INTRODUCTION

Although homosexuals have been repressed for centuries, and continue to cause social discomfort, several individuals and groups have come out to defend their sexual choices. Gays and lesbians have attempted to make themselves more visible and acceptable, in spite of the on-going prejudice and social controversy that they have dealt with. Prestigious Sociology textbooks actually continue treating homosexuality as a kind of deviant behaviour, together with alcoholism, prostitution and drug use[1]. Since the 1960s, nevertheless, homosexuality has been widely discussed in the media, while queer theory and criticism have become important lines of research in North American and British institutions such as Stanford and the University of Sussex.

Motivated by queer studies, this thesis pursues the subject of homosexuality in drama and film. The artistic objects of analysis are Christopher Marlowe's play *Edward II* (c.1592) and director Derek Jarman's film *Edward II* (1991), the screenplay of which is based on Marlowe's play and was adapted by Derek Jarman, Stephen McBride and Ken Butler.[2]

As I regard the need for equal civil rights in these last years of the twentieth century, I realise that homosexuals are still being repressed by the dominant Judeo-Christian ideologies and the majority of people whose interest is to establish heterosexual behaviour as the only acceptable norm. Provided this context, Jarman's film emerges as a very interesting cultural product that openly examines parallels between homophobia in the fourteenth century and in contemporary society. His film suggests, above all, that the way nobles and clerics used Edward II's homosexuality

against him in many ways can be linked to current violence against gays and lesbians. in the last decades.

Although *Queer Edward II* focuses British history, it accentuates the universal and timeless theme of homosexuality with complex political and aesthetic implications, provided its context of production. In the remaining part of this introduction, the background of queer theory and criticism will be presented; pertinent aspects of the technical terms "homophobia", "queer", and "sodomite" will be discussed; a historical overview of homosexuality, will establish the context of production of Marlowe's *Edward II* during the Renaissance.

Chapter one examines the relationship between the historical and the literary Edward II. and then appraised specific features of the screenplay. Derek Jarman's film is then analysed in chapter two, where I consider particularly the transgressive nature of the film narrative, provided the heterosexual tradition that Jarman claims to challenge through what I have defined as a queer aesthetics. Finally, I investigate the extent to which Marlowe's character is an adequate symbol of political activism from a contemporary homosexual perspective.

Homophobia, Homosexuality: sodomy and queer

Homosexuality before the English Renaissance

Homosexuality before the Renaissance was the target of cruel oppositions. However, Costa argues that in ancient Greece there was no conception of *sex* as it is understood today (1995, 95). According to him, there were the *afrodisia,* which referred to pleasure in general, and also the various *eros* which were manifested in diverse ways. That is, men had pleasure with men, women with women, men with women, humans with animals, gods with men, humans and nature elements such as rain, wind etc. (95). These different ways of obtaining pleasure could be sexually or not, obviously depending on the individual physique. Costa also explains that for the Greek people, the *eros* was not in the anatomic shape of humans nor in their sexual acts; for the Greek, the important was the citizen's public performance in the *polis* (95). Costa verifies that for the Greek people, love between men was not only tolerated, but important social functions were attributed to it (191). Costa still shows that, despite being considered a sexual perversion today, sex between men was not like that for the Greek. He says that this sexual practice was accepted for adults and boys who were not degenerated, nor even inhibited in their diverse forms of development (193). Costa adds that the sexual practice between men was a central element of the Greek social and political education (194).

Homosexual acts were not viewed the same way by all of the ancient people. The Judeo tradition follows the prejudice view in the Old Testament; the book of Genesis tells the story of two cities, Sodom and Gomorrah, which were destroyed for

their various sorts of perversion, being homosexual acts one of the condemned ones (see Genesis, chapter 19, verses 24-38). Rowse exposes the influence that the Judeo-Christian traditional had on people in the Medieval Age. He raises the commandments in the book of Leviticus concerning the treatment that a male individual should suffer if he was found having sex with another man (1). According to Leviticus, chapter 18, verse 22, and chapter 20, verse 13, when a man lies with another man as if he were a woman (being penetrated), both will have practised abomination and be killed. Rowse reminds the reader that these commandments dated from 2,500 years before the Medieval Age (1). To emphasise the horror against homosexual acts in the New Testament, the Apostle Paul writes to the Romans, chapter 1, verses 26 and 27 similar words. In verse 26, he mentions women and calls their homosexual act *"infamous passions* contrary to nature", and in verse 27, he mentions men and calls their acts as an "inflaming sensuality, ... receiving the due reward for their error". Rowse elicits the cruelty committed by that moralistic tradition before and after Christ (1). He says that "medieval societies were hardly less barbarous and brutal" than the ancient times (2). In the Middle Age, as soon as homosexuality was seen as a menace to the preservation of power, the dominant homophobic heterosexual class rushed to declare homosexuality as a 'danger'.

Rowse also mentions that the Christian Church found one apparently convincing criterion to preach a discourse establishing homosexual intercourse as an act of abhorrence to the human species in the Middle Age (1). He mentions the English king William Rufus (c.1056-1100) who favoured men around him (2). But according to Rowse, Rufus defied the Christian Church and its moral codes by laughing at its beliefs (2). Consequently, Rufus was reprehended by the Christian Church which "wrote him

down to all posterity and deplored his habits" (2). Rowse also cites Richard Coeur-de-Lion (1157-1199) (3), a king who preferred men and for that he received a warning from the clerics in order to be mindful of the Sodom event and to be away from what was considered unlawful (3). Although both William Rufus and Richard Coeur-de-Lion were able rulers, they did not escape the Christian morality and its condemnations against their way of life. Rowse exposes that persecution and stresses the Christian hypocrisy, since some clerics preferred men, too (3). Rowse cites the Bishop of Ely, William Longchamp, who governed England during Richard's travel in the Crusades (3). We can see a similar treatment again as we travel to the past and have a look at what the nobles and clerics in Marlowe's and in king Edward II's times did against homosexuality.

Bray also emphasises the aspect of danger by mentioning the importance and "the centrality and primacy of the (preferably married) male and father; the exaltation of biological procreation" during medieval times (16); Rowse explains that at a time when illnesses abounded because of improper sanitary systems, the human race was threatened by the ghost of a high mortality (2).

Within that context, it **seemed** an acceptable attitude to forbid homosexual relationships. But in my opinion, the growing need for procreation according to the biblical principles could never excuse the death of those who have been executed for their homosexual orientation. That opposition rose first from institutions such as the Catholic Church which, in the Middle Ages, was powerful for many centuries, and later from the various Christian Protestant branches which have been supported by the dominant social class for centuries.

Considering the fact that never have all human beings been homosexuals, and, consequently, that the human species has not been in real danger of disappearing, I have been investigating homophobia and found that prejudice was generated particularly because of political reasons. Homosexuality became a target of the dominant class who wanted to possess the governing power. That class saw in homosexuality a reason to condemn kings, for example, whose sexual inclination was different and 'dangerous' to humankind. By condemning the homosexuality of monarchs, who did not accomplish their political body, the dominant class could usurp power and have it. Bredbeck says that it was claimed that monarchs were deposed once they did not accomplish their roles as part of their political body (20). King Edward II certainly suffered that persecution. He did not accomplish his political body. But, as Sterling elicits "if they [kings] fulfilled their duties well, alienated no one of great power, and stole moderately, their illegal doings were inconsequential"(102). Homosexuality was not illegal, but it could be used to depose or condemn kings once their political body was neglected.

  Sterling's statement may seem too compromising, but as we regard the fact that corruption was always a strategy within the walls of power milieux, we can understand what he is saying. To exert any condemnation against homosexuality, the homophobe heterosexuals needed a subtle means. Art, the expression of human spirit, then, has become a worthwhile instrument for the dominant homophobic heterosexual class to manifest its political interest in society. This can be exemplified as many pieces of art highlight heterosexuality as the normal sexual orientation.

Homosexuality in the English Renaissance

Since the Renaissance, Art has been a very useful and functional means used by the homophobic powerful classes to achieve their goals. A great artistic and intellectual production has been verified throughout history by artists such as Michelangelo and Leonardo Da Vinci in painting and sculpture, who are said to have been homosexuals. Their marvellous masterpieces such as the "Mona Lisa" by Da Vinci and "The Pieta" by Michelangelo have impressed humanity for their lifelike features and accuracy both in form and content. Although some homosexual artists have created stupendous works of art, many other artists, like filmmakers and playwrights, together with their sponsors or alone have spread a negative concept of homosexuality. Their works generally carry an implicit homophobic idea.

In order to understand the homophobic ideology since the Renaissance, we can mention some theoreticians of the subject. Bray cites many works written in the Renaissance which connected the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah with homosexuality (1995). This connection shows the power that Judeo-Christian precepts used to have. He also puts forth the fact that homosexuality was considered as an enormous horror in that time (7). To exemplify this view regarding homosexuality, Bray mentions the execution of John Atherton, the bishop of Waterford and Lismore and his supposed lover John Childe in 1640 (14). According to Bray, they were executed for *buggery*, a word used at that time to name homosexuality (15). He mentions the advantage that the Protestant party took to construct a discourse against the Catholic Church (19). In that discourse, the Protestant linked "the religious deviation of the Catholic Church with sexual deviation". The discourse claimed that the celibacy of the

Catholic priests was serving for sexual deviation (19). He cites William Lithgow's words that declare the Catholic priests as men "who forsooth may not marry and yet may miscarry themselves in all abominations, especially in sodomy, which is their continual pleasure and practice" (19). One of the Church actions towards homosexuality was to construct its demonologic ideology whose name exposed how contrary the clerics were against everything which did not correspond to heterosexuality in the Renaissance (23). In this ideology, everything which existed in Heaven had its parallel in Hell, but, as Bray verifies, "homosexuality had no place in the Kingdom of Hell because it had none in the Kingdom of Heaven" (23). The fact is that, as Bray says, it was all a myth. But that myth was used to describe what homosexuality was, rather than saying what it was (23). During the reign of Elizabeth I, George Tubervile, an English ambassador in Russia, described that society as "a savage soil, where laws bear no sway... that was a land where lust is law" (25). Bray explains that:

> Homosexuality was not part of the chain of being, or the harmony of the created world or its universal dance. It was not part of the Kingdom of Heaven or its counterpart in the Kingdom of Hell...it was not conceived of as part of the created order at all; it was part of its dissolution and was not a sexuality in its own right, but existed as a potential for confusion and disorder in one undivided sexuality (25).

Cady says that "there existed no significant conception of, nor language for, homosexuality as a distinct, categorical, sexual orientation" (11).

It is common knowledge that ideas can be disseminated either in favour or against an individual or a group. In the Renaissance, theatre and literature exerted an extremely important part in the politics of the time. Dollimore says that theatre had a didactic aspect, and for such reason, it was used to teach subjects to obey their kings (1994, 7). To emphasise this idea, Dollimore cites Raymond Williams' words in the

former's essay *Problems:* "we cannot separate literature and art from other kinds of social practice...", or even, "they (literature and art) cannot be separated from the general social process" (1994, 4). But literature and theatre also served those who did not behave in accordance to or agreed with the established social order. Those were certainly viewed as transgressors and subversive people once they were demystifying power, being, consequently, contained by the powerful class.

According to Bredbeck (27), culture creates through its power a dichotomy in which the powerful are the *subjects* and (specifically in the case of homosexuality) the sodomite is the *other*. So, ever since the Renaissance, for instance, there appears to have been much pressure from the dominant class to impose a normative pattern of behaviour on the dominated. This concept is easily understood as we regard the fact that any society attempts to keep its social order because it benefits a certain number of individuals, especially those who hold power.

To comprehend the homophobic heterosexual dominant class' process, I want to compare the 1990s with Marlowe's English Renaissance and King Edward II's century. For this comparison, I find Jonathan Dollimore's idea about cultural materialism and the new historicism very important (1994). He writes that our worldwide culture has privileged the maintenance of the heterosexual system and all those who are adequate to it (4, 5). In the Renaissance and the fourteenth century theatre, religious precepts and dogmas, and laws were means through which heterosexuality was maintained. The persecution and death sentences which the dominant class established against homosexuals in the Renaissance and in the fourteenth century can *appear* primitive as we look back in History. But today, homophobia still seems to exert subtly its role as a

means to stratify heterosexual women and homosexuals under the top levels of power in our society by benefiting heterosexual white men alone.

In the English Renaissance, Bredbeck says, the homophobe discourse was connected to satire which functioned as a social regulator by displaying exemplars of lower deviant modes in society (37). By doing so, explains Bredbeck, this discourse solidified the high or orthodox modes by enacting a social stratification. In this stratification, all that was bad was ascribed and all that was good was implied, and order was achieved (37). But so far, this discriminatory discourse has not been convincingly and reasonably explained so as to promote a reasonable benefit for all human beings. It has crossed the centuries and lingered on come to the late years of the twentieth still claiming through art and laws that the only valid sexual behaviour is heterosexuality.

This political view of human relations in a given society is the relevant spectrum that I consider as an extremely important point for investigation: human rights of minorities. The necessity felt by the early feminists to put an end to the unjust laws which had been polarising men and women during and before the Victorian Age in the United Kingdom, is similar to the interest of some gay aestheticians in the twentieth century as well as of organised gay groups for civil rights around the world. Finally, a historical shift which brings together women, gays and lesbians appear to challenge the enduring heterosexual white male system.

Homophobia

Jones defines the word *homophobia* as an "irrational prejudice and hatred against a person because of her or his homosexuality" (1996, 277). Many authors, such as Chris Jones and Barbara Smith, have adopted that word to name opposite attitudes which insist to position homosexuality as an unnatural and deviant human behaviour. Homophobia is, therefore, held by dominant social classes which bear the power to ideologically lead general social opinion against homosexuality. At first sight, we can argue that there is nothing wrong in heterosexuality; and, in fact, heterosexuality has its importance as we consider the biological factors implied in it, such as the reproduction of the species. And besides, heterosexual desire is undeniably part of the human sexual instincts like other living beings in Nature. But the problem is the emphasis society gives to it as the only possible sexual behaviour for humans. The dominant social classes also seek to propagate homophobia and prohibit homosexuality by diverse ways such as educational systems, television, cinema, theatre etc. The homophobic campaign comprehends the creation of social laws and conventions. These rules standardise social conventions and acceptable behaviours. But they spill a continuous and infamous propaganda upon people in general. In civilisations taken by machismo and male-centred families that propaganda is not always perceived. Homophobe heterosexuals use subtle means as television programmes and literature to stress heterosexuality and to disseminate their ideology against homosexuals. This homophobe ideology turns a sexual orientation such as homosexuality something deplored and condemned.

I can see that the heterosexual homophobic society has been trying to close an eye to the existence of homosexuality which is a reality ever since present as another expression of human sexual instinct. The constant propaganda for heterosexuality on television exemplifies the fact that the dominant class tries to fight against homosexuality. History indicates that the emphasis given by the dominant class. If today a lesser intolerance has been seen towards homosexuals, homophobia is still present in educational systems, as Smith exposes in her article (Abelove 1996). According to her, schools have been one of the favourite places chosen by the dominant class to disseminate an aversion against homosexuals (99-112). Naturally, many young people who feel attracted by individuals of their same sex start to suffer repression early in their lives both at home and at school. Smith adds that homophobic heterosexual educators and classmates end up oppressing young gays or lesbians, so that sexual repression has been one of the main causes of suicide among teenagers (102). Nash follows Smith's concern with educational systems. Nash cites the executive director of the National Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), Kevin Jennings' words: "we can end homophobia in this generation. If we can change what people learn when they are young, we can achieve a long-term goal of ending homophobia" (Feature 1).

Such homophobic heterosexual culture also seems to privilege white heterosexual men in society, for example, by creating a negative image of homosexuality. From this perspective, I can see that social order current in the nineties tends to benefit the dominant class. Bianco says that in the United Kingdom, public opinion contributed mostly in 1967 when the British Parliament voted to decriminalise private adult homosexual acts in England and Wales. Bianco's words show that until

1967 homosexual acts were seen as crime for the British Law (British 1-2). Although public opinion contributed to change the law against homosexuals in those countries in the late 1960s, there is still a homophobic view on homosexuality in the United Kingdom. Chedgzoy explains that Section 28, a Government Act in 1988, "sought to prevent local authorities from using their financial resources to promote homosexuality"(1995, 187). This Section 28 is a demonstration of how homophobia is still handled appropriately by preventing homosexuals to achieve equal social rights in their societies.

For example, we can consider the conservative family-centred American and British societies and what their postwar ideologies provoked against homosexuals in general. Those ideologies chased homosexuals in order to make its heterosexual values prevail as the acceptable ones.

Homosexuality: sodomy and queerness

At our day and age of electronics and information, it is possible to perceive enormous amounts of propaganda for the maintenance of the prevailing heterosexual social, political, and economic system. The majority of products and services advertised on television, for instance, cast men, women and children in clear heterosexual roles. Sexual discrimination is, of course, unconstitutional in Brazil, the USA and England, yet the lack of communication addressed to the homosexual public suggests that it somehow does not matter. Homosexuals are in effect stratified below the top levels of power in our society, while heterosexuals are systematically empowered.

While homosexuals are not interested in denying the biological, political and economic aspects that grant the social importance of heterosexuality, they are concerned with the fact that as long as heterosexuality is viewed as the only acceptable behaviour, discrimination and homophobia take place, as an overview of terminology shall illustrate.

There have been many uses of terms such as queer, sodomite which are verified in studies of homosexuality, mainly regarding the socio-political movement towards equal civil rights in sexual politics according to Foucault's terminology (1993). He understood sexual politics as sex used for political reasons. To exemplify, Foucault highlights the gender cut phenomenon. He perceived a political strategy behind the cutting between male and female (Foucault 1993). That cut privileged male rather than female.

In order to understand the difference between terms like *queer* and *sodomite*, it is useful to draw on what Cady says about the fact that in the Renaissance times "there

existed no significant conception of, nor language for, homosexuality as a distinct, categorical, sexual orientation" (11). Coke (apud Bredbeck 1992) says that homosexual relationship was linked with sodomy and states that sodomy "is a realm of Sorcerers, Sodomers and Hereticks" (5). It means that the term *sodomy* is a broad one in which homosexual acts were inscribed. Bredbeck expands the analysis saying that "homoeroticism is contained within a mythology of the unnatural, the alien, and the demonic"(5). Goldberg gives a definition of sodomy:

> [it] is a sexual act, anything that threatens alliance – any sexual act, that is, that does not promote the aim of married procreative sex: anal intercourse, fellatio, masturbation, bestiality – any of these may fall under the label of sodomy in various early legal codifications and learned discourses (19).

It is relevant to paraphrase Goldberg a bit further as he reminds the reader hat sodomy in the English Renaissance involved sex with same-sex partners, sex with animals and opposite-sex partners (19). He also states that sodomy was envisioned only when those who were called heretics, traitors and the like, acted as disturbers of social order that marriage maintained (19). Goldberg suggests that prescriptions against homosexuality have ancient roots and mentions, for example, Justice Byron White referring to Plato's Laws, the Sodom and Gomorrah story, a sentence from Leviticus, the burning of homosexuals in the middle ages and the English statute of 1533 to justify his contrary positioning to homosexuality. The most famous instance of punishment remains the Oscar Wilde case, around 1895. Oscar Wilde, the famous British writer, was condemned for opening his homosexual activity. Wilde was married and had two children. At the same time, he was having an affair with Lord Alfred Douglas, an aristocrat. Wilde was able to live a double life because he found it both strategic and amusing. After being insulted by his lover's father, the Marquess of Queensbury, Wilde

decided to annoy the latter by bringing a libel suit against him. But Wilde failed because he was a sodomite according to the British Law. Queensbury called rent boys frequently employed by Wilde to witness against the latter. The suit against Queensbury was dismissed and the crown arrested Wilde. After two trials, Wilde was found guilty of sodomy according to the law of Great Britain and sentenced to two years of hard labour at an English jail. After those two years as the prisoner C33, Wilde left prison and went to Italy. Back to France, he met Alfred again and they both stayed together until November 30 1900, when Wilde died.

For the first time in British history, homosexuality was discussed as a legal issue in the House of Lords in the 1950s. A committee investigated both homosexuality and prostitution after a decision of the British government. In 1957, the Wolfenden Committee report was issued. According to that issue, law existed to preserve public order and decency and protect the weak from exploitation. One of the conclusions of the Committee was that Law should not concern itself with what a man does in private, unless it can be contrary to the public good, and Law, then, should intervene as a guardian of the public good. The committee examined the objections to reforming laws that would criminalize any male-male sexual act which represented a menace to the health of society with harmful effects upon family life and the possibility of a man (who indulges in these practices) influencing boys. The Committee debunked all these objectives. For the members of the Committee there was no evidence to support the view that homosexuals caused the decay of society. The point was that fornication, adultery and lesbianism were equally threatening to family life and yet were not criminalized. The Wolfenden Report explicitly outlined a programme for the reform of laws that criminalized homosexual acts and it exposed the legislation of consensual Sex

between adult males who were older than 21. For many men, the limit of age at 21 was disappointing, since lesbians and heterosexuals acts were legal at age 16. Unfortunately, the majority of public opinion did not accept the report.

A positive point was that theatrical and cinematic portrayals of homosexuality could further the dissemination of liberal ideas about gays and lesbians. As the Wolfenden Report carried no legal force, only after ten years there was the release of the Sexual Offences Act of 1967 in which the Parliament decriminalised private adult homosexual acts in England and Wales. In Scotland and Northern Ireland the criminal sanction fell only in the eighties. In 1984, the age of consent for gay male sex was lowered to 18. Nowadays, the European Commission presses Britain to lower to 16.[5]

Regarding the USA, the Stonewall Riot in New York in 1969offers further evidence of the continuing Civil Rights strife. In that event, homosexuals and the Police fought one another because the Police did not permit homosexuals to enter a local bar. From then on, gay male criticism sought to erase this incorrect image regarding homosexual manners which, in a sense, correlated gays with women.

Gay Male Activism and the Development of Queer Criticism

According to Dellamora's (1993) historical overview of the production of gay male theory "Gay male criticism is the most recent of the critical/theoretical discourses to emerge from the 'liberation' movements – new left, anti-Vietnam War, counter-culture, black, and feminist – of the 1960s and early 1970s"(324).

Gay activism appears to have a lot in common with the early feminist pursuit of equal rights in the United Kingdom. Shanley, for instance, points out that in the late

nineteenth century British women struggled in Parliament in order to alter the laws which did not guarantee them social freedom and practically confined women to their home, bearing and raising children (Shanley 79-80). Although laws have not confined homosexuals to their homes, they have suffered homophobia and been persecuted as criminals, sinners or ill people, as was the case with Oscar Wilde.

Dellamora addresses homosexuality particularly at the end of the nineteenth century in England. While he considers important gay influences, he emphasises the name of Oscar Wilde, whom he believes "established a diverse, highly self-conscious set of strategies for articulating homosexuals existence and critiquing dominant norms..." (325). Dellamora draws on Hodges and Hutter (1979) to consider several other persons who empowered what he calls "queer culture", such as E. M. Forster and W. H. Auden. Dellamora then points out the importance of Sinfield (1989) and his studies of "cross-class sexual contacts among homosexuals during and after the war"(325) as well as about closeted homosexuality in London theatre (Sinfield 1990).

For Dellamora, the publication of a volume about gay studies in the academic periodical *College English* in 1974 was the point of departure of "a specifically homosexual literary tradition, a process that has continued to engage a number of gay critics"(325) which in the 1980s generally follows either feminist approaches to civil rights of Foucauldian power analysis.

Oscar Wilde stands as the initial reference in the movement for civil rights that was developed on the laws of his social view of desire, which has been examined by Dollimore. Being a cultural materialist, Dollimore analyses the concept of desire by comparing André Gide's and Wilde's perceptions of homosexuality (Abelove 626-641) and establishes a deeply important difference between them. According to Dollimore,

Wilde's conception of desire per se is something generated by a culture or a society into which individuals are born. As Chedgzoy also writes: "Wilde was caught up in a major shift in the cultural conception of homosexuality" (Chedgzoy 155). This socialised view of desire differs from Gide's conception. The latter was led to believe that there was an inner factor influencing the generation of desire, as something related to his own human nature. Dollimore states that essentialism in Gide, from Wilde's eyes, is "fundamentally in the service of a radical sexual nonconformity which was and remains incompatible with conventional and dominant sexual ideologies, bourgeois and otherwise"(Dollimore 637).

This appraisal helps us to see that the thinking of an essential view on homosexual desire is in itself not sufficient to stand by itself and which reinforces the prevailing heterosexuality centred social system. For Dollimore, essentialism is more historical than we conceive it (637). It can be understood as we take into account the cultural factors that create and establish a pattern of desire in history. I would exemplify this by referring to what the influence of the media has caused in societies, even taking people to rethink their social behaviour and traditional values. This rethinking makes the difference as individuals are subjects in History and finish reshaping it. With an intent similar to this, Wilde wanted to transgress and determined "to demystify the normative ideologies regulating subjectivity, desire, and the aesthetic" (Dollimore 637). Chedgzoy implements Wilde's character by citing Sinfield's argument that "many of the features associated with Wilde's life and writing which we take to signal his homosexuality only in fact do so because it was he who brought them together in order to constitute the central terms of one of the most visible forms of homosexual identity"(1996, 136). If we consider the analysis done by Dollimore as relevant for the understanding of

homosexual desire in society, we shall conclude that a given culture is generator of desire rather than essentialist motives alone. This brief view of Wilde´s activity becomes important to the extent that his attitudes corrborated homosexuals´ strife for civil rights.

Thus Wilde remains a crucial reference to homosexual history, at a time when "behaving" gay had different implications. For Sinfield (1994), the flamboyant manners used by Wilde to express himself in society were considered natural in the late nineteenth century (42).Sinfield explains that at Wilde´s time the conception of effeminacy was not linked to delicacy or to flamboyant gestures. Theses characteristics did not signal a homosexual man. That is to say, effeminacy and homosexuality hand no correlation as they do in the stereotypical conception society has of gays today. A man was actually perceived as effeminate whenever he was seen constantly surrounded by or in the company of women in the 1890s (Sinfiled 1994, 44).

This false social assumption regarding homosexual manners continued to exist until the twentieth century. Yet, the meaning effeminacy had in Wilde´s time and the meaning it came to have in the twentieth century, especially in post World War II, are complete diverse. This connection between women and male homosexuals as weak has perpetrated a gender cut which still serves to privilege white heterosexual men in the various fields of human activity. Sinfield explains that gender cut by sayng that late in the eighteenth century "women were taken to be incomplete versions of men" according to the thesis in Ian Maclean´s and Thomas Laqueurs´ work (1994, 44). In their work, Maclean and Laqueur also show that a thought deriving from Aristotle and Galen reckoned women and men not to be essentially different biologically (44). Nevertheless, as Sinfield remarks, for a man it was a disaster to slide into femaleness

because this meant to be effeminate (44). Sinfield affirms that intimacy with women could, in a certain way, be avoided as men related to one another, even sexually; but in the 1700s, ´male and female became polar opposites, rather than a matter,almost, of degree´(44). This makes the slied between them inconceivable, for each person is essentially one or the other as Sinfield remarks (1994, 44).

With Sinfield, I realise that the definition of social behaviour started and sexual practice was secondary (46). That is, society considered more important the appearance of social behaviour than what was being done away from society's eyes. In the nineteenth century, there was an emphasis that men be manly and women be domestic (Sinfield 52).

The idea of binaries helps us to link it to what Sedgwick says as she mentions how and what is done to access power in society (2). According to her, gender differences block women's access to power (2). She states that "whereas women tend to help other women in their homosocial milieux, this does not happen between males"(3). I find striking to read Sedgwick's statement concerning the fact that among males, heterosexuals protect their interests by imposing their sexuality as the proper one in a patriarchal society (3). This is to say that those men who defer women to prefer men (homosexuals) are subverting the heterosexual economic, social and political system. For such a system to subsist, heterosexual marriage and homophobia are essential factors (3).

Owen mentions for several times Sedgwick's *Between Men* in his book *Beyond Recognition* (1992) and chapter "Outlaws: Gay Men in Feminism". In his writing, Owen explains the mechanism of homophobia in the dominant discourse (218-235). According to his interpretation of Sedgwick's statements, homosexual desire "lies at

the origin of both the 'social instincts' and of homophobia as well" (231). Still, Owen elicits Sedgwick's words in her aforementioned book as she states that "homophobia is aimed not only at gay men, but also at men who [are] not part of the distinctly homosexual subculture"(220). "Male homophobia", Owen continues by citing Sedgwick, "is directed at both gay and straight men"(232). It is important to highlight Owen's direction towards the idea that homophobia controls and limits what has clearly become known as homosexuality, and, as well, that homophobia generates a sort of aversion in heterosexuals for further physical contact with other men. Therefore, Owen confirms Sedgwick's ideas and explains that "the stigmatisation of homosexuality 'as a suspect classification' presupposes the metamorphosis of the sodomite into a homosexual" from the nineteenth century on (225).

I think it is very relevant to mention Foucault's words in his *The History of Sexuality*: "the sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species"(Apud Owen 226). This statement by Foucault puts homosexuality not only as an illegal act inside sodomy, as it was included in the Renaissance, but defines and classifies homosexuality as a human sexuality in society.

Homosexuals have still been classified as incapable individuals. The same ideology against women has been used by heterosexual discriminatory men against homosexuals, claiming that gays (especially) are not men enough to accomplish professional and political positions in society. This pejorative view has been supported by the assumption that women and gays are inferior beings, needing to be governed rather than governing. Furthermore, homoeroticism has been classified a threat to the homophobic dominant class as seen before. This discourse has also been based on the claim that gays lack manhood to wield leadership in society.

The prevailing homophobic discourse owes its millenary establishment much to Christianity. Catholicism has since its foundation been commanded by men. Its dogma and teachings have privileged a given class of people: themselves and the governing dominant class. As seen before, in the English Renaissance, clergy men not only set the rules, but guaranteed the fulfilment of them, and also have been declaring ever since an ideology of suffering by stimulating individualism in society (Dollimore 1993, 628). What Dollimore is saying is that in Wilde's conception, Catholicism and Protestantism have been preaching the achievement of virtue and wisdom through suffering. For Dollimore, this discourse has been increasing social competition and a sort of individualism for a very long time, so that most of the individuals in a certain society have not had equal social rights (628).

Goldman defines *queer* as "a complex term which itself allows for many, sometimes contradictory, interpretations"(apud Berutti 1997). If we consider feminism, gay and lesbian studies, we are talking about *queer studies*, Berutti explains (2). According to Berutti, the word queer is a choice which clearly defends gays and lesbians against homophobia (2). She argues that the use of a term such as queer exposes the fact that same-sex people have been accused of being odd, different and abnormal since the nineteenth century, then the use of queer in academic circles defines "a theory that challenges heterosexist paradigms"(Berutti 2, 3). She says that the word queer "would, therefore, work as an umbrella term under which different minorities could be studied and discussed"(3-4).

But Berutti warns against the usual error the term queer may lead some people to. She says that it does not relate only to sexuality (5). Berutti makes that fact clear as she

mentions Goldman (169), who explains that the term queer aims at problematising aspects of identity such as race, gender, ethnicity and class (4).

For Rubin (apud Abelove 1996) "sexuality in Western societies has been structured within an extremely punitive social framework, and has been subjected to very formal and informal controls"(10). Such punitive social framework manifests itself in the many anti-gay social behaviours both in the United Kingdom and in the North American English speaking countries. Rubin cites many examples of that anti-gay social behaviour since the beginning of the century. Her examples help us to understand the political and social activism against homosexuals in the United States in the twentieth century. Rubin argues that the sexual politics adopted by federal and/or state laws expose the diverse social movements such as chases against homosexuals which led them to flee their homes to go to California in the 1950s. She also points out that the focus of many organisations of sexuality was, among other points such as prostitution, specifically around the image of the 'homosexual menace' as the 'sex offender' (Rubin 5). Ruin also states that, like child molesters, communists and rapists, homosexuals were considered 'deviants' and in some US States they were pursued after the World War II just as the so-called "witches" were in the late seventeenth century (5). As Rubin well states, "the realm of sexuality... has its own internal politics, inequities, and modes of oppression"(4). In the seventies, in some US States and in Canada, "police activity against gay communities has increased exponentially" with many arrests and depredations of gay bars and saunas (Rubin 6). According to Dellamora the North American East Coast gay activism began to resist discrimination in more overt and explicitly political fashion that formed an economic, political high mass cultural issues before Stonewall, the famous incident in 1969 at a New York bar.

Provided this recent history of discrimination and homophobia, I agree with Rubin as she says that "a radical theory of sex must identify, describe, explain, and denounce erotic injustice and sexual oppression"(9). My analysis of Derek Jarman's film *Edward II* in Chapter II will consider Jarman's radical reading of Marlowe's play in order to establish his own aesthetics, through which he could transgress the homophobic heterosexual filmic stereotypes. I shall argue that the traditional film narrative is subverted by Jarman in his version of *Edward II* as a result of aesthetic choices which help the film-maker to create a Queer background which inevitably conveys the gay and lesbian strife for equal civil rights. Thus, Jarman reinforces his political activism through a queer aesthetics that emerges not only from mannerisms which are characteristic of traditional films approaching gay themes but also of the life style and the perspective of gays and lesbians within a predominant heterosexual homophobe society. Ultimately, I will argue that Jarman's *Edward II* served himself and homosexuals in general the purpose of claiming their civil rights to the world. Derek Jarman's film *Edward II* seems to be the point of convergence between Marlowe's *Edward II* and the gays' and lesbians' activism for equal civil human rights in society today.

Chapter I

Homosexuality in the pretexts and in the screenplay

The Historical King Edward II

Late in the Medieval Age, Edward II, byname Edward of Caernarvon (b. April 25, 1284, Caernavonshire, Wales - d. September 1327, Berkeley, Gloucestershire, Eng.) was king of England from 1307 to 1327. He was the fourth son of King Edward I, ascending the throne upon his father's death. He was immediately concerned with his father's opponents. The barons hated him for his granting the earldom of Cornwall to his favourite Piers Gaveston. In 1311, a c21-member baronial committee drafted a document, called the Ordinances, in which Gaveston should be banned and the king's powers over finances and appointments were restricted (Edward 375). King Edward II was pursued and killed for his homosexuality. He was said to be a friendly subject toward people at those times (Rowse 4), but this aspect of his personality did not attract the sympathy of his peers. Edward suffered the imposition of his royal role. According to Rowse (1977), Edward II had no inclinations to kingship; his tastes were demotic, which "might be approved today – not so in the hierarchical Middle Ages" (4). His tastes, in other words, were distinctly lower class: he liked hedging and ditching, building and trenching, sports, racing and hunting, gaming and dicing (Rowse 4). Rowse also says that "he enjoyed the gay and unrepressed company of jolly workmen, grooms, sailors, rowing men"(4). His reign was crowned by frequent attacks from his peers, nobles who did not accept his way of governing.

Rowse explains that Edward, in a sense, forgot the demands of his *body politics[1]* and preferred, instead, to privilege his minion, Piers of Gaveston (4). This was a French young man who was brought up with Edward and became his great lover. Rowse also mentions that Gaveston "was a recognisable type of playboy: there was no harm in him, he had no ambition for power"(4). The crisis established due to the king's sexual behaviour and relationship with Gaveston provoked the nobles, because the former was a plebeian. Sinfield (1994) argues that monarchs were allowed to have their minion[s], provided the latter were nobles, too, i.e., of the same social class. But Gaveston was a plebeian, and in this point Bredbeck (1991) reinforces this idea of prohibition to class-cross relation. Gaveston's rise could endanger the nobles properties by threatening the established order. It would separate the body politic to the temporal one, destabilising the order (Bredbeck 63). As such, he had no rights to participate in politics. Nevertheless, king Edward II did not account for the opposition of his peers, caring only for his lover's desires.

That was Edward's error. The nobles and clerics owned many lands and financial power on which the king depended to preserve the throne. Edward, according to Sterling (1996), refused to allow the barons to acquire wealth and titles because he did not comprehend that his prosperity, especially in an era before the centralised monarchy, depended upon theirs (102). But besides the privileges received from the king, Gaveston had a provoking attitude towards the nobles. He was said to make "fun of all-too-serious, uncoath barons, scuttling in mail, like lobster, across the face of the land" (Rowse 2). His presumption added by his many gifts, even the title of Earl of Cornwall given by the king, led the nobility and clergymen to despise and hate him. Sterling explains this idea by saying that "the jealous peers blame[d] the sycophants for acquiring undeserved authority and their king for providing it"(102). According to Bredbeck (1991), Gaveston represented

a danger to the dominant class, because Gaveston's presence in the noble milieu subverted "the standard dominance of the atemporal body politic" (54).

Sterling helps us understand the reasons which led the nobles and clerics to destroy Gaveston as the latter's success demystified the ideology of noble blood (102). That ideology perpetuated the maintenance of royal lineage which Gaveston's did not have from his plebeian birth (Sterling 103). The nobles and clerics, feeling scorned and confined to a second plan by their king, conspired to depose the king through a fierce persecution against both Edward II and Gaveston. After having exiled Gaveston in France and Ireland, Queen Isabella, a French princess espoused by Edward, was deferred and despised by her husband. Hurt and angered, she, the nobles and the clerics allowed Gaveston to return to England so that in the Court he could be 'accidentally' murdered. Finally realising his fault of not having wielded his royal power hard enough to stop his peers' advance, king Edward II tried to keep Gaveston alive and rid of persecutions by marrying him to a princess, but still, it was too late. Gaveston was pursued and beheaded under the command of the nobles. After his death, the king continued alive for about a decade. Edward's sexual desire for men did not change with his peers opposition and the execution of Gaveston. The king continued to privilege two new minions, the Despensers. Again, the king and his minions were pursued and, after being imprisoned, were executed. Edward II died in 1327, being executed and leaving his throne to his son Edward, who became Edward III.

Rowse (1977) describes Edward III's reign. The king was still young to govern as an adult, did not approve of his father's executors and ordained the nobles' and clerics' commander, Mortimer, to be executed too. His mother, Isabella, was confined in a Catholic convent where she finally died. Edward III was not an exception in his time, i.e., he also had his minions, but it is known that, contrary to his father, he governed with an iron hand.

He wielded his body politics (5). Through Edward III's positioning before his peers who killed his father and his style to govern, I verify a reinforcement of the political discourse against homosexuality being related to a man like Edward II (Edward 376). His incapacity to accomplish his royal duties and to care for his body politics revealed in him a weak person and an easy prey to those who wanted to usurp his power (Peres Homophobia 105).

Sterling supports the idea that Edward's fall was not basically caused by his marital union with Isabella and his homosexual bond with Gaveston. Rather, "his adulterous affairs cause[d] him to neglect his kingly responsibilities and the prosperity of his nation" (111). According to Sterling, if Edward had had an extramarital relationship with a woman, "his obsessive love and loyalty would have still caused him to shirk his monarchical duties and his wife, consequently destroying his reign, marriage, and life. The only difference", Sterling adds, "would have been in the manner in which his murderers killed him" (111).

The Literary Character

Christopher Marlowe's play *Edward II,* written late in the sixteenth century (probably 1591), exposes power relations in the English Throne. Apparently, Marlowe subverted the prevailing discourse against homosexuality in those times. Ribner (1963) describes his life and one of his occupation was in the service of the Queen Elizabeth I's Privy Council (14). According to Ribner, Marlowe got an M.A degree in 1587 at the Corpus Christi College (14). But Ribner also elicits the various problems Marlowe had with Justice in his life (15). This information helps to deduce his awareness of the illegality of homosexual relations since Henry VIII's reign. Bray mentions the unlawful aspect of homosexuality in the first half of the sixteenth century on (14). So, Marlowe's own

character seems to have been that of a transgressive individual, and whether he was a homosexual or not, his approach on homosexuality in *Edward II* shows his counter-arguments to the illegality of homosexual relations.

Marlowe's central issue is power relations inside the nobility of England both in the beginning of the fourteenth century and at the end of the sixteenth. He appropriated King Edward II's as an allegory to historical events. The counter-argument exposed in *Edward II* against homophobia served Marlowe to show how the nobles acted when obtaining the royal power was their main goal. We can see a conspiracy conducted by the nobles to usurp King Edward II's position. In order to achieve their goal, alike in History, Marlowe shows us that both the nobles and the clerics used a political discourse against the king's homosexual relationship with Gaveston so that the king could be deposed.

According to Alvarez (1997), "Marlowe made some alterations in the historical events and characterisation as he appropriated History in order to attain his dramatic purposes" (2). King Edward II remained in the throne of England for twenty years. She also mentions that those changes generated a theatrical effect, "so as to build up tension" (2), revealing dramaturgical choices (2). Clemen writes that Marlowe's pace whose action is immediate and all the events are the result of the characters' actions and designs as a fundamental factor distinguishing his plays from other dramatists of his time (1971, 128). From Alvarez's point of view, Marlowe's play presents ambiguous main characters. His Edward II descends from pride to misery, and Gaveston presents a contradictory nature (2).

Alvarez's explanation on Gaveston's nature does not satisfy my reading of Marlowe's play. To me, her questioning Gaveston's sincerity does not seem to be relevant because the fictional Gaveston acted as a plebeian favoured by a king. Essentialist critics

believe that Gaveston's attitudes reveal an identification between writer and character (15). In MacCabe's analysis, for example, Marlowe identifies himself with Gaveston (197). He explains that Marlowe "also portrays Gaveston as someone who knows how convenient it is to be by the king's side" (197). But in my view, to know how convenient is to be by the king's side does not make Gaveston a contradictory character. His personality is prudent, rather. This can be verified as he advises the king to get rid of Mortimer by imprisoning the latter (Act II, ii, 232) which the king does not do. MacCabe's view helps the reader perceive the political intention that seemed to be present in Marlowe's mind.

I agree with Alvarez regarding the comparisons between Gaveston and Edward, and would add the fact that Edward's passion worked within him as a drive which led him to destruction. Rather than proud, Edward II was an instinctive man, especially in the sense of not being able to realise what his kingship represented at his time. Alvarez's dichotomic view of Marlowe's characters in this play follows with Mortimer's change of loyalty (3). Alvarez, however, does not take into account the Machiavellian attitudes, which enrich Mortimer. Ribner mentions that Mortimer plays a real Machiavellian character, because he denies his temporal body to achieve power, which the king was not able to do (36).

At any rate, Marlowe describes king Edward II's tragedy through insertions of characters who are not historically contemporary to this monarch. Alvarez (1997, 2) elicits what Ribner (1963, 2) also notes, as the plot is developed, that not only non contemporary characters are added, but also facts that increase tension. Again, I see in Marlowe's style a sort of joining in one play elements which found his political positioning; i.e., Marlowe is evoking monarchs' affairs towards power and how and what they were capable to do as relating with their nobles to maintain power in their hands or to avoid usurpation.

In his film, Jarman manages to merge both the historical and the fictional dimensions by drawing on the fourteenth-century story of the English King and using Marlowe's sixteenth-century theatrical version, which presents, as mentioned above, extensive transformation of its sources. The appropriation of the political plot developed by Marlowe simultaneously focuses the theme of homophobia and accentuates the prejudice against homosexuals at that time. The result is a mirroring of the dramatic condition of homosexuals not only in Edward II's and Marlowe's times, but also in the late 1990s, when many gay and lesbian political activist groups have been demanding their civil rights, particularly in the United Kingdom.

Jarman, an artist who lived his last years while the Conservative party was dominant in England, claims to "repeal anti-gay laws , particularly Section 28" (1992, 3), because gay love "can't keep its big mouth shut" (4).

Like Marlowe, who seemingly used Art as a useful means to create and counter-attack social and political laws in the English Renaissance, Jarman elicits that "Marlowe outs the past" (1992, 3) events related to King Edward II in the beginning of the fourteenth century. In the same way, Jarman proposes an outing of the present events concerning gays' civil rights in the 1980s and 1990s (3).

Queer Edward II

In his book *Queer Edward II*, Jarman supplies the script of the film and writes a journal of the shots, exposing the queer aspect of the film and how he uses heterophobia. From his perspective, he creates a screenplay that features a mixture of two different stances: the first is from the homophobic heterosexuals who plan to usurp the king's power.

The other stance is that of queer people and their strife to overcome homophobia and to pursue equal civil rights. Nevertheless, Jarman highlights the heterophobic attitude that the queer people use to fight for their rights. The structure of the screenplay resembles a collage by Bordwell (Rimmon-Kenon 1983) who exemplifies the use of it (317). He says that this concept, although never defined with care, has some historical justification identifying with Godard's disruption of cinematic unity including scenes from several films in his narratives (317). Instead of using scenes from other films, Jarman's "collage" juxtaposes twentieth century cultural events to a story of the fourteenth century and a playtext of the sixteenth century. Jarman seems to disrupt the traditional view of homosexuality in cinema and history by uniting those elements.

Since Isabella plays an influent role over her son and the nobles, Jarman poses her with Mortimer in a relevant scene. Her cross-bow shooting scene supplies a doubtless representation of her ability to achieve her goals through homophobia and make her husband fail. Jarman changes the scene of Marlowe in Act I, scene iv, lines 187-303. In Marlowe, Isabella talks to Mortimer Junior, Mortimer Senior, Lancaster, Pembroke and Warwick. The nobles and clerics want to bring Gaveston back to kill him. In Jarman, we see Isabella and Mortimer planning that. As in the whole film, in this scene, Isabella is very well dressed. She also wears sunglasses. She and her lover conspire homophobically against the king and the latter's lover. The scene is remarkable and awkward, in the sense that it contains elements of different epochs, overlapping the times. Isabella's dress does not   ma y (a robot). The nobles and clerics are very constrained by that vision. The woman who was delicate and pitiful exposes her steadiness. The scene in which she meets Mortimer is strange as the scene before is considered. Jarman's view declares through these complex

anachronistic elements such as her dressing and a modern cross-bow how much of Isabella and Mortimer *is* at that encounter. In this scene, the view of Isabella and Mortimer, who can be seen apparently as individuals promoting the welfare of their people, falls off the position as such and denotes their true objectives in their society. They are conspiring against Gaveston and Edward. We can see their real greed for power. Homophobia openly appears in this scene.

At first, Mortimer's and Isabella's relationship may look ridiculous in the sense that they are apparently different in their intentions toward the king, but I do not see it ridiculous. I verify in the scene in which she is descending a tilted passage way somewhere in the castle and meets Mortimer. He asks her where she is going, and she reminds him of the king's *queer* behaviour. But Jarman changes her first sentence and adds two more to Marlowe's text:

> *Unto the forest, gentle Mortimer, to live in grief and baleful discontent, for now my lord, the king, regards me not, but dotes upon the love of Gaveston. He claps his cheeks and hangs about his neck, smiles in his face and whispers in his ears, and when I come, he frowns as he should say, 'Go whither thou wilt, seeing I have Gaveston'. (I, iv, 47-54).*

In Jarman:

> *Down to the country, gentle Mortimer, to live in grief and baleful discontent, for now my lord the King regards me not, but dotes upon the love of Gaveston. He claps his cheeks and hangs about his neck, smiles in his face and whispers in his ears, and when I come he frowns, as if to say, 'Go whither thou wilt seeing I have my Gaveston'. Is it not queer, that he is thus bewitched? (38)*

Later in the story, the viewer can realise their similarity. Here, the term *queer* means *unconventional* and alludes to its meaning towards gay affairs. Jarman plays with the word exposing its dubious meaning, however, highlighting the sense that the word has acquired from the 1980s on. From that decade on, the term is connected to gays and lesbians. The

homophobic aspect of the word *queer* also appears. If in Marlowe's text Edward's behaviour is not named *queer,* meaning a gay behaviour, but rather passionate, in Jarman's screenplay the word *queer* elucidates his homosexual behaviour. Isabella's calling Edward *queer* indicates her homophobic perspective.

In Marlowe's text, there are three poor men who want to serve Gaveston. The latter despises them just like he does the sailors. In the film, just some words remain from the playtext. Marlowe wrote:

> *...These are not men for me, I must have wanton poets, pleasant wits, musicians, that with touching of a string may draw the pliant king way I please* (I, i, 50-3)

Jarman includes some words:

> *There are hospitals for men like you. I have no war, and therefore sir, begon. These are not men for me; I must have wanton poets, pleasant wits, musicians that with touching of a string may draw the pliant King which way I please.* (10)

The words relating to war in Jarman's text are a sort of flashforeward, because soon Gaveston will be participating in a war to remain alive. Here, Jarman seemingly criticises the idea of homophobia that the armed forces use to refrain gays to serve them. The awkward insertion of cigarette, smoked by the sailors and Gaveston brings the scene to the 1990s.

Jarman's *Edward II* is queer because it contains a radical fictional approach to homosexuality and homophobia, rather than just presenting the homophobic view found in the pretexts. Jarman achieves it by emphasising the process of transformation in the system of social stratification of individuals, and exploring the instability of monarchy and power caused by rivalry between genders.

The choices of point of view are crucial in shaping the gender conflict. Friedman conceives eight sorts of narrator according to point of view (1955). One of the classifications done by Friedman partly fits Jarman's screenplay. Friedman says that one of the chief characters tells his own story in the first person, meaning that in this case the story is told from an internal focus (108). In other words, the story is told considering the characters' perceptions of the events around him/her as it is with Jarman's *Edward II.* On the other side, the information that the reader of the viewer has as the story is narrated can be given by a dramatic mode (Friedman 109). This means that the reader and/or the viewer, besides relying on verbal cues, is also informed by the characters' movements, gestures, emotions, etc. In Jarman's screenplay the apparently confusing embedding has two levels of linearity: that of Marlowe's play and that of 1990s gay political activism. The perplexing effect of the film seems to spring from the struggle between homosexuality and homophobia in the overall queer perspective of the narrative. Jarman's awareness of the traditional use of screen in 1950, 1960 and 1970s films dealing with homosexuality allows him to pursue an innovative stance. As in other of his films such as *Caravaggio* (1986), he not only juxtaposes different times of history in mise-en-scene, but creates a complex narrative that shall be examined more closely in the context of cinema history in the next chapter.

The relevant aspects of the use of Marlowe's words in Jarman's screenplay is on the one hand the ever present homophobia through language. Language as an instrument to disseminate ideology. And on the other hand the change that the latter gives to the text by delivering it to another character and cutting some phrases or inserting others. That can be exemplified in the scene in which Isabella listens to Edmund's speech at the massage room. The exact text from Edmund's mouth is in Marlowe's *Edward II* said by Mortimer Senior

as the latter talks to his Junior, referring to the kings sexuality. What Jarman seems to be revealing is his queer approach of the subject of homosexuality before homophobia. Isabella is silent the whole scene. Her voice appears rather through her inexpressive eyes starring at nowhere and her right hand breaking the pearl collar. And even, by the sound of those tiny shining expensive balls falling down on the floor. What satisfied Mortimer Junior in Marlowe's play does not satisfy Isabella; on the contrary, it increases her homophobia, anger and hatred against her husband and his lover. Isabella's notorious beauty crumbles down with those pearls, and gives place to another Isabella in the following scenes. Mortimer Senior's words (I, iv, 385-400) are shortened in wild Alcebiades. Then let his grace, whose youth is flexible, and promiseth as much as we can wish, freely enjoy that vain light headed Earl, for riper years will wean him from such toys. (84)

By putting this words in Edmund's mouth, Jarman seems to accentuate Edward's cruel reality, because his own brother is also homophobically waiting for the day to destroy the king. But Isabella is without an exit but fighting for the royal power. Jarman brings her recomposed up to the monarchs' bedroom. The pearls are together again. But Isabella is in pieces in her heart and she tries one more time to have him. She awakes her husband and promises him Gaveston's return. Jarman seems to offer an exit to Isabella, which does not work out because she is indeed pretending to be by her husband's side. Edward's emotional drive makes his words empty of meaning. It is so because his promise to love her becomes later a factor added to increase her decision to fight against Edward's frailty and Gaveston's presumption against the nobles and clerics. Edward cannot escape his real needs and neither can Isabella up to their meeting in their room. He promises her things he cannot fulfil.

Isabella will feel betrayed, mocked by her "loved" husband who will never love her. He says to her:

> *For thee fair Queen, if thou lovest Gaveston, I'll hang a golden tongue about thy neck, seeing thou hast pleaded with so good success... (82)*

But Isabella wants his love. He continues:

> *Once more receive my hand and let this be a second marriage twixt thyself and me. (82)*

In Marlowe's play, the royal couple are accompanied by some nobles and clerics in this scene (I, iv, 320-334). Jarman put them together in their bedroom, inside a totally white scene. Isabella and Edward are dressed in white, the sheets are white. She comes from Edmund's massage session. She seems to be hopeful. She feels quickened by his words, and he is desperately in her hands so that he says to her exactly what she wants to hear, but not what he feels indeed.

Although feelings are in the pretext, they are not forgot like in most of the traditional films which approached homosexuality (Jones 1996). But Isabella's feelings are confused. She seems to want Edward's love, but in fact she is just trying to obtain his honoured word to trap him. She does so not because she wants him back, but to weaken Edward by killing Gaveston. Is it not a demonstration of her homophobia as a strategy to destroy Edward, and incapability to deal with her own feelings? Her attitude is actually homophobic. If Edward is an incapable king because of his strong emotional drive, neither is Isabella because of her claimed emotional drive. She homophobically avenges herself and demands her part in power.

The information above gives us a background to understand my analysis of Derek Jarman's film *Edward II* in the next chapter. In Chapter II, my analysis will investigate

Jarman's reading of Marlowe's play in order to establish his own aesthetics, through which he could subvert the homophobic heterosexual stance which has existed for centuries. I shall argue that the traditional film narrative is subverted by Jarman in his version of Marlowe's play text. My working hypothesis is that through his particular narrative, Jarman is establishing not only his own aesthetics but also subverting the homophobic heterosexual order.

I will analyse Jarman's appropriation of *Edward II* and the aesthetics chosen by the film-maker towards a Queer style which inevitably conveys the gay and lesbian strife for equal civil rights. I will demonstrate that Jarman reinforces his political activism through queer aesthetics. This aesthetics emerges not only from mannerisms which are characteristic of traditional films approaching gay themes, but also the life style and the perspective of gays and lesbians within a predominant heterosexual homophobe society. Ultimately, I will argue that Jarman's *Edward II,* in spite of having served himself and the homosexuals in general the purpose of claiming their civil rights to the world presents contradictory features. Derek Jarman's film *Edward II* seems to be the point of intersection between Marlowe's *Edward II* and the gays' and lesbians' activism for equal civil human rights in society today.

[1] See, for example, *Fundamentos de Sociologia*, by Alfonso Trujillo Ferrari, Rio de Janeiro: MacGraw-Hill, 1983 (pp. 464-476).
[2] The screenplay was published under the title *Queer Edward II* (Worcester: The Trinity Press, 1992).

[1] **Body politics (or political body) refers to all royal responsibilities regarding State affairs.**

■■

Chapter II

Edward II – the film

The queer perspective is introduced by means of different filmic elements, such as genre, text, costumes, setting, photography and music. The narrative of this film becomes one of the central aspects of a queer motion. Together with those filmic elements, Jarman's choice of a different narrative seems to carry a meaning for queer interests other than films of the 1950s, '60s and '70s did. His film does not treat homosexuality as a marginal issue inside film genres such as thriller or suspense. In *Queer Edward II,* homosexuality is the main theme and homophobia becomes an issue to be put forth from a gay perspective.

Homosexuality in Traditional Cinema

The first movies that addressed homosexuality linked it to deviant individuals who were often insane and frustrated. Jones (1996) considers the sexual ideology of the Western culture drawing on Dyer's analysis on the book *The Matter of Images* (1993). According to Dyer, society and culture use structures such as the family and artefacts such as films to impose a particular view of what they consider correct sexual behaviour (Jones 263). For Dyer, the dominance of the heterosexuals' homophobia includes the heterosexual point of view in most mainstream Hollywood films in which gay characters were portrayed negatively in both appearance and behaviour. These were presented, for example, by the American film noir (Jones 264, 267). This vision appears to me what the American and British societies, centred in the family and the middle class values, exactly want to prevail

and much more after World War II. Film noir characterisation certainly provided a stereotype of gays as human beings living inside perpetually mysterious and obscure spheres. This pattern also implies social despise against homosexuals, who are depicted as psychologically decayed individuals. Homophobic heterosexual cinema seems to take a prejudiced stance, totally ignoring the formation of desire.

In his book *The Celluloid Closet – Homosexuality in the Movies,* Russo(1993) says that gays were simply invisible in the Hollywood films of the 1950s, while in the 1960s and 1970s films associated gays with marginality and violence (Jones 267). Jones explains through Dyer's words that cinema and its dominant groups create stereotypes that are not necessarily negative but limiting (271). He cites the film *Victim* by Basil Dearden (UK, 1961) to exemplify this sort of image. The protagonist in that film is considered abnormal or deviant in some way (he is a homosexual), promoting an attitude of pity for homosexuals as pathetic outsiders (273).

Jarman seems to reject that sort of stereotypical portrayal that the traditional cinema strongly does of homosexuals in his *Edward II* by showing how much of the individual *is* or *is not* in the received image. He counter attacks that stereotypical image and actually offers a statement: "Heterosexuals have fucked up the screen so completely that there's hardly room for us to kiss there " (1, 1992). When he mentions *us,* he is referring to the homosexual minority to which he belonged. He himself states in his book that he violated Marlowe's text, rather than appropriated it. His *Edward II* aims at breaking down the prevailing image that homosexuals used to have in the traditional cinema. Thus, Jarman attempts to deal with political dimensions of homosexuality: in his screenplay, as King Edward II has to face his peers' opposition against his homosexual relationship with

Gaveston. For Jones, Jarman makes the audience aware of this dimension, as the latter shows the king as weak and vacillating with his lover, Gaveston, scheming and slimy (285).

Whereas he does not suggest equality of expressions such as the sexual orientation, Jarman seems to search for equality of civil rights as the king and his accomplices fight against their opponents in order to establish their sexual orientation. At this point, we can notice his political activism. The image that he supplies in *Edward II* is now from a gay's perspective, since he counted himself as a gay. Chedgzoy cites Jarman's words to support that as he says that works of art bring him little pleasure unless they are based on their creator's life (182). Jarman's homosexual gaze from inside the British homophobic society is constantly directing the camera while the film narrative unfolds.

Narrative, Narration

Branigan (1945) addresses the difference between narrative and narration. He explains that the author of a narrative cannot be mistaken for the narrator of that narrative; the one who speaks (in the narrative) is not the one who writes (in real life) and the one who writes is not the one who is (40). In simpler words, Branigan puts that the author is the subject who presents the text, while the narrator is the story teller (1). Thus, narrative would be the story itself and narration would be everything that a character sees from his/her point of view. Branigan says that narration is not the story itself, the narrative, but the knowing of the story (2): the character's perceptions (the narrator's) such as listening, telling, displaying describe the object seen by him/her (2). Branigan highlights the linguistic and logical relationship posed by the screenplay in order to create its intelligibility (3).

Jarman's film narration transcends what Friedman calls an internal focus alone, and subverts the traditional linear narrative. That is, Jarman uses not only the external focus, but the internal and the camera as the narrator. When an author uses the camera, Friedman says that s/he aims at transmitting without apparent selections or arrangement of events (109). But Jarman's use of camera as the extradiagetic narrator seems to select and arrange the events to narrate his film. Stam et al. (1997) say that when a character starts to narrate his or her story, and before long, another character within the frame of the first story begins telling the story, and so on, leading to a sense of infinite regress, this embedded narration is called metadiegetic (98). In *Edward II,* instead of another character telling his/her embedded story, the camera narrates the events. Edward II is the voice-over narrator echoing the protagonist's own story as a representation of memory before his death. Stam et al. also say that the voice-over of the character-narrator "authorises" the images (99). Jarman's Edward II begins telling his own story as the viewer sees him sort of awakening alone in his prison and remembering his words to Gaveston:

> *My father is deceased. Come, Gaveston.*

These are Gaveston's first words in Marlowe's play (Act I, i, 1).

Edward's last words are the result of another rearrangement but still preserve his role as a character-narrator in Jarman's film, while in Marlowe's play Edward's words are not the last ones; they appear in Act V (with six scenes), scene i, while Edward is speaking to the Bishop:

> *Now sweet god of heaven, make me despise this transitory pomp and sit for aye enthronized in heaven. Come, death, and with thy fingers close my eyes, of if I live, let me forget myself* (V, i, 107-111).

Jarman changes the first line and replaces it, but he maintains the next words at the end:

> *But what are Kings when regiment is gone, but perfect shadows in a sunshine day? I know not, but of this I am assured, that deaths end all, and I can die but once. Come death, and with thy fingers close my eyes, or if I live let me forget myself.* (168)

The difference of text and the maintenance of the last words may denote two aspects. In Marlowe, Edward is before the Bishop and claims for God's pity by eliciting his view of a transitory power on Earth. In Jarman, Edward is already dead, and his words are addressed to his 'soldiers' killed in the battlefield and to those who still remain alive. But in both texts, Edward calls death to help him be free from that suffering. This beyond death voice-over sounds weird, as something misplaced, taking into account that he is already dead. What Jarman seems to indicate in the last scene is a memory of the dead king's words, suggesting an echo of Edward's life. The remaining activists are embraced in a shadowed room, with their flags and posters down. Their silence and sadness denote a reverence delivered as an *in memoriam* act, as they listen. Edward's voice emerges as that of a spectrum for them.

The use of representation of memory is current in the film and resembles what Branigan calls "mental process of narration" (85, 1945). According to him, this process depends mainly on the occurrence of undefined temporal markers and the existence of a character's mental condition as the unity, or coherence, of the representation (85). He adds that the logic which links the character to the framing of the image may be either directly spatial (the camera assumes the character's spatial perspective), or more indirect and rhetorical (85). This creates an idea of memories of a past time until the moment Edward is in prison waiting for the execution, so suggesting his view of the events. Branigan explains

that "the mental process sequence thus encompasses a range of temporal relations with respect to character" (85). This view from a gay character's perspective delineates, frames the whole screenplay, eliciting his view of the homophobic persecution. In addition, there are scenes which are not Edward's memories, since he would not know what was going on. For example, the scenes in which the nobles and clerics meet to ban Gaveston, and others in which Isabella and Mortimer talk about their homophobic plan.

This framing and use of camera as the narrator links the units of representation into a whole generates a continuity, where the units, not the whole, form a discontinuity, which takes place (Branigan 57). These shifts are usually accentuated by the choice of setting and lighting.

Setting and Lighting

The setting of the film is delineated in these initial scenes. The credits are presented on a black screen which resembles the dark walls in which the story happens. The next scene locates Gaveston walking towards his bed where Spencer dresses up and two naked sailors still relate sexually and show a hot kiss. The insertion of those two sailors and Spencer inside a sunlit bedroom with nothing else but a bed is Jarman's conception of Gaveston's life in exile in France. These two initial scenes show a contrast of lighting and setting choices. As for lighting, the shadowed room, where Edward first appears, indicates the last moments before his execution and the proximity of death.

Jarman's use of basic furniture is notable. There is a bed in the scene above with Gaveston and Spencer with the sailors and nothing else but the thick walls and light; the

throne room is furnished only with the royal seat with light on it; Edward's and Isabella's dark room with just their marital bed; the dark burial chamber containing only the King Edward I's tomb surrounded by the earls and soldiers ; the clear room used to sign the form of Gaveston's exile with a board-room table and chairs; Edward sitting by his desk in his dark office with the Bishop; the big stones where Gaveston cries out loud at night in his exile; Isabella's soliloquy in an empty room with some light; Edmund's clear massage room with just one bed; the dark dungeon where Edward waits his execution with Lightborn and his blazing firelight and a furnace; the clear dining-room where Isabella and her son and Mortimer dine with just one table, etc. All are examples of the continuous characteristic setting with much or little light   denoting the characters' shifting mood and/or the situation they are going through. Little or much light especially denotes the moments of adverse feelings and situations like pleasure and pain, secret and open, joy and sadness, hope and despair, etc. The near absence of furniture seems to create and/or denote an atmosphere of sameness and emptiness, as the world where they all, heterosexuals and homosexuals, live in.

The dark setting where Edward and Gaveston frequently appear is considered by Jarman himself as "the dungeon of our own" (Chedgzoy 184). I see that this contrast accentuates the complexity of the issues of homosexuality and homophobia. The darkness can be understood as something reflecting the mental disorientation, concerning sexual orientations, that social values have acquired at the end of the 1990s. The absence of light in most of the scenes contrasts with the presence of thick walls within which all those characters interrelate. The idea of continuity that homophobia has had in History is presented by that setting, whereas the idea of discontinuity is supplied by the narration.

The discontinuity and continuity of the narration with Edward going in and out of the dungeon come together to form a whole comprehension of the events. Thus, the object represented, the homophobic persecution, is framed alternatively.

This alternation of narration creates a sensation of instability which can be associated with the object represented (homophobia) as shown on the one hand from the opponents' (the nobles and clerics) perspective, and on the other hand from the persecuted team (the king and his accomplices). In this format, homophobia is seen from two opposite angles which the beginning and the end of the film illustrate.

The first scene before the credits shows Edward bearded and lying like an abandoned sidewalk beggar. Edward sits up and finds his message-letter to Gaveston. The words he sent to Gaveston are voiced-off in Edward's own voice, and the scene is cut to present the credits. The light is rare and Edward can hardly be seen and recognised. It is as though Edward's person was vanishing away, differing from the scene in which he and Gaveston are in pyjamas and dance their last dance before the latter's exile. In this scene, there is a light focussed on them creating an image as if they were the only ones to be watched. They are sad but together. Their existence seems to be highlighted by the light right on them.

Genre

Jarman's film *Edward II* suggests more than a variety of genres put together in a production. The contrasts with the first scene where the viewer can hardly see Edward in his dungeon due to the slight light resembling the moon reflecting on the water of a pool together with the scene in Gaveston's sunlit room in his exile show Jarman's mixture of genres. Bordwell and Thompson (1996) say that "sombre lighting is standard in the horror film and the thriller"(53). So, using this sombre atmosphere, Jarman seems to elicit the horror of homophobia that Edward and his accomplices are about to live, and the message to grasp inside the embedding that the narration and the narrative of the story are to present. I can also see the thrilling aspect of the film as the plot is developed.

Bordwell and Thompson also say that filmmakers may seek to surprise or shock viewers by breaking their expectation that a certain convention will be followed by devising something radically different (54). Jarman does that by mixing those different film genres mentioned by Bordwell and Thompson and merging them inside a new type of narration as seen before.

Yet Jarman's queer genre seems to thrive on stark contrasts. He deals with contrast right in the photography of the first scenes and, to a certain extent in the credits too. This use of contrast seems to indicate Jarman's line throughout the film to represent homophobia. In the first scene, Edward is seen in close-up. The camera catches him in a panel through which his desolate state can be seen. He is hungry and thirsty and alone waiting for his execution, although his executioner, Lightborn, is not shown yet. Edward impersonates the character or the individual suffering the consequences of homophobia.

Now, the camera shows Gaveston walking towards the bed where the others are. We can see his whole body dressed in a long white gown. He is joyful for having received his lover's message, but dissatisfied for the sailors' condition as he realises his possibilities close to the king.

This scene of Gaveston with those three men does not appear in Marlowe's text. But Jarman seems to have a meaning in using this alternation process. They appear eliciting light-darkness, loneliness-companionship, pain-pleasure, death-life, hopelessness-hopefulness. I see through this polarity another aspect of homophobia and its absence. On the one hand, Edward's and Gaveston's joyful and sad moments are also alternated by the camera closes, in which we can see their closeness and intimacy. Those joyful moments are represented by light, companionship, pleasure, life and hopefulness. On the other hand, the awe brought by homophobia is represented by darkness, loneliness, pain, death and hopelessness. But all those moments after Edward's awakening in his lonely moment just before his death are but memories. After his death, the narration changes to the camera depiction of events consequently. The scene has little light. The camera travels from the right to the left, showing Edward's accomplices standing in pairs and silent. Jarman seems to indicate that through the survivors the civil activism for gays' civil rights must continue.

In the next scene after Gaveston's conversation with Spencer and the sailors, Queen Isabella appears in bed with her husband. She is kissing him but she is unable to seduce her husband. She falls effortlessly on his side in bed where they cannot relate sexually. He gets up and beats his front head against the wall. His attitude suggests two interpretations to me. First, it can mean dissatisfaction for having to do what he is not fond of. This leads me to Edward's body politics which he does not know how to wield. He cannot exert the role

of a woman's husband. He loves a man. Another meaning can represent his frustration for not being able to satisfy his wife. In both cases, Edward does not feel able to exert his part as a husband (and as a king). But as the plot develops, Edward's presumed bisexuality is rejected in favour of homosexual love. The historical Edward II, nevertheless, had four children with his wife. Indeed, Jarman chooses the first hypothesis. This can be seen when Gaveston is back, and the king is close to the throne seat. Edward's satisfaction resides exactly in his minion's eyes. The scene contains little light, but Edward's garments are golden, highlighting his monarchic power. Edward's words are strong:

...knowest thou who I am? Thy friend, thy self, another Gaveston. (18)

Jarman uses the same words that Marlowe used in his text in Act I, scene i. Edward sees himself united with Gaveston being both of them but one individual.

Through these two scenes, the political polarity reinforces the queer genre. The queen forms opposite poles with Gaveston. Edward does not have to choose. He has already let everyone know that Gaveston is his joy. Edward and Gaveston are one, and not the queen and Edward. Here homosexuality establishes itself as a choice above heterosexuality. Isabella would be the heterosexual possibility and Gaveston the homosexual one. Bisexuality is not an issue. Heterosexuality is but a social imposition upon Edward, the king, and not upon Edward, the man, whose temporal body makes up his mind. Jarman's direction for Edward to beat his own forehead implies the desire of getting rid of that external imposition. The blood shed demonstrates his death to that social imputation.

Gender and Power

As gender and power relations are considered, Edward's choice had a price. From Jarman's view, the deferred queen becomes the main responsible for the tyranny against her husband and his lover. In Marlowe's text, Mortimer Junior meets her sad and hopeless in Act I, scene ii. In Jarman, she is standing close to her son, prince Edward. The nobles and clerics see her crying and question her sadness from far. Her son is playing with an electronic robot. The boy wears a feminine hat. Isabella is in a beautiful dress with her hair tied. Although she is sad, she is gorgeously dressed just like throughout the film. The music is sad and her eyes are far suggesting her suffering for being deferred by her husband. The prince, a very young boy, does not seem to understand what is happening around him. In Marlowe's text, she is sort of inserted in the nobles' and clerics' project not much for her own principles, but for her having no other way out. Jarman's Isabella is the mentor of the conspiracy, maintaining Marlowe's development of the story. She joins the nobles and clerics to mercilessly destroy the king and Gaveston. Her attitude exposes her homophobic view on those who do not follow the prevailing social order, that is, heterosexuality.

In this sense, Jarman creates a misogynous version. He imputes to Isabella the awful role that Marlowe did not mandate in stage directions. But I do not see Jarman's Isabella as an anti heterosexual women. His queen turns from a 'miserable' (as she herself tells Mortimer at their meeting by night) and abandoned person into a woman who is pitiless against homosexuals. This transformation can be exemplified in the scene in which she is being fitted for a new dress. She stands statue-like with her arms lifted. She is in a white strapless dress contrasting with her maids in black. Edward enters dressing a black pair of trousers

and a white shirt. He comes to ban her from his bed and life until Gaveston is repealed. The young prince spies his parents from far. He seems to be scared before that scene between them. Edward sends the women out and tells her to stay away from him if she does not bring Gaveston back. He grabs her neck and bows her up to his chest. His aggressiveness shows her his determination. He calls her a whore and makes her know that he is aware of her relationship with Mortimer. But until then, the narration does not confirm his words concerning her affair with Mortimer. Edward leaves her alone in the shadowed room broken by some rays of light. Her soliloquy declares her perception of her own reality: Edward will never love her.

   In Marlowe's text, Gaveston appears in this scene, but not the servants. The king and his lover have an argument with her concerning her honour stained by a presumed affair between her and Mortimer. Jarman's choice for Gaveston's absence and the little prince Edward's presence suggests that the homophobic persecution is headed by Isabella and that the main object of that chase is Edward. Moreover, the prince's presence makes the event more significant for the meaning and genre of the film. The child becomes not one of his parents, but a weird mixture of them by assimilating his mother's cruelty and his father's sexual orientation. In both Jarman's film and Marlowe's text, she says:

> *O miserable and distressed queen! Would, when I left sweet France and was embarked, that the charming Circes, walking on the waves, had changed my shape, or at the marriage day the cup of Hymen had been full of poison, or with those arms that twined about my neck I had been stiffled, and not lived to see the king my lord thus to abandon me. Like frantic Juno will I fill the earth, with ghastly murmur of my sighs and cries, for never doted Jove on Ganymede so much as he on cursed Gaveston. But that will more exasperate his wrath; I must entreat him, I must speak him fair, and be a means to call home Gaveston. And yet he'll ever dote on Gaveston, and so am I for ever miserable* (I, iv, 170-186).

Isabella describes well *what* she is from that moment on. Her awareness of her own situation leads her to act so that she cannot be harmed even further. Edward's harsh words exposed his knowing of her relationship with Mortimer. Rumours or the truth, Edward is very sure that Gaveston's exile was caused by her intervention and influence. Up to that scene in which husband and wife face each other, Edward's suspicions against her seem unfair. Jarman seems to be demonstrating through Edward the anger which springs from a man's wounded heart. The viewer may be misled to a pitiful reaction towards Isabella.

But in the film what the character of Isabella becomes, as the homophobic persecution against the king and his lover begins, indicates a change in her character. This change happens because she is as greedy for power as the nobles and clerics rather than because she is a woman. And she makes her personality transparent at her decision to ally to Mortimer as his queen. Immersed in that context, her motherhood can be questioned. While she involves herself in a war against her queer husband, her son gradually undergoes a remarkable semiotic transformation.

Isabella is seen as a docile and fragile creature in Marlowe's play, but he shows us a woman who subtly usurps her husband's power. She plays an outstanding part in Jarman's film. It would be difficult to understand Jarman's language without comprehending Isabella as a character portraying a 1990s woman. Although the theme of Jarman's film deals fundamentally with gay issues, the portrayal of the 1990s in terms of treating gay would become awkward without taking into account women's part in society. Women's ascension and their decision to act over their lives is determining in the 1990s. In Isabella, Jarman seems to show exactly what he perceived in Mrs Thatcher on the command of the British Government. Isabella's holding the stab mirrors Thatcher's iron

hand in her conservative way of governing. Jarman's recurrence towards a portrayal of Mrs Thatcher creates in the context of the plot a block against Gaveston's ascension. That is to say, Thatcher is blocking homosexuals and homosexuality at a high cost, their own lives. Chedgzoy calls the attention to Thatcherism, which sought to prevent the use of financial resources to "promote homosexuality" through a law called Section 28 – a 1988 Local Government Act (187); Isabella's acts demonstrate her discourse for the maintenance of the prevailing family-centred system.

The scene of Edward and Gaveston meeting for the last time gives the viewer an idea of a revolution just started. Edward's worries are nothing before the strong and bloody army that Mortimer commands. The powerful class does not pity its opponents. Gaveston is then found by the Army and strangled. The relevant aspect of these battle scenes are the number of individuals. On the one hand, Mortimer's Army is numberless. They mercilessly arrest and kill gays just like in a dictatorship governmental system. On the other hand, we see a number of gays who cannot avoid death due to their small number. The homosexuals' resistance and life rendering is a representation for the homosexuals' ideal.

Jarman demonstrates Isabella's desire for power as she speaks to her people on a television and radio broadcast. Her speech evokes her intolerance towards those who want to break the established system and power structures. She insists in and assists the maintenance of a system of values in which only white heterosexual men can achieve power. To that system, the king's strife is perverse, offensive, anti conventional. Therefore, as the queen, she deliberately counter attacks the subversive group commanded by her husband. It is clear that Jarman is also expressing the break of family patterns. Husband and

wife fight against each other. The former for his queer values inside a society that the latter insists to support. Isabella's words are Jarman's creation:

> *Misgoverned Kings are cause of all this wrack. And Edward thou are one among them all, whose looseness hath betrayed the land to spoil. And made the channels overflow with blood of thine own people. And for the open wrongs and injuries Edward hath done to us, his Queen, and land, we come in arms to wreck it all with swords; that England's queen in peace may repossess her dignities and honours; and remove these flatterers from the King. That havocks England's wealth and treasury. (124)*

Here, a heterosexual woman fights against a homosexual man. This shift is weird, unexpected for political reasons. Jarman's *Isabella* is homophobic because she does not support Edward's decision; she does not allow him his own choices for his sexual orientation. But she is a member of a tyrant homophobe heterosexual team. This attitude of Isabella declares her interest for power behind her reclaiming Edward's love. Indeed, Jarman is showing that Isabella was always interested in power marrying Edward. Now, Marlowe's *Isabella* is sort of sheltered by the nobles and clerics, especially by Mortimer's "love".

But Jarman shows a scene in which Edward and Spencer are joyfully washing off the blood on their skins after fighting their opponents. Their joy just provokes Edward's brother, Edmund. The latter fearlessly joins Isabella and Mortimer. At this point, Jarman shows Isabella's Machiavellian heart. She manages the situation. Her vampire-like way of killing Edmund denotes a cruel person. Her biting Edmund's neck to death declares her awareness before the facts. She knew rather than her child son how dangerous any Plantagenet, Edward II's dynasty, is for her goals. The way Isabella kills Edmund is evidently horrible. Her attitude does not only offend Mortimer's and Prince Edward's eyes, as well as the viewer who can clearly see her inner character.

This scene is Jarman's. He increases the tension little by little. When Lightborn comes into the scene, Isabella, angelically in white, kisses his lips as signalising their connection or their sharing the same cruelty. Cynically, Isabella sends s

ow all is sure, the Queen and Mortimer shall rule the realm, the King; and none rule us. Mine enemies will I plague, my friends advance, and what I list command. (150)

Isabella declares her association with him:

"Sweet Mortimer, the life of Isabel, be persuaded that I love thee well." (150)

Mortimer is obeyed and feared, just like a real king whose saying nobody dares to question. Isabella is where she always wanted to be, or where non officially she has been.

Now, Prince Edward observes the adult world, both the political violence and personal violence in the relationship between his parents. Little by little, the young boy seems to identify himself with his mother. The scene of his first entry is particularly Jarman's, being absent in Marlowe. In that scene, Edward titles Gaveston the Earl of Cornwall. Prince Edward enters the throne room with his uncle Edmund. Edmund listens to King Edward's words and disapproves of them. Prince Edward is in pyjamas like a young child dressed to go to bed (or waking up to the world). The child says nothing, just listens to his father's argumentation with Edmund. While King Edward questions Edmund's attitude towards his sovereign and brother, Gaveston plays with the prince. The king's sword is used like a video-game joystick. Gaveston seems to be teaching the prince how to play well a war game. In Marlowe, the war for power is related to the homophobic war as the nobles and the clerics strive to usurp the monarch's power through the persecution of

Gaveston, so weakening the king. In Jarman, the war for power is related to the homophobic war as homosexuals are persecuted not only because of a class-cross relation between the king and a plebeian, but also because homosexual practice is illegal.

These two scenes show a contrast starting in the child's mind and behaviour. A transformation is going on in him too. His observing the world around him seems to lead him far from his father and closer to his mother. This seems to destabilise the family roles of father as the pattern for the son and the mother for the daughter. His silence is broken in the scene in which he, also in pyjamas, is in his father's arms. In the previous scene, Gaveston is man-handled between two lines of Clergymen who spit at him. He is homophobicly banished from the Court to exile in Ireland. Jarman embeds the two scenes, and the prince asks his father:

Why should you love him who the world hates so? (66)

The prince's words show his incapacity to understand what causes so much grief to his father. In another scene, at night, he appears in pyjamas with a torch in hand and observes naked players playing rugby. In another, it is raining and prince Edward is in a dark room with his mother and Mortimer. At the end of the scene, prince Edward says:

I think King Edward will outrun us all. Check mate.(136)

The prince seems to understand war affairs better than emotional ones. Mortimer and Isabella are playing chess. The pieces are tall, disposed on a table right in the centre of the room. In this scene, Mortimer and Isabella are talking about the homophobic war engendered against the King and his accomplices. The boy once more is attentive to the adults' words and completes their dialogue by expressing his opinion. Just like he did in participating in the chess game, he exposes his thoughts. But he was wrong, because king

Edward loses the war. Would Jarman be posing an itchy question with this character? I mean, would Jarman be trying to say that what Isabella was fighting against was happening under her very eyes? Would not king Edward be the winner through his son's queerness? Marlowe does not answer this question. But I perceive through History that homosexual relationships continued in Edward III's reign. He himself had his minions. The difference shown by Marlowe and History is that Edward III reigned differently from his father. In Marlowe's play, he avenges his father by executing Mortimer and imprisoning his mother. Contrary to his father, he exerted his body politics. But in Jarman, Edward III is a complex character.

His complexity is subtly shown. The prince appears in the scene in which Isabela kills Edmund. After his mother's biting Edmund's neck to death and draining his blood, prince Edward draws near his deceased uncle and passes his finger on Edmund's bloody neck and tastes the blood. The scene raises another question: would the prince become a sanguinary monarch like his Machiavellian mother? It is not simple to answer, because Jarman shows the prince in big earrings, with his eyes and lips made up. It seems that prince Edward was getting more and more used to the cruelty around him and more identified with his mother. In his mother, the prince could see both a feminine example and a greedy person.

In the last court scene, after king Edward's execution, Isabella and Mortimer are in a cage. The prince, now the king, is seated on the cage wearing gold robes, crown and holding an orb. Mortimer and Isabella are like animals in Edward III's hands and command. They are covered in white flour. The prince watches them. While he dances,

Mortimer utters his last lines from inside the cage. His words are the same in Marlowe's text:

> *Base fortune, now I see that in thy wheel, there is a point to which when men*
> *aspire, they tumble headlong down; that point I touched. And seeing there was*
> *no place to mount up higher, why should I grieve at my declining fall?... (V, vi,*
> *59-63).*

In Marlowe's text, Mortimer and the queen are not in a cage. They are before the enthroned king. Mortimer continues his words by bidding Isabella farewell, because he will be executed. This scene differs much from Marlowe's last scene. In the playtext, the prince starts his reign with an iron hand. But Jarman goes further. He makes the prince a major character in the end, because, through the child prince, he transgresses more evidently the heterosexual order. Homosexuality emerges as the new order in Jarman's conception.. Paradoxically, the boy does not assimilate the heterosexual men's example. Moreover, he, differently from the homosexuals around him, whose masculinity is accentuated in their bodies and dress, wears women's clothes becoming a little woman at the end of the film. This drag-queen-like image of the prince seems to indicate a heterophobic concept to fight against homophobic heterosexuals.

Costumes, Props and Music

The image of the characters, like the drag-queen-like one of the prince, is highlighted much by the cinematic elements such as costumes, props and music. These elements assembled with the characters help to show the queer genre of the film. Isabella's

chic dresses from the 1950s declare her economic power. Her sunglasses denote her exquisite and singular taste as an unordinary woman. Mortimer often wears military clothes, just like his soldiers. He is in charge of the military persecution against Edward and his accomplices. In one of the last scenes, Gaveston is found, beaten and strangled to death by one of Mortimer's soldiers. Later, this soldier is captured by Edward. The former is crucified on sides of beef. Edward interrogates him, but he does not feel any regret for his killing Gaveston. So, Edward stabs him to revenge Gaveston.

Jarman also presents main characters such as Gaveston and Mortimer nude. In one of the first scenes of the film, Gaveston appears completely naked sort of leaping in the throne seat. In the scene before, Mortimer was sexually relating with two women. Mortimer listens to Gaveston's voice and goes to the throne room. Dressed in a fur coat, Mortimer defies him and condemns the behaviour of Edward's minion. His words first to Edward and later to Gaveston are homophobic:

> *This Edward is the ruin of the realm.*
> (to Gaveston) *Thou villain. Wherefore talks thou of a king, that hardly art a gentleman by birth. (28)*

 But Edward appears from behind the seat and does not allow Mortimer to continue. It is remarkable that Gaveston and Mortimer appear nude. Both are the king's and the queen's lovers, respectively. Whereas the monarchs never appear naked, Jarman shows their lovers so. It is relevant to highlight Mortimer's moralistic positioning against Gaveston's behaviour, because the former was practising sado-masochism with his two female lovers. Mortimer's hypocrite homophobic attitude is elicited as he leaves his room towards the throne room and his two lovers kiss each other in the mouth. Jarman seems to

indicate that Mortimer was with bisexual women, and he went to condemn a gay's behaviour.

The nobles and clerics' suits also give them a location inside the late decades of the twentieth century fashion by the casual dressing that this epoch requires. Their dresses also indicate the conservative way of dressing. On the other side, some characters like Gaveston and his friends wear jeans trousers and leather jackets sort of showing the kind of social group to which they belong. Their clothes indicate their rebellious personalities.

The electronic toys such as the robot and the gun machine used by the prince approximate the story to an advanced time of modernity, and create an aura of future by linking Edward III and his adulthood as a monarch. His toys also seem to model his warrior tendency. The extravagant and expensive hats, purses and shoes fit to the nobles and clerics who search for an appropriate cover, suitable to their upper class social position. Jarman suggests that those who have money are the ones who can engender a homophobic project against gays. The typewriters and ink pens reach the twentieth century hurrying up the nobles' and clerics' urgency to ban Gaveston and determine the homophobic chase against homosexuals.

Jarman inserts modern dance in the scene in which Edward and Gaveston are enjoying their company at the throne seat. The two male dancers finish their performance by kissing each other in the mouth. The music in this scene is heavy and singular, suggesting the quality of the lovers' relationship. Annie Lennox, a famous 1980s and 1990s singer sings the song *Every Time We Say Goodbye.* This song was composed by Cole Porter, a gay composer of the 1930s.. This song combines the theatrical performances held

to nobles in the Medieval times with pleasure and sadness of the lovers' for Gaveston having to be exiled.

All these elements assembled inside those cold and dark walls of an apparent nowhere or everywhere. This indicates homosexuality facing homophobia everywhere, either privately or publicly. The timelessness of the theme together with these elements mentioned before help Jarman show the crisis of society before homosexuality from ancient times to the end of the twentieth century. The traditional values and institutions are presented in a *collage* since his film is a show of one aspect of reality. And that of a gay perspective now.

The unconventional use of these elements together with the characters reinforces a new image of gays. This aspect features a queer work of art. But to achieve that image, Jarman's use of narrative would not have been sufficient if the text, the narration and the characters alone had been maintained without those elements. For the queer image sake, Jarman's de-structuration of narrative became more accentuated as he gathered all of them so that the 1990s society could be represented just like the other epochs were by the use of Marlowe's text and historical facts.

Chapter III

Jarman's *Edward II* and Queer Aesthetics

Given the historical information and literary features of Edward II, Jarman's screenplay and movie stand apart from the intertext, i.e., Marlowe's playtext, by merging in queer aesthetics. The term *queer* does not only refer to sexuality. The aspects of the film express that personal way of expression of Jarman. His setting the cinematic elements and inserting anachronistic artifices contribute to classify his film as queer inside the political issue of the story (and History) for gay civil rights strife.

By doing this mixture in which political and social affairs are the ground of the narrative, Jarman shows an unconventional aesthetics. The traditional Hollywood narrative established a unique film genre and created a heterosexual pattern through which stories are narrated on the screen. If this traditional narrative and synchronistic components denote a habitual way to tell a story, Jarman's *Edward II* does not match it. Queer aesthetics is, then, a way out of the standard narrative so much referred and used to narrate a film. Krakauer elicits this aspect of some aesthetes in specialising mainly in some scenes in order to reproduce theatrical scenes, creating a special genre (1992, 14). Such is the case in Jarman's *Edward II*. Jarman does that by establishing queer aesthetics as a film genre differing from the customary views. Whereas some theatre plays cannot be taken to the

screen because of technical reasons, Jarman adapted Marlowe's play due mainly to the realistic events of the plot.

The reality of gays in the 1990s society matches with theatre and cinema. The fact that gays are viewed as queer by a homophobe society enables Jarman to produce his film. This real aspect of gays as queer can be understood in the sense that they consider themselves out of a standardised heterosexual social behaviour. By assuming that position inside society, gays do not presume to re-establish their difference from the heterosexual society, but as Berutti says by citing Gloria Anzaldua's warning words "queer... erases our differences" (5). But Jarman demonstrated that in *Edward II* not only by erasing differences, but also by suggesting homosexuality as the new order.

Besides the performance aspect of the film which alludes to theatre, I include radical representation which transcends the theatre scope. I mean, Jarman not only regards the elements of a dramatic piece, but also inserts his *own* way to express his political positioning. Through a queer perspective, Jarman represents gays' differences as they are paralleled with heterosexual patterns of behaviour in society. Thus, queer aesthetics also seems to avoid any fixed meaning, leaving up to the viewer his part in the reading of the film. This way, Queer aesthetics becomes not the exit towards a new possibility to gays in this specific case, but a possibility for the existence of differences in society. That possibility offered by Queer aesthetics does not presuppose a unique way, but a broader range of artistic and social manifestations.

King Edward II is the subject whose reputation is structured by a homophobe discourse which highlighted not his different sexual behaviour, but elicited his sexual behaviour and turned it into a queer and unacceptable procedure. Fowler (1986, 148) says

that language has a representational function so that the speaker or writer embodies in language his/her experiences, reactions and perceptions of the world. Regarding the treatment that Edward II received, I see him as an object of the subjects in his society. He is the *other* together with his minions and accomplices. Nonetheless, Edward's subjectivity is formed and shaped by a discourse which does not necessarily correspond to his real character. It is true to say that he did not know how to wield his body politics. This inability of his cost his own life.

But in Jarman's filmic language in Edward becomes the subject as *he* himself decides to pay the price of his positioning. Edward, the character, represents his own experiences and perceptions of the homophobe world and reacts against it in order to achieve his goals. The awkward [re]presentation is assimetric. That is, a queer story is [re]presented by a gay filmmaker through his protagonist, King Edward II, with whom Jarman seems to identify himself. The latter speaks not only to gays (a queer viewer) but also to heterosexuals so as to give to and require from these a queer positioning for the sake of understanding the also awkward plot. As a queer aesthete, Jarman seems to break down all the expectations of his heterosexual viewers by demanding from them a different positioning towards the theme of homosexuality surrounded by a homophobe society. Jarman's perceptions of the world prompts the viewers to his film to assume a position before the facts shown on the screen. Jarman reacts to homophobia by not accepting homosexuality as an excuse for the murdering of gays. It seems to be an unacceptable homophobic attitude for him. He wants to show (say) that homophobia is just a heterosexual political and ideological tool to block the access to power.

To demonstrate that, Jarman lifts a crisis that reaches a top. The king and his peers are awfully executed after a rebellion between homophobes and homosexuals. Turning to queer aesthetics and its "proposals", this top definitely seems to require another rather than the one presented by historical facts and representation. The attention of the viewers is called for the unconventional chain of events topped by an also unconventional ending. The latter is forced to read the story regarding and/or taking an unconventional position and positioning. To understand what was going on in Jarman's narrative, the viewer would have to change his traditional way of watching a film. In traditional film narrative, the meaning is grasped through the editing of continuous shots (Krakauer 1992). Jarman makes his art and aesthetics through his unconventional editing.

Silence as an act of indifference towards the events is, then, unexpected. On the one hand, the performer has to break the viewer's traditional expectations. On the other hand, the viewers have to position themselves so that they can have their opinion of what is presented so that they can construct the narrative otherwise. So, Jarman is expecting to reach his viewer by shocking him/her with scenes in which some characters' silence is remarkable. The scene in which Gaveston on a rock howls at the edge of the sea, the viewers do not hear his scream but a sad music denoting his non-conformity to his exile. In another scene, Edward is dreadfully killed. At his execution, the king's awful scream becomes a call upon the viewer to the facts shown in the plot. He is screaming in order to get a positioning from the viewers in terms of what his opponents did. That scene relates to the one on which Gaveston screams in the rain. In it, the nobles and clerics had exiled Gaveston. In this way, they separated the two lovers. The former's scream denotes his inaudible pain. The relation between those two scenes is on the silent screams. Both

Gaveston and Edward scream out loud, but the viewer just *sees* them and listens to a sad music. These two scenes seem to express Jarman's aesthetic stance. He seems to be saying that gays' scream (voice) may not be heard, but the atrocities against their lives can be seen, depicted and artistically represented. The pain caused by exile and death would not be registered better than on images.

The positioning of the performers as well as of the viewers does not only seem different, but also exposes degrees of difference. Queer aesthetics does not see *difference* per se. Difference becomes, from a queer perspective, the possibility of coexistence of alternative genders, whichever they are. Gays are commonly seen as different than heterosexuals. But Jarman does not seem to emphasise that fact alone. His film accentuates differences in the sense that homosexuals can be accepted not as undesirable and prohibited individuals, but as a difference which brings diversity to society just like it can be realised in Nature. Moreover, Jarman's heterophobic perspective denotes homosexuality as ***the,*** and not ***a*** sexual orientation. Whereas homophobe heterosexual perspective highlights heterosexuality as the only possible sexual behaviour in society, Queer aesthetics does not privilege queerness as the only accepted form of human expressiveness.

Jarman seems to be concerned with that allowance of difference in his film, but he goes further. He exemplifies that by confronting the royal couple. If on the one hand Edward is aware of Isabela's love affair with Mortimer, on the other hand she tries to deny it. But in the Court, everybody knows of Edward's homosexual relationship with his minions. Synchronically looking over the facts, I verify that Marlowe's Isabela could be comprehended for the role that women were meant to play that time. They could only be one man's woman in society. But as I diachronically see the plot, Jarman's Isabela did not

need to hide her relationship with Mortimer, unless she had other things in mind. She is a 1990s woman whose social role is simply other than the English Renaissance one. The viewers can soon know that the queen is pretending. She is performing the role of a faithful woman to her husband and peers. Her attitude, therefore, denounces her homophobia. But Isabella does not suffer any punishment for her acts. Rather, she is favoured because she is playing under the nobles' and the clerics' rules. And that fact is also unconventional, because by opening his sexuality to society, Edward misled his life to death. His honest and frank behaviour caused his death. But Isabella and her peers, who pretended to want all but the realm's good, continued alive. Jarman's further attitude shows that to fight against homophobia, queer people must manage heterophobia.

Quoting Beebee, who says that "a genre is a response to someone's desire" (4), I can verify that Jarman expressed his own desire in creating his queer *Edward II*. He desires to express his view of homosexuality inside a homophobe society. Beebee also says that the absence of genre indicates absence of power (12). If this thought is applied to Jarman's film, Edward II's absence of power as a monarch fits the idea of a peaceful co-existence among different genders. Edward is not searching for power but for self expression, whereas his nobles and clerics fight to usurp his kingship to obtain his power. Beebee explains that as a text is classified within a genre, its meaning is determined and exposes an ideology (19). For me, it would be naive to say that Jarman's effort is not to establish his film inside any genre. In not classifying his film according to known genres, he does not mean that he is not trying to spread any ideology. In my opinion, his ideology lies on the fact that he uses a different (queer) aesthetics to express his perspective.

At this point, Jarman does what Beebee says in terms of genre : "only genre makes works interpretable" (27). Therefore, not sliding off any genre, but mixing different ones, Jarman creates queer film as a proper genre as it bears a message, a meaning laying there to be interpretable. He makes his (film) text interpretable despite the non traditional narrative. According to Beebee "genre goes further and actually exploit ambivalent social values and attitudes"(55). I can see and verify that Jarman does exactly that as he works with homosexuality inside a homophobe society through a queer aesthetics. The heterosexuals' homophobe attitudes shown in the film are ambivalent, dubious, once their own behaviour towards gays is questionable.

Chedgzoy elicits Jarman's words concerning the fact that his artistic goal was to make the meaning of his films as open to diverse interpretation as possible, creating emotive and evocative images which will resonate with the different experiences and preconceptions that a viewer brings to them (186). For Jarman, Chedgzoy continues, the active role of the spectator is constructing meaning of a film is consonant with the strand of lesbian and gay film theory which stresses the activity and mobility of the queer spectator, who has always proved able to appropriate the most heterosexist of Hollywood narratives as sources of illicit or oppositional pleasures and desires (186). For Chedgzoy, one of Jarman's crucial tasks was to challenge the cultural centrality of heterosexuality (186). And in my point of view, Jarman decentralises heterosexuality by proposing homosexuality as a new order. I would also add to Chedgzoy's view the fact that Jarman's homosexuals are [re]presented as *who* rather than *what*.

I understand that change from object to subject as I see homosexuals in Jarman's film as subjects of their lives rather than objects of a homophobe society. The weak and

inferior position that homosexuals occupied for centuries in History is replaced by a superior position. This happens as they assume their subject position in their lives and subsequently in History. It is through their vision that meaning is shown and not anymore through a mistaken traditional perspective supplied by homophobe heterosexuals. By putting homosexuals on a superior position to that they used to occupy in traditional narratives, Jarman changes the politics of power relations. And he shows that change as his protagonists, Edward and Gaveston take their position not inside the nobles' and clerics' milieu, but in their sexual orientation. And they do that by striving for their civil rights. Jarman does not mitigate the plot, and this means to me that he intended to express his perspective all the way around. That is, he shows his view of homosexuals through a cruel and violent way just as they have lived within a homophobe society.

Chedgzoy puts that the power of art lies not in its ability to change sexual orientation, as the supporters of the Section 28 seemed to fear, but in its capacity to confirm and reinforce an already existing but oppressed and stigmatised sexual identity (188). This may seem very contradictory and unreasonable. As it were, by preventing funds to promote homosexuality, homophobe heterosexuals are stressing the existence of homosexuality. And to intensify that contradictory attitude of the British Government, Jarman's *Edward II* was produced by the public television, the British Broad Casting. In my opinion, this awkward positioning seems to be but a possible contention strategy. Would the British Conservatory Government be slightly loosening its rope, or just still containing homosexuality as it has been confined to its ghettos? Jarman states in his *Queer Edward II* that the funds for the production of the film decided many of the scenes (110). He says that the original script on *Edward II* would not find fund once the narrative makes it

prohibitive. Earlier in the screenplay, Jarman says that the takes could be only two, being one for safety since the film was getting expensive (34). This information helps us perceive the difficulties which a production on a theme of this sort faces. I would also say that to answer the question aforementioned, my view of the dominant class' project is indeed trying to reinstate its tolerance to homosexuality and that to contain homosexuality to its usual corner.

Conclusion

As I ponder on his appropriation of Marlowe's Edward II for gays' political strife, I can notice a questionable point: how adequate King Edward II – both the historical and the literary – is to that strife? Jarman does not seem to be concerned with Edward's failure as a monarch in his time. When I consider the king's incompetence as a country ruler because of his complete inability of exerting his political body, I question Jarman's choice. If, on the one hand, Jarman's choice of a failed personality does not represent a danger for gays' political activism, on the other hand, Jarman's making of King Edward II an icon for homosexuals means a negative construction. If the first hypothesis is true, Jarman seems to be revealing but the terror of homophobia falling on any individual, including monarchs who held power to do something to counter attack homophobia. If the second hypothesis is valid, Jarman seems to have made a mistake for apparently taking such an individual, since society insists in pointing out homosexuals as deviants and insane. But this last idea does not seem to support the purpose of the film, since Jarman shows Edward II play differently from the traditional and stereotypical gay character that Hollywood has shown in the post war decades.

Moreover, Jarman's filmic features accentuate more the matter of power as if the changing of people could make the world somehow better. That is, his posing homosexuals

in the throne, he seems to be stating that the strife for civil rights demands the access to power for homosexuals. But this idea can clearly be understood and accepted, as we recall women's ascension to power in many countries. If queer aesthetics presupposes the peaceful coexistence of alternative genders, and queer people are members of society, we can conclude that Jarman's proposal is correct. However, Jarman's Edward III as a queer king oppressing the heterosexuals who murdered his queer father, demonstrates the maintenance of the political and social system. Furthermore, the phobia addressed towards heterosexuals confirms humankind-no-way-out situation in these last years of the twentieth century.

In these years, nothing new like another socio-political system has been presented in the world. But in my opinion, Jarman's message should not be tolerated as well as homophobia. It seems to me that human intelligence cannot be satisfied with something which perpetuates social inequality and political oppression. Nonetheless, Jarman's film shows the world that gays are aware of social and political injustices towards them and other minorities and that mnay manifestations have been done to propagate this message. Although his film has been homophobically reviewed in 'The New York Times' (1991/92, 299) and other publications in the United States of America, Jarman's concern with homosexuals' condition remains in the history of Cinema as a mark for human rights.

This research happened to be one of the first ones in the Gay and Lesbian Studies, also known as Queer Studies at Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina. The writing of this text was possible due to Professor Doctor Margarida Gandara Rauen's constant concern and help in obtaining bibliographical references abroad. I would suggest PGI to be more

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