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My Body is a Temple and a Prison: Derek Jarman's Body-of-Work

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> Could our fingers touch across this page, across the fleeting minutes?
> Derek Jarman, The Last of England (247)

Filmmaker, painter, writer, designer; to understand Derek Jarman, one only needs to surrender to his Body-of-Work. In deploying the term Body-of-Work I intend to open up a space where we consider both his artistic output as well as his actual body and its presence. A Queer man traversing Thatcher's England, Jarman found in the body a means to contest the repressive controls of his milieu. Bodies – mostly Queer, sexual, sensual, and provocatively visible – are rediscovered and enlisted as tools against the conservative institutions that dominated his time. Few artists have highlighted the body and energized it the way Derek Jarman did.

Jarman's bodily emphasis in his art attained greater weight four days before Christmas 1986 when he learned that he was carrying the HIV virus and as a consequence had developed AIDS. From then on, AIDS informs Jarman's Body-of-Work. Jarman infuses his body and its senses with more insistence into his work. Moreover, the senses never remain constant given that the illness compromises their capacity to capture life. To harness his mutating senses, Jarman mobilizes the tropes of the war narrative, capturing the onslaught of the illness on his own body. Jarman, who was born in England during World War II and whose father was an RAF bomber in that war, observantly finds parallels between war and AIDS, offering his Body-of-Work as a point of convergence where both conditions assemble.

In Jarman's lifetime, AIDS represented a death sentence. Jarman's frenetic output after 1986 constitutes a response to this new reality. Language, imagery, and texture represent assemblages of the senses, transmitting a wealth of information that at the time hid under stigma. Those diagnosed with AIDS remained in the shadows for fear of attack; Jarman instead opted to shine a bright light on the affliction. Consequently, language, imagery, and texture similarly represent assemblages of Jarman. By engaging with these assemblages, we come face to face with the person. I want to retrace his bodily experience with AIDS through the sensations he so meticulously captured in his latter films. Each unit grants a necessary component towards assembling his greater Body-of-Work. I want to connect these units in the hopes of phenomenally connecting with Jarman himself. I want, as my epigraph suggests, our fingers to touch across the page. But before I embark on this journey, some additional preliminary considerations of Jarman must be established.

Tilling The Soil

> I am involved as one body.
> Derek Jarman*, At Your Own Risk* (123)

Late in his life Jarman proclaimed that he was a painter who chose film as his primary medium (Watson 33). Jarman's proclamation sheds light on his approach to artistic production. We can speak of a painterly quality in his films; of a textual emphasis in his paintings; even of a prevalent montage technique that characterizes most of his writing. However, along with being a filmmaker, a painter, and a writer, Jarman was also a gardener. After his AIDS diagnosis, Jarman bought a fisherman's cottage on Dungeness, the southernmost tip of Kent, England. The shores of Dungeness are notorious for their shingle beaches. The elements batter this plot with persistent waves, brutal salt-infused wind, and a cold that rarely lets up, making for an inhospitable place for gardening. And yet, Jarman, against the odds, succeeded in creating a garden that stands as arguably his greatest work. Jarman's gardening process, documented in detail in books like *Modern Nature* (1991), included a lot of trial and error. Plants were tested out. Most succumbed to the conditions. But ultimately Jarman hit on those plants that were sufficiently robust to grow in this unforgiving environment. The garden became for him, as Michael Charlesworth notes, "his place to stand," a respite to contrast with the ramped up activity after his AIDS diagnosis (11).

The garden needed constant tending to survive: the waves threatened to uproot the foundations; the wind threatened to blow the plants away; the saltpeter oxidized the metal which gave it structure. This constant assault drew Jarman into the obsessive work that went into keeping this garden alive. In the garden he built a parallel to the ongoing siege he was under. In keeping it alive he kept himself alive. The garden afforded Jarman a renewed connection to his senses. A lot of his writing on gardening foregrounds the color of flowers; the sounds at his cottage; the smell of saltpeter; the texture of his gardening utensils; the feel of the cold temperatures. The garden's sensorial stimuli renewed his apprehension of what it meant to *sense* and *make sense*. Given his access to this new space, we can trace a sensuous turn in his work. As such, Jarman's garden provides a theoretical frame through which we can assess his post-1986 output. Inspired by Deleuze and Guatarri's *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980) and their notion of the Bodies-without-Organs (BwO), we can speak of Jarman's Body-of-Work as a plateau on which many parts assemble. Each item joins the plateau, changing its constitution, becoming part of the greater body while also remaining itself. Jarman's Body-of-

Work functions similarly to his gardening work. Films, writings, and paintings, assemblages in their own right, are at once self-contained manifestations, but also represent individual components of the greater Body-of-Work. Like a garden, the Body-of-Work is tended to. And in tending to his Body-of-Work, Derek Jarman assembles Derek Jarman.

Within his Body-Of-Work, Jarman highlights the theater of war emblematic of his life as the son of an RAF pilot, a Queer man, an avant garden artist, and a Person With AIDS (PWA). In *The Last of England* (1988) Jarman captures England under siege, with citizens either being assassinated or deported for not fitting the nation's identity. *War Requiem* (1989) serves as Jarman's adaptation of Benjamin Britten's musical piece of the same name, itself based on the WWI poetry of Wilfred Owen. *The Garden* (1990) explicitly foregrounds the attacks on the Queer body, showcasing religion as a main belligerent. Finally, *Blue* (1993), Jarman's final film, sets a soundtrack of hospital visits and sounds of war against an Yves Klein Blue screen. This essay looks at each of these films as assemblages of phenomenal sensibilities and military rhetoric. After analyzing each film, I return to Jarman's garden to assess and assemble the traces Jarman has left behind.

The Last Man, Accompanied

> I've never been interested in the future,
> only in the past insofar as it relates to the present.
> Derek Jarman, *At Your Own Risk* (114)

Jubilee (1978) opens with Queen Elizabeth I asking her advisor John Dee to show her a vision of England in the future. In that future, Queen Elizabeth II has been murdered, the streets burn, and the nation is reduced to rubble. The film functions as a lamentation; the queen sees her once-great empire destroyed, while Jarman meditates on the downfall of British society due to the rise of conservatism (Margaret Thatcher would become Prime Minister a year later). Ten years after *Jubilee*, and now diagnosed with AIDS, Jarman returns to this apocalyptic vision with *The Last of England*. If *Jubilee* served as a harbinger, *The Last of England* functions more as a documentary through which Jarman seeks to "explore… the deep seated malaise of current Britain" (Turner 82).

The Last of England connects isolated segments through internal visual and aural tendencies. Segments include youths destroying structures, hooded individuals rounding up people either to execute or deport, and footage of various wars. The bodies depicted are constantly under threat; daily life represents a source of ongoing danger and confusion. Tellingly, *The Last of England* opens with Jarman working in his study; Jarman's presence serves as the frame, investing his own body into his work. Consequently, this film is not a vision, but Jarman's reality. To the images of his studio work, Jarman adds images of a youth in the process of shooting drugs, and Caravaggio's painting *Amor Vincit Omnia* (1601-02), first as an out of context hyperkinetic image, then as an object vandalized by a second male youth. To these images, Jarman adds a voice over delivering two of his poems, "4AM" and "Imperial

Embers," initially published in *The Last of England*[1] (1987). "Imperial Embers" mourns the loss of innocence, of youth, of country, of friends, of memory.

> Poppies and corncockle have long been forgotten here, like the boys who died in Flanders, their names erased by a late frost which clipped the village cross…. On every green hill mourners stand, and weep for The Last of England (189)

These apocalyptic lines make of the film's diegesis an aftermath. A survivor is forced to look upon his losses. But who exactly has been lost here? And who is doing the looking back? Jarman initially summons the ghosts of WWI, particularly those lost in the region of Flanders, where some of the greatest numbers of casualties occurred during the war. But are we to read more into this notion of the Last of England?

To answer these questions, we must summon another ghost: Lancelot, Jarman's father. In a sense, *The Last of England* constitutes Jarman's attempt at exorcising the influence of his father. In the book *The Last of England,* Jarman constantly returns to Lancelot, revealing how many elements in the film are responses to his father's militaristic ways.

> [H]e created my aversion to all authority, to the extreme patriotism with which he fought the war.… I looked in his poisoned well and saw others celebrating the war…. All I saw was deceit and bankruptcy…. This country stinks of platitude. *The bomb dropped in this child's eye.* (emphasis added, 179-81)

In many ways, Jarman saw himself as a casualty of his father's war. Abuses marked the artist, who developed a great deal of hatred towards his father. Jarman's aunt, Moyra, once wrote of Lancelot, "Your dad really was a strange man. Yes you were impossible with food, he used to try and force feed you, and meal times became a *battle*" (emphasis added, *Nature* 249). Jarman always lauded his father's service and the fact that the latter "fought a hard war," going so far as to accept that "without men like my father the war would not have been won" (*England* 107). But ultimately for both Jarman and his father, war meant more harm than good. At home, Lancelot "carried on the war" (*England* 107) to the detriment of his family; "family became an extension of the war" (*England* 121). On that account, we could read Lancelot as one of those whose name has been erased, forced to carry the burden of the war into oblivion. As time passed, Jarman's father lost his sanity along with the love of his family. *The Last of England* stands as an elegy to Lancelot as another victim of loss.

But ultimately, *The Last of England* really encapsulates Jarman's generation. In the story of his father and his generation, Jarman sees an important parallel to his own generation's experience with AIDS. Regarding his father, Jarman writes "He had many friends who were killed, he laid his life on the line but survived" (*Nature* 107). As the epidemic progressed, Jarman saw his friends passing, not only as bodies, but as memories, their names equally erased. As the voiceover proclaims "I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by madness…. Not with a bang but a whimper" (*Last of England*). To capture the parallels, Jarman connects the idyllic home movies his father filmed with the sounds of war. At one point, footage of Jarman playing around in the yard reveals the barbwire that surrounded RAF camps. In *Modern Nature,* Jarman recalls talking at an exhibit about " the barbed wire that had hemmed me in, quite literally, in the RAF camps - the fenced-in boarding school, the proscribed sexuality, the virus" (167). Thus, Jarman connects the RAF experience - the war and its effects on his father's generation - to his experience with AIDS, each an extension of the other. To punctuate these images, Jarman assembles a meticulous soundtrack. During many of the domestic scenes, Jarman adds the droning of bomber planes. The sound elicits a sense of doom, building anxiety on the viewer/listener. Seeing the family evidently unaware of the war machines above their heads shatters the illusion of innocence and happiness Jarman's father intended when filming domestic events. Consequently, there is a reinterpretation of these events on the part of Jarman who reinscribes the actual history lurking behind the footage.

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[1] The book would be renamed *Kicking The Pricks* in the US (Overlook Press, 1997).

Shattering the illusion, Jarman brings us closer to the real. The sounds anachronistically capture the danger that presently hovers over Jarman. With that in mind, Jarman adds footage of his father's bombing runs, footage actually shot by Lancelot Jarman himself. Cut together, the film presents an infant lying inside a pram, covered in newspapers informing us of the 1982 Malvinas War. Jarman, during one of the home movies, can be seen in a pram, being pushed around by his mother Betts. By creating this troubling parallelism, Jarman invites the viewer to see him as the target of these bombing runs. In *The Last of England,* Jarman writes "I was born with sirens wailing, bombs fell through my childhood, I watched the world militarise…" (109). Like the child in the pram, war looms large over Jarman. After all, the Malvinas War cemented the Conservative Party's hold on power in England during the 1980s and 1990s[2]. War *touches* Jarman; through his father, through his country's history, through his position as a social outsider.

Sound physically connects the viewer to Jarman's experience. Jarman hopes that we will in fact experience that sense of hovering doom that comes from living with AIDS. Jarman is the one looking back, seeing his friends falling to the virus. In a country where conservatism blamed AIDS on Queer identities, calling these identities "the Last of England" placed the onus of mourning on the reluctant nation. Not only has the nation failed to remember both war and AIDS casualties, but in the inaction that comes from forgetting, the nation has brought about its own apocalypse. Jarman reluctantly looks back so as not to fail those the nation has chosen to erase. He calls upon us to do the same.

To Feel Old at a Young Age

> Merry it was to laugh there –
> Where death becomes absurd and life absurder.
> Wilfred Owen, "Apologia Pro Poemate Meo" (79)

Midway into *War Requiem* (1989), Jarman assembles a visual translation of Wilfred Owen's poem "The Parable of the Old Man and the Young." In the poem, Owen narrates the biblical tale of Abraham and his son Isaac, ending with one major alteration: "But the old man would not so, but slew his son,/ And half the seed of Europe, one by one" (99). Through Owen's first hand witnessing, war became a sham. The odes written to war had painted glorious, almost attractive deaths. With *The Parable,* Owen breaks with tradition by pulling the veil off the cruel reality. *The Parable* indicts those responsible for sending their sons and daughters towards death. For Jarman, *The Parable* rings true when transposed to his Body-of-Work and the plight of PWAS. Like Abraham in the poem, the nation looked the other way and opted to sacrifice the afflicted, less as an offering and more as a way to get rid of them.

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[2] See *British Cinema and Thatcherism* (Editor Lester Friedman. University of Minnesota Press, 1993.) for a direct correlation between the work of British filmmakers, the Malvinas War, and the rise of Margaret Thatcher.

Commissioned by the BBC to create a film based on Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem,* Jarman imagines the events Owen witnessed. Jarman inserts graphic archival footage of the two World Wars along with the wars in Cambodia, Afghanistan, and Vietnam. By directly presenting these conflicts, Jarman's film indirectly "compares the slaughter of the war with the persecution of homosexuals and the AIDS epidemic…" (Pencak 122). Consequently, Jarman continues to apply the senses of a siege onto his Body-of-Work and the experience of living with AIDS.

The film opens with an old soldier, played by Sir Lawrence Olivier in his final on-screen performance, being pushed across an open field on a wheelchair by a nurse, played by Tilda Swinton. While showing his medals to the nurse, the old soldier, via voiceover, recites lines from Owen's *"*Strange Meeting.*"* In it a soldier sees his colleagues succumbing to death on the battlefield. Upon being addressed by one of his dying companions, the soldier comes to a realization: "And by his smile, I knew that sullen hall, –/ By his dead smile I knew we stood in Hell" (88). To Owen's lines Jarman pairs images of the World Wars. At the end of this montage, the old man, looking directly at the camera, suddenly realizes how vain his accolades seem. The old man has survived, but is forced to live with the memory of the horrors he outlived, horrors he also helped commit. One important figure gains prominence alongside Owen in this theater of war. The nurse is called upon to witness and mourn the dead. Her body's senses capture and transmit stimuli as they work towards honoring the task she has been given.

Following the "Strange Meeting" introduction, the film presents Owen lying in repose, clutching a wad of paper onto which he has written his poem "*Anthem for Doomed Youth*." Keeping watch is the nurse, anxiously heaving, unable to accept the poet's death, much less his body's presence. Angrily, she covers the poet, trying to avoid acknowledging the influx of information she is receiving. Jarman's treatment of this sequence highlights the primacy of the senses as avenues for the absorption of pain and emotion. Owen's *Anthem* chronicles an assault on the senses in its recording of more loses than the senses can bear.

> What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?
> –Only the monstrous anger of the guns.
> Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle
> Can patter out their hasty orisons.
> No mockeries now for them; no prayers nor bells;
> Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs, –
> The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;
> And bugles calling for them form sad shires. (77)

The reference to sound is relentless. However, Swinton's performance stands in stark contrast to the poem. Unable to cope, the nurse belts out a scream, but this scream remains silent. Forbidden by Britten's Estate from adding sounds over the Requiem, Jarman creatively opts for a visual sound cue instead. Consequently, the nurse's "scream" rings louder and truer. The image of someone screaming demands the audience's insertion of the missing aural scream. At once, the audience must supply the scream, generating the necessary mental and bodily exercise to fill in this gap, but the audience must also recognize the lack and be affected by it.

The invocation of the body extends to sight, when the screaming nurse presses her fingers onto her eyes. Owen's poem also invokes the eyes when it compares the subsequent trauma of witnessing pain and suffering as "a drawing-down of blinds" (77).

The eyes cannot fully comprehend the horrors they are being shown. The events themselves deny vision's access. Confronted with the magnitude of the horrors, the subject proceeds to reject vision altogether. Returning to his family relations, Jarman's mother was a potential witness to the horrors inflicted on her son by her husband. Yet, over an over, she decided to look away, unable to confront her husband over the treatment of their son. Thus, if in *The Last of England* Jarman exorcizes the memory of his father, in *War Requiem* he analyzes the effects of his mother's non-interventionism. In that sense, it is still an indictment of the old generation and its willingness to sacrifice the youth they were supposed to protect.

At another level, the nurse's denial of the senses represents the denial of the AIDS epidemic on the part of the nation. Having the nurse enact a silent scream encapsulates the pervasive silence associated with the AIDS epidemic in most countries, particularly the UK and the US. Thatcher refused to recognize the epidemic due to its early association with the gay community. The effect was the silencing of advocacy groups for fear of legal retribution, thus, lessening the visibility of PWAs. Owen stands for this marginalized segment, his death representing the death of all those who have been silenced by the cultural war surrounding AIDS. Through Jarman's treatment, Owen's poem becomes a commentary on the AIDS epidemic and the nation's response.

Near the end of the film, a ghostly Owen carries a torch down into an underworld where he finds soldiers, enemies, and victims. There, a child reaches down and picks up a bugle, blowing on it but producing no sound. An adult male also picks up the bugle but similarly fails at producing any sound. Given that this purgatory lacks any walls, silence stands for the missing walls. The mood is contemplative but also melancholic. Since the world cannot make space for them, they make a space for themselves. Collectively they proceed to physically and metaphorically cleanse themselves from the grime of the underworld. Bodies touch each other. Bodies listen to each other. Bodies see and recognize each other. The dead save themselves. In *Modern Nature*, Jarman provides a meditation similar to the one contained in this scene.

> Could I face the dawn cheerfully, paralyzed by the virus that circles like a deadly cobra? So many friends dead or dying – since autumn: Terry, Robert, David, Ken, Paul, Howard. All the brightest and the best trampled to death – surely the Great War

> brought no more loss into one life in just twelve months, and all this as we made love not war. (56)

Jarman's commiseration is directed towards the ones he has lost but also towards himself. He tried playing the bugle as a child to rid of the pain he felt. He now tries to play the bugle as an adult in an attempt to revive those who are gone. In both instances he fails, and worse yet, he seems to be convinced that he will join the list of the brightest and best he is memorializing.

Like Owen, dead, haunting, and walking down to the underworld, Jarman descends in search of his friends but gets lost along the way. "The hopelessness" invoked by Owen in "Strange Meeting" represents the same hopelessness Jarman needs to communicate to his audience. Here we find Jarman at his lowest, with a hope "Which lies not calm in eyes" (Owen 88). Still relatively young at the time, Jarman's body and experiences render him old, like the old soldier who opens the film. And like that old soldier, Jarman serves as both victim and witness of "The pity of war, the pity war distilled" (Owen 88).

Under a Blood Red Sky

> I walk in this garden holding the hands of dead friends.
> Derek Jarman, *The Garden*
> The garden feels under siege this winter.
> Derek Jarman, *Modern Nature* (250)

The Garden assembles different aspects of the AIDS experience and the siege mentality the ailment elicits. Again, Jarman serves as a frame that gives form to the film. Throughout the film, Jarman intersperses images of himself tending to his garden in Dungeness, directly including his body in the film's body. Gardening becomes a metaphor for filmmaking, artistic creation, and life in general. At the start of the film, Jarman's voice calls on those on set and in the audience to be "very quiet," to show reverence. There are rules of decorum in this space and we are to follow them. Another voice non-diegetically follows, seeking to connect with the audience. "I want to share this emptiness with you," it explains. We are being spoken to, directly, in a way that previous Jarman films have not attempted. The voice continues,

> Not fill the silence with false notes or put tracks through the void. I want to share this wilderness of failure…. I offer you a journey without direction, uncertainty, and no sweet conclusion. When the light faded I went in search of myself.

A narrative whirlwind, *The Garden* takes us on this undefined journey towards self-discovery, arguably making it Jarman's most personal film. The film emphasizes the effects of authority figures on Jarman's Body-of-Work, the church representing the main belligerent in this case. Through its various guises, the church inflicts violence on those who, like Jarman, identify as Queer. In the film, two male lovers are forced to navigate a hostile world. Tortured, ridiculed, and ultimately assassinated by religion, their bodies prominently reveal the effects of the assault, which bear a striking resemblance to Christ's stigmata. In fact, the film enacts a reappropriation of Christ's martyrdom, humility, and sacrifice in the service of Queer identities. By extension, the film fuses the body of Christ with Jarman's Body-of-Work, both functioning as offerings to heal the damage previously done to their respective flocks.

The color red punctuates many of the couple's interventions, linking these events to blood and violence, infection and war. At first the couple revel in their blissful physical encounters. But like Jarman, who at the beginning of the film was roused from his sleep by water seeping in from outside his cottage, the couple are rudely woken out of their dream. A blood red sky serves as a harbinger of events that will grow incrementally more violent. First, a trio of Santa Clauses disrupts the couple's sleep. One handles a camera, capturing the event. Another listens to a hand radio, the sound emanating from it included diagetically in the soundtrack. The third Santa Clause belts out a rendition of *God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen.* Eventually the three men physically shake the couple, bringing them out of their sleep. Image and sound function as weapons, the Santa Clauses' choice artifacts representing a continuation of the film's own methods. However, the Santa Clauses also physically invade the couple's space, bringing touch into the experience. Considering the film's foregrounding of religious belligerence, the Santa Clauses stand as evidence of false religiosity. The Santa Clauses have less to do with Christianity and more to do with capitalism, the latter reaching predatory levels in the West during the late Twentieth Century. There is violence inherent in so called free market practices. And, yet, the church willingly looks the other way, seeing little to condemn in this practice. Jarman critiques this double standard by highlighting the couple's proximity to the piety and sacrifice associated with Christ.

After being harassed by a group of elderly, business types in a sauna, the couple find themselves in a diner-cum-police interrogation room. The couple, bloodied and tied to chairs, are progressively covered in a tar-like substance by the ring leader as the rest of the men egg him on. The leader then proceeds to rip his jacket, revealing the down underneath and covering the couple in plumage. The vileness of the attack turns them into prisoners of war. The men are subjected to an aural assault of disjointed sounds emanating from those doing the torturing in a frenetic orgy of sadism. Sitting across each other, the men are also subjected to the visual spectacle of seeing their significant other reduced to a pulp by men in uniform in a visible position of power. Restrained and denied mobility, their bodies become displays of the States' capacity for violence, itself justified through religious morality. Like Christ in the Via Crusis, these men are paraded and displayed, their wounds a warning to those who dare choose the same path.

Jarman cycles the men through these same tableaux, until the director takes us to a shoreline reminiscent of his garden at Dungeness. The Santa Clauses return to whip the men, now tied to a pillar, until blood soaks through their clothes. At this juncture, Jarman makes the beating a personal affair. Like the men, Jarman had been attacked for his identity. Moving the scene to a shoreline bridges the stories of Christ, the couple, and Jarman together. At the edge of his garden, violence takes place. The men are beaten savagely. The elements threaten his garden. The illness erodes Jarman's life. After depicting the men carrying a cross, Jarman brings together images of his garden and the elements surrounding it: the sea, the sun and sky, and the neighboring nuclear power plant are all imbued with a blood-red tint. As the montage rolls, a voiceover narrates his poem "Scarlet Poppies*."*

This is a poppy
A flower of cornfield and wasteland
Bloody red
Sepals two
Soon falling
Petals four
Stamens many
Stigma rayed
Many seeded
For sprinkling on bread
The staff of life
Woven in wreaths
In memory of the dead
Bringer of dreams
And sweet forgetfulness. (*Nature* 8)

The red poppy, a symbol of military loss after WWI, reinscribes mourning onto those being lost to the illness. The flower, its red hue and its possession of a stigma, summons the image of Christ. The "stigma" allows Jarman to broach the topic of social and religious stigma by way of allusion. Identifying with his garden, Jarman recognizes that he is also "stigmatized." These connections call attention to the plight of PWAs, as noted by Niall Richardson: "[R]ed images can be traced throughout Jarman's films…. The effect… is to suggest the ubiquitous threat of the virus rather than condensing the condition into one quantifiable group of specific infected bodies" (188-89).

Interestingly, Jarman omits the moment of crucifixion, jumping directly to the image of the dead couple's bodies. The visible wounds on the men's bodies in conjunction with the purple tint Jarman utilizes at this moment bring to mind Kaposi's Sarcoma, the type of skin cancer commonly seen in immunocompromised PWAs. The intersection between the visibility of Christ's stigmata and Kaposi's Sarcoma stands as a powerful commentary on the stigma associated with AIDS. In Christianity, the body of Christ is elevated to reverent status precisely because it suffered. That is not the case with the bodies of PWAs. By omitting the crucifixion, Jarman fuses one body with the other. The story of Christ gains meaning in the salvation it enacts at the moment of his resurrection. Jarman is reappropriating this trope in the service of his Body-of-Work and PWAs. The "wilderness of failure" breaks Jarman's body. In a February 3, 1989 entry in his journal, he observes, 'slugs seem particularly fond of [the seedlings] and continually crop them; *they survive though,* and are soon sprouting again" (*Nature* 8). By reflecting on the nature of his garden, Jarman contemplates the nature of his illness. He recognizes the illness comes and goes as it pleases. But like his poppies, he survives and sprouts again.

Wading Through the Dark

Used to the shadows, my eyes cannot adjust to light.
Derek Jarman, Modern Nature (273)

Opportunistic infections progressively deteriorated Jarman's health, causing him to increasingly retreat to Prospect Cottage in hopes of improving. Particularly brutal were those infections that targeted his eyesight. In an April 1990 journal entry he writes, "Eyes tested. One of the drugs I'm taking can make you go blind…. [I]t's reversible, thank heavens" (*Nature* 276). However, his condition did not improve, and by July a frustrated Jarman writes: "I have partially lost my sight…" (*Nature* 303). Jarman developed toxoplasmosis, requiring hospitalization. Under siege, Jarman makes no qualms about growing tired of the illness's assault on his body.

> *How many assaults will my body stand*? At what point will life cease to be bearable?
> …
> *Scuttling across the road like a rat on my way here, I took my life in my hands and arrived on the far pavement safe*. (emphasis added, *Nature* 304)

Jarman's words resemble those of a person under sniper fire. This threat became ongoing as Jarman would lose his sight at many points for the rest of his life, sometimes to toxoplasmosis, other times to cytomegalovirus (CMV). Eventually, Jarman suffered from a detached retina, blinding him permanently.

Jarman's final film, *Blue* (1993), originates from these hospital visits. Ever the sensorial architect, Jarman creates a soundtrack which uses stereophonic cues to define location. However, in order to place the audience squarely in his Body-of-Work, Jarman dispenses with the iconic and idexical registers of the filmic image, barely retaining the symbolic register. Virtually blind, Jarman employs an Yves Klein blue screen to relay his condition. While prior films heightened externalized sensations, *Blue* focuses on personal internal experience. By placing the audience in his Body-of-Work, Jarman simultaneously invites the audience into the body of a PWA and the body of a war casualty.

Early in the film, our narrator disrupts the ambient sound, stating,

> I am sitting with some friends in this café drinking coffee served by young refugees from Bosnia. The war rages across the newspapers and through the ruined streets of Sarajevo.
>
> Tania said, 'Your clothes are on back to front and inside out.' Since there was *only two of us* here I took them off and put them right then and there….
>
> What need of so much news from abroad while all that concerns either life or death is all transacting and at work *within* me? (emphasis added)

The soundtrack establishes a location inside a café, but from what we gather there are more than "only two of us here." At the mention of the Bosnian War, Jarman removes the ambient sounds and inserts an explosion. Both the war and AIDS converge in his Body-of-Work, the actual war serving as a metaphor of his current bodily state. Reading about the Bosnian War in the papers functions as an undesirable reminder of his current state, a battle between life and death occurring "within." Jarman internalizes this realization early on, the film becoming an awakening into hyperawareness. During his doctor visits, we listen to the doctor's commands of “look left, look down, look up, look right.” We are compelled to do the same; needless to say, nothing is actually visually perceptible, except the blue screen. But as mentioned above, the blue screen does gain some symbolic meaning. At one point, wind gusts and water laps on a shore, sounds that can only mean Dungeness. The narrator joins the sounds of the shore: “I’m walking along the beach in a howling gale…. In the roaring waters I hear the voices of dead friends…. My heart’s memory turns to you, David, Howard, Graham, Terry, Paul…”.

The names reverberate in the soundtrack, a desperate attempt at grasping their essences. The blue screen urges the audience to see the specters emanating from the water. The audience can fill in their own losses, using the names as avatars of intersubjective suffering. We feel with Jarman; we are literally moved to mourn and remember.

Jarman hardens these specters later on in the film when he connects these names with more tangible identities and experiences. In a passage that recalls the Greek myth of Charon, the ferryman who transports the dead to Hades, Jarman materializes his lost friends into bodily presence.

> David ran home panicked on the train from Waterloo, brought back exhausted and unconscious to die that night. Terry who mumbled incoherently into his incontinent tears…. Howard turned slowly into stone, petrified day by day, his mind imprisoned in a concrete fortress until all we could hear were his groans on the telephone circling the globe…. Karl killed himself. How did he do it? I never asked.

Hardening these specters makes the experience of living with AIDS equally tangible. Jarman catalogues the different ways in which these bodies are coming under assault.

> It started with sweats in the night and swollen glands. Then the black cancers spread across their faces. As they fought for breath, TB and pneumonia hammered at the lungs, and Toxo at the brain. Reflexes scrambled, sweat poured through hair matted like lianas in the tropical forest. Voices slurred, and then were lost forever.

Beyond engaging in a memorial to lost friends, Jarman’s cataloguing represents a realization of his own Body-of-Work. His friends are gone, but he realizes that he will soon join them given the similarity of their physical conditions. Jarman in this case is Charon, his tribute transporting his friends into the realm of the dead. However, we must also remember, Charon is dead himself. Jarman’s meditation on dead friends is also an acceptance of his own mortality. The concretization of specters represents a need in Jarman to remain tangible, a need echoed by his voiceover: “In the pandemonium of image I present to you with the universal Blue. Blue an open door to soul. An infinite possibility become tangible.” Borrowing from Trond Lundemo, Davina Quinlivan proposes that “blue and white are the most haptic colours, the most inviting to the senses…” (45). Therefore, the blue screen represents tangible evidence of Jarman and his friends’ passage through this world. Like fingerprints on a page, the film makes them present. The blue screen fuses Jarman’s Body-of-Work with those of his friends, and by extension, those of PWAs, bringing the experience closer to the audience.

Extending the fusion of sensations and bodies, Jarman includes war in a highly effective way during one particular episode. During a hospital visit, Jarman muses about being attached to the drip which impedes his mobility. The meditation is followed by the repetition of the names of his departed friends. Suddenly, Jarman returns to the café space. And again, he mentions Bosnia.

> There is a photo in the newspaper this morning of refugees leaving Bosnia. They look out of time. Peasant women with scarves and black dresses stepped from the pages of an older Europe. One of them has lost her three children.

Like specters, the refugees return not as employees at the café, but as actual casualties of war. That the refugees "look out of time" is certainly evidence of their haunting quality. Furthermore, to be "out of time" carries the specter of death looming not just for the refugees but for Jarman himself. Ending this passage by mentioning the loss of three children mobilizes the deadly effects of the Bosnian War and hangs them over the spaces Jarman inhabits, where others are similarly dying from AIDS.

The film's sudden shift of time and space opens the possibility of the audience visualizing Jarman surrounded in the hospital by casualties of the Bosnian War. Jarman punctuates this suggestion by narrating an encounter with another patient's mother.

> [A]t the door an elderly woman stands waiting for the rain to clear. I ask her if I can give her a lift, I've hailed a taxi…. On the way she breaks down in tears…. Her son is in the ward – he has meningitis and has lost use of his legs – I'm helpless as the tears flow. *I can't see her*. Just the sound of her sobbing. (emphasis added)

As Jarman reminds us, "The worst of the illness is the uncertainty," uncertainty being a trait that characterizes the state of siege. The woman's son gives shape to this uncertainty by simultaneously representing the body of a PWA and the body of a casualty of war. He is the three children lost to the Bosnian woman. He is the son succumbing to opportunistic infections due to AIDS. He is also by association another of Jarman's friends. And he is Jarman, mired in the uncertainty of his illness. Roger Hallas proposes that the film "reverses the visual attention of the spectacle of AIDS from the body with AIDS out *there* back onto the spectator's own body right *here* before the blue screen" (45). In providing a blue screen, Jarman projects the bodies of casualties and PWAS onto us, the blue light suffusing our own bodies.

Late in *Blue,* Jarman asks, "How are we perceived, if we are to be perceived at all? For the most part we are invisible." *Blue* stands as an exceptional exercise in the politics of visibility. Omitting the iconic and indexical registers mimics the selective erasure of PWAS and casualties of war from the public's eyes. However, the film's selective visual omission along with its heightened soundscape actually moves these identities into spaces of tangible presence, making these bodies manifestly "visible" in ways that foreground other senses.

"Invading Many Private Worlds"

My work is my life.

> Derek Jarman, At Your Own Risk (114)

Given Jarman's heightened sensorial tendencies, each film vibrates with the power to communicate his *sens*ibilities pertaining to the effects of the illness on his body and mind: each film allows audiences to "feel" Jarman's experience. We can still hear the echoes, we can still see the reflections, we can still sense the presence. It is also true that each work put additional strain on Jarman's already taxed body and mind. As much as his Body-of-Work kept him alive, it also brought him closer to his end. Near the end of his life, Jarman's painting work took a hit. His health diminished so badly that Jarman developed ataxia during the final weeks of life; at one point Jarman could not even hold his paintbrush. Stuart Morgan notes how a blind and debilitated Jarman enlisted the help of two assistants to work on his paintings, following Jarman's instructions (117). Jarman's last two painting series were criticized as not being truly the artist's creation (Wollen 27).

Eventually, Jarman's body arrived at a juncture where it was unable to function. With this in mind I would like to propose looking at Jarman's body as emblematic of Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the Body-without-Organs (BwO.) In *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980), Deleuze and Guattari develop the BwO as a concept that speaks of a state of potentiality immanent in everything, from people, ideas, and situations, to art and philosophy. Using the egg as a symbol, Deleuze and Guattari propose that the BwO carries the possibilities of "becomings" onto a limitless horizon. A BwO harnesses and deploys creative and innovative energy, moving us collectively forward. Jarman's Body-of-Work represents an assemblage of Jarman's life including family, friends, culture, religion, and even AIDS. Close to death, Jarman's organs begin to fail. As his organs began to fail, Jarman's body truly became a body without functioning organs. And while this represented a terrible, tangible reality, with the passage of time Jarman's Body-of-Work reveals an alternate reality.

During his formative days at the Slade, Jarman reveled in the act of collaboration. For him, collaboration represented a way to tap into limitless potentialities. Never abandoning painting, Jarman increasingly engaged in collaborative theater work. Later he transferred the same work ethic to the film world. As a director, Jarman always welcomed input from everyone on the set. While he "directed" his films, he always acknowledged everyone involved. Looking at the credits on his films, one notices a pattern of recurring names: Simon Fisher Turner, James McKay, Nigel Terry, Tilda Swinton, along with a cadre of recurring artists, technicians, and friends populate his films. By harvesting these collaborators, Jarman assembled his films out of individual, inspired work. Consequently, as his body waned, the bodies of others stepped in. Much as he did with his gardening, Jarman found other bodies and inserted them into his Body-of-Work. As his body's organs failed, other organs continued the work. Viewed this way, Jarman's use of two assistants to finish his paintings must be seen as a continuation of Jarman's Body-of-Work; not as limitations but as the "becomings" Deleuze and Guattari speak of. Regarding these becomings, Jarman's comments about the film *The Last of England* could be applied to all of his Body-of-Work.

> It would be true to say I am making this film for myself with my collaborators, we are the community. I am the pivot who gathers the communal threads and creates the pattern…. The important thing is the creation of work itself, not the finished product.

> This harnessing of everyone's creativity, so that when you call 'wrap' for the last time *you can feel the loss physically.* (emphasis added, *England* 197)

In other words, the ongoing creative act with its flows, possibilities, and assemblages materializes the Body-of-Work. Crucially embedded in Jarman's commentary is the notion of physical loss. While creating, Jarman also transfers the senses onto everyone involved, including not only his on-set collaborators, but subsequently the audience as well. When a work ends, everyone involved or witnessing should reach a cathartic moment wherein the energy harnessed, both positive and negative, is put to new uses. Therefore, the Body-of-Work always demands an open-ended, ongoing collaboration on the part of the audience. We are as much a part of the flows and connections of the BwO. Encountering Jarman's films, we bring our own concerns and questions to the event. Leaving the film we are summoned to carry Jarman's losses, both creatively and physically, and to project these senses in an effort to both bear witness and disseminate the experience.

About living with AIDS, Jarman once wrote, "my body is in prison" (*Risk* 124). As his body defended itself from the virus within, it also shielded itself from the sociocultural siege transpiring outside. It is no surprise that Jarman devoted himself so firmly to his garden. "Involved as one body," Jarman's gardening work gave him the space to work on his imprisoned body (*Risk* 123). Out of "[t]he twisted grimace of wartime mines," new life emerged (*Garden* 109). Consequently, once his physical body dissolved, his Body-of-Work endured, a temple extending his reach ad infinitum. An open-ended assemblage of *sens*ibilities, collaborations, and even witnesses, the Body-of-Work continues to expand, as evidenced in the growing interest in his work, including an eponymous 2014 film festival at the Brooklyn Academy of Music and an upcoming retrospective at the Zagreb Film Festival in November. Consequently, Jarman remains one of the most relevant thinkers regarding the AIDS epidemic. Jarman harnessed the hostilities directed at him, transforming them into becomings. His Body-of-Work stands immune to assaults in the reassurance that "someone else will win the war" for Jarman and, by extension, PWAS (*England* 167). Like his beloved plants, Jarman continues to thrive even in the most inhospitable locations, carrying endless potentialities that flourish upon contact.

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