A textual and theoretical reframing of Derek Jarman's films in the context of British cinema in the 1970s and 1980s

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Abstract

The purpose of this work is to present a reframing and repositioning of films made by Derek Jarman via in-depth textual analysis (rarely seen previously) and attention to relevant theoretical connections (such as heritage, pastiche, camp, adaptation). These discussions are anchored to a consistent contextual grounding within the British film industry/culture, which includes consideration of the history and role/s of the BFI, dialogues with debates of national cinema and heritage, an assessment of Channel 4's impact and influence, and an investigation into the function of British Film Year and its lists of acknowledged films.

The first chapter addresses shortcomings and problems of previous framing, and gives an example of my textual analysis and methodology using previously ignored filmic texts *Queen is Dead* and *Paninaro*. With the stifling and dominant biographical/auteur approach removed from application (and the label Jarman accounted for as a categorising structure of the text rather than a reference to an external figure), the thesis considers the films as cultural texts which examine representation and heritage. The next three chapters explore *Jubilee*, *The Tempest*, and *Caravaggio* respectively, addressing the films' uses of history, cultural heritage and style via facets such as temporal layering, punk and camp modalities, pastiche approaches, adaptation, appropriation, and allusion.

The thesis opposes arguments that can be reductive, monolithic, and totalising (like auteur, biographical, and heritage frames of analysis), and instead makes central the operations of the specific filmic text. Rather than allowing texts (in terms of content and meaning) to be subsumed into an examination of the life and personality of the director (as has so often been the case with Jarman films), the filmic texts are observed, analysed and discussed via attentiveness to the particular properties of the text (style; representations; framing), and connected to the British cinema context of the period.

Acknowledgements

Thesis Contents

Chapter One:

Framing Jarman filmically

In February 2014 the British Film Institute at BFI Southbank began a two part Derek Jarman season, so scheduled because it marked the twentieth anniversary of the director's death. The location of this 'two-month celebration of Derek Jarman's life and films' (Fowler 2014[1]) held some import because it was just a short westerly distance down the river from the Shad Thames and Bankside area of London where Jarman had lived and begun shooting short films 44 years previously, now completely regenerated and firmly connected to the cultural establishment. This suggests that the siting of the Jarman season was not chosen arbitrarily, and that the BFI were perhaps seeking to establish their take on Derek Jarman within one of the director's heartlands. It is interesting to consider for a moment the geographical closeness and temporal division of these two locations of filmic life: one area contributing to the establishment and development of Jarman's nascent filmic approaches, and the other contributing to Jarman's current cultural framing.

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[1] This is taken from William Fowler's handout which accompanied the introductory talk to the season. Note that it calls itself a celebration of the *life* and the films of Jarman, clearly showing the primacy of biography.

The curator, William Fowler, in his handout for the introduction to the season (5th February 2014, of which I was in attendance[2]), made much of Jarman's legacy stating that in "the 20 years since his death his films have lost none of their relevance and remain massively influential, with public interest increasing substantially in recent years" (Fowler 2014). With this Fowler perhaps revealed rather too much about why the BFI had decided to dedicate a whole season to a film-maker they had previously had ambiguous feelings about (particularly true during the early part of the 1980s when Jarman struggled for funding of the *Caravaggio* project[3]), suggesting that the posthumous groundswell of (potentially lucrative) public appreciation for Jarman's work had been a crucially influential factor in the appearance of the 'Jarman celebration'.

Putting this potential criticism aside for the time being, the season did provide a valuable chance to see the majority of Jarman's feature-films on the cinema screen (with some in newly remastered digital versions), alongside some of the lesser-known or little seen works (such as *Electric Fairy* and *Imagining October* during the introduction I attended; and *In the Shadow of the Sun* a few days later). The promotion and publicity of the event would also have attracted new interest to Jarman's work but the framing of the season and the style/tone of the discourse surrounding it raises significant questions, in terms of the BFI's

[2] The introduction to the season consisted of a 10 minute talk by William Fowler, the screening of *Electric Fairy* (1971), *Imagining October* (1984), *The Queen is Dead* (1986) and a TV interview with Jeremy Isaacs (*Face to Face* 1993), followed by a Q&A session with James Mackay (*Caravaggio* producer) and Richard Heslop (one of the filmmakers to work with Jarman on *Queen*).

[3] It was Peter Sainsbury, as head of the Production Board at the BFI, who eventually funded a Jarman project with the very low budgeted *The Angelic Conversation* (1985) [Peake 1999: 337-338]. The BFI then went on to part fund *Caravaggio* with Channel 4. The BFI's role in filmmaking and film culture will be debated further later in the chapter.

purposes here (and on a wider note, for film culture), and when considering the ways in which Jarman's oeuvre is critically evaluated. As such, it is highly relevant to this thesis to debate and investigate the BFI season for several related reasons: firstly, the BFI's influential standing within the film cultural establishment, along with the organisation's international reach, means that its seasons carry significant weight in the field and are capable of impacting on future study and appreciation both nationally and globally; and secondly, as will be established below, the BFI Jarman season highlights, in a number of ways, the manner in which critical studies and assessments of Jarman have framed the debate along similar lines leading to a particular and widely acknowledged take on Jarman's films. The narrowing of considerations on Jarman's films has led to the creation of a Jarman filmic orthodoxy which is problematic, and the shortcomings of previous approaches clearly point to areas where research and discussion are found wanting, both in terms of theoretical exploration and textual analysis.

As a whole, and with the benefit of critical reflection based on my research into Jarman's films and the field of Jarman studies, the BFI season sparked a number of questions that were directly applicable to core concerns and film-industrial subtexts relevant to my thesis. Namely, how is Jarman being framed and represented here, and how does this relate to previous representations? Does close textual analysis have a key role to play in this, or are other methodologies being used? What is lacking in Jarman studies and how can this be addressed?

And finally, on a wider note but using the Jarman season as an indicative example, what effect and influence can a well-known industry player like the BFI have on the function/s, and on-going creation, of film culture in Britain?

It is worth exploring and addressing these questions as this will provide a relevant and contemporary introduction to topics within the Jarman debate, as well as relating these to an assessment of previous works and methodologies within Jarman studies. Following on from those discussions will be a short piece of analytical work, focusing on examples of Jarman films largely ignored by critical studies, which will act as a precursor for the close analyses within the body of the thesis (where Jarman films frequently referred to within critical studies are addressed and analysed differently), and will establish the methodology of my approach to Jarman's film project. Before investigating the way in which the BFI specifically framed their Derek Jarman season, it is pertinent to briefly explore the history of the institution in order to obtain a sense of its ideologies and how it has operated, with particular focus on its changing role/s and the cultivation of a film culture within Britain.

The impact of the BFI cannot and should not be overlooked, because, as Geoffrey Nowell-Smith and Peter Thomas have stated, "no aspect of cinema in Britain has been unaffected [by it]: preservation and access, exhibition, distribution, production, education, information and documentation, and research" (2006: 441). Alongside this, however, Nowell-Smith and Thomas also observe that, for

an organisation founded to 'encourage the art of film' the BFI "concerned itself very little with what came to be known as 'artists' film[4]" (2006: 441) suggesting either an ideological oversight or a failure of sufficient funding and involvement in art film. As such the BFI's relationship with Jarman relates to a crucial area on which the institute was founded, as well as to the type of film culture fostered and promoted by the BFI. Looking into these areas of context will provide the chapter with an historical framework through which to view my reflections on the contemporary framing and positioning of Jarman's film work by the institution.

Firstly, it should be noted that there is very little scholarship on the BFI's history with Ivan Butler's book (1971)[5], the 2006 special edition of journal *Screen[6]*, and the edited collection it went on to spawn[7], being the only examples. Also, it is not the purpose of this chapter to delve into the minutiae of the historical workings of the BFI, as this would prove a complex and esoteric mixture of internal politics, bureaucracy, film-finance and "border disputes" with other institutions such as the Arts Council (Nowell-Smith and Thomas 2006: 441). Instead, the aim is to present a brief overview that places the 2014 Derek Jarman season in an historical context that sheds some light on the practices of the BFI and in turn allows for a degree of informed reflection as to what kind of

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[4] This sort of film is described as being "produced non-industrially in a modern art framework" (Nowell-Smith and Thomas 2006: 441) such as Jarman's *Sebastiane*, *Jubilee* and *The Tempest*.
[5] *To Encourage the Art of Film: the Story of the British Film Institute*.
[6] *Screen* 47 (4) Winter 2006.
[7] *The British Film Institute, the Government and Film Culture 1933-2000* edited by Geoffrey Nowell-Smith and Christophe Dupin (2012).

film culture they wish to propagate, with the aforementioned season as an example of that culture. As Nowell-Smith and Thomas state, the "BFI has been at the centre of film culture in Britain since 1950" with a claim to have actually pioneered the use of the term 'film culture' (2006: 441), but what does this mean in practice? Prior to 1950[8] and the modernisations undertaken by influential BFI director Denis Forman, the BFI was "a sleepy organisation with a vaguely educational remit" (Nowell-Smith and Thomas 2006: 442) which touted a "narrow-minded" brief that advocated "the promotion of film as a modern means of instruction" (Dupin 2006: 444). Forced to modernise and change ideology following a crisis at the lack of impact the institute had had after 15 years, the newly hired Forman "brought in a new generation of film enthusiasts" such as Gavin Lambert and Penelope Houston "who were to lead the way towards a more modern approach to the film medium" (Dupin 2006: 447). It is thus from 1949 onwards that the institute begins to resemble facets of the organisation that it is today, as it begins to play an active role in the creation of a film culture in Britain via the notion of film appreciation and cultural cinema[9]. Further periods of crisis reveal both the problems faced by the institution, and the ways in which it attempted to develop a filmic culture.

By the late 1960's the institute was again being put under scrutiny due to lack of sufficient development and progression since the earlier crisis of inactivity. The

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[8] The BFI was founded in 1933 and was a "marginal organisation" (Dupin 2006: 445) until the Radcliffe Report of 1948 gave it a strict ultimatum for change and growth.

[9] Key developments included the creation of the Experimental Film Fund which later became the BFI Production Board, a National Film Theatre, a strengthened National Film Library (which became the National Film Archive), and a modernised *Sight and Sound* that now included film criticism and analysis.

film enthusiasts that had been brought in by Forman were still occupying the same positions, and areas of previous development had slowed or ossified. As Christophe Dupin explains, "what was considered modern in the late 1940's had become conservative in post-1968 Britain" (2006: 451) with the BFI a potent symbol of the cultural establishment. Nowell-Smith relates details of the 1970 crisis, and particularly the rebellion of the BFI Members Action Group (MAG) which had been formed in the wake of an open letter sent to *The Times* by filmmaker Maurice Hatton where he "lambasted the BFI for squandering its resources" and called "for it to be abolished and replaced by a new, more active body" (2006: 455). The MAG thought the BFI "represented a stifling orthodoxy" that was "out of touch" and "abused its monopoly position actively to keep the culture stagnant and restrictive" (Nowell-Smith 2006: 457). It is also interesting here to consider Ernest Lindgren's[10] responses to the crisis as it highlights a difference of opinion with regards to the role of the BFI that has direct relevance to considerations of the purpose of seasons like the one of Derek Jarman in 2014. Lindgren, after first establishing that arguments for the BFI to play an active role in creating a film culture are against policy, then says:

> The proper role of a public organisation in a democratic state is to provide the information and the facilities to enable the people to make up their own minds about the nature of film and its purpose in society…It is not the job of the Institute…to develop and promulgate one particular film culture (cited by Nowell-Smith 2006: 458).

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[10] Lindgren was Curator of the National Film Archive and so at the heart of the institute's operations.

Nowell-Smith, on the other hand, finds this view and description of the BFI to be "hypocritical…or, more likely, insufficiently self-aware" because, he contests, "the Institute did develop and promulgate…a particular culture" (2006: 458). The reason Nowell-Smith finds Lindgren to be lacking self-awareness on the matter of influencing a film culture is because Lindgren has overlooked the role of taste, preference and subjectivity within the BFI and its members (which, of course, still stands today). A cultural organisation such as the BFI cannot be neutral as it is required to make choices regarding programme content and film funding, and people are chosen to make and carry out those decisions. Lindgren mentions that the role of a public organisation is to 'provide information', but he does not seem to have understood that the 'information' coming from the BFI will have been selected, edited, positioned and issued by people working within the BFI along subjective agendas In terms of the BFI of the early 1970s, Nowell-Smith suggests that the culture they promulgated, and which "simply seemed *natural* to Lindgren and his peers" consisted of "a handful of canonical classics, plus some more recent art films, preferably erotic in a tasteful way" (2006: 458) – and whether this was wholly true or not is a matter for further debate beyond the remit of this chapter. What these exchanges do illustrate, and something of direct relevance to investigations into Jarman's film work, is that the majority of the operations of the BFI are based on taste and opinion (of the chairman, the director, the members), and these are ambiguous things that must be open to change – when they

are not it becomes a serious problem for the organisation (as with the 1948 and 1970 crises).

Assessing the historic roles of the BFI also suggests ways in which they have continued to operate up until the present day. It is arguable, when looking into the Jarman season of 2014 for example, that the BFI currently operates as a cultural institution that involves a mixture of several facets from its two previous incarnations, namely instruction (from its early educationally focused period) and appreciation (from its later more culturally involved period). As such, the BFI can be seen as a body that offers 'instruction' in film appreciation and cultural cinema; this means that it does provide information and facilities to enable filmic consideration (as Lindgren stated), but that these services have an attached agenda that is preordained, prescribed and decided beforehand by people within the BFI, so are not neutral (as Lindgren seemed to assume). So, in terms of the Jarman season, the BFI provided screenings of the films, with talks, and 'information' booklets and handouts, but the presentation of these arguably offered a prescribed and particular representation of Jarman's films that continually referenced leading biographical information (seen in Fowler's handout and the season's accompanying booklets, and in the decision of the BFI to split the season in to two segments – discussed below). This method of evaluating and considering Jarman's oeuvre (making his life central; organising the films into categories that often rely on biography for part or

all of their definition) is one that has been previously observed in critical studies on Jarman (again, discussed below) and suggests that little new insight or textual analysis had been developed by the BFI for the 2014 season. It also suggests that the out-dated liberal taste culture identified by Nowell-Smith above and indicative of the Lindgren regime is still in operation at the BFI, and had merely developed enough to subsume Jarman's filmic oeuvre without really considering its dramatic diversity.

Mattias Frey has explored, from the late 1940s onwards, the predilections and tastes of *Sight and Sound*, which he describes as "an organ of the BFI and a defender of a middlebrow, 'liberal' taste" (2013: 215). For Frey, the core of this specific taste culture is something he defines as a "cinephillic morality" based on "an ethical stance that ascribes to the medium the ability to provide a special insight or 'antidote' to the globalized world" (2013: 215). It is this cinephillic morality that Frey believes still "remains *Sight and Sound*'s underlying editorial line" (2013: 215). Again, as with Nowell-Smith's perception of the film culture favoured by Lindgren's BFI, the length to which this is the case is for exploration outside of the remit of this thesis. But, Frey's findings are useful here because they provide an assessment of the intellectual atmosphere within the BFI, which is then portrayed and promoted through the institute's magazine, and it suggests, as Nowell-Smith also did, that this environment can become stagnant and biased towards a particular kind of film culture. Indeed, when considering

the ways in which the BFI arguably 'instructs' the public in terms of appreciating and evaluating cultural cinema, such as with the particular presentation of seasons of work by specific directors or by utilising its own magazine, it is still plausible to consider relevant the observations of the MAG in 1970 who found the BFI "represented a stifling orthodoxy" which "abused its monopoly position actively to keep the culture stagnant and restrictive" (Nowell-Smith 2006: 457). With this considered however, and to illustrate the positive side of subjective organisational decision making, there are also a number of solid historical examples of forward-thinking decisions and filmic variety coming from within the BFI.

The Production Board[11] was a successful arm of the BFI, specifically from the mid-1970s to the early 1990s, helping to fund disparate film projects from a variety of directors in a myriad of styles, including a degree of patronage towards Derek Jarman. With the wide-range of films financed, the effect and influence of the Production Board on British film culture suggests that hierarchies of taste can be overcome and multiplicity sought and celebrated, even though the BFI could be severely weakened by internal division and institutional stagnation. Indeed, on looking into the type of films made with help from the Production Board, it is arguable that, despite Nowell-Smith and Thomas suggesting otherwise (as mentioned

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[11] The Production Board replaced the Experimental Film Fund in 1965 and went on to provide finance for works by directors such as Don Levy, Tony Scott, Mike Leigh, Bill Douglas, Horace Ove, Jarman, Peter Greenaway, Laura Mulvey & Peter Wollen, Stephen Dwoskin, Sally Potter, Nick Broomfield, Isaac Julien, and Patrick Keiller amongst others. A list of films and directors that benefitted from the Board can be found on the BFI website at http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/1348538/.

above 2006: 441[12]), the BFI did in fact concern itself with encouraging and funding 'artists' films albeit this was not always consistent. Peter Sainsbury, a head of the Production Board, had "regarded Jarman as too successful, and possibly too commercial, for the BFI" (Peake 1999: 338) after the release of *The Tempest*, because, by that point Jarman had successfully attracted private funding for three feature films and Sainsbury felt that the BFI with its limited resources should be working with "people unable to find funding elsewhere" (1999: 338). However, with *The Angelic Conversation* Jarman was "desperately in need of assistance" (1999: 338) so Sainsbury backed the project on the basis of its rushes alone, and shortly after, helped by a partnership with Channel 4 and an increase in Government grants, the BFI co-financed *Caravaggio* (1999: 347). In 1990 the BFI declined to finance *The Garden* but in 1992 they did give backing to *Wittgenstein* (1999: 448 and 507 respectively).

In sum then, the BFI can be labelled as both a conservative and a progressive organisation, as there are examples from its history and the way in which it has operated to prove both assertions. It has been shown by way of this historical investigation that the BFI can be understood as a cultural institution which offers public instruction in filmic appreciation, with an attached subjective agenda. Finally, the BFI's role within film culture has changed frequently over the years with its presence now being

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[12] "Founded to 'encourage the art of film', it concerned itself very little with what came to be known as 'artists film' – that is to say film produced non-industrially in a modern art framework" (Nowell-Smith and Thomas 2006: 441).

felt more in terms of cinema exhibition (the seasons at the South Bank NFT being central to this), DVD and book production, and on-going archival work, than as a producer of films. The latter allows for a more direct and contemporary influence on film culture so the BFI's recent lack of involvement within this area means that it must rely mainly upon scholarship, *Sight and Sound*, and the screening of films to foster cultural agendas. As such, it is intriguing to return to my reflections on the BFI Jarman season armed with relevant findings from the investigation into its historical purposes and roles within the culture, which led to a number of questions to be posed of the BFI Jarman season. Does the BFI take a neutral or loaded position regarding Jarman's film work? Does the surrounding information (including the season organisation) attempt to 'instruct' the viewer in this position? Is this position found in other critical studies of Jarman? What do the shortcomings of the BFI season also suggest about the problems of Jarman scholarship?

Returning to William Fowler's handout from the season introduction, there are a number of clues as to the way in which the BFI have chosen to position and frame Jarman. Before exploring this it should be acknowledged, to a degree, that generalised assertions and journalistic shorthand are accepted by-products of the kind of overview which the season and its attendant literature are attempting to convey, because they do not know at which level of knowledge or interest people are approaching the season. With that said, the season literature assessed here

is certainly indicative of a particular tone and thrust within the majority of the season's content; generalisation, received ideas, assumptions, prescribed conclusions, narrowing of focus and restrictive evaluations. Fowler declares that Jarman "was a romantic", a "rooted post-modernist" and 'an alchemist[13]' (Fowler 2014) illustrating a reliance on assertions based on subjectively perceived traits of Jarman's personality rather than analytically proven aspects of the films he created. This sort of approach would be more useful and acceptable if, after stating such a thing, Fowler followed it up with an example from one of Jarman's films which proved such an assertion.

In another paragraph Fowler talks of how Jarman "manipulated time into startling new loops and sequences – colliding past and present, tradition and transgression, challenging accepted orthodoxy" (Fowler 2014), which is arguably a quite insightful comment especially in terms of temporal subversion (a motif of Jarman's films which I analyse throughout the thesis), but the assertion is not backed up with a concrete filmic example. The latter segment of the statement by Fowler, 'challenging accepted orthodoxy', provides a further example of the rather vague way[14] in which critical evaluations of Jarman's filmic approach tend to suggest that elements of his style are confrontational, again without textual examples. Perhaps Fowler and the BFI were assuming attendees would consider the season as providing the textual examples, expecting the films to

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[13] For Fowler, Jarman's practice of "working on Super 8 and treating and transferring footage to other formats" (BFI handout 2014) aligned him with the methods of alchemists.
[14] This sort of statement raises immediate, and critically central, questions such as, what orthodoxy did Jarman's films challenge, and in what ways?

speak for themselves and prove the assertions made in the introductory talk and within the booklets promoting the season, but I suggest that this is not enough. Textual examples and analysis should be directly linked to surrounding discussions to provide evidence and depth so there is a clear and well thought-out thread between the debates and the films. Even bearing the tendency towards generalisation within such seasons providing directorial overviews in mind, it is not sufficient to state subjective descriptions of who Jarman was, and what he was interested in, and then show a series of his films as if that proves these tropes. However, the tone and approach of the handout was continued with the organisation and division of the films to be shown during the season.

The lack of this critical and analytical connection within the BFI season can be clearly seen when looking at the separation of the season into two parts[15]. Before looking into this it should be acknowledged that the season as a whole was titled 'Queer Pagan Punk[16]', which clearly illustrates the general method of evaluation that the BFI were applying to Jarman's filmic work. The season title is seemingly a combination of Jarman's sexuality with two of his passing interests, again highlighting the propensity of studies on Jarman to prioritise discussions of his identity and snapshots of his biography as opposed to a direct, textual approach to the films themselves. The anecdotal and conclusive tone continued throughout the programme of events, and clearly helped to decide the presentation of the films throughout the season. Part one, which ran through

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[15] The BFI guides for February and March 2014 were key sources here.
[16] The title was sourced from Scott Treleaven's publication of the same name that ran from 1996-1999 (there is a reference to this in the March 2014 BFI guide, pp.21).

February, was subtitled 'Alchemy and the Occult' and showed the following

films; *Savage Messiah* (Ken Russell 1971), *In the Shadow of the Sun* (1972-80),

Sebastiane (1976), *Jubilee* (1978), *The Tempest* (1979), *Aria* (1987), *The Angelic*

Conversation (1985) and *Caravaggio* (1986). The season booklet suggests that the

rationale for the subtitle of February's season was due to the presence of

occultist John Dee in several of the selected films, as well as the use of

'alchemical imagery' (although an explanation and example of this is not given),

and because Jarman was "working on Super 8 and treating and transferring

footage to other formats (like an alchemist)" (Fowler in BFI guide Feb 2014: 20).

Part two, which ran through March, was subtitled 'New Queer Cinema', and is

described in the BFI guide from that month as illustrating the "powerful

message of resistance that unites his output from 1987 onwards" (Fowler in BFI

guide March 2014: 18) which chimes with Fowler's aforementioned notion that

Jarman's films 'challenged accepted orthodoxy' and is equally as vague. In this

section the following films were shown; *The Last of England* (1987), *War*

Requiem (1989), *The Garden* (1990), *Edward II* (1991), *Wittgenstein* (1992),

Glitterbug (1994) and *Blue* (1993). What is overly transparent regarding the

chronology and grouping of the films in the March section of the season is that

Jarman's diagnosis, and public announcement, of being HIV positive (December

1986) has been utilised as the season divider and taken as signifying a marked

change in Jarman's filmmaking – from 1987 he now makes 'queer cinema'

possessing a 'powerful message of resistance' according to the BFI. Again, this

mapping of life details and biographical narrative onto filmic consideration and analysis is overly predetermined, and so restrictive and simplistic. It serves to stifle the multiplicity of the works, suggesting that all work from a particular time period contains similar traits, motifs and subtexts.

Looking at this division of films from Jarman's oeuvre it can be argued that the separation and labelling is arbitrary in terms of content and form, and that, for the most part, the season has been conveniently segmented into chronological order. The discursive separation does not stand up to scrutiny, and examples from the respective catalogues prove this – in February the films are described as "mythic", "prophetic", "evocative", "auteurist", "mythical" and "intense", and in March they are variously "near-mythic", "intimate", "intense", "passionate" and "evocative". Furthermore, the organisation of the works begs some (rather obvious) questions such as, for example, what exactly do film texts like *Sebastiane* and *Caravaggio* have to do with the suggested subtexts of alchemy and the occult? If a "powerful message of resistance…unites his output from 1987 onwards" how is this the case, and why was it not present in his previous filmic texts? These sorts of questions regarding the presentation and framing of Jarman by the BFI season of 2014 help to highlight a major area of investigation and analysis that was conspicuous by its absence, namely a direct address of what Jarman actually did in film and a discussion of why he did it in that way. Too much is assumed and delivered as a given about Jarman's film work, with the majority of these observations being based primarily on biographical

information that has been mapped from Jarman's life story (favoured touchstones extracted by BFI/critical studies include details from his upbringing, burgeoning sexuality, resultant sex life, the places he lived, latter political activity and ill-health) or transferred from perceived personality traits (much is made of his cultural tastes, political viewpoints and artistic preferences) straight onto analysis of his films without filmic evidence or theoretical backing.

The discursive divisions and methodologies of evaluation of Jarman's films highlighted by the BFI season have also been prominent within previous critical studies of the director, and before assessing this field in more detail it is worth noting several similarities. Michael Charlesworth (2011) integrates Jarman's life and work in his investigations, and the work contains chapters on the feature films of the 1970's and a later one entitled '1986 and after'. Charlesworth also frequently claims to know what "Derek felt" (77: 2011) about filmmaking and life, and is surprisingly able to assess how events impacted upon Jarman ("After *The Tempest*, for Derek everything changed" [78: 2011]). Therefore, Charlesworth's approach can be distracting and misleading because he claims to speak for Jarman's personality and the dramatic impact of this prose style can take precedence over textual analysis.

Jim Ellis (2009) draws together Jarman's politics and his filmic aesthetics, utilises alchemy as a metaphor for queer film-making (2009: 68), and devotes his final chapter to discussions of queerness in *Edward II*, *Wittgenstein* and *Blue*.

Niall Richardson (2008) views a number of Jarman's films through the analytical prism of queer theory and the aesthetics of queer cinema, concentrating predominantly on *Caravaggio*, *Edward II*, and *Blue*. Richardson's grouping here raises questions surrounding the validity of the BFI season allocating *Caravaggio* to the alchemical/occult segment rather than to the subsequent segment focused on queer cinema, providing further evidence of the BFI's rather arbitrary organisation of the season. Rowland Wymer (2005) frequently applies discussions of Jarman's personality traits to his observations on the films, and consistently refers to queerness as an identity for both Jarman and the films. Finally, Steven Dillon (2004), who despite using the unique analytical method of understanding Jarman's cinema as an example of lyric film (a combination of visual imagery and poetry), connects much of the work to an evocation of sexual identity, and is another who groups the first three feature films together in one chapter.

Looking at these similar traits within the field of Jarman studies provides evidence of how the BFI season served to emphasise and replicate debates and groupings already present, therefore providing a voice lacking in originality that strengthens a particular Jarman orthodoxy. The filmic how and why (direct textual analysis) is often absent or underexplored by work wishing to assess the director's output, usually coming second to life details, and this can be viewed as an analytical deficiency frequently covered up with biographical detail or circumstantial anecdotes. For example, Charlesworth, on discussing *The*

Tempest, begins by noting that "Derek knew the play well. He had studied it on his English course at Kings as an undergraduate" (2011: 72). What is the reader supposed to glean from this anecdote? That Jarman's scholarly knowledge of the source material would lead to a successful film? Charlesworth concludes his discussion of the film by suggesting that Jarman's version can be viewed as a tribute to his recently deceased mother because "Derek's mother loved Shakespeare" (2011: 76). Indeed, there are many examples of where authors have allowed their fascination with Jarman's life, personality, tastes and opinions to influence and pepper their discussions of his films, leading to narrowed conclusions regarding what is going on within them[17]. The diffuse and diverse filmic output of Jarman was tackled by the BFI with an approach similar to previous examples of work on Jarman. Familiar motifs and traits were highlighted, and sections of biography inserted so as to offer little in the way of a fresh perspective on, or reconfiguration of, Jarman's filmic oeuvre.

On investigation, Jarman's film work can appear abstract and diffuse making categorisation problematic and significantly reductive which has not been helped by the surprising lack of sustained textual analysis in critical studies on Jarman,

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[17] Other examples of this kind of writing include the following: Ellis in his dramatically titled chapter 'Thatcherism, AIDS, and War' – "Jarman was diagnosed as HIV positive in December 1986. *Caravaggio* was his last work of art not to be marked by the epidemic in some way" (2009: 133); and Ellis on *The Garden* – "one of the film's subjects is AIDS and in particular Jarman's experience with it" (2009: 186); it "clearly mirrors Jarman's experiences with the tabloid press" (2009: 186). Examples from Chris Lippard's edited collection: "*Caravaggio* allowed Jarman to insert *his* [my emphasis] own life into Caravaggio's story in further homage to Pasolini (David Gardner 1996: 42); "Jarman's treatment of *The Tempest* exemplifies *his* [my emphasis] view of the connections between the early modern theatre and the postmodern cinema" (David Hawkes 1996: 107). Finally, Steven Dillon clearly positions Jarman's opinions and interests as the defining factor when evaluating his directorial approach and the films themselves: "Jarman's antipathy toward narrative and narrative cinema is repeatedly expressed with great clarity in his published journals and scripts" (2004: 2); "Jarman's subjective immersion in the historical Caravaggio is at the centre of everything one wants to say about the film" (2004: 137).

with people preferring to pepper their assessments with biographical detail or the application of attributes to Jarman via a variety of adjectives – recall Fowler's pronouncements in the season handout which described a "multi-faceted artist" who was a "romantic" and "subversive" "postmodernist". Each one arguably an interesting label but rather meaningless when simply stated and applied to Jarman rather than proven through evidence extracted from textual analysis of the films. As a result, over the years, despite the presence of heterogeneity within descriptions of Jarman's work (often still with their basis in life or personality details), critical studies have usually positioned his work in just a few discursive or analytical frames[18] (biography; politics; sexuality; identity). Therefore, the majority of previous studies either always lead textual analysis back to Jarman himself in some way, or attempt to place Jarman's films within a previously established category (avant-garde; art cinema) or cultural tradition (English Romanticism; Renaissance) that is seen to correspond with the tone of his output, often also arrived at via application of traits of personality or perspective. In spite of this, I suggest that something notable can be gleaned from the variety of adjectives applied to Jarman and his films despite this same diversity not being present in the subsequent analytical categorisation, and academic framing, of Jarman's filmic project. It is a point that is of core importance to the influence and longevity of Jarman's project within British film culture - namely that the multiplicity and difference located within the project, from film to film, and within each film in terms of content and form, means that

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[18] These frameworks and methods of assessing Jarman's work are discussed from page 23 onwards.

the project can be seen to offer consistent resistance to reductive categorisation, and can facilitate diverse scholarly and theoretical approaches.

With this in mind, *Queer Pagan Punk* did little to develop filmic analysis and theoretical discussion of the works, and can be seen to have functioned in order to allow the BFI to present a united front regarding Jarman's cinematic worth, ignoring their past reticence. Retrospectives often present a teleological grand narrative, both of a persons' career and the institution/establishment that is holding it, which removes inconsistencies to present a clear and smooth progression that is wholeheartedly celebrated. With *Queer Pagan Punk* it was hard not to note that Derek Jarman, due in part to the fortunate benefit of hindsight and the cultural impact of the posthumous cult of appreciation, was now being sold back to the Frey's 'middlebrow' public as a deviant darling of British cinema[19]. As such, it is now relevant to assess in more detail the field of critical literature referred to above, to indicate the ways in which a particular Jarman orthodoxy had been created and replicated, leading to the BFI's recapitulation in 2014.

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[19] Similar could be said of the way he was presented in Isaac Julien's BFI funded documentary *Derek* (2008) which utilises a chronological and biographical frame to effectively sanctify Jarman and mythologise the oeuvre. *Derek* is an earlier example of the way in which the BFI framed the Jarman debate, and is also relevant to mention here because the DVD, with its thick attentive information booklet and cleverly designed sleeve, illustrates how the BFI now operates as a purveyor of influential merchandise which helps substantiate a particular film culture.

On looking into the majority of criticism and observations regarding Jarman's
film work it is interesting to organise the field into four particular categories
featuring attendant labels, with considerable crossover. Firstly, some centre
their discussions around their placement of his oeuvre in the avant-garde or art
cinema[20] such as Michael O'Pray (1996), John Hill (1999), Dillon (2004) and
Geoff Brown (2005), all of whom highlight different characteristics to prove this
positioning. O'Pray and Brown both write of a romantic sensibility that meshes
with avant-garde techniques, while Hill and Dillon regard the films in an
allegorical light. For example Hill reads *The Last Of England* (1987) as an avant-
garde 'national allegory' and sets it on the margins alongside several other films
(including *The Ploughman's Lunch* [1983] and *Defence of the Realm* [1986]) from
the mid 1980's which he describes as addressing the 'state of the nation'. Dillon
places Jarman's films within the category of lyric film (along with directors like
Jean Genet, Pier Paolo Pasolini, and Michael Powell & Emeric Pressburger)
suggesting that the visual imagery and poetry used by Jarman often references
facets of sexual identity.

A second category concentrates on looking into the connected issues of sex,
sexuality and identity politics which they locate within Jarman's films, and
includes the work of Martin Quinn-Meyler (1996), David Gardner (1996), Alan
Sinfield (1998), Richardson (2009) and Ellis (2009). Of particular relevance here

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[20] Terms such as 'avant-garde' and 'art cinema/arthouse cinema' are often interchangeable in the literature
and typically mean similar things in reference to the style of the film, and its positioning in film culture. Very
basically and briefly, it highlights the film's identity as 'not of the mainstream'. Notionally there are a multitude
of reasons for this labelling ranging from filmic techniques and narrative approaches to the type of funding
attained and the visibility of the film when distributed for exhibition.

is the exploration of images and aesthetics of opposition and resistance which the scholars locate in Jarman's canon – recall also that the notions of opposition and resistance were tropes of the BFI discussion. Quinn-Meyler discusses how Jarman's films contained a clear political ideology that offered resistance to the "institutionally sanctioned bigotry of Heterosoc" (1996: 127), and similarly Gardner positions Jarman[21] in opposition to a dominant order but this time as a 'gay criminal hero' (1996: 31) operating in line with a homosexual artistic tradition (Gardner cites Jean Genet in relation to *Sebastiane* and Pasolini when discussing *Caravaggio*). Sinfield and Richardson both use the language of the Queer Theory debates, and a general framework of gay identity politics to describe how Jarman's films offer resistance to the status quo. Ellis looks at "connections between Jarman's political interests and his artistic ones" (2009: introduction xvii) by examining Jarman's formal experiments throughout his career.

Interestingly, Ellis begins his assessment by saying that criticism of Jarman's work has "tended to emphasize certain aspects of his work over others" suggesting that "his films are [most frequently] read from either a biographical or political perspective" with "short shrift given to the formal aspects of the films[22]" (2009: introduction xvi – xvii). As discussed above, this chapter has identified a similar trend and deficiency within the Jarman studies corpus, and

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[21] Note the preference for framing Jarman himself rather than the texts he produced.

[22] Ellis qualifies his assessment of the field however by noting that "neither the biographical nor the political approach to Jarman's career is illegitimate or unjustified, and the work certainly encourages them". Having said that, he concludes on this with a warning that "such approaches [are] limiting and potentially treacherous" (2009: introduction xvii).

Ellis also adds a point of relevance relating to Jarman's own approach to the usage of life details and personal material within his filmic constructs, again highlighting the limitations of biography as a tool of textual assessment: "autobiography serves for him as a source material or a starting point for certain explorations, never really as the object of interest itself" (2009: xvi). It is fair, and indeed useful for the development of Film Studies, to suggest that the filmic texts produced by a director can be usefully viewed and analysed by applying a methodology (subjective textual analysis, related theoretical exploration, contextualisation) that is not prescriptive, limiting or reductive in the way that the application of personality traits and life details can be[23]. Why? Simply put, the latter approach offers a monolithic central argument (with the author/director at the core of it) that assumes, and excludes, too much. The use of biography and emphasis on details about the director/author as the centre of textual meaning is theoretically orthodox, textually unrevealing, and simplifies the task of the critic/academic. For one thing, this approach can often assume that the director/author has "full control over his work" and does not take enough account of the "multiplicity of factors" (Wollen 1997: 71) that influence a filmic text as it is being created (the crew, the actors, the producers, industrial and cultural context, time constraints). There are also many factors, aside from the director, that influence the interpretation of a filmic text after its release (for example, historical analysis of the industrial contexts, or the application of theoretical work to the filmic text).

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[23] Concentrating on analysis of the individual texts as the primary investigative tool (as opposed to a critical allocation of over-arching power and impact to the director) can also liberate the work from the limitations and shortcomings of auteur theory – filmic texts can then be viewed and assessed away from suggested traits and personality supposedly held by the director. There is further discussion about this with reference to Foucault on page 34-36.

Secondly, the concept of an 'author' is not necessarily a unified one that always

relates to the 'proper name' (Foucault 1980: 121); there is a marked difference of

designation between the notion of a manifest, dominant author that presides

over textual meaning and a latent author 'effect' (Wollen 1997: 179) – for

example, the difference between Derek Jarman the person, and 'Jarman', defined

as the effects of direction on a filmic text. As Roland Barthes suggested, "a text is

not…a single 'theological' meaning (the 'message' of the Author-God)" (1993:

146), for example, the explicit connection of films that Jarman has directed to

traits and actions of Jarman's personality and life style – e.g. Derek Jarman was

homosexual and politically motivated by this, so he made films promoting gay

rights; or Derek Jarman trained as a painter, and was a practicing artist, so he

made painterly and artistic films. This methodology allocates such texts with a

manifest and dominant 'Author' (and a leading and reductive analysis) and this

is problematic because, returning to Barthes once again, "to give a text an

Author is to impose a limit on that text" (1993: 147).

Barthes also reveals how this methodological approach can provide the

critic/writer with a type of investigative success suggesting another reason for its

popularity within Film Studies. He observes that "such a conception suits

criticism very well, the latter then allocating itself the important task of

discovering the Author beneath the work: when the Author has been found, the

text is 'explained' – victory to the critic" (1993: 146). It is my opinion that this

should not be the central goal of academic Film Studies writing. However, on

assessing Jarman's oeuvre the majority of scholars have preferred to resort to life details and 'facts' (procured from Jarman's own writings, quotations credited to Jarman[24] from various sources, or Tony Peake's expansive work of biography [1999]) as proof of something solid with which to use as objective tools of textual analysis to prove their hypotheses. Some scholars, such as Ellis, admit that it is "difficult to pin Jarman and his work down, or to find the appropriate grounds on which to assess his accomplishments" (2009: xvi) which is a rather limiting way to view an exploration of his heterogeneous oeuvre. Surely the diversity within enables a variety of interpretations and responses, with the need to 'pin' the work down a consideration that should not be the driving force of the investigation because it has reductive and arbitrary connotations - but such a method does allow the writer to claim an analytic 'victory' however pyrrhic. Below (on page 33-34), before moving on from this assessment of the Jarman literature I will further substantiate why my use of 'Jarman' in this thesis is not connected to conventional conceptions of the author or notions of auteur theory, and does not seek to 'pin' down and unify Jarman's filmic texts. Prior to that discussion however, are two further groupings of writers that have taken a particular stance on Jarman's films.

A third grouping of writers containing significant crossover with the previous cluster can also be suggested; including the work of O'Pray (1996), Rowland

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[24] It is true to say that Jarman spoke frequently about his film work (among many other topics), often embellishing such discussions with anecdotes from his past, thereby meshing life and work in a rather conclusive way that would have influenced scholars. However, this sort of primary source reportage is not to be relied upon, being highly subjective, changeable, and influenced by context and Jarman's whim.

Wymer (2005), Chris Lippard & Guy Johnson (2006) and Charlesworth (2011). These authors merged Jarman's film work with his other artistic pursuits or selected life events in order to use elements of biography to understand parts of his filmic aesthetic, without the emphasis on queer theory or sexual identity as the previous group had. O'Pray takes a chronological approach to Jarman's life and work combining biography with some textual analysis, including sections on the feature films as well as mentions of the short films and pop promos. Wymer also utilises the chronological approach but with the majority of the work concentrating on the feature films (they each have a chapter to themselves). Within these chapters, Jarman's films are considered with consistent reference to his personality and cultural tastes, using Jarman's unpublished papers held at the BFI archive as a central source. In his introduction Wymer boldly states that Jarman "was unashamedly auteurist in his conception of cinema" suggesting via the evidence of Jarman's own writings that Jarman "came to believe that a highly personal form of cinematic expression was the only kind that mattered" (2005: 3). As such, Wymer approaches Jarman's films from an auteur perspective linking facets of the films back to Jarman's life and personality in a way that, as Ellis warned earlier, can be "limiting and potentially treacherous" (2009: xvii). Wymer's methodology of analysis does not allow Jarman's film form the space to be assessed on its own merits as everything is traced back to Jarman's life, personality and tastes. Lippard and Johnson look at a very specific motif that they attribute to Jarman's cinema, namely the positioning and role of the 'suffering male body' (2006: 304) in his films, discussing its meaning before and after Jarman was diagnosed HIV

positive, with the majority of their analysis taking place after the diagnosis. *The Last of England* is a pivotal film for Lippard and Johnson, emerging just after Jarman's diagnosis, and representing, for them, an example of "an active, critical, contaminated cinema of formal experimentation and social critique, one which is both intensely private and wilfully public" (2006: 303). In terms of Jarman's cinema, Lippard and Johnson describe how "sickness is a crucial part of its practice" (2006: 303) using examples of the 'bodies in pain' found in *Sebastiane*, *Caravaggio*, *War Requiem* and *The Garden*. Although there is certainly an argument for the centrality of the male body within Jarman's oeuvre, and it is interesting to explore the ways in which this physicality is displayed, Lippard and Johnson's work is too heavily influenced by Jarman's diagnosis of HIV. With this in mind, the authors simply choose to highlight the examples of suffering seen in Jarman's films and ignore visualisations of physical fitness and good health, making the overall analysis too particular and narrow to be of lasting use when considering the entirety of Jarman's cinema.

A fourth grouping of writers, including the work of Lawrence Driscoll (1996), David Hawkes (1996), and Peter Wollen (2006) (with similar sentiments also mentioned by O' Pray, and Dillon) position Jarman's films as continuing national cultural traditions. Wollen highlights a line of continuity in Jarman's film work with the cultural heritage of England and thus locates him as part of an English cultural and artistic tradition which he labels "neoromantic" due to the combination of heritage influences and those of a "pop modernism…in touch with

street culture" (2006: 37). Driscoll connects Jarman to 'Romanticism' and also notes a strain of 'anti-industrialism' which aligns him with a tradition of thought and a particular area of national culture. This mixture, Driscoll suggests, has been influential in the film cultural positioning of Jarman as a contentious filmmaker; the "image of Jarman as a controversial filmmaker has emerged not because he is an iconoclast of Britain's sacred institutions and values, but because he has chosen to speak for a very old British tradition, placing his faith in cultural values that are primarily aesthetic and historical" (1996: 65). Driscoll describes some of the impetus behind Jarman's project as "an opportunity to re-establish a sense of community, history and culture" by returning "to an older tradition [including] Shakespeare, Blake, Ruskin and Larkin" (1996: 65). Hawkes aligns Jarman with renaissance art and theatre and concentrates on *Edward II* and *The Tempest*, stating that the latter film "exemplifies his view of the connections between the early modern theatre and the postmodern cinema" (1996: 107). This is a quotation which is indicative of certain scholarship on Jarman in its attempt to emphasise how his film work traverses eras of culture and schools of theory, whilst still asserting the dominance of Jarman's personality as a deciding factor in this (note Hawkes' use of the phrase '*his* view' rather than providing a solid textual example to prove the assertion).

However they may argue the finer points of their comparisons, all three writers are united over the relationship Jarman's filmic texts have to an older cultural tradition, and are concerned to describe how the films connect to this. The

observations of this fourth group of writers are useful when considering my methodology because, as explored throughout this thesis, there is much to be found within Jarman's filmic project that investigates the purposes and functions of art and heritage in the creation of a cultural identity. Although an interesting line of investigation, these writers do not necessarily use the cultural traditions subtext as a tool of textual analysis. If used in such a way, for example by textually exploring the function of Renaissance culture in Jarman's films, this approach can facilitate analysis which brings out and explores the nuances of Jarman's films' interactions of past and present, and what such conjunctions can suggest about the role of culture in society. In general, previous writers in this framework are more concerned to simply attach Jarman to the cultural heritage of England /Britain (a further example of interchangeable terms within the literature), rather than offering a thorough textual investigation of how the films can be said to do this.

Jarman's filmic interpretation of, and investigation into, English cultural identity will form one of the main facets of this thesis's approach to Jarman's films. As such, it is entirely relevant to describe Jarman as an English film-maker rather than a British film-maker. The label 'English' has been decided upon because it has connotations to culture and cultural representation whereas 'British' relates directly to ideas of nationhood and politics, and is a rather loaded term with connotations that distract from the project's central concerns – for example, it is beyond the remit of this project to relate Jarman's film work to

the politic landscape of Britain, but one would feel inclined to do this to an extent if discussing Jarman as a British filmmaker. However, it should be noted that the British label is applicable for use in this project when discussing the BFI and its impact and influence on British film culture, as this is where Jarman's filmic project interacts with the industry (which in turn is affected by the government), and the point at which cultural concerns are crossed with political and economic perspectives. It is important to attempt to de-clutter the Jarman debate, in terms of applicable labels and groupings, because as can be seen above when assessing the field of scholarship, there is significant crossover of analytical methodology (the biographical frame or the political frame) and interchangeable terminology in much of the scholarship.

My methodology positions textual analysis at its core, facilitating discussion of related subtexts and theory, rather than applying these first. For example, Jarman's film of *The Tempest* can be assessed textually for how and why it operates in terms of an investigation into cultural heritage using analytical tools such as theories of adaptation, appropriation and pastiche. In addition, the methodology of this thesis will also be constantly wary of the previous dominance of Jarman's personality and life when it comes to assessing the films, and will not apply Jarman's opinions, preferences and biography as primary reasons for the content, or proof of the meaning, of the films. It is true that this thesis makes repeated reference to Jarman in relation to the films but the name is framed here as a categorising (but not unifying) process and as a structure and function

of a filmic text, rather than evidence of, or reference to, an actual "figure who is outside and precedes" (Foucault 1980: 115) the text.

Utilising and applying significant amounts of biographical detail allocates the filmic texts with a dominant 'Author-God' (Barthes 1993: 146) and can lead to the subsequent discussions situating filmic analysis within an approach more akin to that of literary discourses. The visual image and the multiple facets of its composition become secondary and subservient, or even risk being forgotten completely, due to the academic/critic's strong concern and interest in the personality and life of the actual person existent prior to, and away from, the filmic texts. This section of the chapter has demonstrated how description and application of Derek Jarman's life story and personality traits have dominated previous scholarship and critical appreciation of the associated filmic texts. One of the purposes of this thesis is to declutter the textual debates by cutting away Derek Jarman the person, and concentrating on 'Jarman' as a function, effect or structure which "remains at the contours of the texts" (Foucault 1980: 123). In Foucault's discussion of authorship he insightfully posits the notion that the task of criticism is "not to re-establish the ties between an author and his work or to reconstitute an author's thought and experience through his works" but instead that it "should concern itself with the structures of a work…which are studied for their…internal relationships" (1980: 118). Similarly, Wollen observes that "Fuller, Hawks, or Hitchcock…are quite separate from 'Fuller' or 'Hawks' or 'Hitchcock', the structures named after them, and should not be methodologically

confused" (1997: 115). Names, such as those mentioned by Wollen, can function as acceptable tools of filmic discourse which are necessary in order to situate and contextualise films, and to separate certain texts from others for the purpose of investigation (for example, it would be impossible for me to write a thesis on the filmic texts I have selected, or have associated discussions about said films, without making reference to the name Jarman as a categorising prose tool). Therefore, the use of the name Jarman within this thesis is not "a principle of unity" that "serves to neutralise the contradictions that are found in a series of texts" (Foucault 1980: 128), it is more an organising, functional methodological tool that can also plausibly refer to a structure within these filmic texts separating them from the multitude of other texts released in Britain through the 1970s and 1980s.

My methodology will be based on textual analysis of a selection of Jarman film texts and the organisation will be thematic rather than chronological in order to avoid falling into the teleological trap of allowing chronology to provide a convenient narrative for the piece (usually that of artistic progression and auteur development). The framing of film director as auteur, in terms of a consistent career, with notable motifs and periods of similar categorisation is overly simplistic, outdated, and loses sight of individual textual analysis. This method can be misleading and ultimately untrue because distinctions between films will be excluded in order to facilitate a celebration of the director's overall message (expressed via examples of repeated techniques and motifs), as has been

previously shown via this chapter's analysis of the BFI's treatment of Jarman's oeuvre. The dominance of the person behind the camera, in terms of application of biography or the utilisation of auteur theory, is problematic for the study of film because it can stifle analysis of the text itself. The resultant reduction in focus on the intricacies of individual texts is an imbalance my thesis seeks to redress, whilst also considering the possibility of a binding conceptual element that could link the tendencies of the texts.

Tendencies of the texts

Not wishing to tie the texts down, it is fair to say that the disparate stylistic strategies of Jarman films can be united (to a degree) via an overall tendency within the films towards expressions of camp postmodernism, debates and discussions of which often emerged coterminously with the majority of Jarman films. But what is camp postmodernism in this context, and why is it applicable? It is now important to expand on this notion for a short while through a consideration of Jarman style effects, in tandem with an enquiry into the markers of postmodernism (via the contrasting observations of Frederic Jameson [1999] and Linda Hutcheon [2002]) and the features of camp (through the discussions of Jack Babuscio [1999], Richard Dyer [2002], and Moe Meyer [2002]), the two rubrics of which have some significant philosophical and aesthetical crossovers that dovetail within the texts examined in this thesis.

Before embarking on this discussion, however, there are several important issues connected to the labelling and selection of filmic texts that I wish to debate and clarify in order to ensure that the content of the thesis is as justified and as precisely positioned as possible. It should be noted that I do not wish to express that Jarman films are postmodern, or that Jarman is a postmodern director, as this serves as yet another label with which to tie-down and limit the effects of the texts. The reader could then simply walk away from this work with the thought that the Jarman effects are postmodern effects and very little is remembered of what the specific texts actually do, or where they may fit in the context of the British cinema. Such labelling has the potentially reductive effect of boxing the texts off and allowing them to fall into a neat narrative of filmic development (British or otherwise) that does not really exist but serves a theoretical purpose in the way that such assertions seemingly un-problematically elide developments in intellectual thought to contemporary artistic tendencies. Crossover, dialogue, and influence between such strands certainly exist but often this convenient merging of interests only really serves other academics and historians, with the specificities of the texts getting submerged and lost in the process as they are rendered and recalled as one-dimensional exercises in a particular aesthetic theory. Recall once again Barthes observation of the pyrrhic victory of the critic inherent within investigations of author/auteur theory; "such a conception suits criticism very well, the latter then allocating itself the important task of discovering the Author beneath the work, the text is 'explained' – victory to the critic" (1993: 146).

Therefore, it should also be noted that it is not the purpose of this thesis to offer a solution to the texts included and therefore profess my dominance and control over them as an academic; rather, it is to highlight and explore stylistic facets of the texts by virtue of close textual analysis, contextualisation and relevant theoretical discussion. The need to do justice to this tripartite manifesto (textual analysis, context, theory – in connection to style) is at the heart of why I have chosen three specific texts (plus two shorter works) for my thesis rather than attempting to deal with the majority of Jarman films (word limit and time required for the project would also have been an issue if more texts had been addressed). In this thesis I am exploring filmic style rather than story - an overview of most of the Jarman texts would constitute a much less specific analysis of the works (seen in the majority of previous Jarman scholarship), and elide the study to the approach of auteurist analysis (the problems and shortcomings of which have been noted above), as well as suggesting a clear cut but unrevealing narrative of development if pursued chronologically from film to film (for example, by grouping films within one phase of the director's career then moving on to another phase including necessary transitional periods).

The three central texts in this thesis; *Jubilee*, *The Tempest*, and *Caravaggio*, have been chosen over other Jarman texts such as *Sebastiane*, *Edward II*, and *Blue* organically (meaning they were not pre-selected prior to research) based on my interpretation of the stylistic strategies observed within the films, and after a thorough viewing period where all available films (including features, shorts,

and pop promotional work) with a Jarman label had been considered. Briefly put, *Sebastiane*, *Edward II*, and *Blue*, were also excluded from coverage in this thesis after close analysis because of their significantly personal and political content in terms of homosexuality (separate from a camp aesthetic – see below), queer rights, and the life and times of Derek Jarman the person outside of the texts. For example, *Edward II* included a role for the direct action LGBT rights group OutRage! of which Jarman was a central member, and *Blue* features significant and direct (readings of Jarman's diaries and so forth) autobiographical content. Story, in parts of these texts, would distract from the discussion of style.

Some of the stylistic strategies observed in the three central films of this thesis include a de-familiarisation of heritage and cultural texts (for example, eliding the Elizabethan eras, and subverting heritage iconography in *Jubilee*; adapting, altering and appropriating Shakespeare's *Tempest*; utilising versions and references to Caravaggio's paintings in *Caravaggio*); the representation and exploration of multi-layered temporalities; appropriated adaptations and intertextualities; temporal and cultural pastiches and parodies; and a destabilising effect on subject/text relations. The chosen texts were also selected over other Jarman works because of the significance of their film-cultural contexts (as will be explored thoroughly in all chapters of the thesis), a notion which includes and facilitates discussions of what constitutes a heritage film, the role of cultural texts, the work of the BFI and Channel 4, and the purpose and impact of 'British Film Year'. Lastly, it is not the purpose of this thesis to suggest

for example, that by its absence *Edward II* has less to offer in terms of close textual analysis than the texts selected, but more so that when taking into account the findings of my research methodology and the constraints of time, three central texts represented relevant choices for my project. Relatedly, if a binding conceptual element is necessary to further an understanding of the stylistic strategies of the texts in this thesis, the crossovers and similarities with notions of camp and postmodernism should not be ignored. But how can these texts be considered as embodying a camp postmodernism? In order to substantiate this claim, it is relevant to explore several key discussions amongst writers associated with such approaches to cultural life.

Notions of postmodernism have emerged from fields such as literary theory, architecture, economics, and cultural theory, with many conceptions attempting to make sense of the particular contemporary 'moment' in each field. Postmodernism has often been connected to a third stage of cultural and political life, coming after an initial first step and the central second stage – so, for example, postmodernism has been said to occur and flourish in a post-industrial, post-ideological, or post-capitalist/late-capitalist world. Jean-François Lyotard (1979; 1999), when attempting to describe what postmodernism was, did so by making a strong link between cultural power and capital, suggesting that the postmodern approach seemed to be the most successful in adapting to such a situation. For Lyotard, consumer eclecticism was symptomatic of this postmodern 'solution' to the contemporary world, where people's cultures and

tastes were hybridised and available to all. He stated that "eclecticism is the degree zero of popular culture", adding that "this realism of 'anything goes' is in fact that of money" (1999: 42), with the value of art judged according to the profits it could return. So, in many ways Lyotard's conception of postmodernism was quite negative and cynical, with a central and dominating role for capital, and an associated loosening of cultural definition and purpose; as such, he proclaimed that "the epoch is one of slackening…with the absence of aesthetic criteria" (1999: 42). In response to this I would agree that eclecticism is a facet of works of postmodernism, and such a mixture of references, styles and modes is visible in the three texts analysed in this thesis, but Lyotard's negative reading and assertion regarding an absence of aesthetic criteria are misplaced. Facets of eclecticism such as hybridity and intertextuality can represent an interrogative approach to history, heritage, and cultural life, as paradigms and boundaries are subverted and disrupted.

A predominantly negative reading (certainly in terms of cultural representation) was also issued by Marxist cultural theorist Frederic Jameson (1984; 1991; 1999), who, similarly to Lyotard, saw a penchant for eclecticism within postmodernism, described by Jameson as the "random cannibalization of all the styles of the past, the play of random stylistic allusion" (1999: 74). For Jameson, the postmodern epoch was one of loss, irrationality, and the dominance of the "glossy qualities of the image" (1999: 75). He believed that, with the coming of postmodernism in the era of late capitalism, and the related change of cultural

approach from parody to pastiche (the latter described poetically as "imitation of a peculiar mask, speech in a dead language" [1999: 74]), society had lost its sense of historicism and its ability to represent the contemporary experience (this notion is effectively challenged by camp, as will be discussed below). Problematically however, Jameson reveals that at the centre of his notions on the machinations of postmodernism is a belief that a "real history" (1999:76), connected to what Tim Woods defines as "an objective reality outside texts" (2009: 243), has been replaced by a "history of aesthetical styles" (1999: 76).

Jameson's argument starts to weaken here as he criticises filmic representations for being in the 'nostalgia mode' (*American Graffiti* [1973], *Chinatown* [1974]) or for offering 'nostalgic escapism' (*Star Wars* [1977], *Body Heat* [1981]), whilst also being guilty of a nostalgic longing himself with his beliefs that culture used to represent its historicity more successfully, and that an objective reality of discourse exists outside of the constructed representations of texts. So, Jameson's argument risks becoming both hypocritical, in terms of feelings towards instances of nostalgia, and ignorant, in terms of failing to accurately recognise the ways in which postmodern texts can deal with cultural history and the construction of narratives/referents. On this, Linda Hutcheon points out that postmodern film does deal with history but does "not deal with Marxist History" and features "little of the positive utopian notion of History and no unproblematic faith in the accessibility of the 'real referent' of historical discourse" (2002: 109), which puts one in mind of the approach to history

discussed and pursued by Amyl Nitrate in *Jubilee* (notable particularly in the scene at the gang's HQ, with its bricolage mise-en-scène, where Amyl delivers an alternative history lesson). In answer to Jameson's nostalgic-escapist critique, and in terms of an approach to history and past-ness, Hutcheon suggests that postmodern films demonstrate "that there is no directly and naturally accessible past 'real' for us today" and also that "we can only know – and construct – the past through its traces, its representations" meaning that such films always acknowledge "a contingent and inescapably intertextual history" (2002: 109).

Lastly on Jameson, before moving on to consider Hutcheon's rather more positive reading of the functions of postmodernism (a version closer to the stylistic ethos of the three core texts of this thesis), he did recognise the increased importance and textual involvement of intertextuality, noting that "our awareness of the pre-existence of other versions…is now a constitutive and essential part of the film's structure" (1999: 76). Insightfully, he continues by pointing out that "we are now…in 'intertextuality' as a deliberate, built-in feature of the aesthetic effect" (1999: 76), but fails to realise, as he is still mourning the perceived loss of historicity, that this aesthetic effect is a productive, multi-layered way in which history can be dealt with and the current experience represented. Variants of this aesthetic effect in the three thesis texts will be discussed via close textual analysis, including the use of pastiche (focussing on Richard Dyer's [2007] work) and bricolage in *Jubilee* and how these techniques are used to explore issues of heritage taken up almost a decade later by other British films; the method of

adaptation of the play (referring to Julie Sanders [2005] and Hutcheon [2006]), and the involvement of the camp modality (making particular use of Susan Sontag's essay on camp [1964, 2009]) within the masque, in *The Tempest*; and the uses of versions of the paintings in *Caravaggio*, and how this approach (with reference to the subject text relations and stabilising/destabilising strategies explored by Colin MacCabe in *Screen* [1974, 1976]) and the film cultural context of the text (Channel 4, British Film Year, heritage films), connects it to discussions regarding the nature and purpose of visual representations.

Linda Hutcheon (1989, 2002) offers a productive reading of postmodernism, concentrating in part on the politics involved in the use of parody, and how this marker of a postmodern approach to cultural representations interrogates ideas of the subject/self (an area where the camp sensibility also facilitates fruitful expression [see the discussion of Babuscio's work below]). In Hutcheon's interpretation, "Postmodernism works both to underline and undermine the notion of the coherent, self-sufficient subject as the source of meaning or action" (2002: 104). Works of postmodern parody, says Hutcheon, function in this way via a "double-voiced irony" which offers "subversion from within" (2002: 109) because such films simultaneously depict particular representations from a certain subjectivity whilst also commenting on, and destabilising, those very same representations (bringing the form close to operations of camp). Hutcheon uses two Woody Allen texts (released in the same period as the Jarman texts discussed here), *Zelig* (1983) and *The Purple Rose of Cairo* (1985), to illustrate

her notion regarding postmodern parody's simultaneous underlining and undermining of the coherent, meaning-making, subject.

Zelig, a quasi-documentary in which Allen plays an enigmatic chameleon-like character who becomes a celebrity in the 1920's, illustrates for Hutcheon the "self that changes constantly, that is unstable, decentred, and discontinuous" and so depicts "the formation of subjectivity" (2002: 105). Similar things are afoot in *Jubilee* where Jenny Runacre is first seen as Elizabeth I at Mortlake, then Bod, the ultra-violent member of the gang of punks led by Amyl Nitrate, and finally, as a bridge between the two final sequences of the film, Bod walks out of the frame at Borgia Ginz's estate, and onto the Dorset shore at Dancing Ledge, becoming Elizabeth I once again. *Caravaggio*'s frequent, playful, and complex, manoeuvres back and forth in time, where the painter is seen at various different stages in his life cycle (and portrayed by three different actors), also suggests similar things about subjectivity whilst foregrounding the act of construction via the instability of representation and narrative progression.

The Purple Rose of Cairo, in which a film character comes down from the screen to enter the 'real world' of a depression era waitress, is observed by Hutcheon, through its continuous use of "self-conscious irony", to exploit "the appeal of humanist-modernist wholeness" as it "questions the nature of the 'real' and its relation to the 'reel' through its parody and metacinematic play" (2002: 105). The celebration masque in *The Tempest* offers something similar, but this time it is

the spectator who is invited into the on-screen action when the spirit Ariel, looking directly into the camera, beckons the audience into the hall of the masque and reveals the camped-up Busby Berkeley style dance routine of the shipwrecked mariners. Expanding on the exploitation of 'humanist-modernist wholeness', Hutcheon suggests that in postmodern parodic films, this destabilisation is carried out "in the name of contesting the values and beliefs upon which that wholeness is constructed – with the emphasis on the act of construction – through representations" (2002: 105). Again this sort of operation is observable within Jarman texts, for example, with the way in which *The Tempest* and its masque is adapted and appropriated (to challenge or change perceived meanings or functions through stylistic application), and the usage and positioning of versions of Caravaggio's paintings in *Caravaggio* (for example, the camp interpretation of *Boy Bitten by Lizard* [see chapter 4 of thesis]).

To conclude on Hutcheon's conception of parody, before moving on to related observations of the camp aesthetic, she says that postmodern parody "evokes what reception theorists call the horizon of expectation of the spectator, a horizon formed by recognisable conventions of genre, style, or form of representation" (2002: 110). In the case of the core Jarman texts dealt with here, this could consist of things like the particular uses of heritage iconography and representations of the Elizabethan era (*Jubilee*); previous adaptations and versions of the Shakespeare play (*The Tempest*); and Caravaggio's original paintings, as well as previous painterly biographical films (*Caravaggio*).

Hutcheon then says that these horizons of expectation are "destabilized and dismantled step-by-step" (2002: 110), and one of the ways this challenging destabilisation can be achieved is through usages of the camp modality.

In an article originally included in Richard Dyer's *Gays and Film* (1977) to promote the BFI film season *Images of Homosexuality* at the NFT, Jack Babuscio articulated the four central features of camp. These features were deemed to be "irony, aestheticism, theatricality, and humour" (1999: 119), and Babuscio's articulation shares similarities with both Hutcheon's assessment of postmodern parody and the stylistic strategies of Jarman texts. Irony is identified by Babuscio as the "incongruous contrast…between an individual/thing and its context/association" (1999: 119) with humour "inherent in the formal properties of irony" and resulting from the identification of this incongruity (1999: 126). Some examples of irony and humour in the Jarman texts of this thesis would be Amyl's version of *Rule Britannia* in *Jubilee*; Jack Birkett's excessive performance as Caliban, and elements of the masque, in *The Tempest*; the female adult Pipo (Dawn Archibald) posing as the male boy of *Profane Love*, the comedic performance of Robbie Coltrane as Scipione Borghese, and the various anachronisms, in *Caravaggio*.

Babuscio suggests that camp embodies aestheticism in "three interrelated ways: as a view of art; as a view of life; and as a practical tendency in things or persons" (1999: 120), adding that "camp emphasises style as a means of self-

projection" and "a conveyor of meaning" (1999: 122). Importantly, he then links this advocacy of style to "performance rather than existence" (1999: 122). So, applications of style are utilised in the camp modality to foreground the act of construction, which then challenges and subverts representation, much like Hutcheon's postmodern parody, and the examples taken from Jarman texts cited above, and explored in the following chapters of the thesis. Similarly, Dyer observed that camp can be a useful weapon against the mystique of representation by "playing up the artifice" (2002: 52). Babuscio's enunciation of the theatricality of camp recalls Hutcheon's (previously discussed) observations regarding the constantly changing self that contests wholeness, visible within postmodern parody. Babuscio notes that camp theatricality "implies that roles [cultural, historical, and sexual representations]…are superficial – a matter of style" and that "life itself is role and theatre, appearance and impersonation" (1999: 123). The latter statement serves as a rebuttal to Jameson's advocacy of the real referents of objective reality and the lack of historicity in postmodernism (recall Jameson 1999: 76-77), and thus illustrating that usages of the camp modality can effectively tackle past-ness, heritage, and the contemporary experience.

Before returning from this conceptual discussion to a micro-analysis of the stylistics of several Jarman pop promos (in order to provide an example of the methodology used throughout the thesis) it is important to note that for the purposes of this thesis I consider camp primarily in terms of it being an

observable multi-faceted aesthetic approach utilised in filmic texts rather than an identity marker for a sector of society. I am not wishing to remove the 'gay sensibility' (Babuscio 1999) and homosexuality of camp as the queer identity certainly birthed the articulation and continues to be the main producer and interpreter of camp. As Moe Meyer puts it, "there are not different kinds of camp. There is one. And it is queer" (2002: 5) with Meyer previously positioning the queer label as referring to "gay and lesbian" in "a subtle, ongoing, and not yet stabilized renomination" (2002: 1). However, I am placing specific identity and sexual politics outside of the remit of this thesis as this would necessarily involve a discussion of Derek Jarman's biography, which has been conducted thoroughly and numerously over the years, and would distract from the central focus of this thesis, the texts themselves. This is why I have chosen to utilise Sontag's problematic *Notes on "Camp"* (1964) during my analysis of *The Tempest*, precisely because, as Meyer critically observes, Sontag detached "the signifying codes from the queer signified" (2002: 5). I am considering filmic stylistics rather than personal identity politics, and Sontag's enunciation of the camp aesthetic allows me to do this (see chapter 3).

Throughout the project the topics of cultural identity, heritage, history and art, and interrogations of these, will be tracked with relevant theoretical and contextual detail being brought in where it has been deemed, via research and analysis, to have a tangible effect on the film. For example; the heritage film cycle, the use and function of pastiche, methods of adaptation, the role and

impact of organisations such as Channel 4 and the BFI, and the cultural

purposes of events like British Film Year. The project will allow the film texts to

'speak' for themselves rather than using them to bolster a theory or slotting

them into a biographical account of a life. This has been done a number of times

before and does not stimulate or add fresh insight to the field with much of this

type of work seemingly being based on assumption. For example, it is widely

known that Jarman was a homosexual man who trained as a painter, but does

this necessitate that he went on to create a string of gay-themed, painterly films?

This may in fact be true in part, but it is not a viable or effective basis for

analysis, it is merely an assumption that could be suggested by anyone with a

basic grasp of Jarman's biography. This project aims to look at particular

Jarman films in a new analytical and theoretical light, offering a methodology

centred on sustained and consistent textual investigation, wishing to develop

ignored or under-explored facets of Jarman's cinema.

The field of literature on Jarman has been shown to divide up into several

groupings – there were those who discussed his films as part of an avant-

garde/art cinema; studies that emphasised and analysed the role of sex,

sexuality, and identity politics; writers who concentrated on the influence of the

director's life and personality, considering Jarman a particular kind of auteur;

and finally, certain scholars connected Jarman's work to facets of cultural

heritage such as Romanticism and works of the Renaissance. What can be

gleaned from this assessment of the field is that writers in Jarman studies either

wish to classify his films into a particular type or style (e.g. part of the avant-garde, or continuing traits of English Romanticism), or they decide to analyse his filmic texts through the prism of his biography and personality. As noted above, both of these methods of assessment were highlighted by the BFI Jarman season in 2014, proving that the season merely served to reiterate the tropes, and thus the problems and limitations, of critical studies on Jarman's films.

Having discussed the approach of the BFI to Jarman's films, and then assessed the types of previous interventions made in the field of Jarman studies, further shortcomings present themselves, not just in terms of methodology but also in terms of the breadth of texts surveyed by scholars during textual analysis. A considerable area of Jarman's filmic practice presented itself as strangely disregarded, discredited or ignored, offering more evidence of the limitations of previous studies. This critically quiet section of Jarman's filmic oeuvre were the promotion videos and concert films which Jarman made between 1979 and 1993, and it is to an analysis of a selection of these short works that this chapter now turns. By doing this, and locating it after an assessment of the framing of Jarman in the field but before the chapter length analyses which make up the body of the thesis, it can be shown in micro how this project aims to develop fresh perspectives on Jarman's films. This will be achieved using an approach which centres on textual investigation with the addition of textually proven theoretical and contextual discussions.

Style and uses of the past in Jarman's short pop films

The purpose of this section of the chapter is to assess a number of the shorter film works created by Jarman and typically ignored by commentators in the field, with a concentration on their style, the manner in which they can be seen to deliver interrogations of the relations of art and commodification, and the purpose of such works within British film culture. Jarman's varied shorter projects include Super 8mm short films (for example *Studio Bankside* [1971]), bigger budgeted pop music promotional videos (for example *The Queen is Dead* [The Smiths: 1986] or *It's a Sin* [Pet Shop Boys: 1987]), and visual media back projections for a pop music concerts (such as *Paninaro* for Pet Shop Boys [1989] or *The Next Life* for Suede [1993]. Interestingly, while various critical commentators on Jarman such as Julian Stringer (article in *Millennium Film Journal* 1993-94), Tony Peake (1999) and Rowland Wymer (2005) have acknowledged the existence of the pop film work, no in-depth analysis of it has ever been undertaken[25], with the promo work frequently dismissed as 'commercial' (or, carried out in order to "pay the bills" [Ellis: 2009: 89]), judged as "merely serviceable" (Peake 1999: 312), or ignored all together.

With that said, the opinion of the majority of the literature that did comment on Jarman's pop promo work is that it consists entirely of throwaway product

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[25] Stringer's work 'Serendipity into Style: The Queen is Dead' for the *Millennium Film Journal* does offer a degree of close analysis on Jarman's Smiths film but the tone of the piece is rather informal and it reads like a piece of fandom as opposed to an academic piece of filmic analysis.

created primarily out of a financial motive for Jarman, and for a primarily financial outcome for the groups and their record labels. Therefore, Jarman's pop works have always been side-lined within the canon, or completely excluded, so as not to distract focus away from feature-film work positioned as more legitimate for appreciation and study. Such views are problematic for a number of reasons. Firstly this approach to Jarman's oeuvre is snobbish and hierarchical, privileging his feature-length work over shorter films and pop videos, causing a narrowing of focus and analysis that often leads to yet another confirmation of Jarman's 'avant-garde' and 'art-house' credentials. Secondly, in failing to look carefully and critically at these cultural texts, previous commentators on Jarman have failed to accurately assess Jarman's oeuvre. Taking a wider view, it is interesting to note that there is a distinct lack of academic consideration of pop promotional films of the 1980s from a Film Studies perspective[26], suggesting that a general filmic hierarchy and analysis bias is present within the discipline and field of literature. Therefore, exclusion of specific types of film-making within contextual and cultural pieces of work is commonplace. Examples of style and artistic technique that are important for an assessment of Jarman's filmic approach, as well as for an authoritative and inclusive analysis of British film during the 1980s, have been ignored. This assessment of the scholarship, appreciation and analysis of Jarman's oeuvre is as true now, for example with the methodology of the BFI's 2014 *Queer Pagan Punk* film season, as it was when Jarman was alive, when commentators struggled to include or

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[26] E. Ann Kaplan's *Rocking Around the Clock* (1990) analyses a number of music videos with a concentration on MTV's effect on consumer culture from a postmodern perspective. Kaplan's book is now outdated in its approach and selection of material. Steven Reiss and Neil Feineman look into the art of the music video in *Thirty Frames Per Second* (2000) but this coffee-table publication does not offer in-depth textual analysis or approach the material from a Film Studies point of view.

acknowledge all facets of Jarman's film work, and often filled in the gaps with assumptive, evaluative or overly conclusive biographical details. Looking into what these films can convey as filmic texts, and the way in which they can be interpreted to explore tensions and relations between several key concerns within culture (between art and commodification, style and materialism) facilitates a fresh perspective and area of analysis previously overlooked by the majority of commentators and associated literature.

Key cultural issues surrounding the tensions between notions of art and the process of commodification can be investigated and explored through analysis of Jarman's pop videos, and such a methodology of assessment also connects this previously side-lined work to a number of central aspects within his feature-length work: for example, the way in which magnate Borgia Ginz uses punk music and operates his empire in *Jubilee* ("as long as the music is loud enough we won't hear the world falling apart"; selling music to distract and control the population), or the evocation of the painter, his paintings and his patronage in *Caravaggio*. In the latter Jarman purposefully situates the artist within a materialist milieu and not disinterestedly set adrift from commodification in an isolated and 'pure' creative environment: Jarman depicts Del Monte (Michel Gough), Caravaggio's (Nigel Terry) patron from the establishment, closely observing his work in the studio; Caravaggio is shown inserting money into Ranuccio's (Sean Bean) mouth during a pose for a painting; Del Monte discusses new taxes and the Papal budget for Caravaggio's artwork with Giustiniani (Nigel

Davenport) who works it out on a pocket calculator. Art and commodification are not positioned as binary opposites in Jarman's film work, but are shown to be closely linked and reliant bedfellows. The pop promos of the 1980s were in a particularly incisive contextual position (with the influence of the economic policies of the decade seemingly reducing all manner of artistic work to a monetary value) to highlight such discussions and the lack of critical attention given to them is something which this chapter seeks to rectify. Firstly, their form needs to be clarified and understood.

As well as the brevity of these short works most of the films that fall into this 'short' category are also silent[27] having music added to them after they have been shot and edited together[28], meaning that their visual style can dominate allowing the viewer, if so inclined, to obtain pleasure from the gratification of strikingly stylish imagery. The dominance of style within Jarman's short film projects can be said to derive from a number of factors: they are not necessarily restricted by the need for some form of coherent narrative (although interpretative relationships are formed during viewing when making loose linkages between the visuals and the accompanying sound); they do not contain characters that possess a back story and deliver dialogue; and they do not have scenes, rather,

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[27] All of Jarman's 8mm short films of the 1970's are silent and would have been set to various pieces of music at private screenings, or have more recently been given a soundtrack by related music artists such as Coil (*A Journey to Avebury*), Throbbing Gristle (*In the Shadow of the Sun*) and PTV (*Pirate Tape*).

[28] The film sequences shot for Marianne Faithfull's *Broken English* (1979) tripartite pop promo, the video footage shot and edited for The Smiths tripartite pop promo *The Queen is Dead* (1986), and the concert projections shot for the Pet Shop Boys 1989 tour were all silent in their original form. It is interesting to watch all of them with the soundtrack muted, in order to allow the visuals to be absorbed without the potential distraction and leading nature of the accompanying song lyrics.

their trajectory or progression is more akin to montage or collage where the combination and variation of imagery is of crucial importance. These motifs were also present in many of the short films Jarman made in the 1970's, as well as the more abstract feature-length projects he made in the 1980's such as *The Angelic Conversation* (1985) or *The Last of England* (1987), both of which contained no character dialogue (voiceover narration is used) or linear plot-driven story. In discussions regarding *The Last of England*, a feature film heavily influenced by techniques Jarman had developed particularly through pop promo work such as *The Queen is Dead*, the director noted how the film "tells its story quite happily in silent images" (Jarman 1996: 187). Whilst noting that much promo work can be "showy and shallow" (1996: 12), Jarman suggests the possibility that the techniques and methodologies of pop promo work could offer a vital new cinematic language that reintroduces "the silent image, with an emphasis on style" (1996: 185). This is true to an extent because certain pop promos can arguably be seen as descendants of short films from the silent era in the way in which the visuals themselves were without audible spoken dialogue but music was played over them to add coherence, drama or impact to the actions on screen.

Aside from the form and style of the pop promos, they connect to subtexts and issues within Jarman's feature-film oeuvre through the utilisation and exploration of the past and its role in contemporary culture. There are several methods by which an engagement with the past and heritage can be seen to be

explored within Jarman's films – namely through the approaches of camp, pastiche, adaptation and nostalgia. These methods activate and investigate multiple tensions, ambivalences and anxieties within art and culture, and represent ways of dealing with elements from the past in a contemporary context. A feeling of nostalgia is evoked consistently during the majority of Jarman's oeuvre with many films offering a visualisation harking back to a past time, cultural moment or heritage memory. Images and artefacts from history, and the visualisation of different temporal zones, are common motifs located in works such as *Jubilee*, *The Queen is Dead* and *The Last of England*, but always with the added anxiety of loss (the 'ending' of a particular era is implied in the latter two titles mentioned above, whilst *Jubilee* comments on bygone elements of history and heritage) and the complexity of an understanding of the cultural functions of nostalgia in the postmodern world. Svetlana Boym (2001; 2007) has offered a thorough investigation of nostalgia as a typology, looking at its evolution, approaches and functions. Usefully, she breaks the concept down into two different appearances, namely restorative (with a stress on tradition and the protection of absolute truths) and reflective nostalgias, and it is the latter that finds expression in Jarman's film work in a number of intriguing and insightful ways.

Boym defines reflective nostalgia as something which dwells on the "ambivalences of human longing", embraces the "contradictions of modernity" and calls absolute truth "into doubt" (2007: 13). Through the use of

methodologies of approach such as camp-ness, pastiche and types of adaptation, Jarman's films often play up and highlight the tensions and anxieties within culture and identity. The process and impact of the passage of time is reflected on throughout Jarman's film work, with the films often utilising and interrogating vehicles of culture (film itself, music, literature, painting) in order to explore the power of context and the function of history: for example, the pastiche of heritage imagery and merging of historical periods in *Jubilee*; the interrogation of the changing functions of image in *Caravaggio,* the playful re-situation of elements of the play in *The Tempest*; or the evocation of a disjointed and confused national identity in *Queen is Dead* (Boym notes the "inconclusive and fragmentary" qualities of reflective nostalgia, qualities shared by Jarman's *Queen*). Reflective nostalgia has a liberated and active way of utilising time, being capable of "inhabiting many places at once and imagining different time zones" (2007: 13), shown in Jarman's work by his visualisations of temporal duality and the overlapping/merging of historical epochs or cultural eras (for example, the two Elizabethan periods depicted in *Jubilee*, or the anachronisms and painterly pastiches of *Caravaggio*). The past can no longer be simply recalled, like the invocation of the *Blighty* song at the beginning of *The Queen is Dead* initially appears to be (to be discussed more later in the chapter), it must also be exposed, explored and exploited for the contemporary time and the medium of expression it is being used for. The past consistently exists in the present through cultural memory and the presence and influence of cultural artefacts, and thus is permanently open to being re-imagined and re-positioned. This characteristic of the past and use of reflective nostalgia can be found in

Jarman's pop film work (past-ness used within a vital new area of film-making) allowing its largely ignored contents to expand upon, and be explicitly linked to, his more widely received feature-length work. As well as this, the close relationship of a Jarman pop promo with notions surrounding commodification and consumerism, whilst previously preventing the text from being accepted into a critical framework or closely analysed, actually positions such texts in a particularly powerful cultural location from which to interrogate the snobberies and refutations of art, heritage and identity.

Paninaro – projections of art, style and culture

The celebration of style and aesthetics in Jarman's pop promo[29] work allows the medium to highlight a culturally critical paradox that is inherent to it as a piece of work; namely, that an unequivocal central component of the work is commercially-minded and driven (to promote a music single or album; to sell records; to make money for the record label, music artist and music video director), whilst the imagery and lyrics can often be ambivalent, or sometimes outwardly critical, of such motives[30]. This duality serves to highlight the tensions

[29] 'Pop promo' is used here to mean the pop videos of band's made to aid the promotion of their music, and, in the case of the concert back projections, visual media that augmented a live show and was subsequently used as promotional material. In this light *Paninaro* became a pop promo after being a projection.

[30] It should be noted that Jarman did direct a number of pop videos – such as work for Lords of the New Church, Carmel and Wang Chung in 1983; Billy Hyena and Marc Almond in 1984; Bryan Ferry in 1985; Easterhouse and *Ask* for The Smiths in 1986; and The Mighty Lemon Drops and two promos for Bob Geldof in 1987. See Peake (1999) for the most thorough Jarman filmography available.

and anxieties between notions of art, the nature of commodification and the pleasurable gratification of consumption (of style, of aesthetics, of Jarman's imagery). In this context, the viewer is positioned as a consumer, who absorbs and enjoys the style, aesthetics, and excesses of the product, and may or may not observe and entertain the (supposed) critical subtext of the work. The subtext of art and consumer product, and the tensions between these notions, as well as investigations into such cultural representations had previously been explored by Jarman through the vehicle of punk music in *Jubilee* from 1978, a film that is explored in more detail later in the thesis. Similar topics such as state of the nation anxieties, critiques of society and satires about the process of consumerism abound in the lyrical content of some of the artists Jarman worked with, such as The Smiths (with *Queen* and *Panic*) and Pet Shop Boys (with *It's a Sin*, *Rent*, *Opportunities* and *Paninaro*).

Looking specifically at the work Jarman undertook for the Pet Shop Boys and The Smiths, it will be argued that in these cases the films explore, to an extent, the tensions and anxieties inherent in projects that appear to embody an explicitly consumerist attitude (their purpose as promotional tools; their seeming concentration on superficial elements of fashion, appearance and image) with a degree of stylish directorial approach, therefore making the relations of art and commodification a central tenet explored in such films. Once again, style is a crucial factor here as its canny utilisation can successfully compliment and develop the band's image and identity, and affect the impact/longevity of the

song. In this light the pop promo work can be viewed and interpreted as a specific, targeted, kind of cultural reflection. There is also a central facet of these videos which is noticeable in some of Jarman's feature films; namely, an inquiry into, and investigation of, the ambivalence between their pleasurable and luxurious images (depicting excessive style and gratifying aesthetics), and the supposed critique of them (via analytical methodologies such as the activation of camp, or the investigation of pastiche)[31]. This mixture of the imagistic pleasures of the superficial with a distanced and critical cultural reflection invites further analysis.

The duality allows content to be appreciated differently depending on individual approach and interpretation. The pop promo work, and indeed much of Jarman's feature-length pieces, contain a superficial aspect due to a concern for appearance and the impact of the image – there is an appreciation of objects, people and places on a visual level (the props used in *Queen is Dead*; the dressed up characters performing in front of projections of heritage Italy in *Paninaro*) evoking the pleasures of materialism, with the camera (and viewer) positioned as consumer. But on the other hand, this very concern for appearance and image has a particular purpose and function within culture, and can be interrogated and explored via reflections on the method and style of its construction. This analysis then allows for a specific reflection on the role of style within culture and how this connects to representation and identity.

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[31] This is particularly true of *Caravaggio* (1986), a film made during a period when Jarman was frequently shooting pop promos, which is explored and analysed later in the thesis.

Indeed, the influence of materialism (in terms of the visualisation of the possession of desirable materials) in Jarman's filmic style (like the inclusion of fashions, costumes and assorted props) often runs alongside a depth of cultural observation or critique (for example, the activation of a critical camp-ness through particular sections of Jarman's version of the masque in *The Tempest*[32], or the positioning of icons of heritage in *Queen is Dead*). With this in mind it is perhaps tempting or intriguing to consider artistic expression as akin to formations of style (which includes a close focus on the quality of materials), and thus style as a central component of materialism (where commodities have primacy), therefore situating art and commodification as intrinsically linked and culturally inseparable, rejecting any preconceived paradoxes as hierarchical, outdated and irrelevant. Similar can be said of Jarman's pop work for the Pet Shop Boys and The Smiths; there is a level of engagement between the images and the music whilst the interaction is also infused with critique, doubt and ambivalence. As a starting point for considering some of Jarman's pop film work it is interesting to turn to the *Paninaro* back projection produced for the Pet Shop Boys 1989 tour, about which a degree of background context is required.

The Paninari were an early 1980's Milanese youth subculture or style tribe whose areas of dominance consisted of locations such as newly opened burger restaurants (*panino* means sandwich in Italian, and fast-food supposedly symbolised the 'new' within a traditionally slow-food culture) and the expensive designer clothes stores of the Piazza San Babila (see Figure 8.1 in John Potvin

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[32] The masque of Jarman's *Tempest* will be analysed and discussed in detail later on in this thesis (Chapter 3).

[2009: 140]). With subcultural identifiers such as a love of fast-food, American branded clothes and British pop music, their outlook and cultural position could be said to be consumerist and driven by the aesthetics of fashion and appearance, clearly locating the Paninaro as a cultural group who embraced commodification. As Francesca Muscau[33] observed, "everything about the *paninari* typified the self-conscious display of new money which the 1980s brought to Italy, and which manifested itself in careful, neurotic attention to appearance" (2009: 140). From their cultural identifiers and Muscau's observations, analysing the Paninaro through their influence on art with the Pet Shop Boys song and the Jarman back projection film opens up fresh avenues of discussion surrounding the relations of commodification to art and vice versa.

Their aesthetic attitude consisted of ensuring their outward appearance was the height of contemporary urban glamour (in the context of that time and place), and that only persons who adhered to this code of aesthetic conduct were allowed to be seen in the areas where they gathered. As can be gathered from this outlook, as a style tribe with a fresh but heavily materialist attitude towards expression, hierarchy and snobbery were inherent from the beginning, again making a further connection to the echelons within notions of art. This attitude crossed over from social life to lifestyle, making the Paninaro indicative of the self-centred, instant gratification culture burgeoning in the 1980s. The Pet Shop

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[33] There are very few academic sources which discuss the Paninaro. Muscau's chapter in John Potvin's edited collection offers the most detailed analysis of their lifestyle, and Arturo Tosi mentions their influence on language, particularly slang, in Italy (2000: 192). Fashion magazines (GQ 2011) and culture websites (Sabotage Times 2014) offer retrospective homages [see bibliography for full reference details].

Boys song of 1986 mentions food, cars, travel, designer labels and a refrain made up of "girls, boys, art, pleasure", offering a précis of the Paninaro lifestyle. Within that refrain is perhaps the crux of the issue when considering the Paninaro. What is suggested here is that there is no distinction between socialising ('girls, boys'), enjoyment of art ('art' – whatever form that may take), and the gratifications of a highly materialist lifestyle ('pleasure'). Developing this notion, it is interesting to consider the Paninaro as artists whose individual stylistic expression is based purely on their own outward appearance; this would also explain the socio-cultural hierarchy surrounding them exemplified by their exclusion of those who do not dress in a paninari style. Therefore, as observed earlier, art and materialism (and hence commodification) are shown to be closely linked due to a core concern for the expression of individual style.

Jarman's projection of 1989[34] delivers an aesthetic display in keeping with the attitude and approach of the Paninaro whilst also featuring familiar Jarman motifs such as a layering and mixing of time periods, references to artistic and cultural heritage, and the inclusion of androgynous figures. Moreover, the film adds a degree of fictional subtext to the Paninaro story by using images of combat and fighting to possibly suggest that rivalry and casual violence could occur as a result of their (potentially self-centred) lifestyle. This addition

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[34] Jarman created 8 projections for the Pet Shop Boys tour of 1989, for the following songs: *Opportunities*, *Heart*, *Paninaro*, *It's a Sin*, *Domino Dancing*, *King's Cross*, *Always on My Mind* and *Nothing has been Proved* (all bar the last track were included on a VHS entitled *Projections* [1993]). The VHS also collected the 2 later films made by Jarman for a PSB concert at The Hacienda in 1992 – *Violence* (a version of *Garden of Luxor*) and *Being Boring* (a version of *Studio Bankside*).

represents an ambivalent aspect of the film, hinting that such luxurious lifestyles can be vacuous and ultimately dangerous.

The film begins slowly and calmly with around two minutes of shimmering water over which various coloured filters have been applied to give the scenes an abstract feel. As the song develops and builds these scenes are replaced by a background consisting of a large artwork covered by mist, with an androgynous figure (in this case, a female dressed in a masculine manner) in the foreground. The artwork, referencing a previous time period with its renaissance stylistics, sticks out as anachronistic amidst the effects of the new video technology and perhaps symbolises something which Boym refers to as the "shattered fragments of memory" (2007: 15) as it is obscured by the contemporary figures. Jarman is arguably creating a culture space here where signs and referents from cultural heritage are playfully inserted and utilised. Boym has noted that a memory of 'cultural signs', whilst allowing for the expression of varying narratives, also "offers a zone of stability and normativity in the current of change that characterises modern life" (2001: 53). Such examples can help "mediate between the past and the present" (2001: 53), and it is to this end that Jarman includes art heritage within the *Paninaro* diegesis – style expresses identity and a degree of cultural stability here (both in terms of aesthetics of the past and of the present) as the areas of conjoined time are positioned in order to dialogue with one another. The past and the present are not pitched against each other but are situated side by to facilitate cultural investigate and exploration.

Next in the film, the matador figure pulls out a knife and threatens the camera with stabbing motions and the bearing of ostentatious gold teeth. A second figure then enters the foreground, also androgynous in a similar way as the first person with the addition of a matador's red rag which she waves to antagonise the knife wielding figure. The two people then circle each other brandishing their respective objects and mimicking the actions of a bullfight, in keeping with their attire. Interestingly, Jarman was able to combine the two separate images (the background artwork and the foreground fighting figures) by way of the video matte effects available to him when using digital video technologies. The video matte process enables two or more images shot at different times to be composed into a single image, like the one described above. Rowland Wymer (2005: 31) noted that, akin to how the imagery and editing techniques utilised in *The Queen is Dead* went on to influence the construction of *The Last of England*, so too did the Pet Shop Boys projection work (specifically the use of matte imaging) impact upon the use of video effects for *The Garden* (1990)[35]. Through the combination of temporality and spatiality Jarman is able to allow the subsequent interplay of imagery to suggest and highlight issues relevant to the text and subtexts. This methodology had been seen previously, albeit in a different formulation, with depictions of the two Elizabethan eras in *Jubilee*.

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[35] Jarman's work for the Pet Shop Boys also financed *The Garden* (Wymer 2005: 31).

In the next scene of the projection a male Paninaro figure is depicted in the foreground, wearing a stylish suit, sunglasses and smoking a cigar. The film cuts back to the two fighting figures but now the background in this video matte effect has changed to a mixture of historical courtyards and piazzas, offering a further example of 'culture signs' that connect the Paninaro to early evocations of style, allowing for a mediation "between the past and present" (Boym 2001: 53). The footage which makes up the background of this scene captures some of the buildings, statues and artworks of Siena in Tuscany. When watching the montage film *Glitterbug* (1994)[36], edited together by Andy Crabb with recommendations and assistance from Jarman, there is a section dating from 1985 where Jarman films Tilda Swinton and Spencer Leigh walking around parts of Siena. Jarman also allows his camera to wander and it captures a sense of the heritage and beauty of the architecture in this area of Tuscany. The merging of the two scenes in this sequence of the *Paninaro* back projection is accomplished via a layering of images with the paninari and their contemporary fashions to the fore, and the background landscape scene featuring Jarman's roaming camera capturing views of historical Italian buildings, courtyards, piazzas, statues and artwork.

What this combination suggests is highly relevant for the debate surrounding the relations of art and commodification, linking the Paninaro to an Italian style heritage, and Jarman's pop film work to significant debates within his feature-

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[36] *Glitterbug* consists of an hour of (mostly) chronological clips from various examples of Jarman's short films as well as other miscellaneous footage shot by him.

length oeuvre (the function of style and imagery) and British cinema culture (relating to the position of art and the role of commerce). The sequence illustrates that art is commodified through a cultural process which breaks its function down into fragments of useable style, which could be almost anything in the context of the new work (for example here, Italian renaissance paintings or Tuscan courtyard statues; or the music of the Pet Shop Boys, and the clothing of the Paninaro). Examples of style (from heritage or the contemporary, or often a combination of the two) are then chosen and sampled by new works, leading to the establishment of a fresh commentary on the role of art within cultural life. This materialist use of art via the process of commodification (a core element within the methodology of a pop promo) gives primacy to the role and effect of style and, in line with the context and concerns of the period, can allow related anxieties and ambivalences to be highlighted or explored surrounding the purpose of such works. Referencing and positioning such things together (past and present, art and commerce, style and materialism), as Jarman does in *Paninaro* and across his oeuvre, facilitates the emergence of cultural nuances and mutual influences, rather than reducing the majority of interactions to reductive value judgements (for example, dividing cultural texts and signs into high/low/pop, separating cultural taste into that of good or bad, or stating that previous eras were more interesting or successful than the present day). Jarman also merges elements from the past and present in *Queen is Dead* through uses of style and very specific aspects of nostalgia.

The lost of England: Nostalgia in *Queen is Dead*

It is particularly interesting to assess the first 6 minutes of the 13 minute film, which consists of the video Jarman constructed for The Smiths song *The Queen is Dead*. From the opening extreme long shot of the Albert Memorial to the closing extreme long shot of Buckingham Palace as seen from across the lake in St James Park, symbols and places evocative of a particular strand of national heritage and identity are displayed in order to interact with the androgynous protagonist seen walking through the urban wasteland (much like how the heritage locations and first Elizabethan era sit side by side with figures walking through the apocalyptic near [or no] future London of the second Elizabethan era in *Jubilee*). Referring to Boym once again, it is perhaps useful in this context (and for an understanding of the function of nostalgia here) to consider images of Buckingham Palace and the Albert Memorial as typically inhabiting a 'collective memory' from which "shared social frameworks of individual recollections" can be gleaned (2001: 53). The differences of context and experience of these collective memories leads to the creation of "multiple narratives" (2001: 53), highlighted through the visual fragmentation of *Queen*, allowing for an insight into the creation of identities rather than the confirmation function of a 'national memory' that crafts "a single teleological plot out of our shared recollections" (2001: 53).

As the distanced and sped up footage of the Albert Memorial[37] appears so too does the audio sample from the Bryan Forbes film *The L-Shaped Room* (1962), with Cicely Courtneidge singing *Take Me Back To Dear Old Blighty*. It is this sample that begins The Smiths song and Jarman utilises it here as the first example of an interrogation of ambivalent feelings towards national identity, which, in this case, is wrapped up with specific type of nostalgia (discussed below). The impact and evocation of the *Blighty* song is undercut by the interruption of loud propulsive drumming on the soundtrack and footage of a group of children, one of which holds a toy pistol that fires at the camera and unfurls a sign that reads bang! The positioning of these two pieces of footage combined with the disruption on the soundtrack suggests that what follows will explore feelings of nostalgia, and related conceptions of memory and identity, through the interaction of facets of the past and the contemporary.

Jarman probes and interrogates these subtexts and concerns through the use of an androgynous figure (who is latterly revealed as female, but who begins the film dressed in boys clothes with a very short haircut) that can be described as the film's central character and main protagonist (the film returns to focus on her time and time again). Firstly, the camera trails behind her as she wanders through a barbed wire and rubble-strewn wasteland, reminiscent of the second Elizabethan era in *Jubilee*. Indeed, *Queen* connects with *Jubilee* on several levels, particularly through the similar aesthetics of environment, and by the

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[37] The Albert Memorial, aside from being a heritage symbol of the monarchy of the past, may well have been utilised here as a sharply ironic reference to the notions of the song title – the memorial was commissioned by Queen Victoria in memory of Prince Albert who had died of Typhoid 11 years earlier ('the King is dead').

purposeful and probing positioning of heritage locations and contemporary urban

wastelands. Journeying through this wasteland, the figure reaches a decrepit

wall where she spray paints the treasonous graffiti[38] 'The Queen is Dead'

seemingly offering a defiant riposte to the nostalgic notions of dear old 'blighty'

heard in the sample at the beginning of the film.

In between the scenes of the androgynous figure Jarman weaves numerous

disparate images that flash past in a matter of seconds – for example; musical

instruments, tower blocks, flowers and falling petals, a masked man stalking

around an innocent girl in a white dress, and a man holding a foetus in a jar. The

meaning and function of these images within this text is purposefully abstract

and diffuse, however they could reflect the role of 'multiple narratives'[39]

mentioned above. These diverse, seemingly unrelated, imagistic samples help to

visualise the spectrum of memories found within nostalgia, and therefore,

notions of identity. Boym talks of a 'reflective nostalgia' which "does not follow a

single plot but explores ways of inhabiting many places at once and imagining

different time zones" (2007: 13). This multiplicity refuses to "rebuild the mythical

place called home" and instead creates a narrative that is "ironic, inconclusive

and fragmentary" (2007: 13). *Queen* positions heritage imagery and icons (Union

Flag and Crown Jewels), alongside an androgynous figure walking across a

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[38] Graffiti had previously been utilised by Jarman in short film *Sloane Square: A Room of One's Own* (1975-76: Jarman and Guy Ford) with slogans like 'owning to interest tomorrow has not been cancelled' and 'welcome to the requiem'; and multiple times in *Jubilee,* for example the word 'postmodern' appear scrawled above a group of street corner punks. Clearly Jarman uses graffiti for its immediate visual impact, aesthetic directness and its evocation of ideas.

[39] Boym also mentions the "multiple planes of consciousness" (2007: 16) that make up cultural reflections on the past.

wasteland, and collages of disparate visual samples and video effects in order to establish a defamiliarization of heritage and national identity. The reflective nostalgia embodied by *Queen* establishes a realistic and well-rounded contemporary view of the nation; as Boym says, such nostalgia is fully aware that "the home is in ruins or, on the contrary, has just been renovated or gentrified beyond recognition" (2007: 16) and it this awareness that facilitates a narrative of multiplicities.

On returning to the central figure this multiplicity is further revealed because she is now wearing a white wedding dress, which contrasts with her previous incarnation (boys t-shirt, shorts and braces), and also contrasts with her very short, military buzz cut hair style (that matched her previous costume). Icons of heritage, such as the Union Flag and the Crown Jewels, rapidly pass though the foreground of the frame whilst images of urban degeneration continue in the background, again creating a defamiliarization effect. This rapid visual montage of particular props of the past and specific landscapes of the present illustrates the time-sensitive nature of representation, and suggests that Jarman is attempting to interrogate the impact of the passage of time on cultural objects and locations. The sequence (and film in general) is too diffuse to enable the establishment of explicit meanings[40] but time, its passing, and the cultural repercussions of this (like nostalgia or heritage), are subtexts investigated by aspects of style in the work. A degree of ambivalence is purposefully activated by

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[40] Recall that Boym referred to examples of reflective nostalgia as being necessarily "inconclusive and fragmentary" (2007: 15).

the disparate imagery in the film (specifically the combination of images during the montage sequences), and this allows elements of nostalgia and identity to be reflected and explored, and their resultant effects on the function of culture considered. Boym importantly highlights that, when utilised through reflective nostalgia, "culture has the potential of becoming a space for individual play and creativity and not merely an oppressive homogenizing force[41]; far from limiting individual play, it guarantees space" (2001: 53). Throughout Jarman's feature film work there are examples of stylish reflection on elements from the past and how culture utilises or defines them depending on context. This is also true of examples of his maligned pop promo work, where he utilised a 'space for individual play and creativity' (facilitated by the short brief of the pop video) in order to carry out further visual investigations into the function and purpose of art within culture.

This opening chapter of the thesis has explored and assessed the critical framing of Jarman's films which has been found to typically depend on an orthodoxy of opinion centred on the application of biographical details, and the related dominant presence of Derek Jarman (the person) as the manifest author/auteur, endowing the texts with meanings explained by his life and personality. It was demonstrated that the BFI Jarman film season of 2014 represented a rather conventional presentation of the associated filmic texts which served to reiterate the critical judgements of prior Jarman scholars. As a corollary to this the BFI

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[41] Boym's notion of an "oppressive homogenizing force" could feasibly be applied to facets of the BFI, and areas of critical study on Jarman's films, as discussed previously in the chapter.

itself was investigated in terms of its role/s within, and promotion of, British film culture. It was discovered that the institution, having undergone periods of crisis and eras when it had operated in both a conservative and progressive manner, tended to offer services of instruction in film appreciation combined with a subjective agenda that aimed to propagate a particular type of film culture. The notion/s of a British film culture, and the bodies (for example, BFI, Channel 4 or BBC) which contribute to this, will continue to be an important subtext throughout this thesis.

Following on from this was an assessment of the discursive divisions and methodologies of approach found in Jarman studies, which I organised into four distinct groupings with degrees of overlap. In summary, critical studies tended to prioritise and over-emphasis the textual influence of Derek Jarman's biography which in turn constructed leading and reductive textual analysis, or meant that the specificities of individual texts were ignored or their importance greatly minimised. As such, it was pointed out that this thesis would be using the term Jarman to signify a categorising process, and a structure or function within the selected filmic texts, rather than as a dominant analytical tool or unifying force that serves to neutralise all applicable textual and theoretical contradictions. Based on personal research preferences and the shortcomings of previous Jarman studies, the methodology of the thesis will be that of chapters centred on close textual analysis, with theoretical and contextual discussions surrounding, and being stimulated by, the filmic texts.

As a short example of the approach to continue throughout the thesis, and to highlight the limitations of previous studies, the opening chapter concluded with some textually analytical work which focused on filmic texts either drastically under-explored or completely ignored by the field. The purpose of this was to illustrate in micro how the thesis goes on to develop and present fresh perspectives on filmic texts (separate from the previous dominance of the biographical frame and the related implications of the power of the auteur) leading to a contextual reframing of these films. *Paninaro* and *Queen* were both shown to demonstrate a filmic style that consisted of a merging and layering of temporalities in relation to subtexts such as art, culture, history and heritage. *Paninaro* provided examples of uses of style and juxtapositions of time period, to suggest interesting ideas about the function and position of art and commerce within culture, and the visual collage style of *Queen* was shown to employ a specific type, and function, of nostalgia that sought to convey the multiplicity of cultural identities.

In Chapter Two I explore *Jubilee* (1978) in terms of its temporal layering, the ways in which its filmic style functions, and how constituent elements such as these enable the film to address the complex and changing issue of cultural identity. I interrogate the film's supposed 'punk' content looking into the aesthetics of the film, and considering the playful notion of pastiche (as extrapolated by Dyer [2006]) which I argue can be seen in facets of the filmic style. Pastiche is also considered in relation to *Jubilee*'s innovative dual time

period framing and how the films appropriation of costume (with reference to the works of Street [2001] and Cook [1996] on the function of film costumes) enables it to portray such a thing successfully. The film's uses of style and its consistent temporal layering are also shown to allow the film to engage with discussions surrounding cultural identity. Heritage artefacts and iconography are distinctly framed in *Jubilee*, and this enables it to connect with the influential but problematic Film Studies debate, which begun a decade later, surrounding a so-called 'heritage-film cycle' (for this part of the chapter I reference and interrogate Higson's work [2006], using it as an example of an analysis of the purposes of filmic style). Centring on the textual analysis of the opening and closing scenes of the film, Chapter Two interrogates *Jubilee*'s merging and layering of temporalities, and demonstrates how, with highlighted uses of filmic style and playful pastiche, the film can be seen to address cultural identity in the context of the latter third of the twentieth century by offering appropriated representations of the past alongside the contemporary.

In Chapter Three I address *The Tempest* (1979), with particular focus and analysis of the masque sequence which concludes the film. I argue that, with *The Tempest*, Jarman can be seen to be utilising Shakespeare and the early-modern masque form as stylistic devices (similar to the manner in which elements of the punk movement were utilised in *Jubilee*) with which to investigate the heritage of cultural representations. Firstly, I contextualise the discussion via a textual and critical look into the Shakespeare play and the early-modern masque form.

The adaptation history of the play is considered in relation to previous screen addresses of Shakespeare's work by BBC/Time Life (specifically those produced by Cedric Messina), and here the notion of fidelity to the original source text is debated, and ideological appropriation discussed. Key theories of adaptation are brought in to dialogue around this point with reference to work by McFarlane (1996), Stam (2005), Sanders (2005) and Hutcheon (2012). Emerging from this, it is clear that the methods of approach to the source material are important, but so too is the film's specific ideology, and the next section of the chapter explores this via an examination of the film's particular use of style (colours, costumes, lighting, movement) centring on a close analysis of the alternative, appropriated masque sequence (works cited here include Galt on colour [2011] and Sontag on camp [2009]). With Jarman's *Tempest* the world of the film is fractured (through temporal and spatial disjuncture exemplified by the film's use of colours, lighting and other aesthetics of mise-en-scène) mirroring the way in which the play itself had been appropriated via the application of the cut-up technique to the organisation of the text. The chapter will demonstrate that the subversive, playful and questioning methodological qualities applied to the adaptation and appropriations of the play are also the central tenets of the ideology and delivery of the filmic text. Once again, uses of filmic style will be shown to be crucial to a textual investigation into cultural heritage and representation.

With Chapter Four I continue to address the ways in which Jarman's films explore cultural representations (as *Jubilee* does through uses of the punk

modality, and the depiction of two temporally separate time periods; and as *The Tempest* does through appropriations of Shakespeare and the early-modern masque form), this time focusing on the depictions of paintings in *Caravaggio* (1986). The functions and purposes of artistic representation and particular methods of adaptation (in this case, purposefully positioned pastiche reproductions of Caravaggio originals, or references to the latter) will be discussed through my own textual analysis (with reference to Bersani and Dutoit [1999] and Tweedie [2003]), related theoretical debate (for example, Hoesterey [2001] and Dyer [2006] on pastiche), and the context of British cinema and the surrounding British film culture of the period (which will include reference to works by Petrie [1992], Higson [1996], Street [1997], Hill [1999] and Wickham & Mettler [2005]).

The investigation into the cultural and industrial contexts of British cinema in the 1980's will involve critical reflection on the role of Channel 4 (who began in 1982) and the BFI, the national cinematic industry celebration of British Film Year (1985), and the role of other British films from the era (including a further consideration of the heritage film, previously explored in Chapter Two), in order to assess *Caravaggio*'s position within the film culture of the 1980s. The financing of *Caravaggio* (and the industry influence of Channel 4, and the BFI), it's positioning in the industry, and the ways in which it can be seen to interact with relevant British filmic texts of the time, are crucial factors in understanding the operations of the film. These discussions will allow me to

demonstrate an argument regarding what the film is doing and saying as a British film text of the 1980s. Notions of cinema in terms of culture, identity and audience will be brought in here (including engagement with works from commentators such as MacCabe [1974; 1976; 1992], MacKay [1992], Hill [1992], O' Pray [1996], Hall [2005] and Higson [2006]) as this will provide a well-rounded and critical picture of the filmic/cultural environment in which *Caravaggio* was created and released. My filmic analysis, contextual discussions and theoretical debates will combine to clearly demonstrate how the film's approach to history and representation can be seen to offer a marked difference to the position and approach of other British filmic texts.

The film's focus on an Italian painter from the 17th century may not at first seem to have much direct relevance to British culture or debates of national cinema but the film's industrial origins and context combined with its stylistic approach to historical depictions mean that *Caravaggio* can arguably be interpreted as a crucial counterpoint filmic text to much of British cinema and film culture of the time. I argue that these factors make *Caravaggio* an important filmic text when considering British cinema of the 1980s, and one that has not received the level of critical and analytical focus it deserves. Therefore, Chapter Four seeks to readdress the balance somewhat, in order to reframe and reposition *Caravaggio* within key filmic debates and British film culture. But first, I turn to the cultural representations of *Jubilee*.

Chapter Two:

'Let's do the time warp': *Jubilee*, a refashioning of temporal heritage and cultural identity

Jubilee (1978) was Derek Jarman's second feature film and was filmed in 1977, the year of Queen Elizabeth II's Silver Jubilee[42] and the release of the controversial single *God Save The Queen* by The Sex Pistols, which reached number two in the charts during that Jubilee summer. *Jubilee* is often described as a 'punk film' or connected to the 'punk movement' in some way, (see Savage [2005], Sladen and Yedgar [2007], Jeffries [2007] and Monk [2008]). This immediately throws up a number of related questions when considering *Jubilee* as a punk film, such as: what is punk in this context? What are the films punk aesthetics, if any? How are they deployed throughout the film, and to what effect? It is relevant to this analysis that these topics should be addressed first as the concept of punk will be shown to be a crucial facet of *Jubilee*'s construction, delivery and content.

Firstly it is important to note that English punk is a broad category encompassing a multitude of related applications such as creative endeavours (music, fashion, graphics, art works, films), personal developments (such as

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[42] Interestingly, the setting of London during the Silver Jubilee was utilised by Isaac Julien, a filmmaker influenced by Jarman (and who went on to direct the documentary *Derek* [2008]), in *Young Soul Rebels* (1991).

transgressions of appearance and dress) and polemics. Offering a contrast with other cultural explosions of punk, Stephen Colegrave and Chris Sullivan suggest that punk in America was predominantly about music whereas "in Britain the focus was broader, with people attempting to push out the boundaries of fashion, graphics and design, and to create a politics of subversion" (2001: 13). Jon Savage attempts to define punk's DNA as "youth disaffection, rebellion, [and] sheer trouble" with an attendant motto declaring that "if nothing gets challenged, nothing gets changed" (2005: xvii). The notion of challenging and changing things can also be gathered from Legs McNeil and Gillian McCain's oral history of punk which quotes Malcolm McLaren: "To me, the establishment's notion of bad needed to be redefined. And the notion of good meant to me things that I felt absolutely need to be destroyed" (2002: 302). Likewise, Colegrave and Sullivan identify punk's key theme as one where "everyone should question authority and do it for themselves" (2001: 13).

Initially the punk ethos appeared to offer rebellion and a challenge to societal authority, via its abrasive, polemic, direct and simple guitar music (in sharp contrast to other musical styles of the decade such as progressive rock or disco), and its attendant subversive stylistics and iconography (such as the use of cut-up clothes, slogan t-shirts, bondage gear, safety pins, Nazi insignia, and appropriated heritage symbols of Britain, for example, the Union Jack and

images of the Queen's head[43]). However, as the movement continued it was found to be increasingly popular and thus attractive to mainstream concerns, leading to it being co-opted by major record labels, high street fashions, television, and the tabloid press. As such, factions of the movement became more moderate in their outlook or were shown to be fundamentally hypocritical. This inconsistency is seen in *Jubilee*'s narrative, where Amyl Nitrate's (Jordan)[44] gang is gradually co-opted by media magnate Borgia Ginz (Orlando). Savage talks of how punk had a "simultaneous fascination with, and condemnation of the media", and that "at its heart was a furious disgust with consumption, and the place of pop culture and Punk itself within it" (2005: xvi). How to bring about change whilst operating from within was a contradiction over which punk stumbled and it threw up a major problem applicable to other kinds of rebellions from the norm and authority: "for those who want to question the basis of society, how do you avoid becoming part of what you're protesting against?" (Savage 2005: xvi). For example, much punk music had an anti-consumerist (and socially critical) bent but The Sex Pistols and The Clash signed to major record labels, became brand identities and generated a lot of capital or 'filthy lucre'[45]. It should be pointed out that Anarcho-punk band Crass were wise to this trend within punk music and wrote a song entitled *Punk is Dead* (1978) with lyrics like "punk is dead, it's just another cheap product for the consumer's head" and "CBS promote the Clash, but it ain't for revolution, it's just for cash". Similarly, Amyl Nitrate and her

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[43] For Example, see Colegrave & Sullivan for descriptions and multiple pictures of punk style and imagery (2001: throughout); and Jamie Reid's artwork for The Sex Pistols singles *Anarchy In The UK* and *God Save The Queen*.

[44] See Appendix for cast and crew list, outline of story and description of characters.

[45] This was the name of the 1996 tour, and subsequent live album, of the reformed Sex Pistols clearly showing a self-reflexive irony or perhaps just honesty.

gang initially operate on the fringes of society but are gradually seduced by Ginz (Amyl goes to Buckingham Palace, now a recording studio, to make a record) until, by the film's conclusion, Amyl and two of her number have taken residence with him in his opulent country pile (a scene that is part of the second sequence I analyse later on in the chapter).

Another way to analyse punk, and likewise *Jubilee*, is via the notion of how they can be seen to capture a particular spirit or mood at a particular time. Colegrave and Sullivan define punk in terms of "spirit and attitude" and are careful to suggest that it was not a movement but "only ever a collective of individual free spirits" harbouring "intense personal creativity" (2001: 12). Jarman utilised his creativity to make *Jubilee* a 'punk film' and it can be defined as such in three differing ways. Firstly, *Jubilee*'s surface is punk. It contains punk musicians as actors, the frequent use of punk music and punk aesthetics in much of the mise-en-scène. Alongside this are timely locations (mainly the depictions of the London landscape in 1977[46]) that were crucial for establishing a degree of punk authenticity. It is relevant to note here that Jarman's connection to the punk scene began in 1976 when his studio, Butler's Wharf, attracted visitors from the punk contingent[47] including crucially, a key 'face' of the scene, Jordan[48] (Pamela Rooke), who inspired Jarman to make the film (see Jarman 1984: 168, Savage

[46] Savage: "with its persistent air of disillusionment and warning, *Jubilee* captured the mood of Punk England better than anyone could have predicted, not least in the locations. It remains one of the few places where you can see the 1977 London landscape" (2005: 377).

[47] The Sex Pistols played there in February 1976 (Sladen and Yedgar 2007: 16). Jarman filmed some of their performance on Super 8, and this footage ended up being used in Julien Temple's 1980 film *The Great Rock 'n' Roll Swindle* (Peake 1999: 242-243).

[48] Jordan appeared in a short Super-8 film shot by Jarman entitled *Jordan's Dance* (1977), parts of which were then incorporated into *Jubilee*.

2005: 376, Jeffries 2007). All these factors mean that, superficially, *Jubilee* looks and sounds like a visual example of 'punk'. Secondly, as highlighted by Sladen and Yedgar (2007: 9), the use and exploration of resources can also be punk by virtue of things being appropriated in new, transgressive or confrontational ways. As such, punk fanzines such as Mark Perry's *SNIFFin Glue* influenced the collage-like script and art direction of *Jubilee* (Jarman 1984: 168 and Monk 2008: 88-89), and Jarman's home movie approach and use of Super-8 can be seen as examples of the 'do-it-yourself' techniques favoured by punk practitioners. Thirdly, and on a thematic level, *Jubilee* is a punk film in ethos and arguably exhibits a number of punk's tenets, such as: a general questioning of society, a subversion of expectations and accepted narratives, a discourse on consumerism and commodification, and the suggested redefinition of concepts (such as history, identity and heritage) by traversing societal and historical boundaries (to be explored further below). To effectively understand how *Jubilee* is 'punk' and thus how it can be seen to deal with the above it is important to define and describe its form.

The film is set in two time periods, the first and second Elizabethan eras, and it flits between the two periods until members of the former era are transported into the latter era. Elizabeth I (Jenny Runacre), John Dee (Richard O' Brien) and Ariel (David Haughton) are the focus of the first time period. Elizabeth I requires an audience with angels and so Dee summons up Ariel who then provides the Queen with a vision of the future,

to which they are then transported. In the second Elizabethan era the film follows the activities of a gang of female punk revolutionaries that includes the film's central character Amyl Nitrate and Mad (Toyah Willcox), Bod (also played by Runacre) and Crabs (Little Nell). The gang also contains incestuous brothers Angel (Ian Charleson) and Sphinx (Karl Johnson) and anarchic artist Viv (Linda Spurrier).

Close to the beginning of the film Elizabeth I, accompanied by Dee and her lady in waiting, stumble through the wastelands of this future England and much of the film's interest and meaning lies in this juxtaposition of times and spaces. Amyl's punk revolutionaries mix with the music business and the media, all of which is controlled by Borgia Ginz and by the end of the film members of the gang are residing with him in his gated country estate in Dorset, which is now the only 'safe' county left. The film's final scenes feature a meditative Elizabeth I and Dee strolling along the Dorset coast at Dancing Ledge, thinking about and considering what they have seen, as they walk out of the frame and into an uncertain future.

In this chapter I will mainly be investigating the interactions between the two time periods[49], and the utilisation of punk aesthetics, in order to attempt to highlight what exactly *Jubilee* suggests of culture and identity in

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[49] This is the reason I have chosen to analyse the initial scenes of *Jubilee* as it is here that the two time periods are first shown and then interact. Likewise, the final sequence of the film has been selected because it foregrounds the notion of 'dual time' and the continual interaction between, and relationship of, the present to the past (and visa-versa).

the England of the late 1970s. This will lead me to look into societal and cultural essentialism (relying upon intrinsic validity – such as heritage or consumerism) and the opposite of this, open constructs (like works of pastiche or aspects of postmodern discourses), which self-consciously acknowledge their fabricated existence. I will explore the latter mode of operating through *Jubilee* to see if it allows things to be challenged and questioned, and if it addresses contradictions such as the ones surrounding societal critiques and rebellion referred to earlier. These facets, for example, can be evidenced in punk, as described above. Also, as part of this discussion, I will argue that Jubilee can be seen as a work of pastiche and that Jarman is a pasticher. Works of pastiche reference previous work and use self-conscious techniques to signal that they are doing this (as investigated by Dyer [2007]), aspects that are also shared by punk and, as I will argue, *Jubilee*. Some of these techniques in film terms include an appropriation of costume, where the function of the garment or make-up can be seen to exceed the demands of plot or verisimilitude (explored later via Street [2001] and Cook [1996]), and the way the film's settings are transcended via the dual time device evidenced by the interactions between the two Elizabethan eras.

In summary, it is via a consideration of punk spirit, aesthetics and pastiche that the opening scenes of Jarman's *Jubilee* can be effectively analysed. Punk challenges and questions societal order and makes use of self-conscious and

appropriated techniques to do so. Pastiche, as noted by Richard Dyer (2007) is an entirely self-conscious and openly referential mode of operating, and one employed by punk, and as will be argued, *Jubilee*. The analysis will now explore how the aspects and aesthetics of punk, and the modality of pastiche are utilised in the opening sequence of *Jubilee*.

Analysing the opening sequence – 'Time after time'

As the credit sequence for the film begins, bird song and what sounds like waves lapping the shore and wind rustling through trees are heard. This immediately creates a disjuncture (continued throughout the film when the narrative flits between green spaces and the concrete confines of the city) for those expecting a punk film (and to those who had viewed the theatrical trailer) because of the typical connection of punk with the urban environment, and the travails of city life. As the opening credits end the film begins in the garden of Mortlake (revealing that the sound was rusting trees) with the Lady in Waiting walking through the shadowy twilight. The role of Lady in Waiting is played by Helen Wellington-Lloyd, a dwarf, who, akin to Jordan (who takes the lead role of Amyl Nitrate seen later in the film) was a 'face' of the Punk movement, being a friend of The Sex Pistols and Malcolm McClaren. Due to her stature, the Lady is literally dwarfed by her surroundings of trees and densely packed hedgerows, and the dogs who

accompany her are as tall as her. The casting of Wellington-Lloyd, and the deliberate choice to show her as the first figure in the filmic space, is an embodiment of the value of including alternative and unexpected subjectivities within a discourse. Within the mise-en-scène of the gardens of Mortlake she encapsulates the visual style described by Sue Harper and Justin Smith where elements of the mise-en-scène "carry a burden of meaning beyond their narrative function" (2012: 229).

Andrew Higson's work on the 'heritage cycle[50]' (2006), which typically included films such as *Chariots of Fire* (1981), *Another Country* (1984), *A Room with a View* (1985) and *Maurice* (1987) dialogues interestingly with *Jubilee* here as Higson's textual grouping, and Jarman's film, both explore representations of the past and issues of heritage and identity. It should be stated here that Higson's argument is of crucial importance to this chapter for the ways in which he demonstrates the functions/purposes of facets of filmic style (the use of places, spaces and costumes for example) in relation to issues of cultural identity and heritage, rather than for his problematic and flawed grouping of multiple films under a monolithic banner. This chapter will allude to the problematic nature of Higson's totalising argument but it is not the central purpose of this chapter to offer a critical indictment of heritage film theory or to draw up a list of included and excluded films – as this is beyond the remit of the thesis, and has been

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[50] Note that throughout this chapter the term 'heritage cycle' or 'heritage film' is directly connected to Higson's work and the related discussions, rather than as an a priori acceptance of the term as noun describing a film genre.

debate elsewhere, for example in Claire Monk and Amy Sargeant's edited

collection (2002). Indeed, Monk considers that "heritage-film

criticism…needs to be understood as a historically specific discourse, rooted

in and responsive to particular cultural conditions and events" (2002: 178),

and importantly lacking in "rigorous theoretical definition" (2002: 183)[51]. It

should also be noted that this chapter does not consider the label 'heritage

film' to constitute a recognised or unproblematic film genre, due to the

disparity and variety of potentially suitable films, and the way in which the

original grouping was empirically "defined by those who define themselves

by their distance from consumption or production of the films" (Monk 2002:

183). Therefore, there are a number of notable issues with Higson's

argument, but his focus on the functioning of filmic style in relation to

contextual cultural identity is important when considering *Jubilee*.

Higson's heritage argument is relevant because he discusses how certain

films deal with the past, with history and with identity via a significant

filmic style, which is a strategy that I employ in analysing *Jubilee*. However

the emphasis and function of his heritage cycle of films is divergent to that

contained within *Jubilee*. The emphasis (film content and form focused on

the upper class, country houses, the countryside) and function (the

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[51] Monk highlighted three methodological problems with the 'heritage film idea', namely: the "monolithic nature of the critique and its tendency to trample over significant differences between films at the textual level" [reminding one of the general shortcomings of Jarman textual study]; "a top down reading perspective…[that] addressed a reader presumed to be already in agreement with it"; and a dependence on "unspoken and unsubstantiated conjecture regarding the political-cultural orientation of the films' audiences and their reception of the films" (2002: 183).

construction of an image of England to market worldwide) of Higson's

heritage films are tightly linked and revolve around the desire to depict a

mono-cultural English identity that would be successful at the international

box office. *Jubilee* has a very different emphasis and function, and was also

created in a disparate industrial context. Higson connects the heritage film

to the heritage industry, a thing which "transform(s) the past into a series

of commodities[52] for the leisure and entertainment market" (2006: 95). He

then finds that this industrial context impacts on the content of the films

produced because "the past is reproduced as flat, depthless pastiche" by an

"effortlessly reproducible and attractively consumable, connotative style"

(2006: 95). As such, the emphasis within the films (stability) and the

function of such films (creation of a particular national heritage and

identity) must be correspondingly one dimensional and backed up by an

applicable shooting style that displays it all clearly and without

ambivalence. As such, the heritage culture displayed by the films "appears",

according to Higson, "petrified [and] frozen in moments that virtually fall

out of the narrative" (2006: 99). It is in these ways (emphasis, function,

style) that the heritage film cycle, although seemingly exploring similar

issues (the past, history, identity), actually contrasts greatly with *Jubilee*.

In his work Higson argues that heritage films offer "settled and visually

splendid manifestations of an essentially pastoral national identity and

authentic culture: 'Englishness' as an ancient and national inheritance,

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[52] Commodification is also a key theme of *Jubilee*.

Great Britain, the *United* Kingdom" (2006: 93). This essentialism is not found in *Jubilee* and, as will be explored below, the notion of such things is interrogated through the film. Higson also observes that heritage films "are fascinated by the private property, the culture and values of a particular class" and so they "transform the heritage of the upper classes into the national heritage" (2006: 96). The films achieve this through a 'pictorialist' camera style that creates "heritage space rather than narrative space" (2006: 99). 'Heritage space' therefore offers a clear counterpoint to the space/s depicted in *Jubilee* because heritage spaces are only for the *display* of things connoting a heritage, and so an interrogation or exploration of these things is not pursued there. We can gaze upon the 'heritage' "artistry, their landscapes, their properties, their actors and their performance qualities, their clothes and their often archaic dialogue" (2006: 99) but we are not offered anything more. In this way the heritage film fabricates an ossified, inflexible history and identity for the country and its inhabitants. Typically Higson is referring to films such as: *A Room with a View* with its country estates, repressed emotions (the character Cecil Vyse played by Daniel Day Lewis), and oppressive interiors (Lucy Honeychurch's [Helena Bonham Carter] diminished stature when framed within Vyse's house); *Maurice*, featuring Clive Durham's (Hugh Grant) country estate and the repression of homosexual longing between trans-class friends Durham and Maurice (James Wilby); and tropes such as the pastoral depiction of the

village cricket match[53] with its flannelled fops framed against an idyllic

background (shown, for example, in *Another Country* [1984] and *Maurice*).

Higson argues therefore, that the heritage film can be seen to operate as a

one dimensional albeit "visually spectacular pastiche" (2006: 91) because it

is openly referential in a very narrow way. The films in his grouping simply

'display' heritage traits and tendencies, cherry picked from the source

novels, of a particular sector of English[54] society and present the past in a

stable and predetermined fashion. These imaginings of England

conclusively and reductively render "history as a spectacle, as separate from

the viewer in the present, as something over and done with, complete, [and]

archived" (2006: 96). Again, the issues of history and identity are calmly

concluded and defined in Higson's analysis of heritage films due to a visual

distillation of social and national stability. This distillation of a 'closed'

history benefits the heritage film's verisimilitude and the "visual splendour"

(2006: 95) on display "lends the representation of the past a certain cultural

validity and respectability" according to Higson (2006: 96). What is clear

from this discussion is that Higson locates specific uses and applications of

filmic style at the heart of successful representations of cultural identities,

and it this facet of his analysis that is of most important when considering

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[53] It should be noted that the village cricket match was utilised to different effect in a British film from the same era. Director Horace Ové's *Playing Away* (1987) uses a cricket match between a village team (set in the fictitious Sneddington – offering a parodic visualisation of village life, and an explicit reference to the period films mentioned above) and an inner-city West Indian team to explore issues and tensions surrounding heritage and identity in post-imperial Britain.

[54] More often than not it is a distinctly English heritage displayed in these films as opposed to something that could be defined as British.

how *Jubilee* operates. *Jubilee* uses filmic style and aesthetic manipulations to critique heritage and heritage culture (prior to the popular filmic discussions noted above), and exploring *Jubilee* through the prism of the later heritage film discussions facilitates an intriguing debate surrounding film style and cultural representation. Higson's bold and strident analysis, however problematical and subjective, can be seen as a testament to potentially persuasive power of film style.

Jubilee contrasts with a number of the facets which Higson identifies within the heritage film cycle even in its first few scenes and, as will be explored and demonstrated further later, *Jubilee* can be seen to operate as a multi-layered, multi-referential pastiche which utilises techniques of bricolage to reject essentialism, 'purity' (see Cook 1996 below) and the heritage films fabricated visions of stability. Crucial here is the way in which *Jubilee* deals with time by moving forwards and backwards in time, and then positing characters from one time zone within that of another. This 'dual time' mode of operating allows the past and the present to interact and dialogue with one another and can be utilised to interrogate and explore the changing nature of history and identity. As such, the past (or a past) is not simply passively displayed and nor is history a thing of the past. *Jubilee*'s rejection of verisimilitude also highlights that it is active rather than invisible or passive in its depictions of the 'past'. This notion of

constructed, active history depicted in films has been noted by Amy

Sargeant who suggests that:

> If we regard history as the narration of the past…then films…should
>
> be considered as media which produce history rather than
>
> just…represent it, and which deploy their various means to particular
>
> purposes. Thus, history is not something absolutely contained in the
>
> past, entire unto itself, but is made, tested and remade in the present
>
> (2002: 200).

As the Lady walks through the garden she is accompanied by a distant sound of

storms which may be read as pathetic fallacy hinting at the tumultuous events to

come. But, of more interest is the way she is framed and viewed in the gardens.

She is seen in long shot and at times the greenery fills the screen obscuring the

camera's view and at 0:01:35 she is shot from between two trees with herself and

the dogs in the centre of the frame. This shot places a dual emphasis on the

surrounding gardens and, because she is centre frame, the alternative

subjectivity of the Lady in Waiting. The shot conveys a dual emphasis because

neither the surroundings nor the character are privileged in the frame. This is in

contrast with shots and framing in films of the 'heritage cycle' (discussed by

Higson [2006]) where the 'quality' décor of interiors or the beauty of exteriors

takes precedence over the character who is usually in a small corner of the frame

or insignificant in comparison to the rest of the mise-en-scène. Higson describes

how, in heritage cinema, the "camera movement is dictated less by a desire to follow the movement of the characters than by a desire to offer the spectator a more aesthetic angle on the period setting and the objects that fill it" (2006: 99).

This contrast continues in the *Jubilee* scene when the large black entrance door to Mortlake House can just be seen in extreme long shot but is not the focus of the camera eye. The framing of this scene offers a further disjuncture with the 'heritage cycle' and what has become an expected element of the genre iconography of such films containing country houses. In these films, largely from the 1980s, the focus is on material items and tangible heritage. As Higson observes, for these films "the commodity on offer is an image, a spectacle, something to be gazed at" (2006: 95) and this gaze usually falls on a "recurrent image of an imposing country house seen in extreme long shot" (2006: 97), for example Clive Durham's vast estate in *Maurice* (1987). The country house being a crucial part of the genre iconography of the heritage film along with "the costumes, furnishings, objects d' art, and aristocratic character types that traditionally fill those properties" (Higson 2006: 97). *Jubilee* in contrast barely shows Mortlake House suggesting a vast difference in the conception and appreciation of heritage between *Jubilee* and films like *Maurice* from the 'heritage cycle'. Jarman himself touched upon country houses and their filmic popularity calling this version of heritage "a dream England of the past: the England of stately homes, which are the indispensable prop for the English way of life" whilst shrewdly observing that "they're big at the box office" (1984: 173).

What needs to be noted and considered here is that Higson was writing in the early 1990s about a grouping of films that were released throughout the 1980s often with the box office in mind, and which were often compared or contrasted to the aims and manifestos of the political regime of the time. Also, the 'heritage cycle' films were often adaptations from writers such as E. M. Forster and again Higson's analyses centred around comparing and contrasting the uncontroversial and visually pleasing style of the filmic rendering, lacking "any critical historical perspective" according to Higson (2006: 96), to that of the more rebellious and contentious tone of the source novels. *Jubilee* is clearly very different being made independently in 1977 (thus within a disparate industrial context to that of the typical heritage film) from Jarman's own screenplay giving more freedom in terms of content, form and what could be explored. This allows Jarman to suggest the possibility of an alternative heritage in *Jubilee* where the emphasis is placed on people (the Lady in Waiting for example), places (the urban landscape) and things (such as punk) previously ignored or marginalised in films that deal with history or heritage. Visually in *Jubilee*, the interaction of the individual within the landscape, and how Jarman frames and captures this, suggests interesting things about the heritage and identity of a nation. As well as the Lady in Waiting example it is also seen at the end of the film when Elizabeth I and John Dee are strolling atop Dancing Ledge (part of the Jurassic Coast in Dorset) with the countryside to the left of the frame and the sea to the right, again emphasising the figures within the landscape and the relationship that takes place within such a space. In the context of other films of the era with a similar outlook (although quite different in form – it is their evocative qualities

that are relevant here) Harper and Smith give an interpretation of what is being

represented and suggested here, and they also suggest that the depictions are

distinctly English :

> Films such as *Akenfield*[55], *Requiem for a Village*[56] and the historical
>
> elements in *Jubilee* presented an elegiac celebration of a vanished
>
> culture. Such films commemorated, in a nostalgic manner, an organic
>
> relationship between the individual and the natural environment[57] –
>
> an English *Heimat*[58] (2012: 232).

Although I agree that the relationship between the figure and the landscape

in these films is interesting and worth highlighting and investigating I

disagree with the idea that it references something 'organic' and intrinsic.

In this respect (the presence of essentialism) there is a similarity here

between the heritage cycle of films and Harper and Smith's argument about

otherwise marginal films. What is suggested here is that there is something

innate and naturally occurring within a landscape, country or nation, and

hence culturally and socially within these spaces. On the other hand,

Jubilee's form and aesthetics resist this essentialism and instead highlight

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[55] *Akenfield* was made in 1974 by Peter Hall, loosely adapted from Ronald Blythe's novel, and depicts life in an English village played by actual villagers.

[56] *Requiem for a Village* was made in 1975 by David Gladwell and depicts the generational traditions and changes that have occurred in an area that was once completely rural but is now partially suburban.

[57] Recall the "pastoral national identity and authentic culture" (Higson 2006: 93) depicted in the heritage film.

[58] A German term, Heimat means the relationship between a human and a spatial and social unit. It relates closely to a person's identity and involves factors such as tradition, community, and from whom they are descendent. The word can be connected to terms like home and homeland. These ideas are seen to provide a subtext to some of the scene analysis later in the chapter.

the constructed and contrived nature of such reductive concepts. Harper and Smith expand further upon the relationship of individual and landscape by relating elements of nostalgia and myth to a national identity or 'Heimat'. Harper and Smith say that this kind of heritage "was presented as a lost idyll" by *Akenfield*, *Requiem* and *Jubilee* and also that "the idea of national 'wholeness' was central" to it "but that [in these films] it was predicated upon a conception of Albion – a mythic history of English (rather than British) unity" (2012: 232).

Firstly, it is insightful of Harper and Smith to differentiate between depictions of English and British identity. *Jubilee*, although not essentialist, does deal with English rather than British identity in that it is clearly set in England and references English culture, heritage and history (which is also a central facet of the majority of the heritage cycle). Scotland, Wales and Ireland are not dealt with in this way by *Jubilee*. Secondly, this quotation makes clear Harper and Smith's opinion that films such as *Jubilee* depict, or reference, the loss of something that was intrinsic to a space (in this case, a nation). However, I do not find this type of essentialism displayed in *Jubilee*; on the contrary, it makes use of challenging and subversive punk aesthetics (costumes, mise-en-scène, bricolage) and the pastiche modality (in its depiction of two different time periods each with their own identifiable tone – 'period' and 'punk') to show how the film is a self-conscious construct that is openly referential and thus

anti-essentialist. Being constructed in such a way allows the film to resist any claims of essentialism or value judgement that could be attached to the film as a cultural text. Also, Harper and Smith's use of the term 'unity' is not helpful here because of the political baggage that comes with it, and because it suggests a coming together of peoples who are intrinsically linked to a specific place. Once again this concept has essentialism at its core (much like conceptions of the heritage film), an essentialism that *Jubilee* does not depict or even hint at, as can be observed in the next scene via techniques of pastiche and use of costume.

Following on from the opening scenes mentioned earlier, the lady in waiting has now strolled through the gardens and she enters the interior of Mortlake. The lighting of the interior is very low with the only illumination provided by candles which scatter a multitude of shadows across the scene. There is a skull on the mantelpiece, mysterious writings on the wall and a large, heavily bound book on the table suggesting that the room is being used for the purposes of magic. John Dee is seated slumped at his desk next to the book and the Queen is standing, bathed in white light and much less shadow than the rest of the scene signifying purity. Initially it appears that all three characters are dressed in 'period' costumes that are appropriate to the genre iconography of an Elizabethan film and that provide the scene with a level of verisimilitude not unlike similar detail in films of the 'heritage cycle'. However, something else is going on here that surpasses the verisimilitude or iconographic function of the costumes as will be

explained below. Elizabeth I is wearing a modest gown for a queen (perhaps to suit the low key surroundings[59]) although it is accompanied by the appropriate neck ruff and jewellery. John Dee is dressed in functional, plain, rough-hewn garments with a heavy gown and a head covering and the Lady in Waiting wears an appropriate serving gown for her stature also with ruff and jewellery perhaps to signify that she is part of the Queen's retinue.

Taken at first glance the costuming of this scene appears to be authentic and it does, initially at least, have the invisible quality of genre verisimilitude. However the costuming carries out another function which I will explore by way of the work of Sarah Street (2001) and Pam Cook (1996). Street (2001) views film costumes as 'intertexts' meaning that they are not self-contained and need to be understood with reference to other texts, which could involve elements included consciously by the director or inferred in the minds of the audience. Therefore, the role of costuming in film is a complex one. As Street explains; "Film costuming frequently operates as a 'system' governed by complex influences that relate to notions of realism, performance, gender, status and power" (2001: 2). The related topics of verisimilitude and time period are also addressed via film fashion because, as Street suggests, costuming can also "exceed the demands of plot or historical accuracy" (2001: 6) to provide an 'alternative discourse' and "extend a film's sense of time" (2001: 12).

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[59] This comment is indicative of what Street (2001) defines as a facet of character verisimilitude. This is where the 'suspended disbelief' of the viewer leads to an "imagined embodiment" that entails the viewer imagining "that the character has exercised a degree of individual agency when deciding what to wear" (108).

The notion of verisimilitude and time-frames is also addressed by Cook (1996) who talks specifically of film fashion as synonymous with symbolism, change and instability. In her interrogation of the historical film, often considered to possess a certain verisimilitude, Cook observes that "the symbolic carriers of period detail – costume, hair, décor – are notoriously slippery and anachronistic" (1996: 67). These carriers of period detail are "intertextual sign systems with their own logic which constantly threatens to disrupt the concerns of narrative and dialogue" (1996: 67) and are dubbed the "agents of duplicity" (1996: 69) by Cook. This multiplicity suggests that depictions of time periods are not just that but are also active in the present, which is a factor that contributes to the changeable, flexible English identity suggested in *Jubilee*. Costumes for Cook are vehicles with which the film can traverse boundaries between different time periods and locations (1996: 45) making them a central part of the construction of a changeable, flexible identity. Crucially, Cook sees film costumes as lacking an essential identity because as she puts it:

> They pillage the past and other national styles in a constant activity of bricolage [defined by Street as "eclectic borrowings and conscious use of quotations" (2001: 105)], emptying period and place of their original meanings and recombining them into new, vulgarised configurations (1996: 45).

Cook could just as well be discussing punk here because the lack of an essential identity relates directly to punk and the punk aesthetic, which can also be described as bricolage. This act of pillaging across time and space represents for Cook a "resistance to purity" and illustrates the "self as a hybrid amalgam of others" (1996: 45), an idea that also has direct relevance to an understanding of the pastiche modality (understood as consisting of self-conscious and liberal borrowings from previously existent sources). Both of these concepts are valuable when applied to *Jubilee* as there is no consistent and clear representation of a definite English cultural identity within it. Likewise, the 'resistance' and 'hybridity' Cook finds within film costume can also be related to punk with its tenets of rebellion against the establishment and resistance to the mainstream, it's multi-referential aesthetic (a hybrid of many other styles) and it's questioning of 'truths' as part of a politics of subversion.

Jarman subverts and appropriates film costuming to "extend a film's sense of time" (Street 2001: 12) and to traverse boundaries between time periods and locations (Cook 1996: 45). This is seen explicitly later on in the film when Elizabeth I, Dee and the Lady have been transported to the vision of the future. They are seen picking their way through the wastelands of London still dressed in their Elizabethan clothing creating an instant visual contrast and comparison with the style of the contemporary figures in the landscape. The related motifs of transformation and the traversing of time are also present here and represented

by the clothes of both the Elizabethan and the Punk. Clothing can transform the wearer and by the process of a self-fabrication of identity and likewise, depending on what elements are used to construct the look, they are a vehicle (or symbolic system) by which the wearer can refer to various time periods and styles at the same time, similar to the pastiche modality.

It is through this bricolage effect, a term also relevant when describing pastiche, that fashion and film costuming, although appearing authentic and therefore playing by the rules of verisimilitude, can actually be seen to be 'resisting purity' (to paraphrase Cook 1996: 45). With the initial scene inside Mortlake House set up as described above the scene is then carried out in the style of a play or performance of historical accuracy (between 0:02:30 and 0:03:30) with the movement of the characters across the scene appearing very deliberate, slow and staged, and the same can be said of the dialogue spoken. This shows Jarman to be operating in the pastiche mode utilising the actors and mise-en-scène in order to 'perform' a conversation that would take place in a period play or film. It is worth remembering here that works of pastiche share a distinct likeness to the works they reference and that pastiche has a core and crucial self-conscious historical element. As Dyer puts it, a "pastiche is very like that which it pastiches" (2007: 54). In addition Dyer argues that "the historicity of a pastiche involves both the historically specific aesthetic forms within which it works and the prevalent perception of what it is pastiching" (2007: 131).

The pacing of the scene from 0:03:10 to 0:04:39 (as Dee calls on the angel Ariel) is slow with few cuts and the shots used are either long shots that show the characters in their surroundings or close ups that suggest intimacy and the importance of facial expressions. The shot choices here have a different function than similar shot choices in a film from Higson's heritage cycle'. Long shots function in heritage films to establish a situation and then to offer continuity (via shot/reverse shot, 360 degree rule which suture the scene) and verisimilitude. Whereas in *Jubilee* the long shot places dual emphasis on the character and the mise-en-scène, privileging neither, whilst also providing a distancing function that aids the success of the pastiche modality because the scene can be viewed as a 'performance' in a particular stylistic vein as opposed to a depiction of historicity. The speed of these shots and the type of shot again bring to mind similar scenes in the heritage film cycle except here we are not being allowed to revel in tangible heritage and material items as we would in a film such as *A Room with A View* (1985). In that film, views of the splendour of a beautiful period interior take precedence over the position of the character within the frame. For example in one scene when Lucy Honeychurch (Helena Bonham Carter) is playing the piano, she is seen in a small corner of the frame whereas the paintings, furniture and decorations in the room take up the majority of space and thus, attract more of the viewers' gaze. Here, the surroundings are firmly in the background and dimly lit, so the focus is centred on the interchanges between Elizabeth and Dee.

As Dee calls Ariel he describes to Elizabeth that "an angel is the sun's true shadow". This statement is visually explained by Ariel's summoning from the ether and arrival to Mortlake. Dee requests Ariel and the film cuts to a sun-drenched rocky landscape where Ariel is standing on an outcrop holding a mirror. The mirror is flexed by Ariel and it reflects sunlight into the camera which momentarily blinds the screen with white light. It can be suggested that this relates to the idea of being enlightened or unenlightened, or the possession or lack of knowledge. Elizabeth and Dee are seen to be gaining knowledge and enlightenment via Ariel and the vision of the future Elizabethan era he shows to them. When this is applied as a counterpoint to the following 'Post Modern' scene there is a level of irony at play because judging by the mise-en-scène of future London with its wastelands, violent gangs and general degradation, certain aspects of knowledge and enlightenment may have been lost or at least grossly misused.

Interestingly, there is a parallel here with a motif contained within a number of the films of the heritage cycle suggesting perhaps that the two forms are not diametrically opposed. In *Jubilee*, scenes in the garden, countryside and coast have a different, perhaps more sensual and intense atmosphere than those in the urban environment largely because of the construction of the mise-en-scène and the framing of subjects within these scenes. Likewise, in films of the heritage cycle the outdoors also proves to be an arena for a sensual awakening. In *A Room With A View* for example there is a scene where George Emerson (Julian Sands),

Mr Beebe (the local Reverend played by Simon Callow) and Lucy Honeychurch's younger brother, Freddy (Rupert Graves), all bathe nude in a small natural pool in the woods. The liberation they obviously feel is emphasised more when the repressed and unemotional Cecil Vyse (Daniel Day-Lewis) happens to walk past and is scandalised by the activities of the three men. Similar depictions of liberation via elements of nature are observed in *Maurice* when Maurice Hall (James Wilby) leans out of the window of his room at Clive Dunham's (Hugh Grant) country estate and allows his body to become drenched by the falling rain. The sensation is clearly invigorating as he throws his head to and fro in an expression of his liberation from the oppressive environs of Clive's controlled and mannered existence at the estate. So, the outdoors and an embrace of nature provided subjects in both *Jubilee* and films of the heritage cycle with an awakening or enlightenment. Ariel's characterisation furthers this as the scene continues.

After blinding the camera Ariel then arrives in Mortlake, bathed in blue light and framed by the symbol of the sun on his left and the moon to his right. The balanced framing of Ariel has a wider connotation, hinting perhaps that the near future lacks a healthy embracing of the natural elements that rule the natural world and that, when metaphorically applied elsewhere, make up life: light and dark; knowledge and ignorance; creativity and profit; art and products; the sun and the shadows. As the signifier of balance in the film it is within Ariel's power

to "reveal to thee, the shadow of this time", which is the cue for a dramatic cut to the 'Post Modern' section of the film.

Ariel's physicality is also interesting here and signifies issues relating to time and transformation. He appears at Mortlake dressed in a tight all black body suit with a pale, heavily whitened face - both of which exaggerate his physicality and he then glides towards the camera with his arms outstretched and the sun and moon in the background. Not only does he resemble a figure on a music box (the movement of which is time-limited) but the motion of his hands coupled with his physicality bring to mind Leonardo da Vinci's *Vitruvian Man* drawing and the hands of time. The sun and moon here represents transitions and transformations from light to dark, from day to night, and in general refers to the passing of time. The passing of time is a central motif within *Jubilee* and it is the angel Ariel that is the vehicle for this. Ariel provides the bridge between one Elizabethan era and another, a transition which is further supported by changes in use of film fashion and filmic space.

As Ariel announces the revealing of the "shadow of this time" (0:06:10) the film cuts to the vision of the future and the screen is filled with grey, concrete wastelands offering an immediate contrast to the entrance into Mortlake through the gardens. Akin to Mortlake though, thunder is heard but this time it is loud and overhead suggesting that the metaphorical 'stormy weather' has arrived whereas it was safely in the distance as the lady in waiting walked

through the gardens. Again, the camera follows figures (two male punks dressed in jeans, boots and jackets) walking through the landscape but in contrast to the servant who was bringing something to the Queen, these figures appear aimless. The framing here is very similar to the framing of the Lady in Mortlake gardens; the two figures are viewed in long shot and are largely obscured by smoke from fires and the piles of rubble that dominate the landscape, acting as a parallel to how the Lady was observed in long shot but obscured by the greenery of the gardens. The similarity of framing and shot type suggests both comparison (figures walking through a landscape) and contrast (green countryside and grey urban landscape) between the two time periods.

A further contrast is shown by the way in which the figures traverse the filmic space; the Lady walked vertically out of the filmic space into Mortlake House denoting a sense of purpose whereas the punks stroll horizontally across the frame to a destination unknown which highlights the disconnect between the subjects and their landscape. These techniques create divergent tones for the two time periods, and, combined with the way the film is cut together (leaping back and forth between the different eras), offers juxtaposition. The techniques of juxtaposition here are similar to those described by Dyer as 'pasticcio' which "combines things that are typically held apart in such a way as to retain their identities. It may emphasise or play down the differences between its sources, organise them more or less evidently and emphatically" (2007: 21). This in turn, Dyer says, has repercussions for the outcome of a work that utilises pasticcio,

which can "be a wearying confusion or a stimulating array, a mess or a carnival" (2007: 21).

A motif common to both time zones within the film is the angel. Angels feature in the 'Post Modern' era but in contrast to the liberal vision of Ariel here we see the 'angel of death' (described as such in the script) attached to the front of the bonnet of the media magnate Borgia Ginz's Rolls Royce. It is seen driving through the same streets surrounded by wastelands mentioned previously; all the while the camera is fixed on the angel as it leaves a trail of destruction in its wake. Later on, as we are properly introduced to Ginz and get to know his methods, it becomes apparent that he has most of the power in the country (turning Buckingham Palace into a recording studio and requisitioning country estates from aristocrats) and therefore the angel of death can be seen as symbolic of his domination and he, indirectly of course, the major cause of the destruction seen at the film's beginning. The contrast here is that Ariel symbolises knowledge, spiritualism and magic whereas the Rolls Royce angel is a commodified contemporary status symbol related to wealth. The Rolls Royce symbol highlights a type of individualism divorced from any organic relationship with the natural landscape and instead connects the subject to money, private property and commodification.

So what does *Jubilee* suggest about this disconnect between the individual and the landscape, this breakdown of English Heimat? This question is answered by

two tightly framed scenes. The first one occurs at 0:06:46 as we see Mad (Toyah Wilcox) holding a gang of female punks at machinegun point. Again the costumes of the figures appear 'authentic' and provide verisimilitude for the new Elizabethan era. The punks wear jeans, bondage tops, leather jackets, converse trainers and have dyed hair. This action is viewed in long shot so we can see that Mad is barking her orders to the girls on the very same street driven along by Ginz's Rolls Royce seconds earlier. This relationship between shots perhaps suggests that Ginz's reign is aided by vigilante groups, and soon we see that Mad is part of one such group, and, later on in the film, that this group is in fact in cahoots with Ginz and his media empire. After this long shot the camera pans out to reveal a burning pram in the bottom left corner of the screen with the gang being marched off by Mad in the top right of the screen. The framing and visual signifiers here suggest elements of barbarism within the current time period exemplified by the vigilantism of Mad, the aggressive gangs roaming the streets and the (assumed) death of a baby.

The second tightly framed scene comes at 0:07:07 and it is necessary to analyse it thoroughly as its mise-en-scène is packed with clues to the contrast between this near-future dystopian vision of consumer society and the previous Elizabethan era. Firstly what stands out is the graffiti on the wall to the left of the frame. In big bold black letters the words 'Post Modern' are scrawled. This signifies a punk appropriation of a critical and philosophical term usually applied to architecture or literature. Here is it removed from any direct referent

and simply stands as a symbol, a graphic, without any definite meaning. This method of appropriation was central to punk and an interesting example, the use of the swastika, was observed by Mary Harron:

> Instinctively I was in favour of punk, but I had to go on my instinctive liking of it, because of the symbols. It took me a while to work that out, because now it's commonplace that people use symbols ironically. But in the hippie days, styles of dress or symbols were used unironically. It was, This is what you are; you have long hair; you wear this; you are a peace person. So if you wear swastikas you are a Nazi. And suddenly a movement comes along with no transition, nobody saying anything, and they're using swastikas and it's not about that; it's a costume and an assault. It's about something completely different – it's about gesture and shock tactic (in McNeil and McCain 2002: 308).

So, likewise in *Jubilee*, the postmodern graffiti is a gesture and not necessarily possessed of any particular reference or meaning. In this way it is an example of how the film plays with the notion of essentialism. It shows how the sign is released from its referent which in turn allows for free interpretation. The graffiti could signify alienation from the environment which can be evidence by the actions of people in the frame; the punks aimlessly walk the streets whilst Amyl's gang led by Mad run amok and harass passers-by. Yet, graffiti can also be seen as an attempt by the

individual to reclaim and connect to their potentially alienating

environment (via an appropriation of civic space) and so can be viewed in a

similar light as punk or pastiche in the way that they all appropriate

already available resources for their own ends. Indeed, during the same era

as *Jubilee*, graffiti's social and cultural importance was beginning to be

recognised particularly in America where it had been used in poor urban

areas throughout the decade[60] as a method of reclamation and a statement

of individualism. Jeff Chang describes how by "violating notions or property

and propriety, graffiti writers found their own kind of freedom" (2007: 74)

which Greg Tate called "reverse colonisation" (cited by Chang 2007: 74).

Graffiti tags in 1970s America, like the 'postmodern' scrawl in *Jubilee*, were

gestures and "not political statements. They were just what they were"

(2007: 74). Graffiti, therefore, resists essentialism because it is symbolic

and so relies on space, place and subjectivity for any interpretive meaning.

So, the ethos surrounding graffiti and its usage is of relevance to *Jubilee*'s

flexible, changeable, subjective construction as evidenced by the

'postmodern' tag scrawled on the wall above the group of punks.

The wall that the graffiti is on divides the frame and the other side of the screen

contains a further example of the conduct of the near-future, materialist society,

whilst also continuing a motif from the previous era (in much the same way as

Ginz's angel on his Rolls Royce). We see an overturned Volkswagen Beetle, a car

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[60] Taki 183 was the first graffiti writer to popularise the practice when he was quoted in the New York Times in 1971. This expose influenced many young New Yorkers to write graffiti (see Chang 2007: 74).

favoured by hippies, smashed up with the driver dead at the wheel. The car crash is being picked over by an opportunist punk who steals the diamond earrings and sunglasses worn by the deceased driver. The diamonds and the glasses refer back to the recurrent motifs of reflection, light, shadow and the balance of elements observed at Mortlake. In this era they are reduced to a consumer good, a product that 'you can't take with you', a one dimensional object that you can own. In the background, and completing the mise-en-scène by framing the other activities, are a row of bombed out houses dwarfed by a huge gasometer which means that the whole of the frame is filled with separate examples of urban degradation. However, the punning and ironical graffiti, which also lends itself to the scene's title in the script, prevents the scene from being reactionary or straight-faced. It is an awareness of the layering in the film's mise-en-scène that is crucial to an understanding of its ethos. As such, the scenes content may initially suggest a value judgement that is refuted or resisted by other elements in the frame and thus *Jubilee* is able to be playful and deny reductive interpretations.

So, the initial scenes of *Jubilee* introduce the two time periods in which the film operates. It is this framing device that facilitates a dialectic involving aspects of punk (ethos and aesthetics), pastiche, filmic space and costume in order to explore the constructed nature of societal and cultural order, its taxonomies, definitions and modes of operating. This exploration suggests the possibility of different, and unexpected, English cultural identities. Identities based on self-

consciousness (references; irony; knowingness), alternative subjectivities (the Lady in Waiting for example), interpretation and an acceptance of change and flexibility (the original, playful depictions of the Elizabethan eras). In *Jubilee* the depiction of a time period is not based on essentialist ideas reliant on intrinsic validity (heritage and materialism specifically) or mise-en-scène and costume that demonstrate verisimilitude. This is explored via the construction and juxtaposition of the two time zones and the playful, gestural mise-en-scène (the Rolls Royce angel; the 'postmodern' graffiti).

Jubilee constructs a vision of the first Elizabethan era which subverts traditional expectations and perceptions of a historical film and emphasises the alternatives through its framing and symbolic mise-en-scène. This subversive style then continues with the vision of the future provided to Elizabeth I and Dee by Ariel which highlights disjunctions and alternatives involving the subject, the landscape and the relational interplay between both. The opening scenes of *Jubilee* demonstrate an on-going, playful and diverse dialectic which is explored, by way of punk and pastiche, in the film's mise-en-scène, use of space, arrangement of scenes, framing of characters, cultural influences and narrative content. *Jubilee* is seen to offer a societal critique akin to punk whilst also being aware of the inherent contradiction of this (how to change things from within, and also avoid co-option). *Jubilee* has also been shown to operate in the pastiche modality (again, akin to punk) with its self-conscious, referential content and bricolage construction that avoids reductive essentialism. Further points of

interest related to the above exploration can be found in the final sequence of the film analysed below. This sequence shows a continuity of form and content with the beginning of the film, and also foregrounds the two central facets contained within *Jubilee*. Those facets being, depictions of the way the present continually and very frequently interacts with the past, and the way in which the final sequence conveys the related notion of dual time where different time periods and cultural forms can briefly co-exist in the present by virtue of modes of self-conscious referencing (such as pastiche and punk).

Analysing the final sequence – 'Back to the past'

After a brief synopsis of the final scenes of *Jubilee* I am going to move onto a close analysis of the sequence because, as mentioned above, it offers continuity with the ideas discussed previously and because, with it being the ending of the film, it foregrounds the crucial central facets of *Jubilee* regarding time and the interaction and relationship of the past and the present.

In the final sequence of *Jubilee*[61], entitled 'country retreat' (Script and DVD chapter), Borgia and his chauffeur-driven Rolls Royce takes Amyl's gang (including Bod, Mad and Crabs) out of the city and into Dorset. The county is the only safe place left in England and now has controlled borders in order to "keep

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[61] From 01:32:52 to when the credits roll at 01:38:13

the riff raff out" (Script). Borgia has requisitioned a country estate from "some aristocratic family" and we see the Rolls Royce driving towards the house, clearly showing that this is to be the retreat of the title. Once inside, Borgia and friends sup on champagne whilst watching a Nazi rally on television as an aging Hitler (wearing a Jackson Pollock inspired blazer), also watching on from the sofa, declares himself "the greatest artist of the twentieth century". Bod leaves the room and the film cuts back to Elizabeth I and Dee who are also in Dorset, at Dancing Ledge on the coast. They talk of the sea and reminisce about times gone by including "the whispered secrets at Oxford", "the secret language of flowers" and, "codes and counter codes". The film ends with Elizabeth and Dee walking away along the ledge as Ariel narrates. For this analysis I am going to concentrate on three distinct parts of the sequence, namely the border crossing, the approach to Borgia's country estate, and the transition from the interior of the country estate to the world of Elizabeth I and Dee. In the latter part of the following analysis, the metaphorical significance of the sea will be discussed with reference to the overarching dual time motif observed throughout *Jubilee*. In looking at these three sections the mise-en-scène is of crucial importance.

As Borgia's chauffeur-driven Rolls Royce reaches the border crossing into Dorset a Soviet flag can be seen draped over the gate. The soldiers are dressed in dull brown uniforms similar to those seen in *Dad's Army*[62]. It is also relevant to note that the army in *Dad's Army* was the Home Guard which was the last line of

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[62] Interestingly *Dad's Army* [1968-1977, written by Jimmy Perry and David Croft, directed by David Croft, Harold Snoad and Bob Spiers] aired its final episode in November 1977 around the time that Jarman completed *Jubilee*.

defence guarding the British Isles from Nazi invasion, whereas here, the similarly dressed soldier is a different sort of home guard, securing Borgia's house against the "riff raff" who might attempt entry to Dorset, the last safe county in England. The car is halted and an aging female soldier asks for passports and "any seditious literature, records or tapes". She promptly confiscates Crab's *Elvis* album. Then, on allowing the car through, the soldier gives them the Nazi salute. Arguably, Jarman utilises these elements of the mise-en-scène (the soldier, the prop and character references to political regimes and armies) in order to subvert what is culturally expected (the majority of film and TV depicted soldiers as male) and to pastiche the signs of political power. The soldier is a woman, an unexpected representation in films up to this point (a similar idea to that explored by the Lady in Waiting character earlier in *Jubilee*), and so the depiction of the soldier resists the culturally expected representation (young male) and satirises an extremely popular contemporary televisual representation of soldiers via the costume reference to *Dad's Army*. The mise-en-scène here once again represents *Jubilee*'s take on the punk idea and its related aesthetics. Jarman is quoted as saying that "punk was an understandable and very correct disgust with everything, but it wasn't focused" (cited in Savage 2005: 377). This lack of focus is exemplified by *Jubilee*'s bricolage mise-en-scène with filmic style therefore functioning as a form of 'punk' pastiche through its combination and mix of varied references.

Indeed, the entire border crossing scene, like much of *Jubilee*'s mise-en-scène, can be considered to be an example of a particular method of pastiche that possesses distinct parallels with the punk aesthetic. To explore this fully I must return to Dyer's (2007) work on pastiche and in particular, to his investigation into 'pasticcio'. Dyer defines pasticcio as a work of pastiche that uses the combination of diverse things as its central facet. In Dyer's summation, pasticcio "combines things that are typically held apart in such a way as to retain their identities. It may emphasise or play down the differences between its sources" (2007: 21). The things which are usually separate (for example at the border crossing - the Soviet flag, the Nazi salute, the *Dad's Army* uniform) "are held to be different, by virtue of genre, authorship, period, mode or whatever and…do not normally or perhaps even readily go together" (2007: 10). Other examples of pasticcio in *Jubilee* include the interactions of Elizabeth I, Dee and the Lady with the contemporary landscape (specifically when they walk around Lounge Lizard's [Wayne County] room) or the cluttered décor of Amyl's headquarters. To some, this mode of operating could be symptomatic of an "erosion of meaning" (Savage cited in Ellis 2009: 60) which some commentators saw as a central facet of punk, where signs become divorced from their referents. However, I do not find that meaning is lost in *Jubilee* at all, but rather that preconceptions are healthily challenged by juxtaposing different signs and references in the same frame through the bricolage mise-en-scène, as is seen at the border crossing (also, recall the 'post-modern' graffiti at the film's beginning and my discussion of its significance on page 26 of this chapter). Therefore, punk's alleged 'erosion of

meaning' is, in any case, greatly curtailed by Jarman's focusing of the punk aesthetic through his construction of mise-en-scène.

A different form of pastiche is employed in the next segment of the sequence. Having passed through the pasticcio border crossing Borgia's Rolls Royce propels the co-opted rebels towards his recently requisitioned country house. The house is seen in an extreme long shot and framed so that the land surrounding the house is the dominant feature. The Rolls Royce then appears out of the left hand corner of the frame clearly heading towards the house illustrating its ownership by Borgia and combining two commodified heritage and status symbols in the same shot (the country house, the opulent and classic British motor car). The film then cuts to a closer shot of the house, this time from the perspective of a passenger in Borgia's Rolls Royce, with Jarman utilising the windscreen of the car as the parameter of the shot's frame. This shot of the house fills the entire frame and thus ensures that the grand scale of the property is taken in by the occupants of the car and the audience alike, which brings to mind Higson's (2006) observations on the heritage film, which, he found, invited the audience to 'gaze' at the heritage space/s and 'consume' the view/s. At this moment in *Jubilee* private property is presented for public gaze. Indeed the two establishing shots of the estate and the house indulge in something akin to a heritage film aesthetic[63] (a pictorialist framing style) where "the past is displayed as a visually spectacular [albeit depthless] pastiche" (Higson 2006: 91). However, in *Jubilee*'s

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[63] Such as is seen in *Maurice* (1987) or even *Peter's Friends* (1992). The latter, although not a part of the heritage film cycle, does include a number of establishing, extreme long shots of a country house estate with cars drawing up to it.

case, taking into account the context of the film and its 'punk' sensibilities, it is a pastiche which does not resist "ironies and social critiques" (2006: 91). On the contrary, *Jubilee* utilises the visual emphasis (note that Borgia's estate is shot and framed very differently from Mortlake House) in order to subvert notions of heritage, as the film has done throughout.

It is important to raise a chronological point here to ensure clarity because the films grouped by Higson as the 'heritage cycle' were released throughout the 1980s and debates (both academic[64] and polemic[65]) began in earnest in the late 1980s, a number of years after the completion of *Jubilee*. As such these scenes from *Jubilee* cannot pastiche that specific cycle of films. However, it can still be seen to pastiche the iconography of the country house and the commodification of heritage both of which were existent then[66]. *Jubilee* could therefore be seen to function as a rehearsal of ideas and critiques that would come to prevalence a decade or so later when people looked back at the 'heritage industry' that grew and developed under the Thatcher governments of the 1980s. Now, I am not suggesting that *Jubilee* was prophetic or predictive in its engagement with debates on heritage as this is mere conjecture, but the film has been shown, by way of this analysis, to dialogue with the heritage film cycle and Higson's work on this which was a 1990s perception of filmic representations of heritage in the 1980s.

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[64] Patrick Wright (1985), Robert Hewison (1987) and the later work of Higson, and Claire Monk.
[65] Norman Stone in *The Sunday Times* in January 1988 – 'Sick Scenes of English Life'.
[66] Recall Jarman's statement from the late 1970's regarding "the England of stately homes" (1984: 173) cited earlier.

It is precisely because it engages with these ideas surrounding the usage of heritage and can dialogue well with later work that *Jubilee* continues to be relevant as a punk pastiche of our relationship to the past. Heritage properties such as the ubiquitous country house estate were described by Jarman as "the indispensable prop for the English way of life" (Jarman 1984: 173) and it is depicted in *Jubilee* as just that, a "petrified, frozen" symbol of "heritage culture" (Higson 2006: 99), commodification and social status. As well as this, Borgia's estate also represents a retreat from the unstable, unpredictable present to an ossified, secure past. Indeed, by its very presence (in the film and in our lives), the country house is another representation of our continued relationship to the past because it is one of "the very material ways in which history exists in the present" (Ellis 2009: 66).

Finally, on the way in which *Jubilee* pastiches heritage, and related to the way in which it engages with ideas that came to wider providence decades later, I posit that the extreme long shots of the country house in *Jubilee* utilises the pastiche modality in order to both subvert expectations based on the iconography of the country house and to parallel the dual time/time travelling motif heavily present throughout the film. That is to say that Dyer observed that a "pastiche is very like that which it pastiches" (2007: 54), which in *Jubilee*'s case is a display of heritage. Dyer also observed that when pastiching an element of a history or a heritage "a pastiche involves both the historically specific aesthetic forms within which it works and the prevalent perception of what it is pastiching" (2007: 131).

So, applying the latter statement to *Jubilee*, it is possible to see *Jubilee* engaging with past (in its display of aristocratic country houses), present (the contemporary punk perception, and related appropriation, of heritage and history) and future (the following two decades with the commodification of the heritage industry and the discussions surrounding a heritage film aesthetic). It is in these ways that *Jubilee* continues to be relevant as a punk pastiche of our relationship to the past.

This type of pastiche, combining the punk aesthetic with a bricolage mise-en-scène, continues in the next scene which sees Borgia, Amyl, Bod, Mad and Crabs inside the country house. The combination and juxtapostion of artistic and political references here is both subversive and confrontation, and is very much in keeping with the punk aesthetic. This scene signifies both the punk usage of Nazi iconography (mentioned earlier on page 95) and also, more generally, the different methods by which it is possible for the contemporary period to relate to facets of the past and types of history. It is this relationship that is foregrounded next by way of the transition from the interior of Borgia's country retreat to the exterior with Elizabeth I and Dee walking along the Dorset coast at Dancing Ledge. The transition is achieved, and indeed suggests our relationship to the past, by way of a precise directorial approach that includes a carefully framed graphic match and the utilisation of actor continuity.

As Bod gets up and walks to the door Borgia and friends raise their glasses to toast Hitler and the Nazi rally. The camera keeps the clinking glasses and hands of the characters in the left hand corner of the frame, and then Bod walks through the door. Bod vacating the scene acts as a transition device between the two time periods as the next thing visible is the Dorset cliffs and, coming out of the left hand corner of the frame, the interlocked hands of Elizabeth I and Dee. Jenny Runacre plays both Bod and Elizabeth I which aids, along with the graphic match, the transition between the time periods. Ellis keenly observes of this continuity that having "the same actress play Elizabeth I and Bod highlights the inevitable masquerade involved in filmed history" (2009: 66). Ellis usefully invokes the idea here that filmic portrayals of history are performances and representations that need not be tied to a restrictive concept of authenticity, but that they are versions and pretences that can and should utilise all the visual and narrative techniques available to them in order to convey a story. Hence that is why pastiche is a successful method with which to tackle historical elements and the concept of history/histories in films, as has been argue with regard to *Jubilee*. *Jubilee*, being a successful work of pastiche, knows that filmed history is a masquerade and uses this consciousness to its advantage by being referential and playful with the mise-en-scène and the film's narrative content. In turn the masquerade is one of the elements in *Jubilee* that allows the film to traverse boundaries of time and space effectively cementing one of the central facets of the film, which is our direct and continual relationship to the past. A visualisation, and parallel, of this on-going relationship is the Rolls Royce angel that leads Borgia from the city streets to his country retreat in "a dream

England of the past" (Jarman 1984: 173), and the angel Ariel who has guided Elizabeth, Dee and the Lady in Waiting from Mortlake House to the present Elizabethan era, and back again.

The relationship to the past and the dual time motif of the film is further foregrounded in this scene by Ariel's incantation narration proclaiming "there and back, there and back". This can be understood to refer to the time traversing that has been undertaken by Ariel, Elizabeth I and Dee. Shortly after this part of Ariel's narration, the camera captures Elizabeth and Dee in an extreme long shot walking towards the camera (representing 'there'), which is followed by a reverse shot depicting them walking away from the camera (representing 'back'). Elizabeth and Dee will now go back to their past, which is similar to the retreat made by Borgia from the contemporary metropolis to his requisitioned aristocratic country pile. The metaphorical significance of the sea shore and waves (depicted in the parts of the sequence with Ariel, and which lap in a 'there and back' motion) add to the scene's focus on time, and the narration also talks of the sun sinking in the sky soon to be followed by the arrival of the moon (which again refers to the passing of time).

Dyer talks of how pastiche can help us to "know ourselves affectively as historical beings" (2007: 180) and something similar is operating in *Jubilee* through the foregrounding of time, dual time, and the relationship of the past to the present. *Jubilee* is an effective pastiche because of the continued "presence of

the past" (Dyer citing Jencks 2007: 133) throughout the film. *Jubilee* is always referencing something that has gone before it, and signalling the fact that it is doing so (recall that these are Dyer's two main facets of historical pastiche [2007: 133]), which is a technique of pastiche that places the film within the "realm of the already said" (2007: 179). It is this framework, and requisite content and form that keep past and present in tandem with one another throughout the film. The transition of Bod into Elizabeth I in the blink of an eye is, perhaps, a visualisation of how we can all be said to be 'historical beings', with bricolage identities constructed from, and forever influenced by, a continual interaction with history, heritage and time past. *Jubilee* has been shown to suggest this by way of its use of the pastiche modality, its punk aesthetic and bricolage mise-en-scène, and its dual time framing device. Much like Ariel's whispered incantation which is the film's last word, Bod has indeed 'come away' from the present and returned to the past in a visual metaphor that refers to a relationship that takes place in different ways for us all every day.

My next chapter considers Jarman's film version of *The Tempest*, addressing the ways in which the filmic text explores cultural heritage (concentrating on its manipulation of, and amendments to, Shakespeare's text – for example, the masque scene), utilises stylistic appropriation and representation (the way the film employs colour to various effect, and the incorporation of elements of the camp modality in the film), and demonstrates multiple and layered temporal references widening the film's cultural application.

Chapter Three:

Stylistic appropriation, progressive adaptation, and the remixed masque in *The Tempest* (1979)

The Tempest is in some ways the strangest of all Shakespeare's plays;

to return to it after a lapse of a year or two is to receive with new force

the impression that it has always eluded, and may continue to elude,

relevant comment (Frank Kermode 2009: 223[67]).

Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (his final fully completed work) is a complex and intriguing play that has appealed, in different ways, to many adapters and audiences alike since the play's inclusion in the First Folio of 1623. To begin this chapter, I believe it useful to give a brief description of the play, noting the key events from each Act. *The Tempest* represents an intriguing mixture of magic, music, masques[68], humour and plotting cabals which ultimately ends in a message of forgiveness, remorse and freedom. Aside from the first scenes of Act I

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[67] Kermode goes on to say that *The Tempest* is, in a sense, "a self-indulgence on the part of Shakespeare, a play for the theatre of his own mind; but if the mass of puzzled, barrenly ingenious commentary does nothing else, it shows that the world is in no danger of under-estimating the value of such self-indulgence when the talent exercised is Shakespeare's" (2009: 223).

[68] Masques were stage spectacles of "intense theatricality" (Ellis 2009: 71) performed frequently in the Renaissance period. Vaughan & Vaughan suggest that "masques were the original multimedia event" involved music, acting, dancing, painting, design and lighting (1999: 67). The content of a masque was often concerned with conflicts between order and disorder, and usually began with an anti-masque (containing figures of disorder) and ended with audience involvement.

that consist of the titular storm that damages King Alonso of Naples' ship, the entirety of the play takes place on Prospero's island which he has been banished to with his daughter after losing the Dukedom of Milan. On the island Prospero discovers Caliban (whom he 'steals' the island from) and the spirit Ariel, and rules over both. In Act II Alonso's party make it ashore (his son Ferdinand separately) and begin plotting to kill the King. Ariel lures Ferdinand to Miranda (Prospero's daughter), and Caliban performs an anti-masque. In Act III Miranda and Ferdinand fall in love and agree to marry (after Prospero has been impressed by Ferdinand's efforts to deal with obstacles Prospero has put in their way); Caliban meets Stephano and Trinculo (King Alonso's butler and jester respectively), also washed ashore from the storm, and together they plot to kill Prospero; Alonso's party continue to plot to kill him; and Ariel tricks Alonso, who eventually performs a miming masque in order to express his remorse for things that have happened to Prospero. The penultimate Act IV contains the love masque thrown by Prospero and conjured by Ariel in celebration of the union of Ferdinand and Miranda. The love masque is performed by three spirits: Iris, the Greek goddess of the rainbow, messenger of the gods and sister to the harpies; Juno, the Roman Queen of the gods and goddess of light and childbirth; and Ceres, the Roman goddess of fertility and the harvest who represents the "fecundity of the cultivated earth" (Vaughan & Vaughan 1999: 71). Fecundity is "the iconographic theme of the magician's masque" (1999: 73), with continence and chastity representing order, and threats to chastity and self-control (Ceres inquires about the whereabouts of Venus [goddess of sensual love] and Cupid

[representing passion]) representing forces of disorder[69]. Iris calls up naiads (water spirits) and they are joined by reapers, who dance together and bring about the end of the masque.

Act IV also includes the thwarting of Caliban's plot to kill Prospero. Act V concludes with forgiveness for past wrongs from all sides; the restoration of Prospero's dukedom; the freeing of Ariel; the renouncing of magic by Prospero and Caliban getting control of the island once more. There is then a short epilogue as Prospero addresses the audience asking for them to release him by their applause[70].

As mentioned before then, *The Tempest* features a mixture of magic[71], masques, music, murder plots, and ultimately forgiveness, reconciliation and freedom. Alden T. Vaughan and Virginia Mason Vaughan describe it as "a play for all eras, all continents and many ideologies" and suggest that one of the reasons for this is "*The Tempest*'s vibrant but ambiguous central characters" (1999: 1). Consider the diverse facets of the characters and actions of Prospero, Ariel and Caliban for example. Likewise, the play's major events (the storm, the masques,

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[69] Venus and Cupid are banished from Prospero's masque so that order and harmony can triumph.

[70] Jarman's film includes depictions of most of the major events including the storm, the plotting cabals, the meeting and eventual union of Ferdinand and Miranda, and the love masque (which is the film's concluding sequence). The structure is changed and the text greatly edited and rearranged. Jarman describes how he "cut away the dead wood (particularly the obsolete comedy)" and organised it so that the "great speeches were concertinaed. The play was rearranged and opened up" (1984: 188).

[71] Kermode suggests the magical content on the play is a metaphor for the theatre and the playwright; *The Tempest* "deals in illusions – not in theatrical illusions of reality, but in the reality of theatrical illusions; as if Prospero in charge of the plot, spirits and machines, were after all a figure of the playwright himself, showing what depths may be found in traps and flying-machines and music in the right places" (2009: 223).

plotting cabals) and the resolutions of Act V seem to pivot around "antithetical extremes and their many intermediate positions" (Vaughan and Vaughan 1999: 1) and these striking contrasts lend the play a depth that has led to many varied and interesting interpretations.

As can be understood from the above discussion, the content and register of Shakespeare's *Tempest* and a number of the elements of the play (the island setting; the characters; the use of magic; atmospheric music; the masques) can inspire stylistic adaptations due to the potential aesthetic scope of facets of the work. The play's island setting and its masques can enable the creative use of sets or mise-en-scéne, and in the case of masques, expressive costumes and choreography; the ambiguous characters potentially facilitate diverse depictions and representation as well as allowing the adapter to utilise a character to pursue a certain concern, theme or concept of relevance to their idiolect; and finally, the depiction of Prospero's magic has both theatrical and filmic possibilities in terms of use of special effects, and also, in the case of Jarman's version, a visualisation of Prospero's study cell complete with alchemical symbols, dusty esoteric tomes and a magick (denoting 'occult' practices rather than stage magic) wand[72]. An example of the impressionistic and symbolic way in which Jarman depicts Prospero's magic can be seen when Prospero calls Ariel at the beginning of the film. Instead of having a gold lamé dressed Ariel appear

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[72] Jarman describes the mise-en-scène of Prospero's study like so: "My seventeenth-century copy of the *Occult Philosophy* [by Cornelius Agrippa] was open on Prospero's desk…Simon Reade drew out the magic circles that were blueprints of the pinhole cameras he constructed…thereby making a subtle connection [between alchemical practices and film]. Prospero's wand was built by Christopher Hobbs in the form of John Dee's *Monas Hieroglyphica*, which symbolized the unity of spirit and matter" (1984: 188).

from a puff of smoke (like the 1980 BBC adaptation), Jarman's world-weary, washed out Ariel appears after "the chandeliers tinkle, a glass overturns and a spider runs under the staff. Ariel is Prospero's spider and catches his enemies on gossamer threads" (Jarman 1984: 190). Having observed the adaptive possibilities of the play, it is now worth exploring some of its textual transformations.

Adapting *The Tempest*: A brief historical overview

The Tempest was the last of Shakespeare's completed plays (written in 1611) and it was included in the First Folio of 1623, which was an edited collection. The folio editor would have divided the play into acts and scenes, and provided the detailed stage directions. Thereafter all subsequent editions of the play (by various editors) have been based on the version in the First Folio and these other editions often modernise spelling, punctuation and grammar, and may make other changes and contributions. This process suggests a lack of authorial dominance by Shakespeare when compared with the author of a novel because the original play was recorded by another and subsequently edited and produced by many others over the years. Vaughan & Vaughan describe the practice thus; "editing a Shakespeare play is in many ways a cumulative process, begun in the author's own day and layered by generation after generation of editors from whom the next generation learn" (1999: xvii). This method of editorial layering means that the text becomes a palimpsest document with the passage of time

and the different editors, meaning that authorial dominance (for Shakespeare, or adapters and critics claiming fidelity to the source text) is weakened due to the consistent tracked changes that have been made to the document. This process is necessary for the longevity of the text, as Vaughan & Vaughan explain saying that most editors "make a few contributions, and some make a great many, to the better understanding of a document written nearly four hundred years ago in a context that can only partly be reconstructed and in a language that has changed immeasurably" (1999: xvii). So, in general, plays are likely to attract expressive adaptations due to their flexible and malleable structure[73], and the nature of the Shakespeare plays in particular (nearly four hundred years of editors) means that authorial dominance is weakened. As will be seen later in the chapter, expressive adaptations are not always produced from the plays (BBC Television Shakespeare), and this may be down to the particular ideological purpose or compunction of the adapters, and the specific kind of representations of traditions and canons that they want to produce (sometimes this is arguably a safe, untroubled 'heritage' view of the English past).

Adaptations of the play have proliferated over the years and have used the text (via allegory or metaphor) to interrogate diverse issues such as Darwinism (Vaughan & Vaughan 1999: 113), colonialism (Hirst 1984: 50; Billington 1989[74]),

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[73] The separation of the text into acts and scenes makes it easier for an adapter to abridge or amend as they see fit. Stage directions are also open to interpretation and thus foster creative expression.

[74] Original article "In Britain, a Proliferation of Prosperos" in *The New York Times* January 1st 1989. Accessed at www.nytimes.com/1989/01/01/theatre/stage-view-in-britain-a-proliferation-of-prosperos.html on 12/06/14.

Freudian influenced psychoanalysis and sexuality/homosexuality (Vaughan &
Vaughan 1999: 114–115 & 121–123 respectively) amongst others. Film versions
called *The Tempest* have been made in the era of silent cinema (most notably by
Percy Stow[75]), by the BBC twice (1968 and 1980) favouring the traditional
approach[76], Derek Jarman (1979), Paul Mazursky (1982) who made a
contemporary version with modern language (see Vaughan & Vaughan 1999:
118), and Julie Taymor (2010) who changed the sex of Prospero by casting Helen
Mirren as Prospera. Film versions taking *The Tempest* as a central source have
been as varied as the western *Yellow Sky* (1946) (see Howard 2000: 296) and the
science-fiction film *Forbidden Planet* (1956) (Vaughan & Vaughan 1999: 111 –
112). As well as the many versions of the play for stage and screen, the text has
also attracted much and varied analysis/criticism from diverse approaches and
schools of thought (see Coursen 2000: 79 – 140; Hulme & Sherman [eds.] 2004:
119 – 300; and Graff & Phelan [eds] 2009: 109 – 412 for a critical overview and
specific articles highlighting the critical controversy surrounding *The Tempest*).
As can be understood from this brief history *The Tempest* fosters adaptations and
appropriations, some of which transform the play via amendment, re-situation
and interpretation. Indeed, transformation and change are already themes
within the play highlighted by Prospero's practice of magic and the utilisation
and inclusion of the renaissance masque form with its complex mixture of

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[75] Stow, who co-founded the Clarendon Film Company, compressed *The Tempest* into 11 scenes in order to
offer a "complete précis" of the play including several "elaborate tableaux reminiscent of…George Méliès"
(Brooke 2014). It represents a short but narratively coherent film with all of the main characters featured, and
it shows Ferdinand emerging from the sea onto the island as Jarman would later do.

physical performance, acting, music, expressive and extravagant costumes and sets, allegory and metaphor. It is also worth noting here the nature of the collection and recording (folios and multiple editors) of the text of *The Tempest* itself as this can also be seen to foster flexibility in adaptation rather than establishing a dominant and authoritative version of the play. It is now relevant to consider the masque form itself in order to better understand the way in which it is appropriated in this film.

The Masque form

Derek Jarman's film appropriates the "ambiguous central characters" (Vaughan & Vaughan 1999: 1), the esoteric content and references (magic, angels), and most emphatically, the masque sequence, to create an adaptation where the source text becomes one of a number of intertexts. This means that authorship itself along with representation and identity is interrogated via Jarman's film. A masque often deals with order and disorder using a cast of disguised characters[77] whose performances play with notions of identity and counter identity. Vaughan & Vaughan describe how, in *The Tempest*, "Prospero's masque serves…as an allegorical core that symbolizes ideas which pervade the play" (1999: 70), such as duality, unity and harmony. One allegorical example from Prospero's masque is

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[77] The Jacobean masque featured "court ladies and gentlemen dressed in lavish costumes" (Vaughan & Vaughan 1999: 67). Anti-masques, which usually featured within a masque as a counterpoint to the masque's characters, often contained "cultural others" such as "African's, Gypsies, [and] masterless men" and "figures of disorder, such as satyrs or witches" (Ellis 2009: 71).

the way in which "Ceres, Iris and Juno present a double image of the cosmic union of earth and air, fire and water, with a vision of the union of Ferdinand and Miranda as the return of universal harmony" (1999: 70). Again, as mentioned above regarding Shakespeare's work and concerns of Jarman's, the concept of duality is central to a masque and can afford an opportunity for the form to explore issues and concerns relevant to its particular society and culture (via the modes of satire, pastiche, allegory or metaphor). Jim Ellis cites David Bevington and Peter Holbrook who describe masques as "the most inherently topical of all seventeenth-century art forms" (2009: 71), and Ellis goes on to suggest that "the masque was crucially involved in the establishment of cultural difference [with]…cultural others…positioned as threats to order or as disorder itself" (2009: 71)

In constructing his *Tempest* Jarman appropriates Prospero's love masque of Act IV and makes the masque sequence the climax of the film, which, Ellis observes "changes both its significance and function" (2009: 74). Segments of the masque dialogue are scattered by Jarman throughout the film, such as when Ariel stands on a rocking horse and delivers one of Juno's blessings to Miranda. Later on in the film Miranda stands on the rocking horse herself and repeats Juno's blessing, an appropriation which Ellis suggests illustrates Miranda "taking for herself the goddess's power" (2009: 74). Jarman's masque, as will be seen in close analysis later on in the chapter, keeps the spectacular element, and the allegorical function of the masque, but subverts the expected content by utilising

the discourse of camp. Ellis discusses how masques deal with the "production or reproduction of the community", illustrated by figures of order and the reinstated harmony delivered at the conclusion of a masque, and the related concept of "the establishment of cultural difference" (2009: 71) which relates to the figures of disorder, the anti-masque performers. Jarman's love masque incorporates figures and discourses that could, when reflecting on the history and context of the masque form, be considered as representing the anti-masque, such as the camp sailors and the black female goddess. For example, the black blues singer Elisabeth Welch portrays the one and only goddess in this masque. After her spectacularly colourful entrance into the hall of the masque she sings '*Stormy Weather*' (the title and chorus symbolising disharmony and disorder), which is an inclusion and performance that Ellis suggests represents "a recognisably camp gesture, one that displays the potentially rich and subversive historical vision that camp employs" (2009: 74). Welch and *Stormy Weather* can here be seen to signify that the previously marginalised 'others' of society, the perceived figures of disorder, are now included in the community and the cultural discourse of the time. This subversion, suggests Ellis, "disrupts the smooth reproduction of certain narratives that have played a significant role in structuring the present nation" (2009: 71). So, masques can often be used to hint at latent themes and issues of relevance to past periods of society and Jarman can be said to have appropriated the form in order to make comments on the production of community and the involvement of cultural differences in his contemporary society. *The Tempest* as a cultural text has also been appropriated and utilised in

a similar way to diverse ends over the course of its almost four hundred year history.

Jarman's adaptation playfully tackles this by including and amending elements from the play, excluding others and incorporating discourses that question representation and identity such as camp and pastiche. The aims of Jarman's *Tempest* can be seen in its aesthetical choices and the way Jarman selects things from the source text and includes new elements. This technique of adaptation means that the adaptation will represent the adapter's creative expression and idiolect, as well as utilising the source text. Hence it is relevant to investigate ideas surrounding adaptation theory as this will highlight the limitations and possibilities of adapting a source text, often largely influenced by the approach and aims of the adapter (and their cast and crew). Looking into adaptation methods also allows one to sketch a cultural heritage of representations, examining how and why texts were depicted in a cultural context.

The BBC adaptations: High fidelity?

The issue of fidelity is often one of the first issues that arise when analysing and criticising adaptations. Fidelity is linked to authorship and seems to suggest to the adapter that they 'should' or 'need' to tap into the author of the source text's content and form in order to stay 'true' to the text (however subjective and reductive this concept it). What the adapter uses or does not use from the source text and what additional elements are incorporated, create the identity of the

adaptation and also suggest the length and depth of the creative expression the adapter has given to the work. Offering a clear contrast with Jarman for example are the BBC/Time-Life TV Shakespeare adaptations, of which *The Tempest* was finished in 1980 and broadcast only months after Jarman's film had been released. This adaptation represents a conservative reading of the text and one that has a very particular ideology and function.

The BBC Television/Time-Life TV (USA) Shakespeare project (1978-85) adapted 37 plays, the complete Shakespearean canon at that time, and included the necessary but seemingly ideologically diverse involvement of academics and television producers. Graham Holderness observes an "ideological appropriation of Shakespeare" (2002: 10) here due to the union of broadcasters and academics, which sought to educate and entertain simultaneously. One line of thought positioned television as akin to a national theatre, one which could bring about a "democratic recovery of Shakespeare" and alongside that a "reappropriation of jealously guarded fortresses of high culture" (Holdeness 2002: 13) akin to the way in which popular audiences originally embraced Elizabethan drama. With this project the plays would be accessible to the masses when broadcast and also for posterity on video, so the adaptations and images created would have the potential to be influential in the creation of a media identity for Shakespeare in the modern age.

As Holderness suggests, "within that alliance of camera and pen, these discrete ideologies, the scholarly/democratic and the media-populist…must necessarily move towards a devolution of cultural power, an undermining of 'Shakespeare' as a symbol of cultural authority" (2002: 14-15). Whether this actually occurred as a result of BBC/Time-Life Shakespeare is debatable but interrogations of cultural authority are certainly in line with some of the concerns of Jarman. As such it is relevant to look at the BBC/Time-Life Shakespeare project in more detail to discover what its function was, whether it represented a reappropriation of high culture, and what particular identity it created for Shakespeare plays as this will enable an insightful comparison with Jarman's depictions in his *Tempest*.

The Cedric Messina produced plays were considered "straightforward and mundane" with a "lack of imagination" (Vaughan & Vaughan 1999: 117) partly due to artistic and creative restrictions including a concern that the adaptations manifest a very particular type of 'high quality' and 'traditional' production. The so-called 'traditional' approach of the series actually centred on an economic concern by the American partner Time-Life TV's commercial underwriters for saleable 'high quality' which, in this instance, meant "'great directors', 'classical' actors, (and) 'straightforward' productions" (Holderness 2002: 17). As Holderness goes on to explain, the "concept of high quality in fact entailed a conservative respect for traditional values in Shakespearean production" (2002: 17).

The main requirement of this 'traditional' approach was for "interpretations of the plays in appropriately Shakespearean period costumes and sets" (Brooke

2014[78]) that utilised the majority of the original text without alteration. As Medina[79] put it; "we've not done anything too sensational in the shooting of it – there's no arty-crafty shooting at all. All of them are, for want of a better word, straightforward productions" (cited in Holderness 2002: 17). So, due to a dependence on the market, and an insistence on 'high quality' and 'durability' (video and international release) the series ideals of 'democratic recovery' and an 'appropriation of high culture' were smothered by overarching financial concerns. As such, for the most part, the BBC/Time-Life Shakespeare project manifested 'safe' adaptations and images of a straightforward Shakespearean period considered saleable and palatable for international markets (particularly America), and for posterity. In a sense the project can be seen to have operated in a similar way to the heritage cycle of films popular in British (usually English) cinema of the 1980's. These films often depicted visually pleasing heritage images and 'safe' representations of the nation and its culture (often taken to be one and the same in these representations) that could be easily marketed and sold abroad. So, in general the BBC/Time-Life project marketed a safe and limited 'Shakespeare' as an easily saleable product, which chimed with the increasingly consumer focused and financial centred ethos of the late 1970's and the 1980's. A similar remark regarding the function of cultural heritage, this time in relation to Shakespeare tourism, was made by Francis Barker and Peter Hulme:

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[78] Accessed at www.screenonline.org.uk/tv/id/459382 on 29/05/14.

[79] Holderness observes a 'conservative drag' attached to the series due to commercial underwriting, the BBC concern for 'high quality', Messina's cultural conservatism and Miller's naturalism (2002: 18).

No one who has witnessed the phenomenon of midsummer tourism at
Stratford-upon-Avon can fail to be aware of the way in which
"Shakespeare" functions today in the construction of an English past: a
past which is picturesque, familiar and untroubled (2009: 293).

As Holderness points out, there is an inherent and troubling contradiction at the
heart of simplifying heritage projects such as these; the "BBC/Time-Life
Shakespeare was produced in the image of the Corporation itself, as a classical
monument of national culture, or an oppressive agent of cultural hegemony"
(2002: 23). Clearly, the BBC/Time-Life Shakespeare project represented a very
particular way in which cultural texts and forms can be utilised and depicted in
society, and their function and purpose has been discussed at some length here.
It is this very debate that is at the heart of works in Jarman's oeuvre; the history
of cultural representations, their connected ideologies and the ways in which
these have functioned, and continue to function in society. Sitting alongside this
concern and focus, and ever-present throughout the methodology and
construction of Jarman's work, is his felt need for subversive disruption and
penetration of social and cultural boundaries. These boundaries, such as those
revealed in a Renaissance masque or in the economically determined BBC/Time-
Life Shakespeare project, are proven to be exclusionary and reductive.

Jarman's *Tempest* therefore represents something quite different from the
Messina produced period adaptations, in approach, aesthetics and aims. Jarman
applied a 'cut-up' editing and re-arranging technique to the source text which

gave him creative space for interpretation and appropriation. In this way Jarman used Shakespeare's *Tempest* "as a springboard rather than a sacrament" (Brooke 2014[80]) which had a de-hierarchizing effect (meaning, in this instance, a lack of deference to the word and an elevation of the visual) that loosened elements of the play from the structure and organisation of the source text, and allowed Jarman's visual aesthetics room for expression. Jarman's playful handling of the play enabled his creative expression such as the inclusion of camp elements, the re-interpretation of the central characters, and the re-situating and re-imaging of the masque sequence, all of which serve to question and transform the representation and identity of the cultural text.

The approach of this chapter therefore is to interrogate and analyse Jarman's *Tempest* in light of adaptation theory and Jarman's use of, and additions to, the source text with the aim being to show how Jarman used and appropriated the source text, and why additional discourses were brought in to operate alongside the re-appropriated elements of Shakespeare's text. The chapter will debate and discuss what certain additions and changes mean for Jarman's film and the Shakespearean text. This analysis will incorporate the related issues of authorship, representation and identity (adaptation processes), the function of cultural heritage (uses of Shakespeare), and the importance of cultural interrogation and subversion (Jarman's text), therefore demonstrating clear links between *The Tempest* and the discussions of the previous chapters on Jarman's framing and *Jubilee*, and the later chapter on *Caravaggio*. Conclusions

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[80] Accessed at www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/469999/index.htm on 29/05/14.

drawn from these discussions will reveal a consistent set of techniques (such as cut-ups, representations of temporal and spatial discontinuity [merged and layered], and anachronisms) and similar facets of content (often historical and contemporary topics depicted together in order to interrogate representations and identity) which produce and divulge diverse filmic outcomes of representation and meaning.

Adaptation Theory – Jarman's *Tempest* and the question of fidelity

On writing about Jarman's *Tempest* Michael Charlesworth's (2011) analysis and criticism can clearly be seen to operate within the bounds of typical adaptation criticism. Firstly, and with a hint of disapproval, he points out the way Jarman used Shakespeare's source text saying how "Derek cut up the text ruthlessly…intent on converting the play into a film" (2011: 73). Then, using this as the defining technique applied in the film (ignoring the multitude of specifically filmic strategies and aesthetical flourishes) he snobbishly concludes that "as a result the film is really only intelligible to people who know the play already" and that ultimately "Derek's purpose of turning it into a film fails on the level of plot or story" (2011: 73). A contemporary review by Vincent Canby (*New York Times)* is similar to Charlesworth's criticism albeit more negative and hostile in tone opining that "you can barely see through the production to Shakespeare, so you must rely on memory" (again suggesting that knowledge of the play is necessary) and that the film contained "no poetry, no ideas, no

characterizations, no narrative [and] no fun"[81] (again meaning that lack of 'faithfulness' towards the play leads to a failure of narrative and content in the film). Rowland Wymer also noted how *The Tempest* received "two of the most hostile notices…from well-known literary critics" namely Frank Kermode (*The Times Literary Supplement*) and Peter Ackroyd (*The Spectator*) who both particularly "disliked the way the verse was spoken" (2005: 72). To highlight the prejudices and unstated assumptions existent in these criticisms it is important to turn to Robert Stam (2005) and his observations on the typical methodology of adaptation analysis.

Stam's introduction to the 2005 study with Alessandra Raengo looks specifically at the long held biases within adaptation theory. He begins by noting that the "conventional language of adaptation criticism has been profoundly moralistic, rich in terms that imply that cinema has somehow done a disservice to literature" (2005: 3). In contrast, the opinion that cinema can do as it pleases because it is a separate art form is very rare, as Brian McFarlane notes, by way of James Agee, that "voices…querulously insisting that cinema make its own art and to hell with tasteful allegiance, have generally cried in the wilderness" (1996: 8). Charlesworth's use of the term 'ruthless', and then his opinion of the film as failing in terms of narrative clearly confirm that his is the kind of criticism Stam describes as conventional and typical of this particular field. Central and crucial to the rhetoric of adaptation discourse is a belief in the

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[81] Accessed here on 16th January 2014:
http://www.nytimes.com/movie/review?res=9A07EFD81238F931A1575AC0A966948260

superiority of literature; "too often, adaptation discourse subtly re-inscribes the axiomatic superiority of literature" (Stam 2005: 4).

Combined with this inscribed cultural hierarchy are a priori assertions that a central meaning and conclusion can be deduced from a work of literature, and that these evaluations are also fragile and therefore must be preserved and protected. So it is these subjective and restrictive notions which form the basis of whether an adaptation can be considered faithful or not. As McFarlane puts it, "fidelity criticism depends on the notion of the text as having and rendering up to the (intelligent) reader a single, correct 'meaning' which the filmmaker has either adhered to or in some sense violated or tampered with" (1996: 8). Furthermore, as can be gleaned from the crux of these beliefs regarding adaptation, if someone creates a version that is perceived to be unfaithful under these theories they would be deemed to have not only failed the author of the original text but also to have committed an act of vandalism against the 'fragile' and 'true' meaning of the text.

This 'doxa' is supported by a number of prejudices that act as confirmation of the 'subaltern' position of the filmic image compared with the literary word. Of particular relevance here is the anteriority/seniority argument where older arts are considered better due to 'rear view mirror' logic where the passage of time allows the form to garner increased prestige, and as such, the hierarchy positions literature above film, and then film above television (Stam 2005: 4). Other

important adaptation prejudices to keep in mind when considering Jarman's *Tempest* and criticism of it are 'logophilia' which concerns a "nostalgic exaltation of the written word as the privileged medium of communication" (2005: 6) and the related tendency toward 'anti-corporeality'. The latter connects films to the senses and a person's bodily responses, more directly than the written word. This relationship creates another hierarchy where literature feeds the mind and has great depth compared to filmic images which stimulate the body and deal in the surface of things, facilitating yet another way to relegate films as subaltern; "films (are) dismissed as dealing in surfaces, literally superficial" (2005: 7).

The Surface has meaning

It is relevant here to introduce some of Rosalind Galt's (2011) key arguments as she deals directly with the 'surfaces' or decoration in film and attempts to elevate this area of aesthetic analysis and show it be as potentially valid as any other theoretical method of reading a filmic text. In her chapter on 'Derek Jarman and Queer Aesthetics' she discusses, largely through analysis of Jarman's short film work, how his particular use of colour can be seen to rebel against dominant filmic discourses (the "anti-colour thinking of classic film theory" [2011: 75]), and express some of the political aims of queer theory and identity[82], namely the creation of 'spaces' for a queer community to live and articulate themselves freely. The creation of space for the representation of a queer community is

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[82] Jarman himself suggested that "colour seems to have a queer bent" in *Chroma* (2000: 58)

discussed in more detail later on in the chapter in reference to the masque

community depicted during the culmination of Jarman's *Tempest*. Galt suggests

that colour "is where Jarman's films make their stand against hetero culture,

where they propose utopian spaces, and where they locate a valuable queer life"

(2011: 81), and ultimately that colour "is not the surface that prevents deep

meaning" (2011: 89).

With these arguments Galt stresses the value and importance of aesthetics and

sees them as meaningful ideas that can be related to other theoretical issues. In

this, I suggest, she can be seen to tackle "discourses of dominance" akin to what

she attributes to Jarman's use of colour (2011: 76), because, with her elevation of

the value of the decorative, she argues against the dominance of the word as a

lever of meaningful analysis. Galt also observes the tension between mainstream

cinema styles and minority practices, and thus argues for the use of colour

against the common cinematic penchant for naturalism with its inherent empiric

reasoning; "we do not have to keep framing the cinematic as a binarized battle

between reason and image, *disegno* and *colore*" (2011: 81). Here Galt's project

bares comparison with some of the arguments of adaptation theory. Hutcheon

talks of certain adaptations being created out of a "de-hierarchizing impulse, a

desire to challenge the explicitly and implicitly negative cultural evaluation of

things" (2012: xiv preface). Similarly, the rejection of normative methods of

cinematic analysis and the utilisation of alternative representation strategies, in

Galt's analysis of pretty aesthetics and decorative film, questions what

constitutes (inherently and historically biased) cultural concepts such 'value',

'taste' and 'quality'.

It is important to quickly note here that it is not the function of this chapter, nor

the purpose of the thesis, to draw out explicit political meanings from Jarman's

work as Galt clearly does, although there is some reflection on this during the

analysis of the masque sequence. Rather, this chapter finds Galt's observations

useful because they offer a framework of film analysis that values pure artifice in

film form (notably colour and the decorative) as a theoretical idea in itself, and

not as subordinate to narrative or the word. In turn, this theoretically relevant

observation relates to other strands of discourses seen to be in operation within

Jarman's *Tempest*, and a quick comparison is important to note here in

preparation for further discussion during the masque analysis. As mentioned

earlier, the aesthetic technique and discourse of camp also values artifice and

embraces a decorative sensibility. Susan Sontag was the first scholar to roundly

articulate camp and she described it as a 'sensibility' with a "love of the

unnatural: of artifice and exaggeration" (2009 [1964]: 275). The definition, and

subsequent location, of camp, had a resultant impact on that which it had been

discovered within. The effect of acknowledging the presence of exaggerated

aestheticism in something facilitates a transformation whereby cognisance of the

sensibility "converts the serious into the frivolous" (2009: 275) and vice versa[83].

This realisation highlights further comparison between Galt's approach and

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[83] What Sontag calls 'naïve camp' (2009: 282) may well be frivolous but the identification of camp, and things that contain purposeful camp gestures and dialogues, has serious resonances for cultural theory and representational identity.

camp theory, notably that the functional aesthetics within a piece of work "convert one thing into something else" (Sontag 2009: 279). For example, it will be argued later on that, Jarman's intervention into the masque form using an appropriation of the source text and the inclusion of minority discourses and aesthetic practices, represented a détournement which "turned the masque against its own historical moment" (Ellis 2009: 71). These additional elements therefore, converted the early-modern masque form into something else entirely, or as Ellis put it, the appropriations turned "the antimasque into the masque" (2009: 86).

Converting Shakespeare's *Tempest*

> Having decided on the format of a dream film, one which enabled me
> to take the greatest possible freedom with the text, I cut away the
> dead wood (particularly the obsolete comedy) so that the great
> speeches were concertinaed. Then the play was re-arranged and
> opened up: the theatrical magic had to be replaced (Jarman 1984: 188)

Jarman sidestepped many of the potential pitfalls of adaptation, and renders Charlesworth's apparently knee –jerk criticisms quite powerless, by the very thing that Charlesworth took him to task for, namely the cut-up technique (combined with the initial starting point of shooting a 'dream film'). Jarman

chose to utilise this approach to the source text for a number of reasons (aside from his personal interest in, and the influence of, the work of William Burroughs and Brion Gysin). Peake sees the use of cut-ups as a purposeful change in working methodology after *Jubilee* and a creative evolution to strengthen the finished filmic text; "Jarman…made every effort to avoid what he saw as a weakness of *Jubilee*: that he had written too much dialogue" (1999: 265). So, in contrast to the densely arranged script for *Jubilee* that reflected a number of textual influences (punk fanzines, Carl Jung, a Jarman script for a film on John Dee amongst them), the written foundations of *The Tempest* were minimal and experimental. Add to this the "kaleidoscope of projects" being worked on by Jarman and the mixing and coalescing of ideas continually taking place ('palimpsestuous intertextuality), and the cut-up technique represents a particularly useful way by which the director can free himself from the restrictions of adaptation and create something original that can also affectively channel ideas from other creative avenues he was invested in.

Using the cut-up technique enabled Jarman's film to successfully challenge the tendency towards logophilia in adaptation theory, and weaken the potency of critical attacks based on this often unstated doxa, in two central ways. The technique acted as a safeguard for Jarman to ensure that he was ruthless, and thus minimalist, with the amount of dialogue he included (heeding the lessons learnt from *Jubilee*), and it also clearly prevents the dominance of the wording of the source text because the contents have been radically re-arranged, edited and

pulled back together in an entirely new order. It also shows a playful approach to the source text, and the manner of adaptation. As Julie Sanders[84] acknowledges, "the sense of play [is] central to the adaptive instinct" (2005: 7) and she expands on this by stating that "it is this inherent sense of play, produced in part by the activation of our informed sense of similarity and difference…that lies at the heart of the experience of adaptation and appropriation" (2005: 25). Linda Hutcheon describes how a "truly artistic" adaptation must "subvert its original [and] perform a double and paradoxical job of masking and unveiling its source" (2012: 92). The cut-up technique enables this subversion but an 'essence' of the source text is still represented.

'Essences', Intertextuality and the Commentary Adaptation

Moving away from the dominant issue of fidelity, McFarlane highlights the ability of a film with a basis in a source text to capture the 'spirit' or 'essence' of that source text; this, he says, "involves not merely a parallelism between novel and film but between two or more readings of a novel" (1996: 9). This distinction factors in the subjectivity of both the director and the audience, and thus highlights the irrelevance of appreciation based on levels of fidelity; suggesting that, as McFarlane puts it, "the critic who

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[84] In her introduction Sanders also notes the role of bricolage, pastiche and medley pastiche in adaptation practices. Such texts "assemble a range of quotations, allusions and citations from existent works" (2006: 4) and often represent "a complicated blend of admiration and satire at play" (2006: 5). It is important to bear this in mind when considering Jarman's approach.

quibbles at failures of fidelity is really saying no more than: This reading of the original does not tally with mine in these and these ways" (1996: 9). The use of the cut-up technique to simultaneously subvert and unveil the source text facilitates the creation of an ideology that is original to the film and not subordinate to evaluations of the ideology of the original text.

So, having side-lined that restrictive and unilluminating method of criticism we are able to explore, by way of McFarlane, Sanders, and Hutcheon, some of the ways in which a film such as Jarman's *Tempest* can avoid the trap of fidelity and subvert the original text, whilst still capturing the 'essence' of its source material. Alongside the inclusion of 'essences' of the source text is the original and separate ideology of the filmic text. One way to achieve this is through intertextuality which is observable in *The Tempest* specifically via the commentary approach to adaptation, the related pastiche modality and the use of camp aesthetics. For McFarlane intertextuality views "the original…as resource" (1996: 10), and one of many at the directors disposal, all of which combine to form the film's own ideology. McFarlane cites Christopher Orr's (in *Wide Angle* 1984) observation on intertextual adaptations where "the issue is not whether the adapted film is faithful to its source, but rather how the choice of a specific source and how the approach to that source serve the film's ideology" (1996: 10).

Similar to intertextuality is a critical approach that views the film as either a 'commentary' or an 'analogy'; McFarlane cites Geoffrey Wagner (1975) who describes a commentary as a work "where an original is taken and either purposely or inadvertently altered in some respect" and an analogy as a "considerable departure for the sake of making another work of art" (1996: 10-11). A combination of these two approaches applies to Jarman's *Tempest*. Importantly too, Wagner clearly separates film as an art form from the source text (and also elevates the value of film breaking the cultural hierarchy described earlier), which, in a very simple and clear way, frees film from the biases of certain adaptation theory; it is a different medium hence it is a unique work of art. McFarlane also cites Michael Klein and Gillian Parker (1981) who discuss several possible filmic approaches to source material including one which "retains the core of the structure of the narrative while significantly reinterpreting or, in some cases, deconstructing the source text", and another which views "the source merely as raw material [and] the occasion for an original work" (1996: 11)[85]. Again, a combination of these two approaches seems the most relevant way to describe Jarman's appropriation and manipulation of Shakespeare's play.

Moving on from McFarlane's work, Sanders (2005) and Hutcheon (2012) present similar and clear arguments about what denotes a playful commentary adaptation. The ability to 'play' with a text via appropriation or addition, and for

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[85] Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan (1999) also offer similar categories regarding types of cinematic interpretation.

this to be recognised by an alert audience/spectator is at the heart of a successfully subversive adaptation. Sanders also finds this playful, knowing quality to be at the heart of works of pastiche which for her are a "complicated blend of admiration and satire at play" (2005: 5). What is clear from this quotation is that Saunders recognises the active nature of such works. Pastiche works are defined as being 'at play', therefore they are in the process of being created, with the wise receiver (the audience) armed with their subjective grasp of "palimpsestuous intertextuality" (Hutcheon 2012: 21) ultimately reaching an informed conclusion regarding the purpose and meaning of such works. For these adaptation theorists when re-imagining a text "the sense of play [is] central to the adaptive instinct" (Sanders 2005: 7), and Sanders further explains the importance of this in terms of both creation and reception later in her book:

> "It is this inherent sense of play, produced in part by the activation of our informed sense of similarity and difference between the texts being invoked, and the connected interplay of expectation and surprise, that lies at the heart of the experience of adaptation and appropriation" (2005: 25).

The expectation being borne out of what is known of the Shakespeare play itself, and the way it has been told, performed and reworked previously. This can also include the spectator's opinion on the cultural position of the play, and a mixture of critiques and opinions of the play picked up by the

'informed' spectator. The surprise elicited from Jarman's *Tempest* could arise from the re-arrangement and abridgement of the play via the cut-up technique, the use of white actors to play Caliban and Sycorax, the historically inaccurate settings and costumes, the inconsistency in invoking time and space in the film, and the re-positioned masque scene featuring the mariners and Welch's solo goddess. The experience of disparity between expectation and what is actually seen, acknowledged and absorbed by the spectator crucially requires a type of knowledge that Hutcheon calls 'cultural memory'. This means that for the active and potentially subversive adaptation to function effectively "as audience members, we need memory in order to experience difference as well as similarity" (Hutcheon 2012: 22). For example, knowledge of the position and content of the masque in the play would lead to surprise when confronted with its position and content in Jarman's film. This type of adaptation can be usefully labelled a commentary because the additions and alterations comment on the source text and its previous versions whilst also suggesting the function and meaning of the new version.

There is a parallel here between the adaptation approach described by Sanders and Hutcheon, and the Sontag's enunciation of camp. Much like a commentary adaptation camp is playful, intertextual and knowing, requiring an alert spectator to pick it up and thus recognize the presence of the sensibility in something. Hutcheon observed that an adaptation can be

a "transgression of and critical commentary upon the politics of the tradition of the adapted text" (2012: 22). In the case of Jarman's *Tempest* camp-ness facilitates a number of transgressions and effectively comments on the source text and its own mise-en-scène. Hutcheon also notes that an 'artistic' adaptation must "subvert its original and perform a double and paradoxical job of masking and unveiling its source" (2012: 92). This can also be accomplished by the transformative properties of camp and its related aesthetics. Being in possession of the camp sensibility, or being able to detect it, mean that one is always alive to duality (in a text or object) at least, and often this can progress to an awareness of existent multiplicities in representation and meaning. Camp "convert(s) one thing into something else"[86] leading Sontag to state that "the camp sensibility is one that is alive to a double sense in which some things can be taken" (2009: 281).

To illustrate this she gives the example of the effect of applying "the lens of camp" (2009: 281) to the Art Nouveau movement. On the one hand this was a political, moral and revolutionary movement "spurred on by a utopian vision" whereas camp sees objects of the Art Nouveau movement as "disengaged, unserious, [and representative of an] aesthetes vision" (2009: 281). This is the 'double sense' and is akin to Hutcheon's 'double job' of simultaneously masking and unveiling a source in adaptation practice. As

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[86] Relatedly Ellis likens camp to alchemy which also transforms one thing into another. Other similarities include that it is "practiced by a marginalised group, dependent on specialised knowledge and representative of an entire philosophical outlook" (2009: 83). Likewise Sontag describes camp as "a private code, a badge of identity even, among small urban cliques" (2009: 275).

will be described below, the 'doubling' is visible in Jarman's *Tempest*, in particular in the masque sequence with the mariners "Busby Berkeley-style" (Ellis 2009: 74) performance and Elisabeth Welch's appearance and song. These acts both relate to Shakespeare's *Tempest* masque (by commentary and intertext), and at the same time do not; and are examples of Jarman's aestheticism and filmic idiolect. Sontag expands what she means by the camp 'double sense' thus: "[it] is not the familiar split-level construction of a literal meaning, on the one hand, and symbolic one on the other. It is the *difference[87]*, rather, between the thing meaning something, anything, and the thing as pure artifice" (2009: 281). Therefore, it is the recognition and activation of the 'difference', and the resultant multiplicity of meaning (and meaninglessness) it accepts, that imbues camp with a theoretical and practical validity when interrogating cultural texts.

The deconstruction of the source text allows the intertextual figures of commentary adaptation and camp to birth the film's unique ideology. Indeed, the way in which the source text is utilised (rather than its actual content) has distinct impact on the film's construction, appearance and ideology. Graham Holderness describes how the "deconstructionist effects of *The Tempest* operate…at the levels of textual adaptation and dramatic interpretation: casting, setting, *mise-en-scène*, costume: and sexual politics" (2002: 84). Holderness also notes how the approach of deconstruction leads to, and allows for, a "confusion of historical period" which is "exploited

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[87] This is my emphasis on the quotation.

through both setting and costume" (2002: 86). Ellis finds similar things at

play in Jarman's *Tempest* and discusses what he calls its 'punk heritage'

and aesthetics (2009: 66-67). He compares the film to *Jubilee* saying that

whereas that film "oscillates between the renaissance and a postmodern

punk apocalypse, *The Tempest* goes one step further by combining the two

time periods, offering a punk version of Shakespeare's play" (2009: 67).

What Ellis is suggesting here is that the punk nature of the piece (cut-up

technique, style of costumes, set design, use of iconography and

anachronism) fractures and subverts Shakespeare's work and the history

and culture surrounding its representation – which is why Holderness

identifies a "confusion of historical period" in the piece. Ellis calls this

'confusion' of settings and costumes "a palimpsest or layered historical

space that includes multiple temporalities" (2009: 67). The confusion is

intentional, and the way the film subverts expectations of time and space[88],

and plays with representational cultural tropes such as heritage and

national history[89], are crucial elements in its successful interrogation of

English culture and its activation and celebration of difference. As Ellis

suggests, "the film's real interest is not just in the play or its historical

moment, but also in the history of the play's transmission and thus the

play's historical and cultural significance" (2009: 67), enabling the film to

offer a wide-ranging investigation into cultural heritage. Ultimately Ellis

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[88] Ellis cites Colin MacCabe regarding this element of the film: "It is the fracturing of representational space which makes *The Tempest* such a subversive film, for it sets itself not on an island but in a ruined aristocratic house, an imperial monument. If the viewer grasps that this is a house, there is no way that he or she can organise the space that is presented" (2009: 70).

[89] Ellis suggests that setting the film in a ruined country house both subverts heritage iconography (as *Jubilee* did) and "comments on the rot at the heart of the nationalist imagination and its investment in nostalgia" (2009: 70). Indeed, there is little or no nostalgic sentiment to be found in Jarman's *Tempest*.

understands the film "to be interested not so much in history, but in how history works in the national imagination, the means through which it is reproduced (literature and film), and its favourite stories" (2009: 70). In *The Tempest* this culminates in the masque sequence which will now be analysed with reference to the discussions above.

Jarman's masque

Jarman's *Tempest* ends with the masque ball scene and the subsequent freeing of the spirit, Ariel. The masque sequence is composed of two set pieces that take place in the colourful and gaily decorated hall where Miranda and Ferdinand are celebrating their upcoming union. These set pieces comprise of, in the first instance, the mariner's dance, and secondly the entrance of Elisabeth Welch as a Goddess and her subsequent performance of the song '*Stormy Weather*'. Both of these elements of the sequence can be considered as representative of the text's possession of a camp sensibility. Sontag describes camp as "a certain mode of aestheticism" particularly "in terms of the degree of artifice, of stylization" (2009: 277), both of which are represented here through the mise-en-scène, the costumes and the movement of the actors. Sontag also describes how the camp sensibility is "alive to a double sense" (2009: 281), where meaning can be

attached to things[90] whilst the very same objects and texts can also be considered as representing an exercise in "pure artifice" (2009: 281). Sontag summarised that the "hallmark of camp is the spirit of extravagance" and its "outrageous aestheticism" (2009: 283). So, it is important to look closely at the aesthetics, style and function of Jarman's masque in order to consider why Jarman constructed and depicted the masque in the way that he did. Does it represent a "culturally loaded" (Sanders 2006: 21) appropriation of a canonical text, or an exercise in cinematic style and 'pure artifice' that is creatively necessary (in the context of Jarman's filmic idiolect) in order to transform elements of the source text into a filmic text? It is plausible to suggest that the 'double sense' of camp discourse is alive here – elements of the film could well be interrogating the cultural history of the text, whilst other moments of aestheticism could be functioning as just that. This will be explored further below by way of scene analysis but first it is relevant to assess what, and how, Jarman's film actively changed and altered the concluding acts of the play. Jarman pointedly remarked that "the theatrical magic had to be replaced" in order for his "dream film" (1984: 188) imagining of *The Tempest* to work. So it is necessary to note the divergences from the play, in order that I may suggest the possible intentions and meanings behind this. This will facilitate a discussion about the function of both the Shakespeare text and Jarman's appropriation of it.

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[90] Such as the Art Nouveau example discussed earlier in the chapter.

Shakespeare and Jarman: Differences and intentions

As has been previously stated, the film concludes with the masque scene and Ariel's release from Prospero's capture. This is in contrast with the play which features the masque in the lengthy Act IV (of a five act play) alongside the prevention of Caliban's plot to murder Prospero (which, in the film, is mostly a comedic aside). Act V of the play has an air of reconciliation and change about it, as well as a feeling of forgiveness and hope for the future: Alonso, Antonio and Sebastian are released, rebuked by Prospero, then forgiven and their ship is repaired; Alonso is shown that his son Ferdinand is not dead and he then blesses the union of his son and Prospero's daughter Miranda; Trinculo and Stephano are reprimanded by Alonso for their plotting against Prospero; Caliban will become the master of his island again after the departure of Prospero to Milan; Ariel is freed; Prospero agrees to resume his dukedom in Milan, and, in a lengthy speech, surrenders his magic by breaking his staff and drowning his books.

Though Jarman's film does conclude on a narrative of forgiveness for Alonso and his men, and the release of Ariel, there are interesting and notable absences from, and additions to, the original narrative which have some import to the film's ideology. The scene in which Prospero abjures his magic and related knowledge was one of the first to be excised by Jarman who, as Peake informs, was in agreement with English Renaissance historian Frances Yates in feeling that "here Shakespeare was simply pandering to the politics of the time,

throwing away the magical past to make his contemporary audience feel

comfortable" (1999: 266). The English society that made up the contemporary

audience for *The Tempest* was experiencing major changes in cultural

approaches and outlook. Again Peake describes Jarman's interpretations of *The*

Tempest; "he saw Shakespeare both celebrating and bidding farewell to a

Renaissance world of magic which, in the person of John Dee and others, had

become discredited under the new materialism exemplified by James I" (1999:

265). On reading the abjuring of Prospero's magic and knowledge as a

contextually necessary capitulation by Shakespeare Jarman removed this and, in

the subsequent film, depicted the magic and learned studying of Prospero

regularly. Indeed, the masque sequence is clearly a magical feat facilitated by

Ariel under the control of Prospero.

A crucial intervention here is Jarman's appropriation of the masque form and

the subversion of its message regarding the community depicted by it (discussed

more later on). Jarman has also positioned the masque as the pivotal sequence in

the film (both in terms of concluding the narrative and for level of visual and

aural spectacle), and made it the receptacle of much of the film's ideology

expressed through Jarman's idiolect. In this sequence the discourses of camp,

alchemy, drag, utopianism, the blues (as observed and discussed by Ellis [2009:

82-84]) and Galt's theory concerning the meaningful resonance of the decorative

image can be evidenced. Whereas the reconciliations of the play occur in Act V

after the masque, Jarman ensures that it "is the masque…that becomes the most

important moment of forgiveness or redemption in the film" (Ellis 2009: 86) as well as exemplifying the appropriations and subversions carried out in this adaptation of the Shakespeare play.

Jarman's aesthetic film is not concerned with the minutiae of Shakespeare's plot and subplot here, nor the political reconciliations (and inevitable compromises) achieved through discourse, rather it wishes to demonstrate the power of art and the power of the spectacle. The spectacle here is utopian in tone because it is inclusive and blurs the division between performer and spectator[91], the insider and the outsider. This is conveyed by the spectacular masque and its inclusion and depiction of alternative practices. Ellis further highlights this difference in focus in Jarman's film when he describes how "all attention [in the film] is…focused on the spectacle, and the political question of who will rule Milan becomes secondary to the larger question of the values of the resultant community" (2009: 86).

It is quite possible that the issue of political rule and political reconciliation is largely absent from Jarman's adaptation because it implies domination over another, or at the very least, a compromise that is based on a self-centred tug of war between two parties. Jarman's masque and conclusion of *The Tempest* does

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[91] The Elizabethan masque usually ended with a dance that involved the audience, thus breaking the division between spectator and actor. However, this was in line with the re-establishing of order in the masque narrative, and the participation of the audience represented their ideological capitulation with societal order. For Eliis, the societally prescriptive nature of the union of actor and spectator during the conclusion of the masque meant that "any possibility of dissent is banished along with the antimasquers" (2009: 72).

not depict, or seek to reach, a union of compromise, or a series of concessions based on political reconciliation; moreover, it instead depicts an imperfect but tolerant community of individuals and practices. It is true that Caliban is rebuked by Prospero, but he is not excluded from the masque when in situations before he would have been ejected or utilised as a servant. Similarly, the coming together of Miranda and Ferdinand is less manipulated, less political and more organic in Jarman's version. There is arguably much less manipulation, dominance and control depicted in Jarman's film (and when there is any it is usually rather benign, or magical) than in Shakespeare's play. Ellis, reflecting on the discourses of the play, once again offers an opinion on the differences of the two pieces:

> In the play, the political reconciliation looks more like revenge and power mongering, at least insofar as Prospero's relation to his brother is concerned, and the carefully stage-managed romance and marriage is to a large degree the capstone to Prospero's triumph. In the film, it is not as clear that Prospero has manipulated the lovers, and it is Ariel who opens the doors onto the masque and presents it to both on-screen and off-screen audiences (Ellis 2009: 86).

Another major difference in the conclusion of the narrative is that, in Jarman's film, Caliban does not regain the domain of his island. This thread from the source text is not a central element of Jarman's film. Caliban's plight is of

secondary importance to the film's narrative (which largely focuses on the two pairings of Prospero and Ariel, and Miranda and Ferdinand, and culminates in the diversity of the masque) and his appearances in the film often have a comedic or absurd air. Of greater importance to the film than seeing the displaced native regaining his territory, is the visualisation of the 'rich and strange' union of people who attend the masque (which cuts across signifiers of status, gender, culture and aesthetics). By this Jarman's masque can be seen as a celebration of diversity and aesthetical freedom, hence it is this that takes precedence over Caliban's narrative which is arguably less significant in relation to the film's ideology.

Ironically, in the decade after the film's release Caliban's narrative in the play would become a crucial element for postcolonial critics re-appraising the play in light of the decline of empire[92]. Jarman's film can certainly seem to be largely silent on this issue, albeit only specifically (for example Jarman could have depicted Caliban as black[93] or made much more of the territorial theft and subsequent enslavement made by Prospero on Caliban). Generally however, the film's tone is onside with Postcolonial thought and its interrogation and questioning of enforced order alongside its reckoning of the implications and results of domination, exploitation and oppression. Instead of utilising Caliban

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[92] See Graff & Phelan (2009: 265 – 387) and Vaughan & Vaughan (1999: 98 – 108) for discussions regarding *The Tempest* and issues of imperialism, colonialism and the challenge of Postcolonial criticism.

[93] Jarman has commented on this issue of representation saying that "it was very possible to make Caliban black, but I rejected it because I thought it would load the whole film in one way" (Jarman quoted by Kate Chedgzoy, cited in Ellis [2009: 75].

as a vehicle to interrogate forms of societal order and its repercussions, Jarman takes possession of the masque for this purpose. For example, it could be said that Jarman's depiction of the Goddess of the masque as an elderly black woman (a racial 'other' in traditional masque form terms) makes an intervention into both the play itself and the masque, highlighting and celebrating new representations and diverse ideologies that would be valued by postcolonial thought and criticism. Further alternative representations and practices such as camp, alchemy, utopianism and the blues 'queer' Jarman's masque community, and in doing so question and subvert historical modes of societal order and its representations, through the power of the aesthetical spectacle. Indeed Ellis observes how "the film reverses the masque's historical role in representing the white European body as the incarnation of order" (2009: 83).

It is pertinent here to conclude this discussion with an assessment of the intentions of both endings to *The Tempest*. Shakespeare's ending consists of Prospero renouncing his magic and occult knowledge, reconciling with Alonso's party and agreeing to resume the dukedom of Milan, freeing Ariel and leaving the island once again in Caliban's control. All of which, on the surface, mirrors the masque form because its conclusion offers a restoration of order and a message of hope for the future (Prospero will be back in his 'rightful' political position; Miranda and Ferdinand will be married). However, the tensions running throughout the play concerning the nature, implications and repercussions of rule indicate that the 'order' depicted by Shakespeare is not

necessarily an unproblematic, essentialist concept. Elements of Shakespeare's play can be read as questioning the foundations of societal order and organisation whilst also hinting at the practices, discourses and representations that could be excluded and lost by the implementation of such order or rule. The masque celebration which concludes Jarman's version of *The Tempest* acts as both a microcosm of his reading of the play, and its purpose and ideology as a film. Societal order and the restoration of 'normality' are interrogated here, and subverted by the inclusion of alternative influences and practices. It is possible, and indeed plausible, to argue that with the appropriated masque and the representation of its resultant community, Jarman is making more explicit, strands of discourse already alive in the play. Jarman's depiction of a brave new world order in his conclusion of *The Tempest* develops latent elements in Shakespeare's play and contemporises and personalises them in accordance with his filmic idiolect.

Unveiling the masque

The masque is a celebration, and central to the conveyance of the general thrust of *The Tempest*, both play and film. Indeed Jarman saw it as *the* thing saying that "The Tempest is a masque" (Jarman 1984: 203). Elements of the mise-en-scène combine to demonstrate this. The hall is decorated with bright colours, mostly yellows and reds alongside much white, and assorted flower garlands

organised in arches, and there are many leaves scattered throughout the room. These adornments act to amplify the contrast with this scene and the preceding scenes of the film, which were dark and shadowy. Likewise the lighting in this scene is high key allowing all areas of the room, and the people within it, to be depicted clearly, which again is in contrast with the rest of the film which often used low key lighting generated from actual light sources such as fireplaces or candles to render props and characters in shadowy chiaroscuro.

The characters' costumes match the set design with red, yellow, white and gold being key colours; Ferdinand is dressed in white with gold detailing whilst Miranda wears a dress adorned with flowers. The other key costumes of the scene are Ariel's who wears a white suit and that of the goddess who is bathed in soft, delicate light and wears a gold and yellow dress adorned with gossamer wings and headdress. It is relevant here to discuss Galt's (2011) theory of the decorative and pretty in film, as this approach values the aesthetical and elevates a typically marginalised film practice. Galt observes that Jarman's "aesthetics have been marginalised in avant-garde and British film cultures[94]" (2011: 76) and suggests that one reason for this is a widely held aesthetical prejudice which dismisses colourful and aesthetically inventive films.

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[94] This is perhaps not the case anymore as the Jarman 2014 BFI series of films, talks and exhibitions attempted to subsume and position Jarman's oeuvre into the centre of British film culture.

Galt also firmly connects the use of colour in Jarman's films with a political

utopianism "that opens up spaces for queer life" (2011: 76). This is an important

argument for my analysis because, as well as chiming with discourses of camp

and drag[95] in terms of creating spaces for queer representation, Galt's

recalibration of the framework of aesthetical and filmic analysis clearly elevates

images rather than positioning them below, or subordinate to, words, in terms of

meaning or value. As such, Galt's methodology relates to Jarman's filmic project

because her theory interrogates cultural boundaries and exclusions, and has a

belief in the power and importance of visual art to convey alternate

representations. These two central tenets facilitate the creation of space for

varied expression alongside hopes for a less arbitrary, reductive cultural future.

There is a questioning, and challenging, of the boundaries of representation in

Jarman's filmic project which I think Galt importantly locates, and interestingly

connects with queer discourses (an insight that Ellis [2009] also notices). When

assessing the whole of Jarman's filmic corpus through the prism of 'the pretty'[96]

Galt sees how "the films bring together colour and queer politics as questions not

only of representation but of form" (2011: 76). Moving forward in her analysis,

Galt suggests that this inquiry is achieved via Jarman's "composed surface of the

image" where "abstraction and politics, the image and the word" (2011: 81) are

brought together. Furthermore, Galt's assessment of the visual methodology of

Jarman is shown to discount a widely held ideological prejudice[97] which suggests

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[95] Both of which can be observed in the masque scene, analysed later in the chapter.
[96] The pretty is the shorthand expression of her innovative methodology for analysing aesthetic-based films.

[97] Galt's examples of ideological prejudice in practice are the London Co-op filmmakers including Peter Gidal and his "austerity of form" (2011: 79) and Michael O'Pray's assessment of Jarman's *Imagining October* (1984)

that "prettiness works against political meaning" (2011: 80), a prejudice that can also be extended to camp and other ostentatious practices such as drag. Decorative approaches were, Galt argues, devalued precisely because they are colourful, aesthetically adventurous and spectacular as this can be connected to the vacuous or frivolous which is often deemed as unworthy of intelligent analysis. As Galt observes, "politics does not inhere only in formal austerity but can be discerned also in the lush surface of the colourful image" (2011: 81), for example the aesthetics of Jarman's masque sequence. She sees "profligate colour" as "necessary to imagine a queer organisation of social value" and that it is with the use of colour that "Jarman's films make their stand against hetero culture…propose utopian spaces, and…locate a valuable queer life" (2011: 81). Similar thoughts are voiced by Ellis who analyses Jarman's masque community in detail and finds that the values of the community "are expressed through minority aesthetic practices" and that these practices "share a faith in the redeeming power of art and spectacle" (2009: 86) (the make-up of Jarman's masque community will be discussed further below). The inclusion of a multiplicity of colour and the creation of decorative images, in Jarman's masque helps facilitate the subversion of the masque form and the representation of an alternate cultural community (more discussion of this community later in the chapter).

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where "the film's beautiful painted images inevitably work against its political critique rather than forming an integral part of it" (2011: 79).

Finally, the actual physical location of the hall is important for the conveyance of the scene. The action takes place in a circular hall (decorated with arches of flowers to suggest the proscenium arch[98] of a theatre) and this shape is emphasised by the whirring motion of the camera when it tracks the movements of the mariners as they dance their celebratory jig. As mentioned before, this set piece, alongside the appearance and performance of the goddess, is crucial to the mood, tone and aesthetics of Jarman's masque. The physicality of the space where the scenes are performed is crucial here because it is mirrors the movements of the mariners, much in the same way that the set design matches the costumes of the characters. In doing this, it could be argued that Jarman intrinsically links the actors and the inanimate objects in the scene, which is not only aesthetically coherent but has purpose in relation to the action taking place here. So, the costumes, set design, lighting and location combine to create a tone for the sequence and the action that takes place within it, a technique which echoes Jarman's sentiments in *Dancing Ledge* regarding film design; the "key to a film can be its design[99]…when design is integrated into the intentional structure, and forms part of the dialectic" (1984: 186). The physicality and appearance (enhanced and informed by costume, set design and lighting) of the bodies in the masque hall mirror the hall itself and show Jarman's masque to be constructed of intricately composed images that integrate, and interrogate, representation and form. It is now important to look more closely at the two set pieces of the sequence, namely the mariners dance and the performance of the

[98] The main characters all enter the masque through the arches of flowers and the scene unfolds beneath them. This parallel was clearly meant by the director; "In *The Tempest* we paint pictures, frame each static shot and allow the play to unfold in them as within a proscenium arch" (Jarman 1984: 194).

[99] Jarman talks disdainfully here of "designers who dress the film in a kind of wrapping, like a doily around a birthday cake" making clear his desire to create purposeful aesthetics rather than set dressing.

goddess, in order to further establish the possible purpose and meaning behind Jarman's re-modelled and re-made masque.

'Camping up' or 'Queering' *The Tempest* via a modern masque

"His [Jarman's] aim, as with the early-modern masque, is to create through spectacle the grounds for a new community" (Ellis 2009: 71).

The masque scene begins with the sound of a fast, frantic sailor's horn pipe to which the mariners[100] from the King's ship (whom Ariel has just woken from being 'spell-stopped') reel around and perform a tightly choreographed dance, their movements matching the energetic pace of the music. The mariners dance and music acts as a counterpoint to the pace and movement of the previous scenes of the film, and this, alongside the mise-en-scène and the costumes mentioned above, convey the very different celebratory tone of the scene. The actors who perform the mariners dance are dressed as navy sailors and their costume as well as their movement suggests the 'camp' nature of this set piece. As has been mentioned before, this is not part of Shakespeare's masque scene so Jarman has chosen to alter and add to this for a reason, and this reason is arguably to depict an extravagant filmic aestheticism that gives the masque, and

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[100] A primary influence on the creation of this modern-day masque was a story Jarman was told about Jean Cocteau taking twenty one sailors to his friend Francis Rose's twenty first birthday party (Peake 1999: 266).

Jarman's *Tempest* a new identity, separate from the adapted text. This alternate

masque creates a different vision and a different set of politics in and through

the aesthetics.

Ellis (2009) also sees the arrival and performance of the sailors as an example of

camp discourse in filmic action; he suggests that camp "is the modern equivalent

to alchemy[101]" not only because it is "practiced by a marginalized group,

dependent on specialized knowledge and representative of an entire

philosophical outlook" but importantly because it "transmutes substances" and

"performs salvage operations" (2009: 83). For Ellis, in this instance it

'transmutes' and 'operates' "in spectacular ways, by turning the British navy, one

of the prime agents and symbols of British imperial glory, into benign and

vaguely silly entertainment" (2009: 83). This subversion of iconographic

identification[102] is achieved by the combined effect of the costumes and the

movement of the actors, whose dance is closely followed by the camera. Ellis,

interestingly and insightfully, details how Jarman 'transmutes' the early-modern

masque form into a performance that is "functioning to reconstruct [the]

fractured [English] nation" (2009: 83) via the inclusion of alternative discourses

and "minority aesthetic practices" (2009: 86) such as alchemy and camp (more of

which is revealed later on), and the decorative, colourful images observed and

analysed by Galt (2010). The representation of these practices in the masque

subverts the masque form and enables Jarman to use that form to comment on

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[101] As discussed at length earlier in this chapter.
[102] Akin to similar interventions made by Jarman into the iconography of the English country house and related symbols of 'heritage' or national pride.

English cultural history. This is achieved by the depiction of an alternate masque community that does not eradicate perceived bodies and discourses of 'disorder' (in this instance represented by queer, camp, drag, alchemy and the black female goddess).

At one stage during their dance the mariners embrace one another and whirl around in each other's arms (previously they had been tapping each other on the shoulder), and the camera roves in for a close-up briefly capturing the pleasure on people's faces before their bodies rush past in a blur. The camera then gets in close and low as bodies jump and race in circles across and out of the frame. At this point we can also see Ariel seated in the distance at a similar level to the camera, making it feel as though we are seated at the side of the hall observing the dancing like he is. The proximity and positioning of the camera again reinforces the energy of the scene and the celebratory tone of the masque itself, and also the expression of filmic aestheticism that is unfolding in front of the lens.

The camera continues to position itself at the side level with Ariel as the mariners circle again with their arms in the air. Then, they stop in a circle, begin clapping, and take it in turns to wheel around, do handstands, forward rolls and ecstatic leaps into the air. For the last moves, they embrace one another once again, this time holding each other around the waist with the other arm in the arm (similar to a salsa stance), and finally one leaps into the air supported by

the other. The mariners dance can be seen as serving two purposes here.
Narratively it is a representation of the ecstasy they feel after surviving the
storm that hit the King's ship and being freed from their spell induced slumber.
On the other hand it also confirms the camp aesthetic suggested by their initial
arrival because, as has been noted above, they perform a tightly choreographed
dance that facilitates gay abandon and a number of moments where they can
embrace one another. It is also relevant to note that an alternative practice
related to camp is in operation in the scene, namely that of drag. This is
represented by the arrival of Caliban and his co-conspirators who have dressed
up in feminine clothes before entering the hall of the masque. Ellis notes that
drag allows the wearer to self-consciously perform "styles of femininity that are
recognizably outmoded" which functions to fracture history and "any sense of the
natural body" (2009: 83). Ellis then positions this intervention next to the typical
narratives of the early-modern masque form and finds that by "including the
conspirators wearing drag…in the final vision of community, the film reverses
the masque's historical role in representing the white European body as the
incarnation of order" (2009: 83). So drag can be seen to be operating alongside
the other minority aesthetic practices of alchemy, camp and Galt's theory of the
use of colour, in this subversively alternative and inclusive masque. The
mariners' extravagant interlude acts as a precursor to the arrival and
performance of the goddess (at which point the mariners form an enrapt
audience). Here, as with the mariners dance, the masque sequence again
represents a love of style and aestheticism without concerning itself with the
hierarchical, reductive and exclusionary concepts of taste or propriety such as

operated in the early-modern masque form[103]. This ethos is liberating, and an aesthetic and performance based liberation is at the heart of camp; as Sontag puts it, "camp taste supervenes upon good taste as a daring and witty hedonism" (2009: 291).

The air of camp playfulness continues with the arrival, through the flower garland archway and in a blur of multi-coloured confetti, of Jarman's goddess, Elisabeth Welch. As noted earlier, the original masque featured a number of different goddess so Jarman's representation of these as one elderly black songstress[104] is a subversive adaptive technique that endows the new masque with requisite alternative meaning. Again, like the mariners dance before it, of upmost importance here are costumes and movement, as the mellow yellow gossamer goddess gently meanders across the floor of the confetti-speckled hall, watched in awed silence by the Greek chorus-like mariners (who are again seen embracing one another, this time in peacefully pleasured passivity).

The goddess sings the Cole Porter number *Stormy Weather* as she makes her way to and fro the celebration of colourful aesthetics that is the masque hall, which begs the question of why such a song at a happy gathering? Well, there are a number of possible explanations for this song choice, one being that it

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[103] In Jarman's masque, figures that contemporise 'anti-masque' representations, in contrast with the traditional masque form, do not perform a disordered dance and are not banished by a god prior to the restoration of order. Instead they can be considered as representing a new, inclusive and tolerant order.

[104] Peake also highlights this describing Welch as "all three goddesses rolled into one" (1999: 267).

refers narratively to the tempest (a literal example of stormy weather) that

Prospero visited upon the King's ship. Also, outside of the diegesis of the film,

Welch's first appearance on the London stage in 1933[105] had featured the song

and she would go on to perform it regularly, so it may well have chosen with the

knowledge that it was a standard in her repertoire. Ellis also notes that *Stormy*

Weather has long been a standard song of black divas (2009: 84) which means

that the songs inclusion in the masque is in concert with the representation of

black women in the masque's subversive vision of an alternative community

which values minority aesthetic practices.

Jarman has also said of the meaning behind the song choice that "I don't want to

bless the union as Shakespeare did, because the world doesn't see the

heterosexual union any more as a solution. Miranda and Ferdinand may go into

stormy weather"[106]. However, this facet of Jarman's belief (perhaps an example

of rationalising after the fact) is not immediately evident from the mise-en-scène,

aesthetics and overall tone of the sequence. With his claimed refusal to bless the

heterosexual union as a solution, Jarman could be referring to the way he has

appropriated the masque form, and subverted its restoration of order to include

figures and representations traditionally considered as signifying disorder. The

masque seen here arguably depicts an inclusive, tolerant alternative community,

and so this gathering would rest less weight on a politically motivated,

heterosexual coupling such as Miranda and Ferdinand. In this light, the union of

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[105] Peake (1999: 267).

[106] *International Herald Tribune* 14.5.80 (told to Mary Blume) cited from Peake (1999: 266).

Miranda and Ferdinand could be taken to represent a traditional, and in the case of Shakespeare's play, politically reconciled coupling and one that excludes other types of union.

Bearing the play's coupling in mind, the film, as has been noted earlier, does not highlight the manipulated nature of the coupling of Miranda and Ferdinand. It instead depicts this as an organic attraction that eventually leads to celebration amidst the two quarrelling factions of Prospero and Alfonso. As such, I do not find sufficient evidence here to suggest that Jarman's masque purposefully seeks to criticise heterosexual unions, and moreover, Miranda and Ferdinand feature in the resultant masque community as much as the representations of minority aesthetic practices. They are not barred from the celebration, or replaced by a homosexual union for example. So, *Stormy Weather*'s function here seems to be to provide a gently subversive aural accompaniment to a performance that, traditionally, would have climaxed in the restoration of a (reductive, exclusionary) type of societal order. Stormy weather, the unpredictability of natural forces, has its place in Jarman's masque (and filmic text as a whole) and its presence here interrogates and questions the artificial and fragile nature of societal order, and celebrates this fact.

Relatedly, Welch singing *Stormy Weather* is a further example of the depiction of a "marginal discourse invested in transformation" ('the Blues') (Ellis 2009: 84) represented in Jarman's masque alongside alchemy, camp, drag, and the use of

decorative colour in film. Emphatically Michael O'Pray reads it as a counterpoint to previous elements of the film: "Elisabeth Welch's rendering of 'Stormy Weather'…[throws] into relief the other levels of representation within the film from nineteenth-century Romanticism to Hollywood pastiche and high camp" (1996: 117-118). Similarly Ellis views the song "as a pointed intervention in the climax of the film, putting at the centre of order a voice from the other side of that history" (2009: 84). Both statements confirm how Jarman's re-modelled and re-made masque subverts expectations (for a masque narrative and for *The Tempest* narrative) by involving alternative and minority aesthetic practices in its vision of community. Once again, Ellis makes an incisive observation regarding the way in which Jarman uses the masque "to recuperate the strain of utopian discourse that runs through the play[107]" (2009: 84). So, Jarman's masque community therefore, in Ellis's reading, is a version of utopia where previously excluded and persecuted discourses and peoples are included in a tolerant society. A look at Jarman's own writings in *Dancing Ledge* on what attracted him to make a version of *The Tempest* does hint at some utopian sympathies ("forgiveness" in order to "plan for a happier future") but these are tempered by a realistic bent ("know who your enemies are"): "The concept of forgiveness in *The Tempest* attracted me; it's a rare enough quality and almost absent in our world. To know who your enemies are, but to accept them for what they are, befriend them, and plan for a happier future is something we sorely need" (1984: 202). With his *Tempest* Jarman interrogates English culture and history by way of subversions and the inclusion of minority aesthetic practices. Jarman's aesthetic

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[107] Ellis identifies Gonzalo as the vestibule of utopian discourse in the play (2009: 84).

articulation serves to highlight cultural prejudices, historical exclusions and the arbitrariness of societal boundaries. As a result these representations can facilitate hopes for a 'happier future' where alternative ways of being are accepted.

Concluding remarks and positioning *The Tempest*

Akin to the way *Jubilee* utilised punk, *The Tempest* utilises Shakespeare and the early-modern masque form in order to explore cultural representations and re-think a classic text. Cultural tropes are depicted, then subverted, and alongside this alternative representations are highlighted and difference celebrated. The masque sequence, as we have seen, is an attempt by Jarman to queer Shakespeare and the landscape and cultural heritage of his work (a process that would continue in a more explicit fashion with Jarman's use of Shakespeare's sonnets in *The Angelic Conversation* [1985]). In terms of adaptation theory Jarman appropriated what he wanted from the Shakespearean text, in accordance with his filmic idiolect and the nascent ideology of the film, clearly using "the original…as resource" (McFarlane 1996: 10). In summary, Jarman's version of *The Tempest* bears out Christopher Orr's observation on cinematic adaptations because here "the issue is not whether the adapted film is faithful to its source, but rather how the choice of the specific source and how the approach to that source serves the films ideology" (cited in McFarlane 1996: 10). As has

been discussed, the film is a richly playful version and this tendency is held by theorists to be "central to the adaptive instinct" (Sanders 2005: 7) alongside its subversive qualities which Hutcheon deems as necessary in the creation of a "truly artistic adaptation" (2012: 92). So, Jarman's film takes the Shakespeare play and the early-modern masque form and interrogates its representations, meanings and ideologies alongside a similar exploration of contemporary concerns (camp, queer, cultural and societal boundaries). The resultant film applies the cut-up technique to the play and the world of the film (the settings, costumes and masque), a process which fractures time and space, and the representational signifiers of these. In turn this facilitates the depiction of alternative cultural representations in terms of the possible reading and meaning of Shakespeare, and the 'rich and strange' union of peoples during Jarman's masque sequence. Homogeneity and reductive cultural categories are taken to task in this *Tempest*, whilst the differences of cultural and textual interpretation are activated, included and celebrated. The following chapter continues the focus on methods of cultural interpretation, and contextualises them within the British film culture of the 1980s. It considers how the filmic text *Caravaggio* approaches history and representation, via the film's appropriations of paintings by the titular artist that, due to their positioning and filmic style, become purposefully positioned pastiche reproductions.

Chapter Four:

"Ugly, isn't it? Nice frame[108]" – Repositioned representations in *Caravaggio*

Jarman's *Caravaggio* represents an idiosyncratic interpretation of a number of Michelangelo Caravaggio's paintings alongside aspects of his life via particular kinds of reproductions of, and references to, paintings from the Italian baroque and renaissance painter's canon (the uses of which will be analysed thoroughly later on in chapter as this provides crucial evidence of the film's purpose and attitude towards history and culture). Once again, as in *Jubilee* and *The Tempest*, one of the central concerns in this film is the role of art and culture in terms of representation and interpretation of histories, past-ness and identities. The film offers an interrogation into the function and purpose of artistic representations and highlights the transition of painterly methodologies and notions into cinematic ones. The concentration on representation in the film, and the context of the period in terms of trends in film culture and the machinations of the British film industry[109], allows for reflection on debates surrounding what constitutes a 'national cinema'. Differing conceptions of national cinema abounded in the 1980s and within critical discourses since written about the

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[108] Baglioni (Jonathan Hyde) offers his opinion on Carvaggio's '*Amor Vincit Omnia*' [*Profane Love* in the film].
[109] This chapter positions the film-industrial context, and the film culture of a particular period, as key factors for an understanding of the operations of a filmic text. The importance of such context, and the influence of this on possible textual meaning, further reduces the validity and effectiveness of an auteur approach to film analysis (recall the discussion in Chapter One), as the latter method often obscures important ambiguities, allusions, tensions, and nuances (of text and context) that can be brought out with this approach.

period, and *Caravaggio* raises a number of interesting questions concerning cultural representation and the depiction of heritage (as *Jubilee* was shown to do in Chapter Two through uses of the punk modality, and the depiction of two temporally separate time periods which facilitated a pastiche approach; and as *The Tempest* was shown to do in Chapter Three through appropriations of Shakespeare and the early-modern masque form, and the inclusion of the camp modality).

For example, Jarman's film, by depicting and recreating Caravaggio's paintings and aspects of his life in a potentially subversive manner, could be seen as representing a counterpoint to traditional notions of historical authenticity, when in fact this approach arguably helps to illustrate the ambiguities of cultural representation, thus offering an intriguing interrogation of history and culture. Jarman recalls in the published scripts for the film that he is "obsessed with an interpretation of the past" (1986: 44) and, as will be detailed later in the chapter, his interpretation is quite different from that of traditional art history (the 'archaeological' approach [1986: 45]), artist biography films[110] or the period films of his contemporaries working in Britain (such as director Hugh Hudson, or the director and producer team of James Ivory & Ismail Merchant, or even the poststructuralist work of Peter Greenaway[111]). So, with that in mind it is

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[110] Such as *Caravaggio* (1941, Goffredo Alessandrini), *Moulin Rouge* about Toulouse-Lautrec (1952, John Huston), *Lust for Life* about Vincent Van Gogh (1956, Vincente Minnelli), *The Agony and the Ecstasy* concerning Michelangelo and the Sistine Chapel (1965, Carol Reed) and more recent work like Julian Schnabel's *Basquiat* (1996) or Ed Harris's *Pollock* (2000).

[111] An analytical scene comparison later in the chapter will highlight the differences of these directors in approaches to history and past-ness.

important to state and describe clearly exactly what lines of inquiry this chapter is going to take.

Questioning *Caravaggio*

The central question the chapter seeks to explore is: what is the film actually doing in terms of its function/s and purpose as a text within the British film culture of the 1980s? This is important because it connects to all the other analytical questions regarding the film itself, and relates to influential extra-textual concerns such as the industrial contexts of the time and the film's position within British cinema of the period. An important question to ask in these terms is: is *Caravaggio* a biographical work, a wider celebration of art and the artist, or an interrogation of the process and purpose of artistic reproduction? Furthermore, the film will be situated within the context of the contemporary British cinema and film industry, as well as the related scholarship, to enable a thorough examination and analysis of the film's function and purpose. Sheldon Hall's argument regarding a refashioning of the heritage film debate (in Murphy [ed.] 2005) will be utilised here because, aside from his valid and sensible suggestions for expanding and improving the assessment of 'heritage films' in British cinema, he uses the flaws of previous heritage film scholarship to highlight major weaknesses in British film debate as a whole. The crux of his argument is that critical constructs like heritage cinema (based on a

'mainstream of heritage' [2005: 195]) offer a narrow assessment of British filmic identity because so many potentially relevant texts are marginalised and excluded. Therefore, the sorts of texts excluded (of which *Caravaggio* is given as an example by Hall [2005: 194] should actually be brought into the debate in order to establish vital points of contact and lines of convergence, between texts previously or otherwise considered as binaries.

For example, in a debate regarding British cinema of the 1980s, pitching what Andrew Higson regards as the 'heritage cycle' (1993) of films against 'art-cinema' or 'avant-garde' approaches to national past-ness (for example, the works of Jarman and Greenaway or examples from the Black British Film Collectives such as *Passion of Remembrance* [1988]) would typically result in an evaluation of difference and a confirmation of perceived boundaries[112], further developing an aesthetic separation[113] already established. However, if one was to dispense with the categorisations involved and the theoretical boundaries this throws up, the areas of convergence and points of contact between these disparate films would be fascinating and insightful to consider. It is true that many differences in the approach, purpose and aesthetics of films exist (and always will) but to begin to

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[112] Note that these boundaries and critically guarded areas are almost always clearly separated in edited collections on British cinema, such as those by Andrew Higson (1996), Justine Ashby & Andrew Higson (2000), Robert Murphy (2005) and Lester D. Friedman (2006). Sarah Street's work (1997) also similarly segments British cinema, again highlighting division by naming her chapters on modernism and independent cinema 'Borderlines'. Amy Sargeant (2005) is more successful at illustrating points of contact between disparate films and film practices – her study utilises decades as its dividing lines of content.

[113] The notion of 'quality cinema' would perhaps also play a role here linking bigger budgets, well-known actors, narratively driven and conventionally attractive mise-en-scène to a definition of quality and an acceptable national cinema. Meanwhile the lower budget films with experimental mise-en-scène and presentation, and often lacking scripts or a core concern for narrative, are defined as a cinematic 'other' produced, exhibited, distributed and viewed by 'independents'.

assess the identities of British cinema effectively debate must progress past analysis of difference and continuous reference to "particular critical constructs" (Hall 2005: 194), and be more inclusive. This is not to say that connections are to be drawn where they do not exist, but rather that points of connection between texts must be considered equally to points of difference. Hence *Caravaggio* will be located within an appropriate British cinema context (and one in which, as will be established via discussions about Channel 4, funding plays a central and influential role).

It is relevant here to mention the interconnected, and often discussed, issue of 'national cinema' because this concept can also be interpreted as a construct based around a perceived unified identity much like Higson's heritage cycle, and akin to that, would benefit from expansion and amendment. John Hill (in Duncan Petrie's BFI working paper from 1992) offers an historical reflection on the idea of national cinema[114] saying that it usually implied "a tight, symbiotic relation between films and audiences and a clear, unified version of national identity and national preoccupations" (1992: 16), which, as a concept, makes clear that films which did not conform to this narrow brief would be excluded, marginalised or ghettoised as minority concerns. Hill's formulation of a contemporary concept of national cinema is relevant for this chapter, and the thesis as a whole, because of its inclusivity and lack of reductionism. Hill's national cinema would be inclusive of multiple and varied practices and types of

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[114] Interestingly, Hill pulls up Higson's formulation on national cinema (*Screen* 30/4, Autumn 1989), highlighting a major weakness in the way in which Higson takes ideas of 'national specificity' to mean an 'imaginary coherence' and 'a unique and stable identity' (1992: 16).

filmic project; usually with a complex connection to, and between, British and personal identity without ignoring connections or differences or resorting to reductive essentialisms to prove things – much like arguments that can be drawn from aspects of Jarman's film work. Hill argues "that it is quite possible to conceive of a national cinema which is *nationally specific* without being either nationalist or attached to homogenising myths of national identity" (1992: 16). Hill's national cinema would be "critical of inherited notions of national identity" and would not "assume the existence of a unique or unchanging 'national culture'" which would enable it to be "quite capable of dealing with social divisions and differences" (1992: 16). Citing Paul Willemen, Hill completes his refocused concept of national cinema by suggesting that the above critical qualities would enable it to "address successfully the complexities of nationally specific social and cultural configurations" (1992: 17). So, in practice, Hill (and Willemen's) conceived national cinema would take into equal account films such as *Caravaggio*, *A Room With A View* (1985, James Ivory), *My Beautiful Laundrette* (1985, Stephen Frears), *Chariots of Fire* (1981, Hugh Hudson), *Handsworth Songs* (1986, John Akomfrah), *Comrades* (1986, Bill Douglas), *The Gold Diggers* (1983, Sally Potter), *Distant Voices, Still Lives* (1988, Terence Davies) *Britannia Hospital* (1982, Lindsay Anderson) and *The Draughtsman's Contract* (1982, Peter Greenaway) when assessing the identity and character of the British film culture of the 1980's, and its dealings with past-ness, heritage and the application of this to contemporary issues.

With this in mind, the second question this chapter wishes to explore is in what way/s does Jarman's *Caravaggio* approach the past? This will be considered particularly in terms of the ways the film uses the paintings of Caravaggio, and the contexts it situates them in, and clearly this relates to the central question above regarding the purpose and function of the film. Thirdly, after considering function, purpose and approach, it is possible to give a reading of what *Caravaggio* is arguably suggesting with regards to representations and interpretations of history and culture, and the repercussions this can have in terms of opinions, identities and the future. For example, is it fair to say that *Caravaggio* demonstrates that 'past-ness' in terms of history and culture is a construct and a process that is open to revision and amendment if effectively played with or interrogated? Finally, with all of the above considered, does *Caravaggio* relate to Jarman's earlier film works? With the additional caveat, does it even need to? Ignoring the potential bias in the initial question regarding the assumed interconnectedness of works by the same director (an 'auteur' based assessment), it is important to look into this because, in a number of ways, *Caravaggio* represented a significantly different project from Jarman's previous work. It received funding from Channel 4 and the BFI so had a much bigger budget that previous projects (although it was still a low-budget feature by typical film industry standards), contained more recognisable actors than before (including people familiar from television work alongside stage/screen actors with longstanding careers like Michael Gough and Nigel Davenport), and the plot (the work, life and loves of a famous painter) certainly seemed more 'mainstream' than Jarman's recent work such as the avant-garde occult-focused

piece *In The Shadow of The Sun* (1980), and the Super-8 Shakespeare's Sonnets collected in *The Angelic Conversation* (1985). This final question allows for reflection on the approach and style of a film as well as the related issues of film categorisation. Once again, it is necessary to look into the British cinema and industrial context of the period which saw significant fluctuation and change in terms of the constitution of the 'avant-garde', 'independents', the 'national cinema' and the major players of British 'art cinema' (for more on this topic see O' Pray in Higson [1996: 178 – 190] discussed later in the chapter)[115].

The paintings; display, depiction, pastiche

Continuing the line of filmic inquiry and aesthetic interrogation laid out in the previous chapters on *Jubilee* and *The Tempest*, this chapter aims to debate exactly what is going on in *Caravaggio,* interpret why such a subject was chosen (like punk music, and Shakespearean adaptation before), and, as a result, what the film ultimately achieves in relation to ongoing subtexts identified in Jarman's film work. Broadly and briefly, these subtexts (representation, history, identity and subversive stylistics) can be said to coalesce within Jarman's film work in order to explore the function and status of art and culture. This is explored via a twin track approach that utilises elements (cultural, aesthetical)

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[115] Also of interest here is John Hill's *British Cinema in the 1980's* (1999: 31-70) for context on film policy and the relationship of film and television in the 80's. Duncan Petrie (ed.) (1992) also provides interesting reflections on British film-making and production in the 1980's – particularly from himself, Hill, Colin MacCabe and James Mackay.

from both the 'past'[116] and the contemporary, and derives much interpretive interest from the layering and merging of texts and signifiers that occurs as a result of this mixture of referents. The way that this approach can be seen to enliven and reconfigure vital elements from the past has important repercussions for the advancement of filmic, and societal culture – namely that the liberating emphasis on representational and interpretive difference battles historical homogeneity and the dominance of essentialist and reductive cultural categories. Therefore, stable identification and interpretation is challenged.

One of the central ways in which *Caravaggio* does this is by utilising twenty one paintings from across the artist's career and making them a distinct part of the active mise-en-scène of the film. The film represents these twenty one works of Caravaggio in three major ways: displayed in the frame somewhere as a finished piece (all copies done by production designer Christopher Hobbs); as a series of reproductions which are depicted as a work in progress in the studio (for example as a tableau of models; or half-finished on the easel/canvas); and thirdly, and perhaps more complexly, as an allusion to one of Caravaggio's paintings. In terms of the latter method, the film offers a representation by capturing a visual reference to one of Caravaggio's paintings[117] embodied by an actor in the film and caught in action by Jarman's camera and Gabriel Beristain's cinematography.

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[116] Here 'past' means artefacts from the historical and cultural past that either refers to an earlier period or offers a representation or reproduction of such a period. This includes paintings, plays, music, costumes, props, stories, and films.

[117] A detailed analysis of the methodology of the inclusion of the twenty one Caravaggio paintings is to be found later in this chapter.

These swift visualisations (only lasting a couple of seconds of screen time) work as allusions to other texts because the framing of the character and their actions are captured as part of the plot process of the film and not as an explicit depiction of a painting (like the tableau scenes). So the fleeting intertextual reference is concealed from the audience unless they are particularly knowledgeable about Caravaggio's canon. For example, towards the end of the film Del Monte is framed writing at his desk as part of the plot of the film, but this frame also alludes to Caravaggio's *Saint Jerome Writing* [1605]. The implications of this allusive method (and the other two methods of representing or referring to Caravaggio's paintings mentioned above) will be addressed shortly but it is worth suggesting that a form of cinematic pastiche (a topic investigated by Ingeborg Hoesterey [2001] and Richard Dyer [2007]) is at play here that represents a particular pro-active and subversive approach to the past. Hoesterey, with reference to earlier techniques developed by Viktor Schklovsky ('defamiliarisation') and Bertolt Brecht ('alienation'/'estrangement'), discusses the distancing that cinematic pastiche can allow highlighting that the approach makes transparent the "constructed-ness of its representations" (2001: 45). Therefore, pastiche can operate as a revealing artistic and critical device for interrogating the heritage and culture of representation. Dyer, in his chapter entitled 'The Point of Pastiche', similarly observes the transparency of pastiche, finding it to be an approach that always acknowledges its constructed and contrived nature. Pastiche can therefore facilitate a critical appraisal of our knowledge of the past. As Dyer suggests, "what we know of the past…we know through the art that is left behind" and works of pastiche crucially "sets in play

our relationship to the past" (2007: 178 via the foregrounding of its constructed nature. This foregrounding enables critical and analytical intervention to explore art's purpose and functions.

The position and purpose of the paintings in *Caravaggio*

It is now apposite to offer a synopsis of the content of *Caravaggio*, in terms of narrative, characters and the use of the paintings, in order to enable an analytical unpicking that will help answer the research questions mentioned above. Looking closely at the content and stylistic approach of the film will then also facilitate an effective contextualisation with other British films of the period and within the industry itself (both crucially influential critical and analytical factors) helping to further establish and define exactly what *Caravaggio* is doing and saying as a British film text from the mid-1980s.

After the title sequence of an artists' canvas being repeatedly painted black whilst sounds of the sea are heard on the soundtrack, the narrative begins with the dying Caravaggio (played by Nigel Terry – whose features closely resemble a self-portrait of Caravaggio) in 1610. The location is Porto Ercole where Caravaggio has fled to in exile with his mute assistant Jerusaleme (Spencer Leigh), and from the narration it is relayed that they have been "four years on the run". Historically this refers to an incident that took place on 28th May 1606

when Caravaggio fatally wounded one Ranuccio Tommasoni in a brawl (Stefano Zuffi 2012: 157). The character of Ranuccio, and Caravaggio's involvement with him, was heavily dramatized and fictionalised by Jarman and, as will be seen later on, was utilised by the director as an emotive narrative device around which to structure the film (alongside the focus on the paintings). The next scene goes back in time somewhat (representing the film's first time-slip) to when Caravaggio took charge of Jerusaleme as his assistant; Caravaggio (still Nigel Terry) is seen renting a studio space from an old woman whom he also pays for Jerusaleme's services. They go up to the studio space and the first instance of the representation of Caravaggio's paintings is seen with the completed *Medusa* (1597)[118] shield being displayed in the studio; Caravaggio playfully uses it to scare the boy Jerusaleme. The narration informs the audience that Jerusaleme represents Caravaggio's St John, "a companion in my loneliness", and an allusion to the painting *St John the Baptist* (1602) is made by framing the adult Jerusaleme (highlighting another brief time-slip) reclining next to a sheep.

For the sequence which follows, Jarman goes back further in time in order to depict the youthful Caravaggio (played by Dexter Fletcher). This relatively short sequence featuring Fletcher (around ten minutes of film time compared with the entirety of the rest of the film where Caravaggio is played by Terry[119]) as the 'Bacchus' Caravaggio also represents the section of the film that contains the

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[118] The texts that aided my studies by providing colour illustrated chronologies of Caravaggio's work were Timothy Wilson-Smith (2012), Stefano Zuffi (2012) and Walter Friedlaender (1955).

[119] Apart from the end sequence of the film which depicts the boy Caravaggio played by Noam Almaz.

largest and most rapid amount of allusions to, and depictions of, Caravaggio's work. Firstly, there is a street scene showing Caravaggio and a friend sitting on a step; *Basket of Fruit* (1596) is displayed on the step, and his friend is in the process of peeling some fruit in a discrete allusion to *Boy Peeling a Fruit* (1592/93), Caravaggio's earliest known work. A rich tourist (Vernon Dobtcheff) enquires about buying *Basket of Fruit*, and also wishes to know if Caravaggio has more examples at home (alluding to buying his bodily services also). The film then cuts to a frenetic scene at Caravaggio's flat, the atmosphere of which is conveyed via a 360° panning shot from the middle of the room, cutting between the point of view of the client and that of Caravaggio; the client is now stripped to the waist and clearly disorientated from trying to keep pace with the 'Bacchus' Caravaggio who is gleefully skipping around the room, tossing his wine bottle from hand to hand before grabbing a painting knife and threatening his quarry. During this scene there is an allusion to the painting *Boy with Basket of Fruit* (1593)[120], and, as Fletcher sits down exhausted from his taunting of the older man, he reclines on his bed with the wine bottle and the fruit, and places a crown of vine-leaves onto his head ala Bacchus, the god of wine and intoxication, and the subject of several paintings by Caravaggio (in this case the allusion is to *Bacchus* [1596] which depicts a more seductive and healthier young god than the next painting represented in the film).

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[120] In this painting a young, healthy boy offers a basket of fruit to the viewer. From the expression of the boy, and his position in the frame, he could also be considered as offering himself to the viewer; analogous to the way Jarman's young Caravaggio has offered his artwork and his body to the client.

After seeing the young Caravaggio become Bacchus by taking on the accoutrements and lifestyle of the god, the next scene illustrates the vulnerability of the artist (and his approach to life) because he is seen in recuperating in a sanatorium where Cardinal Del Monte (Michael Gough) visits him to offer his patronage. Here he is shown as physically frail due at least in part to his indulgences and also vulnerable in terms of his art because he is in need of someone to further his career. The finished painting known as *Young Sick Bacchus* or *Self Portrait as Bacchus* (1593-94) is displayed; this allows for a great contrast with the previous scene and its allusions to a healthy, happy Bacchus, or the young Caravaggio with his basket of fresh, succulent fruit. This painting depicts a pallid young man, and represents an aesthetic truth and an intriguing example of artistic approach for Caravaggio, as emphasised by the dialogue between Del Monte and the sick artist: Del Monte asks of Caravaggio, "why did you paint the flesh so green?" to which he replies that the painting "isn't art, I've been ill all summer". Here art equates to truth, and truths are viewed as perfectly applicable subjects for art, suggesting the roots of Caravaggio's later approaches to biblical subjects where he utilised people he knew, people from the streets he walked through, and himself, as the characters in the paintings. This notion of representing the past in the present is one which the film takes to its heart and does with the various representations of the paintings.

After the Bacchus episode, Del Monte acquires *The Lute Player* (1595-96), which is displayed completed on an easel, as the price for Caravaggio keeping his otherwise illegal painting knife. Caravaggio runs the knife across his mouth causing blood to flow, and lending dramatic gravitas to the motto on the implement, "no hope, no fear". Jarman's visualisation of this gesture also puts one in mind of the modern day motto "put your money where your mouth is", because the young artist is shown putting a tool of his trade across his mouth, perhaps to prove to Del Monte how sincere he is in regard to his quest for truth and a degree of contemporary realism in art (this sequence and the *Young Sick Bacchus* scene also help to highlight how Caravaggio's approach to art differs from the mannerist style which was popular in Italy throughout much of the 1500s). Del Monte teaches Caravaggio to read, bombarding him with philosophical quotations, and pointedly suggesting that 'the task' at hand is the "repeating of an old truth in a new language". This quotation, which could be taken to refer to the remit of painting (in terms of the diegesis of the film) or cinema itself (if thinking self-reflexively), is usefully punctuated[121] by an allusion to *Boy Bitten by a Lizard* (1593-94) made by Fletcher's Caravaggio as he comically attempts to evade the lustful lunges of his patron. Del Monte leans over towards Caravaggio, who is sitting at the foot of Del Monte's bed reading, and touches his body in a possessive manner. Caravaggio registers this contact with shock and surprise, and jerks his body away until reaching a point where he freezes with his arms and hands recoiling from the advancement (whilst on Fletcher's voiceover a resigned but humorous "Oh! Time to go!" is heard).

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[121] Suggesting that Jarman's film, and in particular his use of Caravaggio's paintings, represent an example of how to repeat older cultural traditions and artefacts in a new, contemporary cinematic language.

The allusion to *Boy Bitten by a Lizard* here displays a lightness of touch from Jarman, as well as a level of complexity that is worth exploring a little further for a moment. The original painting by Caravaggio depicts "one of the most effeminate of his boy models, with a rose in his hair" (Wilson-Smith 2012: 34) and captures the moment of impact when a lizard, nestled in a cluster of cherries and other fresh fruits, bites the boy's middle finger on his right-hand. Wilson-Smith suggests that "the rose behind the ear, the cherries, the third finger and the lizard probably have sexual significance" referring perhaps to the "shock"…and "pains of physical love" (2012: 34) visited upon someone so young and possibly virginal. In addition to this metaphorical notion, the aforementioned effeminacy of the model is further conveyed by the loose-fitting robe he wears which droops to display a purposefully positioned right shoulder, and delicately poised hands, especially the (unharmed) left-hand which is raised up to show the palm and variously extended fingers in what appears to be a heavily exaggerated and forced gesture.

If it was not for the role of the lizard here, allowing these exaggerations to be considered as reactions to being bitten, the boy could now very conceivably be described as performing a camp gesticulation (recall his effeminate appearance and adornments). Indeed, the conceivably camp aesthetic at work in this painting is exactly that which has been appropriated by Jarman and translated into a cinematic allusion that both recalls the original work, and also puts one in mind previous examples of exaggerated cinematic camp-ness such as the

numerous episodes of the *Carry On* franchise (1958 – 1978). As detailed previously in the thesis, camp is a viable form of cultural articulation and expression (noted influentially by Susan Sontag [1964]) and one which, although often interpreted as merely playful (in a pejorative sense) and based on superficiality, also possesses an undeniably powerful political and satirical potential. The camp approach, through its playful extravagance and celebrations of aestheticism, can ridicule and undermine dominant or oppressive traditions, social conditions and gender politics by highlighting difference and the constructed nature of societal and cultural categorisation.

Chuck Kleinhans, on noting that contemporary popular culture is "obsessively self-reflexive", locates the transparently self-reflexive camp in a strong critical position to "challenge dominant culture" (2002: 188). This is the case, argues Kleinhans, because camp approaches offer "critiques (of) the dominant culture…in the dominant culture's own terms" by way of an "especially acute ideological form containing active contradictions" (2002: 188) – for example, The Village People could be said to have represented a parody of mass culture and 'straight' society clichés surrounding gay identity whilst also being a huge crossover success that went on to perpetuate and fuel those very clichés. Kleinhans states that camp "defines itself in difference from the dominant culture" (2002: 195) and camp aesthetics, by way of exaggerating a facet of performance or representation, can use that articulation to comment on, and lampoon, previous depictions in the culture. James Tweedie describes the

inclusion of camp elements in *Caravaggio* (for example, some of the acting styles like the one employed by Jonathan Hyde as Baglione) as "moments of estrangement" that act as "markers of an alt-history of both Caravaggio's time and Jarman's" (2003: 399). So, similarly to pastiche in terms of self-reflexivity and its potential distancing effect, the aesthetic approaches of camp-ness can foreground and therefore critique representations, and this very action can emancipate and celebrate disparate identities.

So, in the example of the filmic reference to *Boy Bitten by a Lizard*, Jarman, by way of concealed allusion (a method of signalling, therefore, which required familiarity with Caravaggio's back catalogue of works – a suggestion, or expectation, of audience intertextuality[122]) is offering an update to the original work by emphasising the 'camp-ness' within the representation of the boy in the painting. Jarman's articulation foregrounds the exaggerated reactions of Caravaggio's subject, exemplified in film by Fletcher's comedic gesticulations, frozen movement and impudent voiceover dialogue. This playful but knowing depiction can then be linked to techniques of camp aestheticism and applied back to Caravaggio's original work. The playful irreverence of the scene therefore, can be seen to subvert the seriousness of historical art criticism and appreciation (the 'aura' of the original, and the concern for the perpetual positioning of art as indicative of 'high' culture), and enable Jarman to successfully resituate the

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[122] Julie Sanders mentions how effective appropriation "relies on the reader's foreknowledge of the work of art that is being alluded to and appropriated for the purposes of narrative" (2005: 147).

filmic reference to the painting for the contemporary audience (gay culture, cinematic camp).

Another form of cultural recuperation and active interpretation is arguably at work here too, namely that of pastiche, described by Dyer as a "form of influence" that can be placed "next to camp" (2007: 9). Pastiche has previously been analysed and discussed with reference to *Jubilee* in this thesis, and its methods of interrogation and re-appraisal can also be evidenced in this film in the way Jarman chooses to reference and manipulate the paintings. Before moving on to a thorough theoretical discussion of this methodology of appropriation it is necessary to continue the above analysis of the film, albeit more briefly, in order to summarise the ways in which the Caravaggio's paintings are utilised and referenced in the rest of the film (primarily focused on the adult Caravaggio [Nigel Terry] and his developing love triangle with Ranuccio [Sean Bean] and Lena [Tilda Swinton]). It is not pertinent to the discussions of this chapter to continue to provide a thoroughly detailed description and analysis of all the film's uses of the paintings because the majority of the displays after *Boy Bitten by a Lizard* are of the tableau for a number of paintings, an area covered adequately by James Tweedie (2003)[123]. The 'work in progress' tableaux in the film are also arguably less interesting, in terms of appropriation and pastiche, because they are unconcealed and form an obvious and straightforward tool of the film's narrative structure – marker points for developments in the career or

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[123] Tweedie discusses how the tableaux manipulate time (in terms of suspension and expansion) and space (in terms of the 'depthless' locations depicted). Rowland Wymer (2005) also analyses some of the paintings used.

love-life of the painter; insights into the artist's studio and works in progress, as opposed to the meta-textual manipulation, and corruption of fixity, inherent in the pastiches of the works alluded to by characters' actions and gestures (the one exception being the depiction of the tableau for *Cupid/Love Victorious* [1601-02] which sees Jarman actively subvert the original and appropriate it for his film – more on this tableau below).

After Caravaggio eludes the amorous advances of Del Monte the tableau for *The Musicians* (1595) is seen, and this represents the only tableau presided over by the young Caravaggio. Ranuccio (Sean Bean) enters the story next, with the adult Caravaggio (Terry) gazing at him across a wine bar whilst he is playing cards with several other men (in an allusion to *The Cardsharps* [1594-95]). Interestingly, scenes featuring Ranuccio almost always contain visible or aural anachronisms, for example, in this scene a radio can be heard whilst cigarettes, laminated playing cards and newspapers can be seen (Ranuccio sports a folded page from one as a hat). This twining of Ranuccio and anachronism suggests the timeless nature of the story and its telling, whilst acting as a device of distanciation/estrangement[124], and also aesthetically denounces the possibility or plausibility of historical accuracy and authenticity. Anachronisms play a noticeable role in the next section of the film; where Caravaggio is commissioned by Giustiniani (Nigel Davenport – seen adding up Caravaggio's fees with a digital pocket calculator during dinner with Del Monte whilst waiters in

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[124] Hoesterey utilises Brecht's strategies of distancing to help explain the purpose of cinematic pastiche; distancing the viewer from the text facilitates a "break up (of) its autonomy...and "reveals the constructed-ness of its representations" (2001: 45)

contemporary uniform are in attendance) to paint *Cupid/Love Victorious*

(referred to as *Profane Love* in the film), followed by the tableau for the painting,

and the unveiling party (replete with jazz music, magazines, flaming Sambucas

and ice cream). James Tweedie points out that "strategies of distanciation coexist

with attempts to establish alternative forms of identification" suggesting that

"*Caravaggio*'s moments of estrangement are at the same time markers of an

alternative history of both Caravaggio's and Jarman's time" with the "oddly

familiar props"[125] (2003: 398-99) acting as a visual signature of this different

identity.

Interestingly Jarman makes his most noticeable intervention into the depictions

of Caravaggio's tableaux during this section of the film, by using Pipo (Dawn

Archibald), a fully-clothed grown woman, as his model for *Cupid* as opposed to a

naked male youth akin to Caravaggio's model. Now, it is possible that this

radical substitution has more to do with Jarman wishing to avoid the thorny

subject of homoerotic paedophilia[126] than anything purely aesthetic or

aesthetically subversive, but it is worth considering another interpretation for a

moment as it may shed some light on one of the ways in which the film

approaches representations from the past. Sue Harper views this scene as one of

the examples of Jarman making "a space for women" who "appear in a positive

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[125] Tweedie's work here puts one in mind of Frederic Jameson who observed how, in late capitalism, objects had become instruments of communication that disrupt time leading to "a Nietzschean affirmation that there is no past, and thus, finally, no time at all" (1995: 11-13)

[126] In the script book for *Caravaggio* Jarman stresses that "*Profane Love* was impossible to reproduce in the present moral climate". "Caravaggio's venture into paedophilia produced great problems" for the director and he chose to cast a clothed Dawn Archibald, "and to restore the paedophilia in the soundtrack with Caravaggio's relation to the fictional character of Pasqualone, his first love, turning the painter himself into the *putto* who trampled over Art and Culture" (Jarman 1986: 75).

light" (2000: 147) making Jarman's suggestive substitution seemingly quasi-political. She mentions how *Caravaggio* includes a focus on "profane women" defined by Harper as "the courtesans and tumblers, whose beauty and agility are celebrated" (2000: 147), with Pipo as Cupid being the primary example of this. Harper goes on to describe the *Cupid/Love Victorious* scene, emphasising the sensuous grace of Pipo's 'performance' (and its suggestive power) whilst the contented and relaxed Caravaggio gazes on: "with extraordinary flexibility and control, she pivots until she does the splits and her foot nestles behind her ear. At this moment, she looks intently at the globe and then back, with a mocking expression, at Caravaggio and the audience. She could enfold or engulf the world"[127]. Here it is Pipo who has taken control of her representation, and not the painter because he does not order her back into position, or demand that she keep still (like he has done to previous models), and he is not seen painting her. Caravaggio is content to look on as Pipo's performance takes the power of creativity (and authorship) back from the artist and positions it within the domain of the autonomous participant, if only for a brief time. Jarman's appropriation and reconstitution of Caravaggio's work by applying a revisionist adjustment to the gender, and the creative power of the model (even if the seeds of the idea came from a need to avoid undesirable subject matter) arguably represents a radical interrogation of cultural representations of gender, and suggests the potential emancipatory power inherent in depicting a subversion of this. Alongside this, the intervention can also be regarded as a playful pastiche

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[127] Harper has a high opinion of Jarman, describing him as "a film-maker for woman as well as men, and in his virtuosity, compassion and radicalism, is an artist for all time" (2000: 148). She also compares him very favourably to Peter Greenaway's representations of women, and particularly the tone of *The Draughtsman's Contract* which is viewed as an example of "posturing pseudo-philosophy" where "puns and quotation-hunting were a substitute for real intellectual labour" (2000: 152).

of Caravaggio's style and subject matter whilst suggesting, through the scene's depiction of an enrapt Caravaggio, the pleasures that alternative representations can bring to an audience.

The rest of the film is primarily taken up with illustrating the developing attraction and love between Caravaggio and Ranuccio: seen with the tableau for *The Martyrdom of St Matthew* (1600) featuring Ranuccio as St Matthew; the allusion to *Doubting Thomas* (1602-03) when Ranuccio stabs Caravaggio; the tableau for *John the Baptist* (1604)[128] with Ranuccio posed as St John. The female side to the love triangle, Lena (Swinton), also influences Caravaggio's art as well as his feelings. Caravaggio's attraction to Lena leads to her posing for the *Penitent Magdalene* (1593-94), and her tragic death is emphasised by the inclusion of her body in the tableau for *Death of the Virgin* (1601-03). The latter, by way of the positioning of a dead body within the frame, acts as a precursor to the film's final allusion to a Caravaggio work when the deceased adult Caravaggio takes the place of Christ in an allusion to *The Entombment* (1602-04)[129].

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[128] This is a different painting of John the Baptist than the one alluded to earlier featuring Jerusaleme (a work from 1602). Later in the film Jerusaleme is seen in the 1604 pose too which foregrounds his importance to the filmic Caravaggio as opposed to the wayward and disloyal Ranuccio.

[129] A completed version of *The Entombment* is visible in the background just prior to the tableau for *Death of the Virgin*, when Del Monte comes to Lena's resting place to bless the body. This visual clue further identifies *Death of the Virgin* as a narrative precursor to Caravaggio's own death and subsequent bodily incorporation into one of his own paintings with *The Entombment*.

The final allusion to a Caravaggio work also represents the first example of a concealed tableau in the film, and one which also complicates the notion of temporality. Nigel Terry and the other actors are positioned precisely as one would imagine the tableau for *The Entombment*[130] but Caravaggio is not depicted at his canvas working on the painting (because in terms of the plot he is now deceased). Instead, the tableau is stumbled upon during an Easter penitents' parade by the child Caravaggio (Noam Almaz) and his companion Pasqualone, who, via previous sections of the voice-over, is known to be Caravaggio's first love and sexual encounter (and an entirely fictional character created by Jarman in order to restore an element of the paedophilic subtext removed from the *Cupid/Profane Love* scene [1986: 75]). The costume of the child Caravaggio can be seen to represent a pastiche of the *Cupid* painting in that the boy is of a similar age to the model, and wears the laurel wreath and white sheet discarded and trampled on by the putto in the original painting. This visualisation of the child Caravaggio as a version of the painter's *Cupid* allows Jarman to reclaim certain details of referential significance removed and reconstituted in the *Profane Love* tableau scene (as discussed earlier in the chapter). Therefore, at the conclusion of the film, there is an intriguing temporal disjuncture between the final possible temporality (Caravaggio's death in Porto Ecole, and his dead body at rest) and the earliest possible temporality in the film's plot (the child Caravaggio with his first love), as well as a concealed visual reference (by way of the child's dress) to a previously depicted Caravaggio painting. Bersani and Dutoit observe that these "temporal infractions" serve to create a purely

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[130] There has been a considerable focus on this tableau in the Jarman literature, with Leo Bersani & Ulysee Dutoit (1999), Jim Ellis (2009) and Michael Charlesworth (2011) all addressing it.

"cinematic time" (1999: 45-46) that facilitate some of the most interesting of Jarman's aesthetic expressions, and revisions. It is within these aesthetic creations of 'cinematic time' (as opposed to narrative or chronologically concerned time) that the radical works of appropriation and pastiche occur in the film, such as the allusion to *Boy Bitten by a Lizard* mentioned above. As such, it is now relevant to investigate a number of these interventions to further establish what they are doing and what they mean in terms of the film, as well as in relation to their wider application and context.

Artistic appropriation and works of pastiche

Prior to Dyer's (2007) work on pastiche mentioned above[131], Hoesterey (2001) assessed the technique as a particular approach to 'cultural memory', and one which embodied a thoroughly postmodern ethos in the way in which it interpreted and revisited the past. Hoesterey highlights the work of the photographer Cindy Sherman and her pastiches of renaissance paintings, including *Sick Bacchus* (known as *Untitled No. 224* [1990]), where Sherman takes the place of Caravaggio (2001: 28 & 69). Sherman's approach is discussed in terms of the "gesture of exhibiting, or foregrounding the structures of mediation of older art to viewers of a different mentality and cultural makeup" and it is noted how "pastiche structuration lends itself to exposing and

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[131] Interestingly, when considering Hoesterey's work, Dyer mentions that he is "trying to rescue pastiche from postmodernism" in that "pastiche should not only be understood through the postmodern instance" (2007: 131).

reconfiguring cultural codifications that for centuries marginalised unconventional identities" (2001: 29) – for example, the switching of genders, and artistic mediums, seen with Sherman's *Bacchus* photograph or Jarman's depiction of the *Cupid* in *Caravaggio.*

Indeed, Hoesterey brings Jarman into her own discussion, suggesting that the type of work he produces can illustrate the "emancipatory potential of the intellectual pastiche" (2001: 29), which is again clearly visualised in the tableau scene for the painting of *Cupid/Love Victorious* when Pipo the model is allowed to express herself by performing acrobatic feats in front of the enrapt gaze of the artist. The change in representation, and its emancipatory effect, is closely linked to a crucial shift in the balance of power from the creator (artist/author) to the created (the subjects and objects of the artwork, and their audience).

A similarly liberating effect is also discussed by Julie Sanders in her study of the particularities of adaptation and appropriation (2005). In Sanders' reckoning, methodological approaches to cultural work, like the process of appropriation, illustrate an intelligent appreciation of surrounding intertextuality allowing space for what she calls "the symphony of texts or polyphony of voices" (2005: 38) located in much of contemporary culture. In this spirit, Sanders believes, historical events, texts and topics are most certainly fair game for revision: "The discipline of history…is in truth a history of textualities, of stories told by particular tellers according to particular ideologies and contexts. In this sense,

history proves a rich source and intertext for fiction, for histoire[132], to

appropriate" (2005: 146). An example of appropriated history within the arts that

Sanders points to is Tracy Chevalier's novel *Girl with a Pearl Earring* (1999)

which created an imagined history for the subject of the Johannes Vermeer

painting of 1665, and once again, the photographic reworks of Renaissance

paintings created by Cindy Sherman[133] - both of which are comparable to the

approach in Jarman's *Caravaggio*, highlighted by the Pipo/*Cupid* scene. Sanders

brings in postmodern theory to dialogue with her discussion of appropriation

mentioning how "the replacement of the 'real' by exact reproductions or

imitations" necessitates a (liberating) "loss of aura" (citing Walter Benjamin) and

gives the version a 'hyper-real' quality (citing Jean Baudrillard) (2005: 148).

Again, the idea of emancipating texts (a potential quality of intervention

recognised by Hoesterey above) from their origins and the subsequent

preconceptions applied to them is noted. This approach represents a useful

way in which a contemporary artist can offer a cultural contribution that is

respectful of the past whilst also being forward thinking in its

contemporary originality. The loss of aura afforded by this emancipation

also serves to deflate the critical and theoretical potency accorded to the

concept of authorship, again as illustrated by the scene of Pipo's

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[132] Sanders is using this phrase here to mean 'stories' that are not necessarily concerned with historical fact or accuracy, and are more interested in providing an alternate reading of an historical/cultural event or artefact. For example, Jarman's use of the 'real' person Ranuccio Tomassoni as one of Caravaggio's love interests in the film; or, the re-imaginings of Caravaggio's paintings.

[133] The fact that Hoesterey chose Sherman's photograph as an example of pastiche, and Sanders as an example of appropriation, highlights the definitional closeness of the two terms. It may be useful to consider pastiche as a method or type of pastiche.

performance as *Cupid* for Caravaggio. So, an awareness of and respect for

previous work does not hinder or prevent playful and thought-provoking

alterations. Indeed James Tweedie suggests that "in the era of cinematic

homage, an under-theorised mutation of the simulacrum, *Caravaggio*

rejects the currency of cultural capital and resists the temptation to quote

without commentary or critique" (2003: 397) foregrounding the

interrogative methodology of creative and critical appropriation.

This dual quality of revision and respect is located by Sanders in Sherman's

work which she describes as representing "both infidelity and fidelity" because it

represents an "intervention into the original art work" as well as being "a

historical return…to the freedom of imitation, borrowing, assimilation, and

bricolage" of previous artistic eras and movements (2005: 150-51). This idea is

foregrounded in *Caravaggio* by the consistent depiction of paintings and

tableaux throughout the film. Interestingly, immediately after the unveiling of

Profane Love in Jarman's film, the art critic Baglione (played with a quality of

cynical exaggeration by Jonathan Hyde) is framed in his bath writing a scathing

review of Caravaggio's style and the art culture of Rome, in a visual allusion to

the Jacques-Louis David painting *The Death of Marat* (1793). Jarman has

appropriated David's painting of the death of a major figure in the French

revolution, and cinematically translated it into a camp interlude for the film

(evidenced by Hyde's appearance, gestures and speech), illustrating the critical

backlash against Caravaggio during that period. The temporal disjunction of the

cultural reference, and the camp acting[134], are combined with an anachronism (Baglione types his notice on a typewriter[135]), to both signal and deconstruct the David painting whilst making the filmic revision unique to Jarman's idiolect.

This camped up pastiche of a well-known painting facilitates a level of distancing between the film text and the viewer, allowing for critical reflection and the production of meanings by the viewer. Dyer (1977) offers an insightful comment with regards to the awareness and critical distance facilitated by uses of camp when he talks of how camp can "demystify the images and world view of art and the media". Camp does this, Dyer continues, "by drawing attention to the artifices employed by artists", actions that "constantly remind us that what we are seeing is only a view of life". Dyer concludes by suggesting that the distancing from the text created by the camp-ness "doesn't stop us enjoying it, but it does stop us believing too readily everything we are shown" (1977: 13). Knowledge of the past, and the knowledge and value imparted by objects of culture, is not necessarily wholly refuted by Jarman's intervention here and throughout *Caravaggio*, but the concept is playfully subverted and its fixity denied. Thinking contextually now, filmic approaches to past-ness and history were a common feature of the British cinema of the 1980's, and in order to better highlight the critical and theoretical position of *Caravaggio* on these pertinent contemporary topics it is important to also assess the film cultural landscape and

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[134] Tweedie compares the camp acting to the use of anachronism (as previously mentioned here on page 17) because they both facilitate distancing from Jarman's text and the source texts, "destroying the film's illusionism and establishing a link between Jarman's time and Caravaggio's" (2003: 399).
[135] Erik Hedling suggests that Jarman is also referencing a scene from Otto Preminger's *Laura* (1944) where the character Waldo Lydecker (Clifton Webb) types a letter out in the bath (2005: 245).

climate it was made in. Situating *Caravaggio* in such a way enables the

possibility of an inclusive national cinema that is not defined by reductive,

essentialist divisions or documented through particular critical conceptions (for

example – the heritage cycle; the avant-garde; Channel 4 films; minority film-

making).

The film-industrial and film-cultural context of *Caravaggio*

Jarman's incorporation of the paintings into the film's diegesis alongside the

activation of their stillness[136] and their relation to the various characters and

character's actions facilitates the structure of the narrative and reflects what is

arguably the film's attitude and approach to history. In *Caravaggio* elements of

the past and representations from history and culture are not depicted as given

and predetermined; a methodological and aesthetical approach that can be seen

to offer a counterpoint to other examples of filmic historicism from the period,

such as *Chariots of Fire* (Hugh Hudson 1981), *The Draughtsman's Contract*

(Peter Greenaway 1982) and A *Room with A View* (James Ivory 1985). Indeed,

Leo Bersani and Ulysse Dutoit opined on the distinction between the differing

filmic approaches to depicting settings from the past when they suggest that,

"without giving in to the showy, self-conscious historicism of the period films he

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[136] Hoesterey described how the merging of film with painting created an intriguing "double visuality" (2001: 46). She continues, in direct reference to *Caravaggio*, by noting that the "dissolve…of the static art object into the transitory time flow of cinematic movement represents a…radical amalgamation of painting and film" (2001: 63).

detested, Jarman…quite comfortably and quite persuasively situates Caravaggio in his own time and place, implicitly dismissing facetious concerns for both historical authenticity and modern relevance" (1999: 22-23). With those thoughts in mind it is useful to move on to a contextual reflection on the British film culture and industry of the period, in particular the role of Channel 4 in relation to funding *Caravaggio* and other contemporary film projects, and the impact and influence of the so-called British Film renaissance (including the so-called *Chariots of Fire* effect, and the British Film Year event and its related film lists of 1985). The shortcomings and problems of British film funding, and the cultural and aesthetic segregations endemic in the British film industry of the period arguably contributed to the difference between certain director's depictions of the cultural past. These factors will be shown to have had a direct influence, not just on the production of the work, but (and more importantly for this chapter's discussion) also on the function and purpose of the film itself, as *Caravaggio* can be viewed and interpreted as dialoguing with the vagaries of contemporary British film-making and the industry surrounding it.

Firstly, it is interesting to note that Jarman's *Caravaggio* took seven years, multiple rewrites of the script, and a turn-over of various different creative and financial collaborators (including Italian scriptwriter Suso Cecchi D' Amico; Melvyn Bragg; and an early promise of investment from Channel 4 in their launch year[137]) before it was finally funded (by a BFI partnership with Channel

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[137] For detailed information on the script to screen life of *Caravaggio* see Peake [1999: 257 – 347].

4), made and released in 1985. The film's complex history and problematic production had much to do with British film culture and the political machinations of the industry. Jarman observed that a level of personal optimism towards the industry was misguided: after "*The Tempest* it seemed a matter of months before a new project would be funded. But I miscalculated the resistance to anything that does not reflect the commercial norm" (1984: 207). In relation to this statement it is worth highlighting Channel 4's complex and contradictory role with regards to *Caravaggio*, whilst also noting the channel's importance to the British film industry of the 1980s.

The role and influence of Channel 4: finance and culture

Channel 4 arrived in November 1982 and its inception sparked a level of interest and excitement from independent film-makers, partly due to the way it marketed itself as offering an alternative avenue for the financing of adventurous film work, but mainly because there were precious few funding opportunities within the industry at the time[138]. However, the *Caravaggio* project was to experience both the positive and the negative sides to the promise of investment from a television channel, and this strand of the *Caravaggio* story highlights important issues with regards to the machinations of artistic

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[138] See Phil Wickham and Erinna Mettler's PDF briefing (available on the BFI website) *Back To The Future: The Fall and Rise of the British Film Industry in the 1980's* (2005) for further information about the funding and production of British films in this period. The document also contains a very thorough statistics section detailing all UK film productions between 1980 – 1990 in terms of production, budget, box office and cultural content.

patronage that would be taken up in part by narrative strands in *Caravaggio* (for example, the role and influence of Cardinal Del Monte [Caravaggio's first patron] specifically, and the Catholic Church in general).

Channel 4 initially promised to invest in *Caravaggio* in 1982 but pulled out after a media-led controversy over the purchasing and potential screening of Jarman's first three feature films (see Jarman 1996: 86 – 89) which left the film without financiers until the BFI finally rescued the project in 1985, ironically with backing from Channel 4. So, the initial arrival of the new channel represented a false dawn for Jarman, who has described how its advent "was whispered about by 'alternative film-makers' as though it were the panacea [but]…,in spite of a much-vaunted alternative image, was to turn out all Beaujolais *nouveau* and scrubbed Scandinavian, pot plants in place" (1984: 207). Jarman was personally angry and annoyed with Channel 4 because they had purchased and then held back his first three feature films for television transmission, and because they withdrew funding for *Caravaggio* as quickly as it had been offered. However, his heavily critical negative bias does not prevent the British film funding process, and even some of his subjective opinions, from highlighting important industrial problems that tangibly influenced the kind of film work being produced at the time. Indeed, when assessing the work that was funded by Channel 4 from its launch up to 1985, the year of *Caravaggio*, an interesting debate opens up as to

whether the channel did fund genuinely ground-breaking film work, or that it played it culturally and aesthetically safe until later in the decade[139].

Channel 4 "wasn't out alternative" railed Jarman (1984: 207), and the cohort to which he referred included, aside from himself, Terence Davies, Bill Douglas, Sally Potter, Ron Peck, Julian Temple and Peter Wollen (1996: 85). Indeed it is pertinent to consider Jarman's opinion on this matter a little longer because his response, although emotionally over-dramatic when one considers the eventual patronage of these directors by the channel, highlights a cultural and aesthetical division in British cinema that often meant certain directors were financially disenfranchised due to their particular approach to filmmaking:

> The early 1980s were the dismal era of the British Film Renaissance which helped no one. The invention of a new TV channel, which announced it was to make low-budget features seemed like a ray of hope. But who would make their cinema? Would they make films with independent film-makers of the '70's? Sadly, the greening we expected never happened, there would be no green pastures for us (Jarman 1996: 85).

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[139] Jarman described it disdainfully as "a channel for the slightly adventurous commuter" (Jarman 1984: 207). This opinion would have been welcomed by William Whitelaw (Home Secretary at the time of Channel 4's inception) who thought the new channel should be "somewhat different, but not too different" (cited by Giles 2006: 64).

Although this is a rather harsh and purposely provocative statement from Jarman considering the funding he, and many other independent directors, eventually received from the channel, an initial disenfranchisement of sorts can in fact be evidenced from looking at the catalogue of notable films commissioned with Channel 4 money between 1982 and 1985[140], just before *Caravaggio*. The back-catalogue includes *Draughtsman's Contract* (note that by this stage Greenaway had already been funded multiple times by the BFI Production Board), *Moonlighting* (Jerzy Skolimowski 1982), *Local Hero* (Bill Forsythe 1983), *Heat and Dust* (James Ivory 1983), *The Ploughman's Lunch* (Richard Eyre 1983), *Another Time, Another Place* (Michael Radford 1983), *A Private Function* (Malcolm Mowbray 1984), *Another Country* (Marek Kanievska 1984), *My Beautiful Laundrette* (Stephen Frears 1985) and *A Room With A View* (James Ivory 1985).

Aside from Greenaway's work of explorative poststructuralist representation with its tendency towards "subverting realism…[and] highlighting the theatricality and artifice of the visual image" (Marcia Lundy in Murphy 2006: 246) the majority of the films funded by Channel 4 during this period are, to a greater or lesser extent, aesthetically or narratively straightforward. A large number of the films financed are also period films that depict a particularly controlled and defined conception of national past-ness that is at odds with *Caravaggio*'s emancipatory approach to cultural heritage (such as *Heat and*

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[140] The list of Film4 productions of the 1980's can be found at www.film4.com/film4-productions/back-catalogue-1980s [accessed 24th October 2014]. John Pym also surveyed the 'Film on Four' productions of 1982-1991, assessing 136 films (1992).

Dust, Another Time Another Place, A Private Function, Another Country, and *A Room With A View*). *Local Hero* was 'whimsical' and reminiscent of the Ealing comedies with its slight storyline (Martin Hunt in Murphy 2006: 207); *A Private Function* mixed "sharp observation…with broad physical comedy" (Robert Shail in Murphy 2006: 442) in a nostalgically depicted post-war setting; *Moonlighting*, *The Ploughman's Lunch* and *My Beautiful Laundrette* were contemporary, and all offered varied vignettes of life in Thatcher's Britain, albeit delivered with the direct and simple aesthetical approach of television work. For example, Eyre's direction of *The Ploughman's Lunch* has been described as "functional and anonymous, respectful of [Ian] McEwan's script, but allowing little emotional involvement" (Lez Cooke in Murphy 2006: 185), whilst Frears' approach is often more "concerned with character and narrative than visual flourishes" and "gives due credit to writers" (Daniel O'Brien in Murphy 2006: 212). Both films offer assessments and observations on the socio-political moment (and *Laundrette* arguably does this in a radical way for the era) but it can sometimes be difficult to discern from their aesthetical and narrative approach the degree to which the texts can be said to challenge orthodoxy and the status quo (although it is problematic to equate form with critique). This discussion leads to a question for further research elsewhere: Do these texts (and indeed others made with Channel 4's involvement) offer discernibly new or different representations as might be expected from work funded by an 'alternative' television channel purported to be operating for the benefit of independent filmmakers?

Looking at the film productions of the decade as a whole, the funding and decision process of the channel, and the overall influence of Channel 4 on British film culture, it is difficult not to agree with Donald Petrie's assertion that Channel 4 played "an absolutely crucial role" in "establishing a climate in which new forms of independent film production became viable and therefore fundable" (1992: 3-4). The commissioning editors of Channel 4 during this period, David Rose and Alan Fountain, made available an unprecedented amount of production finance that ensured film work of all types and methods was created and finished, and this 'climate' in itself encouraged further work to be made. Colin MacCabe (whose debut film production was *Caravaggio*) also discussed the influential way in which Channel 4's finance was dispensed under the chief executive Jeremey Isaacs; 10% of the channel's revenues for British cinema which meant a £10 million subsidy per year for film production (1992: 22). With the abolition of the Eady Levy[141] in 1985 Channel 4 became the central financial supporter of the British film industry[142], but, as MacCabe importantly identifies, the channel's influence went beyond the provision of finance and extended to the fertile method by which the funds were dispersed – which had a liberating knock-on effect for British film culture during the period, and enabled *Caravaggio* to become the film that it was.

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[141] A government tax on the box office receipts of films meaning that a percentage of all revenue was dispensed back into the British film industry to help create indigenous films. This policy was established in 1957 and terminated in 1985 – ironically, also the 'British film year'. The National Film Finance Corporation was also wound up in 1985.

[142] John Hill finds Channel 4 to be the biggest and longest standing private investor in the 1980's (1999: 35) and also notes the channel's financial involvement with film production through funds to British Screen and the BFI Production Board (the latter receiving a vital £500,000 towards shorts, features and development after the abolition of the Eady Levy (1999: 58).

Channel 4's subsidies differed from previous subsidies or government provision because it only required the decision of the commissioning editor (being a limited company) before the funds were dispensed – where previously there would have been a decision based on "a set of political brokerings" that give "very little thought" to "the film's ultimate reception" (1992: 23). Therefore, the processes of funding at Channel 4 meant that the audience was always taken into proper consideration. This funding method and decision-making process[143] established a crucial and liberating shift in film culture away from the dominance of the director (self-concern) and the snobberies of formalism (structural concern) allowing a multitude of projects from a wide range of filmic approaches to emerge. For MacCabe, television's movement into the film industry had a powerful cultural potential because its approach and machinations served to "deny any *absolute* oppositions or hierarchies" (1992: 26).

In this instance, the hierarchy placed cinema (specifically work shot on 16mm or 35mm[144]) firmly above television in terms of artistic integrity and worthiness. MacCabe connects this snobbery to an overall artistic position that he deemed to be prevalent during recent times saying that "one of the great Modernist arguments that has reverberated through the twentieth century is the appeal to the purity of form" (1992: 26). He goes on to say that under this approach "art is

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[143] MacCabe also flags up the importance of the centrality of producers within Channel 4's film-making methodology, suggesting that "Palace and Working Title" are as significant as "Stephen Frears or Neil Jordan" (1992: 23).

[144] Recall Jarman's filmic beginnings using Super 8mm largely considered the gauge of the amateur and therefore critically relegated below 16mm and 35mm. This differentiation was indicative of a number of divisions within British independent cinema, specifically during the 1970's and early 1980's (a period covered by Michael O' Pray in Higson 1996: 178-190).

concerned with neither content nor audience but rather with its own structures and procedures" (1992: 26); for example, the work of the majority of the London Film-makers Co-operative, such as Malcolm Le Grice, Peter Gidal, Chris Welsby and William Raban who integrated formalist experiments with film and the workings of the camera into their 16mm productions. Chuck Klienhans, also observed a level of detachment within formalism suggesting that it consisted of "the divorce of human values from the art experience and considered art as only a matter of internal form separated from ordinary life, from the spectator" (2002: 197). This separation, argues Klienhans, "is tied to creating a subject – text relationship that is essentially a training program for alienation" (2002: 197). MacCabe (in *Screen* 1974, 1976) had himself considered the relationships of subject (spectator/reader) and text within cinema, and the effect of this on the position of the reader – traditionally given 'pseudo-dominance' over the text (1974: 24); or distanced and alienated by formalist texts; or possibly even offered "a different constitution of the subject" (1974: 22).

The latter conception was MacCabe's main focus, covered in both articles, and he wondered "whether there could be a revolutionary film which could subvert the traditional position of the spectator in a more positive fashion than the simple deconstruction of the subversive film" (1976: 24-25). For MacCabe, this 'revolutionary' film would contain discourses that enabled the displacement of the subject from their 'imaginary relationship'[145] of pseudo-dominance over the

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[145] MacCabe utilises Lacan's mirror phase theory here as the basis for his observations regarding typical subject – text relations in cinema. For Lacan, vision during the mirror phase relates to narcissism (as an infant

text, where all contradictions are resolved. Instead, the film would engage the reader in the production of meaning from investigating these contradictions – like those suggested by the pastiches of Caravaggio paintings, or the uses of camp and anachronism in *Caravaggio*. MacCabe also points out that the narrative of the film would not necessarily be the dominant factor allowing for a change in emphasis from the story to "particular scenes and the knowledge that can be gleaned from them" (1974: 24) – for example, the scenes of tableau in *Caravaggio* framed in long shot with few cuts and a lengthy screen-time to enabling the viewer to absorb the mise-en-scène (an approach particularly noticeable with the *Martyrdom of Saint Matthew* and *Cupid/Profane Love* scenes). MacCabe also noted that the use of ambiguous symbolic language[146] could also lead to the breakdown of the imaginary relationship of subject and text as it allowed the film-maker to "draw the viewer's attention to his or her relation to the screen" (1976: 25) – for example, this could be observed in *Caravaggio* by the anachronistic and referential scene with Baglione typing in the bathtub, or the focus on the exchange of gold coins between Caravaggio and Ranuccio, and subsequently, Ranuccio and Lena during and after the painting of *Martydom*. So, whereas formalist work (like much of the London Co-op) may well break the traditional subject – text relationship with its inherent belief in the essentialism of art divorced from content, it has an arguably negative tendency to distance and alienate the reader from the text for the same reason. However,

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discovers their reflection) and therefore "offers a privileged basis to an imaginary relation of the individual to the world" (MacCabe 1976: 13). Object and subject are unified here akin to how language unifies the sign and the referent in the symbolic world.

[146] Again MacCabe employs Lacan's theories here, in particular how the acceptance of 'lack' (genital difference) gives the subject access to symbolic language (1976: 14). The symbolic world, with its attendant "tissue of differences" (1976: 13) draws attention to subjectivity and transformative variables.

the concept for a filmic text that MacCabe described in *Screen* allows for a productive and engaged relationship – arguably facilitated in the MacCabe produced *Caravaggio* through the loose and disrupted narrative, the appropriation and pastiche of Caravaggio's paintings,

Jarman clearly separated his filmic practice from that of the London Co-op formalists[147], and the difference went much deeper than that of the choice of film gauge: "film-makers at the Co-op were involved in the destructuring of film; to one who had stumbled on film like a panacea this seemed a rather negative pursuit – like calling water H20" (Jarman 1984: 128). Jarman goes on to say that he "disliked the subsidized avant-garde cinema"[148] due to the strictures of its "strong official line" (1984: 128) which, suggests that he should have been emphatically in favour of Channel 4's approach to film funding and production despite his petulant reservations included above (and clearly indicates that he and MacCabe shared similar views on film funding and the purposes and functions of cinema, which would have coalesced when they worked together on *Caravaggio*).

So, from the size of its subsidies and the way they were dispensed, to the centrality of independent producers and the intrinsic need for "the continuous

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[147] Jarman did have some involvement with the London film avant-garde, showing multi-screen work in the 'Festival of Expanded Cinema' at the ICA, "the heartland of British avant-garde cinema" (O' Pray 1996: 178).

[148] O'Pray's previously mentioned article from 1996 describes how the British 'avant-garde' of the 1970's (with its variety of approaches to film-making) fragmented into the 'art cinema' (with less clear cut distinctions regarding approach) due to the influence of Channel 4 funding and the impact of "the women's movement, the gay sensibility and the rise of a younger generation of Black film-makers" (1996: 180).

construction of an audience" (MacCabe 1992: 27), Channel 4 avoided crippling and alienating formalist concerns in order to fund a multitude of projects throughout the 1980s including the previously ignored *Caravaggio*. Ironically then, despite initially being the cause of false hope and a three year delay for the project, by 1985 Channel 4 had created the financial climate and filmic culture that enabled a work such as *Caravaggio* to emerge. O' Pray (1996) also observed that the impact of Channel 4 facilitated a shift within British independent film culture from diverse avant-garde practices to a more generalised art cinema that incorporated a number of the concerns and approaches from the previous decade (but sidestepped the focuses on formalism, theory and aesthetical/political divisions). Interestingly, O' Pray positions Jarman as a central figure of this new British art cinema largely because of what he describes as "a thoroughly postmodern hybridisation" at work in his films (1996: 185). What O' Pray means by this is that there are a myriad of influences at play, and techniques at work within Jarman's films that "render many of the existing theoretical and critical frameworks [previously applied to film in Britain] cumbersome, if not useless" (1996: 190), therefore freeing aesthetic expression (to a degree) from reductive, preconceived and partisan interpretation.

With the cultural issues surrounding the essentiality of form largely disabused due to television's mindfulness regarding audience, and a comparatively large amount of capital, Channel 4 was effectively able (or at least tried) to emancipate the British film industry from the doldrums of the 1970s, with its funding

struggles, artistic hierarchies, dialectic debates and theoretical prejudices. Aside from the varied, but typically more conventional films that the channel produced for Film on Four John Hill mentions an arm of Film on Four called the Department of Independent Film and Video. This department was created to develop "experimental work" which had a philosophy based on an understanding that "independence was specifically linked to a tradition of social and aesthetic radicalism outside of the mainstream of film and television production" (1999: 57). Works in this mode would often "combine aesthetic self-reflexivity with political radicalism" and the department facilitated films from Jarman, Sally Potter, Peter Wollen, Ron Peck and Ken McMullen (1999: 57). The department also had a workshop sector that funded regional and minority groups such as Amber and Sankofa, alongside feminist film workshops, clearly illustrating the wide-reaching and diverse funding strategies of the channel. Channel 4 not only provided financial aid for people who already had a foothold within the British film industry, but it used its considerable capital to enfranchise, and enable the creative expression of, previously alienated or excluded parties such as the regions, women film-makers, black and ethnic film-makers, working class film practices and neglected segments of the avant-garde (i.e. those not belonging to the London Co-op or funded by the BFI). So, with sufficient funding, and effective dispensing and production strategies in place, did the film work created represent a 'radical' approach to issues such as history, heritage and national identity?

Paul Giles noted, during his assessment of the Channel 4 productions of the 1980s, that "it would not be difficult to argue that Channel 4 films of this era implicitly reinforce dominant conservative national ideologies, however much they *seem*[149] to challenge such concepts" (2006: 64). Giles is insightful when he describes that certain Channel 4 films *seem* to challenge conservative ideologies and representations because, for example, *My Beautiful Laundrette* was viewed and interpreted in such a way but the film can also arguably be seen as quite stereotypical in its representation of British Pakistanis, homosexuals, and white inner-city native males (see Susan Torrey Barber 2006: 209 – 222). Further to the notion of conservatism, Giles also cites Lindsay Anderson who spoke of how "the kind of subject liable to be financed by Channel 4" was "lacking in…ambition" and often represented a "restriction of imagination or idea" (2006: 64). This thoughtful observation serves to highlight the possible impact of funding sources on subject matter, and suggests that the influence and role of finance can sometimes be felt more in terms of filmic content then necessarily in style or technique as is more usually pointed out.

The issue of filmic content has a political element, and interestingly for the contextualisation of *Caravaggio* this was picked upon by an arm of the film industry during 1985. By using a conception of national filmic identity as the unifying force, measures were taken to build on the 'renaissance' allegedly begun by Hudson and Puttnam's *Chariots of Fire* three years earlier. Celebratory lists of 'British' filmic success stories were drawn up to work alongside a programme

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[149] My emphasis.

of promotional events, with the overall aim being to stimulate growth in cinema attendance and use portions of the extra profits to aid film production in Britain. This conception of 'national cinema' represented one that was at odds with John Hill's description mentioned earlier and also excluded any mention of Jarman's film work.

A further point of interest is that seven of the films Channel 4 funded during this period also found their way onto the British Film Year list, which, as an industry tool of promotion, attempted to represent a united front of national film-making (see below). British Film Year and its attendant lists are relevant here because they serve to highlight a degree of cultural and aesthetic separatism in the British film industry at the time of *Caravaggio* despite the emancipatory potential of Channel 4. This crossover between the supposedly alternative filmic community and representatives of the filmmaking establishment suggest that Channel 4's funded projects did not vastly change the dominant representations, depictions and hierarchies of the industry, and failed (initially at least) to activate important and catalytic creative difference.

British Film Year and the year of *Caravaggio*

British Film Year was a year-long industry driven project that took place in 1985 and was "designed to celebrate the so-called 'renaissance' of the British film"

(Peake 1999: 342) with *Chariots of Fire* as its flagship feature, and Richard

Attenborough and David Puttnam (one of the financiers of *Chariots*) at its helm.

Alexander Walker observed that the project was "a low-key event and slightly

misnamed" because its actual central aim was to boost cinema attendance in

order that British films had a better chance of recouping their costs in the home

market (2004: 23). However, of precise interest to this chapter is the list of

'representative' British films[150] that accompanied the primarily financial aims of

the project.

The lists contents, subtitled '*The Revival Years*'[151] and spanning from the late

1970s to 1984, serves to further highlight the cultural and aesthetical

segregations inherent within the British film industry even after the potentially

emancipatory effect of the emergence of Channel 4. The majority of examples on

the list suggest a level of industry prejudice about the type of film (in terms of

director; narrative content; aesthetical approach) that can obtain financed, and

then subsequently chosen to represent the country's film producing industry and

the nation itself. Indeed it is perhaps only *The Draughtsman Contract*, *A

Company of Wolves* (Neil Jordan 1984), and *The French Lieutenant's Woman*

(Karel Reisz 1981) which could be said to contain examples of non-mainstream

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[150] There was also a separate list of eight British films that garnered Academy Awards. All of these were period pieces, with *Chariots of Fire* and *Gandhi* (Attenborough 1982) featuring on both lists.

[151] The list in full: *Another Country, Another Time Another Place, Chariots of Fire, The Company of Wolves, The Dresser* (Peter Yates 1983), *The Draughtsman's Contract, Educating Rita* (Lewis Gilbert, 1983), *The Elephant Man* (David Lynch 1980), *The French Lieutenant's Woman, Gandhi, Gregory's Girl* (Bill Forsyth, 1981), *Greystoke* (Hugh Hudson 1984), *Heat and Dust, The Hit* (Stephen Frears 1984), *Local Hero, The Life of Brian* (Terry Jones 1979), *The Long Good Friday* (John Mackenzie 1980), *Merry Christmas Mr Lawrence* (Nagisa Oshima 1983), *Moonlighting, Pink Floyd – The Wall* (Alan Parker 1982) and *Tess* (Roman Polanski 1979). Source: Peake (1999: 555).

innovation at the level of aesthetics (*The Draughtsman's Contract*) or narrative (*The French Lieutenant's Woman*, *A Company of Wolves*). A self-reflexive investigation into the functions of representation, history and heritage, and identity alongside an interrogation of the machinations of art and culture are issues at the heart of Jarman's filmic project, and the '*Revival Years*' list as a cultural artefact, as well as many of the films on it, are precisely the sort of things a work like *Caravaggio* can be seen to challenge both aesthetically and politically.

However, it should be remembered and considered that there is almost always a level of ambiguity when interpreting the function and purpose of a film/s. This is applicable even to the flagship film of British Film Year, *Chariots of Fire*, which Neil Sinyard describes as "one of the decade's most controversial films" because it was "regarded by its left-leaning makers (Puttnam, Hudson and the writer Colin Welland) as a radical indictment of Establishment snobbery and privilege, but appropriated by others as a conservative paean to Thatcherite values of individualism and enterprise" (from Murphy 2006: 304). Either way, the film depicts aspects of privilege and accompanying period attitudes with representations, and text – subject relations, that can be taken as conservative and unchallenging.

To return briefly to MacCabe's discussion of text – subject relations, he noted that the "reactionary practice of cinema is that which involves this petrification

of the spectator in a position of pseudo-dominance offered by the meta-language"
(being the way a film is constructed and delivered to the audience) (1974: 24). It
is arguable that *Chariots of Fire* places the viewer in this position of pseudo-
dominance because the narrative of the film and its meta-language inscribe the
viewer with knowledge rather than allowing space for them to produce their own
(*Caravaggio* facilitates this through pastiche and distancing techniques).
Indeed, the films meta-language resolves "all contradictions" (1974: 24), a factor
shared by many of the other films on the list. The implication of this filmic
approach, and the subject – text relations inscribed within it, not only has a
conservative bent. If it is taken as an indicator of 'national' product (like the film
year lists hoped to convey) it suggests a rather narrow and totalising view of
heritage and identity – one in which the subject is kept in a specific position by
the type of 'knowledge' being released to them, and the manner in which it is
released. Worryingly it was not just bastions of the British film industry that
were promoting such images of national identity, but many of newcomer Channel
4's early film productions also did little to disrupt reactionary and limiting
images of identity and heritage.

Firstly, and perhaps emblematic of the Channel's early conservatism, it is
noticeable that the list contains a significant amount of crossover with the film
productions of Channel 4, as seven[152] of the twenty-one films on the list are
Film4 productions. More emphatic however is the style and approach of the

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[152] *The Draughtsman's* Contract, *Moonlighting, Local Hero, Heat and Dust, Another Time Another Place, The
Company of Wolves* and *Another Country*.

preponderance of films selected to represent contemporary British film-making, as the majority on the list are period films that can be seen to demonstrate a very particular approach to the past (usually featuring a straightforward, linear storyline supported by 'believable' locations, set designs and costumes that bolster the films verisimilitude) and its requisite aesthetics (centred on a display of heritage and past-ness that is inflexible and stable). Walker observes that of the films on the 'revival' list "fourteen of the twenty-one were set in the past, commemorating a nostalgically imperial stance" whilst "all the Oscar winners were historical pieces" (2004: 24), which suggests a partisan bias in terms of representation and content for the heralded British film-making of the period, as well as historically. Both lists display a level of cultural and aesthetical segregation within the British film industry which, akin to Channel 4's early years of production, shows the same directors to be excluded from support and, as a result, indicates the impact of funding sources (Channel 4, David Puttnam, BFI) on the approach, function and purpose of a film. Jarman's film work was not represented on the list, and neither were any examples from other alternative and independent British film-makers such as Terence Davies, Bill Douglas, Ron Peck, Julian Temple, Horace Ové, John Maybury, Cerith Wyn Evans, Sally Potter, Peter Wollen and Chris Petit, as well as those who offered alternative representations and aesthetics but had also successfully dabbled in the mainstream such as Nicholas Roeg[153] and Ken Russell.

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[153] From *Caravaggio* onwards Jarman's films would regularly be funded by Channel 4. Terence Davies, Bill Douglas, Ron Peck , Sally Potter, Horace Ové and Nicholas Roeg would also go on to have projects funded by the channel suggesting a widening of scope and a lessening of conservatism in funding decisions not visible during the early years

The examples of Channel 4's early productions and the lists of British Film Year clearly show a certain disparity between the breadth of film work produced and the type of film work to be celebrated and offered funding in the future. Looking into the role and impact of early Channel 4 productions and the purpose of an industry celebration such as British Film Year enables a demonstration of the argument that this disparity was based upon a degree of cultural prejudice, political conservatism and aesthetical homogeneity – the exact things which Jarman's film can often be said to explore, subvert, disrupt and attempt to change by way of an emphasis on difference in his film's seen by their playful self-reflexivity, critical techniques of distance (like pastiche, camp-ness and anachronism), and consistent critiques of cultural/historical fixity and essentiality.

Caravaggio, heritage and identity

The cultural and industrial contextualisation of *Caravaggio* raises valuable issues pertaining to artistic representations and the ways in which history/heritage/past-ness and identity can be combined, depicted and utilised. Of course, the same could conceivably be said of *Chariots of Fire* or *A Room With A View* (and other period films of the era) because these too are artistic filmic representations of past-ness which are open to interpretation, but Jarman's work displays a narrative playfulness and a pointed, critical use of subversive aesthetics that reflects a different conception of heritage and the uses of

heritage. In *Caravaggio* a specific conception of past-ness and heritage is not sought, reproduced or reinforced. On the contrary, liberating levers of difference are present in Jarman's playful approach to narrative, the film's evocation of time and place, and the subversive multi-referential possibilities of the mise-en-scène (pastiche paintings, camp acting, and anachronisms).

These representations and incorporations suggest an enlivening of cultural history and a queering of Caravaggio's art via Jarman's disruption of their previous stillness. This queering technique is part of a methodology of cinematic reflexivity and what Hoesterey calls 'pastiche structuration' where scenes display a "complex medley and layering of different styles and motifs" (2001: 46) such as the *Caravaggio* scenes 'Boy bitten by Lizard', 'Profane Love' and 'Baglione's bathtub/Death of Marat'. The depiction of tableaux in the film, where Caravaggio is seen posing his models and constructing his paintings, also displays a subversion of the still quality of the original works. For Hoesterey this approach offers "cultural critique as double visuality" (2001: 45) because of the way it merges two visual arts to facilitate comment on representations and heritage (the foregrounding of painting and artistic construction in the film is a further example of the film incorporating critical distance). She goes on to describe how "the dissolve…of the static art object into the transitory time flow of cinematic movement represents a…radical amalgamation of painting and film" (2001 63).

It is here that Jarman's methodology and technique serves to adapt elements from Caravaggio's work via the transformative possibilities of cinema which subvert the nature of painting and allow the activation of representational differences, seen here through the uses of pastiche and camp. Bersani and Dutoit describe an 'opacity of materials' within Caravaggio's paintings, a quality which they say "makes impossible the illusion of being able to read through these materials and see the past 'as it was'" (1999: 8) which alludes to the constructed and contrived nature of other depictions of past-ness. They go on to suggest the "politically explosive potential" of this technique of opacity (for example, the street models Caravaggio used for a number of the paintings and the way they look) because it insists "that we recognize the present in the reconstruction of the past" (1999: 8). Jarman utilises a similar methodology albeit with cinematic techniques that develop Caravaggio's artistic processes and purposes via an aesthetical activation of past-ness that disrupts the stillness of the paintings.

As Bersani and Dutoit have it, "Jarman…saw in Caravaggio…[the] rejection of both the claim that knowledge of the past (in art, its successful representation or re-creation) is either possible or useful, and the willingness to use this as a pretext for evading our responsibility to the present" (1999: 9) which is one of the ways in which *Caravaggio* offers such a contrast to other period films from this era and the cultural and industrial trends discussed above. The difference with contemporary works and industrial trends, and the method by which Jarman queers the paintings has not been thoroughly considered in the literature.

Jarman does not shy away from locating the past in the present (exploring the tableaux; activating the paintings), and the present in the past (contemporary influences; anachronisms). Alongside this intervention into temporality and subversion of reductive and essentialist boundaries is an attendant disdain for prescriptive period 'knowledge', seen in other period films of the era. Indeed, Jarman stated in no uncertain terms that there was "nothing more excruciating than English Historical Drama…in which British stage actors are given free rein to display their artificial style in period settings", adding that there were "so few examples of films where 'period' is treated with imagination" (1984: 14). Asked for his opinion on Greenaway's independent 'hit' *The Draughtsman's Contract* (1982) Jarman again reveals, in his criticism of the film's style and aesthetics, how he envisages his work very differently, and also, how, in his opinion, works such as Greenaway's can effectively misrepresent British independent film-making:

> *The Draughtsman's Contract* is "part of the reaction we find around us – unlike the films that Ron Peck, Chris Petit or I make, it has no shadows, in spite of the murder at the end. It has more than enough elements to appeal to British snobbism – aristocrats, a country house, a pretentious, stagey script, and named actors. It's the upstairs without the downstairs of independent films" (1984: 25).

Conceivably what Jarman is insinuating here with his assessment of *Draughtsman* is that its approach and appearance (content and aesthetics) have a conservative edge despite the film's arguably progressive interrogation of the visual image (via the draughtsman's drawings, and the framing of these) and the interconnected debates regarding realism. He compares the film unfavourably to fellow independent film-makers – thinking perhaps of the rawness and extroversion of Peck (*Nighthawks*), or the minimalist monochrome of Petit (*Radio On* 1979). With those examples, and Jarman's own work in mind, this quotation clarifies a perceived (and partisan) artistic division between Greenaway's work and that of other independent film-makers. This opinion is furthered by the punning reference, with its class based associations (meaning the respective quarters of masters [upstairs] and servants [downstairs] in a wealthy household), to *Draughtsman* being endemic of the upstairs of British cinema without the downstairs of independent British cinema. Some grounds for this assertion can be found from a brief assessment of the cinematic techniques used in the film, and their visual impact and arguable interpretive effect.

Draughtsman contains a number of extreme long shots of a country house and its estate (Compton Anstey), emphasising the wealth and property of the characters in the story. Likewise, the film has a penchant for displaying the lavish and beautifully furnished interiors of Compton Anstey which are

shown off via the deep focus of cinematic Albertian perspective with its receding aesthetical depth of field – a method that emphasises clarity of vision and contains little or "no shadows" to borrow Jarman's phrase from above. These visualisations also help to convey the social position of the central characters compared with the many servants that can be briefly glimpsed inhabiting relatively small areas of the frame during establishing shots and long shots. In this respect the cinematography and framing of the film can be seen to offer visuals which reinforce preconceptions based around class divisions and the hierarchies of ownership and wealth. Therefore, the filmic approach of Greenaway here could conceivably be described as displaying a certain type of visual and aesthetical snobbery. However, it is also possible that with the exaggerated costumes, dialogue and murderous storyline Greenaway could actually be pastiching and lampooning period films and British concerns for heritage and status.

It is also worth mentioning that the character of the draughtsman (Mr Neville played by Anthony Higgins) suggests the reactionary dominance of machismo and male sexuality[154] as he frequently demands sexual favours from the lady of the house (Virginia Herbert played by Janet Suzman). Finally, Mr Neville, who is undoubtedly a snob about his work/art but who is not in the same social echelon as the household and their guests, is framed for the murder of the absent man of the house, and killed by a mob of greedy and jealous aristocrats – these actions again reinforcing

[154] Sue Harper has noted similar and compares Greenaway unfavourably to Jarman (2000).

hierarchies of class and social position echoing the visualisations and aesthetics of the film. From this reading of elements of the film (visual display, reinforcement of ideas surrounding class and privilege) *Draughtsman* can be seen to share traits and functions with films that contain a more mainstream approach (in terms of conveyance of story and verisimilitude[155]) to heritage topics such as *Chariots of Fire*, *A Room with a View*, *Another Country* and *Maurice* (James Ivory 1987). Therefore it is arguable that *Draughtsman* appeared to offer little in the way of an alternative to such mainstream modes of British film-making, and could be seen as reactionary by directors with a different approach to issues of heritage and identity, such as Jarman.

Jarman's positioning of himself in relation to contemporary British film culture and his opinions on types of film-making have occasioned comparison between Jarman and his subject matter. Ellis notes that Caravaggio's "oppositional stance to the art-world establishment of his day might have been seen by Jarman to echo his own stormy relationship with the British film industry" (2009: 117). This may well be true to some degree (especially if the seven year script to screen funding difficulties of *Caravaggio* are taken into account) but I argue that it is more a case that Jarman's films can be said to illustrate a marked aesthetic and

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[155] It should be said that although its conventional elements have been mentioned here, in general *Draughtsman*'s illuminating depictions of deception and elevation of artifice allow it to challenge and question representations in a way that is largely alien to mainstream narratives. However, its stance on certain heritage debates, as mentioned above, is arguably traditional and sits at odds with its experimental framework.

representational difference (via approaches and traits like hybridisation, pastiche, camp, the merging of time periods and a disdain for prescriptive period knowledge) to the majority of the contemporary British film culture than a personal connection and identification with Caravaggio based on an anti-establishment stance (in any case, this latter sort of argument relies on the application of biographical detail and alleged personality preferences, which has been textually and analytically found wanting in Chapter One).

As if to back up Jarman's aesthetical counterpoint to mainstream British period drama, or even Greenaway's *Draughtsman*, Ellis expands his comparison of Jarman and Caravaggio by describing some of latter's artistic motifs, namely his use of light and its impact on spatiality: "Caravaggio's lighting…does not uniformly illuminate the pictorial space" which leads to a "paucity of objects…and a relative lack of interest in settings" (2009: 118). Ellis goes on to note that "Caravaggio's use of light to define fairly restricted, shallow spaces went against the prevailing artistic fashion, which was interested in fully illuminated, three-dimensional spaces that demonstrated a mastery of Albertian perspective" (2009: 120). So, by transposing Caravaggio's use of light and shadow (described as chiaroscuro), and its related impact on the space and objects of the picture, to the materials of film, it can be argued that Jarman, with *Caravaggio*, was offering a different aesthetic stance to the vast majority of period films being made in Britain during the 1980s.

Interestingly, as previously considered in the thesis, a grouping of British period films of the 1980s have been retrospectively described as the 'heritage film cycle', an analytical opinion which took as its basis an interrogation of the way period films of this era typically represented time (in terms of history and the past) and space (setting, camera style). It is also important to bear in mind that the term heritage cinema, although it has now passed into popular usage, "is very largely a critical construct" (Hall 2005: 191) organised around subjective interpretations of films, and is not a grounded genre in the traditional sense. Indeed, Hall has rightly pointed out that the utilising the moniker 'heritage film' or 'heritage cycle' "has come to signal not just a particular group, or cluster or interrelated groups of films, but a particular attitude to these films, and indeed to the audiences presumed to frequent them" (2005: 191)[156]. It is worth bearing in mind that this chapter and thesis is concerned with the relations between films rather than the strategic positioning of texts in conflict with one another. Heritage and culture are not fixed paradigms but changeable conceptions open to addition, amendment and alteration, and studies of films which tackle these topics should be equally flexible in terms of critical analysis. With that said it is worth flagging-up this approach for a moment by way of returning to Andrew Higson's heritage cycle study (1993; 2006) which formed a significant part of this projects earlier analysis of *Jubilee*, because Higson not only misrepresents the heritage film work of the era, but his project

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[156] The problem of the vague application of descriptive labels in film culture is also seen with discussions of 'national cinema', as noted by Hill (mentioned at the beginning of the chapter). Assumptions about attitude and the relationship of films and audiences also abounded here.

would also be greatly strengthened and improved by bringing films like *Caravaggio* into the fold.

A cluster of British period films (including *Chariots of Fire* [1981]; *Another Country* [1984] and *A Room With A View* [1985]) released throughout the 1980's were grouped together by Higson (2006) and defined as the 'heritage cycle' primarily because of the ways in which their respective mise-en-scène and aesthetical approaches represented a particular conception of British identity. The emphasis of the content and the form of films in the heritage cycle was assessed by Higson to be typically focussed on the upper classes, their properties and displays of wealth, and the countryside. The cultural impact of this emphasis, Higson suggests, is that it succeeded in transforming "the heritage of the upper classes into the national heritage" (2006: 96) – a result achieved largely by a 'pictorialist' camera style that creates "heritage space rather than narrative space" (2006: 99).

The focus and aesthetical approach of the heritage film, Higson argues, also had important repercussions for the viewer and the creation of meaning mainly due to the "settled and visually splendid" (2006: 93) displays of culture and knowledge of past-ness represented – this method of representation arguably turned the gaze of the viewer into the gaze of a consumer because they allegedly had no active role to play in the creation of meaning (referring again to the issue of subject – text relations discussed

earlier). Utilising the context of the era, Higson also suggested that this distinctive heritage style had clear political implications that could be seen to align with certain policies and approaches of the Conservative government (such as the construction and display of a type of British identity) and the burgeoning 'heritage industry' (the consumption of elements of the national past as a series of commodities). Higson connects the function of heritage mise-en-scène to elements of the Conservative political program and related contemporary financial imperatives. From his assessment these films can often be viewed as depictions of a closed and predetermined history with a largely monolithic identity, an imagistic based and inherently stable heritage that can be effectively sold to a worldwide cinema audience, who, after seeing a number of such films, will begin to construct this as the actual heritage and identity of England/Britain[157].

It is worth bringing Hall's work in to dialogue with Higson here because Hall incisively exposes areas of weakness and a lack of depth within Higson's argument, specifically with regard to the definition of the 'heritage' term, and the breadth of films and decades looked at in relation to it. Hall picks up on numerous work (and eras) of British film-making that have been arbitrarily excluded from heritage analysis, such as *Women in Love* (Ken Russell 1969) and *A Man For All Seasons* (Fred Zimmerman 1966), suggesting that Higson's selective interrogation was primarily rooted in

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[157] The majority of heritage films are set in (a conception of) England.

making a socio-political point about Britain in the 1980's. Hall talks of how "marginalisation can be accounted for in terms of the currency of particular critical constructions of British cinema with respect to particular periods" (2005: 194) hinting at a narrowing of the identities of British cinema due to the predominant or fashionable methods of scholarship applied to areas of it. Hall suggests that heritage films of the 1960s have been largely ignored because their approaches do not 'fit' well with critical assessments that have identified the decade with modernity and change - 'swinging' sex comedies, social realist works and pop musicals being Hall's examples (2005: 194) of the types of 60s films chosen to emphasis it as a dynamic decade. In turn, this same method of selective use of textual evidence to facilitate a confirmation bias can be levelled at scholarship on British films of the 1980s, particularly the tendency to suggest that the majority of work can be interpreted to possess elements that either support or challenge the contemporary Conservative political program and its social impact.

Hall opines that, akin to the clearly defined critical depiction of British films from the 1960s, a "similar critical (and ideological) imperative has presented (a particular version of) heritage cinema as representative of the 1980s" (2005: 194). Central to this is the textual selection process which means "certain historical dramas and literary adaptations have been characterised as heritage texts while others have been excluded" – with examples of those amongst the excluded texts being *The French*

Lieutenant's Woman, *The Draughtsman's Contract*, *Caravaggio*[158] and

Gothic (Ken Russell 1986). What is clear from Hall's assessment is that a

number of critical constructs and decade identifiers dominate the era and,

to a degree, misrepresent or underrepresent the nuances of British film-

making and its responses to topics such as heritage, history, politics and

culture.

Hall ends his discussion with three suggestions for widening and

strengthening the heritage debate: firstly a purging "of its pejorative

connotations and its attachments to the Thatcherite phase of cultural

history" should take place; then an extension of texts and eras covered; and

finally, an increase in detailed textual analysis which facilitates

"engagement with the particularities of individual films rather than loose

generic groupings" (2005: 197). Similar assumptions and limitations were

shown to be present in the creative and aesthetic narrowness of the British

Film Year lists, and Channel 4's initial choice of film funding discussed

earlier in the chapter. All these approaches share biases based largely on a

particular idea of what constitutes British film-making and national

heritage, and also make some loaded judgements regarding audience

reception. Looking into what Higson says about certain examples of 1980s

heritage mise-en-scène is useful for highlighting some aesthetic differences

with Jarman's mise-en-scène, and hence, can help to highlight a variation

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[158] It is arguable that *Caravaggio* can be seen as a precursor to, or an inchoate example of, a 'post heritage film' – possessing "a deep consciousness about how the past is represented" (Claire Monk's usage and description, cited by Hall 2005: 193).

in the responses of British film-making to issues of heritage, history and the past – but it does not necessarily deny, however, that these films and film-makers have cinematic common ground or a degree of aesthetic convergence, and that is an important point to consider. The heritage area of study would be greatly strengthened by bringing works like Jarman's into this particular critical fold rather than consistently ignoring these works or positioning them as forever on the margins, as this can become a shorthand definition for them without any attentiveness to specific textual analysis. This engagement with previously excluded filmic texts would improve debates and aid in the substantiation (or denial) of theories and ideas regarding the visualisation of national heritage and periodic past-ness. This insightful interrogative process, with a detailed consideration of attendant cultural and industrial context offered alongside, would also lead to new critical conceptions – particularly in terms of an understanding of the meaning and purpose of varied heritage-related filmic aesthetics and mise-en-scène.

This chapter, through a focus on the use of the paintings in Jarman's *Caravaggio* and a consideration of the contemporary British film cultural and its industrial contexts, has highlighted important methods of response to crucial issues surrounding representation, identity and heritage. As with *Jubilee* and *The Tempest* before it, *Caravaggio* can be seen to explore and interrogate the function, purpose and status of art within culture. It has

been shown that *Caravaggio* utilises methods of self-reflexive critique like pastiche and camp to foreground the possibility of representational and interpretive difference, and battle historical homogeneity and the cultural dominance of essentialist and reductive categorisation. The film contests the idea that the knowledge of the past gleaned from history and objects of culture is fixed and agreed upon (noting cultural biases and preconceptions), and suggests the emancipatory importance of alternative representations and identities.

It is these qualities that make the film a solid textual example for inclusion in heritage studies or considerations of the national cinema of the 1980s. Such studies should pay attention to the "particularities of individual films" (Hall 2005: 197) and the varied approaches of film-makers whilst considering points of convergence, rather than continuing to separate the debate along tired and foreshortened lines of inquiry[159]. *Caravaggio* should become a constituent part of a liberated conception of 'national cinema' that respects all approaches to heritage and past-ness and does not simply include or exclude films. The 'pastiche structuration' of *Caravaggio*, comprising "a complex medley and layering of different styles and motifs" (Hoesterey 2001: 46), infuses the film with a powerful hybridity that denies

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[159] The conception of the audience in such studies should also not be presumptuous or discriminatory, like the assertions made in previous heritage and national cinema studies, and should instead be cognisant of the transitory and contextually influenced nature of audiences. The provision of an audience and the perceived reception of films in such studies (and in industrial examples – i.e. British Film Year) often appear to be dated very quickly after publication weakening the conclusions, and future applications, of the work. Studies should strive towards a "continuous construction of an audience", like MacCabe suggested of Channel 4.

and deconstructs essentialisms and cultural hierarchies, and involves the audience in the process of meaning creation and the definition of subject – text relations.

Conclusion:

Jarman filmic texts reframed and repositioned

The investigations of this thesis have centred on close textual analysis of three specific filmic texts, as opposed to a typical biographical or career based assessment (seen with the BFI Jarman season [2014] and in multiple scholars which concentrate on Jarman rather than textual analysis). The work has therefore avoided the dominant tendency within Jarman studies to view any particular filmic aesthetic through a reductive and often misleading biographical prism. Throughout the thesis, the methodology has paid specific attention to the operations of the filmic text via analytical investigations into the usages of style, the layering of temporalities within the diegesis (a quality uniquely available to film with its ability to rapidly move or transform from one setting to another; or, through the inclusion of multiple and diverse referents within a frame), and the texts' approach to particular cultural content (i.e. the punk and Elizabethan eras [*Jubilee*]; Shakespeare and the early-modern masque [*The Tempest*]; Caravaggio paintings [*Caravaggio*]. Cultural representations, their heritage and varied depictions, are explored within the three texts, and the particular ways in which the qualities of the filmic medium have been utilised (depiction of style/s; layered mise-en-scène; framing and movement) enable such texts to be effective at this.

The pivotal textual analysis is thoroughly contextualised within British cinema and British film culture, where readings of the texts are integrated with discussions and debates regarding the wider trends and topics of the British cinema of the time (BFI; heritage film theory; Channel 4; other filmic texts operating in the culture). This approach anchors the texts securely in a manner that has not been utilised before with previous analysis preferring to position Derek Jarman's life story, perceived personality, and expressed opinions as the anchor for the work, which has the knock-on effect of subduing the texts and often ignoring or avoiding important contributing factors within British film. Therefore the contextual approach opposes reductive, monolithic and totalising theories (such as the auteurist approach) by observing and analysing the particular properties of the focus films with reference to industrial/cultural trends and relevant theory, in order to centralise an interpretation of the operations of the three filmic texts.

Chapter One addressed the industry and critical positioning of Jarman, and the filmic texts, which were often found to be indivisible in previous approaches due to the primacy of auteurism and the biographical frame. The BFI season of 2014 offered a typical presentation of Jarman filmic texts that served to reiterate the critical judgements of Jarman scholars, often ignoring context or particular textual analysis in favour of biographical discussion and a tendency towards posthumous artist/auteur worship. The BFI was found to operate within film culture as an institution which instructed society (or interested parties at least)

in filmic appreciation via a particular discursive agenda. Similar notions were discovered in Chapter Four when looking into the workings of Channel 4, and industry celebrations such as British Film Year with its attendant lists of establishment approved filmic texts, and the thesis explored where *Jubilee*, *The Tempest*, and *Caravaggio* might fit in as part of British film culture. After looking into the role of the BFI, and previous critical studies on Jarman, Chapter One concluded with analysis of the previously under-explored or ignored *Queen is Dead* and *Paninaro* demonstrating how a distinct filmic style can effectively explore the heritage of cultural representations. It was also important to position these texts at the beginning of the work in order to offer a microcosm of the methodology of the thesis' approaches, and to further highlight the reductive nature of previous studies of Jarman film texts.

Chapter Two continued to address the topics highlighted in the previous chapter via an in-depth analysis of *Jubilee* concentrating on temporal layering and the functions and uses of filmic style within the text. The nature of the textual analysis (filmic style and its depiction of the past or display of signifiers of the past) facilitated a dialogue with heritage film theory, and the notion of playful pastiche. Interpreted in this way, *Jubilee* is an example of how a film text can interrogate representation and address cultural identity, and the chapter argued for its repositioning alongside other British film texts that utilise style to display a (re)vision of the past. Chapter Three, with its concentration on *The Tempest*, explored theories of adaptation, examples of filmic appropriation, and

demonstrated how source texts can be playfully revised in order to provide a textual investigation into the source material, its heritage, and the text's position in the culture. What emerged from this was that methods of approach to source material were important, but so too were the particular properties of film specific ideology, of which *The Tempest* was shown to display an aesthetically strong one (there was an examination of the film's use of colours, costumes, lighting and movement especially during the masque sequence; and the camp modality was observable within certain operations of the text). *The Tempest*'s appropriations of the play (content) combined with the filmic manipulations and operations within its diegesis (form) particularly in the masque sequence, again demonstrates how a Jarman film text investigates aspects of British cultural heritage and representation. These properties of the filmic text mean that it is particularly appropriate for contextualisation within British film, and British film culture, rather than forming part of an isolated auteur study, or highlighting comparisons to European filmmakers (as previous studies of Jarman film texts have been only too keen to do).

The final chapter focussed on *Caravaggio*, and the textual analysis here highlighted the unique and particular way *Caravaggio* explored cultural representations through the precise positioning of multiple pastiche paintings, or references to paintings, throughout the diegesis. This was discussed with continual reference to, and contextualisation within, British cinema and British film culture (notably, Channel 4, British Film Year, and notions of national

cinema) because the film's creation, funding, production and reception was so deeply rooted to the industrial and cultural contexts of Britain in the 1980s (despite it being ostensibly about an Italian painter from the 17th century). This twin track approach of analysis of the use of paintings/references to paintings in *Caravaggio*, and contextualisation of the film within the British film culture of the time, has never been done before, and therefore highlights the reductive nature of previous studies on Jarman films, and critical considerations of 1980s British cinema. *Caravaggio*'s intrinsic connection to the industrial context of the era of its creation, combined with its stylistic approach to historical depiction and artistic representation, mean that it can be positioned as a key British filmic text of the 1980s, as the final chapter sought to demonstrate.

In summary then, my thesis argued against, and subsequently removed from application, the stifling auteur/biographical frame of analysis that has been particularly dominant when considering Jarman films. The methodological result of doing this meant that I was able to pay attention to the specific operations of the texts I selected. So, my approach facilitated a focus on original textual analysis considering aspects and uses of film style, and methods of representation, always within the context of British film, and with relevant theoretical reflection (heritage, pastiche, camp) alongside. Therefore, my thesis has presented a reframing of Jarman filmic texts in terms of the British cinema, and British film culture, of the 1970s and 1980s.

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<u>Filmography</u>

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Bacchus (1596) Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, Italy.

Basket of Fruit (1596) Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, Italy.

Boy Bitten by a Lizard (1593-94) Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, Italy.

Boy Peeling a Fruit (1592-93) Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, Italy.

Boy with a Basket of Fruit (1593) Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, Italy.

Cardsharps, The (1594-95) Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, Italy.

Cupid/Love Victorious (1601-02) Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, Italy.

Death of Marat, The (1793) Jacques-Louis David, France.

Death of the Virgin (1601-03) Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, Italy.

Doubting Thomas (1603-03) Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, Italy.

Entombment, The (1602-04) Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, Italy.

John the Baptist (1604) Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, Italy.

Lute Players, The (1595-96) Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, Italy.

Martyrdom of St Matthew, The (1600) Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, Italy.

Medusa (1597) Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, Italy.

Musicians, The (1595) Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, Italy.

Penitent Magdalene (1593-94) Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, Italy.

Saint Jerome Writing (1605) Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, Italy.

St John the Baptist (1602) Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, Italy.

Untitled 224/*Sick Bacchus* (1990) Cindy Sherman [photographic pastiche of Caravaggio painting], USA.

Young Sick Bacchus (*Self-portrait as Bacchus*) (1593-94) Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, Italy.

Music References

Ask (1986) The Smiths [written by Morrissey & Marr], UK.

Broken English (1979) Marianne Faithfull, UK.

God Save The Queen (1977) Sex Pistols [written by Cook/Jones/Matlock/Rotten], UK.

It's a Sin (1987) Pet Shop Boys [Chris Lowe and Neil Tennant], UK.

Opportunites (*Let's Make Lots of Money*) (1985) Pet Shop Boys, UK.

Panic (1986) The Smiths, UK.

Paninaro (1986) Pet Shop Boys, UK.

Punk Is Dead (1978) Crass, UK.

Queen is Dead, The (1986) The Smiths, UK.

Rent (1987) Pet Shop Boys, UK.

Stormy Weather (1933) Harold Arlen and Ted Koehler – performed by Elisabeth Welch in *The Tempest* (1979), USA.

Take Me Back To Dear Old Blighty (1916) Arthur J. Mills, Fred Godfrey, Bennett Scott – performed by Cicely Courtneidge in *The L – Shaped Room* (1962), UK.