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## AIDS, the Problem of Representation, and Plurality in Derek Jarman's *Blue*

The Venice Biennale

Tim Lawrence

Derek Jarman's *Blue* did not explode onto the cinematic world in the full glory of Hollywood hype. When the film was premiered at the Venice Biennale in June 1993, McDonald's didn't organize a special promotion of blue hamburgers, and Coca-Cola stuck to its red-colored cans and brown-colored drink. Nor were there dozens of photographers hustling for the best shot of the sexiest star as the audience gathered at the Palazzo de Cinema. No, the screening of Jarman's film passed quietly—just Jarman himself, a single reporter, a small audience, and seventy-six minutes of unchanging blue celluloid backed by a soundtrack about the director's experience of living and dying with AIDS.

The same night, at another Biennale event, Elizabeth Taylor presided over an "Art against AIDS" gala in a sixteenth-century palazzo on the Grand Canal.<sup>1</sup> Here there were *only* sponsors, with the price of admission depending on what type of patron you were: artists could contribute an item to the "Drawing the Line against AIDS" exhibition, whereas nonartists had to pay \$2,500 for their place at the table. "Artists have always been, and always continue to be, the living conscience and unbowed spirit of every generation," Taylor told Chaka Khan, Yoko Ono, Valentino, and the rest of the guests. "I take comfort, for you have proved we have not lost our way." Press reports focused on the glamorous excess of the occasion—marble foyers, water taxis, brocade walls, and Taylor's chic chiffon outfit adorned with a diamond necklace.

The organizers of the Biennale were less confident than Taylor that the art world had not lost its way and accordingly named the *aperto* (experimental) section "Emergency." Pride of place was given to an Oliviero Toscani United Colours of Benetton advertisement, which consisted of floor-to-ceiling crotch shots of men, women, and children. The image created a furor, especially around the issue of child exploitation—a charge that Toscani denied on the grounds that the children were his own. Such allegations had become familiar to Toscani, who a year earlier had been accused of exploiting human suffering in a Benetton ad that showed a man dying with AIDS, surrounded by his grief-stricken family.

Besides the creative credits, the only other information included on the publicity was an 800 number—not for an AIDS help line, but for customers who wanted to order the latest catalog.

If Jarman had called, it would have been to complain. Even before the Benetton campaign, he had expressed his contempt for 1980s consumerism and its ubiquitous clothing chains. In *Modern Nature*, the diary-memoir of his garden, childhood, and illness, he wrote, “And everywhere *clothes* shops—as if everyone, knowing their time was ending had put on their best suit for the occasion.”<sup>2</sup> And in a poignant moment toward the end of *Blue*, Jarman indicates that he will not be buying any more clothes: “I caught myself looking at shoes in a shop window. I thought of going in and buying a pair, but stopped myself. The shoes I am wearing at the moment should be sufficient to walk me out of life.”<sup>3</sup> Eight months after the Venice premiere, Jarman died of the AIDS-related symptoms he had pointed to in the film, which turned out to be his last.

The study of last works and late style provides an important framework for my analysis. While last works have always existed, they were not theorized as such until Theodor Adorno examined late style in Beethoven.<sup>4</sup> There the matter has more or less rested, although Edward Said recently published an article on late style and Adorno.<sup>5</sup> Jarman enjoyed having a chuckle at the idea of his own “last work.” In what turned out to be his penultimate interview, he wryly commented, “I’ve written my epitaph about six times now, apparently. Every single film is scotched up as my last. Surely they’ll stop on that business, especially if I get another run together. That will be the end of all this malarkey.”<sup>6</sup>

That Jarman should be looking to “get another run together” just three months before he died speaks to an extraordinary development in his life: an accelerated production in the face of death. After being diagnosed as HIV-positive at the end of 1986, Jarman produced six films: *The Last of England* (1987), *War Requiem* (1988), *The Garden* (1990), *Edward II* (1991), *Wittgenstein* (1992), and *Blue* (1993); wrote two books: *Modern Nature* (1991) and *At Your Own Risk* (1993); and continued to paint prodigiously. Each work was predicted as Jarman’s last, only for another to appear. Still, he could never calculate far into the future. In *At Your Own Risk*, he wrote, “When I was diagnosed five years ago, I thought I would be around for two or three years; that’s the time you were given; that changed.”<sup>7</sup> Medics and activists understood little about AIDS—initially, at least—and it was only a few months before his death that Jarman stated that *Blue* would be his last film: “There are no plans to do another one. It’s a good end film, so I’m not too worried about that.”<sup>8</sup>

## Representing AIDS

In its ubiquitous portrayal as a source of doom, despair, and death, AIDS might appear to be the ultimate metaphor for lateness. As the end of the millennium approaches, the number of people dying from the disease continues to rise, with the best treatment far from universally available. Adorno has argued that late works, far from bringing about a “harmonious synthesis,” are in fact “catastrophes” that display a “ravaged” character, and his account captures the way in which people with AIDS are commonly portrayed.<sup>9</sup> These representations have taken on an unambiguously morbid slant. Bodies are almost always disfigured, whether it be through emaciation or the skin lesions associated with Kaposi’s sarcoma. Debilitated, sick, and almost dead, people with AIDS are desperate in the face of their inevitable death.

Such representations play into deep and reactionary cultural narratives.<sup>10</sup> AIDS has become a convenient symbol for moral majoritarians who want to hammer home their sense of contemporary moral decay: the virus is a retribution for past and current sins, a deserved and necessary ending caused by the “sexual revolution.” The disease has come to stand for the danger of sex outside the heterosexual family—in particular of gay sex, with the distinction between gay men and AIDS regularly erased, replaced by the equation Homosexuality = AIDS = Death. Doom, powerlessness, and hopelessness are central themes: there is little chance of the diseased person having a productive life; the overdetermined body images of the person with AIDS are evidence of inner depravity.

The concentration on the imminent death of the person with AIDS (in fact, representations are almost always male) indicates both his disposability and the hope that he is no longer sexually active—indeed, the hope that AIDS might spell the end of “gay promiscuity” altogether. If a person with AIDS is pictured with anyone, then it is with a family rather than a lover. All of this despite the fact that the vast majority of people with AIDS wear no visible stigmata of the disease, have a life expectancy of years, and carry on with their lives much like everybody else. But they are rarely portrayed as being active, fit to work, and able to have safe sex. As such, the subjectivity of the person with AIDS disappears, while the body with AIDS remains visible. Furthermore, the focus on the individual means that the public dimension of the crisis, especially the failure of governments to provide adequate money for medical research and information campaigns, has seldom been articulated. Individualization becomes a strategy of depoliticization.

At the same time, the high rates of infection experienced by other marginalized groups—most notably blacks, Latinos, and intravenous drug users—have been obscured through the persistent representation of the

person with AIDS as white, gay, middle class, and promiscuous. Inasmuch as these various communities are mutually distinct, they have had different encounters with AIDS. For black and Latino groups, AIDS is in many respects yet another manifestation of the wider problem of poverty, poor health care, and political exclusion. The response of blacks and Latinos to AIDS has been influenced by a series of highly charged debates around, for example, the hypothesis that the disease originated in Africa, the counterhypothesis that it is a racist government conspiracy, the further charge that white organizations have attempted to “own” the epidemic by refusing to surrender their status as experts, and the response that homophobia within the black community has prevented it from tackling the problem.

This is the inflammatory cultural narrative surrounding the disease that Jarman wanted to represent, and the interventions of Luciano Benetton and Elizabeth Taylor illustrate some of the pitfalls that come with attempting such a task. Benetton was accused of exploiting a person with AIDS and using the sensationalism of the epidemic in order to boost his turnover of woolly jumpers. The clothing tycoon denied these charges: “Since 1982 we have used ordinary people in our advertisements. We decided not to waste resources on over-the-top campaigns; people do not need to be told that Benetton makes clothes or where to find our shops. We decided that they were ready to accept certain messages that go beyond the product.”<sup>11</sup>

While the campaign might have been commercially successful—the poster generated huge media interest and provided Benetton’s label with a certain radical chic—its political effectiveness is open to question. On the one hand, the power of the image is undeniable, and could well have been shockingly radical to a conservative audience. On the other hand, the photograph reinforced the image of the gay man doomed to die of AIDS. While the shot was titled “Family: the Christ-like figure of David Kirby, a 32-year-old American AIDS campaigner and sufferer,” none of this information was printed on the ad, and Kirby remained an anonymous individual. The photo contained no clues about his life and activism; and rather than being pictured with a lover, Kirby was positioned with his family, desexualized. Trapped in Benetton’s decontextualized image, Kirby was stripped of power and silenced, unable to repeat the powerful attacks on government inaction that he had made so many times.

It is precisely because governments have not done enough that there is an urgent need for nongovernmental contributions, and Elizabeth Taylor’s American Foundation for AIDS Research (AmFAR) has been one of the most prolific charities in the field, with Taylor a well-established friend of the gay population. The money raised by such efforts has been crucial, yet there has also been a cost. First, charitable provision can serve as a cover for governmental malaise. And second, charitable interventions—

especially, it would seem, lush fund-raising dinners—can result in a contorted vision of the cause they represent. *Newsday*'s report on the Biennale ball provides a particularly troubling example:

Elizabeth Taylor brought her deep tan, her even deeper cleavage and her fierce anti-AIDS stance to Venice last weekend. Her magnetic presence at AmFAR's "Art Against AIDS" benefit raised more than \$1 million. ("This is my life's work now," says Elizabeth when asked about her only-occasional film career. She always adds, "'After all, what could be more important?") Despite the heat, the paparazzi and Elizabeth's chronically painful back, the happenings were a great success and Miz Liz was in fine, cooperative fettle.<sup>12</sup>

Taylor's physical "depth" becomes the most noteworthy aspect of the gala, more significant than her comments on AIDS. The \$1 million is something of an afterthought and is only mentioned in connection to Taylor's reified presence. Taylor and Taylor alone raised the money, and the wider issue of AIDS is relegated to the status of "another good cause" for which celebrities can generate donations at the click of their perfectly manicured fingers. Indeed, the sole quotation about AIDS in the 950-word article is timidly placed in parentheses, coming only after Taylor is questioned about her flagging film career. AIDS sufferers are sidelined as Taylor becomes the victim-cum-heroine of the occasion, battling against the chronic pain in her back. The article closes on a more optimistic note, ruminating on the blissful state of Taylor's five-and-a-half year marriage to Larry Fortensky: "as of today, Liz 'n' Larry, that 'improbable' pair, are still sailing smoothly down the Grand Canal of married life." Journalist Liz Smith ends on the happy and healthy state of heterosexual wedlock: if Liz 'n' Larry can do it, then anyone can (although subsequently they decided they couldn't, and divorced last March). The ostensible reason for the gathering in the first place—the need to tackle a disease that has devastated, amongst other groups, gay men—remains unmentioned.

What does AmFAR stand for when it organizes politically rather than gastronomically? If it seems harsh to judge Taylor on the basis of a gossipy *Newsday* report, then AmFAR's "Art against AIDS" publicity shot does nothing to support such a reservation. Taylor is in the forefront of the photo, dressed in a low-cut designer dress and adorned with layers of diamonds. Three important clues establish that this is an AmFAR photo, rather than an image from Taylor's latest perfume campaign. First, Taylor isn't holding a bottle of perfume. Second, she looks sad rather than seductive. And third, there are some artworks, albeit in the blurry background. While there might not be any direct reference to AIDS, there is Fortensky, obviously an integral part of AmFAR. In an apparent attempt to prove this, the photographer gets him to look at one of the pictures—although, standing about a foot away from a huge canvas, it would appear that he is too close to focus.

Art is the message. Speaking at the launch of “Art against AIDS,” Taylor declared that “art lives forever.” At the same gathering, Richard Goldstein commented, “In an ironic sense, I think that AIDS is good for art. I think it will produce great works that will outlast and transcend the epidemic.”<sup>13</sup> These comments perpetuate the idea that while art cannot save life, it can transcend it, and that this spiritual success is arguably more important than AIDS itself. AIDS is even cautiously celebrated as instigating an artistic renaissance, and the production of this art is seen as redemptive—which indicates that a person with AIDS who produces art is more worthwhile than one who does not. Taylor’s transcendence and Benetton’s doom: these were the two distinctly unpromising models of representation that confronted Jarman at the Biennale. How would *Blue* fare in comparison?

### **Before *Blue***

Jarman’s philosophy on the relationship between art, politics, and money—the set of beliefs that serve as a background to *Blue*—was complex and in some senses contradictory. The least ambiguous aspect of Jarman’s artistic vision was his vehement anticommmercialism. He believed that rampant capitalism undermined the possibility of truth, and three of his films—*Jubilee* (1978), *Imagining October* (1984), and *The Last of England* (1987)—attack the way in which the ethos of capitalism has destroyed British culture. As the monetarist realities of Margaret Thatcher’s first administration sank in, Jarman told the *Evening Standard*, “There’s no room in the modern world for art and culture . . . values are subverted by money.”<sup>14</sup> For Jarman, the corrupting effect of commercialism was most apparent in the world of cinema, especially the product and entertainment values of Hollywood.<sup>15</sup>

Jarman regarded himself as a committed traditionalist—often to the surprise of others. “The older I get, the more I believe in tradition,” he said in an interview with Jonathan Hacker and David Price. “The tradition of hedgerows and fields with flowers—in opposition to commercialization or the destruction and rape of the countryside and cities.”<sup>16</sup> Yet while Jarman was interested in the work of William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, Benjamin Britten, and Wilfred Owen, he was never a straightforward traditionalist. Jarman was highly conscious of both his sexuality and his nationality, and much of his work was dedicated to excavating the queerness buried within English cultural history.

He developed the dual theme of sexuality and nationality in many of his films: *The Tempest* (1979) represented Jarman’s engagement with Shakespeare as the “timeless” strand of British culture; *The Angelic Con-*



*versation* (1985) featured the Royal Shakespeare Company actress Dame Judy Dench reading Shakespeare sonnets (especially those addressed to a young man rather than the Dark Lady); *War Requiem* (1988) was a film version of Britten's oratorio using Owen's life as a narrative thread; and *Edward II* (1991) traced the intertwining themes of Englishness and homosexuality back to the early modern England of Marlowe's play. And so when Jarman insisted that his art was "Tory art," and on one occasion even went so far as to describe himself as an "old-fashioned conservative," he did so sardonically.<sup>17</sup>

In spite of Jarman's insistent traditionalism, he was frequently described as the most avant-garde director in Britain—although his avant-gardism was itself traditional if read within the problematic of the bourgeois concept of art. Critics drew attention to his radical techniques, including the nonnarrative structure of his films, and his "painterly" style. Ironically, it was Jarman's anticommmercialism and the financial restrictions that resulted from this stance that pushed him into adopting these techniques. "I can't handle the narrative approach because it is too expensive!" he said.<sup>18</sup> The making of *Caravaggio* serves as an illustration of the minuscule budgets that he had to work with. The art department was allotted a budget of £40,000, including wages, out of which Jarman had to build all the sets from seventy-two twelve-foot-by-eight-foot units in an east London warehouse that was not even soundproofed. It took seven years to raise the money for the film, and yet this represented something of a luxury for Jarman—*Caravaggio* was the first film he had been paid for.

The unconventional combination of Andy Warhol and Carl Gustav Jung provided Jarman with the inspiration to weave his way around this dire economic situation. He raved about Warhol's iconoclastic approach to film: "He just picked up the camera and filmed his life, even out of focus. I just loved that."<sup>19</sup> Jarman used a Super 8 camera to create smudged and evocative images, and his rebellion against state-of-the-art film technology was complemented by his readings of Jung, in particular *Alchemical Studies* and *Seven Sermons to the Dead*. "He gave me the confidence to allow my dream images to drift and collide at random," Jarman explained.<sup>20</sup> And so notions of narrative were replaced by the imperative of symbol.

Thatcher's accession to power made Jarman's financial predicament particularly acute—grants for the arts dried up, and he effectively became one of "Maggie's Millions" between 1979 and 1985.<sup>21</sup> That which he managed to produce displayed a new anger: Thatcherism stood for everything he despised—commercialism, greed, and homophobia. The marginalization of lesbians and gays was given the stamp of legislative legitimation by Thatcher in the guise of Section 28 of the Local Government Act of 1987–88, which prohibited the promotion of homosexuality by local governments. Thatcher was committed to putting the "Great" back

into Britain through a policy of economic monetarism and social conservatism. Privatization and cuts in welfare were backed up by a campaign to revive “Victorian values” (the family, hard work, self-support) and nationalism (the war against “foreigners”). Gay men were posited as a double threat to this social agenda, undermining the family and spreading an “anti-British” disease that originated from “foreign” Africa and the United States. In the mid-1980s Tory members of Parliament demanded HIV screening for immigrants traveling from the Third World, and the ensuing moral panic around AIDS was used to prop up the threatened and unstable institutions of the heterosexual family and the nation.

Jarman’s disgust at this attack was such that he equated the Conservative government with AIDS: “The virus elbowed its way right into the centre of all our lives during this decade, rather like the new right that has infected British life.”<sup>22</sup> And so when Jarman discovered he was HIV-positive he made a startling resolution: “On 22 December 1986, finding I was body positive, I set myself a target: I would disclose my secret and survive Margaret Thatcher.”<sup>23</sup> He did, at least in terms of her political tenure. Thatcher fell from power at the end of 1990, and Jarman was faced with a fresh artistic challenge: having outlasted his chief political antagonist, how would he represent the disease that he knew would outlast him?

Jarman realized that he would have to tackle the issue of AIDS. By declaring that he was HIV-positive—an acknowledged political act—Jarman had to come to terms with the virus on both a personal and public level.<sup>24</sup> “It was a minefield to be one of the few identifiable HIV+ men in the world, realizing that whatever I said might be taken as representative,” Jarman said.<sup>25</sup> He accordingly maintained that he wasn’t a spokesperson, but was just talking about himself.<sup>26</sup> And describing the genesis of *Blue*, Jarman commented, “I just knew at some point I would be expected to deal with this area, and I left it as long as possible, because making a film about illness is jolly difficult.”<sup>27</sup>

Jarman’s position was complicated by his growing sense of disillusionment with film. In a typically frank comment, he told Hacker and Price:

I see myself at this stage of my life as essentially having failed. Only now at the very end of my career, I’m getting some recognition and acceptance—it’s maybe too late now—isn’t that strange? As a film-maker I had a huge amount of promise which was never realized in any way whatsoever . . . I actually don’t really like the cinema very much. I’m not convinced by it at all. I still think that I should have painted.<sup>28</sup>

At another point in the interview, Jarman remarked that he liked the idea that people should think of him as “a painter who dabbled in another art form, namely cinema.”<sup>29</sup> He believed that cinema lagged behind other art

forms; and at the British premiere of *Blue* at the Edinburgh Festival, he pointed out that abstract work was far more acceptable in the art world than in cinema. But rather than abandon his film career in favor of painting, Jarman decided to bring painting into his films. *The Last of England* was named after a painting by Ford Maddox Brown, and Jarman also thought about the possibility of making a film without images based on Yves Klein's concept of monochrome painting.<sup>30</sup> Ultramarine blue was the blue used by Klein in his most notorious exhibition, "Monochrome Proposition, Blue Period," in which he displayed eleven monochrome panels, all the same color, although each with a different surface. And *Blue*, in which ultramarine blue is the single and unchanging visual image, became the ultimate expression of Jarman's cinematic painting.

*Blue* is in fact three films rolled into one. The first strand—the aspect that critics have focused on—tells the story of Jarman's failing sight (he was suffering from cytomegalovirus [CMV]), his medical treatment, the role of the state and charities in tackling AIDS, and death. The second film-within-a-film is a meditation on the difficulty of representing AIDS and the associated problems of "image." The final element develops the color blue as a plural metaphor and recounts the fantastical adventures of a boy called Blue. Significantly, the three sections are not kept separate but are interwoven to create an intense and disorienting collage. This is not just done for effect: the three themes interact with and inform each other. In this interplay, Jarman breaks down what he perceives to be false and harmful boundaries and lays the foundation for an alternative plural aesthetic. For the sake of clarity, I will unweave Jarman's elaborate pattern, setting out each section in turn, and pointing to some of the ways in which they animate each other. I will also begin to examine the "late style" of *Blue*.

### Altered Vision

The idea of the blue screen provided Jarman with an answer to one of his greatest problems: how to make an autobiographical film about AIDS without filming himself. At the Edinburgh premiere Jarman said that he didn't see how he could have used images in the film given that he didn't want to make a film in which he was the predominant player. One solution would have been to make a film about another person with AIDS, but that would have meant tempering his commitment to gay autobiography. "The problem of so much of the writing about this epidemic is the absence of the author," he wrote in *At Your Own Risk*.<sup>31</sup> As a boy discovering his homosexuality, Jarman was terrorized by the absence of a gay past. "That seemed to be a good reason to fill in the blanks and to start putting in the

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'I' rather than the 'they'. . . The subtext of my films have been the books, putting myself back into the picture."<sup>32</sup> In *Blue*, Jarman grafts his autobiographical writing onto celluloid.

*Blue* begins with a character called Blue:

You say to the boy open your eyes  
When he opens his eyes and sees the light  
You make him cry out. Saying  
O Blue come forth  
O Blue arise  
O Blue ascend  
O Blue come in (3)

Jarman has pointed out that a boy appears in all of his films, a "witness and a survivor" whom "everyone identifies with."<sup>33</sup> In many respects, the boy is the screen spirit of the director, who often described himself as a witness rather than an activist. The boy also represents the beginnings of a gay genealogy and as such is part of Jarman's attempt to remedy the terrifying historical chasm experienced in his childhood. The importance of this figure is indicated by the boy's appearance in the very first line of *Blue*, after which he is theatrically named after the film, thereby becoming, along with the blue screen, its linking metaphor. Jarman literalizes Klein's argument that color is a personality: "I seek to put the spectator in front of the fact that colour is an individual, a character, a personality. . . . Thus, perhaps, can he enter into the world of colour."<sup>34</sup> In addition, the symbol of the boy-as-witness provides another link to Klein, who described his paintings as "the immobile, silent and static witnesses to the very essence of movement and life in freedom that is the flame of poetry during the poetic moment."<sup>35</sup> From the very outset, then, the intricate complexity and dazzling imagination of Jarman's blue metaphor is established.

The boy's first task is to open his eyes so that he can play the part of witness and see "the light"—something that Jarman is physically unable to do:

I've been given the option of being an in-patient in the hospital or coming in twice a day to be hooked to a drip. My vision will never come back.

The retina is destroyed, though when the bleeding stops what is left of my sight might improve. I have to come to terms with sightlessness.

If I lose half my sight will my vision be halved? (7)

The relationship between sight and vision becomes a central theme of the film, and Jarman's treatment serves as a basis from which he contemplates the broader issue of seeing. The blue screen symbolizes Jarman's

failing sight; yet in its capacity as a multivalent metaphor, it also signifies an expanded vision. Jarman's failing sight becomes a site of interplay in which his altered vision serves as a foundation for his new philosophy (something that I will go on to discuss). For Jarman, the goal is to see things as they are, and people with 20/20 vision may be no better at doing this than those with 0/20 vision:

One can know the whole world  
Without stirring abroad  
Without looking out of the window  
One can see the way of heaven  
The further one goes  
The less one knows . . .

If the doors of Perception were cleansed then everything would be seen as it is. (11–12)

Jarman's description of his treatment and condition is often unsparring: needles repeatedly refuse to penetrate his veins; implants require him to carry around a small fridge; torches are forever flashing into his eyes; drugs frost up his mind; skin irritation stops him from sleeping; and a sizeable proportion of the thirty pills he takes every day come up half dissolved. At one point, Jarman painstakingly catalogs the forty-eight grotesque side effects of DHPG, the drug for which he goes into the hospital to be dripped twice a day. The list is read against the sound of a respirator and the synthesized noises of a body being torn apart. It takes the actor two-and-a-half minutes to read the list, and as he proceeds his voice moves from a tone of quizzical calm to one of amused disbelief. The literature that comes with the drug turns out to be the longest joke in the history of National Health Service (NHS) bureauspeak, and the actor squeaks out the punch line: "If you are concerned about any of the above side effects or if you would like any further information, please ask your doctor" (19).

Both the NHS and charitable organizations are targets for Jarman's searing attack. Charity has become big business, and donors' names have been splashed all over a charity-funded hospice, "allowing the uncaring to appear to care" (21). At another point, Jarman reads from a newspaper report that three out of four state-funded AIDS organizations are not providing safer sex information: "One district said they had no queers in their community, but you might try district X—they have a theatre" (14). Later, H. B., Jarman's partner, compares the eye department to Romania. And in Jarman's final account of his treatment, he describes the difficulty of sitting in a waiting room that is plastered with posters displaying endless question marks: "HIV/AIDS?, AIDS?, HIV? ARE YOU AFFECTED

BY HIV/AIDS? AIDS?, ARC?, HIV?” (27). Not just part of Jarman’s tale about treatment, the image of the waiting room becomes part of his critique of the overdetermined representation of AIDS.

### Refusing Representation

As well as providing an autobiographical account of his treatment, Jarman also addresses the problem of representing AIDS per se. *Blue* attains a self-reflexive quality, probing its own artificiality, and as such reflects a theme that is prominent in a number of last works. As Adorno writes: “The power of subjectivity in the late works of art is the irascible gesture with which it takes leave of the works themselves. It breaks their bonds, not in order to express itself, but in order, expressionless, to cast off the appearance of art.”<sup>36</sup> “Subjectivity,” or the author, leaves the work of art in order to reveal the inherent artifice of art. Jarman’s reason for wanting to develop this idea is self-apparent: given the negative depiction of gay men in relation to AIDS and death, he needed to demonstrate that AIDS art is an artificial representation, not an objective truth.

Burdened with the problem of representation, Jarman found a solution in Klein’s theory on art. For Klein, painting fell into two broad categories, neither of which he had much time for. Traditionalists regarded the painting as a transparent image admitting a specific vision of the outside world, and modernists understood the work of art as a finite object referring to itself and its formal pictorial element. In a departure from these schools, Klein sought to create pictures devoid of representation, utterly lacking in components that signified something that might be specified, categorized, or even positioned in a fixed place. Klein also stated his opposition to “spectacle” in painting, which he regarded as a “reign of cruelty.” He added, “For me, it signifies living death, oozing morbidity, obscurantism, and above all, the ferocious condemnation of freedom.”<sup>37</sup>

Inspired by Klein, *Blue* is a refusal of representation. Unwilling to reduce people with AIDS to a fixed category, the monochrome screen dramatically reveals the artificiality of art. Jarman’s move is powerful precisely because it is staged in a cinema rather than an art gallery. While art connoisseurs have come to terms with the idea of monochrome art, cinema buffs have a very different set of expectations. Since its inception, the cinematic medium has relied on thousands of images flying in front of the viewer in order to construct its meaning. If photography and painting are grounded in single images, then film is defined by its belief in the impact of cascading images. And it is because Jarman increasingly doubted the value of visual representation that he chose to intervene in the medium that is most dependent on image. Rejecting the grammar of cinematic language, he resorted to monochrome, an ever-present reminder of the

impossibility of portraying AIDS: “In the pandemonium of the image / I present you with the universal Blue” (11).

*Blue* is particularly concerned with the tyranny of the image—the way in which surface destroys depth:

Over the mountains is the shrine to Rita, where all at the end of the line call. Rita is the Saint of the Lost Cause. The saint of all who are at their wit’s end, who are hedged in and trapped by the facts of the world. These facts, detached from cause, trapped the Blue Eyed Boy in a system of unreality. Would all these blurred facts that deceive dissolve in his last breath? For accustomed to believing in image, an absolute idea of value, his world had forgotten the command of essence: Thou Shall Not Create Unto Thyself Any Graven Image, although you know the task is to fill the empty page. From the bottom of your heart, pray to be released from image. . . . The image is a prison of the soul, your heredity, your education, your vices and aspirations, your qualities, your psychological world. (15)

The last sentence is a condensed version of Klein’s “usual painting”:

A usual painting . . . is for me like a window of a *prison* whose lines, contours, forms, composition create barriers. Lines are for me the concretization of our mortal state, or our sentimentality, of our intellect, and even of our spirituality. They are our *psychological* limits, our *hereditary*, our *education*, our skeleton, our *vices*, our *aspirations*, our *qualities*, our astuteness!<sup>38</sup>

For Jarman, even the slogans and symbols of AIDS activists fall into the category of “image,” in which spectacle erases reality:

I shall not win the battle against the virus—in spite of the slogans like “Living with AIDS.” The virus was appropriated by the well—so we have to live with AIDS while they spread the quilt for the moths of Ithaca across the wine dark sea.

Awareness is heightened by this, but something else is lost. A sense of reality drowned in theatre.

Thinking blind, becoming blind. (9)

Jarman notes the importance of producing positive images, but he questions the strategic effect of such a singular representation in the context of an epidemic in which many people are dying painful deaths. To counter the concept of “Living with AIDS,” Jarman refers to the death of close friends throughout the film, as well as revealing his own thoughts about suicide. Never allowing the symbol of death to become a mechanical and empty image, Jarman names each friend individually, describing the different ways in which they died.

At the same time, Jarman refuses to categorize the person with AIDS as singularly gay, weaving a series of chance encounters with anonymous patients into his script. There is a “demented woman . . . discussing needles,” with whom Jarman forms an imagined alliance and asks, “How are we perceived, if we are to be perceived at all?” (12). A man in a wheelchair warns that “there’s no way of telling the visitors, patients or staff apart. The staff have nothing to identify them except they are all into leather” (20), blurring the supposedly clear demarcations of the hospital space. A young man “frail as Belsen” (25) walks down a hospital corridor, moving Jarman to evoke a parallel with Jewish suffering in Nazi death camps. Lastly, in the eye department at St. Mary’s, a little gray man who looks like Jean Cocteau struggles to read a newspaper and gives up in anger, the commonality of the experience more noteworthy than the specificity of the complaint.

Jarman concludes his depiction of the shifting hospital community with this observation: “The room is full of men and women squinting into the dark in different states of illness” (27). As with his other portraits, Jarman refuses to dwell on themes such as sexuality, race, and the specifics of illness, pursuing a determined vagueness that counters mainstream attempts to fix and render transparent the identity of the person with AIDS. Jarman further confounds the categorizers in a queer rendition of his own sexuality, chanted in the contorted style of a soccer crowd spoiling for a fight: “I am a mannish / Muff diving / Size queen / With bad attitude / An arse licking / Psychofag / Molesting the flies of privacy / Balling lesbian boys / A perverted heterodemon / Crossing purpose with death / I am a cock sucking / Straight acting / Lesbian man / With ball crushing bad manners / Laddish nymphomaniac politics / Spunky sexist desires / Of incestuous inversion and / Incorrect terminology / I am a Not Gay” (21–22).

If Jarman is ready to kick out, then it is because the 1980s had destroyed his belief in progress. AIDS had a seismic impact on Jarman’s world, savagely disrupting the sense of advancement that had defined both gay rights and his own life. The 1970s era, nostalgically portrayed in the film as a sex-and-parties sequence backed by disco music, had gone forever: “What a time that was” (18). The 1980s and 1990s instilled Jarman with a new sense of anger, and the war in ex-Yugoslavia (referred to several times in the film) merely confirmed his sense that the world was categorically not becoming a happier place. As a result, Jarman urges an end to teleological thinking: “fight the fear that engenders the beginning, the middle and the end” (16). He assumes an antidialectical stance, militating against the very philosophy of progress (and mirroring another characteristic of late style). Yet he also recognizes that history has been as repressive as it has been emancipatory. “I had to destroy my inheritance to



face you and love you,” he wrote to a lover in *At Your Own Risk*.<sup>39</sup> The past is no less culpable than the present, and Jarman concludes that “time” itself must be surmounted if we are to escape from image: “Time is what keeps the light from reaching us” (15).

How does Jarman conceive an alternative? In an unorthodox twist, he finds inspiration in his bodily condition, which becomes an extended point of interplay between the description of his medical care and the critique of representation. This is not to say that Jarman romanticizes illness or endows it with a special vision. Early in the film, he states that “the worst of the illness is the uncertainty” (6), and his subsequent description of the drug DHPG is just one of many harrowing episodes in the film. Yet while there is no suggestion of transcendence in the DHPG scene, the drug’s side effects include “abnormal thoughts or dreams,” “loss of balance,” “confusion,” “dizziness,” and “psychosis” (19), all of which contribute to Jarman’s escape from the rigidly ordered spatial and temporal structure of *Heterosoc* (Jarman’s term for the homogeneous imperative of heterosexual society).

Jarman’s faltering eyesight further disturbs any sense of order, and he starts to see the world through a strange twilight vision: “The damaged retina has started to peel away leaving innumerable black floaters, like a flock of starlings swirling around in the twilight” (27). After the release of *Blue*, Jarman described his sight as a “sort of twilight,” and this liminal vision symbolizes the societal position of gays, who “existed in the twilight of Heterosoc.”<sup>40</sup> The link between Jarman’s faltering sight and his new vision is indicated in the initial treatment scene, which segues into Blue Eyed Boy’s first appearance after his naming ceremony. The doctor shines a torch into Jarman’s eyes and says:

Look left  
Look down  
Look up  
Look right

Blue flashes in my eyes

Blue Bottle buzzing  
Lazy days  
The sky blue butterfly  
Sways on a cornflower  
Lost in the warmth  
Of the blue heat haze (4)

“Blue flashes in my eyes” is deliberately ambiguous, suggesting the doctor’s blinding torch and the dazzling appearance of Blue himself, and it is

in this moment of double meaning and disturbance that Jarman is able to move into a pastoral dream in which the drifting rhythm and irregular rhyme contrast with the brittle and regimented dictates of the “real” world.

### **Infinite Possibility**

Jarman’s late style of plurality and disturbance is driven by the concept of monochrome. Klein shared Jarman’s abhorrence of uniformity and the finite, which he detected in realist paintings. Attentive to the appearance of the art object, his paintings were not final products but sources of provocation. For Klein, color was the essence and agent of freedom—a visual stimulus rather than a formulated design. By avoiding any dogmatic system of symbols and narrative content, monochrome painting enabled spectators to engage in open, unmediated, undefined contemplation.<sup>41</sup> Following Klein, Jarman deploys blue as a heterogeneous and omnipresent metaphor that disrupts the propriety of Heterosoc in the confusion it provokes. At the same time, monochrome enables Jarman to redirect attention away from the individual—so often the subject of representations of people with AIDS:

In the pandemonium of image  
I present you with the universal Blue  
Blue an open door to soul  
An infinite possibility  
Becoming tangible (11)

Blue is omnipresent, always creating rather than restricting possibility. Nothing is resolved, everything is opened up. Blue Eyed Boy levitates around the film, transcending “the solemn geography of human limits” (7). He witnesses the archaeology of sound in a labyrinth, protects white from innocence, makes darkness visible, and battles with an insect-like creature called Yellowbelly, during which the boy is “transformed into an insectocutor, his Blue aura frying the foes” (17). The color blue is everywhere as well: it is the shade of Jarman’s depression, of universal love, and of terrestrial paradise. There are bluebottles, blues songs, and blue skies. The reaper has a blue beard, AIDS is a blue frost, and the heat haze is also blue. It is the color of the flashes in Jarman’s eyes and the color of the afterimage. Bliss is a fathomless blue, and blue people come from over the sea. The skies are blue, blood is blue, and blue canvases flutter in the wind. Appropriately, beautifully, Jarman falls in love with this marvelous, boundless Blue: “Blue of my heart / Blue of my dreams / Slow blue love /

Of delphinium days” (4). Jarman’s idyll resembles the delphinium, a perennial herb with tall, branching spikes of *irregular* flowers.

The blue screen also overcomes time, transforming it into “tangible” space. Jarman had started to explore the conversion of time into space in his “previous last works,” but there time, although altered, always retained some sort of defining presence. In *Modern Nature*, Jarman described the way in which the “gardener digs in another time, without past or future, beginning or end,” suggesting that while the garden space might alter time, it does not dissolve it.<sup>42</sup> In *At Your Own Risk*, Jarman described a visit to the Continental Baths in Manhattan: “Like the desert . . . the Baths played disturbing tricks; down there time dissolved you in the shadows. An afternoon passed in seconds”—a disconcerting escape in which time assumes a hallucinatory domination.<sup>43</sup> In *Blue*, however, Jarman subjects time to the total space of the ultramarine screen. There is nothing to provide a visual sense of time: no visual flashbacks, car chases, graying hairs, or final embraces. It is not just that the monochrome screen cuts across time; it *nullifies* time, and the collage structure of the soundtrack further undermines any coherent notion of temporality.

The overall effect is reminiscent of Adorno’s description of the discontinuous and fragmentary composition of Beethoven’s late work, which he “tears apart in time.”<sup>44</sup> The late work becomes a landscape in which art takes place, and this is reflected in a number of last works. In Marcel Proust’s *Remembrance of Things Past*, the paving stone that trips Marcel embodies the past, present, and future. In Giuseppe di Lampedusa’s *Leopard*, time is transformed into the Sicilian landscape. And in Samuel Beckett’s *Endgame*, time is sucked into an implied chessboard. Proust’s metamorphosis into space is redemptive, bringing the narrator to the point at which he can begin to write. Lampedusa’s lurch into the backward space of the Sicilian landscape is determinedly pessimistic, with no salvation possible. Beckett’s vision of space is even more foreboding, with the players trapped in a perpetual check of indescribable awfulness, a form of imprisonment only imaginable in the aftermath of the Second World War.

So what sort of space does Jarman move into? Halfway through the film, Jarman suggests a transition into a distinctly soluble space:

The drip ticks out the seconds, the source of a stream along which the minutes flow, to join the river of hours, the sea of years and the timeless ocean.  
(18)

And in the film’s final scene, Jarman evokes not the solid terrain of a landscape, but the shifting space of the ocean:

Jarman goes  
further than  
in any of his  
previous work in  
recognizing the  
inevitable rupture  
between  
marginalized  
sexualities and  
the national  
dominant.

Pearl fishers  
In azure seas  
Deep waters  
Washing the isle of the dead  
In coral harbours  
Amphora  
Spill  
Gold  
Across the still seabed (28)

Jarman, having escaped the joint tyrannies of image and temporality, concludes his unruly narrative by depicting an idealized escape to an imagined space. Jarman was deeply drawn to the “Mediterranean sensibility” and had thematized it in some of his previous work. *Sebastiane* (1975), his first feature, told the story of the martyred saint, focusing on his sado-masochistic homosexual life under the Roman emperor Diocletian. And *Caravaggio* (1986) portrayed the life of the Italian baroque artist, providing another excursion beyond the confines of English cultural history. Indeed, Jarman had lived in Italy for a couple of years after his father was posted there in 1946, and the period is recounted in both *Modern Nature* and *At Your Own Risk*.

Yet *Blue* marks his most decisive shift into the Mediterranean setting, its metaphorical migration suggesting an ideological and aesthetic departure from the gray misery of Britain—as well as providing the film’s Venice premiere with a greater resonance than the Biennale’s organizers perhaps realized. Jarman goes further than in any of his previous work in recognizing the inevitable rupture between marginalized sexualities and the national dominant. While this is not to argue that the film is first and foremost a critique of the nation, the need to overcome the “solemn geography of human limits” (7) nevertheless suggests political as well as biological factors. At the same time, while Jarman refuses to recognize boundaries of any sort, presumably including national ones, he is equally determined to refuse easy answers: “For *Blue* there are no boundaries or solutions” (16).

Imagining himself at the bottom of the ocean, a nonnational space, Jarman continues:

We lie there  
Fanned by the billowing  
Sails of forgotten ships  
Tossed by the mournful winds  
Of the deep  
Lost Boys  
Sleep forever

In a dear embrace  
Salt lips touching . . .  
Shell sounds  
Whisper  
Deep love drifting on the tide forever (28–29)

The “we” is Jarman plus one other, a “Dead good looking” boy, and Jarman no doubt intends the pun on *dead*. They lie in an underwater embrace, blissfully lost: eternal sleep and everlasting love have become possible in this timeless space. In an echo of previous lines, Jarman asks to be kissed on the lips and eyes, his desire still alive, despite Heterosoc’s denial of the sexuality of people with AIDS. In *At Your Own Risk*, Jarman wrote that “sexuality is as wide as the sea,” and here the statement is literalized.<sup>45</sup>

Yet in spite of the strong romantic and utopian features of the seabed, Jarman refuses to convert it into a transcendental space:

Our name will be forgotten  
In time  
No one will remember our work  
Our life will pass like the traces of a cloud  
And be scattered like  
Mist that is chased by the  
Rays of the sun  
For our time is the passing of a shadow  
And our lives will run like  
Sparks through the stubble

I place a delphinium, Blue, upon your grave. (30)

In contrast to AmFAR’s belief in the immortality of art, Jarman insists that his work will be forgotten. Still, he clearly cherishes this final scene, defined as it is by ambiguity and wild fantasy. The boy, we learn, is the Blue Eyed Boy; and, with his repetition of “our,” Jarman introduces the possibility that he and the boy have always been connected. The references to clouds, mist, sun, and stubble indicate a spatial expansion rather than a closure: the seabed may have been limitless, but that is still too restrictive for Jarman. Cherishing that which lacks order, the irregular delphinium of the earlier pastoral scene is picked and placed on Blue’s grave. Even the burial of Blue is ambiguous. Who or what is being buried? The boy? The film? Every part of Jarman’s far-reaching metaphor? Even Jarman himself? He refuses to clarify his meaning and accordingly opens up the possibility of multiple interpretations. Everything is blue, and all of this is potentially buried in Jarman’s final sweeping gesture, an end with unending implications.

*Blue* is a plural last work. In its refusal of closure, the meanings of AIDS are kept in flux, recognized to be beyond adequate representation. Non-closure also maintains hope, the possibility that the story is not yet over and that a different, more optimistic end will be available in the future. *Blue* is also plural in form: it is simultaneously a film, a painting, a radio play, a soundtrack, a gay autobiography, and a book. While other films increasingly replicate this multimedia formula—you've seen the film, now buy the T-shirt/soundtrack/video/cuddly toy—they do so for commercial rather than aesthetic reasons. In contrast, *Blue's* plural form coheres with its style, which veers between the fantastical and the real, between poetry and prose, injecting a dose of theory for good measure.

Plurality enables Jarman to weave a route between the two broad strategies—reformist versus queer—of lesbian and gay self-representation. The reformist position insists on the rationality of lesbian and gay identity, attacking demonized representations as paranoid and irrational—an approach that suggests that homosexuality would be accepted in a more enlightened culture. In contrast, the queer standpoint maintains that homosexual desire is disturbing and unassimilable, with the reformists sanitizing and censoring their identity in order to gain acceptance. If reformists stress the normality of the person with AIDS, and if queer theorists emphasize the same person's disruptive and defiant outlook, then Jarman incorporates both possibilities, with the metaphorical thrust of *Blue* militating against the existence of a "single universal truth" about the epidemic, the meanings of which cannot be contained.

Defying definition, *Blue* is arguably Jarman's most obscure work. Indeed, Jarman thought of *Blue* as an "interesting experimental film" and considered it "bizarre" that it "just became a film."<sup>46</sup> This relationship between obscurity and significance is once again reminiscent of Adorno's reading of late-style Beethoven (summarized here by Said): "[F]ar from being simply an eccentric and irrelevant phenomenon, late-style Beethoven, remorselessly alienated and obscure, becomes the prototypical aesthetic form, and by virtue of its distance from and rejection of bourgeois society acquires an even greater significance."<sup>47</sup> The correlation between *Blue* and the central themes of "late style" (the artifice of art, subjectivity's evacuation of the work, the refusal of progress, and the transformation of time into space) appears to be confirmed.

It is here, however, that the parallels with Adorno end. For Adorno, Beethoven's late style was ultimately characterized by its radical discontinuity and its catastrophic quality: "The maturity of the late works of significant artists does not resemble the kind one finds in fruit. They are . . .

not round, but furrowed, even ravaged.”<sup>48</sup> Late Beethoven is defined by “sudden discontinuities,” which he refuses to transform into a “harmonious synthesis.” And so, “In the history of art late works are the catastrophes.”<sup>49</sup> In contrast, Jarman’s monochrome erases polarities, refusing to be drawn into a tragic outlook—a refusal that counteracted Heterosoc’s representation of the person with AIDS.

Jarman directly challenged the prescribed “catastrophe” of late style. He continually brought humor into his situation. In an interview with the *Daily Telegraph*, he said: “the stories that are told are not all to do with the hospital—it’s only a third of the film at most. The rest of it is really quite ‘up’ and funny. Because you can’t just sit there in a gloomy state in hospital. You must have a laugh, and everyone does.”<sup>50</sup> Jarman frequently quips about his medical treatment, refusing the psychology of victimhood. In a typical example of his gallows humor, he says, “The Gautama Buddha instructs me to walk away from illness. But he wasn’t attached to a drip” (9). Asked by a journalist how long he had to live, Jarman replied: “I can’t tell. You might be lucky and get this article out in time.”<sup>51</sup> And asked by friends when he was going to die, Jarman replied: “Oh yes, I had AIDS last year. Have you had it?”<sup>52</sup> On the brink of death, Jarman’s outlook is daringly life-affirming: “I’ve had all the opportunistic infections. I’ve strung them around my neck like a necklace of pearls—and survived them all.”<sup>53</sup> Instead of forcing Jarman into a crushed withdrawal, illness becomes part of his cross-dressing wardrobe, a series of shifting, abject guises to be proudly displayed, not covered in shame.

At the same time, Jarman was not in a state of denial. Six weeks before he died, he told *Genre*: “I’m not actually fighting the illness, I just fight for the space to paint.”<sup>54</sup> He added that he didn’t expect to survive another hospitalization, but that he was “still quite happy,” reiterating a line first articulated in *Modern Nature*: “As I sweat it out in the early hours, a ‘guilty victim’ of the scourge, I want to bear witness how happy I am, and will be until the day I die, that I was part of the hated sexual revolution; and that I don’t regret a single step or encounter I made in that time; and if I write in future with regret, it will be a reflection of a temporary indisposition.”<sup>55</sup> He never did.

His accelerated productivity was a testament to his *positive* outlook and subverted the notion of the degenerate person with AIDS. One consequence of Jarman’s work ethic is that it is impossible to speak of his last work: Jarman has last *works*. Spanning disparate media, Jarman would develop several projects simultaneously, thereby leaving his “last work” to be defined by the production schedules of his publishers and distributors. Indeed, Jarman was unable to imagine not working, even in a state of extreme disability: “If I was physically ill, I think I would make decisions.

I'd carry on working, which is my life. If I couldn't make films I'd write, if I couldn't write I'd paint. I've always dreamt up things to do, I would find something which was within my capabilities."<sup>56</sup>

Make films, write books, paint. Available evidence suggests that *Blue* is Jarman's final film—just. Having said that he had no plans to make another feature, Jarman attempted to fund a production of *Narrow Rooms* by James Purdy, but Channel Four eventually withdrew its financial support. Unable to direct films, Jarman continued to write. *Chroma*, published in 1994, is a meditation on color, and *Derek Jarman's Garden* came out a year later, providing a further account of the garden at Prospect Cottage, Dungeness. And even though he was almost totally blind, Jarman continued to paint, just as Beethoven had continued to compose after he went deaf. Jarman didn't hold the brushes himself: a friend called Carl (not an artist) carried out his instructions. "It would help to see just for a second," Jarman said. "But you usually have a very good idea if it is something you have done a lot. I have painted all my life, so I know what is happening. It is quite a boost actually because I always say I won't go completely blind if I paint."<sup>57</sup>

For Jarman, the work would never stop: if he couldn't be the artist, he would stand in as the material. And so, in a passage that recalls Klein's belief that his paintings were the "ashes" of his art, Jarman envisioned his last work: "I'll be cremated and have Christopher mix the ashes with black paint and paint five canvases which I'll have signed—it'll be my last artwork. It seems to be a sensible way to deal with it, to become a work of art and retain some value in death."<sup>58</sup> In an image that would seem to express an insuperable negation, Jarman finds affirmative meaning. Avoiding Benetton's oppressive doom and Taylor's glib transcendence, Jarman imagines a way both to continue his work posthumously and recognize the reality of death. Forever breaking boundaries, Jarman throws the whole notion of the last work into disarray in the startling diversity and dispersion of his last works. That, I think, is something he would have liked.

## Notes

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1. Details of the event are taken from Amei Wallach, "Liz Draws Stars to an AIDS Benefit," *Newsday*, 14 June 1993, 43; and Liz Smith, "Tyson vs. the Supremes," *Newsday*, 18 June 1993, 11. Further information was supplied by



Savvy Management, public relations consultants for AmFAR (American Foundation for AIDS Research), which organized the event.

2. Derek Jarman, *Modern Nature* (Woodstock, N.Y.: Overlook, 1994), 177.

3. Derek Jarman, *Blue: Text of a Film by Derek Jarman* (Woodstock, N.Y.: Overlook, 1994), 28. Page numbers will henceforth be cited in the text, and quotes will follow the layout of the Overlook Press version.

4. Theodor Adorno, "Late Style in Beethoven," *Raritan* 13 (winter 1993): 102–107. The article was originally written in 1937.

5. Edward Said, "Adorno as Lateness Itself," in *Apocalypse Theory and the End of the World*, ed. Malcolm Bull (Oxford, England, and Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1995), 264–81.

6. Richard Morrison, "Derek Jarman: The Final Interview, Thursday, November 18, 1993," *Art and Understanding* 3 (April 1994): 17–22. Seemingly oblivious to Jarman's comment, the title of the interview provides an example of the media's obsession with finality. As it happens, Jarman gave at least one more interview, to Gerard Raymond, which was published as "Fade to Blue" in *Genre*, no. 19 (June 1994): 44–47.

7. Derek Jarman, *At Your Own Risk: A Saint's Testament* (Woodstock, N.Y.: Overlook, 1993), 122.

8. Simon Garfield, "Derek Jarman: Into the Blue," *Independent*, 14 August 1993, 25.

9. Adorno, "Late Style," 102, 107.

10. The following account is largely drawn from the following sources: Douglas Crimp, "Portraits of People with AIDS," in *Discourses of Sexuality: From Aristotle to AIDS*, ed. Domna C. Stanton (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992); Jeff Nunokawa, "All the Sad Young Men": AIDS and the Work of Mourning," in *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*, ed. Diana Fuss (New York and London: Routledge, 1991), 311–12; Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Elliott Trice, "Precarious Positionings: Representing People with AIDS" (unpublished manuscript, 1994); and Simon Watney, *Practices of Freedom: Selected Writings on HIV/AIDS* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1994).

11. Lesley White, "Blood, Sweaters, and Designer Tears," *Sunday Times*, 16 February 1992, sec. 2, p. 3.

12. Smith, "Tyson vs. the Supremes," 11.

13. Crimp, "Portraits," 5.

14. *Evening Standard*, 29 October 1982, quoted in *Take Ten: Contemporary British Film Directors*, by Jonathan Hacker and David Price (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), 235.

15. See Jarman, *At Your Own Risk*, 85.

16. Hacker and Price, *Take Ten*, 255.

17. Mick Brown, "The Dying Wishes of Derek Jarman," *Daily Telegraph*, 16 August 1993, 11; and Hacker and Price, *Take Ten*, 259.

18. Hacker and Price, *Take Ten*, 259.

19. *Ibid.*, 248–49.

20. *Ibid.*, 233.

21. Roy Grundman, "History and the Gay Viewfinder: An Interview with Derek Jarman," *Cineaste* 18 (December 1991): 25.

22. Jarman, *At Your Own Risk*, 114.

23. Derek Jarman, preface to *Dancing Ledge* (London: Quartet, 1991), 7.
24. Jarman, *At Your Own Risk*, 121.
25. *Ibid.*, 123.
26. See Garfield, "Derek Jarman," 25.
27. Brown, "Dying Wishes," 11.
28. Hacker and Price, *Take Ten*, 259–60.
29. *Ibid.*, 248–49.
30. Jarman revealed his thoughts about Klein at the Edinburgh Festival. He noted that he had first thought of the idea several years ago, but that at the time it had proved impossible to fund. His comments were reported in a facile article by Brian Pendreigh, "Blue Movie That No One Wants To Watch," *Scotsman*, 25 August 1993.
31. Jarman, *At Your Own Risk*, 5.
32. *Ibid.*, 30.
33. Mike O'Pray, "Damning Desire," *Sight and Sound* 1 (October 1991): 11.
34. Yves Klein, quoted in Sidra Stich, *Yves Klein* (Ostfildern, Germany: Cantz, 1994), 66.
35. *Ibid.*, 67.
36. Adorno, "Late Style," 105.
37. Stich, *Yves Klein*, 67–68.
38. *Ibid.*, 67 (italics mine).
39. Jarman, *At Your Own Risk*, 43.
40. Morrison, "Derek Jarman," 22; Jarman, *At Your Own Risk*, 66.
41. Stich, *Yves Klein*, 67.
42. Jarman, *Modern Nature*, 30.
43. Jarman, *At Your Own Risk*, 81.
44. Adorno, "Late Style," 107.
45. Jarman, *At Your Own Risk*, 6.
46. Garfield, "Derek Jarman," 25.
47. Said, "Adorno," 273.
48. Adorno, "Late Style," 102.
49. *Ibid.*, 107. It should be noted that critics have questioned Adorno's reading of Beethoven's last works.
50. Brown, "Dying Wishes," 11.
51. *Ibid.*, 11.
52. Jarman, *At Your Own Risk*, 10.
53. *Ibid.*, 122.
54. Raymond, "Fade To Blue," 47.
55. Jarman, *Modern Nature*, 149.
56. Jarman, *At Your Own Risk*, 117.
57. Raymond, "Fade To Blue," 47.
58. Stich, *Yves Klein*, 67; Jarman, *At Your Own Risk*, 118.