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Contents

"A Door of Hell":
Thresholds, Crisis, and Morality in the Art of Gilbert and George in the 1970s

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Abstract

This essay considers the art of Gilbert and George in the 1970s in relation to the concept of the threshold. The threshold is used as a means of addressing the shifting, and potentially disintegrating, boundaries of space, politics, morality, and society that are represented with reckless ambiguity in Gilbert and George's pictures. The Human Bondage *series is read in the context of the artists' adoption of right-wing imagery and rhetoric in their works and interviews, alongside the emerging and overlapping categories of skinheads, gay culture, and punk. The* Dirty Words *series is read in terms of its ambiguous spatial, racial, and political connotations. This analysis places Gilbert and George's 1970s work more firmly in the context of a pervading sense of crisis in 1970s Britain. More broadly, it argues for reading artworks that embrace right-wing imagery with an attention to their workings, and a watchful sense of how they move between positions, spaces, and ideologies before our eyes. These pictures speak—urgently, perhaps, to us in 2018—of fascism's return, the banal slippage into its imagery and rhetoric, marking its presence at the heart of British history.*

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Cite as

Gilbert and George, Morality, and Thresholds

In an interview in the mid-1980s, Gilbert and George reflected on questions of morality, behaviour, and social order in their art:

> Gilbert: Morality—what is good and what is bad. And it changes every day. The shifting of good and bad—what one accepts today, and the next day one doesn't accept any more.

> George: That we're able to sit here without crazy armies coming through the window is, in fact, something that people have culturally insisted on having a government arrange for them. It wouldn't be like that if people didn't insist. And in some places they don't. [1]

Gilbert and George have consistently claimed that the question of morality has been a key concern for them as artists. Gilbert's focus here on the way in which morality might shift from one moment to the next is a particularly useful approach for thinking about the artists' output in the 1970s, as they moved away from their performances as the Singing Sculpture and adopted their now familiar, large-scale, framed photographic "pictures". [2] In these works, the artists embraced abject and alienated states, extreme politics, crude and offensive graffiti, and violence as a way of reflecting on the fluctuating nature of morality. As the decade wore on, they increasingly incorporated the words and imagery of the far-right as well as racial slurs into their work.

It is crucial that George takes up this question above by referencing the home. For Gilbert and George, home has—famously—been Fournier Street in East London since 1968, where they rented a floor in one of the Georgian terraces there before buying the whole house in the 1970s and gradually renovating it. Publicity photographs of the artists still often depict them in this space. In the interview, George imagines the breakdown of morality in society with the image of "crazy armies coming through the window"—a sudden, violent breaking of the boundary between the private space of the home and the world outside. The crossing of the threshold—the entrance to a home or room—becomes a moment of social collapse or, at least, shifting definitions of behaviour and everyday life. The threshold itself is a space of in-betweenness and evokes a state of liminality, "poised upon uncertain ground, to be leaving one condition … and entering upon another" as Carolyn Heilbrun puts it, noting its inherent lack of clarity and unsteadiness. [3] In anthropological terms, the threshold has been considered as a rite of

passage, from one life stage to the next; in Arnold Van Gennep's work, society was akin to a house in whose rooms and doorways we move over our lifetimes. [4] At the same time, these liminal states are dangerous—they are when individuals or societies are at their most vulnerable. [5] The threshold, then, is a site of potential, a state and a space that might, as Subha Mukherji has termed it, enable a kind of "wakeful seeing" but also one of chaos and collapse. [6]

This essay takes up questions of morality and society in Gilbert and George's art via the concept of the threshold. It explores their sombre and, at times, recklessly ambiguous art of the 1970s through these terms in order to place this work in the context of home, identity, and the perceived political and cultural crisis that characterised this era of British history. It also explores, more broadly, how we might deal with artworks that place extreme right-wing or racist imagery at their heart. Across this decade, Gilbert and George position themselves on the threshold—of home, behaviour, society, and morality—and appear to speak, albeit with some opacity, of the potentials, fears, and politics of this liminal state.

Human Bondage and the Swastika

Across the nine, framed, black and white photographs that make up *Human Bondage No. 5*, 1974, Gilbert and George sprawl on the floor of their Fournier Street home, gingerly pouring each other gin and tonics and passing out amidst discarded bottles and half-empty glasses (Fig. 1). The artists, objects, and space are heavily in shadow, with light, just illuminating the surface of the floorboards, their suits, and the glassware. In the central panel, shards of broken glass suggest the chaotic, destructive fallout of a night of heavy drinking. The photographs are arranged provocatively into the form of a backwards swastika. A chain has been superimposed onto the photographic images and arranged to echo the form of the swastika more explicitly. Similar imagery occurs across the other six works in the *Human Bondage* series, with the artists passed out amidst the detritus of drinking and each work formed into grids that take the forms of swastikas, the shape underlined either by the arrangement of the photographs alongside blank borders or, in *Human Bondage No. 6*, by intertwining pieces of rope.
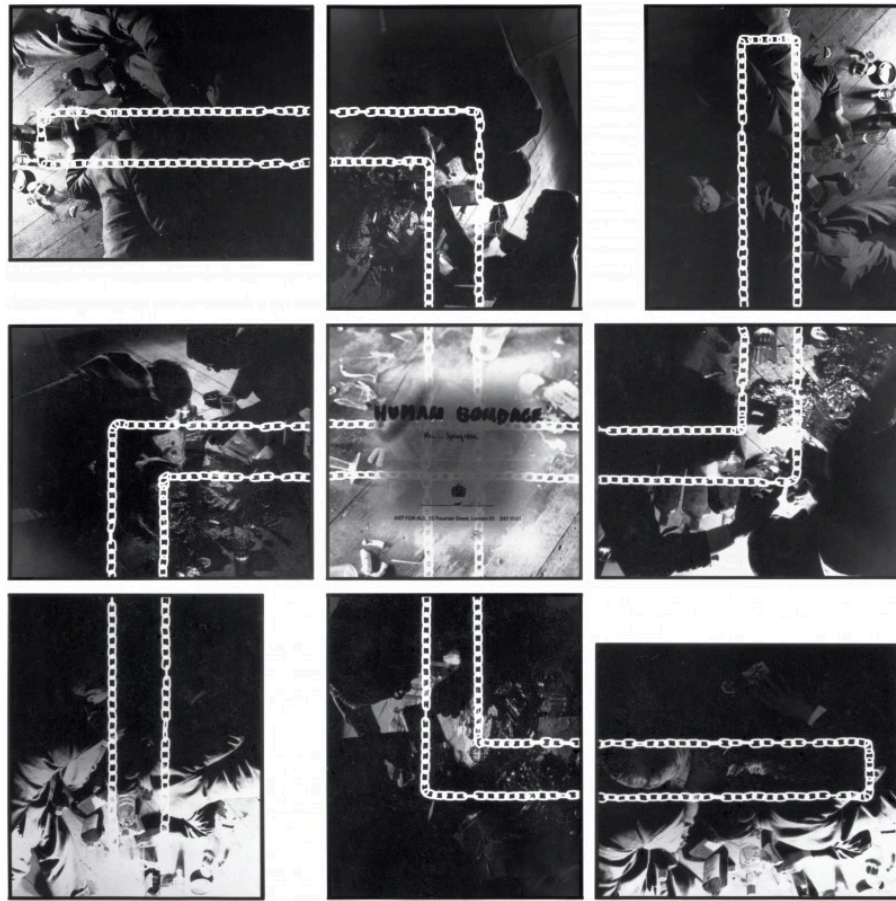
Figure 1.
Gilbert & George, Human Bondage No. 5, 1974, mixed media, 175 x 175 cm. Private Collection, London. Digital image courtesy of Gilbert & George. All Rights Reserved, DACS / Artimage 2018. Photo: Gilbert and George Studio.

Gilbert and George's use of the swastika, nearly thirty years after the end of the Second World War, has been a controversial element of their art. It has been the subject of interviews since the 1970s as critics have sought to understand the reasons for its incorporation into their images made during this period. For their part, the artists claimed that they "used the swastikas as a symbol of human bondage" and they linked this to alcohol: "the sign of a swastika from the recent past meant oppression, total oppression, and we felt that the drink did that". [7] Alcohol had been a subject of Gilbert and George's art since early in the decade when they produced *Gordon's Makes Us Drunk*, 1972, a twelve-minute film that depicted them drinking gin in their Fournier Street home to a soundtrack of Elgar and Grieg (Fig. 2). This marked the start of a destructive, riotous period in their lives and art, as they responded to their initial success in the art world by spending their money on "going out, drinking, getting totally drunk, totally drunk". [8] In interviews, they have claimed that, before long, this happy drinking was overtaken by a

"big cloud … all black" of "pain and loneliness". It is worth underlining that the works produced in this aftermath, like *Human Bondage*, are hardly confessionals—the artists have described these works as "very contrived pieces, very handmade … None of our works are documentaries" and the rather stilted poses and carefully choreographed chaos and darkness in their pictures attests to this. However, it is fair to say that *Human Bondage* was intended as a reflection on the party turning sour:

> That's why we started to do this chained-up piece; to be fucked, chained into these rooms in Fournier Street, alone, on the floor, drunk, and that's why we used to call them Human Bondage. The dark comes in towards us every time. Half our body was always in darkness. [9]

Figure 2.
Gilbert & George, Gordon's Makes Us Drunk, 1972, video, 12 minutes.
Collection of Gilbert & George. Digital image courtesy of Film courtesy of
Gilbert & George / Tate.

In *Dark Shadow*, a limited-edition book of words and images produced in the same year, the artists struck a similar tone. Several sections, such as one called "Drunken Chaps", read like written accompaniments and extensions to the *Human Bondage* series:

> Rough suited chaps glide ghostlike through the debris searching for an unbroken glass. Hands are cut and suits are torn before they rest and cast about for interest to combine with rest. The bottles still with contents hang around expecting to be found, shining and happy looking in the dim light. The human bondage of the hour sets in with elegance of necessity. Turning form tattered and tired to the moment the figures relax with the tense enjoyment of twisted ideas and their minds torn. [10]

Here, the figures of Gilbert and George, so carefully and meticulously arranged in the photographs, become "ghostlike", wounded, dishevelled, and desperate, seeking a necessary release and relaxation in alcohol and the embrace, crucially, of "twisted ideas" and "torn" minds. In this light, the swastika's relationship to alcohol seems to be one that pivots between the oppressive, binding power of alcohol dependence and, more disturbingly, a symbol of the shaking off of respectable boundaries and limits in this moment of excess.

There is a sense that Gilbert and George were interested, through the *Human Bondage* series and also more widely, in the shifting thresholds of behaviour. Commenting on their embrace of drinking as a subject matter, the artists suggested that such works could be read more metaphorically:

> George: … There are all sorts of things people can be drunk with, and it was a general human statement in a way … We felt we had to completely destroy ourselves in some way, to find out the worst things about ourselves, all of the worst feelings …
>
> Gilbert: It was in some ways even like self-flagellation. [11]

We might read *Human Bondage*, then, as seeking to evoke a more general sense of submission—to despair, to power, to the appeal and release embodied in some kind of extreme, whether that be related to politics or alcohol or some other intoxicant. Gilbert and George claimed that the series might also evoke another form of bondage—religion. In an interview with Carter Ratcliff, they underlined the intentionally shifting and ambiguous nature of their use of the swastika and its relationship to Christianity:

> George: The Human Bondage pieces show the Christian cross quite often.
>
> Gilbert: And, anyway, the swastika is a version of the cross. The Nazi swastika runs one way, and others run the other way. We have them going both ways. Reversals. We weren't trying to say anything about fascism or the war in particular.
>
> George: You see a swastika and you have this immediate, extremely powerful feeling about what went on all over the world at a certain time …
>
> We like idea that one could deal with the destructive elements in one's life, in oneself, as human bondage, as something to be accepted. An aspect of life that you needn't avoid at all costs …
>
> Gilbert: There's no correct political line on our works. We are

> interested in morality …
>
> I don't know where we are, politically, because we're not involved with politics. But we have a morality. We are interested in that because we believe that comes through morality—what is good and what is bad. The shifting of good and bad—what one accepts today, and the next day one doesn't accept anymore. [12]

There are a number of implications here that suggest the artists framed their use of the swastika in *Human Bondage* as a means of evoking transition and liminality, between morality and immorality, good and evil, sobriety and drunkenness, selfhood and destruction. We might read the pictures as seeking to reflect on the continued or potential appeal of fascism in the face of hopelessness or wider social crisis, or even as reflections on individuals' potential implication in fascist ideas or tendencies. Gilbert and George breach the moral threshold in *Human Bondage*, we might argue, in order to draw attention to its very fragility.

In the mid-1970s, fascism and far-right politics were enjoying their highest level of popular appeal and political weight in Britain since before the Second World War. This was enabled by an unfurling sense of crisis that gripped British society across the decade, largely seen as indicative of the crumbling of post-war consensus. Inflation had spiralled since the end of the 1960s, which led to a rise in unemployment (it reached 6.4 per cent in the summer of 1976, the highest since the war) and a series of ongoing, bitter trade union disputes across the decade, particularly in the winter of discontent of 1978–1979. Economic crisis was constant and appeared to signal Britain's declining power and influence on the world stage: in 1973, the global oil crisis pushed the British economy into recession and led to the end of Edward Heath's Conservative government, while in 1976 James Callaghan's Labour government was forced to request a loan of $3.9billion from the IMF in order to stabilise the British economy after the pound reached a record low against the dollar. IRA bombings brought domestic terrorism, and Britain's inner cities were marred by riots, poverty, and high levels of inequality. In this context, where questions of social inequality, immigration, and national identity were high on the political agenda, far-right political parties were able to gain some influence. [13]

The National Front formed in 1967 and grew to gain significant victories in a series of local and by-elections by the end of the 1970s. In the October 1974 general election, they promised "a ban on all non-white immigration to Britain and the repatriation of 'all coloured immigrants'" and steeped their statements in "the language of patriotism, moral conservatism, and strict

social discipline", focusing on issues like law and order and capital punishment to mask a crudely racist worldview. [14] They produced party political broadcasts and literature, organised processional marches with banners and drums, and their paper sellers were a common site on street corners, outside football matches, and even at school gates. [15] This far-right actively sought to capitalise on the frustrations and equalities that were widespread in 1970s Britain.

The rising influence of the far-right in contemporary British society was clearly important for the *Human Bondage* series. Gilbert and George's relationship to these politics has, over their career, become muddied, partly due to over-literal critical responses to their work but also due to their own statements, which are at times ambiguous and at others alarming. In a 1981 interview with Gordon Burn, the artists were asked why they had been labelled by some people as fascists:

> George: It's a life-force. It's a life-force we accept very much.
>
> Gilbert: You could say that Christian goodness is fascistic. What people used to believe was good—religion—you could say that is fascistic. Many people would say so.
>
> George: I mean, we're only here because of the World War II turmoil of fascism anyway. Life doesn't exist without it … Without the good works of the people that the extreme left call fascist there wouldn't even be a civilisation. [16]

Statements like this remain rooted in their now familiar sense of shifting morality—fascism is, again, conflated with Christianity—though they appear disturbingly enamoured with its power as a "life-force". The same interview is marred by racist generalisations about the Pakistani community near their home in East London, and George's assertion that the artists were "not against people saying" that they were pro-National Front. [17] Four years later, they stated that: "we wouldn't say we're not fascists". [18] George's former art teacher seemingly reported hearing similar comments: "They said some things that if it had been anyone else, would have made me get up and walk away. But I never understood whether that fascist stuff was just part of the game". [19] The artists consistently toe the line between explicit right-wing utterances and provocative ambiguity.

A sympathetic reading here might assert that Gilbert and George's "art for all" philosophy would, by necessity, include the full spectrum of political radicalism that was present in 1970s London. From early in their careers, the artists repeatedly claimed that their work was intended for as wide an audience as possible, beyond what they saw as the elitist confines of an art world still, in the late 1960s, in thrall to modernism. This approach has gone hand-in-hand with their stance that all aspects of their lives and experiences come under the heading of art; as Gilbert put it, simply, "our lives are one big sculpture". [20] As a result, their art takes in a large variety of subjects, actions, utterances, and experiences, rooted in an attitude where they "accept the whole world". [21] This is a stance that is as artificial as the works of art they produce and suggests, on the one hand, that their statements require an interpretive approach that bears this artifice in mind. However, at the same time, there is a need to deal carefully with their embrace of extreme right-wing statements and imagery, to trace the specific connotations and resonances it might have held at this moment, and to reflect, more broadly, on how we might speak, responsibly, about the effects of these statements and imagery from our own political moment, while acknowledging the contradictory implications and meanings of the artists' works and statements. For this, the intersections between Gilbert and George's use of fascistic imagery and other elements of 1970s British culture are crucial, as well as their connections to the concept of the threshold.

Skinheads and Queerness

In 1974, the year of *Human Bondage*, Gilbert and George recounted how they found themselves in a fight with a group of figures who were emblematic of the widespread sense of "crisis", violence, and extreme politics in 1970s Britain—skinheads:

> Gilbert: Fighting is rather nice. Do you remember when they broke my nose?
>
> George: They were the skinhead types.
>
> Gilbert: Yes, they kicked us in once.
>
> George: It was fun. It was the early days. This was in Finsbury Park, which is very tough. Such a marvellous style of dress they have, the skinheads. Marvellous. Lovely, really. We were their

> greatest supporters, you know. It's rather unfair they attacked us. Everybody's thinking about this great wave of violence and there are we walking around the streets admiring this amazing style. Splendid.
>
> Gilbert: You never see it any more. Not in the East End.
>
> George: It's a style sported rather heavily by male prostitutes. I think that's the last stronghold of skinheads in London. I don't know why. Gentlemen Prefer Skinheads, or something. [22]

The artists' comments here reveal a complex relationship to skinheads, skinhead culture, and their links to male prostitution. In one sense, they position themselves outside of skinhead culture, as just two victims of a gang who met their fate in a relatively common manner: by straying into a different community (Finsbury Park in North London) and standing out from the crowd (in their suits). At the same time, they frame themselves as admirers of skinheads. In the early 1970s, skinheads had come to signify resistance to the shifting social landscape in Britain (where feminist, anti-racist, and gay liberation movements were gaining prominence), rooted in "conservative discourses of nostalgia and authenticity" that sought to reassert a supposedly natural, fixed organisation of society. [23] They had also become widely known for the kind of violence that they inflicted on Gilbert and George. This violence had led to a decline in the skinhead subculture at this time, as the artists note, as it pushed original skinheads away from identifying with a movement that appeared to be growing more extreme.

Skinheads had originally emerged in the late 1960s as a working-class branch of the mod subculture, and they took inspiration from the fashion and music of young Jamaican immigrants, who modelled themselves on Jamaican "rude boys"; they were, early on, a multicultural movement. These roots were retained and centred, later in the decade, in Two Tone's ska/punk/reggae sound and left-wing politics. At the same time, other skinheads became associated with the punk sub-genre Oi! and, more generally, the far-right movements, like the National Front, gaining political and social influence in the inner cities. [24] Gilbert and George's interest in skinheads, then, finds them engaging with a subculture whose meaning was shifting: between a mainstream association with violence and right-wing politics and increasingly obscured links to black immigrant culture and left-wing politics.

At the same time—and, again, Gilbert and George allude to this—skinheads had become both fashion inspirations and sex symbols in the gay scene. These two seemingly unrelated communities had risen to prominence alongside each other, with the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) forming in 1970 in the wake of the partial decriminalisation of homosexuality in England and Wales in 1967, just as skinheads became a recognisable subculture. The GLF's conscious challenging of stereotypes about gay men—as effeminate and middle or upper class, largely—and the general expansion of who might define themselves as gay following liberation led to a "masculinisation" of the gay scene and, eventually, the emergence of the figure of the clone later in the decade (developments that are, of course, not without their politics and problems). [25] Skinhead fashion (button-down or polo shirts, braces, Dr Martens, short hair) began to be fetishised by gay men; a gay publication, *Jeremy, the Magazine for Modern Young Men*, ran its first sequence of skinhead photographs in February 1970, for example. [26] Steadily, some gay men adopted skinhead fashion themselves, and its influence fed into the gay leather and SM scenes during the decade (the more extreme aspects of these scenes also began to appropriate fascistic references, including Nazi uniforms and the swastika). [27] Gilbert and George's reflections on skinheads above seem to chart this queer development, from violence to objects of desire. Elsewhere, reflecting on what they felt was their own marginal position in the British art world in terms of taste and politics, the artists positioned themselves as skinheads' allies, saying "We want to be completely outside with—whatyoucall—hooligans and tramps … We have to be on top of the bus, with the skinheads." [28] Skinheads appeared in their art, though without overt fetishisation, in 1980's work *Patriots*, for example, alongside other white young men and one young Asian man, tempering and diversifying an image that could have been read, via its title, as an endorsement of skinhead nationalism, though which still retains an unsettling, tense aura (Fig. 3).

Figure 3.
Gilbert & George, Patriots, 1980, mixed media, 181 x 303 cm. Private Collection. Digital image courtesy of Gilbert & George.

Though references to skinheads do not appear explicitly in *Human Bondage*, Gilbert and George's active engagement with emerging youth cultures that intersected, unsteadily, with extreme politics, violence, and queerness demonstrates an awareness of the complex relationship between homosexuality and politics at this moment. *Human Bondage* is, after all, a vision of unruly queer domesticity glimpsed through the frame of a swastika; this is a vision that, on the one hand, evokes stereotypes that linked Nazism with homosexuality, while also marking their queer domesticity as different from both from the politically radical approaches to home-making by contemporary groups like the GLF and the conservative respectability of more mainstream gay couples. [29]

To describe Gilbert and George as queer is to use a label that they would likely resist—the artists have consistently rejected being labelled as gay, denied an interest in gay liberation, and refused the idea that they make "gay art": "We never did gay art, we never did, ever". [30] At times, they have put forward a fluid if defensive approach to gender and sexuality:

> we know much younger friends … post-G&G people you can call them … they just don't think of sexuality in divisions … They don't think "gay" or "straight" or "queer". They don't ask if the friend coming over to dinner is queer or not, it's not an issue. [31]

However, Gilbert and George's preoccupation with skinheads, rooted in violence, clothing, and sex, and their identification with them—"on top of the bus"—suggests solidarity or, perhaps more appropriately, an intentionally unsteady alignment between marginal masculinities. As Murray Healy has argued, skinheads (supposedly working class, socially immobile, violent, right wing) and gay men (supposedly middle class, socially mobile, effeminate, left wing) were, in theory, polar opposites. They were the extremes between which lay acceptable definitions of masculinity; they stand outside of its thresholds though they can seemingly slip and shift between extreme categories, as we have seen, and even invade the safety of mainstream masculinity too. [32] Gilbert and George seemed intent on working across these divisions, shrugging off the "gay" label, openly seeking to embrace right-wing politics and imagery as if not an endorsement then perhaps a provocative expression of the contradictions at the heart of emerging categories and markers of identity. We are left, in *Human Bondage*, with an intentionally troubled, intertwined sense of the artists' relationship with far-right imagery and emerging but fluid definitions of male selfhood.

Gilbert and George and Punk

Gilbert and George's use of the swastika also marks them out as unlikely precursors to another youth subculture movement that would emerge in the years following *Human Bondage*: punk. By late 1976, punk was interpreted as a reflection of the pervading sense of social crisis in British society; it has also subsequently been considered by scholars as a site of resistance to the economic and cultural conditions of the period. [33] The provocative potential of the swastika—and the spectre of totalitarianism more generally—proved particularly fascinating for those involved in punk. Siouxsie Sioux wore an armband with a swastika on it in the early years of her band Siouxsie and the Banshees (Fig. 4). Sid Vicious famously wore a T-shirt with a swastika screen-printed on the front too. These were sold by the Sex Pistols' manager Malcolm McLaren (who was Jewish) in his shop Sex on London's King's Road; he reportedly told employees that, if they were asked about this, they were to say, "We're here to positively confront people with the past". [34] There appear to have been a range of reasons why punks decided to wear the swastika, from a sense that they were re-presenting a warning from history, as McLaren claimed, to a sense that it was purely a provocative transgression. Siouxsie Sioux fell into the latter camp:

> It was very much an anti-mums and anti-dads thing … We hated older people—not across the board but particularly in suburbia—always harping on about Hitler, "We showed him", and

> that smug pride. It was a way of saying, "Well I think Hitler was very good actually": a way of watching someone like that go completely red-faced. [35]

More generally, it seems to have been intended as a retort to nostalgia and complacency in the aftermath of victory, particularly as the post-war consensus appeared to be crumbling. It also drew attention to less easily acknowledged aspects of British history, such as the policy of appeasement in the 1930s, Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists, and even, at that very moment, the rising influence of the extreme right. [36] Whether the nuances of these intentions were shared by all and whether the effects achieved amounted to much more than shock and disgust is, perhaps, unlikely. The swastika remains viscerally resistant to these attempts at critique and interrogation. Though Gilbert and George's use of the swastika occurs a year or two before punk arrives in Britain, they share its appeal to shock, and its potential for critique as well as misunderstanding and ambiguity.

Figure 4.
Caroline Coon, Siouxsie Sioux in the Queue at the 100 Club for the First Punk Rock Festival, 1976, gelatin silver print, 30.6 x 24.2 cm. Collection of Caroline Coon. Digital image courtesy of Caroline Coon / Camera Press.

Punk's provocations were also folded into the work of another queer artist in the 1970s: Derek Jarman. His 1978 film *Jubilee* brings Queen Elizabeth I forward in time to the England of 1977, which has been laid to waste by riots and social collapse, to follow the activities of a group of reckless, nihilistic punks made up of women and queer men. The film emerged from Jarman's

own social circle beginning to overlap with punk's key figures, and attests to the often-overlooked intersections between queer subcultures and the beginnings of punk. [37]

Jubilee demonstrates a similarly provocative interrogation of history and morality to *Human Bondage*; early on, Amyl, one of the band of punks, puts forward her own history lesson:

> history still fascinates me—it's so intangible. You can weave facts any way you like. Good guys can swap places with bad guys. You might think Richard III of England was bad, but you'd be wrong. What separates Hitler from Napoleon or even Alexander? The size of the destruction? Or was he closer to us in time? Was Churchill a hero? Did he alter history for the better? [38]

Here, the strict moral boundaries of post-war consensus are actively scrambled. Elsewhere, Amyl both mourns the disintegration of society (civilisation "destroyed by resentment") and welcomes it ("since civilisation itself was always fucking awful for everyone, who gives a shit? We're better off without it"). [39] Punk's nihilistic embrace of ambiguity does not go without criticism in Jarman's film, however. Amyl is eventually recruited by the media mogul Borgia Ginz to perform a reggae-tinged version of "Rule Britannia" in the Eurovision Song Contest. The film culminates in her and her group of punks retreating to Borgia's stately home in Dorset, which has become an independent fascist state (the group are stopped at the border by a customs official who declares "blacks, gays, and jews are banned in Dorset"). They sit on his sofa and watch the Jubilee on television with Hitler, as Borgia reflects, "They all sign up in the end one way or another". [40] The punk movement has submitted to the very forces—popular culture and fascism— that it sought to critique (or perhaps, as Jarman suggested, the connections were there all along). [41]

Jarman's film underlines the cultural connections between punk, extremism, queerness, morality, and social crisis in the 1970s that are implicit in Gilbert and George's work. The *Human Bondage* series pivots on a political and cultural threshold that links these elements, creating a web of allusions, signs, identities, and cultures that represents their surprising yet present connections. These pictures operate in a state of chaos and unreadability—one that, as in Jarman's film, gestures to capitulation and complicity. In this way, the *Human Bondage* series occupies a true threshold, a liminal political and social state, and requires a reading that addresses its

liminality, its vacillation between critique and submission. In 1985, responding to a question about whether they found the 1970s "very depressing", Gilbert and George said:

> We began to realise that it was important for us to respect the misery and death and violence and aggression and other forms as well. You ask most people what they like. They say, well this; and you say, why do you do that? And in the end they just do everything in order to go for a pint of beer on Saturdays. It's all it boils down to. [42]

Here, the everyday rhythms of life and the reward of alcohol lapse into an unthinking, fascistic ritual. In *Human Bondage*, similarly, the home and the everyday are allowed to contain oppression, subversion, and deviant queerness, alcohol becomes total submission and destruction, and morality shifts into something undefinable. It is the chaotic and ambiguous potential of the threshold, evoking violence, extremity, queerness, rebellion, and personal and domestic disintegration (rather than simply political critique or submission) that emerges, like a question, a threat, a presence, from their work. It speaks, with a kind of clumsy complexity, of the incautiously shifting politics and identities of 1970s Britain, where liberation becomes submission, rebellion becomes capitulation.

The *Dirty Words* Series, Race, and Crisis

As the decade wore on, Gilbert and George continued to register the ongoing social crisis in 1970s Britain and reflect on ambiguous thresholds of behaviour, politics, and selfhood. If the *Human Bondage* series found them trapped, alone together, in their Fournier Street home, then their *Dirty Words* series from 1977 placed the still isolated, enclosed, anxious figures of the artists alongside images of the people, spaces, and objects of the city around them. In these works, the very boundaries of home and not-home, comfort and violence, and, potentially, society and its limits are further undermined. The series is made up of a number of large, gridded panels of photographs. Each of the panels includes images of written graffiti, which are mostly puerile, explicit terms: "fuck", "cunt", "scum", "bummed", "bollocks", "suck", "shit", "cock", "queer", "angry", and so on (Fig. 5). These were found and photographed on the streets of London. The subject matter of the other images in the panels vary from work to work: they can include further instances of crude, drawn graffiti, Black or Asian men, police officers, homeless men, male sex workers, soldiers, and views of the spaces of the city, including traffic on the street, sections of buildings, and landmarks on

the London skyline. The bodies of the artists are almost always present too, either depicting just their faces, closely cropped, or their whole bodies, looking mournful, muted, and reflective in darkened interiors.

Figure 5.
Gilbert & George, Cunt Scum, 1977, 16 photographs, black and white, on paper mounted onto board, 241.3 x 200.7 cm. Collection of Tate, London. Digital image courtesy of Tate, London / Gilbert & George.

Particular works from the *Dirty Words* series combine images and text in ways that imply a move across thresholds, between home and society, inner emotion and outer expression, and experience and stereotype. In *Angry*, the letters of the title are enlarged and organised, one per panel, across the top of the work (you can see that they have been daubed over a section of brick wall) (Fig. 6). At the centre of the work is more graffiti—this is a crudely rendered image of a nude male figure that clutches dismembered phalluses in each hand and lets out a "Hic" in a speech bubble that implies he is drunk. The enlarged genitals and facial features of this drawn figure could suggest

that it is a stereotypical and racist representation of a black male. It is surrounded by photographs of other black men, cropped to focus on just their heads. When asked about the inclusion of figures like this in their works at this point, the artists explained that they took photographs of others at a distance, sometimes even using a long lens from within their own home. [43] As the men do not look at the camera here and as we can make out fragments of other figures and the city space behind them, it seems probable that they were captured in a similar way. Gilbert and George, meanwhile, sit in the lower part of the work, again in darkened interior spaces, looking out directly at us. On either side, photographs of cars on the city streets flank the central images.
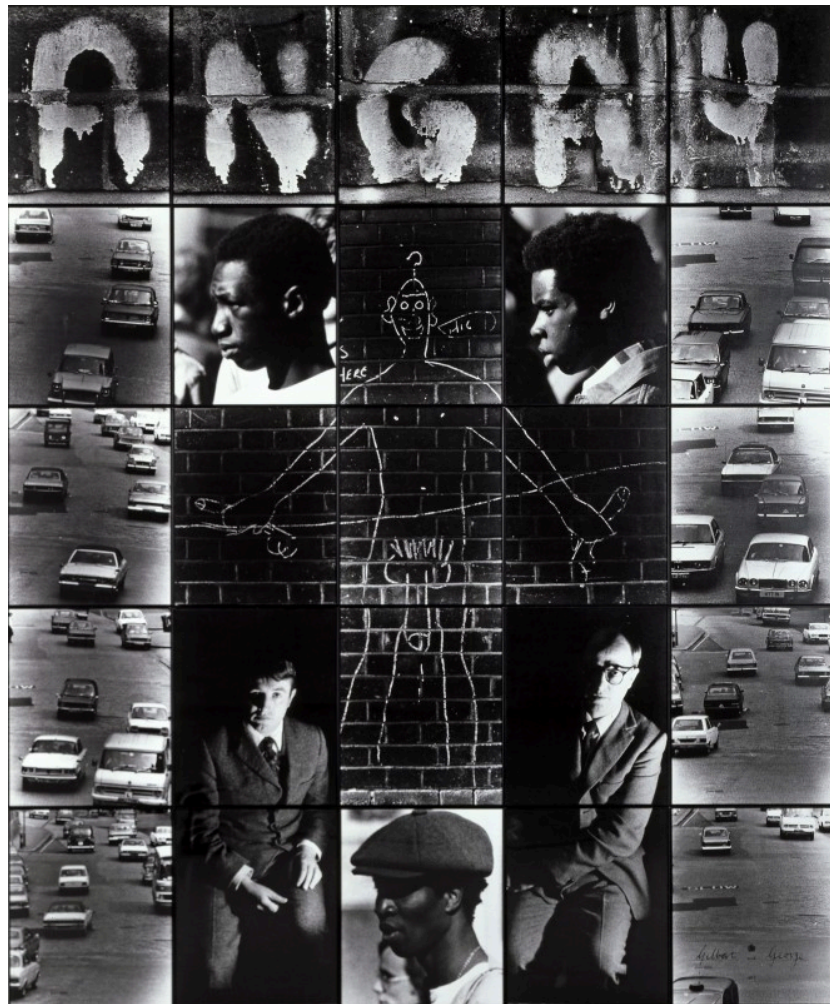

Figure 6.
Gilbert & George, Angry, 1977, mixed media, 302 x 252 cm. Collection of Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, The Netherlands, formerly in the Visser collection. Digital image courtesy of Gilbert & George / Photo: Cary Markerink.

The arrangement of the images in this work brings to mind religious works of art. In some respects, the gridded structure, with thick black lines between the images, recall stained-glass windows. However, the composition here looks more like a devotional altarpiece, with the crucified body of Christ replaced with the graffitied body, arms held out in an approximation of a crucifixion pose across five panels that are arranged like a cross. Around him, the black men appear like devotional saints, while Gilbert and George themselves sit at the foot of this crucifixion like mourners or witnesses, making eye contact with us as viewers in a way that echoes the position and gaze of mourners in more traditional altarpieces. The images of traffic running down the side and even the letters of "angry" running along the top act almost like wings. Gilbert and George would not be the first artists in this period of British art to appropriate religious and specifically crucifixion imagery—there were prominent examples in the work of Graham Sutherland, Francis Bacon, and Francis Newton Souza. In this case, there are specific issues around race being addressed in the appropriation of crucifixion imagery through black bodies. Gilbert and George frequently claimed that they were part of a limited group of artists who were "able to accept black people and white people in our work completely on the same level", and, following their words, it could be argued that this work treats the photographed black men with a sense of dignity, contrasting with their arrangement around the stereotypical and demeaning representation of another black body at the centre. [44] There are, perhaps, elements of cross-identity empathy in the way they present themselves alongside other male bodies.

There is also something intentionally and explicitly provocative about the juxtaposition of graffiti and real bodies, which builds on the immediately controversial use of 'dirty words' across the series. The words and images of the graffiti are base, crude expressions or images, easily found but perhaps determinedly ignored by many around the city, as the artists acknowledged:

> Gilbert: By putting the word along the top, then something vertical down both sides, it looked like a door. A door of hell.
>
> George: We found much of the graffiti in doorways. In every Western city, you find it immediately, the moment you look. We became interested to know what makes a person do that. [45]

Doors feature prominently in their description: they are thresholds, between one space and another—between an interior and an exterior, for instance, or, as the artists seem to imply here, between this world and a hellish alternative. Again, this term "door of hell" has religious connotations, and

could perhaps be interpreted as a subversive framing of their work as the antithesis of something like Lorenzo Ghiberti's so-called Gates of Paradise for the Florence Baptistery. You can imagine encountering a work like this in a relatively pristine art gallery space, with the door of the *Angry* panel beckoning you into a world of abject existence and base expression.

The threshold of a work like *Angry*—and like all of the *Dirty Words* series—creates a moment of uncertainty, where given boundaries are made to appear as if they are about to fall away. It seems, here, to be both a physical and a psychological state: physically, somewhere between the interior in which Gilbert and George place themselves and the unruly spaces of the city, and, psychologically, somewhere between respectability and the abject, anti-social emotions and representations of the graffiti (bringing to light "what makes a person do that", as George says, and recalling his invocation of "crazy armies coming through the window" that opened this essay). As I have demonstrated, a fear of social decline and the disruption of boundaries was something that had permeated debates and government policy in Britain in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s, as the appearance of post-war consensus disintegrated into anxiety and dissensus.

In this context, institutions and the press placed the blame for the ongoing moment of crisis on particular sections of British society: the "enemy within" in Conservative politician Enoch Powell's paranoid terms, who were supposedly seeking to undermine and destroy British society from the inside. The scapegoats, more often than not, were black citizens. They were a force that had previously been on the "outside" of British society, but who were now more visible and perceived to be growing in number. Black people were policed in an increasingly heavy-handed way, and became the focus of large-scale moral panics: for instance, a crisis around mugging dominated the media and political debate in the early years of the 1970s and black youths were perceived to be the perpetrators. [46] As Stuart Hall argued, moments of panic and continued tension like this speak of anxiety about the thresholds of social behaviour: particular events or groups of people were framed as having the potential to violate, decisively, particular given social thresholds and instigate wider social breakdown. [47]

The figure of the migrant, then—and particularly the black male youth—came to represent "the enemy within" British society, the violent, unemployed cause and symptom of a wider crisis in this period. It was—as Gilbert and George would have been aware—not so long since queer men had been perceived in a similar way: perhaps not as violent, but as deviant figures that threatened the consensus and reconstruction of British society after the war. [48] By the mid-1970s, the black male migrant had taken the place of the queer man (to some extent) as the scapegoat for national crisis, and so there is one sense that *Angry* could be read as an active reflection on

the marginality of black male bodies at this particular moment. However, Gilbert and George's approach to this is, inevitably, contradictory. Their broad imitation of the form, poses, and gestures of a religious altarpiece suggests an intention—which they indicated themselves—of recuperating or elevating this marginal figure. At the same time, however, this elevation is done either at the other end of a long lens camera (with their faces framed like mugshots), or through crude and offensive graffiti. It is further complicated by the way they frame a work like this as a "door of hell", one that is obviously meant to provoke and to play on the fears of their audience; the works were shown in three groups at contemporary art galleries Amsterdam, Dusseldorf, and New York between 1977 and 1978, but were also, as ever, widely reproduced and circulated in Britain and elsewhere. There is a push-and-pull at work here: a sense of them encouraging us to identify with these marginal figures, to bring real images of them closer to us and to balk at the crude representation of them on the wall, but there is always, still, a distance. These anonymous men, seen from afar, do not make eye contact with us or, by implication, Gilbert and George themselves. This could, in part, be read as a reflection of the experience of the city—how individuals and demographics live alongside one another but might never know each other. At the same time, *Angry* never really resolves satisfactorily: its black male figures are made present, simultaneously close and distant, affirmed and accepted alongside the racist scrawls on the wall and the evocations of the media coverage on "the enemy within".

The politics of race have been a complex feature of Gilbert and George's art throughout their career—I have already highlighted, for instance, the ambiguity of some of their statements on far-right politics. In 1978—a year after the *Dirty Words* series—the artists produced *Paki* (Fig. 7), a much more overtly insensitive depiction of a South Asian man, with the two artists looking on with a gaze that casts the work's subject as a figure of curiosity. The artists attempted—unconvincingly—to defend their use of the slur as a term of affection; elsewhere, Wolf Jahn has argued that the work presents the figure and the title with a neutrality that might "nullify the generally understood semantic content of the title" (though I would suggest that slurs do not slip so easily into neutrality for those who have been subjected to them). [49] As a result, Gilbert and George's at best clumsy and at worst offensive handling of issues around race at this moment continues to place something of a question mark under their use of representations of black men in *Angry*. The visual linking of black men to the term "angry" treads a fine line in itself: the artists are in danger of evoking the stereotype of the angry black man. So, whose anger is this? Is it the anger of the racially abused black man? The outraged onlooker to racial abuse? Or the British institutions and far-right organisations like the National Front, who sought someone to blame for the apparent decline in British society? It is this

uncomfortable ambiguity that makes works like *Angry*—as well as other *Dirty Words* works—difficult to read as entirely recuperating or elevating its marginal, scapegoated subjects.


PAKI. 1978. 71×59 in. 181×151 cm.

Figure 7.
Gilbert & George, Paki, 1978, mixed media, 181 x 151 cm. Private Collection. Digital image courtesy of Gilbert & George.

Reading Gilbert and George's 1970s Pictures

As viewers, just as with *Human Bondage*, we need to read this ambiguity responsibly; we need to think about how we can respond to a work that seems to reassert the very things it also seeks to critique. It is worth putting *Angry* back in the context of the *Dirty Words* series, which includes slurs directed at gay men (bent, queer, poof), a range of masculinities (South Asian men, the homeless, city workers, sex workers, soldiers, and the police), and slogans that hint at unrest ("smash", "Communism", "smash the reds", "we're all angry", an "NF" for the National Front) (Fig. 8). The splashes of red

that colour some works in the series were intended to evoke violence as well as registering the incoming "socialistic cloud" that meant, in their minds, that "Britain was becoming Communist, all red". [50] *Angry*, then, is part of a series-wide decision to bring together stereotypes, slurs, slogans from across the political spectrum, and snapshots of reality. Together, they suggest a sense of tension, even simmering violence, which hints at a city on the brink. As a group, they locate this tension in the presence of competing masculinities and ideologies, and the abuse of those on the margins. At the same time, these competing words and images are found and combined by the artists to evoke not only the social crisis of 1970s Britain but also a wider uncertainty of meaning: slurs become both derogatory and defiant, political slogans celebratory and critical, and male bodies watched with affection and anxiety.
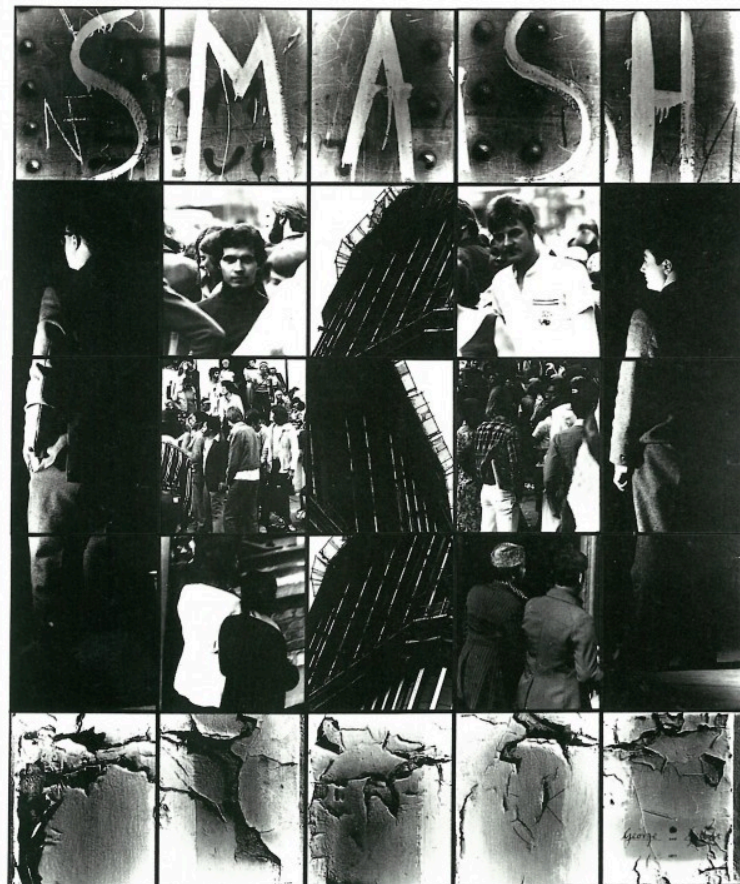
SMASH. 1977. 118×99 in. 300×250 cm.

Figure 8.
Gilbert & George, Smash, 1977, mixed media, 302 x 252 cm. Private Collection. Digital image courtesy of Gilbert & George.

Angry is one "door of hell" in a series of "doors of hell" that purport to beckon us into the all-encompassing social collapse that the black male (among others) was supposedly heralding at this moment. There is a sense, on the one hand, that *Angry* is intended to satirise and critique this sense of crisis. But there is also a sense, on the other hand, that, in re-presenting the stereotypes of the graffiti, in photographing young black men at a distance, and in surrounding them with the chaos of the streets and the word "angry", the artists are evoking the very outrage and hysteria they sought to undermine. There is little to gain in choosing sides here—either crafting a positive reading of *Angry* or condemning Gilbert and George entirely. As a result, we are left with the chaos of the threshold, sprawled across boundaries: between presence and stereotype, between the outrage and the ridicule of the graffiti image, between photographed black men as attendant angels and mug-shotted criminals, between the anger of the abusers and the abused, between a spirit of redemption and a spirit of hate, between home (where Gilbert and George perch) and the city. The way in which these positions occupy *Angry* all at once is significant and, I think, grimly truthful.

Earlier in the decade, Gilbert and George's performances of *Underneath the Arches* as singing sculptures had evoked nostalgia for the spirit of wartime consensus then associated with musical hall songs, while also evoking the wartime destruction of homes and lives—both actual and threatened. In this way, the memories and traumas of war were made to linger in the spaces in London and around the world in which *Underneath the Arches* was performed, nearly twenty-five years after the war's end. A similar push-and-pull of nostalgia and threat was central to the rhetoric of "the enemy within"—the marginal, unruly male figures threatening the perceived post-war consensus of British society. *Angry*'s reckless ambiguity appears to embody the extremes of this moment in a detached manner perhaps only available to white artists both embroiled in but also removed from these debates. But the doubt that is present in this work about Gilbert and George's intentions might be useful to us, as a means of speaking of ambivalence; of allowing a post-war moment of racism and violence to be visible; to address it and point to its insidiousness, its quietness—the said but not said, the action threatened but delayed. As a whole, the *Dirty Words* series simmers with violence—slogans, battle-ready soldiers, extreme politics—and seems intended, in part, to evoke a war of political and demographic extremes. As ambivalent thresholds, these works gesture to the falsity or fragility of boundaries in post-war Britain. In pleading for a spirit of calm and respect, they also seem about to tip into racism, violence, and chaos. In addressing what is left of consensus, they also appear on the brink of a war that had supposedly been won; in seeking to address the question of home (for the artists and others), they find only instability—the lingering uncertainty and troubling potential of the threshold.

Gilbert and George's art of the 1970s—particularly the works in their *Human Bondage* and *Dirty Words* series discussed here—raises difficult questions: on how we might read artworks that engage with right-wing and racist imagery inflected by a significant degree of ambiguity, and what purpose this kind of imagery might serve for understanding how representations and history become entangled. There are not straightforward answers here, but instead I have argued that we can read works like these with an attention to their workings—a watchful sense of how they move between positions, spaces, and ideologies before our eyes. In this light, it is the complication of Gilbert and George's art in this period that can serve as an encouragement towards if not a reconceptualisation then a refocusing of historical and art historical memory towards this complication. In their 1970s work, we are given representations that are imbued with an unsettling potential, that purposefully seek to say the unsaid, that pivot and traverse thresholds that we might wish to ignore. It is not their transgressions that are valuable but their shifting nature, the hinge of their ambiguity that renders them both inscrutable and urgently present. They speak of fascism's return, the banal slippage into its imagery and rhetoric, marking its presence at the heart of British history and British art history with a sense of its closeness, its possibility, like a "door of hell" that might quietly, unnoticed, swing ajar.

Footnotes

1   Carter Ratcliff, "Gilbert and George: The Fabric of Their World", in *Gilbert and George: The Complete Pictures, 1971–1985* (Bordeaux: CAPC Musée d'Art Contemporain de Bordeaux, 1986), xxxii.

2   Gilbert and George refer to their artworks as "pictures" because they are neither photographs nor paintings; see Jan Debbaut, "'Well Then, Let's Make the World Our Gallery!'", *Gilbert & George: Major Exhibition* (London: Tate Modern, 2007), 9.

3   Carolyn Heilbrun, *Women's Lives: The View from the Threshold* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 1.

4   See Arnold Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960); and Victor Turner, "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in *Rites de Passage*", *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967), 93–111.

5   Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2003), 122.

6   Subha Mukherji, *Thinking on Thresholds: The Poetics of Transitive Spaces* (London: Anthem Press, 2011), xix.

7   Robert Violette and Hans-Ulrich Obrist (eds.), "Art For Art's Sake: From an Interview with Jim Shelley 1987", in *The Words of Gilbert and George: With Portraits of the Artists From 1968 to 1997* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997), 170; and Robert Violette and Hans-Ulrich Obrist (eds.), "The Fundamental Gilbert and George: 1997", in *The Words of Gilbert and George: With Portraits of the Artists From 1968 to 1997* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997), 291.

8   Violette and Obrist, "The Fundamental Gilbert and George", 292.

9   Violette and Obrist, "The Fundamental Gilbert and George", 292.

10   Robert Violette and Hans-Ulrich Obrist (eds.), "Dark Shadow", in *The Words of Gilbert and George: With Portraits of the Artists From 1968 to 1997* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997), 91.

11   Violette and Obrist, "The Fundamental Gilbert and George", 292.

12   Ratcliff, "Gilbert and George", xxi.

13   On Britain in the 1970s, see Richard Coopey and Nicholas Woodward (eds.), *Britain in the 1970s: The Troubled Economy* (London: Routledge, 1996); and Alwyn W. Turner, *Crisis? What Crisis?: Britain in the 1970s* (London: Aurum, 2008).

14   Matthew Worley and Nigel Copsey, "White Youth: The Far Right, Punk and British Youth Culture, 1977–87", *JOMEC Journal* 9 (2016): 29.

15   Worley and Copsey, "White Youth", 31.

16 Robert Violette and Hans-Ulrich Obrist (eds.), "Gilbert and George: Interview with Gordon Burn, 1974", in *The Words of Gilbert and George: With Portraits of the Artists From 1968 to 1997* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997), 68–73.

17 Violette and Obrist, "Gilbert and George: Interview with Gordon Burn, 1981", 124.

18 Robert Violette and Hans-Ulrich Obrist (eds.), "Morning Coffee with Gilbert and George: Interview 1985", in *The Words of Gilbert and George: With Portraits of the Artists From 1968 to 1997* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997), 145.

19 Daniel Farson, *Gilbert and George: A Portrait* (London: Harper Collins, 2000), 74.

20 Ratcliff, "Gilbert and George", x.

21 Ratcliff, "Gilbert and George", xi.

22 Violette and Obrist, "Gilbert and George: Interview with Gordon Burn, 1974", 71–72.

23 Murray Healy, *Gay Skins: Class, Masculinity, and Queer Appropriation* (London: Cassell, 1996), 42.

24 Timothy S. Brown, "Pop Music and Politics: Skinheads and 'Nazi Rock' in England and Germany", *Journal of Social History* 38, no. 1 (2004): 157–178.

25 Healy, *Gay Skins*, 58.

26 Healy, *Gay Skins*, 73.

27 Healy, *Gay Skins*, 110 and 115.

28 Violette and Obrist, "Gilbert and George: Interview with Gordon Burn, 1981", 131.

29 On homosexuality and fascism, see Andrew Hewitt, *Political Inversions: Homosexuality, Fascism, and the Modernist Imaginary* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996); on queer home-making in the 1970s, Matt Cook, *Queer Domesticities: Homosexuality and Home Life in Twentieth-Century London* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 191–198.

30 Farson, *Gilbert and George*, 75.

31 Robert Violette and and Hans-Ulrich Obrist (eds.), "Gilbert and George: Interview with Simon Dwyer, 1995", in *The Words of Gilbert and George: With Portraits of the Artists From 1968 to 1997* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997), 209; and Farson, *Gilbert and George*, 76.

32 Healy, *Gay Skins*, 4.

33 Matthew Worley, "Shot By Both Sides: Punk, Politics and the End of 'Consensus'", *Contemporary British History* 26, no. 3 (2012): 335; and, more generally, Matthew Worley, *No Future: Punk, Politics, and British Youth Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

34 Quoted in Matthew Boswell, *Holocaust Impiety in Literature, Popular Music, and Film* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 103.

35 Jon Savage, *England's Dreaming: Sex Pistols and Punk Rock* (London: Faber and Faber, 2005), 241.

36 Savage, *England's Dreaming*, 241.

37 Jarman makes connections between queerness and punk, suggesting that punk:

> somehow got under my skin … it opened up all sorts of wounds which go back of course to the schooling … the actual venom poured out … it was made more aggravating by being gay and having one's life bottled up.[fn]Tony Peake, *Derek Jarman: A Biography* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 249. Connections between punk and queerness are also made in Jim Ellis, *Derek Jarman's Angelic Conversations* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 52–53.

38 Derek Jarman, *Jubilee: Six Film Scripts* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 49.

39 Jarman, *Jubilee*, 68–69.

40 Jarman, *Jubilee*, 74–75.

41 Jarman said, "Afterwards, the film turned prophetic. Dr Dee's vision came true—the streets burned in Brixton and Toxteth, Adam [Ant] was on Top of the Pops and signed up with Margaret Thatcher to sing at the Falklands Ball. They all sign up in one way or another." see Peake, *Derek Jarman*, 251.

42 Violette and Obrist, "Morning Coffee with Gilbert and George: Interview 1985", 141.

43 Ratcliff, "Gilbert and George", xxvii.

44 Robert Violette and Hans-Ulrich Obrist (eds.), "Missionary Positions: From an Interview with Sarah Kent, 1987", in *The Words of Gilbert and George: With Portraits of the Artists From 1968 to 1997* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997), 166.

45 Robert Violette and Hans-Ulrich Obrist (eds.), "The Fabrics of the Their World: From Interviews with Carter Ratcliff, 1986", in *The Words of Gilbert and George: With Portraits of the Artists From 1968 to 1997* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997), 158.

46   See Stuart Hall, Chas Critcher, Tony Jefferson, John Clarke, and Brian Roberts, *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State, and Law and Order* (London: Macmillan, 1978); and John Solomos, Bob Findlay, Simon Jones, and Paul Gilroy, "The Organic Crisis of British Capitalism and Race: The Experience of the Seventies", *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 1970s Britain* (London: Routledge in association with the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham, 1982), 9–46.

47   Hall *et al.*, *Policing the Crisis*, 225.

48   On attitudes towards homosexuality by British institutions in the post-war period, see Matt Houlbrook, *Queer London: Perils and Pleasures in the Sexual Metropolis, 1918–1957* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

49   See John A. Walker, *Left Shift: Radical Art in 1970s Britain* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002), 196–197; Rosetta Brooks, "Gilbert and George: Shake Hands with the Devil", *Artforum* 22, no. 10 (Summer 1984): 56–60; and Wolf Jahn, *The Art of Gilbert and George, or, An Aesthetic of Existence*, trans. David Britt (London: Thames and Hudson, 1989), 205–206.

50   See Ratcliff, "Gilbert and George", xxiii; and Robert Violette and Hans-Ulrich Obrist (eds.), "Interview by Martin Gayford, 1996", in *The Words of Gilbert and George: With Portraits of the Artists From 1968 to 1997* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997), 266.

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