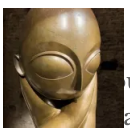
A DOUBLE ACT, A CLASS ACT: Housing and Film as things in a Kingdom by Johnny Rodger

TheDrouth

The story of British housing as seen through film is one of ubiquitous and enduring apartheid. Yet have the filmmakers themselves been immune from that social ill? *Johnny Rodger* gives an intersectional reading of housing and film with lots to watch as well as read.



Housing as phenomena are of the same 19th century vintage. They are contemporaries born of the and possibilities of the mass society of the industrial revolution. In their histories they both speak to us of the formation, development and decline of that type of society.

Would it be too simple though, to propose that by an intersectional reading of the development of these two contemporaries, some new insights into their common grounding in history will emerge? Could film indeed, be seen – especially in the post-WWII period – to be performing the role, theretofore assigned to literature, of documenting, exposing and critiquing social conditions for a broad public? It's a role for which we had traditionally looked to, say, Dickens, Gissing or Orwell – or in the case of the comparison made here, to the writings of Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850) – all of whom presented readers with the human comedy of a particular era.

Yet, how ironic might it be, if the significance of that intersectional reading of the housing/film contemporaries of the post-war period were of its support for the thesis that there literally is no common ground across British society at large? For, notwithstanding that lion-laying-with-the-lamb foundational moment of the Welfare era, when Nye Bevan expressed his guiding principle as Housing and as Health Minister in 1949, that, 'the butcher, the doctor, the grocer and the labourer all live on the same street'[1], the story of British housing can be shown as one of ubiquitous and enduring class apartheid.

Perhaps that's no surprise to most folk, but the intention in this piece is, nonetheless, to show how the insidious momentum of class prejudice is animated and brought alive in the canon of housing films of that pivotal time in the Welfare State era, in a similar way that the writings of Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850) reveal how people actually lived in French society throughout the Restoration epoch (1815-30).

In an examination of six sample housing films, dating from the 1930s to the 80s, I keep in sight as emblematic a particular relationship described by Balzac in his 1835 novel *Le Père Goriot*. At the very beginning of the narrative, Balzac gives an extended description of the building and especially the interior of the *pension*, or boarding house, where his eponymous character lives alongside some of the other characters who feature in both this novel and the other novels in the *Comédie Humaine* series. Balzac then goes on to describe the landlady, Madame Vauquer, in charge of the establishment. He notes that,

> *...toute sa personnne explique la pension et la pension explique toute sa personne.*[2]

So, in other words, 'Her whole character explains the boarding house, and the boarding house explains her whole character'.[3]

The six short clips of documentary housing films, which I would encourage readers to view separately (details are provided in the filmography below and most can be viewed for free on the youtube platform) and for which I will provide the script excerpts here, expose a range of behaviours – attitudes, emotions, prejudices, and in the viewing of the films themselves, facial expressions – which it would be difficult to make manifest via the traditional purely text-centred study of housing history alone. The clips demonstrate performative personal and social behaviours which are implicated – as per Madame Vauquer's relation to her boarding house – in the rise and the decline of mass public housing in twentieth century Britain. They are all engaged with and expressions of class apartheid, and, thus embody the failure of a post-war democratic, empathetic and collective spirit, as might have inspired Bevan above. Ultimately the reading is that throughout that period, filmmaking itself suffered from a similar closeted, top-down approach as did mass housing.

In the presentation of each of those clips as representative or typical of a specific variant or mode of class apartheid in British society, they are given an individual title or rubric by way of characterising the specific social quality of that typology. Thus, respectively, The Lamentable, The Defiant, The Ignored, The Pitied, The Glorified and The Cheated.

The Lamentable

The first clip is from the film *Housing Problems* made in 1935, a film about the terrible slum conditions in Stepney, East London, and how they might be resolved. It was directed by Arthur Elton and E.H. Anstey. In the book *The* *n* I establish how this film, as uniquely and particularly about housing, and as consisting of certain regarding the structure of certain types of building and how people dwell in them, can be considered as ng film of the genre 'Housing Film' in Britain.[4] While this film can also be seen as part of the John Grierson-led tradition of British documentaries (both Elton and Anstey were protégés of Grierson, had made films

with him at both the Empire Marketing Board and the General Post Office, and Chapman calls them Grierson's 'closest associates'[5]), it contains a particularly influential innovation in filmmaking, introduced by Ruby Grierson, the sister of John. Ruby Grierson introduced direct to camera interviews with 11 tenants of the slum properties filmed. Ruby Grierson was not credited with this innovation at the time and her name does not appear in the film's titles. It was nonetheless, very unusual to hear working class voices speaking directly to camera about their lives and experiences, and Neely refers to the phenomenon as a 'revolution in attitude'.[6] Indeed, as can be seen in the cited passage below (beginning at 5.50 in the film) it is, as Neely goes on to say both 'daring and fresh' and shocking in the frank detail presented to us.[7] In the scene we see Mr Burner, standing with his young family around him in his one room house in Stepney.

> *Narrator: And here is Mr Burner*
>
> *Mr Burner: I reckon the condition of living in these little slums is a bit hard for the wife, and besides myself and the children, bringing them up in the one room. Of course, a lot of people don't understand what it is, living in one room. The cooking conditions is very hard, especially on the wife. She has to do the cooking, and it's all done on a gas ring. That means frying this and frying that, if it comes to a baked dinner – it's in the oven, and then you light a fire outside. It's too warm in the room. Of course, we can only make enough for the one day, as there is no conditions or anywhere to keep the food overnight. It wouldn't do the food any good to keep it, being as all the breath of the five of us in the one room would turn it bad. The washing conditions, we have a little bit, that's in the back yard. It's not too great, but we get over that. Of course, I don't suppose people realise what it really is to be tied up in the one room and cannot get anything any better. We only hope that the Council, liven their ideas up and get their minds made up to get the flats ready, so that every working-class man will have a hygienic flat to live in, where the cooking conditions is better, the living accommodation is better, the sleeping accommodation is better, and what's more, we have a bath.*

Perhaps the most telling of those shocking details presented in Mr Burner's speech is the description of how the breath of so many people crammed in one room turns the food bad. It seems that only on film, with a personal testimony to camera by a victim, could the endlessly harrowing and excruciating torments of such otherwise unexpected and unimaginable inconveniences of extreme poverty be so casually revealed. At any rate, it is not the type of detail that can be met with in any of the otherwise excellent existing texts on housing history and the awful conditions of early and mid-twentieth century slum housing.

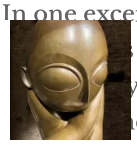
Housing Problems 1935 - subtítulos español
Pablo Lanza

Watch on

The Defiant

Another film about the slums in Stepney, *Tenants in Revolt* was made four years later, 1939, by the Communist Party. Like *Housing Problems* it features a middle-class accented presenter (J. Sommerfield) but in contrast to that earlier film it does not focus on individual stories, experiences and feelings but on collective action by putting in view the work of the Stepney Tenants' Defence League, which had been set up in 1937. Indeed, a viewing of these two films together enables us to see the presentation of the slum dweller in *Housing Problems* in an entirely different framework. In *Tenants in Revolt* the working classes are shown mobilising and organising themselves to fight for housing rights. We see scenes of street demonstrations, marches, postering and graffiti in proclamation and protest of their rights and aims, we see them doorstepping landlords, in meetings to consolidate and plan their campaigns, and in confrontation with the police. It soon becomes clear to the viewer of both films that while the vox-pop to camera may have been a 'revolutionary' film technique, historically influential as effective in communication and dissemination of vital information about conditions and experience, it could not be seen in the Marxist sense – vital, of course, to the Communist Party – as revolutionary. For in contrast to the mobilisation and organisation of the working classes of Stepney seen in *Tenants in Revolt*, the same population is presented in *Housing Problems* as passive and mere victims in lamentation about their lot. In that earlier film the slum-dwellers are shown with no agency in working to better their conditions, but as per Mr Burner, they are framed as simply waiting for the authorities ('the Council') and the professionals, the architects, engineers, filmmakers and solve their problems, so that they are, in effect, and in their filmed lamentations, acquiescing in the existing hierarchical order rather than effectively protesting against it.

In one excerpted narrative scene from *Tenants in Revolt*, shot in the office of the organisation, we can see the [illegible] of the order and efficiency, behind the mobilisation of the working classes in fighting for their rights by [illegible]y Tenants Defence League. It takes place at 7m 40s into the film and the emphasis on action rather than [illegible]d expectation of help from the existing system is explicit.



Narrator: Stepney Tenants' Defence League, it is the tenants' own organisation in which they are united for a common aim. Tubby Rosen, the secretary. [shot of Rosen in the STDL offices, on phone chatting, then leafing through papers, then of a colleague looking through index filing cabinets, each with the name of a street on it]. Here are kept the records, street by street and house by house of the Stepney properties. As individuals we are intimidated and bullied by landlords, but organised, we can fight for our rights as human beings. These rights have to be fought for, it's not sufficient to rely on the law to help us. The law is very elastic, and the government sees to it that it stretches the landlords' way.

https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-tenants-in-revolt-1939-online

The Ignored

The film *A New Way Home,* broadcast on the BBC in 1959, shows the slum clearances from the broken down, vermin-infested brick terraces and back-to-backs of Birmingham and the mass move to modern – often high-rise – flats in new architect-designed estates. It features a middle-class presenter with a clipped RP accent – Douglas Jones – in interview with many working-class people about the new housing. The interviewees unanimously declare how happy they are with this new flatted accommodation. Jones seems to take this as a challenge, and insists in each interview with loaded questions about the value of such housing, and hints at its being unwelcome and a monstruous imposition.

Thus in what appears to be a carefully selected demographic range (though all people with working class accents) he says to the housing manager of the council 'Is there any danger of it becoming an inhuman juggernaut?'; to a tenant couple standing outside their flats, 'Do you like these buildings, do you like modern architecture?'; to a local politician, 'Do you think that people with young children ought to be made to live in these flats?'; and to an apparently random couple of lads he meets in the street, 'what do you think of these buildings, are they too modern for you?'

Despite Jones's insistence with these loaded questions, every single interviewee refuses to agree, and in fact, they often seem, in their already declared contentedness, to be perplexed by his line of questioning.

In one later scene (at 13 mins 52s), we see the interviewer speaking to the architect on a rooftop of one of the blocks, from whence they have a panoramic view of the whole estate. The atmosphere of the interview is decidedly more chummy, and apparently on some sort of level, as these two speak in similar middle class accents. Again, Jones pursues his insistent topic, but this time the response is different.

Narrator: What do people think about the appearance of these modern buildings?

Architect: Well you know ... (grins and chuckles to the narrator) ... most people say, well aren't they frightful or something like that, you know, an Englishman usually says that sort of thing to start with, but after a while, I think they get to like them.

The conspiratorial grins between the two are especially noteworthy at this point. For of course, what is significant is that not one single one of the previous respondents made any reaction remotely resembling that which the architect characterised as that of the typical Englishman. Are these working-class residents of Birmingham, who are very happy with those flats, somehow not really to be considered as English? One wonders what chance there was for the success of demotic modernism in England if, from the very moment of its creation, this was the attitude of those in charge, those on whom the tenants of *Housing Problems* waited and expected relief?

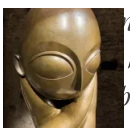
The Pitied

In the 1977 BBC two-part documentary *Lilybank: the 4th World*, the subtitle itself is a significant clue to the filmmakers' attitude. In this documentary, Professor of Sociology at Glasgow University and political activist, Kay Carmichael – herself of working-class background, having grown up in the East End of Glasgow – goes to live incognito (under the name Cathy Price) to study life in the eponymous Glasgow East End estate, which is ultimately portrayed as plagued by anti-social behaviour, poverty and deprivation, violence, crime and vandalism.

The film can be positioned as an early example of a distinct TV genre – including such later examples as the two separate BBC documentaries both named *The Scheme,* the first a 1983 documentary about life in another Glasgow East End estate, Barrowfield; and the other a 2010 series about the Onthank estate in Kilmarnock, Ayrshire.[8] This type of TV film developed over those decades as a sensationalist and scandal mongering genre, in which film crews went into so-called problem housing estates to portray the lives of the inhabitants there, and it ultimately became known as 'poverty porn'.[9] In a newspaper article of 2010, Derek Alexander makes a direct comparison of *Lilybank* and the 2010 *The Scheme* series, and Gerry Mooney in an Oxfam briefing paper, describes *The Scheme* as purporting 'to offer a 'warts 'n; all' account of life' and goes on to write that,

It positioned the viewer in judgment over the behaviour and lifestyles of those exhibited and showcased, the 'dysfunctional' elements of family relationships, unemployment, addictions and violence.[10]

In one scene in Lilybank (at 14mins 18s in the first episode), we see Carmichael exiting the entrance to her block of flats and walking along the street, while they discuss her experience there:

> *Narrator: For Kay Carmichael, life as Mrs Cathy Price, in the fourth world of Lilybank, was a lonely and harrowing experience. She was seeing it as social workers seldom do.*
>
> *Kay Carmichael: It's hostile and it's ugly, and there were times here when I would go back to the house and my eyes would literally be hurting with the pain of never having anything beautiful to look at... everything being dissonant and difficult. And it's as if the whole world is hostile. But there's nothing that comforts you. And this is why a place like the park is so*  *t because that's one place in the world that's got something beautiful in it... you know there are flowers and bit of ordinariness in the world. Now, this world in which we are walking just now is a world where there doesn't e any pattern for anything that's going on ...*
>
> *Narrator: ...except debris*

Kay C: debris, dirt, rubbish … and there is no way that you can take anything for granted about life …

This unguarded moment from the otherwise well-meaning Kay Carmichael, is revealing of the chasm that seems to lie between the middle-class filmmakers and the working-class way of life there. It appears, nonetheless, to portray Carmichael in exasperation and a disconsolate sense of powerlessness in the face of an overwhelming range and scale of poverties and multi-deprivation, rather than in dismissal of those lives led in Lilybank. Yet whatever her personal feelings, the portrayal of life there in Lilybank appears, according to reactions from residents cited in 2010 by Alexander, to be very much resented by those erstwhile residents, as they variously said that the film, '… only concentrated on the negative aspects of Lilybank', that it '… wrecked the community spirit' and that,

It took years for Lilybank to recover from the BBC damage and to this day a lot of people are still angry about it, we were stigmatised after the BBC left…[11]

The Glorified

The film *People to People: Byker* was shot by Finnish artist Sirkka-Lisa Kontinnent with the film collective Amber in the 1960s and 70s but not released until 1983, and shown on Channel 4. It is very much a hymn to the original Byker area, a very run down and poor working-class area of terraced houses and back to backs in Newcastle, which was largely demolished and cleared for a new estate to be built. Like Kay Carmichael in Lilybank, Kontinnent went to live in Byker herself. While she was filming, it was threatened with and ultimately undergoing that demolition, and she celebrates the exuberant and gregarious life of the people and the community as it takes place in their houses, shops, laundrettes, pubs, bingo halls, weddings and barbers and so on. As a counterpoint to her exposition, and indeed, one might say, her kind of glorification of the life there, the film starts with a narrated citation, spoken over an aerial view of the Byker area, from a text by the Newcastle City Planning Officer in 1963, which is very much a dismissal of the people of the area and their way of life (at 0 mins, 6 s).

Narrator: In a huge city it is a fairly common observation that the dwellers in a slum are almost a separate race of people. With different values, aspirations and ways of living. One result of slum clearance is that a considerable movement of [illegible]akes place over long distances with devastating effect on the social groupings built up over the years. But, one [illegible]gue, this is a good thing when we are dealing with people who might have no initiative or civic pride. The task, [illegible] to break up such groupings even though the people seem to be satisfied with their miserable environment, and seem to enjoy an extrovert social life in their locality.[12]

The film goes on to show how that extrovert heart of the community was taken out of it by the design of the new estate after demolition and points to one cause inasmuch as it cites from housing scholar and writer, Peter Malpas that

Over 17000 people lived in Byker at the start of the redevelopment. Less than 20% of them were living in the new Byker in 1978.[13]

The Cheated

The film *The Great British Housing Disaster* made by Adam Curtis, was shown on BBC in 1984 and thus is contemporaneous with the trend discussed above for so-called 'poverty porn' films which focus on anti-social behaviour in working class housing estates. Curtis starts the film with an express statement from the narrator that this work is *not* about social behaviour, but about the real problem in these estates, which is structural failure.

We see detailed analysis via engineers, academics, politicians and builders, as well as residents, of structural failure in system-built blocks which were constructed in council housing estates across the country in the post-war years. There is much criticism of politicians and management and directors of construction companies, who are demonstrated to have failed in providing structurally substandard system-built housing for the social (then council) housing sector.

In one section we see and interview with Cleeve Barr, the then Head of the Government Building Standards watchdog. In this clip (at 19 mins 38s) the viewer sees him smirk as he shrugs off any responsibility for the eponymous 'disaster' of working-class housing.

> *Narrator: If you found example of bolts or nuts for example, or fixings not being done, I mean shoddy workmanship on a site...*
>
> *Cleeve Barr: (grinning) ... mmm, yes...*
>
> *Narrator: did you report that sort of thing?*
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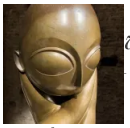
>  *we did find that, and the firms concerned would say they were stepping up their supervision, and correcting it, it happen again sort of thing...*
>
> *Narrator: And what was your next step after that?*

CB: Well, within the capacity of trying to cope with ... (smirking) an enormous amount of work going on, we would look at it again, if it were possible

Narrator: There were no sanctions you could impose?

CB: none at all

Narrator: So, the watchdog role was really a very hollow one, wasn't it?

CB: Yes, it was ...

The odd thing is that at the end of this film we can only wonder if Curtis's exculpatory preface about the film not being 'about anti-social behaviour' is made with conscious irony. And this may be the same species of irony, that in a similar way to the scene from above in *A New Way Home,* is acknowledged tacitly, with a grin or a smirk, from middle-class interviewee to middle-class interviewer. For this film makes clear that anti-social behaviours are indeed the very cause of the disaster of this housing. We are shown politicians, local authorities, and businessmen, managers and professionals in the building industry in their complicity in providing substandard housing for the majority social class – the working class estimated at around 80% of the English population at around this time.[14] Otherwise, after a viewing of the full film, the significance of that prefatory remark as non-ironic would have to be taken as signalling that immoral behaviours that cause alarm or distress, that are directly detrimental to society at large and to other people's quality of life are not to be considered as anti-social behaviour at the BBC when they emanate from the directorial boardroom or the managerial office. And furthermore, that, anti-social behaviour is, in fact, designated in restriction to the sort of violence, addiction, and vandalism in a world of 'debris, dirt' and 'rubbish' such as we see exposed in Lilybank?

Nonetheless, the canon of housing film of this period, from 1930s-80s, can, even in this extremely brief sampling, be seen as presenting something which cannot be found in standard historical and housing texts, namely a real human

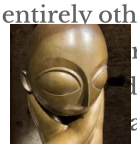
drama of a broad range of human actions, behaviours and relations with respect to the housing in which the people live at that period. Thus, it does indeed perform a role similar to Balzac's scores of novels in his *Comédie Humaine* in portraying the burgeoning life of Paris during a certain epoch, and through the presentation of thousands of characters. As Balzac himself wrote of his aims, it was to create, '... that history forgotten by historians (the history of manners and the ways of life.)'[15] Balzac then goes on to write in that preface to his work, that 'Society makes the man; he develops according to the social centres in which he is placed...'.[16] Hence the *woman*, Mme. Vauquer, is presented in her place, both created by and in creation of that environment. Balzac, the novelist, does not give us an interior monologue by Madame Vauquer, nor a psychological description or analysis of her personal attitudes, instead, like a Durkheim *avant la lettre*, he treats of social facts as things.[17] Thus, the description of the down-at-heel quality of her clothing, and even the cold, hard, worn-out faces of her and her guests, amongst the shabby, dismal furnishings and the wretchedness of the whole establishment,[18] all of which tell us everything we need to know about that society, its people and the way they relate to one another.

Equally, in these housing films, the fact of class apartheid is seen as a thing, and not just an idea, or a personal attitude from this or that individual. The problem for the middle-class and establishment commentators of those BBC films in the sample above is that they are unable to recognise the things in the working-class world as social facts. For those commentators, the things they encounter there are rather random ontological failures, incomplete and damaged as viewed from the point of view of their own ethical community which has a different set of social facts, that is to say, different given ways of acting and thinking. So, as Kay Carmichael says, that 'whole world is hostile' to her and there is nothing 'beautiful' in it. And, as posh-voiced presenter Douglas Jones makes clear in *A New Way Home*, with his insistent attempts to pose the things of that world as worthless, he does not understand the social facts and realities which they embody for his apparently perplexed working class interlocutors. Equally in Curtis's film, some social facts, the corruption and anti-social behaviour of their 'superiors' – politicians, councillors, businessmen and construction industry professionals and executives – are inadvertently revealed as experienced in working-class communities through bolts that won't fit when concrete panels are moved into place on construction sites, damp on the walls in your house, and asthma and other diseases in your children.

Meanwhile, it may seem that *Housing Problems* for one, avoids the clumsy and mistaken handling of the things of the working-class world by being the work of independents and evidently giving the microphone to the working-class and letting them speak. The truth is however that the John Grierson stable of documentarians was, in its involvement with the GPO (General Post Office) and EMB (Empire Marketing Board) film programmes, just as much a part of the middle-class Establishment as any later BBC filmmakers. Besides, the film itself was actually sponsored for promotional reasons by the British Commercial Gas Association, and that has been seen as thus compromising the aims and shifting the loyalties of the makers of the film.[19] As noted above, it may seem that the filmmakers give help to their subjects by exposing the poverty of their world and allowing them to speak in their own voice. In fact, the resultant laying bare of the dependency and lack of agency of the slum-dwellers as social facts, may stage instead yet another betrayal by the middle classes – like that of Kay Carmichael – by shining a light only on the apparently mean things of their social world.

On the other hand, a more full range of social facts in working class communities, that is, of possibilities for acting and thinking, are revealed in both the non-establishment made films cited here. Both these films were made 'in' the community, as it were, rather than 'on' the community. In the film made by the Communist Party, *Tenants in Revolt*, modes of addressing their '*Problems'* directly, rather than waiting for someone else to do so, and the relative strength of those communities in getting what they want by organising themselves in collective operations, are revealed and shown in action. In *Byker* the artist Konttinent lived in the area for an extended period of time and took part in the family and community lives of her neighbours. Together with the politically motivated Amber Film and Photography Collective, Konttinent hymns the creative use of language and story and song, games, entertainments and rituals and other everyday moods of social relations and behaviours that thrived in Byker amongst the straightened economic and environmental circumstances and made the things of that world resonant in the memories of the people long after it had been removed out of existence.

The apparently germane question common to a humane and empathetic consideration of the people and their predicaments in each of these films, is surely then, that of 'agency'. How agency can be enabled in people and communities across the board in the would-be modern-day United *Kingdom*, as a constitutional monarchy,is an entirely other question. For even if a major proportion of the means of production were ostensibly owned by the



rge in those heyday years – roughly the 1940s-80s – of the Welfare State, including the National Health l nationalised transport, utilities and the 'commanding heights of the economy' like the coal and steel and in this particular case study presented here, mass building of public housing and government ownership of media including television and film, then the control and decision making in these key sectors

remained centralised in the hands of establishment elites, and remote from the communities for whom they were ostensibly managed. The results of that remoteness, of that class apartheid, are made dramatically, uncomfortably and somewhat embarrassingly, if not often shamefully clear, when in these films establishment and middle-class figures, representatives from that social elite of the era, encounter the social facts on what apparently is for them, the very stony ground of working-class communities. At any rate, the contrast of these establishment produced films with the much rarer production of independent works from within the communities themselves, like the *Byker* film and *Tenants in Revolt*, which give a much more rounded and humane view of possibilities and actualities for members of these communities, only confirms the instinctive knowledge of every British *subject* that the continued existence and operation of strictly exclusive social class distinctions preclude the possibility of the existence or creation of any real common and shared public thing (*Res publica*).

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[1] *Hansard*, 16 March 1949, vol. 462. cc2126.

[2] Honoré de Balzac, *Le Père Goriot*, Alexandre Hussiaux, Paris, 1855, p.17

[3] Ibid., Author's translation from Balzac's original French.

[4] Johnny Rodger, *The Housing Film*, EUP, 2024, pp. 27-42.

[5] James Chapman, *A New History of British Documentary*, Palgrave MacMillan, 2015, p.73.

[6] Sarah Neely, 'Sisters of Documentary: The influence of Ruby Grierson and Marion Grierson on documentary in the 1930s' in *Media Education Journal, 55, pp 28-31 at* 30.

[7] Neely 29

[8]*Glasgow: the Scheme* (1983) BBC; *The Scheme* (2010) dir. Michelle Friel and Julian Kean, 4 part series, BBC Scotland

[9] See Derek Alexander, 'Decades before The Scheme, another Scots community suffered the TV treatment', *Daily Record*, 1st July 2010, https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/decades-before-the-scheme-another-scots-1062844 (last viewed 18/1/26), and, Jane Graham, 'The Scheme: Gritty TV or Poverty Porn?' *The Guardian*, 28/05/2010, https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/tvandradioblog/2010/may/28/the-scheme-bbc (last seen 18/1/26)

[10] Gerry Mooney, *Stigmatising Poverty? The Broken Society and reflecting on anti-welfarism in the UK today*, A Whose Economy Seminar Paper, June 11, Oxfam. https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/146557/dp-the-broken-society-and-reflections-on-antiwelfarism-010611-en.pdf;jsessionid=B03C6C26BCDF13D17458EB2D7C8A411F?sequence=1 (last viewed 18/1/26)

[11] Alexander.

[12] In the film *People to People: Byker* the text is cited as being by Wilfrid Burns, City Planning Officer in Newcastle, 1963.

[13] Cited in the film as from Peter Malpas: Research study on the Byker redevelopment commissioned (but never published) by the Department of the Environment.

[14] B.J.Heraud, 'Social Class and the New Towns', *Urban Studies* 5:1, 1968, pp33-58 at 39.

[15] Honoré de Balzac, 'Preface', *Père Goriot,* Roberts Brothers, Boston, 1894, p.x

[16] Ibid., p.vi.

[17] *The Rules of Sociological Method* in which Emile Durkheim coined the phrase 'social facts are things' was not written 45 years after the death of Balzac.

1855, pp. 22-23

[19] In Stuart Hood, 'John Grierson and the Documentary Film Movement', in James Curran and Vincent Porter eds), *British Cinema History*, Orion London, 1983, pp99-112 at p.102, the Dutch documentarian, Jons Ivens, is cited in critique, saying 'If the British films had been sponsored directly by social organisations fighting the bad housing conditions, instead of by a gas company, they would have closed in on such dramatic reality of rent strikes and protest movements.'

Filmography

Housing Problems 1935, dir Anstey and Elton, sponsor, British Commercial Gas Association., 15mins.

Tenants in Revolt, 1939, Communist Party made film on Stepney Tenants Defence League

A New Way Home, BBC, 1959 –(Birmingham Slums clearance documentary)

Lilybank: the 4th World, 1977, dir. Michael Tosh, presenter Magnus Magnusson/ Kay Carmichael – BBC Scotland (2 episodes)

People to People – Byker ,1983, (aired Channel 4, 11 Sept 1983) Amber Film and Photography Collective, written and dir. Sirkka-Liisa Konttinen, 52mins

The Great British Housing Disaster, 1984 BBC, dir. Adam Curtis -(49.24 mins)

The Drouth ('The Thirst') is a website and magazine published in Glasgow, Scotland. Founded in 2001 by Mitch Miller and Johnny Rodger, we continue to pursue our original remit, to give space to writers and artists to stimulate debate on literature, film, politics, reportage, visual culture, music, and architecture.

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