

THE APOLLONIAN AND DIONYSIAN ELEMENT IN THE POSTMODERNIST PERSPECTIVE – OF THE AMBIVALENCE OF REALITY IN DEREK JARMAN’S *JUBILEE*

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Abstract

The aim of the paper is to introduce Derek Jarman's movie Jubilee in the perspective of Apollonian and Dionysian motives, that are presented in the reflections on culture (postmodernism), in philosophical thinking (Friedrich Nietzsche), and of course in mythology (in the paper in reference to the interpretations of Zygmunt Kubiak and Robert Graves). The main hypothesis of the analysis is that Jarman's applies into the movie structure and develops both Apollonian and Dionysian motives to introduce situation of Great Britain and compare past and contemporary times of the country. Therefore, the author of the paper claims that using Apollonian and Dionysian motives in the movie is not only the realization of artistic visions, but also some tool to criticize functioning of the British government. In the paper it is also claimed that Apollonian and Dionysian motives are the elements of postmodern culture – ambiguous, liquid and full of paradoxes. Such culture causes also in the movie that Apollonian dimension is absorbed by Dionysian one and in the universe starts to rule permanent chaos.

Key words: Jarman, Nietzsche, Apollo, Dionysus, postmodernism, reality, ambivalence, ontology

Introduction: around two realities

As early as in the first chapter of *The Birth of Tragedy*, Friedrich Nietzsche expresses his conviction that the development of art and its existence are inseparably connected with the duality of the Apollonian and Dionysian dimension (Nietzsche, 2001, 14-16) – the thought was actually present in all reflections by the philosopher, not only in the abovementioned book. Nietzsche, deemed the father of modernism as well as, by some, postmodernism (Schulte, 1998, 5-18), made the Dionysian paradigm the central element of his philosophy and worldview. He deemed himself the heir of Bacchus's ideological legacy and the “wine god's” student. The Nietzschean interpretation of the symbolism of Dionysus's life remains worth attention because the author of *Ecce homo* was the last philosopher who formulated his own philosophical theses in relation to the antique Dionysian cult, using its undoubted attractiveness as well as potential “power,” as Nietzsche himself called it. Therefore, Dionysian philosophy and the Apollonian element connected with it, interpreted through the prism of the philosopher's reflections, still seem the most current thoughts on the mythical elements of the two gods.

Fairly often, also in the most vague statements on culture, one speaks of the Apollonian and Dionysian orders, the former customarily associated with high culture and harmony present in culture; the latter connected with the sphere of primitiveness and chaos. Nietzsche also presents this contrast on the basis of a dialectic connection rather than mutual exclusion (Benisz, 2001, 77-81). The contrast is also inseparably connected with an attempt at understanding the essence of creation and the state of reality and man involved in it (Benisz, 1995, 95-104). Therefore, it is a certain holistic program of reflections on culture, the essence of evil and the possibility of the affirmation of existence.

It appears that this dialectic connection of Dionysus and Apollo (as patrons of diversely understood culture and representatives of two different visions of the world) is also characteristic of Derek Jarman's *Jubilee* of 1978, a movie inspired by Elizabeth II's Silver Jubilee, a reply to the idyllic vision of England as the cradle of culture. The implementation of the Apollonian and Dionysian paradigm in Jarman's movie appears interesting as it is visible not only within the plot (reflections on the state of contemporary culture and society analogical to this culture) but also in the composition of particular frames, sequences and the movie as a whole. In *Jubilee* Apollonian and Dionysian threads appear both in relation to the gods' history, known from mythology, as well as in the form processed through Nietzsche's ideas and postmodernist awareness. In my essay I am also aiming to prove that they are at the same time indicators of ambivalence of the world presented in the movie.

The Apollonian order of Elizabethan England

The first sequence of *Jubilee* introduces the viewer (together with Crabs entering the palace) to a place surrounded by trees marking its symbolic and actual borders, full of splendor, beauty and magic. This is the place of the domination of nature and order, visible as early as in the room's décor. One may also suppose that aside from Elizabeth I and John Dee, her court astrologist, alchemist and magician, no one can enter this place. The perfect image of the presented space is confirmed by the analogical structure of the characters and the dialog taking place between them. Elizabeth, wearing a dress appropriate for that era, rich jewelry, with her impeccable pearl skin, appears a majestic and just ruler, who, worried about the future of her country, asks John Dee to summon an angel so that she can see England's future and "have a discourse with angels"¹. Therefore, the court alchemist, "in the name of Christ Jesus and his angelic hosts," summons Ariel, an angel "with mirrored eyes," so that he informs the queen about what will happen in the "pure waters" of time. The alchemists also expresses his belief that "as once a virgin, fashioned the whole earth... so by a virgin it shall have rebirth." The world emerging from John Dee's words is still a metaphysical world, world of fullness and axioms (virginity being the most important of those). The alchemist summons Jesus Christ, believes in the coming of an angel and the angel does arrive. Therefore, respect for religion and transcendence, which is an instance dominant toward the earthly reality, remains vivid here. It is also characteristic that the contact between heavenly and earthly realities has not been broken off. People have magical abilities and, importantly, use magic for good.

Each of the characters has a stable position within the society. Henryk Benisz notes that the vision of society connected with the paradigms of Apollo and Dionysus is related to the metaphysical problem of unity and plurality (Benisz, 2001, 77). Therefore, Apollo presents the rule of the law, which should consolidate the society. Within a structure organized in this way, individuals have specific tasks to perform, consisting in working for common good. The unifying power of the law brings harmony into the community. "Therefore, Apollo is believed to be the god of perfect order" (Benisz, 2001, 77; own translation – E. T.). Socialization understood in terms of the Apollonian paradigm will thus be based on unity guaranteed by the law, in accordance with the stable rules of social functioning. In Jarman's movie this precise vision of interpersonal harmony and mutual respect has been outlined, as interpersonal relationships are based on clear, legally sanctioned rules: Elizabeth I is the ruler giving out orders, with Ariel as her servant, John Dee uses his unusual abilities in order to make the queen's wishes come true and Crabs, Elizabeth's companion, is treated by the queen with respect.

The character of Ariel is also part of the paradigm associated with Apollo. John Dee calls him the "pearl of fire," the "only star," both names functioning within the semantic field connected with lightness. Ariel, on the other hand, introduces himself as "that pure and clarified spirit," who "will reveal (...) the shadow of this time." Appearing in the blinding glow, looking boyish, he represents characteristics attributed to Apollo, deemed the god of dreams and light (Benisz, 2001, 76) as well as art. The god of light was also identified with any phenomenon of emerging from darkness, changing from non-existence into being, revealing something (Benisz, 2001, 76). "Revealing" was also associated with the ability to foresee the future. According to the Apollonian myth, the god uncovered the mystery of foretelling, then seized the Delphic Oracle and persuaded the priestesses to serve him (Graves, 1982, 80). Ariel, one of the main characters of Jarman's *Tempest*, a spirit floating over the world and in a way controlling it, is summoned by John Dee in order to penetrate the future and show Elizabeth I the England of the 20th century. Moreover, Ariel is also ordered to shed light on the darkness of the contemporary, eliminate chaos in favor of harmony everywhere.

However, the mythical Apollo is not a purely positive character. His ambiguity, to Nietzsche and in relation to Apollo's mythical fate, arises from the fact that he was not only the god of light but also of dreams; he also has some rather inglorious events recorded in his biography, such as cruelty toward Niobe and Marsyas, caused by the sense of danger (Graves, 1982, 81-82). Dreams were identified by Nietzsche as reality of appearances, beautiful, but impossible to live. In dreams a person cannot feel his or her existential development or the pain of "becoming," therefore, the image of the world and life in dreams exists only as a false idea, the product of an individual's esthetic needs (Benisz, 2001, 78). Although Apollonian space-time in dreams seems so real that one may believe in it, we still have the feeling of penetrating the appearance (Nietzsche, 2001, 34). Its ontological status thus becomes imbalanced by the mere fact of existing in a dream. Such a world created by means of appearances seems the world of queen Elizabeth, returning in the movie like an ironic chorus of a terrifying postmodernism song. Alchemy, magic, the miraculous angel messenger able to break through the course of times and the border of any territory undoubtedly are not indicators of reality.

¹ All quotations as in: D. Jarman, *Jubilee*, 1978, 103 min.

What is more, Elizabeth I and her entourage, in the final scenes of the movie, select for themselves existence in the imaginary England from the past (Radkiewicz, 2003, 71), in mythical, timeless, territorial-less times (the characters move to the seacoast, limitless, embodying the eternity of nature), protected by the peculiar sphere of sacrum. Space-time free from borders, as one which, in Ariel's words, is to oppose non-existence and thus to express the essence of being, is to function as a place identical with the Center of the World, the starting point of the Universe, the beginning of Time and its elimination, by "moving man into the mythical moment of World Creation, in a way causing him or her to be 'born again,' contemporary to the World's origin" (Eliade, 1999, 126; own translation – E. T.). The characters' transgression connected with going beyond time and space is confirmed by Ariel's words naming Elizabeth I the beginning of Time. Moreover, both camerawork (sometimes blurred images, as if surrounded by the layer of *sfumato*) as well as dialogs from Shakespeare's dramas increase the feeling of esthetization of the presented reality. Nevertheless, such a world has its price. Mircea Eliade, reflecting on the category of place identified with the "beginning of the World," states: "However, from such places, there was usually no return to the world of the living" (Gierek, 1998, 57; own translation – E. T.). The protagonists of *Jubilee* are not going to return even though Ariel declared that his power would lighten the darkness of the times and the queen wished to better her kingdom. Both chose existence in non-reality. The experience of violence and poignant human mortality made them think that isolation was the only solution. "Fearing death and realizing its inevitability, we dream of the world in which there is no death or of people to which death does not apply" (Zwierzchowski, 2003, 276; own translation – E. T.). Paradoxically, the world chosen by Elizabeth I and her entourage as one from which there is no returning, which is characterized by complete isolation and ontological instability, becomes a prison similar to one from twentieth-century England.

The appearances of this reality resemble the way the *simulacrum* in Jean Baudrillard's famous essay functions (Baudrillard, 1994, 1-42). After all, one cannot overlook the fact that the prototype of England conceived by the protagonists does not exist anymore, one cannot go back in time. The mythical representation of the world in the movie *Blue* thus cannot be fully implemented, as it is marked by "Apollonian appearances" as well as postmodernism. Instead of restoring wholeness characteristic of mythical space-time to the fragmented world (Eliade, 1998, 140), the characters experience only the appearance of order being part of the Apollonian paradigm and also, or maybe most of all, characteristic of the postmodernist perspective – the "bankruptcy of the paradigm" (Bauman, 2004, 186), its processing and degeneration.

It is often emphasized that ontological ambivalence of the contemporary world arises from the destruction of its metaphysical background, the expression of which remains the Faustian myth of the modern era, to which much attention was devoted by Heidegger, who even undermined the existence of the ontological sphere (Popkin, 1999, 669-675). As I have tried to prove, this imbalance of the status of reality in Jarman's movie determines the seemingly harmonious Elizabethan England; still, epistemological ambiguity is also characteristic of the reality observed by Elizabeth I and her serfs. As Małgorzata Radkiewicz rightly notes, mentality embodied by the queen and her entourage is postmodern, oriented to existence in perpetual present and constant wandering (Radkiewicz, 2003, 68). The way of perceiving the world, both this perfect, dreamed-up one as well as the one observed during the travel into the future, in a way determines the shape of those worlds. The former exists only in the apparent dimension, dream-like, unrelated to reality; therefore, it cannot be penetrated. It is a mere "actualization" of escapist wishes. The queen herself, on the other hand, realizes that her kingdom is separated from the world, "on the edge of the abyss," and that it is unknown whether God to whom John Dee referred actually exists: "Where is God? Is God dead?"

The ridiculousness of the kingdom is all the more visible when its vision is juxtaposed with reality observed by the queen's entourage during their travel into the future. The characters, coming from the era of modernism, should try to learn about the world they will witness; however, their participation in the 20th century is reduced to witnessing the effects of crimes, reported briefly, as if watched on the news. They have no actual insight into the postmodern world, separated from it by the apparent mist of inaccessibility and safety. Still, it is difficult to decide whether it is caused by the postmodernist shape of reality itself or the direction of observations accepted by the queen, accustomed to living in appearances, which cannot endanger her reign and existence.

It appears that isolationism of the monarchy, unaware of the shape of the real world, creating despotic laws (customs officers and the police are presented in the movie as resembling an apparatus of repression characteristic of a totalitarian country!), destroying an individual and depriving him or her of the right to freedom, is the main object of criticism. The contrast between the apparent order characteristic of modernism, embodied by the authorities, and the postmodernist struggle to maintain one's identity and the possibility of deciding about one's fate was one of the main topics in Jarman's other movies, *The Last of England* and *War Requiem*.

In *Jubilee*, the authorities are represented in a dualist fashion – by Elizabeth I and the contemporary security service, where the queen embodies the past tradition evaluated positively in the movie, and the security service shows despotic and cruel people; however, the contrast only aggravates the charges against the British system of governance. The England of Elizabeth I or Shakespeare today serves only as a *simulacrum*, space-time characterized by its ontological and epistemological ambivalence; therefore, the choice by the characters from the past to return to this reality is a mere act of cowardice.

The Dionysian paradigm absorbs the Apollonian

The decision to return seems all the more unjustified as the queen realizes the current state of the world. She knows that the “Apollonian order” does not exist anymore, that the paradigm has already been exhausted. She herself says that she is standing “on the edge of the abyss,” asks whether God is still present in the world. Nietzsche, writing about the determination of the world by two permeating orders (Apollonian and Dionysian), notes that in the contemporary world the Apollonian element remains dominated by the Dionysian one since Apollo himself subjects to Dionysus’s vision, which is caused by noticing the appearances of the existence of prevalent order. Moreover, Dionysus’s influence is so great that Apollo starts to preach his truths, falls into the dark abyss of Bacchus, negates himself, his function, which makes the appearance of the power of the Apollonian paradigm an illusion *sensu stricto* (Benisz, 2001, 99).

This natural – to Nietzsche – evolution of the Apollonian paradigm into the Dionysian (or the absorption of the Apollonian paradigm by the Dionysian) may be observed in *Jubilee* not only by tracing the development of the queen’s awareness of the surrounding world, as it is visible in the composition of the movie. Its structure interestingly portrays the blurring of borders between the paradigms, accentuating the ambivalence of the presented reality. I believe that the sequence of scenes depicting the murder of Lounge Lizard reflects gradual transformation of one element into another in a way which best reflects this feature of the composition of the movie (Graves, 1982, 22-23); in Nietzsche’s interpretation (Nietzsche, 2001, 21) it would be the basic expression of the Dionysian element. Nietzsche believed that the “Apollonian illusion” was to prevent direct unification with Dionysian music (Nietzsche, 2001, XXI). In the scene, violence-thirsty punks (main protagonists), led by Bod (Jenny Runcare), “the anti-thesis of monarchy, its new-age version” (Radkiewicz, 2003, 66; own translation – E. T.) enter Lounge Lizard’s dressing room. The leader murders Lizard in order to replace her with a new band, Scum. Interestingly, a moment later above the singer’s body the queen appears (also played by Runcare), worried and sad, asking John Dee why the murder has been committed. The alchemist replies that the reason is people like contrasts: “light and dark, hot or cold, living... or dead.” The sequence was composed in the way that first in the same place (by Lizard’s body) appears Bod and then the queen, resigned, as if those were two natures or incarnations of the same woman. Therefore, on the intrapersonal level two orders have been juxtaposed: the Apollonian (represented by the monarch) and the Dionysian (to which Bod belongs). By committing the murder, Bod appeared to be stronger than Elizabeth I, who cannot bring Lizard back to life. All she can do is leave the stage and admit the antagonist’s advantage. The destructive Dionysian element expressed not by means of dance but by the ecstatic scene of murder thus absorbs the Apollonian order. A moment later a scene appears where the band performs on stage, and the queen heads toward the world of dreams.

Another interesting scene is the one in which brothers Angel and Sphinx (very telling names!) appear, probably symbolizing the metaphysical dimension of the world and life (their relationship, in spite of its incestuous character, is presented in the movie with much affection); they are possibly the only characters understanding the consequences of artificiality of existence to an individual. In the scene they are murdered during a police action resembling a brutal attack. This situation may indicate (aside from the domination of darkness over light) also Apollo’s predilection for cruelty (the authorities should protect the world’s order, theoretically “on the Apollonian side”), depicting the ambivalence immanent in his paradigm. Its major role is probably to show that chaos is the dominant force in twentieth-century reality – it absorbs even this order which has been built for a long time, based on the most sincere human intentions, in just a few seconds.

The basic perspective of the presentation of the movie diegesis is thus the Dionysian order transformed by postmodernism. Its various implementations are the subject of most sequences of the movie; it creates the basis of the picture. Signs of the Apollonian order, with its whole ambivalence, function in *Jubilee* only as recurring sequences, like choruses, contrasting with the whole of the movie. They begin and end Jarman’s movie, making it a story within a story. This particular composition of the sequences depicting the “Apollonian order” and the “Dionysian element” makes us realize that the perfect British system of governance is a mere image surrounding the vastness of chaos and violence.

The Dionysian and postmodernist element

The reality of twentieth-century England is introduced by a sequence of scenes presenting a brutal attack on a woman with her child in a stroller by a group of screaming girls – punks. The streets are devastated, surrounded by barbed-wire fences, shots can be heard. Thefts, vandalism of cars or attacks on waitresses in restaurants are normal – it all happens frequently under the eye of the police, who savor the power arising from the use of violence in the same way as criminals do. According to Bauman's statement on postmodernist reality, elimination of the "cognitive, moral (...) map of the experienced world" occurs here (Bauman, 2004, 35; own translation – E. T.), symbolized literally by a globe with continents colored in black, which appears in the movie.

This world is mainly dominated by chaos (which is confirmed by the name of one of the protagonists), visible on the level of the holistic structure of the world, of particular houses and images of the characters. One also notices complete lack of natural light and nature (in order to see flowers the characters visit Max who keeps a garden of plastic flowers). Reality depicted in this way thus fits the Dionysian paradigm, in accordance with which the world remains synonymous with the "dark abyss of non-existence" (Benisz, 201, 76), far from any forms of statehood and social structure. The myth of Dionysus is also connected with the story of his two deaths and three births, symbolizing constant transgression beyond one's identity and the fact that Dionysus was the only god born from a mortal mother, which made him an outcast (Kubiak, 2005, 336-337). The Dionysian mysteries, during which intoxicated young women, the god's servants, swirled in ecstatic dance, frequently resorting to various sexual deviations and murders, such as one on Orpheus, in retaliation for his attributing them with deviant inclinations, became legendary and exceeded even the Dionysian myth itself (Kubiak, 2005, 337-341).

Acts of cruelty depicted in the movie do not surprise anyone, no one pays attention to them. Symbols are profaned, used in primitive shows (e.g. Borgia's productions or ones from the pornographic industry), suggesting the mixing of high and mass culture, which is one of the best known characteristics of postmodernism. Artistic work does not exist at all, according to what is stated in the movie, there are no artists anymore, as "[a]rtists steal the world's energy. (...) They become blood donors. Their lifeblood drips away... until they're bled dry" and they can only return as representatives of anarchy. The Church has become a temple of heavenly delights, in which macabre orgies take place, which resemble Dionysian mysteries. Sexuality is based here on violence, enhanced by constant intoxication; interpersonal relationships are not founded on natural relationships but on freakish tendencies, "a series of meetings and interactions" (Bauman, 2004, 49; own translation – E. T.). Borgia even says that people love pornography because it is "better than the real thing." Therefore, the pornographic industry becomes the equivalent of the real world. The ontological status of reality is weakened or even eliminated, only the media remain, where the control is wielded by Borgia, who, as he himself says, does not create reality but owns it and states that the generation inhabiting twentieth-century England "is the generation who grew up... and forgot to lead their lives. They were so busy... watching [his] endless movie"; he adds: "I own their world of flickering shadows. I (...) rearranged the alphabet. Without me... they don't exist." The elimination of borders between reality and fiction delivered by the media and entertainment industry is also a sign of the postmodernist state of the world, based on mere simulation. To Borgia, people do not want to learn about or create space-time, but own it. Heidegger wrote about the wish to own the world already in *The Age of the World Picture* (Heidegger, 1977), although this category came into existence only in postmodernist reflections, meaning the inability to experience the world cognitively and esthetically (Bauman, 2004, 35-36).

The main characters of *Jubilee* are young girls living in a strange commune, like contemporary Amazons identifying with punk culture. This counterculture emerged in England when people were disappointed with the authorities after the breakdown of the post-war prosperity (Radkiewicz, 2003, 70). Therefore, Jarman accepted punk culture as an important element of the 1970s world, with contestatory tendencies (Radkiewicz, 2003, 70). As given by Tomasz Lasek, punk is "the street, the demimonde, a paradise for various criminals, street samurais, any outcasts rejected by the society which is falling apart. It is the edge" (Lasek, 2005, 245). In Jarman's movie punk culture is to symbolize rebellion against the stagnant reality as well as a great destructive and demonic force signed by Dionysus, which cannot be controlled by the "Apollonian order." Acts of violence by the girls with names emphasizing their predilection for cruelty and destruction of the surrounding reality (Mad, Amyl Nitrite, etc.) appear to be committed in some ecstasy, which Nietzsche described as the most primitive, that is Dionysian (Benisz, 1995, 99), caused by the willingness to manifest one's power, rivalry, aiming to destroy the opponent, or by the vengeful desire. The rape and murder committed on Kid resemble the ripping of Orpheus into pieces, described in myths. As given by Graves and Kubiak, female worshippers of Dionysus did it in order to take a revenge for Orpheus's accusing them of sexual deviations and for his homosexual love (Graves, 1982, 112-114; Kubiak, 2005, 364-366). States of ecstasy were also the manifestation of female power, which the protagonists of *Jubilee* would like to express. The essence of their reign will be the revenge on a policeman for the boys' death.

The fulfilling of atavist instincts, paradoxically, appears to be motivated by what Nietzsche believed to be the greatest achievement of Dionysian philosophy: affirmation of the world as a whole (Benisz, 1995, 80). One of the characters tells another one: “[T]he world’s your oyster, so swallow it,” place reality within yourself so that there is no external world anymore, nothing beyond your life. The girl’s words remain in concord with what Bauman wrote about contemporary territoriality by stating that we all are actually inside; therefore, there is no direction of further transgression (Bauman, 2003, 277). Those also confirm the fluidity of contemporary reality perceived by the character, the non-existence, to her, of the stable shape of the world, but the presence of an amorphous structure which can be swallowed and thus probably excreted. Accepting the world in its wholeness, proposed by Nietzsche, has therefore lived to see its ironic polemics, in concord with the spirit of postmodernism.

This vision of the world arises probably from the breaking of any major paradigms in the postmodern era, which I have already mentioned; however, it appears that there is at least one more reason. Nietzsche believed that the actual fullness of life and affirmation of the world by Greeks arose from their awareness of the brotherhood of Apollo and Dionysus (Benisz, 2001, 79). “The Dionysian philosophy without the Apollonian would be too tragic, as it knows no canons of morality or reason” (Benisz, 2001, 81; own translation – E. T.). As I have attempted to show in this analysis, the Apollonian character functions in the diegesis of *Jubilee* as a mere illusion, and in fact does not influence the stagnant world. The lack of balance between the two forces causes the most exuberant and barbaric elements of Dionysian philosophy to surface. On the other hand, in combination with postmodernist tendencies, it gives rise to the feeling of ambivalence of the world and to the need to simultaneously destroy and own it.

The power of Dionysian energy in the era of postmodernism has another dimension. I will repeat my previous statement: punk counterculture was to contest the rigid, despotic and stagnant rules of the country established by the British apparatus of power, which deprived individuals of their freedom. Therefore, Jarman juxtaposed the artificial order and what, aside from deconstruction, fragmentation, fluidity and temporariness of the world and life, the contemporary has given the individual, which is, above all, acceptance of various models and lifestyles, the possibility of looking for one’s own place in the world, awareness of the existence of gender and queer, so important to the director (Radkiewicz, 2003, 57-58). The punk “outcasts” from *Jubilee* thus represent both the Dionysian as well as postmodernist element, demystifying, in spite of their predilection for crime, the idyll of the English monarchy and the “modern order.”

Conclusion

Reality presented in *Jubilee* by Derek Jarman is balanced on the border of two great paradigms: the Apollonian and the Dionysian one, which, after certain simplifications, function as counterparts of the modernist and postmodernist perspective. One must remember here that postmodernism brings destruction of the paradigm, hence their fragmentation in Jarman’s movie, dependent on the postmodernist vision. The duality and double dimension of time-space presented in this way are visible both on the level of the composition of the movie as well as the diegesis of the shaping of the territory and social groups belonging to it.

The use of interpretations of the Apollonian and Dionysian paradigms by Friedrich Nietzsche in the present text allows for the presentation of how fluid is, on the one hand, the division into the Apollonian sphere of light embodied in Jarman’s movie by Elizabeth I’s entourage and the contemporary apparatus of power connected with it, as well as the sphere of darkness, to which punks ambiguously presented by the director belong; on the other hand, the fact that the Apollonian and Dionysian dimensions are actually in “the state of constant fight with only temporary peace” (Nietzsche, 2001, 33; own translation – E. T.). Each of the two myths has its immanent ambivalence reflecting the impossibility of an unequivocal evaluation of actions by the authorities and punk counterculture in Jarman’s movie.

The ambiguity of the world is also connected in *Jubilee* with the status which is awarded to reality in postmodernism. On the one hand, it remains fluid, does not function within the established borders, identifying with the oneiric vision or media mixture of reality and fiction; on the other hand, it is still the object of desire. One does not want to discover or create reality anymore but to own it. At the same time, for this state of the world (if we agree with Bauman) the previous era, the time of the modernist formation of national structures, should be held responsible as well, as it was the period which led to the actual division of the world into the reality of “artificial” order and “waste people,” areas of ex-territoriality and landfill. Jarman’s movie shows the consequences of making such divisions, visible both in the territorial structure of England as well as on the level of its society and culture created by it. In spite of the demystification of the contemporary program of governance in England as well as punk counterculture’s predilection for crime and cruelty, *Jubilee* actually balances on the border of missing the Elizabethan era and wishing for the preservation of the right to diversity and freedom in the contemporary world.

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Biography

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