

Literary Form in Derek Jarman's *The Angelic Conversation II: Dream Allegory*

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As with his two films based on Elizabethan plays—*Tempest* (1979) and *Edward II* (1991)—literary influences are integral to Derek Jarman's *The Angelic Conversation* (1985). But while the former are adaptations of plays written by William Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe respectively, *The Angelic Conversation* is Jarman's own composition with voice-over readings of Shakespeare's sonnets by Judi Dench inserted at the final stage of production. Jarman explains, 'After everything was finished I placed the sonnets in the soundtrack that Coil composed' (*The Last of England* 143).¹ Consequently the sonnets function not as a central component of the film's structure but rather as an accompaniment endowing it with an orderly literary form. The film concerns love and its loss. Jarman recognises 'a laser-probing emotion' (*LE* 140) in the sonnets and 'one of the most consistent feelings conveyed in the sonnets is loss' (*LE* 140), because 'It's tough being in love' (*LE* 140). The sonnets give the film a literary form that highlights this to the utmost extent.

There is, however, another literary form at work in *The Angelic Conversation*, and at a more fundamental level: that of dream allegory. Jarman read English at King's College London 1960-1963, and in his autobiography, *The Last of England*, he describes how he admires works of Old and Middle English poetry, in particular, *Beowulf*, *The Wanderer*, *Pearl*, and *Piers Plowman*. Jarman adopts the form of dream allegory characteristic of Middle English poetry in his films, such as *Jubilee* (1978) and *The Last of England* (1987), both of which depict violence, destruction, and a dying city :

In dream allegory the poet wakes in a visionary landscape where he encounters personifications of psychic states. Through these encounters he is healed. *Jubilee* was such a healing fiction, it harked back to *Pearl* and *Piers Plowman*. Which was also a socio-political tract. In *Jubilee* the past dreamed the future present. *The Last Of England* [sic] is in the same form, though this time I have put myself into the centre of the picture. (*LE* 188)

The form of dream allegory roots several of Jarman's films to a greater or lesser extent. It has a closed structure in the sense that the narrative is framed by the protagonist's physical falling

¹ Hereafter the book *The Last of England* will be cited as *LE*.

asleep and awakening. Within that closed structure, sleeping and awakening become metaphors for psychological states with their meaning reversed such that to fall asleep physically is to awaken emotionally and vice versa since dreams disclose a deeper reality than that available to our physical vision. Jarman values the dream state for its universal scope: 'We are all accomplices in the dream world of soul; it is not just personal, it's general, we make these connections all the time. As Heraclitus said: 'Those who dream are co-authors of what happens in the world' (*LE* 108).² Jarman admired certain films for evoking enclosed spaces with a ritualistic quality reminiscent of dreams:

Why this obsession with the language of closed structures, the ritual of the closet and the sanctuary? the prison cells of Genet's *Un Chant D' Amour*, the desert encampment of *Sebastiane*; [Kenneth] Anger, insulating himself with magick, screening himself off; Cocteau's *Orphée*, an attempt to steal through the screen into the labyrinth and usurp the privileges only the cabal of the dead may confer... (*LE* 60)

The Angelic Conversation is such a film, depicting emotional and magical ritual within a closed structure which bestows visibility upon realms beyond the ordinary world, a task for which the art of cinematography is profoundly well suited. In the interview with Tomoko Kitaori, Jarman cites an American critic's remark about *The Angelic Conversation* which he thinks fitting: 'This film never reaches its end but instead continues to grow. As if it were a dream within a dream, you may feel it has a frame in one sense but doesn't in another sense. The film grows more and more, like a flaming fire in the night.'³ It is as if the intensity of the film's emotion overflows the closed structure it derives from the dream allegory form.

So now let us explore how dream allegory features in *The Angelic Conversation*. From an allegorical perspective both youths can be named Lover because neither is endowed with any other attribute, both being defined solely in terms of their quest for love. We see nothing of their personalities, their context, or the background to their story; only that they encounter one another, love one another, and part from one another.

This linear presentation of characters involved only in the act of loving recalls the French medieval dream allegory, *Le Roman de la Rose*. The poem is the work of two different authors writing some forty years apart: Guillaume de Lorris who composed the first 4,000 lines some-

² The original fragment by Heraclitus is No.91: 'Men asleep are laborers and co-workers in what takes place in the world' (Heraclitus 71).

³ Interview with Kitaori in *The Angelic Conversation*, Derek Jarman, published by Question House on the occasion of the release of the film in Japan. This book has no page numbers. While originally conducted in English, the interview is translated into Japanese in the book, and since I have no access to the original English, the paraphrases in the present paper are my own translation back into English.

time between 1225 and 1230, and Jean de Meun who composed the remainder between 1269 and 1278 (ix *The Romance of the Rose*). Geoffrey Chaucer translated part of the poem into Middle English as *The Romaunt of the Rose* and Jarman speaks of his admiration for both Chaucer and another medieval poet, William Langland, author of the dream allegory *Piers Plowman*:

I was always a Pre-Raphaelite : William Morris Tennyson. I loved Chaucer, and Piers the Ploughman, what a great film that would make,

‘...and he screamed for grace

and I awoke...’ (*Up in the Air* 81)

In identifying himself as a Pre-Raphaelite Jarman alludes to the love he shares with those painters for the Middle Ages. Just as medieval literature such as the legend of King Arthur provided much of their inspiration, so the literature and religious art of the medieval era inspired Jarman.

In a chapter in *Chroma : A Book of Colour—June '93*, entitled ‘The Romance of the Rose and the Sleep of Colour,’ he praises the richness of colour in religious paintings of the Middle Ages: ‘The dun-coloured world of serfdom, transformed to a cornucopia that spilled the rainbow over the altar in the church’ (46). He cites the following lines from Chaucer’s *The Romaunt of the Rose* as giving verbal expression to chromatic richness:

There sprang the violet all new,
And fresh periwinkle rich of hue,
And flowers of yellow, white and red,
Such plenty never there grew in mead.

(Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Romaunt of the Rose*) (*Chroma* 46)

In depicting the vibrant hues of flowers these lines disclose ‘a visionary landscape where he [the Poet] encounters personifications of psychic states’ (*LE* 188). The landscape in question is a spiritual landscape reflecting the Poet’s subconscious expectation of encountering love, an encounter symbolised by the blossoming of spring flowers and resilient to the tribulations of human life.

Lorris’ portion of *Le Roman de la Rose* attends more closely to the psychological state of lovers such as longings and sufferings from others’ disturbance than his successor. Maun’s portion mainly comprises a scholastic discourse on love in which the principal speaker is Reason. Here I shall outline the story by Lorris to show how the allegorical landscape and figures delineate the psychological states, both positive and negative, in the process of his pilgrimage to the Rose. Then I shall discuss how this finds reflection in *The Angelic Conversation*.

Sometime in the month of May, the Poet, the narrator of this poem, dreams that he is walking early one morning through a meadow and along a stream. His mood is cheerful in the delightful season. Keeping to the bank of the stream he comes to a large square garden en-

closed by a high crenelated wall, on which allegorical images such as Hate, Avarice, Envy, Poverty, etc. are painted.

Joyful birdsong emanating from within the garden makes the Poet eager to enter. He finds a tiny door in the wall and knocks. The Lady Idleness opens the door to him and leads him inside. In its beauty the garden appears to him to be the earthly Paradise. (Jarman quoted the four lines in *The Romaunt of the Rose* from this scene.) The Poet meets the garden's charming owner, Pleasure, who with his delightful companions is dancing in a circle. Among the dancers the Poet sees the God of Love holding ten arrows.

In the centre of the garden the Poet finds the Spring of Narcissus, gazing into whose waters Narcissus died from his love for his own reflection. At the bottom of the spring are two crystals, in each of which half of the garden can be beheld. In one of the crystals the Poet sees rose bushes surrounded by a hedge of thorns, thistles, and brambles.

The beauty of the roses captivates him and he longs to approach them.⁴ He proceeds to do so, and when he reaches them he chooses the most beautiful, a red rose-bud, and tries to pluck it. As he does so the God of Love shoots him with the arrow of Beauty, and it intensifies his attraction to the rose-bud. Then the God of Love proceeds to shoot him with his other beautiful arrows—Simplicity Courtesy, Company, and Fair Seeming—all of which heighten his desire for the rose still further.

However, the thorns, thistles, and brambles prevent him from reaching it. He swears allegiance to the God of Love, promising to become his subject and carry out his commandments. From then on the Poet is called by a new name, that of the Lover. Love teaches the Lover that only Hope can heal the sufferings of lovers. Led by Fair Welcome, the Lover can make his way to the rose-bud through the hedge. Fair Welcome now appears and leads the Lover towards the rose-bud.

But their way is blocked by Rebuff, the guardian of all the roses, who drives Fair Welcome away and threatens to attack the Lover. The Lady Reason descends from a high tower, accuses the Lover of folly, and tells him to forget his love. The Lover angrily resists her rebuke, then, reflecting upon his plight, remembers his loyal Friend. Friend appears and with his encouragement the Lover begs Rebuff to have pity on him. Rebuff does so, but still the Lover finds it impossible to approach the Rose. Wishing to help him, Generosity of Spirit and Pity persuade Rebuff to allow Fair Welcome to return to the Lover. Upon doing so she leads him through the enclosure and all around the garden.

⁴ In a journal entry for 9th Jan 1989 Jarman writes of the two varieties of old rose he bought in Earls Court and states that he regards one of them, *rosa mundi*, as the rose in *The Romaunt of the Rose*: '*Rosa mundi*, rose of the world, with its crimson and blush striped flowers, an old sport from the apothecary's *Rose officinalis* the rose of Provins. It was brought back by a 12th century crusader and immortalised by Guillaume de Lorris in his poem the *Roman de La Rose*' (*Modern Nature*, 4).

Meanwhile the Rose grows larger and even more beautiful. With the aid of Venus, the mother of the God of Love, the Lover is able to kiss it. But now Evil Tongue awakens Jealousy, who in turn incites Shame and Fear to have Rebuke block every path into or out of the garden. To protect the roses Jealousy digs deep ditches around them and builds a stone wall with turrets. In the middle of this enclosure he builds a magnificent round tower where he imprisons Fair Welcome under the watchful guardianship of the Old Woman. Unable now to reach the Rose, the Lover falls into a desperate grief. At this point Lorris' portion of the poem ends.

Kevin Brownlee observes in relation to the introductory lines of *The Romaunt of the Rose*, in which the narrator announces his intention to recount his dream, that the dream is about initiation into love:⁵ '...the *je*-narrator presents the subject matter of his romance as the dream of initiation into love that he himself had dreamed when he was five years younger: the romance's narrative line will be the dreamed initiatory love experience of this *je*-protagonist' (120). The dreamed landscape in *The Romaunt of the Rose* visualises this initiation of love, and the landscape in *The Angelic Conversation* also has the same function.

The Poet's recounting of his dream in *The Romaunt of the Rose* starts with his dreaming in May, 'the season of love and joy' (3), which signifies his spiritual awakening and the start of his quest for love. As he dreams, his sight is directed from the outward to the inward. This transformation of the direction of vision is also seen in the first scene of *The Angelic Conversation*, in which a youth is looking out through the old diamond-paned window. The filming location of this scene is the inside of the Montacute House in Somerset, an Elizabethan manor house with compartmentalised gardens.⁶ The window, which is the boundary between the outside and inside, functions as a medium for transformation of the youth's vision inwardly. Although he is awake, he is in a state of dreaming in the sense that he is viewing a world other than the ordinary world through the window glass. So the terrain beyond the window is an alternative vision to the dream vision.

In *The Romaunt of the Rose* the Poet walks alone, walking out of the house in the morning and rejoicing in the new vivifying season, making his way through the meadow towards the stream, reaching the garden with a high wall. Then the obstacles start appearing: a high wall

⁵ The early lines from *The Romance of the Rose*, Frances Horgan's modern English translation of *The Romaunt of the Rose*, declare that the Poet is a young man when love awakens in him: 'In my twentieth year, at the time when Love claims his tribute from young men, I lay down one night, as usual, and fell fast asleep. As I slept, I had a most beautiful and pleasing dream, but there was nothing in the dream that has not come true, exactly as the dream told it' (3).

⁶ The website of the National Trust explains the history of Montacute House: 'Built from locally quarried Ham stone and completed in 1601, the house was designed to be magnificent by the local builder and architect William Arnold. The architecture is rooted in Gothic, polished with Flemish and Renaissance influences ('History of Montacute House', *National Trust*). Its garden is '[o]ne of the few remaining Elizabethan compartmentalised gardens. Lawns, flower borders and clipped yew hedges' ('Montacute House', *National Trust*).

which prevents the Poet from entering the garden and signifies other peoples' hate, jealousy, hypocrisy, and other emotional states directed against his loving someone.

In *The Angelic Conversation* walking has significance, too. We see each of the two youths walking alone in various landscapes. Their walks, which signify their journey to find each other, take them through coastal quarries and the seashore. In most of these scenes all we hear is the sound of running water, the youth gasping, the hallucinating music of Coil, or Judi Dench's reading of sonnets. There is no dialogue. One of the youths holds a barrel over one shoulder, the other a length of timber across both shoulders. The youth with a barrel reminds us of Christian, the protagonist of John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, another dream allegory. While Christian's burden signifies his awareness of his sinfulness, the burdens of the two youths—the barrel and the length of timber—signify the suffering caused by intolerance in society. For convenience, I shall refer to the youth with the barrel as 'the youth' and the youth with the length of timber as 'the other youth.'

The actual locations include the Isle of Grain, described by Jarman as 'to the East [sic] of London on the Thames estuary, a very mysterious landscape, one of the oddest places' (*LE* 143), Winspit, and Dancing Ledge.⁷ At least when *The Angelic Conversation* was filmed, all of these places remained untouched by tourism. Jarman says:

The land of England was once the home of dryads and nymphs, every now and again you can feel the last of them lurking around a corner. At Dancing Ledge, at Winspit. But much of the land is desolate. (*LE* 138)

In his interview with Kitaori, Jarman describes *The Angelic Conversation* as a film about walking:

This [*The Angelic Conversation*] is a very experimental film and in its structure it is probably experimental, too. Had I wanted to give it a narrative structure, I could have done so, but I didn't think I needed to. From the beginning, I didn't intend to make a narrative of it, but I just wanted to shoot an image of summer. An image of summer including its weather. To be more precise, an image of a pathway in summer.

He concludes: *The Angelic Conversation* is 'the film of walking, or rather the film of the pathway.' What walking brings about in the film is movements of landscape. It is not the linear

⁷ The website of *Dorset Guide* reads that 'Winspit Quarry is a disused quarry on the cliffs near Worth Matravers, on the Isle of Purbeck' ('Winspit Quarry // Worth Matravers'), and Dancing Ledge is 'near Langton Matravers on the Isle of Purbeck. According to the *Dorset Guide*, the ledge owes its name to being the size of a dance floor due to the rock being cut away and shipped around the coast to Kent ('Dancing Ledge').

stream of time but the flow of landscapes that connects the shots.

The prominent elements in the landscape of *The Angelic Conversation* are a manor house's garden, rocks, cave, cliff, a radar tower, light, fire, water, and the sea, and flowers. 'I was exploring a landscape I had never seen on film: areas of psyche that hadn't been projected before' (LE 134), Jarman says. Underlying that landscape were the four primitive elements—fire, air, water, and earth—and their combinations. In the interview with Kitaori he explains:

The Angelic Conversation presents the images of the four elements which create a unique atmosphere. Somehow, I am always interested in them. It may sound strange, but I feel I am cinematizing the images I experienced in my childhood without being conscious of it, or rather I am cinematizing what happened in my unconsciousness. As I grew up I felt some strangeness in finding that these images are corresponding and combining with each other and this feeling of strangeness led me to reflect upon their doing so. It is extremely difficult to explain to someone else but these images correspond with each other in various ways... This probably creates the hidden closed structure of my films.

The landscapes charged with these images of elements are all involved in the initiation of love, bestowing gentleness and tolerance on the love story; Jarman says '*The Angelic Conversation* is gentle' (LE 134). Only the rotating arm of the radar tower, wire fences, and a burning car undermine the gentleness and tolerance. According to Jarman, the radar tower is an emblem of 'surveillance by Nobodaddy' (LE 133) and represents 'the feeling one is under psychic attack' (LE 133). It is reminiscent of the Old Woman in *The Romaunt of the Rose* who is placed in the castle by Jealousy to watch over the Lover so that he cannot approach to the Rose he loves. Meanwhile, the burning car functions as a symbol of industrialism; as Jarman says, 'I came to the ideas after I made the film, as we cut it together... The beginning had symbols of industrialism—the burning car' (O'Pray 132).⁸

Now I shall discuss how the elements of water, fire and earth contribute to the film as motifs of gentleness and the initiation of love. The element of air is also present but aurally rather than visually, being alluded to by the sound of water and the music of Coil since sound is transmitted through the air.⁹

Of the four elements, it is water that contributes most to the qualities of gentleness and refreshment in the film. As Gaston Bachelard says, 'Natural reverie will always give preference to fresh water, water that refreshes, water that quenches thirst' (Bachelard, *Water and*

⁸ Michael O'Pray quotes this from the interview by himself and Field Simon in *Afterimage*, no.12, 1985.

⁹ Peter Christopherson of Coil comments that *The Angelic Conversation* was made for Coil. It is, he says, 'my favourite of all of Derek's films, not because it was "made for me", but because it transcends the usual confines of experimental film to become a work of pure poetry. Truly, a timeless work of art' (41).

Dreams 156). In this film of dream allegory, the element of water functions to renew life in a gentle way.

In *The Romaunt of the Rose*, the Poet makes his way towards the stream thinking 'Never before had I seen that stream, which was so beautifully situated' and he washes his face there (4). Water refreshes our life and it is a symbol of new life as we find in the rite of baptism or the lines in the Old Testament such as 'He [the Lord] leadeth me beside the still waters. / He restoreth my soul' (Psalm 23). In *The Angelic Conversation*, the youth is bathing in the sea in the two scenes: one is the scene between a momentary shot of Flora-like figure with bright flowers and the ritual of cleansing the tattooed man which the two youths attend, and the other is the scene towards the end of the film when the two youths part. When the youth bathes, water functions as his gaining new life—by finding his lover and by finding that love doesn't endure forever. In another water-related scene, the youth pours water over himself with a spiral seashell. Regarding the seashell, Bachelard writes, '...it is the *formation*, not the form, that remains mysterious' (125). Because they form gradually, there is a sense in which their form reifies the stream of time.

Water is also involved in the cleansing of the tattooed man by the other youth. Concerning the tattooed man, Jarman says :

...the ritual washing of the tattooed man who looks like a king or prince, the giver of rings, carrying his crown, and sceptre. At that time I was thinking of the Anglo-Saxon poem *The Wanderer*; service willingly given, not exacted. ... 'He that has power to hurt and will do none.' (*LE* 133)

The tattooed man represents the ruler of the domain of homoerotic love, who protects and honours lovers and in return is served by them. Their relationship is analogous to that of the Anglo-Saxon king and his men in poems such as *Beowulf* and *The Wanderer*. The two youths' swearing love for each other is portrayed allegorically in the rite of cleansing the tattooed man, who in turn acts as the god of love whose task is bring them together. He is thus equivalent to the God of Love in *The Romaunt of the Rose* who encourages the Poet to seek his beloved Rose. The youth in *The Angelic Conversation* kisses the tattooed man on his knee and arm as a token of his pledge to the god, just as, in *The Romaunt of the Rose*, the Poet kisses the God of Love when he pledges loyalty to him.

The spout of water also symbolises the vital force inherent in the cosmos. It is helpful at this point to compare *The Angelic Conversation* with a film by Kenneth Anger (1927-2023), an American avant-garde filmmaker whom Jarman admired. In Anger's thirteen-minute film *Eaux d'Artifice* (1953), a woman in rococo costume is walking along paths and down flights of stairs in the gardens of the Villa d'Este in Tivoli in Italy, famous for their fountains. Shot in black-

and-white through red filters, the screen only shows us the movements of the woman and the spouting of the fountains. The movements of light, shadow, water, and the woman combine to produce a pattern at once primitive, beautiful, and gentle, a pattern suggestive of the fundamental rhythm and energy that sustains the life of the cosmos. Water both for Anger and Jarman symbolises the source of vitality.

Water is not the only element that can signify purification; so too can fire. As Jarman writes, 'Fire destroys the old, creates a place for the new' (*LE* 225). At the washing ritual, while the youth cleanses the king-like figure, the other youth holds a candle in each hand. Fire functions to purify the king just as water purifies him. In the film, however, fire symbolises not only purification but desire. There are several scenes involving fire: The youth, before encountering the other youth, walks on the quarried cliff holding a torch as if he is signalling to the other youth who as yet remains unseen. Meanwhile the other youth is holding a ball of light which reflects in the camera as if he is signalling to the first youth. Each youth uses the fire and light not to illuminate himself but for the sake of another. We can recall the myth of Prometheus, who stole the fire from Olympia to give it to human beings. As this myth shows, fire was introduced to human beings after their birth. With fire human activity is both enlarged and enhanced. Fire enables human beings to engage more fully with life. In the film fire and light correspond to youths' desire to seek each other. Steven Dillon notes that the ball of light is in fact a round mirror, which was also used in Jarman's early short experimental film, *The Art of Mirrors* (1973), with flashing in the lens of Jarman's super 8 camera in the same way as *The Angelic Conversation*. Dillon observes that the light reflected by the mirror represents desire:

The round mirror that reflects light into the camera is a technique carried over directly from *The Art of Mirrors*, but there it implied only self-conscious artifice and experimental cool. Here the light not only comments self-consciously on the light of the camera, but also performs the light of love's eye in Shakespeare's sonnets. This mirror is the mirror of homoerotic desire. (103)

We see the equivalent of light in *The Romaunt of the Rose*: a crystal at the bottom of the spring of Narcissus is the medium reflecting the object of the Poet's desire.

The imagery most closely associated with the earth in *The Angelic Conversation* involves not soil but the rock at two of the film's locations: Dancing Ledge, part of the Jurassic Coast cliffs in Dorset, and Winspit, a disused quarry also on the coastal cliffs of Dorset. Dancing Ledge also features in the film *Jubilee* as the location where, at the film's end, Queen Elizabeth and her magus John Dee return home to the sixteenth century from the 1970s. At the end of his first autobiography, *Dancing Ledge*, Jarman speaks of his fascination with the rocks of Dancing Ledge: 'I love these rocks with their emerald-green pools and sea anemones—the sea

roaring against the cliffs with their huge silent caves' (252). The cliffs with ledges are shaped in a unique way by the encroachment by the sea and by quarrying.¹⁰ The quarried cliffs at Winspit are equally striking in appearance. Until 1940 Winspit provided the stone for many prestigious buildings in London and then during World War II it was used as a naval and air base.¹¹

The cliffs, caves, quarries, and rock pools of Dancing Ledge and Winspit are 'mysterious' because the stream of time, which is longer than human history, resides in their unique geographic features. As with the spiral seashell, with which the youth pours water over himself, it is the process of their formation rather than their particular forms that Jarman finds mysterious and inspiring; the fact that they solidify the passage of time from the immemorial past to the present day. Here we can recall Jarman's early non-narrative short film, *Journey to Avebury* (1973). The film shows the village of Avebury with its stone circle, 'part of an extraordinary set of Neolithic and Bronze Age ceremonial sites.'¹² Robert Mills observes how in that film Jarman transforms our perceptions of the passage of time :

Some of Jarman's other Super 8s [than *The Angelic Conversation*] are structured as mysterious journeys, notably *Journey to Avebury* (1973), which takes viewers on a trip through a series of mostly static shots of the English countryside. The filters or film stock used in *Journey to Avebury* transform the colours of the landscape, adding to its mysterious tone... Featuring shots of Avebury's ancient standing stones, the film also slows down time, indeed literally stills it—gesturing in so doing to the stones' timeful presence. (159)

As Mills notes, Jarman is conscious of the representation of time, and his shot of dolmens with the background of filtered colour—warm yellow and orange—in *Journey to Avebury* enables us to see a different landscape from the familiar one; a landscape that discloses the accumulation of time from prehistory to the present.

Jarman's love of stones and rocks is also seen in the garden he created in the final years of his life. In the late 1980s he bought a small fisherman's hatch, Prospect Cottage, on the beach at Dungeness in Kent, and for the first time in his life was able to create a garden. The beach at Dungeness has shingle and flints. Jarman collected stones from the beach and made them a prominent feature of his garden. He writes: 'The stones, especially the circles, remind me of

¹⁰ 'Dancing Ledge // Swanage' *Dorset Guide*.

<https://www.dorsets.co.uk/attractions/dancing-ledge.htm>.

¹¹ 'Winspit Quarry // Worth Matravers' *Dorset Guide*.

<https://www.dorsets.co.uk/attractions/winspit-quarry.htm>.

¹² 'Avebury' *English Heritage*.

<https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/avebury/>.

dolmens, standing stones. They have the same mysterious power to attract' (*Derek Jarman's Garden* 24), and he invested the stones in his garden with 'the power of those at Avebury' (*Garden* 47).

The final image that Jarman uses as a symbol of purification, however, is not one of the four elements but flowers. The youth, emerging from the cave which symbolised the ritual of love, stares at the rippling surface of the sea. The shot of a pink waterlily is superimposed on that of the surface of water, and the scene is displaced by that of the garden of a manor house, where the youth is fanning himself. The scene is reminiscent of the moment when, in *The Romaunt of the Rose*, the Poet sees the Rose reflected in the crystal at the bottom of the spring, but unlike the Rose, the waterlily does not represent desire. Jarman says: '*The Angelic Conversation* is gentle. There is that hovering, external violence, but at the end of the film it's characterised by the blossom, which obliterates the radar. The blossom takes over' (*LE* 134). The youth gazes at the pool of waterlilies absent-mindedly while fanning himself, while the other youth absorbs himself in smelling hawthorns. The flowers represent gentleness and tolerance which heal their pain of losing their love. Jarman writes, 'A garden, where poor wayward humanity is capable of being swayed by emotions which make for peace and beauty' (*Modern Nature* 10).

The final shot of the other youth smelling the hawthorns can be regarded as Jarman's homage to his mother Elizabeth. The shot in which the youth fans himself is also informed by Jarman's memory of his mother; as Jarman says concerning the scene, 'I am fascinated by fans, my mother always carried a fan, I used to buy them for her' (*LE* 143). The book *The Last of England* includes three old photographs in which she appears with flowers. In the first photograph she, the young Jarman and his younger sister pick flowers in a field (20); In the second, she stands beside a rose tree and touches a rose (123); and in the third she holds roses in her hands and smiles at her children, who also smile (154). The second photograph in particular finds an echo in the shot in which the other youth smells the hawthorn as he stands beside it and holds its blossoms to his face. The photograph of Jarman's mother touching a rose evokes the heavenly state where time is transcended and desire sublimated. All *The Angelic Conversation's* elemental imagery, its images of water, fire, and earth, is likewise oriented towards that state.

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