

# **How Subcultural Women are represented in British Cinema between 1965-1985**

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## Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to investigate how subcultural female characters are represented in British Cinema in 1965-1985, to do so, a close textual analysis is conducted. During this time period, massive societal changes in Britain were happening in particular a liberation of women. At the same time, subculture was finally being recognised in the academic field by the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Culture. In 1965-1985, the most prominent subcultures were the mod and skinhead cultures, who were the first to allow women to be accepted into their culture. But how does this all translate to British cinema? That is one of the aims of this thesis.

This project takes a close textual analysis approach considering four different perspectives; archetype theory (Schmidt, 2007), male and female gaze theories (Mulvey, 1973, Jacobsson, 1999, Dirse, 2013), British national cinema conventions and finally film form and style. The case studies chosen include *Blow Up* (Antonioni, 1966), *The Girl on a Motorcycle* (Cardiff, 1968), *Twinky* (Donner, 1970), *The Secret of Dorian Gray* (Dallamano, 1970), *That'll be the Day* (Whatham, 1973), *Jubilee* (Jarman, 1978), *Bloody Kids* (Frears, 1979) and *Oi! For England* (Smith, 1982).

From these different approaches, the thesis' overarching argument is that female subcultural characters are negatively portrayed as the new modern woman of Britain in British cinema in order to reinforce traditional stereotypes by using these characters as warnings to the viewers, as each subcultural character dies or is punished.

## **Declaration**

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed A.Thomas (candidate)

Date 30/09/2023

## **STATEMENT 1**

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Where correction services have been used, the extent and nature of the correction is clearly marked in a footnote(s). Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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## **STATEMENT 2:**

I hereby give consent for my thesis, if accepted, to be available for electronic sharing

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## Introduction

Much research has been done around gender theory and British cinema from the 1960s to the 1980s (see Cacqueray, 1995; Harper, 2000; Landy, 2010; Williams, 2010). However, very little of this research has taken subcultural identities into consideration. Britain was revolutionising in many ways: women's liberation; British New Wave cinema and the introduction of new subcultures such as the mods and skinheads – the main focus of this research project. As Britain entered the 1960s, an air of hope and innovation led to a new modern Britain and a new youth culture: the mods. The mods personified the new ideals of Britain at the time becoming the 'poster boys' of Britain, which eventually led to a new branch of British cinema: the 'swinging London' films. The London mods' vibrant clothing, modern thinking and carefree attitudes were the tone that Britain wanted to set for the rest of the country and did so, in part, through cinema. Towards the end of the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s, however, the mod culture died out, paving the way for the notorious British skinheads. In comparison to the mods, the skinheads had less of a positive relationship with British Cinema, often shown as vicious male juveniles working through a moral dilemma. Then almost every decade after the subculture's prime years, a hit mod or skinhead film was released for instance: *Quadrophenia* (Roddam, 1979), *This Is England* (Meadows, 2006), *Brighton Rock* (Joffé, 2010) and *The Pebble and the Boy* (Green, 2021)<sup>1</sup> coinciding with the years of each subculture's revival. Therefore, with British subculture being such a recurring theme of British cinema, it is beneficial to explore how subculture is represented in the film industries by a close textual analysis of some chosen case studies, listed below.

The aim of this thesis is to explore how subcultural women are represented in British cinema between 1965-1985. The case studies have been selected from 1965-1985 because the

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<sup>1</sup> Just to name a few, there are many other well-known films of subculture.

mod culture began during the beginning of these decades and then transformed to the skinhead culture by the 1970s (Hebdige, 1976b:148), then dying out or reviving (in the mods case) by the early 1980s. These dates also match up with the subculture's presence in British cinema and so is the best period to analysis for the following project. The following project argues that the mod and skinhead characters in British cinema at this time, are used to portray the new modern woman of Britain and this portrayal was not a positive representation. These findings add to pre-existing discourse as they show that even when using characters that could represent a new positive 'other', they are ultimately used as a warning away from a different type of life. It therefore shows that British cinema is reaffirming existing stereotypes and portrayals of ordinary women, even in non-ordinary women.

This project focuses on gender and femininity exclusively because of the range of representation of women in British cinema during the 1960s to 1980s. This was a period in which British women were experiencing forms of liberation because of the birth control pill and the expansion of abortion access to all women, not just married women. More women than ever were going to university, gaining their own voice on political and social matters. Women in British cinema<sup>2</sup> during these decades is a well-researched area of academia (see Cacqueray, 1995; Harper, 2000; Landy, 2010; Williams, 2010). However, there has been little work into how subculture can affect the perception and representation of women in British cinema. As such, the following project aims to investigate the representation of women in British cinema, during the height of female liberation, to investigate how subculture can be used to portray an alternative to traditional representation amongst women. And if so, how is the differencing images of women represented, positively or negatively? This thesis will therefore also question if subcultural women are used as 'other' to the typical

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<sup>2</sup> including in *Swinging London* films.

women and if the subculture is used to perpetuate the new modern woman aesthetic. At face value, subculture provides the opportunity to explore more radical than conservative perspectives on gender stereotypes, but do they choose to take this opportunity? This project will also investigate how aspects such as genre and film style affect the way subcultural female characters are represented? How national ideals and norms form representations of femininity and masculinity? And the extent to which subcultural female characters have agency on screen. The above will be investigated by using critical frameworks from archetype theory and feminist film theory, employing detailed analysis of range of case studies. These include: *Blow Up* (Antonioni, 1966), *The Girl on a Motorcycle* (Cardiff, 1968), *Twinky* (Donner, 1970), *The Secret of Dorian Gray* (Dallamano, 1970), *That'll be the Day* (Whatham, 1973), *Jubilee* (Jarman, 1978), *Bloody Kids* (Frears, 1979) and *Oi! For England* (Smith, 1982). In order to find the case studies above, an extensive list of British films surrounding the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, was generated by browsing the BFI archives, filmographies of pre-existing research, as well as exploring subculture blogs to determine what the different subcultures had claimed as their own<sup>3</sup>. From there, each film had to meet three key criteria to be included in the final set of films. To begin the film must include a prominent display of subculture, both in terms of aesthetics and engagement with subcultural past times. The engagement in subcultural hobbies was another piece of criteria because the fashion and aesthetic of the mod and the swinging sixties was identical, therefore it was incredibly important to distinguish between popular culture and subculture. Another key factor of each case study was how much screen time female subculture characters have, because a film like *Made in Britain* (Clarke, 1982), where female representation is only present in the form of older authoritative figures, would not be well suited for this project.

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<sup>3</sup> Blogs and research used includes subculturelist.com (2024), Life, Technology, and More (2013), Youth Subcultures in Fiction, Film and Other Media (Bentley, Johnson and Zieleniec, 2018), The Movie DB (2024), Flavorwire (2014)).

The case studies chosen cover a range of genre and narratives therefore each film will typically frame the female characters differently, but in three case studies that is not the case for subcultural women; subcultural women in thrillers are framed the same as in social realism films. A range of cinematic techniques are also used in every case study, and each technique frames the subcultural woman differently. However the same overall negative representation is apparent. By pairing archetype theories (Jung, 1991, Enns, 1994, Schmidt, 2007) with this conclusion, the different types of negative representation can be distinguished.

Following a detailed literature review, the thesis is divided into four main chapters, as follows.

Chapter One, 'The Artemis and the Aphrodite as Subcultural Women', discusses the prominent archetypes used to portray subcultural women in some of the case studies. The chapter uses Carl Jung's archetype theory (1991) as well as theories later built upon Jung (1991), including Carolyn Zerbe Enns (1994) and Victoria Lynn Schmidt (2007), to examine all female archetypes present in each case study. Overall, this chapter focuses on the female characters' personalities and behaviours. This first chapter, therefore, works as a baseline for the other chapters, as it investigates the foundations that each character is built upon. After an investigation of archetypes, the chapter then gives an explanation for the predominant use of the 'Aphrodite' archetype by referencing marketing posters of the films *The Girl on a Motorcycle* and *Blow Up* with the introduction of the 'sexploitation' industry in Britain. The sexploitation genre was at its peak in the same decades that the case studies are from and there is a direct correlation between the heightened sexual appeal of British cinema in this decade and how subcultural women are represented in cinema as nearly all mod films can be classified as sexploitation films. Later chapters build upon the forementioned topics by

providing a more thorough investigation into sexualisation of girlhood, new types of women in British Cinema and how colour is not only used in marketing to construct meaning.

Continuing from sexploitation, Chapter Two carries the theme of sexualisation and archetypes by analysing how subcultural women's sexuality is portrayed on screen and if it is any different to typical mainstream female sexuality. Goddard (2000) argues that the archetypes function as instructions for the male and female gaze, each gender acts how the other gender expects us to. Therefore, it is necessary to gain an understanding of how the male and female gaze work in the case studies of this project. This chapter focuses on costume analysis, dialogue and narrative to explore how the gazes are used to sexualise but also empower the female characters. For example, the chapter argues that in *The Secret of Dorian Gray*, despite the two female characters wearing similar sexy costumes, one's sexuality is considered negative, as she uses it to manipulate men, and another's considered positive because she 'gave it up' for love – the right reason. This chapter also touches upon girlhood because of a repeated sexualisation of young schoolgirls or young women dressing like even younger girls to be desirable to other men.

We then move on from sexuality and girlhood to exploring the relationship between British cinema and subcultural women in Chapter Three. I compare how women are depicted in these films against traditional gender conventions of British Cinema. The chapter's main focus is on comparing the infamous Swinging London films against British films from other regions to evaluate different depictions of the women's role in Britain. Unlike the other chapters, the third will discuss all the case studies used throughout the entirety of the project, to gauge a greater sense of the variety of subcultural women across Britain. The chapter discusses all the changing conventions emerging in British cinema surrounding the new social expectations of the modern women. These conventions include the women's role to men in cinema; women's relationships, both to men and other women; and women's

perceived independence. Chapter three argues that the case studies chosen do reflect the changing conventions of British cinema through the subcultural female characters. Although, it also adds that there is a distinction between swinging London films and other British regions, that is that the swinging London films positively pursue these new ideals whereas outside of London the new images of women are not accepted.

Finally, Chapter Four looks more closely at film form and style and their impact on subcultural gender representation. Continuing to look at the changing landscape of British Cinema of chapter three, this chapter focuses specifically on the use of colour, as aspect which has been underlying in each chapter. For example, in chapter one, when analysing marketing materials, the darkness of Rebeccas leather is used against an extremely feminine pink rose print, to illustrate her two conflicting sides of wild child and hopeless romantic. Colour is an important factor to analyse when discussing representation, especially during this period as colour film was relatively new and therefore experimental for many directors. A deep dive into the techniques of Jack Cardiff to the monetisation of colour from Derek Jarman is therefore essential to understand how gender construction is solidified by the use of colour to create a clearer understanding of the overarching question, how women in subculture are represented in British Cinema in 1965-1985. This final chapter takes a different approach to the case studies and for that reason rounds out the whole project as it ties up some conclusions made from previous chapters that use different analytical methods.

Overall, this project draws upon the four different methodologies to argue that subcultural female characters were used in British cinema to portray a negative viewpoint of the new modern woman. This builds upon previous work of British cinema and feminist film theories as the project investigates existing theories of British cinema at that time but from a new viewpoint (a gendered subcultural approach), which has brought forward new insights around representations of women in this period. The project shows the contradicting images

of women through each chapter as it begins with a positive representation of subcultural female women by using the archetype approach but then as it progresses concludes the exact opposite.

## **Literature Review**

There are currently some gaps in the field of feminist film history, in which this project belongs, in regard to subcultural representation. So far, there is extensive work from a sociological approach on subcultures. However, as Angela McRobbie (2000) argues and strongly evidences there is a lack of work regarding femininity within such masculine communities. Furthermore, McRobbie begins to ask important questions such as: should we be evaluating girls in subcultures in the same way as boys in subcultures? McRobbie's observation is important for this project in particular as a similar issue applies in the field of British cinema history, in that when subculture is researched in film (Martinez, 2016, Glynn, 2018, Wiener, 2018) ; it is very rarely a gendered approach and even rarer to be a feminist film study. In addition, there are multiple publications on Woman's British Cinema (see Bell and Williams, 2010, Harper, 2000, Hollinger, 2010, Thornham, 1999) but far less regarding Women's cinema and subcultures. In addition, when there is research regarding Women's cinema and subcultures or feminist film theory and subcultures, the critic often overlooks the subcultural element and analyses the female characters in regard to general societal standards (see Harper, 2000 and Monk, 2010). With this project, therefore, I intend to analyse the female characters in reference to the subculture with which they identify.

### ***Previous work on chosen case study films***

The main films that will be covered in this project are *Blow Up* (Antonioni, 1966), *The Girl on a Motorcycle* (Cardiff, 1968), *Twinky* (Donner, 1970), *The Secret of Dorian Gray* (Dallamano, 1970), *That'll be the Day* (Whatham, 1973), *Jubilee* (Jarman, 1978), *Bloody Kids* (Frears, 1979) and *Oi! For England* (Smith, 1982). A range of scholarship has been produced on these films from a variety of different perspectives. For example, *Blow Up*

has been discussed in relation to art cinema and its use of metaphor, celebrating Antonioni's cinematic techniques (Francis, 1985, Lev, 1989). As well as being discussed as a significant swinging London film and the genres obsession with death and desire (Deveraux, 2008) Another way one of the chosen films (*Bloody Kids*) has been analysed is as a 'youth subculture film' by critic, Wiener (2018). However, Wiener's essay focuses on the social realism aspect and the discourse at the time that they were produced. Monk's essay (2014) investigates how punk, and history collide in Derek Jarman's *Jubilee* (1978). The essay considers how Jarman uses a historical figure<sup>4</sup> to critique the present. Monk has also explored Brian Gibson's *Breaking Glass* (1980)<sup>5</sup>, in her essay she not only discusses the content of the film but also the context surrounding it (how it was produced, marketed and what additional content was created) in order to create a well-rounded understanding of the woman as subject in this post-punk film. Whilst the theme of Monk's essay is very similar to this project, the focus is different. I intend to interrogate how the woman's role in their specific subculture is portrayed in cinema. For example, if using *Breaking Glass* my research would explore how Hazel O'Connors character, Kate, functions within the punk society and how this is represented as opposed to how her character is represented within general society.

### ***Defining Subcultures***

This project will put these existing film studies, specifically feminist film studies, in dialogue with works from sociology on subcultures and how they function as a community. In the 1970s, the Birmingham school was at the centre of culture and social studies. Many works came from the school including Hall and Jefferson (1976), McRobbie (1976, 2000), Hebdige (1979), Corrigan (1979) and Wills (1988). Earlier work from Hall and Jefferson's edited

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<sup>4</sup> Queen Elizabeth I

<sup>5</sup> Although this film is not analysed in this essay, Monks methods are useful for my own project

collection of sociological essays regarding subcultures (1976), confirms the ideas Hebdige explores in his monograph surrounding the borders between different subcultures. However, Hebdige's study differs as it begins to dive into specific recurring themes between the different subcultures and is structured accordingly. For example, there are chapters regarding 'The Cultural Meaning of Drug Use' (Willis, 1976), 'A Strategy for Living: Black Music and White Subcultures' (Chambers, 1976), and 'Girls and Subcultures: An Exploration' (McRobbie, 1976). Hebdige's monograph *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (1979) is essential to this project with other supporting research from the other academics of the Birmingham school, mentioned above. *Subculture* fundamentally breaks down the different British subcultures of the 1970s; discussing and dissecting what makes each subculture different and (sometimes) similar. This research provides my project with rough guidelines as to what is a mod, what is a rudeboy, what is a skinhead and what is a punk within the time period in which Hebdige was writing. The differences between each subculture are important to understand given that many British subcultures of the 1970s shared a variety of aspects. For example, both mod and skinhead take aspects of rudeboy culture and both skinhead and punk have relatively similar attitudes and values. Hebdige's study is arguably the most relevant study about British subcultures for this project. His study not only discusses the specifics of British subcultures of the 1970s (mods and skinheads in particular), but it is also written during the same time period. It is not a retrospective piece, as are the case studies of my project.

Mod and skinheads are the primary subcultures for this project. In order to fully understand both, an understanding of surrounding subcultures like the rudeboys and punks is also needed, as the subcultures borrow aspects from other subcultures and define themselves against one another. The general discourse (and what will be used as definition for mod within this project) is that the mods were a working-class subculture, who tried to distance

themselves from the traditional working-class image (Hebdige, 1976, Brake, 1980). The mods were born from an increase in consumerism, due to a rise in income from part time and summer jobs (Savage, 2015: 41). They often enjoyed the more luxurious things of life and were heavily influenced by other countries' fashion and cultural aspects and recognised globally (Feldman, 2009: V). Key characteristics of the mods included: Italian sharp suits, "French crew" haircuts, Vespas, heavy drug (in particular Amphetamine) and alcohol use, and a love for R 'n' B music. Females, according to McRobbie (2000:19), were allowed to participate in this subculture because the fashion and attitude could be easily transitioned between work, leisure and family time, without complaints of parents or significant others. The fashion consisted of the typical swinging 1960s images, with Twiggy as the icon for mod women. Typically the style was miniskirts, A-line dresses and small kitten heels (see fig.7) Within 'The Sociology of Youth Cultures and Youth Subcultures', Brake (1980: 75) expands upon Hebdige's work by suggesting that the mod subculture is separated into four different subgroups: the art school high camp version, mainstream mods, scooter boys and hard mods. Brake's observation is important to this research project as he observes that another subculture, the skinheads, develop from the 'hard mods'. This knowledge is important for my project given its focus upon films produced during 1965-1985. It is possible that there will be characters which show the transition from hard mod to skinhead within this time frame. By focusing on how this impacts female characters specifically, my research will potentially be able to add new information about this particular subgroup and its gender dynamics as they were represented in contemporary mainstream media.

The skinhead subculture is not as well researched as the mods during their own era; with most in-depth writings being from John Clarke (1973a, 1973b, 1976) (although both Hebdige, 1976, and Brake, 1980, briefly discuss the culture while giving general background on subcultures). More recently, however, academic research is being published regarding the

relationship between skinheads and neo-Nazism and racism (see Pollard, 2016) as well as studies exploring the complexity of the subculture and how the group cannot be understood as on negative homogeneous unit (see Borgeson, 2003, Sarabia and Shriver, 2010, Borgeson and Valeri, 2017). In fact (in terms of British skinheads) there are now more academic studies suggesting that being racist and homophobic was not a definite characteristic of people in the skinhead culture. For example, Borgeson (2003) recognises that, similar to the mods, the skinhead subculture can be divided into four different types – traditional, neo-Nazi, SHARPS and gay skins. This observation is relatively new for subcultural studies and has influenced work on skinhead since 2003 as it offers a new perspective on the seemingly heterogeneous subculture. Borgeson's findings are an important aspect to consider while conducting my research, because, without this knowledge, a skinhead character could have been disregarded as they did not suit the typical ideology of the skinhead subculture. The traditional ideology of the skinheads, according to the Birmingham school, is active racism, homophobia and violent tendencies including that of "paki-bashing" and "queer-bashing" (Clarke, 1976: 102). Brake (1980) also adds that skinheads are typically more associated with racism than homophobia because they held typical views and opinions of the gay community as mainstream society, therefore they didn't deviate from mainstream ideology. However, the current discourse suggests that racist skinheads only account for a small fraction of the subculture (Sarabia and Shriver, 2010).

The mods and skinheads were both heavily influenced by rudeboy, and black working-class culture. During the 1960s, the hard mods began dressing like and listening to music from rudeboy culture (Hebdige, 1976b:148). Style items that the hard mods adopted included the iconic pork pie hat, ill-fitting ankle swinging trousers (although this was not purposeful in the rudeboy culture and was likely hand me downs due to poverty), similarly with short legged Levis and boots and braces (Hebdige, 1976b:148). Music, in particular ska, was an

integral part of both rudeboy and hard mod culture and led to a ‘liaison between white and black culture’ (Hebdige, 1976b: 148). Ska tracks became frequently banned on public transmitters and so ‘the music remained a secret’ (Hebdige, 1976b: 149). Therefore, the only way to access the music was through subcultural interactions and at local clubs, according to Hebdige (1976b: 149). Towards the end of the 1960s, came the skinheads, who emulated the rudeboy culture even more so than the hard mods. Not only did they wear extra stylistic items (for example the long open coats), but the skinheads also adapted mannerisms from rudeboy culture. The skinheads used the same ‘loose limbed walk’ and would use the same colloquial terms and dances of the rudeboy culture (Hebdige, 1976b: 149).

Another similar British subculture during 1970s and 1980s is punk. Punk was another working-class subculture of the 1970s and 1980s, however the style was relatively different to that of the mods and skinheads. Punks would wear what appeared to be ‘dirty’ scruffy clothes, chains, and have a preference for slim hollow cheeks/faces in order to emulate working class culture (Hebdige, 1979:63). As with the hard mods and skinheads, punk turned to the sounds of reggae as they sang of alienation, which the white youth resonated with at this time. Unlike before, the punks stood beside reggae and did not attempt to adopt it as their own (Hebdige, 1979:68), as did the mods and skinheads. Punk bands wore reggae slogans, and the whole punk culture supported the Rock Against Racism movement. It is important for my project to understand outside influences on the chosen subcultures, as some female characters may display elements from different subcultures. As example in *Bloody Kids*, a nameless female character dresses as and acts as a skinhead but wears dramatic make-up and has long hair.

### ***The Women's Role within the Subcultures***

Sarabia and Shriver (2010) carried out primary research in current skinhead communities examining different fractions of the subculture. During their research, they determined that the skinhead woman's fashion "reflected strength and confidence" and often had strong female idols such as Rosie the Riveter. The women of the skinhead movement would wear dress consistent with the men's dress code, which was highly polished Dr Martens, wide leg jeans -preferably Levi's - with braces attached and plain/ striped/ gingham shirts – typically Ben Sherman – and a buzzcut (although women would still have a fringe). This information is relevant to my project as it pinpoints how traditional skinhead women would dress and therefore makes it easier to identify them in film.

Whilst the above information reflects on the aspects of women in skinhead culture retrospectively, there is less information published about women within historical skinhead cultures during the 1970s and their representation within film specifically. McRobbie, therefore, is a key figure for this project because her work offers one of the few sustained studies focussed exclusively on women within these subcultures from a feminist perspective. McRobbie began researching about girls and subcultures during the 1970s and was considered a part of the Birmingham school. In one of her earliest studies 'Girls and Subcultures' (with Garber, 1976), McRobbie explores why girls are absent from any other literature on subcultures. McRobbie questions "Are girls, in fact, ... *really* not active or present in youth sub-cultures? Or has something in the way this kind of research is done rendered them invisible?" (1976:209) This is also a theme which recurs in McRobbie's later studies. In her later work, McRobbie (2000) adds to her earlier work, continuing to suggest that, when studying feminism and youth cultures, we should be applying a different strategy: looking from a different angle and asking different questions.

An important difference between McRobbie's work and this project resides with its theoretical framework. My own project approaches the subject from a film studies perspective with help from sociological research to understand the cultures it investigates, whereas McRobbie's (1976, 2000) work is solely a sociological approach with references to magazines in some chapters. This means that McRobbie's work will be vital in understanding the relationship between women and subcultures as they existed historically but is less useful in mounting an analysis of how the iconography and ideology of a subculture is represented within fictional screen media.

### *Defining girlhood in subcultures*

An interesting aspect of McRobbie's work is the distinction she makes between girls and boys and men and women. Arguably the distinction can be considered more accurate for certain subcultures - like the mods, who were primarily pre-pubescent or teenagers – but less so for skinheads or rudies. The use of 'girls' therefore requires an understanding of girlhood as well as womanhood. As early as 1980, McRobbie was reviewing the availability (or lack thereof) of youth subculture studies which considered girlhood alongside boyhood. In her essay 'Settling Accounts with Subcultures: A Feminist Critique', McRobbie subtly criticises Hebdige's 'Subculture: The Meaning of Style' (1979) and Willis' 'Learning to Labour' (1977) because of the extreme male bias. However, McRobbie (2006:55) does not discredit these academic works and claims them as "the most sophisticated accounts to date" of youth culture studies. Instead, McRobbie conducts a re-examination of Hebdige and Willis' accounts with a theoretical feminist approach. From her cross-examination, McRobbie concludes that the subcultures are male-coded and that women are discouraged from joining these cultures. When McRobbie's analyses Willis' work, she notices that an extreme aggression towards women is brought to the surface. Participants of Willis' study had no

regard for women, from using violent innuendos such as having a “good maul” to stating their life goal as sleeping with as many women as possible (2006: 58). When conducting my own research, the sexualisation of women in subcultures is important to understand, so that any findings are not dismissed as films dramatizing narratives or confused with supporting contemporary mainstream media ideology.

Another key aspect of subcultures is the use of alcohol and drugs. According to McRobbie (1980:63), each subculture used different substances: alcohol for the teds, rockers and skinhead, and speed and other pills for mods, punks and rudies. However, it was not known for girls and women to partake in substance abuse, publicly. Whilst their male counterparts indulged in substance abuse (which considered them to be a part of the community), women were warned off alcohol and drugs because of the damage substance abuse can do to their physical appearance and because of the sexual dangers they could be putting themselves into (McRobbie, 2006: 63). The warning and dangers of substance abuse are translated to cinema, in the sense that the film portrays the young female characters indulging in substance abuse to then find dangers awaiting them. For example, in *Blow Up*, all the young models are either high or drunk, which leads to some uncomfortable scenes of the photographer taking advantage not just sexually but by taking control of them; ordering them to stay still and not move while he goes on break for example. On the other hand, in films like *Jubilee* substance abuse amongst women is shown in the same way as substance abuse amongst men. In *Jubilee*, it is a social exercise and a way to pass the time, not a danger to women.

The 1960s-1980s was a time of social and political change in Britain especially for women: the pill and abortion were legalised, more women were going to university and as a result they were becoming more politically involved (Purwin, Burke and Tinkler, 2022:5). ‘Teenage Kicks: Girls growing up in Britain 1956-1974’ is an online zine showcasing a

collection of stories about people's own experiences growing up in this time period. The zine follows 8 girls from all over the UK (including rural and urban places like Bangor, London and Portsmouth). The zine provides new information for my own project as the stories included span past London, unlike other resources collected for example McRobbie comments that Willis' and Hebdige's work (and therefore her own) focuses on London and so are limited geographically. Furthermore, the zine allows insight not only to how academics saw gender changes and girlhood in the 1960s/1970s, but also as to how people experienced and reacted to gender changes and girlhood themselves. This added knowledge of girlhood during the time period, will help to fill in gaps of information from previous resources as it is an insight into the private spheres of the girls in the 1960s/1970s. Some common themes from the zine include being engaged/ marrying young (between 16-20 years old), being pushed academically by teachers but then experiencing misogyny in the workplace, and working young, about 14/15 years of age (Purwin, Burke and Tinkler, 2022). The majority of girls in the zine who married young was the typical boy meets girl young and fall madly in love story.

However, two girls' stories grab attention more than the others. The first is Pamela and her experience with a mod. Pamela's parents believed that her education was not important as she would just marry and be a housewife later in life. So, when she met Mick the Mod at 18, she felt pressured into marrying him. Soon after, Mick became manipulative, possessive and abusive, likely caused by his excessive use of alcohol (as was common in the mod community). Pamela was only able to leave the relationship, after 6 long years, because of the Divorce Act of 1969 (Purwin, Burke, Tinkler, 2022: 12-13). Pamela's story is important to my own research because the story shows what happened to women in the privacy of their homes and relates to McRobbie's (2006: 58) analyses of Willis' work. These aspects are

important to understand for my own project because some of the case studies, such as *Bloody Kids*, *Blow Up*, *That'll be the Day* deal with this subject.

### ***Relevant Approaches in Feminist Film Theory and Feminist Film Histography***

In order to produce a close analysis of the representation of women within skinhead and mod culture on film during 1965-1985, this project will combine existing research from sociology and cultural studies with methodological tools from feminist film theory (Mulvey, 1973, Schmidt, 2007) and feminist film historiographies (Harper, 2000, Bell and Williams, 2010, Hollinger, 2012).

Harper's approach is essential for this project as she focuses only on British cinema and leads the reader from decade to decade in order to understand how different events led to other events. Sue Harper's *Women in British Cinema* (2000) discusses the typical female roles during each decade of British cinema from the 1930s to the 1980s. For the 1960s, Harper (2000:102) determined that female characters would usually fit two archetypes: 'the keepers of the flame (safe but dull) and the Courtesans (willing penetrates but heartless)'. Furthermore, Harper recognises that censorship during the 1960s was 'shifting radically' and could therefore dramatically change content of cinema (2000:107). She further explains that cinema created a myth about the swinging sixties of which portrays girls as free and promiscuous as the boys, observing that the young girls' knickers were visible (due to their extremely short miniskirts) symbolising their flexible morality (Harper, 2000:102). However, Harper also argues that images of women in the 1960s varied and were sometimes liberal. As example, Hammer films portrayed women as being worshipped and powerful whilst the *Carry On* (Thomas, 1958-92) franchise (after Talbot Rothwell took over writing from Norman Hudis in 1963) was hyper focused on sex and that the female characters play an active part in the pursuit. Hollinger (2012) adds that in films produced during 1960s and 1970s, there is an increase in on screen violence towards women, particularly in the horror genre (Thornham, 1999). From Harper's (2000), Hollinger's (2012) and Thornham's (1999)

studies, one consistency presents itself, that is how genre, or a branded franchise can dictate how women are represented in a film.

As well as the above examples, Melanie Bell and Melanie Williams' (2010) edited collection, *British Women's Cinema* is integral to my project as it begins to introduce the theme of subculture into British cinema using gender as a theoretical approach. Chapters 8, 9 and 10 are most important as these cover the same decades as this project. In chapter 8, Marcia Landy (2010:111-112) discusses the transnationality of swinging London films, Landy focuses on the similarities between a changing Britain and a changing Italy, which were both undergoing economical and technological advancements, which in turn encouraged more Italians to migrate across Italy and spread the trends of Italian fashion, transport, and office appliances. This chapter is extremely important for my third chapter as it also discusses the changing trends in British and co-European productions. Chapter 9 of *British Women's Cinema* (Bell and Williams, 2010) is authored by Sue Harper and has previously been discussed above. Chapter 10 is a contextual analysis of Brian Gibson's *Breaking Glass* (1980) which again has been reviewed already within this chapter. Melanie Williams is an expert in women in British cinema history, her essay in *A Companion to Irish and British Cinema* (2019) covers the 1950s and the 1960s of British cinema history. The chapter covers the transition from one decade to the next and encouraged methodologies were used in this project, for example the introduction of colour and sexual intercourse on screen.

### *The Woman's Role according to Genre Films*

An understanding of codes and conventions of individual genres is therefore important for my project, because characters may be portrayed differently purely because of genre and not whether or not they are in a subculture or mainstream. Genres identified in this research project include, for example social realism, crime, coming of age, drama and cult film. The coming-of-age genre in British cinema can be defined as 'a story in which a child or a teenager reaches a critical turning point or event that results in a loss of childhood innocence' (Lort in Maslin, 2018:52). Typically, for western societies, the critical turning point is that of a sexual nature (Maslin, 2018:53.). Furthermore, Maslin states that the young female protagonists, of coming-of-age films, will be equipped with 'character traits traditionally associated with masculinity such as physical strength and sexual aggression' (2018:54).

Another genre that is included in my project is social realism. Lay considers the early 1960s and early 1980s as important time periods for social realism in British Cinema (2018:2-3). Lay continues to discuss the different characteristics of social realism in British cinema, including a link between character and place so that ordinary life can be explored in a naturalist way (2018:9). Another key convention is for social realism films to explore complex social issues, especially in times of conflict or crisis (Lay, 2018:9).

There is another genre, of which the 1970s is a key time period, that is the 'cult film genre' (Mathijs and Sexton, 2020:2). During the 1970s and 1980s, academics began publishing about cult cinema, observing viewing habits of audiences, instead of the aesthetics of the film. A surge in viewing of old Hollywood films, low budget indie films and art cinema lead to a 'counter-culture audience' (Mathijs and Sexton, 2020:2). Mathijs and Sexton identify key elements of cult cinema to be 'strange and weird aesthetics; transgressive content; heightened intertextual self-awareness' (2020:2).

In addition to the above genres, the crime genre is a recurring theme in my case studies. Allen, Livingstone and Reiner (1998:58) define the crime genre as the main narrative following an investigation or commission of a crime and that the protagonist is either a criminal or a professional working in the criminal justice system (however amateur investigators are included for example the character Hemmings from *Blow Up*). Furthermore, according to Allen, Livingstone and Reiner (1998: 60-61), the 1970s was the period with the highest amount of crime content in other genres. Within my own research project, the film case studies chosen cross different genres but contain characters, which from a sociological approach, are considered extremely violent. Furthermore, the above research on genre in British cinema will be used to differentiate genre between the films in order to see if women are represented differently because of genre.

Overall, this project will draw together all aspects of the literature above to provide a close textual analysis of the case studies. Sociological approaches help determine whether or not cinema is reluctant to show certain women on screen as the viewer will see a different image of the subculture on screen, for example cinemas inability to translate the masculinity of the skinhead subculture onto female skinheads. It uses feminist film theories and historiographies of Mulvey (1973), Schmidt (2007), Williams (2005, 2010, 2019) and Harper (2000) in order to determine typical portrayals of women in British cinema between the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. The chosen theories will create a comparison against the subcultural characters to prove that they are represented in a different way to typical women. Arguably, this is the best approach for this project as it is then not merely suggesting how subcultures are represented against each other but against the mainstream women. These frameworks allow me to determine that the subcultural female characters are presented differently to the ordinary woman. Determining that subcultural women represent the new

modern woman of Britain adds to pre-existing critical debates surrounding the changing images of women in British cinema during this period, 1965-1985.

The first chapter begins the argument by predominately using Schmidt's archetype theory to suggest that the subcultural characters are either hypersexualised or are experimenting with their sexuality, which reflects the societal changes of Britain in the 1960s. This chapter also discusses how the mod and skinhead sexuality within the case studies is used to market the film to different audiences. Chapter two then builds upon the sexualisation of the subcultural characters by using the male gaze theory (Mulvey, 1973) and the female gaze theories (Jacobsson, 1999, Dirse, 2013). Chapter three deviates from sexuality by using the gendered conventions of British cinema to interpret how the subcultural female characters play the typical women's role in cinema. This is achieved by investigating how women's relationships are with men and each other, gendered roles in the narrative, and the perceived independence women seemed to have gained in subculture. Finally, chapter four finishes by using film form and style approaches to analyse colour and its meaning to construct subcultural female characters. The final chapter concludes the project by reaffirming and building upon the conclusions of all three previous chapters.

## **Chapter 1: The Artemis and the Aphrodite as Subcultural Women**

Chapter One analyses the surface layer of representation in the case studies chosen, it'll be focusing on the subculture female characters behaviour and personality traits by using archetype theory. Archetypes are a part of our unconscious, according to Carl Jung, and therefore are naturally present in visual cultures including film. Jung suggested that the unconscious was separated into two sections the personal unconscious and the collective unconscious (Enns, 1994: 127). The personal unconscious is where our own ideas of the world live based on our own personal experiences, whereas the collective unconscious consists of archetypes, primordial images, myths, and universal symbols to help us understand and perceive the world around us (Enns, 1994: 127). Archetypes differ to stereotypes as archetypes are decided upon by society and are essentially 'blueprints' for personality whereas stereotypes are personal opinions developed from personal experiences (Schmidt, 2007: 10). Jung originally labelled the main archetypes as the great mother; father; child; God; old wise man; old wise woman; trickster; devil; and the hero (Han, 2019: 14). Woogler and Woogler then build upon the Jungian archetypes, in 1984, by using goddesses from Greek mythology (Enns, 1994: 129). The seven goddesses include Aphrodite; Artemis; Athena; Demeter; Hera; Hestia; Isis and Persephone (Enns, 1994: 129). The goddess categories are then further expanded by Schmidt (2007) who not only adds a goddess but also how these archetypes may look as 'good' or 'bad' people. Schmidt (2007) breaks it down as follows:

Aphrodites can be either a seductive muse or a femme fatale.

Artemis can be either an amazon or a gorgon.

Athenas can be either a father's daughter or backstabber.

Demeters can be either nurturers or overcontrolling mothers.

Heras can be either matriarchs or scorned woman.

Hestias either can be a mystic or betrayer.

Isis' can be either a female messiah or destroyer.

Persephone can be either maidens or troubled teens. (Schmidt, 2007)

The following chapter will be using Schmidt's in-depth categorisation of archetypes and will use them to create a basis for the rest of the project and to assess how affectively these 'real-world' blueprints are used amongst subcultural female characters from the case studies below. Schmidt's archetype works best for this analysis as it considers the negative and positive of each archetype. Therefore, characters that would only be negatively labelled as femme fatales using Jung's theory may actually be a positive representation using Schmidt's theory. Schmidt's theory also begins to show how the two subcultures are sexualised differently to one another. The case studies chosen cross multiple genres: crime drama, coming of age, thriller, satire and television film, as well as being both co-European and purely British productions, and spanning evenly across the time period of this project to conduct a thorough analysis of archetypes in British cinema during 1965-85. The idea of this first chapter is to discuss the pre-existing roles that female characters play as a basis for the rest of the chapters in this study by considering the impact archetypes can have upon the representation of female subcultural characters in film. Therefore, more in-depth observations can be discussed in later chapters involving race, sexuality, and aesthetics. The case studies for this chapter include a diverse range of archetypes (both the bad and the good) and cover the time period and subcultures of my entire study. The case studies chosen for this chapter are as follows:

*Blow Up* (1966); a crime drama about a successful photographer, Thomas, in swinging London who unintentionally captures a murder when photographing a couple in a local park. All female characters within *Blow Up* are part of the mod subculture, with the exception of the female antique shop assistant.

*The Girl on a Motorcycle* (1968); a coming-of-age film, following a young married girl, Rebecca, as she travels from France to Germany (on a motorcycle) to meet her lover, whom she met before marrying and cannot resist. Rebecca represents the mod subculture in her appearance, beliefs and hobbies.

*The Secret of Dorian Gray* (1970) is a German-English thriller film adaptation of the picture of Dorian Gray. However, the film changes the background to that of modern London. Here, Dorian never grows ugly causing his vanity to grow as he explores sexual culture in a more liberal society. In this film, all of the female characters reflect mod culture as well as Dorian himself.

*Jubilee* (1978) is a cult satire film, where Queen Elizabeth I time travels to present day (1978) and sees the horrors that are to come to her country. The film centres around a group of female maniacs who cause chaos and anarchy across London including murder. Many of the female characters represent the punk subculture except for Mad. Mad is a murdering pyromaniac, who best fits into the skinhead subculture<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Mad does also show some punk characteristics, her make-up and anarchic nature, however these characteristics are how cinema translates the skinhead subculture to screen. Without her make-up, she would be too masculine to be recognised as a woman on screen.

The television film *Oi! For England* (1980) is the final case study. The film's narrative follows a band of male skinheads as they debate the ethics of playing a gig at a fascist festival. The female skinhead character, Gloria, of *Oi!* plays an integral part in the film as she helps the boys make their final decision. *Oi!* was adapted from a play, which was written as a 'direct response to the riots of the early 80s and rise in Neo-Nazism' (BFI, 2023).

### **The Goddess Archetypes in the Case Studies**

All female characters match an archetype within Schmidt's analysis of character tropes, with the exception of Rebecca from *The Girl on a Motorcycle*. Throughout the film, Rebecca goes on a transformative journey, discussing her own identity and what she wants to become. In doing so, Rebecca embodies many of the archetypes as the narrative pushes forward. She begins her journey as an Aphrodite or a seductive muse, using Schmidt terminology (2007: 18). The seductive muse character often has a bad reputation in cinema and is often degraded to prostitute, slut, or femme fatale (2007: 18). However, contrary to her evil counterpart – the femme fatale, the seductive muse does not use her sexual allure or beauty to lure a man to death or danger (Anderson, 1995:1); in fact the seductive muse is a strong, creative, loving, determined woman who needs sensual experiences to keep her stimulated in life (2007: 18). The Aphrodite plays a strong part of Rebecca's personal identity. It is the Aphrodite who leads her on the journey she takes, for if she had not desired a sensual experience, she would have never left her husband. Overall, in the case studies, the Aphrodite is not portrayed negatively in subcultural female characters, differing from mainstream norms as the femme fatale is a major archetype for female characters.

The Aphrodite can also be seen in *Blow Up*, *The Secret of Dorian Grey* and *Jubilee*. In *Blow Up*, the models, Patricia (Thomas' partner) and Jane, all engage in sensual

experiences and represent the mistresses of many relationships. Although, the females do not use their sexual desire to their own advantage. Alternatively, they are, in fact, used for their beauty and are the victims of the narrative because the models are constantly high or drunk and do not know what is happening to them; Patricia knew Thomas was having affairs, but she was villainised when she found a new lover; and Jane was blackmailed by Thomas in order to obtain the film of photos she needed. Furthermore, the only character in *Blow Up*, who does not embody the Aphrodite in any form is an antique shop assistant<sup>7</sup>, who does not represent the mod subculture or any other subculture. There is a clear distinction between the mainstream shop assistant and the girls of the mod subculture. The shop assistant is not sexual, does not drink or do drugs, is sensible and most of all successful. Within all the case studies, the distinction between main culture and subculture can be seen in their professions. The subcultural characters are either unemployed or a part of higher society<sup>8</sup> due to a job in the arts, both avenues, according to the films, lead to spending time drunk or high which causes an increased sense of promiscuity. The drinking and drug culture in subculture is consistently used to show females of subculture as non-marriage or family material<sup>9</sup> across a wide range of films in this entire study and is represented by the Artemis goddess archetype.

Artemis is the next archetype Rebecca explores on her journey. Artemis' archetypes are often adventurous, feminist, risk-takers, protectors, and leaders (Schmidt, 2007:26 and Enns, 1994: 129). The Artemis archetype can be separated into the amazons, the positive representation, and the gorgons, the negative representation (Schmidt, 2007:26). Both the amazons and the gorgons are equally masculine as they are feminine, but the amazons care more about other females than themselves and would happily sacrifice themselves to save women and children and she does not care to be a stay-at-home mum or a career woman but

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<sup>7</sup> Who is unnamed throughout the film.

<sup>8</sup> The skinheads are the unemployed and the mods are members of higher society.

<sup>9</sup> Even though the men of the subculture engage in the same culture.

to do what is best for herself (Schmidt, 2007: 26). Besides Rebecca, the only other Artemis subcultural female character is Mad from *Jubilee*, although she is more of a gorgon than an amazon. A gorgon's character traits include happily killing a man for another woman, extreme aggression and rage, she lacks morals and values, and she justifies her action as she believes her rights were once violated too (Schmidt, 2007: 30). Mad is a prime example of a gorgon. When her friend Viv returns distraught to base with the news of the murder of her two lovers, Mad tracks down the police officer and kills him in a graphic, mad rush of fury with no worry for the consequences.

She also shows extreme aggression throughout the film as she labels herself a pyromaniac and encourages others to carry out vicious attacks on innocent bystanders justifying it in a monologue to herself about how the state has done them wrong and caused the anarchy in the UK. Altogether the Artemis archetype is either shown negatively or, when shown positively, it is not shown in its entirety. The misrepresentation of the Artemis archetype indicates cinema's inability to portray female masculinity on screen positively that is visually shown through Mad as she is a vicious skinhead who still wears make-up and is a theme for female skinheads in British cinema during 1965 – 1985. This observation is integral to the rest of my study as it demonstrates a lack of willingness from cinema to accurately represent the skinhead subculture on screen and will most likely distort elements of the female skinhead characters' look or personality to still be read as a typical woman.

As mentioned previously another identifiable trait of the Artemis archetype, according to Schmidt (2007: 26), is that Amazon's do not value stay-at-home mums, nor do they respect the career woman; they value actual experiences in the real world. Rebecca expresses these values often on her journey. She does not have a career herself nor did or does she ever consider having one, and she remarks how she was one of the first of her school year to marry but the last to have children. She further expresses how she does not want to become a

mother, especially a stay-at-home mum, she even suggests that she only married Raymond to 'stop becoming a tart'. However, she changes her views when she finally reaches her lover, Daniel, who she actually wants to marry and begins to show traits of the Demeter archetype.

Also known as the nurturer or overcontrolling mother, the Demeter archetype can be seen in some of the case studies in this chapter. The positive Demeter, the nurturer, can be seen in the female subcultural character Viv in Jarman's *Jubilee*. Nurturer's sole purpose is to care for others, and often crave to have children (Schmidt, 2007:41). Although Viv never expresses a desire for children; she is maternal to the incestuous brothers, whom she forms a throuple with. She appears to look after the two brothers, and is even there when they tragically die, and demands justice for them. However, Viv's character and relationship with the two brothers creates a confusing sexual approach to this archetype, which fits with the tone of the satire film. Besides Bod and Mad<sup>10</sup>, all the characters are sex mad and therefore, can create unique approaches to the archetypes present in film. For example, Crabs is surprisingly a seductive muse despite showing characteristics of a femme fatale. Crabs' whole character identity is based on her being a nymphomaniac, who often kills her sexual partners. At first glance, the action of killing her partners is that of a femme fatale. But Crabs kills partners in order to have sensual experiences and does not kill men to help her progress in some aspect of her life. She kills men because she simply enjoys killing. Furthermore, despite killing men, Crabs still is searching for her 'one' and often has a puppy love attitude towards her partners, which is not typical of a femme fatale and is in fact that of a seductive muse (Schmidt, 2007:18).

The other side of the Demeter archetype is that of the overcontrolling mother (Schmidt, 2007: 41). An overcontrolling mother is typically overbearing, manipulative and terrified of being abandoned by anyone (Schmidt, 2007: 45). Within the case studies, the

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<sup>10</sup> As they prefer the thrill of the kill and violent attacks over sexual experiences.

overcontrolling mother is shown by exclusively female mod characters being distraught at the idea of being alone. In *The Girl on a Motorcycle*, Rebecca threatens to leave her lover as he does not treat her well, but he knows she will return as she feels lonely and unloved with her husband. Her threats last only a few days before she returns to him, however her journey is cut short when she collides with a lorry, dying tragically. Another female mod character similar to Rebecca is Sybil from *the Secret of Dorian Grey*; after discovering her partners affair, she fights for his affections but loses, distraught, Sybil commits suicide immediately after by stepping out in front of a bus. When Dorian hears the news of Sybil's suicide, he becomes angry blaming her for her own death. Both Dorian and Daniel show that male mod characters do not care as strongly for their partners, as does Rebecca's husband, as he lets her leave to go to another man, and Thomas, as he does not care when he catches his partner with another man and he frequently cheats on her.

The subcultural male's response to his partner's actions is negatively framed just like the female's actions, implying that both men and women of the mod subculture are demonised. Furthermore, how the Demeter archetype is presented in the mod subculture is significant as it implies that female mods have an inability of processing emotions and acting rash. On the other hand, the Demeter archetype in skinhead/punk subculture implies a need for a sexual relationship to show care for others. Arguably both depictions of women in both subcultures are negative representations again.

When Rebecca finally reaches Daniel, during a flashback scene, she asks him to marry her, creating a family unit and he bluntly responds "no". The dialogue between the two shows Rebecca's intentions to be a matriarch. The matriarch is based upon the Hera archetype, and is faithful, supportive, the perfect wife, and tough-skinned (Schmidt, 2007: 48). Besides Rebecca's intentions none of the female subcultural characters represent the matriarch nor do the non-subcultural women. Although, because of the structure of the gang

in *Jubilee*, it can be argued that Bod is a scorned woman; the evil counterpart of a Hera (Schmidt, 2007: 52). Schmidt (2007: 52) comments that the scorned woman's 'rage and power comes out when she feels abandoned by her own family' and that she is 'inflexible, impulsive, and unpredictable'. Bod is the leader of the gang, who appear to all live together, and takes on the mother role in an unconventional way. Instead of showing her love and care in a physical form, Bod shows that she cares for the gang by providing for them and protecting them; whether that be stopping them from doing something foolish or attacking someone who has harmed or may harm them. So, when the brothers of the gang are brutally murdered, Bod felt abandoned and is likely why she not only orders the assassination of their murderers but partakes in it.

*Jubilee* ironically reinforces the negative representations of the punk and skinhead subculture, but it simultaneously showcases the care people have for other members of the subcultures. This can also be said for *Blow Up* and *Oi! for England*. Throughout *Blow Up*, the mod models are constantly grouped together and either defy Thomas together or obey him together, showcasing the idea of female community too. On the other hand, in *Oi! For England*, Gloria, a black skinhead woman, is accepted and protected by her white fascist male skinhead friends, when a riot against fascism breaks out nearby; further empathising the idea of community being utmost important within subcultures, regardless of gender and race. Yet, because archetypes seem to take prevalence in the other case studies, this is not always the case.

Gloria's relationship with the male skinheads indicate that she is built upon the archetype, more specially the father's daughter type (Schmidt, 2007: 33). The main indication that a character is a father's daughter is that they are friends with and on the side of male characters without having sexual relations or feelings towards them (Schmidt, 2007:33). Gloria does not see her male friends sexually nor do they see her that way because, before,

Gloria enters the scene ‘the boys’ are heard discussing women in a vile, degrading, unrespectful manner, but they never act that way or say anything similar to Gloria. They even laugh and joke with her as if she is one of the boys. Another aspect is that they fight to prove they are as good as men (Schmidt, 2007:33). Gloria works for her father, collecting money for drugs she has sold for him and when they refuse to pay her, she is more than happy to threaten and defend her reputation against them, illustrating Schmidt’s point above. But one of the male friends does not take her seriously till she mentions telling her father, which further supports the idea that British cinema between 1965-1985 could not comprehend representing the female masculinity aspect of the skinhead subculture accurately<sup>11</sup>, as her physical ability to carry out the threat is undermined and then reinforced when another man is mentioned.

Another type of the Athena archetype is the backstabber, who is embodied by Adrienne in *The Secret of Dorian Grey*. Adrienne possesses traits like walking over others to achieve her goals; her career becoming her whole identity; smart and strategic; and being allowed into the male workplace. Adrienne was an erotic photographer and videographer, who simply would do anything to keep the young handsome Dorian Grey as a client of hers. She would even turn on other women to do so, as shown when locking a woman in Dorian’s room and she even films them whilst Dorian forces himself upon the other woman<sup>12</sup>. As a result, Adrienne develops the same attitude towards women as the men in the film have. Essentially, Adrienne graphically uses the other women in the film in the same way as men but for different reasons; she does it for success whereas the men do it purely for sexual expression. In addition, every male character, in the case studies, sees other women, in particular subcultural women, in the same way; purely as sexual objects for them to degrade.

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<sup>11</sup> As previously discussed above.

<sup>12</sup> Who does not belong to any subculture and is an innocent housewife.

The male's perspective is also likely why the Aphrodite archetype is the most dominant archetype in the films discussed, which also accounts for the higher level of sexual nature in the films.

Overall, by using Schmidt's in-depth archetype categorisations, it can be determined that British cinema during 1965-1985 could not or did not want to accurately transfer the female masculinity of the skinhead subculture onto screen and therefore had to add features or combine personality types to not make skinhead characters completely masculine. This thread of thought will be brought up again in how women are framed to create Britishness by conforming to national gender standards in chapter three, which skinhead characters do despite being very masculine again. As well as expanding upon this point in chapter four to discuss how exploring sexualities and identities is expressed through colour.

Another conclusion is that the women of the mod and skinhead subcultures are not considered practical mother or wife material because of the 'hobbies' they engage in. And the final main conclusion is that the subcultural female characters sexuality is a focal point of the case studies and is mainly portrayed positively throughout the different archetypes. This will play an integral part in chapter two which delves into the sexualisation of subcultural characters and their girlhoods and will continue to be discussed in the typical roles of women to men in chapter three as well as how the new sexually liberated modern is presented through colour in chapter four.

### ***Industry and the Aphrodite***

Why do all the case studies have a higher level of sexual nature in them? The above provides some explanation as to why from a close analytical perspective but for the next half of this chapter, I will take into consideration the industrial context of these films which has an impact on representation in film.

From the 1957 to 1981, a new genre was introduced to British Cinema: Sexploitation (Hunter, 2008: 4). Sexploitation films are sexualised entertainment (Smith, 2021: 353) often disguised as other genre of films or social phenomenon, social realism or emerging subcultural trends for example (Hunter, 2008: 6). Therefore, the genre separates into different subgenres, including nudist films, at its most popular during 1958-1963; documentaries, in its prime during 1963-1971; sex education films, at its height during 1969-1971; permissive drama, at its most successful during 1968-1979; erotic horror, at its best during 1970-1976; and sex comedies, in its prime during 1967-1979 (Hunter, 2008: 5). The nudist films are the first accounts of British sexploitation films and are considered propaganda for naturism (Hunter, 2008: 4). After the introduction of nudist films, there was a growing interest in erotic films in Britain, due to an increase of imported European films. Smith (2021: 354) suggests that it was assumed that European films were ‘more adult’ than British cinema and so nudity and sexual nature was expected. However, due to censorship in the UK, the British film industry could not include such material so easily, which is why the films needed to be disguised as a different genre or response to emerging social trends, especially emerging trends within subcultures (Hunter, 2008: 6) and could suggest why the subcultures are hypersexualised.

An exception of the typical BBFC certification is Michelangelo’s *Blow Up*, whose nudity and explicit nature was sanctioned as it was seen as a film of ‘quality and integrity’ and even led to looser censorship from the BBFC (Smith, 2021: 358). Thereafter, it became mildly easier for films like sex comedies and erotic horror to pass censorship with minimum cuts if it was of good quality. Arguably, the three mod films of the case studies: *Blow Up*, *The Girl on a Motorcycle*, and *The Secret of Dorian Grey* fit the sexploitation genre and is perhaps due to the directors using a change in subcultural trends as an excuse for sexual liberty (Hunter, 2008: 6). Furthermore, Smith (2021: 353) states that the marketing of the

European films was often changed in the UK to appeal to a heterosexual male audience, likely, due to films of this nature only being shown in certain clubs that were known for adult movies. An exceptional example of this is the marketing for *The Girl on a Motorcycle*. The rest of this chapter will discuss how the female subcultural characters are more sexualised in the British cinema context because the sexual nature of subcultures was considered an accurate representation of them, which therefore meant it was necessary for the film and bypassed any censorship by the BBFC.

As seen below, the film posters for the UK (figure 1 and 2) are dramatically different to the film posters for Europe (figure 3 and 4). The film posters for the UK are focused on the sexual nature of the film. In both examples, the prime focus is on Rebecca's suit being undone, to reveal her naked body underneath. Captions like 'The title tells a lot, but there's a lot more to see.' imply that the audience will want to see the film for the titillating visuals rather than the narrative whereas the European film posters include different stills and/or props to hint at the narrative of the film rather than the sexual nature. There was also a collection of 'naked under leather' posters (see figure 1) which all showed different stills of the show and Rebecca in different sexual poses, even though they are not necessarily a sex scene. These posters empathise the Aphrodite within Rebecca and does not reference any of her other personality traits.



**Figure 1 And Figure 2, *The Girl on a Motorcycle* UK film posters (IMDB)**

Furthermore, the European posters seem to be more female oriented. Both of the posters below have more artistic elements. Figure 3 includes an illustration of Rebecca riding her motorcycle and figure 4 is a collage of Rebecca's body with floral patterns, a butterfly and a pistol. Figure 4 is the least male oriented poster out of the four here because it refers to the narrative of the film, a somewhat whirlwind romance, referencing the Demeter within her. The butterfly is the timeless metaphor of metamorphosis, and the journey Rebecca takes not only to her lover but also about her own identity as she often remarks about different things she wants from life and the juxtaposes it later in the film. The harsh black leather is broken up by a soft feminine rose pattern, to indicate the conflicting archetypes within Rebecca. On the outside she wants to appear as a hard, independent mod woman, as an amazon, but on the inside, she secretly desires what most women want, to be a seductive muse by gaining attention and desire from the male sex (according to the film that is). Figure 3 is less female oriented and sits between the sexes. In this poster there is an illustration of Rebecca excitedly riding her bike, the pose she is in, and the expression indicates a male audience. However, in the top left corner, there is a still of Rebecca draped over Robert, in a more romantic scene rather than sexual. The images combined suggests to the audience that there is more to this film than a girl having an affair but rather that the film contains a romantic narrative too, suitable for the female audience.



Figure 3 and Figure 4, *The Girl on a Motorcycle* European film posters

In all four posters, Rebecca's figure is very slim, curvy, and teenage like, which is the typical image of mod girls in cinema. So, the image of the mod is transnational and is alluding to sexuality. Overall, the marketing of *The Girl on a Motorcycle* shows how the different archetypes can change the narrative of the poster and the audience it will draw in. A similar take can be said for *Blow Up*. Figure 5 shows one of the original UK posters for *Blow Up*, whereas figure 6 shows the most recognisable poster for *Blow Up* now.



Figure 5. Original UK film poster Figure 6. Most recognisable UK film poster (IMDB)

The original film poster alludes to the sexual nature of the film by highlighting the model's figure whilst not containing any nudity. In figure 5, the model's<sup>13</sup> dress fits perfectly, covering any elements of the female body which would be censored but at the same time hangs off her curves to captivate the male audience. Her dress and style are also paying homage to the mod subculture, which creates a connection between the subculture and sexuality before the film has even been seen. This poster portrays Veruschka as an Aphrodite as she appears confident and comfortable with her appearance and sexuality were as the other poster (figure 6) alludes to her being a Hera archetype; she is there for Thomas' needs and in doing so, being gazed upon by Thomas fulfils her needs. Her pose alludes to her being helpless but at the same time she is not physically restrained and could likely remove herself from the situation, supporting the fact that she does this for his pleasure for her own needs. In addition, despite wearing the same clothing as the first poster (figure 5), the model is more modestly dressed than Thomas, whose top is unbuttoned. Again, the two posters illustrate the differences in archetype, in the first poster, a sexploitation film is advertised with all focus on the female Aphrodite character. Whereas in the second poster, a film geared towards men's needs with a Hera character is advertised. This observation also suggests that the female mod characters can use their sex appeals differently dependent on the narrative they wish to convey.

As well as the film's marketing, the content of each mod film suggests that they belong to the sexploitation genre. Especially with *The Secret of Dorian Grey*. The sexual scenes and relationships are the central theme of the film, without them the narrative would not progress, nor would it create a coherent plot. As said previously, Hunter (2008: 6) empathises how sexploitation films would be disguised as other genres to pass censorship and

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<sup>13</sup> Played by Veruschka, who was a German supermodel before *Blow Up* and was playing herself in the film.

therefore different subgenres were created. In this instance, *The Secret of Dorian Grey* belongs to the erotic horror genre. Not only do the explicit sex scenes imply that this film belongs to the sexploitation genre, but also the plot line where Dorian becomes a porn-star. It is unnecessary to the narrative as Dorian was already living an aristocratic life, where he engaged in recreational activities and an active sex life. And so, the inclusion of him becoming a porn-star seems to be an excuse to include more sexualised entertainment without the BBFC cutting or censoring the scenes.

The film also introduces different subcultural females at each turning point of Dorian's narrative. Sybil is his first real girlfriend; she is sweet and innocent, giving up her virginity for him but he ultimately gets bored and cheats on her with Gwendolyn. When Dorian meets Gwendolyn, he begins to spiral and give up any morals or values he previously had. Gwendolyn is more of a seductive muse and matriarch character; she knows what she wants and she gets it. But Dorian eventually mentally drains Gwendolyn leading her to alcoholism. He then meets Adrienne who is a mix of the mod and disco subculture and is the only character who does not use her sexual appeal to get to Dorian. The film not only empathises that it is the mod subculture, which is hypersexualised, but it also shows between the three characters how female mod characters can use their sexual appeal differently to create a different narrative.

Similarly with *The Girl on a Motorcycle*, the adult content in the dream-like sequences seems unjustified and unnecessary. An example would be the opening scene, where Rebecca dreams of being a circus worker. In the dream, she stands on top of a horse and Robert whips her so hard that her suit rips causing it to fall off in front of everyone. She is not embarrassed by this, however, but enjoys the thrill. The scene is never returned to, nor is it explained or justified and so seems to be only added for its erotic value. However, it passes the BBFC censorship by using colour to obstruct the viewer from seeing any nudity.

The only mod film, where the eroticism is narratively justified is *Blow Up*. Any type of sexual activity and/or nudity shown in *Blow Up* is justified as it adds to the narrative or builds upon Thomas' character, as he gives into temptations he had not previously, implying him losing control as further suggested with the ending where Thomas decides to join the mimes with their imaginary game of tennis. The ending of *Blow Up* could also suggest that the sexual experiences he encounters are exaggerated and are a fantasy of mod women and not a reality.

*Jubilee* is hard to define as a sexploitation film as it is also a satire piece. Therefore, it is making a commentary on society's opinions of the punk and skinhead society and means the constant nudity and sexuality, are justified decisions. Furthermore, both the nudity and sexuality are used differently in each character to empathise a different point. Bod is wearing pantsuits with heels, but she is also exposing her breast, confusing gender norms. Crabs' entire character's purpose is to seduce men to bring them back to the gang so they can murder them, but it is also how she finds her 'one'. Amyl wears stockings and lingerie under a union jack shirt for her iconic rendition of 'Rule Britannia', like that of the Sex Pistols and the Queen iconography. Viv's relationship with the two brothers (although the incestuous nature of the relationship is irregular in itself) gives a unique take on non-monogamous relationships. The film does not focus on the sexual nature of the three, like *Blow Up* does, but rather how the three works-as a throuple. For instance, how they spend their day to day lives, how they decide what to do and how they ensure each other's emotions are heard and recognised.

Mad is the only character who does not adversely show sexuality or nudity and she is the only skinhead character in the film. This is also the case for *Oi! For England*. Gloria is never once sexualised nor nude in the film, despite the four skinhead males discussing women sexually before she joins the scene. The closest scene to nudity in *Oi! For England* is

when Gloria undresses her top layers in order to put on protective gear so she can attempt to get home safely through the riots occurring outside. Furthermore, the riot gear Gloria puts on is gender bending as she appears more manly than womanly, similar to Mad from *Jubilee*. In every aspect, Mad is a skinhead, in what she wears, how she acts and what she says.

However, Mad still wears make-up, reinforcing the female ideal. It appears that cinema between 1965-1985 cannot accurately translate the skinhead subculture as they cannot have a female character be entirely male coded; she must have some feminine characteristics, even in a satire piece from its own subculture. Additionally, neither of the skinhead characters conform to traditional beauty standards or mod beauty standards. They are both older women<sup>14</sup>, 'larger' women, and bolder women, this is likely why the skinhead characters are not used to market sexploitation films.

Overall, it is apparent that the mod subculture was used as a disguise for sexploitation films to be allowed in British cinema, which meant that female mod characters were sexualised in every aspect. There is not a single fully mod character, who is not sexualised verbally or physically, in any of the case studies discussed. On the other hand, there is not a single skinhead character, who is sexualised verbally or physically, in any of the case studies discussed. Furthermore, the European influence of production companies would have an influence on the content of the film and as Smith (2021: 354) states European films are known to be more adult than British films. It is also clear that there is a difference between how the mod characters and skinhead characters are represented sexually due to the masculine nature of the female skinheads. Furthermore, there is also an industrial difference between the two categories of subcultural film. The mod films are higher end productions with one or more European co-production companies whereas the skinhead films are only

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<sup>14</sup> Mad and Gloria are still young (early to mid-twenties) but in comparison to the mod subculture they are old.

British indie productions and lower budget, which likely gives reason to the difference in representations.

From a thorough analysis of the different archetypes present in film, it can be concluded that there are differences between how mod, skinhead and mainstream characters are represented in film. The most prominent difference is how the different subcultures are sexualised.

Overall, the mod subculture is hyper sexualised whereas skinheads show no sexuality and the mainstream show sexual attraction but nothing more. The mod female characters are constantly seen either engaging in sexual activity, flirting with potential partners or wearing little to no clothing, exposing themselves to the viewer. Furthermore, the sexualisation of female mods is treated differently to the male mods. Both male and female mods are hyper sexual on screen, however, there is no emotional attachment for the men whereas the women's sexual desire controls their emotions.

Finally, the skinhead female characters are not sexualised because they are presented overly masculine, although, they still remain partially feminine to fit the archetypes and industry standard discussed above. The next chapter will build upon the discoveries of this first chapter by delving into how sexuality and gender is portrayed in subcultures in British cinema during 1965-1985. There will be a focus on girlhood in mod subculture exploring the film *Twinky* (Donner, 1970), a romantic comedy, where a student dates (and eventually marries) a 39 years-old erotic novelist.

## **Chapter 2: Is She Growing Up Too Soon? The Sexualisation of Girlhood Excused by Subculture in British Cinema.**

Building upon the conclusions of the previous chapter, this next chapter will explore the changing sexualities present through a close analysis of Richard Donner's *Twinky* (1969) with reference to *The Girl on a Motorcycle* (Cardiff, 1968), *The Secret of Dorian Grey* (Dallamano, 1970), *That'll be the Day* (Whatham, 1973), *Jubilee* (Jarman, 1978), and *Bloody Kids* (Frears, 1979). The chosen case studies cover a period of sexual and political revolution for women and the gay community. However, critics such as Sue Harper (2010) have argued that cinema does not directly deal with these social changes; at this time, women were still sexualised in film and mass media, but they were positioned differently towards the audience, mostly having their own control of their sexuality, which ultimately ended with them being punished (McNair, 2002: 116, 122). In addition, during this period, Laura Mulvey's 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' (1975) was published, which outlined her now well-known theory of the male gaze.

Throughout this chapter, a combination of Mulvey's gaze theory and later theories influenced by the male gaze (see Jacobsson 1999, and Dirse 2013) will be applied to consider the following questions: How are women sexualised in the filmic representation of mod and skinhead subcultures? What and how are different sexualities portrayed on screen in the subcultures? Do the subcultures encourage these behaviours/ does the subculture enable members to engage in different sexual identities? How do people outside of subcultures view their behaviour? By addressing these questions, this chapter will explore how subcultural female sexuality is represented on screen within the chosen films.

The chapter begins with applying Mulvey's gaze theory to the chosen films. Mulvey breaks her essay into two sections: Pleasure in looking/ fascination with the human form and

Woman as image, Man as bearer of the look. The first half of the essay pleasure in looking discusses the pleasures cinema offers including the to be looked-at-ness and the actual pleasure of looking – scopophilia (1973: 16-17). The pleasure comes from viewing the subject as an object and for the viewer to have active control over the gaze, in this first half, Mulvey is primarily referring to the audience being the active watcher taking pleasure from viewing objects on screen (1973: 16-17).

Within the second part of the essay, Mulvey explains how-women are the passive object and the male is the active subject(1973: 19). This statement is true for both the private world the film exists in and within the audience, for it is the male who projects his sexual fantasies onto the female character, in the film and in observing the film (1973:19). As well as Mulvey, this chapter will also use Jacobsson's (1999) idea of the female gaze. Jacobsson (1999:8) questions if the male gaze can be reversed, therefore creating a female gaze. By using the film *Fatal Attraction* (Lyne, 1988), Jacobsson argue that the female gaze is presented through 'independent and strong women, who can be seen as a threat towards men' (Jacobsson, 1999: 9). Other attributes include, the male being the object of desire, the female being the active pursuer and female control of narrative (Jacobsson, 1999: 13- 15).

### ***The Male Gaze and subcultural characters***

Richard Donner's *Twinky* (1969)<sup>15</sup> follows a young schoolgirl, Sybil, who is having an affair with a 39-year-old erotic novelist, Scott<sup>16</sup>. When Sybil's parent's find out about the affair, they decide to call for legal action against Scott, and so she convinces him to fly to Glasgow to be married without parental consent and she obliges. Once, they are married the family begrudgingly go along with the relationship until Scott is deported back to America and Sybil

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<sup>15</sup> Rumoured to be based off Donner's own marriage to Sarah Caldwell, he was 38 and she was only 16.

<sup>16</sup> Susan George/ Sybil would have been nineteen at time of filming and her co-star Charles Bronson/ Scott would have been 47/48, further empathising the age gap between characters.

follows him. Here, Scott is called a monster by outsiders and emotionally upsets his mother because of his relationship with the extremely young girl. When Scott goes to jail for a short spell, Sybil rents her own flat and gains independence, but when Scott returns, he continues to treat her like the immature sixteen-year-old she was and after a physical altercation, Sybil leaves Scott. Despite the major age gap between Sybil and Scott, the film is still treated as a light-hearted romantic comedy.

The very title of *Twinky* – also known as *Lola* and *London Affair* – already connotes a sexualisation of girlhood. A ‘Twinkee’<sup>17</sup> is defined as a ‘gay or bisexual young man with a slim build and youthful appearance’ (Oxford Language, 2023) in the UK<sup>18</sup>. However, other countries may not be aware of this term, especially in the USA, and so other titles were used in different countries. The film was renamed ‘Lola’ when re-released in America in 1970, alluding to having similarities with Stanley Kubrick’s *Lolita* (1962); which shows an older male professor obsessing over his young new stepdaughter. The final title *London Affair* adheres to the growing popular narrative of 1960s British cinema, which would follow a female protagonist as she goes on a physical journey<sup>19</sup> whilst exploring conceptual boundaries including sexuality, social class, and generational differences (Landy, 2010: 111). Many contributing factors led to an oversexualised image of the mod subculture, including the eroticism of London, the sexploitation genre, and the social and political changes during 1960s Britain.

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<sup>17</sup> Notably, spelt different but similar sounding. The change from ‘ee’ to ‘y’ could connote the change of gender.

<sup>18</sup> This specific meaning originating from England in the 1970s.

<sup>19</sup> The transnational aspect of films during 1965-1985 will be discussed further in chapter three.



**Figure 7. Mods sat down, *The Telegraph***

**Note:** <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/fashion/people/dame-mary-quant-style-icon-london-bazaar-chelsea/>



**Figure 8. School girls of the early 1970s**

**Note:** <https://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/news/history/gallery/blazers-blouses-mercury-archive-photos-7449855>

The fashion of the mod subculture can be very easily compared to the typical schoolgirl image, for example, (as seen in the figures 7 and 8), mods would wear kitten heels,

A-line silhouettes, miniskirts and a 'girl-doll' eye makeup resembling that of a bright-eyed pre-teen girl. Similarly, a school uniform for girls in the 1960s through to the 1970s consisted of skirts or smock dresses above the knee, non-body form fitting clothes, small Mary Jane or pumps with knee high socks (as seen in figure 8). Mods adopted this style as they could easily move between the classroom, home area and public eye without having to change their appearance (McRobbie, 2000:19), therefore a 'grown-up' sexier version of the schoolgirl aesthetic was created. The new 'sexiness' of the young London girls did not go unnoticed by the media; journalists were fascinated by them, and the revolutionary mini skirt was deemed both provocative and sensational (Paulicelli, Stutesman, Wallenburg, 2017: 136, 142).

Donner illustrates this change from schoolgirl to 'sexy' young lady in *Twinky*, as we follow the maturing Sybil as she leaves school for her marriage to Scott and transforms into a well-educated, independent mod with the strength to leave an abusive<sup>20</sup> relationship. *Twinky* is not the only film of the case studies to portray young girls growing up Jack Cardiff's *The Girl on a Motorcycle*, Massimo Dallamano's *The Secret of Dorian Grey* and Claude Whatham's *That'll be the Day* all portray the main female character as school leavers age or younger at some point within the narrative.

These case studies are strong examples of the male gaze theory (and female gaze) at work in British Cinema during the 1960s through to the 1980s. Notably, these case studies only portray female mod characters and not skinhead characters, as they are not sexualised in a traditional fashion and are more suitable for the female gaze. The female mod characters in the case studies<sup>21</sup> are sexualised both within and outside of the film's narrative. The title sequence sexualises Sybil through an upbeat theme song, which goes

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<sup>20</sup> Implied through Sybil's behaviour near him and by asking permission to do things, like speaking.

<sup>21</sup> Sybil (*Twinky*), Rebecca (*The Girl on a Motorcycle*), Sybil (*The Secret of Dorian Grey*), Gwendolyn (*The Secret of Dorian Grey*), no-name women (*That'll be the Day*)

“Twinky, I think you’re growing up too soon, girl,  
Twinky, I think you’re growing up too soon.  
I never met a girl like this for me,  
Dumb and pretty as a schoolgirl should be.  
Twinky, I think you’re growing up too soon girl.  
Take a look at her, sixteen summers and a month or two,  
A grown-up lover when the girls can’t see you.”

The song’s focus on growing up too soon, is a reflection of the younger girls of London now being sexualised because of the swinging London and mod culture adopting the schoolgirl aesthetic. Furthermore, the song plays into the male gaze as it commands the audience to look at her as an object not a person, with the line ‘take a look at her’. In addition, the title sequence includes some close-up shots where the schoolgirls are bodies are ‘cut up’<sup>22</sup>. To objectify Sybil even more, she is referred to as dumb and pretty, which demonstrates Mulvey’s theory that femininity is passive and to be looked at were as masculinity is active and to be the looker (1973: 16-19). Despite the tone set from the theme song, Sybil is barely physically sexualised, in that she is never seen committing a sexual act (besides a kiss) and she is only either seen partially naked as she becomes an adult. Instead, Donner adopts voyeurism to create Mulvey’s idea of to be looked-at- ness effect on Sybil. For example, the first time we, the audience, see Sybil partially nude is when she is in her locked bathroom enjoying a nice bath. This shot appears seemingly innocent however, when referring to Mulvey’s idea of the peeping Tom (1973: 17) it becomes much more sinister.

The audience are actively watching Sybil within her locked room while she lies vulnerable under the bubbles of her bath, the only thing protecting her from exposure. The

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<sup>22</sup> For example, only the legs or arms are in the frame.

only other time we see Sybil's bare skin is when she answers the door wrapped in a towel, however she quickly changes into an outfit more suitable. The lack of nudity and sex within *Twinky* is likely due to the real age of Susan George, who would have been 16-18 years old between casting, filming, and releasing as opposed to Marianne Faithfull (Rebecca) who was 22 years old, Marie Liljedahl (Sybil, *Dorian Grey*) was 20 years old, and Margaret Lee (Gwendolyn) was 27 years old and yet these actresses still believably portray girls from 16-20 years old.

Within the narrative, the female mods are used as entities for the male characters to project their fantasies onto (Mulvey, 1973: 19). In *The Secret of Dorian Grey*, for example, Dorian sexually uses different women to gain what he truly wants, social status and riches, so much so that he eventually succumbs to the retired woman who is the wealthiest person within their social circle. He begins to date Sybil as he believes she is an amazing actor and will help him go far but when his aristocratic friends think different, he no longer finds her attractive and sleeps with another woman, Gwendolyn. Gwendolyn is then used to help him reach higher social circles until he is in the highest and then she is disposed of. Furthermore, as soon as Dorian achieves what he wanted, Dorian becomes a porn star to maintain his wealth and he enjoys the lifestyle (parties, drugs, alcohol and attention), showing again that he is willing to use sex to gain what he wants. Likewise, in *That'll be the Day* Jim dreams of losing his virginity and does so when he runs away from home. From then on, it is a repeat cycle of work, drink, pick up girl, hook up with girl, kick girl out, and sleep. Jim deems this as his dream lifestyle and that he would not change a thing. However when he finally meets a girl who does not meet his expectations, he snaps out of the fantasy he had been living in and returns home to mature by marrying an old school friend. In this we see Mulvey's theory differentiate to the typical standard, which is also apparent in *The Girl on the Motorcycle*.

### *The Subcultural Female Gaze*

*The Girl on a Motorcycle* reverses the roles in the narrative; whilst she is looked at by the audience, it is Rebecca who projects her fantasies onto Daniel and therefore plays an active role in the narrative, which Jacobsson (1999:14) classifies as a characteristic of the female gaze. Rebecca's gaze is also on Daniel; she sexualises and lusts after him, more than he does her, by imagining different sexual scenarios and narrating about her wonderful Daniel (1999:14). In addition, the entire plot of *The Girl on a Motorcycle* relies on Rebecca's dreams of Daniel and her imagining a life with him, which ultimately makes her keep going back for more. As Rebecca travels alone to Daniel, her inner monologue (or narration) reveals her hopes and dreams with Daniel, but Daniel does not reciprocate these feelings. According to Dirse (2013: 26), narration is typically a male approach because it is actively telling an audience to think and feel a different way to what might be shown on screen.

This is apparent in *The Girl on a Motorcycle* because when, in a flashback, Daniel explains that he was once married but his first wife has since passed and so he does not want to marry again, only to indulge in 'free love' (to be together without ownership). The audience are forced to sympathise with the adulteress woman rather than the widowed man and understand her decision when she decides then that she no longer wants to see him as she does not get anything out of this arrangement but when she later goes home her mind begins wandering and she projects her fantasies onto Daniel, again, which leads her to travel to him once more. However, Rebecca's power over the gaze is short lived as she becomes consumed with lust and loses control, crashing her bike and gruesomely dying before seeing her lover again. The ending is very fitting to films of this decade, as Harper (2010:126) and McNair (2002: 122) suggest; all powerful women are met with male anxiety and cultural resistance and so must be punished or expecting disaster, similar to the monstrous women (Jacobsson, 1999:20). Harper and McNair's idea is very fitting to both mainstream and subcultural film.

However, subcultural film can differ as the unravelling of the female character often comes from her own lust and pleasure.

*Jubilee* is a perfect example of cinema's punishment of active female pleasure and desire as towards the end, Mad loses her self-control and is fuelled by anger unleashing her wrath onto a police officer. During the attack Mad also shouts to "pass her the knife" so that she can "castrate him", which she ultimately does not do as the preciseness of the attack is lost along with her control. This is the exact moment that male anxieties are shown on screen and Mad is punished<sup>23</sup> by no longer being able to harm others, resulting in having no joy in life. Mad also is an excellent example of the female gaze. As well as playing an active part in moving the narrative forward, Mad also shows 'cross identification with masculinity and femininity', another trait of the female gaze (Jacobsson, 1999: 18). Skinhead characters typically fall into this category by default as they present very masculine, although, their personalities and narrative roles can differ from each other. Mad in *Jubilee*<sup>24</sup> plays a very active, aggressive part whereas Susan from *Bloody Kids* remains a passive side character.

Throughout the film Susan is presented as a mildly but constantly angry person, giving up on men because she's tired of 'just screwing' and egging others on to do dangerous acts. She is very similar to Mad. However, Mad has the confidence to be as aggressive and dangerous as men whereas Susan does not. Throughout *Jubilee*, Mad is shown as an aggressive, sarcastic, pyromaniac, who has control over her outbursts; that is when she attacks there is a reason and cause for what she is doing. However, towards the end of *Jubilee*, Mad can be defined as part of the 'monstrous woman' trope which helps the narrative execute the powerful women being punished ending (Harper, 2010: 126 and McNair, 2002: 122).

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<sup>23</sup>This is the only form of punishment she receives as the gang rejoice with alcohol in a lavish country mansion.

<sup>24</sup> It is important to note here, that *Jubilee* is a fantastical satire piece and so will portray characters differently to other films.

Jacobsson (1999:20) describes the monstrous women as a ‘threat and in essence an anxiety to the male character in the motion picture’ reiterating the idea the powerful women are dangerous. Mods are also presented as monstrous women through the character Gwendolyn and Sybil (*The Secret of Dorian Grey*) and a mother in *That’ll be the Day*. The only mothers shown in the case studies is a hook up in *That’ll be the Day* and a sister acting as a mother in *Bloody Kid*<sup>25</sup>. Both the mother figures are presented as unfit, the hook-up leaves her baby alone all night in order to meet Jim and when they return to her flat, the child has been crying all along. This interaction prompts a fight or flight response in Jim as he flashes back to his mother doing a similar thing. He shouts at the mother as he runs out on her, not stopping until he arrives home. From this experience he decides to settle down, marry and even have a child but ultimately runs out on her too when it all becomes too much for him. Similar to *Twinky*, his running out on the child, is passed off as fun and silly with a light-hearted sitcom tone.

The sister, Susan, in *Bloody kids*, seems to be the only adult responsible for raising her brother. However, she is as unfit as their absent mother, because she ignores call from the hospital all day, despite knowing about her brother’s admittance and cares more about the party she can hear down the road than her brother’s own well-being. These narratives seem to serve as a warning towards young girls about the consequences of living young and carefree and being swept up in the new sexual revolution. The case studies chosen also use the subcultural characters as examples, for instance, in *That’ll be the Day* Jim’s wife has a child after marriage, but she still has support from other family members when he eventually leaves many months later, whereas the mod and skinhead women received no help. Further warnings of motherhood are embedded in *Twinky* and *the Girl on a Motorcycle*. Both *Twinky*

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<sup>25</sup> The sister is hard to define as skinhead or non-skinhead as she is only seen in a towel, however, she has an attitude of a subcultural character and choppy haircut.

and *the Girl on a Motorcycle* have dialogue about the want for a baby which ultimately ends with what the man wants.

In *Twinky*, Sybil asks to have a baby with Scott once he returns from prison, but he refuses due to financial constraints, the conversation is never discussed again and Sybil's feelings about motherhood are completely ignored. Eventually, she leaves Scott as she no longer feels fulfilled from their marriage, which was arguably easier for her without a baby. Rebecca discusses the thought of children in her inner monologue but decides against it as she still wants to feel young. It is also discovered later that Rebecca had no mother and (as she claims), therefore has no identity as she was not helped during formative years. It can be argued that having no mother figure is what keeps Rebecca from being a mother herself.

Rebecca's fascination with having no identity fits well with Harper's (2010:132) idea that 'women in sex films are shown to bare all but also nothing, they appear simultaneously full and empty'. In *The Girl on a Motorcycle*, Rebecca's whole identity depends upon her sexuality. Even when she is not dreaming about her lover, she is sexualising or alluding towards sexual content. For example, when filling her bike up, the camera becomes hyper focused and slows on the nozzle entering the petrol tank, alluding to sexual content. She also repeatedly uses easily sexualised language like 'skin me', 'fast, fast', and compares herself to being like an animal. Throughout the whole film, it is impossible to gauge Rebecca's personality as she is either extremely sexual or contradictory of herself. In addition, she seems to enjoy being sexualised because whenever she comes across another man, Rebecca does not squirm from his gaze and in fact finds joy from it. Later, she even comments that the two men in her life have not given her an identity because they've never called her pretty or beautiful, suggesting that Rebecca finds comfort in the gaze, as it is the gaze which gives Rebecca her identity.

Similarly to Rebecca, Gwendolyn from *The Secret of Dorian Grey* takes a more active role in the gaze. In Gwendolyn's very first scene, we see her staring out a high window looking down below to Dorian with a lustful look in her eye as she discusses with her brother how attractive he is. The gaze is further reverted here when the camera pans up and down Dorians bare torso as he washes up outside<sup>26</sup>. *The Secret of Dorian Grey* does not cohere to either male or female gaze completely but rather switches back and forth between the two.

For example, on screen Sybil is at first the sexualised object gazed upon by the audience and Dorian, but when Dorian's beauty is acknowledged he is the one gazed upon for the rest of the film. However, similar to Gwendolyn and Rebecca, Dorian takes advantage of and seemingly likes to be looked at, as Mulvey (1973:16-17) discusses there is pleasure in being looked at as well as looking. Gwendolyn takes advantage of Dorian's attraction to her by coercing him into bed, even though he was hesitant, and leading him to commit acts he had never done before. However, as time goes on Gwendolyn becomes addicted to alcohol and drugs, losing her control and reverting the active role back to Dorian.

In comparison, *Twinky* oddly switches from male gaze to female gaze as Sybil matures and gains her own voice leading to her taking ownership of the gaze, narratively. Whilst Sybil is a schoolgirl, she acts as Scott's housewife and skips school to look after him but, whilst apart from Scott, she considers returning to education and even partakes in a political protest, because of joining a community of mods. It is also the time apart from Scott which turns her into an independent woman, that gives her the strength to leave Scott when he no longer shows an interest in her and physically abuses her. On the other hand, the narrative creates a somewhat superficial liberation from the male gaze and into the female gaze, because Sybil is still gazed upon by the audience and the camera, when shown as half

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<sup>26</sup> Arguably this technique has meaning as it then proceeds to do the same with Dorian's painting, showing how it has captured his beauty. But it still exhibits a female gaze.

naked. According to McNair (2002:121), ‘most directors make films to satisfy their sexual fantasies’, which is apparent for *Twinky* as it is loosely based upon the director’s own marriage. The context of *Twinky* plays an integral part in the ‘pro-filmic event’<sup>27</sup>, as even behind the camera, it is the husband who has control over how their story is to be told whereas if the wife had been the director, it probably would be less sitcom like and more melodrama.

To conclude, both the male (Mulvey, 1975) and female gaze (Jacobsson, 1999, McNair, 2002) are used equally in the case studies discussed in order to sexualise the different subcultural female characters. Although, the mod and skinhead characters experiences of sexuality are presented differently to one another. Skinhead characters are rarely sexualised and when they are sexualised, they are negatively subjected to the female gaze. They are associated with the ‘monstrous woman’ trope, described by McNair (2002); typically, associate violence and lust together; and display more masculine than feminine traits. Mods, on the other hand, are overly sexualised, supporting every aspect of Mulvey’s male gaze theory (1975), however, female mod characters do support some claims of the female gaze (Jacobsson, 1999, McNair, 2002). Rebecca, for example, has more agency on screen and orders the audience how to think and what to see, like a male character would. In this chapter, distinctions between how male subcultural characters and female subcultural characters are constructed have been touch upon. The next chapter will build upon that by discussing the impact of national cinema on the case studies of the whole project and whether or not the case studies demonstrate the same gendered conventions of British cinema at that time.

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<sup>27</sup> The actual filming of the scene.

### Chapter 3: How Women in Subculture Convey Britishness in Cinema

The mod and skinhead subcultures are iconically British, despite having roots in other cultures. Italian sharp suits, vespas and interior design became a part of mod culture (Landy, 2010: 112) whilst skinheads imitated rudeboy and black culture of the 1960s (Hebdige, 1976:148). Simultaneously, Britain was quickly becoming a multicultural hub and the film industry was not far behind. During the 1960s, European co-productions more than doubled from the decade before and they continued to outnumber solely national productions throughout (Bergfelder, 2005:133). The following table shows how popular co-productions were in the 1960s but also how quickly they disappeared in the 1970s.

<b>Film</b>	<b>Distributions and production companies</b>	<b>Narrative Location</b>	<b>Actors/Characters</b>	<b>Directors</b>
<i>Blow Up</i> , 1966	American	London	British	Michelangelo Antonioni, Italian
<i>The Girl on a Motorcycle</i> , 1968	British, French and American	France and Germany	French and British	Jack Cardiff, British
<i>Lola/Twinky/London Affair</i> , 1970	British	London and New York	British	Richard Donner, American
<i>The Secret of Dorian Grey</i> , 1970	German and British	London	British characters, varied actors	Massimo Dallamano, Italian
<i>That'll be the Day</i> , 1973	British	British Seaside, possibly Essex	British	Claude Whatham, British

<i>Jubilee</i> , 1978	British	Dystopian London	British	Derek Jarman, British
<i>Bloody Kids</i> , 1979	British	Essex	British and Irish	Stephen Frears, British
<i>Oi! For England</i> , 1982	British	Manchester	British	Tony Smith, British

This chapter will explore how European co-productions and British productions convey Britishness by exploring general conventions of traditional British cinema. The focus of the following chapter is the women's role in British cinema. This builds upon the previous chapters as it not only looks at the subcultural female characters individually but how they function with other characters both male and female. Chapter three will explore how British subcultural women help perpetuate the myth of swinging London because of the fun luxurious lifestyle they show in London films in comparison to the 'reality' of subculture in non-London films. The chapter also investigates how subcultural female characters adhere to British cinema gender standards during 1965-1985, by concluding that subcultural characters do reflect the change in the woman's role to men, that they do have platonic relationships to other characters. But this chapter argues that, in comparison to typical British cinema, it is only a *perceived* independence shown in subcultural female characters. Finally, the chapter joins all this together to explain how these representations help to create 'Britishness' in cinema, by conforming to national cinema standards, despite many being European co-productions.

British cinema of the 1970s tended to favour themes of fatherhood, masculinity, male anxieties and 'sexual tourism' (Harper, 2000:76-77), however as we entered a new decade British cinema began to explore the stories of women. Social and political changes in Britain

around women's rights lead to a 'new image' of women in cinema. They were no longer viewed as victims but rather as adventurous women 'escaping from moral constraints about marriage and sexuality to pursue an independent existence' (Landy, 2010:112). In nearly every case study, the female subcultural characters are viewed as a victim<sup>28</sup> during their film at different points, despite the films also celebrating female liberation. For example, despite living a good life, Rebecca (*The Girl on a Motorcycle*) dies because she indulges in her pleasure too much, another example is every single woman left behind by Jimmy (*That'll be the Day*) who he tricks or uses force against to gain sexual gratification from young women, making them victims; at the same time *That'll be the Day* does not persecute any girl which is willingly sexual. The following chapter will explore this back and forth by exploring the following conventions of British Cinema: women are defined only by their role to men, relationships with other women, and women's perceived independence<sup>29</sup>.

### ***The Women's Role in Subculture film***

According to de Cacqueray (1995:112) women's "existence as characters is determined in function of their capacity to save or destroy the principal male protagonist". In non-London films<sup>30</sup>, the female mod characters are always used in such a manner, for example in *That'll be the Day* the girls are seen as stepping stones in Jimmy's life. All the desperate 'tarts' Jimmy sleeps with builds his personality and helps create the arc of Jimmy being unreliable and 'girl mad' as well as showing his lack of emotional control. In addition, of all Jimmy's relationships, the mod girls are shown to be less ideal than ordinary girls because the mod girls are shown as irresponsible, unfaithful and immature. The mod girls also push the

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<sup>28</sup>but can also be seen as adventurous as discussed later in the chapter

<sup>29</sup> List curated by (Cacqueray, 1995:112-113)

<sup>30</sup> with the exception of *The Secret of Dorian Grey*, however this has been credited as a sexploitation film and so has sway over how women are represented in comparison to other narratives.

narrative of the film forward as, with each one, Jimmy is pushed into a moral dilemma. The first dilemma is when a mod girl leaves her child alone to go and meet Jim and sleep with him, she even remarks that she does this all the time. Her action leads him to promptly leave and go home to his mother. The next dilemma is when he cheats on his fiancée with her best friend<sup>31</sup> on their wedding night, initially there is no consequence, but she continues to try to seduce him even after his wife has had his child. Therefore, to avoid her, he begins going to the dancehalls and drinking again, as he did before he wedded. Finally, the last dilemma is when, his wife, Jeannette, gives up her whole life for Jim. Her family beg her not to marry him and even become suspicious of her behaviours because of him. She even moves into his family home to raise their child, where Jim's mother tries to overtake caring for the child. In one last attempt to keep her family together and gain respect from his family, she asks for Jim's help with the son, in doing so, he finally decides to run away as he is finally deciding that he is not a family man.

The film also alludes to all of Jimmy's behaviour being his parents's] fault, as it hints at Jimmy experiencing some kind of childhood trauma throughout the film. It begins with a flashback of Jimmy as a child with his mother and father which transitions to the next scene with a baby's cry in the foreground. This same cry is audible whenever Jimmy experiences intense emotion with other women: when he loses his virginity, when he rapes a schoolgirl and when the baby is left alone unattended. *That'll be the Day* presents different attitudes toward fatherhood and motherhood than traditional British Cinema values. According to Harper (2000:76-77), fatherhood was a popular topic of 1950s British cinema, in particular movies of the 1950s explored how men are better mothers than , crazed widows or silly little girls. However, there is no father figure present in this film, until Jim becomes a father himself, whom he runs out on just like his father did to him. The film seems to condemn both

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<sup>31</sup> who is also his best friend's girlfriend

mothers and fathers of previous generations, insinuating that their behaviour has influenced the younger generation. *That'll be the Day* is not the only example of this generational blame.

The absence of both parents is also shown in *Bloody Kids*, in which a childish prank goes wrong leaving an attention starved child in the hospital. At first it is not shown that his parents are not in his life, and it just seems like an innocent prank gone wrong but when his friend goes to his home, only the sister is there. In the home, there is no sign of any adult, and his sister does not care about his wellbeing as it interferes with a party she is going to. The reason why this child was intentionally stabbed becomes clear when he asks nurses and police if anyone has come, and then he would not let them leave, adding in extra details to his story. These examples show a change in gender representation as it is no longer the mother letting her children down but rather both parents.

*Twinky* shows a different relationship with the generations before her, arguably it is Sybil who lets her parents down rather than her parents letting her down. Sybil's decision to date a thirty-seven-year-old man who reminds her of her grandfather is the reason why her parents are let down by her. We first see her grandfather with a young, barely twenty, personal assistant, who is crouched at his feet writing notes for him, later we also see him with other young girls encouraging them to all take a bath together. Furthermore, whenever Sybil is in trouble, it is the grandfather which punishes her. Sybil takes it one step further by even comparing Scott, her husband, to her grandfather, she later comments that he'll be her "mummy and daddy, my (her) teacher, and my (her) super granddaddy all rolled into one" (Donner, 1970). It seems to be that the only reason Sybil finds her relationship normal is because of the example set by her grandfather. Throughout the film, Sybil also contradicts conventions of the previous generation. For example, despite being married, she continues to go to school, instead of being a simple housewife for the rest of her life and for having the courage to leave Scott, even though in a previous scene she commented that no one would

want her, a widowed sixteen-year-old. Therefore, *Twinky* begins to show a progression in British cinema towards ideals of the woman's role by taking a female protagonist and showing her to develop her own opinions and thoughts as she grows older and matures.

The women's role began to change in the 1960s because physical and/ or conceptual journeys<sup>32</sup> with a female protagonist at the centre became a popular narrative (Landy, 2010:111). Of the case studies used in this chapter *The Girl on a Motorcycle*, *Twinky* and *Jubilee* reflect Landy's claim. Landy also expresses that the 'traditional attitudes toward sexuality and gender, the feminine body, courtship, the family, maternity and social class appeared to be crumbling in the wake of a permissive society (2010: 111). Another claim which is evident in the three case studies above. Arguably *The Girl on a Motorcycle* demonstrates Landy's points most blatantly. Rebecca is travelling from France to Germany and from husband to lover, this is her physical journey. At the same time Rebecca is experiencing lucid dreams which get progressively more powerful as the physical journey goes on, this is used to show her metaphorical journey. As the dreams progress Rebecca becomes more and more subservient to Daniel and detaches from her husband Raymond. It shows a young, bored housewife become a rebellious, carefree biker. Furthermore, during the physical journey, Rebecca narrates her thoughts, discussing various topics about herself including sexuality and gender, the feminine body, courtship, and the family. These were typical topics of film in the 1960s and 1970s, Landy claims (2010:11) 1960s in one singular film. However, some may read Rebecca's death at the end as a warning to these new ideals were as others may consider it liberating as she is freed from the world she was rebelling against.

In a similar fashion, *Twinky* also shows a progression in societal values, as mentioned previously, through a physical and metaphorical journey again. Sybil's physical journey is

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<sup>32</sup> often with London as the final/main destination

her moving to New York to live with her husband and meet his family. Her metaphorical journey is that of her maturing into a young woman. In contrast to other British films at the time, Donner uses England as his traditional setting and the other, in this case America, as his fresh modern background to explore new themes. Typically with Anglo-Italian productions, the narrative takes place in Britain so that characters and audiences could question traditional values associated with their own cultures (Landy, 2010: 117). So, in *Twinky*, when Sybil moves to America, and she is encouraged to live an independent life from Scott and have her own opinions and beliefs, it is done in a similar fashion to that of the Anglo-Italian productions. As shown when she lives alone, goes back to school (to better herself) and is caught protesting outside a college.

Arguably, *Jubilee* also supports Landy's claims. Even though there is no change in location in *Jubilee*, there is a change in time as the film is structured around Queen Elizabeth I travelling forward in time, guided by an angel to witness the dystopian future her country now finds itself in. Again, this physical journey is used to question the new modern standards of society against the traditionally accepted ideals. Jarman cleverly uses the two distinct time periods to argue that the traditional way is too restrictive but at the same time a society cannot function on pure anarchy. The conceptual journey of *Jubilee* is essentially discussing how the world would run if we had no political or societal systems as well as how women would be perceived in the roles of men. For example, the gang of the film is all women: Bod is the head and is coded as a male mobster for the entirety of the film; Mad is her second-hand man, she's not afraid of anything or anyone and completely insane; Crabs is the 'playboy' of the group a different man each night, who she lures in and they murder together; and finally Amyl as the lookout, she barely leaves base unless absolutely necessary and is the smartest of the gang. By placing women in these roles and not men, their actions seem even more irrational and absurd as it is not typically expected in women of British Cinema. Even

though the film ultimately portrays women negatively, Jarman does positively represent a sisterhood between the girls, a new theme in British cinema (Cacqueray, 1995:112).

### ***Women's Relationships***

Cacqueray (1995:112) suggests that women in British cinema during the 1960s could not have a relationship on screen unless they are rivals. However, she also claims that as we approach the 1980s, British cinema showed women as friends with a strong solidarity with one another (1995:5). The case studies of this project accurately reflect that women in the 1960s could only be rivals but they do not completely reflect the strong solidarity of womanhood. The case studies during the 1980s used, tend to only have a singular female character and therefore this claim can only be judge on their words against other women and not visual language. The core of rivalry between women in the 1960s is because women are only written as love interests for the male protagonist.

*The Secret of Dorian Grey* is an extreme example of Cacqueray's claim as the film focuses on one female character and then moves onto to next when she has been defeated by her successor. Beginning with Sybil, a successful confident actress who is belittled and broken down to a paranoid anxious mess after Dorian loses interest in her and moves onto Gwendolyn an eccentric aristocrat. Sybil's defeat leads to her suicide as she begs for Dorian to stay with her, but he chooses the other women. Dorian and Gwendolyn maintain a purely sexual relationship but as it continues Dorian essentially drains the life out of Gwendolyn introducing her to a world of addiction as she begins taking drugs. Because Dorian is immortal and his imperfections are transferred into his painting, he does not age or show any signs of substance abuse, but Gwendolyn does. Due to his good looks and new lifestyle, Dorian becomes an adult movie star and loses interest in Gwendolyn for his co-stars, both male and female. His next 'main woman' is his manager, Adrienne, who will do anything to

please Dorian, including entrapping a female friend in a room with Dorian, so that he could assault her. However, Adrienne, differs to the other women as she is never shown as a love interest for Dorian but rather using him to professionally succeed.

Another female mod character who does not compete for love is Rebecca and her friend, Catherine. In a flashback, Cardiff portrays the traditional ways of courtship when the two double date with their prospective husbands on a ski holiday. Although, after each member retires to their room, both men catch each other sneaking into their chosen bride's room. This scene shows how the traditional attitudes towards sex and courtship seem to be crumbling, a typical topic of 1960s British cinema (Landy, 2010: 111). Before Raymond sneaks into Rebecca's room, we watch her prepare for the evening in her mirror as she pretends to be nervous while she switches between a black lingerie set and a white lingerie set. Rebecca comments that Daniel would love the black set, but she must wear the white for Raymond as she is feigning purity.

Her flashbacks show Rebecca trying to live up to traditional society values by hiding her promiscuity, but during her present she is proud of her lifestyle. The give and take of the representation further show the changing but uncertain ideology around sex, gender, the feminine body and courtship. *That'll be the Day* also portrays a new emerging society, however the characters' acts remain hidden from others, just like the fiancées sneaking into the girl's rooms in *The Girl on a Motorcycle*. Many of the girls Jim sleeps with do not want others to find out; they seem to have a remorse after committing a sexual act. Both willing and unwilling participants beg Jim not to tell anyone what happened between them, but he does not listen, instead he tells his roommate and childhood friend about all of them.

The films communicate a shamefulness in being 'impure' and imply that promiscuous women are not worthy of marriage. Rebecca's marriage fails as she continues her affair with her first love. Jim marries the only virgin woman he meets as she is worth the wait whereas

the others are not worth taming his desire. Sybil (*Twinky*) questions remaining in a loveless abusive marriage as she will be ruined for other men and Sybil (*The Secret of Dorian Gray*) chooses to die rather than cut off her and Dorian's relationship; and Gwendolyn is destroyed by Dorian and no longer of worth for other men. The messages conveyed in the film are confusing as women were gaining equality in the real world, but film is warning them not to engage in this new behaviour.

Furthermore, Jim's two friends have different attitudes towards his behaviour. The older male roommate has respect for Jim whereas his childhood friend becomes disgusted as he matures at university. These two attitudes show the only two portrayals of women in 1960s British cinema, that being the 'working class maid or prostitute' or the 'upper to middle class potential wife' (Cacqueray, 1995:113). The two attitudes of Jim's friends directly correspond with whether they personally see women as the working class prostitutes or the potential wives. The two attitudes also show a distinction between classes at the time, suggesting that the working class are lustful animals, only good for one thing, and the middle to upper class are respectful gentlemen, worthy of marriage. The mod subculture is a working-class culture, but they try to appear middle class by dressing and talking as if they are. This is reaffirmed in British cinema when female mod characters dress and attempt to act sophisticatedly in hopes to try to blend into the middle class but ultimately fail for two reasons. The first reason is that they cannot tie down a 'good man', that being the respectful gentlemen disgusted by people who sleep about. Each female mod loses their boyfriend/husband or never has a man to begin with.

The second reason is the mods working class roots reappearing or not being able to disappear. Cacqueray (1995:113) argues that during this period, a variety of demographics, including social class of female characters are included in British cinema to create variety in characters. However, this is not necessarily a good thing, by using the mods as an example, it

can be seen that the different social classes are used against the female characters as they try to climb out of their class only for their actions to pull them back down and ultimately effect their quality of life. In *The Secret of Dorian Gray*, it is Sybil's inexperience of the upper class which drives Dorian toward the older aristocrat, Gwendolyn. Sybil and Dorian's lifestyles are complete opposites; Sybil lives in a two-bed terraced house in a rough area with her mother and older brother whereas Dorian has a whole estate to himself as well as holiday homes, which he shows and plans to share with Sybil. However, when Dorian introduces Sybil to his friends, he quickly realises that she can look the part of high-end housewife but cannot act as one. Dorian's associates ridicule Sybil about this and her acting career, which ultimately causes Dorian to lose all interest in her. Similarly in *the Girl on a Motorcycle*, Rebecca appears to have dropped a class as she engages in an adulterous relationship. In flashbacks, we see that Rebecca was brought up very comfortably by her father, who owns an antique bookstore. He teaches Rebecca proper etiquette and builds her independence by educating her.

It is in the bookstore where she meets Daniel, her current lover, a professor at a prestigious university. They shortly begin a relationship, and she has all the pieces in place to maintain her middle-class lifestyle, but she decides to marry, Raymond, a settled teacher, who is more age appropriate. When she makes the decision to marry someone else but still continues her love affair with Daniel, she seems to drop a class and gives up her own thoughts and dreams. Although, as she travels back to Daniel, she questions her newfound morals and values. In every instance, the class of a mod character always impacts their love life and therefore their quality of life.

On the other hand, the skinhead culture is proudly working class. In the case studies, *Jubilee*, *Bloody Kids* and *Oi! For England*, the skinhead women not only express their sexuality freely but also do not care to wed. The Skinhead films are released in the 1980s and

accurately reflect the changes in British cinema, Cacqueray discusses. She explains that films during the 1980s progressed the woman character as they are no longer defined by their relationships to men and could maintain a non-sexual, non-emotional relationship with men as well as having on screen friendships with other women (Cacqueray, 1995:112-113). As previously discussed, *Jubilee* is a powerhouse for female friendships, but it also demonstrates professional friendly relationships between women and men. The girl gang are also a punk band managed by 'Borgia Ginz', a rather extravagant man, whose relationship with them remains purely professional, even saving them from a murder charge to save his label.

They also form friendships with three other male characters who have relations with their friends, but there is no rivalry over each other. Another example of a platonic relationship is between Ken and Jan<sup>33</sup>, two subculture characters who protect a young lad from the police. When Jan is first introduced, she is discussing going on an abstinence from men because of the lack of respect they have for women. As the film progresses, it is clear that their relationship is platonic as they reck havoc on the city, joking with one another but never sharing a lingering touch or stolen glimpse. However, they do share an emotional connection as Jan seems distressed by Ken's final actions<sup>34</sup>. One key difference between the eighty's skinhead films and the sixty's mod films is the independence each female character has which attributes to how they function with male characters.

### ***Independence for Women?***

Both Landy (2010) and Cacqueray (1995) both agree that the 1960s is the period of the independent woman. Landy uses John Schlesinger's *Darling* (1965) as an example for she is a 'woman who did not want to get married or have children, but wanted everything', for this

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<sup>33</sup> Similar to Mad, Jan looks very punk but also portrays some skinhead characteristics.

<sup>34</sup> Jumping off a double decker bus to his death

she became an icon of swinging London (2010: 115). Julie Christie became the woman everyone wanted to be; an independent political advocate and fashion model (Paulicelli, Stutesman, and Wallenberg, 2017:136). Landy (2010: 112) expands this by stating that women were now being seen as adventurous in roles where they would typically be the victim. Landy's claim creates another distinction between the Swinging London films and the non-London films as her claim is correct for narratives taking place in London but not correct for films geographically outside of London.

A great example of this is Sybil in *Twinky*, typically in a narrative where a schoolgirl marries a 38-year-old man, the girl would be portrayed as a victim. But Donner adds a mystical comedic element to the film which catches the viewer off guard until the very end where, like Dorothy, Sybil wishes to return home and for it to have been a dream. This very juvenile acts from a childhood story remind the audience that she is in fact a child who has escaped a dangerous situation and not the adventurous woman he was portraying her to be. Whereas, in a similar situation, the schoolgirl who is assaulted by Jim in *That'll be the Day* is considered a victim, as an older male forced himself upon an underaged girl.

This contradiction happens again between *The Girl on a Motorcycle* and *The Secret of Dorian Gray*, as Rebecca falls victim to her infidelity but Gwendolyn thrives on it. Rebecca dies whilst on her way to Daniel to apologise and rekindle their love, but in Gwendolyn's case it is not until after her and Dorian's secret affair is over that she begins to dwindle. The Swinging London films convey a positive strong message around the changing times whereas any other film seems to act as a warning for anyone believing the myth of Swinging London.

The new adventurous woman is only one example of independent women in British cinema during this period, the other is the career woman. Adrienne and Gloria are the only examples of successful happy career women in the chosen case studies, but Adrienne's career is in the sex industry and Gloria's career is selling drugs. Arguably, Bod could be considered

a successful career woman as a mobster, given Gloria's occupation, if 'mobster' can be referred to as a career. The models in *Blow Up* are extremely successful career women but they appear to be miserable, Thomas is constantly controlling them, and they are always intoxicated by drugs or alcohol or both.

Then, any other career women in these case studies are considered failures, Sybil (*The Secret of Dorian Gray*) is a terrible actress, Amyl never finishes her British history book and if we consider a housewife as a career Sybil (*Twinky*) fails as it ends in divorce and Rebecca fails as she is sleeping with another man. British cinema represents these female characters to have independence, but they also suggest that women's independence will make women miserable. British cinema during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s is full of contradictions of representation of women and directors like to use British subcultures to perpetuate these contradictions. Because similarly, to Italian directors at the time, they use a character from a different culture against a familiar background to question traditional values and morals and document their encounters with the 'other', whilst remaining familiar enough for the audiences to relate to (Landy, 2010: 117).

In conclusion, the case studies chosen do support new British cinema trends of the time when representing women. The films adhere to the representation of women at the time but show more experimental extreme examples of situations by focusing on less mainstream films and subcultural women. By this I mean that women would not have been forming mega girl gangs and murdering police if they had power and independence like in *Jubilee*, Jarman uses the subculture to exaggerate the stereotypes of the subculture and simultaneously belittle the discourse around women having power. Similarly, with *Blow Up*, Antonioni uses the mod culture to realistically drive Thomas, the protagonist, insane, as it is not until the end that we realise he has gone mad. Simply put, subculture allows directors to explore new avenues

subtly whilst adhering to traditional standards of British cinema. It is essentially like using subcultures as 'double agents'.

There is also a split of representation between the films that take place inside 'swinging London' and those that do not. The films that do take place in Swinging London favor the new social expectations over those that do not. Furthermore, the Swinging London films show subculture as a lavish fun lifestyle whereas others show the cautious side of subculture. As example, *The Secret of Dorian Gray* shows the high-end party lifestyle of subculture whereas *Blow Up* shows the consequences of the lifestyle.

## **Chapter 4: How Colour is Used in Subculture Film to Convey New Images of the Modern Woman**

This final chapter analyses film form and style, specifically colour usage, in order to solidify my conclusion that subcultural women are used to negatively portray the modern women in British Cinema. By focusing solely on form and style in this last chapter, a greater understanding of how British female subcultural characters are constructed is found. This chapter, therefore, takes a different methodical approach than previous chapters, in order to determine if the same conclusion surrounding subcultural representation is apparent in all fields of research.

Colour in film was a relatively new premise during the 1960s in Britain and directors were, at first, reluctant to use anything but black and white film stock (Street, 2018: 470). The previous chapter concluded that British cinema was experimenting with different images of the modern women through changing traditional conventions of British Cinema. The following chapter builds upon this by focusing on how colour, another new experimental element of British cinema, is specifically used to help construction the new images of women. British directors feared that colour would act as a distraction on screen and would only 'decorate' the narrative they were trying to push (Street, 2018: 470). Paolo Babbioni and Isabel Hernández-Gil (2021: 88) explain director's fears fantastically with these two sentences 'Alfred has not come' and 'Alfred has *still* not come'. Both sentences mean the same, however the 'still' in sentence two hints that Alfred was supposed to be coming, adding a layer of tone (or decoration) to the original sentence. The tone can also be interpreted differently and take away meaning from the original source, it is the taking away meaning of the story that British directors were so frightened about with colour, so if an element of a scene was coded red, the audience may interpret it as danger, but the director means it as love.

However, as colour began to give meaning in media, directors began experimenting with the premise of colour use. The following chapter will use Oleksander Kovsh and Mykyta Dziuba's recent work *Symbolism of Colour in Cinema* (2022), as well as work from Sarah Street (2018) and Simon Rycroft (2010), to conduct close analysis of the case studies so far to further understand how British directors coded subcultural women specifically in British cinema at the time.

As we are aware from previous chapters, the subcultural characters tend to embody the ideals of the new modern women and so the following chapter discusses how colour is used to negatively portray mod and skinhead characters as representations of the modern woman. The chapter will also consider how is colour used to convey mod and skinhead characters as frenzied and irrational and how mod characters are shown as extremely feminine, daydreamers and victims (excluding Jane from *Blow Up*) whereas skinhead characters are shown as masculine, violent and destructive. However, both subcultures portray sexual experimentation through colour, which is not used for typical women of this time period in British cinema.

Of the case studies, red is the most common colour because it is extremely versatile and can convey many different emotions. Kovsh and Dziuba (2022: 209) declare that red symbolises anything that 'sharply manipulates a person's feelings' whether that be love, anger, danger, passion or violence. Dallamaro and Jarman use red in *The Secret of Dorian Gray* (Dallamano, 1970) and *Jubilee* (Jarman, 1978) to indicate murder, figure 9 shows the very first shot the audience see when watching *The Secret of Dorian Gray*.



**Figure 9: *The Secret of Dorian Gray* Title Slide**

The slide is one singular image split into three sections and takes on a pop art appearance<sup>35</sup>, the use of inverting part of an image into the negative counterpart was a popular technique used by director Clive Donner. For him, the negative would represent “the hypocritical nature of society in which we live today: don’t take anything at face value” (Street, Johnston, Firth and Rickards, 2019: 3) The combination of black and red creates a gloomy atmosphere and enhances dramatic elements (Kovsh and Dziuba, 2022:210), combined with the words, ‘the secret’, the shot creates an ominous beginning to the film and encourages the audience to question each characters safety, especially when he strikes his girlfriend shortly before she commits suicide.

The colour palette used within this scene further stresses that his girlfriend is in danger. The camera focuses on a darkened street when a bright red London bus pulls up to Sybil and her and Dorian get on, whilst arguing from then on, the redness of the bus is the backdrop for the scenes ahead. As the audience, we do not see how exactly Sybil dies, we only hear Dorian tell his friend that she jumped out in front of that same red bus. It can be

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<sup>35</sup> An increasingly popular style of art in London during the 1960s (Rycroft, 2010: 67)

interpreted here that Dorian is to blame for her death, the colour palette changes to red, signalling danger when Dorian approaches her and as the title slide suggests, he has many secrets. In this instance, colour is hinting that Sybil is in fact a victim of Dorian's and did not intend to do harm to herself and it is a great example of how colour acts as decoration on top of the initial story.

The next example of red symbolising violence and murder is in Derek Jarman's *Jubilee*, in which he uses red in two different ways, separating the different types of murders that take place. When the gang are killing for fun, the scenes are washed in red (as can be seen in figure 11) but when they either injure or kill others emotionally, the only red to be seen is the blood drawn. The scene shown in figure 10, reinforces the girl gang's feminine side, it begins with Bod removing her heavily masculine black suit jacket, revealing her bare breast, to Mad then straddling Bod's back in order to carve the word LOVE into her back. Whilst carving into Bod's Back, the camera focuses on Mad's face, her expressions, her make-up and therefore a very distinctive colour palette. Mad's red jacket appears pink in this isolated close up as does her lipstick, a colour that connotes femininity (Kovsh and Dziuba, 2022:210) as well as softness and tenderness; as she is carving into Bod, she is very steady and light with her movements. This scene and the only other close up of Mad<sup>36</sup> are the only moments that she is shown as feminine. At the same time, it is also the only time she is shown to have any emotion, reinforcing the Athena archetype within her, as discussed in the first chapter.

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<sup>36</sup> as she is murdering the police officer, another violent act drove by love and passion.



**Figure 10: Mad carves 'LOVE' into Bod's back, *Jubilee*.**



**Figure 11: Close up of Mad, *Jubilee*.**

On the other hand, during the other killings, any emotional insight to Mad is taken away using a red monochrome filter, and therefore implies that these are purely for fun with the girl gang. These scenes use a range of still camera movements, extreme angles and have a high contrast, all elements of black and white British cinema (Petrie, 2018:217). By using red as the main colour, the audience can understand what is happening without the shock factor of seeing blood (like figure 10) or by seeing body parts falling out of a body (as we later do when Mad kills an officer). These killings with the red hue fit the satirical theme of the film

very well as the frantic movements of Bod, the boredom of the other girls and the noises made by Lounge Lizzard dying, make the whole scene feel very inauthentic and so the filter takes a step further from reality. The stark contrast between the two types of killings makes the emotion fuelled ones by Mad even more shocking to the audience and dramatically exaggerates what emotions can do to a woman, reinforcing the Artemis archetype that Mad embodies, as discussed in chapter one, in that she kills to protect other woman, are extremely aggressive and filled with rage.



**Figure 12: Lounge Lizzard being murdered by the girl gang in *Jubilee*.**

A shared use of monochromatic red is not the only similarity between *Jubilee* and *The Secret of Dorian Gray*. In these two films, the colours typically used for subcultural women can be worn by Dorian, and colours worn by subcultural men can be worn by Mad and Jan (*Bloody Kids*). It is unusual in the case studies for any non-subcultural and subcultural characters, male or female, to be wearing vivid colouring, unless they are experimenting in their sexuality. It is only within these two case studies that the gendered costume colours are flipped, although it is not unusual for *The Secret of Dorian Gray* to be an exception in this

case as, according to Darren Elliot-Smith (2016:1), the ‘other’<sup>37</sup> represented in horror films is symbolic of ‘social ills, anxieties and unease’, any sexuality other than heterosexual is considered to be one of these concerns. Dorian is painted wearing nothing but a purple scarf, purple alluding to a fantasy (Kovsh and Dziuba, 2022: 211), adding to the mythical premise of the painting being alive.

He then begins to wear many blue tones as he begins to experiment with his sexuality<sup>38</sup>, here blue is being used to show his confused and uncomfortable state (Kovsh and Dziuba, 2022: 210) as he is reluctant at first, when Gwendolyn’s brother propositions him. Street, Johnston, Frith and Rickards (2019:3) suggest that vivid colours, at this time in cinema, are heavily linked with sexuality<sup>39</sup>, *Jubilee* supports this claim. Jarman changes the colour palette of characters experimenting with their sexuality, as Mad and Jan both predominantly wear black, but have bright coloured hair and make-up. Mad shows sexual tension<sup>40</sup> towards Bod, and Jan gave up on men after being let down one too many times.

Jarman also loves to use the complementary colours orange, pink and green. Pink not only connotes femininity and beauty, but it also has a calming effect on viewers evoking positive emotions (Kovsh and Dziuba, 2022: 210). Similarly, to Jarman’s monochromatic red, Jack Cardiff produces some stunning psychedelic dream-like sequences to portray Rebecca’s sexual experiences and feelings in *The Girl on a Motorcycle* (1968), all of these sequences are dominated by a vivid hot pink tone. At this time, Cardiff was well known for experimenting with colour, having been one of the first directors to use technicolour film stock, long before Eastman colour was readily available (Street, 2019:304). Cardiff purposefully uses pink to calm the audience at these moments because *The Girl on a*

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<sup>37</sup> referring to supernatural beings.

<sup>38</sup> The premise of sexuality in these films is discussed previously in chapter two.

<sup>39</sup> And race identity.

<sup>40</sup> albeit an extremely sadistic sexual tension, considering the scene in figure 10.

*Motorcycle* was one of the first X-rated films in Britain to be shown in cinemas, meaning that audience members would not be used to seeing naked bodies on screen.

The extreme contrast and vivid flat colours blur the image, making the explicit content unidentifiable and suitable for British cinema. Some of her other dreams include a collage of unrelated images to layer different meanings together, this technique was considered to be a very British artform (Rycroft, 2010:67). Take her very first dream for example; it begins with an image of her husband, that is then layered with an image of her lover Daniel, beating like a heart, these images are then replaced by ruffles of pink fabric resembling a rose which the camera follows down to a floating image of a naked woman. By adding all of these elements together Cardiff has already informed the audience that her affair is more loving and sexual than her current marriage. The use of pink here (and for the rest of the film) does not only have a calming effect, but it also encourages viewers to have a positive outlook on Rebecca's overtly sexual lifestyle. However, the further Rebecca loses herself in a dream and/or feeling, the redder the scene becomes, as if Cardiff is warning others of overindulgence. The danger of overindulging is then reinforced when Rebecca is thrown into the window of a red car at the end of the film. The way Rebecca's dreams are staged, implying that she is being drugged by her sinful lust, which is again a topic that subcultural characters only seem to convey at this time in British cinema.



**Figure 13: mid-dream sequence, *The Girl on a Motorcycle*.**

Another colour Cardiff often uses is purple, in order to symbolise lost opportunities (Kovsh and Dziuba, 2022: 212). In every flashback of Rebecca's, involving her secret lover Daniel, she is wearing an element of purple. In addition, it is always when she has either ignored Daniel for another man or not had the courage to pursue him herself. The colour purple is therefore implying that she believes she made the wrong decision and often wonders about the 'what ifs?' of her life and is confirmed when she asks Daniel to marry her, insisting that she will happily leave her husband for him, but she is turned down because he had married whilst waiting for her<sup>41</sup>. Kovsh and Dziuba (2022: 211) also suggest that purple reflects a 'fantasy reality'; the protagonist is in a dream about their own life. So, when the audience are watching these flashbacks, we can only assume that Rebecca is in fact dreaming of them herself and is her own point of view of these events and not fact. Rycroft (2010: 79) further adds that British cinema was transitioning from the themes of provincial and real to metropolitan and fantastic, which Cardiff cleverly distinguishes by using bright vivid colour palettes to highlight the latter. Arguably though Cardiff's use of colour portrays a negative

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<sup>41</sup> the wife is no longer alive at this point, but he expresses how he will remain only married to her.

representation of women in this instance as it is heavily implied that Rebecca spends most of her time in a fantasy like realm. The same can be argued for Sybil in Richard Donner's *Twinky* (1970).



**Figure 14: Sybil visiting Scott in his apartment, *Twinky*.**

As the figure above shows, the outside world around Sybil has a purple tint to it, empathising the fantasy aspects of the world she's created. Unlike *The Girl on a Motorcycle*, the use of purple symbolising fantasy is to constantly remind the audience that this is in fact a little girl on screen not a woman. The construction of Sybil's fantasy world is reinforced by her mannerisms, her high pitched 'princess' voice for example, and the element of wishing to be transported home, undoing her years of marriage. The juvenileness of Sybil is strengthened by the soft yellow tones she wears only when around other schoolgirls. Yellow is often used to represent childish happiness and it is no different in *Twinky*.

Additionally, her costume for this scene, covers more of her skin than any other (including her school uniform), and she is also treated most like a child in this scene, in which her parents sit down with Scott, her lover, and discuss how he is going to take care of

her but she is then treated as an adult when she marries Scott and moves to New York with him. At the same time, it is only Sybil who wears other clothing, not her other school friends, here the distinction that she is a mod character comes into play and arguably suggests that she is more mature than the other girls and she no longer needs a uniform because of her new role as housewife. If we re-visit Babiotti and Hernández-Gil's idea of colour 'decorating' the intended story (2021:88), then it is justified why Donner keeps conveying contradicting ideals through colour. Because the meaning of the story is that this is a young girl and it is morally wrong, which maybe lost when translated to screen due to other elements of cinematography.

Popular colours<sup>42</sup> at that time are used in cinema to symbolise modernity, according to Sarah Street (2018: 482). Throughout the case studies, a link between vivid costuming and younger radical subcultural characters can be found, a clear example of this is shown below in figure 15. Here, Rebecca is the fully modernised character, wearing bright purple tights and voicing her opinion on modern issues in her voice over, her father is partially modernised as he brings his daughter up as an individual thinker, educating her and employing her, therefore a bright blue bow tie is incorporated into his otherwise traditional brown tweed suit; and the professor, who becomes Rebecca's lover, is in a fully traditional colour palette and (at this moment in the film) represents an older way of thinking.

Besides the character Dorian Gray, all mod women in the case studies are wearing brightly coloured clothing, implying that the subcultures have liberal views and welcome the societal changes around womanhood in the 1960s. For the skinheads, black clothing was favoured but with dramatic, often colourful make-up and outrageous hairstyles. The difference is likely due to the different roles women would play in the mod and skinhead subculture. In the mod culture, women were still expected to dress as a respectable lady,

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<sup>42</sup> purples, oranges, blues, and reds.

whereas the female skinhead fashion was used to portray strength and confidence (Sarabia and Shriver, 2010: pp 270), which is exactly what the colour black conveys in cinema (Kovsh and Dziuba, 2022:212). Furthermore, as discussed in chapter one, British cinema does not present skinhead female characters as purely masculine, they must reaffirm their femininity. The pink make up of both Mad and Jan does exactly this (Kovsh and Dziuba, 2022:210).



**Figure 15: Rebecca working in her father's store, *The Girl on a Motorcycle*.**

Black can also be used to convey destruction and restraint (Kovsh and Dziuba, 2022:212); In *That'll be the Day*, Whatham changes the lighting in scenes which reveal Jim's dark nature and in doing so creates a black background. The black background paired with the bluer tone of light creates a cold isolating effect on the viewer (Kovsh and Dziuba, 2022:212), emulating how the young girl must be feeling. Furthermore, Whatham catches the audience off guard with the attack by how he previously framed the fairgrounds. According to Street (2018: 478) colour helps illuminate the changing landscapes of Britain in cinema, the fairgrounds in *That'll be The Day* are a great example. The bright colours of the funfair create a fun, relaxed environment for the characters, leading the girls within the film to a false sense of security. Children would feel welcomed by the luminous grounds, safe to be left

alone without supervision but it is the funfair where Jimmy uses and assaults various teenaged girls.

In these scenes, the location is no longer inviting, all colour and light is gone, only darkness and Jimmy remain. The stark contrast between the two, creates a more dramatic effect on the viewer, encouraging sympathy for the fifteen-year-old schoolgirl. Whatham isolates both the viewer and the girl by removing any fantastical elements of the fair and changing to a darker colour palette, with the intention of revealing its true nature underneath. He uses this same strategy throughout the rest of the film; when Jim's friend is working the fair then taken around the dark back alleys to be beaten; and when Jim meets a girl in a brightly lit pier to go back to her dim damp apartment where she left her own child alone. The colour scheme here, once again, portrays the male protagonist as a predator (but not necessarily as a villain) and the female characters surrounding him as victims. Although, in *That'll be the Day* the blues and blacks blatantly frame Jim as the attacker whereas in *The Secret of Dorian Gray* the reds and blacks hint at Dorian as the murderer, but the audience must piece together hints within the film to come to that conclusion.



**Figure 16: Jim attacking a schoolgirl, *That'll be the Day*.**

In addition, Petrie (2018: 217) discusses how elements of expressionism were still experimented with in colour film during the 1960s, including hard-edged, high contrast lighting, and forced or extreme angles<sup>43</sup>. In this instance, the high contrast and forced angles, to create a further devastating tone in the narrative, as the scene feels unnatural to viewers. The high contrast between the two and the background make it hard to distinguish where the attack is taking place, it is only suggested as the fairground due to Jim's whereabouts before and after. This effect allows the viewer to be reminded that they are watching a film and it is not in fact real as Street (2018: 472) explains, many directors were reluctant at first to use colour to showcase hard hitting stories because colour creates a familiar day to day atmosphere, that cinema could not emulate in black and white, and therefore, becomes 'too real' for audience members.

A similar strategy is used in Antonioni's *Blow Up* (1966) as the only image in black and white is the picture of Thomas capturing the murder of a man. Both at the beginning and end of the film, there are also these mime-like characters around Thomas, they are even there when he returns to the crime scene and no body can be found. The mimes reflect Thomas' insanity as he is accepted into the group when he returns a 'ball' (there is no physical ball) they use whilst miming playing Tennis. Interestingly, despite the normal mime costume of black and white stripes, they are wearing elements of bright mod clothing with the typical mime face paint and beret. Perhaps Antonioni is implying here that Thomas is not the first mod to become mentally ill following an overindulgent lifestyle of sex, drugs and alcohol. Of the mimes, as well, there are equally as many women as men and so in contradiction to other case studies, Antonioni is predicting the same downfall for mod men as for mod women.

Besides the series of photographs and reality of the mimes, *Blow Up* is an extremely colourful film for its time, perfectly capturing the zeitgeist of the mod subculture during the

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<sup>43</sup> with an empathise on low angles

1960s. The overall colour palette of *Blow Up* is heavily dominated by cold undertones<sup>44</sup> which create confusing, alienated, uncomfortable atmosphere and allude towards a dreaminess or ‘unreality of what is actually happening’ (Kovsh and Dziuba, 2022: 210-212). A similar palette is used in *The Secret of Dorian Gray* and they both depict a mod man gradually losing their grip on reality after a key interaction with a mod woman. The colour palette of *Blow Up* is mainly presented through the clothing of the women around Thomas, who, like himself, overindulge in sex, drugs and alcohol. Just like, *The Girl on a Motorcycle*, the other mod characters represent the new modern woman of Britain and are arguably punished because of their modernity. *Blow Up* shows these fashionable modern young women enjoying the new popular pastimes of socialising, drinking and getting high, but because of these activities, the girls are taken advantage of by Thomas and his associates. Although, the consequences are not as severe as Jim’s attacks in *That’ll be the Day* or Rebecca’s death in *The Girl on a Motorcycle*. It is only implied that Thomas is taking advantage of these women, for nothing is shown, like *The Secret of Dorian Gray*, and is only portrayed from the events leading up to the situation.

On the other hand, Jane, a female character, who is mostly sober, is portrayed as an antagonist because of her green and black clothing, a colour typically associated with villains (Kovsh and Dziuba, 2022:211). This is the only time a mod woman is presented as a perpetrator and not a victim in the case studies chosen. She is also one of a few mod women to be able to manipulate a man, in this scene (see figure 17), Jane visits Thomas to get the photos he had taken in the park, the photos of the murder she was witness to. At the beginning of this scene, Thomas seems to be in control, demanding Jane what to say and how to act; Antonioni even uses a low shot so that the audience must also be looked down upon by Thomas. However as soon as Thomas is distracted by Jane’s sex appeal she takes control of

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<sup>44</sup> blues, purples, and greens

the situation, almost convincing him to hand the photos over with nothing in exchange<sup>45</sup>. Now, the composition of each shot changes so that Jane is above Thomas, looking down upon him until she eventually leaves, leaving him a fake name and number. Thomas then takes back control as the viewer is once again below Thomas looking up at him.



**Figure 17: Jane peering down on Thomas, *Blow Up***



**Figure 18: models wearing the colour palette of *Blow Up***

Jane is not the only mod woman to take control of a mod man, in *The Secret of Dorian Gray*, Gwendolyn seduces Dorian the very same day that Sybil commits suicide or is

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<sup>45</sup> they are interrupted by a doorbell, otherwise she would have been successful.

possibly murdered. Gwendolyn walks down the stairs, cautiously approaching Dorian from behind, but he captures her in the mirror. As he turns, the soundtrack changes to an eerie undertone, because unlike Dorian, the audience are aware that she has some kind of argument with her brother to seduce Dorian. In this shot, she is draped in a long yellow and brown gown standing above Dorian in an authoritative manner. The yellowness of her gown foreshadows her insanity as well as labelling her as the main antagonist in this exact moment (Kovsh and Dziuba, 2022:209). The yellow light alludes to an unexpected twist in narrative coming for Dorian (ibid.), that being the news that Sybil has passed or more likely the changing nature of his portrait.



**Figure 19: Gwendolyn waiting to take Dorian to bed, *The Secret of Dorian Gray*.**

To conclude, British directors from the 1960s to 1980s loved to embed meaning through colour in their films, despite their own reluctance to leave black and white behind, at first. The overall impression that colour in cinema gives to subcultural women is that they are the epitome of the new modern woman in Britain. In addition, colour is used differently than its typical use as the inclusion of subculture allows directors to delve into new themes and

subjects with female characters that would not typically be approached, and so colour needs to be experimented within these new topics.

Although, this new modern woman is not a positively represented because they are then either presented as immature/simple-minded or emotionally irrational. Each female character, both mod and skinhead, fit into one of these two categories. Sybil (*Twinky*), the models in *Blow Up* and Rebecca are shown as immature women, Sybil (*The Secret of Dorian Gray*) and Mad are shown as emotionally irrational. The only exception to these categories is Jane from *Blow Up*, who again is shown rather negatively as she helps murder someone by taking him to the right place at the right time, and then she manipulates and robs Thomas in order to get the incriminating photos back. From conducting a closer analysis of how the different scenes are set up, similarities between *Blow Up* and *The Secret of Dorian Gray* have become clearer, they both frame a female mod character as an antagonist during the film and victimise the male protagonist despite wrongdoing of their own. These two films also use extreme angles to convey the power these women have over their men, in a similar fashion to how Whatham asserts Jim's power over the young schoolgirls.

Another emerging similarity is how films with a female protagonist's perspective are shown as mere fantasies while films with a male at the centre are predominately reality or constructed to appear as so. The correlation between the fantasy theme and female perspectives only perpetuates the representation of them as immature and simple-minded. In *Twinky's* case, the immaturity is justified as she is a child playing 'dress up' as an adult. Nevertheless, the portrayal of Rebecca and the models is heavily tainted by the fact that they are both intoxicated, one with love and passion and others with alcohol and drugs.

Overall, an analysis of colour in these case studies shows a purely negative representation of subcultural women during this time period. Colour consistently portrays subcultural women as victims, overly emotional and daydreamers. This use of colour also reaffirms conclusions made in chapter one in that subcultural women often portray the Artemis archetype, a women's woman who justifies their extreme aggression and rage by their lack of morals. In addition, it supports the conclusion made in chapter three that subculture in London show a fun lifestyle in Britain because colour indicated the new modern lifestyle of Britain, which shows as fun and enjoyable environment, despite ending tragically. In addition, this chapter supports ideas of colour discussed in chapter two chapter two, in that skinhead characters are portrayed as more masculine then feminine as they continuously only wear black clothing. But, as discussed in chapter one, their femininity is also reaffirmed by the use of pink make-up, yet again suggesting that cinema will not portray the full masculinity of the skinhead subculture to screen. Therefore, this final chapter is supporting and reaffirming conclusions made from each chapter of the whole project, creating a strong argument that subcultural women are negatively represented in British cinema as a whole.

## Conclusion

This project aimed to answer if images of women in British cinema was changing whilst the women were being liberated across the nation and if so, was subculture being used as the new 'other' to the typical traditional woman. By conducting a thorough analysis of British cinema during 1965-1985 including subcultural women, I can conclude that a new image of women was emerging, and subcultural women were being used to push the new ideals. However, the representation of women is neither purely negative or positive. For example, each female character ultimately dies and/or is punished for overindulging in their passions, which would be considered a negative example but on the other hand one could also argue that the fact they enjoyed their lives to the fullest before passing is in fact a positive representation.

Schmidt's archetype theory proved useful to initially explore the complexity of how these female characters are constructed. For instance, the 'Aphrodite' characters set a positive example of sexual liberation and independent women, but it is the same characters who are shown to be unfit for marriage or family life. Simultaneously, there is another strand of female subcultural character who values community, and family above all else, that they would even turn to violence to protect the ones they love. When looking further at the case studies by using the male and female gaze; British cinema conventions and colour technologies, the confusion of the 'modern women' becomes more and more apparent.

The male and female gazes began to separate the mods and skinheads by beauty standards, and helped to clarify how these two subcultures were treated so differently. In chapter two, it is discussed that these female characters are sexually exploited and that they are in charge of the camera and their allure. There is a distinct difference between how the mods take charge of the narrative and their actions to how the skinheads do. Mods donned the 'femme fatale' look whilst skinheads took on the monstrous women trope, creating two conflicting ideals of the 'modern women' during this period. By considering traditional British cinema

conventions, a comparison between traditional and modern was able to be made and so seeing the subcultural characters as these two different types of modern women was clearer than before. The case studies shown supported changing trends in British cinema but did not always represent these positively, often showing subcultural women as irresponsible, unfaithful and immature. Finally, analysing colour added concrete evidence to the negative representations of subcultural women, because colour was fairly new and experimental, therefore, directors were more thoughtful in how they used constructed colours to mean different things. Meaning when red is used to exaggerate Mad's rage, it is done to push the monstrous women trope and when a modern colour palette is used on the subculture characters it is because they are the new modern woman.

Ultimately, it can be determined that the mod and skinhead characters were used to represent the new 'other' in society and to some extents were used to represent radical ideologies. Although, they were presented as a warning to viewers, who wish to be like the modern women, because they were also punished or dead at the hand of their indulgences. If Rebecca did not give into lust, she would not have crashed into a lorry; had Mad not given into violence and rage, she would not need to hide away; and if Gwendolyn had not used her intellect and sexual appeal to seduce and manipulate Dorian, she would not have lost herself to drugs and alcohol. At the same time, had Rebecca not given into lust she would have never met her one love, Daniel, nor would she have discovered the exhilarating thrill of riding a motorcycle; Mad would not have found her sisterhood amongst the girl gang; and Gwendolyn would not have succeeded at being aristocratic. Because of this, an extremely negative and bewildering discourse begins surrounding not only the modern women but also the mod and skinhead subcultures.

This project adds work to many different fields of academia, mostly the histories of British cinema and feminist film historiography. Previous work has been done on British cinema

between 1960s-1980s, including pairing British cinema with gender theories (Cacqueray, 1995, Gledhill, 2012, Kaplan, 2012) and surrounding film form and style (Bergfelder, 2005, Lay, 2002, Street, 2018). However, this project builds upon these works, by determining how subcultural women are portrayed differently to the typical woman of the time. For this same reason, this project adds to feminist film historiography as it looks at characters and films from a different perspective than previously and creates new conclusions surrounding female representation during 1965-1985. Additionally, the project also adds to niche critical debate surrounding sexploitation movies as it suggests that the mod subculture was integral to pass censoring of the BBFC as the subculture provide an excuse to show full nudity and extreme sexuality.

Despite touching upon elements of male subcultural representation<sup>46</sup>, this project does not cover male subcultural representation as a whole and so the overall depiction of subculture could be entirely different and is perhaps another project to be continued on from this project. Other areas that could be explored further is an investigation into subcultural films released after the subcultures' prime years, *Quadrophenia* (Roddam, 1979) and *This is England* (Meadows, 2006) for example which include an immature, sexually immoral mod and a strong willed, independent gazed upon skinhead. Films like these could give a further insight into how the female and male characters are portrayed differently or how they may reflect social changes of the years in which they are released. Another way this work could be built upon is by exploring other subcultures. During the project, the punks and rudeboys have been mentioned as other characters and as foundations for other subcultures but not analysed, this could be another interesting revenue of research as these four subcultures; rudeboy, mod, skinhead and punk, do all link together and cross over in many ways. Even in the small selection of case studies, presented in this project there is crossover between subcultures and

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<sup>46</sup> See page 36 and 84.

incorporation of each one. After exploring these avenues in more depth, the representation of subcultural women could vary greatly depending on the context the subculture character has been put in, for instance a skinhead amongst mods is likely to be shown as overly aggressive and working class as the two cultures contradict one another despite the skinhead culture stemming from the mod culture.

Lastly, this project set out to answer how subcultural women are represented in British cinema in 1965-1985 and can conclude, after using the four different methodologies to answer this question, that there is no one simple answer. In many ways these groups are represented positively in comparison to traditional conventions of female characters at this time. On the other hand, the conclusion of each character's narrative is extremely negative and has a lasting effect on the viewer in order to work as an affective warning to not behave in a fully modernised manner. Essentially, the case studies are trying to embrace the change but are asking viewers to 'meet them in the middle', i.e. they encourage free loving, own opinions, ownership of female bodies but to be prepared for the consequences of your own actions. Further, the subcultural female characters of the case studies represent the new other; the modern woman, and they were used against traditional female characters to show viewers the most extreme circumstances (typically death or loneliness) of engaging in these new behaviours. This answer adds to preexisting feminist film historiographies as the representation surrounding the modern women entering into the 1980s was supposedly purely positive (Cacqueray, 1995), however when presented through a subcultural characters, a negative point of view comes to light. The project also reaffirms and supports existing frameworks of British and British-adjacent cinema from this period (Bergfelder, 2005, Lay, 2002, Street, 2018), despite offering a fresh approach, by creating a new framework for analysis by centering the peripheral subcultural woman as the object of analysis.

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## **Filmography**

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