

JARMAN, JUNG AND THE COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS



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Prompted by this year's celebration of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, *One+One's* new issue starts with three responses to Derek Jarman's own *Jubilee*, made in 1977.

My response to Jarman's *Jubilee* started with the thought that this film, and I feel that I should extend this to Jarman's film work in general, teaches you how to see better. By this I mean that these are films in which vision itself is being explored, not just sensorial vision, but mainly seeing as a mode of understanding.

In *Jubilee*, this angle on filmmaking is symbolically present in the form of magic and alchemy, in this case, Elizabeth I and John Dee's journey through the looking glass, guided by an angel who has come to show them 'the shadow' of their world. Jarman's biographer, Tony Peake, relates that he was very interested in Carl Jung's reading of alchemy. In essence, Jung proposes that the alchemical search is no more than a spiritual search for the self, its investigation taking similar routes to the process of individuation that he devised by undertaking a deep look at the workings of his own psyche. It is worth mentioning that Jung searched for similarities to his theories in ancient traditions, myths and practices, humankind's long-standing answers to its most primary and fundamental quest, not so much to decode the symbols that he came across but to understand the process and the path that emerged through centuries that one need to take in order to embrace one's own complete self. Jung's analysis led him to turn his attention within, to dreams and the symbols produced by the unconscious, as guides for this spiritual quest, and I feel this is the part that particularly appeals to Jarman and perhaps to all artists interested in Jung, I'd say particularly those working in the cinema, for what are we producing if not dreams for a collective mind?

Like Jung, who proposes that we should look at the images of our unconscious in order to better see ourselves, Jarman presents for us a dream of the year of 1977 in which the film was made. This dream deals with events and ideas

that were happening at that moment, featuring people who were the real protagonists of that movement. Jarman seems to have wanted to distill some truth from the times he was living in and some truth must have come out of this exploration, or it wouldn't have provoked an angry response from Vivienne Westwood in the form of a t-shirt, accusing him of misrepresenting Punk.

Jarman also said 'We are all accomplices in the dreaming of the soul' and though it is a beautiful poetic way to relay the power of the collective unconscious, it brings to mind the other side of the coin, that collective images are not always produced with the purpose to investigate or bring truth to light, they are also produced in order to manipulate and subdue the questioning, to provide answers we can consume rather than questions that can transport us, to simply take advantage of their own power and make financial profit. Whether it be entertainment, high art or simply current events, it is worth remembering that every collective show has that power, the power of a collective ritual that inscribes, establishes or reinforces how we, as a society, understand ourselves, be it the Queen's Jubilee, the opening ceremony of the Olympics, or the news reports of a massacre in a cinema by an unknown man.

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