappy when confronting Lomax later in the screenplay, which is similar to the onscreen playing of the role. The changes to the character from series to film predate the casting of the role. The brusqueness and bullishness is present within the character as written, prior to the casting of Quatermass and his subsequent Americanisation. The fundamental aspects of character are in the script prior to Donlevy’s casting. The abrupt, offhand manner Quatermass has indicates that the playing of the role by Donlevy as ‘brash’ (Rolinson and Cooper, 2002: 159) is not solely down to misunderstanding or lack of subtlety of the actor. Other parts of the screenplay are very similar to the completed film, such as the investigation and search for Caroon-as-monster and the Regents Parts Zoo sequence, or they might take longer, such as the comic scene in the police station with Gertie, played by Thora Hird in the film as Rosie. Involvement in the film, then, came from both American and British practitioners and performers as producers, financiers and actors.

What were the key differences, then, between the BBC television serial and the Hammer film versions of *The Quatermass Experiment*? There are similarities between the two, of course, for instance a self-reflexivity that has been discussed in the literature (Hutchings, 1993: 44, and 1999: 36). Examples of this self-reflexivity include the interrupted television programme filmed at Westminster Abbey, when it becomes clear that the mutation that was once Caroon is there. Other elements that remain are expositional dialogue and the fractious relationship between Quatermass and government ministries, although these are both conflated and shortened, or they are situated in different parts of the narrative. The alterations indicate the priorities of the filmmakers, one of these being the shortening of a six thirty-minute episode script down to feature film length; the
decisions over what remains and how material is changed are of particular interest, as well as how each version might differ in its approach to hybridity and national identity.

The most notable change from the first episode of *The Quatermass Experiment* to the film is the swifter narrative pace of the film and the placing in the plot of the rocket crash. After the opening narration of the first episode ‘Contact Has Been Established’, the action takes place at the British Experimental Rocket Group headquarters, where Quatermass (Reginald Tate) and his colleagues are attempting to make contact with the rocket as it re-enters the Earth’s atmosphere. The rocket crash occurs off-screen and in a different location, almost fourteen minutes in to the episode; in the television version it is relayed by dialogue before the scene cuts to the aftermath of the crash, in an urban setting. In the film, however, the crash occurs immediately and, when it happens, its exact nature and cause is unknown to the spectator. The disruptive impact of the rocket is visualised before it lands, in the high winds and sense of panic of the characters. The change in the way the crash is dramatised indicates the emphasis of the filmmakers on suspense and action in a narrative with a necessarily faster pace; a sense of questioning and enquiry within the spectator as the exposition is withheld. The film seeks the attention of the spectator through spectacle and establishing an enigma to be solved.

The expositional dialogue comes later in the film, through discussions between Quatermass, his colleague and a government minister, while on their way to the crash site, in an exchange that also establishes the fractious relationship between Quatermass and government ministries. The television episode has the expositional dialogue, which focuses on the scientific opportunities, calculation and risk involved in the project, prior to the off-screen crash. The dialogue and action within the Rocket Group Centre provides
specific detail and helps to ground the fantastic narrative within the everyday. As Marcus Hearn observes, Kneale drew on the ‘possibilities the science of the day suggested’, with the narratives rooted within “the real” (1995: 17). The rooting of the narrative within the recognisable is important for creating a sense of the disruption to the everyday and has more impact, arguably, because of this. In the film version, with less room for expansive exposition and dialogue, but more access to real locations which can assist in helping to establish verisimilitude, the director Val Guest focused on cinematic techniques available to provide a realist aesthetic. Guest wanted the film to have a documentary feel, to have the aesthetic of a ‘factual film’ as if it was a Panorama feature, with a style reminiscent of a newsreel (Maxford, 2004: 66). The cinematography in the film version used hand-held cameras ‘more than usual’ to help establish an aesthetic of immediacy, of the “now” (Murphy, 1994: 21). The restrained acting style of actors like Richard Wordsworth, who played Victor Caroon in the film, complements and contributes to the realist aesthetic of the text, discussed below in this chapter, and provide a sense of continuity with the television version in the sense that they are playing recognisable character types and, in some cases discussed below, are established British actors.

As well as a sense of realism, the first episode brings in a ‘real human interest’ through character detail (Kneale in Wells, 1999: 50). This human interest is partly through the more prominent role given to Judith Caroon (Isabel Dean), who works as part of the Rocket Group and is central in the dialogue in the episode and remains in the script, appearing in the final episode. Mrs Caroon is a more substantial, complex figure, the problems in her relationship with Victor Caroon (Duncan Lamont) revealed in the second episode ‘Persons Reported Missing’. Her feelings for her husband are complicated further by her relationship with Dr Briscoe (John Glen). The character of Judith Caroon
is significantly reduced in the film version, with barely any of the above complexities, although her role was drawn on extensively in the advertising campaigns for the film discussed below.

The six episode half hour serial format does, of course, allow more space to develop the characters and include more of a range of character types, which are necessarily removed or conflated in the film versions, or reduced, as with the example mentioned above of Mrs Caroon. Other examples of characters that do not appear in the film include the journalist James Fullalove (Paul Whitsun-Jones), whose insistent search for answers arguably represents the questioning of the spectator. The scene at the aftermath of the crash provides opportunity for diversion from the main narrative, with idiosyncratic characters and social types such as the policeman (Neil Wilson). The role of Miss Wilde (Katie Johnson), pre-occupied with trying to find her lost cat, is one that especially brings a humour and, like the other characters, a British working-class identity to the screen.

The interaction between these various characters, and the journalists, other members of the public and even a Reveller (Denis Wyndham), brings colour and variety to the story and contrasts with the previous expositional scene. This wider range of characters also helps provide an increased number of potential identification figures for the spectator. It is interesting that in both television and film versions, although the main characters are of a middle-class and professional background, the presence of working-class characters as part of the fabric of the narrative offers a view of British national identity that addresses a level of difference. Although necessarily reduced, the film version still retains something of the wealth of characters, for example through the Chemist (Toke Townley), the young girl (Jane Asher), the staff at the zoo and members of the police force and fire brigade.

Although the casting and characters of the film are discussed in more detail later in this
chapter and in subsequent ones, one notable character of working-class origin in terms of both character and casting was Lomax (Jack Warner). His role brought an East London working class identity to the film, and a matter-of-factness that might be popularly associated with notions of national character, as discussed in the next chapter.

The use of a range of characters, the detail that helps place the action within “the real” and the quotidian despite its fantastic nature, and the human interest can be seen as means through which the BBC television version of *The Quatermass Experiment* sought to gain and maintain the interest of the spectator. Another technique used by the serial to develop interest is the philosophical tone of some of the dialogue and narration. At the start of the opening episode, details of the launch of the exploratory rocket into space are given, stressing its scientific purpose and significance. The tone of the narration is confident and trustworthy, but more significantly perhaps, thoughtful as it describes what the astronauts aboard would see and might experience as they travel away from the Earth and its atmosphere. This philosophical and thoughtful tone also extends to Quatermass himself. In the second episode he expresses doubts and uncertainty about his work and to having constant worries about the responsibility of it (1953: 22.53). In the script of the final episode, ‘State of Emergency’, Quatermass, in dialogue with Fullalove, regrets the egotism of his project, which has resulted in the present crisis, when they are confronted with the monster Caroon has become, at Westminster Abbey (1953: 30). This makes the figure of Quatermass in the television serial accessible because of his expressed doubts and regrets, suggesting the humanity behind the expert scientist.

In the film version, Quatermass (Brian Donlevy) is very different, playing the role of the scientist in a more forthright, straightforward manner. This less thoughtful presentation
of the role was arguably suited to the film, though, and in keeping with the style aimed for by Guest. Indeed, in interview with Adam Jezard, Guest remarks that he preferred the role to be played as ‘down-to-earth and factual’ rather than as an ‘ethereal professor’ (1995: 9). His representation of Quatermass is discussed in detail below and in the following chapter. Although both versions of the role, the television and film Quatermass, are quite aggressive towards the police over the fingerprinting of Caroon, in the film the character is generally bolder, bullish even, and does not express the doubts of the character in the television version. Indeed, at the end of the film after the monster has been killed, Quatermass declares he will begin again on another experiment; he does not seem to recognise the implications of what he has done. The film differs from the television serial greatly in the story’s denouement. The ending of the film is an area of key difference to the original television version, chiefly in the approach taken by Quatermass and the means used to despatch the monster. There is also a different sense of hybridity in each version of the scene.

In the film version the presence of the human within the monster, and the notion of a mingling of the two states, is suggested by the eye it has and its scream at its demise. However, there is no reference in the final scene to the commingling of the other two astronauts, Reichenheim and Greene. In the television version, Quatermass addresses each of them in turn and asserts he is speaking to them directly (1953: 35). This gives emphasis to hybridity through alien and human, and the commingling of previously separate humans; a commingling and absorption in to one form. It is interesting that the serial emphasises this slightly different form of hybridity, in the merging of three people, rather than the alien/human hybrid that the film focuses on through the figure of Caroon as he struggles with the warring parts of himself, discussed in Chapter 4. In the second
episode of the television serial, Caroon speaking German and using Greene’s pet name for Mrs Greene (Enid Lindsay) provide early indications of the merging between the three astronauts.

In the script of final episode, ‘State of Emergency’, Briscoe suggests using a charge of electricity against the creature but Quatermass makes the point that the monster is an intelligence that is still partly human (1953: 9). Elsewhere, Quatermass emphasises the human knowledge the creature still possesses (ibid: 16). The film version contains no such reminders in the dialogue, although there are the visual and aural vestiges of the human. This different emphasis suggests an affinity with other science fiction/monster films of the 1950s where the nation is under threat from alien invasion or home-grown monsters such as giant insects, and needs to be robustly defended. The film’s attempt at giving the mutated Caroon a reminder of previous humanness arguably distances it from these other examples; further, the spectator has seen Caroon as he was at the beginning, a stricken and very human figure. In this sense, the film follows the television serial and both versions of Caroon, Lamont and Wordsworth respectively, are imbued with human suffering, which makes their plight pitiful. The horror derives more in the implications of what is happening to Caroon, in both versions. It is interesting though that the television script refers to the creature as ‘The Thing’, (ibid: 39), which rather reduces the sense of a once human monster.

Although the endings of both television and film versions of The Quatermass Experiment take place at Westminster Abbey, the difference in approach to killing the monster gives an indication of the different emphasis of each. As a feature in The House That Hammer

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8 Examples would include The Thing (Christian Nybu, 1951) and Them! (Gordon Douglas, 1954)
Built states, in the original version of the ending ‘Quatermass literally talks it to death, summoning forth the remnants of the three astronauts that have been absorbed into it to combine their strength in overcoming the beast’ (1997: 29). A more aggressive line of action against the alien/human form is rejected by Quatermass as he puts himself in the line of military fire to speak to the creature (1953: 32). This is after dialogue explaining how the three astronauts have been assimilated, emphasising further the complex identity of the form. He appeals to the vestiges of the human, speaks to each astronaut and urges them to remember their humanness, their mission and what has happened, playing them the recording of their flight (ibid: 39). Finally he urges them to commit suicide, to reject the alien that has absorbed them to prevent it from growing stronger (ibid: 41-2). It is not made clear in the script precisely how this happens, which produces an enigmatic effect and contributes, arguably, to the thoughtful and philosophical tone established in the first episode. The Quatermass of the television serial is therefore a man of words and thought, and, as mentioned above, comes to regret his project, which can be seen as an example of over-reaching and hubris. The nature of the ending, more dialogue based and thoughtful in tone, appears in keeping with the tone of sobriety and restraint that has been identified with the BBC. How, though, did the ending of the film differ and what does this indicate about the priorities of the film production company?

The ending of the film is very different to the television version of The Quatermass Experiment, with the creature killed by a massive surge of electricity, which is diverted from London’s supply. This emphasises the threat to the heart of the nation discussed in the following chapter, as does the setting in Westminster Abbey; the spiritual heart as well as the political is under threat. The film text dramatises the preparations for the killing of the monster; there is little dialogue and a focus on action and movement.
through the editing, use of tracking camera and character movement, often across the screen and moving towards or away from the camera, which provides a sense of spatial dimension. The focus on action and movement indicates a different emphasis to the television serial, creating drama and suspense through visual spectacle and sound rather than the arguably more thoughtful approach of the television script. The preparation for the killing creates tension through both sound and image. There are shots of cables being attached to the scaffold on which the creature sits, cuts to electricity supplies being commandeered, which establishes a sense of simultaneity of action. This feeling of tension is heightened in the film by the use of sound, which combines the diegetic chiming of Big Ben with the non-diegetic film score of James Bernard. The subtlety of Bernard’s score in the film and its ability to create dramatic suspense and an eerie atmosphere is commented on in the literature (Maxford, 2004: 66-7, Murphy, 1994: 22). The repeated bass notes of strings, ominous in tone, which then gradually rise up the scale, provide a sense of expectation and waiting for an event. The suggestion of the empty Abbey and the equipment, with the last of the personnel running out of the building, aims to further heighten the suspense for the spectator.

The notion of the use of spectacle in the film for spectator appeal referred to above is perhaps best seen in the shooting of the demise of the creature and the aftermath of this action. Low angle medium-long shots of the monster being electrocuted are edited with close ups and an exterior shot of an Abbey window showing the interior in flames. These shots certainly provide spectacle, visual horror and the potential of disaster and threat. They also, however, represent the killing of what was once human, the stricken Caroon from earlier in the film, emphasised through the scream on the soundtrack and the muted response of Briscoe (David King-Wood), who is subdued as he casts his eyes downwards.
in a suggestion of sorrow and pity. This slightly different tone tempers the spectacle, which remains with the visual representation of flames and smoke in the Abbey in the aftermath of the killing. The film differs in narrative and tone from the television script of *The Quatermass Experiment*, then, with the restrained, philosophical qualities implied in the dialogue replaced by action and spectacle, and greater emphasis on the visuality of horror through the killing itself and the threat to the heart of the nation. In the television script of the final episode, the threat to the national body is represented through a lengthy expositional account given by Quatermass of the present state of emergency to the nation via a television broadcast (1953: 19-20). It is useful to see the differences in approach in their wider institutional and production contexts as this can help explain these variations.

Specific aspects of the wider institutional and production contexts are the focus of this section of the thesis, as marketing and reception of the film version is discussed below. The selected areas of context help to critically consider the difference in narrative tone and content between the two versions of *The Quatermass Experiment*. The prevalence of dialogue, and use of medium shots, close ups and two shots that can be seen in the opening episode ‘Contact Has Been Established’ for example, can be seen as part of the discourses of intimacy and visual restraint identified by Jacobs, discussed above (2000: 123; 126). The change to character, narrative and tone from a philosophical to ‘forceful’ Quatermass and the use of a more spectacular, ‘cinematic’ ending has been commented on (Hearn and Rigby, 2003: 9-10). Indeed, the reactions to the final episode, which were documented in the BBC Viewer Research Report suggests Hammer were, to an extent, justified in the changes they made. As noted above, correspondents were identified by their profession. A clerk notes, in reference to the previous episodes, that the ‘first built up a terrific excitement but Episode six went off like a wet firework’, which implies that
there could have been a more dynamic finale to the serial (2nd Sept. 1953). An audit clerk commented that the final scene with Quatermass addressing the monster made no sense and ‘we hadn’t understood a word’, which further suggests a popular discourse in favour of an ending more focused on narrative action. In summary of its own findings, the report itself observes that the final episode gave the impression of having been improvised and put together at the last minute to replace material that had been censored (ibid), before concluding that an unspecified number of television viewers ‘were very bewildered, and felt that no adequate explanation of anything had been given’ (ibid). In the light of the report’s findings and conclusions, a change to the story’s ending by Hammer seems a prudent measure.

The scheduling of the television broadcasts of the original serial indicate the broad audience The Quatermass Experiment was aimed at, which further illuminates changes made in the film version. The broadcasts of the first three episodes were before 9pm, with the final two showing at 9pm (Pixley, 2005: 44). This is reflected in the television scheduling in Canada, where The Quatermass Experiment was broadcast at 7.30pm after a half hour Tabloid news programme and before a political thriller entitled Foreign Intrigue (CBC Times, Aug 2-8, 1953). Both schedules suggest a programme occupying a television slot that suggests a broad appeal but shifting to the older age group and more “serious” drama, which, in the case of the United Kingdom, links in with the BBC’s discourse of restraint and sobriety. As Lez Cooke observes, the influence of John Reith’s ideologies on public service broadcasting remained after his 1938 departure from the BBC well in to the 1950s, and the notion of the corporation’s programmes displaying a moral tone was important (Cooke, 2003: 10). The BBC’s Royal Charter stated a duty to ‘inform, educate and entertain’ and Reith was particularly partial to the first two of these;
the more philosophical and thoughtful tone of the television version of *The Quatermass Experiment* can be seen as being informed by this ideological position (ibid).

The changes to the narrative of *The Quatermass Experiment* can similarly be seen in their wider production contexts. What influence might the working practices of a commercial company like Hammer have on the story? The removal of aspects of the original version and the emphasis on pace and action in the film is arguably determined by the required feature film length. The greater emphasis on action and specifically on visual spectacle and horror can be linked to cultural contexts, particularly the industrial contexts of film production and marketing. The introduction of the ‘X’ certificate in 1951 gave Hammer space to focus on a more overt use of terror and suspense to attract the audience needed to gain return on their modest budget of £42,000 for the film (Rigby, 2000: 49).

The use of spectacle and broad allusions to horror and science fiction cinema tropes can be seen as part of how Hammer sought to capitalise on the film and make the profit necessary for the funding of future film projects. These allusions include the notion of alien possession, mutation and the over-reaching scientist. The drawing on spectacle and notions of terror extend to the marketing and advertising campaigns for the film issued by Exclusive; the Press Book, for instance, suggests advertisement headlines that evoke notions of formless terror, ‘Can You Face – The Horror That Sprawls’, the monstrous, ‘Colossus of Crawling Terror’ and the tension between fascination and repulsion associated with horror, ‘You May Loathe It – You Won’t Dare Leave It’ (Exclusive Press Book, undated, 1953). The advertising features and images in film journals, including the deliberate use of the “X” certificate to attract interest, no less in the use of
the capital “X” in the spelling of the film’s name during the advertising, are discussed below; this section focuses on the campaign in the Press Book.

Exclusive issued ideas in the Press Book for cinema lobby display cards, which make a positive feature of the “X” rating. Through these cards the advertisers attempt to attract both a male and female audience. One such card addresses ‘MADAM’, capitalised thus for emphasis and similarly places the fact that children are not allowed to see the film in bold upper case, as if this prohibition is part of the attraction of seeing the film. The card then urges the reader to ‘do come yourself for an exciting time – without the children’, packaging the film as an opportunity for women to escape the routine of housewife and mother. Other display cards implicitly promise sexuality, this time through appealing to a male spectator to ‘bring the Wife, Fiancée or Girl Friend’. One card makes the promise more explicit when it states the age restriction in upper case again and states that ‘in the case of the Girl Friend [...] she cannot bring the younger brother with her’, suggesting no presence of a third party chaperone to spoil the fun. Married women are also addressed, through other ideas for marketing suggested in the Press Book, drawing on the reduced character of Mrs Caroon. Referring to the sequence where Mrs Caroon smuggles her stricken husband out of hospital, it asks the potential spectator ‘Would you steal your Afflicted Husband from Hospital?’ and recommends attracting what it refers to as ‘women’s interest’ by running a series of letters to the local press two weeks prior to the film’s opening (Exclusive Press Book, undated, 1955). The focus on spectacle, and affect that might be associated with action and more explicit horror, then, can be seen as part of the working practice of the film production company and a discourse that emphasises entertainment within a commercial context, rather than education or information. The next section of this chapter focuses on the production and casting of the film before
discussing further aspects of the marketing and reception of Hammer’s version of *The Quatermass Experiment*. How was the film seen in terms of national identity and genre?

**Production and Casting**

Production and intertextual aspects such as casting and the impact of actor’s personas are factors that inform discussion of national identity, characteristics and their reception. Apart from the industry practice in UK/US co-productions of casting an American in the lead role, other members of the cast were British and many were familiar names with established careers so they would have had a particular draw for the popular imagination at that time. Richard Wordsworth, descendant of the poet William Wordsworth and a Shakespearian stage actor making his screen debut, played the role of Caroon. Both these aspects of his background may have connoted an association with ideas of national character. The comment on his performance as being ‘mute but macabre’ in the *New Chronicle* suggests links with horror and the Gothic (Paul Dehn, 28th August, 1955). Marcus Hearn and Val Guest discuss the screen personas of various actors playing roles in the film, as part of the audio commentary on the DVD release of the film (2003). Guest remarks that Wordsworth carried a restraint in his portrayal of the stricken astronaut, with a ‘believable’ style that enabled him to convey Caroon through subtlety (2003: 41:30).

Hearn also notes this subtlety and links it to the style of the film as a whole, distancing it from what he refers to as American ‘B’-movie sci-fi (ibid: 41:38). Jack Warner, whose subsequent portrayal of Dixon in *Dixon of Dock Green* (1955-76) helped to consolidate the association with particular interpretations of Englishness established through his roles in the 1940s/1950s Huggets series of films, played Chief Inspector Lomax. Warner had
previously portrayed George Dixon in *The Blue Lamp* (Basil Dearden, 1950), giving the sense of the actor representing a character type. Jeffrey Richards says of *The Blue Lamp*, that it represents a view of the police as ‘an epitome of British life, deeply rooted in the local community and committed to protecting it’ (1997: 139). These characteristics would be personified in the person of Warner, a persona that merges with the role of Lomax. The reference to him as ‘dear old Jack Warner’ by Derek Grainger in his review of the film for *The Financial Times* suggests Warner’s significance in the public imagination (28th August, 1955). Although Kneale disapproved of the joking Inspector that Warner played (Hearn, 1995: 18), there was the injection of humour in to the horror and suspense that characterises Kneale’s own work, as can be seen by the cinema sequence in the original series, which satirises commercial film. It seems curious that Kneale would disapprove of an aspect that he often favours within television writing. Guest says Warner was a ‘down to earth’ person who could give a real, not contrived performance (2003: 18:34).

The other well-known actors included Sidney James, Thora Hird as noted above and Lionel Jeffries. Hird had previously played a Land Girl in the wartime propaganda film *Went The Day Well?* (Alberto Cavalcanti, 1942) and her subsequent roles specialised in English working class characters. The scene with Hird brings the presence of other familiar character actors associated with British film, radio and television. In this scene is the Station Sergeant (Sam Kydd), who in his dialogue echoes the view of the police as paternal. Guest notes how the actor playing the role was a veteran of a German POW camp who had escaped, which introduces the theme of wartime heroism (2003: 103:02). These aspects would have had resonance in the 1950s, as evidenced by contemporaneous research findings cited by Richards that found positive attitudes to the police, seeing
them not as servants of the elite but as embodying favourable traits like ‘reliability, courage and devotion to duty, decency’ (1997: 141). Popular views of society, then, are dramatised and articulated for audience consumption. There are, though, ways in which this can be seen more as a refraction of such popular notions in order to critique them, an aspect that is addressed in the chapter on Quatermass and the uncanny.

Guest asserts that he had majority of control over casting, script and complete control as director (Jezard, 1995: 10). As noted, Hammer’s United States partners provided financial backing and distribution for this and other of their films. Critical writing on the subject of the casting of key roles and Lippert’s part in this indicates a generally negative discourse, with a tone of disapproval or scorn, with some notable exceptions. Murphy notes that ‘the U.S partners insisted’ on an American writer to adapt Kneale’s script (1994: 21), although Guest re-worked it and remembers Landau’s contributions and alterations that were intended to help American audiences to follow the dialogue to have been minimal (Maxford, 2004: 67). Donlevy had been a significant movie star in Hollywood in the 1930s and 1940s, appearing in a variety of film including political satire *The Great McGinty* (Preston Sturgess, 1940) and noir thrillers such as *The Glass Key* (Stuart Heisler, 1942) therefore the description of him as a ‘tough guy from Preston Sturgess movies’ (2003: 11:48) is only partly accurate and might imply a retrospective critical opinion. The fact that by the 1950s his career was on a downward curve has been well documented.

Maxford, for instance, identifies this turn in Donlevy’s career while also pointing out that this was commonplace for stars imported from Hollywood in the 1950s (2004: 67). Much of the criticism levelled at Donlevy comes from Kneale, as noted by Murphy. Hearn, for
instance, in interview with the writer, reports Kneale as stating his dislike of the actor
and his interpretation of the role (1995: 18); this is echoed in criticism, such as the
aforementioned comment by Rolinson and Cooper, whose reference to brashness when
noting Kneale’s response to Donlevy’s acting rather cements the prevailing discourse. It
suggests an earlier judgement encouraged other later commentators to take the same
view.

Contemporaneous articles did highlight Donlevy as American (Today’s Cinema August
22nd: 5) whilst also referring to his adaptability (Today’s Cinema August 23rd: 8). Critical
reviews of The Quatermass Experiment on release illustrate a range of opinion on
Donlevy; Variety sees his playing of the role as being of ‘grim and ruthless conviction’
(September 7th, 1955) while Harris Deane in The Sunday Dispatch complements his
performance as ‘excellent’ (August 28th). The Monthly Film Bulletin, however, considers
Donlevy as a ‘brusque and peremptory’ Quatermass, but as previously noted perhaps this
is implicitly present in the role as written (vol 22, no. 261, Oct 1955). Kneale was
particularly contemptuous of Margia Dean, who played Caroon’s wife; it appeared she
was cast due to personal involvement with a member of the production team and his view
on her ineptness is recorded by Hearn (1995: 18) and Maxford (2004: 67). The criticism
suggests decisions were made to satisfy ‘the American money men’ (Jezard, 1995: 9) and
that the involvement with Lippert and its implications was damaging to the integrity of
the production, which becomes sullied by wishes of big business. As Hearn argues,
Kneale’s feelings and interpretation of the adaptation process, and his criticisms, ‘betray
only an underlying care and pride unwise in anyone competing in the merciless industries
of film and television’, later noting how his ‘hostility...hasn’t mellowed with time’ (1995:
17).
While Kneale is a practitioner and not a theorist or cultural commentator, his opinions concerning the adaptation can be viewed within the wider discourse of critical ideas on adaptation, particularly the fidelity discourse discussed earlier. There is a common problem with adaptations for critics and theorists alike if the fidelity discourse is used to appraise the process of adapting a text from one medium to another, with a resulting sense that the end product is not as “good” as the original, that it has lost some key aspects that made it unique. As indicated above, fidelity discourse is problematic because it tends to elide contextual factors like production contexts. One such context is the tension between economic imperatives and demands of institutions, and the ambition or artistic interest of individual agents. Adaptation as convergence of different art forms, as mentioned above, is significant as it implies the hybrid and how, as we shall see, the adapted text can be seen in this way.

**Production, Adaptation and Hybridity**

The nature of production and casting might indicate a certain hybridity, in keeping with the theme of the film given Caroon’s change. Harper and Porter’s use of the term “hybrid” in relation to Hammer is worth recalling here. They do not refer to Staiger’s definition, but the link is invited by their allusion to two distinct cinematic cultures, American and British. As previously stated, Staiger identifies the genuine hybrid as that which results from a meeting between two cultures, coloniser and colonised, therefore the hybrid form is something truly cross-cultural. Staiger contends that Hollywood products are “inbred” rather than hybrid in that their elements are derived from the same cultural family. This can be used to consider the themes of the narrative and their relations to national identities, as in following chapters; here we can consider it in relation to the production contexts. Is *The Quatermass Experiment* hybrid or inbred, to
use Staiger’s terms? If the hybrid is that which results from the meeting of distinct cultural traditions and sensibilities, containing aspects from different cultural “families”, can *The Quatermass Experiment* be defined in those terms? Harper and Porter’s reference to The United States and Britain as different cultures suggests that it can. If the Quatermass narratives draw from literary traditions, taking conventions principally associated with English literature, (Pirie’s account of British horror film, for instance, focuses on this aspect of them), and combine them with the production and aesthetics of television and film, it might be regarded as embodying two different cultural families. This is especially the case if the tensions between restraint and spectacle referred to earlier is taken in to account.

Hutchings (1999) and Hunter (1999) both identify specific thematic concerns of British cinema, some of which are drawn on in the following chapters. For Hutchings, aspects that help differentiate British cinema from the American model include the attachment to a collective memory of World War II, the marginalisation of desire and individuals seen as part of a group/institution (1999: 39). Hunter focuses on ‘unease about contemporary social tensions’ and ‘Britain’s loss of power’ (1999: 102). What is interesting in terms of aesthetics and cinematic practice is Hunter’s emphasis on the qualities of Guest’s work⁹, what he refers to as an ‘impoverished’ realism, contrasted to the visual extravagance of Hollywood (ibid: 101). Grounding the horror within “the real” and imbuing the films with a sense of realism was important for Guest, who says that *The Quatermass Experiment* was shot ‘almost like a newsreel’ (2003: 4:36), with the stated intention of it looking like a BBC news report (ibid: 4:46). This matter-of-fact approach is within the performance of the actors, which Hearn comments on as being restrained and different

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⁹ In discussion of *The Day The Earth Caught Fire* (Val Guest, 1961).
from American science fiction (ibid: 41:38). This aspect of the film’s style was picked up on by some of the reviews. *The New Statesman*, for instance, focuses on the mingling of the horror with the ordinary; ‘if humanity should ever succumb to a bizarre menace, this is how it might be, with the buses running [...] the elbows leant on the supper table’ (27th August 1955). Further, the reviewer makes comparison with Hollywood, identifying similarities of narrative and subject, which is treated however, with ‘native patience and humour’ (ibid), which shows an affinity with Hearn’s comments and the notion of restraint and sobriety. The use of the codes of realism with inflections of the fantastic, then, might suggest a British sensibility but more interestingly for this study, a blurring of distinctions between categories because of the tension between the two elements.

If we see the United States and Britain as having different cinematic languages and if the coproduction is taken into account it is appropriate to refer to the Quatermass films as hybrid, as implied by Harper and Porter’s analysis referred to above. In this sense, Quatermass presents the familiar in an unfamiliar form; as a refracted, distorted double it becomes the cultural uncanny through configuring literary-based cultural elements in a new, altered form. Further, the notion of Quatermass-as-hybrid becomes more apparent when looking at the production context. Science fiction and horror were almost exclusively happening in film within the United States, not Britain. Thrillers were of course produced, and the term “thriller” used in both television and film marketing and promotion of the Quatermass narratives. However, both horror and science fiction had been rare in British cinema, the exceptions being *The Ghoul* (T. Hayes Hunter, 1933), *Dead of Night* (Cavalcanti et. al., 1945) and *Things to Come* (William Cameron Menzies, 1936). *Spaceways* (Terence Fisher, 1953), a recent Hammer production, was only nominally science fiction and mainly concerned with melodrama and espionage. Scientist
and military encounters with alien life forms were still relatively fledgling in Hollywood but science fiction is still an American genre at this time, sufficiently so for it to be lampooned as such by Kneale in the television version of the narrative. The literary traditions and generic features are both Anglophone, being from Britain and the United States, but sufficiently different, the science fiction narrative elements and the gothic and uncanny tropes through which the fantastic is expressed, to be seen as hybrid. This study will consider these in relation to national identities, with textual analysis of the fantastic within the narratives in the context of these discourses.

Marketing and Reception
Staiger offers a specific methodology for considering the notion of the hybrid, then. It is worth considering at this point the blurring of distinctions between generic categories as this complements the hybridity discussed above. How was the Quatermass narrative in television and especially film format, seen within marketing, promotion and reception? Was the term “science fiction” used at that time and how were The Quatermass Experiment and Quatermass II seen by contemporaneous critics within existing British cinema?

The BBC Viewer Research Reports for both of the television versions of the above films referred to the narratives as a “thriller”. The BBC labels The Quatermass Experiment as a ‘thriller in six parts’ with the thriller aspect implied strongly by the titles of the individual episodes themselves; ‘A State of Emergency’ is the name of the instalment under review (September 2nd, 1953). Viewers respond in kind and refer to the narrative in the same way, not using either ‘science fiction’ or ‘horror’ to label the Quatermass story. Some of the contemporaneous reviews in the press labelled the film in similar ways. Thomas
Spencer in *The Daily Worker* referred to the film as a ‘chiller slightly better than average for its type’, distancing the film from notions of horror and implying criticism of the form (27th August, 1955). Dilys Powell in *The Sunday Times* labels the film a ‘British thriller’, thereby foregrounding the concept of national cinema while eliding the American co-production (28th August, 1955). The Press Book uses the terms “horror” and “terror”, not to identify genre but to suggest the quality of the film (Exclusive Films, 1955).

In a similar manner to Kneale’s expression of dislike for the science fiction genre, Guest also distanced himself from horror. In a *Photoplay* article (1955) reproduced in *Dark Terrors* (1996), he states ‘[P]lease don’t mention the word horror’ stating that the intention was not to produce ‘that kind of picture’, suggesting almost a distaste for the sensation; he states a preference for the term “chiller”, which arguably evokes a very different kind of thrill to that which is suggested by “horror” (1996: 30). His rationale, though, is that there is a lack of ‘brutality’ in the film and sympathy is evoked for the monster, Caroon, who is pitiable in his struggle with the alien presence gradually taking hold within him. The presence of science-fiction within the narrative is drawn on within the *Photoplay* article as is the horror genre through the opening line of the first paragraph. ‘Jump on your broomsticks and raise three bloodcurdling cheers. Britain’s first big try in the monster market has come off’ (*Photoplay* in *Dark Terrors*: 30). The pro-British stance of the statement is discussed below. The image conjured up of witches astride brooms in the night sky links the film, explicitly, with horror and the supernatural as supposedly envisaged within the popular imagination. It is almost as if they knew what Hammer was going to become.
A double-page spread in the trade paper *Today’s Cinema* makes no mention of horror or science fiction but shows the canny move by Hammer of exploiting the ‘X’ certificate rating by spelling the film’s title as *The Quatermass Experiment* with the ‘X’ enlarged, jagged and highly noticeable in green (August 23rd: 4/5). The publicity statements released by Exclusive on the film also emphasises the ‘X’ in the spelling of the name as used for marketing purposes, and while the film is not described as horror or science-fiction, other terms used evoke both genres (Undated Publicity, 1955). The publicity advises cinema managers that they can promise their patrons ‘This is going to haunt you’ (underlined in original). This line is presented in a typeface that mimics the form of handwriting, making it stand out; ‘haunt’, of course, evokes the supernatural, perhaps the more restrained British tradition of the ghost story rather than Hollywood horror. The plot summary given by the publicity statement repeatedly refers to the alien and the transformed Caroon as some, or the, ‘THING’, which suggests Hollywood science fiction genre films (ibid). Hammer’s policy of referring to the ‘X’ certificate has of course often been commented on by later critics while also providing useful material for copy for journalists writing about the film prior to and on release. Some later critical writing, for instance Rolinson and Cooper, state that Quatermass was ‘renamed’ during the publicity campaigns to ‘exploit’ the X-certificate (2002: 159), while others are less condemning in their language; Murphy notes that ‘Hammer cleverly decided to alter the spelling of the title’, demonstrating a different perspective (1994: 23). It is interesting, however, that the use of a term like ‘exploit’ in the context Rolinson and Cooper use it seems like a criticism, although it is quite a canny choice of phrasing; exploitation, in marketing and advertising for producers, distributors and exhibitors was essential to attract an audience. Besides Hammer referring to the ‘X’ in their poster advertising and press releases, the ‘X’ and its place in the title was prominent in articles and features at
the time of release. The title of a pre-release article in *Today’s Paper* ‘An Xploitable Thing comes from Space’ exemplifies this. It echoes the press release from Exclusive (‘Thing’) and by doing so evokes Hollywood film, while also suggesting the advertising and marketing practices of the film industry (August 22\(^{nd}\), 1955).

The rallying call championing British film within the *Photoplay* article mentioned above sets the tone for the writing of the piece and is echoed in other publicity and reviews. Within the article national cinema is foregrounded and the opening line indicates the newness of science-fiction as a genre to British film (*Photoplay* in *Dark Terrors*: 30) and proceeds to draw comparison with the earlier Universal pictures and the current 1950s crop of monster movies. Opposition to and light-hearted comparison is made with the Hollywood product when the article states, for instance, that ‘it’s enough to scuttle ‘The Creature from the Black Lagoon’’ (ibid). The final comments in the article frames *The Quatermass Experiment* as a challenge to Hollywood, declaring ‘now that Britain has got monster minded, we can really make Hollywood scared’ (ibid). This suggests a sense of opposition, commercial rivalry and difference between American and British film and that there was a perceived or perhaps real need to meet a challenge; although Hollywood is presented as having taken the lead and British film following behind, the lesser partner is poised to confront it. Higson discusses competition with American cinema as part of national cinema’s product differentiation and Hammer’s output can be seen in this light (1995: 9-11). The championing of British film in journalism was echoed by the press critics on release of the film in August 1955, some of whom emphasised its Britishness and commented on the state of British film at that time.
Some of the contemporaneous critics emphasised Britishness and evoked ideas of national cinema, further to the above mentioned comment by Powell in the *Sunday Times*. In some cases the notion of British identity and genre become conflated, with national cinema linked to horror and science fiction, as if to claim them for the United Kingdom. Paul Dehn, for instance, in the *New Chronicle*, gleefully refers to the *The Quatermass Experiment* as the ‘best and nastiest horror film that I have seen since the war’ before ending by declaring that how ‘jolly that it is also British’, which like Powell in *The Sunday Times*, elides the American co-production and players involved in the film and effectively claims ownership of it (28th August 1955).

One very telling response, which suggests how British cinema was viewed in the 1950s, refers to the film as a surprise in a positive sense. N. Whitehart, writing for the *New Statesman*, links genre and nation in a manner similar to Dehn, although it is science fiction rather than horror that is mentioned here (27th August 1955). Whitehart outlines the narrative and comments ‘so far, so admirable, in the keen American way, but with native patience and humour’ (ibid). This implies not only the commercial lead of Hollywood referred to above but also a cultural dominance and shadow over artistic production beyond America that is strongly suggestive of cultural imperialism. The tone of the writing also indicates tiredness with the tendency of British film to reproduce the American model but, due to different financial status for instance, with less panache. However, ‘native patience and humour’ intimates Hollywood through a British lens and through a specific cultural sensibility; a hybridity, then. The phrase suggests there was a particular, British way of configuring and articulating science fiction and horror in the 1940s and 1950s that enables British cinema to be seen as re-articulating these forms and producing a hybrid through the link between them and the Gothic, for instance, as
indicated above. This review then asserts British films tend to begin and then ‘flag and yawn’ but *The Quatermass Experiment* ‘keeps its tension’ and is well-paced, able to sustain interest effectively (ibid).

A sense of difference is established, then, between this and other British films, which is echoed by Guest in interview with Adam Jezard, remarking on the film it ‘didn’t look like a Hammer film, and it didn’t read like one’ (1995: 10). It therefore perhaps does pre-figure the colour Gothics Hammer started producing from *The Curse of Frankenstein* (Terence Fisher, 1957) up to the early 1970s. This difference is also stressed favourably by Whitehart between *The Quatermass Experiment* and Hollywood films, stating that it is a ‘better film’ than *War of the Worlds* (Byron Haskin, 1952), or *Them!* (Gordon Douglas, 1954), thereby differentiating the film from Hollywood and promoting national cinema and British “versions” of science fiction and horror (August 27th). The film, and British film articulating the fantastic, can be considered through some of the contemporaneous discourses to be a form of cinematic and cultural hybrid in a way that heralds the presence of hybridity in terms of national identity and film style. This is despite the fact that several reviews refer to *The Quatermass Experiment* as a “pure” British film; it seems that they embrace the hybrid, (unlike the reaction to the creature in the film), as long as it retains the recognisable traits of the host organism, i.e. “Britishness”. The film can be regarded as British yet hybrid in that it adopts a form associated with Hollywood and refracts it through a British lens.

**Adaptation and Hybridity in Quatermass II**

If hybridity is suggested in *The Quatermass Experiment* chiefly through film production and style, in Hammer’s second Quatermass film the hybrid is especially evident through
narrative theme. The adaptation of the second series and the resulting film, *Quatermass II*, released in 1957, shows a close relationship between series and feature, which evokes the presence of the television original in the cinema version. This is not to say that the ghost of Kneale’s series was not in Guest’s first film, but that in *Quatermass II* it is stronger. Hearn observes that the second film, out of all three Hammer Quatermass films, ‘relies most heavily on the style dictated by its television predecessor’ (1995: 18). Indeed, Hearn reports Kneale as stating how there is ‘more of the TV version in that than any of the others’ (ibid). This is partly due to Kneale’s more active presence in the adaptation process, being involved in the screenwriting. Harper and Porter state that Hammer dealt with him directly (2003: 145). Films and other cultural products that are the result of an adaptation process all carry in their final screened versions a vestige of the original story plus other cultural, political and economic factors that influence choice of material. While this might not suggest the hybrid according to Staiger, it implies a mixed provenance. The notion of adaptation as a convergence of the arts supports this notion. What is interesting for this study, though, and the focus in a later chapter on the uncanny is that the similarities suggest doubling, no less through location shooting.

While there is, then, a strong similarity between the television and film versions of *Quatermass II*, there are significant differences, as outlined by Hutchings (2004: 30) and Rolinson and Cooper (2002: 161). What were the details and characteristics of the series that show similarities and differences between the television narratives and their cinema counterparts? The next section of the thesis discusses the popular response to the original serial and briefly outlines the circumstances of the adaptation. Before detailed discussion and analysis of the differences between the original television version and Hammer’s film adaptation of *Quatermass II*, there is some brief discussion of similarities, namely
the use of location, and a brief outline of scenes cut from the serial, to provide a context for the discussion of the changes.

*Quatermass II* the television series had a similar impact to the first series in terms of the audience reaction and interest. A BBC Audience Survey Report conducted for the first episode of the series, which was entitled “The Bolts”, gave a Reaction Index of 75%, above that of the first episode of the first series. 40% of the respondents had seen all of *The Quatermass Experiment*, which indicates the pre-sold aspect of the appeal of the story and suggests regularity and expectation. It is interesting that the BBC’s summary of the reactions states that ‘one or two viewers [...] objected strongly to the serial on the grounds that it would be too horrific, especially for Saturday night viewing’, which rather conveniently gives credence it seems to the anxiety felt by the BBC towards fantastic material. However, this is borne out by some of the comments quoted in the report. According to an “Office Manager’s Wife”, which in itself indicates a parochial attitude, it was ‘too terrifying for older people and children. It should not be televised at this time on a Saturday night’. This echoes, in part, the protective impulse within the Corporation discussed earlier. The overall reaction, though, was positive and expressed an eager anticipation for the next instalments, the appeal of the series cutting across class boundaries. For instance, “Wife of Police Constable” declares it was ‘packed with excitement from beginning to end’ and adds that she ‘[C]ouldn’t bear to miss it’, while a “Carpenter” states of the episode, ‘[E]xciting, gripping and novel. The air of expectancy is always with you. Can’t wait for next Saturday’ (9th November, 1955). Clearly, then, the series had considerable appeal from the start.
This strong favourable reaction remained the case with *Quatermass II* for the duration of the series. In November 1955, after the third episode has been broadcast, Audrey George, who was about to enter an Anglican convent, wrote to the BBC, speaking of her ‘great distress’ in finding she will miss the final instalment of the series. She asks for the ending of the story and assures the BBC that she will maintain confidentiality, as the ‘thought of spending the rest of my life wondering what really happened annoys me so much that I couldn’t help writing’ (November 8\(^{th}\), 1955). Like the first Quatermass narrative then, this one had cultural resonance that gives a pre-sold element to the film version and would be used in marketing and publicity. A Hammer publicity release mentions *The Quatermass Experiment* and that Donlevy returns to play the same role in the second film (May 24\(^{th}\) 1956), drawing therefore on the success of the previous television play and its status as a pre-sold product. The publicity release also names Kneale as writer, drawing on the public memory of the series. This would seem to chime with a review in *Today’s Cinema*, which says of Quatermass, ‘[T]he name has a nation-wide selling angle’ (April 30\(^{th}\), 1957: 6) before making favourable comparison with the first film, suggesting *Quatermass II* shares its qualities. While this ostensibly refers to both film versions, stating that Quatermass as a name is what sells the film also implies a conflation of the film and series, as if the memory of the BBC series equals that of the first film.

The circumstances of story rights and distribution are different to those of the first film. Murphy states that Hammer acquired the rights for *Quatermass II* directly from Nigel Kneale, which explains the absence of documents in the BBC archives that might pertain to this process. Therefore, Kneale, as Hearn states, shares the screenplay credits with Guest, who was again director. It is probably due partly to Kneale’s closer involvement with the project that meant there were more echoes of the original series in *Quatermass*
II than in *The Quatermass Experiment*. However, there were still issues for Kneale; his disapproval of Donlevy remained (Hearn, 1995: 19) and according to Murphy he was still unhappy with the end result, remarking that ‘the film’s characters were so wooden it was difficult to distinguish one from the other’ (1994: 28). Hammer began shooting *Quatermass II* in May 1956 at Elstree, with the exterior scenes filmed at the same Shell Oil Refinery used for the series. There seems to be some slight discrepancy over this in the literature. Murphy refers to the shooting location as ‘not dissimilar’ to that used for the original (1994: 27), and publicity material produced by Hammer states that the location is ‘similar to the one used by the BBC’. This is odd, as Kneale states they used the same refinery, Shell Haven in Essex (Hearn, 1995: 19), (Wells, 1999: 53), a fact also noted by Jezard in interview with Guest (1995: 11).

This repetition of location is suggestive of doubling. Rolinson and Cooper rightly highlight how the title of the story suggests ‘doubles and thematic echoes’ (2002: 161), compounded by the same title as that of the series, *Quatermass II*, being used within the publicity material by Hammer. The notion of the double evokes the uncanny, as does the repetition of the name and setting. Although the uncanny is not the focus of this chapter, it is worth noting that the presence of the series within the film, through doubling and repetition, invokes the hybrid if the cinema version of *Quatermass II* is seen as containing the original within itself. Inevitably there were alterations to the narrative to compress the six episodes down to the feature length running time. Amongst the scenes removed to streamline the text was one with Wilfred Brambell as a vagrant living in the ruined and abandoned Wynnerton Flats area close to the Plant occupied by the aliens and those under their control. In another scene excised from the story, a picnicking family is eliminated by the guards. The aura of strangeness and menace evoked by these sequences
remained in the final film, though, through aspects like the setting itself and the shooting style, which creates an eerie effect through use of filters in the scenes within the town housing the Plant workers. The cutting of scenes was remarked on at the time, though, in a negative way by some. In *Monthly Film Bulletin*, for instance, an article on *Quatermass II* comments it was ‘arbitrarily cut to 85 minutes from the original 180 minutes’ and finds that the film ‘has necessarily lost much of the quality of the original’ (June 1st, 1957). *Kinematograph Weekly*, however, regarded the film as a ‘first-rate British X certificate shocker’, which is generally more positive while focusing on more sensational aspects (May 2nd, 1957).

What were the specific differences, however, between the television and film versions of *Quatermass II*, and how can they be considered critically? What differences are there in terms of the treatment of the key themes of this thesis; ideas of “nation”, and hybridity? As indicated above there is the inevitable conflation and shortening of characters and events, and removals of scenes to fit the narrative to feature film length, which is the industrial context through which such decisions can be regarded. For Rolinson and Cooper, this means that the film ‘simplified’ the serial, despite the closer involvement of Kneale; however, it is important to see the changes in context (2002: 161). The script for a feature film, as Guest discusses in his interview with Jezard, requires significant cuts to be made, especially when adapting the script of a six-part serial (1995: 9). As with the first serial, some respondents to BBC Audience Survey Reports, in this case for the opening episode ‘The Bolts’, ‘confessed that they had been unable to follow the initial stages of the story’ (Audience Research Dept 9th November 1955). Furthermore, an internal BBC memorandum to the Head of Programming, Douglas Ritchie, criticised episode 2, ‘The Mark’, for its ‘complicated dialogue’ (C. P. Tel to H. D, 31st October 1955).
The need for a more succinct writing style informs the streamlining of the narrative and provides rationale for the cuts, then.

This more succinct style can be seen in the different approach to plot structure and pace. In the film, for instance, Quatermass is in the film from the very start and the first scene focuses immediately on the question of the nature of the threat and how it manifests itself with an opening long shot of a car moving swiftly towards the camera from off screen. The film version of *Quatermass II*, like its predecessor, establishes thus its focus on narrative action and suspense, rather than a desire to inform and educate. In contrast, the serial begins with exposition and Quatermass is not introduced until later in the episode, although what is significant about the first encounter with the scientist in the serial is that he is engaged in scientific endeavour, working on one of two prototype rockets. Through this, and further scenes at the rocket in later episodes, in the television version the role of Quatermass (John Robinson) is established more strongly as the expert scientist figure. In the film version, Quatermass as played by Donlevy is more of an investigator, although he utilises science based knowledge and understanding to piece together the clues found through his mysterious encounters with the effects of the alien invasion. This difference might be informed by the screen persona of Donlevy as discussed above and his previous roles in American noir thrillers.

The film also ends more quickly than the serial, with the asteroid source of the alien invasion obliterated soon after the attack on the domes at the Plant. In the serial the rocket is occupied by Quatermass and his infected colleague Leo Pugh (Hugh Griffiths), a character who does not appear in the film version. In the final episode of the television serial, ‘The Destoyer’, the journey to the rocket is largely comprised of dialogue.
between Quatermass, Pugh and the ground concerning the science of the journey, how
the rocket will function and perform the task of destroying the asteroid. Like the more
philosophical tone of the television predecessor, the dialogue can be seen in the context
of the BBC’s remit to inform and educate. The decision for a shortened ending in the
film removes this informative dialogue although, when seen in the context of paring the
six part script down to feature length, is a choice informed by the circumstances of film
production. In the film, the re-awakening of a captured guard provides an opportunity to
show the “infection” or “possession” passing, which replaces the recovery of Dillon
(John Stone), the infected character removed from the serial and substituted by Marsh
(Bryan Forbes) in the film. Apart from this significant difference, the sequence of events
in both serial and film version of *Quatermass II* is quite similar, although treatment and
character is sometimes different, as are some of the details of the scenes.

As with the original version of *The Quatermass Experiment*, the serial format allows for
the fleshing out of detail and more scenes that reinforce the presence of the ordinary,
which gives a sense of the lived contemporary life. Examples of this technique include
the scene in the coffee shop in episode 3 ‘The Food’, and the extra detail in episode 2
‘The Mark’ in the scenes at the site of Wynnerton Flats and the nearby New Town. The
impression of a destroyed landscape is similar in both versions and the events follow a
similar narrative course, although in the serial there is not the violent attack on
Quatermass that there is in the film. The natural environment is harbouring the
unfamiliar; it is the familiar made strange, uncanny, as discussed later in Chapter 4. In
the serial, however, the sequence is augmented by an initial visit to a neighbouring
village in episode 1, the aforementioned vagrant and an extended scene at the Wynnerton
Flats Camp Committee building. Some of the location work reveals interesting details
that the film lacks space for, such as the close-up of an old sign “Ivy Cottage” amongst the rubble of the village, remarked upon by Peter Hutchings (2004: 30). The scene here allows for a low angle shot of Quatermass standing amidst twisted girders, amongst the ruins, the composition making him appear encased within them. The dialogue with the vagrant (Wilfred Brambell) helps provide expositional information regarding the build at the New Town that provides another link to the contemporary social context through the reference to the lack of community in the new estates. The vagrant declares that unlike before, the new people have no time for him and ‘like all these prefab estates they’ve got no time for trampers’ (1955: 8:09). Similar effects are achieved yet through different means. For example, in the serial the New Town is seen first from inside Quatermass’ car, through the windscreen and its wipers and the rain, giving it a bleak aspect and a sense of foreboding. In the film this effect is achieved through signs of the reach of influence from the Plant to the town.

Elsewhere, there are characters in the serial which are conflated or substituted, or removed altogether in the film version. There is, at times, a subsequent substitution of events and re-location of narrative content. Some examples of characters altered or removed have been given. A further example of how the required length of the film impacts on script is in the conflation of two characters encountered by Quatermass in the serial during his investigation of the Plant. In the serial, Vincent Broadhead (Rupert Davies) is part of a Whitehall enquiry group on the Plant, which comprises infected persons of high rank in the government. The scene in which Quatermass questions the enquiry group about the Plant illustrates the reach of the alien invasion within the government and taps in to fears over authority and power. This sense of an infiltrated government is established with narrative economy in the film when Lomax (John
Longden) discovers the mark, the sign of infection, on the Commissioner (John Stuart). In the serial, Broadhead is infected after the meeting; however in the film version he attends a visit to the Plant with Quatermass and is killed. The Broadhead of the film (Tom Chatto) is a counterpart of his namesake in the serial by name only and conflates this role with another character. His fate is shared in the serial by a Public Relations official, Rupert Ward (Derek Aylward), who takes Quatermass and Fowler (Austin Trevor), a senior civil servant sympathetic to the investigation, in to the Plant. The film expands on the visit, which is discussed further in Chapter 4; therefore this discussion is necessarily brief. Broadhead has attempted to attend an organised visit and finally has access and Quatermass is immediately given a place on the same visiting party, which suggests secrecy and a suspicion towards the use of power and authority. The visit comprises a larger number of people, and the rest of the party apart from Quatermass becomes infected, again to show the operations of the aliens and those working for them, rather than provide the information through dialogue. Although the highly unsettling scenes indicating the aforementioned elimination of the picnicking family are removed in the film, the sense of danger and the ruthlessness the aliens are capable of remain in the film through, for instance, the physical attack on Quatermass and the infection of the visitors, forced against their will to obey.

Changes to the female characters are also interesting and can further indicate the priorities of the filmmakers. In the serial, Quatermass has a daughter, Paula (Monica Grey), which is in itself a development from The Quatermass Experiment. Her role, which has a romantic attachment with Dillon, arguably helps provide the human interest aspect of interest to Kneale and mentioned above in relation to the first serial. Like the Mrs Caroon of the earlier television story, Paula has an important role in the serial and
works within the scientific team headed by her father. It is interesting that the film edits the character out as she could be seen as an identification figure for the female audience and, in terms of gender representation, a positive figure as she is a professional character rather than simply a “daughter”. The film therefore has no significant female roles, and implies a male centred focus. There is an additional character, however, in the film version, Sheila (Vera Day), the barmaid in the scene when Quatermass, Lomax and the journalist Jimmy Hall (Sydney James) go to the pub in the New Town near the Plant. The representation of the female character conforms more to patriarchal stereotypes, with costume and lighting highlighting the female form on display, emphasised by the jig she dances in the pub. Sheila is injured when an “Overshot”, a missile that contains the alien form, crashes through the roof, which further situates her as defined by patriarchy, vulnerable and in need of help. The poster advertising *Quatermass II* drew on this notion of woman as in need of protection, prominently displaying her to the left of the image looking anguished and threatened (*Today’s Cinema*, April 29th, 1957: 2). Another significant change in this sequence is the treatment of the journalist character, which, in the serial, offers a chance to dramatise the hybridity implied within the infected humans.

In the film version of the scene, the journalist is shot dead by the Plant guards, as he is phoning in his story to the press. This offers a further example of the ruthlessness of the aliens and their hold on their human hosts, possessed by them and subject to their will. In the serial, though, the journalist, Conrad (Roger Delgado), is infected. The sequence in which he becomes infected and rings his story through provides a representation of the possession by the aliens of the human and the hybrid of alien/human, not dissimilar to the internal conflict witnessed in Caroon and discussed in Chapter 4. The representation of the hybrid in *Quatermass II* is one of anxiety and dread over the loss of individual self,
although in the case of the journalist there is an example of the human not being totally overrun. Previous scenes have also illustrated the possession of the subject and control of the human host, for example when Dillon is infected in episode 2 his voice changes and sounds hoarse, as if speaking with difficulty as he warns Quatermass off. The infection of the journalist, which happens off-screen, is signalled by his changed demeanour and the amount of close-ups on him as he and Quatermass drive from the pub at the New Town. Initially Conrad is unusually quiet and subdued and has to be pulled along by Quatermass, and during his phone call to the press he struggles to speak, to give his story over to his colleagues. There appears to be a battle between two wills that indicates a horror coming from the inside, the subject made strange. The scene creates tension by having most of the scenario played out in close up shots of Conrad on the phone, with one cut away to the onlookers in the pub while they decide to take action against the Plant. Conrad’s struggle is indicated by broken speech and agitation; he has difficulty getting his words out, as if they are being pulled from him. The scenes showing Conrad struggling with the different parts of himself, the human and the alien invader, gives a chance to express the inner turmoil of the infected and the character’s will being subsumed by the alien invader.

As with the critical reactions to The Quatermass Experiment, the contemporaneous responses to Quatermass II implied hybridity, although it was perhaps less so than before. The review in The Daily Telegraph, for instance, evokes monster movies in the horror genre when it references King Kong in describing the aliens themselves, and calls the guards ‘zombies’, which itself echoes dialogue in the film (Dixon, 25.5.57). Publicity and marketing produced by Hammer and their American distributors, United Artists, also evokes the hybrid to an extent. This is through referencing the original series and also
through the framing of the introduction to the film’s personnel. Firstly, a studio publicity release calls the film ‘Nigel Kneale’s “Quatermass II”’, which echoes the evoking of the series mentioned above (David Stevens for Hammer, undated: 1). In another publicity release by Stevens for Hammer, the new distribution agreement with United Artists is emphasised, situating *Quatermass II* within a series of films to be made under this new remit. This release also introduces the key personnel involved in the film, in the following order; Donlevy, Hinds, followed by Guest. The actor, therefore gets ‘top billing’ in the marketing, with the producer second and the director third; clearly there is a hierarchy here and the American actor is afforded star status with his Hollywood credentials foregrounded (David Stevens for Hammer, May 24\(^{th}\), 1956). This perhaps tallies more with the popular imagination in that the actor may take precedence for the cinema spectator over the director, although in critical discourse this might not be the case. Emphasising the American personnel and distribution company can be seen as contributing to a hybrid identity; *Quatermass II*, like *The Quatermass Experiment*, embodies the hybrid in its production context and through the process of adaptation from television series to film.

This chapter has shown how notions of Britishness and national identity were at work throughout the adaptation process of the Quatermass films. The next chapter will proceed to consider issues of national identity within the 1950s Quatermass films, examining representation of British identity and hybridity, which will be further linked to discussion of how science fiction and horror is configured within a British cultural context. The hybrid can then be linked to socio-cultural changes and the very nature of the 1950s themselves. This can then be linked to discussion of hybrid elements within the articulation of the Gothic and the uncanny through science fiction and horror.
Chapter Three: Quatermass and National Identity

Introduction

Within his analysis of the construction of national identity, Jeffrey Richards (1997) highlights a range of characteristics and qualities that are identified as being applied to cultural notions of “Englishness” and “Britishness”. These include ideologically driven ideas promoted and developed through schools, literature and law such as ‘duty, service and conscience, thrift, sobriety and personal restraint’ (1997: 11). These qualities are not expressed through the character of Quatermass in the two 1950s films produced by Hammer, *The Quatermass Experiment* (Val Guest, 1955) and *Quatermass II* (Val Guest, 1957). As played by the American Brian Donlevy, the role of Quatermass embodies and exhibits very different character traits. The presence of Donlevy and his apparent interpretation of the role serve to underline the distinctiveness of that which he is not: “British” character traits, figures and the settings they inhabit. The films, therefore, offer an interesting opportunity to examine and consider the nature of national identity and also concomitant discourses and popular notions of identity and nationhood. This is especially the case given the changing circumstances within the United Kingdom in the years after World War II and within the wider international context.

This chapter focuses on questions relating to “nation” and national identities, response to social and cultural change and ideas about what constitutes “national character”. Analysis of the Quatermass films and their articulation of aspects relating to national identity enable a consideration of social anxieties and themes such as the hybrid, the stranger within the familiar landscape, invasion narratives and attitudes towards modernity and change. This can be related to the social and cultural context; analysis of the film text needs to be situated within the broader picture of society at the time of production. The
interpretation of a film text also alters according to circumstances of reception and social changes between time periods; there is a historical and cultural specificity. The degree to which the films articulate contemporaneous social changes, especially in regard to notions of “national” character and nationhood are considered. It is useful, therefore, to first examine notions of “nation”, national identities and developments in these during the 1940s/1950s. Part of this discussion is looking at what notions there were at that time of “the nation” and “Britishness”, while bearing in mind that this is frequently conflated in popular imagination and critical discourses with “Englishness” in a way that elides Scottish, Welsh and Irish identities and regions of England far from the capital.

Richards’ aforementioned ideas on the forging of national identity concur with those in Ernest Renan’s 1882 lecture at the Sorbonne (in Bhabha ed. 1990). Renan discusses the ideological project of religion and institutions working together in the construction of nations and nationhood. Such concepts enter public consciousness through repetition within cultural formations, thereby achieving hegemonic status through naturalisation. Their function as a tool with the potential to bind disparate entities together is of key importance, as they provided an ‘integrative image for the ruling elites of Great Britain’ and transcended internal boundaries, becoming ideologies that, as Richards states, informed colonial attitudes (1997: 12).

Such ideological notions, then, enter popular consciousness to the degree that they inform a construction of British national identity. According to research referenced by Richards, this in turn informs a continental popular view of the British as ‘reserved, practical, serious, calm, sceptical and self-controlled’ (1997: 5). Further, Richards references a study on the “national character” conducted during the inter-war period, in
the 1930s, finding that there was a broad agreement across the political spectrum over what this national character was perceived to be. A range of traits is identified by Richards, including insularity, bluffness, common sense, tenacity, compromising, anti-intellectual, private, law-abiding (ibid: 14). By implication from this inventory and the characteristics hitherto mentioned above, there is a wide range of traits that are not counted within the lexicon of “Britishness”; these include ambition, emotion and feeling, inquisitiveness and a desire to experiment, sociability and fantasy. That these might be seen as “foreign” invites the question of how cultural products engage with them and what informs these perceptions, how they are circulated.

The key point of interest for this study is the process through which the above notions of national identity are explored and utilised through *The Quatermass Experiment* and *Quatermass II*. What discourses are drawn on in the dramatisation of the monstrous threat, the characterisations and narrative development? While the above traits may form part of the language of characterisation and identification, the cultural and social specifics of production and reception are also significant. Richards notes how social and political changes beginning in the 1950s meant belief systems that had previously held currency no longer did to such an extent, with society undergoing processes of change in lifestyle, working lives and attitudes (ibid: 18/19). Elsewhere, Richards observes that in the immediate post-war period after 1945, there was substantial political change but less social and cultural development, citing the new Labour government against the continuing monarchy and class division (ibid: 128).

This chapter, then, considers construction of national identity, and its configuration within *The Quatermass Experiment* and *Quatermass II*. This analysis is linked closely
with notions relating to the experience of modernity within British culture and society in the 1950s. These modes of being will be examined through the conflict within the first film between the aloof, efficient expert knowledge of the scientist who possesses the drive for knowledge through experiment, and the more conventional attitude and methodology of the British establishment as represented within the police and other institutions. Modernity will also be addressed as a “project” on a national level, as a symbol of the potential for development of the nation politically and economically. The relationship between this and the popular imagination is considered as it enables consideration of the difference between the “nation” and the populace that comprise it, between official discourses and the subject. Jim Leach asserts how the “people” and the “nation” are distinct to each other (2004: 86), which affirms nation as construction. The extent to which the films correlate to popular conceptions of Britain and national identity or engage critically with it is a key theme, assessing the dialogue between different conceptions of “Englishness” and “Britishness”. Further, the notion of a fixed national identity is critically considered and the processes by which popular concepts of nationhood are expressed are addressed, when appropriate to the formation of identity in film. The linking of characteristics associated with national character and the oppressive regime of the alien invaders in the second film will be considered as a way of questioning what constitutes the national character and how such an identity might respond to a threat of this nature.

Three-way Construction: The Nation, National Identity and the National Character in Film

Richards asserts the significance of national identity in looking at the way individuals within society define themselves. Further, he states that various aspects may be
emphasised according to circumstance and ideology, the implication being that
perceptions of both national identities and cinematic culture are contingent upon
ideological construction. Concepts of national identity and the nation itself become a
‘cultural artefact’ through the process whereby the governing powers of a nation
encourage the population to ‘identify with it by education, culture, ceremonial and ritual’
(1997: 1). There is the notion here of an “official” discourse regarding national identity,
which is disseminated by the aforementioned powers through cultural forms, including
cinema.

Timothy Brennan (1990) also discusses the process of constructing a concept of the
nation that comprises disparate elements. He highlights that there is “nation” in the sense
of the modern nation-state and “nation” in the more ‘ancient and nebulous’ notion of a
‘condition of belonging’ (1990: 45). Constructing a popular idea of the nation through
national institutions, ceremonies and rituals can elide difference. The powerful metaphor
of family can provide both a point of focus for the populace and distraction from social
realities. “Englishness” and “Britishness” are frequently conflated, an observation that
can be informed by Ernest Renan’s lecture ‘What is a Nation’ (1882), which chimes with
notions of British internal power. It is interesting to note that Renan identifies the nation
as a new concept, like Brennan, and that as distinct units, nations ‘in this sense of the
term, are something fairly new in history’ (1882 in Bhaba ed. 1990: 9). This in itself
further implies the nation, and moreover the history of it, as a construct, Renan stating
that each nation has a myth of itself to explain its existence and link disparate peoples.
For Renan, two factors help forge a nation: commonality and amnesia, which are ‘the
essence of a nation in that all individuals have many things in common, and also that
they have forgotten many things’ (ibid: 11).
Britain, then, is unified through ritual, institutions and the education system. The other key aspect, taking both Renan and Richards, is the English language itself combined with the national power base being London. Leach also identifies how ‘England is often the part that stands for the whole’ of the United Kingdom (2004: 13). He also notes how institutions are mainly based around London, as is the film industry (ibid: 14). This leads to a privileging of Englishness in representation and discourse. While the significance of the constituent nations that comprise the United Kingdom should be stressed and is increasingly being recognised within the national political scene, the hegemony of the English language and its use within culture and government has inevitably contributed to an imbalance in power. Significantly, as Leach observes, Scottish, Welsh and Irish writers ‘wrote in English, and the language tends to take precedence over their national origins’ (ibid: 15). Language itself can bind and the imposition of it to areas outside England (Wales, Scotland, Ireland) and more distant geographical areas within it (Cornwall, The Isle of Man), all of which have a strong Celtic identity, complements the Ideological State Apparatuses\(^\text{10}\) mentioned above. Renan argues that the hybrid nature of major countries should be recognised, that ‘the leading nations of Europe are nations of essentially mixed blood’, implying inherent hybridity of the sort indicated above by Higson (1882 in Bhaba ed. 1990: 15).

What is significant here is how perceptions of national character might have been informed by changes felt by Britain in a changing international political climate, with significant reduction in status abroad due to the increasing independence of previous colonies and the rising influence of the U.S.A. The onset of the Cold War and the increasing opposition between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. may have compounded this

\(^{10}\) The term ‘Ideological State Apparatus’ derives from Louis Althusser (1971) and refers to the social institutions within civil society, including education, the family, religion, which function to perpetuate ideology on behalf of the dominant ruling class (O’Sullivan, Hartley, Saunders, Fiske. 1983: 111)
sense of Britain becoming diminished. Indeed, Hutchings asserts that there was at this time a growing ‘public awareness of the decline of Empire and Britain’s reduced status as a world leader’, noting the importance of the Suez Crisis of 1956 as indicator of this (1993: 42). For Hutchings, the external source of threat within the Quatermass narrative relates to ‘an ever decreasing British sphere of influence’ (ibid: 42); both of the 1950s films, therefore, articulate a post-colonial anxiety. This manifests itself variously. There is return of the tainted figure in The Quatermass Experiment, coming back from “Out There” and in Quatermass II both fear of political and cultural take-over by a more powerful force from outside and a questioning of the nature of the domestic government and population.

For Davies, the Franco-British forces having to pull out of Suez under pressure from the United States is the culmination of the decline of the British Empire (1999: 762). Davies states the process was not simply one of a steady dismantling of power and influence, but that there were additions and disintegrations occurring at roughly the same time; a sense of flux and instability and of a crumbling of the edifice from within (1999: 756). This could perhaps be more alarming for the nationalist mode of thinking as it suggests a deeper impermanence than a gradual process of change might.

As Davies suggests, the loss of Empires can be due to Imperial overstretch with too much territory and too little resources, and a growth of national sentiment and anti-colonial discourse within the colonised nations (1999: 761). The Atlee government after the Second World War realised that Britain had lost the ability to exercise power effectively over such a wide geographical area, and that economic problems within the United Kingdom formed the backdrop for the relinquishing of direct rule of, for example, India.
Within the popular imagination, then, the financial crisis within Britain could have been as part of a greater malaise, one which renders a once influential and powerful international state more dependent on other, larger, stronger nations and with a more localised sphere of influence. As Davies states, the Empire itself played a highly significant role in the forging of British identity and self-perception (ibid: 764); what happens, therefore, when it is threatened and goes?

The self-image of Britain set against political realities could throw the gap between national myth and actuality into sharp relief and emphasise not only these changing circumstances but also shortcomings and false logic of assumptions behind “national character”. This split between fiction and truth is implied by Jeremy Black in his study (2001) of the Bond figure in both novel and film form. He notes how post-war Britain was ‘still a major imperial power, and she sought to act like one in the late 1940s and 1950s in Africa, Malaya and the Middle East’ (2001: 3). Black notes how this empire and associated status was at risk, suggesting that this was why the Bond novels, the first of which was published in 1953, were so popular (ibid: 4). In James Bond, a character who, as Black states, was ‘designed to resist the threat to empire’ (ibid: 4), comfort was offered to alleviate the anxieties resulting from the changes to national status and identity. In Dr No (1958, Ian Fleming), racially hybrid “Chigroes” (1958: 9) threaten the colonial rule in Jamaica, and as Black states, the foreign nature of the villains is a key factor in emphasising their threat (2001: 4).

It is interesting for this study that a narrative such as Dr No should emphasise racial difference and hybridity as threatening. It provides an indication of the discourses surrounding national identities contemporaneous to the Quatermass narratives, while also
offering a different emphasis on hybridity itself. This is especially important considering the circumstances of the Quatermass films and the way they might be seen to engage with difference within their production contexts and narratives. How can these changes and anxieties be read within the films? How might these changes have been seen at that time and how do the films respond to that? In discussion of the 1980s Heritage Film, John Hill considers how imagery that harks back to the past ‘become the object of nostalgia’ (1999: 86). They evoke a yearning for an imagined past that, through comparison with the present, appears attractive and provides, as Hill states, a ‘kind of ‘secondhand’ nostalgia’ for a past not lived through (ibid: 85). Through the presence and imagery of buildings and objects associated with cultural heritage and history, the films can suggest the construction of a notion of a lost stability and certainty. Can the Quatermass films be showing a social world that lagged behind the political and economic changes?

Taking critical approaches that emphasise plurality assists in analysis of how the film narratives engage with these key questions. Andrew Higson (2000) challenges a critical discourse that emphasises consensus and a notion of a unified identity, noting the problematic nature of this and how it elides difference and the plurality of cultural influences in film. His own earlier work was ‘rather too ready to find British films presenting an image of a coherent, unified, consensual nation’ (2000: 35). This foregrounds how perceptions of film culture are constructed. It also points the way to appreciating the diverse range of influences on British cinema. Higson also stresses the diversity of British culture and national identity. This provides a useful model for this study as it indicates how both popular imagination and critical discourses might rely on pre-conceived notions of what identity might imply and how it is dramatised in the films.
‘It would seem reasonable to define a national cinema as one that draws on indigenous cultural traditions, one that invokes and explores the nation’s cultural heritage. But what exactly is an indigenous cultural tradition?’ (ibid: 36). This stresses the problem of attempting to map the concept of a unified and consensual cultural identity on to the “nation” and to see this imagined within cultural products in an unproblematic way. The extent that, for instance, a narrative depicting a specific social milieu can be taken as representative of the nation as a whole is indicated and questioned here, a factor that is especially the case when such films appear to promote particular ideological notions of national heritage, for instance: whose heritage, whose story is being depicted? Higson also notes how certain characteristics are assumed to be “identifiably British” without question. This can naturalise the perceived link between character traits and national identities. Further, he highlights how critics ‘take Britishness for granted in a way which glosses over too many questions of community, culture, belonging and identity’ (2000: 40).

However, as Higson states, ‘there are also ways in which the British cinema of the past might be thought of as engaging with heterogeneity and plurality’ (ibid: 40). Cinema can be seen to engage with difference by emphasising the role played by international financing, distribution and reception, or within narrative and genre that could suggest a hybrid identity. Higson identifies three methodological strands in emphasising plurality in British cinema, which is a model used in this study for considering the Quatermass films. Firstly, there is the ‘identification of the diverse cultural strands that have over the years fed into British cinema’ (ibid: 41), which, although for Higson emphasises the variety of representations and film style, also indicates the influences of other cultural forms on film production. These could include source novels and other visual media, as
has been discussed above in adaptation. Secondly, and linked to this, are the ‘specifically foreign influences’ (ibid: 41) on film style and production, which enable consideration of how the horror and science fiction genres are configured in cinema. When a film genre or style associated with a mode of film-making is used in another context, to what extent is this a foreign influence: how does the new context provide another inflection? This can introduce and engage with notions of the hybrid. Thirdly, there is the ‘revisionist interpretations of the films of consensus produced during the Second World War’ (ibid: 41). Although this refers to an earlier historical period to the one for this study, it informs discussion of the Quatermass films. What role does modernity and technological advances play through interaction with conventional practice? Can these forces be mapped on to a dialogue between British and non-British characters and positions?

**National Identity and Modernity in The Quatermass Experiment**

According to Richards, a national persona was projected in wartime cinema focusing on ‘sense of humour…tolerance…stoicism or emotional restraint…duty and service’ (1997: 16). He also considers the potential of film as an ideological tool that can be used to promote said characteristics when referring to the Ealing films and Passport to Pimlico (1949) as ‘informed by a desire to return to the wartime spirit of unity and co-operation as the best means of facing and overcoming the problems of the post-war world’ (ibid: 135). Leach refers to the way in which wartime films promoted this sense of the unified nation, engaged in a “‘People’s War”, a unified struggle against fascism that would result in a more democratic and less class-bound nation after the war’ (2004: 18).

*The Quatermass Experiment*, produced in 1954 and released in the following year, contains narrative references to the qualities cited above and to the experience of the
recent war, in both visual motifs and dialogue. The frolicking couple who witness the arrival of the space rocket as it lands heavily on its return to earth, evoke cultural memory of bombing and the anxiety over potential threats within the space/nuclear age in their confusion as to what they witness, be it rocket, missile or meteor. There is a sense of commingling of the two elements, the old and the new technologies and the threats they represent, which recurs within the film. The wartime references, though, together with the pastoral country lane and field setting, suggest cultural memory that potentially provides an experience intended to promote senses of unity and commonality. Other elements suggest personal traits identified above that appear to dramatise and promote these notions of a national character.

After the arrival of the crowds in the street and the landing site, the fire brigade, police and military intervene to maintain order and calm, the film here using recognisable iconography and character types based on the immediate and recent experience of the audience contemporaneous to production. The pleas for the crowd to disperse, with its clipped accent and polite, courteous insistence, evokes 1950s public announcement modes of address and the level headed, calm personal qualities identified above as being examples of British national character. The speaker appeals to reason as the crowd stands immobile. To a contemporary ear, the received pronunciation of the accent also evokes official proclamation and a wartime sensibility. Later, the onlookers at the field stand back, keeping distance from the rocket ship and the experts at work. Reactions to potential unexploded bombs may be evoked here, emphasised by the dialogue between two policemen who quip about bank holidays and the chance that the rocket ship might be a relic from the recent war. The crowd becomes passive observers, participants in
modernity at one remove, by proxy, holding on to the ordinary, suggesting the notion of Britain standing watching while other powers engage in the modern scientific project. Modernity as a project is discussed by Geraghty, as a mode that interacts with the experience of living and responding with it (2000: 22). She states that those living in the 1950s ‘often experienced a feeling of change and newness’ (ibid: 21), through socio-political and technological changes. This can be applied to national identity and concepts of “nationhood”, in the process of establishing a sense of identity within the context of the modern age. In noting a range of discourses on modernity, Geraghty indicates how it can be seen as a ‘project in which science and reason should free mankind from poverty and ignorance’ (2000: 23). There is the increase in specialist knowledge and the applications of science to areas of human behaviour, which can be seen in efforts to classify, define and control (ibid: 23).

Geraghty also considers how modernity is seen as a mode of experience that emphasises constant change and renewal and where the present, because it is not fixed, is being re-defined as the past while at the same time being identified as the contemporary (ibid: 22). This suggests not only flux but also a connection between the “past” and the “present” as ideas and cultural products, in a way that connects with discussion of nostalgia. There could be an articulation here of an anxiety concerning whether or not to participate in the slipstream of modernity or to allow it to pass by, as joining it may precipitate an increase in order and control and the ‘extension of industry, science and technology into all parts of society and in developments in education and politics that seek to civilise and control this process’ (ibid: 22).
The extent to which the film is reflecting or negotiating with and commenting on wartime references and discourses of national character is worth exploring. An old man ventures out of his partly wrecked home with a rifle, which he quickly realises is inappropriate and outmoded in the context of the current danger. If taken as a critique of conventional behaviour, this implies that traditional methods and ways of thinking are an inadequate means of responding to the new situation, and by extension, to the changing society in the 1950s. The first meeting with Quatermass in the car en route to the site demonstrates the potential clash between the need for answers, facts, playing by rules and following procedure set against the desire for knowledge, experiment, and achievement. If the traits above commonly associated with national character are aligned with the former approach, an implied criticism can again be seen as the British representative of the government ministry (Lionel Jeffries) is haranguing and attempting to block Quatermass, his insistent questions appearing irritating. This could be read as a critique on British bureaucracy and “red tape”, the split being seen between policy makers and management, and more active practitioners who aim to implement endeavours and ideas and might be seen to be held back by the rules set by the hierarchies who employ them. Here this is dramatised through Anglo-US relations exemplified by these two characters, with Britishness identified with small-minded caution that should be disregarded as being outmoded.

The dramatisation of the meeting between the traditional, conventional, and the new, the modern, can be seen throughout the film. There is the sense that the attitudes of the past need to be adapted to suit the changes undergone by society. Further, the film dramatises concerns and anxieties over the changing political states referred to above. This can be seen through the opening credits with the music against the darkening sky suggesting the
oncoming threat—of what? The monster, the alien certainly, and what this “Other” represents in terms of social and cultural concerns. The onset of technological change, the influence of the outsider, possible social conflict resulting from the disintegration of previously held certainties can all be read in to the figure of Caroon as he mutates from human into something else that science at present has no answer for. The need to understand and make sense of the threat imposed by this alien “Other” through improvisation and experiment encourages an empathy with Quatermass and his methodology, however ambivalent a character he might be. The ideological implications appear to be that current thinking needs to update itself against the new scientific realities and their implications within the film, as it has to catch up with them. By extension, the social changes in society need to catch up with the political developments in Britain. While the diegetic world and some of the attitudes within it may be predicated on notions of wartime consensus, then, the intention may not be to invoke nostalgia for a “lost” unity, but to highlight the problematic nature of nostalgia itself.

If concerns around identity, immigration and race are read through Caroon, the alien nature of what he becomes is significant. Indigenous cultural aspects are combined with “Otherness” through his character and physical self, returning from beyond and tainted by an outside force, altering beyond all recognition. The national fuses with the foreign, a hybrid status is established, which could imply the threat of an invasive outside force threatening a vulnerable (national) body, while subverting the idea of a single, unified national identity in a manner that implies an anxiety over the hybrid.

While hybridity, the self and subjectivity will be discussed subsequently within the Gothic and the fantastic, here it can be considered in relation to national identity. The
presence of the hybrid and of mutation within the narrative can be read as an exploration
of change to the identity of the nation within the altering post-war, post-colonial
environment. How, through Caroon and the response by Quatermass and the
establishment to what he becomes, concerns over the changing status of Britain might be
dramatised, is important. Within the figure of Caroon especially, but also through
characters exemplifying concepts of national identity, a dialogue between conceptions of
the nation and its related characteristics can be seen. Caroon mutates physically and
psychically from “Victor”, a name that connotes the hero figure of the Second World
War, into something else and suggests subversion of cultural memory of the war.

When seen in the context of the invasion narrative, the treatment of Caroon offers an
articulation over notions of the Empire, the nation and immigration, specifically
regarding attitudes towards race and the constructed racial “Other”. Davies charts the
progress of immigration in the United Kingdom from the turn of the twentieth century
(1999: 824). He noted how economic migrants from the West Indies and Indian
subcontinent arrived after World War II on Empire Windrush 1948, when there was an
open door policy due to labour shortages and the need for workers. Davies considers
opposition to Commonwealth immigration and sets this in context. Previous immigrant
groups had been met with hostility, for instance the ant-Semitic reactions that Jewish
communities had experienced in the 1930s from the British Union of Fascists (1999:
823). Negative reactions to post-war immigration were, as Davies states, partly economic
but also cultural. ‘British society was still extraordinarily traditional in outlook. The
sound of steel bands, or the sight of a mosque in Regent’s Park, were unfamiliar, and
often thought, inappropriate’ (ibid: 824). Another reason was educational, suggests
Davies. He notes how a recent study shows that during this period ‘some British history
textbooks were still preaching a message of moral and cultural superiority’ (1999: 825). This suggests an inability by the official discourse and the popular imagination to adapt to changing circumstances, which feeds into the anxiety over nationhood and identity that appears in both the 1950s Quatermass films.

Caroon can be read through this as articulating fears of infiltration, hybridisation, even of invasion. The return to earth in the rocket becomes a form of homecoming, to the constructed heart of the “nation” of the Empire, if seen in colonialist terms. The method of rejuvenation and feeding by Caroon, the vampire-like taking of the life and energies of another, can certainly be seen as expressing a fear of the lack of difference and of category crisis. While this might be seen in terms of loss of self, here it can be applied to notions of loss of national identity and therefore addresses notions of the hybrid, with the film dramatising a dread of the commingled, which signals a complex attitude within the film to social and cultural change. Caroon can be seen in this way as expressing anxiety over change coming from outside or the colonisers becoming the colonised. The formlessness and monstrous nature of the creature Caroon becomes, unnameable and beyond the knowledge that science possesses, can be read, when considering the efficacy of convention against the new, as the dramatisation of anxiety over Britain’s international status. As Davies states, nostalgia for an imagined past, was, for the British, ‘who lost their enviable status as top dog…particularly acute’ (1999: 840). Will post-war Britain have to change beyond recognition, and how will its new role and status affect its global influence; will it be understood, will it have a voice in the international arena?

The 1950s themselves and historical perspectives on them are worth considering in relation to the film and the conflict between old/new and how this itself dramatises
negotiations between different ideas about national character and identity. Geraghty, in her aforementioned discussion of modernity as both a project, a drive for change and development, and as the lived experience responding to those changes, notes how a respondent to research remarked how she could not get used to the “newness” of things at that time. As Geraghty states, this is not an aspect normally associated with the 1950s, noting how this period is ‘characterised first by austerity and then by a secure, rather complacent affluence’ (2000: 21). This suggests how our perceptions have been constructed with a popular “common-sense” view, being based on self-perpetuating notions that bear little resemblance to lived actuality. It also implies an uncertain response to change that appears to be dramatised in the film as outlined above, a sense that science offers new possibilities but also threats. An interesting aspect of the 1950s is that, as Geraghty proceeds to discuss, it ‘sits quietly between the upheaval and dangers of the Second World War and the social revolution of the 1960s’ (ibid: 21). This view of the period of the film’s production suggests that the 1950s are a “period in waiting” for something to happen perhaps, the nation biding its time. This could be to evaluate the most appropriate response to these changes or to better understand modernity and technological change. In this case, the notion of mutation can be seen as the gestation process for the nation as it re-evaluates its place.

Geraghty’s observation about the nature of the 1950s also suggests the period as a liminal state, in-between, a time of flux when ideas of nationhood may be more fluid. Although she does not refer to the Quatermass films specifically here, this observation is used here to further inform a reading of Quatermass, with the idea of mutating into something new aligned with providing a discursive framework in which inherent hybridity, which has always existed but been elided, can be acknowledged and affirmed. The film, then,
possibly considers a range of identities and traits, rather than simply providing a consensus view. Geraghty argues that 1950s films offered a ‘view of the world that is at odds with what were understood at the time, to be progressive notions of change and modernisation’ (ibid: 21) and what should be investigated is the purpose of this. It has been suggested above that there might be a critique in the film of values associated with nostalgia, despite the film both critiquing and evoking nostalgic sentiments in the references to wartime experience. This creates an interesting tension between nostalgic yearning for the past and values associated with it in the popular imagination, and a desire to perhaps realise the potential of the “modern age”. If the film is challenging consensus and received notions of national identity, through dramatising social/cultural change and the need for new approaches, it is through considering the characters of Quatermass and Chief Inspector Lomax as main examples of new, outside and conventional British approaches that this might be mapped out.

The American Quatermass embodies character traits markedly absent from the list of attributes above. His appearance at the landing site is of a bullying authority figure enjoying a mandate over all civil and military personnel. The dialogue reveals he acted without official sanction or clearance, suggesting the antithesis to the cautious, law-abiding approach identified as part of the British character. His first meeting with Lomax enables the differences between them to be made clearer. Lomax is presented in a familiar official and functional setting, with order and authority suggested by the solid furniture and imposing desk in his office. He is coded as an amicable character however, using his electric shaver at his desk and joking about his wife and payday. Similar to the earlier reference to bank holidays, this feeds in to popular ideas of Britishness and British humour. The running joke of him never getting a proper shave and being unable to have
his dinner contributes to this and also humanises him. His comments regarding the
evidence of the activity of the monster later in the film, either a dead body ‘that takes
care of my supper tonight’ (1955: 46:01) or slime left by the mutated creature ‘look
pretty horrible’ (ibid: 101:30) proves him to be a master of British understatement and
matter-of-fact in his approach. He is laconic, has a sense of fair play and professes to be
old fashioned and conventional, saying to Quatermass ‘I’m a plain simple Bible man’
with a ‘routine mind’ (ibid: 18:00). This aligns him with traits associated in popular
consciousness with British national character through his straightforward logic.

Quatermass, though, is similarly to the point in his approach, but he is bullish with it. He
bursts in to the office where Lomax is, accusing him and the police force of harassing Caroon, demanding immediate answers without pausing for breath. He is coded as
incautious and aggressive, the apparent antithesis of Lomax. He asserts the need for scientific investigation as the only worthwhile one and he needs to do it, not Lomax,
thereby representing a new dynamism from outside taking over.

This can be seen also as a metaphor for the production context of the film, with the
American investors for Hammer having such influence on the making of the film and the
casting of the roles. It could also be recognised as representing political influence extending beyond the U.S.A. within nations outside its borders. The aforementioned absolute authority of Quatermass, which appears curious as he is “outside” the British state, brings an American controlling mechanism into the operations of the national government. The distributors wanted American stars to help sell the film to their
prospective market, hence the casting of Donlevy in the role\textsuperscript{11}. Guest states how lines of
dialogue and material had to be modified to make it appropriate for the Donlevy screen

\textsuperscript{11}This was not unusual in the 1950s and 1960s, with other British made films operating in this way, for instance \textit{Night of the Demon} (Jacques Tourneur 1957) and \textit{The Damned} (Joseph Losey 1961) both use Americans as the male hero
persona, saying ‘the two characters talk in a different language really’ (ibid: 12:01). This introduces a sense of difference between the two versions and raises the notion of there being two distinct characters. Outside influences on British culture can also be seen here, further suggesting the notion of an already hybrid culture and society.

Linnie Blake (2007) provides, in discussion of the adaptations by Hollywood of contemporary Japanese horror films, observations that are useful here. Blake observes the ‘tendency to re-cast […] in ways that speak directly to US audiences about themselves’ (2007: 211) in relation to specific genre elements like *anime*. There is something similar happening in the re-casting of the role of Quatermass in to an American character, to provide access for the US audience, a means through which they can engage with the narrative. Britain is articulated through images constituting a generic “Englishness”, simultaneously drawing on pre-conceived notions of identity while representing American and English relations in such a way as to satisfy United States national self-image as benign interveners in British affairs. While the setting is not “Americanised”, it is a Britain inhabited by characters and dialogue that could be easily identified and recognised to the US audience. The images could help maintain pre-conceived notions of “Britain”, with the locations, uniformed police and military personnel, accents and dialogue content of bank holidays and payday. These are features that might have been familiar to the transatlantic audience, or at least part of existing national mythology and able to serve as shorthand for “Britain”.

Further factors invite the American figure of Quatermass to be seen critically as an articulation of economic and political relations between the United States and Britain. Davies identifies a decline in heavy industry alongside the loss of the Empire, after 1945
(1999: 793), noting the technological changes with the newer industries that heralded changes in themselves. This produces uncertainty, particularly when those industries form the basis for much of the social and cultural life of the population, providing cohesion as well as a measure of economic stability. In the uncertainty precipitated by these changes there were also the economic problems in the immediate post-war period after 1945. The role of the United States is significant, as the Anglo-American loan negotiated in 1945 by John Maynard Keynes provided financial help in near economic crisis. For the Clement Attlee Labour Government, voted in with a large majority on the promise of social reform, to realise its vision of a new Britain, financial help from the United States was needed. Britain received monetary aid, for instance, through American Marshall Aid from 1948, leading to improvements in the economic situation. These factors inform the interventions by American financiers and distributors in the British Film Industry, with many films then and now produced through their support. This plays in the background through the relationship between Quatermass, decisive and authoritative, in control due to superior knowledge and the privilege this affords him, and his British counterparts, who either attempt without any success to impede his progress or obey him implicitly. This relationship appears like that of an adult child caring for an ailing parent, reluctant and unwilling to receive the help but having little choice. The vigorous younger state, significantly an ex-colony of the parent nation, steps in to save the day, which chimes with the above notion, from Blake, that the depiction of Britain and Anglo-American relations serves the interest of a particular United States self-image.

A further factor played out through the narrative is the changing military relationship between the United States and Britain. Aspects of the figure of Quatermass such as his commanding power over British personnel, his ability to cut through red tape
bureaucracy, plus his ambivalent role as both harbinger of the monstrous crisis and eventual saviour of the nation, can be understood through this context. Davies refers to the United Kingdom as ‘loyal but junior partner’ to the United States (1999: 750) in relation to naval power. After the Second World War there was a reduction in the size and importance of the navy, with, after 1949, a substantial part of the armed forces, both sea and land, being assigned to NATO. Decisions were subordinated to the international alliance and Britain was, in effect, ‘forced to abandon the very idea of sovereign, independent defences’, at least in part (ibid). This is articulated in the manner in which Quatermass is the most significant driving force and decision maker within the narrative. There is an ambivalent response to American identity, which, while identifying the main character as American, there is less opportunity provided than might be expected for the spectator to identify with the character.

Conventional thinking as exemplified by Lomax is not enough to defeat the threat posed by Caroon’s mutating form, as is even the conventional science of the diegetic world. It is left to Quatermass to hypothesise and improvise an explanation as to the root cause of the threat and how it will manifest itself, aided by Dr. Briscoe (David King-Wood). After the discovery of the first victim of the monster, the three men discuss how to proceed; a shot frames them, Quatermass and Lomax stood with Briscoe between them, visually representing their differences and positions. Briscoe bridges the gap, conventional man of science yet capable of realising the imaginings of Quatermass in to practical implications, summarising and making sense of what he says.

A combination of approaches is needed, as Lomax’s personnel track and search, while Briscoe and Quatermass monitor the mutation and predict the possible outcome. At one
point, Quatermass suggests to Lomax ‘send your men out with a prayer’ (1955: 101:36), invoking Lomax’s traditional thinking, as if there is some blurring of the division between them. Finally, Quatermass improvises and uses a powerful surge of electricity to kill the monster without causing potential harm to the populace. It is as if a fusion of disparate traits is needed to meet the challenge of the contemporary moment. Traditional and conventional approaches and modes of thought in isolation are not sufficient. The film both endorses and worries about hybridity and integration of identities, through the synthesis of methodologies and the nature of the monstrous threat that this combined tactical method meets. A hybrid approach is preferable that utilises present knowledge while engaging with newness and experimentation. Again, this can lead to the question of when and if “hybridity” became established, echoing Renan for instance in the idea of the “nation” being a hybrid construction and the concept of “national character” to be similarly, by extension, recognised as an ideological construct. The film evokes iconic symbols of the nation in the moments leading up to and during the destruction of the monster.

The setting of its final resting place, Westminster Abbey, at the spiritual heart of the city, recognisable through the recent 1952 royal coronation, suggest the imminent threat to culture and society posed by the alien. Susan Sontag (1965) considers the presence of the monstrous within the heart of the nation, in a discussion of the visual specificity of cinema. For Sontag, film is a particularly powerful means of realising science fiction tropes through provision of an ‘immediate representation of the extraordinary’ (1965: 212). Her discussion infers the vicarious pleasures that cinema offers and how it is possible, through science fiction film, to ‘participate in the fantasy of one’s own death and more, the death of cities, the destruction of humanity itself’ (ibid: 212). There is
special resonance in seeing the destruction of large cities, especially the capital city with its status and cultural importance (ibid: 214). In the case of The Quatermass Experiment the spectator gains pleasure and fascination from the potential for this annihilation. The shots of Battersea Power Station and the interior with the names of London districts prominently displayed on the gauges, “Kensington”, “Southwark” and “Marylebone”, are immediately recognisable nationally: the whole nation is at threat. The images of power being turned off throughout the city, shows a suspension of ordinary life and the normal routine of government and commerce. This moment is suggestive of traditional values having to be set aside temporarily for the threat to be defeated and for normal life to be continued, for familiar values to be maintained. The destructive scenario becomes more credible, as Sontag argues, because of the playing out of the narrative amongst quotidian settings, with reference to familiar cities laid waste (ibid: 215). The potential of the destruction of cultural symbols of national identity and political and economic life has a particular resonance. Cultural symbols, not people, carry more psychological weight and significance. Although the death of an individual may alert the spectator to the violence of the monster, the true destructive force is visually displayed by the threat to society as seen through icons of the nation. ‘Things, rather than the helpless humans, are the locus of values because we experience them, rather than people, as the source of power’ (ibid: 216).

The previous images of troops being mobilised and civil defence personnel that look for the creature immediately prior to the discovery of it in the Abbey are reminiscent of wartime activity. This provides a familiar and comforting image, in that something recognisable is taking place and attempting resolution. The efficacy of such processes, however, is called to question when the new medium of television exposes the monster.
A non-military agency, albeit government sponsored, achieves what the mass mobilisation failed to do. However, the presence of the BBC and the heritage subject of the historical programme being filmed at the Abbey imply links with British identity and national character. Is there an implication that different methodologies are merging or finding a coexistence? Perhaps, by extension, national identity or characteristics are more heterogeneous than might be thought according to received ideas. The final shot of Quatermass, Lomax and Briscoe has them occupying similar positions to the earlier mentioned three-shot stood together in the Abbey. However, Quatermass strides out of the building against a tide of people coming in, suggesting a mismatch and that either he is out of step with the times or that they are. This could also be read as the man of science not belonging in a church, a disparity between spirituality and logic. As he marches away from the site of destruction, ignoring most questions, he walks through pools of light, determined to begin another mission. This could mean that characteristics traditionally considered as comprising the national, are, if not inadequate in the modern world, in need of compromise and adaptation.

As Geraghty proposes, the response to modernity and change can be a combination of ‘a yearning for the parochial and the pleasure sought in imagined pasts’ and the ‘breathless excitement of the committed modernist’; this indicates a hybrid approach (2000: 25). The positions between these two extremes are also, therefore, possible, which invites a more pluralist approach to national identity. It becomes possible to articulate concepts of identities with a discourse of negotiation between positions. Rather than simple binary opposition between two approaches, a more heterogeneous site of cultural exchange can be seen, as social, economic and political changes precipitate re-negotiation of national character. It also enables a more pluralist approach to identity in general, rather than
emphasising fluidity within specific periods; this can be seen as a more permanent aspect of a “national character”, which, by its very nature, encompasses disparate and different elements.

**National Identity and Autocracy in Quatermass II**

*Quatermass II* began production in May 1956 and was released in May 1957, almost two years after the release of *The Quatermass Experiment*, under different production circumstances and within a changing social and political climate. These factors make themselves present in the altered nature of the alien threat, different physical manifestations of monstrousness and how these horror and science fiction elements interface with notions of national identity. There are elements common to each of the two films, but their application, treatment and implications differ. This section will consider how *Quatermass II* addresses the notion of national identity and presents a contrasting portrayal of the British national character. This character is explored through the changing figure of the scientist, attitudes to modernity together with the response of the British national character to the danger posed by the menace of the alien threat. A pervading atmosphere that can be identified as uncanny and a practice of situating science fiction tropes within the Gothic are common to each film, as noted by Hutchings (1999: 38), Pirie (1973: 35) and Rigby (2000: 49, 52), and which is discussed in the following chapter. Within narrative, characterisation and *mise-en-scène* a further dialogue between notions of national identity and “Otherness” can be identified and mapped out. In the second film there is a displacement of perception, with traits popularly identified with concepts of the national character now associated with the alien invaders. This invites a self-reflexive inquiry into national character, and through this distancing encourages it to be seen as part of cultural production. Within the relationship
between authority, power and the working population and exploration of the role of secrecy and the military, the response of what might be understood as the British character to autocracy is explored.

The potential of technology is explored within the film, initially through a discourse between notions of modernity and national identity not dissimilar to that in the first film. A sense of difference between the American Quatermass and British characters such as his colleagues on the Moon Project, Marsh (Bryan Forbes) and Brand (William Franklin), and Chief Inspector Lomax (John Longden), is initially established. However, with a different actor playing the role of Lomax, characteristics and attitudes very different to those associated with Warner and his playing of the role are evident. This difference in, for instance, Lomax, and the resonance of the scenes in which the American professor encounters manifestations of the alien threat, imply a different interpretation of national characteristics and the idea of national identity, and a less certain expression and interpretation of them. Character traits that might have been associated with perceptions of British identity and regarded as benign, are given an alternative slant here due to the nature of the threat, the representation of the monstrous and the way in which these traits are manifested. Familiar characteristics associated within popular consciousness with British national identity, then, are now presented as having partly achieved the goal of invasion and take-over, figures embodying characteristics of calmness, sobriety, law-abidingness, personal restraint, common sense and tenacity, are either humans “possessed” by the alien consciousness or the unwitting agents of the invaders. Drawing upon both the experiences of the previous World War and, refracted through growing friction between East and West, the film posits the
question what if a totalitarian regime was in place in Westminster, how would “the British character” respond?

The dialogue between tradition and modernity is seen via the aims and ambitions of the Moon Project, for which Quatermass has failed in his attempt to secure financial backing. This is realised in terms of technological hardware through the apparatus and language of the research centre where Quatermass, Marsh and Brand work to develop the project. There is, later, the contrast between this science ‘fact’ and the science fiction of the invaders, which, as Kneale remarks in the DVD commentary (2003), demonstrates how the genre is ‘a comment on the society at the time’ (51: 45) and rather than envisaging the future, it quotes elements that are current, employing the conventions and terms of the available technology in terms of concepts and actuality. The potential threats that might be associated with science and new technologies become linked to alien invasive forces. The familiar nature of some of the technology can be seen in the establishing shot of the interior of the research centre, with Marsh and Brand using equipment that carries a sense of the modern, with large radar screens plotting the movement of falling objects and the notion that their presence could be a machine fault making the technology seem quotidian. This is emphasised through their use of instruments like compass and map to locate the region where the objects fall; however both these and the radar are reminiscent of wartime surveillance and tracking methods, and are therefore familiar. Hutchings (1999: 38) notes Kim Newman’s remark on how British science fiction invasion films of the 1950s still appear to be fighting World War II, an observation that can be applied to the film here. There are further visual and aural links to 1940s conflict, as will be seen, which merge with other, more contemporaneous references.
Modernity and technology are explored through the figure of the scientist and the hardware used in the film. The depiction of the scientist dramatises particular notions about the role and its implications. Robert A. Jones (1997) surveys representations of scientists in post-war British film. He identifies two negative stereotypes, the artists and the destroyers and a third, more ambiguous type, the Boffin (1997: 34). This third type works for “us” but is straddled between the military and the civil service, rather like Quatermass (ibid: 40). Their expert knowledge marks the Boffin as separate to the non-specialist (ibid: 34). Although Quatermass clearly occupies elements of the Boffin type in his ambiguity and position, he could also be seen more negatively as an artist/destroyer, whose experiments, as we have seen, have deadly potential12. To what extent is this representation continued in *Quatermass II*?

Quatermass is again associated with a more advanced technology and theoretical knowledge, which is visualised on his entrance to the research centre. A long shot sees him arriving framed by three images of technology, suggesting in part a co-existence and intimating also that Quatermass is common to all and links them. To the left of the screen is the satellite and observation tower of the building, in centre screen is Quatermass and his car, and to the right and in the background stands the space rocket. These represent a combination of specialist scientific knowledge, ordinary domestic technology and advanced, specialised apparatus representing future scientific potential. This composition articulates recognisable features while also responding to concerns contemporary to the film production concerning the use of science within political and research spheres. Kneale refers to radars set up along the coast at that time and public concern over their intended application. He says in the DVD commentary that it ‘was easy to imagine

12 There was also a differentiation between types of scientist; the “good” scientist, or medical doctor, and the “bad” scientist, the experimenter/inventor, a dichotomy seen in *X the Unknown*. 
anything going on at that time’ (2003: 8:41), suggesting not only scientific possibility and what was deemed to be believable, but also fear and mistrust of government and power, an idea explored further, below. The events of the film might not be seen as too fantastic, therefore, and can be seen to dramatise, through character position and dialogue, different attitudes towards the potential of science.

For Kneale, in the 1950s ‘it was difficult to see science as a force of good’ in that it was associated with the H-Bomb and, therefore, conflict on a large scale (ibid: 17:33). Although the new threat in *Quatermass II* is not precipitated by the scientist’s hubris as it was in *The Quatermass Experiment*, (indeed it is the improvising skills and risk-taking of Quatermass that defeats the threat again) there is still anxiety through the representation of the scientist. Kneale refers to the sense of unease that was felt at the time over the personality of the scientist (ibid: 17:43) and Marcia Landy, for instance, identifies this as a theme within science fiction narratives (1991: 391). She discusses how, in science fiction, the new monsters were associated with developments in technology and worries over this advancement, with particular attention given to the ambivalent role of the scientist. Quatermass, as the potentially over-reaching scientist, becomes aligned with specialist, advanced technology. This alters, however, when the source of the threat does not originate from the technology associated with future science, making Quatermass less ambivalent and just as representative of the spectator as Lomax.

The difference between the scientist figure driven by the urge to break boundaries and experiment and a more pragmatic and practical approach can be seen, though, in the conversation about the rocket between Quatermass and Brand. This invites links between notions of national character and attitudes towards modernity not dissimilar to those in
the first film. As part of her discussion of 1950s film culture, Geraghty considers, within
the concept of modernity as project, the growth of the expert and the need for the general
populace to trust the workings and decisions of processes and people they have little or
no contact with: ‘systems of technical accomplishment or professional expertise’ (2000: 23). This can be seen here in the isolated location of the research centre and the
equipment within it. Implied here also are questions around individuals and select groups
holding power based on knowledge and skill, which could inform the reading of the
manifestation of the alien threat later in the film. In that case, the ‘emphasis on the
possibilities of reason and science in controlling forces’ (ibid: 24) shifts from the
scientist to the faceless groups operating as part of the alien invasion. This shift
compounds the ambivalence of the scientist as discussed by Jones. Quatermass asserts
the need for progress and technological advancement when discussing lack of official
backing for the Moon Project and the importance of being the first to realise a moon
landing. While reminiscent of ideas of the Space Race, this also recalls the Quatermass of
the first film. They go outside to view the rocket and discuss the issue of safety, with the
assertion by Brand that it is dangerous and the insistence by Quatermass that the danger
is not certain emphasising the difference between their attitudes. The term Brand uses in
reference to the rocket, ‘bomb’ (1957: 7:18), links it to warfare and to the atomic bomb
specifically.

Ultimately, however, it is this device that proves the nemesis of the alien force when it is
used to eliminate the asteroid that proves to be the origin of the falling objects carrying
the alien form to Earth. This implies a more complex dialogue with the ideas of
modernity and change, with the advanced technology proving deadly for “them”, but
beneficial to “us” when used appropriately and by the “right” personnel. Although, then,
as Kneale says in reference to the 1950s, there were ‘a lot of things to be afraid of’, with the hydrogen bomb ‘ready to drop’ and ‘the first serious rockets going in to space’ (2003: 13:03-13:11), science also signalled possibilities and opportunities that might bring with them both dangers and benefits. For Kneale, a significant aspect and one that clearly was an influence on the Quatermass narratives, was the anxiety about what space bound rockets might find beyond the Earth and return with, stating that this ‘was the story of the first film and that this one was a variation of it’ (ibid: 13:33). This aspect has been noted within criticism, for instance Hutchings (1999, 41), and will be returned to subsequently.

It is worth noting that the source of the threat in Quatermass II, while arriving in tiny rocket-like vessels, is not the result of space bound rockets encountering some outside force and unwittingly infecting the world on return. However, the idea of viral infection conflated with possession is significant and is associated within the film with unaccountable change within human beings. The characteristics exhibited by figures tainted by the alien force or operating at its bidding, represent a dialogue with and invites investigation of traits associated with the national character. They also dramatise anxieties over possible changes to British identity and society in the light of political and cultural developments in the 1940s and 1950s.

Discourses concerning national identity and characteristics are infused with references to recent war experiences that draw on cultural memory of living through conflict and how this altered the landscape, together with imagery redolent of current potential for conflict and change to the social fabric. Rigby sees Quatermass as rather ‘mellowed’ (2000: 53), and it is a considerably less truculent scientist who encounters alien agents, the possessed humans operating under the control of the outside force. Quatermass and Marsh investigate the sight where the objects fell, and discover an industrial Plant that replicates
the Moon Project; this doubling will be discussed in the following chapter, as will the uncanny and liminal quality of the landscape and their journey to it. When Marsh is affected by one of the vessels carrying the aliens after it explodes in his face, being in effect taken over by the alien, a large amount of guards appear to remove him and take him inside the Plant. During the journey to Wynnerton Flats, when Quatermass and Marsh get out of the car and investigate an apparent road to nowhere, the American scientist, now cautious, warns his more careless British colleague against wandering from the set path in case of mines. This is redolent of wartime experience and chimes with the barbed wire and “Keep out” signs that pepper their drive to the area. It also indicates a subtle change in Quatermass himself that echoes the mellowing referred to above; he is less a signifier of difference, as distinctions between his behaviour and that of Marsh is less obvious. There appears to be a conflation of characteristics here, with an encouragement for identification with Quatermass. This position becomes emphasised when the American is faced with the guards, who are ostensibly British in manner and speech yet coded as “foreign”.

The landscape around the Plant, noted by Pirie in a comment that links it with the ‘menacing’ guards who are ‘sinister and unstoppable’ (1973: 36), appears menacing itself, desolate and bereft of familiar human life. The remains of the village that has been cleared to make way for the Plant are forlorn, with rubble that connotes bombed out buildings and seems unfamiliar, alien. The manner in which the village was cleared is never explained and this encourages the sense that an authoritarian agency has destroyed a traditional English community by force and replaced it with something alien within the British environment. This then alters the nature of the space and those in it. Further, Kneale considers the notion that a village with the ‘slightly romantic name of Wynnerton
Flats’ could be cleared and become something monstrous as a key concept in the writing of the original script (2003: 11:39). The unspecified fate of the original inhabitants is left to the imagination of the spectator, suggesting the possibility of a British authoritarian regime liquidating its own population.

This aspect of the narrative chimes with changes to the physical landscape and demographics of Britain, drawing on history and folklore concerning disappearing towns and villages. The emptying of Wynnerton Flats is reminiscent of the way villages were cleared to make way for reservoirs such as Thirlmere, Cumbria, formed in 1894. In the creation of Thirlmere the villages of Amboth and Wythburn, itself bearing phonetic similarity to Wynnerton Flats, were both submerged. Just a few buildings on an edge of the reservoir remain of Wythburn. These places can be eerie and encourage fantastical tales and atmospheres, particularly when the water levels reduce and the tops of tall buildings, usually church spires, can be seen above the waterline. The unexplained manner of the clearing of the village conflates images of 1940s and Cold War authority wielding absolute power and equates the British society of the film with it. Either the notion of how would the “British character” respond to this threat is being explored, or, conversely, there is a questioning of what is meant by British values and national character in a period of uncertainty. The siren heralding their trespass and the sight of the mobilised personnel compound this.

It is also useful to consider this second film as an invasion narrative through which social anxieties regarding national identities and character are dramatised, particularly after Suez. This precipitates self-reflexion concerning identity and relations with others, particularly within the changing political landscapes referred to above regarding the
reduction in military, economic and scientific independence and the reduction in global influence. This scenario enacts fears of a new vulnerability and different international position, with the “Other” displaced within the identity of the Soviet Bloc. For Hutchings, ‘the mere imagining of an alien culture always involves an acknowledgement of Otherness and this in turn unsettles a certain complacency and racial self-centredness’ (1999: 35). The very existence, then, of the outsider, is enough; the outsider who embodies, perhaps, something of “us” within “them” yet who are strongly differentiated from those they threaten. The threat becomes more than physical, but also a psychological and epistemological one; a self-doubt previously sublimated through national myth, ritual and popular consciousness is revealed. “Our” nation, articulated within the science fiction narrative as the human, becomes displaced from the centre. Further, the invasion narrative is a potent metaphor for a nation previously enjoying the status of the coloniser, as suggested by Davies when he remarks that the British Isles were never occupied during the two world wars (1999: 747).

In the 1950s, post-war context, military commitments and international standing were reduced to the extent that, according to Davies, the United States, USSR and China were all in a different, more advanced ‘military league’ (ibid: 754). If the American identity of Quatermass is re-emphasised, the narrative dramatises the sense that the United States is a dominant player and that ultimately it will be necessary to seek its help. The fact, though, that Quatermass seems less a signifier of difference might undermine this reading, or perhaps indicate a remaining ambivalence over the need to depend on the United States. An alternative reading could be that the fear of a more vigorous and dynamic Soviet Bloc is being articulated and the concern is on how an invasion would change society and what the response to it might be. The possible frustration at this
changing status could inform the narrative treatment of this threat. As Davies states, despite the evident political, military, social and economic changes, the popular perception is one of ‘memories of military glory’ that ‘stayed unusually strong’ (ibid: 755). Occupation by foreign powers remained, for the most part, distant and remote, therefore this scenario carries a resonance. Warnings against not recognising threat due to nostalgia or out-of-date notions of international standing can be seen in the narrative through characters who, through ignorance or stubbornness, fall victim to the monstrous threat or who rebel against the representatives of it, as shall be seen further.

The uniformed guards at the Plant, in unadorned, overall-like military style uniforms, appear utilitarian, evoking Soviet Bloc imagery. Authority and officialdom are both suggested, but not in way that might evoke popular notions of “Britishness”. In this instance it can be read as encouraging critical consideration of authority and how this might link with notions of national identity. They do not show emotion, which is a trait that might otherwise be seen as a conventionally “British” characteristic; seen here in a different context it becomes more disquieting and merits questioning. The guards are undifferentiated, monosyllabic, using a measure of violent force with efficiency when Quatermass attempts to accompany Marsh. This denies the sense of fair play, decency and restraint that construct an image commonly associated with the national character. It also rejects notions of benign, paternal authority of the kind exemplified by Lomax in the first film of the series, replacing it with an exercise of power more suited to armed conflict than peacetime internal security. Overt, stern authority is conflated with, as will be seen later, characteristics such as restraint, sobriety and calmness. This encourages investigation both of what might comprise the “national character” (or characters, as it is clearly not a single identity) and how “the British” might respond to authority imposed
from outside. This investigation of “national character” is dramatised within and through the representation of society close to the Plant.

In the absence of the constabulary in the settlement near the Plant, local organisation is in the hands of the Camp Committee, which is housed in a village hall of a building type similar to pre-fabricated dwellings built during the post-war period to alleviate housing shortages. In fact the town itself has a forlorn windswept atmosphere and the similarity of it to a New Town is remarked upon in the DVD commentary, referring to it as a ‘dreary little pre-fabricated town’ (2003: 44:35-44). The film references the changing social and economic urban environment, with housing estates built away from older centres. The New Towns were a phenomenon of post World War II town planning, built to house large numbers of people who had lost homes during the war and to alleviate housing problems in inner cities. Many inner city areas were cleared and the population re-housed in these areas. This process was informed by a number of commissioned reports, including the Reith Report (1947). The new developments included Stevenage, Welwyn Garden City and Milton Keynes. These towns were characterised by a car-oriented layout and use of a grid pattern, creating a look and atmosphere redolent of North American developments. This would have associations with modernity, science and the influence of another culture. Many came to regard some of these New Towns as bleak and alienating places, perhaps partly due to these associations with the distancing effect of modernity as a project.

In ‘The Disappointing New Towns of Great Britain’ (1972), Leonard Downie Jr. discusses a range of issues and problems surrounding these new urban centres. His description of Cumbernauld emphasises the windswept atmosphere and empty spaces of
the town environment, and the lack of activity, noting the ‘strange stillness’ of the ‘empty approach roads and deserted pedestrian corridors’ with no facilities open (www.aliciapattersonfoundation.org/APF00197/Downie). Graffiti and the evidence of vandalism, seems indicative to Downie of a lack of social cohesion, which is underscored by the reference to the cries of ‘marauding’ children (ibid). Other towns are described by Downie as being overwhelmed by vehicle traffic or being like giant shopping centres. He also remarks on the sameness of the population in the New Towns, with residency being dependant on employment by the industries or businesses based there (ibid). This leads to a demographic that lacks high or low income earners and which has high white racial homogeneity. This chimes with the town in the film, populated by workers employed by the Plant, which could be one of the main, if not the sole provider of work; hence the anger of some of the workers over shorter working hours. The events of the film invite comparison with the large scale of planning and construction involved in a fairly short period, indicating deliberate urban planning and population control. This would resonate with the sense that the social fabric of the country was changing and becoming determined by the geography of new spaces, undermining previously held certainties.

This landscape is, however, infused with elements connoting cultural memory of wartime experience and popular notions of traditional, familiar English small town/village life. The establishing shot of the Camp Committee building shows conspicuous signs for ‘Whist Drive’ by the door, reassuringly familiar yet strangely ominous given the context of authority and surveillance in the surrounding area. The interior shot of the building is coded as a village hall with small stage, curtain and bunting, which reinforces the impression of a British Legion or Social Club with socialising, card playing and amateur dramatic societies taking place. Activities such as these would be part of the fabric of the
cultural scene, especially prior to widespread ownership of television and other home entertainments. They would therefore help to connote the notion of the “typically English” setting. Hutchings remarks how the Quatermass narratives in general ‘show Britain as a nation still bound to the experience of the Second World War’, noting the signs within the hall that warn the local population against discussing the nature of their work to others (1999: 38). They remind the workers “Secrets mean sealed lips” and rather more ominously promise them “Talk about your job. Lose it”, which serves as reminders against “careless talk” in the Second World War. This can be understood, when seen against the other more overtly threatening elements of the narrative, as combining the familiar elements with the totalitarian authority of the alien presence, to dramatise anxieties associated with the fear of takeover. As Hutchings argues, the social world in the films ‘bears more than a passing resemblance to a notion of the people developed and circulated in Britain during the Second World War’. However, despite emphasis on collective groups, this post-war society does not have the same sense of cohesion. Hutchings states that the nation in the films ‘lacks any sense of a wartime urgency to bind it together’, suggesting a challenge in the film to nostalgia and collective cultural memory (ibid: 39).

This could be strengthened by an emphasis on the uneasiness of the identification of the workers later in the film at the evening celebration in the hall. They appear to be a strange amalgam of working class or “traditional” elements of British culture, (barmaid and “wotcha”, “Cockney” accents, big band music suggestive of London), with Celtic elements (Irish accents, jig dancing). This produces a generic working class identity and cultural space that is everywhere yet placeless. It contrasts with the metropolitan sophistication of London. This could chime with notions of the breakdown of working
class communities that had a connection to their environment, as populations become shifted to isolated New Towns and estates and the industries around which older communities were often centred are dismantled. This links with senses of displacement derived from, through modernity, the ‘separation of time and space’ and associated split between social activity and place due to growth in telecommunications (Geraghty, 2000: 23). There is a gradual increase in mystification of processes that ties in with the growth of experts (ibid). This distancing of authority and the increasing specialisation and control of forces through science mentioned above can also be seen in the domination of the town by distant agencies with actions instigated from afar. An ambivalent attitude towards modernity and science is being expressed here, through its association with technological progress that may be dangerous yet bring benefits, while being linked here with mysterious authority.

Fears of alien invasion and takeover dramatised by authoritarian rule and behaviour is compounded when Quatermass goes to London to seek assistance in his investigation of the Plant. The narrative also explores the question, in situating the threat within the iconic capital city space, of how the “British character” would react to such an invasion and by extension a questioning of precisely what constitutes this national identity. It is either more heterogeneous than supposed and therefore harder to define and mythologize, needing to adapt to change to altered political/economic circumstances, or even inherently repressive. Critical voices have commented on socio-political aspects although they do no explore the implications for “national” character. As Pirie states, here the alien invasion has already ‘reached national proportions’; he highlights how the film can serve as political allegory for the Conservative government of the 1950s (1973: 36). It also images the “heart” of the nation infiltrated, under threat but already problematic.
The representation of a threatened nation engages with a cultural context within which Britain’s international significance was changing. The film, then, comments on political contexts and encourages an introspective consideration of the body politic and Britain’s place in the post-Imperial moment.

Hutchings also sees the Quatermass narratives, through their appeal ‘to the virtues of the wartime collective’ providing ‘a sense that something is wrong with Britain and that this predates any alien invasion’ (1999: 40). This is most strongly represented through the interaction between Quatermass and the various “infected” authority figures associated with the government. The establishing long shot of the capital show an iconic “London”, with Trafalgar Square and Nelson’s Column with St Martin’s Church in the distance and a double decker bus going past. The image cuts to Quatermass in his car stopping and looking at something off screen. The reverse shot of what he sees reveals military and industrial lorries with the now familiar logo in medium shot, across the bottom of the Mall coming from Whitehall, close to the seat of government and monarchy. The monstrous threat is placed directly within the centre of political and cultural power in the country, in an image that resonates with images of military vehicles belonging to a totalitarian state rolling in to the democratic heartland.

The meeting between Quatermass and Lomax re-introduces notions of the familiar, safe Britishness that had seemed lacking previously. Traits popularly associated with national identity have so far been ascribed to characters “infected” by the alien forces or those working at their behest. The alien influence causes these characteristics to be displayed and refracted back to the spectator as if through a distorting mirror. The concealment of the strange within the familiar is an aspect Hutchings notes in relation to the Quatermass
series as a whole and to invasion narratives generally, highlighting, although he does not name it as such, the uncanny. While the uncanny will be further explored more fully, here it is useful to note that it can be considered through the uneasy relationship established with conventional notions of unified national identity and the idea that what appears benign can easily be less so. Notions of a division between “us” and “them” become less distinct as ‘audiences are invited to look at their own world in a different light, seeing it to a certain extent as itself an alien world’ (Hutchings, 1999: 38).

Lomax appears as stolid and plain-speaking as in the previous film; despite being played by a different actor, the characterisation is fairly consistent. Here he becomes representative of untainted authority, the correct paternal law. Guest remarks in the DVD commentary how Longden was a British silent screen matinee idol (2003: 23:14). He therefore would carry a specific resonance, an association with an era before the Great Depression and the Second World War, thus evoking nostalgia for time past. His dependability is compounded by Longden’s persona and playing of the role, which, for Kneale, was more appropriate for an officer of Lomax’s status. Warner’s association with comedy and light drama contrasts with what was, posits Kneale, a more credible depiction of a senior police officer than in Londgen’s Lomax (ibid: 24:25). Arguably, this provides a strength and weight to the role as well as veracity, and emphasises a more “appropriate” representation of national character.

This is further emphasised with the appearance of Vinny Broadhead (Tom Chatto). His identity is clearly regional and he is an opposition member of parliament. This locates him as “authentically” British as he is not tainted by the alien invaders and is therefore independent from their influence. Furthermore, he originates away from the capital, from
the North. His character proposes a representation of a non-metropolitan, regional notion of national identity; a counterpart to the Home Counties Lomax. Conventionally, regional identities are often visible within films and television and therefore a departure from the invisible, normative Londoner, inhabitant of the Home Counties or generic middle class character, and are marked thus as a signifier of difference. Here, though, Broadhead’s Yorkshire vowels and manner code him as honest, plain-speaking, unpretentious and separate from tainted government figures. Broadhead’s unaffected, down-to-earth nature and his simplicity in comparison with other figures can be seen as both a strength and, in another context, a problem. The above traits can also be interpreted as part of a stubborn, insular and “bloody-minded” outlook that is resistant to change and could potentially hold Britain back, both economically and politically. In the alien invasion narrative taking place here, it is a “Little England” stance that is not able to understand and challenge the danger poses by the monster until it is too late, as can be illustrated by the fate that awaits Broadhead later, at the Plant.

It is Broadhead’s conviction that something suspicious lies behind the official line that the Plants are producing synthetic foodstuffs for the Third World and he has secured himself a visiting permit to go inside the Plant to inspect the process. A distrust of authority is explored here and the misuse of power through the notion of conspiracy theories. The concept of a malignant, controlling government operating covertly against the interests of the nation that it has infiltrated was, for Pirie, a significant one in the 1950s. He suggests that there was a pre-1960s social coherence, which chimes with comments made by Richards concerning societal changes in the 1960s and subsequent fragmentation (1973: 38).
According to Pirie, in the 1950s, in the immediate aftermath of war, ‘there was still enough national coherence left for the idea to be both original and highly disturbing’ (ibid) and this could have allowed a particular resonance to the sight of British characters operating under a malign and totalitarian system. The P.R.O. (John Van Eyssen), who escorts the inspection party, has the same mark on his wrist as Marsh had on his face, seen by the spectator in close up but not noticed by Quatermass. Clearly, the alien forces control him. In the figure of the P.R.O., the familiar British characteristic of punctuality becomes a signifier of secrecy, danger and invites association with authoritarian regimes as he controls the movement of the visitors. His efficient manner and familiar-seeming behaviour become signifiers of something inherently wrong with authority. The fact that he allows Quatermass on the trip so readily when normally it is difficult to obtain a visiting pass is in itself suspicious and compounds the sense of danger and conspiracy. It implies prior knowledge of Quatermass, as if they seek to contain him in some way that suits their purpose. The visitors themselves are an assortment of solid British types, almost all men with just one woman, who have the appearance of dignitaries or representatives of business. The purpose of the visits appears to be to “infest” large numbers of influential people who can do the bidding of the aliens within the realms of government and commerce. The P.R.O. hurries the visitors along, his clipped assertive manner highlighting his authoritarian appearance. His response to questions, ‘everything will be answered later’ (1957: 32:37), sounds like a combination of bland reassurance, official language, and veiled threat.

The infiltration is seen to have reached national proportions when Lomax goes to consult with the Commissioner (John Stuart) and finds the same v-shaped mark described by Quatermass. This characterisation provides another instance of a figure, now at the heart
of the establishment, whose alignment with the alien threat and the outsider, causes his
demeanour to be read as threatening. His calmness, propriety, attention to detail and
work ethic, rather than evoking positive associations now produces these popularly
British-seeming traits as signifiers of the “Other”. No longer easily aligned with a secure
or comforting self-image, the different slant on these characteristics invites interrogation
of national identity. It suggests it is not easily definable, comprised of disparate traits and
potentially threatening.

The national character is, therefore, subject to change and development, and scrutiny.
Not only is national identity not singular or fixed, static, but it is also made to seem
vulnerable and easily threatened by outside forces. It is tempting to see this as a
dramatisation of possible anxieties felt at the gradual dismantling of the Empire and the
resulting “loss” of colonies, while also referencing the sense of Britain sandwiched
between two emerging forces of the United States and the Soviet Union. The
characterisation of the government as totalitarian can be read as a conflation of Cold War
discourse and reference to the Axis Powers of the 1930s and 1940s. The threat in
Quatermass II to the body politic and the national identity could also be seen to pose the
question of how would the British character respond to this threat, as noted above.

This is explored through the characters of the Plant workers referred to earlier, with their
Anglo-Celtic generic working class identity and conflated regional distinction setting
them apart from the establishment. They are clearly pitted against the guards within the
Plant, who they refer to as “zombies” and regard as distant and cold, with the reference to
them ‘treating us like dirt, never talking to us’ (ibid: 51:30) making clear the nascent
hostility felt by at least some of the workers. There is suggestion here of class conflict,
compounded when the workers, provoked into action after the infection of the barmaid by an “overshot” and following the urging by Quatermass to act against the Plant, advance as a mob to the gates. They can be seen as a popular revolt against a mysterious, oppressive authority, following the appearance of some guards at the Village Hall, in paramilitary garb, literally faceless behind masks. The guards shoot dead the journalist Jimmy Hall (Sidney James) as he attempts to ring through the story of the invasion to his paper. His arrival as a drunk appears relatively light-hearted, and introduces a moment of comedy in to the narrative. However, his subsequent apparent self-sacrifice draws attention to itself through the manner by which the character was introduced and invites the spectator to witness the lengths ordinary working people are willing to go to combat the threat. By extension, there is an exploration here of how the British character would respond to tyranny and it is interesting to note how a myth of national character is being explored here that, while placing those traits taken for granted under scrutiny, ultimately perhaps restores them to a central place in re-affirming them as essential in meeting and defeating the monstrous threat. The self-sacrifice is also associated with a working-class identified character.

After the stand-off, the subsequent forced entry of the gates and ensuing invasion of the Plant further situates the working-class as opposed to the illegitimate law of the alien-influenced authority. They appear as revolutionaries or resistance fighters as they hold out, with Quatermass, who has infiltrated the Plant in disguise, in the Pressure Control Centre. The workers in the building, arming themselves with assorted weaponry are urged by a voice from outside to surrender. This emphasises class warfare and foregrounds the above notion that the hope for resistance to corrupt authority lies, in part, in the working class. That they need Quatermass and Lomax to counter the insidious and
fatal voices urging them to surrender indicates that the workers themselves need a form of guidance to enable them to function effectively. This is itself a paternalistic concept redolent of historical philanthropic movements that sought to improve the lot of workers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Ultimately, the day is saved through the combination of scientific knowledge and improvisation of Quatermass, the tenacity and force of the workers and the caution and level-headedness of both Quatermass and Lomax, without which, the revolutionary spirit of the workers might have had a very different outcome.

Conclusion

This chapter has considered national identity as a construct and, as such, a product of specific social and cultural circumstances. The very concept of a single “national” identity has been problematised and the process of forging this ideologically driven concept as part of the political process of nation state building has been considered. Rather than seeing identity in monolithic terms, the multiplicity of characteristics that comprise a hybrid “national character” needs to be acknowledged and addressed. This is to both problematise the concept of a singular nation as well as the idea of a single identity. Taking these ideas in to account, it has been noted that, through emphasis on aspects that explore plurality rather than an unproblematic promotion of realism and consensus, themes of hybrid identity can be mapped out within film narratives. The Quatermass films discussed have been seen to engage with ideas of national identity in a way that can, through this critical emphasis, be regarded as an investigative critique. The films engage with their cultural contexts within the 1950s through dramatising a dialogue, then, between popular concepts of national identity and modernity. Familiar aspects that resonate with cultural memories of the Second World War have been noted.
in both films. In *The Quatermass Experiment* the use of these has been to investigate the role of nostalgia and the identity of Britain in the post-war moment of the later twentieth century, through considering the best way to respond to these circumstances. In *Quatermass II*, the emphasis has been on asking, through displacing and setting them at a distance, what the characteristics that appear to comprise the national character are, and the extent to which this can be identified.

Further, the response of this character to tyranny has been identified as a key theme, which has resonance when considered in the context of political life. The following chapter will continue to draw on some of these issues while focussing on elements of the films common to science fiction and horror narratives. The discussion will situate the texts within the tradition of the Gothic, focusing on the fantastic elements of them. This will focus on the uncanny, the abject, as well as re-visiting aspects introduced in this chapter such as hybridity, with the focus being on notions of self and subjectivity and how the use of the fantastic and the uncanny lend themselves to discussion of “the national”.

192
Chapter Four: Quatermass and the Uncanny

Introduction

This discussion will focus on reading the two 1950s Quatermass films, *The Quatermass Experiment* (Val Guest, 1955) and *Quatermass II* (Val Guest, 1957) as fantastic narratives. Generically they can be situated within the fantastic through their science fiction/horror elements. It is also precisely these aspects combined, which invites reading them through the fantastic as a mode according to the model proposed by Rosemary Jackson. Her emphasis on the tendencies for this mode to collapse boundaries posits a questioning of accepted unities, values and perceptions and carries a concomitant subversive potential. This in turn invites the realisation of the constructed nature of social being and awareness that “reality” is ordered and constructed (1981: 174). This chapter firstly considers the figure of Caroon as an embodiment of hybridity within *The Quatermass Experiment*. It proceeds to apply the uncanny to *Quatermass II*, to critically address identity and “nation” within the film.

This model provides an apt critical framework for considering both Quatermass films in relation to the subversive potential of fantastic narratives, through the commingling of elements and the presence of both the uncanny and the hybrid. This subversive potential is realised in the films through their dramatisation of the loss of self, the collapse of boundaries and the subsequent questioning of identity. The uncanny, especially, can be linked to the national through analysis of how the monstrous makes strange what was previously taken for granted and subverts empirical certainties. This can be then linked to concepts of “nation” and “the national”. The fantastic narrative, for Jackson (1981: 14), disrupts definitions of the “real” and the possible, because it ‘reveals reason and reality to be arbitrary, shifting constructs’ (ibid: 21). This is realised in the way that Caroon in *The
Quatermass Experiment mutates and alters, which troubles these constructs; crucial also is the empirical uncertainty shared by both characters and spectator. The mutation of Caroon can be understood as hybrid according to Staiger’s definition and applied to identity, self and “nation”. How is the hybrid approached within the Quatermass narratives; as something to be fearful of, or to be embraced, or is the treatment more complex?

Jackson echoes Todorov when he notes how the character in the fantastic narrative ‘hesitates, wonders [...] whether what is happening to him is real’ (1975: 24). Jackson develops this and looks at how, with literary texts, the reader is pulled from the familiar to a region close to the supernatural realm, a space slightly beyond the “real” and the known yet tangential to it, still part of it; a notion applicable to both films for character and spectator (1981: 34). The notion of passing through or crossing borders is a key element. If the fantastic evokes liminal states and spaces, collapsing of borders and the hybrid, national identity can be read as provisional and heterogeneous; or, as Higson implies in his questioning of national identity, inherently diasporic.

The manner by which generic elements of science fiction and horror are articulated through the fantastic is a key method of discussing the alignment and relationship of the films to national cinema. An element of fantastic narratives linked by some critical writing (Pirie, 1973) to notions of “Britishness” is the Gothic, elements of which can be traced within the Quatermass films. Hammer is associated with the colour Gothic films of the later 1950s through to the early 1970s, such as the Frankenstein and Dracula cycles. The Gothic might not be a mode immediately associated with the Quatermass films, which have been identified as precursors to the later Gothic cycle. They have,
though, been included in popular critical discourses of British Gothic films (Rigby, 2000), and they contain narrative elements that combine science fiction tropes with Gothic themes and motifs, which contribute to their complex identity. Their structure and aesthetics also lend themselves to discussion of the Gothic. Charlene Brunnell (1984) and Helen Wheatley (2006) consider the role of the spectator as part of the defining character of the Gothic, a critical framework that echoes Jackson’s analysis of their involvement in fantastic narratives.

Wheatley’s study focuses on British Gothic television but her observations can be applied here to film. Wheatley considers modes of address, how the act of viewing is inscribed in to the structure of the narrative (2006: 19), which translates to both narrative content and specific techniques of cinematography in the Quatermass films. This is echoed in Brunnell’s discussion of what defines the Gothic; a key aspect of which is ‘the Gothic's ability to actively engage the reader’s participation in the story’ and that the response is both emotional and intellectual (1984: 80). For Brunnell, the reader must experience the Gothic text, not only through character identification but as themselves (ibid: 81). The spectator, then, finds out information along with and sometimes before the protagonist of the film, an aspect significant to both the Quatermass texts. This uncertainty and searching for answers, moving away from the centre and questioning what has been assumed, links to the uncanny, the third mode that forms the critical framework for this study.

Freud’s notion of the uncanny (1919) as a sensation, state, or feeling of fear derived from the return of something that has been repressed, or the evocation of surmounted beliefs, can be applied to Quatermass. The fear engendered by the uncovering of that which
needed to remain hidden for as Jackson, states, the world to be comfortably known (1981: 65) is important to the uncanny. This specific characteristic renders the known, the ordinary, strange through the transformation of the familiar in to the unfamiliar. That which seemed homely becomes unhomely, a source of threat that encourages a questioning, an uncertainty in both character and spectator. Within the diegesis, the trust in the material becomes unsettled and meaning becomes de-centred, as does the subject as self perception is altered. The presence of that which might be associated with the supernatural heralds the return of previously surmounted beliefs. The possibility of an unknown dimension beyond that which has substance is posited and achieves logic within fantastic narratives.

As Nicolas Royle states, the uncanny is associated with ‘the strange and mysterious, with a flickering sense (but not conviction) of something supernatural’ (2003: 1). It is therefore associated with horror but not necessarily the ghostly and opens space to consider the uncanny in social terms. More specifically, it is a ‘crisis of the proper [...] a crisis of the natural’ (ibid), therefore part of the fantastic mode’s interrogation of the “real”. Reality becomes relative not definite, which carries a subversive potential relevant to both films. The disturbance of borders and categories discussed by Royle and articulated within the figure of Caroon in *The Quatermass Experiment*, for instance, is relevant here also, as it encourages questioning of identity and the known. The uncanny, then, is used in relation to empirical knowledge, subjectivity and notions of borders in *The Quatermass Experiment*, and in discussion of notions of power and identity in *Quatermass II*. When that which should be protecting the population appears malignant and there is a loss of certainty about identity of both the subject and the national, that which has been taken for granted and assumed to be fixed becomes open to scrutiny. As
Royle discusses following Martin Heidegger, the uncanny is a reminder of the strangeness of the everyday and that estrangement is part of ‘the fundamental character of our being in the world’ (2003: 4). What seems “common sense” is extra-ordinary and the subject is reminded not only of strangeness of self but also of the social, the body politic as well as the individual body. Therefore the everyday is prone to change, in a state of potential flux, as the terms ordinary and extra-ordinary, as suggested by Barbara Creed, are not oppositional; the one is implied within the other and this opens up the application of the uncanny within political discourses (2005: 483). When the subject is politically aware of their own oppression within dominant ideological systems and of the provisional nature of “reality”, society itself becomes uncanny. Everyday life and social relations can appear as an estranged ordinariness; estranged from properly knowing our own impermanence and the provisional, fluid character of the social order, culture and “the real”.

**The Quatermass Experiment: Hybridity and Subjectivity**

In *The Quatermass Experiment*, a rocket sent in to space by Quatermass crash-lands on return with only one out of three of the astronauts onboard, Victor Caroon, as outlined above. Caroon has been infected by an inorganic life form that collided with the rocket while in space and he rapidly mutates in to something not human, a carrier able to absorb the life-force of others with potential to multiply. Finally resting in Westminster Abbey and interrupting a live BBC transmission, the creature is killed by a massive surge of electrical power and the film closes with Quatermass determined to begin again. As a fantastic narrative its science fiction and horror elements are articulated through the Gothic and the uncanny, and it contains certain thematic elements and motifs associated
with fantasy as discussed by Jackson: troubling of identity, loss of subjectivity, empirical uncertainty and disintegration of borders.

The lack of certainty arising from the non-rational and that which refuses easy definition manifests itself in *The Quatermass Experiment* in numerous instances. Questions without answers, characters expressing thoughts or rather intimating but not articulating them and the need for both characters and spectators to rethink notions of the “real” and the possible are frequent narrative tropes. The opening sequence of the film, for instance, immediately establishes this with the off screen sound of the returning rocket, denying the source of the sound to the spectator; although the characters are able to see the falling object they do not know what it is. The sound of the projectile is a loud rumble with the high wind that it whips up, making the precise nature of it an enigma; it could be natural, extraterrestrial or a military product. This places the spectator and characters in a similar state of empirical uncertainty that is maintained after the impact, encouraging the narrative engagement common to Gothic texts as outlined above.

The discussion of the estrangement of ordinariness as proposed by Royle (2003: 4), as introduced above, is useful in analysing the situation in *The Quatermass Experiment*. He notes the influence of the Russian Formalists in defamiliarisation or making strange what is taken for granted. The impact of Caroon’s transformation and the initial difficulty experienced by medical and scientific experts to rationalise his situation invites a reading through the uncanny. Royle notes how Bertolt Brecht might not have discussed the alienation effect as uncanny ‘but the effect of the alienation-effect can clearly be construed in this way’ (2003: 5). What has been seen as “natural” or a matter of common-sense becomes seen as if for the first time, through distancing devices written in
to the narrative or the aesthetic realisation of the text. Through the need to adapt experienced by the characters within the diegesis, the spectator sees the questioning of certainties in the social and political sphere. In the case of Caroon and what he becomes, there is a questioning of the efficacy of conventional modes of behaviour and thought that can be linked to ideology and notions of national identities. The figure of Caroon precipitates this in several ways; the medical impossibility of his survival, his status as both returning hero, (Victor), and infected carrier of alien life force together with his decreasing humanity all indicate a troubling of empirical certainty and identification. These characteristics are considered here, particularly how Caroon’s ambivalence articulates anxieties around such concerns as “nation” and identities.

Shortly after Caroon is recovered from the rocket and medically monitored by Briscoe, it becomes apparent that conventional medical science cannot account for the survival of the stricken astronaut; his heart rate and metabolism, for instance, are inexplicable. In this aspect, conventional science has to acknowledge the presence of form and matter beyond what is known, a notion comparable to the return of surmounted beliefs engendered in film texts that draw on cultural fears of the dark, of what it might conceal. Those moments when a character ventures to a marginal place beyond the rational and the spectator vicariously experiences this dislocation are a key feature of The Quatermass Experiment. As Jackson states, the fantastic creates alterity, ‘this world replaced and dis-located’ and its realm, being tangential to the “real”, alongside but distanced, becomes not entirely real or unreal (1981: 19). This indicates the hybrid, troubling nature of a space in which hesitation, as outlined by Todorov (1975) and mentioned above, wavers between rational and non-rational explanations for events. As Christine Cornea states, following on from Todorov and Jackson’s ideas, the fantastic ‘vacillates between that
which remains beyond comprehension or rational explanation and that which emanates from the deeper recesses of the human mind’ (2007: 3). What is from these deeper recesses and otherwise repressed, might therefore become more prominent through the uncanny; uncovered when it normally is safely concealed.

The more information that is found by Quatermass and Briscoe, the more unanswered questions and half expressed thoughts there are, from them and from Lomax. There is a reluctance to voice conclusions, which suggests empirical uncertainty but also the desire to maintain social convention and rational frameworks, for the sake of normalcy, for society to function in a manner appropriate within dominant ideology. Once that which is unnameable has been expressed, solid form is given to the unthinkable; what is conceptually not possible becomes realisable. This is most noticeable when the tissue remains of the other astronauts is discovered in the rocket and processed by Briscoe. The dialogue indicates the suspicions of both Quatermass and Lomax and their fear of giving voice to, of concrete realisation of what seems inevitable; Quatermass says the answer is ‘beyond human understanding’ (1955: 28:40), indicating the limits of available scientific knowledge and the impossibility to imagine the alien within conventional thinking. This also suggests understanding and experience beyond the known, the human, and the notion of alien intelligence implicitly linked with Caroon and his exposure to what lies beyond the atmosphere. When Briscoe reveals that the tissue fragments are all that is left of the bodies of the other two astronauts, Quatermass is briefly incredulous but immediately understands and accepts the hypothesis. At this point Caroon is still at the laboratory in a room in which Judith Caroon is resting. As the two men of science discuss the case further, the image cuts to the glass doors of the room where Caroon is. The camera dollies forward to give a medium close up of Caroon in bed and then pans
left as he moves towards a vase of flowers away from the bed. He moves with difficulty, eventually collapsing before he reaches them, which appears to be due to infirmity but, as it transpires, is due to inner struggle. The spectator sees the action but the speaking characters do not; the visual and aural information links Caroon to the implications being discussed of what has been found and also provides the spectator with prior knowledge before Quatermass and Briscoe realise what is happening. This aligns the film with the Gothic in terms of narrative structure and aesthetic form, the cinematography acting as a mode of address which calls the spectator to details that the characters have yet to find out. This dynamic creates identification and also allows the spectator to experience the text as themselves.

The shift to the liminal space and the articulation of what has hitherto remained hidden is embodied in the figure of Caroon and his increasing sense of Otherness. Notions associated with the fantastic and the uncanny can be applied to him and his transformation. As Jackson states, the relation of the subject to the world is problematised in the fantastic (1981: 49). There is a troubling of perception and identity. This is realised in the strangeness of Caroon and the implications of what he is and becomes. As a human turned monster, what does he represent, what is he an index of? His first appearance, in a spacesuit, emphasises his difference through the visual contrast to all the others at the crash landing site. His rambling and barely spoken plea to Briscoe for help is the first suggestion of a collapse of selfhood, with the gradual loss of language. This suggests difficulty with signification and a shift towards the pre-symbolic, non-differentiated, of a place where “I” am not and where language is not sufficient. The lack of differentiation is manifest in the way that victims are absorbed, of which more
Caroon’s changing state and increasing strangeness is indicated to the spectator when Sergeant Bromley (Arthur Lovegrove) remarks that during fingerprinting his skin felt like ice, suggesting lack of life (1955: 17: 50). When Lomax takes the fingerprints to Quatermass their difference to those in Caroon’s old file is remarked on and Quatermass observes them not even being human; the ring of the telephone interrupts him mid sentence, which emphasises the punch-line through the pause he makes before saying ‘human’ (ibid: 24: 28). Lomax, when Bromley makes his remark, refers to Caroon’s ‘public hero’ status in a light-hearted rebuke at his colleague’s tactlessness (ibid: 17: 52). His name, Victor, and appearance at the rocket might concur with this and evokes notions of war-time heroism and associated cultural memory.

Caroon, though, is an ambivalent subject. He has experience and knowledge beyond human understanding, from outside the earth. As a result he is insensible and inscrutable, enigmatic. Quatermass stresses the significance of his experience, of its uniqueness in returning from the unknown. This can be read as punishment for over-reaching and going beyond acceptable boundaries of knowledge; if so, is Quatermass being punished by proxy, as it is Caroon who suffers not the scientist expert ultimately responsible. Has he instead become an invader, an alien himself? His behaviour might indicate this. He will be discussed later as a reverse coloniser; for the moment, the related notion of hybridity will be considered, employing Staiger’s definition of the hybrid form as that which derives from the meeting between two different cultures. This is especially apt for Caroon as he becomes part alien, part human, a combination of animal and vegetable elements, a site of collapsing boundaries.
The fantastic engenders dissolution of limits and ‘limiting categories’ (Jackson, 1981: 48) and the monster is a harbinger of category crisis (Cohen, 1996: 6). Jeffrey Jerome Cohen proposes seven theses for understanding monsters and the monstrous in cultural products. The most useful for this study is “The Monster’s Body is a Cultural Body” and “The Monster is the Harbinger of Category Crisis” through which the figure of the monster becomes an index of social anxiety, a projection of cultural anxieties and fears given corporeal form. As Cohen says, the monster is ‘an embodiment of a certain cultural moment’ and ‘incorporates fear, desire, anxiety and fantasy’ (ibid: 4). Especially useful for thinking about Caroon is the ‘refusal to participate in the classificatory “order of things”’, which, for Cohen, is common to monsters; they are ‘disturbing hybrids whose externally incoherent bodies resist attempts to include them in any systematic structuration’ (ibid: 6). This is directly applied to Caroon when Quatermass posits a form of life that is inorganic in structure but pure energy and with intelligence, and Briscoe concludes that Caroon is a carrier for whatever this form of life is. Briscoe further states that Caroon is the shell of his human form. He suggests the possibility of the fusion between plant and animal, after Caroon has absorbed a cactus and started to exhibit a combination of the two, in a blurring of categories typical of the monstrous and the fantastic. This instance of hybridity as threatening and to be feared implies a contrasting notion to that of Smith as cited previously in relation to the cyborg; as discussed here, though, the response to Caroon and therefore to hybridity is more complex than purely fear. He is hard, now, to categorise; an articulation of the unnameable (Jackson, 1981: 41).

This hybrid nature seems entirely appropriate in a narrative that contains both science fiction and horror elements, a sense of realism and fantasy, and incorporates humour in to
the horror. While not hybrid in the sense defined by Staiger, the conflation of genre and tone contributes to the sense of the hybrid through the commingling of disparate elements. Hybridity within the self is realised through Caroon’s demeanour, which suggests his inner battle and sublimation, loss of the self to the invasive alien force taking over. When Caroon is at the laboratory, Judith arrives with some flowers and she cuts herself. He has been immobile in a chair and after the cutting occurs, the camera zooms in on his reaction as if awakened by the accident. The music is comprised of low bass notes and a suffused rumble of percussion; a signification of a threat, not noticed by the character but indicated to the spectator. Caroon’s reaction appears animal like, instinctive, and his expression compounds the sense of his strangeness. This is emphasised visually in a series of shots that marks the contrast between Caroon and the others by framing him with first Quatermass and Briscoe, and then Quatermass and Judith. In the first, his gauntness is evident and in the second, he occupies the very edge of the frame, already marginalised. This suggests a loss of the self, characteristic of the fantastic and a shifting away from the homely by a figure becoming uncanny through his combination of the strange and the familiar; he is also visually different and this difference is effectively on display. Caroon’s change and increasing hybridity and Otherness create an interesting dynamic for the spectator in terms of identification. Caroon is our returning “hero”, our “Victor”, and as such can be seen as a potential identification figure. However, he is changing, becoming liminal, ultimately hybrid, and with this hybridity he shifts, literally in terms of visual composition here, to the margin. The gaze of identification for the spectator rests on other characters and Caroon’s increasingly non-human status can begin to remind the spectator of their own humanity; it can re-confirm it and also encourage a questioning on what constitutes the human.
Caroon as hybrid and uncanny figure is also articulated in the sequence in which Judith and Christie (Harold Lang) get Caroon out of the hospital he has been moved to and he subsequently escapes. Caroon is initially immobile, not unlike his state at the laboratory. When Christie is helping Caroon with his jacket, a low angle medium shot shows a cactus plant in the foreground and left, upon which Caroon is transfixed. The position of the plant compared to the characters suggests its narrative importance here and its significance for Caroon. His look suggests blankness yet reveals also a longing, a determination; a set look of intent combined with an inner battle, a reluctant yet relentless mental urge towards the organic matter. Christie sees his behaviour and misinterprets it as normal human distress, yet it appears that Caroon is fighting a losing battle with something within him prompting his actions; a conflict with the alien part of himself. As a human/alien hybrid, he dramatises fears over loss of volition and agency. His own tearful reaction to what he knows he is being compelled to do becomes the subject mourning its own loss in the beginning of the uncanny lack of differentiation.

This sequence offers a complex reading of the hybrid figure in that the spectator is encouraged to feel for Caroon; he is empathetic with his strongly visual struggle. There is a very long take, which incorporates Christie’s conversation and the zoomed close up that levels the frame and pans across as Caroon approaches the cactus, as if reluctant. He appears to be battling, sweating and shaking, looking at the cactus yet also trying not to look at the same time; fear and desire. The frame moves up till the cactus is out of shot and the spectator’s gaze is drawn to Caroon as he raises his right hand before plunging it into the plant. The inner conflict of the hybrid, effectively non-human character is maintained. Once Caroon has done this he/it appears to have crossed a boundary of being, a shift to a liminal, borderline state, and there is an increasing sense
of the abject as the physical and psychic change becomes more pronounced. Caroon reminds both other characters and the spectator what it is to be human, fulfilling the function of the abject as both a threat to the dominant order and a re-enforcement of it, through exercising difference. He becomes a more predatory figure, killing Christie and appearing to give in to his invading alien nature, like an infection taking hold. An alien presence is growing inside the human, a monstrous presence within the recognisable form. Caroon, then, becomes an abject figure. The abject is discussed below in relation to *Quatermass II*. In this case, body horror as applied by Ilse Huygens to *Eraserhead* (David Lynch, 1976) in a conference paper (2006) is applicable. The alien presence literally grows inside the human, becomes part of the subject and the host is prey to it; a monstrous progeny that overcomes its host. The self is no longer recognisable, becoming abject; something “I” no longer recognise.

If Caroon is the cursed hero, his changing physical condition can also be read through the image of the damaged body and psyche of the war veteran. David J Skal (1993) reads 1920s/1930s horror films as representations of the damage done to minds and bodies through armed conflict. This reading has resonance also in the current international political climate and, for the spectator in the 1950s the then-recent world war could have played in the background of Caroon’s role and plight. His condition invites the question over how we might respond to our own loss of selfhood and faculties; how do we cope when our own physical and mental states are in flux?

Further indication of Caroon’s uncanny nature occur when he goes to a chemist and seeks to obtain chemicals to end his life; a literal death drive, associated with the uncanny by Royle (2003: 86). This can be seen as an impulse towards absence and non-
differentiation, a ghostliness of form that is apt in a fantastic text. His shift to the margin and becoming an abject figure is manifest in his places of refuge. He is found in dockland areas, on waste ground, by the canal. These are marginal spaces, associated with transience, places of passage. It is as if he is the outcast figure, the returning anti-hero who, rather than winning the war, having a triumphant return worthy of his name, is shunned and sidelined because he is not, in fact victorious. He has lost himself, submitted to alien compulsion and expressed monstrous behaviour not in keeping with his nominal status as the returning “hero”. His identity as “Other” is confirmed by his sites of refuge, the boat on water suggesting impermanence and flux in itself, as he continues to change.

Ultimately in the zoo all the spectator sees of Caroon are a set of eyes within a bush and a lumbering shadow. In this night-time sequence, the zoo animals are in a state of agitation as they sense the intruder waiting for an opportunity to feed and grow. The scene cuts between the bushes and the animals before showing his eyes in close-up, the human aspect of the figure now all but gone. The point of view shot as the creature emerges from the bushes gives an unsettling moment of identification with the monster, which is not uncommon in horror and science fiction, where part of the viewing pleasure involves alignment with the forces that threaten society and the dominant order. Caroon is now shown through absence, vestiges of his presence and form. A shadow or a piece of fabric suggests his physicality, now altered, and the trail of slime that marks his passage suggests the non-human and an ultimate loss of signification, being evoked through the negative.

A further aspect of Caroon that can be read through the Gothic is his absorption of others. As Susan Sontag remarks, the use of the body by the alien power, an aspect
considered later in relation to the second film, is ‘the vampire fantasy in new dress’ (1965: 221). The loss of humanity of Caroon, starting as human but becoming an “it”, can be read as the mode of transformation that tainted characters undergo in Gothic fantastic narratives such as Dracula or Werewolf cycles. Loss of humanity becomes associated with viral infection, from collision between the rocket and the entity. Caroon appears like one stricken with a serious infection and the virus is invasive, transformative, and can be read as dramatising social anxieties. As with the individual body, the body politic, subject to change in changing political times, is prone to alteration and, if the analogy is carried through, a corruption like that which occurs to Caroon. Is this expressive of the changing international political status of the United Kingdom, or a comment on the film industry itself as a combination of British and American characteristics? Caroon can be seen as a reverse coloniser, using Stephen Arata’s concept of the vampire figure as infiltrator from outside the known (2000: 162). Arata looks at this in vampire films and literature, tracing it to the nineteenth century and how narratives articulated fears and anxieties over the culturally unfamiliar; this can be seen to parallel the social situation in the 1950s and the changes after the dismantling of the Empire. As Arata states, vampire narratives express ‘both fear and guilt’ (ibid: 162) and the notion of reverse colonisation is ‘obsessed with the spectacle of the primitive and the atavistic’. Caroon can be seen as such as he returns from a remote region beyond the familiar, outside of both popular imagination and specialist knowledge.

In The Quatermass Experiment, then, the motifs and narrative tropes associated with the Gothic and the uncanny are present in the fantastic narrative largely through the individual figure of Caroon, and what he becomes. The focus is on the disintegration of the subject and a loss of self, as an expression of the fantastic mode. The loss of certainty
concerning the self and identity can lead, through the questioning of previous knowledge and definitions of the “real”, to a hesitation over the social sphere and an awareness of the relative nature of ideological constructs. The uncanny is applied as much to the body politic as it is to the body. How then, is this manifested in the second film, *Quatermass II*? What specific cultural contexts are dramatised in the narrative and how are the Gothic and Uncanny elements articulated through the fantastic?

**Quatermass II and the uncanny body politic**

The above discussion focused on *The Quatermass Experiment*, addressing it through notions of the fantastic. The focus was on how the narrative and aesthetics of the film drew upon notions of the uncanny and the Gothic. Both of the 1950s Quatermass films explore concepts around national identities, “nation” and international relations, race, modernity and subjectivity. These concerns are present in the first film through manifestations of the hybrid as seen in the figure of Caroon and his monstrous, fluctuating form, representations of modernity/science and traditional authority, and aspects of setting. In *Quatermass II*, the focus has altered. While in the first film the alien threat and notions of the uncanny, were expressed principally through the figure of Caroon, in the second film the danger and the representation of the monstrous has shifted to a more national level. While this was an element within *The Quatermass Experiment*, in *Quatermass II* it is more pronounced. Further, the uncanny is a particularly apt critical framework for the film as it can ‘consist in a sense of homeliness uprooted, the revelation of something unhomely at the heart of hearth and home’, as Royle asserts (2004: 1). It can therefore be imagined as indicative of an invasive force that has infiltrated the body/nation and can be associated with cultural anxieties concerning the “Other” and on
an individual level, it dramatises the moment when the subject becomes distanced from itself.

The uncanny is articulated in *Quatermass II* through the representations of landscape and authority. Peter Hutchings (2004) discusses representations of the landscape as uncanny within the Quatermass narratives. His analysis is within a broader scope and there is therefore space to expand and link to other representations of the English landscape. Hutchings initially identifies the use of landscape and buildings that evoke a specific notion of nationhood within heritage 1980s cinema (ibid: 28) and then notes other representations of natural landscape offering different, more troubling configurations of the relationship between national identities and the land (ibid: 29). For Hutchings, these are landscapes suffused with feelings of anxiety, dispossession and displaced social agency, where the subject becomes a stranger to itself and estranged from the space it inhabits (ibid). The landscape is recognisable but not comforting and within it, the subject becomes less than human and the pre-modern is evoked (ibid)\(^{13}\).

Hutchings begins with the 1980s and then reaches back to the 1950s when he begins analysis of Quatermass. The chosen scope of the discussion is interesting; however, the rationale is not made explicit. Hutchings could have gone further back, to look at the use of landscape in Powell and Pressburger films such as *I Know Where I’m Going!* (1945) and *Gone To Earth* (1950), which depict the landscape as mystical yet also threatening in its otherworldliness; uncanny, even. Stella Hockenhall (2005) considers these earlier filmmakers and connects them to visual language in 1940s painting, which portrayed bleak, angular landscapes that ‘featured images of destruction, such as ravaged

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\(^{13}\) Similar evocations of the English landscape can be found in 1960s/1970s British horror films, such as *Blood on Satan’s Claw* (Piers Haggard, 1970), *Witchfinder General* (Michael Reeves, 1965) and *The Wicker Man* (Robin Hardy, 1973).
landscapes, ruined buildings or remote mountainous areas’ (2005: 56). Powell and Pressburger’s films, states Hockenhall, were produced at a time when the ‘prevailing mood was sombre, the countryside damaged and the landscape under threat’ (ibid: 55). There are clear parallels with landscape in the Quatermass films. There is space to draw on Hutchings but expand his discussion to link with an earlier strain of British film and other written and visual texts that explore a similar melancholy and sense of loss. Do the Quatermass films connect with earlier depictions of something lost and transient, like Alice in Wonderland (Lewis Carroll, 1865) and do they anticipate, for instance, the film and television adaptations of The Day of the Triffids (John Wyndham, 1951) or the landscapes of W. G. Sebald?

Royle refers to the Russian Formalist notion of defamiliarizarion linked with the uncanny and its ability to ‘make strange, to make unfamiliar all sorts of familiar perceptions and beliefs’ (2004: 5). There is the sense of looking at something as if for the first time. As Jackson states, the fantastic and the uncanny re-presents the ‘empirically “real” world’, thereby problematising what has been taken for granted and seen as “natural” (1981: 37). The “real” becomes a contested category. The uncanny reveals what needs to be repressed ‘for the sake of cultural continuity’, and is, as Jackson maintains, potentially subversive in this respect (ibid: 70). The fantastic and the uncanny can, through the process of revealing what is hidden, transform the familiar in to the unfamiliar; they de-naturalise “common-sense” and uncover what needs to remain concealed for the world to be comfortably known (1981: 65). If these components of horror and science fiction disrupt the social, cultural spheres and problematise its functionality, then there is the

14 The Day of the Triffids (Steve Sekely, 1962) and The Day of the Triffids (BBC1, 1981)
concomitant opportunity to regard what are generally accepted notions of the “real” differently; ultimately, as ideological constructs.

As seen here through discussion of the film, in *Quatermass II* the landscape has been invaded by ‘a particular type of modernity upon all that is traditional and “natural”’ (Hutchings, 2004: 30). This is a different imagining of modernity, then, to one that implies benefits as well as dangers; something altogether more troubling. The degree to which the landscape can be seen to be tainted is considered, but also how the un-homeliness of the landscape due to the presence of the alien creates a liminal, in-between space; semi abandoned, in a state of flux and difficult to define. This evokes categorisation problems associated with the fantastic, and the sense of a space on the edge of the known, or just outside of it. How do we regard the characters within this liminal space; as alien in their own landscape? As Hutchings notes, the alien invaders have infiltrated the centre of power within the nation and the forces of authority have been appropriated for the purpose of take-over (ibid). Government and the police force are presented as malign and threatening; the body and the body politic are questioned and de-centred. What was once familiar is now un-homely, while it ostensibly appears the same; a different way of looking at authority is encouraged. After events evoke the uncanny, then, the questioning of social forces and social relations mentioned above is precipitated.

In *Quatermass II*, Quatermass, while smarting from the rejection by the government of his Moon Project, discovers an exact replica of it in the form of an industrial Plant when investigating falling missiles that alter the behaviour of those that come in to contact with them. One of these explodes in the face of Quatermass’ assistant Marsh, who is
immediately taken in to the Plant by sinister guards. While the official line on the Plant is that it is for the development of synthetic food, Quatermass thinks otherwise and, through his investigation, find out that the real purpose is to take over individual minds and absorb the will in order to work for alien forces. Realising that the infiltration has reached government level, Quatermass attempts to expose the operation and, in doing so, stirs up resentment amongst the men working at the Plant. An invasion and stand-off ensues and the aliens are defeated largely through the firing of a rocket at the extra-terrestrial source of the missiles. As the effect of the “possession” wears off the guards, Quatermass wonders how final the defeat will be. The combination of science fiction and horror tropes within the form and content of the narrative invites the application of the fantastic and its attendant aspects, as the hybrid nature of speculative fiction, what David Pirie calls ‘metaphysical thriller’ (1973 [2007 edition]: 28), immediately evokes shifting the boundaries and category crisis associated with the fantastic as it straddles generic boundaries. Part of this is through the fusion of Gothic elements with science fiction. This is an aspect of the first film but in *Quatermass II* it is more thorough, due in part to the closer involvement of Nigel Kneale, scriptwriter for the original BBC TV series, in the adaptation process, as discussed earlier. Pirie notes this and, for him, the quality of the final film comes from this so it bears a closer resemblance to the ‘wonderfully expressionistic’ series (ibid: 28).

The opening pre-credit sequence establishes the sense of unease appropriate to the science fiction and horror genres, situated within what appears to be an everyday scenario. The first image is of a car hurtling through the planes of the establishing long shot from somewhere off screen, with the music suggesting danger and mounting tension through a repeated string motif. In the car is a man and a woman; he is apparently injured
and she is driving him to get help when they almost crash into Quatermass’ car. This is set against seemingly more ordinary aspects of the couple who had been picnicking at the site of Wynnerton Flats, where a village recently stood, and Quatermass returning from a frustrating London meeting. The woman tells Quatermass that a falling object had caused the injury to the man, which she calls a burn. The spectator is given clues that provide a sense of disquiet, to develop the tension encoded by the non-diegetic score. The “burn”, as remarked by Quatermass, does not look as it should, and the object, a fragment of which has been kept by the woman, is stone and could not have caused a burn. Quatermass interjects the question ‘Falling?’ (1957: 1: 12) when the woman describes what happened; this alerts the spectator to the unusualness of the phenomenon, marking it as significant. It appears, then, that the conventional explanation is not sufficient as the visual information does not match the easy hypothesis.

The events of the opening sequence are remarked on by Pirie. Quatermass discovers several strange events in the course of his routine and the more he picks at what Pirie refers to as the ‘ball of twine’ the more it unravels (1973: 28). An accumulative build up of information unsettles and creates the liminal narrative space typical of the fantastic that can be associated most closely with the uncanny. The uncanny can make the subject aware of something that lies beyond the material, the empirically known, of matter that is more (or less) than substance; presence and absence. Through revealing what is normally hidden from view, the uncanny reveals ‘an obscure, occluded region which lies beyond’ the known (Jackson, 1981: 65). As it is relational to the “real”, the uncanny realm presents itself ‘on the edge of something else’ (ibid: 68) so it is both marginal and part of what it disrupts. This is why the events on the surface, while odd, might carry a potential for rational explanation initially; however this is then abandoned, firstly by the spectators
because of the genre of the film, then by the characters as they catch up with their
knowledge.

Gothic themes and narrative tropes permeate the film, beginning with the opening
sequence in the establishing of the narrative enigma and in the structure. The injured man
tries to get away from Quatermass and the woman, who see his actions as deriving from
shock; trying to provide a rational explanation. The spectator suspects this is incorrect as
the man has previously been trying to turn the car around and behaving as if he was
under compulsion to act. This will all later be understood as “possession”, even
“infection” and can be linked to vampire narratives where the victim loses their sense of
themselves. The subject is dislocated and the will is taken over by an outside, invasive
force. The presence of the actions within speculative fiction also alerts the spectator to
their significance and possible meaning; Quatermass himself, occupying a position
within the narrative, does not share this vantage point. The spectator is intimately
involved with the character in the dislocating journey within the fantastic space,
experiencing the narrative as themselves while also identifying with the key protagonist.
This is a key aspect of the Gothic as outlined previously from Brunnell’s discussion of
the mode.

There are frequent visual elements in the film that evoke the Gothic and attendant horror
aspects. The refinery or Plant, discussed in detail presently, is described by Jonathan
Rigby as appearing like a ‘many-domed metallic fortress’ with a community that lives
under its shadow; rather like the Universal (and later Hammer) Dracula cycles (2000:
52). Kneale’s reference to the site of the Plant as a ‘complex and alarming place’ (2003:
29:15) certainly fits the image of the labyrinthine castle of the horror film. Similarly, the
v-shaped mark that is the sign of infection by the alien forces evokes an occult symbol and possession as used to create an enslaved workforce as realised in *White Zombie* (Victor Halperin, 1932); a worker refers to the guards in this way. Quatermass describes the infection as an ‘immediate invasion of the entire nervous system. Something is implanted. An instinct. A blind compulsion to act for them’ (1955: 46: 09-14); it is, then, an infiltration from outside. It can be seen as viral contamination as well as possession or usurpation. These aspects will be discussed further below; it is significant that some of the narrative information is provided to the spectator before Quatermass or other characters know of it; the Gothic is thereby inscribed into the structure of the narrative as well as the imagery.

Another early instance of this privileging of the spectator, which informs the sense of the Gothic, occurs during the drive to Wynnerton Flats by Quatermass and Marsh. Their car journey to the site of the falling objects is reminiscent of the transitions between the known and the marginal within horror film narratives as linked to Caroon above\(^\text{15}\). This transition is whereby the protagonist ventures to a realm alongside the familiar. It might be a change of physical landscape infused with notions of the strange and the exotic, or it might remain within the quotidian yet force a character to confront elements previously unimagined. The fantastic realm is that which exists tangential to the “real” and the uncanny space of the familiar made un-homely. In *Quatermass II* the landscape remains that of the ordinary as if through a distorted lens. Quatermass and Marsh drive using a map to plot their journey but there is a disjunction between it and the actual road; they do not tally. Directions are no use and they have to in part improvise, find their way while also compelled to take certain routes; both characteristic of the fantastic. The shift to a

\(^{15}\) Other examples of this physical and psychic journey can be found in *Nosferatu* (F. W. Murnau, 1919) and *Dracula* (Todd Browning, 1931)
less certain space is signalled by the increasingly remote aspect of the environment and
the prevalence of unfamiliar signage. They come to occupy what is, to use Royle’s
phrase an ‘estranged ordinariness’ (2004: 4), a feeling of being not-at-home, uneasy and
rudderless; the subject de-centred, dis-located in fact. There are barbed wire fences and
signs prohibiting access along the route; a medium panning shot of the car shows it from
the other side of the barrier, prompting the question of who “us” and “them” are. The
subject is becoming a stranger in its own space, or perhaps the space itself is has more
potential for hostility or to harbour the hostile. Marsh comments on the amount of road
blocks and signs of heavy traffic, yet the road is remote, badly maintained and
indications do not add up. Finally, the road ends, quite literally. The tarmac simply stops
as if the rest of it has been sliced off and removed, without evident plans to continue
construction or, indeed, any visible reasons for doing so. The landscape becomes, as
Hutchings puts it, dystopian, through the intervention of technology; as he further states,
it can be linked to a specifically British cultural sensibility (2004: 31).

Therefore, the making strange of the English landscape might point to an inherent
uncanny quality already present within it. A static medium-long shot shows the car and
the two figures getting out with the screen framed by two prominent signs reading
“Danger: Do Not Proceed Without Special Authority”, an ominous and incongruous
sight. However, this might not be the case if the previously seen signs and barriers
encourage a perception of the landscape as slightly alien itself; they might then be in
keeping with it. At any rate, the signs themselves indicate a remote, stern authority and
covert operations. The “natural”, familiar landscape is evident but with odd aspects that
produce feelings of estrangement through the map, the rough road and the increasing
impediments to the journey. It brings new perspectives to the landscape particularly if
seen in the context of the emergent nuclear power in the 1950s. Calder Hall, the world’s first nuclear power station, was opened in 1956 and would inevitably have had an impact on the surrounding landscape and how it was perceived. The emergent modernity and the science associated with it appears to be referenced here by the finding of something unfamiliar at the heart of the familiar, an uncanniness that can be linked with the cultural moment of production.

As indicated above the land seems increasingly hostile, a far image from the rural idyll under threat. In this sense, the Quatermass II seems to be tapping in to a sensibility that depicts the English landscape as something dark, melancholy and, potentially, an evocation of the sublime. Examples include some of the ghost stories of M. R James, such as A Warning to the Curious and Oh Whistle and I’ll Come to You, My Lad, Charles Dicken’s The Signalman and their television adaptations. Quatermass warns Marsh not to walk off the road surface in case there are landmines; the landscape seems to have an unsettling effect on the subject as it finds its way. The reference to landmines and the later warning signs in the camp committee building evoke the Second World War; Lincoln Geraghty, in discussion of The Tripods (BBC, 1984-85), considers how science fiction narratives present a dystopian future that seems to ‘look back’ (2011: 105). Although Quatermass II is set in the present, the observation stands here because of the similar backward glance and the depiction of the fantastic through the known. This sense of the hostile is reinforced, at least for the spectator, after they drive away in the car. When they leave the shot of the warning signs reveals figures emerging from the nearby trees, begging the question of how long they have been watching and what their purpose might be. The presence of something alien in the landscape invites a second look at it and the spectre of surveillance, of covert operations is evoked. The sensation of the uncanny
comes from the commingling of the familiar and the strange; as Royle indicates, it is not just a sense of alienation or oddness, although this is part of it (2004: 1). Now that the spectator knows that Quatermass and Marsh have been observed by anonymous agents it affords them privileged knowledge over the characters; a further instance of their involvement within the structure of the narrative. It also compounds the sense of a hostile environment, which may contain further unknown threats; mines, watchers, observation. These might lie outside the immediate experience of much of the British audience, although beaches were altered by domestic defences in the recent 1939-45 war and the Channel Islands were occupied by invaders. Spaces associated with play and the natural cycle of growth would begin to be seen as zones of threat and menace.

Similarly, in *Quatermass II* the spectator might also see the landscape differently. It is no longer as friendly, or homely, as it was previously. Hockenhall draws on the 1940s visual art that represented the destruction of the landscape and identifies the same ‘dark atmospheric tones’ in Powell and Pressburger’s films (2005: 56/7). As in the opening sequence of *Gone To Earth*, cinematography can render the natural as unnatural, with dragon-shaped trees in silhouette against the skyline filling the frame (ibid: 62). The natural landscape begins to appear unforgiving and it’s sometimes more desolate nature is evident, especially in more remote locations. This depiction of the land as wild and, by implication, beyond the control of humans, literally bigger than them, relates to the sublime, as discussed by Hockenhall (ibid: 54). The cinematic sublime renders landscape as mystical, beyond the ken of the human and difficult to fully comprehend because of immense size and its link to the Divine. As Mark Fisher states in relation to the film *Patience (After Sebald)* (Grant Gee, 2012) and the text upon which it is based,

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16 The cinematic sublime can also be seen in the films of Werner Herzog, particularly *Aguirre, the Wrath of God* (1972) and *Heart of Glass* (1976).
landscapes can become ‘eerily numinous spaces’ (2011: 36). The sublime dwarfs the individual. The landscape no longer seems tamed; the uncanny reveals the wildness barely concealed; there is a regression to a primitive state, and ‘something awful is already in the countryside’, as noted by Hutchings (2004: 34). The uncanny is also manifested through the doubling that occurs when Quatermass sees what looks exactly like his rejected Moon Project.

The previous proliferation of elements coded as sinister through film aesthetics (music, framing), is emphasised by the replica of the Moon Project; the refinery/Plant where, it transpires, the aliens are being acclimatised and fed in preparation for take-over. When they see the Double of the project the camera pans as they walk from the car, past and through the remains of Wynnerton Flats, the village that stood on the spot. Rigby sees the ruins as that of a church, which, although difficult to confirm, is certainly a notion that resonates with the Gothic (2000: 52). The crumbling brick of the nearby older buildings is juxtaposed with the highly modern, futuristic Plant in the distance, which is framed against the two men stood looking. The domes and other less distinct buildings of the complex seem emphatically modern, especially given the architecture in later scenes in London. The editing and framing underscores this contrast with the older buildings and the men’s clothing; Quatermass especially would not look out of place in a 1940s thriller. Marsh’s line ‘It’s unbelievable’ (1957: 11: 48), said in amazement at the appearance of such a replica as the Plant, echoes the possible spectator response to it also. Further, it is also simultaneously feasible. It must be, as the filming used an existing Shell oil refinery for both series and film; the same one, which becomes its own example of doubling and compounds the uncanny nature of this instance. If similar such industrial locations existed, then this would not be beyond the realms of the possible. It is technology of the
modern age contemporary to film production and therefore not totally alien, looking both unusual enough and sufficiently startling for it to achieve an unsettling effect. The Plant is incongruous yet strangely appropriate, in that the spectator has been prepared for oddness due to the signs, watchers and the road; it also evoke the factory mills of the previous century (Quatermass later refers to it as a mill or a factory, which confirms this). It is therefore a continuation of a technological presence in the natural landscape, an infiltration of the industrial/machine within spaces more akin to an older, rural form of industry. The village, or what remains of it, is equally incongruous, or is at a curiously high altitude for an old settlement and there are no visible remnants of village roads or layout; just a windswept hill with wild grass. It seems unlikely that a village would have been there, which adds to the sense of the uncanny. There is an emptiness and sense of space that is disquieting.

For Hutchings, the uncanny landscape expresses an emptying, a draining of the national and a sense of loss (2004: 32). This loss can be linked here to the damaged nation as highlighted by Hockenhall in the immediate post-war context. Loss can also be seen in terms of the reduction in international status of Britain and the 1950s context of Suez and the Cold War as discussed above in the National Identity chapter. The apparent suddenness of the clearing of the village and the lack of information about how this happened evokes a fear and unease of authority; something has invaded and tainted the landscape. There is, though, the possibility still that Quatermass and Marsh are the alien things in the landscape, estranged from it and ill at ease, the former more so because of his American identity.
The landscape as uncanny is reinforced when Quatermass seeks help at the nearest town, following the injury of Marsh by one of the objects exploding in his face and his removal in to the Plant by the quasi-military guards (discussed in the previous chapter in relation to national identity and, below, viral infection). The calm of the town contrasts to the previous events but perceptions of it are affected by them. This is especially the case as the spectator sees evidence of the influence of the nameless forces who seem to be in control and who have changed the landscape. A static long shot follows Quatermass’s car as it enters the settlement and then swiftly pans right as if to alert the spectator to something they will otherwise miss. It reveals a line of standing buses with the same logo on them as seen earlier on the roadside signs; the shot is given from the spectator’s viewpoint and is not an eye-line match showing what the character sees in reverse shot; presumably Quatermass has not seen them and is unaware of their significance. The audience are being involved in the narrative as themselves in a structure that evokes the Gothic. The empty buses compound the sense of the uncanny as they are not being used for purpose and stand forlorn and empty. When Quatermass asks a woman for directions to the nearest police station the combination of her conventional behaviour and unconventional reply, (there are no police, just the ‘camp committee’), also appears strange (1957: 15: 30). When she gives directions to it the change in her voice, from cautious to energised, suggests a sense of relief at being able to say something straightforward.

The New Town looks forlorn, its newness emphasised by the building materials and lack of proper pavement. Both the town and the rural landscape appear as in-between, transitory spaces, rather like the zones occupied by Caroon in *The Quatermass Experiment*. Here they appear indeterminate through demolition or incompletion. Near
the Plant the landscape is being transformed from one associated with farming, mining or cotton, to being part of the modern age within the science fiction narrative. While shots of London show few contemporary structures, if any, here there is a representation of the industrial, social changes taking place in lived actuality. These are parallel to political changes within the body politic and imagine them, when in conjunction with the nature of those who control government, as a critique of the increased sense of displacement associated with modernity (Geraghty, 2000: 24). These aspects articulate economic and social and political changes experienced by the population of the country in the 1950s and the sense of not knowing what the outcome will be, the sense of change discussed by Geraghty. The liminal quality of the spaces makes them a negative version of the more permanent ones of the capital, London. However, as counterparts, these spaces, such as Westminster, constructed as enduring, have the potential also to become in-between spaces and impermanent. The liminality of the capital is due to the alien presence; the threat to the body politic extends the threat to the individual. They no longer appear as solid; they can be infiltrated and corrupted, and, as shall be seen, this has ideological ramifications.

This notion of infiltration is realised both through the body of the subject and the body of the nation. The will of the individual is subjugate and absorbed in to the will and purpose of the alien invaders, in a process reminiscent of the Gothic vampire narrative; the resulting figures are zombie-like, which further connects the narrative tropes of the film to those of horror fiction. Both these concepts, viral infection and zombie/possession, are considered here in relation to the authority figures and the visit to the Plant. Viral infection is a potent concept evoking both the hybrid and the uncanny, linked to moments of abjection and body horror. It also further evokes the sense of estrangement and being
alien within the landscape. As Royle states, the uncanny ‘may be construed as a foreign body within oneself, even the experience of oneself as a foreign body’ (2004: 2), so it is inexplicably bound with the subject’s sense of themselves.

The contamination of the subject by the outside force serves as a metaphor for the infiltration of government by agents of the aliens. This is visualised in several ways and appears within the narrative action. The first is when Quatermass journeys to London to investigate the Plant and sees lorries carrying the logo that associates them with the Plant and its covert operations, at Trafalgar Square and Whitehall; the threat is in the heart of the capital, the core of the “nation”. When Quatermass speaks to Lomax it transpires that the Plant is part of a top-secret government project manufacturing synthetic foods; as was indicated above, this is coded as immediately suspect. The phone conversation with Broadhead, who is himself convinced of a cover-up, indicates the need for caution; a sense that there are listeners and therefore, with the surveillance through watching, potentially a sophisticated network keeping watch for subversives; the government spying on its own population. This could have had cultural and political resonances for the historical moment in relation to the Cold War.

The notion that the government, while superficially appearing to have the interests of the population at the heart of its policies, might be exploiting the nation, is, for Kneale, a central concept of the film; a sense of the uncanny linked to authority through representing this possibility (2003: 9:23). This encourages a different way of looking at something familiar. Within the film, government and authority are already corrupted: Hutchings suggests that beneath both Quatermass narratives lies the suggestion that ‘something is wrong with Britain and that this predates any alien invasion (1999: 40).
Broadhead and Quatermass attend an arranged visit to the Plant, presented as an advertising or marketing exercise but designed to bring significant people to it to infect them. When the guide gives them the time of the visit, a close up of his wrist as he looks at his watch reveals, to the spectator not to Quatermass, the v-shaped ‘mark of Cain’ (Rigby, 2000: 52) that evokes the Gothic. Later, Lomax sees it on the wrist of the Commissioner of Scotland Yard. The mark can be seen as a sign of viral infection.

As a visual site of infiltration, the Plant is a suitably uncanny space. Already uncanny through the process of doubling, the environment, like many spaces of transition and industrial estates, has a pervasive melancholic air and a sense of being an in-between state, like the tainted rural space discussed earlier. Its labyrinthine quality contributes an insidious threatening atmosphere that is capitalised on by the film; the arrival of the visiting party is the first sense of this. Quatermass and his group are greeted by armed guards at a checkpoint, with the medium point of view shot from the visitor’s perspective of these militia like figures opening the gates placing the spectator in the more vulnerable position of being observed and monitored. Broadhead’s comment of ‘Nothing very sinister so far’ (1957: 29: 02) invites the spectator to imagine the precise opposite; this is particularly the case as he makes similar comments throughout the visit, until his own death from exposure to the “foodstuff”. The frequency of Broadhead’s remarks signals his status as an unreliable narrator.

Identification and perspectives are played with in the sequence of the arrival of the visitors to the Plant, which disorientates and invites reassessment of position. On occasion the spectator is observing the visitors and their cars, at others placed with them, which invites both identification and a more distanced relationship, simultaneously. The
shots of the Plant, filmed at the Shell Essex Refinery, utilises the bleak aspect of the setting, which, states Kneale, was an almost fully automated site with about a dozen personnel working there (2003: 29:20-27). This emptiness of space and lack of human life creates a Gothic eeriness that contributes to the sensation of unease, or dis-ease. A static long shot of the visitor cars in the Plant emphasises their being out of place in this specifically modern landscape; although the motor car belongs to the machine age, these structures, the domes and pipes, are aligned with a more nuclear/atomic version of this cultural sphere. Moving through the intersecting pipes and distant domes, their moving form against the other static objects draws attention to their difference. There is then a low angle tracking shot from the perspective of a car passenger, presumably of Quatermass, showcasing the verticality of the structures and the horizontal pipes. Then a medium tracking shot shows the cars enter within a network of supporting girders and pipes, shown in tracking shot passing between rows of pipes; as if they are being gradually enclosed. The increasing frequency of the shots suggests the sense of gradual encroachment. When the passengers get out of the cars a cut to a high angle shot shows a car enclosed within lines of pipes and girders that effectively frame it, dissecting it in half. The sinister aspects of the setting is emphasised linked to the infiltration of the cultural sphere by the alien; infection of the body politic and capture.

In his analysis of science fiction invasion narratives, Hutchings addresses the physicality of the aliens, contamination and the monstrous ‘eruption’ of the body (1999: 41). He does not explicitly address the abject, but this concept can be applied here and the ideas of Barbara Creed used to expand on Hutchings. The subject’s body, then, is exposed to viral infection and infiltration; a localised version of the impact on the cultural. This is chiefly through the take-over, or possession, of the subject. The alien force attaches itself
and enters the body of the subject, an invasion of the inside from something that should
have remained without; a form of abjection, which involves the giving over of the human
will to the alien mind and purpose. Creed sees the abject as the place where meaning
collapses due to excess and where “I” am not (1989: 65). The human figure has become
monstrous, abject, a site of fear and locus of cultural anxiety due to over-abundance of
meaning. They signify too much; human and non-human, terrestrial and extra-terrestrial,
being comprised, in their monstrous form, of traits and characteristics from both
categories. Figures from the Gothic mode such as the Frankenstein monster, vampires,
werewolves and zombies, are also monstrous due to this. As such, they trouble
boundaries and challenge notions of the discrete, autonomous subject and subvert the
category of “human”. This is articulated within Quatermass II as the monster that is such
through two means. Firstly, there is the contamination of the subject of the invasive force
that takes over the agency of the human figure, creating what can be regarded as uncanny
autonomic figures, ostensibly human yet simultaneously alien. Secondly, their minds are
conjoined and form extensions of the mind of the alien itself. Boundaries collapse twice,
then, through the infiltration and uncanny repetition. The guards appear alike, as if
cloned or as zombies, which will be discussed further. The behaviour and attitude of the
“infected” and abject figures emphasise the humanity of those not in contact with the
aliens; the abject re-defines and strengthens the category “human” here also, rather like
Caroon in the earlier film.

The contamination of the subject evokes notions of body horror and disgust providing a
further sense of the abject. Hutchings notes the primitive form of the aliens, which raises
‘the possibility of an evolutionary regression’ (1999: 41) as they appear ‘defiantly
organic, even primordial’ (ibid). Quatermass glimpses them lurching inside the domes
when he looks through a spy-hole; here they are separate from the subject, the interior wall of the dome serving as a barrier. In the denouement of the film when the domes are attacked and blown up the aliens emerge, the danger emphasised by the loss of the containing barrier. It is akin to the release of a deadly virus or plague. This notion runs through the film, from the contamination of the subject and infiltration of the corridors of power (the Commissioner, for instance) to the effect of contact with the aliens. Hutchings also notes the link with a ‘contaminating dirtiness’ (ibid) that is expressed most visually and explicitly through the death of Broadhead alluded to earlier. Here, after his fatal curiosity causes him to come into contact with the “foodstuff” being manufactured at the Plant (food for the aliens), Broadhead gets completely covered in a dark, slime-like corrosive substance that kills him. This ooze, for Hutchings, suggests the ‘messy eruption of biological processes’ (ibid) within a conservative culture. All the aspects of bodily functions dealt with culturally through ritual and containment, elements necessary to life yet repressed and consigned to invisibility and absence, are suggested here but not addressed specifically by Hutchings, which leaves space to do so here. There is the idea, suggested by Hutchings’ use of language, of something difficult to contain, lacking in coherence, but which is sudden and violent in its manifestation. The notion of the return of repressed elements links in with social attitudes and anxieties regarding cultural and political change, fear of the Other and the perceived threat of “alien” cultural modes. The corrosive slime that covers the human figure is invasive, contaminating, and also foreign, being of the aliens, their foodstuff. It penetrates the skin and merges with the human body, being then another form of the hybrid, as with Caroon in *The Quatermass Experiment*. Being food of a kind, albeit unearthly, it should nourish, but it kills; it should be within, yet it is outside the body in a form of abject reversal. It should be kept in containers, like the aliens, yet it is exposed and in the open, abject, deadly to humans.
The deadliness of the stuff to the subject and the fact that it is the foodstuff of the aliens emphasises the identity of the human, despite the initial difficulty in telling the infected apart from others. Articulated in the image of the stricken Broadhead, then, is a social and cultural anxiety over the excremental and the impure.

This can also be read against Creed’s citing of the corpse as the ultimate signifier of abjection, being the body without soul (1989: 66). The human host acts according to the will of the alien, as they have none left while infected or occupied. If thought of in terms of occupation it makes the parallel with the infiltration of the body politic stronger. Creed lists figures common to horror film, including the zombie, which can be equated with the guards. When the “spell” leaves the host, they are confused as if they have woken from a dreamless sleep, or a form of death. With the viral infection the subject is joined to the monster via control of nervous system, mind and will, both “me” and “not me”. The consciousness becomes part of a collective mind, a larger controlling force of which it is both part and not part of. The alien entity is divided between multi hosts. This is a form of hybridity, as discussed above; the possessed subject is both human and alien, part of the monstrous figure yet superficially the same. Categories and definitions are typically blurred and problematised. The alien within the human becomes a monstrous child growing within, taking over. Kevin Boon’s conference paper ‘The Zombie as Other: Mortality and the Monstrous in the Post-Modern Age’ (2006) considers the threat of absorption by the “Other”, which is articulated in the figure of the guards-as-zombies. Similarly as with the vampire, there is a loss of selfhood associated with the take-over, and dissolution in to non-being or un-differentiation. This can be read as a desire to return to an inorganic state. It is a desire for death, or rather both a compulsion towards and repulsion against it.
It is interesting to consider what happens to the consciousness during absorption by the alien host; when the guard who “wakes up” at the end of the film is released from this state he appears as if emerging from a dreamless sleep or coma. Where was his mind in between that moment and the moment of possession or infection? There is a ‘loss of “you”’ as Boon suggests; where is the “I” of the subject while it is possessed (2006)? There are wider social ramifications in that the relationship of the subject to the cultural sphere can be considered and the changes in perception associated with notions of authority exploiting and indoctrinating. The guards at the Plant are not individualised; they are clone-like. Their quasi-military garb reduces difference and they react together when they realise it is Quatermass himself in disguise, when he infiltrates the Plant. The idea of cloning develops the threat suggested by the zombie figure. For Boon, the clone, as a produced person, (without consciousness?), posits the question, again, of where “I” am (2006). There is the idea that the subject is nobody because something (or someone) has taken their place. While the zombie is a metaphor for the loss of subjectivity, the clone-like nature of the guards here becomes a metaphor for a loss of political will and social/cultural agency.

The wider social implications of the zombie and clone figures dovetails with the uncanny as political, discussed above. When Quatermass, Lomax and the reporter Jimmy investigate the Plant and the village to gain evidence for a national warning, a falling object, named an “overshot” by the workers at the Plant, infects the barmaid at the social club and Jimmy is shot by the guards who come to fetch her. The village workers already disgruntled at unfair working conditions and what they see as the high-handed attitude of the “zombie” guards, revolt and advance on the Plant. The workers are relatively
individuated, of different ages and, it seems, ethnic background in that some appear Southern English working class in speech pattern and accent, others more Scots/Irish, while the guards are more homogenous. In their group march on the Plant, the workers are reminiscent of villagers in 1930s Universal Frankenstein films, turning against the titled perpetrators of the misery caused them by the monster. They become their generic descendents. It is tempting to see this in terms of revolutionary action, with the oppressed workers rising against their masters. If the village workers are the counterparts of the guards, they become their opposites and form a kind of doubling in the manner of Frankenstein and the Monster. In that way they become the rebellious child, or extension of the original that discovers its own agency and refuses to conform. When the mob breach the gate to the Plant a form of class war ensues, with workers pitted against authority, which is emphasised when a group of them including Quatermass and Lomax occupy the building that regulates the flow of oxygen and gasses in to the domes. Their sabotage of the apparatus is met by an increasingly urgent and authoritative voice demanding they surrender. Pirie notes the importance of the political allegory of the uprising at the end (1973: 30). He suggests that the idea of a ‘malevolent, cynical authority controlling government’ (ibid) was unusual and startling in the 1950s and he links it to the historical moment with a recent conflict and the threat of another. The representation of such a scenario challenges certainties and posits the question of the uses and abuses of authority, power and technology. The workers, after seeing the deadly capabilities of the guards, realise this and their perception of their social context is changes, rendered un-homely, unfamiliar and uncanny.

The association of the uncanny with the political can be read using Royle’s citation of the thinking around the concept by Heidegger (2004: 4). The uncanny is posited as part of
the everyday human condition. Heidegger, states Royle, indicates how the very nature of human social existence and cultural being is un-homely; the ordinary is extraordinary. The mode of existence that might be regarded as comfortable, complacent, ‘tranquilized’ (Heidegger in Royle, 2004: 4), content with its lot, is itself uncanny. The term “uncanny” suggests “canny”, as discussed by Royle (ibid: 10). Canny has meant, states Royle, cautious, cunning, wily, wise; therefore, to be not canny, or uncanny, suggests being unwise, having a lack of caution and cunning, perhaps even being duped. This suggests that those who live according to dominant ideological conventions, are themselves decentred or self estranged, having denied an essential part of themselves in order to compromise and enjoy the physical comforts afforded them. Politically, this connects with the Marxist view of the working masses alienated from the fruits of their labour through the capitalist process, or the decentred subject of post-structuralist discourses. Dominant ideology itself decentres the subject. The uncanny, then, performs two related functions. It unsettles and unnerves due to the commingling of the familiar and the unfamiliar or the reminder of repressed elements as noted before. It also alerts the subject, through unsettling them, to how they were decentred to begin with. It is therefore potentially subversive, politically; especially if the political reality of government and institutions dominated and confronted by self serving autocrats.

Conclusion
Analysis of the 1950s Quatermass films as fantastic narratives has enabled discussion of hybridity and the uncanny, with both concepts linked to concepts of “nation”. Discussion of Caroon as hybrid addresses disintegration of categories, borders and points to the contingency of identity. These concepts have wider social implications, indicating their subversive potential through considering identity and, by extension, knowledge and the
“real” as contested categories. Discussion of the uncanny linked to landscape and authority indicates the potential threat behind the everyday. It shows how that which has been taken for granted can be interrogated through the uncanny.

What possibilities are there for considering the hybrid in other examples of cultural products related to the Quatermass films? What is the legacy of Quatermass in terms of the themes it addresses and the impact it had on film and television practice? The following chapter addresses later instances of hybridity and looks at these questions through discussion of later science fiction narratives and examples of the Quatermass story.
Conclusion

The 1950s Quatermass films, then, dramatise questions over identity, “the national”, and socio-cultural concerns contemporaneous to their production. They also display, through their production and within the treatment of their narrative themes, dialogue with hybridity. Hybridity is a key tool for understanding how these films engage with the “national” and, while articulating characteristics associated with national identity, they offer some critique of them. The Quatermass films envisage particular representations of “nation” and identity that addresses ideas of the imagined community, and dramatise anxieties over the hybrid. Their response to hybridity is complex, positing the hybrid both as an element to be cautious of but ultimately as something that reminds us of our own human identity. Using hybridity as a theoretical framework and combining it with the fantastic and the uncanny has enriched assessment of national identity and “the nation” through encouraging a questioning of conventional discourse and the notion of fixed identity. The 1950s Quatermass films, therefore, serve as an example of the less consensual historical film as proposed by Andrew Higson (2000: 41); (2000: 67). The following conclusion reflects critically on the thesis, its research questions and how the preceding chapters have addressed them; it also considers further possibilities for reading hybridity subsequent to the 1950s Quatermass films and in the contemporary moment. How might hybridity be understood and configured within and through cultural products, in a postmodern, multicultural and globalised context?

This part of the conclusion offers some initial observations on the Quatermass films and their potential for engaging with plurality. I then provide an evaluative discussion of how this study has engaged with the research questions established in the Introduction. The Quatermass films can be seen as an example of the potential for 1950s cinema to offer
less of a consensus view of society. There is a move towards engaging with a more pluralistic view of identity, to destabilise and challenge accepted certainties. These questions engage with current discourse on the national and post-national (Richards, 1997), (Higson, 2000), discussions that are recognising the contingent and diffuse nature of individual and national identity. This emphasis on the inherently diasporic nature, as Higson puts it, of “the nation”, has helped enable a questioning of what is meant by national identity and national cinema. Study of the Quatermass films can point, then, to a myth of national identity that has been constructed through habit, custom and cultural production. The heterogeneous nature of “national cinema” has been emphasised and application of the uncanny and the hybrid has helped find these potentialities within the texts.

A summary of the content of each of the analytical chapters helps to introduce discussion of how my thesis has addressed its research questions. Chapter One, the Literature Review, established the methodological frameworks and current literature on the 1950s Quatermass films to situate this thesis in the wider critical context of other studies that similarly address concepts of “nation”, identity and national cinema. The Adaptation chapter provided the narrative of the adaptation process of the Quatermass stories from television to film, within the wider contexts of production, marketing and reception. This wider context helped provide a rationale for the changes to the original scripts whilst indicating the prevailing discourses within the BBC and their relations with Hammer. The comparative analysis of the television and film versions of the Quatermass stories is a particular contribution of this thesis, and illustrates how the institutional and production contexts shape the narratives. Chapter Three discussed how ideas of national identity are dramatised within the Quatermass film texts, during a period of social change and how
the changing international status of the United Kingdom informed conceptions on “national character”. There was also discussion of the possibilities and challenges posed by the modern, new technologies and science and how these were configured in the films. Chapter Four read the figure of Caroon in *The Quatermass Experiment* and alien infested authority in *Quatermass II* principally through the uncanny, to evaluate the treatment of hybridity in each film. This chapter also addressed and used the concept of the uncanny in socio-cultural terms, considering the subversive potential of the uncanny to unsettle and challenge.

A significant intention and contribution of my thesis has been to critically reassess the 1950s Quatermass films, within and through specific critical contexts and research questions. Essentially, the initial purpose was to fill the gap in the literature because, as was illustrated in the Introduction and Literature Review, there are no in-depth studies of Quatermass of any substantial length. I also wanted to bridge the gap between the contextualised textual analysis of Pirie, Hutchings and Rolinson and Cooper on the one hand, and the film production and historical focus of Murphy, Maxford and Jezerd on the other. The use of a range of archival resources was part of this aim, to bring a cultural historical approach in to the process of textual analysis. As indicated by Sarah Street, the use of original documents often leads to a widening of the research focus and the placing of the case studies in broader contexts; the study becomes as much about these contexts as it does about the Quatermass films. The film texts, then, have not been discussed in isolation but have been fully contextualised.

To help discuss the research findings specifically and establish the contribution of my thesis, this section of the conclusion identifies the research questions and discusses how
they have been met in the preceding chapters. There are several research questions at the start of this study, which are summarised here. Principally, the main question is how do the 1950s Quatermass films engage critically with concepts of “nation” and national identity, and how can the concept of hybridity be utilised as a critical framework through which this can be understood? How do the films engage with the hybrid? Further, what is the significance of the historical, cultural and social contexts of the films’ production, particularly concerning notions of national identity and the changing status of the United Kingdom in the 1950s, but also the industrial contexts, including Hammer and the BBC? What resonances might there be for our contemporary moment?

In addressing the research questions, specific concepts and issues relating to “nation”, hybridity and social change have been explored in the thesis, through contextualised discussion of The Quatermass Experiment and Quatermass II. One such context is the concept of “nation” and attendant notions of national identity and how such ideas might be dramatised within the historical contexts of the 1950s such as the Cold War and the United Kingdom’s relations with, for example, the United States. Several themes have been highlighted through textual analysis of how the alien threat and the response to it are configured within each film. The Quatermass films posit conflict between the old and the new, tension between nostalgia for the past and its certainties and traditional values, and knowledge of the need to adapt to change. The modern, technological age poses both threats and opportunities and this is dramatised through the source of the threat in The Quatermass Experiment and the means used to defeat the aliens in Quatermass II, for example.
Further, my discussion illustrates how ideas of national identity are interrogated in the films through the mapping of traits associated with “Britishness” on to those under the influence of the alien forces. This thesis demonstrates how some films from the 1950s engaged critically with ideas of “nation” and national identity, through association of “British” characteristics with threat. Associated with this is the challenge in the films to the idea of a fixed national identity, implied by the need in the film for a combination of approaches to defeat the monstrous threat, as argued in the ‘Quatermass and National Identity’ chapter. The emphasis on the plural links with the hybrid and implies the complex approach to hybridity within these films. My thesis has illustrated the anxiety over hybridity present in the films, which then helps to indicate the social and cultural concerns refracted within and through the screen. The discussion also indicates the need for and usefulness of a flexible approach which acknowledges diversity and hybridity, in order to respond adequately to a range of threats, challenges and changing circumstances.

My discussion of The Quatermass Experiment and Quatermass II has taken the notion of how the uncanny engenders anxiety through the uncovering of what has been repressed and applied it to a critique of concepts of national identity, and authority. My thesis combines discussion of the ability of the uncanny to ‘make strange’ (Royle, 2004: 5) with the social critique implied by the hybrid and its challenges to homogeneity and the dominant ideology. Analysis of the Quatermass films demonstrates how the uncanny can be linked to the national through analysis of how the monstrous makes the previously known, strange; more specifically, it makes the subject aware of the unfamiliar within the familiar. The uncanny can unsettle, subvert and reveal the strangeness of the everyday; an unhomeliness at the heart of hearth and home, and, by extension because of how it is applied in this study, the nation. As argued in the above discussions, the uncanny implies
displacement and the subject (or nation) a stranger to itself; fluid and contingent. Like the uncanny, the hybrid also challenges and problematises the previously transparent and threatens the status of authority; dominant ideology becomes less secure as it is obliged to dwell alongside competing ideologies.

Analysis of the hybrid within the context of the cinematic fantastic and the concept of the uncanny has enabled me, through this thesis, to think differently about the socio-political application of both concepts. I have addressed what could be termed the uncanny hybrid; the decentred, fluid and unstable subject, a reminder of the similarly ‘contingent, abstract amalgam of dispersed and specific audiences or cultural subjects’ that comprise “nation” (Higson, 2000: 65). The uncanny thus serves as an index of a heterogeneous culture and it also suggests the contingency of the wider culture itself and the use of authority, hence the affinity with hybridity. The link with the uncanny suggests a different way to address the hybrid, the expression of which, as Janet Staiger states, ‘forces the dominant culture to look back at itself and see its presumption of universality’ (1997: 11). Texts and events that point to a hybridity can prompt self-examination by the dominant culture. Myths of wholeness become exposed as such. There is also a challenge to the version of “nation” and the nations past in circulation in cultural formations and the popular imagination.

Through this discussion my thesis has linked the concepts of hybridity and national identity and illustrated how two films produced in the 1950s critically engage with the concept of “nation”. Through identifying this critique, it is evident that historical films can be seen to be challenging the ideology of the imagined community and that, rather than being a phenomenon of the postmodern condition, British films from the 1950s display a degree of the transnational. There is an acknowledgment of the multiplicity of
characteristics that comprise a hybrid “national character” that need to be addressed. It could be argued that they therefore provide some parallel with the post-national films produced in more recent years as discussed below.

As well as the contribution and strengths of this study, there are also some limitations, which are outlined here before discussion of hybridity after the 1950s Quatermass films. The range of the thesis is very specific, the discussion and analysis being primarily focused on two feature films, *The Quatermass Experiment* and *Quatermass II*. Both films are, however, assessed within their wider production contexts and situated within critical discourses on British cinema. They are also discussed together with their counterparts, the original BBC serials upon which they were based, itself a contribution of this thesis. The textual analysis of the films also takes account of their historical, social and cultural contexts. However, a broader focus could help to determine the efficacy of hybridity as a critical framework more. Another limitation is the particular historical focus on the 1950s, although this could be seen positively as it allows detailed discussion of the case studies within a context. A broader range of British film case studies beyond the specific historical moment and, indeed outside of the fantastic, could also evaluate more fully the different representations and articulations of hybridity. Another possible limitation is the sole focus on film, although there is some discussion of television, mainly to identify and explore differences between the two versions of the Quatermass narrative. How might hybridity be read and understood within other forms of popular culture? This next part of the conclusion briefly addresses examples of hybridity outside of the 1950s Quatermass films, to evaluate how changes in social, cultural and production context might impact on the understanding of the hybrid.
Discussion of the third Quatermass story on film, *Quatermass and the Pit* (Roy Ward Baker, 1967), the 1970s Jon Pertwee era *Doctor Who* (1963-89; 2005-present), and *Torchwood* (2006-present), presents an opportunity to map changing configurations of hybridity. These texts also share an affinity with each other; as well as being examples of the fantastic on screen, they share certain elements of narrative. The Earth-bound 1970s *Doctor Who* featuring Jon Petrwee compares to the Quatermass stories in the use of the invasion narrative theme, particularly in *Spearhead from Space* (1970), as argued by James Chapman (2006: 83). *Torchwood* is an offshoot of the revived 2000s *Doctor Who*, and is an interesting case study as it represents a transition to a postmodern, multicultural context. It therefore enables evaluation of hybridity in a globalised, transnational context.

*Quatermass and the Pit* was the third Hammer film adapted from a BBC television series, *Quatermass and the Pit* (1958-9), although in this instance Nigel Kneale had a more significant, central role in the adaptation process. Undated publicity material from Hammer entitled ‘Hammer News’ states that Kneale was author of the screenplay, maintaining that the narrative had been re-written but fundamentally was unchanged, merely updated (Bob Webb, Unit Publicity: 1). A retrospective in *The House That Hammer Built* states Kneale had full control over the script and adaptation for film, commenting on the result that it was the ‘most faithful rendition’ of the Quatermass stories (1997: 316). Critical assessment of the film allows for further instances of hybridity to be explored. In this Quatermass film the alien presence is embedded within the human through age-old intervention and genetic engineering by extra-terrestrials on “pre-human” subjects. What marks humanity out as unique, is the product of literal cross-cultural encounters and fertilizations. The human is already “Other”, the subject decentred and inherently hybrid.
*Quatermass and the Pit* altered the quality of the invasion as outlined above and conveyed an arguably more anxious sensibility, with a significant development in the nature of the invasive force. As Bruce Eder remarks, the trajectory of the Quatermass narrative was steadily gloomier, its view of the world increasingly bleak with each instalment (1987: 77). Nigel Kneale, in interview with Paul Wells, outlines how the first Quatermass narrative concerned a ‘contemporary small-scale but spreading invasion’ [...] [T]he second was about something that had happened some time before [...] the spread had already happened’. However, the third narrative, *Quatermass and the Pit*, ‘involved something that had happened millions of years before, so the take-over was completely established’ and this has different implications for ideas of national identity and nationhood (Kneale in Wells, 1999: 54). In *Quatermass and the Pit*, then, hybridity is a source of anxiety through an invasion narrative that posits a historical intervention. The notion of the alien/human hybrid implies the sense of a loss of privilege and uniqueness, and problematises the concept of “purity”. As Peter Hutchings argues, the imagining of an alien culture in the invasion narrative challenges ‘complacency’ and, it can be argued, the sense of entitlement that derives from absolute authority and privilege (1999: 35). As Hutchings further states, humanity’s ‘imaginary dominion, its sense of being at the centre of things, is wounded’; an uneasy and less secure authority (ibid). Although from the perspective of dominant ideology this challenge is the source of fear and anxiety, it also, in forcing the dominant culture to look back at itself, may prompt the self-examination referred to above in relation to the discussion of Staiger.

What further examples of the hybrid are there in later fantastic narratives that bear an affinity with Quatermass? One strong area of influence is some of the later *Doctor Who* incarnations, most notably the Jon Pertwee era (1970–74). In many ways this is the
Doctor with the closest affinity to Quatermass, through his role as a largely Earth-bound scientific advisor to a military organisation, the United Nations Intelligence Taskforce (UNIT), with the focus on threats to the nation. This role of ‘quasi-official scientific adviser’, as Chapman identifies, harks back to Quatermass’ character (2006: 78). These threats mainly take the form of various crises caused by human actions unearthing primeval forces or awakening hibernating beings, as in Doctor Who and the Silurians (1970). The Silurians, a race of reptile-like creatures that pre-date humans and had been in hibernation for millennia, are awakened by human activity. Their identity and that of the closely related The Sea Devils (1972) perhaps owes as much to the stories of H. P Lovecraft, especially The Shadow Over Innsmouth, as it does to Quatermass, but the notion of a sophisticated and advanced non-human from the depths of time evokes Quatermass and the Pit. Other narratives address environmental issues and pollution, with infection and contagion caused by industrial processes, as in The Green Death (1973). A blurring of categories is present within the production format of the serial itself, although this might not imply hybridity in the terms of Staiger. As Chapman observes, certain storylines combined themes and motifs from different genres; he cites The Dæmons (1971) as an example of this (ibid: 89). David Butler concurs with this when he identifies how Doctor Who blurs generic categories, employing elements that evoke science fiction, horror, mystery, costume drama and comedy, for example (2007: 9). One interesting aspect that is discussed by Chapman and linked by him to Quatermass is the potential socio-political critique offered by the Doctor Who stories of the early 1970s, with areas of the British landscape cordoned off; a nation of restricted areas (2006: 82). As Chapman rightly points out, this appropriation by government forces evokes Quatermass II and the depiction within it of authority; together with the above mentioned concern over the effects of pollution on the environment, a coherent critique
of misuses of power. The aforementioned invasion narrative story *Spearhead from Space* bears a marked similarity to *Quatermass II* in the scenario of alien intelligence contained in falling objects. The alien intelligence inhabits malevolent mannequin-like figures, the Autons; these then become animated, which evokes the uncanny. The Autons are alien in origin yet humanoid in appearance, which invites them to be read as human/alien hybrid. Here, hybridity is configured as monstrous and destructive, expressing fear and anxiety and also vulnerability through the imagining of the Other.

However, there is another way of thinking about the and the notion of hybridity; the programme *Torchwood* (2006-). *Torchwood*’s narrative involves an organisation investigating aliens, not dissimilar to the role of Quatermass the scientist and the Pertwee era *Doctor Who*. The key aspects of interest to this study, though, are the circumstances of production. In his discussion of *Torchwood*, Lee Barron places the programme within what he refers to as ’something of a renaissance’ for British science fiction television (2011: 178). Within the introduction to their edited collection of essays on British science fiction film and television, Tobias Hochscherf and James Leggott refer to the hybrid nature of *Torchwood* and highlight how Barron stresses the importance of situating discussion of texts within their contemporary cultural moment, for instance the globalisation of media forms (2011: 8). The implicit hybridity within globalisation, through co-production (international financing, personnel, location) and in the text itself make this programme a pertinent contemporary example of the hybrid. Hybridity can be seen as embodied within the figure of Jack Harkness (John Barrowman), played by, as Barron states, a Scottish American (2011: 178). *Torchwood* was originally a spin-off programme of the re-vamped, contemporary *Doctor Who* series (2005-), though aimed at a more adult audience and scheduled for a later evening slot. It is less of a hybrid in
terms of its spectatorship, perhaps, than the parent programme, originally conceived of course as a series aimed at a more varied audience. This shift in demographic parallels the change undergone in the audience of the Quatermass narratives in their move from a late evening BBC television slot to an adult oriented ‘X’ rated cinema release. The global context of production and reception, though, especially given the wider possibilities of spectatorship offered by internet access and different screens and interfaces in the contemporary moment, may well counter the notion of a more closely defined target audience. What are the circumstances of production, then, that carry an implicit hybridity that chimes with the interests of this study?

Barron refers to Torchwood as a text ‘characterised by slippage, rift and collision; from the literal [...] to the tonal shifts [...] throughout the series’ (ibid: 179). The troubling of borders and the inherent sense of the hybrid that this idea carries has been identified in the Quatermass films. The blurring of identity between alien and human, for instance, (The Quatermass Experiment) and in the temporal collision implicit in Quatermass and the Pit with events in the distant past bearing monstrous fruit in the present, is a key theme. As identified by Barron, Torchwood displays a set of ‘boundary erosions’ in terms of worlds, dimensions, temporal zones and sexuality, the final aspect being seen through the figure of Jack (ibid). Hybridity is inherent to slippage, or collision and erosion, of boundaries due to consequent overlap and mixing; this might be through identity or genre. While sharing the science fiction tropes of the parent programme, generic slippage can be identified, as Barron states. He cites the first episode of the series, ‘Everything Changes’, as an example of this because of the similarity of the opening to a crime thriller and the identification of the programme as science fiction through the dialogue and use of props (ibid: 181). The sense of generic blurring and
knowingness enables the series to be linked with other, similarly postmodern texts in both television and film, which can be characterised as such through both inter-textuality and self-referential elements as well as the *bricolage* of tropes associated with different genres that is employed by many blockbuster films (*The Fifth Element* [Luc Besson, 1997]).

*Torchwood* was initially aired on BBC3 before shifting, concomitant with its growing popularity, to BBC2 and then finally BBC1. The first years of the programme were structured as a conventional series of thirteen episodes, then prior to the American co-production there was a week long broadcast, on BBC1 of the story *Torchwood: Children of Earth* (2009) that had the sense of being an event, a high-profile, high impact television event. The trailer for the storyline features a montage of images over an ominous visual countdown, without voice-over. The emphasis is on the narrative events hinted at by the visuals contrasting with the accompanying musical soundtrack, which aims to produce a sense of foreboding through dissonance.

There are parallels with the 1950s Quatermass films with the programme being a UK/US co-production. *Torchwood* was re-imagined as a co-production between BBC Wales and the United States and can therefore be seen as a genuine example of cultural hybridity and cross-fertilization, to employ the notion of the hybrid according to Staiger. In effect, the brand has spread to different contexts and territories. There are also certain aspects of the narrative that are coherent with the more global impetus of the programme’s production and furthermore with the innovative impulse associated with hybridity. There is a non-metropolitan premise in the setting of *Torchwood* from the outset; rather than being set in London, the narrative focused on a part of the Torchwood Institute based in
Cardiff. This shift away from the British capital contrasts with the more London based depiction of Britishness that might have previously been the staple of both domestic products and exports. The use of Cardiff in the series signifies a ‘move away from the strict London/Home Counties/English focus of the original Doctor Who’, as Barron states (ibid: 182). In this decentralisation of location, then, a different articulation of the idea of the “nation” is being constructed for consumption, which addresses difference and the contemporary realities of devolution.

Representation of the capital of a constituent nation within the United Kingdom, namely Cardiff, is also significant as it articulates national identities differently and shows an awareness of the very identities historically subsumed within the wider, encompassing construct of “Britishness”. One interesting aspect of this is implied by Barron when he observes the predominance of Cardiff as a single location in the series; a form of coherence. ‘And yet’ he states, Torchwood is concerned primarily with flux as a running theme because of the narrative device of The Rift, a space time portal that allows alien access to Earth (ibid: 179). It therefore creates an interesting tension. The notion of flux, though, is in keeping with the use of a singular location in this instance, because of the decentralisation to the non-English setting and the re-imagining of the nation. The use of the non-London/Home Counties/English type of location as identified above indicates a broadening of definition of national identity. This suggests the notion of shifting identity and borders characteristic of the fantastic as discussed elsewhere in this study. It also evokes the challenge to a nationalist discourse emphasising fixed, innate concepts of “national character”; in that sense, this returns the parameters of the discussion of the nation and nationhood. The focus becomes national identities rather than national identity. The widening out of definitions of nationality chimes with previous assessment
in this study of critical discourses around the national identity and cinema, and the emphasis therein of plurality. The focus on the hybrid and on the innovation arising from cultural exchange and cross fertilization by this study enables a return to this emphasis on plurality and difference.

As indicated above, cinema operates within an increasingly globalised marketplace, and a multi-media context (Leach, 2004:4). Indeed, Robert Stam and Ella Habiba Shohat remind us that film is ‘inherently globalised, multicultural, and transnational’ and they highlight other forms of technology that co-exist with film (2000: 381). Globalisation can be applied to discussion of contemporary film and hybridity, through thinking about the transnational and how spectators engage with cultural products and media forms. As defined by Stam and Shohat, the term “globalisation” refers to ‘international political, cultural, and economic interdependency’ (ibid: 384). This interdependency is perhaps a defining element of the transnational, in terms of production, distribution and reception. Indeed, Higson identifies international co-production and the processes of distribution and reception as two means through which cinema engages with the transnational (2000: 67-68). Spectators interact with cultural products in ways that are in keeping with their multi faceted, heterogeneous identities; a subject may connect with and understand a cultural product according to their age, social class, race, sexuality, gender, as well as their sense of belonging to a “nation”. As Stam and Shohat rightly point out, ‘media spectatorship impacts complexly on national identity, political affiliation, and communal belonging’ (2000: 381).

Transnational spectatorship can be understood, then, in terms of how nations are, as Higson argues, both ‘imagined communities’ while being comprised of ‘fragmented and
widely dispersed groups of people’ (2000: 67-68). Modern nations may exist as imagined communities, which itself remains a potent concept, but the communities themselves are not homogenous. A sense of belonging is not restricted to geographical location, as the affiliations the subject has can cut across national boundaries, which in itself implies a hybridity. Conversely, being physically together in one space does not imply shared experiences, at least in terms of the response to events. Higson proceeds to discuss how particular events might be thought of as national phenomena or moments that bring the “nation” together, but they might not be accessed by or engaged with by some Britons (ibid: 65-66). Further, they would not be engaged with in the same way, and some events or cultural products have a transnational reach or success. They cannot be understood simply as ‘national phenomena’ (ibid: 65). Rather, they are transnational, reaching across boundaries. Media and cultural products circulate across national boundaries encouraging modes of interaction that are not limited by the imagined community, which is itself not fixed or stable, but contingent. As Stam and Shohat state, spectators do not have ‘single monolithic identities’, rather, they are involved in ‘multiple identities [...] having to do with gender, race, sexual preference, region, religion, ideology, class and generation’ (2000: 97-98). The user of contemporary media forms can interact in ways that call on different aspect of their multi-faceted identities, then, which links with the discussion of Higson outlined above and in the Introduction, on identity and the inherently diasporic, or hybrid nation (2000: 65)

For Ulf Hedetoft, a concept such as “national cinema” within the global marketplace is a ‘changeable and non-permanent notion, as a transboundary process rather than a set of fixed attributes’ (2000: 282). Discussion of that which carries across boundaries evokes the mutability inherent within the films and within national and international identities.
As Hedetoft also suggests, international film within the globalised marketplace could be interpreted by spectators ‘within their own field of mental vision’ at a local level (ibid: 278). This takes in to account the possibilities of decoding, acknowledging the active agency of the spectator in making meaning. What is significant here and would provide an interesting development of this thesis is the ‘dialectic between national identities and globalisation’ (ibid). Hedetoft considers how spectators in different countries would have culturally specific responses to films texts, using *Saving Private Ryan* (Steven Spielberg, 1998) as a case study. There are opportunities for discussion of both hybridity and “the national”. The process through which Hollywood becomes seen as an invisible norm or industry standard, while others are more “local”, inward looking and regarded as more specific, chimes with the themes of this thesis (ibid: 280). This links in to discussion of both nationhood and national cinema.

Hedetoft addresses hybridity, linked in to the international reception of Hollywood film. Local audiences interpret American cinema according to their own local context, through their own ‘national optics’ (ibid: 281), a canny image that evokes how the Quatermass films articulate elements of science fiction through a “British” lens. Higson concurs with this when he states, in relation to transnational cinema, that ‘there is no certainty audiences will receive them in the same way in different cultural contexts’ (2000: 68). What is interesting, and hybrid, about this process, is that the spectator is interpreting those elements in the Hollywood film ‘forged’ within an American context (Hedetoft, 2000: 281). There is, then, a merging, or blending, of the local and the international; two national contexts. Hedetoft refers to this as a ‘cultural hybrid’ in that a reframing process takes place in the interpretation of the Hollywood text (ibid). The emphasis on the reflexivity of the process and the active agency of the spectator is important, as they will
bring their own knowledge of the Hollywood film as American as well as their own ideas about “America” to the reading (ibid). In that sense, study of the national and the hybrid could merge in this case with discussion of spectatorship.

Hybridity and the transnational complement each other, especially, it might be argued, in the contemporary moment; as such they comprise one avenue of further research beyond this study. Hybridity provides a framework for understanding the complex networks of affiliations and engagements the subject experiences, as well as the fluid and contingent social groups within society. The hybrid also, when discussed within the context of post-national film practice, provides opportunity for the critique and challenge to dominant ideology outlined above.

Hybridity can also be utilised therefore in thinking about national cinema, and herein lies a further positive aspect of the hybrid in the contemporary moment. If the subject is seen as multi-faceted, the imagined community contingent and fluid with a reading of the “nation” as inherently diasporic, hybridity can be applied to the cultural products that the “nation” produces. Therefore, the very concept of national cinema can be problematised, as can the notion of a central “core” of film production. In his article ‘The Instability of the National’ Higson uses the subheading ‘A de-centred film culture’, which is a pertinent concept in thinking about cultural products if the nation is seen in more pluralist terms (2000: 44). Rather than conceiving of a certain type of film, for example those with a realist aesthetic lauded as “national cinema” and other, perhaps more self-reflexive forms as marginal, there is the opportunity to understand national film culture as multi-faceted, fluid and responsive to a range of specific contexts and influences. Higson
discusses such films that engage with different aspects of national identity, the regional, hybridity and the transnational, as post-national cinema (ibid: 40).

Hybridity has an affinity with the post-national and is a key concept associated with it, offering a further instance of where hybridity might be found in the contemporary moment and which also continues some of the discussion earlier in the thesis. This line of research would enable an extension of the discussion of the inherent diaspora in the national proposed by Higson, as well as providing a development of discussion around identity, “nation” and national cinema. For Higson, post-national film ‘embraces multiculturalism, difference and hybridity’ and implies a range of identities beyond the national (ibid: 38). The post-national links with post-colonial discourse and through this, responds to plurality and its challenge to homogeneity. Stam and Shohat highlight how post-colonial discourses replace binary structures with a ‘more nuanced spectrum of subtle differentiations’, inviting identity to be seen as more fluid and multi-layered; fixed boundaries become porous, less secure (2000: 391).

Examples of post-national cinema are given by Higson (200: 37) and Stam and Shohat (2000: 392), such as *My Beautiful Launderette* (Stephen Frears, 1985) and *Young Soul Rebels* (Isaac Julien, 1991). As Stam and Shohat state, many post-colonial hybrid films explore the experience of the diaspora within the “First World”, addressing the multiple allegiances that point to split identities rather than assimilation. (2000: 392). How might the notions of national identity looked at from Jeffrey Richards be seen in the light of post-national film such as *Anita and Me* (Metin Huseyin, 2002) and *Bhaji on the Beach* (Gurinder Chadra, 1993)? The films examine specific aspects of cultural identity within a plural British society. There are also elements of the hybrid in the identity of the
characters, (British/South Asian) and the films themselves, with their blending of social realism and more self-reflexive forms and elements of the Bollywood epic. *Anita and Me* has a particularly vivid colour palette that evokes the period in which the film is set (the 1970s), but rather than offer a nostalgic vision of the past, the narrative makes clear the threat of racism and the dilemmas of the central characters. It therefore engages critically with ideas of identity and “nation” and presents a challenge to the narrative of the past in circulation that might elide more problematic aspects of cultural experience in the ideological project of forging and promoting an imagined community. As Leach suggests, *Bhaji on the Beach* represents ‘secure cultural identities’ but also destabilises them (2004: 227). The post-national therefore points to identities beyond the national and can re-emphasise both the different identities of the individual and also the regional, as well as the national and transnational.

Opportunities therefore exist for the lesser-known narrative to be told and for dominant ideology to be challenged. Particular discourses of the past that elide the actual lived experience of constituent groups in society can be realised, through the hybrid post-national film. Higson stresses the “impurity” of the national, referring to a ‘cultural collage’ (2000: 36). Further, he states that rather than being restricted to contemporary film, there has been a sense of the hybrid reaching as far back as the 1920s (ibid: 41). The narrative of a shift from homogenous to heterogeneous culture is not accurate, as there has long been a sense of heterogeneity in identity and culture. ‘Identity is in fact always fluid, the sense of belonging always contingent (ibid: 38).

Within British film production this sense of hybridity, Higson argues, can be traced through aspects of industrial practice such as multinational casts and crew as well as
international funding (ibid: 42). Other theorists concur with this. Higson in fact states how critics increasingly question the idea of a core national identity (ibid: 44). Richards also surveys critical discourses on British film and recent developments that move away from emphasis on realism, and points to international influences on filmmaking (2000: 28). Higson argues for historical film to be seen as hybrid, an approach applied in this study and which could be used to further address other instances outside of Quatermass and the fantastic (2000: 44)

Discussion of further research possibilities, the post-national and the hybrid has returned this study to a historical context. I was writing about the Quatermass films 1950s but there is relevance for them today, especially if seen as earlier examples of transnational elements within British film. What is the significance of these films for us now and what parallels are there? Why might our understanding of the relevance of the films in the 1950s have a bearing on the 2010s? Quatermass and the 1950s both point towards a time of flux and change, with hybridity identified as a key related theme in this thesis. We are now at a similar moment of change where there are concerns within politics and the media over “nation” and identity, with discussions on multiculturalism, immigration, membership of the Euro and Britain’s involvement in international affairs, within political discourse. The presence of nationalist political parties and the rise of, one the one hand, “single-issue” parties like UKIP and others like Respect campaigning for a range of issues, also bears testament to this political interest in identity. Both science fiction and popular culture can engage with hybridity and there are similar concerns now to the 1950s. The hybrid screen text is once again relevant. How do we approach the hybrid in the contemporary moment; is it imagined as something fearsome and infected or new and invigorating?
In the 1950s Quatermass films, certainly, the hybrid figure is troubling enough to be rejected or destroyed, although a more nuanced response is encouraged through the identification with either the stricken Caroon or with “British” character traits that are, through association with alien/human hybrids, called in to question. The co-production contexts of the films, of course, invite hybridity. With *Quatermass and the Pit*, the third film, the complex response to hybridity is increased through the news that the categories “us” and “them” are commingled. The hybrid de-centres and prompts questioning. Understanding of the film texts and how they articulate their 1950s/60s context and engage with the hybrid has resonance for us now. In what way, though, is the hybrid configured?

In a forthcoming paper, David Butler discusses the depiction of the monstrous in the new Matt Smith *Doctor Who* series, with particular focus on the episodes featuring The Silurians: ‘The Hungry Earth’ (2010) and ‘Cold Blood’ (2010). The narratives feature, as well as individuated aliens, characters that represent a more pluralist and multicultural notion of identity, with a prominent British Asian character, for instance. What is especially pertinent about the programme for the perspective of this study is the, as Butler explains, repeatedly sympathetic representation of the monstrous, including alien/human hybrids and how it offers narratives exploring negotiation of difference (2013: 1). For Butler, the new *Doctor Who* series proposes the ‘acceptance of difference and coming to terms with the alien’ (ibid), which indicates a different approach to the 1950s Quatermass films (and the original *Doctor Who* series, also). Although the portrayal of Caroon might have sought to evoke a measure of audience sympathy, his transformation was configured as threatening in its monstrousness; in the new *Doctor Who*, there is a more positive approach and it can be seen as a post-national text that
offers examples of ‘cultural mixing’ and hybridity (ibid: 5). How is hybridity and national identity configured in other instances of popular culture?

As argued by Higson, holding on to a notion of the national can obscure the ‘cultural diversity, exchange and interpenetration that marks so much cinematic activity’ (2000: 64). This argument can be applied to other areas of cultural production and the promotion of a focus on the “nation” as comprised of a range of identities, rather than imposing a single interpretation that elides difference; a pluralist vision of identity. One recent manifestation of a more inclusive and heterogeneous imagining of the nation was manifest in the London 2012 Olympics Opening Ceremony, under the artistic direction of Danny Boyle. This event celebrated the hybrid and raised issues and concerns over identity, “Britishness” and how these are defined. It offered what could be termed a multicultural, hybrid portrayal of the nation and its peoples and can be seen not as an attempt to impose a single unified image of an imagined community but to propose one that emphasises difference. Higson stresses how, in the diasporic nation, identities are contingent, multiple and responses to events similarly so (ibid: 66). The subject might engage with cultural products in a range of ways, that respond and speak to different aspects of their person; gender, class, race, sexuality, ability or political affiliation. In this way, the constituent parts of the opening ceremony could be responded to differently according to the multiple identities and allegiances that reside in the individual, as well as to the dispersed audiences that come together for specific events as referred to by Higson (ibid).

Owen Gibson’s report on the Opening Ceremony, in The Guardian, indicates the diversity and hybridity of Boyle’s interpretation; the bucolic section, the chimney
smokestacks and the internet age; multiple references to popular culture, classical music, performances of working patterns and major historical episodes like the Empire Windrush arrivals and the contribution of immigration. As this list suggests, there is a hybrid and inclusive approach to identity realised here with the focus shifted away from the “the great and the good”. The celebration of the lives of ordinary people offers a very different image of Britain to that which is presented for consumption in programmes such as *Downton Abbey* (ITV, 2010-Present) and Heritage Cinema from the early 1980s onwards. The celebration of hybridity shows a more positive response and representation of it. This, as Gibson puts it, ‘effort to tell a thousand small stories’ rather than a Master Narrative, has been praised by some, (in *The Guardian* and *The Telegraph*) but also criticised by others (*www.guardian.co.uk/sport/2012/jul/27/olympics-opening-ceremony*). Tim Stanley, writing in *The Telegraph*, is largely positive about the event and critical of detractors such as the Conservative MP Adrian Burley, who he quotes as referring to the ceremony as ‘leftie multi-cultural crap’. This comment illustrates how insularity and a mistrust of diversity and hybridity is still present within political discourses. It certainly demonstrates a refusal to engage meaningfully with the realities of a diverse society and serves as a reminder of those who advocate a more singular concept of national identity. However, Stanley’s opening comment, that Boyle’s show was ‘as complex (and confusing) as British identity itself’ indicates the multi-faceted nature of the “nation” (*http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/timstanley/100173004/danny-boyles-olympics*).

The depiction of the hybrid is different now to what it was in the 1950s, then. The Quatermass films from that period started to articulate a complex attitude towards hybridity, one which, while dramatising a sense of unease, also acknowledged and
posited identification with it. If now we are seeing a more positive engagement with the 
hybrid overall within popular culture, including science fiction and horror, perhaps this 
indicates an invigorated culture and one which is more ready to embrace the hybrid than 
the 1950s. Adrian Power cites films such as *Children of Men* (Alfonso Cuarón, 2006) and 
*28 Days Later* (Danny Boyle, 2002) as examples of this in both their production contexts, 
personnel and narrative content (2011: 144). We can therefore see a parallel between the 
contemporary moment and the 1950s in terms of film practice, social concerns and their 
articulation in cultural products.

Although Power points out (ibid: 145), as indicated earlier in this study, that the notion of 
a unified nation, and by extension the imagined community, is still powerful (the presence of the likes of UKIP and some of the reactions to the Olympics Opening 
Ceremony tell us that this is so), the reality is that national identity and national cinema, 
are, if these terms have currency, anything but a single “identity”. Cinema is 
simultaneously national and international, transnational in fact (ibid). In the global 
marketplace, such films “speak” different aspects of their simultaneous identity to 
different contingencies within their audience. The tension between identification with 
one’s nation and the ‘contingent, complex [...] fragmented [...] overlapping’ (Higson, 
2000: 66) communities the subject identifies with, will continue to be played out in the 
‘increasingly eclectic and transnational nature’ of cultural products (Power, 2011: 143). 
Fantastic narratives can dramatise these overlapping identities and allegiances, mapping 
out their contradictions and helping us make sense of and comprehend them.
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